Stigma Around the Consumption of Sanitary Napkins and Implications for International Marketing Strategy: A Case Study from Rural India

Kranti K. Dugar, Assistant Professor, College of Business, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire

Jennine Fox, Lecturer, College of Business, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire
dugarh@uwec.edu

Authors:
Dr. Kranti (Kran) Dugar is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire's College of Business. His teaching interests include new product development, consumer behavior, global marketing, marketing strategy, marketing research, and international immersion programs, and research areas of interest include deconsumerism, consumer behavior, equity, diversity, inclusion, & belonging (EDIB), technology-consumer interaction, and global marketing. Prof. Dugar has a Ph.D. from the University of Denver, and an MBA from Ohio University. He has taught and has conducted research at universities in India, Bangladesh, France, and USA. A winner of the Chick Tombski Teaching Excellence Award (2022), he has a strong track record of teaching excellence.

Prof. Jennine Fox is a Lecturer at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire’s College of Business. She teaches Digital Marketing Fundamentals, Social Media Marketing, and Principles of Marketing. Prof. Fox was a marketing practitioner who worked in Internet Marketing and e-commerce for 20 years prior to teaching. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire with a BBA in Marketing, a BA in Spanish, and a Certificate in Business Communications. She later graduated with a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

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Women and girls in rural India experience period poverty and are subject to stigma, shaming, and trauma around menstruation, which leads to exclusion and attrition. An acute lack of awareness about the risks of using unsanitary products, the lack of usage of sanitary menstrual products, and the non-availability of resources at the school- and community-level is a challenge for volunteers, companies, community leaders, community institutions such as schools, village governments, and non-profit organizations such as Vimukt India. Can concepts of effective communication, avoidance of ethnocentrism, and application of effective and adaptive international marketing strategy to bottom-of-the-pyramid markets help alleviate taboos and myths around stigmatized menstruation and provide access to menstrual education and hygiene products to girls and women in rural India? This case provides an opportunity for students to explore topics such as self-reference criterion, ethnocentrism, bottom-of-the-pyramid markets, and hierarchy of effects, and also challenges them to effectively apply adaptation of international marketing mix strategy.