

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	THE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN GCCS: A COMPARISON BETWEEN SULTANATE OF OMAN AND UNITED ARAB EMIRATES DR. THRESIAMMA VARGHESE	1
2.	LAND TENURE AND FARMERS' INVESTMENT ON AGRICULTURE: EVIDENCES FROM THREE COUNTIES IN HAWZEN DISTRICT, TIGRAY, NORTHERN ETHIOPIA DEREJE TEKLEMARIAM GEBREMESKEL & ABEBE EJIGU ALEMU	5
3.	LEADERSHIP QUALITY PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF AUTONOMOUS POLYTECHNIC COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU M.ISAKKIMUTHU & DR. S. GOWRI	13
4.	STUDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAITS AND THEIR COMPETITIVENESS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY DR. D. S. CHAUBEY, PRAVEEN KUKRETI & LOKENDRA YADAV	17
5.	EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SELF HELP GROUPS DR. P. ABIRAMI & DR. J. SIVASUBRAMANIAN	23
6.	PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH AND PRODUCTION STRUCTURE IN SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR: A COMPARISION OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA SATINDER KUMAR & DR. PARMINDER SINGH	25
7.	POLITICAL ECONOMY AND LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT SCHEME IN TAMIL NADU DR. S. RAJENDRAN & N. RAJASEKARAN	32
8.	MARKET INTEGRATION OF INDIAN STOCK MARKETS: A STUDY OF NSE DR. PRASHANT JOSHI	36
9.	DEMOGRAPHY OF INDIA: THE DYNAMICS AND DIFFERENCES - A REFLECTIVE STUDY OF CENSUS 2011 DR. S. P. RATH, DR. BISWAJIT DAS, PRIYA PUTHAN, A. K. SHARMA & LEENA NAIR	41
10.	EMERGING SME CLUSTERS IN INDIA – A STUDY DR. REKHAKALA A. M. & RUCHI MEHROTRA	57
11.	NEED FOR CREDIT SCORING IN MICRO-FINANCE: LITERATURE REVIEW ARUN KUMAR VAISH, DR. ARYA KUMAR & DR. ANIL BHAT	69
12.	FULFILMENT OF MERGER MOTIVES - EVIDENCES FROM MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS IN THE INDIAN BANKING SCENARIO DR. V. K. SHOBHANA & DR. N. DEEPA	74
13.	SERVICE QUALITY SATISFACTION IN INDIAN ORGANIZED RETAIL INDUSTRY - A CASE STUDY OF DELHI & NCR SHISHMA KUSHWAHA & DR. M. K. GUPTA	78
14.	BASEL I NORMS: BOON OR BANE TO INDIAN PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS - A PRELUDE TO BASEL II NORMS DR. G. SHANMUGASUNDARAM	82
15.	CORPORATE SOCIAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH VALUE ADDED REPORTING - A CASE STUDY OF HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LTD. DR. CHITTA RANJAN SARKAR & DR. KARTIK CHANDRA NANDI	89
16.	TRENDS IN FDI INFLOWS IN INDIA LAILA MEMDANI	96
17.	CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON DESIGNING RURAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND MARKETING OF PRODUCT: A MODEL BASED APPROACH TO STUDY RURAL MARKET PANKAJ ARORA & ANURAG AGRAWAL	100
18.	EXPORT OF COIR AND COIR PRODUCTS FROM INDIA: AN ANALYSIS NAGARAJA.G	109
19.	DEVELOPMENT OF CREDIT RISK MODEL FOR BANK LOAN RATINGS DR. KAMALESHKUMAR. K. PATEL	112
20.	ROLE OF MONETARY AND FISCAL POLICY IN INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT PROCESS NEELAKANTA.N.T	117
21.	A STUDY ON JOINT VENTURES BY THE INDIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS DR. SAVITHA G.LAKKOL	128
22.	BLUE OCEANS OF URBAN AFFORDABLE APARTMENTS ROSHNY UNNIKRISHNAN	136
23.	FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN INDIA AND ITS ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE S. HARISH BABU & DR. CYNTHIA MENEZES	140
24.	A MARKOV CHAIN APPROACH TO INFLATION IN INDIA SINCE 2001 DR. N. KUBENDRAN	146
25.	LAW FOR SURROGACY: NEED OF THE 21ST CENTURY DR. KIRAN RAI	151
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	155

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON DESIGNING RURAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND MARKETING OF PRODUCT: A MODEL BASED APPROACH TO STUDY RURAL MARKET

PANKAJ ARORA LECTURER DISHA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY RAIPUR

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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews the state of rural marketing in India and examines the difficulties which company face in establishing distribution network and running communication programme in rural India. It also exhibits the dilemma which company faces in crafting rural communication program. In Present paper researchers had examines the paradigm shift which had been in rural market, designed strategies for effective rural communication for rural managers and concludes with some further questions on how the future need of rural people can be addressed. The tempt of rural India has been the theme of vibrant discussion among corporate, researcher and academician. And there is a superior reason too. With urban markets getting saturated for several categories of consumer goods and with rising rural incomes, marketers are running and discovering the strengths of the large rural markets as they try to enlarge their markets. In the vein of any market that has seen a demand and awareness boom, rural India has been seen significant changes in purchasing power and brand recognition. Shift in consumption patterns and easiness to medium of communication have made the rural market a vital mechanism in the churning sales, especially with demand for many categories increasing in the urban markets. The proposed framework can help contribute to the theoretical development of strategic issues of participant who are operating in market under different modalities and norms in present system. It may also provide insights communication gap and challenges in present rural market structures.

KEYWORDS

Rural Market, Rural Communication Framework and Strategies, Rural Consumer, Purchasing Power Framework.

DEFINING THE TERM RURAL

he Current acceptable definitions are those given in the Census of India 2001. It defines 'Rural' as any habitation with a population density of less than four hundred per sq km. where at least 70% of male working population is engaged in agriculture and where there is no Municipality or Board. Most companies in the FMCG sector define 'rural' as a place where population is up to 20000 Persons. Most durable and agri-input companies would consider any town with a population below fifty thousand as 'Rural' (Pradeep kashyap & siddharth Raut – The Rural Marketing: 2006)

With the census definition as above, the 2001 census inform us of Rural Population of 743 million in the total population of India of 1029 million(2001). Thus 72.2% of the Indian population is in the rural areas.

DOMAIN OF RURAL MARKETING

FIG: 1



Source: (Pradeep kashyap & siddharth Raut – The Rural Marketing: 2006)

Rural marketing is thus a two way marketing process (other than internal aspect). Its content now encompasses inflow of product into rural areas for production or consumption purposes, and also outflow of product to urban areas.

DEMAND AND AWARENESS BOOM, RURAL INDIA

This market is not only large, but also geographically scattered. It exhibits linguistic, regional, cultural diversities and economic disparities, hence can be considered as more complex than the total market of a continent. Rural consumers represent a heterogeneous lot- a complex mosaic of mind-sets, cultures & lifestyle and this is depicted in their unique demands and preferences on how the product is designed and how the brand is positioned and promoted, and this calls for a methodical study and conscientious research of the rural consumers, their psyche, needs, buying patterns and their problems.

FIG: 2 RURAL MARKET & ITS FUNCTIONARIES Institutional & Organizations Infrastructure Imporved Market development Access Rural Maket Marketing of Government Agricultural Policy product and rural goods Marketing Intermediary

Enhanced access to quality roads, power and water supplies remains a pipedreams, despite all the promises made by successive governments (Pothik Ghosh, 2005)1. Living conditions (from kutcha houses to semi-pucca and pucca structures, from biomass to LPG for cooking, etc) in rural India seem to have been improving in recent years, as highlighted by the recent NSSO Survey (59th Round).

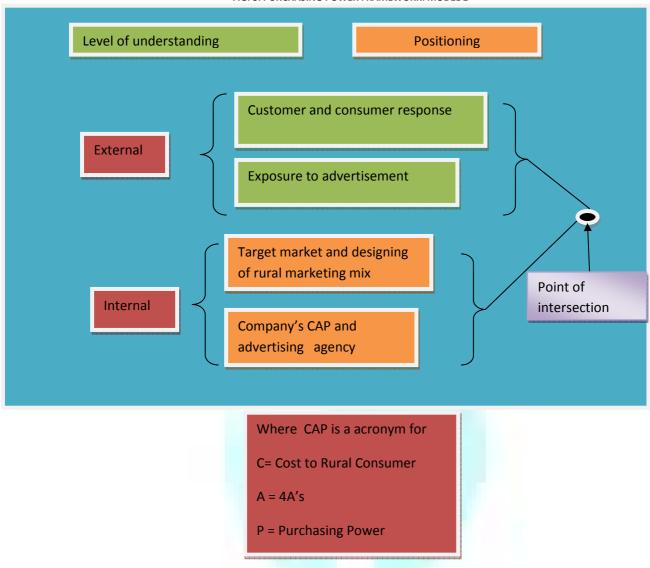
Rural areas in developing countries suffer from poor market access. As urbanization grows, the increased demand for processed food favors production areas with more favorable agricultural conditions. The Common Minimum programme (CMP) should be seen as a package that promises to make growth more sustainable by addressing a key variable – rural demand. After a decade and a half of reform, we seem close to arriving at the right growth-welfare mix (Editorial, The Times of India, and 30th May 2005).



PURCHASING POWER AND BRAND RECOGNITION

The framework for increasing purchasing power for rural market can be understood by pyramidal structure.

FIG: 3. PURCHASING POWER FRAMEWORK: MODEL 1

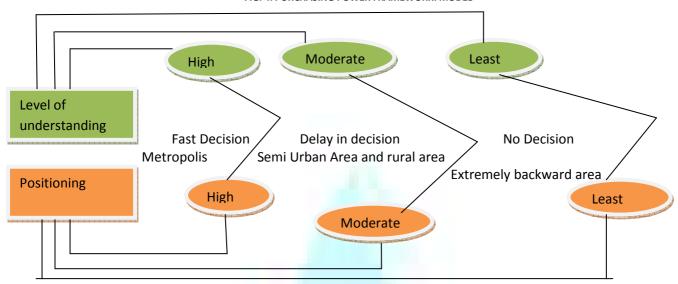


Here CAP is a new acronym which is being introduced by researcher after analyzing the concept of rural marketing and researcher objectively places CAP as the starting ladder towards the purchasing power and brand recognition process because it forms the integral and internal part of organization's strategy towards development of rural market.

COST TO RURAL CONSUMER

It relates to at what price the rural customer is ready to pay for certain benefits. It largely differs from urban purchase to rural purchase as because of primal aspect of differentiation in various categories of which prime one is income and culture and environment. There should be different cost strategy while moving from urban to rural and vice versa .product re-engineering would be one way to redefine product's value relative to benefits and cost. The point of intersection basically is known as decision point. Hence the decision point may be diagrammatically be shown as

FIG: 4. PURCHASING POWER FRAMEWORK: MODEL



- Metropolis=Tier 1 with high per capita income City.
- Semi Urban and rural area=tier 2 city with moderate per capita Income and population range 15,000-20,000
- Extremely Backward Area=With Least per capita Income

Focus should be on with moderate- moderate combination.

4A's

The alphabet A recognizes the most charismatic part of marketing strategies in churning out the various dimensions of rural customer as it requires a serious thought to be given by organization who are seeing to make their presence in untapped rural environment. It stands for affordability, availability acceptability and awareness. The matrix form showing the relevancy of A is shown below.

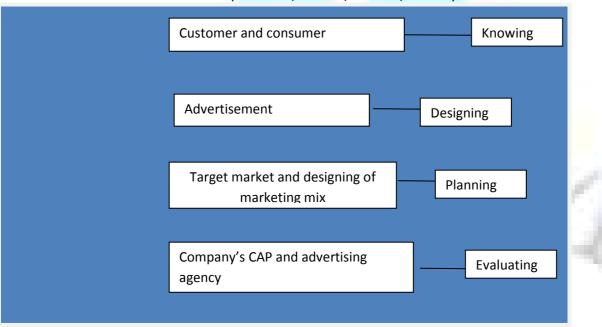
TABLE 1: 4 A'S

	Affordability	Acceptability
Availability	Product Positioning occurs	Cost evaluation
Awareness	Evaluation of product occurs-pre and post behavioural aspect	Demand flow is good

	Affordability	Acceptability
Availability	Where	When
Awareness	What	How

PURCHASING POWER TO RURAL CONSUMER

FIG: 5. EPDK (EVALUATING, PLANNING, DESIGNING, KNOWING) FRAMEWORK



Hence purchasing power of a rural customer can be analyzed through EPDK circle (researcher's own idea) of evaluating company's own strength and potentials where as planning, designing and knowing are action oriented part.

RURAL CONSUMER

India being a very vast geographically, consumer here are naturally scattered over a vast territory. As the country is also marked by great diversity in climate, religion, language, literacy level, custom and almanac, lifestyles and economic status, here consumer present a complex and bizarre group. The heterogeneity hold many implication for a marketer, especially to those going in national marketing (Ramasamy and Namakumari, 2002, p.34)

The buying behavior of the rural consumers is influenced by several factors such as socio-economic conditions, customs, cultural environment, literacy level, occupation, superstitions, geographical location etc. Usage of various forms (like cartoons etc) of religious gods or symbols in advertisements – Rural consumer is more religious and has a great depth of belief in God. When they see their gods have been used as say cartoon characters in any advertisements they feel highly offended. Marketers need to be very careful in this aspect while designing advertisements which are specially targeted for rural customers.

The launch of non durable into the market can be use demonstration and sampling to educate the consumer and create conviction. Demonstration and sampling for a new brand helps to create brand awareness and pushes the product through the channel. The marketer of an existing non durable brand can use reminder advertising and sales promotion to retain the loyalty of the rural consumer.

RURAL COMMUNICATION & MARKETING OF PRODUCT FRAMEWORK

Rural communication is an interactive process in which information, knowledge and skills, relevant for development are exchanged between farmers, extension/advisory services, information providers and researchers either personally or through media such as radio, print and more recently the new "Information and Communication Technologies" (ICTs). In this process all actors may be innovators, intermediaries and receivers of information and knowledge. The aim is to put rural people in a position to have the necessary information for informed decision making and the relevant skills to improve their livelihoods. Communication in this context is therefore a non-linear process with the content of data or information. (Castello & Braun, 2006)

FRAMEWORK FOR MARKETING OF PRODUCT CAN BE DESIGNED BY TAKING IN CONSIDERATION FOLLOWING PARAMETER

- · Participant: (producer, seller, facilitator, regulator, buyer and consumer) with their utility functions.
- Product: (goods, services and ideas)
- Modality: (Place, time and ownership utilities, roles of participants, the organization of participants, and terms);
- Norm: formal and informal rule governing the behavior of participants and liabilities of the participants); and
- Outcome (satisfaction and dissatisfaction of one or more participant and their impact on subsequent transaction and nature of relationship)

We can combine the two framework, domain of rural marketing and dimension of transaction (the core concept of marketing

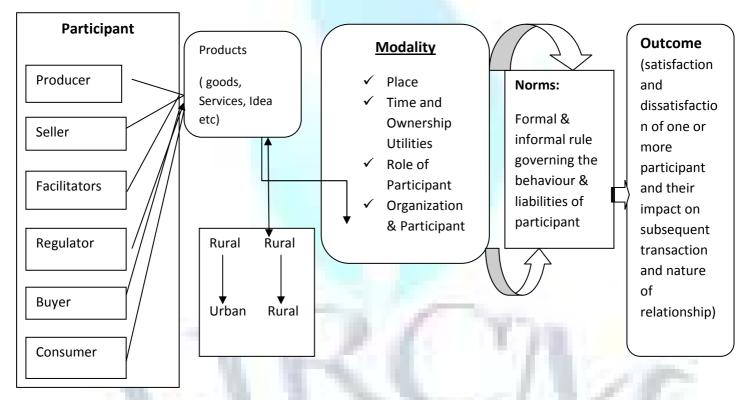


FIG. 6: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR MARKETING OF PRODUCT

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES IN RURAL MARKETING

The situation concerning communication in rural areas of developing countries especially in the case of country like India is characterized by the following. (Castello & Braun, 2006)

- 1. Lack of information (absence of source and of confined communication content) leading to lack of local knowledge, local flavor and local connection
- 2. Contrary messages (difficult to know about the appropriate/correct information for a specific rural area) as same message can be interpreted differently in different regions
- 3. A fragmented market for information with many individual clients or client groups
- 4. Spread & heterogeneity f rural markets: different regions need different communication strategies as one suit does not fit all due to the vast heterogeneity of rural areas.
- 5. Relatively few clients scattered over a large area makes the task of rural communication hectic and costly
- 6. Structural transformations leading to constantly changing channels and content and a lack of the necessary skills for communication is a major challenge
- 7. A lack of well developed ICT infrastructure and low levels of ICT skills pose threats against effective and advanced modes of communication.
- 8. Readiness and involvement: The rural environment has a lot of influence on the receiver and therefore he or she may not receive the intended message for any of the following four reason:
- a. Selective attention: where the consumer may not notice the stimuli provided;

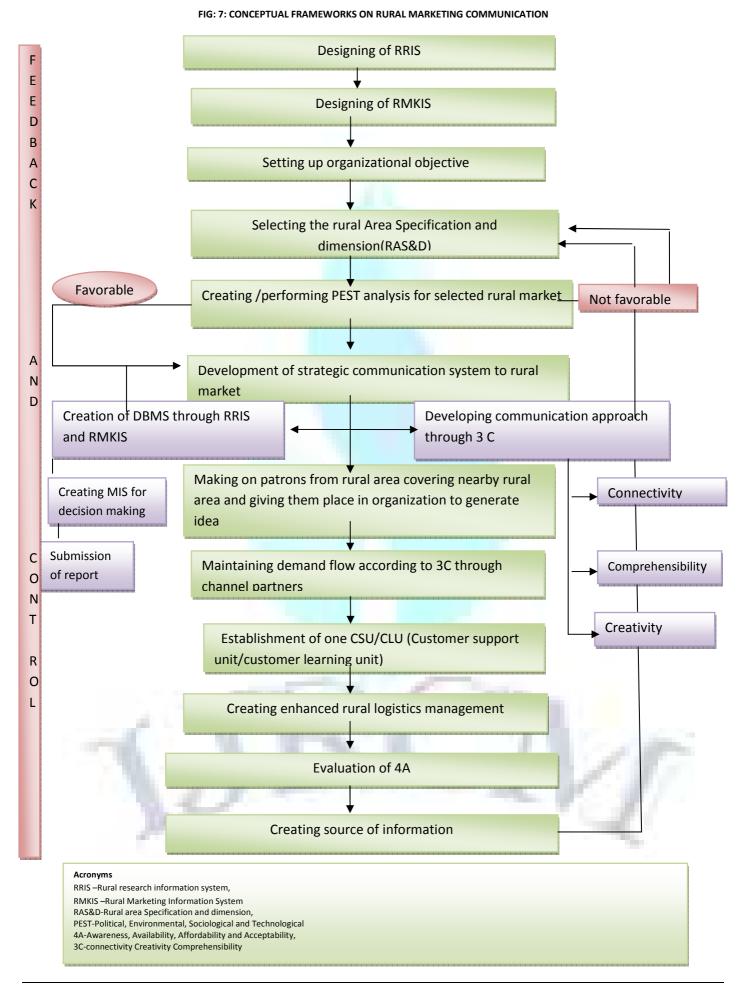
- b. Selective distortion: where the message is twisted to hear what the consumer want to hear.
- c. Selective recall: where the consumer permanently retain only a small fraction of the message that reach him/her.
- d. Selective comprehension: Comprehension of message is therefore a critical problem In Indian rural markets.

RURAL COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK MODEL

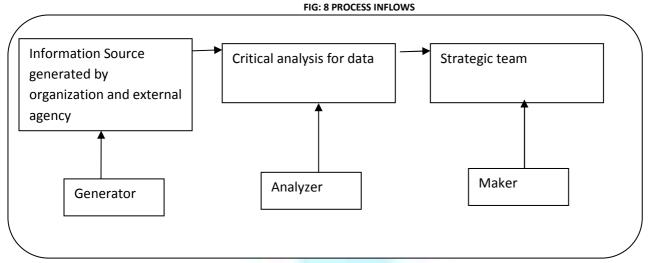
The organization's most crucial part of managing resources is development of sustainable strategy for long term advantage on how to make product and services available at affordable cost and price. In this context it becomes ostensible to narrate the importance of adapting to various communication styles for fast changing market and market dimension. Once they diversify from urban to rural relative of same brand with different positioning and communication strategy then it will create sustain and competitive advantage for the business organization. Indian market and its taxonomy is widely diversified into spectrum of sectors vis a vis primary, secondary and tertiary and majority of population resides in rural area comprising nearly 70% of total population which requires a different outlook to be persuaded in terms of benefit consumption and value maximization.

This is a closed loop and iterative cyclical anatomy which gives a holistic and analytical approach towards development rural market. The structural but hierarchical framework which researcher suggest is indeed a way to gain strategic competitive advantage on the basis of organization's core competence towards various brands and extent of brand image in the urban and sub urban area, over the period of time.





The first building block towards rural persuasion /affiliation which every organization should look for is generation of information system through research which the researcher has acronym as RRIS i.e. rural research information system. It has three internal blocks that will work in coordination with each other and is depicted here.



Here the last block is of strategic team which will comprise of middle level management to take and proliferate a policy and approach for reaching rural market and preparing a decision and control mechanism both internally and externally. This would comprise an empirical way of data collection in the domain of psychology, anthropology and geography.

The next building block in a loop is rural marketing information system abbreviated as RRIS. The prime objective of this block will comprise of evaluation of frequency of buying habit, trend analysis, motives of purchasing and valuation of influence of media and its acceptability among rural consumer and customer. The RMIS is based on the concept of creating ,exchanging and recording the information relative to various marketing tools and techniques for rural consumer and develop a liaison between internal and external environment so that the product and services can be offered in a creative way to vernacular group of consumer. In This direction the organization must carry his product positioning objective with an analysis of PEST which forms uncontrollable and external factor to be considered which shows a wide extent of dynamism in context of political, economical, sociological and technological in which only subscription for organization is to understand this and work smartly and precisely. The Pest analysis also enunciates the understanding of macro and micro economics which includes government policy, subsidization of agro-products, increasing infrastructural factors, connecting rural to urban. Another part of this is analysis at which rural segment is growing ie monitoring rural CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) and evaluating factors responsible for rural CAGR. In this case the organization should carry out their operation to niche marketing by deciding the rural area specification and testing its feasibility on the ground that if any two factors from PESTAL analysis comes to be favorable then it demands for implementation of strategic planning and action.ie to say

PEST factor	Favorable	unfavo	rable	Strategy
Political and economical	1	0		Product variation and product re-engineering, Adopting to blue ocean strategy, building
Sociological and	1	0		communication approach
technological				

PEST: Political, Economical, Sociological, Technological.

PEST FACTOR

PEST factor	Favorable	unfavorable	Strategy
Political and Economical	0	1	Preparation of team, research work, rural learning network
Sociological and technological	0	1	

Further it can be expressed mathematically as

MAXIMIZE CONSUMPTION THROUGH MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

l=n

 $\sum \beta_i x_i$ i=1,2,3.....n

I=1

 β =constant

X_i= Media and communication variable

Subject to

 $\sum x_i > 0$

 $P_i + E_i > .50 P_i = P_1, P_2, P_3, ..., P_n; E_i = E_1, E_2, E_3, ..., E_N$

 $S_1 + T_1 > .50 S_1 = S_1, S_2, S_3, ..., S_n; T_1 = T_1, T_2, T_3, ..., T_n$

P_i=Political Variable, E_i=economical Variable

S_i=sociological Variable and T_i=technological Variable

And non negativity condition $x_1, x_2, x_3 > 0$

It can further analyzed through models of multiple regression and correlation.

The development of systematic approach to communication system through 3C is yet another blend of communication strategy which is done in order to maximize the consumption. These three C stands for connectivity, comprehensibility, creativity

- Connectivity through Psychology and emotional, cultural and behavioral connectivity
- Comprehensibility through learning theories like classical conditioning and cognitive theory
- Creativity through simplicity in conveying message as it is dependent upon language and level of understanding, there must be proliferation of creativity in s simple and their language through which they feel much comfortable in decoding the message conveyed through any promotional medium and can decipher the brand image of organization.

Once the communication approach through 3C has been designed then is the task of designing of enhanced logistics management

- Creation of proximity
- Minimum gap between demand and supply
- Warehousing

- Channel partners
- Making product available at pick up centers.
- Evaluating PERT/CPM for designing shortest path.

After designing logistics management there is strong affirmation for 4A

Each Company is making their way to Rural India. Most of them have studied the market and analyzed the things over there and ready to stand and compete at rural India. There are some of the companies which have already written their success stories in rural market. Companies like HUL, ITC, LG, and M &M have given a new format for rural marketing. They have done a great job. So, the marketing is always having the difference in Urban and rural, which makes the companies to think over the Marketing mix. Marketing mix is such an element in rural market which gives the sense to think of marketing activities. This 4A model is similar to the 4P model of marketing mix; the difference it shows is main streamline and rural market. 4A perceived to be more customer oriented. The 4A's are Affordability, Availability, Awareness, and Acceptability.

HOW TO COPE UP WITH THIS COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

- Tie-ups with NGOs, Self Help Groups
- Setting up of Regional rural banks
- Improving the physical infrastructure.
- Stimulating the flow of market information,
- Promoting competitive conditions, monitoring prices, and the meeting of quality and food safety standards.
- Strengthening the institutional environment

This framework proposed in context of understanding the rural market and placing the offerings through sustainable approach in order to gain competitive advantage strategically and innovatively. These different variables are put together by developing taxonomy of communication strategies for rural market. These brands are the market leader in their target market.

CONCLUSION

The attitude towards growing rural market should be that of an investor. The approach is to be of 'market seeding'. The marketer has to develop a separate marketing programme and information system which can tracks sales to different markets as well as identify market potential to meet the customer needs. With knowledgeable and discriminating rural buyer, the suitable approach is to have product variants, differentiation and multiple brands. A marketer has to identify region specific media and develop regional messages. This is to be implemented by developing region and area wise budget for promotion. Marketers also need to research the audience state of readiness and information search behavior for their products for effective promotion.

Therefore, companies need to understand the social dynamics and attitude variations within each village though nationally it follows a consistent pattern. As a general rule, rural marketing involves more concentrated personal selling efforts compared to urban marketing. Marketers have to counter a number of challenges as well – understanding the pulse of rural consumers, physical distribution of products and services as well as communicating to a heterogeneous rural audience.

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