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**FASHION MARKETING STRATEGIES OF SME
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Fashion Marketing Strategies of SME Textile Manufactures in India – A Qualitative Perspective

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Abstract – SME textile manufactures play an important role in the economy of the country. Textile manufactures is an very important part of that sector and fashion runs hand in hand with that and so does fashion marketing. This paper focuses on the fashion marketing strategies that are used by fashion marketers to market the SME textile industry products such as apparels and garments to generate revenue and opportunities for the SME industry. This paper gives you a qualitative approach of the marketing mix tools and techniques of fashion product, fashion promotion, fashion place, fashion price. And the way those help in the marketing of the SMEs products. This helps in understanding the strategy used by the SMEs for marketing and what are the different ways through which they do it in a reasonable way as the investment and turnover to the SMEs are comparatively low. And with already the big players capturing the market how can they still survive and are surviving in the market only because of those marketing strategies.

Key Words – SME, Marketing, Fashion Product, Fashion Price, Fashion Place, Fashion Promotion, Target Market, Target Audience, Revenue.

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INTRODUCTION

SME, it stands for Small and Medium Enterprises. The definition of SME according to India is as per the section 7 of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises development Act, 2006. It is basically based on the investment amount to the sectors they cater to. There are two types of SMEs depending on the amount of investment and turnover of the company. If the investment threshold of the company is between 1 to 10 crore and the turnover threshold is between 5 to 50 crores, it is considered as a small enterprise and if the income threshold is between 10 to 20 crores and the turnover is between 50 to 100 crores it's considered as a Medium enterprises. The contribution of the SME to the Indian economy is huge as they contribute 24% to the service sector GDP and 6% to the manufacturing sector GDP of India. They provide employment to a large number of the people, according to survey nearly 120 million people are employed under this sector. There are more than 63 million small and medium enterprises as per registered and it also accounts to 45% of all exports in India. Textile industry is an very essential part of the SMEs. After agriculture the textile industry is the only industry that provides the most employment in India. The textile industry has huge skilled and unskilled labour. Agriculture being the first for employment the textile industry has always been the second in providing employment to people. Nearly 35 million people are directly employed under the

textile industry. The textile industry is directly linked with fashion and clothing. Giving an overview of fashion it can be termed as something aesthetic with short term and no fixed popularity. Clothing and apparels make up a huge part of the fashion Industry. Fashion is something which is termed to be short lived and dynamic. It emerges according to many different reasons like situational, political, climatic, environmental, innovative and sometimes by admiring famous personalities. It is never fixed and it sometimes doesn't even last a season. Someone is considered fashionable when he embraces all the aspects which are famous at that point of time. Fashion is also influenced by history at times as well. The way the fashion and trends reach people is also a whole process. Marketing is an important part of this whole process. Marketing refers to the set of procedures or practices a company or brand adopts for the buying the selling or their products. Philip Kotler known as the father of marketing defined marketing as "Satisfying needs and wants through an exchange process" and a decade later defines it as "a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they want and need through creating, offering and exchanging products of value with others". Fashion and marketing works hand in hand (Simmel, 1957).

Fashion Marketing is defined as the way of understanding the complex and dynamic nature and

aspects of the fashion industry and coming up with strategical and operational business activities to satisfy the needs and demands of the consumers. The fashion Marketing strategies used by the SMEs textile are not too much different from the normal fashion marketing strategies but are planned with lower capital and are much more budget friendly. This study will give you a clear overview of the fashion marketing strategies used by the textile manufactures in India (Kotler, 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The fashion marketing strategies are hugely depended on the marketing mix and fashion marketing mix in this case. Though they don't differ a lot incase of the strategies for the SMEs apart from the low investment of capital and some certain changes. The fashion marketing mix consists of the 4P's which are Fashion product the first, fashion promotion the second, fashion place the third and fourthly and lastly the fashion price (Armstrong, Kotler, & He, 2005).

- **Fashion product** - Anything that can be designed to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer can be termed as a product, so anything or any garment or apparel that can satisfy the needs and wants of a consumer can be termed as a fashion product. The core benefit of the product is that it provides you with a set of value that is more than the normal and bundles all the more than usual requirements of the consumer. Actually the now fashion products like garment were designed earlier for protection and modesty purpose but this since many centuries have turned up as a statement of fashion and class. Marketing plays an important role at stages of branding, sales promotion and retail offerings. The theory of product marketing can be applied best to the fashion marketing genre as this is where the marketing works mostly. People are fashion conscious now always want to look stylish. The product marketing helps in knowing the demand and wants of the consumer and then design a product according to that (Easey, 2009). The marketing activity helps adding value to the core product. Considering the example of the Levi's denim jeans. They are the first to discover the jeans in the late 19th century. The trend of the Levi's jeans is still in continuation. The price of the jeans now is way more than the cost price but the hype and product image created by Levi's of themselves adds an unique proportion to it. There are many new denim brands as well who sell high proved denims because of the image of the product they created of themselves. People buy particularly high priced product for some minimum amount of particular style so brand plays an Important part in the fashion product as well as the decision of what an individual purchases highly depends on the brands individuals nowadays also take it as a way of communication among themselves. For SMEs finding the right product for their consumers and then catering their needs according to them at a low and friendly budget is also a very essential task. The big brands have products off

all categories and as they are already leading the market it's not a that huge task for them to get or add some more product lines to their collection. But as a SME you need to find the exact product that would completely get your audience attention and not only that but also would create a unique and good image of the brand to keep them loyal towards it and in sustaining the customers. The market for the SMEs are great and with huge potential and there is always treat of new entrants but if you can understand your customers' needs and wants the best you would always emerge as the Ace in the game (McCarthy, & Perreault, 1997).

- **Fashion Promotion** - The idea of promotion or fashion promotion was derived from sales promotion. It basically means letting the consumer know about the product and letting him know the information and details about the product at a certain level to keep the curiosity intact of the consumer. It is now recently been started referred to as marketing communication. It contains the discussion between the company or brand and it's customers. Its an interactive way of sharing information and letting your customers know better about your product. The marketing communications includes sales promotion, advertising, public relations and publicity, personal selling and direct and indirect marketing. The tools of marketing communication are used more and more effectively in terms of fashion promotion and fashion marketing (Raichurkar, & Ramachandran, 2015). Advertising and publicity are largely used for promotion and getting to the public. Advertising and also fashion shows and fashion walks are covered by the media which does not only give a hype to the particular clothing shown but a whole hype to the brand and it's whole product line. Advertising, social media, television, radio helps the promotion a lot. Public relations department also provides great ideas to reach and let people know a lot about the product and brand. The role played by the fashion press is also huge. They cover the fashion shows and exhibitions of the brands and this gives a hype to the other lines of the brand as well. A huge number of public are also behind those television screens with huge untapped potential. Social media has got the most number of youth who are 95% inclined towards the fashion and want to be up with the trend. So that is a good option to explore as well and get good conversions. The international magazines mostly cover the huge brands and the luxury brands but the SME sometimes when doing better or comes up with good ideas and concepts give them a chance to be featured in the national magazines and that too has a huge reach and conversion. So, the SMEs also use those strategies for fashion promotion (Fifield, 2012).

- **Fashion Place** - Place or Fashion place describes where the products are made and where the products are to be sold. It comprises of the market the particular brand of company seems to target. The distribution channel and market penetration. Most the the huge brands like H&M, ZARA, GAP have already taken the market with hugely organised distributor

channels and good marketing strategies every season. So finding the right place for your product to have a good return and the best target market is very important for the SMEs for generating revenue and profit. Finding the right market is depending on many factors starting from knowing your product to promotion to many demographic reasons as well. If you need to find the best market for your product to target and generate revenue even apart from the huge players already capturing the market is firstly you need to know your product and which age group it is mostly helpful for or from past experience that which age group has been the main target audience (Hines, Bruce, 2007). You also need to find the right people for your product. As an SME you can target either the high class people with huge incomes or the middle class people. As the big players are already taking the high class audience to their account as they have been leading the market mostly SMEs focus on the middle class audience because as compared to the high class the middle class has a huge audience and a large market which also demands products to meet their wants. If your product can capitalise the potential of the market and reach out to the middle class the profits are guaranteed but for this the place the very much crucial as placing your products in the too much posh markets would not lead to great return as the public there are capable of paying more. So as a fashion marketers knowing your product and marketing it and finding the right place and target market is really important. We always need to be balance as too much luxury target market would lead to loss as there are people with more paying potential and in today's society it's also a symbol of status and you can't even target the too low markets as the people there would or may not have the paying potential so finding a right market for the product is a huge part of the strategy or else the product and promotion would not give you the returns you are seeking for and that would be a huge loss. The target market for distribution of your product is very important and also having a good distribution channel for clear and organized distribution of the products. Finding a right place for your store or enterprise in the best market for your product is also a very important aspect. You should always be close to your target market so that the penetration of your product works based. Establishing a store in remote areas or areas with too much high potential people would cause loss. Always finding the right place for your enterprise and the right target market for distribution and sale of your product is very essential (Walker, Mullins, Boyd, & Larreche, 2006).

- **Fashion price** - It's the main factor for revenue and getting the value - positioning of the product. The product as per the previous discussion is to cater all the needs and wants of the consumer which he will be getting more than the normal. The products are customized to cater the needs and wants of the customer. So now it's the time for fashion price. You should always know your target audience and target market because that is the only thing which will

help you lead to the right price. If targeting the middle class audience your price must be according to that. Targeting the middle class people and putting high prices would lead to bad revenue generation and if you are pricing high that more than what the value your product serves at a luxury market that would lead you to loss as well. Pricing is a very complicated subject. You need to look at every aspect before reaching the solution. We need to target the right market, the right audience depending on the age group, and there income status. Even the location and geography of the market if your shop matters (Jackson, & Shaw, 2008). You also need to think of not being too much on any side and always keep a balance so that the revenue is also generated and you can also be a good player in the market you particularly target so that it can also create a brand value in the minds of the people and have a good picture of yours. Firstly before deciding the price it should be in a particular serial way. At first we need to know our product and how much value it serves. Keeping this in mind we need to move on to the market we want to target, as the luxury markets are already captured by the big players we need to target the middle class market as the target market and set the middle class as our target audience. Once we are able to find that we need to move on to the place aspect and let know the market you are situated in and the kind of people and status those people possess. Once you know that now you know the audience around you. Now you can try out getting to the past and finding the age group which showed more results and now once you get that you have a clear picture of every aspect of your target market and audience and as well as your product and what value it can add. Now by looking toward the opportunities for profit and then analysing the data gathered till now we need to reach to a result once you are done with that you can now find the price that should be fixed cutting your expenses and then keeping a margin profit and also keeping in mind the audience as the brand image and value is what that would be attracting the customers towards your brand from the next time. This is how SMEs fix their price. The big luxury brands have already created that image and audience buy them for even one particular style but a SME has to think about many issue and then reach the conclusion as the amount of investment is not that much to bear a huge loss (Watson, 1866).

This is how the SME textile industry strategize for their fashion marketing. It's not a huge different from the huge enterprises but the amount of capital invested in it much low and they strategize according to that for sustaining in the market and also getting good and sufficient amount of revenue (Panizzolo, Garengo, Sharma, & Gore, 2012).

CONCLUSION

The SME industry is a very important part in the Indian economy and provide employment to a huge audience. It's directly linked with textile industry as

the textile industry is the 2nd highest sector provided skilled and unskilled labour after agriculture. The concept of fashion is an always trending concept. Fashion is something which is short lived and comes with time and because of various reasons like seasonal, political, sociological or inspired from famous personalities. Fashion marketing is the marketing of mostly fashion related items and specially textile. It includes all the 4P's of marketing with the fashion aspect. The first P stands for fashion product which means the product should be according to the needs and wants of the customers and customized to give it the different value edition and an unique image for the brand and good quality for the consumer to sustain them. The other aspect is promotion, it is how the information is taken to the customer through various means like television, advertising, PR and direct marketing and many more. This is how the customer is made aware of the product, the next step is fashion place. You need to find the right place for your enterprise and even the right target market. Having a good picture of the right market and right people with the distinguished age group and also knowing the class of people targeting to would be very beneficial. The next and last step is the pricing, considering every aspect taken yet and by checking the value proposition of the product and keeping the profit in mind then fix the price. Those are the fashion Marketing strategies of the SME textile manufactures in India which is continuously helping the economy to rise and helping the country to attain a global place in the future (Pal, Torstensson, & Mattila, 2014).

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