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RURAL MARKETING STRATEGIES OF PEPSICO AND COCA-COLA

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ABSTRACT

The globalisation process completely changed the life style of the Indian rural people. The rural consumers are habituated to drink Multi National Corporation (MNC) products like Pepsico and Coca-cola than traditional soft drinks. In order to analyse the preference of Pepsico and Coca-cola soft drinks in rural areas, 106 retailers were interviewed. Census method was adopted to select the retailers from two villages in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. By using interview schedule, all 106 retailers were interviewed and data was collected from the field. The study findings showed that the Pepsico soft drinks have higher demand in the rural market than Coca-cola. Nevertheless, the latter one supplied cooler facilities and free services to the rural retailers. Similarly, the sale of Pepsico products gives higher profit margin to the retailers than the sale of Coca-cola soft drinks. Hence, Pepsico has to give higher concentration in the selected rural markets for its sustainability and survival. Diversified taste and attractive bottles also play crucial role in bringing more customers to their particular brand.

KEYWORDS

soft drinks, rural marketing, pepsico, coca-cola and retailers.

INTRODUCTION

India is witnessing a paradigm shift in the consumption of soft drink products. India is an agrarian economy and still now 60 per cent of the GDP is contributed by the agricultural sector. Agriculture is a core of rural economic prosperity along with other sectors like fast moving consumer goods. Since the introduction of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation in 1991, consumer's behaviour and taste for soft drinks has been changing drastically. Research findings have brought out the fact that for many Multi-National Companies, rural market contributed almost 50 per cent of their total sales revenue. Companies have realised that if they want to grow rural marketing is the only way to grow. As such, the international companies made a point that they want to have a strong hold in the rural areas. Thus, manufacturing and sale of goods and services in rural areas is called rural marketing. In the present study, the flow of goods and services from urban to rural areas was considered as rural marketing. Very particularly the marketing of manufactured soft drinks-Pepsico and Coca-cola and allied services provided by these companies in rural areas is considered as rural marketing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An analysis of NSS data shows that of the total expenditure on manufactured consumer goods, 75 per cent is spent in rural India. This percentage has remained almost unchanged since 1960-61. However, per capita consumption and expenditure on manufactured consumer items are low in rural areas but the market is approximately three times larger. In addition, the consumption of food and non-food items by the rural people, living above poverty line is growing year after year. Although the average annual expenditure by rural people seems to be low but the opportunities that exists for selected products like Pepsico and Coca-cola is growing at a faster rate. Thus, rural marketing plays an important role for not only stimulating production and consumption but it accelerates the pace of economic development. For these reasons, the rural marketing is described as the most important multiplier of rural development by and by for the Indian economic development. The significance of rural marketing has been realised by various national and international companies, exploring to exploit the rural consumers. Now, the marketers of all fast moving consumer goods have a 360° view on rural market.

The recent development shows that rural market has thrown a red carpet welcome to corporate sector. Rural economy is witnessing an aggressive infrastructure development namely rural roads, rural communication, rural electrification, rural housing, rural health, rural medicine and rural literacy. Now, almost all villages have been well connected by roads, 90 per cent of the villages are electrified, every thousand population is connected by STD, 41 per cent of the rural houses are pucca, the below poverty line families has declined from 46 per cent to 37 per cent and rural literacy level has improved from 36 per cent to 62 per cent. For many companies, rural market contributed almost 50 per cent of their total sales revenue. Companies have well realised that if they want to grow rural market is the only option and rural market is the only way to grow ahead.

Pepsico and Coca-cola are the world leaders in the supply of soft drinks. In total 26 products were manufactured and supplied to the consumers. They present in more than 200 countries and employ more than four lakhs people in their companies. These soft drinks penetrate into rural market in addition to the existing urban market. By providing tasty soft drinks they have covered the sales in almost all rural India. As a promotional policy, these companies freely supply cooler system or refrigerators to the retailers in order to increase sale volumes. In addition, a new "hub and spoke" model has been put in place to drive the rural expansion plan. The companies felt that there is untapped potential in the rural areas that will fuel quick growth in coming years. Per capita soft drinks consumption in rural areas is only 2.8 liters compared with 7.4 liters nationally. In comparison, urban dwellers in the country's top metros, which form 4.2 percent of the country's population, consumes 49 liters annually. These companies penetrate in rural areas to the share of 40 per cent to the total soft drink sales. This growth rate has been achieved by combination of aggressive marketing strategies and introduction of new innovative products in the market. One important strategy adopted by these companies is introduction of 200ml. packs with variety of taste to target rural customers. The demand for these products had been growing year after year.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To analyse the impact of two international soft drink products in the Indian rural market, four objectives were formulated, namely,

- i) to analyse the preference of rural retailers in the sale of Pepsico and Coca-cola products in the selected rural markets;
- ii) to study the retailer's satisfaction between Pepsico and Coca-cola services;
- iii) to evaluate the consumers' satisfaction between the Pepsico and Coca-cola products in the selected rural markets and
- iv) to suggest suitable policy measures for sustainability of the selected companies in the Indian rural market.

The present study is an analytical one, based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected from a sample of 106 retailers. These retailers were selected from two villages in Thanjavur district of Tami Nadu. 46 retailers from Adirampattinam and 60 retailers from Pattukkottai constituted sample of the study. Thus, Census technique was adopted to select the respondents. All the 106 retailers, selling Pepsi Co and Coca-cola were selected for collecting the primary data. A well-structured and pre-tested interview schedule was administrated by the researcher for collecting the primary data. The investigator personally collected the primary data. The secondary data has been collected from the companies audited statement, journals, books and official website of the selected companies.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: TYPES OF PEPSICO AND COCA-COLA SELLING OUTLET

S.No.	Types of Outlet	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Grocery shop	33 (72)	41 (68)	74 (70)
2.	Convenience shop	21 (17)	32 (28)	53 (23)
3.	Eatery shop	16 (11)	7 (4)	23 (7)
	Total	70 (100)	80 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Table 1 explains the types of outlets through which the selected two international soft drinks were sold to the rural consumers. Grocery shop (the shop which sells various items, various household consumer goods, retailing of food items and soft drinks), convenience shop (the shop which sells tea and liquor) and eatery shop (the shop which sells food items such as hotels). Most of the soft drinks were sold through grocery shop 70 Per cent followed by convenience shop 23 Per cent and Eatery shop 7 Per cent. The same trend was noticed for the selected villages namely, Adirampattinam and Pattukkottai.

TABLE 2: AGE-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE RETAILERS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Less than 40	8 (17)	26 (43)	34 (32)
2.	41-45	9 (21)	-	9 (9)
3.	46-50	13 (28)	15 (25)	28 (26)
4.	51-55	8 (17)	19 (32)	27 (25)
5.	More than 56	8 (17)	-	8 (8)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Table 2 explains age-wise classification of the retailers. It was found from the table that 32 per cent of the retailers are falling in the age group of less than 40 years, which is followed by 46-50 years 26 Per cent and 51-55 years 25 Per cent. Least number of retailers were noticed in the age group of more than 56 years 8 Per cent and in the age group of 41-45 years 9 Per cent. While comparing the selected villages higher number of retailers was found in Alanganallur village in the age group of less than 40 years 43 Per cent. Again 32 per cent of retailers in the same village were falling in the age group of 51-55 years. No significant age difference was found with respect to the retailers selling the soft drinks in Adirampattinam. No retailers were found in the age group of 41-45 and more than 56 years in Pattukkottai.

TABLE 3: EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE RETAILERS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Primary level	-	9 (15)	9 (8)
2.	Secondary level	30 (65)	29 (48)	59 (56)
3.	Higher Secondary level	12 (26)	19 (32)	31 (29)
4.	Under graduate	4 (9)	3 (5)	7 (7)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The education detail of the selected retailers is presented in Table 3. Of the 106 respondents, 56 per cent had attained secondary level of education, followed by higher secondary level (29%). Among the selected villages, the retailers in Alanganallur village were less educated than retailers in Nagamalai Pudukottai village.

TABLE 4: SOFT DRINKS SALES PER DAY (200ml. bottle)

S.No.	Particulars	Adirampattinam	Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico	416 (66)	413 (48)	829 (56)
2.	Coca-cola	216 (34)	447 (52)	663 (44)
	Total	632 (100)	860 (100)	1492 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Soft drinks sales (200ml) per day in the selected villages are shown in Table 4. It was found that the sale of Pepsico were found more 56 Per cent than the sale of Coca-cola 44 Per cent with respect to 200ml. soft drink sales. The Adirampattinam retailers were sold more Pepsico 200ml. bottle 66 Per cent than the Pattukkottai retailers who sold higher level of Coca-cola soft drinks 52 Per cent. Of the four sizes (200 ml., 500 ml., 1000 ml. and 2000 ml.), 200 ml. bottles were mostly sold in retailer's outlet. The higher level of sale of PepsiCo in Adirampattinam and Coca-cola in Pattukkottai was due to availability and supply of these soft drinks in the selected villages.

TABLE 5: PROFITABLE SOFT-DRINKS SALE FOR RETAILERS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico	34 (74)	21 (35)	55 (52)
2.	Coca-cola	12 (26)	39 (65)	51 (48)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Table 5 presents the profit earned by the retailers in selling Pepsico and Coca-cola soft drinks in the selected villages. 52 per cent of the retailers were earned their profit by selling pepsico products were as 48 per cent of the retailers were earning their profit by selling Coca-cola soft drinks. While comparing the most profitable sale of these products, Adirampattinam retailers were earned more profit by sale of Pepsico 74 Per cent and the Pattukkottai retailers were earned more profit by the sale of Coca-cola 65 Per cent soft drinks. The variation in profit earned by the selected villages was due to the supply of 200 ml. bottles by the selected companies. Thus, Pepsico has supplied their soft drinks regularly to Adirampattinam than Pattukkottai. Similarly, Coca-cola has able to supply their soft drinks regularly to Pattukkottai retailers than Adirampattinam. While discussing with the retailers with respect to deviation in supply of 200ml. bottles, the Pepsico was unable to supply the demand of Pattukkottai, which was capitalised by Coca-cola in that area.

TABLE 6: TRADE SCHEMES OF PEPSICO AND COCA-COLA SOFT DRINKS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico Schemes	7 (15)	6 (10)	13 (12)
2.	Coca-cola Schemes	27 (59)	31 (52)	58 (54)
3.	Scheme from both company	4 (4)	6 (10)	10 (9)
4.	Not received any scheme	10 (22)	17 (28)	27 (25)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

In order to popularize the soft drinks companies immediately announce different trade schemes. Through this trade schemes the companies display the products and information brochure at the point of purchase. These trade schemes draw the attention of the consumers, increase the sales turn over and enhance the brand name among the consumers. In the study area the Pepsico and Coca-cola companies provide trade schemes in the form of incentives, namely when retailers purchase three grades of 200 ml. soft drinks, five 200 ml. soft drinks are given as free to the retailers during winter seasons.

Table 6 explains Trade schemes of Pepsico and Coca-cola soft drinks in the study area. Among the companies present in the rural market, Coca-cola has provided higher trade schemes support 54 Per cent to the retailers than Pepsico. Nine per cent of the retailers were benefited from both the companies' trade schemes. The same trend was observed in both the villages. 25 per cent of the retailers have not received any trade schemes from the multinational soft drink companies.

TABLE 7: SATISFACTION OF THE RETAILERS ON COMPANIES WEEKLY SUPPLY OF SOFT DRINKS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Satisfaction on Pepsico supply	5 (11)	10 (17)	15 (14)
2.	Satisfaction on Coca-cola supply	11 (24)	40 (66)	51 (48)
3.	Retailers satisfaction due to the supply of both the company products	30 (65)	10 (17)	40 (38)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Retailer's satisfaction with respect to supply of Pepsico and Coca-cola products in the rural area is presented in Table 7. 48 per cent of the respondents satisfied with the supply of Coca-cola. Both companies satisfied 38 per cent of the retailers with the supply of soft drinks. The study found that the Pepsico has least satisfied the retailers. This shows that the Pepsico has to improve their supply chain management strategy in the rural market. Among the selected villages Pattukkottai retailers were highly satisfied with Coca-cola 66 Per cent supply were as Adirampattinam retailers 65 Per cent were satisfied with the supply of both the companies.

TABLE 8: RETAILERS SATISFACTION WITH RESPECT TO SUPPLY OF SOFT DRINKS IN ALL SEASONS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico	3 (7)	10 (17)	13 (12)
2.	Coca-cola	6 (13)	20 (33)	26 (25)
3.	Retailers satisfaction due to supply of both company products	37 (80)	30 (50)	67 (63)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The retailer's satisfaction with respect to supply of soft drinks in all seasons is presented in Table 8. 63 per cent of the retailers were satisfied with respect to supply of soft drinks in all seasons. Coca-cola exclusively satisfied the retailers to the tune of 25 per cent and Pepsico exclusively satisfied only 12 per cent of the retailers. With respect to the selected areas, Adirampattinam retailers were satisfied more than 80 Per cent Pattukkottai 50 Per cent of this area. Coca-cola 33 Per cent better served in Pattukkottai retailers than Pepsico 17 Per cent.

TABLE 9: COOLER FACILITIES GIVEN BY THE COMPANY TO THE RETAILERS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico supply	15 (32)	7 (12)	22 (21)
2.	Coca-cola supply	11 (24)	19 (31)	30 (28)
3.	Cooler facility supplied by the both company	4 (9)	3 (5)	7 (7)
3.	Not received any cooler	16 (35)	31 (52)	47 (44)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

In order to promote the soft drinks the companies freely supply cooler systems. These cooler facilities enhance the sale volume of the soft drinks in summer seasons. Of the 106 retailers, 44 per cent of them were not received any cooler system from both the companies (Table 9). However, 28 per cent of the retailers were received cooler from Coca-cola company and 21 per cent of the cooler facilities were received by retailers from Pepsico company. The Pepsico has supplied coolers to 32 per cent of retailers at Adirampattinam where as the Coca-cola has supplied the coolers to the retailers by 31 per cent in Pattukkottai. The reasons behind the higher supply of cooler by Coca-cola were to catch or to influence the rural consumers to buy more Coca-cola. Although the demand for Pepsico is higher in rural areas but the company is least bothered about the supply of more coolers in the villages.

TABLE 10: COOLER SERVICES PROVIDED BY COMPANY

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	PepsiCo	5 (11)	4 (6)	9 (9)
2.	Coca-cola	7 (15)	9 (15)	16 (15)
3.	Lack of service from both company	18 (39)	16 (27)	34 (32)
3.	Not received any cooler	16 (35)	31 (52)	47 (44)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The services extended by the companies to the area retailers and their overall satisfaction are shown in Table 10. Among the recipients of the coolers, 32 per cent have told that they lack services from both companies. However, 15 per cent of the retailers were satisfied with respect to Coca-cola services. Only 9 per cent of the retailers were satisfied with the services provided by Pepsico.

TABLE 11: OVER-ALL SATISFACTION OF RETAILERS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	PepsiCo	26 (56)	10 (17)	36 (34)
2.	Coca-cola	10 (22)	40 (66)	50 (47)
3.	Satisfied with respect to both company services	10 (22)	10 (17)	20 (19)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The overall satisfaction of the retailers is shown in Table 11. 47 per cent of the respondents have viewed that they are fully satisfied with the Coca-cola soft drink sale. 34 per cent of the retailers were satisfied with PepsiCo products sale in the rural market. Among the selected areas, 66 per cent of the retailers in Pattukkottai were fully satisfied with Coca-cola supply. In the case of Adirampattinam, the PepsiCo has satisfied 56 per cent of the retailers.

TABLE 12: TASTE SATISFACTION AND RURAL CONSUMER'S PREFERENCE FOR THE SOFT DRINKS

S.No.	Particulars	No. of Retailers in Adirampattinam	No. of Retailers in Pattukkottai	Total
1.	Pepsico	36 (78)	40 (67)	76 (72)
2.	Coca-cola	10 (22)	20 (33)	30 (28)
	Total	46 (100)	60 (100)	106 (100)

Source: Compiled from the primary data

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

The satisfaction and consumers preference of soft drinks in the rural market is shown in Table 12. The consumers prefer to drink more Pepsico 72 Per cent than Coca-cola 28 Per cent. No major deviation was found within the selected areas with respect to taste satisfaction and rural consumers' preference for the soft drinks.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- To increase the sale volume and to improve the competitive strategy in the rural market the PepsiCo has to provide cooler facility services and attractive trade schemes to the retailers. The PepsiCo should not neglect the demand for their products in the rural areas and have to develop win-win situation in the rural market. The PepsiCo has to capitalise the existing rural consumers' preference by providing continuous supply of PepsiCo soft drinks in both the areas.
- The Coca-cola, although provide cooler and service facilities to the retailers they have to improve taste by introducing new flavours and designs of the bottle. The Coca-cola has to improve the taste to bring new consumers to the products.

CONCLUSION

India lives in villages. Still now 70 per cent of the Indian population depends on their livelihood in the rural areas. Agriculture and allied activities is the core of rural economic prosperity. Due to liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation the rural consumers prefer to consume Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) like PepsiCo and Coca-cola soft drinks instead of traditional soft drinks. The vastness of the rural market poses both challenges and opportunities for traditional cottage industry soft drink makers as well as MNC's soft drinks manufacturers. PepsiCo and Coca-cola have penetrated into the rural market slowly at the same time very steadily. The MNCs are providing variety of products to the consumers and other services. Through this, they can able to attract the retailers to sell their products to higher volume. In the process, they also give attractive services to the rural retailers. Thus, retailer's satisfaction is the backbone of any company to grow. PepsiCo and Coca-cola have to satisfy the retailers and have to concentrate to improve their products for sustainable sale in the rural areas.

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