E-marketing Awareness in Rural Areas with special reference to Velur, Thrissur District, Kerala

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Abstract
Marketing is the heart beat of each and every business man without which he cannot sell their products and services. It has a prominent role to play in the smooth functioning of a business. At present we are living in an ever-changing world in terms of technology, government policies, public interest, taste and preferences, fashion and so on. People have a very busy schedule in a way or the other and no one have time to travel from one place to another in search of markets were they get appropriate prices for their products and services. Thus, in order to make the marketing activities much easier and faster, the introduction of e-marketing came into action which helped the people to find a market that provides the highest rate without the interference of any intermediaries. The present study analyzes the e-marketing awareness among the rural folk of Velur, a small village situated in Thrissur district, Kerala and it is found that majority of the people residing at Velur are farmers and doesn’t have knowledge and access to e-marketing techniques and also are reluctant to change from their normal methods of selling into latest technological enhancements. It is found that only a very few makes use of internet facilities that too only for banking or entertainment. So it is a prerequisite to bring new changes into the minds of the rural people so that they can sell their products at higher margins and earn much more than what they sell through intermediaries. So it is the duty of the authorities to take necessary steps to uplift this rural folk into present era by providing awareness programmes on e-marketing tools from time to time which will certainly improve the standard of living of the people.

Keywords: e-marketing, technology, intermediaries

Introduction
Marketing plays a vital role in the business for selling the finished goods into the hands of the final customer. It is a two way process, were by both the buyer and the seller gets satisfied with the occurrence of the particular transaction or otherwise known as exchange. At present,
with the advent of technology marketing concept has widened and has now found places in internet too, in the form of e-marketing. Thus e-marketing was converted as a supreme power in the minds of the present generation as the society finds it much easier to handle varying transactions like buying, selling, exchange of goods and services. It is the process of advertising and selling products and services on the internet were the exchange of liquid cash is not at all necessary which in turn helps to reduce the risk involved in handling a huge quantum of money. Today an adequate number of people in our society make use of these facilities. Thus it has become a dynamic medium of exchange in our economic system.

**E-marketing Meaning**

E-marketing is a part of e-commerce. It simply means marketing through electronic devices such as computer, internet, television and digital medium such as email, web, wireless media and so on. It is the process of communicating and selling products and services through electronic devices and related digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives. It is the process of building and maintaining customer relationship through electronic media to facilitate the exchange of ideas products and services that satisfy the goals of both parties. E-marketing is also known as online marketing or internet advertising. It is referred to those strategies and techniques which utilized online ways to reach target customers.

**Advantages of e-marketing**

- One can build a good customer relationship worldwide through e-marketing as it provides 24 hours access to its users that too daily and as such the customer can shop or order product at any time.

- Many social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Google plus allow to freely advertise and to promote business and as such the cost involved to spread the message to the public is comparatively very less.

- As there are no extra costs like rent, insurance etc. involved in selling the products through internet, the seller can sell his products at a lower price than what is fixed in the market and as such the customers will get premium quality products at lower prices.

- It helps in increasing the relationship between the customers as the organizations can communicate with the customers to have a detailed knowledge about their needs and hence can build good customer databases.
• Price flexibility is more in the case of online marketed products as their prices can be changed for any number of times considering the products ease of use, its amount, and advertisings, to get along with the fluctuating market conditions.

• E-marketing helps to access global markets on its fingertips, thereby attaining more sales and profits with fraction of time.

• E-marketing helps to track real time results by the use of online analytics so that it is possible to know whether the marketing is carrying out.

• Online marketing focuses on demographics such as age, gender, location etc. and also on the variations in income and education which helps to market the products more easily.

• Varieties of methods are available to exhibit online marketing like the email, social media and newsletters.

**Disadvantages of e-marketing**

• An adequate quantum of money has to be spent by the seller if he intends to have a strong advertising campaign as the cost of web site design, software, hardware, maintenance of the business site, online distribution costs etc. are very high.

• Majority of the people in our society prefers to have live interaction when they buy the products. This reduces their interest in using online purchases.

• People finds it as a pleasure to shop with their dear and near ones by getting into shops one after the other and as such online purchases gets less importance.

• The company should update information in their site from time to time which in turn requires research and skills that turns out time consuming and much costlier.

• Due to a lot of haphazard and threats in online marketing many visitors of the business web site will not want to use their credit card to make a purchase. This reduces the popularity of internet marketing.

**Brief History of Velur**

Velur is a small village and Panchayat in Thalapilly Taluk, situated in Thrissur district, Kerala. Other places close to Velur are Kechery, Wadakkancherry etc. It belongs to Central Kerala Division and is located 16 km towards North from district headquarters Thrissur, 7 km from Wadakkancherry and 297 km from State capital Thiruvananthapuram. This place is in the border of the Thrissur District and Palakkad District. Malayalam is the local language here. The total area comprises of 28.32 km² (10.93 sq. mi). The population of the village
according to the sensex 2001 is 22,155 and the density of the same is 780/ km2 (2000/sq mi). Official Languages used are Malayalam and English. The sex ratio 0.89 ♂/♀ and has a literacy rate of 90.15%.

**Statement of the Problem**

Marketing handles a significant role for transferring goods and services from one destination on to another and the advent of e-marketing has brought out a revolution in the minds of the present generation. And as such it acts as a medium for transferring goods and services. People started making use of these electronic services to sell their products and services without handling liquid cash. The present study focuses on the e-marketing awareness on the citizens of Velur, a small village in Thrissur District, Kerala on the adoption of e-marketing, to perform their day to day businesses.

**Scope of the study**

The present study is about the development of people at Velur on e-marketing techniques while carrying out their daily routines. The study also measures the activities of the people in this locality and tries to identify their problems and constraints in adopting these technological tools for various activities. The scope of the study is limited to this village due to constraints of time. There are similar other villages in the nearby locality were people performs various activities and jobs and who uses these technologies which are not taken into consideration by the researcher.

**Methodology**

- The study is mainly based on primary data.
- Secondary data are also collected from articles and websites.
- Direct personal interviews were made with the residents of Velur.

**Objectives of the study**

- To analyse the importance of e-marketing in rural areas
- To analyse the awareness of e-marketing in the rural folk of Velur.
- To analyse on the attitude of rural folk at Velur towards internet usage and e-marketing.
• To analyse whether the rural farmers of Velur are adopting the e-marketing techniques to sell their goods.
• To analyse the problems and challenges faced by the people at Velur while using these latest technologies.
• To analyse the role of the Government on the adoption of e-marketing in rural areas.
• To evaluate the prospects of e-marketing in Velur.

Importance of E-marketing in Rural Areas

About three-fourth of India's population live in villages and thus rural development is needed to the develop nation as whole. It is scrutinized that, seventy per cent of Indian population gets employment through agriculture and as such half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is the major occupation of rural India. It is analysed that the rural folk don’t have direct access with the ultimate customers and as such they approach middle men to sell their products which reap very less profit to them. But with the advent of e-marketing things are changing, the old marketing techniques are gradually moving out of order and e-marketing gathers momentum in the minds of people due to its ease of access, profitability etc. Thus e-marketing have paved the way to bring more economic benefit to the society as such.

Rural Folk at Velur

Most of the people residing at Velur are typically engaged in agricultural and other allied activities without having much exposure to the outside world. But at present there is some improvement in the same i.e., in the present generation, people are exposed for higher studies and jobs outside their premises. But even then the composition of total population i.e., in the class of senior citizens, majority are illiterate and works within their locality without even looking or perceiving the light of latest technologies that have been adopted in our economy and are not at all bothered of these changes and stands firmly themselves in their old norms, values and beliefs. But even then, a good quantum of people i.e., the present generations have changed a lot in their attitude towards their latest trends in technology and other related aspects and are using the same in a better way.

Findings
• E-marketing is not at all adopted in Velur. The same is not applicable for the localities like farmers, coconut climbers, and daily wage workers as they are unaware to use the same and also doesn’t have access to it.

• Velur has only internet access for BSNL and Airtel connections. Other companies doesn’t have a network due to low signal and as such those people who has other connections will be forced to take new connection in BSNL or Airtel for internet access which makes an additional burden to them and due to all these technical difficulties majority of the people hesitate to make use of such facilities.

• Only the literate and young generation makes use of e-techniques.

• Majority of those who access internet are mainly for downloading songs, movies and games and not for any e-transactions because they too hesitate to use due to fraudulent activities that is happening online.

• Very few people uses online for cashless payment that too very rarely and thus the use of e-payment has not gained importance at Velur at all.

• Majority of the residents at Velur wishes to sell their products in their old style.

• The present senior citizens hesitate to adopt these latest technologies that too in their old age. So such changes can be adapted only to younger generation.

• At Velur, internet access is found only with a very few people as it is not affordable to the poor and as such finds the same as an additional unwanted cost.

• It is not easy to change the attitude of rural people from their old tradition on to a sudden change to the latest technology.

• Farmers of Velur are not using e-marketing techniques to sell their products. Very few or zero percentage of people makes use of e-marketing strategies for selling their products. All of them relay on the traditional methods of buying and selling.

Problems and Challenges

Majority of the residents at Velur doesn’t have a computer or laptop in their houses and as such internet access is very less. A minimum quantum of knowledge is necessary for the operation of computers and other electronic devices which is found lagging in many people and as such only literate, medium and rich people make use of the same. A good quantum of people at Velur constitutes farmers, cattle rearers, shop keepers and so on and as such they
wish to have the old form of life through normal interaction with the society and the public at large. Various other problems faced by them are:

- The initial setup cost for the purchase of these technological instruments is very high.
- Rural people hesitate to adjust with e-marketing as it is a form of Robert work.
- Internet jams and frequent online network errors in the system while carrying out a transaction makes the people irritated to make use of these e-techniques.
- They also have the fear of losing money while carrying out transactions through the internet as frequent online jams, low signal etc. are found while dealing with internet transactions.
- It demotivates those people who use the same for the first time.

**Suggestions**

- E-marketing cannot be replaced fully at present in Velur. It should be brought into routine habits of the rural folk on a step by step basis.
- Frequent awareness on e-marketing is necessary for the rural folk in order to make them ready to operate all kinds of online marketing transactions so that they may get a good profit for sale of their products.
- The adoption of e-marketing techniques can be implemented only to present generation and also to the upcoming generation and not to the senior citizens of Velur who won’t adopt the same in any manner as they don’t have the patience to study such things.

**Role of Government**

E-marketing is no more a new concept in today’s world. The objective of the adoption of e-marketing is to promote the use of e-techniques in all sectors of our economy, including backward areas. So, it is the duty of the Government to ensure the following towards the society:-

- Should create new ideologies in the minds of the society for the effective use of e-marketing tools which is more eco-friendly.
- The authority should provide adequate training and awareness classes for the residents of Velur and the nation as such to make use of such e-facilities.
- The concerned Municipality or Panchayat should provide awareness classes to the residents of Velur in using e-facilities before adopting such drastic changes as at present people are in the situation of panic and chaos to make use of the same due to the fear in loss of money.

- The authority has to take initiatives to produce laptops and other electronic systems at a very low cost and distribute the same to the lower class of the society so that they may get access to the same. Also it should take necessary steps to arrange morning or evening classes to these people with the support of Self Help Groups, National Service Schemes, and People Service Society etc. to mould them into the present scenario. Also the youth can be trained enough to equip the rural people with the latest technology.

- Upcoming and the prevailing young generation i.e., those who deal with business, should be moulded fully with e-marketing techniques, so that in coming future they may use these online procedures for sale of their products.

**Prospects of e-marketing at Velur**

E-marketing cannot be wiped out from our economy. It is gaining much more importance with the passage of time. It is bringing out a revolution in our country. It has become a prerequisite as the whole world is running behind technology. So the residents of Velur need to be equipped with these changes slowly or else will be tortured by intermediaries. They have to get practised with net banking, online transactions and gradually move to online marketing along with their traditional marketing activities.

**Conclusion**

From the study, it is found none of the people are making use of e-marketing techniques for selling their products and thus the functioning of e-marketing system is not at all effective at Velur. The adoption of these techniques can be implemented successfully only to the upcoming generation and also to the present middle aged people. Also it will take necessary time and cost to upbring the lower sections of the society into the field of e-marketing which indeed really is a heavy task to fulfill and might take some quantum of years.

One of the main advantages of using e-facilities is that it helps to avoid a lot of physical transactions, decline in the usage of liquid cash thereby reduction in robbery, decrease in cutting of trees for making papers, currencies etc., thereby protecting our ecological system as
such. So it is the duty of the authority to reach the unreach sections of our society and take necessary steps to educate them in all spheres.

As we know that “The heart of India lies in the villages”. Now, it is a prerequisite for our country to enhance the capabilities of the rural folk by providing adequate awareness on e-marketing which will definitely bring a revolution in our society.

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