

An Empirical Study On Sales Promotion Of Dabur India Limited In Indian Rural Market

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INTRODUCTION

The India rural market is great diversified market as 70% of the total Indian population is living in the villages. There are approximately 6,00,000 villages in India. 25% of all villages account for 65% of the total rural population (Table 1).

Table 1: Rural Population Statistics

Population	Number of Villages	% age of total villages
Less than 200	114267	17.9
200-499	155123	24.3
500-999	159400	25
1000-1999	125758	19.7
2000-4999	69135	10.8
5000-9999	11618	1.8
10000 & above	3064	0.5
Total	636365	100

Sources: Statistical Outline of India (2001-02), NCAER

Purchasing habits of rural population is generally on the mantra of “*earn today, spend today*” mentality. The rural population looks out for buying in small quantities as it comes at a cheaper price. The rural population is still largely dependent on agricultural activities, which is their major source of income. Therefore, the rural population has to depend on good monsoons to earn a substantial income. Because of all these factors, the big companies like Dabur, HUL etc, are customizing their offerings to match the rural demand and expectations specifically (Table 2).

Table 2: Rural Demand- Expendables (% of All India)

Products Categories	1995-06	2001-02	2009-10
Edible Oil	64.3	67.1	62.9
Health Beverages	28.6	27.3	28.1
Packaged Biscuits	36.0	42.8	30.3
Shampoos	27.2	31.9	33.0
Toilet Soaps	49.8	52.5	54.7
Washing Cakes	68.7	71.14	75.6
Washing Powder	50.4	50.8	54.8

Source: NCAER Annual Report 2009

The spending pattern by the rural consumers varies in accordance with their income level. The mindset of the rural consumer is such that they spend only for the utility items. The rural population is fast changing itself into an aspiring category of consumers from that of deprived category. The Table 3 reflects the spending pattern of the rural consumer across different regions for the year 2005-06.

SALES PROMOTION IN RURAL MARKETS

From a very long time, Indian marketers are trying to consolidate their brands in the rural markets of India. The rural market is a seasonal market in nature. The consumption level of rural India goes high in post monsoon and dries up in the non-crop period. The success of a business in India will be decided in the future by its success in the heart of India i.e. the rural market. The rural advertising in India needs some innovative and alternative media to attract the rural

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Table 3: Spending Pattern of Rural Consumer

LEVEL	STATES	EXPENDITURE
High (Above ₹ 382/-)	Punjab	614
	Kerala	604
	Haryana	546
	Rajasthan	452
	Gujarat	416
	Andhra Pradesh	386
	Maharashtra	384
Average (₹ 382/-)	West Bengal	382
	Orissa	381
	Tamil Nadu	381
	Uttar Pradesh	373
	Karnataka	365
Low (Below ₹ 382/-)	Assam	338
	Madhya Pradesh	326
	Bihar	289

Source: NCAER Report 2006

customers. The conventional aspect of urban glossy advertising mix through television will not work in the rural markets. Advertising strategy for rural market is not only important for those who are planning for a brand promotion in the rural market but also for the existing players in the businesses like tractors, pesticides, fertilizers. Traditional media like television and radio covers some of the areas but still, 265 million are beyond the reach of the advertisers. The requirement of the rural promotional schemes is as follows-

1. To explore the available media at different locations.
2. To develop region-specific consumer profiles to understand the characteristics of the target market.
3. To design right communication and motivation strategies to induce target audience to buy the product.

Corporates and advertising agencies have now started working in this area. The puppet shows in Punjab, Folk media like *Ragini* in Haryana for communicating qualities of Virat cement, *Pala* and *Daskathia* in Orissa for promoting safe electricity consumption and tooth pastes of Colgate Palmolive, *Baul* songs in West Bengal for advertising insecticides are few of the examples. Britannia has entered into the rural market by participating in rural melas and displaying its down market brand Britannia Tiger Biscuits. These rural melas and weekly haats have become a popular medium of rural advertising by the media planners.

The extensive network of postal and medical workers throughout the country can be used as an alternative vehicle for brand promotion in the rural areas. The organizations are trying to tap the advantages - the post-box, post office walls and the postman's dress where he will carry the logo and brand names of companies, the walls of the rural primary health centres, the schools will be covered by suitable brand advertising catering to the taste of the rural target market. If this innovation of reaching the rural audience through alternate cost effective media starts, then the rural consumption will go high, making it potentially more attractive than the urban market. Rural marketers need to skillfully communicate with a much larger, but scattered audience characterized by variations in language, culture and lifestyles. Poor message comprehension and low media exposure is the major problem of communication through mass media. The Table No. 4 shows the various alternatives available with the marketers to communicate with the rural audiences on mass marketing, local marketing and personal marketing basis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

✿ According to **Pareek (1999)**, the Indian rural market has immense untapped potential. The rural market's importance arises out of the fact that India lives in the villages, both literally and metaphorically. According to National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) surveys, the income of the average villager is rising. Recession is hardly possible in rural India. Also, rural education levels are rising because of the efforts of the states. The rural markets

Table 4: Type of Media in Rural Market

Mass Media	Local Media	Personalized Media
Radio	Haats, Melas, Fairs	Direct Communication
Cinema	Wall Paintings	Dealers
Newspaper	Hoardings	Sales Persons
Television	Leaflets Video Vans Folk Media Animal Parade Transit Media	Researchers

remain untapped because of **Three D's: Distance, Diversity And Dispersion**. Due to scattered rural markets, it is difficult for a brand to be available all over the county. He has observed that it is very hard to design a communication strategy as the marketers have little understanding of folk media. Mass media reaches only the upper end. Genuine efforts should be made to exploit the rest of the market potential.

✿ **Krishnan (2002)** presented the details about the panel discussion organized by strategic marketing, where the issues like the changing profile of the rural consumer reach and effectiveness of media and distribution problems were discussed. It was stated that according to one study, if the rural income in India goes up by 1%, there would be a corresponding increase of about ₹ 10,000 cr in the buying power. It is a fact that unlike a few years ago, the rural youth today is playing a far more significant role in influencing the purchase of radios; television sets (black and white as well as color). Penetration levels of consumer durables in the rural sector have risen dramatically in the last decade or so. Even the rural woman is coming out of the closet. The youth have certainly begun to play a role in selecting a brand in certain product categories. Studies suggest that the rural youth is playing an important role in purchase decisions. They are the real drivers of the rural market. The B&W television industry is shrinking. If color television is termed as a luxury item, rural people are migrating towards color televisions. But when other high-end electronic goods such as the CD player market are considered, these really have not yet found entry into the rural market. It is still an analogue industry. Amazing quantity of radios are sold in the rural market.

✿ **Raj and Selvaraj (2007)** discussed the opportunity for makers of branded products who can convert consumers to buy branded products. Many companies including MNCs and regional players started developing marketing strategies to lure the untapped market. Their study also covers the marketing strategies adopted by many companies in rural areas.

✿ **Shrotriya Vikas (2008)** highlighted that Indian rural market, with its large population base and vast market potential, has caught the attention of marketers. Technological and infrastructural developments, increasing literacy and brand awareness and ever-increasing competition among marketers are some of the factors responsible for the rapid growth of markets in the rural areas.

✿ **Hundal and Anand (2008)** conducted a study to gain insight into perception of rural and urban consumers about various promotional measures adopted by durable goods manufacturing companies. Their results indicate that though both the groups seem to have considered all the factors as important in sales promotion, a minute observation states that urban respondents have assigned high priority for these schemes, installment purchase, off-season discount, zero interest system.

✿ **Pirakathesswari P. (2010)** emphasized that success of a brand in the Indian rural market is as unpredictable as rain. It has always been difficult to gauge the rural market. Many brands, which should have been successful, have failed miserably. More often than not, people attribute rural market success to luck. Therefore, marketers need to understand the social dynamics and attitude variations within each village, though nationally, it follows a consistent pattern. Looking at the challenges and the opportunities which rural markets offer to the marketers, it can be said that the future is very promising for those who can understand the dynamics of rural markets and exploit them to their best advantage. A radical change in attitudes of marketers towards the vibrant and burgeoning rural markets is called for, so they can successfully impress on the 230 million rural consumers spread over approximately six hundred thousand villages in rural India.

JOURNEY TO RURAL INDIA: INITIATIVES BY DABUR

1. Boosting Rural Sales: ASTRA : Dabur organised various **role-plays staged by professional actors** at different retail outlets selling Dabur's consumer products. The actors helped them to learn the new and advanced marketing techniques. The initiative is titled **ASTRA**, which stands for **Advanced Sales Training for Retail Ascendancy**. Dabur had recruited 75 sales and HR managers across the country to educate over 2,000 distributors and channel partners of the firm to learn the complexities of sales and distribution through the **audio-visual medium**. After implementing Astra in **May**, Dabur is targeting sales growth of above 15 per cent, and expects nearly 40 per cent growth in sales through modern trade and institutions. The company had reviewed the performance on a monthly and quarterly basis.

2. Rural Beauty Pageants : Dabur India conducted rural beauty pageants in rural areas to increase the rural consumer base of Dabur Amla Hair Oil. The programme was started in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and other north Indian regions where Dabur has a substantial market share. Dabur Amla Hair Oil is the largest brand in its portfolio. The contest had taken place in **April-May** in 20-30 villages of Uttar Pradesh with a population of approximately 5,000 people. The penetration for mustard hair oil segment of Dabur is about 70 per cent in Uttar Pradesh and is largely concentrated in deep pockets of the rural areas. The ₹ 250-crore Dabur Amla Hair Oil is a 250 crore brand and enjoys a healthy 70% market share with more than 35 million consumers across the country.

3. Dabur Vatika: Melodious Voice Of Punjab: The launch of natural conditioners range by Dabur India Limited, India's leading natural healthcare company coincided with a hunt for a melodious voice. Dabur had launched a big singing & talent hunt contest in Punjab and neighbouring areas. The programme was titled '**Dabur Vatika Koyal Punjab Di**', and the contest sought to identify the new female singing sensation in the region. The company was trying to take this natural association to the next level with the launch of the programme. The promotional campaign was searching for the most **melodious voice of Punjab**, a voice that could resemble and correspond with the core natural values of Vatika. The "**Dabur Vatika Koyal Punjab Di**" contest was an initiative to connect better with the rural consumers and to help the young women by offering them a chance to display their talent on a big scale.

4. Live Life Big Bite : Babool: Dabur India Ltd. unveiled its new advertising campaign for Babool toothpaste. The new campaign was designed to drive the rural market share in a fast growing economy segment of toothpastes. The new campaign was accompanied by new and refreshing packaging with a distinct logo and the picture of the celebrity. For the sales promotion, the company had roped in Bollywood actor Vivek Oberoi for endorsing its Oral Care and Health care range of products and this was the first campaign being launched with the celebrity for its Oral care product by Dabur. The rationale approach behind the new campaign is based on the concept "Live Life Big Bite" which is in line with the marketing strategy for Babool that is being promoted as a natural toothpaste that strengthens teeth from roots "*Pride in natural strength of teeth (Kudrati Mazbooti)*". These points are clearly visualised in the ad by Vivek Oberoi living life big bite by directly biting into hard fruits unlike other characters.

5. Dabur To Use Indian Oil's Retail Chain For Rural Push: Dabur India Ltd. Entered into an agreement with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to service its huge rural market demand for consumer products through the latter's chain of Kisan Seva Kendra (KSK). IOC's 1,600 KSK's (countrywide) stock and sell Dabur's range of healthcare, oral care, personal wash, skin care and home care products in the rural market. Dabur has a strong foothold in the rural market with its extensive distribution channel and has 2,200 stockists pan India. The move was aimed at further strengthening its rural market and to better satisfy the growing rural demand. The agreement has been made initially for a period of five years. The company with a network of 1.5 million retail outlets in urban and semi-urban areas, and is expected to spread further with the growth of herbal, consumer care, healthcare and food products. Through the KSK rural retail outlets, IOC is offering fuel as well as non-fuel value-added services like seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, grocery, personal care articles, tools, auto spares etc. Dabur will now be able to offer its range of consumer goods in the chain.

6. Odorous Mosquitoes With IMA, School Kids : Dabur and the Indian Medical Association (IMA) had launched a joint attack on dangerous mosquito borne diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya through an awareness programme in schools. The campaign had been conceived by Dabur and IMA and had hired Mudra. Under this programme, infotainment workshops and discussions were held in 350 schools in four states, Delhi and the NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. The initiative began with 1,300 students. The awareness programme was running simultaneously in all the four states and continued for two months. It involved both primary level students in discussions with the teachers and doctors on mosquito borne diseases, their impact and the means to prevent them. It

also involves their participation in activities such as Hit the Mosquito, which has the children dressed up in raincoats trying to hit with soft balls a man dressed up as a mosquito. Those who managed to hit the 'mosquito' on his face won prizes. The idea was developed with an aim for the kids to have fun while learning because simply telling them about the effects does not work, and for the mothers to be aware of the dangers of these diseases.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the consumer behaviour towards the sales promotion activities conducted by Dabur in the rural areas.
2. To know whether the sales promotion activities play any significant role in increasing the sales of the organisation.
3. To know the various Sales promotion activities being undertaken by Dabur.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used here is descriptive in nature because the researcher needs to obtain a very specific picture about sales promotion in the rural market. It has been used to get an accurate idea about a specific part of the market such as level of sales promotion and extent of brand awareness among rural consumers.

The Technique of Research used in the project was of Quantitative as well as Qualitative Nature because it found out the percentage of population who knew about a particular brand firstly and sales promotion technique; and secondly, if they knew about brand, then which technique of sales promotion they liked the most. However, the research wants to find out the level of brand awareness in the rural people's minds and effectiveness of the sales promotion. Hence, the research is classified as Quantitative as well as Qualitative Research.

A well structured questionnaire was prepared for the primary research and personal interviews were conducted to collect the responses of the target population. The research has been done in villages located in western Uttar Pradesh.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A rough draft was prepared initially to conduct a pilot study to monitor the accuracy of the questionnaire and required changes were made thereafter in accordance with the data required for the research purpose. Later on, a questionnaire in Hindi was prepared as to conduct the research effectively so as to assist the respondents. All the respondents were made to understand the questions thoroughly before taking the actual responses from them.

Total 100 respondents who filled the questionnaire were selected on a random basis. Respondents were generally the persons who came to purchase commodities at the local kirana stores in the villages.

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

❖ AWARENESS OF DABUR PRODUCTS

Of the total respondents, 81% said that they were aware of Dabur Lal Dant Manjan -reasons given by them being that it is the oldest product of Dabur India, 60% respondents' were aware of Dabur Amla Hair oil and 36% of respondents were aware of Hajmola. It means Dabur Indian has been able to create a good awareness level among the consumers with the help of some successful brands over the years -like Dabur Lal Dant Manjan, Dadur Hair Oil etc. (Table 5).

On the other side, it has been found that only 18% respondents were aware of toothpaste and Dabur Pudina Hara and the product that had the lowest level of awareness among the respondents of rural markets was Dabur Chyawanprash.

❖ FACTORS CONSIDERED WHILE PURCHASING

Table 6 analyzes the factors encouraging the purchasing of the product in the rural market. Here, the strongest factor is affordability that is directly related to the pocket of rural consumers. It can be well observed from the table that quality is the second important factor behind the purchasing of the items. Third factor among all the factors presented was quantity because rural consumers are more value conscious customers -they pay according to the quantity. Fourth factor is availability of the product at their villages. Least important factor is attractive packaging because they pay for value, not unnecessary pop and show (Table 7). For finding the strength of the relationship between several variables, "Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient" is used. Table 8 is showing correlations for all the variables. There is a high correlation amongst the independent and dependent variables; especially between availability and quality, quality and affordability, and quantity and affordability. Correlation between availability and quality is (.907), which means availability of a product is an important criteria for purchasing the product along with the quality of

Table 5: Awareness level of Products

Lal Dant Manjan	81
Amla Hair Oil	60
Babool/Promise Toothpaste	18
Chyawanprash	12
Hajmola	36
Pudin Hara	18

product. Correlation (.896) between quantity and quality is also very high which points out that these two factors also play a very important role in the Indian rural market. Mean of the quantity and quality is same (3.33). Quantity with affordability is showing (0.860) correlation, which means that affordability with quantity of the product is also important for the rural consumers for purchasing the product.

Table 6: Parameters Important For The Consumer For Purchasing

Factors	Rank1	Rank2	Rank3	Rank4	Rank5
Attractive Packaging	-	3	32	34	31
Affordability	45	30	5	10	10
Quality	25	29	8	15	23
Availability	6	23	30	23	18
Quantity	24	15	25	18	18

Table 7: Ranking of the Factors

Fators	Mean Score	Mean Rank
Attractive Packaging	2.07	5
Affordability	3.9	1
Quality	3.18	2
Availability	2.76	4
Quantity	3.09	3

Table 8: Correlation Between Variables

	Attractive Packaging	Affordability	Quality	Availability	Quantity
Attractive Packaging	1				
Affordability	.818	1			
Quality	.844	.856	1		
Availability	.871	.826	.907	1	
Quantity	.872	.860	.896	.934	1

✿ MOST PROMINENT MODE OF COMMUNICATION

The Table 9 shows the responses of the respondents' for the most prominent mode of communication used by Dabur India for promotion in the rural areas. It was found in the survey that most of the companies use Campaigns (3.19) as the mode of communication for the promotion of the products. Majority of the respondents said that Campaigns and Direct Contacts were the most prominent modes.

Thus, we can interpret that although the penetration of media (audio and video) has increased, but the companies rely on other modes and want the rural consumers to be aware at their door step. This increases the trust for the brand and

generates the need, which otherwise remains latent due to lack of awareness and enthusiasm. This also gives the touch-and-feel experience and increases the sense of satisfaction among the rural mass.

Table 9: Type of Communication Mode

Variables	Rank1	Rank2	Rank3	Rank4	Total	WAS	Mean Rank
Print Media	10	10	28	52	100	1.78	4
Electronic Medium	15	25	40	20	100	2.35	3
Campaigns	45	35	14	6	100	3.19	1
Direct Contact	30	30	18	22	100	2.68	2
Total	100	100	100	100	400		

Abbreviations: WAS: Weighted Average Score

❖ MODES USED IN CAMPAIGNS

From table 9 it was found that campaigns was the most prominent mode of communication, under this question respondents were asked to tell which mode of campaigns they like most. The Table 10 shows the responses for the modes used by the Dabur India in the Campaigns.

Table 10: Types Of Modes Used In Campaigns

Variables	Rank1	Rank2	Rank3	Rank4	Total	WAS	Overall Rank
Road Show	44	32	10	14	100	3.06	1
Movie	18	23	23	36	100	2.23	3
Speech	2	14	40	44	100	1.74	4
Demonstration	36	31	27	6	100	2.97	2
Total	100	100	100	100			

It is evident from the Table 10 that the most important mode of Campaigns are the **Road Shows**, this is generally common for the FMCG sector. The Agri input sector focuses more on the **Demonstration** as mode of Campaigns. It was found that the companies' promotion through campaigns was based upon road shows (3.06 mean), whereas demonstrations were the second with mean 2.97.

The interpretation from the above finding can be that the companies focus on touch-see-feel methods while promoting their products in the rural areas. The road shows and demonstrations let them see the things for themselves, before they execute the purchase behavior. This induces the sense of satisfaction and eliminates the feeling of being cheated. These kinds of activities are very near to the heart of rural masses and they are involved with such activities psychologically.

❖ REASONS FOR RATING THE PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The most important reason reflected by the respondents while rating the promotional activities was on the spot by 31% respondents. Second most important reason was better realization of the product by 28% respondents. Third most important reason was understandability by 21% respondents. The most important finding is that all these reasons correspond to Direct Contact and Campaigns (Graph 1). Thus, these two modes are the most important promotional modes.

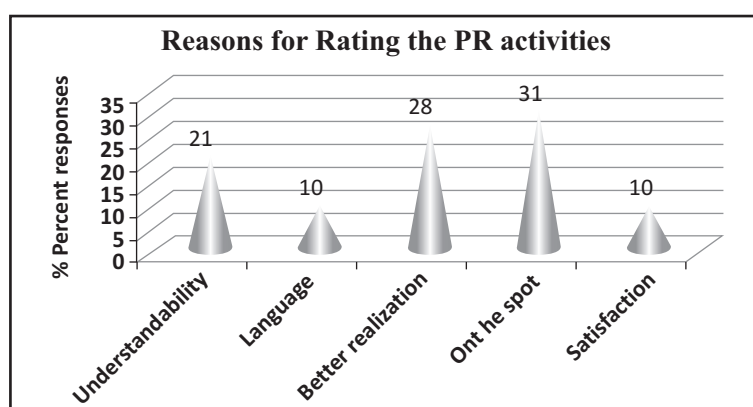
SALES PROMOTION TECHNIQUES AND BUYING BEHAVIOUR

H_0 : Sales promotion technique influences the buying behaviour of the consumers.

H_1 : Sales promotion techniques do not influence the buying behaviour of the consumers.

Level of Significance: 5%

Graph1: Reasons for Rating



	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	Total
Yes	15	18	20	16	17	86
No	5	2	0	4	3	14
Total	20	20	20	20	20	100

❖ **Abbreviations:** V1: Village 1, V2: Village 2, V3: Village 3, V4: Village 4, V5: Village 5

❖ **The degrees of freedom** = $(r-1)(c-1) = (2-1)(5-1) = 4$ and calculated value of X^2 is 6.62.

❖ **Inference:** Hypothesis Accepted

The critical value of X^2 at $\alpha=0.05$ level of 4 degrees of freedom from the table value is 9.488. Since the calculated X^2 is less than the critical value of 9.488, the null hypothesis is accepted. In other words, sales promotion techniques of Dabur India are effective and influential for targeting consumers for purchasing the products.

CONCLUSION

The presence of Dabur is extremely good in the rural areas because of its strong distribution network. There is top of the mind awareness about the organisation and its product line as the consumers are able to easily associate themselves with the brand because of its mass appeal. The sales promotion schemes given by the organization are able to match the customers' needs and expectations and are good motivator for the consumers to make a favorable purchase decision. The sales promotion activities have been able to generate more revenue and the acceptability of Dabur's Product line has gone up. There is a level of optimism in consumers regarding the different schemes and initiatives taken up by Dabur, which is reflected in the questionnaire where respondents said they will not go for any other product other than Dabur's. Advertisements and sales promotion have been able to create the much needed awareness along with the indispensable role played by the retailers. Communication reach of Dabur is not up to the mark and is a cause of concern and should be worked upon by the company.

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