RURAL MARKETING STRATEGIES OF HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PATANJALI AND DABUR

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***Abstract*- Rural markets emerging as a crucial area for business growth, especially in the context of India's vast population residing in rural areas, understanding and effectively implementing marketing strategies tailored to these regions becomes paramount. This study delves into the realm of rural marketing strategies, focusing specifically on health care products, through a comparative analysis of two prominent companies: Patanjali and Dabur. The study aims to compare the strategies adopted by Patanjali and Dabur, assess customer satisfaction with their health care products, and analyze factors influencing purchasing decisions in rural areas. Employing a descriptive and analytical research design, data was collected using a mixed sampling technique in Haryana, employing both primary and secondary sources. Statistical analysis using tools such as SPSS facilitated the interpretation of results, including hypothesis testing using techniques like the Krushal Wallis Test and Mann-Whitney U Test. It results indicate that both Patanjali and Dabur have successfully implemented rural marketing strategies, leading to increased sales and consumer satisfaction. Rural consumers demonstrate a preference for high-quality, affordable health care products available locally. This study not only contributes to understanding rural marketing dynamics but also offers insights for companies seeking to optimize their strategies for the burgeoning rural health care product market.**

Key Words: **Rural Marketing, Health care products, Marketing strategies, Patanjali, and Dabur.**

1 INTRODUCTION

Rural marketing is an untapped potential market with a hub of opportunities. The scenario of the rural market has changed over the last 20 years. At that time business units did not focus towards it. It was explored only by agriculture product companies. There are many reasons that other sector companies not valuing the rural market due to lack of electricity, no transportation facilities, lack of infrastructures facility, lack of technology awareness, no proper distribution system and rural people are very less aware of the products. Later, companies realized that the rural market is full of opportunities and they can create huge demand for their product with the help of awareness because 2/3 population of India lives in the rural area. Now companies manufacture their product especially for rural consumer according to their needs and taste such as quality product at affordable price. (Bhusan, 2015)

A rural marketing strategy refers to making plans for a reasonable supply of goods and agricultural input to the villages at a reasonable value to fulfil the requirements of the customers residing in these rural areas. Rural markets have a high potential and may generate large sales volume for businesses that manufacture an efficient product and have active supply chain management.

Health confers a person or group's freedom from illness and the ability to realize one's potential. Health is physical and mental well-being. The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) offers a simple definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. It helps a human being to function his all activities in society. Mental health can maintain or improve with the help of yoga, and meditation and live a stress-less life. Physical health can improve with the help of exercise and the use of health care products. Healthcare products include immunity boosters and personal care products. Immunity helps to recognize the infected disease and fight it. It makes protein inside the body to eliminate disease and boost the energy level. Immunity booster products are health drinks, digestives, nutrition and supplements and immunity booster products such as chyawanprash, honey etc. Personal care products include skin care, body care, oral and hair care products such as soaps, shampoo, face wash, creams, toothpaste, etc.

HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS:

Figure1: Health care products

Health supplements and Nutrition:

These are those products which a person takes in addition to a diet. It includes minerals, proteins, vitamins, iron, zinc, potassium and herbs which enhanced overall health. There are varieties of forms to intake it such as capsules, powder, gummies, drinks and energy bars. A health supplement and nutrition produce label contains everything about the herbs inside it and how many doses should take at a time. Health supplements and nutrition products are shilajit gold, chyawanprash, honey, immunity kit, glucose, Janam gutti, balm, power vita, roasted diet, ashwagandha, badam pak, etc. (ods.od.nih.gov)

For example:

- To strengthen the bones calcium and vitamin D should take
- The risk of birth defects can reduce by folic acid.
- Heart disease can be reduced by omega-3 fatty acids.

Digestives health care products:

It includes those products which improve the digestive system. These products contain pepsin, lactase, amylases, and peptides that help in digestion. Digestive products are hing goli, ajwain, jaljera, shodit harad, anardhana, hajmola, etc. (www.healthline.com)

Health drinks:

A body requires a liquid that replenishes the fluid it loses and feels refreshed & abundant. In the beginning, water was the only source to complete the fluid need of a body. Later on, milk was used but nowadays there are numerous beverages such as sports drinks, refreshing drinks, energy drinks, diet drinks, fruits and vegetable juice etc. which give instant energy and keep the body hydrated. These drinks are low in calories, have lots of vitamins and minerals ad better than sugary beverages such as tea, coffee, and cold drinks. Health drinks products are real juice, milkshakes, sharbat, lemoneez, coconut water, giloy juice, amla juice, Kerela juice, tulsi juice, etc.

Skincare/ Body care:

Body care or skin care is a part of healthy life because our skin has a direct connection with the external environment. Skincare is a range that enhances skin appearance and condition. Skin care products include nutrition, skin protection herbs and emollients. It is a regular process to maintain the health of dry, oily and sensitive skin. Those products are good for skin which has no artificial fragrance, contains botanical, and biological extracts and are suitable for sensitive and acne porn skin. Skincare enhanced self-confidence. Skincare or body care products ranges are body cleansers, body lotion, face wash, soaps, moisturizing creams, face packs, gulabari, etc.

Oral care:

Oral care means brushing your teeth to keep your mouth clean and disease free. Oral hygiene is very crucial to keep teeth and gums healthy. Oral health is linked with body health because infection in the mouth can carry germs and bacteria into the body and lead to health diseases. Brush your teeth & tongue, floss, visit a dentist regularly and avoid

smoking & tobacco products to improve oral hygiene. Oral care products are toothbrushes, mouth floss and toothpaste.(

Hair care:

Hair care includes all those activities done by people to keep their hair healthy, clean and looking attractive. Hair care's main purpose is to clean and provide nutrition to the human scalp. Hair care products are shampoos, hair repair formulas, hair conditioners, hair masks, hair oil, hair serums, hair colours, anti-dandruff formulas, etc.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Neharkar. V and Anute. N (2022) identified the marketing strategies especially advertisement which is widely used to promote health care product like a nutritional drink by companies. Nutritional drinks are specially designed for children to make them healthy and strong. Companies used big celebrities and sportsmen for the promotion and advertisement of their nutritional drinks. The 6 nutritional drinks are Pediasure of Abott Company, Horlicks of HUL, Bournvita of Cadbury India, Complan of Zydus wellness, Power vita of Patanjali Ayurveda and boost of HUL were studied in this research paper. These companies faced challenges like government guidelines related to health care products, diversity of language and culture. All companies used television, print, web and media advertisements along with an emotional appeal to the customer. **Nagpal. A and Pallavi. K. (2022),** research paper's objective is to find out the impact of Covid-19 on the preference of consumers towards brands and products, the frequency of buying products, and changes in consumer behaviour. The data is collected from 100 respondents and a focus group interview of 10-15 people was done. Descriptive analysis, correlation and regression tools are used to analyse the collected data. The research paper concludes that people prefer available private/ substitute/ local brands during the duration of Covid -19 but they go back to the brands to which they are loyal when they get the opportunity. **Sneha, R., & Hajira, B. (2022),** The author discussed the rural market's recent trends, opportunities, threats and 4P's rural marketing strategies. It also described the innovation and strategies of several companies related to rural marketing in India. He concluded that marketer has to make a connection with the rural consumer to tap the untapped rural market opportunities. There is a need for proper analysis of the rural market to develop strategies and products according to the need and demands of the consumer. **Naik, R. L., & Naik, C. K. (2022),** in this research the potential parameters of the rural sector is evaluated. A questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from 100 respondents in the Ananthapurama district of Andhra Pradesh. The finding revealed that the male population mainly those aged 35-40 years is more dominant and they take a purchase decision. Discount and price is the important factor that influences the purchase of the rural consumer. It is concluded that there are some challenges but the rural market has great potential and resources which must be tapped. **Usharani B.(2021)** focused on the concept of rural marketing which is two processes the inflow of goods and services for production and consumption and the second way is the outflow of products. There are government schemes like Integrated Rural Development Programme, Training Rural Youth for Self Employment and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana create employment and banks also provide loans for agriculture and small business to rural people which enhance their purchasing power due to their habits and preference are changed. The analysis of the rural market concluded that the rural market has a great future and promising market for industries. There is only a need for increasing media penetration and rising literacy levels which increase product knowledge and create demand for products. **Sen A.(2021)** identified the impacting factor that developed consumer brand preference and awareness of rural northeast India(Dibuwal Dihingia, Assam) towards FMCG. The multisampling technique was used to collect 102 samples. The study found that consumers prefer brands in FMCG. Rural consumer of Badangpet and Nadergul region has more brand loyalty than Chintullain soap category. The awareness was 75%, 70%, 63% and 64% in the case of shampoo, washing powder, toothpaste and tea respectively. Indian organizations want to cover all the rural India then they have to re- strategies their policies according to rural consumers, beliefs, attitudes and preferences, perceptions and traditions. Viral marketing is also a good tool for the nearby area. **Chaudhary, M. S. V. (2021),** the author understands the consumption behaviour of rural and urban consumers. It focuses on the innovation of products and services in the rural market. It is concluded that the companies have to identify key challenges of the rural market and offer the right product at right time and the right place. They ensure that products must be affordable and customised according to rural consumer choices. **Garg. A. K and Agarwal. K. D (2021)** examined the marketing strategies of FMCG companies and consumer behaviour towards them. It also studies that the rural consumer is awaked of the consumer protection act and whether this act is implemented effectively by the government or not. The survey was conducted in the district of Meerut. The outcome of this research is that rural consumers awaked of the consumer protection act and they are influenced by FMCG marketing strategies. **Sonawane P. A (2021)** explored the possibility of expansion in the rural market. Most industries and companies are gaining huge profits by untapped the hiding opportunities of the rural market. After the green revolution, the consumption and income level raised in rural areas. Big MNCs HUL, Dabur, Godrej, Palmolive etc started their expansion in rural India. The study concluded that urban and rural consumer expectations and demand both are different. That is why different strategies and policies are made for the rural market to expand their business. There is a need for proper use of the 4A's of the rural market. Consumers of the rural market are daily wage earners

so products and prices are designed according to their needs and paying capability. **Dr S. Karthikeyan (2020),** in this study author finds out the relationship between rural marketing functions like price and promotion on the decision-making of the respondent. The nature of the study is descriptive. The primary data was collected through a survey of rural entrepreneurs of Thanjavur district. It is concluded that advertising, transport, grants for warehousing, and insurance have a great impact on rural marketing. The business organization has to increase their sales promotion activities to create demand and then fulfil the rural consumer demand on time at a reasonable rate. **Sheelam R (2020)** explained the market research related to the needs and wants of rural consumers. This study analyzes consumer preference and the current scenario of the rural market which help the companies to make their strategies for new product development and marketing strategies for the rural market. It concluded that there is a vast scope of e-commerce, organic farming ad agri-tech with the help of some perquisites like STP strategy, 4P's, unique selling points and proper consumer analysis. **Pushkar & Pandey (2019)** stated that the rural market is complicated because it is tough to understand consumer perceptions regarding products and brands. There is a requirement for proper promotional strategies and tools to attract and retain the consumer. This study is based on a survey to know the effective promotional tools and strategies for rural consumers. He concluded that promotion tools mainly visual advertising influence the rural consumer and small packaging and low price product are affordable for them. **Sure, P. D., & Usha, P. (2019),** in the research paper, "FMCG and Indian Rural Markets; the Need for Digital Literacy in Mainstreaming the Rural Consumers – A Review" emphasized the requirement to focus on rural consumers by the corporate sectors. It is the corporate social responsibility to spread the knowledge of digital technology and distribute the technological benefits in rural areas to widen the business world. This study examined the use of digital technology by rural people in the marketing of FMCG products to understand that rural consumers are benefited from digital marketing. **Selvi. T. K. (2018)** discussed the current trends and challenges in rural retailing in India. Retailing contributes 10% of the economy's GDP and 80% of employment. The government plays a vital role in responding to the retail sector by permitting FDI 100% extend in single-brand retail trading and 51% extent in multi-brand retailing trade. Online retailing is also growing very fast it is projected that in 2020. There are favourable factors related to rural retailing are technology, economical, government policy and regulations. The rural market is not less than heaven for retailing and it is expected that modern retailing will reach up to 25% of total retailing. **Sharma. G. (2018),** it observes the healthcare product advertiser perception towards direct-to-consumer advertisement. The primary source was used for descriptive research. The data were collected from a focus group of healthcare product advertisers with the help questionnaire of 5 points on the Likert scale. It is concluded that health is the most important for human beings and proper ethics must be used by the advertiser. Brand highlighting or celebrity endorsement is less effective. The best expressive method for health care products is advertisement through television.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To compare the rural marketing strategies adopted by Patanjali and Dabur companies.
- To find out the satisfaction level of customers towards health care products of Patanjali and Dabur company.
- To analyze the factors that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.

3.2 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study proposes to test the following hypothesis:

- H_{01}: There is no significant difference between the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur.
- H_{a1}: There is a significant difference between the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur.
- H_{02}: There is no significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.
- H_{a2}: There is a significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.
- H_{03}: There is no significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur healthcare products
- Ha3: There is a significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur health care products.

3.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Rural marketing is at the developing stage. It is very important in the current scenario to focus on rural marketing by companies. According to India's population, more than 70% of prospective buyers are living in rural areas. Now a day's people are very conscious about their health which increases the demand for healthcare products. It is very effective to understand the rural marketing strategies and follow them to improve supply chain management, product development, improvement in organization management which deal with the rural market and grab the opportunities of the rural market along with the urban market.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study will be descriptive and analytical and was carried out to identify the factors which form the rural marketing strategies and to evaluate the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur. This study will do to identify the best rural marketing strategies for companies of Health care products.

3.5 SAMPLE DETAILS

Sampling is the process to know about the population from where the data will collect for the research. Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are two methods of sampling. In this study probability sampling method is used. The sample details for this study are:

Sampling technique: Mixed Sampling technique (Qualitative and Quantitative).

Sample frame: Haryana

Sample Size: 385

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Profile		No. of Respondent	Percentage
GENDER	MALE	208	54.03%
	FEMALE	177	45.97%
AGE	Below 20	49	12.73%
	20 to 40	255	66.23%
	40 to 60	80	20.78%
	Above 60	1	0.26%
MARITAL STATUS	Married	230	59.74%
	Unmarried	150	38.96%
	Divorced/ Widow	5	1.30%
OCCUPATION	Agriculture	161	41.82%
	Salary/ Wages	12	3.12%
	Government Employee	38	9.87%
	Private Employee	40	10.39%
	Self Employed (Business)	29	7.53%
	Student	85	22.08%
	Unemployed	15	3.90%
	Other	5	1.30%
QUALIFICATION	12th	128	33.25%
	Graduate	132	34.29%
	Postgraduate	117	30.39%
	Other	8	2.08%
MONTHLY INCOME	0 to 20000	180	46.75%
	20000 to 40000	124	32.21%
	40000 to 60000	46	11.95%
	Above 60000	35	9.09%

Source: Primary Data

The above table depicts that there is balanced contribution of both the gender in the study. There is relatively 8% more male participation in comparison of female respondents. On the basis of study it is found that majority of respondents age is between 20-40 (60%) and 40- to 60 (21%) age. It demonstrates that young generation to middle aged generation is more influencing the study results. Approximately 60% respondents are married which shows that targeted rural market is married person which is more than unmarried person. 41.8% of respondents in rural areas in agriculture occupation followed by students (22.1%) and private employees (10.4%). There is a diverse educational background of the respondents in which maximum respondents are graduated (34%) and 12 pass (33%). It has revealed from the study that maximum respondents have income less than 20,000 (47%) and followed by respondents have 20,000 and 40,000 (32%).

HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no significant difference between the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur.

H_1: There is a significant difference between the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur.

TABLE 2: RANKS

COMPANY	N	MEAN	SUM OF RANKS
PATANJALI	385	389.55	149975.00
DABUR	385	381.45	146860.00
TOTAL	770		

Source: SPSS

TABLE 3: TEST STATISTICS U TEST

	RESULTS
Mann-Whitney U	72555.00
Wilcoxon W	146860.00
Z	-.512
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.608
a. Grouping Variable: Company	

Source: SPSS

A Mann-Whitney U test is employed to investigate whether there is any significant difference between rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur. The Mann-Whitney U value, calculated as 72555, and the associated Wilcoxon W value of 146560 is obtained from the test statistics table.

The results indicate a z value of (–0.512) with a p-value of 0.608 (Asymp. Significance of 2-tailed). The p-value, being greater than the chosen significance level of 0.005 at the 5% significance level, leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

It can be inferred, based on the Mann-Whitney U test; there is no significant difference between the rural marketing strategies between Patanjali and Dabur. This outcome may imply that both companies' strategies have a comparable impact in the rural marketing.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: There is no significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.

H_2: There is a significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.

TABLE 4: RANKS

Respondent Districts	N	Mean Rank
Mahendragarh	92	192.20
Charki Dadri	75	154.65
Rewari	106	208.75
Bhiwani	112	204.43
Total	385	

Source: SPSS

TABLE 5: TEST STATISTICS OF KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST

	Total
Chi-Square	**12.463**
Df	**3**
Asymp. Sig.	**.006**
a. Kruskal Wallis Test	

b. Grouping Variable: Respondent Districts

Source: SPSS

A Kruskal-Wallis test is used here to determine the there is no significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas. Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric equivalent test to one-way ANOVA and it is used here as normality assumption is violated

In this study, the respondents were asked about the factors that affects the purchase of healthcare products in rural areas.

Rural area was divided into 4 Mahendragarh, Charkhi Dadri, Rewari and Bhiwani.

The distributions of the rural area are not normally distributed.

- The observations in each district are independent of each other.
- The distributions in each group are having a similar shape.

As of the above 2 satisfied criteria, Kruskal-Wallis test is being conducted.

The test was conducted to know whether there is any significant factor that affects the purchase of healthcare products on the basis of rural areas, so a Kruskal-wallis test using 5% level of significance is conducted, the H statistic was found 12.463 and p value of 0.006. Since the p-value of the test (p = 0.006) is less than 0.005 at 5% level of significance, our null hypothesis is rejected. The rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that there is a significant difference in the factors influencing the purchase of healthcare products across the rural areas.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03}: There is no significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur healthcare products.

H_3: There is a significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur health care products.

TABLE 6: RANKS

COMPANY	N	MEAN	SUM OF RANKS
1	385	375.42	144538.00
2	385	395.58	15229.00
TOTAL	770		

Source: SPSS

TABLE 7: TEST STATISTICS OF U TEST

	RESULTS
Mann-Whitney U	70233.00
Wilcoxon W	144538.00
Z	-1.276
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.202
a. Grouping Variable: Company	

Source: SPSS

A Mann-Whitney U test is used to determine whether there is any significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur healthcare products. The Mann-Whitney U value, calculated as 70233, and the associated Wilcoxon W value of 144538 is derived from the test statistics table.

The results indicate a z value of (–1.276) with a p-value of 0.202 (Asymp. Significance of 2-tailed). The p-value, being greater than the chosen significance level of 0.005 at the 5% significance level, leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis.

It can be inferred, based on the Mann-Whitney U test; there is no significant difference between the satisfaction level associated with Patanjali and Dabur healthcare products. The outcome suggests that, based on the Mann-Whitney U test, the two brands are perceived similarly in terms of customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Consumers in rural areas should be educated about the importance of health care products and their attributes. This includes understanding the significance of product quality, packaging, and overall satisfaction.
- Encourage consumers to make informed decisions by researching and understanding the health care products they are purchasing. This can involve reading product labels, understanding the ingredients, and considering personal experiences or reviews.

- Consumer has to compare prices and offerings from different brands to make rational decisions. This can help them choose products that offer the best value for money.
- Consumers should actively engage with advertisements on various platforms to stay informed about new products and promotions. Utilize social media platforms to stay connected with health care brands. Many promotions and awareness campaigns are conducted on these platforms, offering an opportunity for consumers to stay informed.
- Companies should more focus on creating a brand image and marketing strategy proper implementation because there are lots of substitutes are available in the market due to which consumer doesn't take time to shift on another brand.
- Companies should prioritize product quality to build trust among consumers. Regular quality checks, adherence to industry standards, and transparent information about ingredients can enhance the perceived value of health care products.
- A strong and wide distribution network to reach all rural consumers is beneficial for companies to get the benefit of economies of scale.
- Design advertisements that are easily understandable to a diverse audience. Clear and concise messaging can effectively communicate product benefits.
- Stay innovative in advertising strategies, exploring new and effective ways to promote products, such as through social media and local events.
- Maintain penetration pricing as a strategy, ensuring it aligns with market dynamics and consumer expectations. Periodically reassess and adjust pricing strategies as needed.
- Time to time training and development session for its staff, distributors, and sellers is provided by the company which improve the effectiveness and efficiency of them
- During the product production and promotion, the company relates these activities with the culture of the consumer.
- The company should have regular and continuous monitoring on rural consumers and markets to analyze the taste, preference, choice, and need for product development and changes in its strategies according to market conditions.

CONCLUSION:

The health care products market is growing at a very fast speed in the rural areas also after the Covid pandemic because people are more concerned about their health and prefer to use healthier and ayurvedic product to boost their immunity system and health. There are various factors that motivate or attract companies towards a rural market like 70% of the population in a rural area, increased literacy ratio, improved infrastructure facilities, government initiatives In the exploration of rural marketing strategies for health care products, particularly those employed by industry stalwarts Dabur and Patanjali, rich insights has unfolded. In this study to accomplish the objective of the study both primary and secondary data is used. There are three hypothesis are constructed. The non-parametric tests are used to test whether the hypothesis accepted or rejected. The results of test is that out of three two hypothesis are accepted and one hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is no significant difference between the rural marketing strategies of Patanjali and Dabur on the basis of collected data. Both companies Patanjali and Dabur implemented their rural marketing strategies properly and the effective result comes in the form of an increase in their sales, revenue and makes their position in rural consumer mind. Rural consumers are strongly aware and satisfied with the health care products of both the companies. It is clearly understand from the study that rural consumer prefer those product in all the categories of health care products (health supplements, nutrition products, digestive, hair care, skin care, oral care and healthy drinks) which has good quality with affordable in price at their nearest local store. Patanjali came in the market with the concept of ayurvedic and natural product and rise competition in the market while Dabur is existing in the market from a decade but still Patanjali entry in the market effect Dabur health care product sell. Dabur change its marketing strategy with anew tagline – "Science based Ayurveda" which increase the trust of consumer on its products. Therefore, we can say emergence of Patanjali is a blessing for Dabur.

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