



**MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN RURAL SETTING: THE
INDIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Three-fourth consumers live in rural areas. More than one half national incomes are obtained from rural area. Due to their vast size and demand the market started showing it's potentially in recent years. Moreover, the rural market of India is fascinating and challenging at the same time it offers large of account of its sheer dimension and prospective .Even a gradual programme pushes up sales of product substantiality in view of the huge base. The urban market is highly competitive, the rural market relatively quiet. In fact in certain products, it is totally a virgin market. It must be recognised that the rural marketing is out and out development marketing. It is often said that markets are made, not found. This is especially true in case of rural market in India. It is a matter of fact that the marketing communication and its promotion is a problem in rural area due the low literacy rate among the rural consumer as well as cultural barriers, economic backwardness and language problem. Thus, the paper tried assessed and develop a communication strategy for the rural marketing in the Indian perspectives of socio-economic development.

Key Words: *consumers, rural markets, strategy, development*

1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing Communications is a simple concept. After examining the basic communication process, we shall understand the marketing communication concept. Marketing is the process which brings the products and services to the consumers to satisfy their needs and wants. Modern marketing manages the four Ps of product, promotion, price and place or the channel of distribution. The whole marketing process in a sense has a large communication content. For instance, the product communicates prestige, youthfulness, speed, care etc. The brand name communicates the product attributes, e.g., Dreamflower talc. The package communicates convenience coupled with aesthetics. The price communicates the quality of the product. The marketer and distributor communicate between them. This each element of the marketing mix either facilitates or hinders communication process. These elements greatly influence the selling process. Marketing communication is thus a broader term. However, in a narrow sense, marketing communication is the promotional strategy. It is planned promotional communication with a mix five major tools —

At another level, initial research suggests that images shared in advertising and direct mail boost both advertising awareness and mail shot responses. So marketing Communication can boost sales by stretching messages across several communications tools to create more avenues for customers to become aware, aroused, and ultimately, to make a purchase Carefully linked messages also help buyers by giving timely reminders, updated information and special offers which, when presented in a planned sequence, help them move comfortably through the stages of their buying process... and this reduces their 'misery of choice' in a complex and busy world. (Chunawala and Sethia: 2015)

1.1 Marketing Communications in Theoretical Framework

Basic communications models show a sender making an impression on a beneficiary who gets and gets it. Genuine is less straightforward - numerous messages are misjudged, neglect to show up or, are essentially overlooked. Careful comprehension of the crowd's needs, feelings, interests and exercises is basic to guarantee the precision and significance of any message. Rather than noisy 'purchase now' promotions, numerous messages are regularly structured or 'encoded' with the goal that the hard sell turns into an increasingly inconspicuous delicate sell. The sender makes or encodes the message in a structure that can be effortlessly comprehended or decoded by the recipient.

The sender of the message is the marketer. The message is encoded as advertising copy, publicity material, sales displays or sales talk. The media to deliver the message could be print media such as press/magazines, or electronic such as radio/TV/Films or a salesman making a sales talk. The decoding involves the interpretation of the message by- the -consumers. This is the most challenging part of the marketing communication, as the consumers may not always interpret the message as the marketer desires it to do. The fundamental difficulty arises in communication at the stage of coding

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The common field of experience and reference makes the communication possible. If there is no such overlap, communication may be poor or impossible. The feedback comes as marketing research inputs or sales reports. The noise elements are the competitive promotional messages. Communication can be made more effective by understanding the audience and the market properly. Marketing communication is a major chunk of the total corporate communications. Advertising is an important element of the marketing communication. Advertising has certain unique features, which distinguish it from other forms of marketing communication such as personal selling, sales promotion (SP), publicity and public relations (PR). (Chunawala and Sethia: 2015)

1.2 Rural Marketing

The rural market of India is entrancing and testing simultaneously, it offers enormous extension by virtue of its sheer size and potential. Also, it is developing consistently. Indeed, even a steady product pushes up the deals of an item significantly, considering the gigantic base. It is appealing from one more edge. Though the urban market is exceptionally serious, the rural market is moderately calm. Actually for specific items it is absolutely a virgin market. Usually marketers are made, not found. This is particularly evident on account of rural markets of India. It is a market implied for the creative thinker. In the end, it might be expressed that rural marketing communication is a piece of rural development and henceforth of national development of events and that except if this happens, rural marketing cannot come up.

(Kumar and Hagagi: 2011)

From time to time, the emphasis has shifted. First we had changes in local institutions and self-help organisations, then came the integrated rural development slogan followed by target group approach and now the basic need approach, about the meaning of which there is an unresolved controversy. So far, our national policies have failed to resolve the agrirural problems of land, better seeds, fertilizers, mechanized farming, water for irrigation, electricity, low productivity, increasing population and poverty. The problems are not only of physical availability of food and other resources, the bigger problem is that of distribution, lack of purchasing power and of poverty, Malnutrition and hunger continues to spread, and affect rural productivity.

Rural Urban dichotomies and rigidities have reached a stage at which economic policies relating both have become impossible to pursue and which are pushing rural and urban population into a serious conflict. We must help the subsistence farmers to increase their yields by giving them various aids (finance etc.) and technical help, and try to bring about a change in their traditional values and attitudes. It is not simple or easy to formulate a strategy for rural development marketing and advertising. There are unresolved problems and tasks. There is no magic formula.

Rural development require persistent efforts over decades. The consequences of past neglect and misdirected efforts cannot be overcome and reversed in a short time. Small-scale industries should capitalise on the rural market sector. Greater commitment on the part of our government is essential if it wants to check social unrest which is spreading from the rural sector into urban India. The training of local rural specialists in rural marketing and administration is important. Therefore, rural development marketing should be used as a human concept, to which purely material transfers and their purpose should be subordinated. (Mannappa, O: 2003)

2. THE PROSPECTS

In rural market, marketing communication and their promotion is the main problem. There are many reasons of this problem in rural consumer as the literacy rate among the rural consumers is very low, Cultural barriers, traditional bonded nature. Economic backwardness. Rural communication will not be in their local language.

Organised media reach only 30 per cent of the rural population of the India, As regards the print media, the various publication reach only 18 per cent of the rural population. Cinema is relatively more accessible. It is found that 33 percent of the total cinema earning in the country come from cinema

Selecting media in the rural Setting: The Possibilities

2.1 Organised Media

•**Television:** In context of rural audience where several programmes of social interest are of prime importance which affect their minds. Eg. Amitabh Bachchan-campaign for Pulse Polio.

Cinema - More effective media because visual effect is long lasting

Radio is very important medium as it is such source which has 1,0th every one i.e: percentage of people listening to radio

Other Print media such as POP'S , Out doors and others

2.2 Non-Formal or Rural specific media

Folk Media: Dance-Drama. Puppet shows. Rural specific art terms Eike like Harikatha, Tamasha Viitupatu performed at village meats and temples festival.

Rural Media: Audio-Visual Vans or publicity vans Mike announcement, processions Caparisoned elephants, decorated bullock carts carrying as panels ; House-to-house campaigns by special promotion squads Information centres on company's products.

Rural Marketing in India Three-fourth consumers live in Rural areas One h !loth n income is obtain from rural areas. Due to their vast size and demand market started showing its potential in the sixties. And the nineties have seen the full blossoming of the rural market. It is only natural that rural market form an important part of the total market of India.

The market pioneers can certainly have their rewards from the rural market. Simultaneously, the market also poses several problems and hurdles. The firms have to squarely encounter them and put in a great deal of effort to get a sizeable share of the market. They must recognise that rural marketing is out-and out developmental marketing. (Mirchandani: 2006),

3. THE STRATEGY

3.1 Be As Omnipresent As Possible

The consumer journey in rural areas has become more complex than ever, with a mix of touchpoints across both offline and online channels after digital India Programme . And while the channels keep increasing, the consumers are becoming more fickle-minded than ever. Within numerous brands cluttering the predominant channels to fight for even a sliver of audiences' attention, having a well-defined and more-targeted presence across as many offline and online touchpoints as possible will help create a more lasting Impact. For this, a communication strategy needs to robustly leverage all these touchpoints to effectively reach out and communicate in a convincing manner. It is extremely important to define the central brand essence & replicate the same essence across all the touchpoints. Such practices will help ensure greater impact for its target audiences and consequently, better response and retention.

3.2 Identifying and Addressing the Changing Needs and Demands

It is Common knowledge that consumers have different needs, beliefs, and perceptions that lead to the generation of ever-changing demands, irrespective of what domain or its subset the product or service comes from. In the rural market, there are a variety of problems and needs that exist throughout the journey, thereby presenting a huge opportunity for the marketing team to tap into. By identifying the same and capturing consumers at these points, a communication strategy can significantly reduce its consumer acquisition costs. This can be done through effective content marketing wherein the team can pre-plug the right information pointers and facts along with sharing use-cases and testimonials. Such a strategy will not only pull customers but also help establish the brand as a segment leader in the long run.

3.3 To be Remain Consistent with the Brand Messaging

In the rural market, introducing a strong brand can create significant value, and it can be achieved through a consistent and sustained brand messaging. Once a communication strategy succeeds in establishing its presence across the various touchpoints and setting the direction of its brand, it is highly important to remain consistent with the same messaging across these touchpoints. Essentially, the tone, values, character, and personality that a brand sets for itself becomes its very identity that the existing and potential customers would recognize it with. Keeping communications across various channels consistent across all channels will therefore help generate awareness among and secure a deeper connect with the target audiences, while ensuring a seamless experience simultaneously.

3.4 Use the Budget Set Judiciously and Effectively

The strong communication strategy always helpful which has a limited budget allocated to marketing, it is important to define the right consumer segment and target the marketing communication programs efficiently. Prolonging a non-efficient marketing communication programme may end up exhausting the budget sooner, without creating any real impact. Therefore, the right marketing communication measures need to be put in place in a very objective manner to ensure a judicious and effective usage of the budget while attaining brand recognition, attraction, and loyalty among consumers.

3.5 Do Not Let Failures Set You Back

This is one of the most important and useful mantras for anything and everything. However, in the rural markets it holds all the more relevance. The rural market is a very interesting one, and it is extremely important for marketers to experiment with the resources available, tap into newer ideas, and come up with more innovative strategies. While some of these may lead to failure, in most cases, a communicator needs to learn how to not let those overwhelm them and set them back. Those failures should instead, be quickly overcome from: and perceived as lessons for :- : revision of existing marketing : practices in accordance with the shortcomings observed. After all, as the old saying goes "Failure is a lesson learned, and success is a lesson applied."

4. CONCLUSION :

The rural market in India and globally are undergoing radical changes at present, led majorly by the ongoing digital revolution. This tech-led transformation has also resulted in the emergence of and disruption by new players in the rural market every other day. At this point, being equipped with genuinely great aspects like a very unique idea, the best of innovations, a dedicated team, and the required funds is not enough, especially if one is relatively new to the market. Incorporating the right marketing communication strategies has become just as essential to help take these to the target audience and successfully raise awareness & create preference. (Singh, &, Sharma: 2012)

Moreover, while the significance of offline marketing channels remains, newer channels are robustly gaining momentum and assuming greater importance. Gone are the days when only TV, Radio & Print advertising would be impactful enough to help a business survive and thrive. Digital technologies and marketing trends are quickly overtaking the traditional modes, and the rural industry is no exception to this phenomenon. With an unprecedented rise in ownership of smartphones and increasing digital penetration, the consumers are more connected today than they have ever been, and have information available right in their palms. As new players keep emerging in this scenario and increasing the already intense competition, it has become extremely important for one to stand out. Amidst such a landscape, a communication strategy needs to implement into their target audiences so as to convert them from being potential customers to active advocates of the company itself.

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