

A Study on Rural Marketing Practices at YMCA, Marthandam

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Abstract

This project report, entitled "A Study on Rural Marketing Practices at YMCA, Marthandam", aims to analyze the role and effectiveness of rural marketing practices in enhancing community participation, communication effectiveness, and outreach of social service programs. The study examines how different marketing strategies influence beneficiary involvement, identifies the challenges faced in rural marketing, and assesses the overall impact on the utilization of social service programs. Rural marketing plays a crucial role in creating awareness and improving access to services in underserved areas. The study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as One-Sample t-test, Independent Sample t-test, ANOVA, and Karl Pearson Correlation have been used for data analysis. The analysis reveals that rural marketing practices significantly enhance community participation and awareness among respondents. Communication channels, both traditional and modern, are found to be effective in disseminating information, although certain challenges such as limited digital access and communication barriers still exist. The results also indicate a positive relationship between rural marketing practices and the outreach and utilization of social service programs. The study concludes that effective rural marketing strategies can improve participation, awareness, and service utilization in rural areas. It suggests that organizations should adopt a balanced approach by combining traditional and modern communication methods, addressing existing challenges, and strengthening outreach activities to achieve better results and sustainable community development.

Keywords: Community Participation, Communication Channels, Outreach, Rural Marketing, Social Service Programs, YMCA Marthandam

Introduction

Rural marketing has emerged as a vital mechanism for social service organizations to communicate their programs and services to rural communities effectively. In a country like India, where over 65 percent of the population resides in rural areas, organizations such as YMCA Rural Centres play a pivotal role in enabling socio-economic development and community empowerment. For these organizations, rural marketing is not primarily driven by commercial objectives, but

rather by the need to create awareness, build trust, and encourage active participation among rural beneficiaries.

YMCA Rural Centres and the Institute of Rural Development, Marthandam, established in 1916 under the guidance of Dr. Spencer Hatch, is a renowned social welfare organization committed to rural reconstruction and community development in Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu. The organization employs a variety of rural marketing practices including village meetings, awareness camps, personal interaction, and word-of-mouth communication to reach its target beneficiaries. These practices are designed to be culturally sensitive, accessible, and effective in reaching communities with varying levels of literacy and digital access.

Rural consumer behaviour is heavily influenced by social structures, customs, and community relationships, making conventional marketing strategies less effective in rural contexts. As a result, organizations engaged in social service delivery must adopt marketing approaches that align with rural lifestyles and communication preferences. This study investigates the rural marketing practices adopted by YMCA Marthandam, assessing their effectiveness in enhancing community participation, examining the communication channels employed, identifying key challenges, and evaluating the overall impact on the outreach and utilization of social service programs. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for social service organizations seeking to strengthen their marketing strategies and improve service delivery in rural areas.

Literature Review

Rashmi Mehra (2025) examined the changing dynamics of rural marketing in India with a focus on the durable goods sector, highlighting how rising rural incomes, government infrastructure initiatives, and increased electrification have transformed rural markets.

Dr. Baisakhi Mitra Mustaphi (2025) examined the shift of major corporations from saturated urban markets to high-potential rural regions, identifying affordability, availability, acceptability, and awareness as the key pillars for rural marketing success.

Dr. Vivek Sharma et al. (2025) analyzed the changing purchasing patterns of rural consumers in developing countries, emphasizing the impact of digital transformation through mobile technology and internet access. The study recommended Social and Behavior Change Communication as an effective strategy.

Waribam Asha Devi and Dhiren Meetei (2024) analyzed how the 4P's of marketing are adapted for rural consumer markets in Manipur, India. The findings indicated that rural markets offer strong growth potential due to their large population.

Dr. Razia Sultana (2022) analyzed the growing importance of rural markets in India, highlighting opportunities created by rising literacy rates, improved purchasing power, and government development initiatives. The study emphasized the need for customized marketing approaches.

Research Gap

1. Most previous studies on rural marketing mainly focus on product marketing and business development rather than social service organizations.
2. Limited research has been conducted on the role of rural marketing practices in enhancing community participation and beneficiary involvement.
3. Few studies have examined the impact of rural marketing on the outreach and utilization of social service programs in rural areas.
4. There is insufficient research on the combined use of traditional and modern communication methods in rural marketing practices.
5. Very few studies have specifically focused on rural marketing practices at YMCA, Marthandam, creating a need for the present study.

Research Methodology

YMCA, Marthandam has been serving rural communities for decades, and this study focuses specifically on understanding how its rural marketing practices including awareness campaigns, outreach activities, and communication strategies influence community participation and the outreach and utilization of social service programs among rural beneficiaries. A descriptive research design was adopted since the primary intention was to observe and understand existing practices rather than manipulate any variables, and data was gathered directly from rural respondents through a structured questionnaire, with additional information drawn from secondary sources such as organizational records, journals, and published literature. To analyze the collected data, One-Sample t-test and Karl Pearson Correlation were applied the t-test helped assess whether rural marketing practices significantly impact community participation and beneficiary involvement, while the correlation analysis examined the relationship between rural marketing practices and the outreach and utilization of social service programs, together providing a clear and reliable picture of how effectively YMCA Marthandam's rural marketing efforts translate into real community engagement.

Objectives

1. To understand the role of rural marketing practices in enhancing community participation and beneficiary involvement.
2. To assess the impact of rural marketing practices on the outreach and utilization of social service programs.

Limitations of the Study

- The data is largely based on personal opinions and perceptions of respondents, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies.
- The study focuses only on a social service organization , the findings may differ from those of commercial rural marketing practices.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

One-Sample t-Test: Impact on Community Participation

H_0 : There is no significant impact of rural marketing practices on community participation and beneficiary involvement.

Table 1 One-Sample t-Test – Community Participation (Test Value = 3)

Variables	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Awareness Campaigns	43.768	383	.000	1.448	1.38	1.51
Village Meetings & Camps	36.171	383	.000	1.273	1.20	1.34
Clarity of Marketing Materials	31.108	383	.000	1.307	1.22	1.39
Feeling Valued & Listened	36.166	383	.000	1.318	1.25	1.39
Volunteering & Spreading Message	36.554	383	.000	1.365	1.29	1.44

Source: Primary Data

The One-Sample t-test with a test value of 3 reveals that all variables related to the role of rural marketing in community participation are highly significant. All Sig. (2-tailed) values are .000, which is less than 0.05, and all mean differences are positive and greater than 1, indicating that respondents strongly agree that rural marketing practices play a major role in enhancing community participation and beneficiary involvement. This suggests that the organization’s awareness campaigns, village meetings, marketing materials, and outreach activities have been effectively received by the rural community. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted, confirming that rural marketing practices significantly enhance community participation and beneficiary involvement.

Karl Pearson Correlation: Impact on Outreach and Utilization

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between rural marketing practices and the outreach and utilization of social service programs.
- H₁: There is a significant relationship between rural marketing practices and the outreach and utilization of social service programs.

Table 2 Karl Pearson Correlation – Impact on Outreach and Utilization

Variables	Program Utilization	Awareness Raising	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI
Awareness Campaigns	43.768	383	.000	1.448	1.38	1.51
Village Meetings & Camps	36.171	383	.000	1.273	1.20	1.34
Clarity of Marketing Materials	31.108	383	.000	1.307	1.22	1.39
Feeling Valued & Listened	36.166	383	.000	1.318	1.25	1.39
Volunteering & Spreading Message	36.554	383	.000	1.365	1.29	1.44

Source: Primary Data

The Karl Pearson Correlation test reveals a positive and significant correlation among all variables related to the impact of rural marketing on outreach and utilization. All correlation coefficients are positive, indicating that rural marketing practices are meaningfully associated with increased program utilization, awareness raising, service accessibility, and community recommendation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted, confirming that a significant positive relationship exists between rural marketing practices and the outreach and utilization of social service programs.

Findings

- The study reveals that rural marketing practices significantly enhance community participation and beneficiary involvement.
- Awareness campaigns and outreach activities play a major role in encouraging participation in social service programs.
- Rural marketing practices create a positive impact on awareness, accessibility, and utilization of social service programs.
- Increased participation in programs and willingness to recommend services are observed among respondents.

- Karl Pearson correlation confirms a strong positive relationship between rural marketing practices and outreach effectiveness.

Suggestions

- The organization should strengthen both traditional and digital communication methods to improve rural outreach.
- More awareness programs and outreach activities should be conducted to increase community participation.
- Community volunteers should be encouraged to improve trust and beneficiary involvement.
- Greater integration of traditional communication methods with digital platforms is recommended.
- Sustainable rural marketing strategies should be developed to ensure long-term community impact and program utilization.

Conclusion

The findings of this study make it evident that rural marketing practices at YMCA, Marthandam are not merely promotional activities but a genuine bridge between the organization and the rural communities it serves. Awareness campaigns, outreach activities, and thoughtfully designed communication strategies have collectively encouraged rural people to participate more actively in social service programs and make better use of what the organization offers. The One-Sample t-test confirmed that these practices have a statistically significant impact on community participation and beneficiary involvement, while the Karl Pearson Correlation analysis established a strong positive relationship between rural marketing efforts and the actual outreach and utilization of social service programs. What this ultimately tells us is that when an organization like YMCA, Marthandam invests in reaching people the right way through channels they trust and in a language they understand awareness grows, accessibility improves, and communities respond. Well planned rural marketing is therefore not optional but essential to the sustained effectiveness and reach of social service delivery in rural areas.

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