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Customers' Brand Preference towards Mobiles with Reference to Rural Market in Kurnool District

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Abstract:
Marketing a product differs from urban to rural. In Rural marketing, a company should change its strategies to market its product in rural areas. Unfortunately, this is the unaddressed area by majority of companies though it is bigger. Now, in this war fare the rural marketing is definitely a competitive advantage through which one can win others. The main of the study is to describe the potentiality of Indian rural markets and the people's preference patterns.
The main focus of this study is to know the brand preference patterns by the rural people towards mobiles. This research study is based on the primary data collected directly by approaching the respondents with the help of planned questionnaire. Based on the research findings, there is a bond between demographic parameters and brand preference. Finally, we preserve that consumers are having a specific brand preference and choice towards mobiles in rural areas. Consumers investigate various factors like Price, Features, Service, Brand Image, Availability etc. in prior to the purchase mobile.

Keywords: Rural market, customer, brand preference, demographic parameters, mobile, purchase behaviour

1. Introduction
Rural marketing is the process of promoting the company offerings in the rural market by using a different strategy in comparison with urban and semi urban areas. The taste and preferences of rural consumers are not as urban and semi urban consumers. According to the census of India, nearly 70% of Indian populations are of rural areas. This evidence is the main reason for the companies to select rural market as one of its main segments. The income of rural people is also an important parameter which wrapping up the company's attention towards the rural market. As income increased, the disposable income has also increased.

1.1. Need for the Study
Rural market size and its consumer base are challenging the companies and marketers. This is an opportunity for marketers to market their product by facing different types of problems like product designing, pricing, positioning, promotion etc. this study is to observe how the rural people are going for brand selection with respect to mobiles and for what factors they are giving much importance. In this study the brand preference cross matched by various demographical parameters like Gender, Age, Income, and Occupation. So, this research paper attempts to look into challenges and opportunities in rural marketing

1.2. Objectives
1. To examine the consumer buying behavior towards mobiles.
2. To find out the factors that influences the consumers to buy mobiles
3. To suggest effective strategies for mobiles in rural areas

1.3. Methodology
The primary objective of the study is to know brand preference of rural consumers towards mobiles, the study is based on primary data collected through questionnaire directly from the respondent. For analysis, the Chi square is done to understand the relationship between variables. The primary data had collected from 200 respondents of Pedda Tekur, B. Kodur, Srinagar & Parnapally villages in Kurnool district.

1.4. Limitations of the Study
1. The sample size was restricted to 200 due to time constraints
2. The study was not focused on the specific brand, but this study is describing the preference patterns towards mobile brands.
3. This study was carried out only among the consumers of Pedda Tekur, B. Kodur, Srinagar & Parnapally villages.

2. Literature Review
Shankthiman Singh[1], his research is stating that how rural and urban people conceive the notion of "Brand". Also he compared the rural and urban consumer behavior with respect to brand preference. Through his research he found pricing is strong influence on brand preference in rural areas. On the other hand, brand awareness is playing a role in urban areas.
P. Karthikeyan[2], His research describing that the customer brand preference towards mobiles equally influenced by quality, Price, Technology and Durability. Also customers are considering the quality of product with apt price.
Neema Nagi[3], describing that the consumer brand preference majorly influenced by the appearance of the mobile with reasonable price. The other factor is income of the family. Through research, the researcher has identified appearance and income as major parameters for brand preference.
Dharmraj J Solanki[4], this paper is explaining that the advertisements, Brand image and price are the major influencing factors. Also appearance & Design are also the parameters.

3. Data Analysis and Interpretation
Data analysis had done with the help of Chi-square test to find the relationship between Brand Preference and demographical factors like Gender, Age, Income and Occupation.

Gender of Respondent * Brand preference Cross Tabulation						
		Brand preference				Total
		Brand Image	Low Price	Features	Availability	
gender of respondent	Male	5	26	55	24	110
	Female	8	12	43	27	90
Total		13	38	98	51	200

Table 1

➢ Hypothesis: H0 There is no relationship between Gender and Brand Preference
→ H1 There is a significant relationship between Gender and Brand Preference

	Value	Df
Chi-Square	5.552	3

Table 2

Table 1& 2: Chi-Square test for Gender and Brand Preference
From Tables 1 and 2:

$\chi2_{Cal}$ = 5.552
Degrees of Freedom (DOF) = (2-1)*(4-1) = 3 and level of Significance= 0.05
From the Chi Square table$\chi2$ = 7.815, $\chi2_{Cal} < \chi2_{Tab}$ Accept H_0
There is no relationship between Gender and Brand Preference

Income per month * Brand preference Cross tabulation						
		Brand preference				Total
		Brand Image	Low Price	Features	Availability	
Income per month	Less Than 10000	3	4	31	22	60
	10000-20000	5	13	30	14	62
	20000-30000	3	11	18	5	37
	Above 30000	2	10	19	10	41
Total		13	38	98	51	200

Table 3

➢ Hypothesis: H0 There is no significant relationship between Income and Brand Preference
  → H1 There is a significant relationship between Income and Brand Preference

	Value	df
Pearson Chi-Square	13.951[a]	9

Table 4

Table 3& 4: Chi-Square test for Income and Brand Preference
        From Tables 3 and 4:

$\chi 2_{Cal}$ = 13.951
Degrees of Freedom (DOF) = (4-1)*(4-1) = 9 and Level Of Significance= 0.05
From the Chi Square table$\chi 2$ = 16.919, $\chi 2_{Cal} < \chi 2_{Tab}$ Accept H_0
There is no significant relationship between Income and Brand Preference

Age of Respondent * Brand preference Cross tabulation						
		Brand preference				Total
		Brand Image	Low Price	Features	Availability	
Age of Respondent	20-30	1	13	20	22	56
	31-40	3	9	31	12	55
	41-50	0	6	28	5	39
	Above 51	9	10	19	12	50
Total		13	38	98	51	200

Table 5

➢ Hypothesis: H0 There is no relationship between Gender and Brand Preference
  → H1 There is a significant relationship between Gender and Brand Preference

	Value	df
Pearson Chi-Square	30.700[a]	9

Table 6

Table 5 & 6: Chi-Square test for Age and Brand Preference
        From Tables 5 and 6:

$\chi 2_{Cal}$ = 30.700
Degrees of Freedom (DOF) = (4-1)*(4-1) = 9 and Level Of Significance= 0.05
From the Chi Square table $\chi 2$ = 16.919,$\chi 2_{Cal} > \chi 2_{Tab}$ Reject H_0
There is a significant relationship between Age and Brand Preference

Occupation * Brand preference Cross tabulation						
		Brand preference				Total
		Brand Image	Low Price	Features	Availability	
Occupation	Self employed	3	14	33	8	58
	Employee	5	10	19	22	56
	Farmer	1	8	21	10	40
	Student	4	6	25	11	46
Total		13	38	98	51	200

Table 7

➢ Hypothesis: H0 There is no relationship between Gender and Brand Preference
  → H1 There is a significant relationship between Gender and Brand Preference

	Value	df
Pearson Chi-Square	14.758[a]	9

Table 8

Table 7 & 8: Chi-Square test for Occupation and Brand Preference

From Tables 7 and 8:

$$\chi2_{Cal} = 14.758$$

Degrees of Freedom (DOF) = (4-1)*(4-1) = 9 and Level Of Significance= 0.05

From the Chi Square table $\chi2 = 16.919$, $\chi2_{Cal} < \chi2_{Tab}$ Accept H_0

There is no significant relationship between Occupation and Brand Preference

3.1. Findings

From this study, we found that the brand preference towards mobiles has a significant relationship with Age and also we found that there is no significant relationship between Gender, Income, Occupation and Brand Preference. So, the companies need to consider age while determining features of the product.

3.2. Suggestions

From the data analysis and interpretation, we suggest the following suggestions to Mobile phone companies,

1. Most of the people go for the product/brand which have high features in comparable with other parameters. Thus the companies need to highlight the features in such way that the customer should understand it.
2. Rural people go for the product which suggested by opinion leader or the people may go for the product which has high publicity. So, it will be better for the companies if they adopt the procedures through which publicity can be increased.
3. The Income, Gender and Occupation of rural people are uniformly influenced by the features of the product. So, it is clearly suggesting the companies that, the rural peoples' brand preference will have much influence by features of product.

4. Conclusion

In the urban markets, the companies are facing cut throat competition for many products. In these areas, the companies are struggling a lot for its existence by sharing the same market with many players. On one fine day this market may become stagnant. This situation became an eye opener for many firms and forced them to go for rural markets where there are huge opportunities. The brand preference pattern of rural consumers will vary from the urban areas. So, it is better to understand the brand preference patterns of rural consumers in prior to market the product. With a view of this, through the research, we find that the brand preference has a good relationship with Age of customer but there is no relationship between Gender, Income, occupation and brand preference. The companies should plan the production and other marketing activities as per the requirements of the rural people.

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