

CHALLENGING COCACOLISATION OF RURAL NEPALI MARKET

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The shelves of local shops are filled with an abundance of imported beverages. Coca-Cola and Pepsi, Fanta, Sprite, Frooti, Red Bull among others have made the way to rural Nepal, where agriculture is still the primary source of income. As the result of increasing access to imported goods and products in rural markets, local products are gradually losing its ground. Using extensive desk review, observation of rural markets and interview with consumers, vendors and youths this papers shows that tailored consumer education can assist de-cocolising the market and increase the competitiveness and diversification of local products by imparting knowledge and skills to individuals to empower them to make their contribution to an equal share of local products on the rural market.

DIVERSE CONSUMERS

This paper starts with brief stories of three different types of consumers: traditional, modern and postmodern.

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Story-1: We started to sell milk in our village 45 years ago and it has since become one of our major sources of income. At that time, milk was also a major part of our daily food. We used to consume fresh milk, yogurt, skimmed milk, butter, and ghee every day. Over the time we had more and more cattle, mainly buffalo and cows, and the milk production increased. High in calories, ghee is the most nutritious food we have and it is essential for every religious and other ritual activity in Hindu families. We still produce skimmed milk, a liquid remaining after spinning the milk to butter, every 15-20 days. This is, however, less frequent than before. Our children don't like skimmed milk. They prefer fresh milk and yogurt. Coke or Fanta, we haven't tasted in our entire life. It is impure and touched by people from lower caste groups. Even if somebody would offer it to us, we would not take it. We don't allow our children to drink imported drinks. Skimmed milk, in contrast, is very good for our health: it helps to increase our appetite; it gives us energy and stamina. We can work long hours with only drinking a mug of skimmed milk and it has no side effects. These days you can see that this is changing slowly; younger generations are exposed to many new things and fashions, including imported beverages (Interview with the Brahmin brothers Buda Ghimire, age 69, and TekGhimire, Age 64, in rural area of Kavre District, Nepal)².

Story-2: Sometimes, I drink Fanta but not every day. I like it because of its sweetness and fizziness. I would never give my children any money to buy Coke. I tell them to choose other drinks like Frooti³, yogurt and milk and they prefer those to imported beverages. I completed 10 years of school; in 10s years' of schooling I did not learned what good things to eat and drink are. This kind of knowledge comes from our parents and elders in our community. What we eat

²The informant's name has been changed in this paper for their confidentiality purpose.

³Frooti is a packaged drink available in different brands in Nepal. It contains high sugar and additives with fruit flavor. Frooti is the largest-selling mango flavored drink in India.

where and when is often part of our beliefs and daily practice. Nowadays, nobody buys skimmed milk on our local market. Milk and yogurt you can get from the local market. There is only one shop that sells yogurt. Coke, however, you can find in many shops⁴. (Interview with Shiva Ghimire, age 34, son of Tek , in rural area of Kavre District, Nepal).

Story-3: I like to drink skimmed milk and Coke. It depends upon the place and time. On the market and with friends, I like to drink Coke and enjoy but when I am with my family and at home, skimmed milk is a better option. Personally, I prefer Fanta to Coke. I understand that it is less harmful. Also my uncle says that Coke is bad for your health. I believe my uncle. I get NPR 10-15 per day to buy a snack. This is not enough money for a bottle of Coke. Even if I had more money, I would not drink more than 3-4 bottles of Fanta per month. It is a waste of money. With the same money I can buy better food. A 250 ml Coke costs NPR 30 and the same amount of Fresh milk only costs NPR 20: so why should I go for Coke (Interview with Rabin Ghimire, age 16, son of Shiva Ghimire, in rural area of Kavre District, Nepal).

INTRODUCTION

The three stories of these people reflect the complexity of the Nepali rural market. Their voices, representing the three different generations of a traditional Nepali rural family, have something in common: they are all, in some way or the other, exposed to a fast changing rural market or, as we call it here, a process of *cocacolisation*. Their responses to this change however are quite different.

⁴ The local market in Kusadevi consists of about 150 shops and Coke is available one third of them

The complexity of the Nepali rural market originates from the various interests and behaviours of its traditional, modern and postmodern consumers as well as from globalised products that have penetrated the local market. Since its opening to the world economy in 1984, traditional products have gradually disappeared from Nepal's rural market and were replaced by imported products, like Coca Cola, Red Bull and instant noodles. Eventually they all became part of local peoples' regular life. In rural Nepal where agriculture is still the primary source of income, the rising consumption of globalised goods is of major concern having cultural and economic impacts. Research has shown that consumers in developing countries often prefer brands from abroad, such as the U.S. or Germany, over brands that are seen as local in origin. Choosing these products they seek to demonstrate higher social status and lifestyles similar to those in economically developed regions (Batra et al. 2000; Howes 1996 as cited in Nagata, Barg, Veleggia, Bream, 2011). French communists attacked Americans for cocacolisng France (Long, 2010).rather it is the search for consumers' informed choice whether they want to pay Coke (global product) or skimmed milk (local product).

Today, 77 per cent of Nepalese are living in rural area which is far above the global average (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS] (2011)). In our observation, Nepal's rural shops are filled with an abundance of different imported products and many young consumers tend to prefer foreign brands. The consumer behaviour of these young Nepali shows us certain characteristics of a postmodern consumer - a consumer that not only chooses a product because of its necessity or taste but also because it provides him with a desired identity (Peltonen, 2013). By consuming global products they feel prestigious and proud. Their selection of certain products is largely determined by their peer consumer behaviour as well as aggressive advertisements of multinationals that have recently penetrated the rural markets. The postmodern

consumer believes that his/her identity is associated with what they use or consume (Tonder, 2003).

Although general access to education and information in Nepal has increased, our research revealed that rural consumers and vendors lack access to reliable information about local and global products and the impact these products can have on their socio-economic life. They become part of the new dominant culture having little understanding on how and to what extent they can influence the economy, the environment and the society through their individual behaviour.

Through the lens of postmodernism the paper analyses the modalities of a *cocacolised* Nepali rural market versus a *de-cocacolised* Swiss rural market and explores in what ways consumer education can influence the share of local products in Nepal's rural market contributing to a equitable co-existence of global and local products. Using comparative observations of rural markets modalities in Nepal and Switzerland as well as focus group discussions and interviews on the perception of global and local products among youth, adults and elders, this paper explores the ways education can enable local products re-gain an equal share on the local market.

COCACOLISATION IN RURAL NEPAL

These three stories are the representatives of diverse and complex Nepali rural consumers.. Similar to these stories, another rural family a newly married Kabita, age 19 mentioned, "I like to drink Coke and imported beverages. I drink it two-three times a month but if I had more money, I would drink more." Her 42 year's mother in law stated that she drinks Coke few times in a year when she travels to her mother's house. Kabita's 84 year's grandma

never tasted Coke or any other imported beverages. These statements confirm the stories presented at the beginning of this paper and present a Nepali rural market that is neither totally traditional or postmodern in nature. Many young people get exposed to a wide range of global products through extensive travel that they undertake in their search for employment. They have started to believe that global products would be better than the local ones. Kabita's husband, who worked in Saudi Arabia before here turned back to Nepal, supports this point. He believes in foreign products more than locals.

The phenomenon of domination of the rural market through global products has been frequently referred to as *cocacolisation* (Nagata, Barg, Veleggia, Bream, 2011) and is seen as one of the many instruments and means of globalisation. Globalisation refers to increase the flow of cross-border movement of goods, services and capital, increased human movement and increased market diversification (Hillebrand, 2010). Some interpret cocacolisation as a product of modernism and globalisation, while others refer to it as a form of Americanization and westernization. Koestler even takes it a step further and coined the term 'coca-colonization' to describe the impact of Western societies on developing countries and the results of Western intrusion into the lives of traditional-living indigenous communities (as cited by Zimmet, 2000). We are here using the term cocacolisation and with it Coke as a symbol for the availability of globalised products on the local market which are gradually displacing local market products.

Marketing strategies of multinational companies entering new markets often tend to be aggressive and comprehensive. Mainly targeting teens and children, they aim to create demand by changing traditional habits and reproducing necessities with the result that global products are becoming an obvious choice for the rural youth whereas the local products are losing ground (Mariola, 2005). The consumer in postmodern culture is perplexed by the incredible array of

brands and products that impose their own rules and procedures as a way of life. The well-packaged products advertise a high western lifestyle where consumers enjoy their consumption and identify themselves with the product. Postmodernist studies argue that consumers seek to express themselves and their relationships to others through the products they possess. Identity construction process plays thus an important role in the way that the consumers perceive themselves (Firat, A. 1991). The consumer transcends the state of just satisfying one's individual needs, and becomes positioned and identified by what one consumes.

Buda, Tek, Shiva and RabinRabin, who gave us a short insight in their lives on the rural market in Kavre district, which we visited for our research, symbolise three different types of consumers: the traditional, modern and postmodern consumer. The first type seems to be reluctant to new challenges, to experiment new products and to taste new brands. He is satisfied with the consumption of traditional products. The second category explores new products and is informed. He is ready to negotiate the price and conscious about different brands, packaging, and cost-benefit. Our third character represents a postmodern consumer. He cares not only about price and branding but is emotional attached with the products; He chooses his own favourite brand, is mobile and unpredictable (Featherstone, 2007). However, these individuals representing the three generations are not fixed to one type of consumer as their behaviour can be changed in context and culture. Together they reflect the complexity of its market.

The local market – *Haat Bazar*⁵ in Nepal – was originally promoted to provide a space for local products but has since converted into a place to sell imported goods. Apart from vegetable, a large majority of goods and products in the local *Haat Bazar* are imported. In the *Haat Bazar* in

⁵Haat Bazar is a temporary market established in rural centers where local people bring their small amount of products and sell, exchange goods and products. Generally they come together once a week but there are many Haat Bazars run twice or three times in a week too.

Kailali, , about 150 shops are lined up along both sides of the main road. To us, they all looked the same: imported products, bottled drinks, packed foods including local products mainly grains and fresh vegetables. Dhani Ram Chaudhary, one of the many local shopkeepers, said that twenty years ago there was no practice to have this kind of shops, but today they are everywhere. With the extension of the road and a better connection to town, the number of outlets exploded and imported beverages became available over the last then to fifteen years. While most of the shops sell imported beverages, there is only one that sells yogurt, yet none of them sells skimmed milk. Long term use of packaged junk food has serious impact on people's health. The global type 2 diabetes epidemics is one of the most obvious disease manifestation of a massive social and public health problem now facing developing countries as well the ethnic minorities and the disadvantaged in certain developed countries', so Zimmet (2000: 305).

At the beginning of 2000, there were 130,000 market outlets in rural Nepal (Subedi, 2002). Since their number has significantly increased. Driven by incentives such as free refrigerators and high profits, the number of local shopkeepers selling imported beverages has also significantly increased. Self-employed and without any formal training, they seem not to be concerned about the consumers' changing habits. Rather they follow, what other relatively big shopkeepers do, stated Ram Prasad Sapkota of Kavre. In rural areas, compared to urban markets, the demand for imported products is still rather low. 'The market for these new products is not very great - people do not have sufficient cash to purchase imported beverages', explained Dhani Ram Chaudhary from Kailali. As a low-income country with a GNI per capita of USD 730 (World Bank 2013) the purchase of a bottle of coke paying NRS 25, remains for many beyond their means. Even though a bottle of coke in Nepal is more than 10 times cheaper than in any Western country, one could with the same amount of money buy a daily meal in Nepal.

Nepal took important steps for the liberalisation of its economic policies under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) initiated in 1986(Khan, 2000), but major reforms for integration into the global economy came only in the early 1990s. Until the 1990s, people in rural areas used to share their products free of cost with their neighbours. Today Nepal's rural market is still largely agro-based. Most local food producers are producing raw materials, used for self-consumption and some surplus that they can sell to the local market. The barter system and the culture of sharing gradually disappeared when local level vendors started selling products on the rural market. Small farmers sell milk and milk products (mainly ghee, yogurt and fresh milk), fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, and cereals. During the last 25 years, many international companies started entering the local markets with their products, like Coke.

Presented in attractive wrapping and of different exotic tastes, imported beverages are tempting the new rural generation. Multinational advertise for their products with seductive schemes, targeting in particular children and teenagers. 'Drinking Coke makes you feel happy', 'Win a ticket to the World Cup in Brazil', 'Win 1 KG gold', 'An apartment in the capital just for you': utopian slogan like these are often presented by movie stars, popular singers, and sports persons and seek to get millions of Nepali to buy a bottle of Coke. These advertisements provide the rational to spend 25 Rupees on a Coke instead of choosing a local drink which does not have any associated attractions and is often not even available, or only on request, in the local store. "I would drink Red Bull everyday if I had the money to buy it. Because it is tasty, gives a good feeling and makes us smart", said Biond a 15 year old boy that we meet in a school located in Northern rural Kathmandu district. For him Red Bull not only tastes good, it also provides him with a desired identity by making him feel good and smart. "RedBull is popular among our youth because it contains alcohol and it is accepted as non-alcoholic beverage among parents", adds

Bharat who operates one of the tiny shops. This clearly indicates that it is not only the lack of information, but also misinformation that leads to the consumption of imported beverages.

"We are what we eat" is a famous axiom. Nepali rural people largely eat self-grown, self-cooked, meat and vegetables. Eating habits, clothing and cultural practices construct the identity of rural people. Nepali Hindus believe that local products are suitable for them and accepted socially and culturally. Referring to the Hindu text he argues that local food is better than the imported one. He encourages people to consume local, homemade food, self-cooked (*Swoyampakya*) and very simple food, to be a vegetarian and to avoid alcohol. *Rajashi Bhojan* is another category of food that, according to Hindu tradition, is most suitable for Chhetri, the warrior groups and royal family. It consists of 84 food items, including different spices, meat, and sweets. A third type of food is *Tamashik*. It is said that this third type is particularly good for manual workers as it is extremely nutritious. The belief 'we are what we eat' is inherited from generation to generation through daily food practices, learning from elders and the exposure to religious texts. Recent developments of Nepal's rural market tend to hamper this process, breaking with a knowledge chain that has been in place for centuries.

Besides Nepal's traditional knowledge, food habits are also determined by the access to food. Rural people have significantly reduced their consumption of skimmed milk because of two reasons. First, they started to sell fresh milk directly on the market, before processing it to skimmed milk. Selling milk and milk products to local dairy shops has become one of the major sources of income for rural people. These shops then process the milk and sell the milk products to outlets in the region. Second, with the migration of many rural farmers to urban areas and other countries for employment, including other than agro-based activities, the milk production

has gone down. A large number of youths are absent in their villages as they are working aboard or in urban canters.

Today 45 per cent of Nepal's population aged 15-24 is working abroad or in the capital (CBS, 2011) and remittances contribute to 25 percent of Nepal's GDP (World Bank, 2013). Rural families have now access to cash which they can use to purchase imported goods and products. Increased access of cash has lowered the barrier, in particular for adolescents to the consumption of fast-food from the local market. The Nepal Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2013 shows that Nepal made significant progress on education, health and poverty reduction (United Nations Development Program, 2013). As a result general consumers are becoming more aware of the different products. Consumers' awareness is increasing; they like to know more about the quality and use of products (Sharma, 2008). Yet, consumer education is a very new area of discourse in Nepal. Today, consumer education that informs children about available products yet needs to become part of the school curriculum. Rajesh Paudyal, principal, of a Secondary School, Kavre seemed concerned about the consumption of junk food among his students: "They prefer to eat roasted and dry noodles over local food like roasted maize." He advises children not to use junk food and encourages them to eat homemade food items. Rajesh gets the information about the products from newspapers, local health workers and uses his common sense to guide children in what is best for their health. He also acknowledges that is not fully informed about the consequences of using packed, readymade foods and beverages. He mentioned, "We are not trained on it, rather we learn informally by listening from others."

Nepal passed a Consumer Protection Act 1998 under which the Consumer Protection Council was established. The council is mandated to inform consumers about products and to protect consumers' rights. Article 6 ensures the right to consumer education. This law is very

appealing but the general consumer is not informed about his/her rights and vendors are not concerned about it. Birat Thapa, 64 in rural Kathmandu mentioned that he does not look at the expiry date while buying and selling products. He stated, "So far, nobody complaint with us and in our community people don't check the date while buying and eating our products."

Rural markets have become places where low quality products are promoted and rural communities do not care much about nutritional value, manufacture date, and brands of the new products available to them. Participants in our focus group discussions confirmed that they generally do not care about the quality and manufacturer while buying imported products. Most of the respondents also affirmed that they never thought about the consequences of using imported products.

UNDERSTANDING DE-COCACOLISATION

"So why Coke?" or "Why not Coke?", as Rabin our youngest interviewee would ask. "Why not skimmed milk?", his grandfather would question. These questions reflect the complexity of Nepali rural society where the younger generation shows some of the characteristics of a postmodern consumer that sharply contradict with their older generations. Media and modern communication has been effectively used to prove Rabin as rational and his grandmother's advise to drink skimmed milk as an irrational and out-dated idea and have so contributed to the decline of traditional knowledge. While Nepali society is gradually moving towards modernity and post-modernity, is it possible to de-cocacolise or de-globalise society? To find an answer to this question, we need to understand why we should even think for de-cocacolisation. Stiglitz (2005), among others, argues that trade liberalisation in poor countries with badly performing market structures may cause unemployment and decline productivity to

understand de-cocacolisation, we have to understand the complexity of Nepal's rural market, the multiple truths and realities of its population as well as the local economy. Besides the new enormous range of globalised products available on the market other factors have played an important role in enduring their presence. Better infrastructures, labour migration to urban areas and foreign countries as well as the selling of raw materials to bigger distributors have facilitated the penetration of imported products. De-cocacolisation, used as the breaking with the domination of imported goods, seeks to create space for local products on the market. The processes of cocacolisation and de-cocacolisation, however, have to be understood as complementary rather than mutually exclusive, contributing to a dietary transition where the ideal scenarios is that the consumer is able to make a conscious choice between different local and global products.

Consumer education of young rural postmodern consumers, as we argue in this paper, can be used as one of the vehicles of the de-cocacolisation process. We have seen that the process of cocacolisation is both constructed by modernity and supported by postmodern consumers who make themselves part of the new dominating culture through their choices and preferences. Likewise, well-informed postmodern consumers, acting as individuals or groups have the power to challenge this dominant reality, supporting a de-cocacolisation process.

Increasing the share of local products on the market needs a very deliberate effort of consumers, vendors, and distributors, multinationals as well as government officials. Education can play a very crucial role in this process by informing the different actors about the value of the products as well as raising their awareness on the power of their actions. In order to do so, education both formal and non-formal needs to be re-designed. Starting with the dissemination of information about newly available as well as traditional products, education needs to go the

classical approach. Only by also promoting critical thinking, respect for diversity and fostering dialogue between traditional and new ideas, effective consumer education can play an essential role bringing traditional, modern and postmodern values together on a single market and thus ensure equal space for all of them. Cocacolonisation in rural area is not yet a very severe problem. Mr. Neeraj Garg spoke In an interview with Vice President of Coca-Cola Company in India mentioned,

Nepal is a country which has a relatively low per capita consumption levels for packaged beverages and we see steady and robust growth in both sparkling and still beverage categories in the future. The per capita consumption of our products is only 9.2 drinks per year. Contrast this to a global average of 92, 38 in China and 728 in Mexico (M. Lamsal, 2013).

Coca Cola Company clearly sees the opportunity of selling more beverages on the Nepali rural market which in their view is not sufficiently exploited. Low income and high transportation cost to remote hilly areas are some of the major reasons for the low per capita Coke consumption in Nepal. This, however, also presents the perfect time to start consumer education and inform about imported, packaged, preserved foods. As the Nepali market is not fully globalised, consumer education could prevent cocacolonisation by increasing people's knowledge of modern and local product allowing them to make their own informed choices. As individuals can unknowingly be trapped in globalisation (Fisher, 2011), cocacolonisation of mind also happens as the result of exposure to Coke through radio, television, sports and other major events. As Hall (2007) argued, the major issue of globalised products is their hegemonic character that attacks consumer's minds. So, to begin the de-cocacolonisation process, consumers' minds need to be changed first.

There is not simple way to de-cocacolise minds and markets. Education has been used as vehicle of cocacolisation and the same way it can be used for the de-cocalisation process.

Alluding to Swiss experiences, Nepal can create a new approach of de-cocalisation that creates a dialogue between the producers of global and local products and educate consumers and investors aiming to create a just market where both local drinks, like skimmed milk, and Coke can coexists and where consumers have more choices and more democracy.

SWISS EXPERIENCE OF DE-COCACOLIZATION

In Switzerland consumers are well informed about the quality and origin of the available goods and can select from a wide range of local products. Due to a very high proportion of small and middle sized companies, distributors' support of rural products, favourable national policies and an increasing consumer demand for products that are locally produced, marketed and consumed, local products are getting better positioned. Over the last three decades, the Swiss agricultural sector has gradually decreased. In 2012, 162'000 people worked in agriculture, less than half as many as in 1975. More than half of them worked part-time. The numbers of farms has also fallen continuously, only between 2000 and 2012 from 70'500 to 56'000. However over the last 20 years still 60% of the Swiss food consumption could be covered by domestic production (Federal Statistical Office [FSO], 2014),

Progressive policy reforms to support the agricultural sector were made in Switzerland in the late 1990s targeting subsidies towards ecological practices (Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape, 1999). The public support was in particular given for specific biotypes, integrated production and organic farming. Policy now differentiates between three different levels of public support depending on the sustainability of agriculture. Tier one is support for

specific biotypes, such as extensive grassland and meadows, high-stem fruit trees and hedges. Tier two supports integrated production with reduced inputs, meeting higher ecological standards than conventional farming. Tier three is support for organic farming (Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape, 1999). A vital element of the policy process was also that responsibility to set, administer and monitor is delegated to cantons, farmers' unions and farm advisors, local bodies and non-government organizations. Most of the farmers are able to comply with the basic ecological standard which allows them to receive public subsidies⁶. In 2012, the Swiss Confederation spent CHF 3.7 billion on the agricultural and food sectors. Of this amount, 78% was paid as direct payments and social contributions to the entitled farmers (FSO, 2014).

Over the years Swiss consumers have paid more attention to the quality and origin of the products that end up in their shopping baskets. Today's Swiss consumers appreciate local products and are ready to pay an extra price for it, if convinced. This has been taken so far that today's consumer is able to trace back the way of his boiled morning egg. Consumer education has played a crucial role in informing consumers about the different products and has supported them in making their every day decisions in a way that supports local farmers. Through the publication and distribution of information materials to related issues, the introduction of nutritional science and consumer behavior in schools, the exact labeling of available products and the active engagement of distributors, civil society and public agencies to promote and increase the amount of offered products produced and sold in the same region.

Swiss small and middle sized vendors and distributors adapted their marketing strategies to the nature of the postmodern consumer, fostering the latter's identification with the product

⁶Some 5 000 farms (8 percent) are now organic (up from two percent in 1991), and most farmers are now expected to meet the 'ecological standard' during the year 2000. Pesticide applications have fallen by 23 percent since 1990, and phosphate use is down from 83 to 73 kg/ha.

and letting the consumer become part of a bigger movement towards more sustainable local markets. Supermarkets have created separate sections where they have only products that come from the region in which the particular supermarket is located. The products are usually so well labelled that the consumer could easily find its producer. Small local stores selling typical local products have also gained popularity. These local food items are often quite expensive. It is the uniqueness and localness the costumer appreciates and which gives him/her the feeling of supporting its community. She/he is thus also willing to pay a higher price for it. With a higher income, households in Switzerland spent roughly only 12% of their budget on food (FSO, 2014).

Beside all the range of different products, Coke is still a popular drink among Swiss people. With the consumer's changing lifestyle, Coca-Cola has also adapted its marketing strategy to the new type of consumer and focuses on the needs and well-being of its consumers reducing the caloric value by more than 10% over the past 7 years. The company supports numerous sporting events and promotes a healthy, active lifestyle. Further, Coca-Cola respects the responsibility of parents. As a result, the company does not advertise its products to children below the age of 12. Classrooms are ad-free zones and absolutely no promotions are conducted in schools. Vending machines are only installed at the express wish of the school's administration. The Swiss example demonstrates that to increase the share and diversification of local products in the rural market it is essential to disseminate information about their values and to increase people's identity with local products.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION ON DE-COCACOLIZATION

Consumer education is a neglected issue in Nepal as well as its health and economic consequences. Schools could play an important role promoting local markets but so far they have not done so. They mainly teach children to better memorise texts and quote the learnt in exams. Based on exam result, both student and school get rewarded or punished. Dharma Rana, Kailali, an educationist, mentioned that there is no reliable information available about the consequences of using junk food in Nepal and, as a result of this, teachers also does not have a clear idea about the newly available products. .

In an interview, Neeraj Garg, vice president at Coca-cola India and South West Asia stated:

“With regards to the beverage industry in Nepal, I think the packaged beverage consumption is on the rise and the non-alcoholic ready to drink category continues to evolve to varying consumer demands. Coca-Cola has a strong focus on innovation and we will continue to provide our consumers with beverage choices for all occasions and cater to the advancements of the Nepali beverage market (Lamsal, 2013).

Comparing Nepal's rural market with the Swiss case, we have argued that consumer education can assist de-cocacolising the market and increase the competitiveness and diversification of local products. Informing consumers about the value and quality of available imported and local products as well as their socio-economical impacts on society is important. It would not only allow consumers to understand the process of cocacolisation but also make them reflect on the role they can play to strengthen their own local economy. By imparting knowledge and skills to individuals, education can empower them to make their contribution to an equal share of local products on the rural market. Consumer education in Nepal has to address some of

the misconceptions created by the cocacolised market. Drinking Coke means being modern and smart is one of the major misconceptions we observed in the Nepali market. To educate postmodern consumers, we need to adjust, accommodate and cope with the change. Berner & Tonder, 2003 argued, "The postmodern consumer lives in a world filled with 'doubt, ambiguity and uncertainty' (Thomas, as cited by Berner & Tonder, 2003)." And, our education system should work with unpredictable learners - the learners who make their own choice and decide what they choose to learn so that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities as consumer.

In order to challenge this understanding, consumers, in particular young consumers need to re-awake their appreciation for local products that has been created over many centuries and are still very enshrined in its tradition. For young consumers, these products need to be presented attractively and young consumers need to be informed about the benefits of using local, natural and fresh food instead of imported, packaged and readymade food products. As a result, using local should make them feel proud. Exposed to a wide array of different products, consumers need to choose again local products because they feel proud of consuming it and because it provides them with a desired identity. By investing in local production and knowledge about local products, and its transfer from generation to generation, education can increase newer generations' understanding for traditional food items as well as their identification with it as being part of a culture.

Not only consumers, but also vendors, teachers, curricula writers, and business leaders need to be given access to information about both global as well as local products. A holistic understanding of the functioning of the market and their particular role will empower them to make their own choices on the local market and let them become part of a bigger movement towards a more sustainable local market. In addition, building up skills and investing

in local infrastructure can contribute to the promotion of local products beyond the borders of its market and create a demand from post-modern consumers all over the world which in turn again will contribute to an increase in its value at the local level. The global business houses need to be encouraged to invest part of their profit to promote local products. Mechanism and institutions need to be established that make sure that certain percent of the profit is re-invested to produce and market local products. With better infrastructure, increased access to roads, higher income through remittances and the selling of surpluses, the Nepali rural market has high potential to grow and promote its products. Well-informed consumers and distributors can act in a sensitive and responsive way, allowing local products equal space on the local market.

CONCLUSION

Nepali rural markets and Haat Bazars (local weekly vegetable markets) are dominated by imported goods. This domination of imported products over local ones has created both opportunities as well as challenges in Nepal's economy and consumers' minds. The influence of imported goods on consumers drives them to buy imported goods and products like Coke ignoring local products, like skimmed milk that have a higher nutritious value. Importantly, the social and cultural dimensions of cocacolisation have been less discussed. The Swiss example shows that effective consumer education and awareness; increased investment in local quality products; distributor's support for rural products; special space for local products in supermarkets and favourable national policies can equalise the prestige of local products to the global imported ones.

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