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## Role of ORMAS in Marketing and Promotion of Rural Products through Exhibitions in Odisha: A brief Overview

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### Abstract (10pt)

ORMAS has played quite a significant role in the marketing and promotion of rural products since it came into existence in 1991. In fact the contribution made by ORMAS has been instrumental in establishing it as a household name in Odisha. ORMAS has been organizing exhibitions for last 21 years in most of the cities of Odisha under the banner of "*Pallishree Mela*". The name of the Mela that implies 'wealth of villages' provides an opportunity to rural poor to sell their products directly in major urban centres & also interact with the urban buyers to know their tastes/preferences for various types of products. Thus the mela is quite helpful in upgrading & developing their products, customer handling skills and meeting the needs and expectations of urban consumers leading to enlarging their customer base. It has almost become a trend in Orissa that during important local festivals, ORMAS Exhibition is regularly held to attract both SHGs/Producers & buyers to meet and strengthen their relationship for a good product. The data of the last decade shows that the concept of Palli Shree Mela has not only increased the revenue but also has reached to every corner of the Odisha State and outside the state as well.

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**a. BACKGROUND :**

Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society, ORMAS, an autonomous body was constituted under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, in the year 1991. The primary aim of the autonomous body was to provide a platform for the rural producers/artisans to promote their products and to get a remunerative price for the same. ORMAS (Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society) is the first and the only organization of its type, under the Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Odisha that is playing an instrumental role in facilitating sustainable livelihoods of rural producers through access to different poverty alleviation programmes. As a result, the rural producers are getting exposed to various provisions under different schemes namely training on relevant topics, value addition opportunities etc by taking up initiatives in a cluster approach thereby enhancing the hope of hundreds of people staying in Rural Odisha.

The core activities of the industrial sectors of ORMAS mainly include Handloom, Handicraft and other Utility items. Apart from these three items, Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society is also involved in collection and processing of minor forest and agri-based products which provides a great scope to build on the availability of raw materials and skills. In this connection it is important to mention here that at present the activities carried out by ORMAS (Orissa Rural Development and Marketing Society) mostly relate to producing siali and sal leaf plate and cups, hill broom, Rock Bee honey processing, dal processing, kewda leaf products, and many more. ORMAS also does a countrywide networking for marketing products such as Tamarind, Amla, Harida, Kalmegh and few other MFPs and medicinal plants. In recent times, ORMAS has taken steps to promote a few more agricultural rural products namely Onion, Turmeric and Ginger.

From the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, Exhibition/Mela has been a part of entertainment relaxation activity of our culture & cultural Renaissance. In an Exhibition identified products are shown in an organized manner to attract the customers. ORMAS has used this medium as a channel to promote rural products made by the rural producers. It provides an opportunity for rural poor to sell their products (Producers to Consumers) directly in major urban centres and interact with the urban consumers. This is quite helpful in knowing the taste, preferences of urban consumers regarding their products. It is also a great learning opportunity for the rural producers. It also helps the rural

entrepreneurs to identify livelihood opportunities and establish links with the markets in urban and semi-urban areas.

**b. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF OPERATION :**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>SCOPE</b>
To facilitate empowerment of rural producers through economic upliftment :	It is mostly done through Formation and Management of small women groups, Capacity building of Self-Help and SGSY groups, Initiation of Micro Enterprises and Micro Credit Linkages etc.
To facilitate the marketing of rural products in terms of taking up activities.	Market Research, Activity selection/Trade identification, Assessing Feasibility of Key activities, Technology Up-gradation, Skill Development, Standardization and Quality Assurance, Design Diversification and Product, Scientific and Attractive Packaging Development, Participation and Organization of Product Exhibition, Facilitate Sales through different channels.
To facilitate sustainable livelihood of the rural poor through some strategic interventions	Promotion of Self Help Groups (SHGs), Developing Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) groups on feasible key activities in a cluster mode, Facilitate Capacity Building of the Groups, create Infrastructure linkages, Transfer of Appropriate Technology.

**c. STRATEGY OF IMPLEMENTATION :**

Objectives can never take shape without the adoption of consciously designed strategy that aims at achieving results through a systematic process of networking, capacity building, market linkages and follow up. Hence keeping the above said objectives in view,ORMAS has strategized its operation in the following manner:

- Collaboration with stakeholders for increased sharing and mobilization of resources for effective implementation of activities.

- Promoting SHGs for building up a strong institutional base at the field level.
- Identify & develop Feasible Project Proposal based on the opportunities and resources available in the area.
- Capacity Building of the stake holders based on the identified needs and opportunities.
- Technology Dissemination for increased adoption of appropriate technology towards not only improving the quality of product but also for reaping the economies of scale.
- Product Promotion through different channels to create a strong awareness base.
- Market Linkages with leading players , so that product can be easily sold to prospective buyers.
- Organisation of Exhibitions to keep creating awareness about the product among the people based on their tastes and preferences.

**d. EXHIBITION – AN EFFECTIVE MARKET PROMOTION APPROACH :**

Exhibition is organised on a regular basis at different times of the year with an aim to provide opportunity to the rural producers to sell their products in urban markets, to interact amongst themselves so as to learn from each other and also to sensitise urban buyers about rural products. ORMAS is regularly holding State&National level exhibitions throughout the year during important events / festivals , so that more people can participate in it .BasicallyORMAS organises three types of exhibitions such as SARAS, Gramshree Mela & Pallishree Mela.ORMAS has used this medium as a channel to promote rural products made by the Institutions of poor. Importantly an exhibition not only creates awareness of their products among the various consumers but it also helps the rural entrepreneurs to identify livelihood opportunities and establish links with the markets in urban and semi-urban areas.

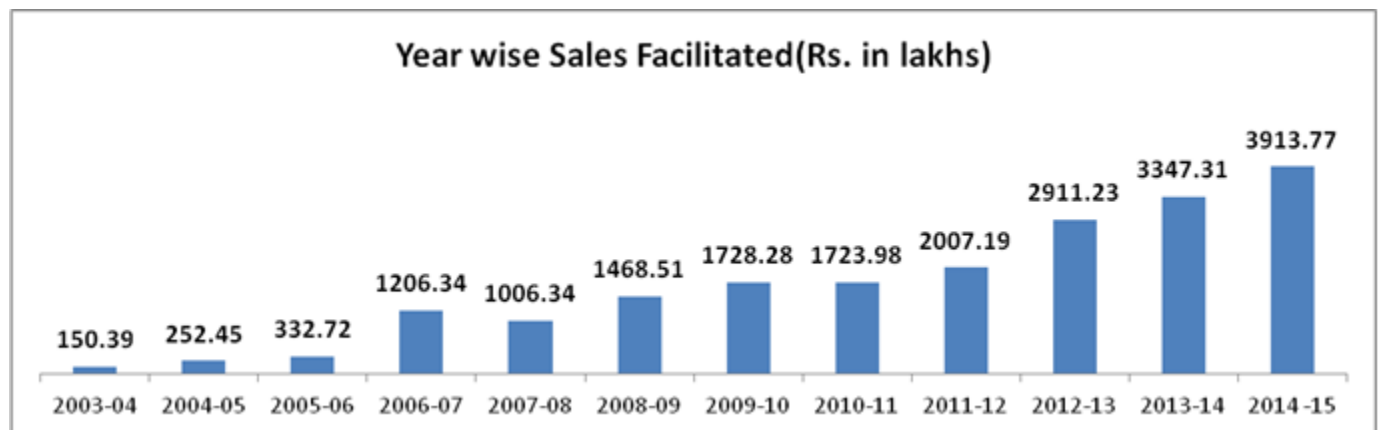
The concept of *Mass Marketing Mission* was initiated in 2003-04, by ORMAS for convergence among likeminded Departments/Agencies [Mission Shakti & Directorate of Handicrafts and Cottage Industries, KVIC, KVIB, Department of Textile, NABARD] for organization of exhibitions in one platform, without being overlapped. The participants (all categories of rural producers) are now getting a bigger platform to sell their products and interact with the customers who are getting products as per their choice at a common place. The concept of Mass marketing Mission has become a key road for the success of Promotion of the rural product as is evident from the data of the last decade.



During initial 3 years from 2003-04 to 2005-06 the marketing events were organized in some potential locations only in a convergence mode with other line departments. Looking at the success of the past experience, since 2006-07, the events are being organized in most parts of Odisha at the time of local cultural festivals where there is a huge gathering. As is seen from the table, the sales figure has mostly increased due to factors namely good communication mix, brand image of Pallishree Mela & ORMAS and the quality of the products from rural India.

Figure 1: Year wise Organization of Events

Sl.	Year	No. of exhibitions organized	No. of SHGs / Institutions participated	No. of participants	Total sales (Rs. in lakhs)
1	2003-04	6	1060	2642	150.39
2	2004-05	10	1144	2765	252.45
3	2005-06	9	2051	2267	332.72
4	2006-07	20	3310	6078	1206.34
5	2007-08	20	3120	5820	1006.34
6	2008-09	22	3348	7365	1468.51
7	2009-10	28	4128	8307	1728.28
8	2010-11	28	4020	7573	1723.98
9	2011-12	28	3940	6854	2007.19
10	2012-13	27	4500	8702	2911.23
11	2013-14	22	<b>3535</b>	7365	3347.31
12	2014-15	28	4604	9244	3913.77
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>248</b>	<b>38760</b>	<b>74982</b>	<b>20048.51</b>



The above graph shows growth in sales every year, which is a positive sign of increased business of the rural products and also a concrete evidence of how exhibition has proved to be quite effective in attracting a large no. of buyers to share their tastes and preferences for product.

**e. OUTCOME OF PALLISHREE MELA :**

- **Business facilitation:** Based on the experience of previous years , it is expected to generate more revenue i.e total business volume of Rs.50 crores for around 12000 rural poor.
- **Launch of new products:** Success of vibrant SHGs in different exhibitions will inspire & motivate other institutions of rural poor to emulate the model & strengthen the micro enterprise initiatives.
- **Exposure to rural women/ PG:** Participation in exhibitions both inside & outside the state will lead to increased self confidence of rural poor women.
- **Up-scaling of existing micro enterprises:** Exhibition will help in regular facilitation of sales resulting in increase in volume of production.
- **Learning to participants:** Workshops & interaction with fellow participants & customers will help the rural entrepreneurs enrich their knowledge on product, process, technology, design etc.

## **f. CONCLUSION :**

An Exhibition in the most general sense, is an organized presentation and display of selected items based on tastes and preferences consumers . Exhibition/Melas have been part and parcel of entertainment and relaxation activity of our culture. ORMAS has innovatively used this medium as a channel to promote rural products made by the Institutions of poor. Based on the experience of Palli Shree Mela , it can be safely said that exhibition has indeed proved to quite critical in establishing a link between ORMAS and Consumers in terms of preparation and design of need based and appropriate products based on the availability of resources and skill. It is hoped that the effort to organise will get further strategic in attracting a large no. of buyers to select and buy a product of their choice. Most importantly it will go a long way in enhancing the livelihood of the rural entrepreneurs towards a better living in the future.

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