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## **AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF ADVANCED DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES ON THE GROWTH OF RURAL INDIA: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUNE DISTRICT**

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### **ARTICLE DETAILS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

New possibilities have arisen for both enterprises and consumers as a result of the fast growth of digital infrastructure in rural India. Research opportunities abound in the rural market since it is still in its early stages of development. At the moment, the market is still expanding. The data used in this study came from a mix of primary and secondary sources. Durable, high-quality items are more popular in rural markets. A creative mindset is necessary to provide a solid foundation for this rural market. The researcher has chosen 25 respondents from each hamlet so that the samples is representative. That amounts to a total of 400 buyers' representatives being chosen as survey respondents. The rewards will go to the one who shows inventiveness. From the study we can conclude that rural India's market is promising for the future. Advertising agencies like HUL also have a lot of room to grow. This study will greatly contribute to the establishment of a scientific foundation for rural market development and will serve as a focal point for rural marketing in India.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing features such as social media marketing, email marketing, affiliate marketing, on-demand video streaming, websites, search engine optimization, search engine marketing, and more. Many positive changes have occurred because of digital marketing's involvement. When we consider how shopping used to be done, we can see how much technology has altered the industry. Online retail has emerged as a serious competitor to traditional brick-and-mortar stores. There is clearly a transition to the digital realm. Because of digital marketing, small companies have been able to increase their revenue and reach by taking their operations online. Because of the high expense of conventional marketing methods like billboards and magazines, many small companies in the past were unable to expand their customer base. However, the advent of digital marketing has made expanding their customer base much more affordable and convenient. Small locals may now launch their own companies outside the constraints of geography, something that was previously unattainable in the era of conventional marketing thanks to the rise of the Internet and the advent of digital marketing. The advent of digital marketing has been a huge help to businesses in rural areas.

It helps our economy grow and thrive as well. Accenture, a multinational management consulting firm, predicts that India's GDP would increase by \$101 billion by 2020 because to the country's increased use of digital technology. In addition to freelancing, digital marketing allows you to launch your own website and generate income through online advertising. Since starting a digital marketing campaign requires very little capital, it has helped a plethora of rural business owners expand their operations. Even in remote areas without roads, individuals may access the internet and stream films directly to their mobile devices or computers. It's why companies will put more resources into online advertising. Therefore, a startup's marketing plan should highlight the company's strong digital approach. It would be irresponsible to suggest that conventional marketing strategies be ignored in favor of digital ones. As a result, it's clear that the two promotional strategies complement one another.

In the last fifty years, the market for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) has taken form. In India, the economy will collapse without this sector. It touches on everything that makes up a human being. The FMCG industry in India is quite diverse. Over half of consumers prefer generic versions of store-bought goods. Branded goods are catering to the remaining customers. Slowly but surely, the rural customer is shifting his preferences from generic to name-brand products. According to a survey done by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the number of middle-class households in both rural and urban regions is about equal. For publicity, Hindustan Unilever Ltd. relies almost solely on its own carefully orchestrated channels. The stockiest of them all plan these gatherings. The percentage of GDP that comes from agriculture has been steadily decreasing over the last several years. This is because much of India had very little rain during the monsoon, which greatly reduced crop yields throughout the country. Furthermore, we have lower agricultural yields than industrialized nations due to our reliance on time-tested farming practices.

With its unprecedented reach and engagement, digital marketing has revolutionized how companies function. Lack of knowledge, digital literacy, and infrastructure constraints are just a few of the challenges that rural India continues to confront, in contrast to the rapid



adoption of these innovations in metropolitan regions. Examining the role of cutting-edge digital marketing tactics on rural India's economic growth is the primary objective of this research. It provides data-backed insights into the efficacy of various techniques by investigating the effects of digital technologies on SMEs, agricultural markets, and local craftspeople. Furthermore, the report highlights obstacles and proposes strategic solutions to promote equitable digital development.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Ranjan, K.R. (2023)** many people still think of India as a rural nation, even though it has the fastest-growing economy in the world. Half of India's population still resides in over 6.5 million villages, where they rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihood. With better infrastructure, cities and villages became closer to one another. The internet and mobile devices made it easier for people in rural India to move to cities. People in rural areas were motivated to start again because of this. There have been many strategies used by telecom companies in their pursuit of rural market dominance. It is obvious that service providers are drawn to rural areas due to their potential.

**Ranjan, K.R. (2022)** e-commerce is seeing a surge in online purchasing. Thanks to improvements in network connection and smart mobile phones, consumers now have more options for how and where they may shop online. Various web-based shopping programs, including Myntra, Amazon, Flipkart, and others, make shopping easy for customers. Retailers may reach out to consumers with a range of incentives that encourage them to purchase online thanks to the advancements in technology. This test paper makes use of the premise of planned behavior to help students understand how customers behave while shopping online. Online shopping habits and customer satisfaction among Patna inhabitants are the primary foci of this study report.

**Sugashini, S. (2022)** The marketing method has recently included online shopping. The advent of global electronic marketing is a monumental, paradigm-shifting development. Shoppers in India utilize it on their computers, mobile phones, and with their taps. Finding the best online shopping sites in Nagercoil city and understanding what factors impact online consumers' choices are the key objectives of this research. Customers have more alternatives when they purchase online compared to when they visit brick-and-mortar stores. It is often known as "online shopping" when one purchases goods and services over the World Wide Web. Due to its many advantages, the internet is being used by many consumers. The time, effort, and money saved by doing one's shopping online is substantial. In addition, the thinking and buying habits of the buyer are the most important factors in online shopping.

**Dewangan & Pandey (2021)** there has been a significant surge in the number of people using the internet in rural areas since major telecom companies began measures like reducing the price of data packs. The advent of reasonably priced cellphones has also been beneficial. With the advent of digital marketing, this unrealized potential in rural areas may be reached. This study delves into the many digital marketing channels available and identifies items that may take use of these channels to reach a new audience of consumers. Methods for investigating the possibilities of digital marketing in rural regions are still in their infancy, but the topic is vastly uncharted and has enormous unrealized promise.



**Babita, R. & Rekha, N. (2024)** with the rise of digital marketing, conventional marketing tactics are being progressively supplanted as an integral aspect of modern corporate marketing strategies. With digital marketing, marketers may learn more about consumers' likes, dislikes, and choices via messaging, alerts, emails, and reminders, which is crucial for keeping in touch with customers before, during, and after a transaction. Digital marketing is already crucial for companies, and it's only going to become more so as technology keeps getting better and more people use digital platforms. The purpose of this article is to shed light on the present situation of digital marketing in India by discussing the pros and cons that companies encounter when they move their attention to online platforms.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study's overarching goal is to obtain a better understanding of digital marketing and how enterprises in rural regions is using it to raise product awareness, drive sales, and differentiate themselves from the competition. This article provides an overview of the state of digital markets in rural regions today, as well as an examination of the possibilities and threats facing firms who make the move into rural areas. In order to narrow the scope of this study, only 8 of Pune District's 14 talukas is include in the research. The metropolitan city of Pune is also the district capital; therefore, these eight talukas is choosing since they are easily accessible from the metropolis. These talukas also showcase a range of socioeconomic statuses existing in Pune district.

#### 3.2 Sample Size

The researcher is has chosen 25 respondents from each hamlet so that the samples is representative. That amounts to a total of 400 buyers' representatives being chosen as survey respondents.

#### 3.3 Data Collection

We are using both primary and secondary sources to compile the information for this study.

- **Primary Data:** Villagers from each of the eight talukas were chosen at random to provide the primary data. Five respondents, chosen to represent a cross-section of the identified respondents, were administered the finished questionnaire in order to gather primary data from the identified respondents. After making certain adjustments, the same was sent to the remaining responders. We translated the questionnaire into Marathi since the peasants who filled it out probably wouldn't have understood it if it had been given to them in English.
- **Secondary data:** Information made public by means of annual reports Books, reports, journal articles, prior research papers, Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (HUL) annual reports, interviews with company marketing executives, and a small number of shop owners from the identified villages who sell these HUL products were used to gather secondary data.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

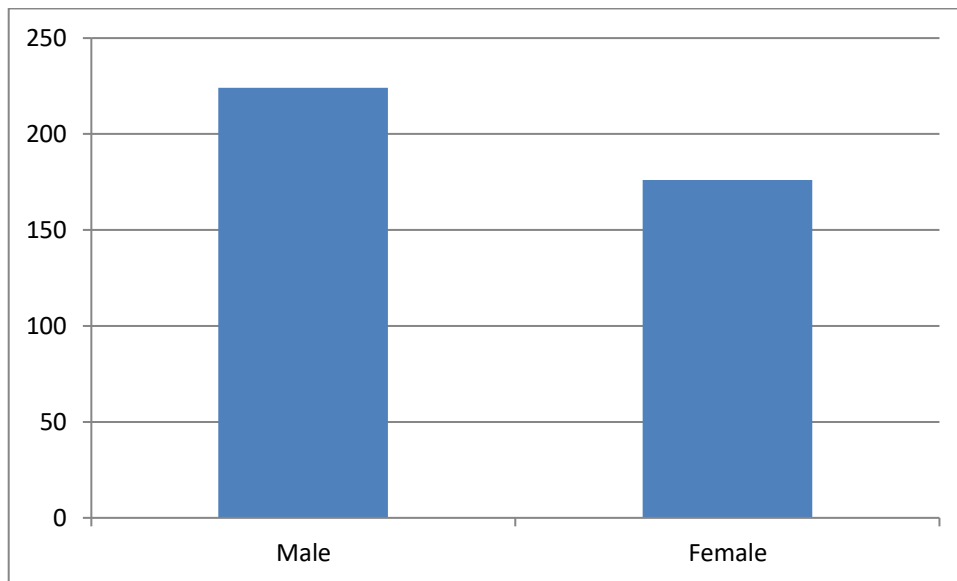
### 4.1 Demographic Data Presentation of Villagers'

- **Genderwise classification of the respondents**

The products consumption pattern is affected by the respondents' gender categorization. For instance, it stands to reason that a household with a larger number of female members would also have a higher cosmetics consumption rate. Here is the data that the researcher requested, keeping this factor in mind:

**Table 1: Genderwise classification of respondents**

Male	Female	Total Nos.
224	176	400



**Fig. 1: Genderwise classification of respondents**

According to the statistics shown above, males made up 54% of the respondents' households and females the remaining 46%.

- **Considerations that is important to the respondents while making a purchase:**

It was critical to grasp this element. Several variables influenced consumers' purchasing choices. For the marketing group to formulate a strategy that targets these specific areas, a thorough understanding of this component was required.

**Table 2: Considerations that is important to the respondents while making a purchase**



Sr.No.	Factors	Notatall important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Total
1	Quality	12	38	123	179	48	400
2	Price	14	56	90	168	72	400
3	Appearance	135	68	114	67	16	400
4	Durability	68	26	72	186	48	400
5	Availability	7	38	145	132	78	400
6	Credit facility	18	48	182	88	64	400
7	Recommendations from friends/ relatives	29	68	206	82	15	400
8	Availability of gifts	89	121	88	59	43	400

The product's quality was appreciated by 56.75 percent of the respondents. A total of 60% of respondents rated price as important, while 0% rated appearance. 58.5 % of respondents rated durability as important, and 0% rated the credit facility or recommendations from friends and family as very important when making a decision. Regarding the availability of presents, it was the same story.

- **Products from HUL that is available in rural areas:**

Even if the commercial is well-made, it won't do much good if the items aren't really available. In light of the importance of this contribution, the following data has been compiled and made available:

**Table3: Availability of HUL Products at the rural area**

Product	Never available	Rarely available	Can't say	Mostly available	Always available	Total
Lux/Lifeboy	0	18	50	132	200	400
Rin/Wheel	0	15	35	142	208	400



Pepsodent/Close up	0	20	250	95	35	400
Clinic +/Sunsilk	65	35	28	240	32	400
Taj Mahal Tea/Taaza	83	64	226	15	12	400

In remote areas, you could generally find Lux, Lifebuoy, Rin, and wheel in the market. In contrast to the ubiquitous Sunsilk shampoo in sachet packaging, Pepsodent and Close up tooth paste were almost never seen. Due to low demand, products like Clinic + shampoo and Taj Mahal Tea/Taaza were in short supply.

#### 4.2 Data from the Rural Shopkeepers

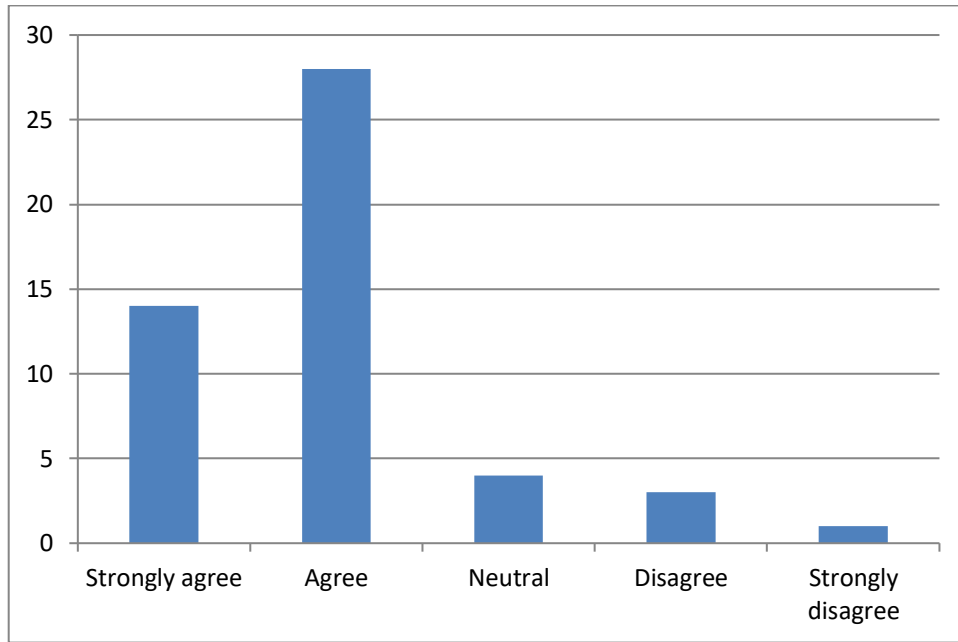
Primarily, we polled the people who stood to gain the most from the rural marketing situation improvement: the customers. The consumers shared their own views on the statements included in the survey by means of the questionnaire that was given to them. Nevertheless, rural store keepers are an integral element of the marketing system, just like individual consumers. Store keepers may influence sales by relaying the collective impression of consumers based on their interactions with customers.

- **HUL products' quality is very good and hence consumers prefer them**

Some businesses, like Godrej and ACC, are completely committed to doing the right thing at all times. Another firm that fits this description is HUL. The reputation of the organization has been built on its commitment to maintaining excellent product quality. Data research has shown us that customers care about product quality and consider it a major factor when making a purchase. The quality of HUL products has been proven time and time again. This score was included because the researcher wanted to hear the respondents' thoughts on it.

**Table 4: HUL products' quality is very good and hence consumers prefer them**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
14	28	4	3	1	50



**Fig.2: HUL products' quality is very good and hence consumers prefer them**

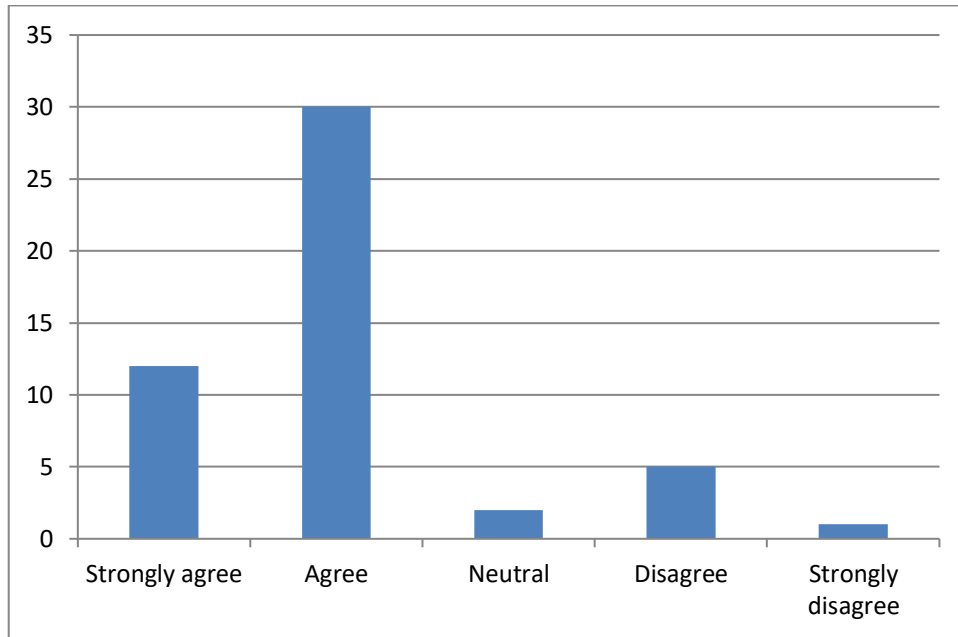
Eighty-four percent of those who took the survey gave their enthusiastic approval of the claim. The assertion is valid because most responses are agreeing with it. Eight percent were agnostic, and eight percent were in severe disagreement.

- **Consumers prefer HUL products because HUL is the oldest Multinational Company in India and has earned a good reputation in the market**

An established marketing firm with a lengthy history in India is Hindustan Unilever Ltd. As a result, even those living in rural areas know its name. In the market, the firm has an excellent reputation. Because of this, HUL goods are preferred by people who trust in their quality.

**Table 5: Consumers prefer HUL products because HUL is the oldest Multinational Company in India and has earned a good reputation in the market**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
12	30	2	5	1	50



**Fig.3: Consumers prefer HUL products because HUL is the oldest Multinational Company in India and has earned a good reputation in the market**

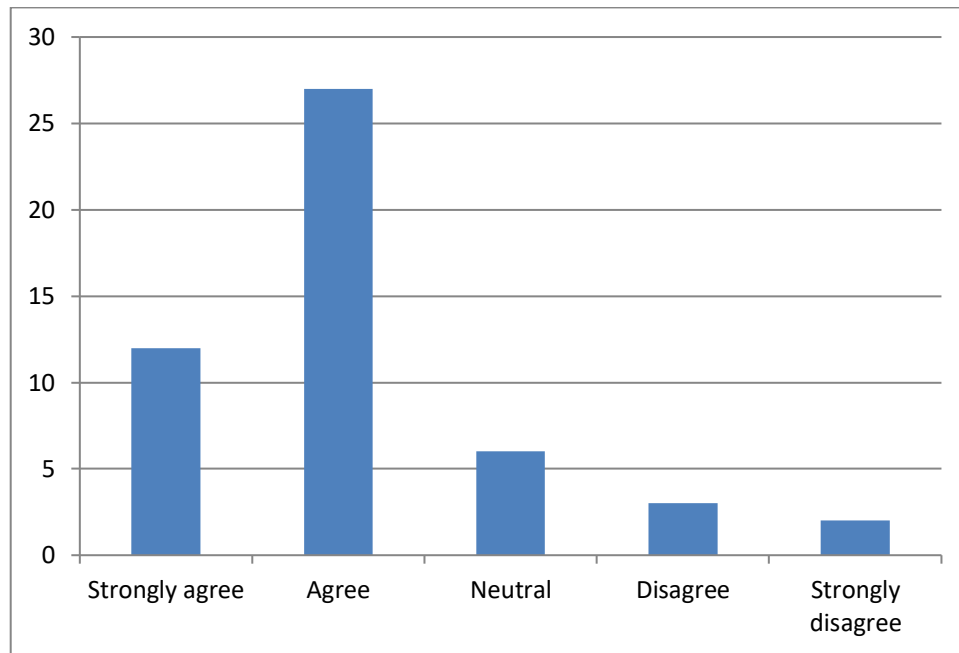
An overwhelming majority of responders (84% to be exact) agreed with the statement. The assertion is valid since most replies were reiterating the stance. Only 4% were agnostic, while 12% were in severe disagreement.

- **Company’s name satisfies the rural consumers who think that it is an Indian company**

Since the corporation is called "Hindustan Unilever Ltd.," the locals, who have a decent level of education, assume that it is an Indian company. The term Hindustan is misleading to the public. It is an international corporation, in fact. Consequently, the rural populace believes they are supporting an Indian enterprise when, in fact, they are not. The corporation benefits from the widespread misunderstanding among rural residents. We provided the comment to help you comprehend the village store proprietors' attitude.

**Table 6: Company’s name satisfies the rural consumers who think that it is an Indian company**

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
12	27	6	3	2	50



**Fig.4:Company's namesatisfiestheruralconsumerswhothinkthatitisanIndian company**

According to the statistics, 78% of the shopkeepers in the hamlet agreed with the statement, thus it must be true. Twelve percent were agnostic, and ten percent were in severe disagreement.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that rural consumers in developing marketing economies have a lot of untapped potential. To tap into this market, a creative and well-planned marketing strategy is needed, one that prioritizes product suitability, relationship building, promotion, and distribution. Rural India's buying power has skyrocketed in the last few decades, thanks to the country's booming economy. Despite the fact that rural India's economy has benefited from improved digital marketing methods, obstacles including a lack of digital literacy and inadequate infrastructure continue to be obstacles. The rise of data-driven marketing, AI-based targeting, and social media penetration has had a profound impact on customer behavior, opening up new opportunities for companies in rural areas. But to overcome these obstacles and make sure that digital marketing stays in rural India for the long haul, it will need a joint effort by politicians, companies, and digital platforms.



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