

# *Practices of Marketing Strategies in Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs in Manipur*

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## <<< Abstract

*Women entrepreneurs have started taking leading roles in the country's economic development. One of the remarkable observations of today is entry of 'Women' into the entrepreneurial ventures. There has been a shift in the empowerment of women in India. Even though, in the past, they were treated inferior to their male counterpart, now they have come forward with increasing interest and vigour to be the entrepreneurs. They have started extending their productive hands in taking leading roles in the enterprise promotion along with their usual households. Again, Government's initiation through certain policies changes in their favour has accelerated the promotion and growth of women entrepreneurship in India. The case studies to be cited in paper highlights the entrepreneurial abilities of women today. One of the remarkable observations is that the present women entrepreneurs have become more customer friendly, and have clear understanding of the philosophy of marketing. Accordingly they have been adopting strategic marketing in real practice in success of their enterprise. This adoption of strategic marketing practice has made them to be successful women entrepreneurs. The specific contribution of marketing in the organization lies in the formulation of strategies to choose the right customer, build relationships of trust with them and create a competitive advantage. This paper is an attempt to presents the trend and constraints of the growth of women entrepreneurship and focuses on the understanding and adoption of strategic marketing by them in managing their enterprises. This has been discussed through the case study. **Keywords:** Roles in economic development, Shift in the empowerment of women, Understand strategic marketing, Trend and constraints, Government's initiation.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs development have become buzz words of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indian economy has witnessed significant changes during the last two decades. The waves of economic liberalisation and globalisation have unleashed multiple opportunities in the industrial, service and agricultural sector. It is observed that the 21<sup>st</sup> century belongs to the young, dynamic and new breed of entrepreneurs, who with their risk taking ability and innovative ideas have started initiating in the promotion of industrial units, specifically in the micro, small and medium sector. Again, the revolution in the information technology, liberal access to the markets both inside and outside the economy, the policy of free entry and free exit etc. have motivated the young educated youths into entrepreneurial ventures. The diverse nature of the NER States has shown the different style of entrepreneurship and growth scenario of the small scale and village industries in the region including the women enterprises.

**Table 1:**  
**Participation Of Women In Management/ Ownership In SSI Sector,**  
**North Eastern Region, India (As On March, 2010)**

Sl.No.	Name of State/ Union Territory	Numbers of enterprise managed by women	Number of women Enterprises	Numbers of Females employees (Both Registered and Unregistered sector)	Percentage of Female employment in the total employment of the State/UTs
1.	Sikkim	30	98	221	16.72
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	131	150	446	12.10
3.	Nagaland	207	179	321	15.65
4.	Manipur	9168	10745	23338	17.06
5.	Mizoram	3076	3700	6824	27.46
6.	Tripura	631	863	7619	13.38
7.	Meghalaya	3658	3580	8803	13.42
8.	Assam	11189	11757	26065	6.08
	All India	995141	1063721	33,17,496	13.31

Source: *Journal of Asian Research Consortium, 2010.*

#### **Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship:**

Entrepreneurship is a purposeful activity indulged in initiating, promoting and contributing economic activities for the production and distribution of resources. Industrialisation through entrepreneurship approach is now considered as an effective means of fast economic development not in India but also in other region. One of the remarkable measures of the government today is the empowerment of the women, which has motivated them to come forward from their traditional occupation to entrepreneurship promotion. From the time immemorial women are involved in multifarious activities and because of the gender biasness they were treated inferior to their male counterpart. But today with the change in time, increasing urbanisation, women's increasing interest in higher and technical education, and at the same time with the supporting government policy measures, they have been motivated to set up their own enterprises. Many successful cases have been noticed.

Women in business are a recent phenomenon in India. By and large they had confined themselves to petty business and tiny cottage industries. Women entrepreneurs engaged in business due to push and pull factors, which encourage women to have an independent occupation and stand on their own legs. A sense towards independent decision-making on their life and career is the motivational factor behind this urge. Saddled with household chores and domestic responsibilities women want to get independence. Under the influence of these factors the Women entrepreneurs choose a profession as a challenge and as an urge to do something new. Such situation is described as pull factors. While in push factors women engaged in business activities due to family compulsion and the responsibility is thrust upon them. An effective Women entrepreneur required certain basic qualities, which can be listed as – innovative thinking and farsightedness, quick and effective decision making skill, ability to mobilise and marshal resources, strong determination and self

confidence, preparedness to take risks, accepting changes in right time, access and alertness to latest scientific and technological information.

Marketing is the key co-ordinating role as it plays between the linked process of production, selling and distribution. Marketing is nothing more or less than the total business function of producing a saleable product. In spite of an extensive potential market, the women entrepreneurs were most reluctant towards efficient marketing technique and consequently have met utter failure on the front of marketing their products.

Women entrepreneurs find it difficult to capture the market and make their products popular. In order to make a success of a venture, women entrepreneurs need to have good marketing plan. In the marketing plan, the important factors to be considered are building up on image for venture, location, policy, planning the stores and channels of distribution of goods/services, advertising, promotion strategies and the selling skills.

Modern marketing whether it is urban areas or rural areas it values movement of the entrepreneurs. In certain economic activities the movement for marketing their products on services is easy. Hence, an attempt has been made to analysis the marketing strategies adapted by the women entrepreneurs to market their products and the problems faced by them in the managerial functions of marketing.

#### **Categories of Women entrepreneurs:**

- Women in organized & unorganized sector
- Women in traditional & modern industries
- Women in urban & rural areas
- Women in large scale and small scale industries
- Single women and joint venture

#### **Categories of Women Entrepreneurs in practice in India:**

##### **• First Category**

-established in big cities; having higher level technical & professional qualifications; non traditional items  
-sound financial positions

##### **• Second Category**

-established in cities and towns ; having sufficient education

-both traditional and non-traditional items;  
undertaking women services

##### **• Third Category**

-Illiterate women; financially weak; Involved in family business.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

An attempt has been made to review some of the available studies.

According to a report by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, 1995b), “despite evidence that women’s loan repayment rates are higher than men’s, women still face more difficulties in obtaining credit,” often due to discriminatory attitudes of banks and informal lending groups.

Starcher (1996) opined that “women’s family obligations bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations. Having primary responsibility for children, home and older dependent family members, few women can devote all their time and energies to their business”.

Kotler (2002) emphasised that “a sales is very different from marketing in the organisation. Four important areas where they differ separate the two approaches: organizational objectives, orientation, attitudes to segmentation and the perceived task facing marketing in the organization”.

In the backdrop of the review of literature, it is evident that Women’s position in the equations of Marketing Strategies has felt needs careful scrutiny of infrastructure.

## **3. THE OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study under consideration proposes to achieve the following objectives:

- i) To find out the trend and constraints of the growth of the Women Entrepreneurship of North East India in general and Manipur in particular.
- ii) To give focuses on the understanding and adoption of the strategic marketing by Women Entrepreneurship in light of managing their enterprises.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collection comprises of primary, secondary data collection and informal discussions. The Primary data for the study are collected through personal interview, discussion with different Women Entrepreneurs concerned in Imphal East and West District; related journals & books and 'The Imphal Free Press & Sangai Express (Manipur English Daily newspaper) etc. are chosen for the purpose of the present study. The Primary data collected are analyzed by using appropriate Statistical tools such Percentage analysis, Mean, Chi-square techniques and Spearman's rank correlation co-efficient technique. The data has been collected from 100 Women Entrepreneurs derived from DIC, Lamphel, Manipur. The Sample comprises the Women Entrepreneur who engage themselves in manufacturing (171 - 57%) like wax carving, match boxes, fire works, rice mill etc., Trading (99 – 33%) like groceries, Stationary, Cosmetics etc. and servicing (30 – 10%) like beauty parlour, tailoring, Xeroxing, repairing shop etc.

#### 5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

**Identification of scope for the market-** The survey throws light on whether Women Entrepreneurs identified the scope for the marketing for their products before starting the units. If the scope of marketing is not identified it may lead to problems in the introduction of the product. The investigation reveals that 48 per cent of the Women Entrepreneur units identified the scope of marketing and the rest of 52 per cent had established the units without identifying the scope of marketing. The following table exhibits the respondent's identification of market scope.

Further investigation reveals that a great majority of women entrepreneurs manufacture traditional products. So it is not necessary to identify the scope of market. Very few Entrepreneurs state the reason for not identifying the marketing scope is the lack of business experience.

**Problems in product introduction:** The introduction stage is the first stage in the life of a product. The initial stage needs large amount of

**Table 2: Identification of Market Scope**

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Yes	144	48
No	156	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 3: Problem in Product Introduction**

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Yes	219	73
No	81	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

investment. All the business units especially, the small entrepreneurs units are exposed to many problems at this stage of survival. During the study an attempt was made to magnify the nature of problems faced in the introduction of the product in the market by women entrepreneurs units.

This study reveals that a majority (73 %) of women entrepreneurs faced problem of product introduction.

**Reasons for problems in Product introduction:**

The survey explores the factors responsible for the problems in the product introduction. The study has brought to sharp focus that the 'Heavy competition' is the foremost constraints which caused problem to 124 units (42.47 %) in the product introduction. Among the reason 'availability of labour' and maintenance of quality were the problem to 106 (36.30 %) units and 62 (21.23%) units respectively. The following table exhibits the reasons for problems in product introduction.

The study identifies that women entrepreneurs have to face a stiff competition for marketing their products with both organized sector and their male counterparts.

**Marketing Area:** In order to ascertain whether the women entrepreneurs sell their product in wide area or limited area. The market is divided into –

**Branding :** Branding strategy involves around ensuring that the brand name will stick in the

**Table 4: Reasons for Problem in Product Introduction**

Sl. No.	Problems	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Heavy Competition	124	41
2.	Availability of Labour	106	35
3.	Maintenance of Quality	62	21
4.	No Answer	8	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 5: Market Area**

Sl. No.	Problems	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Local	166	30.29
2.	Taluk (Sub-Division)	90	16.42
3.	District	128	12.36
4.	State	136	24.82
5.	Country	28	5.10
<b>Total</b>		<b>548*</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey. \*since each respondents answered more than one area.

consumer's minds. According William H. Doyle, if it does not and chances are about 200 to 1 that it will not the product will probably fail. The study sheds light that, the study participants, namely 130 (43 %) units branded their product. The products of remaining 170 (57 %) were not branded. Each respondent has different opinion in connection with selecting brand name. But normally the brand name should be simple and easily recorded in the minds of consumers.

**Registered and Unregistered Brands:** A trademark is occasionally used to use to indicate a registered brand, but this use is not to be preferred. Better usage is to equate brand, trademark and

**Table 6: Registration of Brand**

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Yes	17	10.80
No	116	89.20
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

distinguish between whether they are registered or not by calling them 'registered or unregistered'.  
**Labelling:** Label identifies the quality of a product by a letter, number or word. Out of 300 women respondent, a majority of 237 (79 %) respondents gave special attention to fix label on the product and

**Table 7: Nature of Information Provided in the Label**

Sl. No.	Nature of Information	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Product Content	80	17.24
2.	Quantum of Contents	100	21.55
3.	Brand Name	96	20.69
4.	Price	88	18.67
5.	Method of Storing	28	6.03
6.	Method of Using	72	15.52
<b>Total</b>		<b>464*</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey. \*since each respondent answered more than one information.

the remaining 63(21 %) respondents expressed that 'no need' to fix label on the product.

**Pricing Objectives:** Proper and careful pricing and the adoption of a proper price policy are some of the important steps towards the success of small scale industries. It must be consistent with the organization's internal thrust and compatible with the external environment.

**Pricing policies and Pricing method:** The study brings to lime light the pricing goals of sample units.

**Discount:**The enquiry unearths that among 300 sample units, only 138 (46%) units offered discount.

**Distribution Channel System:** According to an estimate, even less than 3 per cent of total consumer sales are made in their channel due to spending handsome amount in training, maintaining and supervising a large number of staff.

**Advertising:** Media choice are mainly influenced by the purpose of advertising, nature of the product, the types of consumers to be approached and the cost of the media.

**Sales Promotion:** The various sales promotion methods that markets have at their disposal.

**Analysis and Interpretation of the Study:** It is a significant revelation that is most of the marketing

**Table 8: Cost of Labeling**

Cost in %	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Upto 0.5%	80	33.80
Upto 0.75%	72	30.50
Upto 1%	50	21.20
< 1%	24	14.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 9: Pricing Objectives**

Sl. No.	Objective of Pricing	No. of Units	Per cent
1.	Maximisation of Current Profit	64	21
2.	Minimum Return on Investment on Sales	60	20
3.	Target Sales Volume	40	28
4.	New Market Penetration	64	21
5.	Competition Orientation	72	24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 10: Method of Pricing Fixation**

Sl. No.	Pricing Method	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Based on Cost Plus Margin	168	56
2.	Based on Competitors price	80	27
3.	Highest that market Can Bear	52	17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 11: Discount**

Sl. No.	Nature of Discount	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Trade Discount	30	21.80
2.	Cash Discount	74	53.60
3.	Quality Discount	34	24.60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

practices; the variances among the women entrepreneur's units on nature of business basis are significant. The investigation unveils that in order of importance, the problems

'Heavy competition among the small scale units',  
'Competition from the large scale units',  
'High credit sales',  
'High distributors margin',

**Table 12: Type of Distribution Channel**

Sl. No.	Nature of Channel	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Direct Selling	94	31.30
2.	Through Intermediaries	140	46.70
3.	Both Systems	66	22.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 13: Media of Advertisement**

Sl. No.	Media	No. of Units	Per cent
1.	Newspaper	28	14.90
2.	Wall Posters	28	14.90
3.	Banner Advertisement	40	21.30
4.	Cinema and Theatres	28	14.90
5.	Bit Notice	64	68.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 14: Sales Promotion Methods**

Sl. No.	Methods	No. of Respondents	Per cent
1.	Price Deduction	68	47.20
2.	Free Gifts	26	18.00
3.	Samples	50	34.80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 15: Chi Square Analysis of Marketing Practice on Nature of Business wise**

Sl. No.	Marketing Practices	df	Calculated X <sup>2</sup> Value	Table X <sup>2</sup> Value	Remark
1.	Identification of Market Scope	2	15.047	5.9991	Significant
2.	Problems in Product Introduction	2	1.810	5.9991	Not Significant
3.	Area of Market	8	107.755	15.5	Very Significant
4.	Branding strategy	2	48.378	5.991	Significant
5.	Labelling Strategy	2	74823	5.991	Significant
6.	Method of Price Fixation	4	55259	9.49	Significant
7.	Sales Promotion Programme	2	1.279	5.991	Not Significant
8.	Advertisement	2	18852	5.991	Significant

Source: Personal survey.

**Table 16: Respondent's Ranking of Marketing Problem**

Problems	Mean Score of the Rank <i>S<sub>f</sub>x/e<sub>F</sub></i>			Rank Awarded			R1 & R2 D2 (R1 -R2) <sup>2</sup>	R2 & R3 D2 (R2 -R3) <sup>2</sup>	R1 & R3 D2 (R1 -R3) <sup>2</sup>
	Manuf- acturing	Trad- ing	Service	M R1	T R2	S R3			
1. Cheaper competitive substitutes.	4.51	3.91	3.77	6	8	6	4	4	0
2. Low brand preference	3.88	3.98	2.95	8	7	9	1	4	1
3. Cost plus pricing not feasible.	3.65	5.27	3.52	9	1	7	64	36	4
4. Heavy competition among the small sale units	5.67	3.90	4.38	2	9	4	49	25	4
5. Competition from the large scale units	4.82	5.23	6	4	2	1	4	1	9
6. High credit sales	5.72	4	3.48	1	6	8	25	4	49
7. High distributors margin	5.05	4.72	4.10	3	4	5	1	1	4
8. Low sales promotion knowledge	4.40	4.91	5.05	7	3	3	16	0	16
9. High marketing cost	4.53	4.68	5.24	5	5	2	0	9	9
						$\Sigma_2 D$	<b>164</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>96</b>

Source: Personal Calculation

'High marketing cost',  
'Low sales promoting knowledge',  
'Cheaper competitive substitutes',  
'Cost plus pricing not feasible',  
'Low brand preference', prevailed in the midst of women enterprises and ranked 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively.

## 6. SUGGESTIONS

An attempt was made to find out whether any correlation exists in ranking the problems in the sphere of marketing by the sample women entrepreneurs units. For this Spearman's rank correlation co-efficient ( $r_s$ ) was used. The following table exhibits whether the manufacturing, trading and service organization have a close approach in ranking the common problems in marketing.

Since the co-efficient of rank correlation is negative (-0.37) in the judgement of first and second judges namely manufacturing and trading group units. So they have a negative approach to the common

problems in the area of marketing. It is also noted that rank correlation co-efficient between first and third judgement i.e., manufacturing and service group units and the judgement of trading and service group units are positive. So they have a nearest approach to the common problem in marketing. A discussion of various kinds of problem encountered by the study participants in the realm of marketing is made in the following passages.

*A. Heavy competition among the Small Scale Units:* There are no proper organised associations, like SEBI, among the small units to avoid cut throat competition.

*B. Competition from Large Scale Units:* Lack of resources, small size etc. make them unable to adopt modern marketing methods.

*C. High credit sales:* Loss on Bad debts is increasing every year.

*D. High Distributors margin:* Profit margin retained



by the intermediaries or distributors are higher than women entrepreneurs.

*E. High marketing cost:* Women entrepreneurs unable to meet heavy marketing cost due to lack of financial support and moral support.

*F. Low sales promotion knowledge:* Due to lack of qualitative education, limited market areas, etc, women are not aware of market knowledge.

*G. Cheaper competitive substitute:* The customers normally prefer the products manufactured in the large-scale units having reported brand names.

*H. Cost plus pricing not feasible:* Sustainable market strategy impel them it non-feasible.

*I. Low brand preference:* 'Brand consciousness' of the customers is a big hurdle in marketing.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs do face many challenges in today's business world. The process of developing marketing skill is rather not so slow as compared to early eighties. The present study clearly indicates that marketing practices by the women entrepreneurs and their outlook on business must still go a long way to catch up with the rapid technical and industrial advancement that is taking place in India. Proper entrepreneurial skill and marketing talent are to be given to the women entrepreneurs through proper training programmes for carrying entrepreneurial activities successfully. If they are given proper education and awareness about entrepreneurial activities they will become an important source for the economic development of our nation.

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