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## **EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN RURAL MARKETING: A CASE STUDY OF HERITAGE FOODS INDIA Ltd.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Rural marketing refers to the process of developing, pricing, promoting, and distributing products and services to rural consumers. With the increasing purchasing power, improved infrastructure, and growing awareness among rural populations, rural markets have become an important segment for businesses. Rural marketing involves understanding the unique needs, preferences, and consumption patterns of rural consumers and designing marketing strategies accordingly.

The significance of rural marketing has increased due to rising rural incomes, government development programs, improved connectivity, and the expansion of digital technologies. Companies are focusing on rural areas to expand their customer base and achieve sustainable growth. Effective rural marketing requires innovative distribution channels, affordable pricing strategies, localized promotional activities, and strong relationships with rural communities.

This study highlights the importance of rural marketing, the factors influencing rural consumer behavior, and the opportunities and challenges faced by marketers in rural markets. It also examines various marketing strategies adopted by organizations to successfully penetrate and serve rural areas. The study concludes that rural marketing plays a vital role in economic development by improving the standard of living of rural consumers while creating growth opportunities for businesses.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Markets:**

The concepts of exchange and relationships lead to the concept of a market. A market is the set of actual and potential buyers of a product. These buyers share a particular need or want that can be satisfied through exchange relationships.

Marketing means managing markets to bring about profitable customer relationships. However, creating these relationships takes work. Sellers must search for buyers, identify must first create a need-satisfying marketing offer (product). It must decide how much it will charge for the offer (price) and how it will make the offer available target consumers (place). Finally, it must communicate with the target customers about the offer and persuade them of its merits (promotion).

#### **Marketing:**

Marketing is the business function that identifies customer needs and wants. Creating customer value and satisfaction are the heart of modern marketing thinking and practice. Marketing is the delivery of customer satisfaction at a profit.

Many people think of marketing only as selling & advertising. But selling & advertising are only the tip of marketing. Marketing means managing markets to bring about exchanges and relationships for the purpose of creating value and satisfying needs & wants.

Today, marketing must be understood not in the old sense of making a sale – ‘telling and selling’ – but in the new sense of satisfying customer needs. If the marketer does a good job of understanding consumer needs; develops products that provide superior value; and prices, distributes, and promotes them effectively, these products will sell very easily. Thus, selling and advertising are only part of a larger ‘marketing

mix” – a set of marketing tools that work together to satisfy customer needs and build customer relationships.

Broadly defined, marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. In a narrower business context, marketing involves building profitable, value – laden exchange relationships with customers. Hence, we define marketing as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong relationships in order to capture value from customers in return.

### Marketing Research

According to American Marketing Association, “Marketing Research is the function that links the consumer, customer and public to the marketer through information-information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems, generate, refine and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.”

Marketing Research is systematic problem analysis, model building and fact finding for the purpose of important decision making and control in the marketing of goods and services.

Marketing Research is a well-planned, systematic process which implies that it needs planning at all the stages. It uses scientific method. It is an objective process as it attempts to provide accurate authentic information. Marketing Research is sometimes defined as the application of scientific method in the solution of marketing problems.

Marketing Research plays a very significant role in identifying the needs of customers and meeting them in best possible way. The main task of Marketing Research is systematic gathering and analysis of information.

### Concept

In recent years, rural markets have acquired significance, as the overall growth of the economy has resulted into substantial increase in the purchasing power of the rural communities.

On account of green revolution, the rural areas are consuming a large quantity of industrial and urban

manufactured products. In this context, a special marketing strategy, namely, rural marketing, has emerged. But often, rural marketing is confused with agricultural marketing - the latter denotes marketing of produce of the rural areas to the urban consumers or industrial consumers, whereas rural marketing involves delivering manufactured or processed inputs or services to rural producers or consumers.

### Need for the Study

Rural markets constitute a significant portion of the population and offer immense growth opportunities for businesses. With rising incomes, improved literacy levels, better infrastructure, and increasing access to technology, rural consumers are becoming an attractive target segment for marketers. Understanding rural consumer behavior, purchasing patterns, and market dynamics is essential for organizations to develop effective marketing strategies. This study is needed to analyze the opportunities and challenges of rural marketing and to identify suitable approaches for reaching rural customers successfully.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the buying behavior of rural consumers.
2. To identify the needs and preferences of rural customers.
3. To analyze the growth potential of rural markets.
4. To help companies expand their market reach in rural areas.
5. To develop effective rural marketing strategies.
6. To improve product distribution in remote villages.
7. To understand the impact of pricing on rural consumers.
8. To evaluate the effectiveness of promotional activities in rural markets.
9. To examine the role of technology and digital marketing in rural areas.
10. To identify challenges faced by marketers in rural regions.

11. To support business growth through rural market penetration.
12. To increase awareness of products and services among rural consumers.
13. To contribute to rural economic development.
14. To help organizations make informed marketing decisions.
15. To promote inclusive and sustainable growth for businesses and rural communities.
16. To assess the influence of government schemes on rural consumption.
17. To understand changing lifestyles and consumption patterns in villages.
18. To create employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in rural areas.
19. To strengthen customer relationships and brand loyalty in rural markets.
20. To provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and business organizations.

### Scope Of The Study

The scope of this study is to examine the various aspects of rural marketing and its significance in today's business environment. It focuses on understanding the needs, preferences, and purchasing behavior of rural consumers, as well as the factors that influence their buying decisions. The study analyzes marketing strategies related to product development, pricing, promotion, and distribution in rural markets. It also explores the opportunities and challenges faced by organizations while serving rural customers. Furthermore, the study examines the impact of technological advancements, digital marketing, government initiatives, and rural development programs on market growth. The findings of the study provide valuable insights for businesses, marketers, researchers, and policymakers to develop effective strategies for improving market penetration, customer satisfaction, and sustainable growth in rural areas.

### Objectives Of The Study

1. To understand the concept and importance of rural marketing.
2. To analyze the buying behavior of rural consumers.
3. To identify the factors influencing purchasing decisions in rural areas.
4. To examine the needs and preferences of rural customers.
5. To study the marketing strategies adopted by companies in rural markets.
6. To evaluate the effectiveness of product, pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies.
7. To identify the opportunities available in rural markets for business growth.
8. To analyze the challenges faced by marketers in rural areas.
9. To examine the impact of technology and digital marketing on rural consumers.
10. To assess the role of government initiatives in the development of rural markets.
11. To study consumer awareness and acceptance of branded products in rural areas.
12. To provide suggestions for improving rural marketing practices and customer satisfaction.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design:

A research design is considered as the frame work or plan for a study that guides and helps the collection and analysis of the data.

A sound research is the basis of success of any formal research. It is said to be the blue print of the study conducted.

### Nature of the Data:

The data collected for the study was mainly primary in nature. There is first hand information which is customer opinion, towards the company products. Besides this secondary data was also collected from company brochures and company websites.

### Sources of Data:

Primary data was collected from the customers who are using **Heritage Foods (India) Limited** products in Hyderabad Rural.

Secondary data was collected from the company brochures and company websites.

#### **Methods of Data Collection:**

The method adopted to elicit information from customers is structured questionnaire that contains close, open ended questions. The reason for choosing the questionnaire method is primarily due to the qualitative nature of the study.

#### **Survey:**

Wide range of information about customer opinion, perception, and expectation is gathered through survey from Hyderabad Rural Area.

#### **Sampling Design:**

Sample Unit: The sampling unit is customers who are using **Heritage Foods (India) Limited** products, Hyderabad rural area.

Sample Size: The sample size is 100 customers in Hyderabad rural area.

Sampling Method: Random Sampling

#### **Limitations:**

1. The study is limited to selected rural areas and may not represent all rural markets.
2. Consumer preferences and buying behavior may vary across different regions.
3. The findings are based on the responses provided by the respondents, which may involve personal bias.
4. Limited availability of accurate and updated data may affect the results of the study.
5. Time constraints may restrict the depth and scope of the research.
6. Financial limitations may reduce the sample size and coverage area.
7. Rapid changes in market conditions and consumer behavior may affect the relevance of the findings over time.
8. The study may not cover all products and services available in rural markets.

9. Differences in literacy levels and awareness among respondents may influence the accuracy of responses.

10. The conclusions drawn are subject to the limitations of the research methodology and data collection techniques used.

### **III. REVIEW OF LITURATURE**

**Marketing research** is "the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information — information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications." Marketing research is the systematic gathering, recording, and analysis of data about issues relating to marketing products and services. The goal of marketing research is to identify and assess how changing elements of the marketing mix impacts customer behavior. The term is commonly interchanged with market research; however, expert practitioners may wish to draw a distinction, in that market research is concerned specifically with markets, while marketing research is concerned specifically about marketing processes.

Marketing research is often partitioned into two sets of categorical pairs, either by target market:

- Consumer marketing research, and
- Business-to-business (B2B) marketing research

Or, alternatively, by methodological approach:

- Qualitative marketing research, and
- Quantitative marketing research

Consumer marketing research is a form of applied sociology that concentrates on understanding the preferences, attitudes, and behaviors of consumers in a market-based economy, and it aims to understand the effects and comparative success of marketing campaigns. The field of consumer marketing research as a statistical science was

pioneered by Arthur Nielsen with the founding of the ACNielsen Company in 1923.

Thus, marketing research may also be described as the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis, and dissemination of information for the purpose of assisting management in decision making related to the identification and solution of problems and opportunities in marketing.

**Why Different Strategies?**

Rural markets, as part of any economy, have untapped potential. There are several difficulties confronting the effort to fully explore rural markets. The concept of rural markets in India is still in evolving shape, and the sector poses a variety of challenges. Distribution costs and non-availability of retail outlets are major problems faced by the marketers. The success of a brand in the Indian rural market is as unpredictable as rain. Many brands, which should have been successful, have failed miserably. This is because most firms try to extend marketing plans that they use in urban areas to the rural markets. The unique consumption patterns, tastes, and needs of the rural consumers should be analyzed at the product planning stage so that they match the needs of the rural people.

Therefore, marketers need to understand the social dynamics and attitude variations within each village though nationally it follows a consistent pattern. The main problems in rural marketing are:

- Understanding the Rural Consumer
  - Poor Infrastructure
  - Physical Distribution
  - Channel Management
  - Promotion and Marketing Communication
- Dynamics of rural markets differ from other market types, and similarly, rural marketing strategies are also significantly different from the marketing strategies aimed at an urban or industrial consumer.

**Strategies to be Followed**

**Marketing Strategy**

Marketers need to understand the psyche of the rural consumers and then act accordingly. Rural

marketing involves more intensive personal selling efforts compared to urban marketing. Firms should refrain from designing goods for the urban markets and subsequently pushing them in the rural areas. To effectively tap the rural market, a brand must associate it with the same things the rural folks do. This can be done by utilizing the various rural folk media to reach them in their own language and in large numbers so that the brand can be associated with the myriad rituals, celebrations, festivals, "melas", and other activities where they assemble.

**Distribution Strategy**

One of the ways could be using company delivery van which can serve two purposes - it can take the products to the customers in every nook and corner of the market, and it also enables the firm to establish direct contact with them, and thereby facilitate sales promotion.

However, only the bigwigs can adopt this channel. The companies with relatively fewer resources can go in for syndicated distribution where a tie-up between non-competitive marketers can be established to facilitate distribution. Annual "melas" organized are quite popular and provide a very good platform for distribution because people visit them to make several purchases.

According to the Indian Market Research Bureau, around 8000 such melas are held in rural India every year. Rural markets have the practice of fixing specific days in a week as Market Days (often called "Haats") when exchange of goods and services are carried out. This is another potential low cost distribution channel available to the marketers. Also, every region consisting of several villages is generally served by one satellite town (termed as "Mandis" or Agri-markets) where people prefer to go to buy their durable commodities. If marketing managers use these feeder towns, they will easily be able to cover a large section of the rural population.

**IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

1. Name Of The Brand People Think First In The Rural Retail Industry.

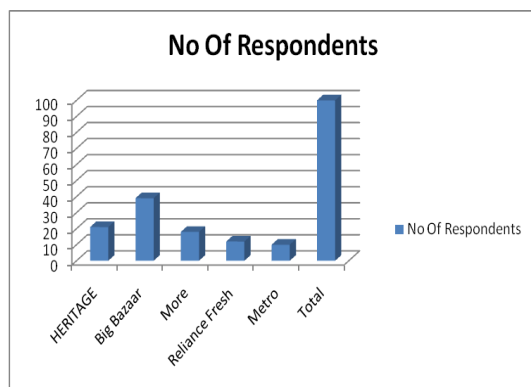
- A) HERITAGE
- B) Big Bazaar
- C) More
- D) Reliance Fresh

Sense of Question:

This question aims at finding the awareness of the people about HERITAGE in Rural Retail industry.

Table no:1

Brand	No Of Respondents
HERITAGE	21
Big Bazaar	39
More	18
Reliance Fresh	12
Metro	10
Total	100



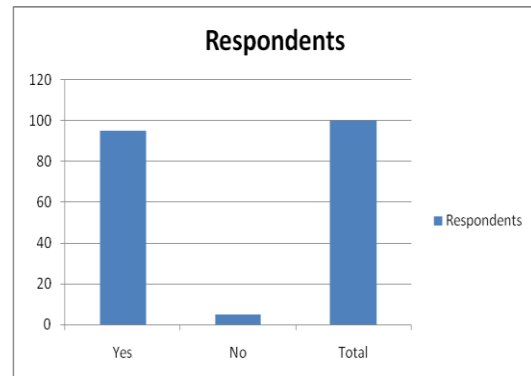
**INTERPRETATION:**

39% of the respondents are think Maruthi brand first in the industry  
 21% of the respondents are think HERITAGE brand first in the industry  
 18% of the respondents are think more brand first in the industry  
 18% of the respondents are think Reliance Fresh brand first in the industry  
 10% of the respondents are think Metro brand first in the industry

2 .Do You Hear about Heritage Rural Retail Outlets.

- A) Yes
- B) No

Options	Respondents
Yes	95
No	5
Total	100

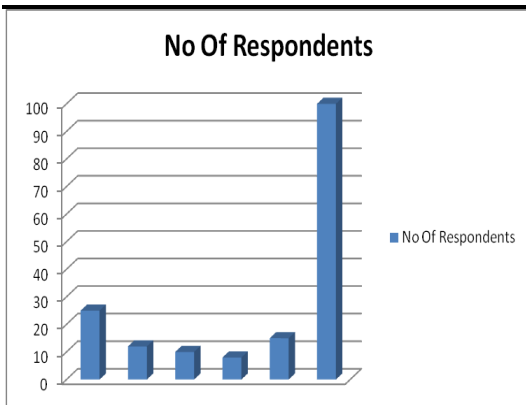


**INTERPRETATION:**

From the above table it is clear that 95% of the respondents Know about Heritage retail outlets

3. If Yes, Which Rural Retail Do You Know?
- A. HERITAGE
  - B. More
  - C. Big Bazaar
  - D. Reliance Fresh
  - E. others

Options	No Of Respondents
HERITAGE	25
More	12
Big Bazaar	10
Reliance Fresh	08
Others	15
Total	100



**INTERPRETATION:**

From the above table it is clear that

- 25% of the people owned HERITAGE
- 15% of the people owned Other
- 12% of the people owned More
- 10% of the people owned Big Bazaar
- 08% of the people owned Reliance Fresh

**V. FINDINGS**

- Most of the respondents are think Big Bazaar first in the Rural Retail industry and second is our Heritage Foods India Ltd.
- From the above research it is clear that 70% of the respondents are in Heritage
- The drive of HERITAGE is t taken by 61% of respondents
- Majority of respondent’s is 63% of the people satisfied with performance of the Heritage Foods India Ltd.
- 40% of the people rated that service of the Heritage Foods India Ltd is Average and they are t satisfied with after sales of Products due to huge rush at Outlet centres.
- 54% of the people feeling that Price of Heritage Foods India Ltd is same comparing to others
- Most of the respondents , 76% are feeling comfort and convenient with Outlets
- 67%of respondents feeling good with the Safety And Security Measures In HERITAGE Outlets
- 56% of respondents are feeling the pricing is high.

- 58% of respondents satisfied Good with Heritage Foods India Ltd
- 30% of respondent’s choice is HERITAGE among other brand.

**VI. CONCLUSIONS**

The research has brought to light various facts about customer perception on branding. The questionnaire that was contact customers to obtain their feedback had helped to understand customer needs and wants and their feedback is providing to maintain better customer relationship.

1. Among the communication options about customer awareness there is significance difference.
2. HERITAGE is maintaining a good position in the market among its competitors.
3. Almost customers preferring brand and price in buying FMCG.
4. Among the customer perceptions about HERITAGE is significance difference. Most of the customers feel happy and satisfied with it.
5. Most of the customers satisfied with HERITAGE Outlet service also.
6. Most of the customers rated the service is Above average
7. Most of the respondents are feeling comfort and convenient.

**VII. SUGESSTIONS**

- There is a need to improve service to customers for this purpose there is a need to open New service stations in twin cities. And provide best service.
- The Company should develop the promotional Strategies like Advertisement to capture more market.
- The company needs to develop the branding strategies in a publicity point of view, because public relations are more important than advertisement.

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