

Media Influence On FMCGs - A Comparative Study Among Rural And Urban Households On Their Product Purchase Decision

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INTRODUCTION

The media is instrumental in defining the way we think and what one's place is in the society. It has an impact on how issues are interpreted and evaluated. The term *Mass Media* is defined as means of communication that operate on a large scale, reaching and involving virtually everyone in the society to a greater or lesser degree (Mcquail, 2000).¹ *A medium is called mass medium when it reaches above 50 million people* (Chundi and Srivastava, 2000).² Thus, it essentially means dissemination of information, idea and entertainment by the communication media.

Media audiences have different individual backgrounds, intelligence, interests and attitudes, which invariably influence their perceptions and interpretations about the incoming message and, therefore, the impact varies. Media has enabled people to have access to different sources of information and facilitated the people to see different people and their way of life, thus creating better ideas and perceptions about the world. The media on the one hand document endangered species, vanishing cultural heritage and life styles and activities of the past and on the other hand, it has also influenced people to accept global culture and values. In India, the Mass media primarily refers to the radio, the newspaper, cinema halls, print, television and the internet. The spread of mass media is impressive where, in the initial stage, the spread of mass media and related technology was confined largely to the urban areas and now, this has engulfed the whole society. The communication network has reached even the remote rural areas of the country. These are the main media disseminating information and serving as sources of entertainment.

FMCGs

Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), also known as Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) are products that have a quick turnover, and relatively low cost. They are not sold loose or by weight, do not take up too much space, are not messy to handle and have high consumer demand. Consumers generally put less thought into the purchase of FMCGs than other products. The absolute profit made on a FMCG product is less; however, they are generally sold in high numbers. Hence, profit in FMCGs generally scales with the number of goods sold, rather than the profit made per item. The main segments can be classified as *Personal Care* (oral care, hair care, soaps, cosmetics and toiletries), *House Hold Care* (fabric wash and house hold cleaners), *Branded and Packaged Food and Tobacco*.³

MEDIA AND RURAL MARKETING EFFORTS

The effectiveness of rural marketing communications, to a large extent is influenced by the media habits of the rural consumers. Though all types of media is being used in rural areas, however, in view of low levels of literacy, audio-visual media, i.e. radio, television and films assume major importance. However, with the increasing rate of literacy, print media in the form of newspapers, magazines etc are also gaining popularity in the rural context. In general, media has a tremendous impact in sustaining or weakening the social fabric of social life. The *Advertisement*, which brought with itself new dimensions has led to changes in dress style, way of living and new consumption demands among the rural consumers. Development in the field of communication has greatly facilitated the spread of messages of change. In Assam, where lakhs of people live in rural villages, speak diverse languages, and maintain diverse cultural identities, mass media of communication assumes a very strategic place. Realizing that mass media are important precursors to change, improving media reach in rural areas has become a guiding factors in rural marketing strategies. The economy in the last couple of decades has witnessed an unparallel proliferation of consumer goods and international brands. As the Indian economy becomes a part of the world capitalist system, there is a shift away from

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building a self reliant welfare state to a 'Market Driven' consumer goods economy (Kurien 1995⁴; Mankekar 1999).⁵ This rising consumer expectation, created with the change in economic policies has led to the strengthening of the social acceptance of consumption, as it increasingly becomes means of defining social status. Mankekar (1999, p74)⁶ describes the phenomena as: The new economic policies enabled the middle class to purchase consumer goods that had recently been luxury items, but are now perceived as crucial indices of upward mobility: household appliances, toiletries, packaged foods and other consumer goods. Venkatesh (1994) described media as one of the prime movers of growing consumerism in India. There are three related changes in the nature and content of media that deserves to be highlighted. First, there has been a several fold increase in the number of television channels in the country. Second, there has been an exponential rise in advertising expenditure in India. Third, a related shift has been the altering of the programming or media content to suit the corporate interests.⁷

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objectives of the study are as follows :

1. To find out the influence of mass media in product purchase decisions among the rural and urban households.
2. To know whether there exists any significant difference or there is no significant difference between the rural and urban households in their product purchase decision (FMCGs) through the influence of mass media.

METHODOLOGY

A sample size of 300 rural consumer households from the district of Kamrup (rural) and 60 urban households from Guwahati city of Kamrup district (urban) of the state of Assam were taken for the study. Primary data had been collected through direct personal interviews through schedules. An attempt had been made to find out the influence of mass media in product purchase decision among the rural and urban households.

The influence of media was studied on two variables:

- (i) Income of households for both rural and urban and
- (ii) Family type (nuclear/joint).

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PRODUCT PURCHASE DECISION AMONG RURAL AND URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

The following media are considered to be influential in product purchase decision among the rural and urban consumers because of their strong presence in households and its corresponding influence: (1) DD TV (2) Cable/ Satellite TV (3) Cinema (4) Radio (5) Newspaper (6) Magazine.

Table 1 : Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban Income Group
(≤ ₹ 5000)

Type of Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Significance	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	62	.2742	.44975	-1.282	11.215	.226	NS
	Urban	10	.5000	.52705				
Cable/Satellite TV	Rural	62	.1613	.37080	-.274	11.359	.789	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				
Cinema	Rural	62	.0161	.12700	1.000	61.000	.321	NS
	Urban	10	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	62	.3387	.47713	2.042	16.495	.058	NS
	Urban	10	.1000	.31623				
Newspaper	Rural	62	.1452	.35514	.412	12.955	.687	NS
	Urban	10	.1000	.31623				
Magazine	Rural	62	.0645	.24768	-.338	10.853	.741	NS
	Urban	10	.1000	.31623				

Note: NS= Not Significant; Significant is at p<0.05 level.

Source: Field Survey

The study was attempted to find out whether there exists any significant difference or there is no significant difference between the rural and urban households in their product purchase decision through the influence of these media. The study identifies whether the rural and urban consumers are equally being influenced by these media or otherwise. In order to find out the influence of these media, calculation through statistical t-test' was done through SPSS among the different income groups as well as among the family type (nuclear and joint) of rural and urban households.

As indicated in Table: 1, there exists no significant difference in the influence of media among the rural and urban respondents in the product purchase decision. Media influence is ,therefore, equal in both the urban and rural areas in the income category of less than or equal to ₹ 5000. However, there exists a near to significant difference in the influence of radio among the rural and urban households, which is evident from the Table 1, where significance is nearby at (.058), where $p < 0.05$.

**Table 2 : Group Statistics: Media Influence on Rural and Urban Income Group
(₹ 5001- ₹ 10000)**

Type of Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Significance	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	114	.2807	.45133	-.396	17.302	.697	NS
	Urban	15	.3333	.48795				
Cable/ Satellite TV	Rural	114	.1579	.36625	-1.789	15.979	.093	NS
	Urban	15	.4000	.50709				
Cinema	Rural	114	.0088	.09366	1.000	113.000	.319	NS
	Urban	15	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	114	.3421	.47651	3.433	28.647	.002	S
	Urban	15	.0667	.25820				
Newspaper	Rural	114	.1404	.34888	.073	17.819	.943	NS
	Urban	15	.1333	.35187				
Magazine	Rural	114	.0702	.25657	.050	17.837	.961	NS
	Urban	15	.0667	.25820				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level.

Source: Field Survey

As indicated in Table: 2, there also exists no significant difference in the influence of different media among the rural and urban respondents in the income group of (₹ 5001- ₹ 10000). However, there is a significant difference in the influence of radio among the rural and urban households in the same income category. However, barring radio, significance at (.002), where $p < 0.05$, rest of the media and its influence is equal in product purchase decision for both the urban and rural areas in the given income group. It can be inferred that rural and urban households are equally exposed to different forms of media in the given income group and their influence in the product purchase decision can be said to be equally alike, although the influence of mass media 'Radio' seem to have a significant difference in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban households. Hence, Radio, as a viable media, has varied influence in product purchase decision among the rural and urban consumers in the given income group. Marketers need to keep note that a same product being advertised through radio targeting both rural and urban consumers at the same time may not have similar influence on their product purchase decision.

As indicated in Table 3, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media among the rural and urban respondents in the income group of (₹10001- ₹ 15000). However, there exists a significant difference in the influence of radio among the rural and urban households in the same income category. However, barring radio at (.001), where $p < 0.05$, media influence is seen to be equal in both the urban and rural areas in the given income group.

It can be inferred that rural and urban households are equally exposed to different forms of media in the given income group and their influence in the product purchase decision can be said to be equally alike, although the influence of mass media 'Radio' seem to have a significant difference in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban households. Hence, Radio as a viable media has varied influence in product purchase decision among the rural and urban consumers for the given income group. Marketers need to keep note that a same product being advertised through radio, targeting both rural and urban consumers at the same time, may not have a similar influence on their product purchase decision.

**Table 3 : Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban Income Group
(₹ 10001- ₹ 15000)**

Type of Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Significance	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	66	.2647	.44133	.441	14.497	.691	NS
	Urban	15	.2020	.47695				
Cable/ Satellite TV	Rural	66	.1551	.35625	-1.549	12.684	.083	NS
	Urban	15	.3090	.50609				
Cinema	Rural	66	.0394	.09256	1.000	32.000	.310	NS
	Urban	15	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	66	.3629	.47541	4.343	32.000	.001	S
	Urban	15	.0000	.24720				
Newspaper	Rural	66	.1471	.33788	-.460	14.097	.933	NS
	Urban	15	.2000	.34187				
Magazine	Rural	66	.0698	.24557	-1.112	10.853	.941	NS
	Urban	15	.2100	.24720				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Field Survey

**Table 4 : Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban Income Group
(₹ 15001- ₹ 20000)**

Type of Media	AREA	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Significance	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	34	.2647	.44781	.421	15.497	.680	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				
Cable/ Satellite TV	Rural	34	.1471	.35949	-1.449	11.684	.174	NS
	Urban	10	.4000	.51640				
Cinema	Rural	34	.0294	.17150	1.000	33.000	.325	NS
	Urban	10	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	34	.3529	.48507	4.243	33.000	.000	S
	Urban	10	.0000	.00000				
Newspaper	Rural	34	.1471	.35949	-.360	13.097	.724	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				
Magazine	Rural	34	.0588	.23883	-1.012	10.753	.334	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Field Survey

As indicated in Table 4, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media among the rural and urban respondents in the income group of (₹ 15001- ₹ 20000). However, there exists a significant difference in the influence of radio at (.000) where $p < 0.05$, among the rural and urban households in the same income category. However, barring radio, media influence is equal in both the urban and rural areas in the given income group.

It can be inferred that rural and urban households are equally exposed to different forms of media in the given income group and their influence in the product purchase decision can be said to be equally alike, although the influence of mass media 'Radio' seem to have a significant difference in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban households.

Hence, Radio as a viable media has varied influence in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban consumers in the given income group. Marketers need to keep note that a same product being advertised through radio, targeting both rural and urban consumers at the same time, may not have similar influence on their product purchase decision.

**Table 5 : Group Statistics: Media Influence on Rural and Urban Income Group
(₹ >20000)**

Type of Media	AREA	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Significance	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	24	.2917	.46431	.560	18.540	.582	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				
Cable/ Satellite TV	Rural	24	.1667	.38069	-1.290	13.271	.219	NS
	Urban	10	.4000	.51640				
Cinema	Rural	24	.0417	.20412	1.000	23.000	.328	NS
	Urban	10	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	24	.2917	.46431	3.077	23.000	.005	S
	Urban	10	.0000	.00000				
Newspaper	Rural	24	.1250	.33783	-.500	14.065	.625	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				
Magazine	Rural	24	.0833	.28233	-.803	12.506	.437	NS
	Urban	10	.2000	.42164				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level.

Source: Field Survey

As indicated in Table 5, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media among the rural and urban respondents in the income group of (₹ 20000 above). However, there exists a significant difference in the influence of radio at (.005) where $p < 0.05$, among the rural and urban households in the same income category. However, barring radio, media influence is equal in both the urban and rural areas in the given income group. It can be seen that rural and urban households are equally exposed to different forms of media in the given income group and their influence in the product purchase decision can be said to be equally alike, although the influence of mass media 'radio' seem to have a significant difference in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban households. Hence, radio as a viable media has varied influence in product purchase decision among the rural and urban consumers in the given income group. Marketers need to keep note that a same product being advertised through radio targeting both rural and urban consumers at the same time may not have similar influence on their product purchase decision. Therefore, it can be inferred that barring radio, all the other media (DD TV, Cable /Satellite TV, Cinema, Newspaper or Magazine) have equal influence in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban households in different income groups.

The above analyses of Income category for urban and rural households have the following inferences:

- i) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media among the income class of (\leq ₹ 5000) for both the rural and urban households.
- ii) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except 'Radio' among the income class of (₹ 5001-10000) for both the rural and urban households.
- iii) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except 'Radio' among the income class of (₹ 10001-15000) for both the rural and urban households.
- iv) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except 'Radio' among the income class of (₹ 15001-20000) for both the rural and urban households.
- v) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except 'Radio' among the income class of ($>$ ₹ 20000) for both the rural and urban households.

GROUP STATISTICS OF RURAL AND URBAN FAMILY TYPE (NUCLEAR/JOINT)

As indicated in Table 6, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media in product purchase decision among the rural and urban family type. However, there exists a significant difference in the influence of radio at (.000) where $p < 0.05$, among the rural and urban family type (nuclear and joint). However, barring radio, media influence is equal in both the urban and rural areas. Hence, it can be inferred that both rural and urban households

**Table 6: Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban Family Type
(Total of Nuclear and Joint)**

Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	300	.2500	.43374	.276	85.210	.784	NS
	Urban	60	.2333	.42652				
Cable	Rural	300	.2200	.41494	-1.484	78.530	.142	NS
	Urban	60	.3167	.46910				
Cinema	Rural	300	.0333	.17981	-.552	75.585	.583	NS
	Urban	60	.0500	.21978				
Radio	Rural	300	.3067	.46188	3.832	113.119	.000	S
	Urban	60	.1167	.32373				
Newspaper	Rural	300	.1067	.30920	-1.161	75.782	.249	NS
	Urban	60	.1667	.37582				
Magazine	Rural	300	.0833	.27685	-.745	77.196	.459	NS
	Urban	60	.1167	.32373				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Field Survey

(nuclear and joint) are equally exposed to different forms of media, although influence of mass media '*Radio*' seems to have a significant difference in the product purchase decision among the nuclear or joint family type of rural and urban households.

Table 7 : Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban (Only Nuclear)

Type of Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	126	.2381	.42762	.216	78.734	.829	NS
	Urban	45	.2222	.42044				
Cable	Rural	126	.2143	.41196	-1.228	69.820	.224	NS
	Urban	45	.3111	.46818				
Cinema	Rural	126	.0476	.21381	-.452	67.900	.653	NS
	Urban	45	.0667	.25226				
Radio	Rural	126	.3016	.46078	3.039	112.534	.003	S
	Urban	45	.1111	.31782				
Newspaper	Rural	126	.1111	.31552	-.723	68.679	.472	NS
	Urban	45	.1556	.36653				
Magazine	Rural	126	.0873	.28340	-.806	66.571	.423	NS
	Urban	45	.1333	.34378				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Field Survey

As indicated in Table 7, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media in the product purchase decision among the rural and urban respondents in nuclear family type. However, there exists a significant difference in the influence of radio at (.003), where $p < 0.05$, among the rural and urban nuclear type family. However, barring radio, media influence is equal in both the urban and rural areas. Hence, it can be inferred that both rural and urban households (nuclear) are equally exposed to different forms of media and its influence in the product purchase decision is also alike. However, it may be noted that radio as a mass media has significant variation in its influence on product purchase decision among the rural and urban nuclear family type. As indicated in Table 8, there exists no significant difference in the influence of different media among the rural and urban respondents. Hence, it can be inferred that both rural and urban households in the joint family type are equally exposed to different forms of media as there does not exist any significant difference in the influence of different media in the product purchase decision among the two categories of households.

Table 8: Group Statistics: Media Influence On Rural And Urban (Only Joint)

Type of Media	Area	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
DD TV	Rural	174	.2586	.43914	-.066	16.301	.949	NS
	Urban	15	.2667	.45774				
Cable	Rural	174	.2241	.41822	-.841	15.824	.413	NS
	Urban	15	.3333	.48795				
Cinema	Rural	174	.0230	.15030	2.018	173.000	.045	NS
	Urban	15	.0000	.00000				
Radio	Rural	174	.3103	.46397	1.817	18.478	.085	NS
	Urban	15	.1333	.35187				
Newspaper	Rural	174	.1034	.30542	-.883	15.342	.391	NS
	Urban	15	.2000	.41404				
Magazine	Rural	174	.0805	.27279	.198	16.811	.846	NS
	Urban	15	.0667	.25820				

Note: NS= Not Significant; S= Significant; Significant is at $p < 0.05$ level. Source: Field Survey

The above analyses have the following inferences:

- i) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except '*Radio*' in the product purchase decision among the Nuclear and Joint family type (combined) for both the rural and urban households.
- ii) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media except '*Radio*' in the product purchase decision among the Nuclear family type for both the rural and urban households.
- iii) There is no significant difference in the influence of different media in the product purchase decision among the Joint family types for both the rural and urban households.

Therefore, it may be observed that '*No Significance*' in the influence of different media among rural and urban households exists in '*only joint family type*' for the rural and urban households. Except '*Radio*', there is also no significant difference in the influence of different media among the '*nuclear and joint family types*' (combined) and among the '*nuclear family types*' for the rural and urban households respectively.

CONCLUSION

The above study leads us to the conclusion that influence of media in the purchase of FMCG products seems be similar for both the rural as well the urban households in different income classes and family types. It is found that media has considerable influence upon the rural folks like their urban counterparts. The presence of media, which is generally regarded to be an urban domain, has been able to make its presence felt in the rural land as well. In general, however, media has a tremendous impact in sustaining or weakening the social fabric of social life. The effectiveness of rural marketing communications, to a large extent is influenced by the media habits of the rural consumers. Though all types of media is being used in rural areas, however, in view of low levels of literacy, audio-visual media, i.e. radio, television and films assume major importance. However, with the increasing rate of literacy, print media in the form of newspapers, magazines etc are also gaining popularity in the rural context, as is evident from the study. It is for the marketers to understand the implications of the influence of the various media and utilize the appropriate media applicable for marketing their products, especially to the rural areas.

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