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Theoretical Assessment of Marketing Strategies for Small and Medium Enterprises in Indian scenario

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Abstract: Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of India's economy, contributing significantly to employment generation and economic growth. In an era of intense globalization and technological evolution, SMEs face unique challenges in establishing and satisfying effective marketing strategies. This theoretical assessment explores the intricacies of marketing strategies tailored for Indian SMEs, in view of cultural, economic, and technological dynamics specific to the Indian context. The paper synthesizes existing literature to identify key marketing agendas, evaluates their applicability to SMEs, and highlights innovative approaches, such as digital marketing, customer-centric branding, and value-driven promotion. It also examines barriers to effective marketing, including resource limitations, lack of expertise, and market fragmentation, and proposes strategic interventions to overcome these challenges. The study underscores the position of integrating traditional and digital marketing practices, leveraging cost-effective tools, and fostering agility to enhance competitiveness. This assessment aims to provide a robust theoretical foundation to guide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in devising impactful marketing strategies for SMEs in India.

Keywords: SMEs, marketing strategies, Indian economy, digital marketing, branding, resource optimization, cultural dynamics

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INTRODUCTION

Using both the provider's and the consumer's points of view, this article will attempt to describe the marketing approaches used by small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). It is essential to change marketing plans annually to achieve stated targets, since they are not a one-time activity but rather a diverse and distinct action. Any business, no matter how big or little, may benefit from implementing a marketing strategy, regardless of the company's turnover. Because of their quantifiable and comparing character, marketing tactics are very susceptible to the ebb and flow of the market and the economic cycle. Not only does the scientific community have a vested interest in the key changes associated with the shift to a new economic model.

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in India are expanding at an astounding rate, and the country's manufacturing, precision engineering, food processing, pharmaceutical, retail, information technology, agriculture, and service industries are all contributing to this growth. The expansion of non-agricultural economic areas, including services, manufacturing, and industry, is critical for India's economy, which is still heavily dependent on agriculture. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the industrial sector as a whole by acting as both a forward and backward link in the supply chain of larger

companies. SSI stands out in India's economy because of the unique role it plays in the country's production, sales, and employment (Ranchy Bhateja et al., 2007). Exports from India's SSI industry have been skyrocketing in the last decade, reaching double digits (Govinda Sharma, 2011).

Under the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Act 2006 (MSMED Act 2006), the Indian government established its definition of small manufacturing businesses based on the limit historical value of investment in plant and equipment. There are two subsets of the small business sector defined by the legislation. Subset 1 includes establishments involved in production or manufacturing. Group 2: Organisations whose primary function is to provide or provide services. Under the MSMED Act of 2006, small units are defined as industrial units in category 1 (manufacturing sector) with an investment in plant and equipment above twenty-five lakh rupees but not exceeding five crore rupees. Businesses with an investment in equipment between ten lakh rupees and two crore rupees are considered small units under the MSMED Act of 2006's category 2 (service sector).

Economic reforms are like double-edged swords; they affect every unit's success or failure. This viewpoint is shown by liberalisation and globalisation. The SSIs have long held the view that liberalisation is bad for them due to the many businesses that it swept away (Ranchy Bhateja et al., 2007). How small-scale industries in India have fared as a result of globalisation and domestic economic liberalisation, and how their expansion has fared in terms of employment, production, units, and exports. Because these aids will lead to the country's economic riches, the relevant government body should step forward. In developing nations like Nigeria, there have been recent examples of strategies addressing issues such as post-colonial thinking, marketing challenges faced by small businesses, government intervention, and participation (Ayozie Daniel Ogechukwu et al., 2010).

In order for auxiliary units to get a foothold in both domestic and foreign markets, the government must oversee the implementation phase of growing industries in economically depressed regions.

In order to adapt to the new economic model, developing nations are laying the groundwork for an information society that their citizens can live in. This includes expanding access to the Internet, electronic commerce, and telecommunications; fostering the growth of small and medium-sized businesses; investing in education and training; promoting social protection systems; and bolstering scientific research as a competitiveness vector and human resource enhancement strategy (Dan Popsecu, 2011).

Through the development of highly productive labour-intensive employment, both directly and indirectly, SMEs are the only economic actors capable of achieving the national goal of inclusive growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) use local resources and expertise to create goods and services, which boosts the economy of the area as a whole and creates more jobs in the immediate vicinity. The possibility for SMEs to rise up the value chain arises when major enterprises outsource a greater portion of their value-added operations. This is one manner in which SMEs make a substantial contribution to the economic value chain. By increasing production capabilities and providing high-quality products and services at affordable rates, SMEs contribute to the expansion of industrial development. They were crucial to the expansion of the industrial sector.

According to Sebastian and Rakesh Basant (2010), in this era of liberalisation and globalisation, every

effort to establish a competitive small-scale industry in the nation must clearly include the growing global networks of production and knowledge. A rapidly expanding economy in which small businesses play an increasingly important role has its focus on critical policy challenges, and proposed reforms to address these issues

they play fundamental and inherent functions. If India wants to make the right policy decisions, it has to learn how the contemporary small-scale industry evolved in late-industrializing nations.

A product's life cycle mirrors that of a human being, with an introduction, growth, maturity, and a falling period when sales hit rock bottom. In order to stay ahead of the competition, marketing strategies are developed alongside product life cycles. Depending on consumer demand, expanding the breadth and depth of product offerings is one way to improve the product-based marketing mix. In 2008, Kotler and Keller published their findings. A wide range of branding strategies, some of which are innovative and even defy convention, are being used by small enterprises. Additionally, entrepreneurs have their own unique perspectives on branding, yet this creative performance advances both the theory and practice of branding (Barbu et al., 2010).

When it comes to marketing mix techniques, price is king since it determines whether a business makes a profit, stays in business, or grows. In the present holistic marketing phase, accurate pricing quantification is challenging due to the reliance on price elasticity of demand and the fact that price is a major role in both demand and sales (Jobber. D., 1995). (Kotler and Keller, 2008). While David Jobber notes that production and price factors have a significant impact on pricing, Kotler and Keller (2008) place more importance on product positioning and market targeting when setting prices. There are a number of important aspects that go into deciding on prices, including profit margins, market conditions, competitive pricing, consumer knowledge via personal interactions, and price flexibility. In 1998, David Carson and colleagues

Advertising is the first point of contact between a marketer and a prospective consumer. The goal of every good promotional message is to educate, convince, and indirectly remind consumers of the product. The six main components of a promotion mix are advertising, sales promotion, publicity and public relations, events and experiences, direct marketing, and personal selling. Along with defining the target audience, setting the goals, and designing the message strategy, these six strategies contribute to an improved message with sufficient funding and efficacy. Clustering, networking, and technical innovation are thriving in promoting SMEs.

The phrase "place" and "distribution" are sometimes used interchangeably since both involve the same process of getting a product to its final destination—the consumer. The route of distribution

The choice of distribution channel retailer, wholesaler, or direct consumer approach is equally crucial.

According to Romano et al. (1995), small businesses may be impacted by the 4Ps of marketing, which are important variables in the success of marketing strategies. Relationship marketing, network marketing, creative marketing, clustering, and standardisation vs. adaption are just a few of the new and evolving ideas that have been brought to the strategy group in response to today's current tumultuous environment. According to Jorma Larimo et al. (2008), there are a number of background influences that might affect a company's choice to standardise or modify its worldwide marketing strategy. These forces include firm,

managerial, product, market, and consumer difficulties.

Advertising in three different ways, notably advertising as a marketing mindset, marketing as an approach, and marketing as a set of procedures when thinking about SMEs. The adoption of a model provides a simple approach to diagnosing problems inside SMEs, and this in turn helps shed light on the complicated and disorganised issues that may arise within these units and their surrounding business environment (Simpson et al., 2006). Some have proposed using SER databases to shed light on big problems and challenges faced by smaller businesses. One vineyard that has found success in niche markets by focussing on a mix of short-term gains and long-term sustainability is the subject of a case study (Beverland and Lockshin, 2005). This method has been important in Palliser's rapid success. When it comes to specialised services that bigger manufacturers can't provide, small businesses usually come through. Despite the lack of government support for the garment sector, small-scale operations in countries like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and China are booming (Arti Singh, 2006).

Another case study (Beverland and Lockshin, 2005) likewise encountered the need of relationship marketing with well-known companies on a worldwide scale. According to Fatima Vegholm (2011), a dyadic strategy may help banks and SMEs build long-term relationships via mutual involvement and demand. A positive corporate image for banks is a direct outcome of the strong relationships that develop between banks and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The link between bank happiness and small and medium enterprise (SME) owners has been explained, and there have been suggestions for a preliminary framework and switching recommendations based on bank satisfaction (Lisa Feeney et al., 2002). A hypothetical deductive model using a matrix to describe the role of marketing and relevance.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The goal of this research is to conduct a theoretical assessment of marketing strategies used by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in India, with a focus on identifying challenges, evaluating innovative approaches, and understanding the role of digital transformation and government initiatives in shaping these strategies. The technique include a thorough study of secondary data, such as peer-reviewed journals, industry reports, government publications, and case studies, in order to synthesise current information about SME marketing methods. This qualitative method allows for a thorough examination of the interaction between old and contemporary marketing strategies while also filling gaps in the literature about scalability, inclusion, and sustainability. The research uses text analysis to discover repeating themes and patterns, resulting in a more detailed knowledge of the elements impacting SME marketing in India's heterogeneous socioeconomic environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Simpson et al. (2006). A company's marketing strategy seems to have a positive correlation with its bottom line, according to the matrix. This model was used by Moller and Anttila (1987) to study the marketing practices of small manufacturing enterprises. The model proposed by Simpson et al. (2006) expands upon the model put out by Moller and Anttila (1987) by adding an additional, non-essential feature.

According to Yen and Chew (2011), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) may only get a competitive edge via relationship marketing and high performance competitive marketing strategies. Small

businesses may greatly benefit from a marketing intelligence system, marketing mix, and marketing tactics that operate together, with an emphasis on networking as a marketing tool (Gilmore et al., 2001). When it comes to marketing initiatives, it fits well with the way SMEs make decisions. Managers will exercise restraint when discussing sensitive matters, such as their intentions to significantly alter the course of the company, and will strike a balance when collaborating with competitors, ensuring that the advantages accrue to all parties involved in a fair and equitable manner.

Dasa Dragnic et al. (2009) found that small firms in Splitsko-Dalmatinska County engaged in marketing efforts, which highlights the management and operational components of market orientation in their behaviour. One of marketing's most popular concepts, marketing orientation is often misunderstood (Harris et al., 1998). Most Croatian small businesses, according to the report, have a focus on the market, their customers, and their rivals, and they use marketing in their own unique way. The study's findings are supported by the careful examination of consumers and rivals, as well as their impact on pricing and product policies. We all know that the client is the most important part of any marketing strategy, and that's why customer orientation is crucial. Kwaku and Satyendra Singh (1998) used performance metrics such new product success, sales growth pattern, and return on investment to highlight customer inclination towards SME goods. It seems that SMEs' performance is positively impacted by client orientation.

Using some unforeseen variables, we compare the extent to which SMEs standardise and modify the marketing mix components for their international sales. While price is more adaptable, the overall findings show that there is only a tiny variation in the degree of adaptation across product, communication, and distribution methods.

According to earlier research (Reijonen et al., 2009), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have partially embraced this, with an emphasis on collecting customer information and less on disseminating and reacting to market data. The marketing department is not always given the attention it deserves, especially by smaller SMEs.

ANALYSING EXISTING RESEARCH

Using a literature review as a framework, this study sets out to investigate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Hisar area of Haryana from the perspectives of marketing strategy, market intelligence systems, creative marketing, and customer orientation.

As a means of controlling for other contextual factors, Hakimpoor et al. (2011) looked at how the structural aspects of the marketing network mediated this connection. In order to evaluate the validity of the model, researchers hypothesise that SMP and SMEs' performance would be favourably impacted by the size, formality, variety, density, stability, and flexibility of the marketing network. The authors want to address the vacuum in research about the link between SMP and performance in the context of SMEs. The research concluded that the structural marketing network aspects moderate the association between SMP and the performance of SMEs.

Yen and Chew (2011) looked studied the marketing strategies used by Chinese construction SMEs and the effects of external variables on their performance, therefore there is a clear focus on marketing methods.

The multi-dimensional analysis of important factors influencing SME marketing activities and the longitudinal assessment of the nature of SME marketing were assessed by Jimmy Hill (2001) using desk research. The marketing competences, sales orientation, human interaction types, and marketing planning characteristics of SMEs have been the primary foci of this research.

Gerald Susman et al. (2006) provide several examples of effective use of novel approaches to developing products and services. Based on their findings, the researchers provide suggestions to make SMEs more competitive and to improve the capacity of MEP (manufacturer extension partnership) consultants to help SMEs achieve this goal.

With the goal of reporting on a large-scale examination of the function and significance of marketing in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Simpson et al. (2006) proposed a novel theoretical and practical perspective on the subject of marketing in SMEs.

SMEs, or medium-sized businesses. This research looked into and examined the marketing relevance and role model in SMEs. In addition, the model's marketing strategy seems to have a good correlation with financial success, according to certain results.

How much the four Ps of marketing (product, pricing, distribution, and communication) are standardised vs. how much they are adapted, as well as the effect of certain contingency variables on the strategies studied by Jorma Larimo et al. (2008).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the focus of Reijonen's (2009) examination of marketing beliefs, strategies, and objectives. Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) marketers saw marketing as a set of practical exercises including promotion, sales, and connections with customers, and they claimed to have used a mix of marketing tenets to achieve success.

Procrastination patterns have a significant impact on small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) branding, which emerged from research into product planning and development (Gillian Horan et al., 2011). When it comes to product and process innovation, SMEs would prioritise incremental improvements, according to Egbetokun et al. (2010). The product development process's critical success criteria have been elucidated via empirical study in SMEs. According to Isidre March-Chorda et al. (2001), the expense of product development initiatives and the uncertainty of market acceptability are the main reasons that discourage commitment to new product development.

When setting prices, proactive terms proposed by David Carson et al. (1998) should take into account product attributes and market potential as opportunity and threat criteria for environmental and competitive factors.

In small businesses, branding has always been seen through the lens of the consumer, but from the viewpoint of management, it is a relatively new field that may bring out an entrepreneur's best traits in branding. Given the tendency for SME merchants to simplify the branding process, Richard Mitchell (2012) offers a number of consequences for managers of retail SMEs. Retail SME owner managers may find this model's toolkits helpful in better coordinating their brand's message. Jimmy Hill (2001) proposed a new model that suggests SMEs should illustrate three tiers of competence: foundational, transitional, and

marketing. These tiers should implement relational communication and commitment techniques on a large scale. The concepts of larger, more established company branding should also be embraced by owner managers.

Also, for SMEs to get the most out of their brand assets, owner managers should be on the lookout for ways to gauge how customers perceive the brand. The function of branding in locally owned businesses is examined by Barbu et al. (2010). They found out how tiny companies improve their brand and how the brand dynamics work by doing desk research on the internet and news.

Ben Othmen (2010) analyses Fotomina ltd's present online marketing efforts and offers some suggestions for how they might be improved. Little attention is paid to SMEs in the E-marketing literature, which mostly focusses on major company houses. For SMEs, the two key sources of competitive advantage that Beverland and Lockshin (2005) identified were pricing and quality. Due to their flatter organisational structure, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the European Union place a higher value on human resources than bigger corporations. Human resource development initiatives, according to Dan Popsecu (2011), are where SMEs may see a significant shift in their competitive advantages.

When it comes to the execution of marketing strategies in Sri Lankan SMEs, R. Gajanayake (2010) lays out the majority of the requirements. The article concludes that a lack of familiarity with and understanding of new business procedures and approaches is the primary cause of SMEs' failure. Their marketing techniques did not significantly affect the development of their organisation, according to the research. Furthermore, the actions of the entrepreneurs had little effect on the expansion of the firm.

According to Michele O'Dwyer et al. (2009), creative marketing is influenced by both the firm's features and the external environment. Using data collected from a Chinese setting, Shigang Yan et al. (2010) demonstrated a correlation between a company's success and factors including market distinction, focus, innovation strategy, and strategic alliances. Taking into account the unique requirements of SMEs and decision-making within the framework of market focus and customer focus, innovative marketing takes into account technical advancement, new product development, and product specifications. Ayozie Daniel Ogechukwu et al. (2010) details the marketing challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs in Nigeria, outlining potential solutions such as more favourable legislation, better infrastructure, ongoing training and education for employees, direct financial aid, and the creation of lending institutions that cater to SMEs. Adequate promotional methods are further demanded by a marketing-centric strategy and distinctive selling proposition. In order to be successful, SSI marketing campaigns in India need to target better credit flows, human resources, allocated resources, suitable technology, and modernisation funding (Rajesh Kumar Shastri et al., 2011).

Clustering was introduced by Chrysoula and Angela (2011) as an additional dimension that has gained early awareness because of vertical interactions instead of horizontal ones. From this idea also arises networking, which aids in the awareness of brands from the perspective of small and medium-sized businesses.

Henny Romijn has examined the ways in which developing-world institutions back small-scale manufacturing businesses with technology (2001). For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the key

to success is embracing demand-driven product and process innovations, forming cooperatives that may develop into autonomous institutions, and implementing suitable market-based incentive systems. According to Alam and Ahsan (2007), businesses have the option to use internet facilities, which might significantly enhance their capacity.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is now essential for keeping up with national and international competition, the common distribution technique has altered, and a myriad of new paths are being added inadvertently. According to Avvari V. Mohan et al. (2006), one program that the Malaysian government has set up to help small and medium-sized businesses in the country that rely on technology. Support programs for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector are designed within the scope of the entrepreneurial life cycle by the MTD program. In order to expand their operations both locally and internationally, the majority of Malaysian enterprises have already embraced ICT (Alam and Ahsan, 2007).

The link among marketing strategy, business environment, and performance of small and medium-sized construction companies in China is examined via the development of a theoretical framework (Shigang Yan et al., 2010). Marketing strategies that include environmental management, strategic choice, and resource-based views may help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) take a more environmentally conscious stance and ultimately survive. Environment dynamism is unrelated to the success of construction SMEs, contrary to the research's expectations. In addition to a mix of innovation, rapid delivery, and suitable marketing, resource-based theory has the potential to provide outstanding success. (Stephen Duhan and colleagues, 2005)

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a pivotal role in the Indian economy, contributing significantly to GDP and employment generation. However, their marketing strategies often face challenges due to limited resources, expertise gaps, and the complexities of a fragmented market. Recent studies highlight the diverse approaches SMEs adopt to overcome these hurdles, reflecting a blend of traditional and innovative practices tailored to India’s unique socio-economic landscape (Gupta & Sharma, 2021).

The marketing approaches in Indian SMEs are deeply influenced by regional cultures, customer behaviors, and market dynamics. Many SMEs rely on cost-effective methods such as word-of-mouth, community engagement, and local networks, which are particularly effective in rural and semi-urban markets (Ghosh et al., 2022). However, the diversity and fragmentation of Indian markets present challenges in establishing cohesive branding strategies, often resulting in inconsistent messaging and lower brand loyalty across regions (Das & Roy, 2021).

Digital marketing has emerged as a transformative tool for SMEs, enabling them to reach broader audiences at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook have become indispensable for promotions and customer engagement (Kumar et al., 2022). E-commerce marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart have further expanded opportunities for SMEs to access national and international markets. Despite these advancements, many SMEs struggle with digital literacy and lack an understanding of the complexities of online marketing, which limits the effective utilization of these platforms. Training programs and initiatives under the Digital India campaign aim to address these gaps, though their impact is uneven across regions (Singh & Patel, 2023).

Financial constraints remain a significant barrier for SMEs in India. Limited budgets force these enterprises to prioritize operational needs over marketing investments, resulting in reactive strategies that often lack long-term vision (Chatterjee, 2021). The absence of formal marketing expertise exacerbates this issue, as SME owners frequently handle marketing efforts themselves, leading to suboptimal practices in market research, branding, and customer relationship management (Sharma & Mehta, 2022). Additionally, the fragmented nature of the Indian market, characterized by diverse consumer preferences and economic disparities, necessitates highly localized strategies that may not scale effectively to broader markets (Das & Roy, 2021).

Despite these challenges, Indian SMEs have shown remarkable adaptability and innovation in their marketing efforts. Many businesses combine traditional marketing techniques with digital tools, creating hybrid strategies that cater to both local and broader audiences. For example, leveraging cultural events and festivals for promotions while amplifying their reach through social media campaigns has proven effective (Gupta et al., 2023). Similarly, value-driven marketing, which emphasizes sustainability and social responsibility, is gaining traction, particularly among urban consumers who prioritize ethical and eco-friendly practices (Bose & Jain, 2023).

Government initiatives such as Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat have also played a significant role in shaping the marketing landscape for SMEs. These programs offer financial support, training, and market access to help SMEs adopt innovative practices and enhance competitiveness (Verma & Sinha, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these initiatives varies widely, and there is a need for more localized and targeted interventions to address the specific challenges faced by SMEs in different sectors and regions.

Current research provides valuable insights into the evolving marketing strategies of Indian SMEs, yet several gaps remain. The long-term impact of digital transformation on these enterprises is still underexplored. Additionally, more research is needed to understand how localized marketing strategies can be scaled for national or global market integration. The intersection of marketing with sustainability and inclusivity, particularly in rural and resource-constrained SMEs, also warrants further investigation (Ghosh et al., 2022).

The marketing strategies of Indian SMEs reflect a dynamic interplay between traditional practices and modern innovations, shaped by the unique socio-economic conditions of the country. While financial constraints, expertise gaps, and market fragmentation pose challenges, the adoption of digital tools and innovative approaches offers significant opportunities. Addressing these challenges through policy support, enhanced digital literacy, and scalable marketing models is crucial for the sustained growth and competitiveness of SMEs in India. Continued research is essential to adapt to the rapidly changing business environment and evolving consumer preferences, ensuring that SMEs remain a vital driver of India's economic development (Sharma & Mehta, 2022).

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The discussion emphasises the complex and changing characteristics of marketing strategies utilised by SMEs within the Indian context. Small and medium-sized enterprises encounter distinct obstacles arising from financial limitations, disjointed markets, and restricted access to marketing knowledge. The presence

of these barriers requires the development of innovative and cost-effective strategies to maintain competitiveness. The results indicate that conventional marketing approaches, including the utilisation of local networks and community involvement, continue to be fundamental to SME strategies, especially in rural and semi-urban markets where interpersonal trust and cultural alignment play a vital role.

The impact of digital transformation on the marketing landscape for SMEs is substantial, offering tools that facilitate the expansion of reach and improvement of customer engagement. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram have emerged as essential tools for promotions and facilitating direct communication with customers. SMEs that implement digital marketing observe enhanced visibility and improved customer retention; however, the complete benefits of these tools are often not fully achieved because of deficiencies in digital literacy and a lack of understanding of advanced marketing strategies. Additionally, e-commerce platforms have developed into essential avenues for SMEs to reach broader markets. Nonetheless, smaller enterprises, especially those located in rural regions, encounter difficulties associated with onboarding expenses, logistical issues, and competition from larger entities.

The research highlights the significance of incorporating value-oriented marketing strategies. Small and medium-sized enterprises that integrate sustainability, ethical practices, and social responsibility into their branding strategies are positioned to achieve a competitive advantage, especially among urban consumers who prioritise environmental and social considerations. These strategies enhance customer loyalty while simultaneously creating new opportunities for differentiation in saturated markets.

Government initiatives, including Make in India and Digital India, provide essential support through financial incentives, training programs, and enhanced market access. Nonetheless, the influence they exert differs significantly among various sectors and regions. Small and medium enterprises located in urban regions generally experience greater advantages from these initiatives, attributed to superior infrastructure and resource accessibility. In contrast, those situated in rural areas face significant hurdles in the implementation process. It is essential for policymakers to concentrate on addressing this disparity to guarantee fair advantages for all.

The results indicate a notable deficiency in both scalability and sustainability. Localised strategies effectively address immediate needs; however, their scalability to national or global markets poses a significant challenge in the long term. Moreover, the convergence of digital marketing with inclusivity and rural development remains inadequately examined, resulting in missed opportunities for growth.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasises the essential function of both traditional and modern marketing strategies in assisting Indian SMEs to address challenges and attain sustainable growth. Financial constraints, regional disparities, and limited marketing expertise present ongoing challenges; however, the integration of digital tools, value-driven marketing strategies, and supportive government initiatives create substantial opportunities for innovation and market growth. To improve the effectiveness of these strategies, it is essential to implement targeted policy interventions, enhance digital literacy, and develop scalable marketing models that cater to the varied needs of SMEs across different regions and sectors. Focussing on inclusivity, sustainability, and strategic digital transformation allows SMEs to enhance their

competitiveness while also playing a significant role in India's overall economic development.

The study concludes that Indian SMEs are employing a combination of traditional and modern marketing strategies to tackle challenges. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on overcoming obstacles such as financial constraints, gaps in expertise, and regional disparities. Improving digital literacy, developing policy interventions that cater to the varied needs of SMEs, and encouraging sustainable and inclusive marketing practices are essential for empowering SMEs to succeed in India's competitive and diverse market environment.

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