



ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN AIDING RURAL PRODUCT MERCHANDISING

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ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a big groundbreaking change in media consumption habits, including the rural areas. The number of monthly active internet users in India has grown 24% over that of 2019. In fact More than 60% of India's population is concentrated in rural areas where there is a lack of opportunity, awareness, and resources as compared to urban areas. Rural market provides huge potential to almost all manufacturers. HUL, P&G, ITC etc. The impact of digital marketing on the growth of rural market has shown positive hopes for marketers in almost all sectors. No more villages remain remote in the era of digitalization, that was the goal that one should continue to strive.

Keywords: Digitalization, Digimarketing, Rural, Economy, Small Industries

INTRODUCTION

With an increase in business opportunities in rural areas, there will be even a great boost in the new employment opportunities, thereby growing overall income levels of people. These scenarios, in turn, will have positive impacts on more small businesses penetrating rural India in diverse ways, and adopting digital marketing is one of the helpful ways for the same. Digital marketing trends have altered, and new ways of marketing have evolved with time. From newspapers to radio to television ads, to email and now, the current drift is towards the internet. With the help of targeted social media and other digital marketing campaigns, even small businesses are making the most out of the accessible opportunities. With a limited marketing budget, the conversion is mind boggling, and the yield is way high.

RURAL DIGITAL MARKETING CHANNELS

1. Whatsapp and Other social medias

Whatsapp marketing utilizes promotion of products through Social media platforms like Whatsapp. This type of channel helps the brands to reach numerous audiences at one, and builds inter personal relationship with the buyer and seller and forms a customer base.

2. Facebook Advertisements

Facebook being one of the prime marketplaces before Whatsapp helps the rural producer to build awareness of the brand, so that the online following can increase. Selling and buying products are made more easier since many marketing tools like uploading photos, videos and other contents can be used seamlessly here.

3. Search engine Optimizations (SEOs)

This strategy operates by organizing the traffic of a website by topic and makes it possible to present the particular keyword on the search engine. The increased visibility of the topic makes it easier to attain visibility and gain more traffic across search engines.

4. Marketing by Influencers

The currently famous influencer marketing where a well-known established celebrity endorses the products through social media, ranks the products, gives demos and reviews which looks more credible in the minds of the customers. The influencer influences like minded followers in buying the products

RURAL DIGITAL MARKETING – OBJECTIVES

Identifying Rural Customers' Demographics and Psychographics

Rural Digital marketing research tries to reveal the number of facts about the people who buy, the reason they buy, and the frequency of their purchase and if they will buy that product again. Rural marketing study helps to find out the social status and regional location of the rural customers.

To determine the effectiveness of promotional efforts

Rural Digital marketing research aids in determining the effectiveness of advertisements, pricing strategies, and usage of promotional tools on rural customers. It facilitates evaluating and improving the methods of sales promotion.

To Forecast Sales

Rural Digital marketing research helps in sales forecasting and market planning in rural India. The researchers can determine sales predictions on the basis of the response from the rural customers and the distribution media.

To Know Rural Customer Response to a New Innovation or a product:

Rural Digital marketing research is frequently used to find the opinion of rural customers about the satisfaction given by a new product. This helps in knowing the much-needed improvements in quality, size, design, pricing, physical distribution methods, etc. This is also known as testing of the product

Predicting Competition Moves

Rural marketing research assists marketers in continuously monitoring competitors and determining the best actions to take.

MERITS OF RURAL DIGITAL MARKETING

Keeping urban population under check

Rural marketing can help in the growth of prosperity and infrastructure in a country. It makes people to realise they can live comfortably in small villages too, since the all the goods and services that are available in the city is also available in the rural areas. Since the increase of marketing activities, the livelihood of rural places has also massively increased, therefore reducing the pressure on urban areas.

Economic growth attainment:

Marketing is always considered as a economical growth catalyst. The lucrative business opportunities in urban areas brings out more potential for the consumers and sellers. Since India is an Agricultural country and contributes more than half of the national income, rural marketing can boost the agricultural sector and the elevate the level of whole economy together.

Employment creation:

The Indian population is heavily dependent on the agricultural activities in rural areas. The promotion of rural products can attract more employment opportunities in both urban and rural population. Since the economic growth will lead to increase in local businesses, professional activities, thus generating a lot of employment opportunities for increasing population.

Elevation in Standard of Living:

Since the advent of rural digital marketing, the rural purchasers can easily gain access to good quality goods and services at reasonable price. Therefore, rural marketing improves the basic standard of living of the rural population, generates better income and thereby improving the overall infrastructure on the whole.

Establishment of Agro-based Industries:

The advent of digital marketing in rural areas will bring about a new market for agro-based products such as vegetables, fruits, pulses, cereals etc., which are used as raw materials in many industries. Therefore, due to this, such industries can improve farmers profit margins and increase their employment opportunities.

Consistent Pricing

Digital marketing which can be accessed anywhere, ensures the knowledge of the price levels of products at any place. And the communication leads in fixation of fair pricing across the marketing, thereby also reducing the gap between demand and supply and establishes price stability

Balanced Industrial growth

It bridges the gap between the development of urban and rural industries Since the advent of rural industries, it reduces the industrial pressure of urban industries.

CHALLENGES OF RURAL DIGITAL MARKETING

The need of the hour

The under developed markets exists mainly in the rural areas, since the poverty line has not yet been breached when compared to the urban markets. The majority of the people in rural markets are tradition bounded and face challenges such as electric power shut downs, poor infrastructure, unreliable networks and political pressure and dominance that stops the development in the regions no matter the influence of digital marketing measures

Poor communication channels:

Due to the inaccessibility of many rural areas due to weather conditions worsening has been a never-ending problem. This leads to more challenges to make the digital marketing in rural India work. Only if the communication channels are cleared, the more accessibility provides a better opportunity for rural developers

Market dispersion:

Diversified markets may bring a better opportunity while the dispersed markets are ever challenging in rural populations. The scattered markets over a large area of land, makes in impossible for the availability of a product in many places. Occasional fairs, exhibitions, markets are the only mode the rural populations still have access to. The visibility should be developed more by the manufacturers and the sellers to grab the attention of the audiences ie their customers for a long span of time. Advertisements are very expensive, which cannot be afforded by many rural populations.

CONCLUSION

The digital marketing is no doubt an aid to the rural product merchandises one and only if it develops certain qualities to it. The strategies of digital marketing needs to be customized according to the challenges of the rural populations, so more inclusion is established. The balanced growth and mutual wealth attainment is only possible if the humongous gap between the urban and rural population if fixed and that will be the goal that can be attained through rural digital marketing integration. With proper awareness, understanding of the technicalities, training and interest, the collaboration of digital marketing in rural sector is a sure hit formula altogether.

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