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### Unleashing Rural Economies through Societal Marketing: A Case of Rural Revamping

**Dr. Pallavi (Joshi) Kapooria**

Assistant Professor (Marketing Area)

Prestige Institute of Management and Research, Indore

**Abstract** : Societal marketing has become one of the major differentiators in the success of any organisation. It's not only about being responsible to the needs of the consumers but also of all the stakeholders including the producers. In rural context, the concept of societal marketing plays a significant role as the producers are the local residents. Identifying the untapped potential in the rural areas in terms of supply end, the marketers can penetrate into the rural markets and explore the avenues to connect the local population to commercial platforms. Strategising an appropriate marketing mix for these products will leverage a win-win situation for all. The present case intends to highlight how public-private collaboration can open up avenues for unleashing the rural economies and may have an enormous impact on the economic and social life of the communities concerned. The case strongly recommends the role of a catalyst, who may initiate or contribute such a movement which spurs into regional development. An apt catalyst may be the natives of such rural areas who are now residing in urban set ups and wish to payback to their ancestral places. It highlights the commendable initiative by IIM Indore to invigorate the rural population and to enable the local people to be proud of their localities. It talks about how the current Director of IIM Indore, who is a native of a small village of the state of Uttar Pradesh, has been a true catalyst for the upliftment of his village and has partnered with the State government of Uttar Pradesh to boost the ODOP scheme and induce a movement for exploring and developing products which can be a symbol of locality, of which residents can be proud, and which can be competitive on the national and global levels. IIM Indore has also initiated avenues for online marketing and state-wide exhibition platforms for these products to maximise growth and profit. Local rural residents will surely be stimulated by a clear, feasible goal and driven by a vision of a bright future which lies ahead. The case concludes with proposing an innovative 5P Framework Model of Societal Marketing to approach towards inclusive business through such initiatives in an effective way.

**Keywords** : 1. Marketing Mix, 2. ODOP, 3. OVOP, 4. Societal Marketing, 5. 5P Framework Model, 6. Producer Empowerment

## Introduction to the Case

On a chilled morning of 2019 in Indore, Rural Marketing lecture had just begun at one of the renowned management institutions in Indore. Suchit, a promising student of marketing, joined in after missing out on few days at the institute. He looked quite perplexed. On being probed by the Marketing faculty repeatedly, Suchit admitted that he is unable to concentrate in the class. Further probing into his dilemma, he revealed that he had to rush to his home town due to a tragic casualty wherein his childhood friend's father had committed suicide due to excessive financial burden. Suchit seemed extremely perturbed with the condition of his native place, which is a small village nearby. Adding on to his plight was a fact that most of the youngsters of his generation had to move out of the village for higher education or for their careers and being away, there was a little they could do for their native places. Hearing this, another fellow student narrated a similar incidence of his distant relative from his hometown which apparently happened to be another small village from Madhya Pradesh. And then, there was a plethora of sharing from many students who came from rural backgrounds.

The Rural Marketing class was over with a bundle of stories. Each story had a sense of guilt for not being able to do anything for their native places as they are still students, without much resources to be able to contribute. With few futile efforts to cheer up Suchit, the Marketing faculty left the classroom, in a deep quandary as to how to make these young students combat their guilt. She knew that mere words won't suffice, for sure.

Later in the evening, while scrolling through the newspaper, she came across a news article about ODOP, wherein IIM Indore had inked a pact with the government of Uttar Pradesh with an objective of inclusive development of a district called Deoria in Uttar Pradesh. This MoU was an initiative by Prof. Himanshu Rai, Director, IIM Indore to revamp a small village Kataura in district Deoria. Trying to establish a link between IIM Indore and Uttar Pradesh, she kept reading the article and soon realised that Kataura is the ancestral village of Prof. Rai! And here, she got hold of what's going to be the agenda for her next class. She was delighted to have with her, a live case of how one can payback to the native places. She knew that this initiative by Prof. Rai, who is the role model for the youth, can do wonders by instilling in them the motivation to engage with the rural communities and help them realise their potential and move towards unleashing rural economies.

The Marketing teacher was crystal clear on the fact that she had a dual perspective of letting the young minds explore the untapped business opportunities in their native places while at the same time, instilling social responsibility and sensitivity. All excited to embark upon a new day of possibilities with her dynamic students, she calls off the day with all contentment.

The next day, as the lecture began, the faculty assigned an activity to the student teams to explore the ODOP initiative in the light of the MoU inked by IIM Indore under the aegis of Prof. Rai. The teams commenced the task with all enthusiasm. After an in-depth analysis for a day, the teams presented their findings as follows:

### An Overview of ODOP Initiative

One District, One Product - ODOP scheme is an initiative by the state of Uttar Pradesh for reviving and giving wings to the state's traditional industries. ODOP scheme is supposedly to play an important role in turning the state into a USD 1 trillion economy by 2024.

The state of Uttar Pradesh is home to nearly 5 million MSMEs and the sector forms a vital cog in the state's economic development roadmap, including jobs. Exports from the state MSME sector had clocked 6% growth to touch Rs 890 billion in 2017-18 as compared to Rs 840 billion in 2016-17. The MSME sector already existed but was neglected for the last 15-20 years without the government support. MSME sector contributes 60% of UP's industrial output, employs 40 million people and generates direct economic activity worth Rs 1.2 trillion. ODOP proposes to integrate 20 million workers with MSMEs.

### **Emergence of ODOP**

ODOP seems to have its advent from The One Village, One Product (OVOP) movement, which was initiated in 1979 in Oita prefecture, Japan, which commenced as an innovative program in which each local community identified one or a few products as locally specific, concentrates resources on its production, establishes it as a local brand, and markets it to the entire country or beyond. The movement tries to revitalise dejected local communities by combining the production of commodities with local pride and human resources development. The OVOP movement encourages the mobilisation of local human, material, and cultural resources to create value-added products/services for domestic and external markets.

### **Objectives of ODOP**

ODOP has been launched to address and resolve the economic and regional imbalance among the art producers' community and safeguard the traditional knowledge of production and creativity in manufacturing art and craft products. It aims to create additional MSME sectors in all districts of Uttar Pradesh to increase local art production. ODOP is said to provide a stable marketing platform to improve income, local employment, skills and livelihood and to create a marketing platform to promote, design packaging and establishing a brand to increase production and income.

Apart from the primary social objectives of ODOP to preserve and develop local crafts / skills and promotion of the art and thereby increasing the incomes and local employment; ODOP has a societal marketing perspective too which is being catered to through improvement in product quality and skill development, transforming the products in an artistic way through packaging and strategic branding and connecting the production with the tourism on apt platforms.

ODOP is in the process to collaborate with companies to widen the scope of distribution, increase online promotion and sales activities, advertising and publicity and create a micro plan to export products at national and across international boundaries. To increase the skills to compete with manufacturers globally, technical and technological training is proposed to be provided to the Artisans for increased productivity, innovation and research. The scheme will extensively work on creating database exclusively on finding stakeholders, distribution of products, details on total production and export, raw material requirements and training to make the scheme available to all eligible people.

### **Unleashing the untapped potential of signature industries**

Most of the districts of Uttar Pradesh have their own signature industries and ODOP is an attempt to unleash the hidden potential of all districts and to provide a market to local products and artisans. The potential of small districts has never been harnessed. ODOP will give them that exposure and in turn the districts will make Uttar Pradesh a trillion-dollar economy.

Uttar Pradesh is famous for product specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts viz. Varanasi for Banarasi silk sari, Bhadohi for carpet, Lucknow for chikankari and zardozi work, Kanpur for leather goods, Agra for leather footwear, Aligarh for locks, Moradabad for brassware, Firozabad for glassware, Meerut for sports goods, Saharanpur for wooden products, Chitrakoot for wooden toys, Bulandshahr for ceramic products and so on. When the mapping for the ODOP was going on, there were no significant industries in Muzaffarnagar. At that time, it was suggested that districts, which do not have an industry of prominence to be included in the ODOP list, can go for agriculture product. And the gurrh (jaggery) of Muzaffarnagar made it to the ODOP list. Today, there are 118 varieties of gurrh being made there, and a festival dedicated to 'gurrh' called 'GurrhMahotsava' is being held. Gurrh has given a new name to Muzaffarnagar and it has potential for exports. The rice variety 'kala namak', for which Siddharthanagar and Maharajan districts are known, can work in these areas with some technical help.

### **Strategic Interventions by ODOP**

A multi-pronged strategy is being undertaken to promote ODOP and encourage entrepreneurs come on board and benefit from the concept. [7] A roadmap is being prepared to sew alliances with big shopping malls for the branding and marketing of traditional products. ODOP aims to develop a common marketing platform between ODOP and tourism sector for live demo sessions and promote the ODOP products as gifts and souvenirs. To boost traditional industries under its ambitious ODOP scheme, the officials are mulling to partner with US ecommerce giant Amazon and eBay for global branding and marketing. UP has already signed a MoU with Amazon for showcasing 'UP Khadi' over its online marketplace apart from training artisans, the avenues are being considered with regards to more than half dozen other traditional products to be further showcased. Several initiatives have been initiated to encourage MSME sector in the state through ODOP scheme by setting up clusters to promote local products and make them export-oriented. In first phase, the state would launch 1,000 ODOP retail outlets at strategic places such as railway stations and also plans to establish ODOP clusters at prominent locations across the state. The products are also made available on GeM. Government e Marketplace is an online portal to maximise the outreach. Micro plans are also proposed for product development and marketing promotion.

In addition to the promotional efforts, an ODOP Booklet, ODOP Coffee Table Books have been conceptualised to maximise the outreach of the huge and diverse product portfolio. Initiatives have been undertaken to initiate GI registration of ODOP Products to safeguard their product quality. A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

One District One Product (ODOP) scheme is proposed to be promoted in the first semi-high speed train Tejas Express. The Department of Industries (Micro, Small and Medium) of the state government has given the responsibility of the branding to IRCTC. Passengers travelling will get a fair idea about the special and popular products of the districts.

### **Challenges Ahead**

Since the integration to the global economy, the challenges lie ahead for rural development due to the trend of labor migration to urban areas, industrial zones, difficult access to credit, market, social inequality [1][2][3][4], the government has proposed various policies and national programs focusing on empowering the agri sector and rural development

ODOP is an ambitious project which banks upon an effective planning, implementation and monitoring. The daunting task lies ahead of the ODOP initiators to maintain the momentum and effectiveness for this ambitious ODOP scheme. The immense untapped potential of the producers and the target segments needs to be professionally assessed and the gap may be filled up by leveraging on both the aspects. The project calls for a systematic approach to cater to challenging responsibilities like producing market research on consumer segments and insights into their preferences with respect to the target food commodities/products. ODOP needs to produce a dynamic Geographic Information System (GIS) database and diagnostics of prominent market segments, their geographies & the comparative advantages they possess. ODOP will certainly face enormous challenge to keep pace with dynamic environment. It's crucial to use participatory learning and experiential workshops to enable the programme to design/modify the interventions it can support to enhance market-responsiveness and remain competitive.

### **Managerial Implications**

The essence of a true catalyst lies in identifying its capacity to bring deeper integration of the rural–urban economy and revitalise intra-rural economy. This will emerge through improvement in existing exchange relationships and identifying new opportunities for rural producers based on rural resources to tap urban and rural markets for goods and services. Such interventions will further strengthen the proposed dual perspectives of empowering the rural producers and strategic marketing for competitive advantage.

Based on three principles in the OVOP movement as reflected across studies Local yet global, Self-Reliance and Creativity and Human Resource Development, [5-10] the entire movement calls for a shift from linear operations to an interconnected system with holistic integration through the entire value chain. It will require to focus on multiple facets that manufacturers can leverage to remain competitive in the global marketplace. ODOP's implementation strategy is based on a commercial and market-led approach aimed at strengthening backward and forward linkages for the selected value chains and facilitating the role of public and private sector institutions to provide efficient and effective support to rural enterprises. There is a dire need to have a better understanding of the marketing mechanisms governing each value chain.

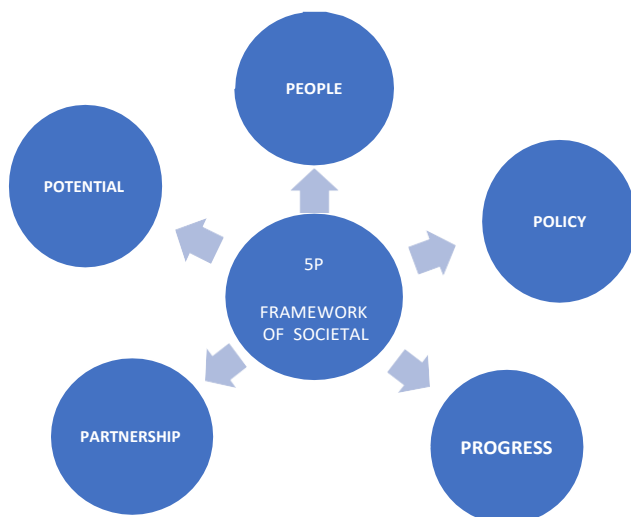
The growth of MSMEs and their value chain participants can be strengthened by increasing their interaction with viable markets in a coordinated and sustainable manner. ODOP will implement a more explicit private sector-driven 4Ps approach as part of its strategy to support rural enterprises. It will concentrate efforts and resources on facilitating linkages between private sector institutions and organisations interested in sourcing raw, semi-processed or processed products and already organized small producers with comparative advantages in the selected value chains.

The movement can look forward to abandon supply driven initiatives and focus on activities that will empower producers to increase their bargaining and supply capacities with set targets such as establishment of proactive marketing groups and platforms, maximise their profit with set targets such as knowledge and control of their production costs, use of appropriate semi processing technology for value addition and acquisition of quality certifications that shall allow for preferential prices.

### **Proposed Model – 5P framework of Societal Marketing**

Initiatives like ODOP are commendable ones and may be spread across the country with an innovative model proposed hereby as 5P Framework of Societal Marketing. It comprises of dimensions like People, Potential, Partnership, Policy and Progress.

**Figure 1: 5P Framework of societal marketing**



### **5P framework of Societal Marketing**

- **People** includes all the stakeholders who can bring a difference/effect or the beneficiaries, who will get affected by such initiatives. This also includes the marketers who have the capacity to explore the areas for commercialisation through identifying untapped potential. It also includes the people who may act as catalysts in the process of implementation. Empowering, sharing and facilitating for a mutual growth is the ultimate key.
- **Potential** signifies the unleashed potential of the signature industries and also, the untapped market potential which may be explored. This dimension may also include the potential of the catalyst to lead, initiate or contribute in any capacity.
- **Partnership** implies the collaboration public - private or similar ones to share resources, skills, platforms for a mutual facilitation. The strategic level interventions to undertake MoUs, collaborations and partnership contract for business linkages hold utmost prominence.
- **Policy** is the heart of such an initiative. The strategic decisions will form a part of policy document which may be adhered to and shall be dynamic in light of changing and emerging needs.
- **Progress** of any initiative through a sound and dynamic monitoring mechanism is a must. It shall help to capture and monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the scheme.
- This 5P framework of Societal Marketing is a challenging task. However, an effective planning towards inclusion of all the dimensions of the framework will facilitate the fulfillment of dual objective of attaining inclusive growth and paving a way for the marketers alongside.

### **Case Dilemma and Conclusion**

Despite of an immensely inspirational story of Prof. Rai's initiative to be a part of ODOP and making a difference, the management students felt that they don't have enough resources or authority to be able to contribute. Their point was that, being in a position of authority, one might undertake such challenging tasks to bring a change. But, being just a student, they can barely contribute anything towards such an

initiative. All this looked as a challenging task which calls for resources and power in addition to mere dedication and commitment.

The Marketing faculty was still not disheartened as deep inside she knew, these students have enormous potential and they can certainly make a difference by identifying small ways to contribute anywhere across the societal marketing mix dimensions of the wonderful initiative. The only way out is they need to attempt a personal SWOT analysis which shall boost their confidence as they can identify their core strengths and recognise the means to put these to an apt utilisation against the available opportunities.

After analysing this case study, the student should be able to do the following:

**Learning Outcomes 1:**

Demonstrate the knowledge and application of theoretical concept of Marketing Mix towards unleashing rural economies.

**Learning Outcomes 2:**

List the personal SWOT elements and identify the core strengths for being a catalyst to Societal Marketing and Inclusive Business Models in their own ways.

**Learning Outcomes 3:**

Broaden the horizon for identifying the untapped business opportunities and exploiting them by collaborations and networking.

**Suggestive Teaching Plan**

Following are the questions or issues which can be used for discussion of the case:

**Question 1**

Identify the main issues in the case with regard to the dilemma faced by the management students.

Hint: Management students felt helpless to be a catalyst without having resources and power.

**Question 2**

Consider yourself as one of those management students with roots in a village. Attempt a personal SWOT analysis and identify the ways you can contribute to such an initiative.

Hint: A number of opportunities and challenges as mentioned in the case calls for a significant role of these management students. They can find avenues and innovatively put their skills to use and combat these challenges.

**Question 3**

Does the primary agenda of ODOP initiative to empower the local producers deviates from its primary goal when the role of a marketer is introduced?

Hint: Societal Marketing concept with win-win situation for both

**Question 4**

Critically analyse the marketing mix elements as portrayed in the case.

Hint: Unique Products and dynamic Promotion strategies exist but no significant approach for Pricing strategy and Place (distribution) elements visible.

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