

# Micro- Packs - A Key Tool Of Fast Moving Consumer Goods Pull Strategy

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## INTRODUCTION

Intense competition, lack of unexplored markets and increasing complexities of consumer buying behaviour have led to the development of new marketing revolution which is all-encompassing the Indian market. The marketing strategy of successful companies today is towards adopting a new concept of "Micro-Packs" to coax the customers to purchase smaller sized versions (Small- Packs) of their premium and mid-priced products, especially daily use consumer goods at reasonable prices by enhancing the affordability of the expensive products at the same budget. Micro- Packs allow expensive brands to be sold at an economical price, provide the manufacturer the benefit of providing the product in a small quantity, which enables ease of handling on part of the manufacturer and the customer. Apart from this, it saves the manufacturer from the hassles of storage of the product. A new product, if launched as a Micro- Pack, can help the manufacturer in cutting down the costs of test marketing and can increase convenience of trying a new product for the customer. Availability of so many Micro- Packs of a product also provides an assortment of brands in the same price bracket for the customer to choose from. It also instigates the element of brand loyalty and stimulates repetitive purchases.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

An attempt has been made in the present paper to deeply understand the strategy of Micro- Packs adopted by Fast Moving Consumer Goods Sector. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To understand the evolution of Micro-Packs and to explore the strategy of Micro-Packs being adopted by Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs).
2. To explore the benefits of sachetization to the company as well as to customers and to find out whether companies are charging excessive prices on Micro-Packs.
3. To know the preferences of consumers regarding purchase of Micro- Packs.

The Concept of Micro- Packs was originally adopted by Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies (FMCGs). Today, Micro- Packs of all fundamental products are available in the market. We have sachets of shampoos, jams, sauces, snacks, biscuits, toiletries, beverages, washing powders, oils, candies and so many other products. The consumer today is very adaptive to these Micro- Packs and prefers usage of these Micro- Packs over Macro- Packs.

More and more companies are following in the league. Modicare Limited, which offers home care and skin care products boasts of a turnover of Rs 200 crore and a network of over 7,50,000 consultants across 2,000 cities has also entered the sachet segment with the launch of 12 gm and 15 gm packs. Mr. Samir Modi, Managing Director, Modicare claims his sachets are much more value for money than other FMCG sachets. "A 12 gm Modicare detergent sachet, priced at Rs 5, will take care of at least 15 washes, which no other detergent sachet of the same weight would do," he claims.

Initiated by FMCG's, this innovative concept of Micro- Packs is now being adopted by cooperative societies also. Dakshina Kannada Cooperative Milk Producer's Union Ltd. (DKMUL) has just launched 50 gm and 100 gm sachets of Nandini ghee to lure customers. According to Mr. Bhavanthabettu, President "When people can buy other products such as toothpaste and shampoo in small sachets, there is no reason why a cooperative unit cannot follow suit and give products such as ghee in sachets".

A company may choose a push or a pull strategy for enhancing its sales. Push strategy involves use of heavy sales promotion, advertising and personal selling. The manufacture stimulates the intermediaries, who in turn encourage the

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customer to buy the product. It is used to arouse the buyer to make impulse purchases. This strategy is generally applied when the target segment is not brand loyal and has numerous brand switchers. On the other hand, pull strategy induces customers to solicit a product. The customer urges the intermediaries to provide the product, who in turn demand the product from the company. This strategy is appropriate where the customer is loyal to a brand and plans to go for repetitive purchases. This strategy requires heavy advertisement. Micro- Packs can be used as an effective pull strategy. By offering the customer the benefit of small quantity at lesser price, the company stimulates the customer to try out a product without much thought and then to go for repetitive purchases. Customers develop an interest in the product quickly because of the convenience of usage it offers, try the product more because of its small quantity and have a high adaptability rate because of the minimal cost involved.

Micro- Packs are being optimally employed by companies as a strategy for popularizing the newly launched products and expanding the sales of the products which are already available in the market in macro packs. These micro single-use sachets give an opportunity to the manufacturer to attract aspiring customers and to build up a loyal customer base which understands and adapts a brand and acts as an opinion leader for the entire market. Consumers are also gainers from the purchase of Micro- Packs because they are getting smaller quantity at the lower price as compared to macro packs because more and more companies are competing with their counterparts by following the strategy of price reduction. Table 1 provides a complete analysis of the data collected.

**Table 1: List of Micro- Packs Introduced by Companies to Pump Up the Sales of Newly Launched and Existing Products**

S. No.	BRAND*	COMPANIES	QUANTITY	MRP
<b>PERSONAL CARE</b>				
1.	Vatika Shampoo	Dabur	8 ml	Rs 2.00
2.	Rejoice Shampoo	Proctor & Gamble (P&G)	7.5 ml	Rs 2.00
3.	Clinic All Clear Shampoo	Hindustan Lever Ltd (HLL)	7 ml	Rs 2.00
4.	Head and Shoulder	P&G	5 ml	Rs 3.00
5.	Clinic Plus	HLL	8 ml	Rs 2.00
6.	Sunsilk Fruitamins	HLL	8 ml	Rs 2.00
7.	Sunsilk Black shampoo	HLL	8 ml	Rs 2.00
8.	Pantene Normal Hair	P&G	5 ml	Rs 1.50
9.	Mediker shampoo	Marico	10 ml	Rs 4.90
10.	Himalaya Ayurvedic Concepts shampoo	Himalaya Ayurvedic Concepts	6 ml	Rs 2.50
11.	Ayush Dandruff Nashak Shampoo	HLL	6ml	Rs. 2.00
12.	Chic Shampoo	Cavin Kare	4 ml	50 Paisa
13.	Lux Shampoo	HLL	4 ml	50 Paisa
14.	Sunsilk White Anti Dandruff	HLL	7 ml	Rs 3.00
15.	Vatika Anti Dandruff	Dabur	7 ml	Rs 1.00
16.	Ponds Cold Cream	HLL	7 gm	Rs 5.00
17.	Fair and Lovely Cream	HLL	9 gm	Rs 5.00
18.	Vatika Heena Cream	Dabur	8 ml	Rs 1.75
19.	Hamam Soap	HLL	20 gm	Rs 2.50
20.	Lux Beauty Soap	HLL	45 gm	Rs 5.00
21.	Colgate Toothpaste	Colgate Palmolive	20 gm	Rs 5.00
22.	Ponds Sandal Talc	HLL	20 gm	Rs 5.00
23.	Spinz	Cavin Kare	0.4 ml	Rs 2.00
<b>HOUSE- HOLD CARE</b>				
24.	Ariel Washing Powder	P&G	20gm	Rs 2.00
25.	Rin Washing Powder	HLL	75 gm	Rs 5.00
26.	Surf Excel	HLL	20 gm	Rs 2.00
27.	Ezee	Godrej	20 ml	Rs 3.5
28.	Ujala Blue	Jyothy Labs	30 ml	Rs 5.00
<b>FOOD AND BEVERAGES</b>				
29.	Britannia Marie Lite Biscuit	Britannia	15 gm	Re 1.00

30.	Hide and Seek Biscuit	Parle	25 gm	Rs 4.00
31.	Tiger Biscuit	Britannia	19 gm	Re 1.00
32.	Britannia Fifty-Fifty Biscuit	Britannia	11 gm	Re 1.00
33.	Maggi	Nestle	50 gm	Rs 5.00
34.	Top Raman	Nissin Foods	50 gm	Rs 5.00
35.	Perk Chocolate	Cadbury's	6.2 gm	Rs 2.00
36.	Cadbury Gems	Cadbury's	2 gm	Rs 1.00
37.	Tiffany Wafers	Tiffany	5 gm	Re 1.00
38.	Frito Lays	PepsiCo	15 gm	Rs 5.00
39.	Crax		30 gm	Rs 5.00
40.	Haldiram Aloo Bhujia	Haldiram Foods International Ltd.	28 gm	Rs 5.00
41.	Britannia Bread	Britannia	200 gm	Rs 5.00
42.	Rasna Shake Up	Rasna Pvt Ltd	25 gm	Rs 3.00
43.	Brooke Bond Tea	HLL	40 gm	Rs 5.00
44.	Nescafe	Nestle	1 gm	Rs 2.00
<b>OTHERS</b>				
45.	MDH Chat Masala	MDH	15 gm	Rs 5.00
46.	Kissan Sauce	HLL	9 gm	Re1.00
47.	Kissan Jam	HLL	20 gm	Rs 2.00
48.	Everyday Milk Powder	Nestle	3 gm	Re 1.00
49.	Eno	Glaxo Smith Kline	5 gm	Rs 5.00
Source: Primary data collected personally.				
*This list of products is not exhaustive and more micro-brands are also available.				

## IN THE PERSONAL CARE CATEGORY

A glance at Table-1 depicts that Hindustan Lever Limited, which is a market leader with over 50% market share in the shampoo market offers sachets of Clinic All Clear, India's largest selling dandruff control shampoo, Ayush Dandruff Nashak Shampoo and Sunsilk also in a price range of 50 paisa, Re.1 and Rs. 2.00. HLL has also launched its own 4 ml version of Lux shampoo, which is priced at 50 paisa as a part of its marketing strategy to push sales further.

Procter and Gamble (P&G) India, has launched 'Rejoice' shampoo in the Indian market The Sachet is priced at Rs. 2 for 7.5 ml. As a part of marketing strategy to pump sales further, some companies have also resorted to further price reduction in the sachets. Dabur offers Vatika Anti Dandruff Shampoo priced at Re. 1.00 for 7ml. It also offers Vatika Heena Cream. Himalaya offers Himalaya Ayurvedic Concepts shampoo priced at Rs 2.50 for 6ml. Cavin Kare, a Chennai based company which owns the Chik brand of shampoo introduced a smaller 50 paisa sachet of Chik, when most other sachets retailed at Rs 2. This has lead to an increase in the sales of the shampoo by 40%.

## IN THE HOUSEHOLD CARE CATEGORY

An examination of Table-1 depicts that Procter and Gamble Home Products Ltd. (P&G) account for 40 per cent of P&G's Rs. 200-crore detergent business in the country. It offers the topmost brands- Ariel and Tide which are priced at Rs. 2.00 for 20gm. It has also lead to an increase in its market share in Indian detergent market from 10 per cent last year to over 11 per cent at present. Hindustan Lever Limited (HLL) offers leading brands -Rin and Surf in the detergent segment. Micro pack of Rin is priced at Rs. 5.00 for 75 gms and Surf Excel is priced at Rs. 2.00 for 20gm. Godrej offers Ezee Fabric Care which is priced at Rs. 3.50 for 20ml.

## IN THE FOODS AND BEVERAGES CATEGORY

Further glance at Table-1 depicts that Britannia offers Milk Bikis, which are priced at Re. 1.00 for 15gm, Britannia Marie Lite biscuit priced at Rs 1.00 for 15gm, Tiger which is priced at Re1.00 for 19gm, Britannia Fifty- Fifty priced at Re. 1.00 for 11gm. It also offers its Bread priced at Rs. 5.00 for 200gm. Parle offers Hide and Seek biscuit priced at Rs.4.00 for 25gm.

PepsiCo offers Frito lays priced Rs. 5.00 for 15gm. HLL offers Kissan Jam Priced at Rs. 2.00 for 20gm, Kissan Sauce priced at Re1.00 for 9gm. Nestle offers Everyday Milk Powder Priced at Re 1.00 for 3gm, in snacks, it offers Maggi- a popular two minute snack priced at Rs. 5.00 for 50 gm. In beverages, it offers Nescafe which is priced at Rs 2.00 for 1gm. Cadbury's offers its Perk chocolate priced at Rs 2.00 for 6.2gm and a Re 1.00 pack of Cadbury's Gems also. Top Ramen by Nissin Food is priced at Rs. 5.00 for 50gm. In masalas, MDH offers its MDH Chat Masala priced at Rs. 5.00 for 15gm. The strategy of miniaturization provides an easy inroad to the FMCGs not only to test market a new product, but also to expand the sales of the existing products. Today, the tool of Micro- Packs is being successfully employed by these companies as a pull strategy to stimulate the customer to try a product and become loyal to it. The prime focus is on creating maximum innovators and on converting late adaptors and laggards into early adaptors. The question that arises that is whether this strategy (aimed at customers) is actually benefitting the consumer? A deep survey indicates that it is not so. The companies are not transferring the entire benefit of Micro-Packs to the customers and it is mere eyewash. In majority of the products, the companies are charging more from the customers in low-unit packs. If a comparative profile of micro-packs and big-units packs of products offered by FMCGs is done, it is obvious that most of the companies are cheating the consumers. Consumers are paying more prices for same quantity per unit if they substitute big-unit packs with low-unit packs of the same brand.

**Table 2: Comparative Profile of Low-Unit Packs and Big-Unit Packs of Same Brands**

S. No.*	Products	Pack Size	MRP (Rs)	Price/ Unit (Rs)	Pack Size	MRP (Rs)	Price /Unit (Rs)	Gain/Loss@ to the customer (% age)
1	Fair & Lovely Cream	9 gm	5	0.56	80 gm	85	1.06	50
2	Rasna Shake Up	25 gm	3	0.12	100 gm	36	0.36	24
3	Pantene Shampoo	5ml	1.5	0.3	200 ml	99	0.49	19
4	Sunsilk Shampoo	8ml	2	0.25	400 ml	150	0.38	13
5	Brooke Bond	40 gm	5	0.13	250 gm	47	0.188	6
6	MDH Chat Masala	15 gm	5	0.33	100 gm	36	0.36	3
7	Ponds Sandal Talc	20 gm	5	0.25	300 gm	80	0.267	2
8	Lux Beauty Soap	45 gm	5	0.11	150 gm	19	0.127	2
9	Kissan Jam	20 gm	2	0.1	500 gm	72	0.14	4
10	Perk Chocolate	6.2 gm	2	0.32	30 gm	10	0.33	1
11	Ariel Washing Powder	20 gm	2	0.1	1000 gm	135	0.13	3
12	Rin Washing Powder	75 gm	5	0.07	1000 gm	64	0.064	9
13	Fifty Fifty Biscuit	11 gm	1	0.09	200 gm	15	0.075	- 1
14	Britania Bread	200 gm	5	0.03	500 gm	11	0.022	- 1
15	Tiger Biscuits	19 gm	1	0.05	550 gm	19.5	0.035	- 2
16	Maggi	50 gm	5	0.1	600 gm	59	0.09	- 1
17	Hide& Seek	25 gm	4	0.16	100 gm	15	0.15	- 1
18	Hamam Soap	20 gm	2.5	0.13	150 gm	17.5	0.117	- 1
19	Colgate Tooth Paste	20 gm	5	0.25	300 gm	68	0.227	- 2
20	Coca Cola	200ml	7	0.04	2000 ml	49	0.02	- 2
21	Marie Lite Biscuits	15 gm	1	0.07	200 gm	10	0.05	- 2
22	Top Raman	50 gm	5	0.1	400 gm	30	0.075	- 2
23	Kissan Sauce	9 gm	1	0.11	1000 gm	91	0.09	- 2
24	Surf Excel	20 gm	2	0.1	750 gm	57	0.076	- 2
25	Ujala Blue	30ml	5	0.17	200 ml	29	0.145	- 2
26	Vvd Coconut Oil	5ml	1	0.2	500 gm	80	0.16	- 4
27	Haldiram Aloo Bhujia	28 gm	5	0.18	200 gm	30	0.15	- 3
28	Ezee	20ml	3.5	0.18	1000 ml	115	0.115	- 7
29	Cadbury Gems	2 gm	1	0.5	28 gm	13	0.46	- 4
30	Crax	30 gm	5	0.17	200 gm	20	0.1	- 7
31	Ponds Cold Cream	7 gm	5	0.71	100 gm	63	0.63	- 8
32	Frito Lays	15 gm	5	0.33	80 gm	20	0.25	- 8

32	Frito Lays	15 gm	5	0.33	80 gm	20	0.25	- 8
33	Jal Jeera	5 gm	1	0.2	500 gm	55	0.11	- 9
34	Tiffany Wafers	5 gm	1	0.2	100 gm	10	0.1	- 10
35	Everyday Milk Powder	3 gm	1	0.33	500 gm	106	0.21	- 12
36	Cheese Balls	12 gm	5	0.42	120 gm	25	0.208	- 21
37	Clinic All Clear	7ml	2	0.29	400 ml	215	0.54	25
38	Amurtanjun Strong	1.25 gm	2	1.6	45 gm	60	1.33	- 27
39	Eno	5 gm	5	1	100 gm	35	0.35	- 65
40	Nescafe	1 gm	2	2	200 gm	240	1.2	-80

Source: Primary data collected personally.

@ Negative sign denotes loss from the consumer's point of view, while purchasing micro-packs.

\*This list of products is not exhaustive and more micro-packs are also available.

Analysis of Table 2 reveals that out of 40 products in case, only in case of 9 products the consumer is net gainer, in case of just three products, he is neither better off nor worse off and in case of rest of the surveyed products, the consumer is at slaughter while purchasing micro-packs and companies are fleecing the consumers. Further perusal of the Table 2 highlights that in case of certain products like Fair & Lovely, Rasna Shake Up, Pantene Shampoo etc. costs less to the consumer in the low-unit packs and discount percentage vary from 1 percent to 50 percent.

Comparative profile of micro-packs and big-units packs confirms (Table 2) that in case of certain items like Coca Cola, Eno, Ponds Cold Cream, Frito lays, Everyday Milk Powder, Clinic All Clear, Nescafe etc., companies are hammering the consumers. Consumers are paying more prices for same quantity per unit if they substitute big-unit packs with low-unit packs of the same brand. It implies net loss to the consumer and loss percentage varies from 1 percent to 80 percent. In this regard, economic repercussion is that pinch of the cost to the poor and rural folk is more as compared to the affluent class. It can be concluded from the above tabular analysis that in case of micro-packs, loss to the consumer is more as compared to gain but still people sometimes prefer to purchase low-unit packs because of certain advantages.

In order to fulfill the third objective of understanding consumer preferences regarding purchase of different Micro-Packs and to find out the most preferred product category amongst different categories of Micro- Packs, the respondents were asked a question in which four options namely: groceries, snacks, toiletries and candies were given and respondents were asked to rank these categories in order of their preference.

**Table 3: Preferences Of Consumers Regarding Different Micro- Packs**

RANKS COMMODITIES	1	2	3	4
GROCERIES	64	38	46	52
SNACKS	48	82	49	21
TOILETRIES	45	56	74	25
CANDIES	26	24	60	90

A glance of Table- (3) reveals that the most preferred category in Micro- Packs is the toiletries with 37 Percent i.e. 74 out of 200 people choosing the category as most sought after in Micro- Packs. It is followed by 26 Percent of the respondents opting for groceries and 24 percent opting for snacks and finally 13 percent of the respondents opting for candies. The second most opted category is snacks with a leading margin of 41 percent followed by 28 percent of respondents opting for toiletries, 19 percent for groceries and 12 percent for other commodities. The third most sought after category is candies with 30 percent of the respondents vouching for it followed by 24.5 percent respondents opting for snacks, 23 percent for groceries and 22.5 percent for toiletries. The least desired option is candies with a lead of 45 percent followed by 32 percent respondents opting for groceries, 12.5 percent for toiletries and finally 10.5 percent for snacks. The above analysis shows that the most preferred category of Micro- Packs is toiletries, followed by snacks, candies and finally groceries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of micro-packs has evolved very well but new dimensions should be added to this promising model. Out of a whole range of branded FMCG products, only a few reach out to a very small proportion of Indian population which resides in rural areas. Many companies like HLL, Dabur India, Colgate Palmolive, Godrej soaps, JK Dairy, ITC etc.



have designed various strategies to enter rural market in India but they have not achieved the desired level of penetration. So, the need of the hour is to take turn around strategy in the favour of Micro- Packs to make the branded products affordable to the rural folk and push up the sale volume. In India, the majority of the population is purchasing its necessities on a daily basis and they cannot afford to purchase big-unit packs because majority of the people are daily wage earners. The product portfolio of micro-packs should be expanded and its product range should include the items like sugar, rice, flour, pulses, vegetable oils, spices and processed foods. In this regard, efforts made by Cavin Kare Pvt. Ltd, a Chennai based company are significant because company is manufacturing and providing pickles and spices in sachets costing as little as 50 paise. Creating a low-unit sized and low priced product for end users is one aspect and making it available to them is another. Constituting a separate sales force for selling and marketing Micro- Packs will be an incredibly excellent initiative. These micro-packs, if made available to every household residing in every nook and corner of the country can definitely pump up the sales of FMCG's. Chennai based Cavinkare has used a novel approach by creating separate sales force for micro-brands and larger packs size brands.

Apart from this, the Government should ensure that the companies do not fleece the consumers in the name of micro-packs. A minimum profit margin should be fixed up after calculating the packing and other costs and gain from sachetization and low-unit packs should be passed to the customer. As per the Consumer Protection Act, a consumer must be fully aware regarding the practices followed by companies. They must calculate and compare price per unit charged for low-unit packs and big-unit packs while putting into effect their purchases and join their hands under consumer forums to protect themselves from the clutches of fleecing activities of the companies.

The study reveals that the most preferred category of Micro- Packs is toiletries followed by snacks, candies and finally groceries. The product portfolio of micro-packs should be expanded and its product range should include the items like sugar, rice, flour, pulses, vegetable oils, spices and processed foods.

The concept of micro-packs, if implemented positively, can prove to be a boon for consumers. With growing competition from the MNC's, the Indian companies cannot stick to marketing strategies like price cuts, freebies for a long time. Adoption of micro-packs can lead to an increase in the brand awareness, which would further trigger off overall penetration and end result will be significant augmentation in the sales.

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