

Effects of Digital Marketing on Marketing in Indian Rural Areas - A Research

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Abstract: India, recognized as the fastest-growing large economy globally, is still widely referred to as a land of villages. Approximately 70% of Indians reside in 6.5 lakh villages, with 50% of the nation's populace significantly reliant on agriculture (Shireesh Diveeker 2017)¹. Advances in infrastructure have bridged the gap between villages and cities. The advent of mobile technology, and to a certain extent, the internet, has connected rural areas more closely with urban populations, leading to rural India becoming acquainted with urban lifestyles. This has inspired rural residents to enhance their prosperity and improve their living standards. Numerous telecom companies have been attempting to establish a foothold in the rural market through various strategies. The rural market presents opportunities and considerable appeal for service providers. However, it is not as straightforward as it appears. Marketing in rural areas brings forth multiple challenges, necessitating that service providers invest considerable effort to skillfully address these obstacles. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of digital marketing on rural populations and identify the various issues they encounter.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Technology, and Marketing in Rural Areas, effects of digital marketing, emerging applications in digital marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian consumer products market consists of two separate segments: the urban market and the rural market. Rural marketing involves delivering specific goods and services to the rural market, facilitating exchanges between urban and rural markets while satisfying consumer demands and achieving organizational objectives.

DIGITALMARKETING

Digital marketing involves utilizing the internet, mobile gadgets, social networks, search engines, display advertisements, and various other platforms to connect with consumers. As a branch of conventional marketing, digital marketing extends beyond just the internet to encompass Short Message Service (SMS), Simple Notification Service (SNS), search engine optimization (SEO), electronic or interactive billboards, and other online advertisements (like banner ads) to advertise products and services.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Venkatesh Babu BR and Swetha MR (2018) examined the opportunities and challenges faced by producers. They found that marketers are prepared to implement digital marketing strategies and tap into the untapped potential of rural markets. This research focuses on the rural market as a whole but does not concentrate on any particular product.

Pooja and Neha (2014) explored the potential of rural marketing in India and concluded that there is significant marketing potential, contingent on enhancements to infrastructure. Their findings indicated that the rural market remains largely unexplored.

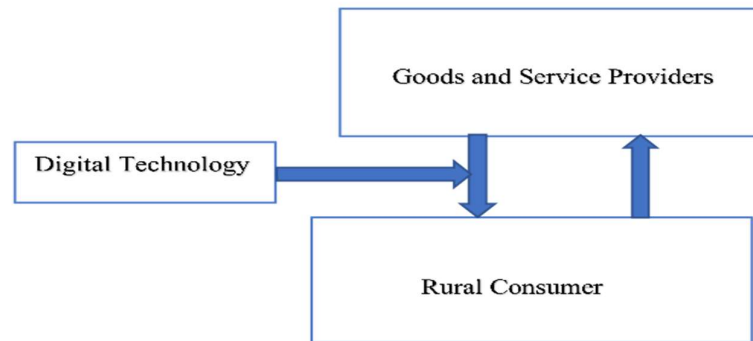
Saroj Kumar Verma (2013) researched the challenges and opportunities surrounding rural marketing in India. A key challenge highlighted in the study is the non-homogeneous and dispersed nature of the market. Additional challenges



include seasonal marketing, low per capita income, transportation, and warehousing; however, the large population is viewed as a significant consumer base, offering an opportunity for marketers.

The Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI) noted an increase in purchasing power, further emphasizing the untapped potential in this segment. Erda CV (2008) investigated the comparative buying behavior between rural and urban customers concerning mobile phones. The research emphasized differences in awareness regarding price, quality, style, function, and brand. It was determined that rural consumers tend to prioritize price and style over quality, function, and brand. The study concluded that simply adapting urban marketing strategies to the rural market may not be effective.

Conceptual frame work



OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To observe the potentiality of digital marketing effect on rural people and find various problems that are being faced by rural people.

METHODOLOGY:

The study is descriptive. A secondary data collection technique was implemented. The data used in this study has been collected from different websites and published papers.

III. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND RURAL MARKETING

The rise of DTH, mobile phones, and mobile internet in rural India is transforming traditional consumer engagement models. This shift has significantly changed rural marketing practices. Digital marketing offers numerous advantages compared to traditional marketing, including

A. Direct Promotion: Direct promotion allows marketers to build awareness about a brand or product through digital advertising. Nowadays, companies can easily showcase their advertisements across various digital platforms. This approach serves as an effective marketing strategy, capable of reaching a large audience and growing the business.

B. Easy Consumer Reach: One of the primary benefits of digital marketing is its ability to reach a broad audience as quickly as possible. Today, people spend a significant amount of time searching online. By leveraging web channels, advertisers can efficiently target different consumers. There are numerous social media platforms available for advertising, including WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Blogs, Instagram, and Google+, among others. These platforms enable advertisers to easily connect with their intended audience.

C. Cost Efficiency: Digital marketing allows advertisers to save money. It is generally much cheaper than traditional advertising channels such as television, newspapers, radio, billboards, and magazines. Many websites and business profiles can generate substantial traffic at no cost. It presents an excellent opportunity for advertisers to expand their business globally without significant expenses.

D. Continuous Availability: The internet is always available, meaning ads can run 24/7. With online marketing, advertisements are continuously visible around the clock, ensuring they reach the intended consumers at all times. This



constant availability is a key feature of digital marketing that is important to consider when discussing its advantages and drawbacks.

E. Consumer Convenience for Online Shopping: Online shopping is an emerging trend. Due to the benefits and capabilities of digital marketing, consumers are increasingly inclined to shop online. Shoppers can purchase items from both local and international markets. In today's world, distance is not a barrier for consumers. Additionally, they can choose from a vast array of options. A large number of people now prefer online shopping for its numerous advantages, creating new opportunities for both businesses and customers. This facilitates easy interaction between retailers and consumers.

F. Global Advertising: This is one of the most crucial aspects of digital marketing. It allows businesses to advertise on a global scale without facing geographical limitations. As a result, companies can expand their operations effortlessly and reach a worldwide audience from virtually any location.

IV. SOME GENUINE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE RURAL MARKET INCLUDE:

A. Digital illiteracy: According to the Pattern of Consumer Expenditure Report 2011, only 3.5 out of every 1000 rural households in India had internet access at home during the period of 2009-2010. There are approximately 90,000 rural info kiosks (such as Common Service Centres and Community Information Resource Centres) across India, with around 5,452 CSCs in the state. However, these kiosks often lack internet connectivity and services delivered to people's doorsteps. For India to achieve digital literacy, approximately 3.5 million individuals need to become digitally savvy.

B. Wide and Scattered Market: The rural market, which is widespread and dispersed, presents challenges in terms of both promotion and distribution. Rural India is distributed across about 600,000 villages of various sizes, whereas the urban population is concentrated in around 3,200 cities. Most villages are quite small, with populations under 500. Only about one percent (6,300) of villages have populations exceeding 5,000. Identifying target markets and serving them effectively poses a significant challenge.

C. Language Problem: Language serves as a primary constraint for communication strategies. The variety of languages spoken in rural areas complicates marketing efforts. The linguistic differences vary not only from state to state but also within regions of the same state. When creating advertising, personal selling, and publicity strategies, marketers struggle to meet the linguistic needs of all rural residents. Promotion efforts often lack flexibility.

D. Urban Marketers versus Rural Customers: Company executives often fail to comprehend the consumer psychology of rural markets. The lack of awareness and understanding of consumer behaviors in rural contexts hinders the development of effective marketing strategies. Rural customers differ greatly from urban ones in terms of habits, tastes, preferences, and other characteristics. Therefore, attempting to cater to rural consumers with an urban mindset (from executives raised in urban environments) often proves fruitless.

E. Backwardness: Rural consumers tend to be economically disadvantaged. Over 30 percent of the rural population lives below the poverty line, restricting their ability to spend even on essential goods. This economic backwardness also influences their willingness to embrace change. Their limited purchasing power and resistance to change are significant barriers for marketers trying to serve them.

F. High Inventory Costs: Due to the limited and unpredictable demand in rural areas, effective inventory management poses challenges. Furthermore, retailers operating in rural locations often lack the necessary skills and knowledge to determine optimal inventory levels. Excess stock reduces profit margins, while insufficient stock leads to lost customers.

G. Inadequate Marketing Support: Typically, producers and wholesalers do not provide sufficient support to rural retailers in terms of flexible credit, financial assistance, and related resources that they typically extend to traders. Of urban areas. In the same way, rural customers and retailers are not given adequate space in designing overall marketing programmed.



V. CONCLUSION

Digital marketing in rural regions is a highly pristine area with significant untapped potential, yet strategies are still being developed to fully explore this space. Over time, digital marketing will contribute to a rise in consumption in rural India and will provide job opportunities, increasing disposable income, which will subsequently have a favourable impact on the country's economic growth. The current study highlights such opportunities for marketers to seize the unexploited potential in the rural market.

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