

**Shift from Local to Branded Products in Rural Markets:  
A Study of Selected Villages in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram Districts, Andhra Pradesh**

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**Abstract:** The liberalisation of the Indian economy and the rapid expansion of media infrastructure have fundamentally altered the consumption landscape of rural India. Rural consumers, once predominantly reliant on locally manufactured and unbranded products, are increasingly gravitating towards nationally and internationally branded alternatives. This paper examines the nature, extent, and determinants of this shift from local to branded products in the rural markets of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts, Andhra Pradesh. Employing a descriptive research design, structured questionnaires were administered to 173 rural consumers drawn from ten villages and semi-urban towns across the two districts; 100 usable responses were collected (response rate: 57.8%), comprising 65 male and 35 female respondents. Data were analysed using percentage analysis, weighted mean scoring, and ranking. Findings reveal that television advertising, perceived quality assurance, and peer influence are the dominant drivers of brand switching. National brands are overwhelmingly preferred for FMCG categories, while local products retain significance in textiles, spices, and condiments. The paper concludes with policy-level and managerial recommendations directed at local manufacturers to enhance competitiveness against national brands in rural markets.

**Keywords:** *Rural Consumer Behaviour; Branded Products; Local Products; Brand Switching; Rural Marketing; FMCG; Andhra Pradesh*

## **I. Introduction**

The rural market of India represents one of the largest and most heterogeneous consumer bases in the world. With over 833 million people residing in approximately 640,000 villages (Census of India, 2011), rural India accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the country's total population and contributes significantly to national consumption expenditure. Historically, rural consumers have been characterised by low incomes, limited market access, and a strong preference for locally

produced, affordable, and familiar products. However, the post-liberalisation era (post-1991), the expansion of road and telecommunications infrastructure, the proliferation of television, and the aggressive marketing strategies of multinational corporations have collectively catalysed a discernible shift in rural consumer preferences towards nationally branded products.

This transformation carries profound implications for both branded and local manufacturers. While national companies see rural India as the next frontier of growth, local producers face increasing competitive pressure and market displacement. Understanding the drivers, extent, and category-wise nature of this shift is, therefore, of critical theoretical and practical importance.

### **1.1 Local Products**

Local products, in the context of this study, refer to goods manufactured by small-scale or cottage-industry producers, typically operating within a specific geographical region, and marketed primarily through informal distribution channels without significant national advertising support. These products are characterised by lower prices, region-specific attributes (taste, texture, cultural relevance), and the absence of standardised packaging. In the rural markets of Andhra Pradesh, local products have traditionally dominated categories such as edible oils, handloom textiles, spices, tobacco, and dairy items. They are perceived as familiar, accessible, and culturally congruent by the rural populace.

Despite these advantages, local products are increasingly challenged by national brands that leverage economies of scale, extensive advertising, and superior packaging to create perceptions of quality and modernity among rural consumers. The informal production systems of local manufacturers and their limited ability to invest in branding, quality certification, and distribution expansion further compound their competitive disadvantage.

### **1.2 Local Brands that Existed in Rural India up to 2019**

Several regional and local brands have demonstrated remarkable resilience and consumer loyalty in rural India, even as national brands have expanded their reach. The following table documents notable local and regional brands across various product categories that held a significant presence in rural markets up to 2019:

**Table 1: Local and Regional Brands in Rural India (Up to 2019)**

S.No.	Brand Name	Category	State / Region of Origin	Year Established
1	Nirma	Detergent / Soap	Gujarat	1969
2	Ghadi Detergent	Detergent Powder	Uttar Pradesh	1987
3	Gemini / Ruchi Gold	Edible Oil	Andhra Pradesh / MP	1990s
4	Bovonto	Soft Drink	Tamil Nadu	1916
5	Mangalore Ganesh Beedi	Tobacco Products	Karnataka	1919
6	Heritage Foods	Dairy Products	Andhra Pradesh	1992
7	Sakthi Masala	Spices	Tamil Nadu	1983
8	Parle-G	Biscuits	Maharashtra (Mass)	1939
9	Amul (GCMMF)	Dairy / Cooperative	Gujarat	1946
10	Liberty Shoes	Footwear	Haryana	1954
11	MDH Masala	Spices	Delhi / Punjab	1919
12	Bikano / Bikanervala	Snacks / Namkeen	Rajasthan	1950
13	Dhanuka Agritech	Agri-Inputs	Rajasthan	1980
14	Pochampally Ikat	Handloom / Textiles	Telangana	Traditional

S.No.	Brand Name	Category	State / Region of Origin	Year Established
15	Parachute (Marico)	Hair Oil	Maharashtra	1990
16	Dabur Vatika	Hair Oil / Care	Delhi / UP	1995
17	Hero (Hero Honda)	Two-Wheelers	Haryana	1984
18	Dalmia Cement	Construction Material	Tamil Nadu / Odisha	1935
19	MTR Foods	Ready-to-Eat / Spices	Karnataka	1924
20	Lijjat Papad	Food (Cooperative)	Maharashtra	1959

*Source: Compiled from secondary sources – FMCG industry reports, CII Rural Market reports (2017–2018), NSSO data, company websites (accessed 2018).*

The brands listed in Table 1 illustrate that rural India has historically sustained a diverse ecosystem of regional and cooperative brands. However, since the early 2000s, national brands backed by large advertising budgets have progressively eroded the market shares of many of these regional players, particularly in FMCG and food categories.

### **1.3 Need and Scope of the Study**

The need for the present study arises from several observable trends in rural consumer behaviour in Andhra Pradesh. First, the rural consumer is no longer isolated from the media ecosystem; satellite television penetration in rural Andhra Pradesh exceeded 60 per cent by 2017 (TRAI Annual Report, 2017), exposing rural populations to extensive brand advertising on a daily basis. Second, the expansion of road connectivity under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has improved the physical availability of branded products in rural retail outlets. Third, rising rural incomes, particularly through MGNREGS wages, remittances, and increased agricultural productivity, have enhanced rural consumers' purchasing power.

Notwithstanding these macro trends, empirical evidence regarding the specific drivers, category-wise preferences, and demographic correlates of brand switching in rural Andhra Pradesh remains limited. Existing studies (Velayudhan, 2007; Krishnamacharyulu & Ramakrishnan, 2011) are largely conceptual or based on pan-India aggregate data; district-level empirical evidence specific to coastal Andhra Pradesh is conspicuously absent from the literature. This study addresses this gap.

The scope of the study is confined to rural consumers of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts in the North Coastal Andhra Pradesh region, covering ten villages and semi-urban localities. The study covers eight major product categories: soap and detergent, edible oil, biscuits and snacks, beverages, clothing and textiles, footwear, dairy products, and spices and condiments.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The present study is guided by the following two primary objectives:

- Objective 1: To examine the extent and category-wise pattern of the shift from local products to branded products among rural consumers in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh.
- Objective 2: To identify and rank the key socio-economic, demographic, and marketing factors that influence the shift from local to branded product consumption among rural consumers in the study area.

## **II. Review of Literature**

A comprehensive review of existing literature was undertaken to understand the theoretical and empirical context of this study. The following eight reviews represent seminal and significant contributions to the domain of rural consumer behaviour, brand switching, and rural marketing in India and comparable developing economies:

1. Velayudhan, S.K. (2007). *Rural Marketing: Targeting the Non-urban Consumer* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications India.

Velayudhan's foundational treatise on rural marketing in India provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the unique socio-economic characteristics of the rural consumer. The author argues that rural consumers exhibit a distinct decision-making process influenced by

community norms, opinion leaders, and limited information access. He identifies the 'haats' (periodic markets) as critical points of brand exposure and notes that first-time brand trial in rural areas is primarily driven by demonstrations and word-of-mouth, rather than advertising.

2. Krishnamacharyulu, C.S.G., & Ramakrishnan, L. (2011). *Rural Marketing: Text and Cases* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education India, New Delhi.

This comprehensive textbook analyses rural marketing strategy across product, pricing, distribution, and communication dimensions. The authors document how the Four A's framework (Affordability, Availability, Awareness, Acceptability) proposed by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has guided the successful entry of national FMCG brands into rural markets. Case studies of Hindustan Unilever, ITC's e-Choupal, and Dabur India illustrate how firms tailored pack sizes, pricing, and distribution to win rural consumers away from local alternatives.

3. Badi, R.V., & Badi, N.V. (2012). *Rural Marketing* (3rd ed.). Himalaya Publishing House, Mumbai.

Badi and Badi provide a structured analysis of the evolving rural consumer base in India, cataloguing the influence of rising agricultural incomes, migration, and remittance flows on product aspirations. Their empirical evidence from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh indicates that branded products had begun to capture significant market share in rural FMCG categories by the early 2000s, driven primarily by sachets and small-unit packs. The study underlines that price, not quality, remains the primary purchase criterion for the rural consumer in the lowest income quartile.

4. Prahalad, C.K. (2004). *The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits*. Wharton School Publishing, Philadelphia.

Prahalad's landmark work, though global in scope, carries significant implications for rural marketing in India. The author proposes that the 4 billion consumers at the bottom of the economic pyramid (BOP) represent an enormous untapped market for branded goods and services, provided companies innovate on price, packaging, and distribution. He documents case studies from India, including HUL's Project Shakti, showing how branded FMCG products successfully penetrated the lowest income segments.

5. Shukla, P. (2009). Impact of contextual factors, brand loyalty and brand switching on purchase decisions in the Indian FMCG market. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 26(5), 348–357.

Shukla's empirical study explores the antecedents of brand switching in the Indian fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Using survey data collected from 312 respondents across

urban and semi-urban areas, the author finds that situational availability, promotional offers, and peer recommendation are the three most significant triggers of brand switching. The study notes that brand loyalty is substantially weaker in lower-income consumer segments, making rural markets particularly susceptible to aggressive competitive marketing.

6. Sehrawet, M., & Kundu, S.C. (2007). Buying behaviour of rural and urban consumers in India: the impact of packaging. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(6), 630–638.

This study investigates the role of product packaging in shaping purchase decisions of rural consumers in Haryana, India. A comparative analysis of rural and urban consumers (n=400) finds that rural buyers place significantly higher importance on label readability, price visibility, and tamper-evident packaging when choosing between local and branded products. The authors conclude that improving packaging quality and introducing vernacular labelling can substantially enhance the competitiveness of local brands in rural markets.

7. Jha, M. (1988). Rural Marketing: Some Conceptual Issues. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 23(9), M8–M16.

Jha's early conceptual piece in the *Economic and Political Weekly* provides a historical perspective on rural marketing in India, highlighting the structural constraints—poor road infrastructure, illiteracy, linguistic heterogeneity, and lack of cold-chain logistics—that historically prevented branded goods manufacturers from penetrating rural markets. The author predicts that, as these structural barriers erode over subsequent decades, rural consumers will progressively migrate towards branded products. This prescient analysis provides an important theoretical baseline against which contemporary rural brand switching can be assessed.

8. Kashyap, P., & Raut, S. (2006). *The Rural Marketing Book: Text and Practice*. Biztantra (Dreamtech Press), New Delhi.

Kashyap and Raut offer one of the most comprehensive practitioner-oriented analyses of rural marketing in India. Drawing on fieldwork across multiple Indian states, the authors document how branded FMCG manufacturers have systematically employed van campaigns, haats, mandis, and dealer networks to displace local products from rural retail shelves. The book also contains an important chapter on the psychology of the rural consumer, emphasising the role of aspirational identity and social visibility in driving brand preference.

### **III. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The present study adopts a descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population without manipulating variables or establishing causal relationships (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This design is appropriate for the present study as the primary objective is to describe the extent and pattern of the shift from local to branded products and to identify the factors associated with this shift among rural consumers in the study area.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling**

The study population comprises rural consumers residing in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts of Andhra Pradesh. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select ten villages and semi-urban towns from the two districts, ensuring geographical representation of both coastal and interior rural settlements. Within each selected location, systematic random sampling was used to identify individual respondents from households.

### **3.3 Questionnaire Design**

A structured, pre-tested questionnaire was developed in English and translated into Telugu (the local language) to ensure comprehension by rural respondents. The questionnaire comprised five sections:

- Section A – Demographic Profile (age, gender, education, income, occupation)
- Section B – Purchase Pattern: type of products (local / branded) purchased in the last 30 days across 8 categories
- Section C – Awareness of brands and source of brand information (television, word-of-mouth, hoardings, etc.)
- Section D – Brand preference (local vs. national) across product categories (paired comparison)
- Section E – Factors influencing brand switching: 8 factors rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 20 rural respondents in Vizianagaram town, and minor revisions were made for clarity before the final data collection round.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Primary data were collected during March–April 2018 through personal interview method. Trained enumerators administered the questionnaire to identified respondents at their homes and at local retail outlets (kirana shops). Of the 173 questionnaires distributed, 100 were returned in a usable

form, yielding a response rate of 57.8%. The remaining 73 questionnaires were either not returned (n=45) or were incomplete and hence rejected (n=28). The following table presents the distribution of questionnaires across the ten study locations:

**Table 2: Distribution of Questionnaires Across Study Locations**

S.No.	Village / Town	District	Distributed	Responded	Non-Response
1	Etcherla	Srikakulam	18	10	8
2	Palasa	Srikakulam	20	12	8
3	Narasannapeta	Srikakulam	15	9	6
4	Amadalavalasa	Srikakulam	12	7	5
5	Tekkali	Srikakulam	18	11	7
6	Vizianagaram Rural	Vizianagaram	20	14	6
7	Bobbili	Vizianagaram	15	10	5
8	Salur	Vizianagaram	15	9	6
9	Gajapathinagaram	Vizianagaram	20	8	12
10	Parvathipuram	Vizianagaram	20	10	10
	Total		173	100	73

Source: Primary Data (2018).

**Table 3: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	65	65.0
Female	35	35.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2018).

**Table 4: Age-wise Distribution of Respondents**

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
Below 25 years	12	8	20	20.0

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
25 – 35 years	20	10	30	30.0
36 – 45 years	18	10	28	28.0
46 – 55 years	10	5	15	15.0
Above 55 years	5	2	7	7.0
Total	65	35	100	100.0

*Source: Primary Data (2018).*

The majority of respondents (58%) fall within the 25–45 age bracket, which is broadly representative of the economically active rural population.

### 3.5 Tools of Analysis

The following statistical tools were employed for data analysis: (i) simple percentage analysis for demographic and descriptive data; (ii) weighted mean scoring (WMS) for ranking factors influencing brand switching; and (iii) cross-tabulation for examining category-wise brand preference patterns. Secondary data were sourced from government publications, NSSO survey reports, CII industry reports, and published research articles accessed through Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the SAGE Journals online platform.

## IV. Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 Awareness of Branded Products

Rural consumers in the study area demonstrate a high level of awareness of national branded products across all eight product categories studied. Table 5 presents the primary source through which respondents became aware of branded products:

**Table 5: Source of Awareness of Branded Products**

Source of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Television Advertisements	38	38.0

Source of Awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Word of Mouth / Friends	25	25.0
Local Shops / Point of Sale	18	18.0
Wall Paintings / Hoardings	10	10.0
Radio / Newspapers	5	5.0
Others	4	4.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2018).

Television advertisements emerge as the dominant source of brand awareness, accounting for 38% of responses. This finding is consistent with the rapid expansion of cable and DTH television services in rural Andhra Pradesh since 2010. The second most important source is word-of-mouth from friends and neighbours (25%), affirming the continued importance of social networks in the rural information ecosystem. Local shops and point-of-sale displays account for 18%, suggesting that in-store visibility also plays a critical role. The relatively low contribution of radio and newspapers (5%) indicates that traditional rural communication channels have been substantially displaced by television.

#### 4.2 Brand Preference by Product Category

Respondents were asked to indicate their preference for local vs. national branded products across eight major product categories. The results are presented in Table 6:

**Table 6: Brand Preference – Local vs. National Brand by Product Category**

Product Category	Prefer Local (%)	Prefer National (%)	No Preference (%)
Soap / Detergent	22	65	13
Edible Oil	30	55	15
Biscuits / Snacks	18	68	14
Beverages	20	62	18
Clothes / Textiles	42	45	13

<b>Product Category</b>	<b>Prefer Local (%)</b>	<b>Prefer National (%)</b>	<b>No Preference (%)</b>
Footwear	38	50	12
Dairy Products	35	52	13
Spices / Condiments	48	40	12

*Source: Primary Data (2018).*

The data in Table 6 reveal a clear predominance of national brand preference across most FMCG categories. Biscuits and snacks record the highest preference for national brands (68%), followed by soap and detergent (65%) and beverages (62%). These categories are characterised by extensive national advertising, standardised quality, and widespread retail availability, which appear to have effectively displaced local alternatives in the minds of rural consumers.

In contrast, spices and condiments (48% local preference) and clothing and textiles (42% local preference) show greater retention of local brand loyalty. This is attributable to the culturally embedded nature of these product categories; regional spice blends and handloom textiles are perceived as authentically local, and their taste profiles and aesthetic attributes are not easily replicated by national brands. Footwear (38% local) and dairy products (35% local) also exhibit moderate local brand loyalty.

#### **4.3 Factors Influencing the Shift to Branded Products**

Respondents rated eight factors on a five-point Likert scale (SA=5, A=4, N=3, D=2, SD=1). Weighted mean scores were computed for each factor and ranked in descending order of importance:

**Table 7: Factors Influencing Shift from Local to Branded Products (Weighted Mean Analysis)**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>SA (5)</b>	<b>A (4)</b>	<b>N (3)</b>	<b>D (2)</b>	<b>SD (1)</b>	<b>W.M.</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Quality Assurance	40	35	15	7	3	4.02	1
TV / Media Advertisement	35	38	14	8	5	3.90	2
Availability in Local Shops	30	36	18	10	6	3.74	3
Peer / Social Influence	28	34	20	12	6	3.66	4

Factor	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	W.M.	Rank
Aspirational / Status Value	25	33	22	12	8	3.55	5
Price Competitiveness	20	32	25	15	8	3.41	6
Government / SHG Promotion	15	28	30	18	9	3.22	7
After-Sales Service	12	25	32	20	11	3.07	8

\*W.M. = *Weighted Mean Score*. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree.

Source: Primary Data (2018).

Quality assurance (WM=4.02) emerges as the single most important driver of the shift to branded products, indicating that rural consumers perceive national brands as offering superior and consistent product quality compared to local alternatives. This finding corroborates Shukla (2009) and Velayudhan (2007), both of whom note that quality perception is the dominant driver of brand preference in emerging markets.

Television and media advertisement (WM=3.90) ranks second, reinforcing the earlier finding that television is the primary source of brand awareness. Availability in local shops (WM=3.74) occupies the third position, affirming that improved rural distribution networks have played a critical enabling role in the shift. Peer and social influence (WM=3.66) ranks fourth, consistent with the rural sociological literature on the role of community reference groups in shaping consumption behaviour.

Aspirational and status value (WM=3.55) is ranked fifth, suggesting that using nationally branded products has become a marker of social status and modernity for a segment of the rural population. Price competitiveness (WM=3.41) and government and SHG promotion (WM=3.22) occupy the sixth and seventh positions respectively, indicating that while price remains a consideration, it is no longer the dominant criterion for brand choice, particularly as rural incomes have risen. After-sales service (WM=3.07) ranks last, which is expected given the limited relevance of after-sales considerations in FMCG categories.

#### 4.4 Willingness to Pay a Premium for Branded Products

**Table 8: Willingness to Pay a Price Premium for Branded Products**

Willingness to Pay Premium	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Willing	20	20.0
Willing	35	35.0
Neutral	22	22.0
Not Willing	15	15.0
Strongly Not Willing	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

*Source: Primary Data (2018).*

A majority of respondents (55%) indicate that they are willing or strongly willing to pay a price premium for branded products over local alternatives, reinforcing the argument that quality perception and aspirational value have effectively decoupled rural brand preference from price alone. Only 23% of respondents are unwilling to pay a premium, while 22% remain neutral. This pattern has significant strategic implications for both national brands and local manufacturers.

## V. Findings and Suggestions

### 5.1 Major Findings

The following major findings emerge from the analysis:

- Television is the dominant source of brand awareness in rural markets, accounting for 38% of awareness generation, significantly ahead of word-of-mouth (25%) and in-store visibility (18%).
- National branded products are overwhelmingly preferred over local products in FMCG categories—particularly biscuits (68%), soap and detergent (65%), and beverages (62%)—indicating that the brand shift is most advanced in categories with high television advertising intensity.
- Local products retain relative competitive strength in spices and condiments (48% local preference), clothing and textiles (42%), and footwear (38%), where cultural specificity and sensory familiarity provide a natural moat against national brands.

- Quality assurance is the most important determinant of the brand shift (WM=4.02), followed by television advertising (WM=3.90) and retail availability (WM=3.74), confirming that the shift is driven by both push factors (advertising) and pull factors (quality perception).
- A majority of rural consumers (55%) are willing to pay a price premium for branded products, signifying a fundamental change in the rural consumer's relationship with price as the dominant purchase criterion.
- The brand shift is more pronounced among younger respondents (25–35 age group) and male respondents, consistent with higher media exposure and aspirational consumption patterns observed in these demographic sub-groups.

## **5.2 Suggestions**

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are offered:

### ***For Local Manufacturers:***

- Local producers must invest in quality certification (FSSAI, ISI, Agmark) and improve packaging to signal quality parity with national brands, as quality assurance is the single most important driver of brand switching.
- Regional branding strategies—leveraging Geographical Indications (GI) tags, cultural heritage narratives, and local language advertising—should be adopted to reinforce the authenticity advantage of local products in categories like spices and textiles.
- Cooperative marketing models (similar to Amul or Lijjat Papad) should be explored by small local producers to achieve economies of scale in production, packaging, and distribution, thereby improving price and availability competitiveness.

### ***For National Brand Companies:***

- Companies should continue to invest in rural distribution infrastructure and rural-specific pack sizes (sachets, smaller SKUs) to maintain availability competitiveness, given that retail availability ranks third among brand switching drivers.
- Cause-related marketing and CSR initiatives aligned with rural community development can strengthen brand trust and social legitimacy among rural consumers, supplementing the effectiveness of television advertising.

### ***For Policy-Makers:***

- The Government of Andhra Pradesh should introduce dedicated cluster development schemes for local FMCG producers, combining technology upgradation, quality certification

support, and marketing assistance, to strengthen the competitiveness of local enterprises against large national brands.

- Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and rural cooperatives should be encouraged to adopt branding strategies for their products, with support from NABARD and APMAS, to create sustainable local brand ecosystems in rural markets.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The present study provides empirical evidence of a significant and accelerating shift from local to branded products in the rural markets of Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts in Andhra Pradesh. The shift is most pronounced in high-advertising-intensity FMCG categories such as biscuits, soaps, and beverages, and is driven primarily by quality perception, television advertising, and improved retail availability. Local products retain competitive relevance in culturally embedded categories such as spices, textiles, and footwear.

The findings reveal that the rural consumer of 2018 is no longer a passive, price-bound buyer of the lowest-cost available product. Increasingly, rural consumers exercise brand preferences, demonstrate willingness to pay quality premiums, and make purchase decisions influenced by national media ecosystems. This transformation represents both a competitive threat to local manufacturers and an opportunity for national brands to consolidate their rural market presence.

For local manufacturers, the imperative is clear: quality certification, packaging improvement, cooperative branding, and cultural positioning are the viable pathways to sustained relevance in a rapidly evolving rural marketplace. For policymakers, the protection and promotion of rural enterprise through cluster development and GI-based regional branding represent critical interventions. For marketing scholars, the granular empirical evidence from district-level studies such as this one help build a more nuanced and contextually grounded understanding of rural consumer behaviour in emerging India.

Future research could extend this study to a larger sample spanning all thirteen districts of Andhra Pradesh, and could employ multivariate techniques such as factor analysis and logistic regression to more precisely delineate the determinants of brand switching across demographic sub-groups.

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