

Rural Advertising: An Unwavering Resolve for Rural Marketing

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to understand the presence of various communication channels to reach out the rural customers in India with special reference to Bihar state. The researcher has found that, with the improvement in rural infrastructure in terms of road and electricity, television is getting great acceptance in villages of India and Bihar state in particular and the marketers of FMCG companies are enthusiastically using television as a means to inform, educate, and persuade their target rural customers. Companies like HLL, Colgate-Palmolive, Cavincare, Procter & Gamble and many more are using television as most appropriate communication channel to run their awareness campaign for rural customers. Researcher has used a set of rank based, dichotomous, and multiple choice questions in the questionnaire to collect the data through simple random sampling method and applied SPSS 16.0 for data analysis. It has been found that the television is the most preferred followed by radio, and wall paintings are being considered as channel of communication by FMCG Companies.

Keywords: Communication Channels, Rural Market, Awareness Campaign, FMCG Companies, FMCG Products.

I. Introduction

The potential of rural markets in India and Bihar has always been analysed, well interpreted, and experienced by the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) Companies. But, found difficult to create and run the required advertisement and promotion-cum-awareness campaign to outreach the rural customers. The infrastructure development is now being prioritized by the Central and the State Government through various rural development schemes for rural electrification, road construction, etc. leading to more and more use of television and consequently it is turning much easier for FMCG Companies to seek the attention of rural customers by informing, educating, and persuading them.

FMCG Companies like HLL, Colgate-Palmolive, Britannia, P&G, and many more are trying hard to tap the rural market since a long time and up to an extent they have successfully attracted the villagers in India and Bihar as well. On one side the urban market is becoming tough to get a chunk of market share and on the other side the rural market is majorly untapped and offering endless opportunities for FMCG Companies. With improvement in road conditions and electric supply in rural areas, it seems quite possible to ensure the regular availability FMCG products on the shelves of rural retail outlets and running an appropriate advertising and awareness campaign to grab the opportunity available in virgin and potential rural market. Leading companies in India have taken up a developmental approach to nourish this new market. The companies are Hindustan Levers Ltd, Godrej, Procter and Gamble, Nirma, Reckitt and Coleman, Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd. HLL has done pioneer work in developing FMCG products for rural market and initiating collaborative and innovative strategies. The major rural sales promotion tools for FMCG products are: free samples, cash rebates or discounts, gifts, contests, prizes, games, product warranties, free trials, sale counter displays, and trade promotion to stimulate wholesalers, retailers, and field workers with gifts and awards.

For advertising of FMCGs to be effective in rural India, it is necessary to set the objectives in advance against which achievements can be compared. The methods of analyzing and evaluating progress towards the objectives can be established. One also needs to view the way in which advertising works, and what it can achieve for a given product. The advertising effectiveness of FMCGs is measured in light of sales and communication effects.

II. Literature Review

The review of literature reveals that rural markets though have large potential but it is yet to be tapped. Howard and Sheth (1969) explained the processes and variables which affect the individual's behaviour prior to and during the purchase. Chandy et al (2001) studied the role of market age in understanding the effectiveness of advertising. The scholars like Zhou et.al. (2002), Millman (2005) studied the effectiveness of television media over other media. Verma and Kapoor (2004) studied the influence of TV advertisements on Children's buying

response. Banerji and Bandhu (2005) analysed the impact of various slogans and promises made in Television advertising. Shivakumar and Arun (2002) focused their study on rural buying behaviour of wristwatches and footwear. Patel and Prasad (2005), Sakkithivel (2006), Vaish (2006) found aggressive potential in rural markets which corporates cannot afford to ignore. They also talked about the changing lifestyles of Indian rural consumers. In view of above, it can be concluded that though sufficient attention has been given to the effectiveness of advertising in general but relatively little attention has been given to FMCG advertising and that too in rural markets. The purpose of this research is to address the previously noted gaps in our knowledge regarding body of FMCGs advertising.

III. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the role of advertisements in purchase of the product by rural customers.
2. To identify the most suited communication channel for rural markets.
3. To list the preference of the various advertising appeals

IV. Methodology

The present study is based on primary data and the same has been collected through a non-disguised structured questionnaire consisting of questions of dichotomous type, rank based, and multiple choice. 650 rural respondents have been selected from various villages of selected districts like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Ara, Siwan, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, and Rohtas of Bihar. Simple random sampling method has been used for sample selection for this study. First fifty responses were taken analysed to understand the suitability of words and questions in the questionnaire and required improvements were incorporated. After collecting 600 responses, through assortment of the questionnaires, the researcher has removed the incomplete, inconsistent and illegible responses and finally got 468 responses for the purpose of data analysis and interpretation.

V. Findings of the Study

In the present section data has been analysed using tabular approach. Rank based questions, multiple choice questions and dichotomous questions were subject to tabular approach where the median score and percentages were computed respectively.

The viewers were found to view 12-16 channels at a time. It was found that usually in a programme of 30minute duration, there are two commercial breaks of 5minute duration each.

Television advertisements are a need creating process. The benefits represented in the advertisements create an urge in the viewers to buy and use the product. Moreover, the toiletries endorsed by the celebrities leave a greater impact on the minds of the viewers.

In the present study, keeping in consideration of the objectives, the subsequent analysis based on ranks were raised to identify the most significant media and motivational force affecting the purchase of toiletries, to know the importance held by the television in advertisement of toiletries. Respondents were also asked to rank the advertisement appeal they prefer the most. The respondents were asked to rank the various medium of communication for advertising. The respondents considered television as the most important medium of advertising, thereby ranking the radio as second important followed by many traditional media. In the rural Bihar, television (Portable LG television) is getting a good acceptance for entertainment leading to the exposure of advertisement and promotion campaign for the general masses. Moreover, the rural folk also have an easy access to television in comparison to radio which is next in the line to get popularity among the rural masses.

Majority of the respondents felt that they got influenced by television advertisements for the purchase of a particular toiletry followed by radio, and wall paintings, past experience and friends correspondingly.

To make out the reliability that the respondents lay on the television advertisements, the queries were made asking the opinion regarding the misleading and untruthful advertisements and the price of the advertised toiletries.

Majority of the respondents felt that television advertisements are not misleading or false. It may be because the television is the main source of information for the rural consumers about the new products and their features.

VI. Conclusion of the Study

The study conducted on the respondents from rural Bihar reveals that a large number of channels are viewed by them thereby indicating the urge to view more channels in the small time span of time of 4-5 hours. It was also found that the brand consciousness is increasing among rural population of Bihar. The television advertisements are considered to be over persuasive and consequently leading to the purchase of FMCG products which are sometimes not needed. Television is judged as the most leading media which insist upon the rural masses to procure the products advertised. Rural consumers want the advertisement appeals to be rational i.e. they want the advertisement to convince them to the purchase the particular brand of toiletry.

The findings of the study reveals that the level of awareness and exposure regarding television advertisements of Toiletries is high among the rural respondents and television advertisements are playing a dominant and conspicuous role in their purchase behaviour of FMCG products. It can be concluded that the television is one of the most effective communication tool to reach out the rural customers. A rural consumer is brand loyal, understands symbols better, and matured enough to understand the communication developed for them, especially with reference to the FMCG products. Television is a valuable and successful communication system for rural masses and, as a result, companies should identify themselves with their advertisements. Advertisements touching the emotions of the rural folks could drive a quantum jump in sales.

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