

**IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES
FOR CONSUMER NON-DURABLES
ON RURAL MARKETS**

By
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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of

**Master of Science *(Co-operation & Banking)* in
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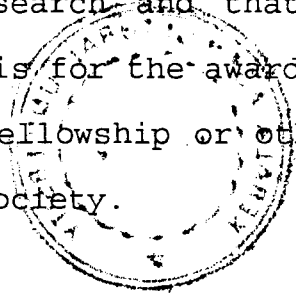
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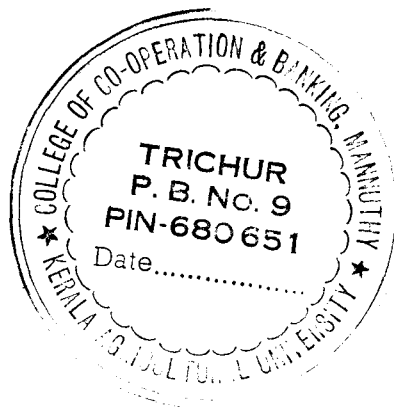
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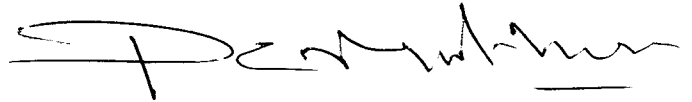
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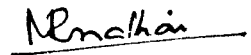
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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem and its significance

Promotion makes marketing conspicuous to the masses. It is, therefore, a key element in the marketing mix of all business. One of the best ways to appreciate the significance of promotion is to fancy a situation where a marketer chooses to do without it. If such were the case, consumers would not seek his product, for want of adequate information. Should they come across the product by sheer chance, they would hardly know what it would offer to merit their custom, or which of their wants it would serve and how well. They may not know even the use of the product, and hence avoid purchasing it. The core function of promotion is, therefore, popularisation - popularisation of what the marketer has for the public.

Promotion communicates with the masses by informing, reminding and persuading them to patronize a company's products, services, or ideas. It is effected through words, images, symbols, incentives, offers, or people. All this is manifest to the audience through advertisements, sales promotion, personal selling and publicity - the ingredients in the basket of promotional tools. Promotion is thus the most obvious, tangible and proximate of all marketing activity. But it is common notion that when promotional strategies are given shape, the

target audience is often urban consumers. With villages increasingly getting recognised as the "markets of the future" (Rao 1993), it is worth probing how rural consumers conceive of these promotional strategies, and how far their buying decisions are fashioned by such strategies.

1.2 Rural Marketing and Promotional Requirements

Rural areas no longer escape the attention of the enterprising business. For, charged with higher purchasing power, the rural consumption panorama is fast changing. This change has been more obvious since the beginning of the nineties.

Ramaswami and Namakumari (1990) predict that the nineties would see the full blossoming of the Indian rural market, with significant changes in the composition of rural demand. If the results of the household consumption survey conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research in 1990 (see Rao 1993) are any indication, this prediction has almost come true. The survey reveals that over 70 per cent of products like radio, bicycles, mechanical wrist watches and cigarettes are purchased in the rural markets. Between 60 and 70 per cent of annual sales of washing cakes, tooth powder, cooking oil and footwear come from rural India. Over 50 per cent of quartz wrist watches, ceiling fans, black and white

televisions, mopeds, cassette recorders, washing powder, table fans, sewing machines, motor cycles and kerosene stoves are bought by ruralites. With rural India's contribution to the national consumer market rising, the 'dusty villages' getting dismissed as worthless has become history. Small wonder, rural marketing is almost the order of the day with most Indian companies.

Though radiant with vast potential, rural markets can hardly be got into with such ease as is possible in urban markets. For, despite development and prosperity whatsoever, ruralites are more often a mass of individuals than a mass of consumers. Reaching and persuading them to become discernible consumers are beset with various problems. Meeting the target population, understanding and addressing their consumption requirements, informing them about the products that suit their wants, and motivating them to purchase are the major among the several goals a marketer has to pursue in his efforts at tapping the rural market. Communication with the rural audience is the primary requirement in achieving these. A marketing programme in rural areas is thus basically and importantly a communication programme. Marketing communications, as we know, mostly take place through promotional strategies purportedly aimed at the urban audience. Do these promotional strategies have any bearing on rural consumer behaviour? Can these supposedly urban-prone strategies be effectively used to reach the rural

audience as well? Or, is there the need for a totally new promotional approach in rural markets? Any business that seeks a sizeable share of the rural demand has to answer these questions.

1.3 Focus of the study

There is no gainsaying that communication with the rural masses is indispensable. But doubts prevail on how to do that. There are two schools of thoughts in this regard. One says that the common promotional approaches may be extended to the village, as well. The other lays down that promotional strategies that suit the rural milieu are to be evolved for better results. Though both these views may be true depending on the situation, an all new promotional approach need be attempted only if the existing promotional techniques are rendered ineffective, or less effective. Now that mass media are fast pervading the countryside, we must suppose that marketing communications and promotion too are, more or less, reaching the rural areas. Given this, it will make but less sense to attempt novel promotional techniques without having assessed the impact of the existing ones on rural markets. This is, precisely, the focus of the present study.

1.4 Setting of the study

The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of promotion in a rural setting can be best known by taking up the study in a locality with fairly good reach of mass media, diffusion of branded products, spread of retail outlets and scope for consumer promotions. One of the best locales that can boast of these facilities is rural Kerala.

Rural areas of Kerala are unique. This uniqueness is best understood by an outsider. A trip to a typical Kerala village presents him a picture so very distinct from what he would have had in mind. The difference would be obvious even before he reaches his destination. The bus he travels in, the people he comes across, the road he passes through, the environment he is surrounded by - all forebode the uniqueness he is to experience. As he terminates, he finds that the village is so strikingly atypical - with fairly laid roads, electricity, transport and other basic infrastructure. The school and the public health centre stand testimony to the quality of life the villagers have inherited. All this apart, there are the ingenuous but sensible people. True, there is poverty, there is hardship. Nevertheless, the village sharply contrasts with the rest of rural India in terms of living standards.

Should the traveller be an enterprising businessman, there are more things of interest: the spread of retail outlets, the multitude of branded products and several others, not to speak of the conscious consumer class. The proliferation of newspaper and radio is near total. The dailies are a part of life - at home, in the tea shop, in the salon and virtually everywhere. The impressive literacy rate has made a sustaining acceptance for the written word. The spoken word through the radio has long gained a mark on village life. Tuning in the radio is not only an entertainment, it is a custom as well. The sprouting television antennae symbolize the modernity that permeates the countryside. The village movie house, and the host of wall writings, posters and other outdoor media remain with their enduring appeal. Because of the abundance of media and other means, marketing communications are not alien to rural Kerala. The impact of the seemingly urban-prone promotional strategies on rural markets can therefore be best judged in Kerala. Hence this study.

1.5 Objectives

The present study has been carried out with the following objectives.

1. To assess the responses of rural consumers towards promotional strategies, with special reference to consumer non-durables,
2. To analyse the socio-economic factors that influence the responses of consumers towards promotional strategies, and
3. To measure the relative effectiveness of different promotional strategies in rural markets.

1.6 Scope and practical utility

The study is expected to reveal whether rural buyer behaviour is guided by promotional strategies, and if so, to what extent. The study shall also indicate whether socio-economic factors have any bearing on the response behaviour of rural consumers towards promotional strategies.

1.7 Limitations

The effect of promotion can be best known by evaluating it against the objectives with which the marketer has used it. This would warrant matching the study with the promotional goals of the producers/marketers of different brands under each product category considered. But the scope of the present study has been restricted to an assessment of the response behaviour of rural consumers towards promotional strategies.

The response behaviour was examined by making specific reference to commonly used consumer non-durables and popular promotional tools. The results may not always be applicable to other types of products and promotion.

Regression analysis was attempted for examining the influence of socio-economic factors on the response behaviour of consumers towards promotional strategies. Since the observations were in the form of scores, the coefficients have only limited scope in explaining causation. Besides, the data were collected from 150 respondents spread across three villages. The problem could have been overcome had the sample been large. But this was less feasible, considering the level of research.

1.8 Organization of the report

The report is organized into five chapters. The first chapter, as we have seen, introduces the problem, states the objectives and highlights the scope, practical utility as also limitations. A critical review of the available literature relevant to the problem is made in the second chapter. The third chapter gives the framework of analysis. The fourth chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The fifth chapter summarises the findings.

Review of Literature

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Literature on promotion is voluminous. Over the years, several studies and writings have emerged on the area, especially, advertising. Most of these works, however, come from the western world, where advertising and other means of promotion have achieved impressive strides. The foci of these studies range from social, economic and psychological dimensions of promotion to such subtle aspects as signal detection, build-up effects, source magnification, and the effect of a single promotional offer. A scanning of the massive volume of literature will reveal beyond doubt that a good majority of the studies extensively rely upon complex statistical and mathematical tools or models. Since the focus in the present study is on a rural setting in the Indian context, it is borne in mind that the findings of the western exercises and the patterns of their analyses are more relevant to the urban marketing scene. In this chapter, therefore, the endeavour is to make a critical survey of the available literature that can offer some guidelines to promotional decisions for rural markets.

The studies and writings reviewed herein are classified under four heads, viz.,

- the role and importance of promotion,
- the need for rural-specific promotional approaches,
- the impact of popular promotional strategies,
- the influence of socio-economic factors on response behaviour

2.2 The role and importance of promotion

Promotion is a widely written, discussed, and debated area in marketing. Several noted authors have spelt out the role and importance of promotion in the marketing mix of businesses. Although most of their views exemplify the sophisticated, dynamic and advanced marketing environment, some of their observations have universal acceptance.

Stanton and Futrell (1987), for instance, observe that as the number of potential customers grows, the problem of market communication becomes significant. According to Bennet (1988), promotion of a product communicates what marketers have done to satisfy consumers' needs; it is marketing made tangible. Pride and Ferrel (1989) hold that the role of promotion is to communicate with individuals, groups, or organizations to directly or indirectly facilitate exchanges by

informing and persuading one or more of the audiences to accept an organization's products.

Drawing upon these observations, it may be stated that as the potential of the Indian rural markets grows, promotion and marketing communications assume importance. For, it is the marketer's responsibility to inform the rural prospects what he has done to satisfy their needs. The marketer seeking a sizeable share of the rural demand has to inform the target audience about his products, and persuade them to patronize the products. The view of Evans and Berman (1994) that customers must be informed about the products and their attributes before tending to develop favourable attitudes holds good in the emerging rural marketing arena of India too.

Speaking in the Indian context, Ramaswami and Namakumari (1990) opine that communication is the first requirement of marketing. They, therefore, identify promotion and communication as a major problem area in rural marketing. It may be inferred that promotional effort is inevitable in the rural markets too.

2.3 The need for rural-specific promotional approaches

A matter that riddles many while pursuing the rural marketing goal is whether an all new promotional approach is required for the villages.

The Indian Journal of Marketing, in its Editorial (October 1971), writes that rural promotional strategy should concentrate on radio, films, mobile vans, hoardings in regional languages, shop boards, wall paintings, local drum-beating, and local festivals.

Rural advertising and promotional campaigns, in the view of Paul (1972), have to be regional in appeal to meet the local needs. Gaikwad (1972) too insists upon a different promotional approach for rural areas. But he emphasises the need to develop messages that can create changes in the need structure of the rural population.

Wanmali and Ghosh (1975) are also of the opinion that advertising and other promotional strategies in rural markets are to be different from those in urban markets. Subscribing to the same view, Rajagopal (1988) believes that the most effective media that can appeal to the rural people would be the local newspaper, television, radio, posters, local microphone announcements and cinema slides.

Ramaswami and Namakumari (1990) suggest that rural communication be uniquely assembled and delivered, matching with the realities of the rural market. They feel that besides radio, cinema, outdoor and print media, and point-of-purchase (POP) promotions, rural specific media are needed to suit the specific requirements of rural population. But the choice of

appropriate rural specific media is the most difficult and uncertain aspect of rural marketing, fears Ganapathy (1992). He, yet, discusses various communication alternatives feasible in rural markets, such as mobile advertising, demonstrations or exhibitions at village fairs, street plays and 'tamasha' programmes with built-in promotional content.

Singh (1992) too feels that a suitable medium to reach the rural market does not exist as popular media like press, cinema, and radio are restricted to urban and semi-urban areas. This may not always be true, at least in the case of rural Kerala. Radio and cinema have been identified as potent media for rural promotion by several authors, besides Rajagopal, and Ramaswami and Namakumari. Ange (1992), for instance, considers radio, cinema, and television the appropriate media to promote popular products in villages. With newspapers, radio and television fast reaching rural India, and with several experts judging these media appropriate for rural promotion, the statement of Singh is to be taken with some doubt. But a categorical comment is not made here, pending a detailed examination.

The foregoing discussion of studies and writings on the need for rural-specific promotional strategies is not exhaustive. Yet, the review made above is almost representative of the points of view that have so far evolved in this regard.

Any research that approved of the extension of the existing promotional strategies to rural markets could not be traced. But there had been several attempts at examining the effectiveness of such strategies, especially advertising, in varying contexts. Some of them had specific citations to rural areas. A review of a representative mix of these studies, it is hoped, can provide some insight into whether the seemingly urban-bent promotional techniques can be effectively targeted to rural consumers as well.

2.4 The impact of popular promotional strategies

A good number of studies have found that promotional strategies do have a bearing on the buying habits of people.

Mukhopadhyay (1983) observes that advertisements work by inducing certain psychological changes in consumers. If the advertisements are noticed, understood, remembered and discussed with others, there is a likelihood of the viewer wanting to use the product, she writes.

In specific references to rural markets, Anilkumar (1990), Ahmad (1991), Aneja (1992), Ganapathy (1992), Sanjith (1992) and Unni (1992) report that promotional strategies and media influence the purchase decisions of consumers.

Studies that arrived at the opposite result are not rare, if not equally numerous.

In a consumer attitude survey, Abraham (1979) noticed that a good number of respondents considered advertisements misleading. The influence of advertisements was found rather low by Bearley (1980), Philipose (1981), Cyriac (1984), Shankar (1987) and Sajeev (1990).

Indian research on the effect of sales promotion offers, incentives and other techniques is relatively scarce. Only two such studies could be located, and they produced mutually antithetical results.

Sajeev (1990) reports that sales promotion offers and incentives often fail, for want of adequate consumer awareness. Ahmađ (1991), on the other hand, witnessed a favourable disposition from rural consumers towards such offers, especially price discounts and gifts.

A common feature of the studies that have looked into the impact of promotional strategies is that they do not provide supplementary evidence on their findings. Almost all the available studies either said that a particular promotional tool is effective, or noted that it is ineffective, in a given situation. Even if they had gone into the details, results are barely deducible.

Besides exploring the impact of promotional strategies on buyer behaviour, research interest was focussed on their relative effectiveness.

Abraham (1979) noted that consumers gave the highest rating to advertisements in newspapers and magazines for usefulness, information content and credibility. Newspaper advertisements generated the maximum exposure in Bearley's (1980) study too. He, however, found that magazines hardly evoked any exposure. The influence of print advertisements on rural consumers has been confirmed by Ahmad (1991) and Sanjith (1992). But Aneja (1992) warns that the press has a highly limited role in reaching rural consumers. Nevertheless, he admits that it is a good medium in states like Kerala where the literacy rate is quite high. It is the local press, rather than the national press, that has a marginally better reach in villages, he feels. The local press was certified effective for rural advertising also by Rajagopal (1988).

Compared with print advertisements, radio commercials have fared well in terms of reach and influence, as indicated by the literature. This is especially true of rural areas.

Agarwal (1981) writes that radio has deep penetration in villages, and therefore, radio commercials are of good impact. The influence of radio has been found positive also by Rajagopal (1988), Anilkumar (1990), Ahmad (1991), Ganapathy (1992) and

Sanjith (1992). But Unni (1992) states that in spite of the incredibly greater reach of 90 per cent commanded by radio nationally, its disadvantage as a communication tool is its auditory nature which does not force attention of the listener.

Television is yet to make a notable mark on the Indian rural consumers in general. Yet, Aneja (1992), Ganapathy (1992) and Unni (1992) are confident that television viewership will gain momentum in due course. The long run, they predict, would see a favourable impact of television commercials on the rural audience.

Apart from the mass media, the outdoor and conventional media too have figured in research on promotional strategies. Some of the findings vouch for the appeal such media have among consumers.

According to Doshi (1972), product image can be visually presented to the rural prospects through posters, mobiles, dealer boards and wall paintings. Bearley (1980) provides evidence on the exposure of consumers to wall paintings and hoardings. Agarwal (1981) upholds the suitability of wall paintings in rural areas. Traditional media have some edge over mass media in villages, as disclosed by Sharma (1987). Singh endorses the utility of 'Video on wheel' and video shows in retail outlets as means of promotion in rural markets. Unni (1992) is of the opinion that wall paintings, hoardings, posters

and other outdoor publicity undertaken in prominent spots such as market places arouse the interest of rural consumers. But research by Ahmad (1991) revealed that posters, wall writings, announcements and hoardings came next to radio commercials and print advertisements in terms of influencing the rural audience.

Not all studies have advocated that the formal media are the only influential sources of information to consumers. The informal means of communication like word of mouth have a role in shaping attitudes towards products.

Shankar (1987) gives proof that consumers rate word of mouth opinion of friends and relatives the best in terms of information, reliability and influence. In a farmer level study conducted by Anilkumar (1990), neighbours and friends outweighed print media as a source of information on fertilizer brands. Sanjith (1992) reports that rural consumers heed to the word of mouth of the local dealer.

Literature on the impact of promotional strategies has brought forth some interesting results. Research findings depict a clear dichotomy posing us some difficulty to propose an absolute corollary on the impact of promotion on consumer behaviour. Some of the studies that have proven the influence of promotional strategies have ventured into identifying the relatively better or effective ones. But given the diverse contexts wherein such studies were expedited, there is no

consensus in findings. With the available literature, therefore, it is difficult to make a clear ranking of the different strategies. Nonetheless, it may be loosely stated that in rural markets radio commercials have some edge over other promotional techniques. The outdoor and conventional media too seem to have some leverage in villages.

2.5 The influence of socio-economic factors on response behaviour

Expert opinion recommends consideration of the socio-economic and cultural background of the people while deciding upon the media and messages for rural markets. This is under the premise that socio-economic factors have a bearing on consumers in getting influenced by promotional strategies. It will therefore be of worth to discuss some studies that have examined the effect of factors like age, education and occupation on the response behaviour of consumers towards promotional strategies.

A survey conducted by the Commercial Broadcasting Service of the All India Radio (1972) revealed that the frequency of radio listening was low among older people.

Philipose (1981) discloses that noticeability of advertisements is related to the age of consumers. The younger generation is more exposed to advertisements, she points out.

Sivayam (1988) examined the effect of different socio-economic factors and validated the correlation of advertisement media preference of consumers, and their age. He found that the low aged favour cinema, but the middle aged are inclined towards print and electronic media. Reddy (1990) too witnessed the influence of age on the attitude of consumers towards advertisements. Despite this, he noted that display advertisements were insensitive to age.

The level of education is an important factor that fashions the media choices of people. According to Sivayam (1988), illiterates prefer cinema, while the educated consumers like either television or the print media for advertisements. The coefficients of the level of education arrived at by Reddy (1990) endorse that the less educated are prone to cinema. The well educated, on the other hand, preferred magazines.

Ahmad (1991) points out that the educated ruralites are more influenced by the mass media, whereas illiterates and the less educated depend on reference groups, stickers, posters, and hawkers for product and brand information. The correlation between literacy and all forms of communication is also confirmed by Aneja (1992) in a specific reference to rural areas.

Income has a vital bearing on the degree of exposure of people to different media and sources of information.

It was found from the study results of Sivayam (1988) that the high and middle income groups preferred television commercials, while the low income group opted cinema.

Reddy (1990) hypothesized household affluence as an influencing factor, and observed that it is positively correlated to customer attitude towards television commercials. For other media, affluence was not a significant variable.

An all different finding evolved from Shankar's (1987) study. There consumers in both the low and high income groups said that they were influenced more by word of mouth, rather than by advertisements or media whatsoever.

Occupation was hypothesized by many to have a role in determining the consumers' level of exposure and their attitudes towards advertisements. A major attempt in this regard came from Reddy (1990). The results manifest that students were highly exposed to magazines; housewives, to radio; and businessmen, to cinema. Despite their exposure, businessmen and housewives took little interest in advertisements and commercials, he records.

Sharma (1987) writes that the socio-economic status index constructed by him with education, income and occupation as variables is an important determinant of the relative exposure of people to different media. Those with higher index had more exposure to radio and movies. Those who had a lower index were more exposed to traditional media.

The role of socio-economic factors in shaping the response behaviour of consumers towards promotional strategies and hence in fashioning their consumption habits cannot be altogether ignored, as hinted by the literature. This may have some added significance in rural marketing because of the unique social, cultural and economic milieu the villages are composed of.

2.6 Conclusion

The survey of literature has established the need for promotion and marketing communications in rural areas. There are many who advocate novel promotional approaches for rural markets. Some others have explored the effect of the popular promotional techniques on rural consumer behaviour. But possibly because of the differences in their individual research situations, or the socio-economic and other peculiarities of their specific reference groups, there is a lack of unanimity on what media and strategy are the best

suited to reach the rural prospects. Yet another point that emerged out of the review of available studies was the concentration of research on advertising, and an almost negligence of other means of promotion. This restricts the scope to determine which strategy or tool is the most congenial to rural areas. Besides all this is the apparent dearth of research on promotion and marketing communications in rural Kerala. The unique features of rural Kerala, and the sensibility of her consumer class warrant an elaborate inquiry into the response behaviour towards various promotional media and strategies. This might serve marketers in conceiving and implementing appropriate promotional decisions in the emerging rural markets of India. The present study is an earnest attempt towards that end.

Materials and Methods

Chapter III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a field enquiry into the response behaviour of rural consumers towards various promotional strategies. The rationale of such an exercise arises from the a priori belief that the results may provide some guidelines to marketers in evolving appropriate promotional decisions for rural areas. The study, therefore, has an application bias, and has justification from the policy perspective rather than serving mere academic interest. This chapter conceptualises the research problem, and provides the analytical frame.

3.1 Conceptual exposition and definitions

The study uses various terms and concepts. They are briefly explained below.

1. Rural markets

The term market has several connotations. It can be a place where market is held; an assembly of buyers and sellers; an area of operation; an organization facilitating exchange of goods; an act of buying and selling; or an assemblage of commercial activities. The term rural markets essentially takes a spatial definition, and then, any or a combination of the

other interpretations. In the present context, rural markets specifically refer to the sample villages and the inhabitants.

2. Rural consumers

A rural consumer is defined as a resident of the study area who, at the time of survey, had been using the products considered for the study.

3. Response

Response is an answer, action or feeling caused by a stimulus. In the present case response is the answer, action, reaction or feeling of the sample consumers towards the different promotional strategies they had come across.

4. Respondent

The sample consumers included in this study are our respondents.

5. Awareness

Awareness refers to the respondents' state of having knowledge of one or more promotional strategies/tools.

6. Influence

In the present context, a respondent is said to be influenced by a promotional strategy if he discloses that he had purchased a product under consideration after getting exposed to such strategy.

7. Consumer non-durables

Consumer goods that are normally consumed in one or a few uses are called consumer non-durables. The present study considers four commonly used consumer non-durables, viz., toilet soap, tooth paste, detergent and fabric whitener/blue. They are coded P_1 , P_2 , P_3 and P_4 respectively.

8. Promotional strategies

Promotional strategies are the different forms of communication used by marketers to inform, persuade, or remind people about goods and services. The major among such strategies are advertising, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion.

- (i) 'Advertising' is any form of non-personal presentation of goods, services, or ideas for action, openly paid for by an identified sponsor.

- (ii) 'Publicity' refers to the non-personal stimulation of demand for a good, service, or business by placing commercially significant news about it in a published medium, or obtaining favourable presentation upon radio, television, or stage that is not paid for by an identified sponsor.

- (iii) 'Personal selling' is the demonstration of a product in a conversation with one or more prospective buyers.

- (iv) 'Sales promotion' involves marketing activities, other than advertising, publicity or personal selling that stimulate consumer purchases and dealer effectiveness. We exclude dealer promotions from the purview of our study. Consumer promotions are non-recurrent selling efforts, and include gifts, coupons, price reductions etc.

3.2 Study period

The field investigation for the study was carried out during August-October, 1994. Although advertisements appear year long, consumer promotions are largely temporal in nature. Most such promotions are offered during festival seasons. The months August, September and October being Onam season in Kerala, the study was conducted during that period, providing

the respondents better scope to make a realistic judgment on the influence of as many promotional tools as possible.

3.3 Sampling procedure

3.3.1 Study area

The study has been confined to three villages: one each in the districts of Malappuram, Palakkad and Thrissur of Kerala State. Accessibility and familiarity were the criteria adopted in deciding upon the districts.

Multi stage sampling procedure was employed to select the villages from the districts. From among the four taluks of Malappuram district, Ernad, with a population of 12.21 lakh was selected at random. Out of the fifty villages in the taluk, Chokkad was randomly selected. The village had a population of 14,920.

Kodungallur, with a population of 2.84 lakh, formed part of the sample out of the five taluks in Thrissur district. The taluk consists of thirteen villages, wherefrom Padinjare Vemballur, with a population of 11,152 was drawn at random.

Alathur was selected from among the five taluks of Palakkad district. It had a total population of 3.98 lakh, spread across thirty villages. The village which was selected at random was Kannambra-II, which had a population of 9,986.

(For details of population, area etc. see Government of Kerala 1991).

The selected villages have been coded V_1 , V_2 and V_3 respectively.

3.3.2 Selection of respondents

Taking into consideration the scope, coverage and level of the study, and bearing in mind limitations with respect to resources, the sample size was fixed at 150, i.e., 50 each from the three villages. Simple random sampling procedure was employed to draw the respondents from the chosen villages. The sample thus selected was post-stratified based on age, sex, education, income and occupation.

3.4 Approach to the problem

There is no unanimity among researchers on how to measure the effect of a promotional campaign. The concepts of effectiveness and evaluation are prone to a myriad connotations. Besides, promotion being a creative input, it is not so easily amenable to evaluation or assessment whatsoever nevertheless. Since substantial funds are committed to promotion, some marketers seek evidence that their effort is really paying.

An evaluation, to be effective, should

- (i) be concordant with the promotional objectives of the business concerned;
- (ii) consist of several measures to ensure accurate, authentic results;
- (iii) empirically demonstrate reliability and validity;
- (iv) be based on human responses to promotional stimuli - comprehension of stimuli and responses thereto.

One may not be very much clear about the promotional goals of individual business organizations. It cannot be categorically maintained that the purpose of promotion is always to achieve or exceed the sales target. Promotion, some times, may have goals further than that. So long as one is oblivious to the individual firm's promotional objectives, one cannot make one's evaluation subserve such objectives. The present attempt too is not relieved of such a problem. The approach in this study is to measure the effect of promotion entirely based on human responses to stimuli.

Response behaviour to promotion is supposed to occur at different levels. These levels, according to the Hierarchy of Effects Model, are awareness, knowledge, liking, preference,

conviction and purchase. The present study does not fully resort to these levels because of three reasons. To begin with, it is difficult to clearly tell knowledge from awareness, or preference from liking solely based on a consumer survey. Further, since the concern of this study is with the simple rural masses rather than with the seasoned urban consumers, it will not be easy to draw from them which point on the continuum of responses they are/were at a given point of time. Thirdly, since the products of interest here are consumer non-durables, buyers are assumed to exhibit 'routinised response behaviour'. In such a state, exact identification of the different response levels is rather difficult.

The Howard-Sheth model is relatively more comprehensible and hence reliable (see Chunavalla and Sethia 1993). The model states that the decision process is influenced by four major sets of variables, viz., (i) inputs, (ii) perceptual and learning constructs, (iii) outputs and (iv) external variables. Here, 'inputs' are the stimuli to a purchase decision. Significant stimuli comprise the tangible and intangible product cues, promotion and price. 'Perceptual and learning constructs' are the motivation, attitudes and perception affecting the buyer. 'Outputs' are, in effect, decisions or action. The consumer, if favourably inclined to the stimuli, may decide to purchase the product; if not, may avoid purchasing it. 'External variables' are not explicitly part of the decision

process, but may influence the buyer. They include status, social class, personality traits etc. The socio-economic factors considered in the present study may be loosely considered external variables.

The approach to the problem has been made simple by making a judicious combination of the above two models. Given the limitations involved, 'awareness' and 'purchase' alone are considered from the continuum of responses in the Hierarchy of Effects Model. 'Awareness', as has been defined earlier, is the state of having knowledge of a promotional strategy, which is indeed an 'input' explained in the Howard-Sheth Model. The 'awareness' of a promotional 'input' shall lead to perceptual or learning constructs, i.e., create in the consumer a favourable or an unfavourable response to the promotional strategy concerned. This is difficult to comprehend, as is the case with 'knowledge', 'liking', 'preference' and 'conviction' in the other model. We, therefore, take 'output', which represents 'purchase', which is an action.

3.5 Methodology

3.5.1 Data base

The study relies upon cross sectional, primary field data collected from a sample of 150 respondents. For this, a

field survey was conducted by administering a pre-tested, structured interview schedule (see appendix) on the respondents.

3.5.2 Techniques employed

Bivariate tables and simple percentages form the basis for analysis. The following steps were involved.

- A (1) The respondents' exposure to (or awareness of) various promotional strategies in different product categories.
- A (2) The frequency of such exposure. This was determined by directing the respondents aware of a promotional strategy to state how often they had come across such strategy. Responses were collected on a three-point scale: often, occasionally and rarely, with weights 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Based on this, an index was constructed with the following formula

$$K_x = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k K_{ix}}{\sum_{i=1}^k K_{ix} \text{ Max}} \times 100$$

where,

K_x = the index value of exposure for promotional strategy x

K_{ix} = the response score of individual i, showing frequency of his exposure to promotional strategy x

$K_{ix} \text{ Max}$ = the maximum score obtainable by strategy x from individual i

k = the relevant number of respondents from the sample

A (3) Advertisement/commercial recall

The respondents who had been exposed to the advertisements/commercials of their brands were directed to recall them. Based on this, they were grouped under three recall stages: High recall, Partial recall and Low recall.

A (4) The status of advertisements/commercials as sources of brand knowledge

The respondents who obtained brand information from advertisements/commercials were asked which of the following descriptions best explained the status of an

advertising medium for their respective brands: 'the only information source', 'a major source', and 'one of the several sources'. The descriptions were attributed weights 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Index values were constructed on the same lines as above.

- A (5) The extent to which promotional strategies have influenced the purchase decisions of respondents.

The data for this were collected on a four-point scale for each product category and promotional strategy. The following are the weights attached to the scale choices: Certainly:3, Occasionally:2, Rarely:1, Never:0.

Based on the weights attributed, the level of influence of each promotional strategy under each product category was determined by constructing an influence index.

$$I_{jp} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k S_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^k S_{ij} \text{ Max}} \times 100$$

where,

I_{ij} = the influence index of promotional strategy 'j' in product category 'p'.

S_{ij} = Individual i 's influence score for promotional strategy ' j ' in product category ' p '

S_{ij} Max = Maximum influence score obtainable

k = Sample size

Zones of influence

Had all the 150 respondents reported that they 'rarely' got influenced by a promotional strategy, the corresponding influence index would have been 33.33. Likewise, if all the respondents said that they got influenced but 'occasionally', the index would have been 66.66. In a highly ideal situation where all respondents stated that they 'certainly' got influenced by a promotional strategy, the index would have been 100.00. Based on these, three zones of influence were determined.

Range of index value	Zone of influence
0 - 33.33	Low
33.33 - 66.66	Moderate
66.66 - 100.00	High

B. Relative effectiveness has been determined by arriving at the level of influence of each promotional strategy for all product categories. The following formula was used.

$$RE_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k \sum_{x=1}^n P_{ij}}{K \sum_{x=1}^n P_{ij} \text{ Max}} \times 100$$

where,

RE_j = the relative effectiveness in index of promotional strategy 'j' for all product categories (x_1 ----- x_n)

$\sum_{x=1}^n P_{ij}$ = the influence score of individual i for promotional strategy 'j' for all product categories (x_1 ----- x_n)

$\sum_{x=1}^n P_{ij} \text{ Max}$ = the maximum influence score obtainable by promotional strategy 'j' for all product categories (x_1 ----- x_n)

k = Sample size

C. The role of promotional strategies in the second and subsequent purchases.

D. Shift in brand purchases and the role of promotion in inducing such shift. Six reasons were found to induce shift (discussed in detail in Chapter IV). The respondents were asked to rank those reasons (R_1 through R_6). Weights 1 to 6 were attached to the individual reasons as per the ranks obtained and an index was constructed as follows.

$$PR_j = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k R_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^k R_{ij} \text{ Max}} \times 100$$

Where,

PR_j = prominence index of reason R_j as per respondents ranking

R_{ij} = the weight attached to reason j as per the rank given to it by individual i ,

$R_{ij} \text{ Max}$ = the maximum weight attachable to reason j if individual i ranked it first

k = sample

E. The effect of socio-economic factors on consumers' responses to promotional strategies.

This was examined by adapting the multiple regression model proposed by Reddy (1990).

The adapted model is

$$Y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_{5-11})$$

where

$$Y = \sum_{i=1}^n P_{ij} \quad \text{of each respondent (i), indicative of his influence score for promotional strategy 'j' under all product categories (x}_1 \dots x_n)$$

x_1 = age

x_2 = sex

x_3 = education

x_4 = per capita household income

x_{5-11} = occupation

Among the independent variables, sex and occupation were treated as dummy variables. If the sex (x_2) was male, the value assigned was 1; if female, the value was 0.

The dummy values of occupation are as follows:

	x_5	x_6	x_7	x_8	x_9	x_{10}	x_{11}
x_5 (Agriculturist)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
x_6 (Labourer)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
x_7 (Student)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
x_8 (Housewife)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
x_9 (Businessman)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
x_{10} (Service)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
x_{11} (Unemployed)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

The values for education (x_3) ranged between 0 (illiterate) and 17 (post graduate).

Results and Discussion

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present chapter comprises two sections. Section I pursues the first and the third objectives; Section II takes up the second objective.

SECTION I

4.1 Introduction

The effect of promotion can be best known by gauging it against the objective with which the marketer has used it. It is often presumed that promotional campaigns ultimately aim at increasing sales. However, the difficulty in ascertaining the magnitude of sales needs to be acknowledged. The sales effect of promotion is, most of the time, hard to measure. This is so because sales are fashioned by several factors besides promotion, such as product features, price, quality, availability and consumer's psychological aspects. The next best alternative method to study the impact of promotion is to make an assessment of the response behaviour of consumers. This chapter examines the responses of rural consumers towards promotional strategies, with specific reference to four consumer non-durables, viz., toilet soap (P_1), tooth paste (P_2), detergent (P_3) and fabric whitener (P_4).

The approach adopted was a stage by stage analysis beginning with an estimation of the reach of different media in the selected villages, and culminating in the determination of the extent to which the respondents' purchase decisions were influenced by promotional strategies. The following were the individual stages of examination.

1. Media Reach and Frequency
2. Awareness of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies
3. Awareness of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies of the purchased brands.
4. Advertisements/commercials as sources of brand knowledge.
5. Recall of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies.
6. Influence of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies in the purchase decision of respondents.

4.2 Media reach and frequency

The process of marketing communication comprises three elements, viz., the marketer (the advertiser), the media and the audience. Since matching of audience to advertisements is done

by the different media, an investigation into the respondents' exposure to media was found important.

The exposure to different media, or precisely, the 'reach', denotes the total number (or percentage) of persons exposed to a given medium at a point of time, or during a given period. The achievement of the advertiser's objectives is dependent initially on the reach of the media through which he communicates, and then on the appeal of the message he uses to communicate. Media reach is, therefore, an important consideration for deciding what media are to be used to launch a communication (promotional) campaign.

The present study has determined the reach of five different media, viz., print, radio, television, display and cinema, in the three selected villages. This was done by arriving at the percentage of people who were exposed to each medium (see Table 4.1).

Radio has reached 90 per cent of the respondents covered in the study. Most of the respondents said that they were used to listening to radio at some time or other daily. Several studies and surveys have categorically reported the overwhelming reach of radio in rural India. The case of the selected villages was no different. Among the three villages, however, V₂ had a relatively lesser reach of radio. Radio was followed by print media, with a little less than 89 per cent respondents

Table 4.1 Share of respondents exposed to different media

Media	Villages			All villages
	V ₁	V ₂	V ₃	
Print	84.00	88.00	94.00	88.67
Radio	94.00	84.00	92.00	90.00
Television	62.00	86.00	78.00	75.33
Display	68.00	58.00	72.00	66.00
Cinema	74.00	62.00	76.00	70.67

Note: Figures in percentages

exposed. The readership of printed material is impressively high in Kerala, due to her high rate of literacy. A rural-urban divide in reading habits is less apparent, especially in the case of regional newspapers and magazines. It was noted during the field survey that even people of small means like daily wage earners were highly exposed to newspapers, especially in Malayalam.

Television is supposedly an urban medium. But there are signs of spreading television viewership across the country. Though introduced to the Kerala audience as late as in the early eighties, television has achieved tremendous reach. Television viewership has been on the increase even in rural areas, especially since the beginning of the nineties. Television has commanded reasonably good reach in V_1 , V_2 and V_3 with around 75 per cent of the respondents reporting that they view it. A point that may be highlighted here is that wherever viewership of television is high, radio has to its merit a relatively lesser number of listeners. This was especially evident in V_2 , where the number of radio listeners, as noted earlier, was comparatively less. But this does not mean that radio has low reach in places where television has reached well. Instead, it is the extent of listenership that is less. The increase in television viewership does not seem to have affected newspaper/magazine readership, as is evident in Table 4.1.

The high reach of electronic and print media does not necessarily mean that all the respondents concerned are owners of radio and television, and subscribers to newspapers or magazines. The reach of mass media is possible even without ownership or subscription whatsoever.

The two other media categories that evoked exposure in the study area are display media and the local movie house. A little above 70 per cent of the respondents stated that they were quite used to watching movies in the local cinema houses, while 66 per cent reported that they had come across the display media.

The respondents' awareness of advertisements/commercials can be said to be dependent on the extent of (or the level of) their exposure to these media. The more they are exposed, higher is their likelihood of awareness of advertisements/commercials. This extent of exposure is known as 'frequency'. Frequency denotes the number of times a person is exposed to a given medium during a given period (or at a given point) of time. Since the respondents included in this study expressed difficulty in telling how many times they were exposed to a medium, they were asked to state their frequency of exposure on a four-point scale: 'often', 'occasionally', 'rarely' and 'never', with weights 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively. Index values of frequency of exposure were determined for each media category, and are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Frequency index of exposure to different media

Media	Villages			All villages
	V ₁	V ₂	V ₃	
Print	77.33	81.33	88.00	82.22
Radio	81.33	68.67	75.33	75.11
Television	52.00	70.67	64.67	62.45
Display	50.67	42.67	53.33	48.89
Cinema	67.33	53.33	64.00	61.55

Being residents of the relatively less developed Malappuram district, the respondents in V_1 (Chokkad) exhibited a typical rural character in their media habits. They were more frequently exposed to radio and the local movie house (cinema) than to other media (see Table 4.2; cf. Table 4.1). Radio and cinema are widely regarded the most effective media in villages.

But on the whole, print media, with an index value of 82.22, and radio, with 75.11, evoked high exposure, followed by television and cinema, with index values of 62.45 and 61.55 respectively. Thus even with the spread of electronic media, the average Keralite's obsession with the written word seems to endure. The frequency of exposure to display media was low, as suggested by the index value. It was with this background information on reach and frequency of the prominent media the respondents' awareness of (or exposure to) advertisements/commercials was examined.

4.3 Awareness of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies

As the second step, the exposure of respondents to the advertisements/commercials launched through the different media was looked into. The respondents who had reported exposure to the various media were asked about the awareness of advertisements/commercials of products P_1 through P_4 in the respective media.

Table 4.3 The number of respondents exposed to advertisements/commercials in different media

Media	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Print	38 (90.48)	35 (83.33)	32 (76.19)	37 (88.10)	40 (90.91)	36 (81.82)	34 (77.27)	34 (77.27)	44 (93.62)	38 (80.85)	36 (76.60)	37 (78.72)	122 (91.72)	109 (82.00)	102 (76.69)	108 (81.20)
Radio	43 (91.49)	37 (78.72)	36 (76.60)	45 (95.74)	38 (90.48)	34 (80.95)	39 (92.86)	40 (95.24)	41 (89.13)	42 (91.30)	43 (93.35)	45 (97.83)	122 (90.37)	113 (83.70)	118 (87.41)	130 (96.30)
Television	28 (90.32)	26 (83.87)	25 (80.65)	28 (90.32)	41 (95.35)	39 (90.70)	39 (90.70)	40 (93.02)	36 (92.31)	34 (87.18)	36 (92.31)	35 (89.74)	105 (92.92)	99 (87.61)	100 (88.50)	103 (91.15)
Display	30 (88.24)	17 (55.88)	23 (67.65)	17 (50.00)	26 (89.66)	14 (48.28)	25 (86.21)	10 (34.48)	34 (94.44)	21 (58.33)	24 (66.67)	13 (36.11)	90 (90.91)	52 (54.55)	72 (72.73)	40 (40.40)
Cinema	31 (83.78)	16 (43.24)	29 (78.38)	14 (37.84)	29 (93.55)	14 (45.16)	23 (74.19)	13 (41.94)	35 (92.11)	11 (28.95)	27 (71.05)	15 (39.47)	95 (89.62)	41 (38.68)	79 (74.53)	42 (39.62)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

As seen in Table 4.3, out of 133 respondents who were used to reading newspapers or magazines, 122 (91.72 per cent) said that they had got exposure to the advertisements of some or other brands of toilet soap (P_1). With 102 (76.69 per cent) out of 133 respondents, detergent (P_3) evoked the lowest exposure in print media.

Among the 135 radio listening respondents, as many as 130 (96.30 per cent) were aware of the commercials of fabric whitener (P_4). Awareness of advertisements or commercials, determined from among the respondents who had reported exposure to each medium, was the highest in the case of radio commercials of fabric whitener. The awareness was found to be less for the cinema commercials and display advertisements of tooth paste (P_2) and fabric whitener (P_4). Yet, a reasonably good percentage of the relevant respondents were aware of toilet soap advertisements in display media and cinema houses.

The awareness of television commercials had an edge over that of print advertisements and radio commercials among the respondents. Awareness, depicted as a percentage of the reach of the respective medium, was relatively higher for television commercials, though in absolute terms more number of respondents were aware of print advertisements and radio commercials. This may be because of the audio-visual effect of television as a communication medium. On the whole, it may be inferred that a majority of the respondents exposed to the

different media were also exposed to the advertisements/commercials cast through them.

Rather than the percentage of respondents exposed to (or aware of) advertisements/commercials, it is the frequency of exposure that has more relevance. Frequency was worked out by asking the relevant respondents as to how often they had come across or been exposed to an advertisement or a commercial of a specific product in a given medium. Responses in this regard were collected on a three-point scale: 'often', 'occasionally' and 'rarely' carrying weights 3, 2 and 1 respectively. Index values calculated based on this are shown in Table 4.4.

Except for cinema commercials of P_2 (toothpaste) and P_4 (fabric whitener), the index values of exposure to advertisements/commercials have been fairly high in all media for all products (An index value of 66.66 and above denotes high exposure).

Relatively high index values were obtained for print advertisements of P_1 (toilet soap) and P_4 (fabric whitener), and radio commercials of the latter. Although the percentage of respondents exposed to commercials among television viewers was relatively higher than the corresponding percentage among the radio listeners, the frequency of exposure was almost equal, as suggested by the index values.

Table 4.4 Respondents' level of exposure to advertisements/commercials in different media (index values)

Media	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Print	84.21	76.19	72.92	92.79	91.67	75.93	78.43	77.45	81.82	76.32	71.30	74.77	85.90	76.15	74.22	81.67
Radio	76.76	81.08	75.93	82.96	78.07	76.47	76.07	81.67	76.42	73.02	79.07	80.74	77.08	76.86	77.01	81.79
Television	77.38	76.92	78.67	76.19	79.67	75.21	74.36	75.00	71.30	77.45	77.78	75.24	77.08	76.86	76.94	75.46
Display	76.67	82.46	78.26	78.43	74.36	73.81	74.67	68.00	75.49	71.43	75.00	76.92	75.51	75.90	75.98	71.78
Cinema	74.19	62.50	72.41	64.29	70.11	47.62	75.36	61.54	69.62	63.64	72.84	66.67	71.27	57.92	73.54	64.17

Most of the respondents were exposed either often or occasionally to advertisements/commercials of the selected products in the various media.

On the same lines as above, the percentage of respondents who were aware of (or exposed to) other promotional tools, and the index values of the level of such exposure were arrived at. This was done separately because other promotional tools do not have any link with the media, and are launched independently. The tools considered were price cuts, gifts and point-of-purchase (POP) promotions.

It may be observed in Table 4.5 that only around 10 per cent of the 150 respondents were aware of price-cut offers for toothpaste and fabric whitener brands. The awareness, however, was relatively higher for toilet soap and detergent brands. Almost a similar pattern of awareness was recorded by gifts. A little above 23 per cent of the respondents revealed having noticed gift offers with some toothpaste and fabric whitener brands. On the other hand, 52 per cent and 48 per cent of the respondents stated that they had come across free gifts with toilet soap and detergent brands.

Contrary to common notion, awareness of point-of-purchase promotions is very less in rural areas as per the information obtained from the study area. This is mostly due to the near total absence of such promotional materials in the

Table 4.5 The number of respondents exposed to other promotional tools

Strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Price cuts	20 (40.00)	0 (0.00)	18 (36.00)	0 (0.00)	23 (46.00)	9 (18.00)	16 (32.00)	8 (16.00)	26 (52.00)	7 (14.00)	21 (42.00)	7 (14.00)	69 (46.00)	16 (10.67)	55 (36.67)	15 (10.00)
Gifts/ offers	21 (42.00)	9 (18.00)	19 (38.00)	9 (18.00)	26 (52.00)	13 (26.00)	29 (58.00)	14 (28.00)	31 (62.00)	13 (26.00)	24 (48.00)	12 (24.00)	78 (52.00)	35 (23.33)	72 (48.00)	35 (23.33)
POP	10 (20.00)	4 (8.00)	12 (24.00)	3 (6.00)	5 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (12.00)	11 (22.00)	7 (14.00)	9 (18.00)	16 (32.00)	0 (0.00)	22 (14.67)	13 (8.67)	34 (22.67)	14 (9.33)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

rural retail outlets. Even if they are exhibited, they often remain unnoticed. Yet, 22.67 per cent and 14.67 per cent of the respondents remembered having come across hangers and other promotional materials of some brands of toilet soap and detergent in the shops they frequented. Except perhaps for some isolated references, respondents were almost unexposed to POP material of toothpaste and fabric whitener brands.

As with advertisements and commercials, here too the exposed respondents were enquired about their frequency of exposure to price cuts, gifts and POP material of the products selected for the study. Just as exposure was low, the index values are also quite low, as revealed by Table 4.6. All those respondents who had the experience of coming across price cuts, gifts and POP material said that they had noticed them, but quite rarely. This has been reflected in the index values. The general inference that may be made here is that price reductions, gifts and POP promotions are less known among rural consumers. Even if they are found, they arouse but little interest of the consumers. For the same reason, the influence of such promotional tools in their purchase decisions is doubtful.

Table 4.6 Respondents' level of exposure to other promotional strategies (index values)

Strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Price cuts	56.67	0.00	51.85	0.00	44.93	40.74	47.92	50.00	46.15	38.10	42.86	42.86	49.25	26.28	47.54	30.95
Gifts/offers	41.27	37.04	45.61	51.85	47.44	41.03	44.83	45.24	45.16	43.59	45.83	47.22	44.62	40.55	45.42	48.10
POP	36.67	33.33	41.67	33.33	40.00	0.00	44.44	48.48	38.10	33.33	45.83	0.00	38.26	22.22	43.98	27.27

4.4 Respondents' awareness of (or exposure to) the advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies of the purchased brands

An important step involved in the present study was to know the respondents' awareness level of the promotional strategies of the specific brands of products P_1 , P_2 , P_3 , and P_4 they had been using at the time of survey. This was under the premise that only such respondents as were exposed to the promotional strategies of the specific brands they had been using would be fit to answer a question on whether any such strategy had influenced their purchase decision. Thus the relevant respondents (i.e., those who had reported awareness of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies; q.v. tables 4.3 and 4.5) were asked whether they had come across promotional strategies of the brands they had purchased under each product category selected for the study.

It may be found in Table 4.7 that out of 122 respondents who were exposed to some or other advertisements of toilet soap in the print media (q.v. Table 4.3), 120 (98.36 per cent) disclosed that they were aware of the print advertisements of the individual toilet soap brands they had been using at the time of survey. The rest of the percentages were arrived at on a similar basis. More than 90 per cent of the respondents who were aware of print advertisements, radio commercials or television commercials of the various products reported that

Table 4.7 The number of respondents exposed to advertisements/commercials of the brands they purchase

Media	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Print	38 (100.00)	34 (97.14)	30 (93.75)	34 (91.89)	39 (97.50)	34 (94.44)	32 (94.12)	32 (94.12)	43 (97.73)	37 (97.37)	34 (94.44)	36 (97.30)	120 (98.36)	105 (96.33)	96 (94.12)	102 (94.44)
Radio	40 (93.02)	36 (97.30)	35 (97.22)	45 (100.00)	35 (92.11)	33 (97.06)	36 (92.31)	40 (100.00)	41 (100.00)	39 (92.86)	40 (93.02)	45 (100.00)	116 (95.08)	108 (95.58)	111 (94.07)	130 (100.00)
Television	28 (100.00)	25 (96.15)	25 (100.00)	27 (96.43)	40 (97.56)	34 (87.18)	38 (97.44)	37 (92.50)	33 (91.67)	33 (97.06)	31 (86.11)	32 (91.43)	101 (96.19)	92 (92.93)	94 (94.00)	96 (93.20)
Display	20 (66.67)	11 (57.89)	12 (52.17)	10 (58.82)	18 (69.23)	9 (64.29)	13 (52.00)	6 (60.00)	23 (67.65)	16 (51.54)	16 (66.67)	8 (61.54)	61 (67.78)	36 (66.67)	41 (56.94)	24 (60.00)
Cinema	17 (54.84)	10 (62.50)	20 (68.97)	9 (64.29)	19 (65.52)	7 (50.00)	16 (69.57)	8 (61.54)	21 (60.00)	7 (63.64)	18 (66.67)	8 (53.33)	57 (60.00)	24 (58.54)	54 (68.35)	25 (59.52)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

they were exposed to the advertisements/commercials of the brands they had been using. A relatively lower exposure was produced by display media and cinema houses, as understood from the corresponding percentages. But this variation is not seen in the index values of exposure (see Table 4.8). In most cases, the values remained above 66.66, indicating reasonably high exposure to the advertisements/commercials of the purchased brands. The highest exposure to any advertisement/commercial of a purchased brand was that of fabric whitener (P₄), where radio commercials of Ujala activated the awareness of 81.79 per cent of the relevant respondents. Yet, the display advertisements of fabric whitener, and cinema commercials of toilet soap, toothpaste and fabric whitener had been in the medium exposure range.

Though advertisements and commercials of the purchased brands did activate awareness, other promotional tools like price cuts, gifts and POP material did not, as reported by Table 4.9.

Only 33 (47.83 per cent) from among the 69 respondents (q.v. Table 4.5) who had been exposed to price cuts of toilet soap said that they had experienced such cuts for their respective brands. The percentage of respondents who were aware of price reductions, gift offers and POP promotions of their specific brands had been quite low in all product categories. The index values shown in Table 4.10 manifest that the frequency

Table 4.8 Respondents' level of exposure to advertisements/commercials of the brands they purchase (index values)

Media	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Print	82.46	75.49	74.44	71.57	74.36	75.49	78.13	77.08	79.07	76.58	70.59	74.07	78.63	75.85	74.39	74.24
Radio	76.67	80.56	75.24	82.96	76.19	75.76	77.78	81.67	76.42	72.65	80.83	80.74	76.43	76.32	77.95	81.79
Television	77.38	77.33	78.67	75.31	79.17	75.49	74.56	74.78	74.75	77.78	78.49	76.04	77.10	76.87	77.24	75.38
Display	71.67	75.76	69.44	66.67	64.81	62.96	66.67	50.00	72.46	64.58	64.58	50.00	69.64	67.77	66.90	55.56
Cinema	68.63	46.47	63.33	55.56	59.65	47.62	68.75	54.17	63.49	52.38	68.52	58.33	63.92	48.89	66.87	56.02

Table 4.9 The number of respondents exposed to other promotional strategies of the purchased brands

Strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Price cuts	11 (55.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (38.09)	0 (0.00)	9 (39.13)	4 (44.44)	9 (56.25)	3 (37.50)	13 (50.00)	3 (42.86)	14 (66.67)	3 (42.86)	33 (47.83)	7 (43.75)	30 (54.55)	6 (40.00)
Gifts/offers	10 (47.62)	3 (33.33)	6 (31.58)	2 (22.22)	6 (23.08)	4 (30.77)	9 (31.03)	5 (35.71)	12 (38.71)	4 (30.77)	8 (33.33)	4 (33.33)	28 (42.81)	11 (31.43)	23 (31.94)	11 (31.43)
POP	3 (30.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (25.00)	1 (33.33)	1 (20.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (33.33)	4 (36.36)	2 (28.57)	3 (33.33)	7 (43.75)	0 (0.00)	6 (27.27)	3 (23.08)	12 (35.29)	5 (35.71)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 4.10 Respondents' level of exposure to other promotional strategies of the brands they purchase (index values)

Strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Price cuts	51.52	0.00	42.86	0.00	40.74	41.67	44.44	33.33	43.59	44.44	42.86	33.33	45.28	28.70	43.39	22.22
Gifts/offers	36.67	44.44	38.89	33.33	44.44	41.67	48.15	40.00	44.44	33.33	41.67	41.67	41.85	39.81	42.90	38.33
POP	33.33	0.00	44.44	33.33	33.33	0.00	33.33	41.67	33.33	44.44	42.86	0.00	33.33	14.81	40.21	25.00

of exposure to price cuts, gifts and POP material has not been of a high level. Most of the respondents had come across such promotional strategies quite rarely, and a few, occasionally.

4.5 Advertisements/commercials as sources of brand knowledge

Imparting information on brands to the prospects is one of the important functions of advertising. It was, therefore, considered worthwhile to examine how far advertisements have worked as sources of brand knowledge to the rural consumers.

In Table 4.11 it is found that of the respondents who had been exposed to advertisements/commercials of their brands of choice (qv Table 4.7), between 70 and 90 per cent said that such advertisements and commercials had been sources of brand knowledge to them. It is quite unique that most respondents considered advertisements in all the major media as information sources about their brands of preference. No particular advertising medium achieved a distinct status as information source, although print advertisements, and radio and television commercials seemed to have some edge over display advertisements and cinema commercials. From the percentages one cannot make out a single medium as 'the major information source' to the consumers. That the respondents obtained brand knowledge from advertisements and commercials in all major media is a case of multiplicity/duplication of information sources. This multiplicity is indicative of the high reach of mass media in

Table 4.11 The number of respondents reporting promotional strategies as sources of brand knowledge

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
	-----				-----				-----				-----			
Print	30 (78.95)	29 (85.29)	25 (83.33)	29 (85.29)	35 (89.74)	31 (91.18)	22 (68.75)	27 (84.38)	36 (83.72)	27 (72.97)	30 (88.24)	30 (83.33)	101 (84.17)	87 (82.86)	77 (80.21)	86 (84.31)
Radio	36 (90.00)	32 (88.89)	29 (82.86)	41 (91.11)	30 (85.71)	29 (87.88)	31 (86.11)	36 (90.00)	38 (92.68)	31 (79.49)	33 (82.50)	41 (91.11)	104 (89.66)	92 (85.19)	93 (83.73)	118 (90.77)
Television	27 (96.43)	23 (92.00)	23 (92.00)	24 (88.89)	38 (95.00)	32 (94.12)	34 (89.47)	32 (86.49)	29 (87.88)	28 (84.85)	29 (93.55)	29 (90.63)	94 (93.07)	83 (90.22)	86 (91.49)	85 (88.54)
Display	16 (80.00)	9 (81.82)	10 (83.33)	7 (70.00)	10 (55.56)	5 (55.56)	8 (61.54)	4 (66.67)	19 (82.61)	14 (87.50)	13 (81.25)	6 (75.00)	45 (73.77)	28 (77.78)	31 (75.61)	17 (70.83)
Cinema	13 (76.47)	7 (70.00)	16 (80.00)	7 (77.78)	15 (78.95)	5 (71.43)	13 (81.25)	5 (62.50)	16 (76.19)	5 (71.43)	15 (83.33)	5 (62.50)	44 (77.19)	17 (70.83)	44 (81.48)	17 (68.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses show percentages

rural Kerala about which evidence was provided earlier. No wonder, the average consumer generally finds difficulty to clearly state which advertisement/ commercial in what medium has provided him brand knowledge. This vouches for the fairly high awareness he has on different media and advertisements. Since he has been exposed to advertisements/commercials in most media, the tendency naturally is to say that all of them have given him brand information. To get a clear picture, the status of each advertising medium as a source of brand information was determined. The respondents were asked to state which of the following descriptions best explained the status of an advertising medium for their respective brands under each product category: 'the only information source', 'a major source', and 'one of the several sources'. The descriptions were attached weights 3, 2 and 1, and indices were arrived at (see Table 4.12).

No medium was judged the 'only source' of information, nor was it rated the 'major source'. Each medium has acquired the status of 'one among the several sources' of information. Wherever the index exceeded 33.33, but remained less than 66.66, there the respective medium was identified by a few respondents as a major information source.

Given that no medium has been the only source, or even the major source of information, it may be inferred that the respondents have obtained brand knowledge also from sources like

Table 4.12 Status of promotional strategies as sources of brand knowledge (index values)

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
	Print	28.94	32.35	19.33	29.41	35.04	37.25	28.13	27.08	31.78	29.73	37.23	30.56	31.92	33.11	28.33
Radio	30.83	28.70	27.62	43.70	34.29	29.29	33.33	43.33	39.02	30.77	31.67	45.19	34.71	29.59	30.87	44.07
Television	42.86	44.00	49.33	37.04	43.33	44.12	44.74	37.84	41.41	44.44	46.24	48.96	42.53	44.19	46.77	41.28
Display	10.00	15.15	13.89	13.33	7.41	7.41	5.13	11.11	8.70	1.71	8.33	8.33	8.71	8.09	9.12	10.92
Cinema	11.76	6.67	13.33	11.11	8.77	14.29	12.50	8.33	9.52	9.52	11.48	8.33	10.02	10.16	12.44	9.26

word of mouth or other information channels. While interviewing the respondents it was noted that some of them failed to identify any information source. This occurred in the case of those respondents who exhibited brand loyalty to some long existing, reputed brands. They virtually failed to relate wherefrom they obtained brand knowledge. For them, the respective brands have been existing since as far back as they can take their memory.

4.6 Recall of advertisements and commercials

It is assumed that if an advertisement has achieved awareness and interest of the consumers (or the audience), it will be remembered by them. It is felt rightly or wrongly that if an advertisement is remembered by the audience, it has succeeded in communicating. This is often the basis for research into people's recall of advertisements they have seen. A word of caution needs to be raised here because a measure of recall is, in effect, a test of memory. Recall may reveal how well the advertisement has been noticed and retained by the audience, but not necessarily reflect how far it has been successful in influencing purchase. Notice and retention may be necessary but not sufficient conditions for an advertisement's success. The recall power of the audience is, therefore, not always a realistic surrogate of an advertisement's effectiveness.

Although the ability of the respondents to recall the advertisements of their respective brands was examined, the limitations of the method and the possibility of an erroneous result were borne in mind. It needs to be asserted, therefore, that the measure of recall may supplement, but not augment, the measure of awareness.

The respondents who had disclosed awareness of advertisements/commercials of the brands they had been using (q.v. Table 4.7) were asked to recall such advertisements/commercials. Four stages of recall were fixed, viz., low, partial, high and full. Since a disclosure of the awareness of an advertisement vouches for the respondents' memory, cases of 'no recall' did not arise. It was also observed that no respondent could fully recall any advertisement/commercial of any of the brands he had purchased. This was true of print advertisements, and commercials cast through on radio and television.

The recall of print advertisements was generally low (see Table 4.13). More than 80 per cent of the relevant respondents made but low recall of the print advertisements of the brands they had been using. A few instances of partial recall occurred, but high recall was quite rare. On the other hand, radio commercials were better placed as regards memorability (see Table 4.14), as relatively more number of respondents made partial and high recall. A reasonable number

Table 4.13 The number of respondents who recalled print advertisements

Stages of recall	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
	Low	29 (76.32)	31 (91.18)	30 (100.00)	26 (76.47)	36 (92.31)	34 (100.00)	30 (93.75)	24 (75.00)	41 (95.35)	37 (100.00)	34 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	106 (88.34)	102 (97.14)	94 (97.92)
Partial	9 (23.68)	3 (8.82)	1 (0.00)	0 (23.53)	3 (7.69)	- (0.00)	2 (6.25)	7 (21.88)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	12 (10.00)	3 (2.86)	2 (2.08)	15 (14.71)
High	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	1 (3.12)	2 (4.65)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	2 (1.66)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	1 (0.98)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages

Table 4.14 The number of respondents who recalled radio commercials

Stages of recall	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Low	36 (90.00)	36 (100.00)	24 (68.57)	17 (37.70)	31 (88.57)	33 (100.00)	26 (72.22)	17 (42.50)	41 (100.00)	39 (100.00)	37 (92.50)	10 (22.22)	108 (93.10)	108 (100.00)	87 (78.38)	44 (33.85)
Partial	4 (10.00)	- (0.00)	11 (31.43)	19 (42.22)	4 (11.43)	- (0.00)	6 (16.67)	21 (52.50)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	3 (7.50)	23 (51.11)	8 (6.90)	- (0.00)	20 (18.02)	63 (48.46)
High	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	9 (20.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	4 (11.11)	2 (5.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	12 (26.67)	- (0.00)	- (0.00)	4 (3.60)	23 (17.69)

Note: Percentages are shown in parentheses

of respondents either partially or highly recalled the commercial of a specific brand of fabric whitener.

The audio-visual effect of television had a bearing on the respondents' ability to recall commercials launched through that medium (see Table 4.15). Although television commercials attained low exposure vis-a-vis print advertisements and radio commercials (q.v. Table 4.7), they seemed to have aroused some interest in the audience, as indicated by the recall level.

Though the respondents demonstrated reasonably good recall power, it need be asserted that remembering an advertisement, and reproducing some or all parts of it are not always indicative (or fully indicative) of its success. It is the purchase decision brought about by the advertisement that matters.

The focus of interest thus far was on the respondents' awareness of (or exposure to) advertisements and other promotional methods. This was on the postulation that a study on the impact of promotional strategies will render meaningless if it directly examines the influence of such strategies on the purchase decisions of the audience. Prospective consumers, to get influenced by a promotional campaign, should first get exposed to it. The effort in the preceding sections was to probe the extent to which the sample respondents were aware of the advertisements and other promotional strategies of the

Table 4.15 The number of respondents who recalled T.V. commercials

Stages of recall	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Low	8 (28.57)	6 (24.00)	6 (24.00)	4 (14.81)	9 (22.50)	7 (20.59)	3 (7.89)	11 (29.73)	14 (42.42)	7 (21.21)	4 (12.90)	14 (43.75)	31 (30.69)	20 (21.74)	13 (13.83)	29 (30.21)
Partial	16 (57.14)	19 (76.00)	12 (48.00)	18 (66.67)	21 (52.50)	25 (73.53)	21 (55.27)	17 (45.95)	18 (54.55)	20 (60.61)	19 (61.29)	16 (50.00)	55 (54.46)	64 (69.57)	52 (55.32)	51 (53.13)
High	4 (14.29)	- (0.00)	7 (28.00)	5 (18.52)	10 (25.00)	2 (5.88)	14 (36.84)	9 (24.32)	1 (3.03)	6 (18.18)	8 (25.81)	2 (6.25)	15 (14.85)	8 (8.69)	29 (30.85)	16 (16.66)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

brands they had been using at the time of calling on them. The results obtained are quite absorbing.

The respondents, despite their moderate rural background, exhibited reasonably high awareness of print advertisements, and radio and television commercials. Their awareness was reinforced by their fairly good ability to recall the advertisements/commercials of their brands of preference. Advertisements have also worked as sources of brand knowledge to them, although not in a very high range. Other promotional tools such as price cuts, gifts and point-of-purchase promotions have generated but low awareness among the respondents. It also needs to be mentioned that no respondent has come across personal selling efforts to promote any brand in any of the product categories considered. It was against this background the influence of promotional strategies in the purchase decisions of rural consumers was examined.

4.7 Influence of advertisements and other promotional strategies

The respondents who had been exposed to advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies of their brands of choice (q.v. tables 4.7 and 4.9) were asked whether any such advertisement or other promotional strategy had exerted an influence on their purchase decisions of the respective brands.

Table 4.16 presents the number of respondents who reported that advertisements and other promotional strategies had some degree of influence in their purchase decisions. The respondents who were exposed to advertisements and other promotional strategies, but were never influenced have been excluded from the table. The percentages were arrived at based on the relevant totals appearing in tables 4.7 and 4.9.

Out of the 120 respondents who had been exposed to the print advertisements of their respective toilet soap brands (q.v. Table 4.7), 87.50 per cent disclosed that such advertisements did exert some degree of influence - 'certainly', 'occasionally', or 'rarely' - on them. Table 4.16 reveals that a very high per cent of the relevant respondents were influenced in some degree or other by print advertisements, and radio and television commercials. Among them, radio and television commercials had relatively better appeal, although in absolute terms the number of respondents who got exposed to each medium varied (q.v. Table 4.7).

The influence of display advertisements and cinema commercials was quite low, while other promotional tools such as price cuts, gifts and point-of-purchase promotional material hardly evoked any impact.

To make a valid inference on the impact of promotional strategies, the distribution of respondents among different

Table 4.16 The number of respondents influenced by promotional strategies

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
Print	33 (86.84)	30 (88.24)	26 (86.67)	31 (91.18)	34 (87.18)	29 (82.29)	28 (87.50)	28 (87.50)	38 (88.37)	32 (86.49)	30 (88.24)	32 (88.89)	105 (87.50)	91 (86.67)	84 (87.50)	91 (89.22)
Radio	38 (92.68)	34 (94.44)	31 (88.57)	43 (95.56)	32 (91.43)	30 (90.91)	32 (88.89)	39 (97.50)	38 (92.68)	35 (89.74)	34 (85.00)	43 (95.56)	108 (93.10)	99 (91.67)	97 (87.39)	125 (96.15)
Television	24 (85.71)	22 (38.00)	22 (88.00)	24 (88.89)	36 (90.00)	31 (93.94)	35 (92.11)	34 (91.89)	30 (90.91)	31 (93.94)	29 (93.55)	29 (90.63)	90 (89.11)	84 (91.30)	86 (91.49)	87 (90.63)
Display	8 (40.00)	7 (36.36)	4 (33.33)	3 (30.00)	7 (38.89)	4 (44.44)	5 (38.46)	2 (33.33)	9 (39.13)	5 (31.25)	6 (37.50)	3 (37.50)	24 (39.34)	16 (44.44)	15 (36.59)	8 (33.33)
Cinema	7 (35.29)	3 (30.00)	7 (35.00)	4 (44.44)	6 (31.58)	2 (28.27)	6 (37.50)	3 (33.33)	8 (38.10)	2 (28.57)	7 (38.89)	3 (37.50)	21 (36.84)	7 (29.17)	20 (37.84)	10 (40.00)
Price cuts	2 (18.18)	0 (0.00)	1 (14.29)	0 (0.00)	2 (22.22)	0 (0.00)	2 (22.22)	0 (0.00)	3 (23.88)	0 (0.00)	3 (21.43)	0 (0.00)	7 (21.21)	0 (0.00)	6 (20.00)	0 (0.00)
Gifts/offers	1 (10.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	1 (16.67)	0 (0.00)	1 (11.11)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (12.50)	0 (0.00)	2 (7.14)	0 (0.00)	3 (13.84)	0 (0.00)
POP	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (33.33)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (25.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (14.29)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (16.67)	1 (20.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses show percentages

levels of influence was next looked into (see tables 4.17 through 4.20).

A little above 30 per cent of the total respondents (i.e., 50 out of 150) stated that they were certainly guided by print advertisements while purchasing a brand of toilet soap (P_1). A little above 30 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of the respondents reported that radio and television commercials had certainly influenced them in selecting a toilet soap brand. The number of respondents who found that print advertisements, and radio and television commercials had no impact on their choice of toilet soap brands was also of a similar magnitude. The rest were either occasionally or rarely influenced. On the other hand, cases of no influence were very high with respect to display advertisements, cinema commercials and other promotional strategies. Yet a very small group of respondents (1.33 per cent) said that they were certainly influenced by cinema commercials.

The pattern of influence made by advertisements and other promotional strategies for tooth paste (P_2), detergent (P_3) and fabric whitener (P_4) was no much different, as indicated by tables 4.17 through 4.20. Nevertheless, on the whole, radio has gained relatively more interest of the rural audience. A special mention needs to be made about the radio commercials of P_4 (fabric whitener), which have achieved the credit of influencing more number of respondents. It was noted during the

Table 4.17 Distribution of respondents over different levels of influence for Product 1

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				Average of all villages			
	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N
Print	20 (40.00)	11 (22.00)	2 (4.00)	17 (24.00)	13 (28.00)	16 (32.00)	5 (10.00)	16 (32.00)	17 (34.00)	18 (36.00)	3 (6.00)	12 (24.00)	50 (33.33)	45 (30.00)	10 (6.67)	45 (30.00)
Radio	17 (34.00)	15 (30.00)	6 (12.00)	12 (24.00)	15 (30.00)	12 (24.00)	5 (10.00)	18 (36.00)	16 (32.00)	18 (36.00)	4 (8.00)	12 (24.00)	48 (32.00)	45 (30.00)	15 (10.00)	42 (28.00)
Television	11 (22.00)	10 (20.00)	3 (6.00)	26 (52.00)	17 (34.00)	17 (34.00)	2 (4.00)	14 (28.00)	12 (24.00)	12 (24.00)	6 (12.00)	20 (40.00)	40 (26.67)	39 (26.00)	11 (7.33)	60 (40.00)
Display	0 (0.00)	6 (12.00)	2 (4.00)	42 (84.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	4 (8.00)	43 (86.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (12.00)	3 (6.00)	41 (82.00)	0 (0.00)	15 (10.00)	9 (6.00)	126 (84.00)
Cinema	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	3 (6.00)	43 (86.00)	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	4 (8.00)	44 (88.00)	1 (2.00)	3 (6.00)	4 (8.00)	42 (84.00)	2 (1.33)	8 (5.33)	11 (7.34)	129 (86.00)
Price cuts	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	48 (96.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	48 (96.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	47 (94.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (4.67)	143 (95.33)
Gifts/offers	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.67)	1 (0.67)	148 (98.66)
POP	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)

Notes: C = Certainly influenced N = Never influenced

O = Occasionally influenced R = Rarely influenced

Note : Figures in parentheses depict percentages

Table 4.18 Distribution of respondents over different levels of influence for Product 2

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				Average of all villages			
	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N
Print	11 (22.00)	16 (32.00)	3 (6.00)	20 (40.00)	12 (24.00)	13 (26.00)	4 (8.00)	21 (42.00)	12 (24.00)	17 (34.00)	3 (6.00)	18 (36.00)	35 (23.33)	46 (30.67)	10 (6.67)	59 (39.33)
Radio	17 (34.00)	14 (28.00)	3 (6.00)	16 (32.00)	13 (26.00)	13 (26.00)	4 (8.00)	20 (40.00)	11 (22.00)	20 (40.00)	4 (8.00)	1 (30.00)	41 (27.33)	47 (31.33)	11 (7.34)	51 (34.00)
Television	9 (18.00)	12 (24.00)	1 (2.00)	28 (56.00)	13 (26.00)	14 (28.00)	4 (8.00)	19 (38.00)	12 (24.00)	17 (34.00)	2 (4.00)	19 (38.00)	34 (22.67)	43 (28.67)	7 (4.66)	66 (44.00)
Display	1 (2.00)	5 (10.00)	1 (2.00)	43 (86.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (92.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	3 (6.00)	45 (90.00)	1 (0.67)	10 (6.67)	5 (3.33)	134 (89.33)
Cinema	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (4.00)	47 (94.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (96.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	48 (96.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (1.33)	5 (3.33)	143 (95.34)
Price cuts	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)
Gifts/offers	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)
POP	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)

Notes: C = Certainly influenced N = Never influenced

O = Occasionally influenced R = Rarely influenced

Note : Figures in parentheses depict percentages

Table 4.19 Distribution of respondents over different levels of influence for Product 3

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				Average of all villages			
	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N
Print	11 (22.00)	10 (20.00)	5 (10.00)	24 (48.00)	12 (24.00)	13 (26.00)	3 (6.00)	22 (44.00)	10 (20.00)	12 (24.00)	8 (16.00)	20 (40.00)	33 (22.00)	35 (23.33)	16 (10.67)	66 (44.00)
Radio	16 (32.00)	12 (24.00)	3 (6.00)	19 (38.00)	14 (28.00)	15 (30.00)	3 (6.00)	18 (36.00)	14 (28.00)	19 (38.00)	1 (2.00)	16 (32.00)	44 (29.33)	46 (30.67)	7 (4.67)	53 (35.33)
Television	10 (20.00)	11 (22.00)	1 (2.00)	28 (56.00)	12 (24.00)	18 (36.00)	5 (10.00)	15 (30.00)	12 (24.00)	14 (28.00)	3 (6.00)	21 (42.00)	34 (22.67)	43 (28.67)	9 (6.00)	64 (42.66)
Display	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	1 (2.00)	46 (92.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	3 (6.00)	45 (90.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	3 (6.00)	44 (88.00)	0 (0.00)	8 (5.33)	7 (4.67)	135 (90.00)
Cinema	0 (0.00)	5 (10.00)	3 (6.00)	42 (84.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	2 (4.00)	44 (88.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (8.00)	3 (6.00)	43 (86.00)	0 (0.00)	13 (8.67)	8 (5.33)	129 (86.00)
Price cuts	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	47 (94.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	5 (3.33)	145 (96.67)
Gifts/offers	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (2.00)	147 (98.00)
POP	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (1.33)	148 (98.67)

Notes: C = Certainly influenced N = Never influenced

O = Occasionally influenced R = Rarely influenced

Note : Figures in parentheses depict percentages

Table 4.20 Distribution of respondents over different levels of influence for Product 4

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				Average of all villages			
	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N	C	O	R	N
	-----				-----				-----				-----			
Print	11 (22.00)	16 (32.00)	5 (10.00)	18 (36.00)	11 (22.00)	16 (32.00)	1 (2.00)	22 (44.00)	12 (24.00)	17 (34.00)	3 (6.00)	18 (36.00)	34 (22.67)	49 (32.67)	9 (6.00)	58 (38.66)
Radio	21 (42.00)	22 (44.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (14.00)	18 (36.00)	20 (40.00)	1 (2.00)	11 (22.00)	20 (40.00)	21 (42.00)	2 (4.00)	7 (14.00)	59 (39.33)	63 (42.00)	3 (2.00)	25 (16.67)
Television	10 (20.00)	9 (18.00)	5 (10.00)	26 (52.00)	14 (28.00)	15 (30.00)	5 (10.00)	16 (32.00)	13 (26.00)	13 (26.00)	3 (6.00)	21 (42.00)	37 (24.67)	37 (24.67)	13 (8.66)	63 (42.00)
Display	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	0 (0.00)	47 (94.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (4.00)	48 (96.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	3 (6.00)	46 (92.00)	0 (0.00)	4 (2.67)	5 (3.33)	141 (94.00)
Cinema	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	3 (6.00)	46 (92.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	2 (4.00)	47 (94.80)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (6.00)	47 (94.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (1.33)	8 (5.33)	140 (93.43)
Price cuts	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)
Gifts/offers	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	150 (100.00)
POP	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (2.00)	49 (98.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.67)	50 (100.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	149 (99.33)

Notes: C = Certainly influenced N = Never influenced

O = Occasionally influenced R = Rarely influenced

Note : Figures in parentheses depict percentages

field survey that the radio commercials of Ujala brand of fabric whitener had the greatest appeal among the respondents.

One can perceive from tables 4.17 through 4.20 the emerging potential of television as a communication medium in rural markets. The impact of television commercials was indeed low in relative terms. Yet in some cases television commercials had an edge over print advertisements in terms of impact. But as of now, the relative appeal remains with radio commercials, due to the high reach of the medium.

These inferences were by and large validated by the index values of influence. The index was worked out by attaching the following weights to the scale choices: Certainly:3, Occasionally:2, Rarely:1, Never:0 (see Chapter III for details).

The response index, which manifests the level of influence exerted by various promotional tools, remained less than 66.66 for print advertisements, and radio and television commercials of all product categories. This is indicative of the fact that respondents, on the whole, were not even occasionally influenced. There were, indeed, occurrences of high influence, but they were inconspicuous because of more instances of rare or occasional influence, and no influence. An exception to this was the relatively high influence exerted by the radio commercials of P₄ (fabric whitener), the index value

being 70.64. As noted earlier, this was the effect of a single brand, Ujala, and its promotional effort through radio (see Table 4.21).

Advertisements appearing on display media, and commercials launched through the medium of cinema, contrary to conventional wisdom, have made but less impact on the rural audience. Other promotional tools such as price reductions, gifts and POP material have generated virtually no appeal among the rural consumers, as illustrated by the index values. This too runs counter to common belief. On enquiry, a good number of respondents disclosed that low price and gifts were not unacceptable to them. But they are, more often than not, less inclined to switching to a brand if it intentionally offers a price cut or has an offer of gift with it. They also revealed that even if some among them do have interest to buy a brand that offers consumer promotions, the tendency of the retailer is to conceal such offers. But no evidence was obtained to validate this.

In general, the results point out that the influence of promotional strategies was not of a high degree. The respondents, despite that they are ruralites, had fairly good exposure to different media and promotional efforts. But their purchase decisions were not very much fashioned by promotion, as disclosed by the response index.

Table 4.21 Index values of influence of different promotional strategies

Promotional strategies	V 1				V 2				V 3				All villages			
	Products				Products				Products				Products			
	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4	P 1	P 2	P 3	P 4
	Print	59.57	49.28	42.96	50.72	51.70	45.83	47.10	47.83	60.00	48.67	41.33	48.67	57.09	47.93	43.80
Radio	60.42	59.42	47.83	79.26	49.33	47.92	51.02	63.33	58.67	51.33	54.00	69.33	56.14	52.89	50.95	70.64
Television	38.10	36.88	37.59	35.33	58.00	50.35	51.33	53.47	44.00	48.00	44.67	45.33	46.70	45.08	44.53	44.71
Display	9.33	9.33	4.67	4.00	6.80	4.86	4.76	1.36	10.20	4.67	6.00	3.33	8.78	6.29	5.14	2.90
Cinema	7.48	2.78	8.84	3.55	6.00	2.00	6.94	2.84	8.67	1.33	7.33	2.00	7.39	2.04	7.70	2.80
Price cuts	1.39	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.67	0.00	2.08	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.38	0.00	1.12	0.00
Gifts/offers	1.33	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.68	0.00
POP	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.00	0.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.22

4.8 Relative effectiveness of promotional strategies

Before considering the second objective, the third was taken up, which was to measure the relative effectiveness of different promotional strategies in the rural markets. Since the third objective was supplementary to the first, it made sense to pursue it before considering the second.

Relative effectiveness of different promotional tools was arrived at by constructing an index with the response scores (see Chapter III). Relative effectiveness gives the aggregate impact of a promotional tool in all product categories rather than its specific impact within a single category.

The index values recapitulate earlier findings (see Table 4.22). With an index value of 66.20, radio has reinforced its appeal than any other medium among the ruralites. Print media and television have been judged second and third in terms of relative effectiveness, with index values of 58.62 and 47.94 respectively. Though display media and cinema come next, they have not created any worthy impact, as suggested by the index values. Consumer promotions like price cuts and gifts, and POP promotions have virtually little relevance. Thus, even when different products are taken together, promotional tools exhibit the same result. This leads to the inference that the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a promotional medium or method is almost exclusive of what product or brand is promoted.

Table 4.22 Relative effectiveness indices of promotional strategies

	Print	Radio	Television	Display	Cinema	Price cuts	Gifts/offers	POP
V ₁	68.63	83.57	40.72	6.97	6.21	0.83	0.68	0.17
V ₂	58.55	56.70	57.78	4.71	3.65	0.34	0.34	0.17
V ₃	48.67	58.33	45.33	5.78	4.83	1.04	0.17	0.17
All villages	58.62	66.20	47.94	5.82	4.90	0.74	0.40	0.17

4.9 Influence of promotion on second and subsequent purchases

The whole task of promotion, especially, advertising, is not restricted to introducing a product (or a brand) to the masses and influencing them to purchase it. Promotion is used as a means to reminding the customers that the brand exists, and retaining their confidence in its utility. Although continuous promotion may have the objective of getting more customers, it is mainly intended to keep customers and maintain (or increase) sales. It is believed that customers will have to be reached constantly by advertising or other means for maintaining the market. But how far promotion, especially, advertising, succeeds in making people buy again? The present study has tried to answer this question in the context of rural consumer behaviour.

The respondents who had been influenced in some degree by advertisements/commercials towards purchasing a brand were asked whether their subsequent purchases, if any, of that brand were still based on such influence. The answer, unanimously, was in the negative. This would tend to mean that advertisements seem to influence consumers only in making the first purchase of a given brand. The subsequent purchases, it may be presumed, are guided by other factors such as quality, availability, price and the like. However, it cannot be

emphatically stated that advertisements do not create a reminder effect on consumers as the enquiry in this regard was not deep.

4.10 Shift in brand purchase

It was observed that consumers were inclined to shifting brands frequently. A notable percentage of the respondents had constantly switched from one brand to another. The incidence of such a behaviour was found to be more conspicuous for toilet soap (P_1), as Table 4.23 indicates. More than 70 per cent of the respondents stated that they were in the habit of shifting from one brand of toilet soap to another. But fabric whitener (P_4) recorded the lowest cases of brand shift, presumably due to the respondents' loyalty to Ujala. It was of interest to know whether promotion was the force behind brand shift.

The respondents were asked to state the reasons for switching constantly from one brand to another. They were also required to rank the reasons, based on which weights were attached (see Chapter III). Table 4.24 presents the index values of the individual reasons.

Promotion was not the most important factor that prompted consumers to shift brands frequently. Instead, it was 'just for a change' that most of them switched from one brand to

Table 4.23 The number of respondents who reported brand shift

	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄
V ₁	33 (66.00)	23 (46.00)	29 (58.00)	9 (18.00)
V ₂	39 (78.00)	19 (38.00)	31 (62.00)	10 (20.00)
V ₃	37 (74.00)	21 (42.00)	26 (52.00)	7 (14.00)
All villages	109 (72.67)	63 (42.00)	86 (57.33)	26 (17.33)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages

Table 4.24. Reasons for brand shift

	Reason	Index
R ₁	Just for a change	64.33
R ₂	Other members' preference	59.67
R ₃	Long lasting	55.33
R ₄	Low price	55.67
R ₅	Promotion	58.00
R ₆	Non-availability	57.00

another. The purchase choice of other members of the family was the second major factor that resulted in frequent shift. Promotion, with an index value of 58, was only the third important factor. Thus factors other than promotion appear to have a major role in shaping the purchase behaviour of consumers. It may be recalled that the influence of promotional strategies, as shown by the index values (q.v. Table 4.21), was not high. The conventional factors such as price, long lasting nature and availability had but less decisive roles in the purchase decisions of the respondents. Surprisingly enough, non availability of the preferred brand was not a major reason that made the respondents switch to different brands. This, however, does not mean that all the brands are always available in the rural retail outlets. But from the fact that non availability was only the fourth important reason, it may be inferred that people are not very much brand loyal with respect to the products under consideration.

Equally surprising is the finding that price and long lasting nature of the product are not prime considerations when a purchase decision is made. This is against our common notion regarding rural buyer behaviour. It seems that the average rural consumer of Kerala is ready to pay for the value of the product he buys. Though it is commonly believed that ruralites would like to see a consumer non-durable long lasting, it appears from the results that they are fully aware that such products do wear off as per the usage rate.

4.11 Conclusion

Promotional effort is not alien to the rural population. It is quite wrong to say that advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies are noticed by the urban consumers alone. The reach of mass media has been high in the selected villages; so has been the people's awareness of advertisements and commercials cast through them. Advertisements do not go unnoticed, nor do commercials go unheard or unwatched. Despite this, they do not have much of an influence in the purchase decisions of rural consumers. The average ruralite has rarely come across consumer promotions and point-of-purchase promotional material. They, therefore, hardly have any impact.

SECTION II

4.12 Introduction

It is common notion that while making a promotional plan to reach the rural markets effectively, the socio-economic profile of the prospects is to be considered. For, factors like sex, age, education, income and several others are said to have a bearing on buyer behaviour. The influence of these factors is supposedly more distinguished in rural areas. This view has been upheld by several studies and surveys, an anthology of which is presented in Chapter III.

This section seeks to examine whether the sample consumers' response behaviour towards promotional strategies is influenced by socio-economic factors. The following model was attempted, drawing from the one proposed by Reddy (1990).

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5 + b_6X_6 + b_7X_7 + b_8X_8 + b_9X_9 + b_{10}X_{10} + b_{11}X_{11}$$

where

Y is the dependent variable, derived from the influence scores, i.e.,

$$\sum_{x=1}^n P_{ij} \text{ of each respondent (i),}$$

indicative of his influence score for promotional strategy 'j' under all product categories (x_1 x_n). Since eight promotional strategies/tools were considered,

Y eight different sets of influence scores, i.e., Y_1 through Y_8 , where

Y_1 = influence score for print advertisements

Y_2 = influence score for radio commercials

Y_3 = influence score for television commercials

Y_4 = influence score for display advertisements

Y_5 = influence score for cinema commercials

Y_6 = influence score for price cuts

Y_7 = influence score for gifts

Y_8 = influence score for POP promotions

X_1 through X_{11} are independent variables, where

X_1 = sex

X_2 = age

X_3 = education

X_4 = income

X_5 = Occupational dummy - agriculturist

X_6 = Occupational dummy - labourer

X_7 = Occupational dummy - student

X_8 = Occupational dummy - housewife

X_9 = Occupational dummy - businessman

X_{10} = Occupational dummy - service

X_{11} = Occupational dummy - unemployed

4.13 Discussion

To examine the influence of the variables, a space was defined comprising four products and eight promotional tools. The entire space was applicable to a total block consisting of three villages, V_1 , V_2 and V_3 . Although both vertical and horizontal analyses are necessary to get a comprehensive picture of the influence, the individual regression runs indicated that there is no significant difference between villages, or between promotional tools. Hence the influence of socio-economic

factors on the responses of consumers was examined for each promotional strategy by pooling the villages.

The response behaviour of the sample consumers towards print advertisements (of products P_1 through P_4) was substantially influenced by their occupation (variables X_5 through X_{11} ; see Table 4.25). Among the set of variables, however, X_4 (income) indicated a negative (although marginal) association with the responses. This is, indeed, contradictory to the a priori beliefs, but is presumably due to the nature of the products - fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) - selected for the study. The spurious relation is because of the fact that FMCGs are generally characterised by routinised buyer behaviour, and income is not a major determinant in shaping the purchase decisions of such consumer non-durables. This was reflected in the response behaviour towards the respective promotional strategies also. Variables X_1 through X_3 (sex, age and education) do not seem to be major determinants of purchase behaviour. The coefficients being of very low magnitude, the inference is that they have hardly exerted any influence on the consumers' response behaviour to print advertisements. But the coefficient of sex shows that the responses of men were relatively higher. The probable reason is that men had more exposure to print advertisements than did women.

Although the coefficients of age, education and income remained positive (yet, less decisive) in the case of responses

Table 4.25 Influence of socio-economic factors on the responses of consumers towards promotional strategies

Independent variables	Dependent variables							
	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3	Y 4	Y 5	Y 6	Y 7	Y 8
X 1	0.86 (1.120)	-0.20 (-0.275)	-0.50 (-0.594)	-0.27 (-0.959)	0.28 (0.979)	-0.007 (-0.093)	-0.02 (-0.259)	-0.08 (-2.535)
X 2	0.01 (0.451)	-0.002 (-0.078)	0.02 (0.880)	-0.005 (-0.648)	-0.003 (-0.402)	0.003 (1.496)	0.001 (0.486)	0.0009 (0.879)
X 3	0.10 (1.021)	-0.06 (-0.640)	0.03 (0.303)	0.04 (1.141)	-0.05 (-1.346)	-0.006 (-0.624)	-0.004 (-0.436)	-0.002 (-0.347)
X 4	-0.0002 (-0.469)	-0.0004 (-0.894)	0.001 (3.198)	0.0001 (0.927)	-0.0003 (-1.805)	0.00002 (0.583)	-0.00001 (-0.371)	-0.00002 (-0.839)
X 5	5.00 (2.00)	-0.33 (-0.139)	4.28 (1.566)	-0.02 (-0.021)	0.85 (0.917)	-0.04 (-0.170)	-0.47 (-1.987)	0.02 (0.153)
X 6	3.07 (1.285)	0.98 (0.426)	-0.04 (-0.014)	0.53 (0.626)	1.55 (1.763)	0.44 (1.967)	-0.19 (-0.838)	0.09 (0.828)
X 7	4.72 (1.847)	-0.82 (-0.335)	3.93 (1.410)	0.60 (0.662)	1.58 (1.677)	0.15 (0.606)	-0.45 (-1.809)	0.03 (0.254)
X 8	5.03 (2.045)	-0.36 (-0.153)	1.40 (0.521)	-0.13 (-0.152)	1.37 (1.514)	0.03 (0.118)	-0.49 (-2.090)	-0.04 (-0.344)
X 9	5.65 (2.308)	0.67 (0.284)	3.62 (1.355)	1.06 (1.215)	1.27 (1.407)	0.09 (0.371)	-0.46 (-2.001)	0.02 (0.211)
X 10	2.62 (2.250)	-0.57 (-0.237)	5.64 (2.064)	0.06 (0.068)	1.20 (1.306)	0.01 (0.044)	-0.45 (-1.882)	0.01 (0.116)
X 11	3.31 (1.023)	0.02 (0.006)	8.01 (2.266)	-0.07 (-0.064)	0.27 (0.224)	-0.06 (-0.209)	-0.52 (-1.706)	-0.05 (-0.380)
Intercept	-0.754670	8.366209	-1.475292	0.163427	0.327288	-0.097118	0.512146	0.069381

Note: Figures in parentheses represent student - t values

to print advertisements, they are negative (again, less decisive of the negative relationship) as regards radio commercials.

The regression run showed that women responded comparatively more to radio commercials of the products under consideration. The coefficients of various occupational categories (variables X_5 through X_{11}) have revealed that labourers, businessmen and the unemployed responded more to radio commercials. But here too, the magnitude has been quite low. But all the occupational categories (except X_6) have shown a positive relation with the responses to television commercials. Here too, women responded with a relatively higher degree than men did. Age, education and income recorded positive association with response behaviour in small degrees.

It was observed in the preceding section of this chapter that display advertisements, cinema commercials, point-of-purchase material and sales promotion offers were of very low influence. The index values derived from the response scores also support this inference. It does not therefore appear that the regressors (variables X_1 through X_{11}) can satisfactorily explain the changes in the regressand. Since the response scores themselves are quite low, the various independent variables (X_1 through X_{11}) cannot be considered fully explanatory, regardless of the sign and magnitude of the respective coefficients. This has been demonstrated by the individual regression runs.

The responses of women were comparatively higher (yet with low magnitude) in the case of display advertisements, price cuts, gift offers and POP material. Age showed a positive association with response behaviour except towards display advertisements and cinema commercials. Education struck a positive relation with responses to display advertisements, and remained negatively related with the rest. Income, on the other hand, recorded positive association with responses to display advertisements and price reductions. That people with higher income responded positively to price cuts is quite strange. This spurious relation is indicative of the erratic response behaviour the consumers exhibit to promotional strategies. Besides, as already stated, sales promotion offers like price offs and gifts have hardly evoked any worthy response. The individual regression runs showed that the occupational categories (variables X_5 through X_{11}) that had a positive association with the responses differed across promotional strategies.

As explained in the earlier paragraphs, the different socio-economic variables had only limited influence on the response behaviour of consumers towards promotional strategies. Although sex-wise difference in behaviour was found to be less significant, females responded more to radio, television, display, price reductions, gifts and point-of-purchase promotions.

Age took a positive sign for print, television, price cuts, gifts and POP material. However, had the analysis been made after a proper segmentation based on age, the youngsters and the middle aged would have probably shown a better response. But that was not done because of methodological issues.

Education and income, on the other hand, had a positive relation with the responses towards three promotional tools each: education in the case of print and display advertisements and television commercials; income in the case of television commercials, display advertisements and price cuts.

Some occupational categories were found to have positive association with response behaviour. But given the similar pattern of response scores for print advertisements, radio commercials and television commercials, and the low scores for the rest, it is difficult to categorically infer on the impact of occupation on response behaviour.

4.14 Conclusion

The regression analysis leads to the broad generalisation that none of the variables had a strong association with the response behaviour of consumers towards promotional strategies. In one sense, this is against the hypothesis that the socio-economic factors do have significant influence on the responses. The various studies reviewed (see

Chapter II) validate this hypothesis. The totally different picture obtained here is probably due to the peculiar nature of Kerala and her people. It may be concluded that even today, modern promotional tools neither have much of an influence on the masses at large, nor is the response behaviour to such tools influenced by socio-economic factors. This has been asserted by a statistically insignificant coefficient of determination (R^2).

Although mathematical modelling as the one tried here is valid per se, the nature of the present research problem, which is confronted with measurability issues, restricts its scope. Even if one leaves room for imperfections in the mechanics of measurement, the results obtained here may well be accepted as broad generalisations. Thus it may be concluded that in determining the purchase behaviour of the rural population with respect to consumer non-durables, and hence the response behaviour towards promotional strategies, socio-economic indicators do not have a prime role. The validity of this observation may be specific or general, but it invites more intensive research.

Summary

Chapter V

SUMMARY

5.1 Background

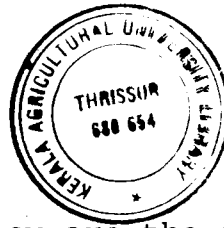
Modern marketing being complex with sophisticated products, conscious consumers and ever increasing competition, there is the need for proper flow of communication from the producer to the prospect. It is to achieve this end that various promotional tools have been developed. They are used by marketers to inform consumers about brands, and to persuade them to effect purchases. But it is rightly or wrongly believed that such tools are predisposed to the urban market, and that they hardly match the rural areas. The question as to how ruralites conceive of the supposedly urban-prone promotional techniques assumes relevance against this background. With the rural masses getting increasingly recognised as an emerging consumer class, it was thought to be of worth to probe whether their buying decisions are fashioned by such techniques. The present study, entitled "Impact of Promotional Strategies for Consumer Non-durables on Rural Markets", was therefore taken up with the following objectives.

1. To assess the responses of rural consumers towards various promotional strategies, with special reference to consumer non-durables,
2. To analyse the socio-economic factors that influence the responses of consumers towards promotional strategies, and
3. To measure the relative effectiveness of different promotional strategies in rural markets.

5.2 Materials and methods

The study was confined to the villages of Chokkad, Padinjare Vemballur, Kannambra II in the districts of Malappuram, Thrissur and Palakkad respectively. The sample frame comprised 150 respondent, i.e., 50 from each village. The field survey was conducted during September-October, 1994 by administering pre-tested, structured schedule on the respondents. Specific reference was made on the response behaviour of selected consumers towards the promotional strategies of selected consumers towards the promotional strategies of four common consumer non-durables, viz., toilet soap, toothpaste, detergent and fabric whitener/blue. Bivariate tables, percentages, response indices and regression analysis comprised the methodology.

5.3 Findings



Presented briefly below are the findings of the study.

5.3.1 Media reach and frequency

The reach of mass media in the selected villages has been tremendous. With 90 per cent of the respondents exposed, radio has established its overwhelming presence in the village life. Newspapers and magazines, especially those in Malayalam, too have good reach in the sample villages, marking the obsession of the average Keralite with the printed word. The study also gave a clear manifestation of the spreading television viewership in rural Kerala. If the evidence obtained is any indication, television will be the most potent communication medium in rural areas in the years to come. The display media and cinema produced fairly good exposure individually, but not relatively.

The frequency of exposure was the highest for print media. Thus even with the high reach of electronic media, people have not lost interest in the printed material. This is, indeed, a demonstration of the high literacy rate Kerala commands. The frequency of exposure was quite high for radio, television and cinema, but low for display media.

5.3.2 Awareness of advertisements/commercials and other promotional strategies

A majority of the respondents exposed to different media were also exposed to the advertisements/commercials launched through them. Although the number of respondents aware of radio commercials and print advertisements was higher in absolute terms, television commercials evoked more awareness relative to the number of respondents exposed to each medium.

The frequency of exposure to advertisements/ commercials was reasonably high in all media for all products. Most respondents were either often or occasionally exposed to the advertisements/commercials of the selected products. On the contrary, exposure and its frequency were quite low for price cuts, gifts and POP promotional material. According to the respondents, products hardly ever carried offers of price cuts or gifts with them. If at all there was such an offer, they alleged that the tendency of the retailer was to conceal the offer from them. The low exposure to POP promotions is because they are almost non-existent for the selected products in rural markets. Nevertheless, some isolated cases of exposure were reported.

More than 90 per cent of the respondents who were aware of print advertisements, and radio and television commercials

reported that they were exposed to the advertisements/commercials of their preferred brands. But display advertisements and cinema commercials of the preferred brands generated relatively low exposure. As was the case earlier, other promotional strategies like price cuts, gifts and POP material of the purchased brands did not activate notable exposure. Most respondents had experienced such strategies quite rarely, and a few, occasionally.

5.3.3 Advertisements/commercials as sources of brand knowledge

The respondents had obtained brand information from advertisements and commercials from all major media. This multiplicity of information sources testifies to the high reach of mass media in the villages of Kerala. Because of the multiplicity, no medium has acquired the status of either the 'only source' or the 'major source' of information. It may be deduced from this that the respondents had obtained brand knowledge from other sources too, such as word of mouth. Some respondents who are loyal to certain brands could not identify an information source as they have known such brands since long.

5.3.4 Recall of advertisements and commercials

Quite opposed to common belief, the respondents, in spite of their rural background, were able to recall reasonably well the advertisements and commercials they had been exposed

to. Although television commercials had gained low exposure as against print advertisements and radio commercials, they seem to have good memorability, as suggested by the high recall. Nonetheless, it may be borne in mind that remembering and reproducing an advertisement or a commercial does not always reflect its success.

5.3.5 Influence of advertisements and other promotional strategies

A good percentage of the respondents who had been exposed to the advertisements/commercials of their respective brands were influenced in varying degrees by print advertisements, and radio and television commercials. But the influence of display advertisements and cinema commercials was very low. Other promotional tools like price cuts, gifts and POP material did not have any role in the purchase behaviour of the respondents. This is because of the near total absence and hence the respondents' low awareness of such tools.

The influence index, which reveals the degree of influence made by the different promotional strategies was below 66.66 for print advertisements, and radio and television commercials of all product categories. This means that the respondents, as a whole, were not even occasionally influenced. Among the different means of promotions radio commercials had relatively more appeal. The index values of display media and

cinema commercials were low. Other promotional strategies such as price reductions, gifts and POP material were not at all of any impact as revealed by the index. The index values of relative effectiveness uphold these results.

5.3.6 Influence of promotion on second and subsequent purchases

The respondents who were influenced in some degree by advertisements/commercials towards purchasing a brand unanimously reported that their subsequent purchases of that brand were not based on such influence. What follows from this is that advertisements do not appear to influence consumers beyond the first purchase.

5.3.7 Shift in brand purchase

Most of the consumers covered in the study stated that they switched from one brand to another frequently. Toilet soap recorded the highest cases of brand shift, and fabric whitener, the lowest. But promotion did not have a major role in inducing this shift. Rather than any known factor, it was just for a change majority of the respondents changed brands often.

5.3.8 Influence of socio-economic factors

The study examined whether socio-economic factors such as sex, age, education, occupation and income of rural consumers have any bearing on their response behaviour to promotional strategies. It was found that none of the variables had a strong association with the responses. Socio-economic factors do not have a major role in shaping the purchase behaviour of ruralites towards non-durable products, and their response behaviour towards the promotional strategies of such products. This finding, indeed, defies the commonly held hypothesis as regards rural buyer behaviour. But in every probability, this is a reflection of the unique nature of rural Kerala.

5.4 Conclusion

As has been observed earlier in this report, the results of the present study are expected to have an application bias. The scope of the results may sometimes be restricted to the sample villages. But it is hoped that they may serve as guidelines to promotional policy makers.

The study reinforces the fact that rural Kerala is distinct. This distinctive nature has reflected in the sample consumers' response behaviour towards promotional strategies. advertisements and other methods of promotion may be unfamiliar or exotic to the ruralites elsewhere in the country, but not to the

average rural consumer of Kerala. He has fairly good exposure to advertisements and commercials, especially, those launched through radio, television and print media. They have imparted him brand knowledge; and he has interest in them, for he can recall them reasonably well. But his purchases are not highly influenced by them. Advertisements and commercials do not seem to create a reminder effect on the rural consumer. He shifts brands frequently, but not impelled by promotion. He is less aware of consumer promotions. Offers of price cuts and gifts hardly ever attract him. His purchase behaviour as regards consumer non-durables is rather erratic, with promotion commanding only a minimal role. A striking contrast is the case of Ujala, a fabric whitener brand, which has made both rural and urban consumers almost brand loyal mainly through promotional effort. Though this is apt to be dismissed as an isolated example, it reminds us that promotion can be highly successful. With television viewership gaining momentum, radio maintaining its appeal, and printed material prevailing on, promotional success is not impossible in the rural markets of Kerala. But as pointed out by many experts, the effort should arouse the interest of the audience, and appeal to them.

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Appendix

Appendix

Kerala Agricultural University
 College of Co-operation and Banking
 Department of Rural Marketing Management

IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CONSUMER
 NON-DURABLES ON RURAL MARKETS

Schedule
 (for academic purpose only)

1. BASIC DATA

- 1.1 Name :
- 1.2 Address :
- 1.3 Sex :
- 1.4 Age :
- 1.5 Education :
- 1.6 Occupation :
- 1.7 Monthly income :
- 1.8 Details of family :

 Name Sex Age Education Occupation Monthly income

 1.9 Monthly expenditure pattern

- 1.9.1 Cereals :
- 1.9.2 Other food items :

1.9.3 Consumer non-durables

P₁ Toilet soap :

P₂ Tooth paste :

P₃ Detergent :

P₄ Fabric whitener :

1.9.4 Others (specify) :

1.10 (a) Place of purchase:

Rural shops/Urban shops/Both

(b) Reasons:

Convenience/Quality/Fair price/Good service/
Better product choice/Credit facility/Store
loyalty/Others (specify)

1.11 Purchase pattern:

(a) Monthly/Fortnightly/Weekly/Daily

(b) Cash/Credit/Both

1.12 Specify

(i) brand(s) preferred, (ii) brand(s) usually
purchased, and (iii) brand(s) currently used under
each product category

Product categories (i) (ii) (iii)

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

2. MEDIA REACH

2.1 Whether exposed to the following media?
(Mark Yes/No and specify frequency of exposure:
Often/Occasionally/Rarely/Never)

Radio :

TV :

Display :

Cinema :

Others (specify) :

2.2 Specify vehicles/types frequently exposed to in each
medium

Print :

Radio :

TV :

Display :

Cinema :

Others (specify) :

3. KNOWLEDGE OF PROMOTION

3.1 Brands in general

3.1.1 Whether exposed to/aware of different promotional
strategies of some or other brands under each
product category below? (Mark Yes/No against each)

 Promotional strategies

Product categories

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

Print ads

Radio commercials

TV commercials

Display ads

Cinema commercials

Price cuts

Gifts/offers

POP promotions

Others (specify)

3.1.2 If exposed, specify frequency of such exposure:
 Often/Occasionally/Rarely

 Promotional strategies

Product categories

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

Print ads

Radio commercials

TV commercials

Display ads

Cinema commercials

Price cuts

Gifts/offers

POP promotions

Others

3.2 Brands currently used

3.2.1 Whether exposed to/aware of different promotional strategies of the brands currently used under each product category? (Mark Yes/No)

Promotional strategies	Product categories			
	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄
Print ads				
Radio commercials				
TV commercials				
Display ads				
Cinema commercials				
Price cuts				
Gifts/offers				
POP promotions				
Others (Specify)				

3.2.2 If exposed, specify frequency of such exposure:
Often/Occasionally/Rarely

Promotional strategies	Product categories			
	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄
Print ads				
Radio commercials				
TV commercials				
Display ads				
Cinema commercials				
Price cuts				
Gifts/offers				
POP promotions				
Others				

4. SOURCES OF BRAND KNOWLEDGE

4.1 Source(s) which imparted information on the brands currently used under each product category

 Product Sources (mark as many as applicable)
 categories

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

 Sources: Print/Radio/TV/Display/Cinema/POP/Word of mouth
 (specify)/Others (specify)

4.2 If brand information was obtained from more than one source, specify the status of each source against each product category. (Select an appropriate choice from below that best describes the status)

 Sources Status of each source in imparting information on
 (list) -----
 P₁ P₂ P₃ P₄

 (Choices: (A) the only source
 (B) a major source
 (C) one of the several sources)

5. ADVERTISEMENT/COMMERCIAL RECALL

5.1 Print ad recall (specify brands against each product and check the recall stages appropriately)

Product categories	Recall stages			
	No recall	Partial recall	High recall	Full recall
P ₁				
P ₂				
P ₃				
P ₄				

5.2 Radio commercial recall

Product categories	Recall stages			
	No recall	Partial recall	High recall	Full recall
P ₁				
P ₂				
P ₃				
P ₄				

5.3 TV commercial recall

Product categories	Recall stages			
	No recall	Partial recall	High recall	Full recall
P ₁				
P ₂				
P ₃				
P ₄				

6. INFLUENCE OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

6.1 Have promotional strategies influenced purchase of brands currently used in each product category below? (Scale choices: Certainly/Occasionally/Rarely/Never)

Promotional strategies	Product categories			
	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄
Print ads				
Radio commercials				
TV commercials				
Display ads				
Cinema commercials				
Price cuts				
Gifts/offers				
POP promotions				

6.2(i) Whether any of the promotional strategies influenced in making second and subsequent purchases? If yes, specify strategies and the relevant brands in each product category.

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

(ii) If promotional strategies did not influence the second and subsequent purchases, what other factors did?

7. BRAND SHIFT AND THE ROLE OF PROMOTION

Whether shift in brand purchase (i.e., switching of brands) occurred? If yes, specify reasons

 Product categories Reasons (Check as many as
 applicable and rank)

P₁

P₂

P₃

P₄

 (Reasons: Promotion (specify); low price; lasts long;
 just for a change; non-availability of
 preferred brand; non preference of other family
 members; other reasons (specify))

8. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

**IMPACT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES
FOR CONSUMER NON-DURABLES
ON RURAL MARKETS**

By
RAJESH, P.

ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirement for the degree of

**Master of Science *(Co-operation & Banking)* in
Rural Marketing Management**

Faculty of Agriculture
KERALA AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF CO-OPERATION AND BANKING
MANNUTHY, THRISSUR.

1995

ABSTRACT

The study entitled "Impact of Promotional Strategies for Consumer Non-durables on Rural Markets" was conducted with the following objectives.

1. To assess the responses of rural consumers towards promotional strategies, with special reference to consumer non-durables,
2. To analyse the socio-economic factors that influence the responses of consumers towards promotional strategies, and
3. To measure the relative effectiveness of different promotional strategies in rural markets.

The study was carried out in the villages of Chokkad, Padinjare Vemballur and Kannambra II in the districts of Malappuram, Thrissur and Palakkad respectively. The field survey was conducted during August-October, 1994. Specific reference was made on the response behaviour of consumers towards the promotional strategies of four consumer non-durables of common use, viz., toilet soap, tooth paste, detergent and fabric whitener. Bivariate tables, percentages, influence indices and multiple regression model were used to analyse and interpret the data.

All the major media - print, electronic, cinema and display - had fairly good reach in the villages. The respondents had high awareness of advertisements and commercials cast through the different media, but less awareness of other means of promotion. Advertisements and commercials have imparted the brand knowledge. Their recall rate of advertisements and commercials was high, reinforcing their awareness level. Though a good percentage of the respondents were influenced by advertisements and commercials, such influence was not high. Among the different promotional strategies, however, radio commercials had more appeal among the rural consumers, mainly because of the high reach of radio. The measure of relative effectiveness of different promotional strategies was also in support of radio commercials. While display advertisements and cinema commercials commanded very low influence, consumer promotions like price cuts and gifts, and point-of-purchase promotions had little role in generating brand interest and purchase.

Although advertisements and commercials were remembered well, they were not found to make any reminder effect on rural consumers by inducing second and subsequent purchases. There were high cases of brand shift among the respondents, but promotion was not a major factor that led to such shift.

Contrary to common belief, socio-economic variables such as age, sex, education, income and occupation did not have decisive roles in the response behaviour of rural consumers towards promotional strategies.