



## **AWARENESS OF RURAL CONSUMER ON BRANDED HEALTH FOOD DRINKS**

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### **Abstract:**

Rural consumers are fundamentally different from their urban counterparts socially, psychologically, physiologically and literally. There is mass consumption among them regarding a particular product or brand since they are homogeneous at the village or regional level. Health and well-being have become two important parameters of human consumption in the modern, busy world of today. When compared to the other food supplements, health drinks stands the top most of any other thing in this world. By studying the consumer information seeking and buying behaviour extensively, it could throw light on the psychology of consumers; how they think, reason, and select between different alternatives and how her / his influence the consumer environment. Since the study is mainly based on primary data, the total study rests on the instrument for collecting the primary data namely the interview schedule.

**Key Words:** Rural Consumers & Awareness on Branded Health Food Drinks

### **Introduction:**

Consumers in India can be divided into three broad groups in terms of geographic and sociological characteristics: urban, rural, and semi-urban. This supports the notion of a continuum from rural to urban, urban being the overlap between the two, with pretensions to being closer to urban in physical features and proximity to large urban centre, but with deep rural sociological moorings.

It may also be considered behaviour in specific interaction contexts of these three markets, namely participants from each market buying from, selling to, or facilitating participants from the same or other markets, for better understanding of specific behaviour patterns. The grouping in terms of geography and sociology and as participants of the three markets together put for exploring and understanding rural consumer behaviour.

### **Review of Literature:**

Manto Gosti, Alan Wilson (2001), in this study titled "Corporate reputation management: "Living the Brand" identified that recognized that an organization's corporate reputation is affected by the actions of every business unit, department and employee that comes into contact with another stakeholder. However, the means by which employees can be directed or encouraged to "live the brand" is an area which has received relatively limited coverage.

Narang (2006) in his article entitled "A study on Branded Foods", points out that a buyer does not stick to one brand in case of food purchasing. He/she is able recall different brand names when they go for purchase. Repetitive advertising can be used to promote brand recall. The product should be associated with style and trend, so that it appeals to the youth and the brand name should be developed as a fashion statement. He further suggests that the promotional schemes such as discounts and free offers with purchase were suggested to increase rates.

John Mano Raj & Dr. P. Selvaraj (2007) In his article entitled " Social Changes and the Growth of Indian Rural Market: an Invitation to FMCGs", This paper covers the attractions for the FMCG marketers to go to rural and the urban markets and uses a suitable marketing strategy with the suitable example of companies and their experience in going rural. Thus, the rural marketing has been growing steadily over the years and is now bigger than the urban market for FMCG. Globally, the FMCG sector has been successful in selling products to the lower and middle-income groups and the same is true in India. Over 70 per cent of sales are made to middle class households today and over 50 per cent of the middle class is in rural India. However, the rural penetration rates are low. This presents a tremendous opportunity for makers of branded products who can convert consumers to buy branded products. The marketers need to develop different strategies to treat the rural consumers since they are economically, socially, and psycho-graphically different from each other. This paper covers the attractions for the FMCG marketers to go to rural, the challenges, and the difference between the rural, the urban market, and the suitable marketing strategy with the suitable customers.

### **Significance of the Study:**

The findings of the study will be useful for the marketers to understand the awareness of rural consumers. In addition, marketing strategies would work better if the marketers properly understand the extent of consumers awareness in purchase decision-making. By studying the consumer awareness extensively, it could throw light on the knowledge of the consumers; how they know about their rights, duties, ways to complaint,

verification of the product etc. Consequently, the marketers may effectively redesign the marketing mix. The scope of the study is restricted to selected category of consumer goods namely branded Health Food Drinks (HFDs).

**Statement of the Problem:**

Researching on consumer awareness, especially consumer awareness and unawareness is a very vital exercise and people for a variety of purposes could use the results got. The vast untapped potential, increasing knowledge on market, and sources to get the awareness, improved accessibility and the increasing competition in urban markets make rural markets an attractive destination for marketers of products and services. However, the marketer has a limited understanding of the rural consumers.

**Objectives of the Study:**

- ✓ To study the socio- economic profile of rural consumers.
- ✓ To study the level of awareness on branded Health Food Drinks (HFDs) by rural consumers.

**Methodology:**

The data required for the study were collected over interview schedule through interview schedule. Questions related to the objectives included after reviewing the literature on the consumer buying decisions. In addition, the structure of the interview schedule was redesigned based on the data collected from pilot study comprised of 50 respondents. The interview schedule was divided into two parts: socio-economic profile of rural consumers, information seeking behavior and buying behavior. The total sample size for the study is 514 respondents.

**Choice of Product:**

The choice of product was decided as Health Food Drinks such as Horlicks, Boost, Bournvita, Complian and Pediasure.

**Collection of Data:**

Since the study is mainly based on primary data, the total study rests on the instrument for collecting the primary data namely the interview schedule. The interview schedules were pre-tested among a sample of 50 respondents in the study area and finally collected from 514 respondents.

**Frame Work of Analysis**

**Rural Consumers Profile:**

S.No	Factors	Rural Consumers (N)	Percentage	
(i)	Gender	Male	250	48.6
		Female	264	51.4
(ii)	Age Group	Less than 25 yrs	44	8.6
		26-35 yrs	154	30
		36-45 yrs	142	27.6
		46 -55	136	26.5
		56 and above	38	7.4
(iii)	Marital status	Married	448	87.2
		Unmarried	66	12.8
(iv)	Type of family	Nuclear	347	67.5
		Extended	167	32.4
(v)	Size of the family	Up to 2 members	16	3.1
		3	146	28.4
		4	218	42.4
		Above 5 members	134	26.1
(vi)	Education	No formal education	74	14.4
		school level	342	66.5
		Graduation	78	15.2
		Professional	18	3.5
(vii)	Occupational status	Technical	2	0.4
		Farmers	184	35.8
		Agricultural labours	166	32.3
		Business persons	64	12.5
(viii)	Monthly Family Income (in Rs.000's)	Employees	100	19.5
		Low (below 5000)	194	37.7
		Medium (5001-10,000)	152	29.6
		High (more than 10,000)	168	32.7

Source: Primary data.

Table 1.1: Gender Wise Brand Awareness Score

Gender	Respondents	Mean Brand Awareness Score
Male	250	33.39

Female	264	32.66
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Source: Primary data

It summarizes, male consumers 250 (33.39) have more awareness of HFDs.

TABLE 1.2: Anova – Mean Awareness Score among the Gender Group of Consumers

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	1	345.471	345.471	3.563 ns
Within Groups	512	49646.404	96.966	

ns- non Significant at 5 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

As the Calculated F-ratio value is 3.563, which is less than the table value of 3.84 at 5% level of significance, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean scores on among gender group of consumers.

Table 1.3: Age and Overall Mean Awareness

Age	Consumer		Overall Mean Awareness Score	Range		SD
	No	%		Min	Max	
Upto45 years	176	34.2	38.55	22	50	7.50
46-55 years	170	33.1	31.34	10	50	9.34
Above 56	168	32.7	28.90	10	45	9.98
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33.04</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9.87</b>

It summarises, up to 45 years age group of consumers (38.55) have high level of awareness of HFD. Consumers in the age group of 46-55 years (31.34) have moderately aware of HFDs and consumers of high age group above (28.90) have low-level of awareness of HFD.

**Null Hypothesis:**

There is no significant difference in the overall mean awareness scores among different age groups of consumers.

Table 1.4: Type of Family and Overall Mean Awareness Score

Type of Family	Consumer		Overall Mean Awareness Score	Range		SD
	No	%		Min	Max	
Nuclear	347	67.5	34.42	10	50	9.57
Extended	167	32.5	30.08	10	50	9.85
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>33.01</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9.87</b>

It can be seen from the Table 7.7, among 514 total consumers, 347(67.5 %) of consumers live in nuclear family have overall mean awareness score of 34.42 and 167(32.5 %) of consumers who live in extended family have the score of 30.08.

Table 1.5: Anova Overall Mean Brand Awareness Score among the Education of the Consumers

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	8734.894	5	1746.979	21.51 **
Within Groups	41256.98	508	81.21453	

\*\* - Significant at 1 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

As the Calculated F-ratio value is 21.51, which is higher than the table value of 3.02 at 1% level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean brand awareness scores among the education of consumers.

Table 1.6: Anova Overall Mean Brand Awareness Score among the Occupation of the Consumers

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	10756.34	3	3585.446	46.60 **
Within Groups	39235.54	510	76.93243	

\*\* - Significant at 1 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

As the Calculated F-ratio value is 46.60, which is higher than the table value of 3.78 at 1% level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean brand awareness scores among the occupation of consumers.

**Garret Ranking:**

This technique was used to rank the marketing problems faced by the consumers in the study area. In this method, the consumers were asked to give ranks according to the magnitude of the problem. The order of merit given by the Consumers were converted into ranks by using the formula

$$\text{Percentage position} = 100 (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where,  $R_{ij}$  = Rank given for  $i$ th factor by  $j$ th individual

$N_j$  = Number of factors ranked by  $j$  th individual

The percentage position of each rank thus obtained is converted into scores by referring to the table given by Henry Garrett. Then for each factor the scores of Individual consumers are added together divided by the total number of consumers for whom scores were added. These mean scores for all the factors are arranged in the descending order, ranks are given and most important problems are identified.

Table 1.7: Awareness of Brand

Brands	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Horlicks	2.879	1
Boost	2.813	2
Bournvita	2.575	3
Complan	2.396	4
Pediasure	1.599	5

Source: Primary Data.

Table 1.8: Awareness of Product Specifications - Weighted Average Score and Rank

Product Specification	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Manufacturer of the product	3.523	3
Date of expiry of the product	3.906	1
Price of the product	3.883	2
Ingredients of the product	3.132	5
Local taxes of the product	3.038	10
Colour of the product	3.390	4
Vitamins included	3.081	9
Carbo-hydrate contents	2.903	8
Flavour of the product	3.050	7
Price variations on packing of goods	3.097	6

Source: Primary data

Table 1.9: Awareness Score of the Product Specifications

Awareness	HA	A	N	UA	HUA	Total
Manufacturer of the product	98 (19%)	130 (25%)	64 (12%)	144 (28%)	78 (15%)	1568
Date of expiry	100 (19%)	246 (48%)	56 (11%)	54 (10%)	58 (12%)	1818
Date of expiry of the product	<b>168</b> <b>(32%)</b>	230 (45%)	44 (9%)	44 (9%)	28 (5%)	2008
Price of the product	180 (35%)	192 (37%)	68 (13%)	50 (10%)	24 (5%)	1996
Ingredients of the product	78 (15%)	124 (25%)	154 (30%)	104 (20%)	54 (10%)	1610
Local taxes of the product	88 (17%)	136 (26%)	118 (23%)	112 (22%)	60 (12%)	1622
Colour of the product	125 (24%)	154 (30%)	90 (18%)	100 (19%)	45 (9%)	1756
Vitamins included	122 (24%)	136 (26%)	72 (14%)	114 (22%)	70 (14%)	1118
Carbo-hydrate contents	94 (18%)	96 (19%)	66 (13%)	174 (34%)	82 (16%)	1482
Flavour of the product	98 (19%)	130 (25%)	64 (12%)	144 (28%)	78 (15%)	1568
Price variations on packing of goods	110 (21%)	128 (25%)	54 (11%)	146 (28%)	76 (15%)	1592

Source: Primary data

The Table 1.9 shows the level of awareness about the product details among the consumers of Health Food Drinks. Twenty eight per cent of the rural consumers are highly unaware of 'manufacturer of the product'. However, 130 (25%) of them are aware and 98 (19%) of the consumers are of highly aware of. On 'date of expiry 246' (48%), a high number of consumers are of the highly aware category and 100 (19%) of them are highly aware of 'flavour of the product'. On 'price of product' 192 (37%) and 180 (35%) consumers are 'aware' and 'highly aware' respectively. On 'Ingredients of the product' 154 (30%) of the consumers are neither aware nor unaware. On Local taxes of the product, the high number of consumer 136 (26%) are highly aware. On the colour of product, 154 (30%), 125 (24%) are aware and highly aware respectively. On vitamins included 258(50%) of them are on the aware category. On Carbo-hydrate contents, 174 (34%) of the customers are unaware. However,

94 (18%) of them highly aware. On 'flavour of the product', the rural consumers are equally divided on both unaware and aware. Finally, on price variations of packing of goods 146 (28%) are highly aware of and 238 (46%) of the consumers are of the aware category.

Table 1.10: Verification of Maximum Retail Price (MRP)

Verification	Consumers	Percentage
Yes	414	80.5
No	100	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data.

It summarizes, most of the consumers 414(80.5%) verify the MRP of the products.

Table 1.11: Price Comparison and Brand Switching

Comparison	Consumers	Percentage
Yes	372	72.4
No	142	27.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It concludes, most of the consumers 372 (72.4%) compare the price with other products.

Table 1.12: Cross Checking of Product Weight

Cross Check	Consumers	Percentage
Yes	12	1
No	502	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data.

In concludes, majority of the rural consumers (99%) do not check the weight of the HFD while they purchase.

Table 1.13: Experienced Defects in Products

Experience	Consumers	Percentage
Yes	174	33.9
No	340	66.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>514</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data.

In concludes, majority of the consumers 340(66.1%) have not experienced defects in the product.

Table 1.14: Defects Forwarding

Complain to	Consumers	Percentage
Shop keeper	157	90.0
Main supplier	17	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Primary Data.

In summarizes, majority of the consumers 157 (90 %) have taken the defects in HFDs to shopkeepers which reveals that consumers trust on shopkeepers.

Table 1.15: Consumers Favouring Legal Actions

Legal Action	Consumers	Percentage
Favouring Legal Actions	2	1.2
Not Favoring Legal Actions	172	98.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Thus, the study reveals that majority of the consumers 172 (98.8%) not in favour of legal actions.

Table 1.16 – Anova Overall Mean Awareness Score on Consumers

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	9	615.582	68.398	42.17**
Within Groups	5130	8320.418	1.622	

\*\* - Significant at 1 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

As Calculated F-ratio value is 42.17, which is higher than the table value of 2.41 at 1% level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the consumers favouring legal action on HFDs used among the consumers.

Table 1.17: Anova Overall Mean Awareness Score on Consumer Protection and Rights among the Education of Consumers

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	8987.954	5	1797.591	19.84 **
Within Groups	46004.96	508	90.56095	

\*\* - Significant at 1 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

There is no significant difference in the mean score on consumer right and protection awareness among the education of the consumers. As the Calculated F-ratio value is 19.84, which is higher than the table value of 3.02 at 1% level of significance, the hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the mean score on consumer right and protection awareness among the consumers.

Table 1.18: Level of Education and Consumer Rights and Protection Mean Awareness Score

Education	Respondents	Mean Consumer Rights & Protection Awareness Score
No Formal Education	74	22.89
School Level	342	30.28
Graduation	78	36.09
Professional	18	36.03
Technical	2	38.38
		<b>31.00</b>

Source: Primary data

The mean effectiveness scores on getting consumer rights and protection awareness score about product from different sources ranges 22.89-38.38. Awareness of consumer rights and protection among the group those who have complete professional degree ‘professionaldegree’ has secured the highest mean score 38.38, followed by ‘those who have completed graduation degree have the second highest mean awareness scores 36.09. Finally, those who have ‘no formal education’ has secured the least mean score 22.89.

Table 1.19: Awareness of Consumer Rights and Protection - Weighted Average Score and Rank

Factors	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Right to safety	<b>3.688</b>	1
Right to be informed	3.346	2
Right to be heard	3.182	4
Factors	Weighted Average Score	Rank
Right to choose	3.202	3
Right to consumer education	2.883	5
Consumer forum,court, council	2.657	6
Indian sale of goods act,1930	2.529	7
Standards of weight & measures Act,1976	2.042	10
Prevention of food adulteration act,1976	2.350	8
Drugs and cosmetics act,1948	<b>1.860</b>	11
Consumer protection act, 1986	2.284	9

Source: Primary data

It can be concluded that among the eleven factors ‘the Right to Safety’, ‘the Right to be informed’ and ‘the Right to choose’ are the factors in which rural consumers are highly awareness of.

Table 1.20: Anova Overall Mean Score on Brand Awareness among the Gender Group of the Consumer

Source	SS	DF	MS	F
Between Groups	68.9733	1	68.9733	0.70 ns
Within Groups	49922.9	512	97.50567	

\*\* - Significant at 1 % level

**Null Hypothesis:**

There is no significant difference in the mean brand awareness scores among the gender group of the consumers. As the Calculated F-ratio value is 0.70, which is less than the table value of 6.63 at 1% level of significance, the hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean brand awareness scores among the gender group of consumers. The overall mean brand awareness scores among the gender group of the consumers given in Table 7.35.

**Null Hypothesis:**

There is no significant difference in the mean effectiveness scores on the in getting information about the product among different sources.

Table 1.21: Age Wise Overall Mean Awareness Score

Age	Consumers	Overall Mean Awareness Score
Low (25-45 years)	176	38.55
Medium (46-55 years)	170	31.34
High (above 56 years)	168	28.90

Source: Primary data

The Table 7.3 illustrates that overall mean awareness score. That the overall mean awareness score is on par among different age group of consumers.

**Conclusion:**

This chapter has dealt with rural consumers awareness on HFDs, consumer rights and duties, consumer Protection Act and so on. The next chapter concludes the findings of the research work. In addition, suggestions made to various stakeholders based on the research findings.

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