

Rural Consumer Purchase Behaviour Towards Mobile Phone with Special Reference to Mandya District, Karnataka

Kavitha R. Gowda* , K. S. Gopalakrishna**

Abstract

India lives in villages! Rural India is a significant market as 68-70% of India lives in villages. Starting from the Father of Nation to industrialists, it has been predicted and noticed that the future of India lies in its villages. Many marketers (HUL, Dabur, LG, Chik Shampoo, Hero Honda, Mahindra, etc.) have made revenue of 35-45% from rural market¹. Today, mobile phones are more than voice communication and have become most important and integral part of life due to various advantages in one product such as - alarm, radio, watching movie/videos, speaking, Whatsapp, access to Facebook, mails, information search, video call, etc. India being big in population and growing economy, with greater population living in villages with improved literacy rates, TV penetration, improved infrastructure, governments and industrialists schemes to improve and tap rural market, is thus a potential market for mobiles too.

Rural market being a significant part of Indian economy, and telecom being a fastest growing sector, this paper focuses on understanding the buying behaviour of rural consumers towards mobile phones from the rural consumers of two villages of Mandya district in Karnataka.

Keywords: Acceptability, Affordability, Availability, Awareness, Rural Market

¹ <https://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-rural-market.aspx>

Introduction

Understanding the consumer is very essential for all marketers in the world. Thus, India and its rural consumers are not an exception, but are most important as a major population lives in villages. Rural consumers are different due to culture, purchasing power, caste, social groups, traditions, and beliefs, which impact the decision-making

process. All these have an influence on purchase decision-making process of rural consumers.

Consumers buy several products for their daily needs as long as they exist. One such product which has become extremely important and a necessary product today is the mobile phone.

According to McKinsey, 2007, communication accounts for 2% of spending by consumer's today and is expanding fastest with a growth rate of 13%. The Indian mobile industry is growing fastest in the world and continues to add more mobile phone connections every month. This growth is noticed due to liberalization of telecommunication laws and policies. According to Gartner report, after China, India would be the fastest telephone market in Asia Pacific. Due to growing competition between the mobile phone manufacturers as well as competition between the service providers, the prices of mobile phones and the call rates have dropped, thus enabling many consumers to buy the products and use the services. Subscriber rates are growing further, every month. The consumers are also spending on buying mobile phones with better technology. It was predicted that mobile phone subscriber base would grow from over 500 million in 2013 to over 800 million in 2019 (number of mobile phone users in India from 2013 to 2019, www.statista.com). In India, 13 million new connections were added in the third quarter of 2015, followed by China which added 7 million, the US (6 million), Myanmar (5 million), and Nigeria added 4 million subscribers, according to Ericsson Mobility Report for 2015 (*Business Standard*, 18th November 2015). Globally, the subscriptions of smartphones are expected to increase from 3.4 billion in 2015 to 6.4 billion by 2021. India is pegged at 77% penetration of mobile

* Assistant Professor, Department of Management, CMS Business School, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.
Email: profkavithargowda@gmail.com

** HOD of Commerce, B E S Evening College, Jayanagar, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

phones against global average of 99%. According to Ericsson Mobility Report, it is expected that the mobile subscription in India will increase by 1.4 billion by 2020.

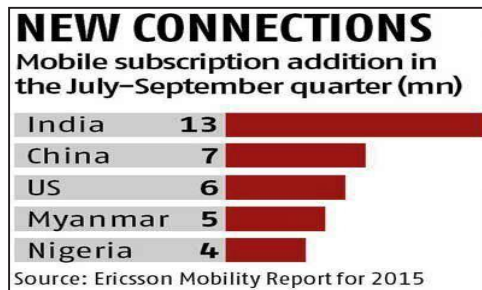


Fig. 1: Mobile Subscriptions

Thus, India is a huge market for mobile phones.

Rural

Government agencies from IRDA & National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) define ‘Rural’ as “a village with a population of less than 5,000 with 75% of the male population engaged in agriculture etc.”²

The Census of India defines any habitation with a population density less than 400 per sq.km, where male working population of at least 75% is engaged in agriculture and where there exists no municipality or board, as a rural habitation.³ According to the RBI, all locations with population up to 10,000 will be considered rural, irrespective of whether village or town.³

Introduction to Indian Rural Market

Rural India comprises around 840 million people; around 70% of population, with over 600,000 villages and 56% of national income. The Indian rural market with its vast size and demand base offers greater opportunities to many marketers.

It accounts for around 55% of the manufacturing GDP; rural areas were host very closer to 75% of new factories built in the last decade, while the rural factories account for 70% of all new manufacturing jobs.

² <http://www.bms.co.in/rural-marketing-notes/>, 4th June 2014.

³ Kashyap Pradeep, (2012), 2e, Rural Marketing, Pearson, Delhi.

During the period 2009-2012, rural consumption per person increased by 19% annually, according to National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) (Indian Rural Market, November 2013).

In incremental terms, spending in rural India during this period increased by US\$69 billion, significantly higher than US\$55 billion by urban populations (IBEF, November 2013, <http://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-rural-market.aspx>).

There is a demand for consumer products as middle- and high-income households in rural India are increasing. A survey by the NCAER, India’s premier economic research entity, recently confirmed (2014) that rise in rural incomes is almost in pace with urban incomes. With an average income from 55 to 58% of in 1994-95, the average rural income in 2001-02 has gone up to 63-64% and touched almost 66% in 2004-05. It is noticed that the growth in rural middle class is at 12% against the 13% growth of its urban counterpart. Thus, rural consumers search for value in their products as well.

Urban Indian subscribers were 582.95 million, and mobile subscription of rural India was of 435.02 million. Urban mobile subscriber share stands at 57.27% to that of rural subscriber with 42.73%.

As described by the Chairman of Godrej Group, Adi Godrej: “the rural consumer is discerning and the rural market is vibrant. At the current growth, it will soon outstrip the urban market. The rural market is no longer sleeping but we are.”

Literature Review

The rural market of India has noticed a tremendous change from past 10 to 12 years, in terms of development in infrastructure, increased literacy rates, demand for FMCG and automobiles; is predicted as next target market for many other products as well. Of all the sectors, it is in the area of telecommunication and retailing that a prospective growth is expected. India being around 70% rural, with growing demand for products, improved literacy rate, better income, and purchasing power, can thus be predicted as next destination for the marketers. Mobile being an integral part of consumers’ life globally, while a lot of studies has been carried out focusing at rural market of India with reference to FMCG products but hardly any work for shopping goods with special reference to mobile phones, has been the reason behind this research. This is research on rural consumer buyer behaviour with respect to mobile phones in Karnataka with special reference to villages of Mandya District.

- Aniruddha Akarte, and Dr. Amishi Arora, (2012), Indian telecom market in transitive economy: A comparative study on buying behaviour of rural and urban buyers on mobile phones was conducted in Vidarbha region, Amravati district, Maharashtra State, aimed at understanding buyer behaviour of rural and urban consumers of Amravati district on factors like price, quality, style, function, brands, and current trends, while the other factors being source of information, brand preferred, and role of family members in influencing buyer behaviour. The study concludes that rural consumers are not similar when it comes to giving priority to brand, and functionality while shopping a mobile phone, but are similar to prioritizing price.
- Jegan A. and Sudalaiyandi (2012) conducted a research study on consumer behaviour towards mobile phone services in Kovilpatti, Thoothukudi district on 100 mobile users and concluded on factors which influence the consumers while buying a particular mobile phone were call tariffs followed by network coverage and brand image.
- Dr. Pratyush Tripathi & Prof. Satish Kr. Singh, (2012), in their study titled Consumer Behavior towards the Preference and Usage of Mobile Phones Service in Bhopal, focused on understanding the factors leading to consumer satisfaction on using a mobile phone, and to understand the effectiveness of activities of promotion incorporated by companies if had any impact on purchasing the same. The study revealed that the service of mobile phones was used by men more than women, irrespective of being educated or uneducated. Maximum cell phone users being students, with 55%. The most preferred service provider being Airtel (35%) followed by Vodafone (20%) and Reliance (20%). The study concluded that product features and their benefit, free SMS, would attract a customer and customer satisfaction can be enhanced by offering better schemes by the marketer.
- Richard Kipkemoi Ronoh, (2012), in the research titled: Usage Patterns of Mobile Phones amongst University Students in Kenya, concluded that the technology which would fit their lifestyle and individual needs would be the reason for choosing a particular mobile phone amongst university students. The researcher felt that since very little research was conducted in this area, and the choice of university students as respondents was important due to phenomenal growth and impact wireless technology. Assuming that these students are heavy users of technology, this study according to the researcher became the prime focus. The research was focused on understanding the influence of both intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivational factors driving the usage of mobile phones. The study revealed that the technology is not just used for simple purpose but is used according to their lifestyle and individual needs.
- Mesay Sata (2013) researched on paper titled: Factors Affecting Consumer Buying Behavior of Mobile Phone Devices, found correlation between six factors like, price, social influence, durability, brand, product features, and after-sales service with the decision to buy a mobile phone device. Ethiopia, being a developing country with wide increase in usage of mobile phone, has attracted international brands. The respondents chosen were from urban region of Ethiopia. Study does not mention about rural respondents due to the competition that is existing in mobile phone manufacturers. This study helps marketers understand the factors influencing purchase of mobile phones to increase the sales of their brands. The study conducted on factors or variables like durability, price, brand name, social influence, product feature, and after-sales service had relationship with the buyers' decision on mobile purchase. The study concludes saying that Nokia would lose sales if technological changes were not incorporated like Samsung, and that Samsung would take away the market share from Nokia. Every marketer should update technology in their mobile phones along with focus on brand personality, positioning, differentiation, and design.
- Sivakumar Alur and Jan P. L. Schoormans, (2013), suggested that due to poor infrastructure prevailing in rural markets backed by low purchasing power, and price sensitive population, new product introduction will not be easy. This study focused on understanding retailer's role in new product introduction with the context of manufacturer and rural consumer in general. Syndicated marketing mea-

asures like joint product marketing and distribution, communicating product values, and lower pricing through innovative products as well as the reduction of costs can make new product introduction acceptable to the retailer and the consumer. The study says that rural retailers exercise power due to a number of different reasons. As retailers are directly in touch with the customers, they understand customers better and thus can help marketers to understand the factors that empower them while bargaining with companies in new product introductions.

- Puneet Bansal, Veerpaul Kaur Maan and Mandeep Rajora, (2013), in their study on Rural Retailing in India, have suggested on various issues like infrastructure, customization, and innovative approach to be considered before entering a rural market.
- Mridanish Jha (2013) studied on a comparative study of the buying behaviour of rural and urban consumers towards mobile phone in Bihar. It was a comparative study. The study also concluded on saying that rural consumers give priority to local languages in their phones, while price being the next priority and advertisement being the third important factor influencing the buying behaviour.
- Dr. Kanakaiah Madasi and Ch. Raghupataiah, (2014), in their study titled: Buying behavior towards mobile phone: A comparative analysis of rural and urban consumers, focused on understanding the motivational factors influencing mobile purchases by rural consumers and comparing them with that of urban consumers. The study focused on understanding rural purchase decision based on examining the source of information, role of family members, and customer satisfaction. This study also focused on understanding motivators like quality, function, price, style, brand, and quality impacting purchase decision. The study indicates that the rural and urban consumers were not different towards price and style but differed in importance given for quality, brand, and functions, which means that the rural consumers are less quality, function, and brand conscious compared to urban consumers.
- Inderjeet Sethi and A. S. Chawla, (2014), in their research titled: Influence of cultural, social and marketing factors on the buying behavior of Telecom users: A comparative study of rural, semi-urban and

urban areas in and around Chandigarh, state that social, marketing, and cultural factors have a great influence on the buying behaviour/purchase behaviour of the users of rural, semi-urban, and urban areas. The advancement in technology has narrowed the difference between the awareness and usage of mobile services in different areas. The factors under social influence like family and friends had almost equal impact among urban and semi-urban region. Group opinion had influence of 63% of respondents in urban region, 60% in rural region and influenced the most at 69% in semi-urban respondents. Mobile was also found to be owned for prestige reasons among urban consumers. The brand image had high impact in urban consumers. While buying a mobile phone, most of the semi-urban consumers strongly agreed on Word Of Mouth (WOM) influencing buying, 100% of rural consumers strongly agreed on sales promotion offers, and 77% of rural consumers strongly agreed on advertising campaign while 69% urban and 57% of semi-urban consumers agreed on advertising campaign. Even if rural consumers were not highly educated, they still were aware about the technology and preferred innovation in services.

- Shaktiman Singh, Saurabh Kumar, Tanmay Goel and Sahib Chawla, (2014), in their study titled: Impact of brand on rural and urban consumer behavior – a study on mobile phone buyers, preferred brand as a variable, impacting sales of mobile phones among rural and urban buyers. The study aimed at comparing buying behaviour of rural and urban, and understanding their priorities while making a purchase decision regarding mobile phones. The study revealed that the urban consumers are more style and brand conscious compared to their rural counterpart who gave more importance to price and functionality of mobile phones. The study also reveals that urban population is more dependent on the Internet as a source of information while TV ads and the telephone retailers act as source of information for the rural consumers.
- Dr. R. S. Mishra, (2014), in his research titled: Mobile phone usage patterns among Indian consumer, focused on understanding factors influencing the consumers for brand preference, and to study relationship between the availability of brands and consumer buying behaviour towards mobile

phones. The sample for the study was Varanasi and Allahabad districts. The study was conducted to understand factors that influence mobile phone usage pattern on brand, price, quality, style, and functions among respondents/youth or college students suggests that service providers must focus on improving network connectivity.

- Khaing Wai Naing and Sirion Chaipoopirutana, (2014), in their research on the factors affecting purchase intention of a smartphone in Yangon, Myanmar, stated that there is a strong positive relationship between: perceived quality - emotional value, consumer aspiration and purchase intention, product image and consumer aspiration, and attitude towards product and purchase intention. The research suggests that this study would help marketers to understand the Myanmar consumers better, their purchase decision towards Apple iPhone, and can help achieve competitive advantage. The research suggests that the company must focus on perception of consumers. By improving quality of the product, the companies can enhance positive emotional value of the product, and that the product image has impact on purchase decision in consumers while buying mobile phone. Thus, knowledge of purchase intention, perceived quality, and image of product can further increase positive attitude towards product offerings further leading to increased sales.
- Md Reaz Uddin, Nusrat Zahan Lopa, and Md Oheduzzaman, (2014), conducted a research on factors affecting consumer buying decisions of mobile phone: A study on Khulna City, Bangladesh focused to understand the underlying factors affecting customers choosing mobile phone. The study collected data from equal ratios of male and female, employees, students, and businessmen. The result suggested that the most important factor being physical attribute, followed by pricing, size and weight, operating facilities and charging, recommendations by friends, neighbours, and colleagues, and impact of advertising on purchase decision. The study did not consider customer expectation; rather, it focused on the issues of customers which they faced while using the product in current scenario.
- Agago, Tirfe, and Nittala, (2015), in their study titled, Personal factors influencing consumers buying decision of mobile phone: A case of Ethiopia, Dilla City, chose age, education, income, and occupation of consumers as factors influencing buying decision of mobile phones. The study surveyed on respondents from business, government employees, teachers, as well as students. Customers were studied on the basis of pre-purchase evaluation, post-purchase evaluation, and personal factors. The research concluded on stating that the consumers make purchase decision on the basis of factors like product evaluation and personal factors. Significant association between innovative features, image factors, portability, and age of consumers was observed. Significant association between post-purchase factors, innovative features, and monthly income of consumers were noticed.
- Dr. Sathya Swaroop Debashish and Dr. Nabaghan Mallick, (2015), through their study titled Consumer behavior towards mobile phone handsets - a study in Odisha, observed that companies need to develop specific marketing strategies and action plans taking into account the complex set of factors that influence consumer's behaviour.
- Saurabh S. Desai and S.K.Sharma, (2015), in their study titled - A study of consumer behavior exhibited by the college-going students, in purchasing mobile handset; with special reference to Pune region, focused on understanding consumer behaviour of young college-going customers for mobile handsets. The parameters undertaken in the study were robust built, large display, long battery life, attractive colour, aptly sized, latest Operating System, great sound, and great camera (more than 5MP). The results of the survey say that Samsung was the most preferred brand, followed by Apple and Nokia. The consumers preferred Apple as the preferred brand to switch over and that the customers were not loyal to a particular brand due to technical deficiency.
- Gautam R Parmar, Ajay Kumar Ukas, and Aditya Jagdish, (2015), in their research titled Factors affecting on mobile usage in rural area, focused on understanding how rural consumers use mobile and

which were the factors affecting on usage from rural areas of MP and Maharashtra. The factors like need and social status, perceived usefulness, social influence, product attributes, and perceived risk control were found to be affecting mobile usage. Since the penetration of mobile phones and TV was increasing in rural India, it was thus found to be necessary to know the usage pattern and factors affecting usage pattern. The study also tried to understand problems faced by rural consumers while using the product which would be a hurdle to the marketers and thus would suggest overcoming the problem. Based on the factor, need, and social status, it was observed that mobile has become an integral part of life, was also a status symbol for few, while it also defined lifestyle for many.

Research Methodology

List of Variables Under Study

Independent variables: Age, Key Opinion Leader, Brand Preference, and Advertising

Dependent variable: Rural Consumer Behaviour

Data Collection

- The primary data were collected by interviewing rural consumers with the help of structured questionnaire. A sample size of 303 from two villages; Keelara and Alakere from Mandya District of Karnataka were collected by questionnaire supported by interviewing.

Hypothesis 1: Age has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone

- Secondary data: Since the study is focused at rural consumers, due to the availability of several research studies conducted on rural consumers, several journals have been referred for finalizing the topic and framing of hypothesis. The theory aspects from books and journals have helped in establishing the variables to be studied or researched.

Hypotheses

- Age has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.
- Brand has influence on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.
- Key opinion leaders influence buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.
- Advertising has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.

Mandya District: As per the Census 2011, Mandya district has population of 18,05, 769 with 70.40% literacy rate. The district stands 7th place in rural population of Karnataka.

- Village 1: Keelara: Keelara is a village around 10 km away from Mandya and has population according to Census 2001, as 5,263, while 5,112 according to Census 2011.
- Village 2: Alakere is a village closer to Keelara with population of 2,725.

The main crop of these villages are sugarcane and paddy, while a few grow *ragi* and vegetables too.

Table 1.1: Descriptive for Impact on Buying Behaviour of Age group – Mandya District

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Which of the following mobile phone do you own?	15 - 25 YEARS	26	2.00	.000
	25 - 35 YEARS	105	8.05	6.093
	35 - 45 YEARS	101	3.98	.800
	45 - 55 YEARS	71	9.82	5.069
	Total	303	6.59	5.122

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Is it a new or used mobile phone?	15 - 25 YEARS	26	1.00	.000
	25 - 35 YEARS	105	1.00	.000
	35 - 45 YEARS	101	1.42	.495
	45 - 55 YEARS	71	1.97	.167
	Total	303	1.37	.483
If it's a used mobile phone, would you prefer buying a new one?	15 - 25 YEARS	26	1.08	.272
	25 - 35 YEARS	71	1.01	.119
	35 - 45 YEARS	13	2.00	.000
	45 - 55 YEARS	0	.	.
	Total	110	1.15	.354
If yes, which of the following would you like to own	15 - 25 YEARS	26	1.73	.533
	25 - 35 YEARS	70	5.73	4.198
	35 - 45 YEARS	0	.	.
	45 - 55 YEARS	0	.	.
	Total	96	4.65	4.008
Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons	15 - 25 YEARS	26	1.00	.000
	25 - 35 YEARS	105	1.85	.794
	35 - 45 YEARS	101	2.22	.415
	45 - 55 YEARS	71	3.06	.232
	Total	303	2.18	.791

Table 1.2: Results of ANOVA for Descriptive for Impact on Buying Behaviour of Age Group - Mandya District

<i>ANOVA</i>					
		<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>
Which of the following mobile phone do you own?	Between Groups	2198.090	3	732.697	38.278
	Within Groups	5723.342	299	19.142	
	Total	7921.432	302		
Is it a new or used mobile phone?	Between Groups	43.858	3	14.619	165.086
	Within Groups	26.478	299	.089	
	Total	70.337	302		
If it's a used mobile phone, would you prefer buying a new one?	Between Groups	10.841	2	5.420	204.788
	Within Groups	2.832	107	.026	
	Total	13.673	109		
If yes, which of the following would you like to own	Between Groups	303.000	1	303.000	23.289
	Within Groups	1222.958	94	13.010	
	Total	1525.958	95		
Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons	Between Groups	102.472	3	34.157	118.009
	Within Groups	86.544	299	.289	
	Total	189.017	302		

Considering the factor of Age on one side and other variables like 'Mobile phone of Brand owned', 'owned mobile being used one or new one', 'If it's a used mobile phone, would you prefer buying a new one', 'If yes, which of the following would you like to own', 'Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons' factors being

on the measuring side, it was observed clearly as shown in ANOVA Table, the value of F being 38.278, 165.086, 204.7, 23.289, & 118.009, respectively. At 5% Level of Significance with 95% confidence intervals, it can be said that Age has impact on buying behaviour of consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.

Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. Which means, Age has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.

Hypothesis 2: Brand has influence on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone

Table 2.1: Results of Descriptive for Influence on Buying Behaviour - Mandya District

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	
Were you aware of the brand of mobile phone before buying it?	SAMSUNG	54	1.00	.000	.000
	KARBONN	52	1.00	.000	.000
	MICROMAX	45	1.33	.477	.071
	NOKIA	54	1.96	.191	.026
	LG	5	2.00	.000	.000
	GIONEE	9	2.00	.000	.000
	OPPO	12	2.00	.000	.000
	LAVA	45	1.00	.000	.000
	LYF	7	2.00	.000	.000
	CELKON	2	2.00	.000	.000
	SWIPE	0	.	.	.
	Total	285	1.36	.480	.028
How were you aware of the mobile phone you own?	SAMSUNG	60	1.85	1.635	.211
	KARBONN	52	2.00	.000	.000
	MICROMAX	45	2.00	.000	.000
	NOKIA	54	2.19	.392	.053
	LG	5	3.00	.000	.000
	GIONEE	9	3.00	.000	.000
	OPPO	12	3.00	.000	.000
	LAVA	45	1.82	.387	.058
	LYF	11	3.09	1.375	.415
	CELKON	9	3.67	1.871	.624
	SWIPE	1	6.00	.	.
	Total	303	2.17	.990	.057
Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons? Price was Lesser, TV Advertisement Newspaper Advertisements Due to Friends Opinion Due to Family Members Opinion Due to Opinion of Village Head Due to Opinion of Highly Knowledgeable Member in the Village Due to Village Teachers Opinion Due to Bank Village Others	SAMSUNG	60	1.27	.634	.082
	KARBONN	52	2.17	.382	.053
	MICROMAX	45	2.18	.387	.058
	NOKIA	54	2.83	.376	.051
	LG	5	3.00	.000	.000
	GIONEE	9	3.00	.000	.000
	OPPO	12	3.00	.000	.000
	LAVA	45	1.69	.633	.094
	LYF	11	3.00	.000	.000
	CELKON	9	3.33	.500	.167
	SWIPE	1	4.00	.	.
	Total	303	2.18	.791	.045

Table 2.2: ANOVA Results of Descriptive for influence on buying behaviour – Mandya District

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	
Were you aware of the brand of mobile phone before buying it?	Between Groups	53.569	9	5.952	137.249
	Within Groups	11.926	275	.043	
	Total	65.495	284		
How were you aware of the mobile phone you owned?	Between Groups	76.464	10	7.646	10.182
	Within Groups	219.285	292	.751	
	Total	295.749	302		
Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons? Price was Lesser, TV Advertisement Newspaper Advertisements Due to Friends Opinion Due to Family Members Opinion Due to Opinion of Village Head Due to Opinion of Highly Knowledgeable Member in the Village Due to Village Teachers Opinion Due to Bank Village Others	Between Groups	124.119	10	12.412	55.846
	Within Groups	64.898	292	.222	
	Total	189.017	302		

Considering the factor of Brand owned on one side and other variables like ‘Were you aware of the brand of mobile phone before buying it?’, ‘How were you aware of the mobile phone you own?’, ‘Did you buy the mobile phone due to the following reasons?’, factors being on the measuring side, it was observed clearly as shown in

ANOVA Table, the value of F being 137.249, 10.182, & 55.846, respectively. At 5% Level of Significance with 95% confidence intervals, it can be said that Brand has influence on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone. Thus, hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: Key Opinion Leaders Influence Buying Behaviour of Rural Consumers While Shopping for a Mobile Phone

Table 3.1: Descriptive for Key Opinion Leaders Influence on Buying Behaviour - Mandya District

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Did you buy the mobile phone due to your prior awareness?	Price Was Lesser	48	1.00	.000
	Tv Advertisement	30	1.00	.000
	Newspaper Advertisements	10	1.00	.000
	Due To Friends Opinion	56	1.09	.288
	Due To Family Members Opinion	15	1.00	.000
	Due To Opinion Of Village Head	4	1.00	.000
	Due To Village Teacher’s Opinion	3	1.00	.000
	Relatives	10	1.00	.000
	Shopkeeper	2	1.00	.000
	Total	178	1.03	.166

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Did you end up buying a different mobile phone than what you had initially planned for?	Price Was Lesser	48	1.00	.000
	Tv Advertisement	30	1.00	.000
	Newspaper Advertisements	10	1.00	.000
	Due To Friends Opinion	56	1.09	.288
	Due To Family Members Opinion	15	1.00	.000
	Due To Opinion Of Village Head	4	2.00	.000
	Due To Village Teacher's Opinion	3	2.00	.000
	Relatives	10	1.70	.483
	Shopkeeper	2	2.00	.000
	Total	178	1.12	.323

Table 3.2: ANOVA Results Descriptive for Key Opinion Leaders Influence on Buying Behaviour - Mandya District

<i>ANOVA</i>					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Did you buy the mobile phone due to your prior awareness?	Between Groups	.306	8	.038	1.420
	Within Groups	4.554	169	.027	
	Total	4.860	177		
Did you end up buying a different mobile phone than what you had initially planned for?	Between Groups	11.869	8	1.484	37.684
	Within Groups	6.654	169	.039	
	Total	18.522	177		

Considering the factor of Opinion Leaders on one side and other variables like 'Did you buy the mobile phone due to your prior awareness?' and 'Did you end up buying a different mobile phone than what you had initially planned for?', factors being on the measuring side, it was observed clearly as shown in ANOVA Table, the value of

F being 1.420 & 37.684, respectively. At 5 % Level of Significance with 95% confidence intervals, it can be said that Key Opinion Leaders influence buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone. Even if they are few in number, they have their influence as an independent factor without comparing other influencers.

Hypothesis 4: Advertising has Impact on Buying Behaviour of Rural Consumers While Shopping for a Mobile Phone

Table 4.1: Descriptive for Advertising Impact on Buying Behaviour - Mandya District

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
If yes, did you decide to buy a different mobile phone due to the following reasons?	Family	42	1.76	.692
	Friends	131	4.01	2.813
	Relatives	0	.	.
	Village Head	0	.	.
	Teachers	0	.	.
	TV Advertisement	5	4.00	.000
	Total	178	3.48	2.615

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
To what extent has the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – TV?	Family	23	5.00	.000
	Friends	24	5.00	.000
	Relatives	0	.	.
	Village Head	0	.	.
	Teachers	0	.	.
	Tv Advertisement	0	.	.
	Total	47	5.00	.000
To what extent has the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – RADIO?	Family	42	1.00	.000
	Friends	145	1.00	.000
	Relatives	37	1.00	.000
	Village Head	5	1.00	.000
	Teachers	5	1.00	.000
	Tv Advertisement	0	.	.
	Total	234	1.00	.000

Table 4.2: ANOVA Results for Descriptive for Advertising Impact on Buying Behaviour – Mandya District

ANOVA					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
If yes, did you decide to buy a different mobile phone due to the following reasons? Price was Lesser, TV Advertisement Newspaper Advertisements Due to Friends Opinion Due to Family Members Opinion Due to Opinion of Village Head Due to Opinion of Highly Knowledgeable Member in the Village Due to Village Teachers Opinion Due to Bank Village Others	Between Groups	161.799	2	80.899	13.501
	Within Groups	1048.611	175	5.992	
	Total	1210.410	177		
To what extent has the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – TV?	Between Groups	.000	1	.000	.
	Within Groups	.000	45	.000	
	Total	.000	46		
To what extent has the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – RADIO?	Between Groups	.000	4	.000	.
	Within Groups	.000	229	.000	
	Total	.000	233		

Considering the factor of Advertising on one side and other variables like 'If yes, did you decide to buy a different mobile phone due to the following reasons', 'To what extent have the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – TV', & 'To what extent have the following influenced you to buy a mobile phone – RADIO', factors

being on the measuring side, it was observed clearly as shown in ANOVA Table that the value of F being 13.501 consolidated. At 5% Level of Significance with 95% confidence intervals, it can be said that Advertising has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping for a mobile phone.

Research Findings and Analysis

Mobile phone is not just a means of communication but has also become an essential product. Its availability is vast in urban areas, and is growing in rural regions too. The life of a mobile phone may not be many years due to wear and tear; thus, a potential product. Among shopping goods, this product has shortest life and thus frequent purchases and the demand for the same will lead to more sales in a marketer's point of view.

To understand the rural consumer buying behaviour towards mobile phone, research was conducted with a total of 303 sample size from two villages of Mandya district, Karnataka.

Discussions, based on the questionnaire supported by interview, are as follows.

Discussion

- India, being big in population with almost 70% living in villages, with improved literacy rates, income, and better infrastructure, is a vast market for mobile phones too. Marketers should customize their marketing strategies to focus on rural sales. KOL have influence on purchase decision-making, friends being most important influencers. Major earning of rural respondents from both the districts was from agriculture. In Mandya district, it was majorly through sugarcane and paddy. Due to the fact that TV penetration is higher in rural India, and also since it was found that the respondents get awareness through TV and newspapers, marketers can thus utilize advertising through TV and newspapers to create awareness and influencing the rural consumers while choosing a mobile phone.
- Nokia and Samsung are the most possessed brands among the rural consumers of both the villages. Mobile phones of brands like Micromax, Lava, Karbonn, Oppo, and Vivo are also owned by the respondents along with LYF, HTC, LG, Swipe, Celkon, etc. It was surprising to know that the mobile phones which are exclusively sold online, like Readme, One plus 1, One plus two, and Moto G are also owned by a few of the respondents. This could be due to employed respondents working in nearby towns and cities are exposed to the Internet and use the same. These respondents could further spread a positive word-of-mouth.
- Rural consumers or respondents also prefer branded mobile phones. Majority of them gave equal preference to brand as well as price. Thus, for a marketer, it would not be difficult to sell a branded mobile phone; but then, he needs to price it by taking into consideration the affordability of the rural consumers. Features that are required and beneficial to the rural respondents or consumers should be given priority while designing mobile phone products. Too high technology in a mobile phone may not be relevant while designing a mobile phone.
- Retailers have also influenced few rural respondents while buying a mobile phone. Retailers, if display many different models of brand with different price tags, and highlight on offers provided by a marketer, would further enhance sales. Marketer should try to build cordial relationship with these retailers since not all retailers can afford to display all brands and the varieties of mobile phones offered by all brands. By providing training to the salesmen of these retailers, the salesperson's knowledge about product, features could get enhanced along with increased confidence in a selling.
- Since a few respondents are self-employed and employed too, chances of selling smartphones to these respondents are high by providing EMI option. Sales could be further enhanced by providing offers during harvest and important festivals in villages. Print advertisements can be displayed in *haats* or *melas* too.
- Demands for mobile phones are high in rural market as a majority of the respondents prefer to own yet another mobile too. Mobile phone's life is not big. It usually works well for 2 to 5 years or at the most 8 years, after which, anyhow a new mobile phone has to be purchased. Thus, in general, mobile phone market is attractive, and selling in rural market is also beneficial to a marketer.
- From the findings, it is observed that Samsung is the most preferred brand and desired to be possessed as a next mobile phone, followed by demand for Oppo, Vivo, Lava, Karbonn, and Micromax. A few preferred Apple brand too.

Suggestions

- Rural market for mobile phones is lucrative, especially in Karnataka, due to the findings of this research. Thus, it is required by a marketer to understand the affordability of majority of rural respondents who constitute as agriculturist and have varying income due to the fluctuations in the price and the harvest.
- Marketers need not provide the kind of technology or more features in their mobile phones as they offer for urban consumers. Rural buyers need a mobile phone majorly for speaking, listening to music, and capturing pictures. This stands for acceptability of 4A of rural market. To make the price of mobile phones more affordable, marketers can concentrate on most important and useful features to provide if not all the features which rural consumer might not use.
- Marketers should note that even small villages have very few retailers, as was noticed in Keelara; thus, they need to reach them to reach many. Since the respondents trust these retailers as they also belong to the same village, it would be easier for a retailer to sell a particular brand of mobile phone. Thus, accessibility of 4A is found relevant in this study too.
- The main purpose of advertisement is to create awareness about the products and should aim to sell more. Thus, advertisements should be crafted in such a manner that creating awareness and inducing sales could be achieved through them. A marketer in order to show its advertisements in local languages

must understand; which of the regional channel is viewed most, serial, slot and thus, must advertise more during the most viewed serial or show.

- Marketers can sponsor some awareness programmes/events in schools and colleges for creating awareness and induce sales too. They can also add their product with other electronic goods and show how much a customer is saving.
- These kinds of studies conducted at state level or at national level can benefit academicians and marketers to understand consumer buying behaviour of rural market better.

Gap of the Study

- Similar work can be conducted in other districts of Karnataka to understand the rural market of Karnataka better.
- Many more factors can be added while conducting a similar research.
- Similar work can be conducted in different states of India to understand rural market of India better.

References

- IBEF. (2017). Indian Rural Market-Rural Segment Quickly Catching Up. Retrieved from <https://www.ibef.org/industry/indian-rural-market.aspx>
- BMS. (2010). Profile of Rural Marketing: Definition of rural. Retrieved from <http://www.bms.co.in/rural-marketing-notes/>, 4th June 2014.
- Kashyap, P. (2012). *Rural marketing* (2nd ed.). Pearson, Delhi.