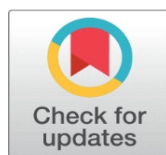
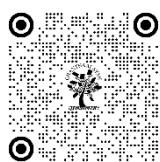


# RURAL MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING CONSUMERS PRODUCTS IN MANIPUR

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## ABSTRACT

Rural marketing is a process of economic development in which products are exchanging from rural to urban and urban to rural markets for consumers satisfaction. It is a growing market with lots of opportunities to the marketers due to its large number of populations. Rural marketing refers activities which are taken by the marketers to the rural consumers to encourage them to convert from purchasing power to effective demand for goods and services in rural market. Mostly marketing is the combined form of selling, advertising and public relations, but rural marketing is different from other type of marketing due to consumer buying behaviour. The present study is based on 4P's of marketing strategy in rural market is adopted. The required data are collected from two districts namely Imphal West and Imphal East with 160 respondents. The study applied statistic methods such as tables, percentage, ANOVA and t-test for the authentic result and to solve the hypothesis of the study.

**Keywords:** Economic development, growing market, rural marketing, advertising and public relations, 4P's of marketing

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Rural marketing can be defined as a combined form of all the required activities which can be converted from income level to effective demand by providing products and services for consumer satisfaction and making improvement for standard living to the rural people (Umamaheswari, 2018). Rural marketing means all the marketing activities which is performed in rural area. More than 70% of Indian population are staying in rural areas and villages. The increase of population means more opportunities to the rural marketers and they focusing on rural consumers need, requirement and maximum satisfaction level of the rural consumers (Shilpa, Kumar & Girish, 2023). In the recent years, rural market occupied the good position in the development of Indian economy due to increasing rural consumer purchasing power but the marketers faced the changes of consumer preferences frequently. The changes of rural marketing affect the changes of Indian economy and transformation of society into a growing world (Pande, 2022). Human being as a social animal, always did something to get something, marketing always play the role of consumer satisfaction to get their business objective (Dhran & Naik, 2018). Marketing always has three elements they are selling, advertisement and public

relation but rural marketing is different from urban marketing. Rural marketing has independent in nature and rural consumers buying behaviour always influence by its culture and traditions (Vij & Gupta, 2015). People think that rural marketing is about the agricultural marketing but in actual sense it is not. There is always two ways of marketing involved, urban to rural and rural to urban (Gulati & Swati, 2013). In another word, rural marketing is the process of developing, pricing, promoting, distributing and exchanging of goods between urban and rural products to make consumer satisfaction. In present, marketer targeted only the rural consumer and market because its large and less competition in comparison of urban market (Sultana, 2022). The rural marketing in India is a combined form of factors, such as social, historical, cultural, technological, economical and business etc (Pande, 2022).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

**STRATEGIES FOR RURAL MARKETING:** In rural marketing, many companies follows the various strategies such as product strategies, pricing strategies, cost strategies, distribution strategies and promotion strategies (Kumar & Gupta, 2017). It is a growing with speed and developing sector in Indian economy in comparison of urban marketing. It is because of large population, increase of rural consumer income level and became the source of revenue for the nation. In rural marketing, people think that everywhere is rural consumer and their like, belief, need and attitude will be the same but it's has different and unique nature of rural marketing. That's why a separate marketing strategy is needed both for rural and urban marketing (Hagargi, 2011). The market segmentation takes the important role in development of rural marketing that Indian villages are heterogeneous in nature and identification of needs and want of every region is different (Gopalaswamy, 2016). In the beginning, marketing strategy is denoted by 4Ps that is Product, Price, Promotion and Place. But now it's added another 'P' that is people. Without people market and marketing activities are impossible. The rural market and urban market is quite different. Rural market has their own nature which is adapted from its culture, habitat and geographical location. The study analysed the 4p's of marketing. To realise the rural consumers, rural marketing strategies can be analysed as follows:

**PRODUCT STRATEGIES:** The product design for rural marketing should be simple, small quantity with low cost and the brand name should be suite with the rural areas (Kaur, 2015). The rural consumers always want those products which are low price, high quality with multiple uses (Srivastava, 2021). They did not have a habitual to purchase large quantities with high price instead they purchase according to their income and living standard level. The product logo or symbols take the role to identify and differentiate the product from others to the rural consumers.

**PRICING STRATEGIES:** The price of a product or the service is the only means to create revenue to the marketers and manufacturer. The rural consumer always followed the optimum pricing strategy as per nature of the product and its quality (Srivastava, 2021). The rural consumer purchased the products in small quantities according to their income level. They buy what they need. They always targeted the low quantity with low price, matching quality with the price which they can efforts easily.

**PROMOTION STRATEGY:** The positive word from the local mouth is the key success of rural marketing and that can make comfortable and affordable for the rural consumers (Kaur, 2015). Communication takes the major role for promotional strategy that only 16% of rural population can read and understand newspaper, so video with audio must use to gives right information to the rural consumers (Katna & Khanna, 2016). Mass and the modern media is the medium for communication in modern era which includes television, radio, internet, cinema, print media etc. The other means for communications are wall painting, hat, mela, campaign and awareness etc. which provide information about the products. But still there are challenges in promotional strategy, such as gap of brand recognition, problems of indentifying logos, video and colour of the product by the rural consumers (Srivastava, 2021).

**PLACE STRATEGY:** To make product available into the consumers doorstep direct contact is needed (Kaur, 2015). The used of multiple distribution strategy depends on the product, target consumers, availability of logistics, product transportation and warehousing facilities needed for the rural consumers (Srivastava, 2021). Most of the marketers and manufacturers had special distribution system for rural consumers. This strategy is designed for rural consumers along with co-operative societies, public distribution system, distribution up to feeder market/melas, agricultural inputs dealers etc.

## CONSUMERS GOODS

Consumers goods are divided into two, such as durable and non durable. Durable consumer goods are those which has life span not less than 3 years with high cost, on the other hand non-durable consumer goods are those which has immediate consumption after buying by the consumer for to satisfied immediate want or desire, generally these goods has low cost. These non-durable consumer goods are also called FMCGs or fast moving consumer goods. In economic term, it is defined as tangible commodity produced and subsequently purchased by the consumer to satisfy the current desire.

### 3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rizi , Verma & Pandey (2016) observed that rural marketing is the brain of rural development activities. A little attention on planning and development can improve the rural advertising which are necessary to explore the rural economy in profitable way. The infrastructure, transports and communication are the major blocks for growth and development of rural products, marketing activities and rural market places. Sultana (2022) defined rural marketing is a process of developing, pricing, promoting, assessing products and exchanging goods between rural and urban markets to satisfy their consumers. She also studied the importance of rural environment and consumers studies to achieve the organisational goal. Shelpa, Kumar & Girish (2023) defined rural marketing is the all marketing in rural area. Marketers are interested in rural marketing due to large population and its opportunities but they need to study the rural people and their nature before entering into rural market. Bharti & Vinneeta (2017) have reported that there are lots of opportunities and challenges in rural marketing. To achieve these opportunities marketing strategies is necessary for the rural challenges. Vij & Gupta (2015) stated that rural marketing need to understand the psychology of rural consumers. For this the marketer adopted personal selling, product design, brand name etc which are base on rural folklore for more effective. The media also used rural language for mass coverage of rural consumers.

### 4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the people think that rural marketing is an agricultural marketing. But, in the modern marketing, rural marketing is very vast. It involved three marketing that is rural to urban, urban to rural and rural to rural. Consumers play very important role in marketing. Market exists because of consumers. The rural market is the largest market sector in India due to large population. In the beginning, rural market was avoided by the marketers but the companies know the importance to the development of economy and their revenue. In present, the marketers targeted the rural consumers and they apply different methods to understand the rural consumers and their want. For this, most of the companies segmented rural marketing as different culture, geographical reasons and rural consumer behaviour which is different from urban consumers. Thus the study trying to find out the convenience of consumers through 4P's of marketing in rural area of Imphal valley.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. For primary data, a structure questionnaire is developed with the help of observation of rural consumer behaviour, discussion and survey. Primary data are collected through personal interview with the rural respondents to ascertain the view and opinion regarding the various aspects of rural marketing strategies for promotion of consumer products and satisfaction. The secondary data are collected with the help of related books, journals, internet search, thesis and libraries.

The demographic profile of the questionnaire for the study included age, gender, income level, educational qualification, occupation etc. which are the major response for the formation of rural marketing strategies.

### 5. OBJECTIVE

- i) To study the demographic profile of the respondents.
- ii) To study the 4P's of marketing strategies in rural marketing from respondents.

**SAMPLE SIZE:** A sample of 160 respondents are collected from the rural area of two districts, namely Imphal East and Imphal West in equal number as Imphal East-80 and Imphal West-80 respectively.

**SAMPLING METHODS:** The required data are collected from the respondent randomly both from the villages of Imphal east and Imphal west districts of Manipur.

## HYPOTHESIS

**Ho1:** Age group of the respondents does not have a significant impact on the product strategies in rural marketing.

**Ho2:** Income level of the family members does not have a significant impact on the respondents' perception on price strategies.

**Ho3:** Respondents' occupation does not have a significant impact on the promotional strategies of rural marketing.

**Ho4:** There is no significant difference between respondents in Imphal East and Imphal West district on the place strategies on rural marketing.

## ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

**Table 1: Demographic profile of the study**

Particulars	Details	Imphal East	Imphal West	Total
Gender	Male	38	53	91
	Female	42	27	69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>
Age Group	20-25	14	10	24
	25-30	32	25	57
	30-35	25	21	46
	35-40	6	3	9
	40-45	3	8	11
	45 & above	0	13	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>
Education	Illiterate	3	5	8
	High school	5	4	9
	Higher secondary	13	7	20
	Graduate	23	35	58
	Post graduate	29	27	56
	Ph.D	7	2	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>
Occupation	Government employee	17	10	27
	Private employee	13	11	24
	Professional	2	5	7
	Agriculture	25	23	48
	Selfemployed	23	24	47
	Pensioner	0	7	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>
Income level	Below Rs. 10,000	22	31	53
	Rs. 10,000-15,000	21	8	29
	Rs. 15,000-20,000	13	6	19
	Rs. 25,000 and above	24	35	59
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>
Marital Status	Married	28	29	57
	Unmarried	51	49	100
	Divorce	1	2	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>160</b>

Sources: Computed from primary data

**INTERPRETATION:** Table-1 shows the demographic profile of the study which includes gender, age group, education, occupation, income level and marital status. It is the comparative study of Imphal East and Imphal West. In Imphal East, female respondent is more than the male respondent, whereas in Imphal West male respondents are more than the female respondents. Among the age group, 25-30 are more respondents from both the districts. In the educational level, post graduate is the more in Imphal East with 29 and graduate is more in Imphal West district with 35. Among the occupations, agriculture and self-employment is the maximum with 25 and 24 respectively. Both districts showed the highest income level as maximum respondents. At last, in marital status, unmarried is the highest respondents in both the districts with 51 and 49 respectively.

**Table 2: H<sub>0</sub>1:** Age group of the respondents does not have a significant impact on the product strategies in rural marketing.

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Before producing the products, marketers should conduct rural marketing survey.	Between Group	12.877	5	2.575	7.762	.000
	Within Group	51.098	154	.332		
	Total	63.975	159			
The producers should produce the same products in different quantities that are affordable by rural consumers.	Between Group	1.808	5	.362	.578	.717
	Within Group	96.385	154	.626		
	Total	98.194	159			
Products should have proper labelling about its contents and the manufacturing details of the product along with the pricing.	Between Group	3.059	5	.612	3.314	.000
	Within Group	28.434	154	.185		
	Total	31.494	159			
Products must be attractive to the consumers.	Between Group	22.695	5	4.539	10.356	.000
	Within Group	67.499	154	.438		
	Total	90.194	159			
Products must have proper packaging	Between Group	8.748	5	1.750	5.795	.000
	Within Group	46.495	154	.302		
	Total	55.244	159			

Source: *Computed from primary data*

\*Significant at 5% level of significance

**INTERPRETATION:** Table 2 shows the age group does not have significant impact on the product strategies in rural marketing. Among the given statements, five statements are rejected, they are 'Before producing the products, marketers should conduct rural marketing survey'  $F(5:159) = 7.762$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Products should have proper labelling about its contents and the manufacturing details of the product along with the pricing'  $F(5:159) = 3.314$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Products must be attractive to the consumers'  $F(5:159) = 10.356$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and 'Products must have proper packaging'  $F(5:159) = 10.356$ ,  $p < 0.05$  respectively. On the other hand 'The producers should produce the same products in different quantities that are affordable by rural consumers'  $F(5:159) = .578$ ,  $p < 0.05$  satisfied the hypothesis and only this statement is accepted.

**Table 3: H<sub>0</sub>2:** Income level of the family members does not have a significant impact on respondents' perception on price strategies.

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig
The price of the product should match with the quality and quantity of the product.	Between Group	3.822	3	1.274	3.022	.031
	Within Group	65.778	156	.422		
	Total	69.600	159			
Pricing should mostly base on what the consumer is willing to pay	Between Group	3.560	3	1.187	1.758	.157
	Within Group	105.284	156	.675		
	Total	108.844	159			
If price of the product increases, consumer gets attracted to alternative products.	Between Group	9.539	3	3.180	2.421	.068
	Within Group	204.861	156	1.313		
	Total	214.400	159			
Heavy discount as pricing strategy during festivals is quite attractive to the consumers	Between Group	1.938	3	.646	.825	.482
	Within Group	122.155	156	.783		
	Total	124.094	159			
Pricing strategy changes the consumer buying behaviour	Between Group	7.557	3	2.519	2.630	.052
	Within Group	149.387	156	.958		
	Total	156.944	159			

Sources: *Computed from primary data*

\*Significant at 5% level of significance

**INTERPRETATION:** Table 3 revealed the significant impact between income levels of the family members and the price strategy in rural marketing. Among the five statements, 'The price of the product should match with the quality and quantity of the product'  $F(3:159) = 3.022$ ,  $p < 0.05$  is not satisfied the null hypothesis and it is rejected. On the other hand, 'Pricing should mostly base on what the consumer is willing to pay',  $F(3:159) = 1.758$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 'If price of the product increases, consumer gets attracted to alternative products',  $F(3:159) = 2.421$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Heavy discount as pricing strategy during festivals is quite attractive to the consumers'  $F(3:159) = .825$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ' and 'Pricing strategy changes the consumer buying behaviour',  $F(3:159) = 2.630$ ,  $p < 0.05$  is satisfied the null hypothesis and these statements are accepted.



**Table 4: Ho3:** Respondents' occupation does not have a significant impact on the promotional strategies of rural marketing.

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean squares	F	Sig
Advertising of a product give necessary information to the consumer	Between Group	57.039	5	11.408	23.444	.000
	Within Group	74.936	154	.487		
	Total	131.975	159			
Good relation is necessary for batter future both for consumer and marketers	Between Group	62.890	5	12.578	37.756	.000
	Within Group	51.303	154	.333		
	Total	114.194	159			
Sometime the information from advertisement and actual information of the product is not matching	Between Group	8.926	5	1.785	3.689	.004
	Within Group	74.518	154	.484		
	Total	83.444	159			
Personal selling is a kind of force selling to the consumers	Between Group	5.635	5	1.127	3.619	.004
	Within Group	47.965	154	.311		
	Total	53.6000	159			
Increase of digital marketing help to increase purchasing products by the consumers	Between Group	33.671	5	6.614	21.615	.000
	Within Group	47.123	154	.306		
	Total	80.194	159			

Sources: *Computed from primary data*

\*Significant at 5% level of significance

**INTERPRETATION:** Table 4 shows the relationship between occupation and promotional strategies. The statements given in the table revealed that all the statements are not satisfied the hypothesis that is 'Advertising of a product give necessary information to the consumer'(5:159) =23.444,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Good relation is necessary for batter future both for consumer and marketers'(5:159) =37.756,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Sometime the information from advertisement and actual information of the product is not matching'(5:159) =3.689,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Personal selling is a kind of force selling to the consumers'(5:159) =3.619,  $p < 0.05$ , 'Increase of digital marketing help to increase purchasing products by the consumers'(5:159) =21.615,  $p < 0.05$ . So, these all are rejected.

**Table 5: Ho4:** There is no significant difference between respondents in Imphal East and Imphal West district on the place strategies on rural marketing.

Variable	Imphal East		Imphal West		t-value	p-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Improvement of infrastructure of the market place increases the level of demand and supply of goods.	4.10	.789	4.13	1.023	-.173	.863
Retailers and agents should take important role to make goods available on time in the rural market	4.36	.661	4.05	.980	2.366	<b>.019</b>
Having market place nearby increase the frequency of consumers to visit the market.	4.29	7.66	4.38	.682	-.763	.447
Home delivery service should be available to the consumers who are residing in the far flung remote area	4.47	.656	4.63	.487	-1.643	.103
Having different products in the same market place is more convenient to rural consumers	4.46	.693	4.33	.725	1.226	.222

Sources: *Computed from primary data*

Significant at 5% level of significance

**INTERPRETATION:** Table 5 presented t-test result of respondents from Imphal East and Imphal West districts on the place strategies on rural marketing. While comparing the mean differences of each variables of the place strategies, it was found that four variables i.e., 'Improvement of infrastructure of the market place increases the level of demand and supply of goods', 'Having market place nearby increase the frequency of consumers to visit the market', 'Home delivery service should be available to the consumers who are residing in the far flung remote area', and 'Having different products in the same market place is more convenient to rural consumers' did not differ significantly or the supposition of no mean differences were sustained. Whereas 'Retailers and agents should take important role to make goods available on time in the rural market' were rejected which revealed the hypothesis of no mean differences between the district.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Rural marketing strategy is a way to find the consumers choice of goods accordingly. It take an important role in economic development. The present study analysed the rural marketing on 4P's of marketing strategies within Imphal valley. The required data are collected from rural consumers of Imphal East and Imphal West randomly. The study revealed the changes of rural consumer lifestyle, income level and mostly the increased of literacy rate etc. and most of the rural consumers are not in agriculture as their occupations but now it is changed to self-employment and other job opportunities. Rural marketing offer lots of opportunities to the companies due to its large number of populations and interest of marketers are increasing day by day.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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