
LIFE STYLE OF RURAL TRIBAL CONSUMERS OF PANCHMAHAL DISTRICT OF GUJARAT STATE

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Abstract

The shift toward a “buying culture” with more and more stress on commodity consumption is clearly evident in urban and semi-urban areas. Even in tribal rural India, the ethos of consumerism has been drastically changing. In order to tap huge potential of rural market, one has to understand life style of rural tribal consumers. This paper studies the similarities and differences of lifestyle orientations prevalent among male and female groups of rural tribal consumers. The AIO (Activities, Interest, and Opinions) and VALS (Values, Attitudes, and Life-Styles) statements adapted from the current cross cultural marketing literature were utilized to determine different rural tribal consumer market segments. The study is based on primary collected through structured questionnaire administered to 200 young rural tribal consumers through purposive sampling. Questionnaire includes total 88 statements related to eight factors. The study found that life style of rural tribal consumers is changing in terms of their hobbies, Interest, fashion orientation & adoption, family values & conceptions, education orientation, buying behavior, product orientation and financial views. Tribal rural female consumers also have strong position as consumer with their own bold views and opinions. Male and female tribal consumer significantly differs in their view regarding education orientation, product orientation and their hobbies and interest.

Key words: Life Style, Rural Tribal, Activities, Opinion, Interest, Attitude

1. Introduction

The massive penetration of electronic media and communication technology have introduced many changes in the traditional modes of cultural expression, relations, and usages of language and communication at local, regional, and national levels. The shift toward a “buying culture” with more and more emphasis on commodity consumption is clearly evident in urban and semi-urban areas. Even in rural India, the ethos of consumerism has reached at new height and villagers are now more a part of the global market place than ever before (Johnson, 2005). Better roads and improved communication have removed territorial distances among cities, towns, and villages. Even in tribal Gujarat, there are many changes happened and it is very important to check change in their life style and cultural values among rural tribal consumers of Gujarat.

2. Consumer Life Style

Understanding consumer life-styles and value orientations in any country can be very useful in profiling an individual consumer and/or targeting select consumer groups for designing effective plan. In past consumer

behavior and psychology literature has identified different types of consumer life-style groups. Each group has its own unique demographic, socio-economic, and behavioral characteristics.

The basic premise of psychographics is that the more we know about people's lifestyle, the more effectively we can communicate with them. (Hornik, 1989). Life style of rural tribal people differs from urban population. Marketing communication is more effective when end-user lifestyle profiles are understood and reflected in the content of the message. This means that lifestyle research is of capital interest for communication managers to ‘visualize’ their audiences more effectively. (Chiagouris, 1991).

Indian consumers are heterogeneous. Their preferences for branded vis-a-vis non-branded products vary across product categories and there are regional variations in their demand patterns as well.. (Arpita Mukherjee et. al, 2012). Consumers of rural tribal area are getting more educated and their life style values are changing very fast. In order to tap huge potential of rural market, one has to understand life style of rural tribal consumers.

3. Literature Review

Lifestyle is usually defined as the patterns in which people live and spend their time and money (Kaynak and Kara, 2001). Lifestyles therefore help to make sense of what people do, and why they do it, and what doing it. Today, the lifestyle concept has become so central, and the personality concept so marginal to psychographic research, that the latter is currently equated with lifestyle research.

At first, lifestyles were researched using large sets of Attitude, Interest, Opinion (AIO) items. AIO refers to measures of activities, interests and opinions. Thus, authors such as Peter and Olson (1994: 463) define 'lifestyle' as 'the manner in which people conduct their lives, including activities, interests, and opinions'. Activities are manifest actions (work, hobbies, social events, vacation, entertainment, clubs, community, shopping, sports, etc.). Interest in some objects, events or topics (family, home, job, community, recreation, fashion, food, media, achievements, etc.) is the degree of excitement that accompanies both special and continuing attention to it. Finally, opinions are descriptive beliefs (of oneself, social issues, politics, business, economics, education, products, future, culture, etc. (Plummer, 1974).

In a second wave of research, the value concept came to replace this very extensive and burdensome AIO approach. Values are commonly defined as desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people's lives. Culture instills in individuals norms, values and life-styles that influence every characteristic of their behavior as consumers. World cultures are set apart based on the relative importance or ranking of values and life-styles; that is, values and life-styles are not held to the same degree by everyone, regardless of culture.

4. Research Methodology

In view of the existing void in the current national/cultural marketing literature at rural tribal level, the purpose of this paper is to look into the similarities and differences of lifestyle orientations prevalent among male and female groups of rural tribal consumers. The AIO (Activities, Interest, and Opinions) and VALS (Values, Attitudes, and Life-Styles) statements adapted from the current cross cultural marketing literature were utilized to determine different rural tribal consumer market segments.

Panchmahal is one of the backward districts of Gujarat. Most of the population is tribal and is concentrated in Santrampur, Kadana and Ghoghamba Talukas. There are 1215 villages and 11 Talukas in the district. Most of the area is consists of hilly and rocky land. As per Census 2001, the district had a population of 2,024,883 (4 percent of the population of the state) of which 12.5 % live in urban areas. Panchmahals district is rich in respect of forest resources. The district has forest area of 1213.53 sq. km.

Primary data have been collected through structured questionnaire administered to 200 young rural tribal consumers through purposive sampling. Majority of the respondents were graduates and belong to middle class income group. Most of the respondents depend on agriculture as the source of income. Questionnaire includes total 88 statements related to eight factors. The study confined to only educated rural tribal consumers which is one of the major limitation of the study.

5. Discussion of findings and marketing implication

Young rural tribal respondents expressed their Attitude, Interest, Opinion and life style on the basis of 88 statements (five point likert scales) grouped into eight broad categories. The detail findings for each factor containing related variable have been discussed as follow.

5.1 General Opinions, Views and Attitudes

Majority of rural tribal people like to learn about art, culture and history, they want to know about various kinds of people. They believe in preventive medical care and like to be in touch with world by reading newspaper. As compared to male, female of tribal area have been found with more confidence and better learning attitude. Female has been found with less self esteem. Most of the respondents do not considered themselves more intellectual. Female want more variety in life and they are more adaptive to change. Marketers should now use more rational appeal to woo the rural tribal population as now they also exposed to education and they also now think rationally when they receive any information.

5.2 Hobbies and Interest

Rural tribal female also are interested in sports and trying new things. Both male and female agree that they have limited interest and hobbies. As compared

to male, more number of female would like to make something than buy it. Female also interested to learn how mechanical things like engine work. Both male and female like to travel in country and abroad. They don't want to learn about things which may never be of any use to them still more number of female would like to make something than buy it. There is a good market for traditional home made products. There is scope for Business to Business market also. Rural tribal people also aspire to travel a lot that indicate potential of domestic tourism market. Result of t test shows that male and female respondents significantly differ in their views about hobbies and interest at 0.05 level of significance. (Table-3)

5.3 Fashion Orientation and Adoption

As compared to female, male has been more fashionable in rural tribe. More number of male follow latest fashion trend. They follow latest hair style and also adopt fashion from movies. However female preferred to buy beauty related products such as cosmetic products more as compared to male. Both male and female would like to wear traditional clothes. They give more weight age to comfort while selecting clothes. Marketer should further understand the preference for particular style preferred by rural tribal people. Though the income of these people is less but they give priority to fashion and style.

5.4 Family Values and Conceptions

As compared to male, female has stronger conviction for family value and conceptions. More number of Male tribal do not considered female equivalent to male and they want to dominate in family. There is more number of male and female are to follow elder's advice. They are more concerned about their children and their education. As compared to male, more number of female believe that their life is fulfill only if she provides happy home for her family and they would like to go out with family once in a week to have food outside. Marketer should understand that rural people particularly tribal people still hold family values that help marketers to communicate and serve them better.

5.5 Education Oriented Behavior

Both rural male and female strongly opine that it is necessary to give higher education, computer education and learning through extracurricular activities. As compared to male more number of female likes to educate their children in mother tongue. There is a very good market potential for educational institutes in rural area. There is strong need of good schools and tribal university as well as academic university at Panchmahal district. Outcome of t test shows that male and female respondents significantly differ in their views for education orientation at 0.05 level of significance. (Table-3)

5.6 Buying Behavior, Influence & Orientation

Both male and female rural tribal do not have much influence on the buying of others. They even do not believe to share and consult other for buying something. They have been found more prices sensitive and watch advertisement for product announcement. In comparison to male, more number of female agrees that spending too much time on shopping is wastage of time. There is less chance of referral marketing in rural tribal area as they do not take buying decision under influence of others. So marketers should be offer more competitive price with innovative marketing communication.

5.7 Product Orientation

Rural female tribal have been found more brand conscious as compared to rural male. They do not agree that more products in home bring more happiness. There are considerable number of male and female agree that it is good to have credit card but they do not believe in consumption of luxurious products. They also agree that now a days it is easy to use internet. As compared to male, there is more number of female who said that misuse of mobile is more than its use. Rural people also now prefer branded products so marketers should adapt the branded products keeping in mind rural test and preference. Rural people are also aspire to connect through internet so in future there will be all together new avenue for marketing communication in rural area. It has been found through t test that male and female tribal consumers significantly differ in case of product orientation at 0.05 level of significance. (Table-3)

5.8 Financial Views

Both male and female in rural tribal area are hopeful about their future income and they give importance to financial planning. They do not want to invest in risky option of investment. Rural tribal people believe in financial planning and they do not want to invest in risky options. Marketers should educate them for financial decision because their definition of risk is conservative and more conscious. So if they have been properly educated and consulted they will also become a very good potential market for financial products.

5.9 Gender Divide in Life Style of Tribal Rural Youngsters

With the help of two samples t test, it has been found that tribal rural female customers are significantly different than tribal rural male consumers in their Hobbies & Interest, Education Orientation and approach, Buying Behavior & Product Orientation.

6. Conclusion

Life style of rural tribal consumers is changing. Tribal rural female consumers also have strong position as consumer with their own bold views and opinions. Marketers should seriously understand this changing face of rural tribal consumers.

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Table – 1: life style (Attitude, Interest, Opinion -AIO) of Young Rural Tribal

A	General Opinions, Views and Attitudes	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	I like to learn about art, culture and history	4.39	.903
2	I like to know new things	4.57	.721
3	I like to know new things	3.41	1.475
4	I like to know various kinds of people	4.06	1.093
5	I like a lot of variety in life	3.84	1.119
6	I adapt to any change very easily	3.68	1.234
7	I believe that prevention is better than cure	4.33	.913
8	I like being in a charge of a group	3.75	1.349
9	I like I think I have more self-confidence than most people being in charge of a group	3.97	1.227
10	I am more independent than most of the people	3.77	1.188
11	I have more ability than most other people	3.64	1.141
12	I consider myself intellectual	3.12	1.418
13	I believe that there is a little bit of corruption everywhere and one has to resort to corruption	2.59	1.435
14	I like my life to be pretty much the same and regular from week to week	2.76	1.381
15	I must admit I really don't like household chores	2.45	1.454
16	I believe in simple living and high thinking	3.86	1.291
17	I believe in eat, drink and be merry (I believe in living for today and not worrying for future)	2.26	1.381
18	I believe that it's good to go for medical/ physical check-ups at regular intervals	4.11	1.185
19	I believe that reading newspaper is a good habit	4.33	.974
20	I believe that 'Old is Gold'	3.64	1.131

B	Hobbies and Interest		
1	I would prefer to see sports than films	4.03	1.081
2	I am really interested only in few things	3.82	1.230
3	I like trying new things	4.01	1.119
4	I love to make things I can use every day	4.19	1.027
5	I would rather make something than buy it	3.61	1.326
6	I am very much interested in how mechanical things like engine work	4.02	1.087
7	I like traveling in country and abroad	4.25	.967
8	I must admit that my interest and hobbies are limited	3.62	1.296
9	I like making handicraft art item	3.52	1.344
10	I like to learn about things even if they may never be of any use to me	2.75	1.533
C	Fashion Orientation and Adoption		
1	I follow the latest trends and fashions	3.59	1.345
2	I dress more fashionably than most other people	2.53	1.304
3	I usually have many outfits of the latest style	2.98	1.414
4	I usually dress for fashion and not for comfort	2.66	1.523
5	I like to wear traditional clothes	3.53	1.302
6	I often try the latest hairstyles when they change	3.24	1.501
7	I do not mind in buying beauty (cosmetic) products	3.16	1.303
8	I believe that the fashion we see in Movies can be adopted in day to day life also	3.25	1.358
D	Family Values and Conceptions		
1	I always follow elder's advice	4.43	.689
2	I consider boy-girl both equal	4.19	1.096
3	I believe that children should be taught to have faith in god	3.82	1.257
4	When my children are ill in bed, I drop most everything else	4.16	1.036
5	My children are the most important thing in my life	4.24	1.034
6	I like to arrange my home for my children's convenience	4.36	.868
7	I take a lot of time and effort to teach my children good habit	3.96	1.208
8	I believe that a woman's life is fulfilled only if she provides a happy home for her family	4.16	1.022
9	I like to go out with family once a week to have food	3.66	1.177
10	I like to dominate my family	4.41	4.504
11	I don't like to see things lying around here and there	4.24	1.093
12	I believe that old age home is a necessity in society	2.81	1.580
E	Education Oriented Behavior		
1	I like to educate my children in mother tongue	3.96	1.109
2	I believe that higher education is inevitable necessity now days	4.26	.972
3	I believe that it is necessary to give computer education to children now days	4.45	.769
4	I believe that besides imparting school education children should be inspired to take part in extracurricular activities of their own interest	4.48	.813

F	Buying Behavior, Influence & Orientation		
1	My friends or neighbors often come to me for advice	3.73	1.085
2	I sometimes influence what my friends buy	3.37	1.356
3	People come to me more often than I go to them for any product related information	3.33	1.347
4	I spend a lot of time talking with my friends about brands and product	2.70	1.366
5	I often try new stores before my friends and neighbors do	2.38	1.340
6	I will probably have more money to spend next year than I have now	3.12	1.313
7	I like to pay cash for everything I buy	3.85	1.257
8	I shop for special people	3.24	1.430
9	I find myself checking the price in the grocery store even for small items	4.11	.895
10	I usually watch the advertisements for announcement of sales	3.73	1.223
11	I buy products as I like good life style	3.25	1.366
12	I believe that a person can save a lot of money by bargaining while shopping	4.01	1.118
13	I buy from Haats, melas and Mandis	4.09	1.096
14	I prefer to buy from Haats, Melas and Mandis as it is economically and qualitative products are available	3.53	1.389
15	I prefer to take my family members for purchase of grocery	4.47	5.150
16	I believe my lifestyle affects my purchase decision	3.53	1.313
17	I believe spending too much time in shopping is wastage of time	3.79	1.329
18	I shop more during festivals and religious fairs and expeditions	3.58	1.238
19	We are joint family and purchase decisions are taken by elders of family	3.55	1.310
20	I believe that approaching Consumer Protection Organization helps in seeking justice	3.75	1.282
G	Product Orientation		
1	I always like to buy branded products	3.56	1.255
2	I believe that more the products in home more the happiness	3.28	1.422
3	There are so many things without which I can easily live	3.74	1.369
4	I believe that man must have luxurious products	3.06	1.274
5	It is good to have credit cards	3.83	1.129
6	I think eating ready-to-eat food packets is bad for health	3.77	1.345
7	believe that misuse of mobile phone is more than its use	3.54	1.328
8	I believe that with the use of Internet has made things quicker and cheaper	4.42	.854
9	I think it is easy to use Internet	4.14	.973
10	I think nowadays, there is too much vulgarity on television.	3.98	1.104
H	Financial Views		
1	Five years from now the family income will probably a lot higher	3.85	1.154
2	I believe that for better future of my family, financial management is very much necessary	4.44	.768
3	I think Fixed Deposit is the Safest Investment	3.72	1.148
4	Investing in Share market is equivalent to converting Rs. 100000 to Rs. 10000	3.24	1.398

Table – 2: Gender based analysis life style (AIO) of Young Rural Tribal consumers

Factors	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation
General Opinions, Views and Attitudes	Female	3.5077	.29112
	Male	3.4142	.37647
Hobbies and Interest	Female	3.9279	.45687
	Male	3.6282	.47901
Fashion Orientation and Adoption	Female	2.9969	.60876
	Male	3.2195	.79293
Family Values and Conceptions	Female	4.1118	.47429
	Male	3.9375	.79567
Education Oriented Behavior	Female	4.4826	.55473
	Male	4.0813	.63898
Buying Behavior, Influence & Orientation	Female	3.5385	.40073
	Male	3.6047	.62442
Product Orientation	Female	3.8700	.52536
	Male	3.6250	.50574
Financial Views	Female	3.9091	.59085
	Male	3.6964	.82738

Table – 3: Life Style Difference between rural tribal male and female consumers

Sr. No.	Factors	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	General Opinions, Views and Attitudes	.256
2	Hobbies and Interest	.005
3	Fashion Orientation and Adoption	.161
4	Family Values and Conceptions	.253
5	Education Oriented Behavior	.003
6	Buying Behavior, Influence & Orientation	.590
7	Product Orientation	.037
8	Financial Views	.176

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