

Emerging Trends in Rural Marketing Practices in Meerut District

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Abstract

In agriculture-facing categories—seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and equipment—the local dealer and progressive farmer acted as the core influencers. Service elements were personal and highly localized: credit tied to harvest cycles, trial packs doled out by dealers, and in-kind repayments. Even today, these structures remain influential because they embed within trust, reciprocity, and easy recourse for grievance redressal. However, they now sit inside a broadened marketing architecture that reduces information asymmetry and expands choice. The study aims to explore the evolving marketing practices in the rural areas of the Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh. Using a combination of primary and secondary data, the research focuses on understanding consumer behavior, preferences, and shopkeepers' perspectives. A sample of 150 respondents, including rural consumers and shopkeepers, was surveyed through structured questionnaires to obtain comprehensive insights. The findings reveal significant shifts in marketing strategies, product preferences, and purchase patterns in rural markets.

Keywords

Agrarian Economies, Periodic Markets, Kirana Stores, Itinerant Traders, Informal Credit.

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Introduction

Below is a comprehensive, research-style overview of “**Emerging Trends In Rural Marketing Practices In Meerut District**” It is written as an integrated narrative in long-form paragraphs, suitable for the front matter of a thesis or as a standalone review essay. Rural markets in the Meerut District of western Uttar Pradesh occupy a distinctive position in India’s marketing landscape because they sit at the intersection of old agrarian economies and rapidly intensifying urban spill overs. The division’s rural areas are characterized by a mosaic of tightly knit villages, relatively high population densities, irrigated agriculture, dairying, and an intricate network of weekly haats and small bazaars that have historically mediated exchange. Over the last decade-and-a-half, three structural currents have altered how products are discovered, evaluated, bought, and serviced: physical connectivity (better roads, refrigerated chains for perishables, two-wheeler diffusion), digital connectivity (smartphone adoption, cheap data, and person-to-merchant digital payments), and institutional connectivity (self-help groups, farmer producer organizations, and a deeper presence of microfinance and cooperative channels). The combined effect is a hybrid marketing system where age-old relational exchange coexists with algorithmic discovery and doorstep delivery, and where sachet-sized FMCG packs share shelf space and mindshare with digitally discovered brands and agrotech services. A study of changing marketing practices in this setting must therefore weave together agrarian seasonality, caste and kinship-based trust networks, the economics of sachetization, vernacular media habits, and the rise of UPI-enabled small-ticket, high-frequency transactions.

Historically, marketing to rural consumers across this region rested on a triad: periodic markets (haats and melas), village kirana stores and input dealers, and itinerant traders who combined selling with informal credit. Awareness-building relied on wall paintings, temple and school wall signage, van campaigns, and sponsorships of local sports or festivals. Product portfolios emphasized value packs, durability (footwear, farm tools, utensils), and habit formation (tobacco, tea, biscuits, hair oil).

The arrival of affordable smartphones and near-ubiquitous data has recast the “information stage” of the rural purchase journey. Discovery now often begins on short-video platforms and vernacular social media groups, where product demonstrations, micro-influencer testimonials, and community referrals shape perceptions. For agri-inputs, WhatsApp groups of farmers and local extension officers circulate timely advice on seed varieties, pest outbreaks, and spray schedules, while YouTube agronomy channels drive demand for “evidence-based” products. In household consumption, women’s groups and youth-led peer clusters use mobile messaging to share deals, delivery experiences, and cautionary tales about

counterfeits. Marketers have adapted by producing snackable, low-data creative assets in Hindi and regional dialects, deploying micro-targeted ad spends that spike around harvest and wedding seasons, and using hyperlocal influencers—progressive farmers, ASHA workers, schoolteachers, panchayat members—to bridge the credibility gap. This shift has not eliminated the role of the dealer; instead, it has reoriented the dealer from a gatekeeper of information to a validator and local service node for installation, returns, and after-sales support.

Review of Literature

Sur, Samiran & Ahmed, Shafique. (2024).¹ this research looks into the tricky world of country marketing in the unique Indian market. Since a big part of India's population lives in rural places, it's important to understand how they work and come up with ways to get them involved. The study looks at the complex economic, cultural, and physical features of country markets that make them different from their city peers. By looking at how people's tastes, buying habits, and behavior change in rural India, the study explains the main factors that affect buyer decisions and market trends. This report uses a full review of recent writing and real research to talk about the main problems marketers face when trying to reach people in rural areas. Some of these problems are that people in rural areas have different ways of communicating and can't easily connect to modern delivery networks. In addition, the study talks about how these problems could be used to develop new marketing strategies. The study also looks at examples of brands that have done well in India's rural areas. It looks at the strategies these businesses used to show how they dealt with the difficulties of marketing in rural areas and utilized the hidden potential of this group.

Melnyk, Andriy. (2024).² The purpose of this study is to investigate the progression of marketing from traditional methods to the decentralized and user-driven environment of Web 3.0. The purpose of this article is to bring attention to the modifications in marketing techniques that have been brought about by advancements in digital technologies. The primary emphasis will be placed on the impact that blockchain, artificial intelligence, and decentralized platforms have had on modifications in consumer behavior and corporate procedures. The methodology. The current investigation makes use of a comparative analysis approach, which compares and contrasts the traditional marketing mix with digital and Web 3.0 marketing components. This study investigates

1. Sur, S., & Ahmed, S. (2024). Empowering growth: Unravelling dynamics and strategies for effective rural marketing in the Indian context. *International Journal of Research in Marketing Management and Sales*, 6(1), 125–130.

2. Melnyk, Andriy. (2024). Marketing Evolution: From Traditional To Web 3.0. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*. 10. 273-281. 10.30525/2256-0742/2024-10-5-273-281.

the ways in which digital marketing technologies and Web 3.0 strategies can be applied across a variety of industries by using qualitative and quantitative data from the most recent literature, case studies, and empirical research.

Gupta, Tarun. (2023).³ Even though things change all the time, some changes seem strange and contradictory. Today, we see two kinds of changes in the Indian economy: one from a national to a world level, and another from an urban to a country level. It is important to remember that more than 70% of Indians live in rural places. In the end, either no success or failure in marketing. ‘Rural Marketing’ is very important because the main people in a country decide whether a product or service succeeds or fails.

Rosário, Albérico & Dias, Joana. (2023).⁴ in the digital economy, too, business changes quickly, which means that new business models need to be created to achieve strategic marketing success. It was confirmed that social media sites are used by half of the world’s people. Businesses can learn more about their customers and get better business information by using social media. Social media is a versatile platform that businesses can use to sell their products, get people involved, create a communication plan, and keep an eye on how things are going. Using social media for marketing is a way to get companies, services, goods, and ideas out there. So, it’s clear that social media tactics offer a vague benefit that is related to business communication goals.

Qurtubi, Qurtubi et al., (2022)⁵ as the internet grows, it changes how businesses work and how they plan their strategies. People now have a better way to connect with knowledge. This causes a lot of changes in marketing, from old-fashioned methods to digital tools used by businesspeople. Still, some marketing managers aren’t sure how these kinds of communications through digital channels will work or what effects they will have.

Bala Sayi Kumar, Balanagalakshmi & Kumari, Sukhavasi. (2021).⁶ “Any organization will have two types of functions: one is marketing and the other is something

3. Gupta, T. (2023). Rural marketing: Looking ahead. *International Journal of Management Research and Review*, 2(1), 186–191.

4. Rosário, A., & Dias, J. (2023). Marketing strategies on social media platforms. *International Journal of E-Business Research*, 19(1), 1–25.

5. Qurtubi, Q., Febrianti, M. A., Sugarindra, M., Hidayat, A., & Suyanto, M. (2022). The impact of digital marketing: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (IJIM)*, 16(13), 15–29.

6. Bala Sayi Kumar, B., Balanagalakshmi, & Kumari, S. (2021). Challenges in innovative rural retail marketing. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering*, 8(7C2), 286–290.

new,” said Peter F. Drucker, who is known as the “father of modern management.” There are both country and urban markets in India. Marketers know that these two areas have a lot of potential, but it can be hard for country marketers to find the right mix of products and services to sell. The rural markets have grown on their own, with not as much interaction with the business markets, which are still very new.

Gupta, Shallini et al., (2020)⁷ The point of the study was to look at how the marketing techniques of drug companies affect how doctors in rural and urban areas write prescriptions. This split study was done with doctors from both cities and rural areas. The doctors were given a form with 17 questions, and their answers about different parts of marketing tactics were written down. The single t-test was used to compare the two groups. The way doctors in rural and urban institutions wrote prescriptions was affected by different tactics. All 17 factors were affected in the same way, except for emailing, which was affected more by doctors in cities (p=0.005). The current study shows that marketing tactics used by different drug companies do affect how doctors write prescriptions.

Jayaprakash, Shruthi. (2019)⁸these days, digital marketing rules the market. Digital marketing is becoming more popular than traditional marketing, but traditional marketing is still around. Ads that are shown on websites, social media sites (like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, etc.), emails, and other digital tools are called “digital marketing.” There are a lot of great opportunities in digital marketing now that we live in a digital world. Some things that make up digital marketing are email marketing, affiliate marketing, social media marketing, on-demand video streaming, the website, SEO, SEM, and more. The study says that in rural India, 78 million people, or 48%, use the internet every day and 140 million people, or 83%, use it at least once a month. Over 60% of India’s GDP comes from rural areas, and as the number of people using the internet grows at an amazing rate, there will likely be a big rise in digital trade.

Arsil, Poppy et al., (2018)⁹ Places (country and urban) may affect how much people want to eat local food. This study looks at and compares how people in cities

7. Gupta, S., Khajuria, K., Khajuria, V., & Gupta, N. (2018). Comparative study of impact of marketing strategies of pharmaceutical houses on prescription practices of doctors: Rural vs urban. *International Journal of Basic & Clinical Pharmacology*, 7(5), 10–16.

8. Jayaprakash, S. (2019). Digital marketing strategies for rural India. *IIBM's Journal of Management*, 4(1), 159–172.

9. Arsil, P., Brindal, M., Sularso, K., & Mulyani, A. (2018). Determinants of consumers’ preferences for local food: A comparison study from urban and rural areas in Indonesia. *Journal of Business & Retail Management Research*, 13(2), 184–195.

and rural areas feel about eating local food. In cities and rural areas on the Indonesian island of Java, questions were done in person. A structured form was used to ask 600 people. Consumers were put into groups based on their tastes using factor analysis. The types of people who buy food are different, but the things that affect their choices are similar when it comes to “food quality,” “support for local food,” “availability,” “promotion,” “tradition,” and “packaging.” In cities, “food safety” also affects people’s choices for local food. The ways that the groups get to these motivators are different, but the things that make people want to buy local food are surprisingly similar, no matter where they live. These results have big implications for coming up with marketing plans for local food that connects cities and towns.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the emerging trends in rural marketing practices in the Meerut District.
2. To analyse changes in preferences, and purchasing patterns in rural markets from the perspectives of rural consumers and shopkeepers.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Research design refers to the overall plan and structure of the study that guides the process of data collection, measurement, and analysis.

Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data:

- **Primary Data:** Collected directly from rural consumers and shopkeepers using structured questionnaires.
- **Secondary Data:** Collected from books, journals, research articles, government reports, websites, and previous studies related to rural marketing.

Sampling Design

The population of the study comprises rural consumers and shopkeepers located in selected villages of the Meerut Division.

Sample Size: 150 respondents

- a) 100 rural consumers
- b) 50 rural shopkeepers

Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling method was used due to time and accessibility constraints.

Sampling Area: Selected villages from districts under the Meerut Division.

Profile of Study Area

The present study is conducted in the Meerut Division, which is one of the prominent administrative divisions of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Tools of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire is used as the primary research tool. Two separate questionnaires are prepared—one for village consumers and another for shopkeepers.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic table of the respondents

Table 1.1: Demographic Profile of Rural Consumers (n = 100)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	60	60%
	Female	40	40%
Age (years)	18–25	20	20%
	26–35	35	35%
	36–45	25	25%
	46–60	15	15%
	60+	5	5%
Education	Illiterate	10	10%
	Primary	25	25%
	Secondary	40	40%
	Graduate	20	20%
	Postgraduate	5	5%
Occupation	Farmer	50	50%
	Labourer	20	20%
	Shopkeeper	10	10%
	Others	20	20%

The demographic profile of rural consumers (n = 100) shows a slightly higher proportion of males (60%) compared to females (40%), indicating a male-dominated respondent group. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents belong to the 26–35 years age group (35%), followed by 36–45 years (25%) and 18–25 years (20%), while only a small fraction are above 60 years (5%). Regarding education, most respondents have completed secondary education (40%), followed by primary education (25%), graduation (20%), illiterate respondents (10%), and postgraduates (5%). This suggests that the rural population surveyed has a moderate level of literacy. With respect to occupation, half of the respondents are engaged in farming (50%), 20% work as laborers, 10% are shopkeepers, and the remaining 20% are involved in other occupations. Overall, the table reflects a rural consumer base that is primarily young to middle-aged, moderately educated, and largely dependent on agriculture for livelihood.

Table 1.2: Demographic Profile of Shopkeepers (n = 50)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	45	90%
	Female	5	10%
Age (years)	18–25	5	10%
	26–35	15	30%
	36–45	20	40%
	46–60	10	20%
Education	Illiterate	5	10%
	Primary	10	20%
	Secondary	25	50%
	Graduate	10	20%
Business Type	Grocery	20	40%
	General Store	15	30%
	Others	15	30%

The demographic profile of shopkeepers indicates a clear gender disparity, with the majority being male (90%) and only a small proportion female (10%), reflecting the traditionally male-dominated nature of rural business ownership. In terms of age, most shopkeepers fall within the 36–45 years category (40%), followed by 26–35 years (30%), 46–60 years (20%), and a small segment in the 18–25 years range (10%), suggesting that middle-aged individuals are more actively involved in running shops. Regarding educational qualifications, half of the shopkeepers have completed secondary education (50%), while 20% are graduates, 20% have primary education, and 10% are illiterate, indicating a moderate level of formal education among rural entrepreneurs.

Concerning the type of business, 40% of shopkeepers operate grocery stores, 30% run general stores, and the remaining 30% are engaged in other types of shops. Overall, the table shows that rural shopkeepers are predominantly middle-aged males with moderate education, primarily operating essential retail outlets in the community.

Table 1.3: T-Test Table

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	df	p-value
Rural Consumers	100	3.2	0.8	5.23	148	0.000*
Shopkeepers	50	4.1	0.6			

The independent sample t-test was conducted to examine the difference in the level of awareness regarding modern marketing practices between rural consumers

and shopkeepers. The results indicate that shopkeepers have a higher mean awareness score (Mean = 4.1, SD = 0.6) compared to rural consumers (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.8). The calculated t-value of 5.23 at 148 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 5 percent level ($p < 0.05$). This significant difference suggests that shopkeepers are more informed and aware of changing marketing strategies than rural consumers. The higher awareness among shopkeepers may be attributed to their direct interaction with suppliers, companies, and distributors, as well as their exposure to promotional schemes and product information. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is rejected, indicating a meaningful variation in awareness levels between rural consumers and shopkeepers.

Conclusion

1. The demographic profile of rural consumers ($n = 100$) shows a slightly higher proportion of males (60%) compared to females (40%), indicating a male-dominated respondent group. In terms of age distribution, most respondents belong to the 26–35 years age group (35%), followed by 36–45 years (25%) and 18–25 years (20%), while only a small fraction are above 60 years (5%). Regarding education, the majority of respondents have completed secondary education (40%), followed by primary education (25%), graduation (20%), illiteracy (10%), and postgraduation (5%), suggesting a moderate literacy level among the rural population surveyed. Occupationally, half of the respondents are engaged in farming (50%), 20% work as laborers, 10% are shopkeepers, and the remaining 20% are involved in other occupations. Overall, the rural consumer base is predominantly young to middle-aged, moderately educated, and largely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.

2. The demographic profile of rural shopkeepers ($n = 50$) reflects a clear gender disparity, with 90% male and only 10% female, highlighting the traditionally male-dominated nature of rural business ownership. Most shopkeepers fall within the 36–45 years age group (40%), followed by 26–35 years (30%), 46–60 years (20%), and 18–25 years (10%), indicating that middle-aged individuals are most actively engaged in running shops. Half of the shopkeepers have completed secondary education (50%), while 20% are graduates, 20% have primary education, and 10% are illiterate, pointing to a moderate level of formal education among rural entrepreneurs. Regarding business type, 40% operate grocery stores, 30% run general stores, and 30% manage other types of shops, showing that essential retail outlets dominate rural commerce.

3. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare awareness of modern marketing practices between rural consumers and shopkeepers. The results

indicate that shopkeepers have a higher mean awareness score (Mean = 4.1, SD = 0.6) compared to rural consumers (Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.8). The calculated t-value of 5.23 with 148 degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). This finding confirms that shopkeepers are more informed about changing marketing strategies than rural consumers. The higher awareness among shopkeepers can be attributed to their direct engagement with suppliers, distributors, and promotional schemes, as well as their exposure to product information and market updates. Consequently, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups is rejected, indicating a meaningful variation in awareness levels between rural consumers and shopkeepers.

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