

CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Sachin Sharma¹
Kavita Sharma²
Dr Prabhjot Kaur³

Abstract:

The development of urban centers cannot ensure sustainable development. The disparity of Shining India and Deprived Bharat can lead to social unrest in the long run. The development of rural areas is crucial for growth to be sustainable and inclusive. The paper reviews the role of celebrity endorsements and other approaches for sustainable development in rural areas. It is recommended to focus on 5 E's model of education, entrepreneurship, empowerment of women, electricity and expansion of financial services for rural development.

Keywords: Rural, Sustainable Development, Celebrity, 5E Model

1. Research Scholar, IK Gujral Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala, Punjab
2. Research Scholar, IK Gujral Punjab Technical University, Kapurthala, Punjab
3. Associate Professor, faculty of Management, CGC-Technical Campus, Jhanjeri

Introduction:

The celebrity endorsements have been used for promotion of products by corporate world in India. The rising levels of competition and declining operating margins have created the necessity for marketers to think beyond traditional boundaries and traditional approaches of marketing to sustain the growth of business.

The rural markets are relatively unexplored by the marketers. The rural markets provide challenges as well as opportunities. The problems faced by rural people should be treated as opportunities by marketers to develop products that can provide solution to the problems faced by rural masses.

Rs. 1.34 lakh crore would be invested by government in rural areas under Swachh Bharat Mission (The Hindu, 2014).

The following issues should be considered by marketers for exploring rural markets.

1. The strategy should be prepared with a long term orientation. The rural markets are required to be developed in terms of distribution network, brand building, supporting economic wealth creation.
2. The celebrities should be selected so that the rural masses can connect with them.
3. The celebrity endorsements should have a social message to create an appeal in the mind of rural people. Sachin Tendulkar is part of wash India campaign. It is estimated that availability of separate toilets can increase enrolment of girls by 11% (UNICEF, 2008). Vidya Balan is a part of Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan to create awareness about sanitation (wordpress, 2012).

4. The product should be designed to cut the cost by removing/modifying features not important for rural consumer. Gillette has modified razor to suite consumers of small cities and rural areas and came up with Gillette Guard. The company also worked with distributors to deliver to small retailers. Shave India campaign was launched to support the product (Reddy and Dula, 2013)
5. The promotional efforts should include scholarship foe education of a child based on skill test and the participants should be given gift vouchers. The winners should be given scholarship for skill development in a chosen area, till the child achieves self sufficiency to support himself/herself financially.
6. The personalities outside cinema and cricket should be explored for promotion of products along with social message.
7. The nongovernmental organizations (NGO) should be used to create a network along with micro finance and other agencies private agencies working for up liftment of rural people socially, and economically.

5E Model:

The sustainable development of rural areas is possible if 5E model is implemented. The 5E model includes: Education, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment of Women, Electricity, and Expansion of financial services. The components of 5E model are elaborated in this section.

Education: Provide products that meet the educational need of the rural population. The academic courses should be supported and supplemented by job oriented training programs to make it attractive for the rural people to attend these programs. One of the major reasons for poor attendance and drop outs at rural



schools is lack of relevance of education in enhancing the economic condition of the people. Education should not be just for the sake of education. Training programs in English should also be used as a strategy to enhance the employability skills of the rural people. The business processing centers (BPO) should be encouraged to open their mini centers at rural places by providing required infrastructure, power supply, inverters, and internet connectivity. The provision of corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending by corporate can also be used to develop such centers with collaboration of telecom companies, outsourcing companies, IT training providers, language training providers.

The big corporate should be motivated to select, train and provide internships for students from rural areas as a CSR activity. The trainees should be given the opportunity of employment based on their skills and aptitude.

The sports federation should be motivated to start satellite centers in rural areas. The latent talent in rural people can be identified at an early stage and expert training and coaching to develop them at national, international level and transform them into a successful sports personality.

The celebrities should be used to promote education, skill development in rural areas.

Entrepreneurship: Provide opportunity for rural people to start, and develop their own enterprises. The private agencies and industry associations should explore the possibility of working with Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), national knowledge commission. Entrepreneurship at village, taluka level will create jobs for unskilled and semi skilled people in their own village or at a place near to their village. It will have a multiplier effect. The growth of

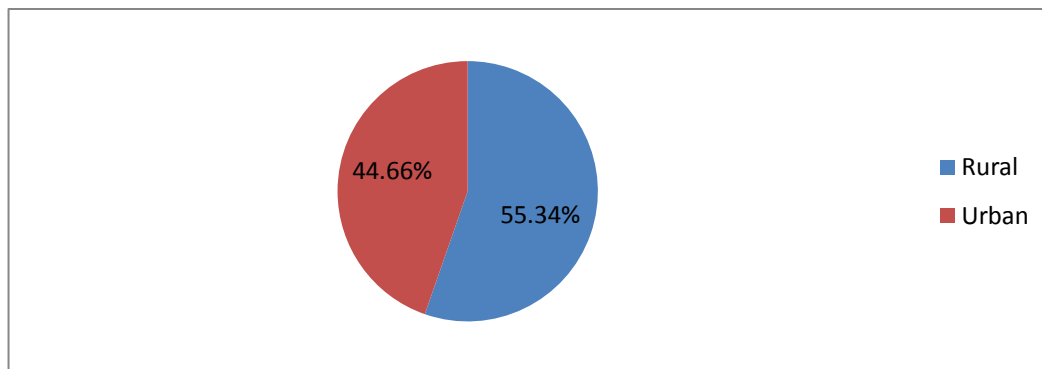
entrepreneurial culture will channelize the energy of people into productive activities and enhance the self sufficiency of villages.

Rural Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (REDPS)

Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) started REDPS as an experiment, has evolved as a major thrust area of the institute. The EDI has developed a network of 500 NGO's throughout the country. EDI provides training support to these NGO's and the NGO's further conduct the REDPS at a grassroot level (ediindia, 2015).

Rural areas have a good potential for growth of MSME units. Rural areas have 200.19 lakh units accounting for 55.34% of total enterprises, as compared to 161.57 lakh units in urban area comprising 44.66% of the MSME units of the country, as shown in figure 1 (MSME, 2013).

Figure 1: Distribution of MSME Units



Source: Source: Annual Report-MSME, 2012-13p

There are 7.07 lakh registered units in the country for MSME creating 93.09 lakh employment as shown in table 1. The employment per unit of registered units is almost 3 times the employment in unregistered units. But unregistered units create more employment in absolute terms.

Table1: MSME Units

Particulars	Registered Sector	Unregistered Sector	EC*- 2005	Total
No. of Rural Units (Lakh)	7.07	119.68	73.43	200.18
No. of Women Enterprises (lakh)	2.15	18.06	6.4	26.61
Total Employment (lakh)	93.09	408.84	303.31	805.24
Per Unit Employment	5.95	2.06	2.06	2.23

*Economic Census

Source: Annual Report-MSME, 2012-13p

The celebrities should be used to create awareness and motivation about entrepreneurship. The successful entrepreneurs should be involved in such campaigns and the campaigns should also involve business plan contests to screen the potential candidates and feasible number of candidates should be provided guidance and support in financial, operational and marketing areas so that they can convert their ideas into a successful business enterprise.

Empowerment of Women: The strategy for inclusive growth cannot be complete without focusing on empowerment of women in rural areas. The success story of Lijjat papad shows the potential of women entrepreneurship. The cooperative model of Lijjat papad can be experimented in other states as well. Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad has grown from 7 women members with a borrowed sum of Rs. 80 in 1959, to a robust organization with 43000 women members, 81 branches 27 divisions across different states. The organisatino has been appreciated for its efforts by power brand 2010-11, Economic Times Award for Business Woman Of the Year 2001-2 for corporate excellence, Best Village Industry



Institution 2003, and Brand equity award by PHDCCI, Khambatta Lifetime Achievement Award for 2010 by All India Food Processor's Association, Outstanding Service Organisation Award-2012 National Institution for Quality and Reliability (NIQR), Chennai. The products of the organization are exported to UK, USA, Middle East Countries, Thailand, Singapore, Hongkong, Holland, Japan, Australia and other Countries (lijjat.com, 2015).

Ladakhi Women's Travel Company established by Thinlas Chorol. Self Employed Women Association (SEWA) established Ela Bhatt. The organization empowers rural women in Bihar. The organization established in 1972 supports women to buy solar bulbs with loan from the organization and rent them or sell to families in people in villages in Bihar. Ela Bhatt has been appreciated for her efforts by Padmashri, the Padmabhushan Award as well as the Ramon Magsaysay Award (womenentrepreneurship, 2013). Mann Deshi Mahila Sahakari Bank founded by Chetna Gala Sinha in association with HSBC bank. The bank was established along with illiterate women now has seven branches and has served 200,000 women in Maharashtra. The organization is second largest microfinance bank in India with 98% repayment rate (manneshibank.com, 2015).

Successful women entrepreneurs should be used as celebrities along with celebrities with mass appeal to create awareness among women for enhancing their economic well being by setting up cooperative or individual micro enterprises.

Electricity Supply: The rural areas have been lagging behind the urban areas due to lack of electricity. The government should make electricity tool for increasing the economic productivity of enterprises and enhancing the quality of life of rural areas.



The celebrities should be used to create awareness about various schemes of government and involve panchayat bodies to use the resources to make electricity accessible to the people. Solar powered systems should be explored for use in villages.

Expansion of Financial Services: The financial inclusion is a major thrust area for development of rural areas. NABARD in enhancing financial inclusion is crucial. The achievements of NABARD include Rs. 17,353 crore disbursement under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund during 2013-14, 340 out of 380 cooperative banks moved to core banking solution (CBS) platform, Rs.20,590 crore was disbursed to self-help groups in 2012-13 as part of microfinance initiative, Rs.9.13 crore were sanctioned under the Farm Technology Transfer Fund (FTTF), watershed programs, covered 43.98 lakh acres benefitting 18 lakh families in 18 states, providing 15 Lakh RuPay Debit and 7 Lakh RuPay Kisan Cards to improve financial inclusiveness (NABARD, 2015).

Celebrities should be used to create a campaign for improving financial literacy and opening bank accounts. The campaigns should create awareness about various schemes of government and motivate people to come forward and use such schemes.

Conclusion:

The celebrities become celebrities due to love and affection of the residents of the country. They have a social responsibility towards the society which gives them celebrity status. The celebrities should come forward to create awareness to issues which can affect the sustainable development of rural areas in a positive manner. This will not only enhance the effectiveness of the government programs for rural



development but also enhance the mass appeal of the celebrities. The 70% of the people living in rural India have been left out in the economic growth of shining India. It is high time that the policy makers, and competent individuals come together to provide opportunities for rural people to contribute in the economic well being of the country to make growth sustainable, inclusive and more meaningful.

References:

Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, (2015), Rural Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (REDPS), accessed on 10th February 2015 from <http://www.ediindia.org/MicroCore1.asp>

Mann Deshi Malhila Sahakari Bank, (2015), AboutUs, accessed 13th February 2015 from http://www.mandeshibank.com/Bank_About%20Us.html

Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), (2013), Annual Report-2012-13, accessed on 4th February 2015 from <http://msme.gov.in/ANNUALREPORT-MSME-2012-13P.pdf>

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), (2015), Highlights, accessed 10th February 2015 from https://www.nabard.org/english/about_Highlights.aspx

Reddy S., and Dula C., (2013), Gillette's 'Shave India Movement', Financial Times, accessed 5th February 2015 from <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/8da786b8-37e7-11e3-8668-00144feab7de.html#axzz3S5N3BmuB>



Sanitationupdates, (2012), Bollywood actress becomes India's sanitation brand ambassador, accessed 5th February 2015 from <https://sanitationupdates.wordpress.com/2012/05/05/bollywood-actress-becomes-indias-sanitation-brand-ambassador/>

Self Employed Women Association (SEWA), (2015), About Us, accessed 3rd February 2015 from http://www.sewa.org/About_Us.asp

Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, (2015), Milestone, accessed 15th February 2015 from <http://www.lijjat.com/Organisation/Milestone.aspx>

Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad, (2015), AboutUs, accessed 15th February 2015 from <http://www.lijjat.com/Organisation/AboutUs.aspx>

The Hindu, (2015), Sustaining Swachh Bharat Mission a challenge, accessed 11th February 2015 from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/sustaining-swachh-bharat-mission-a-challenge/article6469367.ece>

UNICEF, (2008), Cricket Legend Sachin Tendulkar Goes to Bat for UNICEF, accessed 8th February 2015 from http://www.unicef.org/india/wes_4648.htm

Womenentrepreneurship, (2013), 5 Rural Indian Women Entrepreneurs Changing the Picture of India, accessed 8th February 2015 from <http://womenentrepreneurship.blogspot.in/2013/01/5-rural-indian-women-entrepreneurs.html>