



Digital Marketing's Impact on Indian Rural Marketing: A Study

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ABSTRACT

India, the world's largest economy with the highest rate of growth, is nevertheless often seen as a nation of villages. In India, 50% of the population still lives in 6.5 lakh villages and is still mostly dependent on agriculture (Shireesh Diveeker 2017). Villages and cities got closer as infrastructure got better. Rural India grew more used to urban living as a result of mobile technology and to a lesser extent, the internet. This encouraged rural residents to enhance their lifestyle and prosperity. Many telecom companies have been attempting to corner the rural market in various ways. Rural markets undoubtedly provide potential and are quite appealing to service suppliers. But it's not as simple as it would appear. Numerous difficulties are presented by this rural marketing, therefore the service providers must work hard to address these difficulties diplomatically. The study's main goal is to identify the challenges that rural people are now dealing with while also observing any possible effects that digital marketing may have on them.

KEY WORDS

Digital Marketing, Technology and Rural Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian consumer goods market is divided into two main segments: the urban market and the rural market. Rural marketing is the process of bringing certain products and services to the provincial market, stimulating commerce between urban and rural marketplaces while simultaneously meeting customer needs and achieving organisational objectives.

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the process of reaching customers by using the internet, mobile devices, social media, search engines, display advertising, and other channels. Digital marketing, a subset of traditional marketing, extends beyond the web to use 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 goods and services.

Review of Literature

For producers, Venkatesh Babu BR and Swetha MR (2018) looked at potential and constraints. It was determined that marketers are prepared to put digital marketing techniques into practise and to take advantage of the untapped potential in rural markets. This study provides insight into the rural market as a whole but not into any particular product.

In their research, Pooja and Neha (2014) looked at the reach of rural marketing in India. They came to the conclusion that there is a wide range of marketing, provided that infrastructure enhancement is carried out. The rural market has not yet been fully used, it further claimed.

Indian rural marketing's difficulties and prospects were studied by Saroj Kumar Verma in 2013. The non-homogeneous and dispersed character of the market was one of the main issues noted in the study. On the other side, a large population viewed as a massive consumer base in the rural segment is recognised as a chance for the marketers to focus their efforts. Other problems were seasonal marketing, low per capita income, transportation, and warehousing. Another finding of the study that emphasises the existence of an untapped market in this sector is the increase in buying power, as stated by Rural Marketing Association of India (RMAI).

Digital Technology and Rural Marketing

In rural India, the widespread use of DTH, mobile phones, and mobile internet is disrupting all of the established consumer connect models. Rural marketing has undergone a paradigm change as a result. Over traditional marketing, digital marketing provides a number of benefits, including the following:

- A. **Direct Promotion:** Using digital advertising, direct promotion aids in spreading awareness of a business or product. Nowadays, any business may readily display its marketing for products or services on many digital media. A successful marketing plan should include direct promotion. It might draw a sizable audience and expand your business.
- B. **Simple Consumer Reach:** The main objective of digitalized advertising is to reach as many people as possible as promptly as is reasonable under the conditions. People now spend a significant amount of time browsing the internet. With the aid of online channels, a marketer may easily and quickly handle emphasis on diverse customers. There are so many different online life cycles for advertising. There are several examples, including WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, blogs, Instagram, and Google+. An advertisement may easily reach its targeted customers via these social media platforms.
- C. **Cost Savings:** By using digital advertising, businesses may save money. Compared to supposedly typical advertising mediums like TV, newspapers, radio, flags, magazines, and so forth, it is relatively cheaper. A few websites and company profiles generate enormous amounts of traffic for free. It is a fantastic option for advertisers to expand their brand globally without incurring large costs.
- D. **Accessibility:** The Internet is constantly active. So, the advertisement will run for 24 hours. Using the electronic business, your advertisement will be physically shown every day, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. Promotion will always be in front of your targeted customers. While discussing the primary issues and barriers to sophisticated showcasing, we can't avoid mentioning one of the fundamentally important aspects of computerised advertising.

- E. **Online Shopping Convenience for Customers:** A growing trend is online buying. Customers are becoming more and more interested in web-based buying due to the availability and capabilities of computerised advertising. A customer may buy anything both domestically and internationally. Today, a customer is unlikely to have a problem with separation. Additionally, a customer has the option of selecting their material from such a vast array of options. Many people now like using the internet to find things since it offers so many benefits. In this approach, smart advertising creates a new opportunity for both the business and the customer. Currently, a store and a customer may interact successfully.
- F. **Global Advertising:** This is one of the most important aspects of sophisticated marketing. Having such a large variety of geographic differences makes it possible for organisations to market globally without any obstacles. As a result, a company may unquestionably expand without putting in more effort. An company can operate globally while seated in a remote location. This will encourage the organisation to showcase its strengths to the rest of the globe. This global advertisement will increase the reputation of your business.

Some of genuine problems associated with rural market include:

- A. **Lack of Digital Literacy:** In rural India, just 3.5 out of 1,000 families had access to the internet at home in 2009–2010, according to the Pattern of Consumer Expenditure Report 2011. In addition, India has close to 90,000 rural information kiosks (including Common Service Centres, Community Information Resource Centers, and others), with 5452 of them situated in the state. These kiosks don't have internet access, though, therefore thus can't offer home delivery of services. It is crucial for 3.5 million individuals to be digitally literate in order to make India digitally literate.
- B. **Wide and Scattered Market:** A wide and scattered market is challenging to penetrate from both the distribution and promotion angles. The population of urban India is mostly concentrated in about 3200 cities, whereas rural India is dispersed over the whole nation in roughly 6 lakh villages of various sizes. The majority of communities have a population of under 500. Only 6300 settlements, or 1%, have a population of greater than 5000. Selecting target markets and providing them with good services are difficult challenges.
- C. **Language Issue:** Language is a major barrier to effective communication. Rural locations have a diverse population that makes marketing operations challenging. States and regions within a state have different languages. Marketers are unable to meet the language expectations of all rural residents when developing advertising, personal selling and PR methods. Promotional programmes are never versatile.
- D. **Rural Customers vs. Urban Marketers:** The psychology of consumers in rural marketplaces is beyond the comprehension of corporate executives. In rural markets, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of customer behaviour, which makes developing marketing strategy difficult. Customers from rural and urban areas have quite different habits, likes, inclinations, and other characteristics. Therefore, any attempt to appease rural clients with an urban mindset (marketing executives born and raised in an urban environment) is a fruitless venture.
- E. **Economic Backwardness:** Rural consumers are poor. More than 30% of people in rural areas are considered to be poor. They are forced by poverty to spend even on fundamental essentials.

Being behind also hinders their ability to adapt their mindset. Their low purchasing power and rigidity place significant limitations on marketers' ability to cater to them.

- F. **High Inventory Costs:** Because rural demand is unstable and constricted, it is difficult to properly manage stocks. Additionally, the shops that cater to rural areas lack the knowledge and abilities needed to select the appropriate quantity of items. They lose money when they have too much goods and they lose customers when they don't have enough.

- G. **Inadequate Marketing Support:** Producers and wholesalers typically don't give rural merchants the same level of generous credit, financial support, and other facilities that they do to dealers in metropolitan regions. The architecture of the entire marketing campaign does not offer rural customers and retailers enough room.

CONCLUSION

Rural areas are very pristine for digital marketing and have a lot of untapped potential, but methods are still being developed to investigate this region. In the long run, digital technology will improve consumption in rural India, faster job possibilities and raise disposable income, all of which will contribute to the nation's economic progress. The current analysis highlights these chances for marketers to seize unrealized potential in rural markets.

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