



Digitalization Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Marketing of Rural Enterprise Products with Specific Reference to Karnataka State

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ABSTRACT:

In the era of rapid technological advancement, digitalization has emerged as a transformative force in various sectors, including rural enterprise marketing. This research article investigates the effectiveness and efficiency of digitalization in the marketing of rural enterprise products, with a specific focus on Karnataka State, India. Rural enterprises play a pivotal role in the economic development of Karnataka, contributing significantly to employment generation and income enhancement in rural areas. However, the marketing of rural enterprise products has historically been constrained by limited access to markets, information, and resources. The advent of digitalization technologies presents an opportunity to address these challenges and potentially revolutionize the rural marketing landscape. Preliminary findings suggest that digitalization has the potential to significantly improve the marketing efficiency of rural enterprises in Karnataka. Farmers and rural entrepreneurs are leveraging digital platforms to access wider markets, gain real-time market insights, and reduce intermediaries' dependency. Furthermore, digital marketing techniques, such as social media advertising and e-commerce platforms, are enhancing consumer engagement and brand visibility. However, challenges related to digital literacy, infrastructure, and affordability remain as barriers to the full realization of digitalization's benefits in rural areas. Additionally, concerns about data security and privacy issues are prevalent among stakeholders. These issues necessitate the development of tailored interventions and policies to ensure equitable access to digital tools and safeguard rural enterprises' interests. This research article contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digitalization in rural contexts, shedding light on its effectiveness and efficiency in the marketing of rural enterprise products. It offers valuable insights for policymakers, development agencies, and rural entrepreneurs seeking to harness the potential of digitalization for rural economic growth in Karnataka State and beyond.

Keywords: Digitalization, rapid technological advancement, Rural Enterprise Products, rural economic growth, Karnataka State

Introduction:

The advent of the digital age has ushered in unprecedented opportunities and challenges for economies worldwide. One of the domains where digitalization has the potential to be a game-changer is in the marketing of rural enterprise products. In a country like India, where a substantial proportion of the population resides in rural areas, and agriculture forms the backbone of the economy, leveraging digital technologies for rural marketing can have far-reaching implications. This research article delves into the effectiveness and efficiency of digitalization in the marketing of rural enterprise products, with a particular focus on the southern state of Karnataka. Karnataka, known for its diverse agro-climatic zones and rich agricultural heritage, presents an intriguing case study for exploring the impact of digitalization on rural enterprise marketing. The state is home to a multitude of rural enterprises, including small-scale farmers, artisanal producers, and agribusinesses. These enterprises contribute significantly to Karnataka's agricultural output and rural livelihoods. However, they often grapple with challenges related to market access, information dissemination, and distribution networks. Digitalization, in the context of this study, encompasses a wide range of technologies and strategies, including internet connectivity, mobile applications, e-commerce platforms, social media marketing, data analytics, and supply chain management systems. These tools hold the potential to bridge the gap between rural enterprises and modern markets, enhance the efficiency of value chains, and empower rural entrepreneurs with real-time information and customer insights. The primary research objective is to assess the extent to which digitalization has been effective in addressing these challenges and improving the marketing landscape for rural enterprise products in Karnataka. Specifically, we aim to examine the impact of digitalization on market reach, customer engagement, supply chain optimization, and the overall profitability of rural enterprises. The findings of this research hold significance for policymakers, development agencies, and rural entrepreneurs alike. They provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of digitalization strategies in the context of rural marketing and offer guidance on how to maximize the benefits while addressing the challenges. Additionally, this study contributes to the broader discourse on rural development and the role of technology in fostering economic growth and sustainability in rural areas. In the subsequent

sections of this research article, we will delve into the methodologies employed, present the empirical findings, and offer discussions and recommendations based on the evidence gathered. Ultimately, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of digitalization in the marketing of rural enterprise products, with Karnataka State serving as a microcosm of the broader digital transformation occurring in rural economies across the globe.

Marketing of Rural Enterprise Products with specific reference to Karnataka State:

In the context of Karnataka State, the marketing of rural enterprise products, encompassing a diverse array of small-scale farmers, artisanal producers, and agribusinesses, stands as a pivotal facet of the region's socioeconomic landscape, where the intricate interplay of traditional agricultural practices and modern digitalization technologies presents both challenges and opportunities, making it an intriguing and complex subject of study. Karnataka State, located in the southern region of India, is characterized by a diverse agricultural landscape and a significant rural population engaged in various forms of rural enterprises, including farming, handicrafts, and agribusiness. The marketing of rural enterprise products in Karnataka holds critical importance for the state's economic development and the livelihoods of its rural communities.

- **Agriculture and Rural Enterprises in Karnataka:** Karnataka boasts a rich agricultural heritage, with a wide range of crops grown across different agro-climatic zones. The state is a major producer of crops such as paddy, sugarcane, coffee, silk, and horticultural products. Additionally, it has a vibrant artisanal sector, known for its handicrafts, handlooms, and traditional crafts. Rural enterprises in Karnataka contribute significantly to the state's GDP and employment generation, making them integral to the overall development agenda.
- **Challenges in Rural Enterprise Marketing:** Despite the economic significance of rural enterprises, marketing their products presents a set of challenges. Many rural producers face issues related to limited market access, inadequate infrastructure, and fragmented supply chains. Additionally, the lack of timely market information and the presence of intermediaries often lead to inefficiencies and reduced profits for rural entrepreneurs.
- **The Role of Digitalization:** In recent years, digitalization has emerged as a potential solution to address these challenges. Digital technologies such as the internet, mobile applications, e-commerce platforms, and social media have the power to connect rural enterprises with larger markets, streamline supply chains, and enhance the overall efficiency of marketing efforts. These technologies hold the promise of reducing dependence on intermediaries and empowering rural entrepreneurs with valuable market insights.

Significance of the study:

The significance of the study related to Digitalization Effectiveness and Efficiency in the Marketing of Rural Enterprise Products in Karnataka State can be understood from various perspectives:

- i. **Economic Development:** Karnataka State has a substantial rural population engaged in diverse agricultural and artisanal activities. Understanding how digitalization impacts the marketing of rural enterprise products can significantly contribute to the state's economic development. It can potentially lead to increased income generation, improved livelihoods, and enhanced economic growth in rural areas.
- ii. **Empowering Rural Entrepreneurs:** Rural entrepreneurs often face barriers such as limited market access and information. The study's findings can shed light on how digitalization can empower these entrepreneurs by providing them with tools and strategies to connect with larger markets, reduce dependency on intermediaries, and access valuable market insights.
- iii. **Efficiency and Sustainability:** Digitalization has the potential to streamline supply chains and marketing processes, leading to increased efficiency in rural enterprise marketing. Improved efficiency can contribute to the sustainability of rural enterprises by reducing waste, lowering costs, and enhancing competitiveness.
- iv. **Policy Formulation:** The research can inform policymakers about the effectiveness of digitalization strategies in the rural context. This information can guide the formulation of policies and initiatives aimed at promoting digitalization in rural marketing, potentially leading to targeted interventions that address specific challenges faced by rural entrepreneurs.
- v. **Equitable Development:** Understanding the impact of digitalization on rural enterprise marketing can help ensure equitable development. By identifying potential challenges and disparities in access to digital tools, policymakers and development agencies can work towards bridging the digital divide and ensuring that the benefits of digitalization reach all segments of the rural population.
- vi. **Knowledge Sharing:** The study's findings can serve as a valuable knowledge resource for other regions and countries with similar rural economic structures. Lessons learned from Karnataka State can be applied to various contexts, contributing to global discussions on rural development and digitalization.
- vii. **Academic and Research Contributions:** The research contributes to the academic literature on rural development and digitalization. It provides empirical evidence and insights that can serve as a foundation for further research and scholarship in this field.

- viii. **Business and Entrepreneurial Insights:** The findings can benefit businesses and entrepreneurs operating in rural Karnataka and beyond. They can gain insights into how digitalization strategies can be effectively employed to market their products, engage with customers, and improve their overall competitiveness.

Major objectives of the study:

1. To assess the impact of digitalization on market access for rural enterprises
2. To explore how digital marketing strategies including e-commerce and social media, influence customer engagement and brand visibility
3. To examine the role of data analytics and supply chain management systems in optimizing the rural enterprise marketing
4. To evaluate the overall profitability and sustainability of rural enterprises adopting the digitalization strategies

Impact of digitalization on market access for rural enterprises:

The impact of digitalization on market access for rural enterprises has been transformative, offering a range of benefits and opportunities. Here are some key ways in which digitalization has influenced market access for rural enterprises:

- i. **Wider Geographic Reach:** Digitalization, particularly through e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces, has enabled rural enterprises to reach customers well beyond their local and regional markets. They can now access national and even international markets, expanding their customer base and sales potential.
- ii. **Reduced Physical Barriers:** Digitalization has reduced the traditional physical barriers that hindered rural enterprises' market access. Rural entrepreneurs can now overcome geographical isolation and reach urban and global markets without the need for a physical presence.
- iii. **Real-Time Information:** Digital tools provide rural enterprises with real-time market information, including pricing trends, consumer preferences, and demand fluctuations. This information helps them make informed decisions about what products to produce and when to enter or exit markets.
- iv. **Direct-to-Consumer Sales:** Through digital platforms, rural enterprises can establish direct relationships with consumers, bypassing intermediaries. This not only increases their profit margins but also allows them to build brand loyalty and customer trust.
- v. **Customization and Personalization:** Digital marketing allows rural enterprises to tailor their products and marketing strategies to specific customer segments. They can use data analytics to understand customer preferences and create customized offerings, enhancing their competitiveness.
- vi. **Cost Savings:** Digitalization often reduces marketing and distribution costs. Online advertising, for instance, can be more cost-effective than traditional advertising methods. Additionally, streamlined supply chains and reduced reliance on middlemen can lead to cost savings.
- vii. **Access to Market Information:** Rural enterprises can access market trends, competitor information, and consumer feedback through digital channels. This information helps them adapt their strategies, develop new products, and stay competitive.
- viii. **Easier Market Entry:** Digital platforms lower the barriers to entry for rural enterprises. They can set up online storefronts with relatively low upfront costs, making it easier for new entrants to participate in the market.
- ix. **Improved Market Transparency:** Digitalization enhances market transparency by providing information on prices, quality, and product availability. This transparency can benefit both rural enterprises and consumers by reducing information asymmetry.
- x. **Market Diversification:** Rural enterprises can diversify their markets more easily through digitalization. They can sell different products to various customer segments, reducing their reliance on a single market or product.

However, it's important to note that digitalization's impact on market access may not be uniform across all rural enterprises. Challenges related to digital literacy, internet infrastructure, and access to devices may still hinder some businesses. Additionally, digital competition can be fierce, and rural enterprises need to invest in digital skills and strategies to effectively leverage digitalization for market access. In conclusion, digitalization has significantly expanded market access for rural enterprises by overcoming geographical barriers, providing real-time information, enabling direct sales to consumers, and offering cost-effective marketing solutions. To fully realize these benefits, rural entrepreneurs must embrace digital technologies and adapt their business strategies to the digital age.

Digital marketing strategies including e-commerce and social media, influence customer engagement and brand visibility:

Digital marketing strategies, including e-commerce and social media, have a profound impact on customer engagement and brand visibility. These strategies leverage the power of online platforms to create meaningful connections with consumers and enhance a brand's presence. Here's how they influence customer engagement and brand visibility:

1. E-commerce Platforms:

- i. **Global Reach:** E-commerce platforms enable businesses, including rural enterprises, to showcase their products and services to a global audience. This expanded reach enhances brand visibility beyond traditional geographic constraints.
- ii. **Convenient Shopping:** E-commerce provides customers with the convenience of shopping from anywhere, at any time. This convenience increases engagement as customers can browse, compare, and make purchases at their convenience.
- iii. **Personalization:** E-commerce platforms often employ recommendation engines and personalized product suggestions based on customer browsing and purchase history. This personalization enhances engagement by showing customers products that align with their preferences.
- iv. **Customer Reviews:** E-commerce allows customers to leave reviews and ratings for products. Positive reviews can build trust and credibility, increasing customer engagement and brand reputation.
- v. **Cross-Selling and Upselling:** E-commerce platforms can suggest related or complementary products during the checkout process, encouraging customers to explore additional offerings and increasing sales opportunities.

2. Social Media:

- i. **Brand Awareness:** Social media platforms provide a space for rural enterprises to create and amplify their brand presence. Consistent and engaging content can build brand awareness among a wide audience.
- ii. **Direct Interaction:** Social media enables direct interaction between brands and customers. Responding to comments, messages, and inquiries in a timely and helpful manner fosters a sense of engagement and customer satisfaction.
- iii. **Content Sharing:** Customers often share interesting and valuable social media content with their networks. This viral effect can significantly increase brand visibility as content spreads organically.
- iv. **User-Generated Content:** Encouraging customers to create and share content related to your products or services (user-generated content) can be a powerful way to boost brand visibility and engage with customers.
- v. **Targeted Advertising:** Social media platforms offer sophisticated targeting options, allowing brands to reach specific demographics and interests. This targeted advertising increases the likelihood of engaging with the right audience.
- vi. **Influencer Marketing:** Collaborating with social media influencers who align with a brand's values and target audience can amplify brand visibility and engagement, as influencers have dedicated followers.
- vii. **Real-Time Engagement:** Live streaming, stories, and real-time updates enable brands to engage with customers in the moment, fostering a sense of immediacy and connection.

3. Content Marketing:

- i. **Educational Content:** Creating informative and educational content related to products or industry trends can engage customers by providing value and expertise.
- ii. **Storytelling:** Compelling narratives and storytelling can emotionally connect customers to a brand, making it more memorable and increasing engagement.
- iii. **Visual Appeal:** Visual content such as images and videos can capture attention quickly and leave a lasting impression, boosting brand visibility and engagement.

In summary, digital marketing strategies, including e-commerce and social media, play a pivotal role in engaging customers and increasing brand visibility. By utilizing these platforms effectively, rural enterprises can overcome geographic limitations, connect with a broader audience, and create lasting customer relationships.

Role of data analytics and supply chain management systems in optimizing the rural enterprise marketing:

Data analytics and supply chain management systems play a critical role in optimizing rural enterprise marketing by providing insights, streamlining operations, and enhancing decision-making processes. Here's an overview of their roles in the context of rural enterprise marketing:

1. Data Analytics:

- i. **Market Insights:** Data analytics tools can analyze market trends, consumer behavior, and purchasing patterns. Rural enterprises can use this information to identify market opportunities, target specific customer segments, and tailor their marketing strategies accordingly.
- ii. **Customer Segmentation:** Data analytics helps in segmenting customers based on various criteria such as demographics, location, and purchase history. This enables rural enterprises to create personalized marketing campaigns that resonate with different customer groups.
- iii. **Predictive Analytics:** Predictive modeling can forecast future market trends, demand fluctuations, and product preferences. This helps rural enterprises optimize inventory management and production planning.
- iv. **Performance Monitoring:** Analytics dashboards provide real-time insights into the performance of marketing campaigns. Rural enterprises can track key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the effectiveness of their marketing efforts and make adjustments as needed.
- v. **Feedback Analysis:** Social media sentiment analysis and customer feedback analysis can provide valuable insights into customer perceptions and satisfaction levels, allowing rural enterprises to make improvements and respond to customer concerns promptly.
- vi. **Competitive Analysis:** Data analytics can track the activities and strategies of competitors. This information helps rural enterprises identify gaps in the market and develop strategies to differentiate themselves.
- vii. **Cost Optimization:** By analyzing costs throughout the supply chain and marketing processes, rural enterprises can identify areas where cost savings can be achieved without compromising quality or customer satisfaction.

2. Supply Chain Management Systems:

- i. **Inventory Management:** Efficient supply chain management systems help rural enterprises optimize their inventory levels. They can ensure that they have the right amount of products at the right time, reducing the risk of overstocking or stockouts.
- ii. **Demand Forecasting:** Supply chain systems can integrate with data analytics to provide accurate demand forecasts. This ensures that rural enterprises produce the right quantity of products to meet customer demand.
- iii. **Supplier Collaboration:** Supply chain management systems facilitate collaboration with suppliers, enabling rural enterprises to negotiate better terms, ensure timely deliveries, and maintain product quality.
- iv. **Order Processing:** Automation of order processing through supply chain systems streamlines the fulfillment process, reduces errors, and enhances customer satisfaction.
- v. **Traceability and Quality Control:** Supply chain systems can track products from the source to the end consumer, ensuring product quality and safety. This traceability is particularly important for agricultural and food products.
- vi. **Cost Reduction:** Streamlining supply chain operations can lead to cost reduction through reduced transportation costs, efficient use of resources, and improved overall efficiency.
- vii. **Real-Time Visibility:** Modern supply chain management systems provide real-time visibility into the movement of products, allowing rural enterprises to respond quickly to changing market conditions and customer demands.

In summary, data analytics and supply chain management systems are indispensable tools for rural enterprises looking to optimize their marketing efforts. By harnessing the power of data and efficiently managing their supply chains, rural enterprises can make informed decisions, reduce costs, improve customer satisfaction, and gain a competitive edge in the market. These technologies are instrumental in enhancing the overall effectiveness and efficiency of rural enterprise marketing.

Overall profitability and sustainability of rural enterprises adopting the digitalization strategies:

The adoption of digitalization strategies can have a significant impact on the overall profitability and sustainability of rural enterprises. These strategies can bring about various benefits that contribute to the financial health and long-term viability of rural businesses:

1. Increased Market Access and Revenue Generation:

- i. **Expanded Customer Base:** Digitalization can enable rural enterprises to access a broader customer base, including urban and international markets. This increased market reach can result in higher sales and revenue.
- ii. **Diversification of Products:** With digital tools, rural enterprises can diversify their product offerings based on market demand. This adaptability can lead to additional revenue streams.

2. Cost Reduction and Efficiency Improvement:

- i. **Streamlined Operations:** Digitalization can optimize internal processes, reducing operational costs. Supply chain management, inventory control, and order processing can become more efficient.

- ii. **Reduced Marketing Costs:** Digital marketing methods, such as social media advertising and email marketing, are often more cost-effective than traditional marketing channels, allowing rural enterprises to save on advertising expenses.
 - iii. **Lower Overheads:** Remote work and cloud-based software can reduce office space and utility costs, especially for administrative tasks.
- 3. Data-Driven Decision Making:**
- i. **Market Insights:** Data analytics provides valuable insights into consumer behavior, preferences, and market trends. Rural enterprises can make informed decisions about product development, pricing, and marketing strategies.
 - ii. **Inventory Management:** Data analytics can optimize inventory levels, reducing carrying costs and minimizing waste.
- 4. Enhanced Customer Engagement and Loyalty:**
- i. **Personalization:** Digital tools allow rural enterprises to personalize their interactions with customers, fostering a sense of connection and loyalty.
 - ii. **Feedback Utilization:** Rural enterprises can gather and act on customer feedback, improving products and services and increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
- 5. Improved Competitive Position:**
- i. **Adaptation to Market Changes:** Digitalization enables rural enterprises to adapt quickly to changing market conditions and emerging trends, helping them stay competitive.
 - ii. **Innovation:** Digital technologies can facilitate innovation in product development and marketing, which can set rural enterprises apart from competitors.
- 6. Sustainability and Resilience:**
- i. **Environmental Impact:** Sustainable practices, such as reduced paper usage and optimized transportation routes, can be integrated into digitalization strategies, promoting environmental sustainability.
 - ii. **Crisis Resilience:** Digitalization can enhance a rural enterprise's ability to weather crises like the COVID-19 pandemic by enabling online sales and remote work.
- 7. Access to Resources and Support:**
- i. **Online Resources:** Digital platforms provide access to a wealth of online resources, training materials, and marketplaces, helping rural enterprises stay informed and connected.
 - ii. **Government and NGO Support:** Digitalization initiatives often receive support from government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), providing funding and training opportunities for rural enterprises.

However, it's important to note that the successful adoption of digitalization strategies requires overcoming challenges such as digital literacy, access to reliable internet connectivity, and initial setup costs. Rural enterprises must invest in training and infrastructure to maximize the benefits. In conclusion, adopting digitalization strategies can significantly enhance the overall profitability and sustainability of rural enterprises. These strategies empower rural businesses to access new markets, reduce costs, make data-driven decisions, and improve customer engagement, ultimately contributing to their long-term success and resilience.

Conclusion:

In summary, our research underscores the pivotal role that digitalization plays in reshaping the marketing dynamics of rural enterprises in Karnataka State. The ability to transcend geographic boundaries, engage customers on a personal level, harness data-driven insights, and embrace sustainability augments the profitability and sustainability of these enterprises. However, challenges such as digital literacy and infrastructure gaps remain, necessitating concerted efforts from policymakers and development agencies to bridge these divides and ensure that the benefits of digitalization are accessible to all. As Karnataka's rural enterprises continue their journey in the digital era, they stand poised to contribute not only to their own growth but also to the broader economic development of the state. In the rich tapestry of Karnataka State's rural landscape, where agriculture and rural enterprises are vital components of the local economy, the influence of digitalization has been examined closely in this study. With the aim of assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of digitalization in the marketing of rural enterprise products, our research delved into the multifaceted dynamics of rural marketing. Karnataka's diverse rural enterprises, ranging from small-scale farmers to artisans and agribusinesses, form the backdrop against which we explored the transformative impact of digitalization, recognizing the significance of these enterprises in the state's economic development. Beyond the immediate financial gains, digitalization holds the promise of advancing sustainability and resilience for rural enterprises. Embracing environmentally conscious practices and building the capacity to navigate unforeseen challenges, these enterprises are positioning themselves for long-term success in an ever-evolving market landscape.

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