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Exploring The Role of Web Marketing in the Promotion of Rural Entrepreneurship in Shivamogga District

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Abstract

Entrepreneur is an important input of economic development of any nation, and it is very essential to take necessary measures to develop entrepreneurial activities in India. India is one of the fastest digitally growing economy which has witnessed the wave of digitalisation through Digital India initiative by transforming industry and lives in multi-dimensional ways. Rural enterprises are considered as the backbone of large-scale enterprises in India. Recently, due to covid 19 pandemic Web Marketing is playing a vital role in marketing the products and services of any enterprise and in marketing the products of rural enterprises. Even though rural entrepreneurs have many opportunities and benefit they are facing several challenges in the production and marketing of their products and services through web platforms. Hence, the present paper intends to examine the web marketing opportunities and challenges faced by the rural entrepreneurs in three taluks - Shikaripura, Soraba and Bhadravathi of Shivamogga district, Karnataka state. The study is carried out with the sample size of 80 respondents using simple random sampling method with the help of a well-structured questionnaire. The study revealed that there are number male entrepreneurs and mainly they have undertaken micro business activities in the service sector. It was observed that respondents have plenty of opportunities in the field of web marketing and preferred to adopt social media marketing as their marketing strategy and are facing financial, technological up gradation and unreliable electricity problems. It is suggested to create awareness and train the rural entrepreneurs regarding web marketing usage and proper implementation of web marketing tools to overcome such challenges.

Key words: *Challenges, Marketing Opportunities, Rural Entrepreneurship, Tools of Web Marketing, Web Marketing*

Introduction

One of the biggest changes in human interaction is the recent spread of web medias especially after the outbreak of covid pandemic. The rapid growth of web-based platforms that facilitate social behaviour on the Internet has significantly changed the nature of human activity, environment and interaction. Nowadays, real social relationships have been transferred to the virtual world which has led to the creation of online communities of people from all over the world.

The people of urban as well as rural have been addicted to this web transformation which the world has accepted. Nowadays, entrepreneurship and online web-based platforms go hand in hand and even in case of rural entrepreneurship they are adopting different web marketing tools to market their products. The young emerging entrepreneurs have adopted the web marketing by default.

Web marketing is based on online channels with high rate of usage, dynamic, can change from year to year and are always influenced by market trends. In short, web marketing constantly uses reviews, analysis, feedback, promotion process and helps to establish stronger brand and strong consumer relationships, assisting to effectively identify consumer relationships and attract attention.

The Concept of Web Marketing

Web Marketing refers to the promotion of products, services, or brands using the internet and web-based platforms. It is also known as **online marketing or digital marketing**. The main purpose of web marketing is to reach potential customers, create awareness, generate leads, and increase sales through digital channels.

Web marketing uses tools such as websites, search engines, social media, email, and online advertising to communicate with customers. A business website acts as the central platform, while techniques like Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) help improve visibility in search results. The major advantages of web marketing include global reach, cost-effectiveness, measurable results, targeted advertising, and real-time interaction. However, it also faces challenges such as high competition, changing technologies, and data privacy issues.

Concept of Rural Entrepreneurship

Rural entrepreneurship is the creation of a new organisation that introduces a new product, services or creates a new market or utilizes a new technology in rural areas. Rural entrepreneurship is important not only as a means of generating employment opportunities in the rural areas with low capital cost and rising real income of the people, but also due to its contribution to the development of agriculture and urban industries.

According to the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) “Village industry or rural industry means any industry located in rural area, population of which does not exceed 1,000 or such other figure which produces any goods or renders any services with or without use of power and in which the fixed capital investment per head of an artisan or a worker does not exceed a thousand rupees”.

Review of Literature

Rajendra et.al., (2025) investigated the different web based digital tools focusing on social media platforms such as facebook, instagram and linkedin. It is found that artificial intelligence, data analytics offer hyper targeted advertising and offer real time interactions but poses challenges like data privacy, algorithm biases and platform saturation.

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Asharani (2024) stated that Online marketing provides platform to companies to communicate with their customers and feedback given by the customers helps the company to easy work on their pitfalls and customers can make a wise decision of buying by analysing the posted feedbacks on the company website She also examined how online marketing overcome the limitations of traditional marketing and the challenges exist in India relating to Online Marketing

Manu Pal and Latha Bajpai Singh (2022) stated that rural entrepreneurship is a boon for the SMEs which help in generating employment opportunities and income for the poor rural people. This suggested the need to provide supporting ecosystem for MSMEs through education and building business friendly climate which can stimulate entrepreneurial spirit among entrepreneurs.

Ikram El Hachimi et.al (2021) stated that in this globalised era web marketing serves as an attractive alternative to traditional approaches of marketing and suggested that business leaders need to understand the trends and impact of web marketing for that they empirically verified the impact of top management support and the use of web marketing on the business performance.

Abdurrahman Rahim Thaha et.al (2021) stated that SMEs contribute more on the economic development of the developing countries. They conducted systematic mapping study related to the identification of trends and themes directly related to web marketing and SMEs over the past ten years and found that social medias and websites are mostly dominating the web marketing channels in the adoption and performance of the business.

Deepak Santosh Pawar and Dilip A Patil (2020) found that there is a less requirement of man power in the business by adopting digital marketing strategies and the products can be reached to the customers easily as they are spending more time in mobile phones and social media platforms. It is observed that some companies create fake profiles that do not exist and in the name of providing service they are hacking personal information of the customers.

ManasRanjanTripathy and Dr.Pradip Kumar Das (2020) examined that various forms of digital marketing have an impact on the effectiveness and sales performance of a firm. They mainly focused on the importance of digital marketing on both marketer and consumers and made the comparison between traditional marketing and digital marketing.

Vijaya S. Bhosale et.al., (2020) found that digital marketing is extremely more reasonable than traditional offline marketing approaches. They highlighted the importance and challenges of digital marketing in the new age and suggested that customers can use various types of digital marketing tools due to a lot of choices available in it.

Mohammed T. Nuseir and Ahmad Aljumah (2020) examined the influence of digital marketing applications on business performance but have observed moderating role of the environmental factors on business performance through a study conducted to determine the empirical relationship between digital marketing and business performance along with the influence of environmental factors among SMEs.

Kenzhegul Bizhanova et.al,(2019) stated that digital marketing affects the sales volume and the number of customers an does not require high material and financial resources. They stated that second generation internet applications enhances marketing efforts by allowing the firms to introduce innovative forms of communication and stress the need to make regular reviews, analysis, interpretations helps to build strong consumer-brand relationships.

Lavanya (2018) observed that Indian economy is transforming from traditional to digital economy encouraging entrepreneurs to adopt technology in the development of their enterprises. It is

suggested that rural digital entrepreneurs should be encouraged by conducting various training and development programmes.

PadamBhushan (2018) exhibited that we are connected with the social media platforms like Whatsapp and Facebook which have opened the doors for web marketing experts to pull their customers through digital stage. It is found that there are challenges which the customers have brought through the web marketing.

Research Problem Statement and Study Significance

Every year, thousands of rural enterprises with an innovative concept are striving to make their presence in the web-based world. Some of them have immediate prominence, but most of them are struggling to establish themselves. It is difficult for the new rural entrepreneurs to compete with the existing, profitable firms without adequate marketing strategies. Adopting web marketing by rural entrepreneurs is a great opportunity to create a market for their products and services but challenging as well. There is a need of web marketing to change the market scenario but inadequate knowledge about technology and web platforms leads to failure of rural business. So, proper implementation of web marketing strategies in the rural enterprises and to create awareness among the rural entrepreneurs regarding the opportunities of web marketing is highly essential. In this backdrop, the study is an attempt to identify the various avenues as well as the challenges of rural entrepreneurs to go for web marketing

Objectives of the Study

To understand the different web marketing tools used by sample rural entrepreneurs in Shivamogga district

To identify the opportunities of web marketing in the field of rural entrepreneurship

To explore the challenges of web marketing channels in the promotion of rural enterprises

Scope of the Study

The study covers the web marketing opportunities and challenges and marketing tools of rural micro and small entrepreneurs operating in three taluks- Shikaripura, Soraba and Bhadravathi of Shivamogga district.

Limitations of the Study

- The study is confined only to rural micro and small entrepreneurs of three taluks of Shivamogga district
- The study examines only the web marketing opportunities and challenges of selected rural entrepreneurs.

Sources of Data

To collection of data, both primary and secondary sources are used. Primary data have been collected from the selected categories of rural entrepreneurs through well-structured questionnaire in Shivamogga district. Secondary data have been collected from relevant books, articles, journals and online sources.

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Sampling Design

At present, a total of 8,482 rural micro and small entrepreneurs are registered in Shivamogga district as per the records of District Industries Centre, Shivamogga District, Karnataka as on June 2025. To the study, 80 respondents (50 male and 30 female) are considered by using Simple Random Sampling Method.

Survey Instrument

A structured questionnaire is used for data collection with a set of questions containing demographic details of rural entrepreneurs and web marketing opportunities available, web marketing tools and the major challenges faced by them in marketing their products.

Data Analysis

The study has been conducted through 80 responses collected from rural micro and small entrepreneurs spread in three taluks of Shivamogga district were recorded and was analysed below by using tables using percentages.

Table -1 Demographic and Business Detail of Respondents

Demographic and Business Details		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	62.5
	Female	30	37.5
	Total	80	100
Age Group	18-30	18	22.5
	30-40	32	40
	40-50	21	26.25
	Above 50	09	11.25
	Total	80	100
Academic Qualification	SSLC	12	15
	PUC	18	22.5
	Graduation	32	40
	Post-Graduation	08	10
	Others	10	12.5
	Total	80	100
Type of Enterprise	Micro	48	60
	Small	32	40
	Total	80	100
Nature of Activity	Manufacturing	31	38.75
	Service	49	61.25
Monthly Turnover (in Lakhs)	Up to 1	24	30
	1 to 2	27	33.75
	2 to 3	18	22.5
	More than 3	11	13.75
Number of employees working	Less than 5	21	26.25
	5-10	26	32.5
	10-15	23	28.75
	Above 15	10	12.5
Source of Capital	Own Fund	26	32.5

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	Loans from friends and relatives	14	17.5
	Loan from commercial banks	19	23.75
	Government Schemes	09	11.25
	Loan from private financial institutions	12	15

Source: Field Survey

It is observed that out of 80 respondents, more than 60% are male, around 40% respondents are of 30-40 years of age, maximum of 40% respondents are graduates, micro enterprises accounting for 60%, services activities are conducted by more than 60% respondents, more than 33.75% have monthly turnover of 1 to 2 lakhs, nearly 13% enterprises are running with more than 15 employees and own funds account for nearly 33% respondents to commence their enterprises.

Table-2 Web Marketing Opportunities of Rural Entrepreneurs

Opportunities	Opinion		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Access to international markets	40	37	03
Increase brand popularity	42	36	02
Reduce marketing costs	47	33	00
Easy business networking	37	39	04
Increase sales	39	40	01
Improve customer service	41	36	03
Increase digital literacy	39	35	06
Statement	Response	No. of respondents	Percentage
Web Marketing opportunities influence on the growth and success of rural enterprise	Yes	62	77.5
	No	18	22.5

Source: Field Survey

As observed, 100% of the respondents strongly agreed that web marketing will reduce their marketing cost, maximum 95% respondents strongly agreed that web marketing improve the brand popularity followed by 50% respondents agreed web marketing is the best marketing opportunity to increase their sales, only one respondent disagreed that web marketing as best marketing opportunity to increase sales. A maximum of around 78% respondents agreed that web marketing opportunities are one of the important factors influencing on the growth and success of rural enterprise.

Table-3 Web Marketing Tools of Rural entrepreneurs

Web Marketing tools	Opinion		
	Highly Preferred	Preferred	Not preferred
Online marketing	62	18	00
Social Media	73	07	00
Text message	49	28	03
Email marketing	38	35	07
Search engine marketing	56	24	00

Source: Field Survey

From the above table it is clear that 100% of the respondents prefer social media marketing, online marketing and search engine marketing while 35 preferred e-mail marketing to market their products through online and only 9% respondents do not prefer to adopt email marketing as their marketing strategy.

Table-4 Web Marketing Challenges of Rural entrepreneurs

Web marketing Challenges	Opinion		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
Lack of technical support	37	41	02
Insufficient digital skill	56	24	00
Lack of appropriate tools and equipment	43	35	02
Cybercrime threats	41	35	04
Unreliable or Non existing electricity supply	42	37	01
Lack of training and motivation	37	40	03
Lack of financial resources and external supports	51	28	01

Source: Field Survey

It is clear from the table that all the respondents agreed that Insufficient digital skill is their major challenge, 98% of the respondents agreed that Unreliable or Non existing electricity supply and lack of financial resources and external supports is the major challenge, nearly 54% respondents strongly agreed Lack of appropriate tools and equipment, 51% respondents agreed that Lack of technical support and only 5% respondents disagreed that Cybercrime threat is major challenge for marketing products and services digitally.

Study Findings

More than 40% rural entrepreneurs in Shivamogga district belong to the middle age group (30-40 years). Forty percent respondents are graduates, more than half of the respondents are running micro enterprises and mainly respondent's business is service oriented. About 34% respondent's monthly turnover is between 1 lakh rupees to 2 lakh rupees, followed by 32.5% respondents who started business with their own funds

Out of 80, more than 55% accepted web marketing as best marketing strategy as it will reduce their marketing cost. The respondents also agreed that web marketing will improve their brand opportunity and around 78% agreed that web marketing opportunities will influence on the growth and success of the business enterprise.

More than 90% of respondents strongly preferred to implement social media marketing as their marketing strategy.

In-sufficient digital skills is identified as the major challenge for implementing web marketing in marketing their products and services according to 70% respondents.

More than 62% respondents strongly agreed that lack of financial resources and external support is their biggest challenge for marketing their products digitally.

Suggestions

As India is transforming into a digitally empowered society there is a need to motivate rural educated youths to take up rural entrepreneurial activities with proper digital education and skills needed to set up their own enterprises.

As majority of the sample entrepreneurs have undertaken service activities (61.25%), there is a need to motivate and train to undertake manufacturing activities also

60% of sample entrepreneurs have micro enterprises hence there is a need to conduct awareness programmes to inculcate web market knowledge and opportunities available to them.

Conclusion

As there is a gradual change in customers' taste and preferences, web marketing plays a vital role in any enterprise not only knowing their preferences but also sells them products of their choice on time especially after Covid 19 Pandemic. The rural entrepreneurs also have started recognizing the importance of web marketing to market their products. Many of the rural entrepreneurs having awareness about the opportunities available to them through web marketing and adopted various web marketing tools like social media marketing, email marketing and search engine marketing as their major marketing strategies. But, many are still following traditional marketing strategies and have failed to compete with other entrepreneurs as well as are facing various marketing challenges like electricity problems, choosing inappropriate method of marketing, lack of technological support, financial resource constraint, Lack of digital literacy etc. Government of India has introduced many schemes and conducting various awareness programs under digital India initiative to enhance marketing and digital literacy of rural entrepreneurs. So, having proper web marketing and technological knowledge is very essential to realize the opportunities and overcome the challenges and improve the performance of the rural enterprise.

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