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Genesis of Effective Rural Communication for Development: A Pragmatic Study on India

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ABSTRACT:

Rural segment also known as the BOP (Bottom of Pyramid) segment, in India has lately become an area that corporates' just can't afford to ignore. The dynamics of rural segment is worth studying. The products that are offered to rural consumers may or may not be different, but the way these products are marketed ought to be very different. Marketers always look for innovative ways to make their presence felt. But, what could be the possible communication strategy to reach the huge market at Bottom of the Pyramid. The regional disparities are many and there is a need for customized communication strategy. While a lot of thrust is being given to the marketing strategies for rural markets, especially distribution and packaging aspects, little is being talked about the specific communication strategies required there. This article intends to address this specific issue, that is, typical communication strategies that one needs to adopt to reach the consumers at the Bottom of the Pyramid. This article highlights the importance of having a specific communication strategy for the Indian BOP market. Attempts are made to fish-out important learnings' from the analysed cases with the help of which a framework for communicating effectively with the BOP markets can be designed.

INTRODUCTION:

The census of India defines rural as any habitation with a population density of less than 400 per sq.km., where at least 75 per cent of male working population is engaged in agriculture and where there exists no municipality or board. Of the nearly 6.4 lakh villages in India, only 20,000 villages have populations more than 5,000. Leaving aside Hindustan Lever and ITC, most companies in the FMCG sector would define rural as any place with a population up to 20,000. Similarly, durable and agri-input companies would consider any town with a population below 50,000 as rural.

Companies face many challenges in tackling the rural markets, some of the more critical being: understanding rural consumers, reaching products and services to remote rural locations and communicating with vastly heterogeneous rural audiences. Sadly, not many companies have invested sufficient effort and money in research and nor have they spent enough time in the field to understand rural consumers, their values, aspirations, needs and usages habits. Marketing is all about 'getting to know your customer', but having largely ignored this cardinal principle, most corporate in rural markets find that success has eluded them.

The effectiveness of rural marketing communications, to a large extent is influenced by the media habits of the rural consumers. Though all types of media is being used in rural area, in view of low level of literacy, audiovisual media- radio, TV and films assume major importance. For this reason most of the marketers prefer mass media to reach rural audiences, however, Mass media, which might work wonders in urban areas, cannot be that effective in the rural masses. This is primarily because of shortage of electricity, language diversity. To communicate effectively with rural audiences, it is important to understand, the aspirations, fears and hopes of the rural customers, in relation to each product category, before developing a communication package to deliver the product message. This study is an attempt to understand current trends in rural communications in India and thereby identify related prospects and problems. For a conceptual overview, relevant literature in this area was studied. To gain an insight into current practices, communication strategies employed by various manufacturers and service providers through secondary sources were compiled. The study provides an empirical view of the range of communications employed by the various corporates' in the Indian rural market. Some differences in trends are found across FMCG, Consumer Durable and Service sectors. A detailed description of each type of communications is provided along with a suitable package of communication strategies are suggested for various sectors to communicate effectively to reach the rural audiences.

The study ends with the broad conclusions and implications of this research.

The most crucial element in Marketing Mix as Philip Kotler calls is Communication and
as Jagadish Sheth calls is Awareness. The marketing communication must be in a language that target customers understand and relate to. The marketing communication has to vary from region to region, using diverse languages. Companies should focus on areas with high population concentration and use non-conventional methods while communicating with their target customers. The biggest challenge before the marketers particularly in the developing markets is to reach two things from their side up to their target Bottom of the Pyramid (henceforth referred to as BOP) market, viz, their products and their messages. So far managers have been emphasizing and attempting only on distribution of goods and services effectively which made them work on establishing distribution channels. It is only in the recent past that they realized the importance of connecting themselves with their target markets at BOP through effective messages. Thus, there gained momentum for creating a specific and effective BOP Marketing Communication Strategy (BMCS).

Introduction to BMCS

One of the most significant components of the BOP marketing strategy is communicating with the target BOP markets. The success of the strategy will be mostly dependent up on the effective communication efforts put forth by the marketers. If the messages are not properly sent to the receivers, the marketing initiatives may not yield proper results. If the biggest marketing task before a BOP marketer is to shape the perceptions of the BOP customers in favour of company's products or brands, then it is mostly possible through meticulously planned communication format. Various other tasks like building relationships with the customer groups, persuading them to alter their buying and consumption patterns, influencing their behaviour, etc. highly depend upon the way the whole communication exercise is taken up.

Media selection, consideration of local cultures, languages, beliefs and value systems, overcoming the barriers, etc. form an important part of BOP communication strategy. With all such critical aspects kept in mind, if one proceeds to design and implement an appropriate BOP overcoming the barriers, etc. form an important part of BOP communication strategy. With all such critical aspects kept in mind, if one proceeds to design and implement an appropriate BOP communication strategy, one may succeed in creating the market base and influencing the consumer decisions positively.

BMCS, expanded as *BOP Marketing Communication Strategy* 1 (henceforth referred to as BMCS) requires clearly defined communication objectives which are based on the company's vision and mission. The sole goal of BMCS must be to enable the company or sender to interact with the target audience. But at the same time it is the biggest challenge as well. BMCS may be understood as —the systematic way of conceiving and disseminating marketing related messages to achieve the predetermined BOP marketing objectives‖. In addition, the definition of BMCS provides clues about proper selection of media, consideration of language & cultural issues and other BOP market characteristics in designing an appropriate BOP communication strategy. The end part of the definition makes it clear that all this should be done in line with the company's marketing objectives.

Why a Separate Communication Strategy?

An effective communication strategy involves planning, implementing and evaluating the process of sending messages to target audience and receiving the feedback to achieve the set communication objectives. As BOP marketing is different from general marketing, the marketing communication must also be different. Marketing communication as such is a very difficult task and particularly communicating with the customers who are innocent, ignorant, less knowledgeable, poorer, and skeptical, who need to be educated, for whom most of the common goods are very new (the concept of virgin markets), it is not a very easy task. The marketers must keep in place specific communication tools, models and strategies for succeeding in their BOP communication effort. The messages need to be tailored according to their cultures. Their sentiments need to be addressed very cautiously and not to be hurt. Hence, there is a need for separate BOP Marketing Communication Strategy and a separate communication model.

Advertising goes hand in hand with economic growth. With economic liberalization and increasing rural prosperity, marketers are keen to inform villagers about the benefits of buying and consuming their products and services. Prior to the introduction of economic liberalization in 1990s, there was little incentive for marketers to advertise their products and services, as rural markets were predominantly a seller's market.

The influence of the electronic media, in particular television, video and the Hindi film industry, is contributing to the growth of rural aspirations, which are being manifested in rural India in the form of increasing consumerism.

The rural environment is different from the urban and therefore communication to potential customers in a proper and effective manner is a major challenge for corporate marketers. The majority of advertisements designed by corporate marketers, are largely urban oriented and extend themselves to rural areas without any consideration to the values and sensitivities of the rural audience, which are often in striking contrast to those of their urban counterparts. This has led to a negative perception in the minds of villagers, about urban media planners and advertisers.

Rural communication is not a 'peripheral activity'. It does not, for instance, involve taking an audio-visual van to a village and assuming that this step is enough to reach out to customers. It requires an entirely different mindset, which demands getting rid of many mental barriers. Companies have to realize that rural is a long-haul market, as gains in the short term are neither immediate nor large.

Developing Effective BMCS

The managers proceeding towards developing effective BMCS may have to keep in mind the following aspects:

Message Design: This is most crucial part of developing a communication campaign. Various issues like levels of knowledge among the target audience, local issues and many more specific BOP market issues which have been mentioned earlier in this paper must be kept in mind while designing appropriate message.

Message Format: The managers concerned must take all care in various critical aspects like, message design, copy layout, colour, words, sounds, etc. It would generate results if the ad copy possesses more of pictures rather than words and text.

Choosing Media: In BOP areas, media includes, haats, local mandis, local small kirana/grocery shops, village centre, Primary Health Care Centre, School, Government office, community halls, etc. In various villages in Andhra Pradesh, the villagers are given information right from weather to rainfall to prices of various agriculture produce in the nearest grain market, etc. written on a black board meant for that purpose placed in front of the office.

Selection of Message Source: This is the most important part of BOP communication. In the
BOP communication model it is suggested to make use of opinion leaders like, the Surpanch, the village priest, heads of different castes or communities, the Village Secretary and the Head Master as the source. While selecting the source, following points must be considered:
• Highly credible sources persuade more, and more easily
• A poor source can damage the effort than contribution

Collecting Feedback: It is obvious that the most important part of any communication efforts is to encourage feedback. Same in the case of BOP communication.

Socially Responsible BOP Communications: An effective marketing communication must
essentially follow some ethics. This includes, avoiding false and deceptive messages, avoiding bait-and-switch techniques they usually apply on urban customers, avoid communicating only with few sects or segments of the markets leading to controversies, providing fair information, etc. This is important because, the BOP masses are comparatively innocent and ignorant and once they get doubt on a source, they will never turn towards that source. The marketers must remember that the BOP customers are highly sensitive.

Communication for Rural Development: An Overview

Rural development concerns usually focus on determining what rural people need in order to move up the socio-economic ladder. Most interventions revolve around investments and technologies that would improve livelihood, and the inputs necessary to put these technologies into use. While these are considered necessary conditions to help bring about development, they are not necessarily sufficient to sustain the desired progress.

Development efforts in recent years have started to focus on other equally important factors such as human capacity and access to relevant information, knowledge and services. Documented experiences and lessons from the field have in fact indicated that development tends to fail for two basic reasons (Mefalopolus, 2008):
• lack of participation
• ineffective communication

This has increasingly drawn attention from purely technological aspects to the **institutional and social gaps** that can affect rural development, such as (Leeuwis and Hall, 2010):
• lack of information and knowledge about correct technologies and practices for managing the fragile natural environment;
• unresolved social and political conflicts that prevent communities from working together to address communal needs and interests;
• far-flung and isolated rural communities with no access to information that could help them prepare for any eventuality;
• poor skills or capacity of rural actors to undertake development initiatives on their own;
• weak capacity of local institutions to respond to local needs;
• lack of physical and social infrastructures support at the local level that would enable to enhance human and social capital.

In all the above, it is clear that the element of good communication becomes part of the solution. Responding to these challenges requires a combination of immediate, medium and long-term measures directed towards:
• strengthening rural knowledge institutions;
• improving knowledge and information sharing among the variety of rural actors and stakeholders (national agricultural research and extension systems, educational institutions, private service providers, grassroots organizations, NGOs, etc.);
• encouraging people's participation to promote concerted action.

Rural development involves **participatory innovation and social learning**. For innovation, it makes use of small-scale, low-cost and simple technologies made possible by whatever resources local communities have. For social learning, stakeholders engage in processing lessons gained from experience and share these among themselves as a basis for improving practices. Building local capacity therefore begins with the identification of local talents, good practices and know-how within rural communities. This requires **multi-stakeholder participation and dialogic communication.** People's empowerment, both as a means and an
end, lies at the heart of this approach to rural development where information, knowledge and communication are to be considered strategic assets (FAO, 2010).

COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT (ComDev):

As defined during the World Congress on Communication for Development in 2006:

"ComDev is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. ComDev is about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications."

To better define ComDev, Table 1.1 summarizes the purpose, functions and required competencies of different communication approaches commonly encountered in development organizations.

Table 1.1 ComDev compared with other communication approaches

Feature	Corporate Communication	Integral/ Organizational Communication	Advocacy Communication	Communication for Development
Purpose/Defi nition	Communicates the mission and activities of the organization, mostly for external audiences	Facilitates the flow of information within an institution, organization or project (sometimes this area can be included in corporate communication)	Influences change at the public or policy level and promotes issues related to development	Seeks sustainable social change by engaging and empowering relevant stakeholders
Main Function	Uses media outputs and products to promote the mission and values of the institution; informs selected audiences about relevant activities	Ensures timely and effective sharing of relevant information within the staff and institution unit; enhances synergies and avoids duplication	Raises awareness on hot development issues; uses communication methods and media to influence specific audiences and support the intended change; promotes participation in new policies and change	Supports equitable access to information, knowledge and communication resources; facilitates participation, dialogue and collective action
Required Core Competencies	Public relations, institutional communication, excellent writing skills, press releases, broad media network contacts	Institutional communication, excellent writing skills, web and internet skills	Public relations, marketing, experience in media campaigns and advocacy campaigns	Communication research, participatory approaches, adult education, community media, consultations and facilitation skills

What makes ComDev unique and different from other communication approaches is its participatory and holistic view of development. It does not merely address behaviour change through one-way communication, but calls for an integrated approach based on **two-way, interactive and participatory communication processes.** This builds on the understanding that communication and participation are two sides of the same coin.

Likewise, ComDev emphasizes and supports the active engagement of stakeholders in defining their problems, identifying alternative solutions and negotiating often difficult options. Rather than solely focusing on the media and technologies used, it encourages **stakeholders' empowerment through dialogue, knowledge exchange and mutual learning**.

In sum, ComDev is NOT:
• a one-way, top-down transfer of information;
• technology transfer or diffusion of innovations;
• just a matter of getting the message right or mounting public awareness campaigns;
• a social marketing effort persuading to adopt new behaviours.

COMDEV's ROLE IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Communication for development can be applied in the rural sector as a crosscutting approach to address key interrelated issues such as natural resource management, agricultural innovation, food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation, disaster risk management, among others. Such issues can only be addressed in an integrated manner through collective decision making and collaboration among different actors.

For this to happen, rural stakeholders must be deliberately involved to have a say and dialogue with other sectors of society. For example, pollution of rivers and waste management cannot be solved alone by government agencies mandated to do the job. Households, industries, farmers, fishers, policy makers and law enforcers among others, have to discuss and consider varying viewpoints and stakes. Similarly, coping with a changing climate and managing the risks brought about by its disastrous effects require collective community efforts to save lives and properties.

In integrated rural development efforts, particularly in community-based approaches, ComDev serves as a means to expand and deepen the interface among the many issues and areas of expertise involved, ensuring that all the needed actors and knowledge domains are included in the dialogue, hence, in the resolution effort.

ComDev, as a facilitator, combines several communication functions:
• identifying local knowledge, needs, expectations and priorities;
• facilitating equitable access to relevant information and knowledge;
• strengthening peoples' capacity to make their voices heard (building on existing communication systems and local contents);

• fostering multistakeholder dialogue and decision-making processes (involving policy makers, rural institutions, smallholders and local communities);
• promoting participation and collaborative action;
• enhancing mutual learning and co-creation of knowledge;
• improving negotiation, coordination and networking.

Another example is ComDev support to rural knowledge institutions and stakeholders for triggering **agricultural innovation**, by:
• increasing the responsiveness of extension and advisory services to the needs of smallholder farmers;
• bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and sound local knowledge;
• facilitating participatory research;
• enhancing collective learning and horizontal knowledge sharing among farmers;
• strengthening the dialogue between research institutions, government organizations and rural communities.

Likewise, in **disaster risk management** initiatives ComDev contributes to enabling vulnerable rural communities to get organized for quick response or to avoid being exposed to risks, by:
• implementing awareness and education campaigns to inform and guide the population (on threats, preventive measures, institutional responsibilities, etc.);
• promoting active participation of vulnerable communities in risk management plans and policies;
• identifying current practices, adaptation strategies and coping skills;
• documenting and validating best indigenous practices and local technologies;
• involving rural communities in monitoring key indicators;
• implementing early warning systems using community-based communication channels;
• mobilizing the support of different social sectors to promote rehabilitation and reconstruction in affected communities.

ComDev can therefore be considered a strategic tool in pursuing rural development goals, as it increases the participatory base of the process and facilitates the coordination of efforts, leading towards collaborative and more sustainable change.

PARTICIPATIVE COMDEV PLANNING:

Tackling development issues, exploring and experimenting appropriate solutions cannot be done only by researchers, extension workers and development practitioners. It is essential to involve rural stakeholders and local community members as active partners in the diagnosis, discussion and problem-solving process. Participation, one of ComDev's pillars, entails:

" the equitable and active involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation of development policies and strategies and in the analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development activities"

Participatory planning gives people a say and ensures that development interventions are appropriate to the needs and preferences of intended stakeholders. Usually, governments or other development agencies including civil society organizations (CSOs) initiate the participatory planning process; while participating stakeholders include rural or urban local communities, community-based organizations and local CSOs. The level of participation can be minimal (e.g. information-gathering or consultations) or more active (e.g. identifying, prioritizing and designing programme activities).

Oltheten (1999) describes participatory planning as joint actions of local people and project staff in formulating a development plan and selecting the best available alternatives for implementing it. Each stakeholder group may have its own agenda, mandate and responsibilities; the challenge is to identify and agree upon actions suitable for all parties. During participatory planning, a **learning process of dialogue, negotiation and decision-making** takes place among project stakeholders and project staff. Through it, project activities are aligned to local needs, constraints and opportunities.

In the end, participatory planning is expected to produce four sets of results as shown in figure below:

A multiple-way learning process	Community ownership over the initiative	Enhanced political and institutional support	A gradual process of local empowerment
Establishing horizontal relationships between and among various parties involved (local community, project staff, rural institutions, government) enables timely adjustment of project services to changing local realities	The integration of technical support with local knowledge systems leads to development strategies and projects shaped according to local needs, opportunities and constraints. This encourages community mobilization and ownership	Building a platform for dialogue and common understanding between decision makers and rural communities, increases the capacity of local stakeholders to claim higher-quality services and stronger political commitment.	Creating opportunities also for disadvantaged groups to access external resources (training, credits) or mobilize their own resources (knowledge, skills) enhances the capacity to voice their interests and take action to defend them

ComDev planning is a participatory and socially inclusive process: it aims to incorporate and reconcile a variety of views from community

members, local leaders, government officials, rural institutions, local media and subject matter specialists. The very essence of ComDev is that it is done not only *for* the people but *with* the people.

In fact, the planned use of communication techniques, activities and media creates an opportunity for people to both experience and guide change (Fraser and Villet, 1994). Participatory local communication planning (see Section 1 of Module 4) is certainly the best opportunity to tap whatever potential is in the community to create a sense of inclusion and motivation among the stakeholders. When project stakeholders are involved in planning, they already initiate change at the local level. During the design process, they use their knowledge, experience and insights to ensure that the ComDev plan meets local needs and demands, is effective and culturally appropriate. At best, they will take over the responsibility for decision-making and management of communication activities and services. This has long-term effects and benefits for sustainable development and people's empowerment.

THE COMDEV PLANNING PROCESS:

Communication planning requires a clearly defined strategy with specific goals, established in advance, and a measurable impact on the intended stakeholders.

The steps in strategic communication planning are nicely captured by the P-process, a framework developed at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in 1982. It was successfully applied to design health communication programmes worldwide. The model was revised in 2003 to embed two concepts that are crucial to programme sustainability: participation and capacity strengthening.

1.**Analysis**
Profile intended stakeholders, existing policies and programmes, active organizations and available communication channels.

2. **Strategic design**
Establish communication objectives; position the concept for the audience; clarify desired behaviour change; select media or channels; draw up an implementation plan; design the evaluation scheme.

3. **Development and testing**
Develop message concepts; pre-test with audience members and gatekeepers; revise and produce messages and materials; re-test existing materials.

4. **Implementation and monitoring**
Mobilize key participants; train trainers and field workers; implement the action plan; monitor the processes of dissemination, transmission and reception of programme outputs.

5. **Evaluation and re-planning**
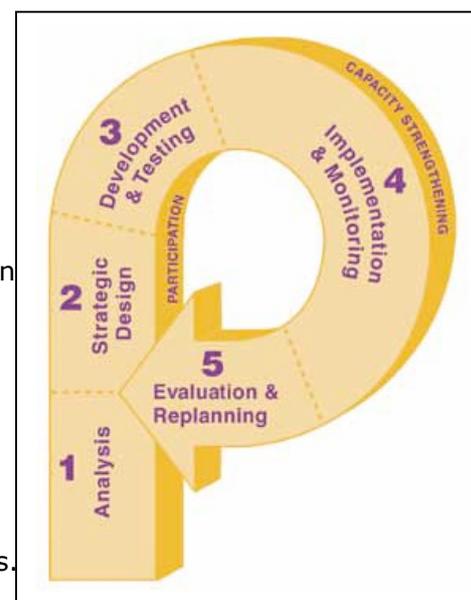
Measure impact on intended stakeholders and determine how
to improve future projects; determine future needs; adjust to
changing conditions and plan for continuity and self sufficiency.

The P-process is a suitable reference model for ComDev planning. However, what makes ComDev planning unique is the use of **participatory methods and techniques** to determine the design and contents of the communication activities based on the actual needs, opportunities and constraints of rural stakeholders. A ComDev strategy can be as elaborated or simple as needed, but to be effective it should always derive from the findings of a participatory communication appraisal. Promoting the active involvement of local stakeholders is an element that permeates also the implementation of the ComDev plan: from the design, production and pre-testing of communication materials to other facilitation
activities aimed at mobilizing people, consensus and resources. Monitoring efforts run through the entire process to provide inputs for the final evaluation, but also to potentially modify the strategy and plan, based on new information gathered, or new intervening factors.

CHALLENGES IN RURAL COMMUNICATION:

There are many challenges to communication in rural. Low literacy level; poor media reach and exposure and vast, heterogeneous and diversely spread rural audiences characterized by variations in language, culture and lifestyle-all these factors pose multiple challenges to marketers looking to take their messages to the largely media-dark or media-grey areas, of rural markets.

Heterogeneity and spread: The communication pattern in any society is a part of its culture. No communication medium can exist in a cultural vacuum. Communicating the message to rural consumers ha posed enormous challenges to the rural marketer, because of the large numbers of consumers scatters across the country. The problem is further compounded by the heterogeneous nature of consumers there are 16 scheduled languages and 114 local vernaculars.

Limited Media Reach: The limited reach of the mass media imposes limitations on universal communication to rural consumers. These factors lead to poor message comprehension and negligible impact, which fail to translate into consumer awareness and hence fail in generating consumer pull.

Understanding the Rural Audience: It is not sufficient to understand rural communication challenges as stated above: rather, what is equally crucial is the need to understand the behavioral and psychographic characteristics of the rural audience, in order to develop an effective rural communication strategy.

CREATING ADVERTISEMENTS FOR RURAL AUDIENCES:

Communication experts need to keep the following factors in mind when creating advertisements for rural audiences.
* Understanding the mindset of potential customers, including their hopes, fears, aspirations and apprehension conducting a qualitative study among the target audience would help in better understanding of the consumer mindset.
* Pick up 'gems' in the form of idioms, expressions, words, etc. in relation to the product category for later use in the creative.
* Tricky, clever, gimmicky, or even suggestive advertising does not work with rural audiences. 'Flicks' using very expensive computer graphics without any human presence go over the heads of rural audiences.
* Combining education with 'entertainment is a good route to take when targeting rural audiences. Using locally popular film stars or even featuring religious events (melas) popular in the region, helps strike a chord with rural audiences. According to a study, it is Govinda and Shahrukh Khan who is most popular among rural folk in north India.

* 'Quickies' (short television commercials) do not register well with rural audiences. Advertising agencies need to provide for ample time and space to communicate a message properly and effectively to the intended audience. This is seen for instance, in the popularity of the two-minute theatre commercials screened in rural cinemas.

RURAL MEDIA:

Rural media can be classified broadly into conventional mass, non-conventional media and personalized media. The various media vehicles are as follows:

CONVENTIONAL MASS MEDIA	NON-CONVENTIONAL MEDIA	PERSONALIZED MEDIA
Television	Haat and mela	Direct mailer
Radio	Folk media (puppet show, magic show)	Point of sale(demonstration, leaflet)
Press	Video van	Word of mouth
Cinema	Mandi	Interpersonal communication
Outdoor: wall painting, hoarding		Animator

INOVATIVE MEDIA:

Outdoor Media: Wall Painting

This medium is the most widespread form of advertising and is the favourite of the Indian rural masses, as they can view it at their leisure. Wall paintings are important because they constantly remind rural people about name and logos in addition to highlighting the key brand promise. They also reflect the vibrant economic and social life of the area.

Characteristics of wall paintings
* They are economical as compared to other traditional media forms, as the manpower and infrastructure requirements are low.
* They can easily be customized in accordance with regional language variations without this impacting their artistic content.
* Audience recall rates are high.

Limitations
* The lack of availability of wall space at prominent locations is an issue.
* The quality of the wall space available is not always satisfactory. The base of rural wall structures is generally not smooth and this impacts the final output.
* No exclusive wall rights are given to the company. It may happen that a company gets a wall painted and after sometimes when the company executive passes through, he finds that the painting has been replaced by the advertisement of some other company.
* The quality of the painters available is also low. Companies prefer hiring painters locally as they are familiar with the area and the cost of hiring them is lower when compared to the cost of hiring painters from outside.

FOLK MEDIA:

* Folk media consist of folk songs, folk dances and other theatrical forms, including puppetry, street theatre and magic shows, which are an intrinsic part of the culture and heritage of the land.
* They are capable of communicating message about contemporary issues, topics and concerns as per the needs and demands of a changing society.
* They are a face-to-face and personal form of communication.
* The essential characteristics of folk media are that are interactive, repetitive and narrative

Kinds of Folk Media
* Folk theatre
* Magic show
* Puppet shows

* Interactive games
* Folk Theatre

Folk theatre, interspersed with folk song and dance, is a simple and entertaining form of communication. It can also be informative and educational. In the past, folk theatre has been used to arose public opinion against the British Raj, to draw attention to atrocities against the girl child and raise public consciousness about other socially relevant issues.

* **Folk songs:** Folk songs are basically simple and direct compositions that are usually transmitted orally from one generation to the next and not through the written word. The structure of the folk song is characterized by simplicity and uniformity in rhythm. The songs consist of many stanzas sung in more or less the same tune. Each region and state has its own particular traditions of folk songs and ballads.

* **Folk Dances:** Folk dances are basically simple and rhythmic and mostly religious in nature. Communication takes place through dramatic gestures and the accompanying music. Folk dances are visually very arresting, attracting audiences with their elaborate costumes and stage settings.

* **Magic shows:** Magic shows are another very entertaining form of folk entertainment and draw large crowds, particularly because of the curiosity factor and the use of hypnotic effects.

* **Puppet Shows:** The kathputli puppet performance is the most common form of this folk tradition. The origin of puppet theatre is closely linked to the performance of religious ceremonies. The connection between rituals and the use of puppets is found in almost all the states in India. Traditional puppeteers were mostly itinerant performers who depended on royal patronage for their survival. Even today tales of chivalrous kings like Prithiviraj Chauhan and Amar Singh Rathor are narrated through puppet performances in the villages and towns of Rajasthan. The different forms of traditional puppetry are glove, rod, string-rod and shadow puppets. The differences exist not only in name but also in form, structure, manipulation techniques and geographical origin spread.

CONCLUSION:

We can conclude that a special BOP Marketing Communication Strategy can certainly prove effective in transmitting the message to the BOP segment. The marketers should be careful

in performing BOP marketing communication exercise to be effective and enjoy the predetermined benefits. Agreeing to the fact that the market is varied in nature, all specific

characteristics must be considered in designing and devising the communication strategies for

BOP markets. Innovation is going to be the key for success. Innovations are expected in media, message design and message execution while attempting to reach the erstwhile neglected markets at the bottom of the pyramid.

Also, it is clear that in any form of rural communication, while we may have a national strategy, we have to think and act locally. The need for focused communication aimed at the rural market, should not be underestimated. This calls for innovation and substantive changes in marketing strategies and approaches. The innovation should be carried out within the framework of what can best be characterized as the 4-R principle:

* Relevance
* Reliability
* Reach
* Reincarnate innovation

If the Indian advertising industry is to reach out to rural India in an effective and efficient manner, it has to be grounded firmly in rural perceptions, value and traditions. It has to immerse itself in local colours, customs and modes of communication in order to make itself relevant to the needs and desires of rural society. It has to gain the trust of the masses by undercutting its own excessive dependency on western styles of advertising, on the one hand and on its use of deceptive and manipulative claims, on the other. It has to reach out to rural consumers and relate to them at an appropriate level, so that it can bring about the desired behavioural changes. Finally, it has to find ways to reincarnate innovation. The four components are not mutually exclusive; they share an interdependent relationship.

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