

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

There is a dilemma among the marketers, whether same marketing mix may be applied for rural and urban markets equally? The fact is that in India rural markets are significantly different from urban markets. Due to their unique features rural customers reveals significantly different buying behaviour than urban customers. Majority of the rural population is engaged in agriculture. In India rural markets are scattered as well as different to each other. These markets consist of people having different needs, habits and preferences. In rural areas literacy level is low. Moreover, caste system, social class and religions etc. are also varying from region to region. Population density is also different in village to village. In some villages population have up to 10,000 whereas, in some it is extended up to 500 people only. Some farmers are very big having land holding more than 10 hectares whereas, some are marginal farmer having land holding less than one hectare. Therefore, it is recommended that same marketing mix would not be suitable for both markets but adapted marketing mix will cater the need of rural markets in better way.

KEYWORDS

rural market, marketing mix, marketing strategy.

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M31

INTRODUCTION

Four fundamental components namely Product, Price, Promotion and Place constitute the term marketing mix. These four components are popularly known as 4 P's. Marketing of products and services consists of various activities which are grouped under elements of marketing mix. Product includes activities relating to the products and services or whatever to be offered to the customers for their want satisfaction. Price comprises of activities connecting to the monetary value to be charged from the customers for market offerings. Promotion is concerned with activities to encourage market offerings such as advertising, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion. Finally, place denotes different activities relating to the distribution of offerings. In other words, it ensures reach of offerings at customers' convenient place. Further it would be worthy mention here that this is not only the way of classification of different marketing activities. It is just one way of classification among the others, which is most popular among the marketers.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Generally, a question arises in mind whether same marketing mix may be applied for rural markets as prevailing in urban markets? To answer this question, it is essential to study the rural environment and consumer behavior. Of course rural markets are different from urban markets on many grounds. Rural environment in which rural people lives is different from urban environment. These environmental factors exert influence on bringing up of rural people. However, in recent time much of developments have taken place in rural areas that are contributing toward gradual changes in rural customers' behavior. Now rural markets are no longer tomorrow's market, but they are today's market. Rural customers are not sticking only to essential items. Now they are the part of potential big and vast consumer goods market. Rural people are copying the behavior of urban customers and purchasing modern goods and services. Therefore, it is important to analyze the need to develop separate marketing mix for rural markets.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One can really visualize the similarities and dissimilarities when travelling across the country. Rural markets are large and scattered. Nearly 60 percent of rural income comes from agriculture, which largely depends upon nature. Rural people are tied with strong believes and have low standard of living. On its contrary urban markets are different on this ground. This difference lies in infrastructure development, lifestyle, socio-cultural background, accessibility, buying habit, consumer behaviour, environmental factors and market factors which regulate marketing activities. Keeping in view, same marketing mix cannot be suitable for both markets. Therefore, it is essential to enter in rural area with appropriate marketing mix strategy.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study is an attempt to analyse the difference between rural and urban markets in India. In this regard the main objective of the study is to examine the problems in developing suitable marketing mix for rural markets and to suggest appropriate marketing mix (4P's) strategies for rural markets thereof.

METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly based on personal observation. Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, internet etc. Despite it, the opinion of rural customers and some experts in this field have also been sought to accomplish the objectives of the study. Finally collected data has been analysed and interpreted to suggest appropriate marketing mix strategies suitable for rural markets in India.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing strategy consists in directing a proper marketing mix towards a target group of customers or market segment. It is an organization's strategy that combines all of its marketing goals into one comprehensive plan. A good marketing strategy should be drawn from market research and focus on the right product mix in order to achieve the maximum profit, potential and sustain the business. The marketing strategy is the foundation of a marketing plan. A marketing strategy serves as the foundation of a marketing plan. A marketing plan contains a list of specific actions required to successfully implement a specific marketing strategy. An example of marketing strategy is as follows: "Use a low cost product to attract consumers. Once our organization, via our low cost product, has established a relationship with consumers, our organization will sell additional, higher-margin products and services that enhance the consumer's interaction with the low-cost product or service." A good marketing strategy should integrate an organization's marketing goals, policies, and action sequences (tactics) into a cohesive whole. The objective of a marketing strategy is to provide a foundation from which a tactical plan is developed. This allows the organization to carry out its mission effectively and efficiently.

RURAL MARKETS ARE DIFFERENT FROM URBAN MARKETS IN FOLLOWING PARAMETERS

- 1. Infrastructure:** It includes facilities like electricity, communication, roads, educational institutes, health, financial institutions etc. In urban market these facilities are in better position and every one can access easily without wasting time. But in rural market there is sufficient lack of infrastructure facilities. However, during last two decades these facilities have been improved significantly yet they are in poor position.
- 2. Economic condition:** In rural areas most of the population engaged in agriculture. Agriculture constitutes about 60 percent of their income. Agriculture largely depend upon nature hence it provides seasonal employment. Due to seasonality and uncertainty income level of rural people cannot be fixed exactly. A little percentage of rural people works in industries and service sector. So income level and standard of living in rural areas is low. In urban areas large no. of people are engaged in factories, Govt. jobs, businesses and service sector. These sectors provide permanent employment as compared to agriculture. Therefore, urban people avail various amenities hence their standard of living is much better and higher than rural people.
- 3. Lifestyle:** The living pattern of both the market is invariably different. It makes the marketer to look both markets differently. Rural people are religious by nature and tied with customs strongly. They depict unique lifestyle not even state wise but district wise too. Rural people like to live with old traditions as continue from ancestors. These people generally resist to modern ideas and change. In its contrary urban people are not rigid and prefer to change. They are of open ideas and are not bound to specific tradition. These people are fashionable and welcome the change.
- 4. Environmental factors:** As for as environmental factors i.e. density, literacy awareness and physical connectivity is concerned it is more and better in urban areas as compared to rural areas.
- 5. Social factors:** In rural areas culture is more visible and influential, rigid and bound of traditions. There is no scientific and objective approach to issues. People adopt conservative path which is directed by age. On its contrary in urban areas culture is less visible and influential. It is free from traditional outlook. These people adopt scientific and logical approach to issues. Moreover, in rural area jobs are hereditary and custom oriented. Caste influence is direct and strength full. In urban areas families choose jobs as per their capacity. Caste system is indirect and less strong.
- 6. Status of women:** In rural areas women are not independent. They are generally housewife and prefer to live in four walls of house. Women in rural areas have given low status and have very little influence on purchasing decision. Purchasing decisions are always taken by leader of house who is generally male. On the other hand, in urban areas women are more independent and have economic status equal to male. Urban women participate in purchasing decision making process. They are also initiator in some major purchasing decisions.
- 7. Demand:** Demand in rural areas is low and is directed by low level needs. People are very much price sensitive and generally price level is low to medium. Low quality products are available in rural areas. Whereas in urban areas demand is high and is directed by high level needs. Prices are medium to high and people are fewer prices sensitive. Products of high quality in different varieties are available in urban markets.
- 8. Consumer behavior:** Due to characteristics of rural markets, mind set of rural consumer is completely different from urban. Rural customers display different and unique behavior while purchasing and disposing products. For example, urban customers give preference to reputation of company, brand popularity, uniqueness and additional features in the product. While rural customer gives due weight to product durability, its sturdiness, price and paying capacity etc. So this mind set of consumer make both the markets extensively different.

Difference between urban and rural markets can be summarized in tabular form as below:

TABLE 1.1: RURAL VERSES URBAN MARKETS

Aspect		Urban market/ marketing	Rural market/marketing
Philosophy		Marketing and social concept and relationship marketing	Marketing and social concept and developmental marketing and relationship marketing
Market	Demand	High	Low
	Competition	Among units of organized sector	Among units of unorganized sector
	Location of customers	Concentrated	Scattered
	Literacy	High	low
	Income	High and regular	Low and seasonal
	Expenditure	Planned and balanced	Unplanned and variation
	Needs	High level	Low level
	Innovation adoption	Initiator and Faster	Follower and slow
Product	Awareness	High	Low
	Concept	Known	Unknown
	Price	Known	Unknown
	Positioning	Easy	Difficult
	Quality preference	Good	Moderate
Price	Sensitive	Yes	Very much
	Level desired	Medium-high	Medium-low
Distribution	Channel	Whole seller, retailer, brokers, middlemen	Village shop, Haat
	Transportation	Good	Average
	Product availability	high	limited
Promotion	Advertising	Print, audio, visual outdoor exhibition etc. few languages	TV, radio, print media but limited, many languages
	Personal selling	Door to door frequently	Occasionally

CHALLENGES IN THE WAY OF DESIGNING APPROPRIATE MARKETING MIX FOR RURAL MARKETS

It is imperative for a marketer who wishes to penetrate in rural markets to familiar with different challenges which may come in the way of designing appropriate marketing mix for rural markets. These challenges are acronym by 4 A'S. These challenges must be kept in mind while designating marketing mix for rural markets

- Acceptability (Product)
- Affordability (Price)
- Awareness (Promotion)
- Availability (Place/ distribution)

Acceptability (Product)

Rural people are tied with strong customs and traditions. Their behavior is directed by cultural and social values. This is subject to no change at any cost. Moreover, rural areas are characterized by certain limitations i.e. lack of proper electricity in households, lack of piped water supply, lack of transportation, large size of family etc. Therefore, urban products do not suit for rural areas. So marketers need to customize or tailor made products which suit to rural specific needs.

Affordability (Price)

While talking about the characteristics or rural markets we discussed that agriculture is main source of income among rural people. Approximately half of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture in rural areas for their livelihood. Agriculture production greatly depends on nature. Hence rural income is seasonal and uncertain. These people cannot afford high price for the products and services. Most of the rural workers are daily wages. Therefore, products for the rural areas should be lower priced, that rural people can afford easily. For this marketers need to focus on small packaging or alternative ways.

CHART 1: 4 A's IN DESIGNING RURAL MARKETING STRATEGY

**AWARENESS (PROMOTION)**

Low level of literacy in rural areas is another challenge before marketers. The means of spreading information, prevailing in urban markets will not be successful in rural areas. Moreover, in rural areas there are hundreds of local dialects and languages which changes for every hundred kilo meters. So marketers need to adapt communication mix according to rural languages and local tone.

AVAILABILITY (PLACE)

This is another challenge before marketers of rural areas to ensure availability of products and services in every corner of every village. But it would not be so easy. Indian rural market is geographically scattered. It is spread over 6, 40,930 villages in 3.3 million sq km. About 69 percent Indian population lives in rural areas. But to search them from marketers' point of view is tedious and difficult task. It is not hidden fact that there is lack of 12 month motor able roads in most of the rural areas. In monsoon number of roads gets closed due to land sliding and rainy water. Like this communication network is also in average position. Which largely get affected by weather conditions?

4 P'S OF MARKETING MIX FOR RURAL MARKETS

Marketing manager has to use his knowledge, skill and experience for developing appropriate marketing mix for rural markets. Marketing mix is controllable variable for the firm which can be adapted as per specific requirements of target rural market. After understanding in detail socio-economic conditions of rural markets, and different challenges in the way of designing effective marketing mix for rural markets, the following marketing mix can be suggested for rural markets:

PRODUCT

Product is the bundle of benefits and is vehicle by which company provide satisfaction to its customers. Rural markets are not homogeneous and also not alike urban markets. So products of urban markets cannot be transferred straight forward to rural markets without modification. Marketers need to understand the specific needs of rural customers while modifying products for rural markets. Product for the rural markets should be designed simpler and easy to use, service or maintain. The product related information should be simple and well illustrated. Below are given some examples of specific needs of rural customers:

- Rural people are rough and tuff; hence they prefer sturdy style products. This is the reason of popularity of bullet motor cycle in rural areas.
- Rural people generally prefer dark colour for furniture, cloths and steel.
- In rural areas there is tendency of joint families, so washing machines; refrigerators etc. like products should be design in bigger size.
- In rural areas there is lack of proper electricity in households. Therefore, electronic or electrical items like mobile phone, washing machine, refrigerators etc. for rural market should be designed such that can be operated without electricity or having long battery backup.
- Purchasing power of rural people is low so small packaging should be preferred, as sachet pack of shampoo, cosmetics, hand wash etc., which are affordable to rural people.
- Rural people generally come back home from work place with goods for family so they prefer bicycle or scooter with large carrier or storage space.

Depth marketing research may be helpful for marketer to understand specific needs of rural customers. Mere little alteration in existing urban products would not be enough. Marketers should develop product with essential features not with alter features. Product developer should eliminate all cost adding features for which rural people are unwilling to pay. Product developer should add such features in product which are rural need based. For example bicycles with large carrier and scooter with enlarged storage space for goods. Product designer should save cost by eliminating fancy fiber. By doing so rural people feel attachment with product and product acceptability will increase. Rural customer will feel that they are paying money only for value.

PRICE

As it is well known fact that affordability of rural people are low due to seasonal income. For this price mechanism for rural markets should be such that rural customers feel that they are being charged less for the same product as compared to urban customers. For this unnecessary features of the product which are not required for rural customers should be eliminated. It is possible through value engineering. Product designer should design such products which are tailor made for rural specific needs. This will help to reduce cost of the product. Moreover, marketers can save cost in packaging and profit margin for rural markets can be minimized. Moreover, in order to make rural customers habitual for the use of luxury goods, special discount offer should be given on festival occasions. Despite its special discount offer on special occasions, seasonal discount, schemes such as buy one get one free, free samples and lucky coupon etc may yield good result.

PROMOTION

Promotion is known as indirect selling, as it is back up function for the sales force. Sales man cannot sell anything if promotional efforts do not create awareness among customers about the product. In rural areas literacy level is low, multiple dialects and languages are spoken and geographically scattered. Therefore, advertising should be given in local languages and should tune with rural culture. In this regard role of celebrities cannot be underestimated. Generally rural people do not adopt new things easily and early. Therefore, marketers should promote their products through demonstration method. By this rural people can touch and feel products. It would help them to understand and rely on product. Further rural people generally visit to post offices, hospitals, banks, panchayat, so alliance with such institutions for advertising may be helpful. Observation shows that rural people believe on word of mouth by known person. Since local distributors continuously keep in touch will rural people so these intermediaries should be given the responsibility to inform and remind rural customers about products and services. Finally advertising through packing which is capable of further reuse such as empty container, carry bags etc. may prove important aid in promoting products in rural areas.

In term of media TV, radio, wall painting and even roof painting are effective. Wall hanging and stickers and shelf display are also effective. Rural sports like kabaddi, kho-kho, bullock cart race rural fairs have a special place in the rural consumer life. It should be used to promote product.

Personal selling is also important to promote product in rural markets but it should be done by simple and suitable person rather than flashy or aggressive.

PLACE (DISTRIBUTION)

Rural markets are less populated and geographically scattered. Infrastructure facilities such as road, communication, transportation are also poor. Hence distribution or making product available at customer convenient place is very difficult task. In urban areas retailers compiled all the necessary products themselves. But in rural areas it is not so easy due to heavy transportation cost. Moreover, it would not be possible to open big outlet at every village, because there are many villages in rural India where population is less than 1000. Hence it would not be possible to recover marketing cost. On the other hand, it is observed that rural people are habitual to visit to near town and cities for purchase of consumer durables. Rural people generally visit concentrated places for auction or sale of their agricultural produce, at this time they have enough money to spend and they make purchase of durable goods. So at village level traditional method of penetration such as HAAT, street hawker etc. may gain good results at these places. And at concentrated places where rural people visit weekly or on special occasions organized retail outlet can be opened. This approach will help to cover all rural markets as well as to reduce distribution cost. At later stage when infrastructure facility will improve which are improving day by day dramatically, then big outlet can be opened at village level.

In addition to this big companies who are making huge profits in urban areas can undertake their social responsibility by initiating organized distribution in rural villages. They can afford to invest more to develop sales distribution in rural sector. They can pave way for other small companies.

PRODUCT STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETS

Rural markets are significantly different from urban markets and same is true with customers of rural markets. Many companies have conducted marketing research to design product strategies in order to capture maximum market share in rural markets. Rural people are conscious about their purchase due to lower level of income and they think many times to spend on expensive goods. For anything more, they think twice and try to postpone or spend very little.

Product for the rural markets should be designed simpler and easy to use, service or maintain. The product related information should be simple and well illustrative. For example, Cavin Kare studies the shampoo market and came with Chuck shampoo priced at 50 paisa per sachet and the brand become an instant hit in rural areas. Followings are some basic product related strategies, which may gain fruitful results for marketers who wish to enter in rural markets:

- Study product:** Rural people are physically strong and follow rough and tuff life style. Rural people have common belief that heavier the product betters the durability and performance. So product developer should develop such products for rural markets which are sturdy and durable rather than soft and fancy.
- Small size packaging:** The low level of income, seasonality of income and low per capita income prevent rural people to purchase goods in large quantity. For this marketers should offer products in small packaging in rural markets, so that every customer could pay for it. Product should be dispensable in single unit. For example: In India almost all Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies have offered their product range in rural market in small size and small packaging. Tooth paste, shampoo, cream, mouth freshener, soft drinks etc. all are in possible small size and packaging.
- Utility product:** Rural people give enough importance to 'value for money'. So product developer should eliminate cost adding features in the product and should imply those only those features which rural customers' need based. For instance, mobile phone with low cost and multiple features like torch, radio, alarm and clock. Rural people don't like just fancy and attractive product without real value. For example: Rural families are larger in size due to joint family system. Hence refrigerators and washing machines should be developed in big size for rural markets as compared to urban markets. Like this rural people works out side in the fields so water resisting wrist watches and shoes should be manufactured, this is the reason of popularity of HMT watches in rural markets.
- Low price:** Prices of rural products should be reasonably low as compared to urban markets. In Indian market several companies have adopted the policy to dump second grade quality to sell at lower price in rural markets. Low price is possible by eliminating cost adding fancy features, adopting small packaging size and minimizing profit margin in penetrating stage. For example Nokia-1100 adopted this strategy and gain popularity in rural markets. Many products such as mouth fresheners, shampoo sachet, tea packets, cold drinks etc. are following this strategy.
- Branding:** Brand refers to any name, symbol, sign, word, design, picture or combination of these which is used to identify and differentiate product from competitors' product. Rural people recognize and identify brand in their own way. For example in rural areas people recognize Thums Up cold drink as sweet dark cold water in bottle. Rural people generally like religious and auspicious name this is the reason that rural people's name are religion based which indicate their auspicious characteristics. The use of symbol OM and SWASTIC in Hindu culture is very popular. That's why a no. of companies brand their product with God name or symbol. Rural people are God fearing people hence they get easily attached with their deity name and symbols. This strategy has successes to great extent in rural market.

PRICING STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETS

Price is the exchange value of the product or service in monetary terms. Price is somewhat which a customer pay against purchase of product or service. Price is an important weapon in the hand of efficient marketers to obtain competitive edge in the market. Price is double edge sword so it should be used very carefully. As paying capacity of rural customers' is less, so following pricing strategies may be adopted for rural markets:

- Low price:** As well as possible initially price for rural markets should be fixed low. It will help marketers to penetrate in rural market easily. Rural people are much price sensitive due to seasonal and low level of income. Once he satisfied with brand he will continue with the same. Rural people are loyal people. Low price of the product will really attract the rural customers for purchasing and trying the products. This is reason many FMCG companies have prices their small packaging size as Rs. One, five and ten which is convenient to pay for rural customers.
- Cost saving packaging:** Marketer should save cost on using cheap quality of material for packaging the product. Ordinary packaging rather than very attractive packaging would be suitable for rural markets. It is found that some time cost of packaging is equal to the cost of actual product. Since rural customers are conscious about value for money, so they do not like waste money for unnecessary cost adding material. It would help in cost saving hence low price of the product. For this tetra packaging is good option for marketers it is economic as well as biodegradable.
- Refill/reusable packaging:** It is another alternative for cost saving and low price. Companies should promote the concept of reuse packaging for products. It will reduce cost as well pollution. Recently Baba Ram dev have launched hand wash with refill packaging, which save 20 to 30 percent cost of the product. Like this good knight pack for mosquitoes is available in market in refill packaging. It would be beneficial for marketers, customers and for society.
- Credit facility:** Since rural customers are depending on agriculture which largely depends on nature. So rural customers' income is seasonal as well as uncertain. They get money for their crop during harvesting period. So rural customers suffer from working capital in rest period. So marketers should give credit facility to rural customers. For example, recently Government of India has launched Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility to extend credit to farmers at low interest rate.
- Value engineering:** It means innovating useful features in product design and manufacturing so that it reduces cost of production and enhance utility for the customer at lower price. By research and development, it is possible to invent multiuse products. For examples TV cum Computer, Mobile phone cum computer, lighter cum torch etc.
- Discounts:** Trade discount, cash discount, off season discount etc. are other options which can be implemented successfully in rural markets. Moreover, schemes like buy one get one free is most successful in rural markets. Which has got tremendous popularity in rural markets?
- Large volume with low margin:** For penetrating in rural areas initially companies may adopt penetration strategy. In which companies fixed lower prices of the products or services.
- Ensuring compliance with MRP:** It is found that due to low level of literacy in rural areas many marketers charge price more than MRP. This kind of practices must be checked and controlled. This will create faith among rural people about the product and company.

PROMOTION STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETS

Promotion simply means to promote or assist the sales of products or services. There are different instruments of promotion ranging from 'word of mouth' to establishing public relation. These means generally include advertising, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion. It is popularly known as promotion mix. As in rural markets ideology of customers is different and different dialect and languages are prevailing. So it is difficult to design common message which is suitable for all rural markets. The following promotional strategies may be adopted in this regard:

1. **Simplicity and clarity of message:** As rural customers are not very much sophisticated they are simple so advertising message should be simple and clear. It should not be vague or having multiple hidden meanings. The message should have single meaning and should be straight forward so that rural people could understand it with minimum efforts. The rural people should understand that what the advertising aim at.
2. **Think and demonstrate in local tone:** Rural people influenced to great extent by their religious and cultural values. So ad developer while developing message for rural customers must mind this fact. Rural people are very touchy about their cultural values. So advertiser should imply local phrases in ad message which are related with rural cultural values. Like Coca-Cola ad Thanda Matlab Coca Cola caught attention of rural customers. The strategy of Coca Cola was using renowned celebrity Amir Khan in rural background.
3. **Convey or narrate the message in story style:** It is true that one picture is more worthy than one thousand words. Similarly, it is easy to memorize a story than simple words. Story creates curiosity for further knowledge. Following this concept marketer should convey or present their product message in the form of small story, which a marketer wants to convey regarding the product or service. It will easily influence rural customers to adopt that product or service. Further it will help them to identify and memorize the product or service.
4. **Choice of brand ambassador:** While selecting ambassador for the product of the company marketer should select such celebrity for the same who is popular among rural people and capable of influencing their ideology. For this celebrity having rural background or concern for rural people might be appropriated. For example, MS Dhoni captain of Indian cricket team who has rural background is much popular among rural people. By looking him in ad rural people feel concern for him and influenced by his product appeal. Rural people copy their celebrity and adopt like him purchasing behavior.
5. **Simple living high thinking:** The theme of the message should be high with ground touch. It will motivate rural people for higher standard of living with dignity. This philosophy will minimize inferiority complex among them.
6. **Personal selling:** Only by simple and suitable person not by aggressive and flashy.

PLACE (DISTRIBUTION) STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETS

Distributions means reach to the customers' convenient place with appropriate product and service. However, rural markets are better option for expansion for existing companies, but distribution of product in rural areas is big problem. It acts as hurdle in the way of effective rural marketing. And force many corporate houses to restrict their functioning in rural market on large scale. Poor road facilities, transportation, communication network are responsible for huge distribution cost. So it is difficult to suggest an ideal distribution strategy for rural markets. Nevertheless, following option may be suggested:

1. **Initially coverage of villages having population up to 2,500:** Due to rural hurdles it is not possible to reach every customer in rural areas with economically. Therefore, it is difficult to open organized retail out lets in every village. So initially it would be advisable to open organized retail out let in villages having population up to 2,500. This will cover just 10 percent of Indian rural village but cover 40 to 45 percent rural population.
2. **Target on places having fairs and rural Mela:** Generally rural people gathered at local fairs and melas. So these places may be best option to open rural retailing out lets for products and services. Rural people are habitual and familiar to visit to these places weekly or monthly.
3. **Public distribution system (PDS) and petrol pumps:** This is another option for distribution products in rural areas. Across the country there are many petrol pumps at national high ways, high ways and link roads. However, in cities they are very busy but in rural area they have enough leisure time. Marketer may alliance with them for distribution of their products. This alliance will minimize the cost of distribution and ensure reach to every customer in rural areas. Like PDS are available throughout the country. These can also be utilized for the same purpose. It would help to utilize their full capacity on one hand and will ensure effective reach to rural customers with minimum cost on the other.
4. **Dealer of agricultural inputs:** Agro input dealers who are already exist in rural areas and serving the rural customers from many years may also be alliance for distribution of manufacture products. These dealers already have rural customers data base and know very well how to deal with rural customers. These dealers are familiar with basic needs and customer behavior of rural consumers.
5. **Co-operatives:** Co-operative means working together. It is an organization or an association of persons who voluntary associate together for the promotion of their common economic interest and based on principal of unity, economy and liberty. It is that system in which common activities are performed mutually by all members who are associates with it. There are approximately more than three lakh co-operatives societies in rural areas who are working presently. These co-operatives imply marketing co-operative, farmer services co-operatives and multipurpose co-operatives. These co-operatives societies can also be better option for rural distribution.

CONCLUSION

In nutshell it can be said that to some extent behavior of rural customers may be alike to urban customers but overall behavior of both is different, as there are many differences in their background and psychology. Therefore, adapted marketing mix would be suitable for rural markets, which suit to rural specific needs and wants. It will help marketers to cater rural markets effectively.

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