



## Reaping the Benefits of Virality in Advertising - A Study of the Indian Scenario

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### Abstract

With the rapid and unprecedented growth and advancement of digital technology, the present world is experiencing several changes and innovations in every field. In this world of change, innovations in marketing and advertising are definitely in the front row. Actually, the global cut-throat competition has impelled sellers, advertisers and marketers to use alternative techniques and compliment their traditional techniques with newer ones to reach their prospective customers. In simple words, advertising and marketing now takes place digitally in addition to the traditional modes. One such popular technique of marketing products and services through digital media is Viral Marketing. It refers to the spreading of product and service related information to a massive audience at a very fast speed through the use of the internet based services like blogs, tweets, e-mails, social networking sites, company websites, mobile messages etc. As these viral messages are transmitted digitally, they carry the benefit of being low cost or no-cost, speedy and high-impact mode of disseminating product and service related information to the prospects. India, being a country with the second highest population in the world and blessed with a huge internet using population base is one of the best Viral Marketing Destinations. The authors in this study have tried to show the effectiveness of Viral Marketing campaigns in India with the help of selected viral advertisements in recent times. The term Viral Marketing has also been known by terms like electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Network enhanced word of mouth marketing, Stealth Marketing etc.

**Keywords:** e-WOM; Viral Marketing; Viral Advertising; Network enhanced word of Mouth.

### Introduction

The present dynamic world is characterized by an unprecedented growth and advancement of technology. People all over the world are becoming more and more technologically able, stable and advanced with technological innovations in different spheres of life. In such an era the spheres of marketing and

advertisement are not an exception to this. Companies, nowadays, in addition to the traditional marketing methods have chosen the internet based services to propagate product and service related information to their prospective customers. This way of reaching out to the prospects and spreading

product and service related information with the use of the internet is termed as Digital Marketing. Viral Marketing, our area of discussion is actually an offshoot of Digital Marketing. Here, digital messages and videos of advertisements are seen and shared by the viewers over digital platforms like social networking sites, blogs, e-mails, mobile messaging applications etc resulting in an exponential increase in the spreading and reach of the advertising messages. However, this concept of viral marketing has been closely known by terms like "Interactive Marketing" (Deighton & Blattberg, 1991), "Network –enhanced word of mouth" (Juvetson and Draper (1997), "Word of mouse" marketing (Goldenberg et al. 2001), "Stealth marketing" (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004) and "Buzz Marketing" (Thomas , 2004)

### Review of Literature:

As mentioned in the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, the word 'Viral' in relation to internet phraseology, refers to 'something that quickly becomes popular or well known by being published on the internet or sent from person to person by e-mail, phone etc.'

Marketing experts Kotler, Wong, Saunders & Armstrong (2005) define marketing management as the art and science of selecting target markets and building gainful relationships with them. This involves obtaining, retaining and developing customers through creating and delivering and communicating improved customer value.

Therefore , combining the above concepts of the terms 'viral' & 'marketing' We may define viral marketing to be a process in which a marketing message, generally initiated by a company spreads at an exponential rate through Social networking sites (Facebook , Instagram etc), Messenger services (Whatsapp, Snapchat etc ),e-mails, company websites, blogs, tweets etc. It must be noted that in case of Viral marketing, even the people who are not related with the company or the organisation may take part in the process simply because they love the message, the advertisement or the fun or

surprise element contained in the advertisement.

Kiss & Bichler (2008) have said that Viral marketing is a marketing technique which uses the social media and internet networks to increase the brand awareness of the product by rapid diffusion of the messages.

Hennig *et al.* (2004) have said that Word-of-mouth refers to any positive or negative observations made by a consumer regarding his / her experiences about a product or company. These observations reach a huge mass of people and organizations with the help of internet and internet based services.

### Objectives of the Study

This study is carried out with the following objectives

1. To explore the scope and extent of Viral Marketing in the Indian context.
2. To make an exploratory study of some successful cases of Viral Marketing Campaigns in India in recent years.

### Methodology

The present study is a descriptive one based on information collected from extensive literature survey. Several national and international literatures have been explored to collect relevant information. Additionally, personal observations have been made over the social networking sites , online video sites etc to find out and list the most successful Viral advertising Campaigns in India in recent times.

### Result & Discussion:

#### Benefits of Viral Marketing

In a world characterized by high degree of competitiveness and jet speed information dissemination, Viral Marketing is considered to be a very effective, high speed and low cost or no-cost medium of advertising.

The main benefits of Viral Marketing can be explained as follows:

1. Sending information about products and services to the prospects at the fastest speed due to the use of Internet.
2. Reaching out to huge masses in the smallest time.
3. Lowest cost and sometimes no cost of information dissemination due to the use of existing social networking sites, video sites, chat sites etc.
4. Creation of a buzz due to many people seeing and sharing the message over the internet at the same time.
5. According to Sonawane & Chaudhuri (2015) efficient targeting of recipients and creation of trust as messages are generally shared among friends, relatives, colleagues etc.

### India as a Viral Marketing Destination:

Just after China, India is the second most populated country of the world and has a very large population base of internet users. Actually, India is also the country having the second largest population of internet users. As per a report in Internet World Stats (as on May 2020) the top 10 internet using countries of the world are shown in Table 1.

Table 1- Top Internet Using Countries of The World.

Sl. No.	Country or Region	Internet Users 2020 Q1
1	China	854,000,000
2	India	560,000,000
3	United States	313,322,868
4	Indonesia	171,260,000
5	Brazil	149,057,635
6	Nigeria	126,078,999
7	Japan	118,626,672
8	Russia	116,353,942
9	Bangladesh	94,199,000
10	Mexico	88,000,000

[Source: <https://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm>, retrieved on 10.5.2020]

Statistics and reports reveal that due to a strong user base, India also has a huge number of users of Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp and Instagram, which are the main media for dissemination of Viral Marketing messages:

Table 2: Facebook, Youtube , Whatsapp & Instagram Users in India

Media	Number of users in India	Ranking in terms of User base	Source
Facebook	Users : More than 280 million as on 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2020	(1 <sup>st</sup> in the World)	Statista ( <a href="https://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users/">https://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users/</a> ) Retrieved on 10.5.2020
YouTube	Users : More than 265 million as on 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2019	(1 <sup>st</sup> in the World)	Hindustan Times ( <a href="https://www.hindustantimes.com/tech/youtube-now-has-265-million-users-in-india/story-j5njXtLHZCQ0PCwb57s400.html">https://www.hindustantimes.com/tech/youtube-now-has-265-million-users-in-india/story-j5njXtLHZCQ0PCwb57s400.html</a> ) Retrieved on 10.5.2020
Whatsapp	Users: More than 400 Million as on July, 2019	(1 <sup>st</sup> in the World)	Tech Crunch ( <a href="https://techcrunch.com/2019/07/26/whatsapp-india-users-400-million/">https://techcrunch.com/2019/07/26/whatsapp-india-users-400-million/</a> ) Retrieved on 10.5.2020
Instagram	Users: More than 88 Million as on April, 2020	(2 <sup>nd</sup> Largest user only after USA)	Statista ( <a href="https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/">https://www.statista.com/statistics/578364/countries-with-most-instagram-users/</a> ) Retrieved on 10.5.2020

[Source : Compiled by the researcher(s)]

The Hindu (www.thehindu.com, retrieved on 11.5.2020) dated 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2019 mentions

that in a study with 15000 respondents from India, it was found that on an average an

Indian user spends about 2.4 hours per day on social media

Therefore, the above two tables and relevant information showing India as the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Internet using population of the world and the position of India in usage of Social Networking sites, message platforms etc easily prove and proclaim that India can be considered to be one of the most favorable destinations of the world for Viral Marketing campaigns.

### A Study of Most Successful Viral Advertising Campaigns in India:

With the above statistics in mind and considering the fact that India can be regarded as one of the best Viral marketing destinations of the world, we can make a study of some of the the most successful Viral Marketing Campaigns in India in recent times:

Table 3: Tabular Representation of Some Successful Viral Advertising Campaigns in India With an Explanation of The Emotion Contained in Them and The Extent of Spread and Virality.

Name of The Campaign	Content of The Advertisement	The Emotion Contained in The Message	Extent of Virality.
#SAMSUNG CARES #SAMSUNG SERVICES CAMPAIGN	The advertisement shows the reach of Samsung Services anywhere, anytime, thereby creating joy in the heart of the people. Specially shows how a timely service by Samsung associate helps a blind girl and her friends hear to their friends performance on the Television.	AWE & EMPATHY	Winner of “ <b>youtubes most watched video globally</b> ” award in 2017. As on may 2020 this video has <b>211,169,018 views</b> on youtube.
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS DIGITAL MARKETING	An initiative to spread Information about Kolkata Knight Riders Team over Facebook and Instagram	JOY	The facebook page of kkr has more than <b>15 million likes</b> which is (higher than any other ipl team). Kkr has more than <b>466000 followers</b> on instagram.
#RIDE YOUR INDEPENDENCE : BAJAJ AVENGER INDEDEDENCE DAY CAMPAIGN	A video of 1.44 minute depicting the safety and independence of Women in India with quotes from Mahatma Gandhi	JOY	This ad film has <b>11,921.840 views</b> on youtube as on may 2020 after being uploaded on 10 <sup>th</sup> august 2017 and more than <b>5.7 million views</b> on facebook page.
VICKS - GENERATIONS OF CARE #TOUCHOFCARE CAMPAIGN	A transgender woman named Gauri saves a small girl – Gayatri from several problems of life. The objective behind the campaign was to show the belief of 'Vicks' Brand in the power of love and care	SURRPRIZE & AWE	THIS VENTURE OF VICKS HAS <b>10,339,702 views</b> AS ON MAY 2020 ON YOUTUBE.
DOMINOZZ PIZZA #MAANAHIBHOOLTI CAMPAIGN	Mothers Unconditional Love	SADNESS FOLLOWED BY JOY	Published on youtube on 10 <sup>th</sup> may, 2018 and <b>2564471 views</b> on may 2020  Posted to facebook on 11 <sup>th</sup> may , 2018 and has <b>5684799 views</b> and

			<b>97000 shares</b> as on may 2019
BAJAJ V- "THE NATIONS BIKE"	This advertisement showed that the molten metal of Famous Indian Warship INS Vikrant was used to build Bajaj Bikes. People felt proud of buying Bajaj V Bikes as they felt that the Bikes build out of the Ships metal was the true "Nations Bike".	AWE & JOY	Bajaj easily managed to <b>sell 11000 bikes on the first day of the launching this advertisement.</b> The manufacturing capacity of bajaj was soon taken up to 50000 from the existing capacity of 20000 monthly. This ad got <b>984862 views</b> on youtube apart from getting shared time and again.
MIRINDA RELEASE THE PRESSURE CAMPAIGN	The advertisement depicts the constant pressure on teenagers as they are being continuously compared with others. The advertisement closes with the tag line "Comparison adds pressure, Release pressure", indirectly asking people to drink Mirinda and release pressure on them.	SADNESS & ANGER	The advertisement has more than <b>24,821,628 views</b> on youtube as on may 2020.
BRITISH AIRWAYS : FUELLED BY LOVE CAMPAIGN	A crew member of British Airway falling in deep love with Indian tradition and cultural values.	EMPATHY & JOY	The video was introduced in the British airways website on 2nd February , 2016  And as of may 2020 it has more than 78,88,046 views on youtube
SAMSUNG WE CARE FOR THE GIRL CHILD CAMPAIGN	SAMSUNG TECHNICAL SCHOOL – A CSR Initiative of Samsung helps a conservative Village girl Seema to achieve her dreams.	EMPATHY & JOY	Received <b>81,318,108 views on youtube</b> as on may 2020. One of the highest viewed videos on youtube.
ARIEL #SHARE THE LOAD CAMPAIGN	A message to sons and daughters to share the work load of their mother.	EMPATHY & JOY	<b>9,339,190 views on youtube</b> as on may 2020. Since 10 <sup>th</sup> may 2019 it has generated more than <b>1.5 million views on facebook.</b>

[Source: Observation by the researcher(s) by going through relevant digital platforms]

## Conclusion

The discussions made above along with the tabular presentations in Table 1, 2 & 3 very clearly brings forward a bright picture of success of several Viral Advertising Campaigns in India . The viewer base of most of the selected Advertising Campaigns has

views ranging from lakhs to millions and people have also shared such advertisements in a huge number thereby making them viral. The main reasons for success of Viral advertising Campaigns in India may be attributed to the Huge Internet connected active population base of the country. It is

already pointed out that Viral Marketing is a high speed-low cost advertising mode. Thus it may be suggested that advertisers and companies, in addition to the Traditional advertising methods, may open Facebook, Instagram Pages and YouTube Channels of their organizations and can post their advertisements on these channels. This will surely help them to reach the highest viewer base in the shortest time and by incurring no extra cost at all.

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### Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare that the research review was conducted in the absence of any commercial or economic associations that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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