

# Emerging Communication Platforms in Rural India

By R V Rajan

Chairman, Anugrah Madison Advertising P Ltd.  
President, Rural Marketing Agencies Assn. of India

10<sup>th</sup> May 2007

# Rural Marketing - Issues

- Heterogeneity
  - 28 states, 6 religions, 16 major languages and 1650 dialects
  - Culture & traditions that vary from region to region
- Logistics
  - Geographical distances
  - Lack of infrastructure – roads / power
  - Difficulty of last mile connectivity
- Poor media reach
  - Need for unconventional media
- Challenges of Communication
  - Unlike urban communication, one size does not fit all in rural

# Emerging Media Opportunities

- Which provide answers to the challenges of rural communication
  - I. Local Cable TV Network
  - II. Postal Network
  - III. FM Radio

# I. Local Cable TV Networks

# Why Local Cable TV Networks?

- Have self-produced programmes which are of interest to local people
- Some of the programmes like local news, local event coverage are very popular
- Interactive and call-in facility based music programmes are very sought after by youth
- Inexpensive and focussed target audience

# Understanding of Cable TV Network – in Karnataka

# Karnataka Local Cable TV Network

- Satellite channels
- Provide signal feeds to 20 Head End Operators
- HEO distribute signals to their sub-link operators (100 to 200 per HEO)
- Sub-link operator re-distributes signals to cable homes. Each operator may have 50 to 300 HHs.

# Local Cable TV Network in Karnataka

- 20 Head End Operators at district head quarters
- 12 of them have the facilities to create and air local programme
- Each covering about 200 villages
- Each village operator provides connection to at least 100 households
- Opportunity to cover nearly 4 lakh semi urban / rural households



# Mandya Television Network (MTV) (One of the HEOs)

- Managed by a young, educated and professional team
- Owns over 300 km fibre optic network and completely equipped studio set up
- Covers Mandya, Srirangapatna, Maddur, KM Doddi, Bannur, Keragod and Mirgavalu areas
- Caters to 7 lakh local population in about 200 villages

# MTV Programmes

- MTV News is the most popular programme among all with even live coverage
- Caters to different segments with programmes like Dial-in-Songs, Cookery, Health, Religion, etc.
- Airs different language films to cater to the needs of multi language population of Mandya District.

# MTV for Consumer Connect

- Village level consumer meets can be organised using the Network manpower
- The village operator will help in data collection of potential consumers, identifying the venue, catering and such other ground support.

# MTV for Consumer Connect

- He could also act as the local canvassing agent for order booking
- Scroll messages on MTV News about the ensuing meet to generate awareness and interest.

- Such local cable networks available in every state
- Particularly well entrenched in South India
- Many open to the idea of providing promotional support to corporates for a fee

## II. Postal Network

- Out of 1,55,516 Post offices, 1,38,409 are in rural areas (90%)
- Further divided into HPOs, sub Post offices and extra departmental branch post offices
- 5,50,000 employees

# Postal Network & Rural Marketing

- Logistics
  - With unbeatable and well established infrastructure
  - Post offices in rural areas serving 4 to 5 villages providing last mile connectivity
- Media
  - As a place where locals visit – can provide new media opportunities
- Communication
  - Being part of local milieu can help in local communication
- Credibility
  - Govt. owned and hence high credibility for financial transactions

# Factors in Favour – Human Resources

## Postmaster

- Educated / knowledgeable
- Local Opinion leader
- Trustworthy government representative

## Postman

- Daily visitor to the village
- Knows every one and their status
- Connects villagers with the rest of the world
- Local man, therefore understands local sensitivities



# Opportunities for Marketers

- Infrastructure – Post offices
  - Helping in logistics
    - Reaching goods and services to remote villages
  - Dept. of Posts has already established **LOGISTICS POST**
  - To carry everything from computer hardware, auto spare parts and even FMCG
  - To any nook and corner of India
  - Backed by new technologies such as RFID\* - a web based consumer response system

*(\* Radio Frequency Identification for tracking the supply chain)*

# Post Offices – Services already on offer

- Media Post
  - Advertisements on Postal Stationary
    - Post Cards
    - Inland Letters
    - Aerograms
    - Money Order Forms
    - Post office SB Pass Books

# Media Post Contd...

- Meghdoot Postcards
  - Four colour printing of advertising messages on one side of the card
- Advertisements on letter boxes
  - TV / Pillar types
  - Others(C3, C4 & C5)

# E-Post

- Use E-Post for advertising products to targeted customers
- Handover your message at a post office or just access *indiapost.nic.in* on your computer and the message will be printed and delivered to postal addresses anywhere in India

# Dept. of Post and Insurance

- Sale of non life insurance products in association with Oriental Insurance Company
- Rural Related
  - Cattle Insurance
  - Kisan Agri Insurance
  - Kisan Pumpset Policy
  - **Also have their own Life Insurance policy**

# What else can the Post Offices Do?

- Infrastructure - Post offices
  - Offering space for promotional materials and activities
  - Providing space for demonstration, sampling etc.
  - Providing post man's cycle and his uniform for branding

# What else can the Post Offices Do?

- Human Resource - Postmen
  - Sampling, door delivery of products as per corporates needs
  - Reaching direct mail communication to specific TA in villages
  - Physical reach of contest forms, merchandising material to be put up at specified areas
  - Ground support for organising consumer meets by corporates like collecting database of potential consumers based on certain criteria
  - Using their services for simple feedback research activities

# Examples of on-going Experiments

## Stocking and selling products & services

### ■ Kodak

- Kodak products like batteries, cameras, film rolls now available in post offices in Panvel & Sangli districts of Maharashtra
- Photographic rolls for developing and printing accepted at identified post offices.



# Other Experiments (Contd.)

## ■ Andhra Pradesh

- 75000 copies of a Telugu magazine sold through the post office

## ■ Tamilnadu

- Distribution of VITA English Home Study Packages (printed book and audio tapes) priced at Rs.950/- through the post offices of Tamilnadu

- Every circle is involved in some experiment in rural marketing
- Not all are successful because of problems on the ground level

# There is an urgent need for

- Training post masters / postmen
- Changing their mindsets / motivating them with incentives
- Providing info on the no. of people who physically visit the post offices and their profiles
- Info on the physical reach of each post office - no. of homes covered, average no. of homes actually visited by local postman everyday etc.
- Commitment on time taken for delivery of services
- Accountability

- *Corporates are looking for reliable one point contact for executing rural campaigns.*
- Postal Network is ideally suited to play this role.
- And the top management in Dept. of Post is fully geared
- **BUT THE BIG CHALLENGE IS TO *MAKE THE ELEPHANT DANCE!***

## III. FM Radio

- Growing in popularity
- Especially among the youth
- Both in urban and semi urban

# FM Radio Current Situation

	No. of Stations	Non-Metro Stations
All India Radio	175	145
Gyan Vani	19	11
Big FM	15	10
Radio Mirchi	12	5
Edicational Institutions	19	13

# Possibilities...

- FM Stations in every district HQ
- Localised communication in the language of the region
- Great opportunity for rural marketers

# Other Emerging Rural Communication Opportunities



# Proliferation of large format retail stores in rural

- Choupal Sagar
- DSCL Hariyali Stores
- Tata / Rallis Kisan Kendra
- M&M Shubh Labh Stores
- Escorts Stores
- Godrej Aadhar
- Proposed retail chain by Reliance

# Large Format Retail in Rural

Providing a 3-in-1 experience to rural consumers

Product Availability



Brand Communication

Brand Experience

Captive Communication Opportunity

Physical demonstration of Brand / Product

# Use of Technology in Rural Communication

- Common Service Centres (CSCs)
- With Internet Kiosks in 1,00,000 villages
- A GOI initiative with private partnership

**Thank You**