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Digital Marketing of Kudumbashree products

Abstract

In recent years, marketers see an untapped potential in the rural segment of the country due to the economic shifts which in turn led to rise in purchasing power of the rural community. Lately, introductions of schemes by major telecom players such as cutting down cost of data packs have resulted in significant rise in number of internet users in the rural segments. Also, launching of cheap range smart phones has contributed to the cause. In a way now this untapped potential in rural markets can also be targeted via digital means. This paper focuses on how and why Kudumbashree entered into digital marketing, and which type of improvements expecting from Kudumbashree entrepreneurs as well as community.

Introduction

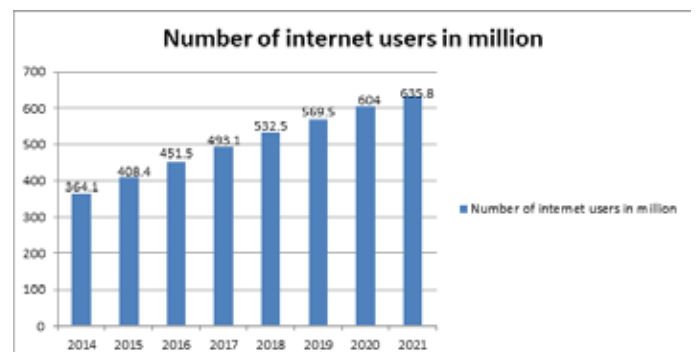
Kudumbashree, Kerala poverty eradication mission put forward a new initiative in the e-commerce era i.e., an e-commerce portal for Kudumbashree products. Now a days Kudumbashree introduces many innovative ways to use technologies for social welfare. Through these interventions, Kudumbashree could achieve the goal of social empowerment of women entrepreneurs as well as economic empowerment. India is a quick moving country towards the digital economy and this development has been quickened with the demonetization of the Indian currency in the last quarter of the year 2016. With it, different government digital payment promotion schemes have been propelled. The digital market requires digital promotion and marketing strategies. The telecom segment likewise assuming an imperative part of the digital marketing development. Indian banks are additionally giving more client amicable and secure money transaction services. The present Indian shopper is investing more energy in online networking and web surfing. In this manner, the permeability of any item is more through the digital medium than conventional marketing strategies. Digital marketing systems incorporate Content Marketing, AdWords, SEO, Social Media, Email Marketing and Website

Design.

Trends of Internet users and E-Business in India

In 2015, India had 408.4 million internet users. This figure is projected to grow to 635.8 million internet users in 2021. Despite the untapped potential, India already is the second-largest online market worldwide. As the trends of internet users and e-commerce users go high the market penetration via digital media is also become more popular.

Graph: Information about the number of internet users in India from 2014 to 2021



India is one of the fastest-growing e-commerce markets worldwide, with millions of new internet users taking advantage of cheap mobile connections to send mobile messages, watch online videos, use mobile services, and of course, to shop. As of 2016, 26 percent of the local population was using the internet; almost ten times the audience size from a decade prior to it. According to recent market research, mobile phone internet user penetration in India is projected to reach 37.36 percent of the population in 2021, representing a huge potential in terms of digital and mobile buyer audience. Total internet audiences in India are estimated to surpass 635 million online users in 2021.

Kudumbashree and Marketing

Being a service organization, it is a great challenge to implement innovative marketing strategies and compete with existing market leaders who has advance technologies and implementation power of strategies in all aspects. But Kudumbashree mission has already proven records for taking challenges and still driving it for success to great success. Along with Kudumbashree's motto of social empowerment of poor women, economic empowerment and striving for absolute poverty alleviation also equally important in the current scenario which is Kudumbashree's long term vision too. Kudumbashree is successfully implementing several social empowerment activities and women empowerment programs over the last two decades and few years back it started giving more attention to trainings and skilling programs as well as marketing activities for the economic empowerment of each and every Kudumbashree women micro entrepreneur.

Traditional Kudumbashree Markets

Weekly and monthly markets

Weekly and monthly markets are considered as Kudumbashree's most traditional marketing platforms which is still satisfying the needs of rural customers. These markets are really played a vital role for familiarising Kudumbashree micro enterprises products in the rural community and building a brand image among them. These markets are giving opportunities to rural local micro entrepreneurs to exhibit their products in the same locality they are living and producing it. By regular training and financial support more and more entrepreneurs have become part of it and benefited by the market. As part of the process, a market space or building/room is identified for setting markets in the CDS or Grama Panchayaths which is allotted by the grama panchayth itself. CDS will intimate entrepreneurs through the community network and facilitate the market. Mostly the market duration vary from 2 to 5 days.

Fairs

Fairs have become an important part of Kudumbashree marketing techniques. Festival fairs like Onam, Ramzan and Christmas, Kudumbashree own fairs and food fests,

Kerala SARAS fairs and other state fairs, others private owned fairs etc. are the major fairs of Kudumbashree mission. CDS and districts will identify the entrepreneurs and give opportunity to participate in fairs. Kudumbashree café plays a vital role in familiarizing Kudumbashrees brand name. Fairs are not only for exhibiting and selling of women micro enterprises products in the rural and urban region, it also provides an exposure and pedagogy to them which will help to improve their marketing skills, product quality and packing, sustainable production, interaction with other customers etc. and understand the cultural values of enterprises from different region.

Permanent markets

Permanent markets are permanent marketing platforms or shops currently being used for marketing Kudumbashree products. Kudumbashree has so far promoted 56 permanent shops across Kerala which is owned by CDS or Kudumbashree micro enterprises units. Kudumbashree has also established 163 Nano markets till July 2018. Nano markets are 'shelves space' in various institutions like office of local self governments, CDS or Grama Panchayath, shopping outlets like HortiCorp, Supplyco, private shopping malls and super markets.

Home shops

Home shops are community distribution network who play the role of retailers who buy products from entrepreneurs and then re-sell the products to Home shoppers who either directly sell the products to customers or through door to door visiting. Home shops made a revolution in marketing sector and it helped a substantial number of micro enterprises in sustainable production thereby economically empower community especially in Kozhikode and Kannur districts. Home shops helped in delivering Kudumbashree products among all categories of customers. Kudumbashree is planning to spread this model to all districts in this financial year.



Kudumbashree products via online portal

Apart from traditional Kudumbashree marketing platforms like weekly and monthly markets, Fairs, Permanent markets, Home shops etc., Kudumbashree entered into digital marketing in 2018 by launching an e-com-

merce portal called www.kudumbashreebazaar.com. Considering all the aspects of buyer behaviour of Indian customers in the current scenario, an exclusive e-commerce portal will be one of the most effective tool for marketing Kudumbashree products.

Central point influencing the Digital Marketing India's literacy rate is at 74.04%. While many States lag behind in literacy, Kerala is the most literate state in India with 93.91% affecting the digital marketing development positively.

Opportunities for digital marketing in India

Digital Market and digitization is occurring with a fast manner in India. Web-based business sites are giving every product and venture through online entrances in India today.

Various reports and studies far and wide demonstrate that the digital marketing will develop more in coming years. By 2018, cell phones are relied upon to stretch around 3 billion units around the world. So as more individuals utilize cell phones and tablets, the capability of the portable market keeps on developing.



At a glance to Kudumbashree e-commerce portal

Objectives of Kudumbashree e-commerce portal

Creating an advanced platform for exhibiting Kudumbashree products

It is high time to develop an online portal of Kudumbashree products to ensure accessibility of the same to all those who are in need anywhere in the world. Kudumbashree has provided opportunities to rural women entrepreneur to introduce their product into the global market. E-commerce portal satisfies the needs of Kudumbashree customers both in house and outside without any geographic limitations.

Reducing resource management

E-commerce portal help in reducing overall marketing operating expenses. Producers and customers are the only associated parties in the management process and

the rest of the things are managed by the digital platform. Customers can easily select products from different providers without moving around physically and without spending much money and time for choosing a product.

Up gradation of micro enterprises units

E-commerce portal requires a certain criteria for each and every micro enterprise while entering into Kudumbashree e-commerce portal such as requisite legal licenses, manufacturing protocols etc. Enterprises fail to follow such criteria should go through an up gradation process and prove their quality before authorities for approaching Kudumbashree e-commerce portal. This process helps micro entrepreneur units to improve their standard.

Ensure the number of quality units

Once an entrepreneur's products are added into this

portal, they will be consider as priority products among others, thereby we can create a database of premium Kudumbashree entrepreneurs which may help to enter other e-commerce portals like amazon, flipkart etc. and export to other counties.

Creation of brand image

Kudumbashree doesn't promote too many permanent market places for the time being. By reaching Kudumbashree products into global market via digital media, it may create an impact among all customers and thereby Kudumbashree can gradually build a brand image which will influence the overall journey of Kudumbashree micro enterprises.

Creation of customer base and satisfaction

By creating a brand image, a satisfied customer base will be generated which may increase the adaptability of Kudumbashree products in the global community. It may increase the customer volume, reachability, publicity etc. which can be utilize as promotion of Kudumbashree micro entrepreneurs products.

Faster buying/selling procedure

Faster buying/selling procedure, as well as easy to find products may attract more customers to Kudumbashree products. Buying/selling 24/7 may help customers to order products as per his/her convenient.

Development operations of Kudumbashree e-commerce portal

Identification of web developer

Kudumbashree has identified a web developer named Streetbell Pvt. Ltd. with the help of Kerala start up mission – Government of Kerala. After conducting technical meetings and improvisations, with a time duration of six months, Streetbell has developed the required portal with specifications required by Kudumbashree. Along with e-commerce portal, company had developed a mobile application for more convenient use of both customers and micro enterprises incorporated within the system. Mobile application provides a user friendly platform for choosing the required products and order placement and also it helps Kudumbashree personnel and units to track their orders and update the progress in every step of shipping the product.

Identification of micro entrepreneurs and products

Along with web development process, Kudumbashree has started identifying potential micro entrepreneurs. The selection of quality units from among all Kudumbashree entrepreneurs was a great challenge. District mission have played a vital role in scrutinizing and selecting micro enterprises products. Initially Kudumbashree has conducted several meetings and trainings at CDS, ADS and NHG level regarding e-commerce portal benefits and its relevance in current scenario. In all cases,

Kudumbashree has conducted direct unit visits for assessing accurate potential of units and their quality. Mission identified 510 Kudumbashree products in 11 product categories which belong to 114 Kudumbashree women micro enterprises.

Major products categories

1. Groceries
2. Personal care
3. Home decor
4. Garments
5. Jewellery, Accessories
6. House hold items
7. Bakery and beverages
8. Housekeeping, Cleaning
9. Health
10. Snaks
11. Umbrellas, Bags

Trainings

Kudumbashree mission has given proper training for entrepreneurs and staffs who are associated with it for assuring proper service to the ultimate customer and avoid unwanted errors. Training on packing the products for parcelling was one among them, as if the packing is improper, the products will get damaged and it may affect customer satisfaction. Heavy packing may increase shipping charges and it may cause economical imbalance to the entrepreneur. Kudumbashree had obtained expert opinion from courier agencies and others who are associated with shipping industries. In every month each district will conduct an online micro entrepreneur meet, which may help to understand ground level difficulties of coordinating online activities and giving proper time to time training for sustainable quality service.

Payment gate way

A payment gateway is a merchant service provided by an e-commerce application service provider that authorizes credit card or direct payments processing for e-businesses. Payment gate way is an important part while implementing an e-commerce portal. Management of customer payment and timely responding against the orders will affect favourably. Kudumbashree has selected M/s CC Avenue to facilitating the payment gate way activities for www.kudumbashreebazaar.com. Customer verification while placing an order for preventing fraudulent practices, Manage payment activities of customer and bank, report generation, customer support, refund and rejection of payment etc. will be the major activities coordinated by M/s CC Avenue.

Order management

Once a customer places an order, within half an hour the customer will get an SMS regarding order confirmation with the help of mobile application associated with the portal. Entrepreneurs in the portal are connected by the mobile application also, so that they can get all commu-

nication related to her order. Within 48 hours the appropriate products will be sent to customer via courier or post and entrepreneur will update the docket number so that if required customer can track the parcel.

Delivery of products

For assuring proper delivery to the customers Kudumbashree had signed MoU with India post for delivering its goods. As per India posts instructions, micro enterprises may pack the products in such a manner that without affecting its quality and appearance. Damage of products may cause dissatisfaction of customer. Kudumbashree mission is in the process of selecting more couriers partners so that it could deliver products in a short duration and in lower cost.

Customer care support

Kudumbashree e-commerce portal also provides 24/7 customer support which is a range of customer services to assist customers in making cost effective and correct use of Kudumbashree products. Kudumbashree is always considers high priority for customer grievance and its solution on time for a satisfied fully satisfied customer base.

Conclusion

Even though India is a fastest growing economy in the world, it is popularly known as a country of villages because majority of Indian people are staying in villages or in rural regions. Over the past 20 years of interventions of Kudumbashree mission in the rural area of Kerala state, it has brought a new face to rural Kerala. Online marketing of rural products is quite an untouched area



and has lot of untapped potential. Kudumbashree aims to improve the capacity of women entrepreneurs to ensure the quality of their products enough to compete in the global market. It will increase the demand and consumption of rural products, create more opportunity thereby increase disposable income and will have a great impact on economic empowerment of rural women.