

FMCGS AS CHANGE AGENTS IN RURAL TRANSFORMATION - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Abhigyan Bhattacharjee*

*Associate Professor, Department of Management, North Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, Tura, Meghalaya, India. E-mail: abhigyan09@rediffmail.com

Abstract Culture and customs, more so in the Indian society, play a predominant role in affecting the behaviour of the consumers. Every society has its own cultural norms and identifies itself with those norms more often. Assam, as a state, is cultural and has strong footage and bondage with old traditions, rituals and beliefs. FMCGs as products mark its identification with the usage of modern lifestyle goods. These goods are believed to be the latest additions towards sophisticating the living standard of the rural society which is subject to bring change in the culture and habit of rural people to a great extent, thereby transforming their attitude towards adopting a modern lifestyle. This paper tried to find out whether the rural people have transformed their attitude towards adopting a modern life style with the use of FMCGs and consider the same as an inevitable necessity of their life or not. In order to find whether there is any shift in habit among the rural households from their traditional lifestyle, a detailed survey was undertaken among the rural households of Kamrup district (rural) of Assam.

The study focused on ten select products in FMCG sector which reflected visible transformation in usage pattern among the people with the gradual change in their mindset towards modernity and usage of modern lifestyle goods and products. However, the presence of traditional usage habits among the people on similar product classes supports the contention that FMCGs in select product classes are yet to be reckoned as indispensable necessity in the rural pockets of rural Assam.

Keywords: FMCGs, Change Agent, Culture, Habits, Rural Transformation, Changing Lifestyle

INTRODUCTION

An FMCG¹ product brings about changes in the lifestyle, taste, habit and fashion of the rural consumers and thereby brings into effect tremendous changes in the quality of life of rural masses. These goods are believed to be the latest additions towards sophisticating the living standard of the rural society which is subject to bring change in the culture and habit of rural people to a great extent and transforming their attitude towards adopting a modern life style. Culture and customs, more so in the Indian society, play a predominant role in affecting the behaviour of the consumers. Every society has its own cultural norms and identifies itself with those norms more often. Assam, as a state, is cultural and has strong footage and bondage with old traditions, rituals and beliefs. It is mainly the case in the rural areas and semi-urban areas.

The traditional knowledge of products is quite popular among the rural masses. Out of the estimated species of wild plants in India, around 75,000 species are used to cope with disease and ailment in the rural areas of the country (Medhi, 1994, 1995). The Assamese people at large have an immense

knowledge about plants and their usage, which is handed over from one generation to another. Before the dawn of the modern branded FMCGs, the rural households have been using the traditional products as items of daily life.

RURAL TRANSFORMATION – AN OVERVIEW

The social scientists have interpreted “rural transformation” from different angles. Famous sociologist in the country, Yogendra Singh (1990) feels that “the pace of social reformation, the emergence of new classes and decline of traditional cultural institutions exemplify the phenomenon of contemporary transformation in rural India. Since the process of restructuration is closely associated with rationalisation the pattern and syndrome of rural transformation vary from region to region”. This means rural transformation has multi-dimensional meaning. According to some social scientists, rural transformation does not mean urbanisation of village or ruralisation of cities. The word “rural transformation” covers wider perspective that is rural to urban transformation as well as transformation in socio-economic and political structure of rural society.

Mahatma Gandhi, too, talked about rural transformation. According to him how transformation takes place is more important than what is transformed. His approach towards rural transformation, inter alia, means cluster approach to village development and self-sufficient village economy (Tiwary, 1994).

Many social scientists believe that “Rural Development” is complementary to “Rural Transformation” but two are not identical, rather rural transformation has been treated as a corollary to the term rural development. In this context the definition extended by World Bank in 1975 on rural development is cited, which states “a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people-the rural poor”. As is evident from the definition, it is a strategy meant for improving the life of poor people. On the other hand, rural transformation refers to major shift in rural formation. Therefore, it can be said that rural development may lead for rural transformation as complementary process.

A REVIEW ON THE FMCGS IN THE RURAL MARKET

Rural India contributes 60 percent of the country’s GDP and accounts for 53 percent of the FMCGs. The rural economy, with an estimated 500 million consumers has remained largely untouched by the global financial meltdown and offers huge opportunities and growth potential (Career hotline, 2009).

A study by Kumar (2007) finds that penetration levels as well as per capita consumption in most product categories like jams; tooth paste; skin care; hair wash etc in India is low indicating the untapped market potential. Burgeoning Indian population, particularly the middle class and the rural segments, presents an opportunity to makers of branded products to convert consumers to branded products.

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% of sales are made to middle class households today and over 50% is in rural India. The sector is excited about a burgeoning rural population whose incomes are rising and which is willing to spend on goods designed to improve lifestyle. Also with a near saturation and cut throat competition in urban India, many producers of FMCGs are driven to chalk out bold new strategies for targeting the rural consumer in a big way. MART, the specialist rural marketing and rural development consultancy, has found that 53percent of FMCG sales and 59 percent of consumer durable sales lie in the rural areas.

It can be configured that the new horizon in which the corporate sector finds a sunrise area is the emerging rural market for fast moving consumer goods (FMCG). It is important to analyse whether with the advent of modern

FMCG products, the age old attachments to the traditional and home produced items have now been diluted and there is an urge for goods of modern living by the rural people or not.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the awareness of the rural consumers towards FMCG products.
2. To identify whether there is any change in the traditional usage habit and behaviour of consumers with the use of FMCG products.

METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted with the sampling design of three stage stratified purposive sampling with the development blocks as the first stage, the village and the target consumer household as the second and third stages, respectively. Information about the consumer behaviour with reference to FMCGs is being obtained from the households of the sample villages. Four blocks are identified from Guwahati sub-division depending upon the distribution of GEN, ST and SC population in the sub-division. From each of these blocks four villages are chosen based on random sampling, and from each village fifteen households belonging to general caste, scheduled tribe and scheduled caste are being interviewed. A total of two hundred forty (240) consumer households spread over sixteen (16) villages in the sub-division are being selected for the purpose of the study. Selection of villages has been made where population of general caste, STs and SCs is found to be dwelling altogether (as per 2001 census). The select villages (sample size) as such account for approximately 30 percent of the total number of the villages which is actually inhabited by the general caste, ST and SC population altogether (diverse socio-economic background). The villages which are not inhabited by general caste, ST and SC population altogether are deliberately excluded by the researcher while selecting the sample size of villages from the concerned blocks. This attempt has been made purposefully in order to establish the buying behaviour of respondents from a diverse pool of socio-economic and cultural family background of population in a particular village. Finally, the selection of fifteen households from each of the chosen villages in a block is taken at 5% which accounts to 240 households. The proportion of households belonging to the three classes, viz, Gen, ST and SC categories is kept in the ratio 3:2:1 i.e. out of 240 household 120 for General Caste, 80 for Scheduled Tribe and 40 for Scheduled Caste. It will be an interesting finding to know whether the rural people have transformed their attitude towards adopting a modern life style with the use of FMCGs and consider it as an inevitable necessity of their daily life. In order to find whether there is any shift

Table 1: Product Awareness and Usage in Rural Households

Product	Aware & Used (%)			Aware & Not Used (%)			Total No of Aware (%)			Not Aware Not Used (%)			Total No of Respondents (240)		
	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC
Washing powder	82.6	88.0	92.0	17.3	12.0	8.0	100	100	100	0	0	0	120	80	40
Laundry Soap	100	100	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	0	0	0	120	80	40
Tooth Paste/ tooth powder	84.6	87.0	88.0	15.3	13.0	12.0	100	100	100	0	0	0	120	80	40
Shampoos	81.3	74.0	82.0	12.0	18.0	14.0	93.3	92.0	96.0	6.6	8.0	4.0	120	80	40
Milk supplement/ health drinks	54.0	58.0	46.0	42.0	31.0	30.0	96.0	89.0	76.0	4.0	11.0	24.0	120	80	40
Skin Cream	88.6	72.0	78.0	8.6	12.0	18.0	97.2	84.0	96.0	2.8	16.0	4.0	120	80	40
Biscuits	100	100	100	0	0	0	100	100	100	0	0	0	120	80	40
Rub & Balms	68.6	48.0	54.0	22.0	14.0	32.0	90.6	62.0	86.0	9.3	38.0	14.0	120	80	40
Mosquito Repellents	62.6	75.0	42.0	24.0	13.0	28.0	86.6	88.0	70.0	13.3	12.0	30.0	120	80	40
Digestives	58.0	67.0	46.0	12.6	24.0	24.0	70.6	91.0	70.0	29.3	9.0	30.0	120	80	40
Analgesics/Cold/Ethical Tablets	31.3	24.0	36.0	17.3	16.0	18.0	48.6	40.0	54.0	51.3	60.0	46.0	120	80	40

Source: Field Survey

in habit among the rural households from their traditional lifestyle, a detailed survey has been conducted among the rural households of Kamrup district of Assam.

ANALYSIS OF TABLE 1

Table 1 shows that the rural consumers are fully aware among the product categories, viz., washing powder, laundry soap, tooth paste, tooth powder, and biscuits. The lowest in the awareness level was found to be in the product category of Analgesics/Cold/Ethical Tablets.

Users among Aware

The percentage of users from among those who are aware was observed to be substantially high within all categories except for Analgesics/Cold/Ethical Tablets among the Gen, ST and SC consumers respectively.

Non-Users among Aware

A vital chunk of the product categories includes the percentage ratio of rural consumers belonging to each Gen, ST and SC community that are aware but have not used the specific product category till now. The reason may be due to non-affordability or non-availability of the particular product category in the rural market. The reasons may also be attributed to the use of traditional products which were found to be in use in most of the rural households as substitute for the modern branded FMCGs. These traditional

products are very much prevalent in the rural households and more importantly act as substitutes to the modern FMCGs.

The marketers need to device strategy to make the products aware among the rural consumers among all the income class. With the presence of alternative traditional products, it remains a tough challenge for the marketers to make the consumers compatible with the modern lifestyle products in the particular product categories.

Not –Aware not Used

Consumers who are not aware and are non-users of the product categories are also significantly prominent. The top product categories in the list are analgesics/cold/ethical tablets and digestives. The other major categories followed are mosquito repellents and milk foods. It may be observed that barring product categories, viz., washing powder, laundry soap, tooth paste, tooth powder and biscuits, it is found that the rural households exhibited non-awareness as well as non-users (ranging from 3 percent to 51 percent) among all the classes, i.e., Gen, ST and SC for the remaining product categories (refer Table 1).

The finding of the above study reflects that awareness in rural market varies widely across the product class. Low awareness in rural market calls for the marketers to strategise its marketing campaign. However, if the non-use of a product is on account of non-awareness itself, the situation may prove to be a potential opportunity for the marketers where in by developing awareness among the consuming

Table 2: Usage of Branded, Local Unbranded and Traditional Products Among Rural Households

Products	Share of Branded Products (%)			Share of Local / unbranded (%)			Share of Traditional Products (%)		
	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC	Gen	ST	SC
Washing powder/Detergent	96.6	68.0	74.0	-	-	-	31.3	15.3	24.0
Laundry Soap	96.6	68.0	74.0	61.3	62.0	58.0	31.3	15.3	24.0
Tooth Paste/ Tooth powder	93.3	89.0	86.0	-	-	-	31.3	45.0	24.0
Shampoos	63.3	69.0	70.0	-	-	-	22.0	29.0	26.0
Milk supplement/Health drinks	54.0	58.0	46.0	-	-	-	77.3	72.0	68.0
Skin Cream	88.6	72.0	78.0	37.3	54.0	62.0	58.6	67.0	70.0
Biscuits/ Confectionery	85.3	86.0	88.0	96.0	92.0	90.0	96.0	92.0	90.0
Rub & Balms	68.6	48.0	54.0	-	-	-	70.6	83.0	72.0
Mosquito Repellents	62.6	57.0	66.0	-	-	-	92.6	96.0	96.0
Digestives	58.0	52.0	56.0	-	-	-	92.0	94.0	96.0
Analgesics/Cold/ Ethical Tablets	31.3	24.0	36.0	-	-	-	92.0	94.0	96.0

Source: Field Survey

class marketing of products may open up.

Table 2 shows the percentage share of branded FMCGs, local unbranded products and the share of existing traditional products among rural households.

Analysis of Table 2

- (a) **Washing Powders/ Detergents:** It may be observed that the usage of branded washing powder/ detergent is quite prominent among the rural households. Among the local unbranded detergent cakes, the *round janata soap* is quite popular. It is important to observe that the percentage share of traditional products used as an alternative to washing powder/ detergents among the rural households is also considerably high. It is found that most of the households still use the traditional indigenous made product *khar* (soda), extracted by burning the stem of banana plant. *Khar* is used as a cleaning agent while washing clothes and therefore is considered as an important substitute for detergent powder or detergent cakes.
- (b) **Tooth Pastes/ Tooth Powders:** Among tooth pastes and tooth powders, it is observed that branded products have the dominant share among the rural households in comparison to local unbranded and traditional products, the percentage usage being 93.3%, 89% and 86% in tooth pastes and tooth powders among General, ST and SC households. Among traditionally used products, the twig of Neem plant (*Mahaneem* in Assamese language) is popularly used to brush teeth. Neem has got medicinal value and cures infection of teeth and therefore is quite popular among the rural households. Twigs of bamboo and babool plants are

also quite popular among the households. Charcoal and common salt are also used important substitutes to clean teeth. The percentage share among the traditionally used products in this segment combined altogether makes up to 31.3%, 45% and 24% among the General, ST and SC population of the households.

- (c) **Shampoos:** It may be observed that the households have good knowledge of different shampoos in the branded category as evident from the figures. The usage percentage being 63.3%, 69% and 70% among the General, ST and SC households. It is worth noting also that the rural households seem to use traditional products as substitute for branded shampoos. It was found that most of the households use *reetha* (*Monixalorguti* in Assamese language) and *shikakai*, a locally found seed for shampooing hair. After oil is extracted from, the remains of mustard husk is mixed with water and used by the rural people as conditioner. These apart, paste of leaves of *Lawsoniainermis* (botanical), locally known as jetuka or mehendi is used as hair toner. The extract of *Hibiscus rosasinensis* (botanical), a flower locally known as Jaba, is also applied in hair as a conditioner. These traditional preparations are used as a substitute for branded shampoo in most of the rural households. It is important to note that these traditional preparations are almost exclusively used by 22%, 29% and 26% of the General, ST and SC households respectively. This trend may be taken as an important consideration by the marketers while marketing their branded shampoos targeting the rural areas.
- (d) **Milk Supplement/ Health Drinks:** As observed from the table, the rural households consume packaged milk supplements where up to 54%, 58% and 46% of General, ST and SC household consume branded

packaged milk supplements. Most of the rural households opined that juice extracted from coconut is an important substitute for cow milk or other milk. It is also an important complement in the preparation of tea and can also be consumed wholly as milk. It is found that most of the rural households rear cattle and goats in their households. As such, cow milk, buffalo milk and goat milk are consumed in most of the rural families. It is important to observe that the percentage consumption of these traditionally consumed milk produce is up to 77.3%, 72% and 68% among the General, ST and SC households which is quite high in comparison to the consumption of packaged milk supplement ordinarily purchased from the market. The traditional milk food as observed have a conspicuous presence among the rural households and has the higher consumption ratio in comparison to the packaged health drinks. One of the reasons for low consumption ratio of branded packaged health drinks among the rural households may be attributed to the consumption habit of cattle milk or coconut milk which is found common in almost every household surveyed. From the marketer's point of view, there is a need to make deeper study about the consumption habit of the rural people. It is therefore difficult to say whether an advertisement on health drink targeting the rural consumers is worth fruitful given the unique life style and consumption habit of the rural people.

- (e) **Skin Cream:** The consumption habit of the rural consumers is quite high in the use of skin cream as evident from the figure that 88.6%, 72% and 78% of the General, ST and SC respectively have the consumption habit of branded packaged skin cream. The use of local unbranded skin cream is also significant, usage percentage being 37.3%, 54% and 62% for the General, ST and SC. The households also exhibited the usage habit of local traditional herbs in their day-to-day skin complications. Among the traditionally used herbs, some are as follows: pastes of potato, papaya, pulses are applied in face to get smooth clear skin. Dog grass (locally known as *Dubari ban*) mixed with turmeric paste (*Haldi* in local term) is used to cure boil, prickly heats and is also helpful in curing skin disease. Indian pennywort (locally known as *Manimuni*), the paste of leaves is applied to cure pimples and skin disease. Leaf of Marigold, (locally termed as *Narji/Gendha*) is yet another effective medicinal leaf used in skin inflammation or cut/ burn. *Sacred basil*, locally known as *tulasi*, the juice of the leaves is locally applied to cure skin disease.

Apart from the above mentioned locally available herbs and its application in medicinal treatment, there are wide usages of varieties of other locally used items which are effectively used in the treatment of various

skin ailments in the rural households. Marketers need to take into consideration the local usages and habits of the target population while launching the particular products in order to make it a successful brand.

- (f) **Biscuits/ Confectionery:** Branded packaged biscuits and confectionery are also popular among the rural households as up to 85.3%, 86% and 88% of the General, ST and SC households opined that they consume branded packaged biscuits. Local unbranded biscuits or local bakery biscuits also find a sizeable portion of share among the households at 96%, 92% and 90% among the General, ST and SC households. It is also interesting to observe that rural households are well accustomed with the local traditional home made confectionary which they make at their home made of local ingredients like coconut, sesame seeds, flour and other locally available materials and make up stuffs like *larus*, *pithas* etc.

It may be observed that branded packaged biscuits have considerable presence in the households in spite of the sizable share of local unbranded and prevalent traditional home made confectionaries among the rural households.

- (g) **Rub & Balms:** Branded rub & balms also have a considerable presence among the rural households with share of 68.6%, 48% and 54% among the General, ST and SC households respectively. Local traditional usage habit is also prevalent among all the categories of households. It is worth noting here that the households use locally found herbs in case of common cold, cough, headache or body ache. Some of the traditional folk usage which the people use as rubs & balms are *Catatropis gigantean* (botanical) locally known as *Akan*, its leaves are slightly warmed up and tied in the affected part to cure muscular pain. *Curcuma angustifolia* (botanical) locally termed as *Ban Haladhi/ Kajalgauri*, the paste of the rhizome is tied over affected part to treat swelling of muscle or dislocated bone. *Black pepper* (locally known as *Jaluk*), is applied to cure waist pain. *Mustard*, locally termed as *Sariah*, oil extracted from seed is massaged to get relief from muscle pain.

The above mentioned traditional usage of herbs and its knowledge among the households is prevalent from generations together, the usage share being 70.6%, 73% and 82% among the General, ST and SC households, respectively.

It may be observed that branded packaged rub & balms have comparatively less usage percentage ratio than the usage and habits which are traditionally being followed among the households. The state is rich in medicinal plants and herbs, together with it there is a wide knowledge of the same in the treatment of various

diseases and ailments especially among the people of the rural areas. Scarcity of land in rural areas is not so acute as the case of urban places. Even people of low income category are an owner of a large area of land. People are of the custom and habit of utilising free area of land in plantation, among which betel nut, mango, papaya, jackfruit etc are common in almost every households. Various medicinal plants and herbs also find ground in most of the households. These come to use in the treatment of ailments and healing of various diseases. Even consulting a doctor will be a secondary option unless locally prescribed natural treatment gets its top priority. Until complications demands serious medical attention people seem to be more secured and comfortable going the natural way in the treatment of diseases.

- (h) **Mosquito Repellents:** The rural households exhibit knowledge and consumption habit of packaged mosquito repellents, the percentage ratio of consumption being 62.6%, 67% and 66% among the General, ST and SC households, respectively. However, it is worth noting that almost every household as a traditional practice burn coconut husk added with latex of tree locally known as *dhona* in their household. As a practice, every evening lighting *dhona* is a customary practice among every religious Hindu family, and is practiced very religiously in the rural households mostly at the strike of dusk. This is done as a mark of respect to the almighty and is traditionally believed to thwart evil and bring purity and peace in the household. The smoke acts as an effective disinfectant and a strong mosquito and insect repellent as well. Leaves of *Neemplant*, paddy hays and even clothes etc are also usually burnt to repel mosquitoes, as opined by majority of the rural households. The traditional practice adds up to 98.6%, 96% and 92% among the General, ST and SC households respectively.
- (i) **Digestives:** It is observed that rural households exhibit the use of branded packaged digestives also which share 58%, 67% and 46% usage among the General, ST and SC households. The households however are quite accustomed with the traditional usage habit of locally found herbs which they use as digestives. Some of the locally used digestives are mentioned below: Pineapple (*matikanthal*) is locally consumed to treat acidity. *Phyllanthusembilica* (botanical), locally known as *Amlakhiis* yet another effective remedy for acidity and indigestion. *Adhatodavasica* (botanical), locally known as *Bahkabears* white flower and leaf. The curry of dried or fresh flower of red variety is taken to get relief from acidity. *Terminaliabelerica* (botanical), locally known as *Bhomora*, powder of the dried fruit is believed to treat acidity. Night Jasmine, (locally termed *Sewali*), its leaf and flower are

consumed to treat acidity. *Terminaliachebula* (*silikha* in local term), its powder of dried fruit is taken to treat acidity and constipation.

The above mentioned locally used digestives cannot be taken as an exhaustive list as there are scores of different varieties of locally available plants and herbs which are effectively used in as remedial to different ailments and diseases among the households.

- (j) **Analgesics/Cold/Ethical Tablets:** The rural households have exhibited consumption of analgesics/cold/ethical tablets as evident from the figures that about 31.3%, 34% and 36% of the General, ST and SC households respectively have opined to have purchased some sort of medicine from chemists shop in case of ailments like cough, cold or fever. However, the traditional usage of naturally prescribed treatment accounts for 92%, 94% and 96% among the General, ST and SC households. Among the traditionally used natural treatment, the following holds the majority of the *usages*. *Ginger*, locally known as *Ada*, pieces of rhizome with salt is eaten to get relief from cough and sour throat. *Adhatodavasica* (botanical), locally known as *Bahka*, juice extracted from leaves of its white variety flower is taken to cure cough and whooping cough. *Terminaliabelerica* (botanical), known as *ashomora* locally, the powder of its dried fruit is taken to cure cough. *Herpestismonuieria* (botanical), known as *asbrahmiin* local term, the juice of the plant is taken to cure cough. Drumstick, locally known as *Chajina*, the leaf and fruit is taken to cure cough, although the fruit is available only seasonally. *Lucusliniolia* (botanical), locally known as *Doron*, juice extracted from leaves is taken to cure cough and respiratory problem. Turmeric, known as *Haladhilocally*, powder of dried rhizome is burnt and smoke is inhaled to treat headache due to cold and cough. Mustard, locally known as *Sariah*, the powdered seed is taken to cure cough. *Asperagusrecemosus* (botanical), known as *Satmullocally*, the juice extracted from root is taken to cure cough. *Euphorbia neriifolia* (botanical), known as *Sijuin* local term, juice extracted from leaves is taken to cure cough and cold. *Terminaliachebula*, locally known as *Silikha*, powder of dried fruit is effective in healing cough and mild fever. *Bay Leaf*, known as *Tejpatlocally*, the leaves are kept in water for few hours and the water is taken to treat cough.

It may be inferred that traditional practices and their remedial treatment has deep rooted base in the culture and habit among the rural households. It is also seen that households following natural treatment for their diseases are common among the General, ST and SC households. Unless disease demands serious medical attention, the households opined that natural treatment

is the best and comfortable way to remedy different ailments. The prevalent traditional system and usages of products is an integral part of the culture of the Assamese society. The study reveals that although the rural people are accustomed with the usage of branded packaged products in different categories, in most of the product categories however, the percentage ratio of branded products is quite low in comparison to the traditional products being used. It is more applicable in the categories of biscuits/confectionary, rubs & balms, mosquito repellents, digestives and analgesics/cold/ethical tablets where traditional usage habit maintains the upper hand than the usage of branded products in the same category.

An increased exposure of rural consumers to urban lifestyle has however led to a gradual change in norms and roles prevalent in the social fabric of villages.

CONCLUSION

The present study reflects that there is visible transformation of rural market with the gradual change in the rural consumer mindset towards modernity with the usage of modern lifestyle goods and products. However, the presence of traditional usage habits among the people on similar classes resembles the contention that FMCGs are yet to be reckoned as indispensable in the rural pockets of rural Assam.

REFERENCES

- Career Hotline. Want a job, Go Rural, (August 2009). *The Telegraph*, Thursday 6, Calcutta.
- Raj, S. J. M., & Selvaraj, P. (2007). *Social Changes and the Growth of Indian Rural Market: An Invitation to FMCG Sector*. Paper presented at the 2007 Part II – Co-Operative, Rural & BOP Marketing, International Marketing Conference on Marketing & Society, 8-10 April, IIMKS.
- Kumar, C. V. (2007). FMCG Spearheading, *Portfolio Organizer*. The ICFAI University Press, Hyderabad, Feb, 14-17.
- Medhi, B. K. (1995). Ethnomedicine: A Study among the Mishings in a Rural Context, *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University*, 9, 61-68.
- Medhi, B. K. (1994). Health culture in a Kaibarta Village. *Bulletin of the Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University*, VIII, pp 39-45.
- Singh, Y. (1990). Contemporary social transformation in India: Processes and contradictions. In T.M. Dak (Eds) *Social Transformation in India*, Ajanta Publications, Delhi.
- Tiwarly, J. (1994). *Rural transformation in India*. Reliance Publishing House, New Delhi.

Sample Population

Blocks	Gaon Panchayats	Villages
Boko Development Block	Uttar Boko G.P.	Alekjari
Do	DakhinPachimBoko G.P.	Dakuwa Para
Do	Pub Bekeli G.P.	Jalukbari
Do	PachimBekeli G.P.	Bondapara
Chaygaon Development block	Champak Nagar G.P.	Kukurmara
Do	PachimChaygaon G.P.	Choudhurykhat
Do	Do	PachimDhuli
Do	Do	Dhekenabari
Hajo Development Block	KetekibariUkhura G.P.	Mokhonia
Do	Do	Ketekibari
Do	Hajo G.P.	NizHajo
Do	Do	BorSapari
Rani Development Block	Ranigaon G.P.	Kandurigaon
Do	Do	Batabari
Do	Do	Tatibama
Do	DakhinBholagaon	Bhella

Source: Field Data

Respondents Profile

Variable	Characteristics	No. of Rural Respondents	In %
Age	Below 20 years	22	9.0
	20-30 years	46	19.0
	31-40 years	114	48.0
	41 years and above	58	24.0
Gender	Male	134	56.0
	Female	106	44.0
Caste	General	120	50.0
	ST	80	33.3
	SC	40	16.7
Household size	Staying alone	7	3.0
	Two-Four	94	39.0
	Five-six	72	30.0
	Above six	67	28.0
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	43	17.6
	Elementary level	42	17.3
	High School level	70	29.3
	Higher Secondary level	48	20.3
	Graduate and Post Graduate	37	15.3
Income per month (in Rs.)	Less than 5000	50	20.7
	Rs(5001-10000)	91	38.0
	Rs (10001-15000)	53	22.0
	Rs (15001-20000)	27	11.3
	Rs 20000 above	19	8.0
Total		240	100

Source: Field Survey Data

ENDNOTES

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), also known as Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) are products that have a quick turn-over, and relatively low cost. They are not sold loose or by weight, do not take up too much space, are not messy to handle and have high consumer demand. Consumers generally put less thought into the purchase of FMCG than other products. The main segments can be classified as personal care (oral care, hair care, soaps, cosmetics and toiletries), house hold care (fabric wash and house hold cleaners), branded and packaged food and tobacco.