

A Study on Product Management and Marketing Strategies in The Indian Nutraceutical Industry

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Abstract—The Indian nutraceutical industry has witnessed substantial growth driven by increasing health awareness, rising prevalence of lifestyle disorders, and a shift toward preventive healthcare practices. This study examines product management and marketing strategies adopted by Malook Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd., with particular emphasis on doctor engagement, Retail Chemist Prescription Audit (RCPA), and market-oriented product development.

A descriptive and exploratory research design was employed. Primary data were collected from 20 retail chemists and through interactions with 10–12 doctors in the Delhi NCR region. Secondary data were obtained from company documents, academic literature, and industry reports.

The findings indicate that doctor engagement and retail chemist relationships significantly influence prescription behaviour and product demand. Key determinants of product success include competitive pricing, product availability, and promotional strategies. However, challenges such as limited brand awareness, intense competition, and distribution inefficiencies were identified.

The study contributes to bridging the gap between theoretical marketing frameworks and their practical application in the nutraceutical sector. It offers managerial insights for enhancing product positioning and improving market penetration through integrated marketing strategies.

Index Terms—Product Management, Nutraceutical Marketing, Pharmaceutical Marketing, RCPA, Doctor Engagement, Brand Positioning

I. INTRODUCTION

The nutraceutical industry has emerged as a vital segment within the healthcare and wellness sector, driven by increasing consumer awareness and a growing emphasis on preventive healthcare. Nutraceutical products, which combine nutritional and

pharmaceutical benefits, are widely used to promote health, prevent diseases, and enhance overall quality of life. The rising prevalence of lifestyle-related disorders such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and stress-related conditions has significantly accelerated the global demand for nutraceutical products.

In the Indian context, the nutraceutical market is experiencing rapid expansion due to changing dietary habits, increasing disposable income, urbanization, and heightened health consciousness. The demand for dietary supplements, functional foods, and herbal formulations has grown substantially, supported by the influence of traditional systems such as Ayurveda. This expansion has intensified competition among firms, making effective product management and marketing strategies critical for achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

Product management in the nutraceutical industry involves product development, positioning, lifecycle management, and alignment with evolving consumer needs. Simultaneously, marketing strategies play a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour, building brand trust, and ensuring differentiation in a highly competitive environment. Unlike conventional pharmaceuticals, nutraceutical products operate in a hybrid market influenced by both healthcare professionals and consumer-driven purchasing behaviour.

Despite rapid industry growth, limited empirical research has examined the integration of product management practices with field-level marketing activities such as doctor engagement and Retail Chemist Prescription Audit (RCPA), particularly in emerging firms. Most existing studies focus on either consumer behaviour or pharmaceutical marketing independently. Therefore, this study aims to bridge

this gap by analysing how these strategies interact in real-world settings to influence product performance. As part of industry exposure, the researcher completed a summer internship at Malook Pharmaceuticals Pvt. Ltd., an emerging nutraceutical company based in Okhla, New Delhi. The company engages in marketing and distribution across multiple therapeutic segments and employs strategies such as doctor engagement, field promotion, digital marketing, and market research. This study evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies and their impact on product positioning and market performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Growth of the Nutraceutical Industry

The global nutraceutical industry has experienced significant growth due to rising health awareness, changing lifestyle patterns, and increased focus on preventive healthcare. Lifestyle-related diseases have further accelerated demand, particularly in emerging markets such as India (Chopra et al., 2022). However, existing studies largely focus on market growth trends rather than firm-level strategic practices.

2.2. Role of Medical Representatives and Doctors

Medical representatives play a critical role in influencing doctors' prescribing behaviour through effective communication and relationship building. Their professional competence and product knowledge significantly impact brand acceptance (Vishavadia et al., 2021). However, these studies primarily address pharmaceutical products and do not fully capture the dynamics of nutraceutical markets, where consumer influence is also significant.

2.3. Retail Chemists and Channel Influence

Retail chemists are key intermediaries in pharmaceutical marketing. Studies indicate that chemists often substitute prescribed products based on margins and incentives, highlighting the importance of trade marketing strategies (Murali & Saritha, 2021). While RCPA is widely used to monitor prescription trends, Kasliwal and Bansal (2013) stated that it is an effective tool for analysing prescription patterns, competitor activity, and product demand at the retail level. Its application in nutraceutical marketing requires further exploration due to differences in consumer behaviour.

2.4. Marketing Strategy and Customer-Centric Approach

Marketing management involves identifying customer needs and delivering value through integrated strategies such as product development, pricing, promotion, and distribution (Kotler & Keller, 2016). While these principles are well-established, limited research exists on their practical implementation in the nutraceutical sector, particularly among emerging firms.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To study product management practices in the nutraceutical industry with reference to Malook Pharmaceuticals Pvt.. Ltd.
2. To evaluate the role of healthcare professional engagement in product promotion.
3. To analyse the impact of RCPA on marketing decisions and product performance.
4. To assess market opportunities and competitive dynamics.
5. To identify challenges in nutraceutical product management and marketing.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to analyse market behaviour and identify patterns in product management practices where limited structured data exists.

4.2 Data Collection

Primary Data:

- Structured questionnaires administered to retail chemists (n = 20)
- Informal interactions with doctors (10–12 respondents)
- Field visits and RCPA observations

Secondary Data:

- Company reports
- Academic journals
- Industry publications
- Online databases

4.3 Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling was used due to accessibility constraints during the internship period.

4.4 Study Area

Delhi NCR region

4.5 Data Analysis Tools

Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel through:

- Percentage analysis
- Frequency distribution
- Comparative analysis

Due to the exploratory nature and small sample size, advanced statistical techniques were not applied.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

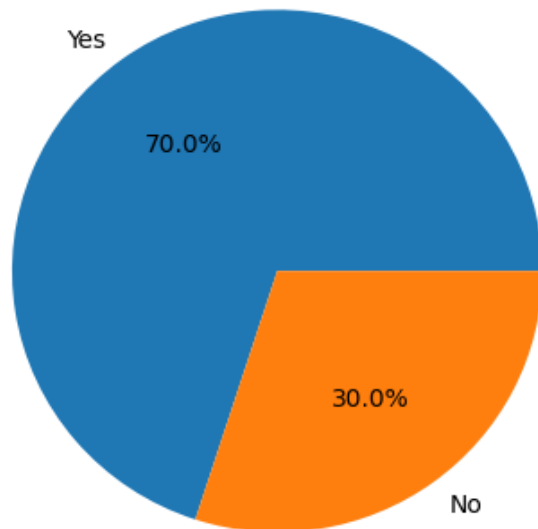
5.1 Awareness of Nutraceutical Products

- Yes: 70%
- No: 30%

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents are aware of nutraceutical products, indicating a growing level of health consciousness and awareness in the market. However, 30% lack awareness, suggesting scope for improved promotional and educational strategies.

Awareness of Nutraceuticals



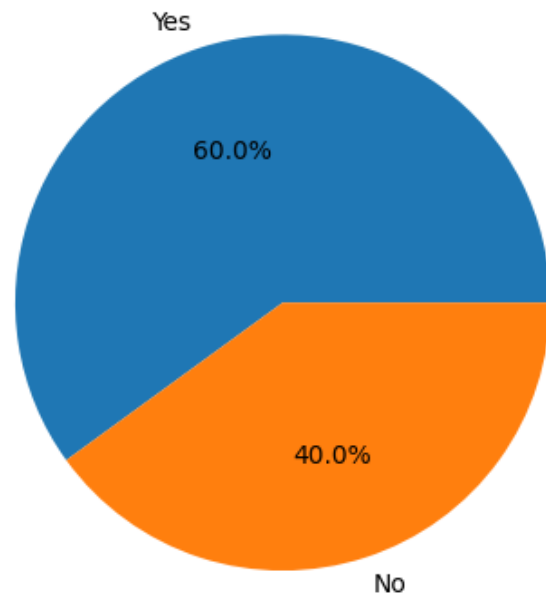
5.2 Influence of Doctors in Product Promotion

- Yes: 60%
- No: 40%

Interpretation:

Doctors continue to play a significant role in influencing product adoption, although the influence is not absolute. This indicates that nutraceutical marketing is partly doctor-driven and partly consumer-driven, unlike traditional pharmaceuticals.

Influence of Doctors



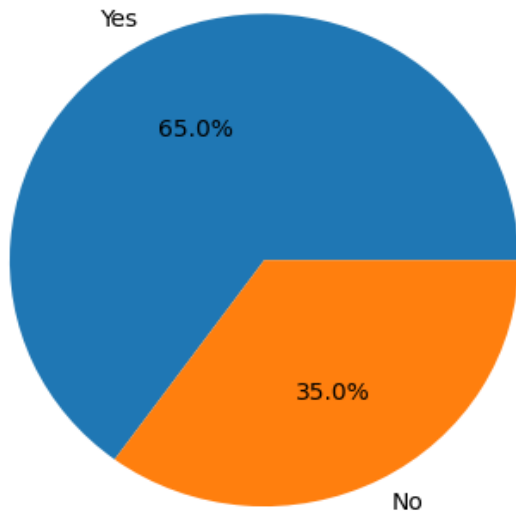
5.3 Preference for Branded Nutraceutical Products

- Yes: 65%
- No: 35%

Interpretation:

A majority of respondents prefer branded products, highlighting the importance of brand positioning and trust in the nutraceutical market. Companies must focus on branding strategies to gain a competitive advantage.

Preference for Branded Products

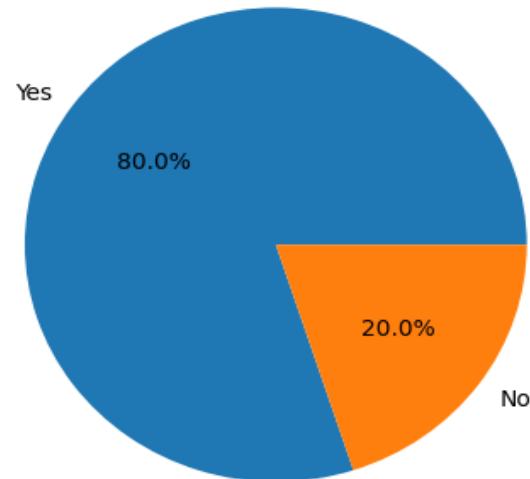


- No: 20%

Interpretation:

Most respondents consider discounts and offers important, showing that price-based promotion and trade schemes are key drivers of sales. This reflects a strong push marketing strategy in the industry.

Importance of Discounts/Offers



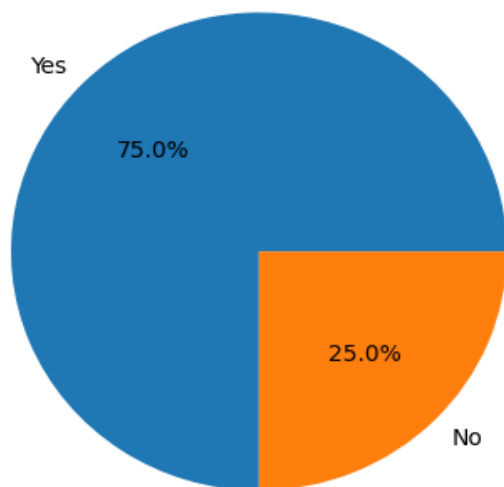
5.4 Chemist Substitution Behaviour

- Yes: 75%
- No: 25%

Interpretation:

A large proportion of chemist's substitute products, indicating strong retail-level influence. This highlights the importance of channel management, trade margins, and relationship building in marketing strategy.

Chemist Substitution Observed



The analysis indicates that both healthcare professionals and retail chemists significantly influence the marketing of nutraceutical products. While doctor engagement contributes to product credibility, chemists play a crucial role at the point of sale through substitution and recommendation. Additionally, branding and promotional strategies, such as discounts and offers, are key drivers of product acceptance and market performance.

5.6 Product Availability

Approximately 65% of chemists reported the availability of Malook products, while 35% indicated non-availability, suggesting moderate market penetration with scope for improvement.

Availability Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Available	13	65%
Not Available	7	35%
Total	20	100%

5.5 Importance of Discounts and Promotional Offers

- Yes: 80%

The results indicate that Malook products were available in 65% of surveyed pharmacies, suggesting moderate distribution penetration in the target market.

However, 35% unavailability highlights opportunities for improving supply chain management and retailer outreach.

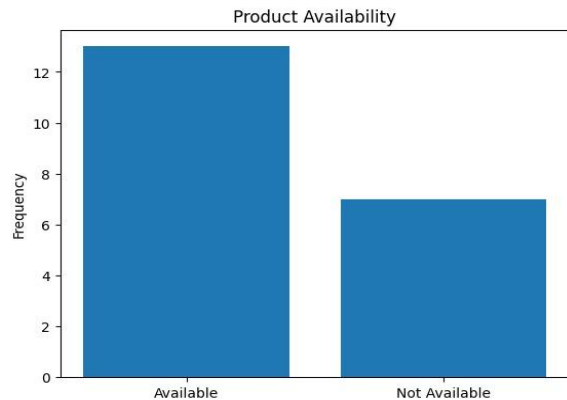


Figure 1: Availability of Malook Products in Retail Pharmacies

Source: Primary Data Collected by Researcher (2025)

5.7 Demand for Nutraceutical Products

Around 85% of chemists observed moderate to high demand for nutraceutical products, reflecting increasing consumer awareness and preventive healthcare trends.

Demand Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	8	40%
Moderate	9	45%
Low	3	15%
Total	20	100%

Interpretation

Most chemists reported moderate to high demand, indicating increasing consumer awareness and acceptance of nutraceutical products in the market.

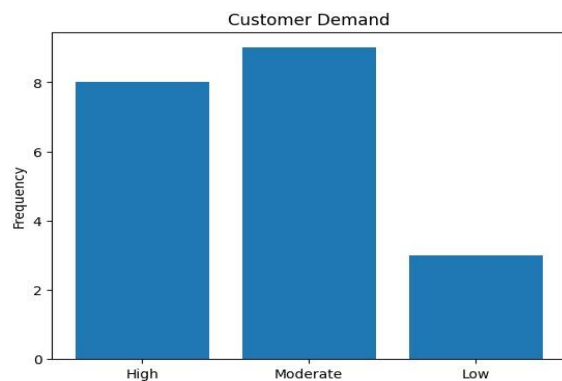


Figure 2: Customer Demand for Nutraceutical Products

Source: Primary Data Collected by Researcher (2025)

5.8 Doctor Prescription Influence

Doctor prescription was identified as the most influential factor affecting sales, with approximately 60% of chemists reporting strong dependence on doctor recommendations.

Influence Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	12	60%
Moderate	5	25%
Low	3	15%
Total	20	100%

Interpretation

Doctor prescriptions emerged as the most significant factor influencing product sales, highlighting the importance of physician engagement strategies in pharmaceutical marketing.

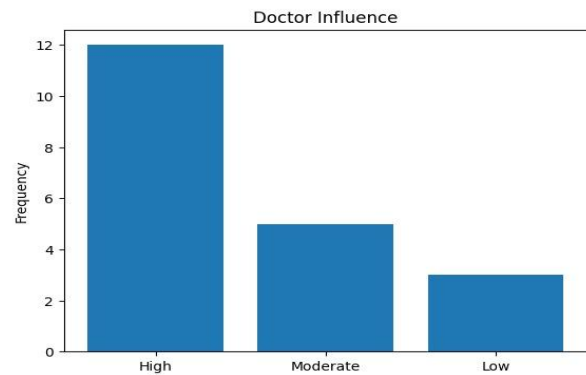


Figure 3: Influence of Doctor Prescription on Product Sales

Source: Primary Data Collected by Researcher (2025)

5.9 Competitive Market Scenario

Lactulose-based syrups and established wellness brands dominated the market, indicating strong competition and entry barriers for new products.

Competitor Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lactulose Syrups (Duphalac, Looz)	11	55%
Cremaffin Products	6	30%
Herbal Products (Softovac, etc.)	3	15%
Total	20	100%

Interpretation

Lactulose-based syrups dominate the market segment, indicating strong competition and high entry barriers for new products in this category.

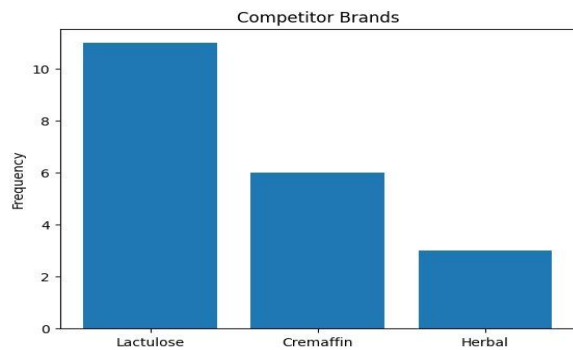


Figure 4: Major Competitor Brands in the Constipation Segment

Source: Primary Data Collected by Researcher (2025)

5.10 Factors Influencing Chemist Recommendation

Doctor prescription, brand reputation, and pricing were major determinants influencing chemist recommendations.

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Doctor Prescription	10	50%
Brand Reputation	5	25%
Price	3	15%
Customer Demand	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Interpretation

Doctor prescription remains the most influential factor, followed by brand reputation and pricing. This highlights the importance of scientific marketing and competitive positioning.

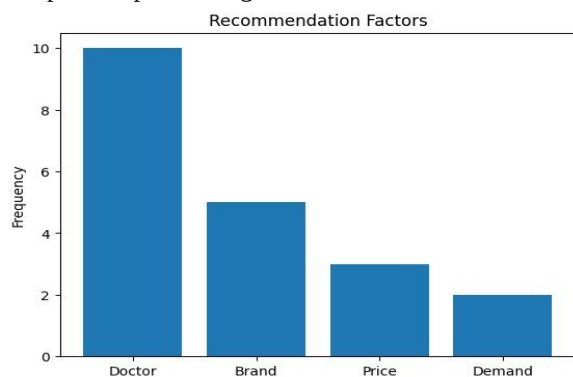


Figure 5: Factors Influencing Chemist Recommendation

Source: Primary Data Collected by Researcher (2025)

5.11 Price Sensitivity

Nearly half of the respondents indicated high customer price sensitivity, highlighting the importance of competitive pricing strategies.

Price Sensitivity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High	9	45%
Moderate	7	35%
Low	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Interpretation

Nearly half of the chemists reported high price sensitivity among customers, indicating that pricing strategies significantly influence purchasing decisions in the nutraceutical market.

The analysis reveals that awareness of nutraceutical products is relatively high among chemists, indicating increasing market penetration. Doctor influence remains significant, with a majority of respondents acknowledging its role in driving product adoption. However, chemist substitution behaviour highlights a strong retail-level influence.

Brand preference, pricing strategies, and promotional activities were identified as key factors affecting product performance. Product availability was moderate, suggesting scope for improving distribution networks. Demand for nutraceutical products was largely moderate to high, reflecting growing consumer acceptance.

Competitive analysis indicates dominance of established brands, particularly in the constipation segment, creating entry barriers for new products. Price sensitivity among consumers further emphasizes the need for competitive pricing strategies.

VI. FINDINGS

The study identifies the following key determinants of success in the nutraceutical market:

1. Doctor prescription influence remains the primary driver of product demand
2. Chemist substitution behaviour significantly impacts sales
3. Product availability determines market penetration
4. Pricing sensitivity influences purchasing decisions

5. Promotional strategies enhance product visibility and acceptance

VII. CONCLUSION

The nutraceutical industry in India is undergoing rapid transformation driven by preventive healthcare trends and increasing consumer awareness. The study concludes that effective product management and marketing strategies are essential for achieving competitive advantage.

Doctor engagement and chemist relationships play a pivotal role in influencing product demand, while pricing, availability, and promotion determine market performance. The industry is evolving into a hybrid model combining prescription-driven and consumer-driven approaches. Companies must adopt integrated marketing strategies to sustain growth and enhance competitiveness.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen doctor engagement through scientific detailing and regular interaction
2. Enhance distribution efficiency through expanded channel networks
3. Implement competitive pricing strategies aligned with market sensitivity
4. Develop strong trade relationships to minimize product substitution
5. Invest in digital marketing and brand-building initiatives
6. Focus on product innovation and differentiation

IX. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study highlights the importance of integrating product management with marketing strategies. Organizations should focus on multi-channel engagement, combining field promotion with digital platforms. Effective supply chain management, continuous market research, and strategic pricing are essential for improving product performance and achieving sustainable growth.

X. LIMITATIONS

1. Limited sample size restricts generalizability
2. Study confined to the Delhi NCR region

3. Short duration limits the depth of analysis
4. Reliance on chemist-based insights
5. Company-specific findings

XI. FUTURE SCOPE

Future research should:

- Include larger and more diverse samples
- Apply advanced statistical techniques
- Conduct consumer-based studies
- Compare multiple companies
- Analyse digital marketing impact

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