

Exogenous Stimulants influencing rural consumer's while choosing mobile phone.

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Abstract

Today, in this era of globalization marketers have not only focused serving the needs of urban customers with value, but also have started giving importance to Indian rural market. 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. The Indian rural market with its vast size and demand base offers great opportunities to many marketers. Rural India comprises around 840 million people; around 70% of population, with over 600,000 villages and 56 per cent of national income. The Indian rural market generates about 50 per cent of the country's gross domestic product. There is a slight improvement in the purchasing pattern of rural consumers as their discretionary income is increasing. If India is a huge market for mobile phone, it is also due to huge population based in rural part of India. Marketers have to work on strategies to capture the growing rural market by understanding the needs of rural consumers, which is different compared to urban consumers based on affordability and preferences, strive to provide those products and services to have a profitable exchange. The companies need to make proper assessment while marketing for the rural India. India has approximately 700 million mobile phone users, out of which 320 million are rural mobile users (How smartphones are penetrating deeper in rural India, 25th May 2015, The rural Marketing Journal). The penetration of mobile phone in rural market has increased from 22% to 38% in the last four years. This research is an attempt to fill the gap by considering an extensive work on mobile phone as a potential market due to its 'essential' need for rural market of India.

Keywords: mobile phones, rural consumers, preference, buying behavior, influencer's, factors, advertisements, key opinion leaders, brand.

I INTRODUCTION

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 provider, the prices of mobile phones and the call rates has dropped respectively 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, 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 smart phones are expected to increase from 3.4 billion in 2015 to 6.4 billion by 2021. India is pegged at 77 percent penetration of mobile phones against global average of 99 per cent.

Rural India comprises around 840 million people; around 70% of population, with over 600,000 villages and 56 per cent 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 per cent of the manufacturing GDP; rural areas were host very closer to 75 per cent of new factories built in the last decade, while the rural factories account for 70 per cent of all new manufacturing jobs.

At present due to the change, today's rural consumer is value driven. A product is worth purchasing if it enhances his life in a meaningful way. Rising literacy and exposure to the same commercials as urban consumers has created a demand for typically urban products and services. Villagers are willing to adopt new products or services if they are clear about the benefits that accrue. Better road infrastructure has led to increased mobility; with people travelling, not just for visiting family or pilgrimages, but more often further a field in search of entertainment in the form of cinema.

During the period 2009–2012, rural consumption per person increased by 19 per cent 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>)

According to TRAI report of Jan 2016, India is currently the fastest growing subscriber rate, with total subscriber base of 1017.97 million. In 2015, India added over 67 million subscribers while in China; the total subscriber growth was closer to 30 million in 2015.

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%.**

Thus, Indian rural market is more of an opportunity to the marketers and hence the need to understand their purchase behavior.

Applicability in India as whole:

India is composed of more than 6,27,000 villages. About 3/4th of the total population resides in the rural area. The development of nation largely depends upon the development of the rural population. If not all the villages to the same extent, but atleast to certain extent, they are similar in terms of price sensitivity, brand awareness, purchase decision making. Hence, a strategy (customized) made to sell in these regions can also be implemented to other few villages which are similar in composition in most ways.

List of variables under study:

Independent variable: Age, Income, Gender, Key Opinion Leader, Brand preference, and advertising

Dependent Variable: Rural Consumer Behavior

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, research has been conducted to understand urban and rural consumers on factors like function, quality, style, price and brand in different states of India, but not in Karnataka.

The discussions on research conducted at national and international context and the gaps which inspired for this research are as follows:

- Md. Abbas Ali, Venkat Ram Raj Thumiki and Naseer Khan,(2012), in their study on Factors Influencing Purchase of FMCG by Rural Consumers in South India, commented that as the trust in retailers is more by rural consumers , retailers focused strategy should be considered as a strategy for the marketers in addition to low-price strategy without compromising on quality. Since the study was focused on FMCG products, this could serve as a background for other researchers to focus on different products like automobiles, electronic goods, etc.
- Aniruddha Akarte, and Dr. Amishi Arora, (2012), Indian telecom market in transitive economy: A comparative study on buying behavior of rural and urban buyers on mobile phones was conducted in Amaravati district in Vidarbha region, focused at understanding buyer behavior of both urban and rural consumer with respect to features like, current trends, quality, function, price, style and brands. This research ignored the role of KOL and educated youth's influence on the buying behavior.

- Dr.Kavaldeep Dixit and Priyanka Sharma, (2012), in their research on Innovative marketing strategies experimented by MNCs for exploring vast Indian rural Potential, focused on understanding how Procter & Gamble and Unilever have tapped semi-urban and rural areas of India to expand business. This was a secondary research aimed to understand marketing mix better on the basis of 4A's of rural marketing. This study gives good information on SWOT and Marketing Mix to be used to tap rural markets to enhance business opportunities. Since India is expected to be 5th largest consumer economy of the world by 2010, has to be tapped. This research is a general research based on secondary research gives a general view of marketing mix, but is not specific on a particular product.
- BVNG ChandraSekhar (2012), in his research titled Consumer Buying Behaviour and Brand Loyalty in Rural markets: FMCG, mentioned that brand loyalty is very low in rural area as they are price sensitive, and IMC cost will be high. While men do major shopping, women are not much interested in going out for shopping.
- Richard Kipkemoi Ronoh, (2012), in the research titled; Usage patterns of mobile phones amongst university students in Kenya mentioned to fit lifestyle and individual needs, better technology would help 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. It was focused more on understanding internal and external factors motivating the usage of mobile phones. Study was concluded with understanding technology was major influencer.
- 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. It was very much required for Innovative ways to manage the obstacles for new product introduction to be effective which also requires cooperative effort between the companies and the retailers. Thus, this work is an attempt to understand the difference between urban and rural consumer, and the impact of retailer's relationship on new product introduction.
- Puneet Bansal, Veerpal Kaur Maan and Mandeep Rajora, (2013), in their study on Rural Retailing in India, have suggested on various issues like infrastructure, customization, innovative approach to be considered before entering rural market. As rural geography, and developments are different, it is important to consider a proper knowledge on infrasyructre for distribution, while consumer willingness to

spend for customization and innovative approach as rural consumers are different. For example: rural consumers can be reached better by being in melas or weekly fair markets.

- Dr.Gajendra Jha and Jui Banerjee, (2013), in their study titled Rural market penetration of FMCG companies in India mention that due to economy slowdown in 2012 affected FMCG sector, made the companies focus on rural areas of India. The study is focused on FMCG only not on shopping goods and thus would be a gap.
- Mridanish Jha (2013) in the study titled; A comparative study of the buying behavior of rural and urban consumers towards mobile phone in Bihar concluded on saying that the priority for rural consumers was having local languages in their phones, followed by price and advertisement as respective priorities in the buying behavior.
- 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 influence mobile purchases by rural consumers and comparing 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 while that of urban consumers. Since the respondents were from Warangal district, the study says that this could be a limitation since other states differ in socio-cultural component. This study is similar to the study conducted by Aniruddha Akarte and Dr,Amishi Arora focused at Vidarbha, Amaravati district in 2012, has similar objectives under study. Similar studies if conducted in different districts of all states can to greater extent predict rural buyers of India.
- Sanal Kumar Velayudhan, (2014), in the study titled, Outshopping in rural periodic markets: a retailing opportunity, was an attempt to understand the influences on the prevalence of rural retailing institution of periodic markets. He examined the influence of access to and population of the location on the performance of periodic markets and their effect on the competition between periodic markets and local rural retail stores. He suggested that marketers have to use traditional periodic markets in addition to conventional retail store. He also suggested that for rural consumers, convenience and their effects on for rural stores has greater priority than outshopping behavior preferred by urban consumers. The study did not take into consideration size of the store and study

did not explain much on consumer behavior in the rural market and hence the gap for further research.

- Inderjeet Sethi and AS 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 factors and cultural factors have a great influence on the buying behavior/purchase behavior of the users of rural, semi urban and urban area. The advancement in technology has narrowed the difference between the awareness and usage of mobile services in different areas. The study with the objective of impact of culture and subculture, also, impact of social influences and marketing influences had analysis concluding that many cultural and sub-cultural factors like parental control, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, had influence on purchasing while religion had no impact on purchase behavior. The factors under social influence like family and friends, had almost equal impact among urban and semi urban and slightly lesser among rural consumers, while group opinion had almost same impact on urban (63%) and rural (60%) while most (69%) on semi-urban consumers, prestige as a reason while owning a mobile phone was maximum in urban consumers than semi-urban and rural consumers, and it was semi urban agreed strongly that social class affects purchase behavior. The brand image had high impact in urban consumers while buying a mobile phone, most of the semi urban consumers strongly agreed on 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 agreed on advertising campaign. Even if rural consumers were not highly educated, they still are aware about the technology and prefer innovation in services. The study is based more on socio-cultural factors and is restricted to respondents of Chandigarh only, hence the gap.
- 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 behavior 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 its rural counterpart which gave more importance to price and functionality of mobile phones. The study also reveals that urban population are more dependent on internet as source of information while TV ads and the telephone retailers act as source of information for the rural consumers. The study suggested that companies offering varieties of mobile phones by taking into consideration price and features can do

better business in urban and rural areas. The study gave importance to Brand alone as factors influencing buying behavior and thus the gap.

- 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 behavior towards mobile phones. The sample for the study was Varanasi and Allahabad district. The study was conducted to understand factors influence mobile phone usage pattern on like, brand, price, quality, style and functions among respondents/ youth or college students suggests that service providers must focus on improving network connectivity . The rural market should be tapped with strategies influencing purchase decision-making.
- 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 intension, product image and consumer aspiration, and attitude towards product and product intention. The majority of the respondent in this study being women, single, aged between 26 to 35 years, bachelor degree holder, with monthly income being within 200,001 to 400,000 kyats, concluded that the 4th hypothesis on a total of nine hypotheses had strong impact which said that there was a significant relationship between perceived quality and perceived 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 and by improving quality of the product, can enhance positive emotional value of the product. It is also suggested that the product image has impact on purchase decision in consumers while buying mobile phone, thus marketers must keep this in mind while providing products. Thus, knowledge of purchase intention, perceived quality, image of product, can further increase positive attitude towards product offerings further leading to increased sales. Since this was study based on Apple iPhone, the research suggests that similar studies could be conducted for brands like Samsung, Nokia, Huawei, etc, also on variables like brand loyalty, price consciousness, brand awareness, brand association, risk averse, country origin and country image too.
- 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, neighbors, 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 face while using the product in current scenario. This was a study conducted in other country; shows that consumers are similar even in other countries while preferring a mobile phone. But the study was on consumers in general not in particular to rural area.

- Gurleen Kanwal, Nayyar Varun, and Dhillon Ajwinder (2014) in their study of Purchase Behavior of rural consumers in Jalandhar , focused on understanding on role of advertising , preferred media of understanding, and advertising appeals found that advertising has great impact on influencing rural consumers , while TV was most preferred followed by radio. They suggested that rural consumers would be influenced if the advertisements were made more rational.
- 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 basis of factors like product evaluation and personal factors. The gap of the study would be to understand the aspects of personal factors like personality and self-concept influencing purchase decision-making. The other gap would be that the study was conducted in Dilla City and not rural area.
- According to Dr.Sathy Swaroop Debasish and Dr. Nabagan mallick, (2015) 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 behavior. The study is similar to the study on the basis of 5 factors like, price, quality, style, brand and function as motivators, while in a different state, Odisha. This study is similar to the study conducted by Dr.Kanakaiah Madasi and Ch.Raghupataiah, (2014), in their study titled Buying Behavior towards mobile phone, the objectives under study being the same, shows similar interpretation. This may not be true in all villages of India since they are different in income, infrastructure development, exposure, and affordability, and thus the gap.
- 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 behavior of young college going customers' for mobile handsets. The parameters undertaken in the study were, robust built, large display, long battery

life, attractive colored, aptly sized, latest OS, 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 are not loyal to a particular brand due to technical deficiency. The study was restricted to Pune region only, could be carried forward to understand youth's buying behavior in different parts of India as well as rural areas.

- Dr.M.Malathy, (2015), in her research titled Consumer Buying Behavior pattern towards the choice and usage of mobile phone in Chennai City, focused on mobile phone features, buying motives and their effect of purchase decision of consumers in Chennai city . It can be observed that the work was focused at urban region only and not on rural region.
- Gautam R Parmar, Ajay Kumar Ukas and Aditya Jagdish, (2015), in their research titled Factors affecting on mobile usage in rural area aimed at understanding factors affecting usage of mobile phones by rural consumers of MP and Maharashtra. Need and social status, social influence, perceived usefulness, perceived risk and product attributes were found to be affecting mobile usage. In addition to these factors, it was an attempt to understand problems faced by rural consumers while using the product along with lifestyle, and the product attributes were also considered. The problems faced by rural consumers were on the areas like battery life, hanging of phones, life of battery, slow internet, call drop, language of phone, and complex technology.
- Shweta (2016) in her research titled Buying Behavior of rural consumers and their psychology with special reference to mobile aimed on understanding purchase motivation of consumers residing in rural area of Dehradun. This study was beneficial to manufacturers in understanding intrinsic factors of importance among rural consumers so as to introduce new strategies and increase in sales.

III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to enhance retail opportunities for mobile phones, this research aims to understand buying behavior of rural consumers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India is the 12th largest consumer market in the world is also expected to be the 5th largest economy in the world by 2025. There is a tremendous growth in all areas of consumer goods and services⁵. (Asian Journal of Management Sciences, McKinsey 2007). All this is due to liberalization of policies and laws of telecommunication.

Just the way personal communication is essential, so also the need for mobile phone! In India, it has been noticed that everyone irrespective of geography, age, gender, occupation, almost all income groups have started using mobile phones for the personal communication.

Research Objectives:

Primary Objective:

- To understand and analyze the rural consumer buyer behavior towards mobile phones of with special reference to Keelara village of Karnataka

Secondary Objectives:

- To understand the influence of advertising as variable on rural consumers while purchase decision making.
- To study the influence of brand preference on purchase decision-making
- To understand the impact of KOL (Key Opinion Leaders) on purchase decision-making
- To analyze the influence of demographic factors like age (15-25 years, 25-35 years, 35-45 years, and 45-55 years), income, occupation, gender (men and women) and qualification on purchase decision-making.
- To give suggestions based on findings.

DATA COLLECTION

With reference to the research objectives, the data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire comprises of several questions printed or typed in a particular form supporting the objectives of the research study. Closed ended questions, few with multiple choice options were used to understand respondents.

SOURCES OF DATA

This study utilized data from both the primary and secondary sources.

- The primary data was collected by interviewing rural consumers with the help of questionnaire. A sample size of approximately 270 was surveyed, of which 36 had to be rejected due to errors. Thus, actual sample size was 234.
- 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 book and journals have helped in establishing the variables to be studied or researched.

HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

On the basis of the study, the following hypotheses were framed:

- Age has impact on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.
- Brand has influence on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.

Exogenous Stimulants influencing rural consumer's while choosing mobile phone.

- Key Opinion Leaders influence buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.
- Advertising has impact on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.

METHOD OF STUDY

- a) Geographical area
- b) Sampling population
 - a) Geographical area: Karnataka is one of the major states of South India. With more than 66 million population of India, Karnataka stands as ninth largest state in India in terms of Population. Going by estimated figures of 2016, there are 66,076,021 people living in the state of Karnataka (census 2016).The respondents under study are from Keelara village of Mandya district .
 - b) Sampling population: A sample of 270 respondents from various age groups at different villages from Keelara was considered for the research study. Respondents chosen had different crops cultivated, with differing income and geography to know if despite of differences if the need, purpose and purchase decision-making for mobile phone is the same.

Mandya District: as per the Census 2011, Mandya district has population of 18,05, 769 with 70.40 percent literacy rate. The district stands 7th place in rural population of Karnataka.Keelara is a village around 10 kms away from Mandya and has population according to census 2001, as 5,263, while 5,112 according to census 2011.

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

IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Sample Size

Keelara: Keelara is a village around 10 kms away from Mandya and has population according to census 2001, as 5,263, while 5,112 according to census 2011. Sample size of Keelara is 234.



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What margin of error can you accept? %
5% is a common choice

What confidence level do you need? %
Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%

What is the population size?
If you don't know, use 20000

What is the response distribution? %
Leave this as 50%

Your recommended sample size is **232**

With 6.3% margin of error, 95% confidence level and considering the population of 5112, the recommended sample size is 232.

Critical F Value

Critical F-value Calculator

Degrees of freedom 1:

Degrees of freedom 2:

Probability level:

Critical F-value: **2.41089418**

STATEMENT 1 : To Understand the impact of age on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone	Null Hypothesis H0 : Age has no impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone						
	Alternative Hypothesis H1 : Age has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone						
	Anova F-Test	F Critical	Level of Confidence	Sig.	Critical Value	STD. ERROR	Accept the Alternate Hypothesis
RESULT	305.2	2.41	95%	0.0406	0.05	5%	YES

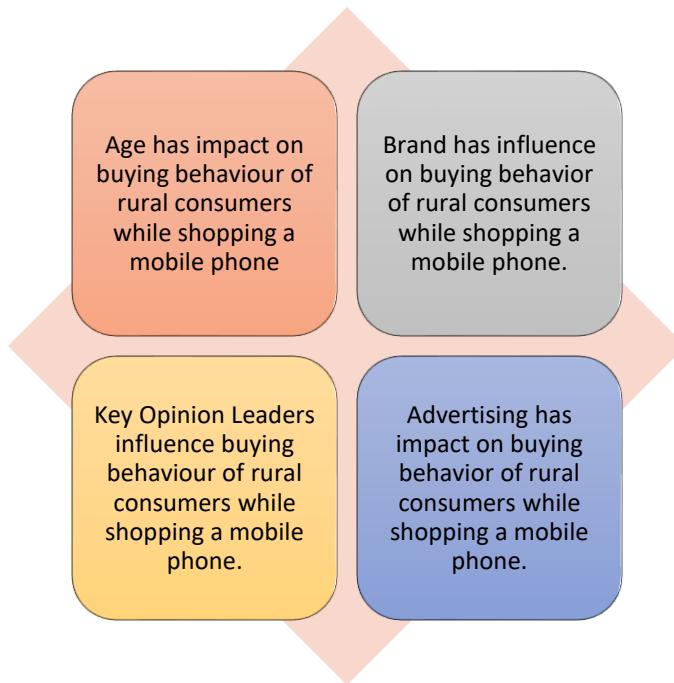
STATEMENT 2 : To Understand the influence of Brand on buying behaviour of rural	Null Hypothesis H0: Brand has no influence on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.					
	Alternative Hypothesis H2: Brand has influence on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.					

STATEMENT 3 : consumers while To Us shopping dathe influence pf Key Opinion Leaders on buying behaviour RESULT of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone	Null Hypothesis H0: Key Opinion Leaders has no influence buying behaviour of Analova consumers while Is shopping a mobile phone						Accept the Alternate Hypothesis
	F-Test	F Critical	Confidence	Sig.	Critical Value	STD. ERROR	
	69.3	2.41	95%	0.0306	0.05	5%	YES

Alternative Hypothesis H3 : Key Opinion Leaders influence buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.

	Anova F-Test	F Critical	Level of Confidence	Sig.	Critical Value	STD. ERROR	Accept the Alternate Hypothesis
RESULT	50.2	2.41	95%	0.0406	0.05	5%	YES

STATEMENT 4 : To Understand the impact of advertising on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone	Null Hypothesis H0 : Advertising has no impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone						
	Alternative Hypothesis H4: Advertising has impact on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.						
Anova F-Test	F Critical	Level of Confidence	Sig.	Critical Value	STD. ERROR	Accept the Alternate Hypothesis	
RESULT	232.5	2.41	95%	0.0306	0.05	5%	YES



V. DISCUSSION

Summary of Hypotheses:

All the null hypotheses failed to get accepted.

- ❖ Age has impact on buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone
- ❖ Brand has influence on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone.
- ❖ Key Opinion Leaders influence buying behaviour of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone
- ❖ Advertising has impact on buying behavior of rural consumers while shopping a mobile phone

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study considered just one village. Thus, may not be possible to generalize about rural consumers of Karnataka.
- Accuracy of information on income may not be reliable.
- There might be bias of respondents, since the awareness on brands, among all the respondents may not be the same.
- Changes happen dynamically, few products/brands may get outdated very soon. The brands that are available now, may not be available later or new brands may enter the market, and thus the current data on availability of existing brands in future may be a challenge.

VI. CONCLUSION

Karnataka having a population over 6.6 crores is a huge market for almost all products. Thus, essential product being a mobile phone is not to be neglected.

- By understanding respondents of few more villages in every district, it becomes easier for marketers to know the similarities and differences of rural consumers towards mobile phone.
- According to Ericsson Mobility Report, November 2015, India is expected to have 180 million smartphones by 2019, contributing to 13.5 percent of global smartphone market on the basis of rising affordability and better availability of data services. According to Microsoft report, India will emerge as a leading player in the virtual world by having 700 M internet users of the 4.7 billion global users by 2025. Due to government favorable policies 4G hitting the market, Indian telecommunication sector is expected to witness fastest growth in the next few years. Due to the fact that 70 percent of India lives in villages, this study would help marketer to devise marketing strategy focused on rural consumers need to enhance mobile sales.
- Changes happen dynamically. This is true in the case of rural consumers too. This study helps in understanding the 'change' in awareness due to growing literacy rates, television penetration in villages, thus creating TV as a source of awareness, to promote products and increase sales. Books say that KOL play a vital role in purchase decision-making, while the increased TV penetration is found to have more impact on rural consumers.
- This study will help marketers understand rural consumers better and thus develop marketing programmes focused at increasing sales of mobile phones.
- Since is almost 70% rural, everyone in the academics, especially in the area of management, should know; rural, rural consumers and rural market. This research study will be of use for academicians and students in order to understand rural marketing in the context of Karnataka and the factors influencing the rural consumer buyer behavior towards mobile phones better. India being agrarian is thus very crucial for academicians to know the backbone of India, 'Rural India'.

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