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CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BRANDED PETROL IN NAVI MUMBAI

DR. ELIZABETH MATHEWS
HEAD

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

C.K.THAKUR
A.C.S.COLLEGE
NEW PANVEL

SANGEETA TANAJI KAMBLE
LECTURER
ST.JOSEPH'S JUNIOR COLLEGE
KALAMBOLI

ABSTRACT

Most new generation cars launched in the country after 1990s need better quality fuel to be able to offer their best in terms of smooth, knock-free performance and peak power output. The cost of maintaining the car and the cost of spares that need frequent replacement also gets reduced with the use of better quality fuel. The area of study of Branding of Petrol was chosen as Navi Mumbai. Navi Mumbai is spread over 344sq.Km and starts from Vashi in the North to Panvel in South and Airoli in the East and Uran in West. The composition of the population is a best example after Mumbai of mix of cosmopolitan locality, with people living in complete harmony. The area of study of Branding of Petrol is Navi Mumbai. Navi Mumbai is spread over 344sq.Km and starts from Vashi in the North to Panvel in South and Airoli in the East and Uran in West. The composition of the population is a best example after Mumbai of mix of cosmopolitan locality, with people living in complete harmony. The study is based on both Primary and Secondary data. The study proves that there is a tendency among the vehicle owners to buy and consume the technically superior petrol in Navi Mumbai.

KEYWORDS

Branded Petrol, Navi Mumbai, Nodes, CIDCO.

INTRODUCTION

A vehicle demonstrates its best efficiency and engine performance when it is new. As the engine ages, its performance suffers from petrol fuel-generated deposits that form on the fuel injectors, intake valves and combustion chamber. Additives are required to control deposit formation. Today's fuels, however, lack sufficient treatments of either enough additives or high quality additive. Petrol with additives has high performance rating and come with higher cost. High octane petrol increases the engine performance very much so it would be more advisable for the customers. Most new generation cars launched in the country after 1990s need better quality fuel to be able to offer their best in terms of smooth, knock-free performance and peak power output. The cost of maintaining the car and the cost of spares that need frequent replacement will also be reduced with the use of better quality fuel.

With the introduction of the fuel consumption label in 2001 which has to be displayed on all new cars in the dealer showroom and increasing fuel prices, fuel consumption has become an important factor for vehicle buyers.

BPCL Launched the 'Pure For Sure' program in August 2001 to ensure that petroleum products were delivered properly both in terms of quantity as well as quality. The campaign was aimed at stringent certification of quality and quantity, ensuring courteous, personalized services and efficient fuelling. Similar measures were undertaken by IOC and HPCL; both the companies expanded their retail initiatives rapidly. The companies promoted retail outlets aggressively and their media campaign mainly focused on providing convenience, modern facilities, cleanliness and pure (unadulterated) fuel.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out customer awareness and willingness to buy branded fuel in Navi Mumbai nodes.
2. To study consumer perception of branded petrol.
3. To compare available branded petrol in the market.
4. To know the future of the brands.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is based in Navi Mumbai and a sample size of 200 respondents.

HYPOTHESIS

"The consumers of Navi Mumbai have a tendency to pay for and consume technically superior petroleum products".

The research methodology used for this Research study is based on –Survey method.

1. Interviews with experts and professionals from the same fields
2. Collection and evaluation of Primary Data and Secondary data

CITY AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION OF MAHARASHTRA LIMITED (CIDCO)

CIDCO was designated the New Town Development Authority for a project aimed to decongest Mumbai in respect of both population and commerce, by shifting industries and job opportunities to the developing satellite towns. Now after fulfilling its prime duty of relieving Mumbai and its infrastructure of the increasing number of migrants and residents, Navi Mumbai has emerged as an urbanized location with the efforts of CIDCO. CIDCO through its town planning process has converted large tracts of virgin land on which no semblance of infrastructure existed into a planned city. The CIDCO started functioning as a fully owned company of the State Government with initial subscribed capital of Rs.3.95 crores from the government. It was entrusted with developing the necessary social and physical infrastructure and was also entitled to recover all cost of development from sale of land and constructed properties. The actual work of planning and development of Navi Mumbai was started by CIDCO in March 1971.

BRIEF SKETCH OF THE NAVI MUMBAI REGION

The area of study of Branding of Petrol was chosen as Navi Mumbai. Navi Mumbai is spread over 344sq.Km and starts from Vashi in the North to Panvel in South and Airoli in the East and Uran in West. The composition of the population is a best example after Mumbai of mix of cosmopolitan locality, with people living in complete harmony.

The planning of the city had been done meticulously with a futuristic eye. The city was named New Bombay because the parent was then called Bombay, now renamed Navi Mumbai.. It was divided into large nodes, each one independent of one other, yet connected very well through public transport. Vashi was the first node to come up, followed by Sanpada, Nerul, Belapur, Kharghar and New Panvel. Magnificent railway stations in each node, wide roads and highways, malls and shopping centres. Flats, parks and gardens, penthouses and bungalows came up regularly and in an organized way.

Navi Mumbai is a good offering for a Quality life. It is a well-planned city, with futuristic infrastructure and presence of corporate giants. The city was planned by City & Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd (CIDCO). It was constituted in 1970; today it is a premier town planning and development agency of India.

Navi Mumbai is in fact, one of Asia's largest new city built on completely undeveloped land. The new city is being developed as an independent, self-sustainable, self-contained city to act as a counter magnet to relieve pressure on Greater Mumbai.. This booming new satellite city has already become the base of reputed Indian and multinational corporates.

BRANDING

Branding is a process, a tool, a strategy and an orientation, Branding is the process by which marketers tries to build long term relationship with the customers by learning their needs and wants so that the offering (brand) could satisfy their mutual aspirations. Branding can be viewed as a tool to position a product or a service with a consistent image of quality and value for money to ensure the development of a recurring preference by the customer. Branding can be used as a differentiation strategy when the product cannot be easily distinguished in terms of tangible features Marketers use branding as a differentiation strategy and try to develop an intimacy with customer groups, such differentiation is an on – going process.

BRANDING OF PETROL

It was in July 2002 that a major milestone in India's Petroleum Industry was achieved in the form of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL), one of the leading players in the Petroleum Industry, launching premium grade petrol under the brand name, 'Speed'. This was the first instance of an oil company launching branded fuel in the market. Soon, the two other leading oil companies, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL), also launched their own new generation fuels.

While IOC's branded petrol was called 'Premium', HPCL called it 'Power'. IOC and HPCL also launched branded diesel called 'Diesel Super' and 'TurboJet' respectively. In December 2002 another company, Indo-Burma Petroleum (IBP) launched a new brand of premium grade petrol 'Jash' and a premium grade high-speed diesel, 'Shakti'. Within a short span of time, the country had seen the emergence of an entirely new market category.

This trend was in line with the global trends wherein petroleum companies tried to build a loyal customer base by branding petroleum products. Both the petro retailers and marketers have been on a major co-branding drive to provide facilities like **convenience stores** and **credit cards**. Not only are efforts being made to attract new customers. But also to keep them through various loyalty programmes and other offers like HPCL's **Club HP** and BPCL's **Petrocard**. With these initiatives, the two firms are also going ahead with expansion of their infrastructure. There exists an eagerness and willingness in the Indian Petroleum Industry to innovate and change according to the need of the times.

TABLE 1: HIGHLIGHTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN NAVI MUMBAI

Survey Highlights	Year of Survey			
	1987	1995	2000	2005
Total migration to Navi Mumbai (%)	69	66	50	60
Population migrated from Mumbai (%)	61	42	47	48
Literacy rate (%)	93	94	96	98
Graduates and above (%)	15	17	27	28
Average family size	3.86	4.01	4.05	3.80
Reason for moving to Navi Mumbai (%) (Easy Ownership and reasonable price)	43	28	31	42
Ownership of vehicles (%)	18	28	46	49
Population working in offices (%)	44	27	60	74
People working & residing in Navi Mumbai (%)	48	65	63	60
Happy with physical infrastructure (%)	NR	40	67	80
Happy with social facilities (%)	NR	NR	85	82
Happy with education amenities (%)	NR	NR	75	86

NR- Not Recorded

Source: CIDCO (2007), Salient Features of Nodes in Navi Mumbai

The above table shows that there has been steady development in Navi Mumbai and CIDCO has concentrated on Physical and social infrastructure and majority of the residents are satisfied with the same. The number of residents of Navi Mumbai who own vehicles has increased from 18% in 1987 to 49% in 2005, which justifies the purpose of the study.

CONSUMER PERCEPTION OF BRANDS

TABLE 2: AWARENESS OF BRANDED PETROL AMONG REGULAR PETROL BUYERS

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Speed	96	48%
Power	78	39%
Xtrapremium	24	12%
Unaware	02	01%

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 3: TO FIND OUT CUSTOMER RESPONSE TO BRANDED FUELS IN NAVI MUMBAI NODES

WILLINGNESS TO TRY BRANDED FUEL

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	178	89
No	22	11
Total	200	100

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 4: MOST FREQUENTLY USED BRAND

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Speed	94	52.8
Power	62	34.8
Xtrapremium	22	12.4
Total	178	100

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5: SATISFACTION LEVEL OF CUSTOMERS

Particulars	Number of respondents	Percentage
Satisfied	165	92.7
Dissatisfied	08	4.49
Not Sure	05	2.81

Source: Primary Data

FINDINGS

- It was found that 48% of the respondents were aware of the brand speed(BPCL), 39% were aware of the brand power(HPCL), 12% were aware of the brand Xtrapremium (IOCL) and 1% was unaware of the brands.
- 89% of the respondents were willing to try various brands of petrol, 11% was not ready to try different brands
- 52.8% of the respondents using branded petrol use Speed, 34.8% use Power, 12.4% use Xtrapremium.
- 92.7% of the respondents were very satisfied with their choice of branded fuel.
- The satisfaction levels of the customers were encouragingly high and such a situation arose because of the good quality of the products being advertised and sold.
- This further positively justifies the hypothesis that there is a tendency among the vehicle owners to buy and consume the technically superior petroleum products.
- The preferred brand of Quality petrol i.e. BPCL (Speed) is the most preferred brand.
- A majority of the respondents of Survey on branded fuel said their main reason to try the new offerings would be just to test quality; Customers are opting branded fuels for just an experience. The survey shows that the marketing efforts of the companies promoted many customers to try out the fuel.
- Therefore, Branded fuel will gain greater consumer acceptance if oil companies market them harder. All oil companies are planning similar initiatives.
- Thus, the struggle for gaining a larger share of the market would intensify in the future.

CONCLUSION

The success of the branded fuel being marketed depends on the factors like brand awareness, smooth performance of the engine with maximum power output and the willingness of the buyers to recommend the said brand with positive intentions. The perception about the branded fuel created after it was used by the respondents that it had definitely brought about positive change in the engine performance and ride quality. With this desirable effect on the branding in Petroleum products in Navi Mumbai region, the study at the end positively justifies the hypothesis that there is a tendency among the vehicle owners to buy and consume the technically superior petroleum products.

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