



## IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON KERALA RURAL CONSUMERS

### Management

**Mr. Jojo Joy**

Research Scholar, School of Management Studies, Noorul Islam University Kumaracoil, Kanyakumari District.

**Dr. M Sulaipher**

Assistant Professor, School of Management Studies, Noorul Islam University Kumaracoil, Kanyakumari District.

### ABSTRACT

Recent development has been going down in online promoting. The companies are taking lot of initiatives to change the attitude of rural customers. This paper can give insights to the companies about the impact of SMM efforts adopted to enhance the customer experience and perception of them in Rural India. This study will facilitate the marketer in understanding of however attitudes influence consumer behavior towards SMM in Rural India. Attitudes are measured using the Likert's scale to understand how the consumers behave towards the ads of products in social networking sites. The success of brands in rural area is unpredictable as rain. This can be as a result of, most of the companies extend marketing plans that they use in urban areas to rural market. There is emerging need of expertise in social media marketing of products. The study can establish the factors touching the attitude of consumers in rural Kerala.

### KEYWORDS:

Rural consumers, Attitudes, social media marketing, Perception

#### 1. Introduction

Digital technology is that the medium through which the companies grow their business. The digital channel is employed for promoting product and services and to succeed in consumers is called digital marketing. The trends of digital selling modified like mobility, social media, content marketing, search engine optimization and advanced analytics. The corporate analyzes the customer behavioral data. Multiple touch points have been identified when communication to customer is made on products and services. The touch points like radio, communities, sales force, television, mobile apps, e commerce, social networks, and direct mail. Indian rural sector shows intensive growth by the automation in their consumption. As Correa, Hinsley and Zuniga (2010) expressed most studies regarding the utilization of social media simply specialize in social networking sites. These sites are the virtual displays of user's profiles, which might be shared to form friend lists in order to keep up contact with them. Most users visit such sites to communicate with people with whom they are familiar. Social media marketing may be a method that permits individuals to present their own websites, products, or services through online social channels to communicate in a wide community and to listen that community, which is not possible with traditional advertising channels. Studies regarding social media and marketing with social media are quite new and few. An iProspect (2007) report stated that social networking sites have an effect on purchasing decisions of a meaningful percentage of internet users visiting these sites.

#### 2. Literature Review

The communications on digital marketing will enhance the ROI of marketing. Technological innovations results in transition from traditional marketing to digital marketing. Traditional marketing functions are increased by using internet to extend the data technology. Digital marketing means integrated communication made with customers using digital technologies. Palani and Yashodha in (2014) studied that education, gender, income has major role in mobile banking usage. The factors like trust, gender, culture, religion, security and price are inhibitors have an effect on the client mentality towards mobile banking to a little extent. Social networking sites form a novel channel in the field of communication. Based on a number of recent research evidence, According to DruryG may be argued that such sites can be considered as a brand new medium for promoting products or services, and as a method for increasing consumption and brand awareness. Within the past five years, the internet has modified the way people work, communicate and live. This new reasonably web is fed by new types of online content, applications and services called social media. As per Spyros Angelopolus and Antonis Kodajamanis consumer perception and attitudes towards advertising on social media, concerning the effectiveness of advertising mechanisms on social networking sites, and how consumers that are currently in the higher education react towards the phenomenon of "advertising mechanism". During this approach we have a tendency to take Tutens (2008)

argument on the link between social media and marketing. Tuten argues that social media as part of a marketing campaign will contribute to the brand awareness and improve its reputation image. He also notes the higher possibility of sales, the higher traffic to the brands website, and the overall enhancement of the fundamental marketing strategy. Bashar, Ahmad & Wasiq (2012) has done an empirical research to understand the effectiveness of social media as a marketing tool and an effort has been made to analyze the extent social media helps consumers in buying decision making. Results of the paper suggested that the medium is growing very fast and hold huge potential but is still in its nascent stage in India. Therefore, it is time for the companies to make effective strategies. Abhu Bashar, Irshad Ahmad, Mohammed Wasi (2012) through their study says the relationship of consumers demographic factors on the impulse buying behavior. The results showed that demographic factors such as income, age, educational qualification and gender produced an association with buying behavior. Dharmesh Motwani, Dr. Devendra shrimali & Ms. Khushbu Agarwal (2014) made an attempt to examine the extent of social media in influencing buying decision of customers and the study results social media not only make customers aware about brands but customers also prefer the brands advertised through social media while making final purchase. But there is no significant relationship between awareness and preference of brands promoted on social media sites. Dr. Ugur Bati in his study states social media marketing strategies permits interaction, connection, conversation, belonging and sense of community among its members. The social media may be a potential tool which will facilitate brands reach all new potential, but sometimes they need help has to how to use this power properly.

#### 3. Problem Statement-

The study has not been undertaken so far on knowing the impact of social media marketing tools in the perception of consumers in brand preference of Kerala rural sector.

#### 4. Objectives of Study

1. To explore the impact of SMM on consumers of rural Kerala.
2. To know about the consumers perception with social media marketing.

#### 5. Research Hypotheses-

1. H0- Age has no significant impact on usage of Social media in rural area.  
H1- Age has significant impact on usage of Social media in rural area.
2. H0- There is no correlation between consumer perception and the brand preference with relate to Social media marketing.  
H1- There is a correlation between consumer perception and the brand preference with relate to Social media marketing.

**6. Methodology**

The paper has used the primary and secondary sources of information. 100 samples have been collected from customers of rural areas of Kerala. The sampling technique is multistage sampling and the area is Wayanad. The survey has been conducted with the help of questionnaire. The statistical analysis technique used is descriptive, correlation and one way ANOVA for data analysis.

**7. Descriptive Data Analysis-**

**Table 7.1. Demographic factors of respondents**

Gender	Content	Frequency	Percent
	Male	79	79
	Female	21	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	Content	Frequency	Percent
	Below30	54	54
	30-40	30	30
	Above40	16	16
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Education	Content	Frequency	Percent
	UG	52	52
	PG	41	41
	Professional	7	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7.1 shows the demographic factors of respondents using social media and their interest in social media marketing, the percentage of male respondents is higher than female. Males are 79% among the respondents. The age-wise classification displays, mostly the age group from below 30 are responding to the survey. It shows these age groups are more influenced by SMM with the highest percent of 54. The education-wise study reveals in rural areas more people with a qualification of undergraduate degree.

**Table 7.2 Influence of social media among consumers**

Usage of social media	Content	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	78	78
	NO	22	22
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
Influence of Social media marketing in brand preference	Content	Frequency	Percent
	Yes	31	31
	NO	69	69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 7.2 represents the influence level of social media among rural consumers. 78 percent of the total respondents are agreed that they are using social media sites. This is because only 31 percent of the people are agreed that SMM has an influence among them for brand preference. The influence of social media marketing is low.

**8. Inferential Test**

Table 8.1 ANOVA test is used for understanding the significance of age group on the usage of social media.

Influence of social media marketing	Age Group in years			F	Sig
	Below 30	30-40	Above 40		
Brand Awareness	Mean	17.90	16.40	17.49	2.704
	SD	(2.39)	(3.16)	(3.72)	
Brand Preference	Mean	15.70	14.92	13.87	2.712
	SD	(3.17)	(2.34)	(2.84)	

Note: 1. \*\* denotes significant at 1% level  
 2. \* denotes significant at 5% level

Since 'P' value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected. This test result shows there is no significant difference among age group with the influence of social media marketing. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Table 8.2** Correlation test for the relationship between factors of consumer perception and brand preference with social media marketing.

Consumer perception	Brand Preference	Sig
Selective attention	.580(**)	.000
Selective Distortion	.714(**)	.000
Selective Retention	.584(**)	.000

The result shows that there is a correlation between consumer

perception and brand preference of consumer through social media marketing. The significance level is less than 1 percent level. It results a high correlation between these two factors.

**9. Findings-**

From the percentage analysis it is clearly understood that men are more influenced by social media than women. The usage of social media sites is high in rural areas too. But the influence of social media marketing tools in brand preference is not effective. The ANOVA test displays the influence of social media marketing is less among various age levels. The brand awareness and purchase decision of various age groups through social media marketing is comparatively low in rural areas than urban. Hypothesis 1, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. The correlation test stated that there is an influence of social media advertisements in the rural consumer perception. It shows the null hypothesis is rejected and there is a correlation between consumer perception and brand preference through social media marketing. But it is not so effective when compared with the ANOVA test. The analysis of data has indicated that the SMM has no substantial impact on Kerala rural areas. The brands have social media strategies but rural customers are not able to utilize the digital media effectively. They find comfort in using the traditional mode of purchase. The internet penetration in India is around 20%. The rural penetration in terms of internet usage is quite less. Social media marketing tools are not accepted in rural sectors. Further the awareness of social media for rural areas is quite low.

**10. Conclusion & Recommendation-**

The benefits underlying the use of social media marketing are based on customer perception of the brands. The consumption of information technology in buying of products will lead to a bright future of India from a business perspective. Indian Government has to increase the adoption rate of technology so that growth of industry can be sustained. The study can further be taken up for exploring the factors of SM marketing which inhibits the rural consumers in adoption of new purchase mode and technology.

**11. Limitation-**

Owing to lack of time and resources the researcher has been able to explore limited dimensions of SMM for future prospects of rural Kerala. Given a time in the future, more researches may be performed in the area of knowing more on workability of SM marketing models for growing business in rural India.

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