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Index

| Sr. No | Title | Subject | Page. No. |
|--------|---|-------------|-----------|
| 1. | The Impact Of FIIs On Indian Stock Market <i>Dr. Vinod K. Ramani</i> | Accountancy | 1-3 |
| 2. | Human Resource Management New Dimention <i>Dr. Kishor V. Bhesaniya, A. R. Sakhida, C. C. Gediwala</i> | Accountancy | 4-6 |
| 3. | Sequencing The Hypervariable Region V3 Of 16S RRNA Of Bacteria Isolated From RAM <i>V. S. Wadhai, Savitri R. Dewangan</i> | Biology | 7-10 |
| 4. | Credit Rating Methodology for rating Small and Medium Enterprises A Comprehensive Outline <i>Dr. Bheemanagouda</i> | Commerce | 11-13 |
| 5. | Growth And Performance Of Micro Small And Medium Enterprises (MSMES) In India <i>Dr. M. K. Maru</i> | Commerce | 14-15 |
| 6. | Uses Of College Funds In Assam-with Reference To Lakhimpur District <i>Dr. Niranjan Kakati</i> | Commerce | 16-17 |
| 7. | The Study On Awareness Of Solar Energy Products In House Holds, Coimbatore <i>Dr. M. Dhanabhakym, T. Sumathi</i> | Commerce | 18-20 |
| 8. | Connotation Of Systematised Warehouse Management System In Supply Chain Of Small Scale Firms <i>Dr. Vipul Chalotra</i> | Commerce | 21-23 |
| 9. | Distribution Mix Straregy Of Jammu And Kashmir Co-operatives Supply And Marketing Federation Limited (JAKFED) In Jammu District Of J&k <i>Tarsem Lal</i> | Commerce | 24-25 |
| 10. | A Study On Irrigation Projects In Maharashtra State <i>Dr. Pawar, Ashok S., Dr. Rathod Sunita J.</i> | Economics | 26-27 |
| 11. | A Study Of Food Security In South Asia <i>Dr. Pawar, Ashok S., Dr. Rathod Sunita J.</i> | Economics | 28-30 |
| 12. | Inter-District Variations In The Performance Of Self Help Groups (SHGS) In Tamil Nadu. <i>Dr. A. Shyamala</i> | Economics | 31-34 |
| 13. | Challenges of Indian Agriculture and Rural Development <i>Dr. Sangappa. V. Mamanshetty</i> | Economics | 35-36 |

| | | | |
|-----|---|--------------|-------|
| 14. | Enhancing Science Process Skills and Scientific Attitude and Analysing their Interactions. :- An Intervention through Inquiry Learning Approach <i>Sreetanuka Nath, Dr. Sybil Thomas</i> | Education | 37-42 |
| 15. | Effect Of Piston Geometry On Combustion Efficiency <i>A. B. Damor, I. H. Bhoraniya, V. H. Chaudhari</i> | Engineering | 43-45 |
| 16. | Multipoint Hand Gesture Recognition For Controlling Bot <i>Nishant M Labhane, Prashant Harsh, Meghan Kulkarni</i> | Engineering | 46-48 |
| 17. | To Study the working conditions Level in Rajasthan Healthcare Department <i>Dr. Ashwin G. Modi, Sushman Sharma</i> | Healthcare | 49-51 |
| 18. | Impact Of Nutrition Education On Nutritional Knowledge, Dietary Practices And Physical Endurance Of Amateur Badminton Players <i>Dr. Anjali A. Rajwade</i> | Home Science | 52-53 |
| 19. | Impact Of Maternal Nutrition Education Module On Knowledge And Nutritional Status In Urban Pregnant Women <i>Dr. Anjali A. Rajwade</i> | Home Science | 54-56 |
| 20. | Feminism and Gender Representation in Indian Writing in English <i>Bhaveshkumar B Rana</i> | Literature | 57-59 |
| 21. | Impact of Grievances on Industrial Relations <i>Anuradha Averineni</i> | Management | 60-61 |
| 22. | Bioactive Polyphenols Of Bombax Ceiba <i>K.Shakila, D. Sukumar, R. Priya, R.Rajaselvi</i> | Management | 62-63 |
| 23. | A Study On Employee Motivation In Health Care Industry In A Private Multi-Speciality Organization <i>Dr. C. Swarnalatha, T. S. Prasanna</i> | Management | 64-67 |
| 24. | Tax-advantaged Mutual Funds V/s. Rest of the Population <i>Dr. Deepak H. Tekwani</i> | Management | 68-69 |
| 25. | Perception Analysis On Employees Motivation Techniques <i>Dr. M. Dhanabhakym, R. Umadevi</i> | Management | 70-73 |
| 26. | A Feasibility Study of Islamic Banking System in India Miles to Go <i>Dr. Sharif Memon</i> | Management | 74-77 |
| 27. | Rural Marketing Practices in India: Emerging Issues <i>Kavita A. Trivedi</i> | Management | 78-79 |
| 28. | Impact of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises on Indian Economy using the ranking method in Today's Context <i>Vimal P. Jagad</i> | Management | 80-81 |

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------|-------|
| 29. | Paradigm Changes in Healthcare Marketing <i>Dr Mahalaxmi Krishnan</i> | Marketing | 82-84 |
| 30. | Evolution of New Consumer Class in India <i>Dr. Sanjeev Verma</i> | Marketing | 85-86 |
| 31. | Socio-Economic and Demographic Determinants of Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs). <i>Dr. K. JOTHY</i> | Social Sciences | 87-89 |

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Distribution Mix Strategy Of Jammu And Kashmir Co-operatives Supply And Marketing Federation Limited (JAKFED) In Jammu District Of J&K S

*Tarsem Lal

Abstract

Most firms move their products through many intermediate markets, utilizing a complex system of agencies and institutions. These organizations are grouped together in various combinations linking particular producing units with particular using units. Such linkages are channels of distribution. A distribution channel contains a series of relationships among firms and the final users toward which marketing effort is directed. It covers passage of the rights and responsibilities of ownership and the burden of financial and risking to successive agencies; transmittal of impulses to buy or sell; the accumulation and distribution of marketing information; transfers of instructions as to what shall be made; and payment for the goods and services provided. In the present study an attempt has been made to evaluate the distribution-mix strategy of JAKFED in Jammu District

Keywords : Intermediate Markets, Successive Agencies, Distribution, Products

Introduction

A retailer may use extended, limited or direct channel to gain access to the potential buyers of the product. An extended channel is where the manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer provide a chain of facilitating services in order to sell the right product to the final customer. The limited channel is when a retailer works directly with the producer and therefore, can eliminate the wholesaler and the extra costs of this part of the chain. In the direct channel product is sold directly by either the producer or retailer. By using different direct sales marketing promotions such as direct marketing, internet services, telephone sales techniques, etc. the channel is kept direct and the extra charges and commissions are thus eliminated. Within any of the different types of channel the flow is not restricted to physical goods alone.

Distribution Objectives

Distribution objectives provide yardstick for measuring performance and act as a guide for change or for better implementation of current strategies. Two basic goals of a marketing channel are

- The achievement of a sufficiently broad product availability to assure ready exposure of the product to potential purchasers and
- The creation of uninterrupted relationships with the reseller firms that comprise the system.

Table 1 shows distribution objectives of consumer stores in Jammu District.

As evident from table 1 JAKFED has only one distribution objective i.e. 'routinisation of transaction'. This objective is fulfilled by routing fixed range of products through its store. Malik store and Adarsh L.P.G distributor have twin distribution objectives as 'routinisation of transaction' and 'simplifying the consumer search process' which are attained by delivering quality products to consumers.

Janak store has one channel objective i.e. 'simplifying the consumer search process' which is met by providing limited varieties of fertilizers to farmers.

Thus majority of retail stores have 'providing routinisation' and 'simplifying consumer search process' as their channel objectives.

Table 1 : distribution objectives of consumer stores in Jammu district

| S.No | Name of the Store | Product Mix | Channel Objectives |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | JAKFED | -L.P.G -Cement -fertilizer | - Providing routinisation of transaction. |
| 2. | Malik Store | Cement | - Providing Routinisation of transaction. - Simplifying the consumer search process. |
| 3. | Janak Store | Fertilizer | - Simplifying the consumer search process. |
| 4. | Adarsh L.P.G Distributor | L.P.G | - Providing routinisation of transaction. - Simplifying the consumer search process. |

The distribution objective of JAKFED is narrow and does not include important objectives like coverage of geographical market, or important reseller; creation of in-store excitement, building route traffic to unshaped areas of the store, stimulating the sale of items not on display and re-in force the store's price or effective sales promotion measures. Table 2 shows the administrative expenses of JAKFED during 31-03-2010 to 31-03-2011.

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Table 2 : Administrative Expenses Of Jakfed During 31-03-2010 To 31-03-2011

| S.No. 1 | Years 2 | Amount (Rs) 3 | % increase/decrease over the previous year 4 |
|------------|------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | 2009-2010 | 24,599,884 | ---- |
| 2 | 2010-2011 | 23,481,340 | -4.55 |

Thus, the administrative expenditure of JAKFED as reported by management for the years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 were Rs. 24,599,884 and Rs. 23,481,340 respectively. The administrative expenses fell by 4.55 in 2010-2011 as compared to 2009-2010.

Research Methodology

In the present study, the data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire and an interview schedule. The questionnaire for collecting information about the existing distribution-mix strategy of JAKFED in Jammu District. It was circulated among Managing Directors, Registrar cooperatives, Managers, Account Officers etc. Expert opinion of knowledgeable persons on co-operatives were also recorded. An interview schedule was circulated among 250 respondents of various consumer stores. To make the study comparative and result oriented respondents from three private consumer stores namely Malik Cement Store, Janak Fertilizer Store and Adarsh L.P.G. Distributor were also included. The responses were collected on five point likert scale ranging from lowest (1) to the highest (5).

Hypothesis Testing

Table 3 : perception of consumers towards the location of JAKFED in Jammu district

| Annual income of respondents (Rs.) | Ideal | Convenient | Neutral | Unsatisfactory | Poor | No. of respondents |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------|--------------------|
| Below Rs. 20,000 | 4 (40) | 4 (40) | 2 (20) | Nil | Nil | 10 (10) |
| Rs. 20,000 to 40,000 | 12 (29.27) | 15 (36.58) | 13 (31.71) | 1 (2.44) | Nil | 41 (41) |
| Above Rs. 40,000 | 9 (18.37) | 24 (48.98) | 14 (28.57) | 02 (4.08) | Nil | 49 (49) |
| Total | 25 | 43 | 29 | 03 | Nil | 100 |

Calculated γ^2 value 3.78, Table γ^2 value 15.51, $P > .05$ at 8.d.f.

Note: - figure shown in () denote %

From the above description, it is revealed that in the category of consumers having income below Rs.20, 000, 20% respondents are having indifferent opinion (i.e. neutral) regarding the location of JAKFED and 40% consumers perceive that the location of JAKFED is convenient. Where as 40% consumers perceive that the location of JAKFED is ideal.

In the category of consumers having income between Rs.20,000 to Rs. 40,000, 31.71% respondents are having indifferent opinion regarding the location of JAKFED and 36.58% respondents perceive that the location of JAKFED is convenient where as 29.27% consumers perceive that the location of JAKFED is ideal.

28.57% consumers having income above Rs.40,000 have indifferent (i.e. neutral) opinion regarding the location of JAKFED and 48.98% consumers perceive that the location of JAKFED is convenient and 18.37% perceive that the location of JAKFED is ideal.

HYPOTHESIS

There exist no significant difference between income levels of consumers and their perception towards the location of the store.

The calculated γ^2 value being 3.78 is less than the table value 15.51 at 5% level of significance

(8d.f) which means the hypothesis is true. This means that the perception of consumers belonging to different levels of income groups regarding the location of JAKFED is convenient as majority of the respondents perceive. The perception of consumers does not depend upon the income level of consumers.

Objectives Of The Study

The research study was undertaken with the following objectives in view.

1. To evaluate the activities and strategy of JAKFED in Jammu district.
2. To evaluate the perceptions of consumers belonging to different levels of income regarding the location of JAKFED.
3. To critically analyse the various components of distribution- mix on the operational efficiency of JAKFED in Jammu district.
4. To measure the perception of consumers towards the performance of JAKFED in Jammu district vis-a-vis private sector.
5. To advance suggestions for improving the working of JAKFED in Jammu District in particular and J&K State in general

Limitations of the study

The present study suffers from the following limitations.

1. The study is area specific.
2. Detailed data was not available for long periods because rigorous auditing being carried out due to grave financial irregularities committed in the past
3. In most of the cases the consumers were not enthusiastic in reporting. In these cases the accuracy of the data cannot be taken to core.
4. Though every care has been used to be objective yet the possibility of subjective interpretation in some areas cases cannot be ruled out.

Suggestions

In the light of given facts and their analysis the following suggestions are made to improve the distribution mix of JAKFED in Jammu District.

1. For ensuring optimal distribution, JAKFED may broaden its distribution objectives by including point of purchase displays to create in-store excitement, route traffic to unshaped areas and reinforcing of the store's price. Multiple channel objectives by including multiple accomplishments, target locations and time variables must be encouraged.
2. For ensuring regular supply of fertilizers in the backward, hilly and unapproachable areas, decentralisation of fertilizer distribution network must be initiated by JAKFED by opening retail sales centres at block level.
3. For maximizing sale, retail sale of cement must be encouraged by JAKFED more specially during construction seasons.
4. Through accurate sales information feed back from sales system, JAKFED can optimize its inventory level. Thus it can avail quantity discount by placing bulk orders with suppliers. A part of the savings so made can be passed on to the customer.
5. Stock management cost can be minimized by introducing a computerized Shelf-Management (CSM) system of inventory control. This enables more accurate and economical buying. It also impart greater control of stock holding through removal of the human error associate

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