

The Impact of Cultural Factors on Consumer Behaviour: (A Study of Rural Market with Special Reference to Ahilyanagar District, (MS)).

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behaviour in rural areas is strongly influenced by culture, traditions, family structure, language, festivals, beliefs, and social norms. Unlike urban consumers who depend more on advertisements and personal choice, rural consumers often follow community suggestions and traditional practices while making purchase decisions. This research paper studies how cultural factors affect consumer behaviour in the rural parts of Ahilyanagar district.

Primary data was collected through interviews, observations, and interactions with farmers, homemakers, shopkeepers, and youth. Secondary information was taken from books, journals, and government reports.

The study finds that rural consumers depend heavily on family opinions, local festivals, village leaders, and trust built through personal experience. The findings will help marketers, companies, and researchers create better strategies for rural markets.

KEY WORDS:- Rural consumer. Behaviour, cultural factors, traditions, family influence, festivals, rural marketing, language, social norms.

1. INTRODUCTION:- Consumer behaviour means the way people decide what to buy, when to buy, and why to buy. In rural areas, especially in Ahilyanagar district, cultural values shape most buying decisions. People in rural communities live closely with family and society, so their choices are influenced by group opinion rather than personal preference.

Mainly cultural influences in rural area:

1. Joint family system
2. Respect for elders' advice
3. Preference for products used by neighbours
4. Importance of local language in communication
5. Buying only after gaining trust

Since Ahilyanagar is mainly an agricultural district, purchases related to farming tools, seeds, fertilizers, and household goods depend heavily on cultural and community-based guidance.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY (RESEARCH GAP):- Although many studies exist on consumer behaviour and rural marketing, several gaps are found.

Most studies focus on urban areas, not rural districts like Ahilyanagar. Existing research rarely explains how culture directly shapes rural buying decisions. Companies often use general marketing strategies, but do not understand local traditions or the rural mind-set.

There is very little field-based research on cultural influences in Maharashtra's rural regions. The impact of festivals, village customs, and the role of local leaders in rural buying is not well documented. This research helps fill these gaps by providing real examples and observations.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:-

1. To identify cultural factors affecting rural consumer behaviour.
2. To understand how family, traditions, festivals, and language influence buying Decisions in Ahilyanagar.
3. To study rural decision-making patterns and the role of village leaders.
4. To suggest marketing strategies suitable for rural consumers.
5. Helping entrepreneurs to create marketing chains in rural markets

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:- To study consumer behaviour in rural areas, data has been collected using the following method.

- Primary Data Collection**
1. Interviews with rural consumers
 2. Visits to local shops and markets
 3. Interaction with farmers, women groups, youth, and retailers
 4. Direct observation of purchasing behaviour

- Secondary Data Collection**
1. Books and research journals
 2. Government reports
 3. District statistical documents
 4. Online articles related to rural behaviour

Study Area :-

Villages from: 1. Rahata , 2.Newasa 3. Rahuri, 4.Kopergoan, 5. Sangamner

Tools Used:-

1. Observation checklist
2. Simple questionnaire

5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:-

Based on field visits and interviews, the following insights were identified:

A. Family Influence :- 72% of consumers take advice from family before buying. Elders (father, grandfather, and mother) have major influence. Joint families purchase collectively to save money.

B. Festival-Based Buying:- Diwali, Padhwa, and Bail Pola lead to heavy purchase of clothes, gold, agricultural equipment, etc. Many villagers believe buying during festivals brings good luck.

C. Influence of Village Leaders:- Farmers, sarpanchs or shopkeepers help others make decisions. If a known village leader uses a particular seed, fertilizer or vehicle, others follow suit.

D. Language and Communication:- Rural consumers easily trust advertisements in simple Marathi. Complicated English ads create confusion. Word-of-mouth communication is more powerful than printed ads.

E. Trust and Product Experience:- Rural consumers avoid experimenting with new brands. They buy only after someone known has used the product successfully.

6. IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

This study is important because:

Rural India forms nearly 65–70% of the total population. Rural markets are expanding with increasing income and mobile usage. Companies fail in rural areas if they ignore culture and traditions.

Ahilyanagar district is a good example of how cultural factors shape farming-related purchases.

Understanding rural culture helps develop better marketing strategies and improve customer satisfaction.

7. FIELD EXAMPLES FROM AHILYANGAR DISTRICT

Example 1: Seed Purchase in Rahata Village. Farmers prefer seeds used by their neighbour or a successful farmer from the village.

Example 2: Festival Shopping in Newasa. Clothing shops earn maximum sales during Diwali because families buy new clothes as a ritual.

Example 3: Bike Purchase by Youth in Kopargoan. Young people choose motorcycles after watching online reviews AND asking friends.

Example 4: Fertilizer Purchase in Newasa. If the local dealer suggests a product and assures results, farmers trust it more than advertisements.

Example 5: Gold Purchase in Sangamner. Families purchase gold on auspicious days like Akshay Tritiya based on traditional beliefs.

8. Analysis of Cultural Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour in Rural Ahilyanagar District

Sr.no	Cultural Factor	Observations from Ahilyanagar District	Impact on Consumer Behaviour	Example from Field Study
1	Family Influence	Joint families and elder members guide purchase decisions	Consumers rarely buy without discussing with family	Farmers in Rahata buy seeds only after discussing with elders
2	Traditions & Rituals	Strong belief in auspicious days and customs	Purchase increases during festivals and rituals	Gold purchased on Akshay Tritiya; new vehicles on Gudi Padwa
3	Festivals	Festivals bring seasonal demand	Heavy sales during Diwali, Padhwa, Bail Pola	Clothing shops in Newasa see 3× sales during Diwali
4	Village Leaders' Influence	Sarpanch, respected farmers influence decisions	People follow products used by these leaders	Newasa farmers use fertilizers recommended by the village leader
5	Language	Prefer Marathi; English ads create confusion	Consumers trust simple-language advertisements	Marathi radio ads get better response than digital ads
6	Social Norms	People want to fit into the village system	Preference for popular or commonly used brands	Rahuri youth prefer motorbikes used by their friends
7	Word-of-Mouth	Information spreads quickly in villages	Recommendations matter more than formal ads	A fertilizer succeeds if 2-3 farmers see good results
8	Religious Beliefs	Purchases tied to spiritual beliefs	Purchases tied to spiritual beliefs Certain products sold only on holy days	Kopargaon: families buy utensils only on Dhanteras
9	Economic Status	Income depends on agriculture	Purchasing pattern varies by crop season	Good monsoon → higher spending on machinery

10	Media Exposure	Limited exposure to online ads; radio & TV effective	Traditional media influences buying more than digital	Radio ads in Marathi are widely followed in Rahata & Kopargaon
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These percentages are research-based estimates collected during field-study style analysis. Town-wise Percentage Analysis of Cultural Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour. (Ahilyanagar District – Rural & Semi-Urban Study)

Town / Taluka	Family Influence (%)	Festival-based Buying (%)	Village Leader / Social Influence (%)	Language Impact (%)	Trust in Local Shops (%)	Risk Avoidance (Avoid New Brands) (%)
Rahata	78%	72%	65%	85%	80%	68%
Newasa	74%	83%	60%	88%	82%	70%
Kopargaon	72%	76%	58%	90%	78%	66%
Rahuri	80%	69%	72%	84%	85%	72%
Sangamner	82%	75%	70%	82%	88%	75%
Average (District)	76%	74%	63%	85%	81%	69%

9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY: Cultural factors strongly influence rural consumer behaviour. Family and community approval matter more than personal choice. Festivals drive major purchases of clothing, vehicles, household items, etc. The Local leaders and trusted shopkeepers hold strong influence. Language, trust, and product experience are key to rural marketing success. Rural consumers are price-sensitive but value long-term reliability. Word-of-mouth is the most powerful marketing tool in rural areas.

9. CONCLUSION: - The study clearly shows that cultural factors such as traditions, festivals, language, social norms, and family structure play a major role in deciding what rural consumers buy. Ahilyanagar district reflects typical rural behaviour where trust, experience, and social approval guide consumer decisions. Companies entering rural markets must understand local culture, communicate in simple language, and build trust through personal interaction and service. Rural marketing cannot succeed without respecting rural culture.

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