
Editorial

Sudhir Rana* and Arpan Anand

Fortune Institute of International Business,
New Delhi, 110057, India

Email: rana.sudheer21@gmail.com

Email: arpananand978@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

Biographical notes: Sudhir Rana is an Associate Professor of Marketing at the Fortune Institute of International Business. His research area includes consumer behaviour, international marketing and business education. He is an MBA and PhD with MHRD Scholarship from the Government of India and Postdoctorate from the Putra Business School, Universiti of Putra, Malaysia. He has published numerous papers with Emerald, Taylor & Francis, Sage, Inderscience, etc. He is the editor of the management journal, *FIIB Business Review* (Sage Publications) and *Advances in Emerging Markets and Business Operations* (Routledge, Taylor and Francis). He is a researcher at heart and spends most of his time either in teaching or research work. He has been mentoring budding researchers.

Arpan Anand is an inspiring academician in the Marketing area at Fortune Institute of International Business, New Delhi. He obtained his Master's degrees in the field of Management as well as Commerce. His teaching and research interests include family business, sales and distribution management, and marketing management. He simplifies things, making everything complex easy to implement equipped with an analytical mind and clear task-driven thinking. He sets high standards for efficiency and consistency, at the same time, practical enough to acknowledge the caveats facing any execution and great team player. He plays roles in various capacities like Faculty, scholar, guest editor, guest speaker, Session Chair and many more across different platforms in India and abroad. He is a vivid researcher with a demonstrated history of working in higher education and corporate industry complemented with various publications in ABDC listed journals.

Through the special issue on 'What influences marketing practices in India?', we respond to calls from marketing practitioners and agencies, multinationals eyeing investment in India, social activist groups, government and regulatory authorities and research scholars. Marketing in India is possibly as old as other parts of the world.

There are various committee actions and reports that speak about how marketing took birth in the world and grown over the period of time. Tracing the history, marketing in India has been initiated by the Central British government to give effect to the recommendations of the agriculture commission; the central government created a department of marketing, and appointed a marketing advisor to the Government of India on January 1, 1935 (Govil, 1950). Processes and definitions opted into Indian text books of this subject are based upon the definitions and processes agreed in US textbooks. Marketing was probably the least developed aspect of Indian economy (Westfall and Boyd, 1960).

Today marketing is evident in India across industrial sectors and products irrespective of their governance and role. This special issue aimed on exploring contemporary marketing practices in India so that researchers and practitioners can map what went right and what are the critical issues. After conducting this special issue this can be said that, marketing practices are not limited to interest in capturing attention of marketing practitioners and scholars they are important to government and social activists as well. Marketing for India or in the rest of the world is not new terminology. In India, marketing practices are rooted to the pre-Mauryan period. India's culture is considered as the oldest culture by many institutions and we call it as 'Sanatan Dharm'. In India formal marketing practices started in Colonial rule between 1857 and 1947. Several businesses were started in the colonial period and are still in existence. Livingstone (1938) stated in his article that, marketing in India owes its origin to the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928). The commission has had belief that agriculture efficiency in India depends upon sound marketing. Starting from this point, various research studies have been contributed to the marketing domain from India. Few ancient books that have witnessed marketing in Indian agriculture include *The Culture and Marketing of Tea* by Harler (1933), *Agricultural Marketing in India* (Mukerjee, 1960) and *Marketing of Raw Cotton in India* by Dantwala (1937). Partially, focus can be observed on region and segment-based marketing by book on *Agricultural Marketing in Northern India* Husain (1937). After 1950 marketing practices became common for across business sectors and social groups.

Indian consumers have transformed rapidly due to modernisation, economic reforms and government initiatives (Rana et al., 2020). The growing competitiveness amongst Indian industries has motivated business firms to continuously change their marketing practices to engage the consumers (Dhiman et al., 2020). However, the understanding of contemporary India is equally important for two crucial reasons. First, because of the stature of India in the world's economy, inbound and outbound FDI are estimated to grow in the foreseeable future. The continuous growth has necessitated incumbent MNCs or that are eyeing the Indian market to establish a closer understanding of the pluralistic structure of its society. Such an understanding should help these MNCs to better organise their strategic, operational, as well as human resource architecture in India. India's religious (home to seven major religions), ethnic, societal (multiple castes, income inequality, collectivistic family structures), political (multiple political ideologies and parties) and linguistic (multiple languages and dialects) diversities shape the macro-context for strategic decisions at the individual, organisational, and inter-organisational levels. Additionally, the diversity of the competitive environment consisting of state owned enterprises family owned business groups, entrepreneurial start-up firms in the high-tech industries, and small and medium enterprises both in the formal and informal sectors, demonstrates the strategic challenges as well as opportunities for the businesses. Second, the expansion of Indian companies and the diaspora in different parts of the world will also necessitate an improved understanding of their dynamics in the host countries (Rana et al., 2018)

A problem with marketing in general is the lack of engagement with other research areas, including strategy, business models and competitive advantage in the mainstream management literature. However, engagement has begun to take place in particular, in relation to value generation. The changing paradigms have led to a considerable shift in the approach to treating value. From the tangible input focus pre-determined by the supplier to a perceptual outcome focus realised in use and context, marketing has increasingly been decoupled from the exchange with price as the measure of value. The

link to the business model with its earning logic has yet to be reassessed. Yet, and despite the emphasis upon various marketing practices in India there has been some research that has started to link the marketing and management literature around business models. The past few years has seen marketing strategy evolve rapidly in five major directions, which can be summarised into 5 Ds: dynamics, digital, data-rich, disruption and developing markets.

Total wealth in India increased fourfold between 2000 and 2019, reaching \$12.6 trillion in 2019, making India the fifth globally in terms of the number of ultra-high net-worth individuals, as per a Credit Suisse study, and it is important to understand what attracts more customers in India, what kind of practices are creating better outcomes for business organisations in India. The special issue includes five contributions. First contribution is by Sandeep Gupta and O.P. Wali on 'A study on sales promotions using mobile coupons for the Indian quick-service restaurants' as restaurants in India have relied on the 'word of mouth' strategy. To standardise this mode of communication, methods such as punch cards, coupons, etc. have been emerging, not only to attract individual customers but also to encourage them to bring their family and friends as well. The study explores that restaurants have been rewarding customers not only for repeated business but also for referring to family and friends. However, Indian restaurants, specially, quick-service restaurants (QSRs), have been laggard in embracing punch cards. India has adopted mobile couponing leaving paper coupons. The findings of this study suggest that customers have found mobile coupons helpful in saving money and are convenient to redeem. Hedonic and utilitarian attitude have a moderating effect on the customers propensity to use mobile coupons to make a purchase. Second contribution included in the SI is from Jones Mathew and Banasree Dey on 'Antecedents of need for uniqueness: a study of adolescents in India' this study argues that adolescents constitute a significant share of the consumer market. One trait in adolescents that may influence marketing strategies, is the need for uniqueness (NFU). NFU may have both extrinsic and intrinsic drivers, an understanding of which would enable designing of appropriate marketing interventions. This paper aims to determine the antecedents of NFU in adolescents and examine the influence of these intrinsic and extrinsic antecedents on NFU. Next contribution is by Heinz Herrmann and Sudhir Rana on the topic 'Which B2B thinker are you?' The applications of this contribution are more in general than to be the region specific. The study highlights underrepresented literature on business-to-business (B2B) despite its contribution to the developed and emerging economies. The research is based on the argument that B2B sales and marketing (S&M) literature covers traditional, transaction-marketing-related topics. To determine recent trends in thinking, this descriptive study evaluated 201 contributions to the B2B S&M domain. The study contributes new themes: relationship selling, management of sales and tactical selling and four schools of thought: transactionists, blue suiters, servants and partners in B2B literature. Next contribution is by Kunal Mehta and Ekta Singhal on 'Marketing channel attribution modelling: Markov chain analysis' With the advent of the digital era the business landscape has evolved drastically thereby impacting all the marketing and advertising activities. The study explores that advertisers employ multiple channels to reach the customers on digital platforms. Study addresses the challenge to design methodology to attribute conversions to these multiple channels in order to measure return on investment (ROI) and optimise the allocation of media budget. Authors of the study argue that conventional models of first touch, last touch and linear attribution do

not give a statistically complete picture, but at the same time, there are not enough resources outside which helps to implement a model like Markov attribution model to get statistically sound attribution and analysis of conversions. The last contribution included in the issue is by Kulwinder Kaur and Tejinderpal Singh on ‘Visual information impacting electronic word of mouth adoption: mediating role of perceived eWOM review credibility’. Authors in this study revealed that electronic word of mouth (eWOM) affects consumers while making purchase decisions online. This study aims to examine the impact of visual information on eWOM adoption mediated by perceived credibility of online reviews. In attaining this objective, authors developed a model using PLS-SEM structural equation modelling using computer software SmartPLS 3. The result of study advocates that visual information has a significant impact on eWOM adoption and perceived eWOM review credibility as a mediator had partial mediation impact on eWOM review adoption.

We are thankful to Professor (Dr.) Angappa Gunasekaran for his trust and assigning us the editorship for this special issue. We appreciate support from the team Inderscience especially from Norma Banks, Albert Ang, Darren Simpson and Anne. We are highly thankful to the authors for contributing their quality manuscripts with us and bearing with the number of revisions to make these apt with aim and objectives of the SI. We are also thankful to all the reviewers for their voluntary support in reviewing the manuscripts and their fruitful suggestions.

We hope that articles included in this special issue will be helpful in taking insights on marketing practices in India. We expect more discussions by the area scholars on advancements of the practices by taking the research inputs and scope for future research highlighted in the selected papers of this issue.

References

- Dantwala, M.L. (1937) *Marketing of Raw Cotton in India*, Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., Bombay.
- Dhiman, R., Kumar, V. and Rana, S. (2020) ‘Why export competitiveness differs within Indian textile industry? Determinants and empirical evidence’, *Review of International Business and Strategy* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1108/RIBS-03-2020-0021>.
- Govil, K.L. (1950) *The Cotton Industry of India*, 2nd ed., Hind Kitabs, Bombay.
- Harler, C.R. (1933) *The Culture and Marketing of Tea*, Oxford University Press, London.
- Husain, S.A. (1937) *Agricultural Marketing in Northern India*, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd.
- Livingstone, A.M. (1938) ‘Agricultural marketing in India’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 86, No. 4477, pp.1029–1044.
- Mukerjee, B.B. (1960) *Agricultural Marketing in India*, 2nd ed., Calcutta Private, India.
- Rana, S., Prashar, S., Barai, M.K. and Hamid, A.B.A. (2020) ‘Determinants of international marketing strategy for emerging market multinationals’, *International Journal of Emerging Markets* [online] <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOEM-09-2019-0742>.
- Rana, S., Saikia, P.P. and Barai, M.K. (2018) ‘Globalization and Indian manufacturing enterprises’, *FIIB Business Review*, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp.167–175.
- Westfall, R. and Boyd Jr., H.W. (1960) ‘Marketing in India’, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp.11–17.