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Technology In Marketing Communication – Is It RIP For Traditional Media?

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It was in 1440s that the printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg. However, it took nearly 300 years for the first print publication to appear and one more century to leverage this technology as a source revenue through advertising. The first print advertisement in a newspaper came out in France in 1836. In the next hundred years, since 1940, we have had other advertising media such as Radio, Television, POP, outdoor. It was around this time that the earliest computer was also invented.

None of these technological advancements superseded advancement prior to them. Magazines were still popular when radio advertisements started catching up. Radio was still popular when TV Advertisement was the in thing. The earlier and older sources of marketing communication were still used. Similarly, today the buzz is digital marketing that has shadowed other marketing communication channels. Now most marketers spend a lot of time in understanding the digital tools and various digital marketing techniques that are seen as an ocean of opportunities.

Looking at the media evolution in India, it was in 1927 that the Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC), was established in Bombay. This later became the All India Radio (AIR) in 1936. Between this period till the

1970s, radio, print and outdoor were the available media. TV transmission by Doordarshan (DD) started in 1972 in Bombay and Amritsar and slowly extended to 5 other cities by 1975. Transmission then used to be twice a day. When the color television transmission through LPTs (Low Power Transmitters) started in 1982, TV became a rage and every Indian house-hold, eagerly awaited some popular programs like the first Hindi Soap Opera – Hum Log, Chaaya Geet and weekend movies besides playing host to neighbours. Radio nevertheless was still viewed as a popular medium of advertising given the rural reach and the ubiquitous and unique Indian Tea stalls.

Internet and mobile phones appeared only in 1995 but the Indian infrastructure did not support the bandwidth then. However, considering that the first web page globally went on line in 1991, India was not far behind. While India was still getting used to the dial-up connection, the early 90s saw the introduction of cable TV in major metros that was a huge wave. People were glued to the televisions and at the beginning of this millennium shows like “Kyonki Saas bi Kabhi Bahu Thi” and “Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)” serials became popular. Advertising budgets in favour of TV advertising catapulted and witnessed a robust growth since 1982 despite high tariffs. Companies competed for the advertising slots of popular programs to maximize their marketing efforts.

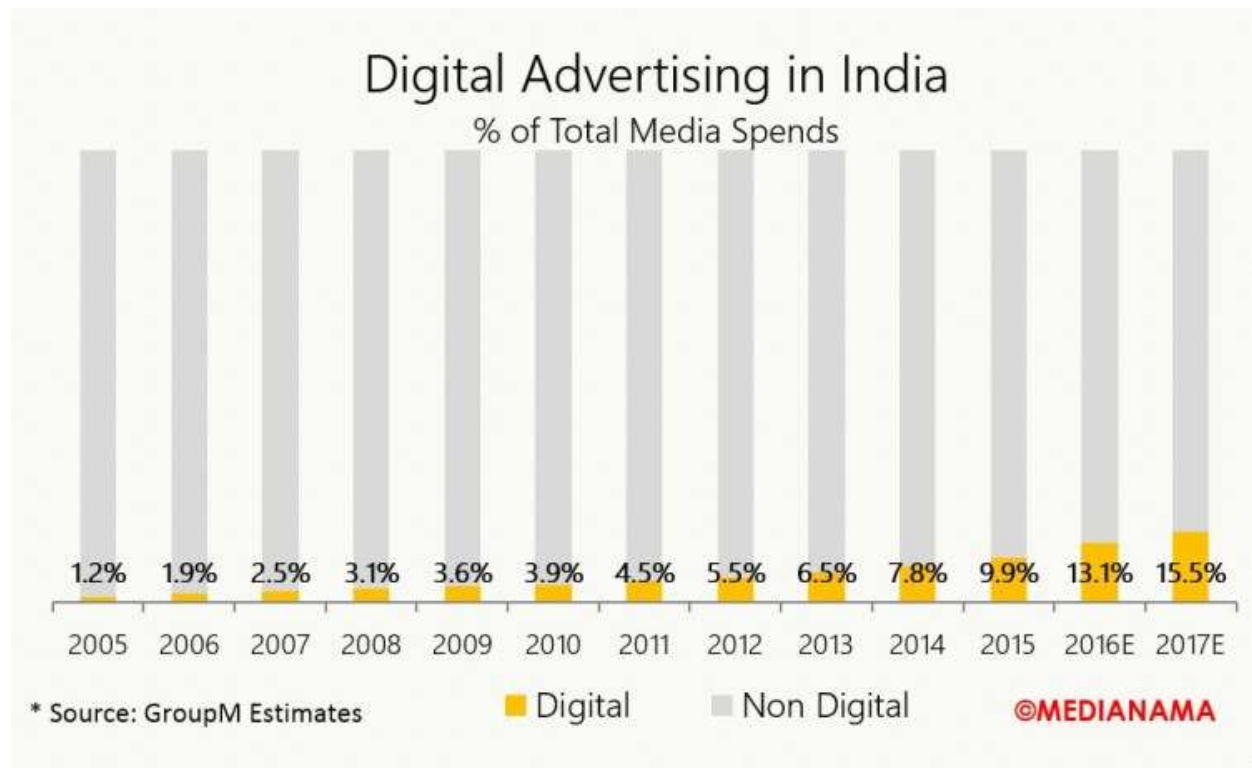
Though television Advertising is still popular, this decade has brought in significant changes in marketing. While for several decades, television, print, radio advertising and outdoor ruled the advertising space, social media marketing brought in a huge change in a short span. Suddenly marketers started focusing more on planning their campaigns on social media, many of them assuming social media marketing and digital marketing is one and the same. While digital marketing includes all forms of electronic medium both internet and non-internet based, a lot of focus was kept on social media channels and web, because of the sharing capability of social media and its ability to multiply its reach among the micro-communities.

With the introduction of cellphones, especially the smartphones, the popularity of social media has grown exponentially. With 2.2 billion users in 2017, if it were a country, Facebook will be the largest country on earth. Several networking apps have mushroomed in no time and most of these apps target the millennials, thereby making these platforms hot for marketers to sell their products and services. This has led to a paradigm shift from Market Place to a concept called “Market Space”.

Market Space concept is one which involves information and communication-based electronic exchange environment, where goods and services instead of being sold only physically are marketed through an online space that facilitates bi-directional commerce.

According to a report released by WPP-owned company Group M, digital will remain the fastest growing medium seen expanding at 30 percent as OTT (over-the-top) platforms gain popularity and gain better Ad rates. Group M had indicated that in 2017, India’s digital advertising was expected to touch Rs 9500 crores or \$1.5 bn. - a growth of 47 percent over 2016 and approximately 15.5 percent of total advertising spending. While the overall digital ad spending has grown by 47 percent in 2017, mobile ads have shown a

robust growth of 110 percent. The report also indicates that an average of 1.13 hours is spent by an average Indian on Digital media, which has given a boost to on line advertising, on line shopping and e-commerce.



Notwithstanding all the above, recorded history from Ca 1400 AD indicates none of the technological advancements superseded advancement prior to them; on the contrary, they co-existed. Given that In India 91 percent is still traditional retailing and 84 percent is non-digital advertising, is it RIP for traditional media or traditional brick and mortar models being replaced by digital marketing and brick and click model respectively?

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