

RURAL & URBAN MARKETING COMPARISON OF GREEN MARKETING- AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The villages are where the heart of India beats, and because of its size and need, the country's rural market presents excellent chances for marketers. In India, the rural market first began to demonstrate its potential in the 1960s. Its steady growth during the 1970s and 1980s foreshadowed its role as a developing economy during the digital era. Additionally, there are definite signs that it will fully develop in the twenty-first century. Expenditure in rural India increased to \$80 billion between 2009 and 2017, a huge increase over the urban population's \$55 billion in spending. During the years 2009 to 2015, the rural FMCG market grew at a CAGR of 13.2%, reaching US\$ 100 billion. According to estimates, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) market in rural and semi-urban India will surpass US. For a variety of reasons, rural markets are growing more appealing. Due to the green revolution, rising agricultural produce prices, Skilled India initiatives, financial inclusion, etc., rural consumers' lifestyles are expanding, and they are purchasing lifestyle items like mobile phones, televisions, and two-wheelers. Companies have been exploring these areas for some time, and the rush to rural markets is not a novel phenomena. Companies use digital technology as a tool to expand their operations. Digital marketing refers to the process of using a digital channel to advertise goods and services and connect with customers. Mobile, social media, content marketing, search engine marketing, and advanced analytics are examples of current developments in digital marketing. The business examines client behavioral information. There are numerous touch points while communicating with.

Key Words: Rural marketing, digital technology, FMCG, Customer behavior, Rural Economy.

Introduction:

The level of needs of rural clients, their capacity and desire to pay a specific amount for their wants to be addressed, the manner in which they would like to be provided, and their preferred method of gathering information about the product and services must all be understood.

India's rural population is characterized by poverty and low literacy rates. As a result, rural markets were formerly thought of as being solely for selling necessities. The Indian government implemented a variety of policies to enhance the quality of life for the majority of rural citizens after independence. The state government of Telangana and other non-profit organizations carried out cooperative movements, mass education programs, agricultural development programs, rural industrialization projects, and other social development initiatives like Green and white agricultural revolution.

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Literature Review:

The concept of green marketing was introduced in 1975 by the American Marketing Association and, over time, it has had various names such as environmental marketing, organic marketing, social marketing, or sustainable marketing (Zhu and Sarkis, 2016). The literature does not provide a universal definition of green marketing. A common element describing this term is the explicit inclusion of environmental awareness in all its tools and actions (Dangelico and Vocalelli, 2017). Dibb et al. (2005) define green marketing as an implementation of the four policies of the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) without doing any harm to the environment. Peattie (2001) believes that green marketing manages all the processes of the marketing activity in a profitable and sustainable way (Peattie, 2001). Mishra and Sharma (2012) suggest that the concept of green marketing refers to sustainable marketing, promoting the use of products in a socially and responsible way, and introducing products that are non-toxic and do not harm the environment. At the same time, green marketing is seen as a commitment of companies to environmentally friendly products and services (Kinoti, 2011).

According to Yang and Calhoun (2007), the trigger for green marketing can be considered the “green revolution”, which emphasizes environmental protection and sustainable economic development and promotes green consumption, reducing the environmental pollution. Bai et al. (2015) believe that green marketing was triggered by three main factors, namely governmental factors, competitive factors, and opportunities. From the perspective of governmental factors, environmental and sustainable development legislation has been amended (Zhang and Wen, 2008) to protect consumers (Chan, 2001; Chan and Lau, 2000), giving them the right to know the components of products. Thus, eco-labeling programs have emerged, such as the Green Watch program in China (Liu et al., 2012). From a competitiveness perspective, many businesses have included green issues in their marketing strategy due to pressure from NGOs, government institutions, and environmentalists.

Holslag (2015) states that environmental management measures have been adopted due to pressures on the supply chain, which have had an impact on the market share of companies (Marquis and Qian, 2014). An example in this sense is the adoption of ISO 14001 environmental certification in the automotive industry, which attests to the environmental concerns of companies (Qi et al., 2011). Pressures can also be felt at a competitive level. Businesses that have competitors with sustainable attitudes will strive to adopt environmental policies to manifest their social responsibility. These pressures determine entities to adopt

environmentally friendly behaviors, including green marketing. The opportunities offered by the market are considered triggers of green marketing because companies/organizations are willing to adopt environmentally friendly attitudes to increase their market share (Forsman, 2013). All the mechanisms mentioned above have the power to influence the marketing and organizational communication of companies (Marquis and Qian, 2014).

Marketing communication refers to the actions of companies to make themselves known through advertising. These marketing actions can have ecological values through ISO 14001 certification (and through an ecological surveillance program). Certifications are not promotional activities, but are perceived by the market as a barometer of environmental performance. With the advent of the green revolution, the concept of green consumption has been developed. It is seen as a green self-identity of consumers (Sparks and Shepherd, 1992) and involves the use of products that do not endanger human health or the environment through pollution and other means. Within it, green consumers are the main actors in ecological consumption. Zhu and Sarkis (2016) believe that green consumers are the ones who prefer products that are not harmful to life and the environment. Therefore, ecological trends are set by consumers. They put their mark on greening the supply chain (Brindley and Oxborrow, 2014).

In terms of demographic segmentation, global research on green consumers presents them as young, married, with high education, and high income (Gilg et al., 2005). In 2012, Shields and Zeng stated that men are greener consumers than women (Shields and Zeng, 2012). Studies conducted in Romania show that, although the important role of consuming green food and produce such as fruits and vegetables for maintaining personal health is known, this is not a priority for young people at the onset of professional life (Pocol et al., 2021). One explanation is that, although consumers are interested in sustainable development, their desires are not always behaviorally transposed (Dabija, Bejan, and Dinu, 2019).

In designing offers and in the promotion of brands, producers need to know the preferences and expectations of consumers, because the sale of products for young consumers is no longer possible without the use of ecological strategies either in production processes or in marketing (Dabija, Bejan, and Dinu, 2019). Economic development comes with several environmental problems: resource depletion, deforestation, coastal recovery, desertification, climate change, pollution, and excessive energy use. These issues jeopardize economic sustainability, public health, and social stability (Zhu and Sarkis, 2016; Feher et al., 2021).

Therefore, global economic growth has also led to environmental concerns that have produced significant social changes, embodied in the emergence of green markets and green consumers. As sustainability norms evolve, certain competitive advantages emerge from the development of green products and a green economy (Zhu and Sarkis, 2016). Thus, concerns related to green marketing began to appear at the level of government, organizations, and final consumers, with the aim of avoiding environmental degradation and facilitating the process of transition to a green economy (Gouvea et al., 2013).

Industrial organizations play an important role in influencing consumer choices through green marketing strategies. Globally, social change has occurred and consumers have put pressure on organizations to green their products and processes, thus influencing green markets and innovation (Zhu and Sarkis, 2016). Food systems contribute significantly to the deterioration of the ecological balance. From this perspective, producers are faced with a new paradigm. On the one hand, the continuous growth of the population means an increase in food production and an improvement in nutritional values, and on the other hand, the production of green food involves higher financial costs while the quantities are smaller (Brînzan et al., 2012). The main challenge for producers is to identify new efficient production methods that meet the market needs and that are also affordable (Popa et al., 2019). As a result, new environmental regulations have emerged, and consumer environmental attitudes have become manifest in several areas (Yu, 2014). Regulatory pressures have arisen in the supply chain (Grumbine, 2014). The COVID-19 pandemic brought a new perspective on consumption patterns and highlighted a continuous orientation of young people toward sustainability, beyond the central dynamic context and disruptions (Dabija, Bejan, and Dinu, 2019).

Consequently, one of the current concerns of companies is the implementation of profitable green marketing strategies (Papadas et al., 2017). Because the concept of green marketing is in a permanent dynamic, green marketing strategies have not significantly contributed to improving the consumers' quality of life or the health of the ecosystem (Polonsky, 2011). This is where the need for a holistic and integrated analysis of green marketing and concept development arose (Papadas et al., 2017). The mid-1990s were dominated by the emphasis on sustainable consumption and production, by addressing policies and studies in environmental reports debated at the UN, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), and the Council for Sustainable Development (Peattie and Crane, 2005). The global financial crisis, together with a changing society (Porter and Kramer, 2011; Stoeckl and Luedicke, 2015), put sustainable development at the forefront so that managers are aware of the need to integrate green marketing at the organizational level (Unruh and Ettenson, 2010)

Companies are guided to fulfill their social and sustainable responsibilities (Geels et al., 2015) and integrate green marketing strategies. Through them, they show that they recognize and internalize the importance of ecological concerns (Lash and Wellington, 2007) and that they can gain a competitive advantage by differentiating and developing the business (Gordon et al., 2011; Kotler, 2011). However, some environmental and sustainability issues are still considered a constraint and too costly for the business. Few industries (mining, chemistry) link them to marketing, as a function of the latter (Shrivastava, 1995). It should be remembered, however, that green marketing is not just about energy consumption and the depletion of natural resources, but it addresses species extinction, ecosystem destruction (Gowri, 2004; Tantau & Şanta, 2021), or supply chain problems (Charter and Polonsky, 2017). Therefore, environmental issues become a competitive factor in the market (Belz and Peattie, 2009; McDonagh and Prothero, 2014).

Another relevant aspect of green marketing is the gradual change of consumer mentality and attitude toward sustainability (Chang et al., 2019). Psychological factors of consumers

regarding environmental protection issues gradually affect consumer behavior (Huang et al., 2018). This means that an increased interest in the environment can lead to conscious consumption and can have a positive influence on green consumption behavior. Green marketing is discussed in papers dealing with sustainable strategies, namely the management of the ecological supply chain (Cheng, Lin, and Wong, 2016). Its strategies regarding all instruments of the marketing mix will have an impact on the greening attitude of consumers and will respond to the characteristics of green consumption.

Rajagopal (1991) in developing countries, rural economy is established through the marketing system prevailing in the region. The efforts of the Government to promote rural economy through income-generating schemes largely depend on the production and marketing efficiency. It is a complex phenomenon. Seamus Grimes, (2003) While there is little dispute that rural SMEs have much to gain from an effective engagement with e-commerce, the experience to date, particularly for firms operating in remote locations, points to considerable barriers to their involvement in the digital economy in the short term. Naidu Dr. Y. Krishna Mohan (2004) with the extent of awareness in the rural markets of India. It presents the "Gold" available in this steadily growing market, which has been going great guns since the 1980's and is now bigger than the urban market for both FMCG's and durables.

Research Methodology:

Objective of the study:

To study of Rural Marketing Mix with respect to essential commodities in Nagar Kurnool District of Telangana State.

Hypothesis:

Null hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant difference between rural and urban marketing mix of essential commodities marketing companies.

Alternative hypothesis (H₁): There is significant difference between rural and urban marketing mix of essential commodities marketing companies

For testing hypothesis, questions were asked to retailers about their experience and observation in urban and rural market; as rural retailer are in contact with urban distribution channel member as well as rural consumers. In product, price, place and promotion; variables are considered for collecting markets information. In Product mix Variety, Quality, Design, Features, Brand Name, Packaging, Sizes, Services, Warranties and Sales Return these variables were judged. Result shows that only 03% to 17% rural retailers are of the opinion that there is no significant difference between rural and urban Product mix of essential commodities marketing companies. Hence there is strong evidence to reject null hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that there is significant difference between rural and urban marketing mix of essential commodities marketing companies.

Conclusion:

There is a need of rural marketing needs collaboration. The traditional command/military structure must change at strategic, executive and operational decision-making levels. Most important is the need for a shift from a competitive to a collaborative culture and, for that, several market participants have to take this approach. New technological developments translate both the above insights into business models.

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