Changing Dimensions of Tribal Markets through Social Media Platform with Reference to Kodaikanal

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Abstract—The Government of India focusing on the strategy for improving the livelihood security of the tribes who constitute 8.14% of the total population of the country. Out of many issues concerning the tribal India, one aspect which is yet to receive an appropriate attention in the planning perspective is the “Marketing Activities” of the tribes. There is limited access to the current market information, literacy level among them is low, multiple channels of distribution that eats away the pockets of both tribal artisans and consumers. Marketing support is of crucial importance in tribal livelihood. It determines the condition of the livelihood system in the community. There is no organized and regulated marketing system for marketing tribal products. The tribal artisans have to face many hardships and have to overcome several hurdles to get fair and just price for their sweat. By using the modern marketing techniques could increase the demand for their products. Recently Indian Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched an e-commerce portal (www.tribesindia.com) and M-Commerce android app “Tribes India” to get Minimum Support Price (MSP) for tribal products. The tribal artisans/groups creative abilities with the support of marketing techniques can be used to create a model of sustainable livelihood. There is no adequate communication channel that enables the artisans in getting information about the policies and programs of the government that may affect their livelihood. The present study focuses on recent marketing techniques to tribal products and ensures the Maximum Support Price (MSP) to their products. Therefore an attempt made through this study to find out the extent of livelihood security to tribal artisans in Kodaikanal through Social Media Crowd sourcing Platform where tribal artisans / farmers / groups / organizations join in these social channels. Consumers can interact with them directly. There is no intervention of the middlemen and the tribal artisans can reap the maximum price for their products. Tribal marketing requires a different mindset than traditional marketing. It is more about serving than targeting and helping people build relations with others that share the same passion.

Keywords—Social Media, Crowd Sourcing, Tribal Markets, e-Marketing, Livelihood Security

I. INTRODUCTION

India has the largest concentration of tribal population in the world. The tribal are children of nature and their life style is conditioned by the eco-system. Tribal people constitute 8.14% of the total population of the country. Tribal economy is equally distinctive since it is closed and undifferentiated characterized by adoption of primitive technology in economic pursuits. Tribal economy in the earlier days was a barter system through mutual help. Thus self-sufficient economy of the tribal does not have the substantial surpluses to warrant establishment of regular markets nor knew their potentialities for their handicrafts. Traders are middlemen came on the scene and slowly these tribal artisans used to sell their products to these traders or middlemen, unfortunately these artisans are being exploited and are paid paucy amounts. The marketing support of the tribal artisans is less because of improper communication with common society, so they are not sustainable in the standard livelihood sector.

Due to lack of proper transportation, warehousing and infrastructural facilities tribal artisans/farmers are forced to sell their produce at the point of origin. This widens the scope of middlemen as farmers are not directly connected to consumers. These middlemen charge abrupt high prices of these agricultural produce form the customers and also resort to malpractices like hoarding and black-marketing. Any investment and with their negotiation skills transfer stocks by buying at low prices and selling at higher prices to the other end. Most of tribal people are not educated, so they did not know the marketing condition. Most of the tribal artisans are still use the traditional marketing techniques. The lack of awareness about marketing of the products is a major problem. The tribal artisans still do not explore the possibilities of technologies that they could use for marketing products. Their livelihood opportunities could have been increased by the proper using of technologies.

The importance of the present study is to focus the recent marketing technology to tribal products and ensure Maximum Support Price (MSP) to tribal artisans. Therefore an attempt is made through this study to find out the extent of livelihood security to the tribal artisans through Social media Crowd sourcing platform. Social media marketing is the use of social media platform to promote a product or service. Social networking websites allow individuals, businesses and other organizations to interact with one another and build relationships and communities online.

When tribal artisans join these social channels consumers can interact with them directly. The interaction can be more personal to users than traditional methods of outbound marketing and advertising. There is no intervention of middlemen and the artisans can reap the maximum support price for their produce. Tribal marketing requires a different
mindset than traditional marketing. It’s more about serving than targeting and helping people build relations with others that share the same passion. Besides offering one’s product and services once can contribute by providing virtual spaces where the tribe can gather, for example our website or Face book page. Conferences, events and meetings are great ways of connecting with tribes.

One should build relations with tribal leaders and influencers. We can include them in our ambassador program, and give them exclusive experiences. Boost their social capital by helping them do what the tribe values the most. Give them platforms, otherwise beyond their reach to be seen and heard. Tribal marketing is about delivering and managing practical benefits, as well as symbolic. As a tribal marketer one should always have the tribe’s best interest at heart. One should have the mindset of an enabler, rather than exploiter, and constantly be on the lookout for ways to deliver updates and experiences that the tribe values.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
In the light of the above issues, the objectives are designed to analyse the following aspects of the new dimension of tribal marketing

- To identify the challenges involved in marketing of tribal products.
- To promote Tribal products into digitized social marketing and get Maximum Support Price (MSP) to their produce.
- To eradicate the intervention of middlemen in tribal marketing.
- To accelerate economic development of tribes through social marketing on sustainable basis and provide them wider exposure.
- To organize and participate of tribes in Domestic/International exhibition.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS
The observations and recommendations, made in the above study lead to some pertinent questions.

- Have the observations made about the structure and functions of tribal marker got universal applicability in the tribal areas of India?
- Have the recommendations for developing the tribal markets been implemented for tribal development or remained as utopian models?
- Are the tribes able to effectively participate in e-trading and e-marketing activities lead their livelihood standard and sustainable in modern era?
- If not, what are the constraints that restrain them from such participation?
- Are the Social e-Marketing able to influence the socio-economic life pattern of the tribes?

The present study makes a modest attempt to find answers to these questions. In order to make the study appropriate and meaningful, the above mentioned objectives are intended to be tested through the following hypothesis:

$H_0_1$: The unregulated Indian tribal marketing system fails to prevent the market exploitation of small producers in general and tribal in particular.

$H_0_2$: The poor infrastructural facilities in Tribal Markets often force the producer sellers to make distress sales.

$H_0_3$: Unaware of current market price/government schemes of tribes allow them not to get Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Tribes constitute approximately 10% the total Indian population. They spread over the country and economically deprived due to illiteracy and culture. (Hari Prasad U, etc. 2015) discussed the livelihood options for tribal and listed about the existing status of their products in markets and assess the support provided by the local NGO’s /Govt. program/Financial Institutions to the artisans. T.M. Shivaprasad, etc. (2016) discussed that the tribes were being misused by moneylenders, middlemen and merchants for a long stretch. Also he pointed that to liberating the tribal from the clutches of money lenders through supply of production and consumption credit. Purchase from tribals their surplus agricultural/forest produce. According to Frankenberger (1996), Livelihood security can be defined as “adequate and viable access to income and other resources to empower households to meet their basic needs. This comprises adequate access to food, clean water, health facilities, educational opportunities, housing, time for community participation and social integration”. Livelihoods can be made up of a wide range of on and off-farm activities that organizing a variety of procurement strategies for food and cash. Thus, every household can have numerous possible sources of entitlement, which organize its livelihood. These rights are constructed on the endowments that a household has and its locus in the legal, political and social fabric of society (Drinkwater and Russinow, 1999). The risk of household livelihood failure plumps the level of susceptibility of a household to income, food, health and nutritional insecurity. Unfortunately, not all households are equal in their ability to cope with stress and repeated shocks. Underprivileged people balance contending needs for asset preservation, income generation and present and future food supplies in complex ways (Maxwell and Smith, 1992).

Swati Chauhan (2014) stated that the timber and non-timber forest produce (NTFP’s) are mainly dependent on tribal for collection and sales. She narrated that how these forest products play an important role in sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation of tribes. Those make up to 80% contribution to the income of forest dependent tribal. Shakeel-Ul-Rehman (2012) argued that how Indian agriculture Directly/Indirectly play an vital role in sustainable livelihood in tribal/rural population. Also he pointed that the past and present scenario of agricultural marketing prevailing in India, it’s challenges and future recommendations.

A.Vadivelu, etc. (2013) listed about the conflicts and prospects of agricultural marketing in India. He also discussed
that how globalization has brought the drastic changes in Indian markets. RoopRaj (2018) discussed about the present scenario of Indian agricultural markets and the intervention of middlemen in tribal marketing who eat away the benefits that the farmers are supposed to get. Also he suggests how to organize and regulate marketing system for tribal agricultural produce for their sustainable livelihood.

Dr. M. Saravanakumar (2012) analyzed about the Social media and its reach to connect the entire globe, the different marketing techniques via social media platform and the benefits of direct customer-trader interaction to eliminate the intervention of third party. Also he suggests to promote their brand via e-Marketing. Irem Eren Erdogmus (2012) stated that how to build and maintain brand loyalty to a product via social media platform. He identifies the effect of social media marketing on brand loyalty of the customers. His research as a pioneer in this new area of marketing, and propose several tactics for the practitioners.

Barbara Harriss White, etc. (2013) analyzed about the growing minority of dalits and adivasis have been incorporated into the Indian economy not as workers but as owners of firms. Also explores that the dalit experience of disadvantages entry into markets, the State and Civil Society, their adverse experience of business associations regulating markets.

This study aims to market tribal products reference to Kodaianal area through Social Media Platform where there is no intervention of third party people and the tribal artisans can interact directly with the consumers which leads to get Maximum Support Price (MSP) that enhance their livelihood.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Kodaikanal is a Municipality city located in district of Dindigul, Tamilnadu. It is divided into 24 wards. It has population of 36,501 of which 18,216 are males while 18,285 are females as per report released by Census India 2011. Literacy rate of Kodaikanal is 89.30%, Male Literacy rate is 93.43% while Female Literacy rate is 85.19%. Kodaikanal Municipality has total administration over 9,442 houses under 24 Wards (Sub-divisions). In that 102 Scheduled Tribes (Male (56)/Female (46)) constitute 0.3% population in Kodaikanal.

The present study focuses on the implementation of social e-Marketing strategy among tribes in Kodaikanal to sell their products via social medium to get maximum Support Price (MSP) to their produce.

1. Design:

According to Tribal e-Marketing “Comparative Research Design” is to be used. We are going to classify the tribes according to their literacy level, marketing interest. This design helps to compare the statistical results between or among groups and the research itself is descriptive.

2. Sampling Techniques and Size:

For the selection of samples, Simple Random Sampling method is to be used for which guaranteeing equal probability through a sample procedure. In Kodaikanal Municipal 0.3% that is 102 Scheduled Tribes has been living. The of this study is to analyze the marketing techniques to implement and improve social e-Marketing among tribes to enhance their livelihood security.

The total number of 102 tribes will be divided into three groups (Approximately) according to their sub-divisions (Wards). The total numbers of samples are 102. Meet ups, Introducing and implementing digital marketing strategy will be initiated at different community centers in and around Kodaikanal according to their interest.

For each group, recent marketing strategies will be explained via Presentations/Real time Conversations/Social mediums to give them a meaningful insight about marketing. According to their interest further steps will be followed in next level. Later will examine the development strategies after successful implementation of social e-Marketing for tribal products. For each groups data will be collected by Simple Random Sampling Method.

Statistical analysis will be done by SPSS software for Windows. The final report will be generated according to the results. Based on the results let them create awareness about e-Marketing techniques to other social backward class people (SC) help them to enhance their livelihood.

3. No of visits to Sample:

In order to adequately cover up the sample population and accommodate in the data, the seasonal influences in the trading and marketing activities of that tribal participants, if any, each sample tribe will be visited according to the purpose of the study.

4. Materials:

The purpose of this study is to create/implement awareness about recent marketing techniques among tribes in Kodaikanal Municipal. During initial phase, we have to analyze the prevailing marketing strategy among tribes. For that purpose, we will ask questionnaires, if needed small surveys about marketing will be conducted. According to their interest the participant can participate via teleconference/video conference/e-mails/social medium/websites.

5. Procedure:

The participants will enroll their name by ward with the researcher manual/digitally and database will be maintained. The tribes have to follow the procedures given by the researcher / field worker. They have to attend meetings / conferences / exhibitions to enhance their marketing skills.

6. Data Collection:

The collection of data will be made through face-to-face/online/social medium/websites/tele/video conferences/emails administration of structured questionnaires will be designed for this purpose. In order to study the performance of tribal co-operative marketing institutions, data from secondary sources as well as oral conversations will also
be collected from the respondents through communication channels.

7. Data Analysis:

At the final stage, the data collected were tabulated, classified and analysed in the light of the objectives and hypotheses of the study. However, before tabulation, utmost care was taken to edit each filled in questionnaire, so that the errors of commission or omission, if any, committed by the investigating team during the field study could be detected and rectified, and the data could appear reliable.

For analysis, different statistical tools like percentages, mean, median, mode, co-efficient of skewness, standard deviations, standard errors, tests of significance, ct’ tests, pie charts and bar diagrams, etc. were used. In order to substantiate the statistical analysis, in some cases, oral expressions of the respondents were also considered useful.

8. Scope of the Study:

The scope of the study is confined to examine the impact of digital marketing strategy helps to enhance tribal livelihood in Kodaikanal Municipality. It also tries to find out the extent of getting Maximum Support Price (MSP) available in e-tribal marketing in Kodaikanal, the forward and backward linkages, activities and performance of the Tribal- Co-operative Marketing Institutions and the Regulated Marketing Committees. The study although is restricted to the geographical boundaries of Kodaikanal Municipal, it is expected will be of much relevance to understand the nature of trading and purchasing functions carried on by the tribal participants in other tribal areas of state as well as the country. Besides, it will be able to highlight the catalytic role of such digital tribal marketing in the development of tribal areas.

9. Limitations of the study:

In spite of the best efforts and utmost care taken by the researcher to make the present study full-fledged and unbiased, several limitations were found manifesting as the study progressed. Some of such limitations could be overcome after sincere endeavours, while the others had to be discriminately ignored due to some reason or other. Yet there may be some lapses which might have escaped the notice of the researcher due to his lack of in-depth analytical vision at the time of investigation. For such lapses, the blame, of course, is entirely borne by the researcher himself. But the limitations which came to the notice, but could not be overcome due to resource and time constraints are outlined in the following.

- The reliability of data collected from the sample during field study
- The land holdings disclosed by the tribal respondents will be a guess work
- Transformation taking place in the socio-economic conditions of the tribes will be attributed to the influence of e-Marketing.

VI. RELEVANCE AND ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- To develop a new dimension of tribal marketing tends to Social e-Marketing.
- To create Direct Trader-Consumer interaction that helps to eradicate the intervention of Middlemen in marketing.
- To expose e-marketing of tribal products through increase of its retail outlets all over India and Overseas.
- To promote Economic Development of Tribal Livelihood.
- To create awareness about current market price to get Maximum Support Price (MSP) to their produce.
- To expose tribal values and their produce that helps to build Tribal-Urban relationship via Social Medium.

VII. CONTOURS OF THE STUDY

Methodology detailing Stepwise activities and Sub activities:

- Statistical Data Collection/Identification
- Review Government Functioning Policies
- Examine Development strategies
- Analyse Current Marketing Techniques
- Grouping based on Marketing Interest
- Introduce/Implement Social e-Marketing
- Spreading awareness via Conferences / events
- Examine the development after e-Marketing
- Build relations with Tribal leaders/NGO’s
- Organize Domestic / International Exhibitions
- Report Generation

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