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A STUDY ON PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF MARKETING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY GOODS IN TAMILNADU

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ABSTRACT

Information and communications technology (ICT) has been seen as a major contributor to productivity growth and as a key tool for innovation. Trade liberalisation can play a role in encouraging ICT adoption by fostering competition and by reducing ICT prices. This paper deals with problems and prospects of marketing ICT goods and services. It outlines the factors determining the prospects of marketing ICT goods and services and problems of marketing ICT goods and services. This paper concludes with some interesting findings.

KEYWORDS: *ICT goods, Information and communications technology, automobiles*

INTRODUCTION

Driven by a combination of consumer demand and the development of new information and communications technology (ICT), the world is rapidly transforming. This process, called digitization, has been happening since the arrival of the computer 60 years ago, but in the past few years it has accelerated, altering everyday life in unprecedented ways. Technological developments such as handheld devices, pervasive sensors, “big data” analytics, digital supply chains, search engines, social networks, satellite-based geographic tracking, interconnected real-time digital infrastructure, and massive server farms have fundamentally altered our society. The 2010s are arguably as different from, say, the 1980s as 1950, with ubiquitous electricity, automobiles, and broadcast radio, was from 1850.

Digitization is being driven in part by the companies that make use of digital infrastructure and in part by consumers around the world. The enterprise market for online IT and digital telecom is

booming — corporate sales worldwide grew 6 percent annually in 2010 and 2011 — while the market for consumer-oriented devices and services including cloud-based online IT services grew even more rapidly.

One might expect that because society is increasingly dependent on digital products and services, the producers of digitization would be affluent, assured of success, and complacent. But their industry is undergoing a parallel transformation, and it is not clear how many companies will last in their current form. The traditional sectors of the ICT ecosystem — a multi-trillion-dollar industry whose members include enterprise service providers, hardware producers, telecom companies, and software developers (including the purveyors of Internet services and social media) — are blurring and converging. For example, telecom, hardware, and software companies are moving into IT services. Offshore IT service providers are developing enterprise software, often in the form of low-cost, highly standardized systems delivered via the

Internet, designed to take over large portions of the work of traditional corporate IT departments. The industry is also being invaded by a host of hungry new Internet players, who offer innovative Web-based solutions that bypass the systems of the past. In this context, even the wealthiest, most successful ICT providers, like Microsoft in the 1990s, Google in the 2000s, and Apple today, cannot be certain of sustaining their success.

How will the process of digitization play out? How will it affect the companies vying to supply these technologies, particularly in the business-to-business domain? The answers are essential for decision makers in any company, no matter its industry. The choice of ICT goods and services is a critical strategic factor: It deeply influences the quality and distinctiveness of a company's capabilities. That choice, in turn, depends on a clear assessment of the future of these providers. It is all too easy to get locked into a technology system that will not be sustained in the marketplace.

At a more exalted level, the leading digitization providers are among the most influential companies of our time, and their influence is increasing. Their digital channels shape behavior for all other businesses and, indeed, for a great deal of human interaction.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study deals with Information and Communication Technology goods and services marketing problems and prospects from the point of view of sellers. In this study Tamil Nadu State is studied on the basis of region wise analysis. In this study, six major municipal corporations are selected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Zone wise Respondents' Views on Problems of buying information technology goods from the manufacturers

Zone	Huge amount need	Problem of Immediate Payment	Refuse to give credit sales	Interest for credit purchase	Total
Chennai	33 (50.00)	16 (24.24)	10 (15.15)	7 (10.61)	66
Coimbatore	16 (29.09)	26 (47.27)	8 (14.55)	5 (9.09)	55
Trichirapalli	35 (52.24)	17 (25.37)	6 (8.96)	9 (13.43)	67
Madurai	9 (17.31)	12 (23.08)	19 (36.54)	12 (23.08)	52
Salem	11 (15.28)	40 (55.56)	12 (16.67)	9 (12.50)	72
Thirunelveli	35 (53.85)	16 (24.62)	8 (12.31)	6 (9.23)	65
Total	139 (36.87)	127 (33.69)	63 (16.71)	48 (12.73)	377

Source :computed

Figures in parentheses denote percentages

They are Chennai, Trichirapalli, Coimbatore, Madurai, Salem and Thirunelveli. From Chennai region 66 seller respondents are selected as sample, 55 seller respondents are selected from Coimbatore, 66 seller respondents from Trichirapalli, 52 seller 66 seller respondents from Madurai 72 seller respondents are selected from Salem and 65 seller respondents are selected from Thirunelveli. Thus totally, 367 seller respondents are selected from TamilNadu.

The researcher has collected necessary primary data from the sellers of Information technology goods by employing a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to the concerned respondents after identifying their address from the Information technology goods marketing directory. After completion of answering, they return back to the researcher. The respondents have extended full cooperation in successful data collection.

In order to study the sellers' problems of marketing electronic goods 5 point rating scale is adopted. It includes strongly agree denotes 5 point rating score, agree indicates 4 point rating score, somewhat agree indicates 3 point rating score, disagree denotes 2 point rating score and strongly disagree indicates 1 point rating score. The collected data are classified and tabulated with help of computer programming. The cross tabulation is done representing region, and sellers type of the respondents as independent variable. The dependent variables include problems and prospects and so on. The general data interpretation is done with help of percentage and average analysis.

Data presented in table 1 indicate the zone wise respondents' views on problems of buying information technology goods from the manufacturers. It is observed that out of the total 377 respondents 36.87 percent of them hold the view that there is a need of huge amount to buy information technology goods from the manufacturers and 33.69 percent of them refer it as problem of immediate payment. In this study 16.71 percent of them state that the problem of refusal on part of the manufacturers to give credit and 12.73 percent of them state the problem of interest payment for credit purchase.

The zone wise analysis reveals the following facts. Majority of the respondents of Chennai Municipal Corporation (50%), Trichirapalli Municipal Corporation (52.24%) and Thirunelveli Municipal Corporation (53.85%) state that there is a need of huge amount to buy information technology goods from the manufacturers. The respondents of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation (47.27%) and Salem Municipal Corporation (55.56%) constitute more number with respect to their problem of immediate payment to the information technology goods manufacturers than those of others.

Table 2 Sales Man wise Respondents' Views on Problems of buying information technology goods from the manufactures

Sales Man	Huge amount need	Problem of Immediate Payment	Refuse to give credit sales	Interest for credit purchase	Total
Dealers	20 (23.53)	45 (52.94)	12 (14.12)	8 (9.41)	85
Agent	62 (55.36)	34 (30.36)	9 (8.04)	7 (6.25)	112
Whole Sales	30 (35.71)	26 (30.95)	16 (19.05)	12 (14.29)	84
Retail Sales	27 (28.13)	22 (22.92)	26 (27.08)	21 (21.88)	96
Total	139 (36.87)	127 (33.69)	63 (16.71)	48 (12.73)	377

Source computed

Figures in parentheses denote percentages

A study of data in table 2 indicates the Sales man wise respondents' views on problems of buying information technology goods from the manufacturers. It could be noted that majority of the

dealers (52.94%) refer it as problem of immediate payment and also considerable number of whole sellers (30.95%) and agents (30.36%).

Table 3 Zone wise Respondents' Proportion of Profit Margin in selling information technology goods

Zone	Up to 2 percent	2-4 percent	4-6 percent	6-8 percent	Total
Chennai	20 (30.30)	26 (39.39)	12 (18.18)	8 (12.12)	66
Coimbatore	6 (10.91)	23 (41.82)	15 (27.27)	11 (20.00)	55
Trichirapalli	7 (10.45)	10 (14.93)	41 (61.19)	9 (13.43)	67
Madurai	12 (23.08)	15 (28.85)	11 (21.15)	14 (26.92)	52
Salem	8 (11.11)	42 (58.33)	12 (16.67)	10 (13.89)	72
Thirunelveli	12 (18.46)	15 (23.08)	29 (44.62)	9 (13.85)	65
Total	65 (17.24)	131 (34.75)	120 (31.83)	61 (16.18)	377

Source: computed

Figures in parentheses denote percentages

Data presented in table 3 indicate the zone wise respondents' proportion of profit margin in selling information technology goods. It is observed that out of the total 377 respondents 17.24 percent of them state that they get 2 percent of profit margin in selling information technology goods and 34.75 percent of them get 2-4 percent of profit margin in selling information technology goods. In this study 31.83 percent of them state that they get 4-6 percent of profit margin and the rest 16.18 percent of them get 6-8 percent of profit margin in selling information technology goods. The high profit margin of selling information technology goods depends on brand name, brand popularity and brand image.

The zone wise analysis reveals the following facts. It could be noted that majority of the respondents of Chennai Municipal Corporation (39.39%), Coimbatore Municipal Corporation (41.82%) and Salem Municipal Corporation (58.88%) get Profit Margin in the range of 2-4 percent in selling different brands of information technology goods. More than a half of the respondents of Trichirapalli Municipal Corporation (61.19%) and a considerable number of respondents of Thirunelveli Municipal Corporation (44.62%) get Profit Margin in the range of 4-6 percent in selling different brands of information technology goods.

Table 4 Sales Man wise Respondents' Proportion of Profit Margin in Selling information technology goods

Sales Man	Up to 2 percent	2-4 percent	4-6 percent	6-8 percent	Total
Dealers	20 (23.53)	19 (22.35)	36 (42.35)	10 (11.76)	85
Agent	23 (20.54)	26 (23.21)	45 (40.18)	18 (16.07)	112
Whole Sales	10 (11.90)	37 (44.05)	22 (26.19)	15 (17.86)	84
Retail Sales	12 (12.50)	49 (51.04)	17 (17.71)	18 (18.75)	96
Total	65 (17.24)	131 (34.75)	120 (31.83)	61 (16.18)	377

Source: computed

Figures in parentheses denote percentages

A study of data in table 4 indicates the sales man wise respondents' proportion of profit margin in selling information technology goods. A considerable number of dealers (42.35%) and agents (40.18%) receive the profit margin in the range of 4-6 percent in selling different brands of information technology

goods. Majority of the retailers (51.04%) and whole sellers (44.05%) receive the profit margin in the range of 2-4 percent in selling different brands of information technology goods.

Table 5 Zone wise Respondents' Views on Advantage of Marketing Information Technology Goods

Zone	Non-perishable goods	Growing demand due to modernization	Move sales and rise profit	Easy to attract Consumers	Man money rotation	byname nature of business	Total
Chennai	8 (12.12)	10 (15.15)	15 (22.73)	10 (15.15)	18 (27.27)	5 (7.58)	66
Coimbatore	19 (34.55)	8 (14.55)	7 (12.73)	6 (10.91)	9 (16.36)	6 (10.91)	55
Trichirapalli	9 (13.43)	12 (17.91)	5 (7.46)	10 (14.93)	18 (26.87)	13 (19.40)	67
Madurai	6 (11.54)	12 (23.08)	10 (19.23)	8 (15.38)	9 (17.31)	7 (13.46)	52
Salem	10 (13.89)	15 (20.83)	13 (18.06)	14 (19.44)	8 (11.11)	12 (16.67)	72
Thirunelveli	13 (20.00)	22 (33.85)	12 (18.46)	7 (10.77)	5 (7.69)	6 (9.23)	65
Total	65 (17.24)	79 (20.95)	62 (16.45)	55 (14.59)	67 (17.77)	49 (13.00)	377

A study of data in table 5 indicates the zone wise respondents' views on advantages marketing information technology goods. It could be noted that out of the total 377 respondents 17.24 percent of them state the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of non-perishable nature of information technology goods and they keep such goods for long duration and 20.95 percent of them state its advantage in terms of growing demand for information technology goods due to modernization. In this study 16.45 percent of the total respondents realize the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of more sales and getting of more profit and 14.95 percent of the respondents visualize its benefit in terms of easy to attract more consumers. Moreover 17.77 percent of them observe the benefit of marketing information technology goods as means of easy money rotation and the rest

13 percent of them state its advantage in terms of dynamic nature of business.

The zone wise analysis reveals the following facts. A considerable number of respondents of Chennai Municipal Corporation (34.55%) state the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of non-perishable nature of information technology goods. In general respondents of Thirunelveli Municipal Corporation (33.85%), Madurai Municipal Corporation (23.08%) and Salem Municipal Corporation (20.83%) observe the advantage of selling ICT goods in terms of growing demand for information technology goods due to modernization. The respondents of Chennai (27.27%) and Trichirapalli Municipal Corporation (26.87%) visualize the advantage of marketing information technology goods as means of easy money rotation advantage

Table 6 Sales Man wise Respondents' Views on Advantage of Marketing Information Technology Goods

Sales Man	Non-perishable goods	Growing demand due to modernization	Move sales and rise profit	Easy to attract Consumers	Man money rotation	byname nature of business	Total
Dealers	12 (14.12)	30 (35.29)	8 (9.41)	9 (10.59)	16 (18.82)	10 (11.76)	85
Agent	29 (25.89)	21 (18.75)	17 (15.18)	11 (9.82)	22 (19.64)	12 (10.71)	112
Whole Sales	6 (7.14)	7 (8.33)	19 (22.62)	22 (26.19)	11 (13.10)	19 (22.62)	84
Retail Sales	18 (18.75)	21 (21.88)	18 (18.75)	13 (13.54)	18 (18.75)	8 (8.33)	96
Total	65 (17.24)	79 (20.95)	62 (16.45)	55 (14.59)	7 (17.77)	49 (13.00)	377

A study of data in table 6 indicates the sales man wise respondents' advantages of marketing information technology goods. A considerable number of dealer respondents (35.29%) and retailers (21.88%) state the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of growing demand due to modernization In general agent

respondents (25.89%) observe the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of non-perishable nature of information technology goods. The whole sellers refer the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of easy consumer attraction.

Table 7 Zone wise Respondents' views on problems of Marketing Information technology goods

Zone	Competition And Rival Goods	recovery of credit	More advertisement cost	need of more sales promotion measures	price fluctuations	loss due to sudden price decline	frequency of getting approval from government agencies
Chennai	4.26	2.86	3.37	4.52	3.39	2.15	3.72
Coimbatore	3.96	2.26	3.67	4.16	2.86	2.86	3.15
Trichirapalli	3.15	3.39	4.42	4.46	2.99	2.72	4.16
Madurai	2.19	3.66	4.52	4.40	2.96	3.72	4.26
Salem	3.39	2.96	4.15	3.98	3.76	2.87	4.15
Thirunelveli	4.24	2.85	4.42	3.95	2.86	3.15	3.86
Overall average	3.53	2.99	4.09	4.24	3.14	2.92	3.88
Zone	sales stagnation and accumulation of goods	sales stagnation reduces money rotation	problem of selling damaged goods	forced give discount and offers due to market competition	low priced Chinese goods	duplicate and low quality substitute products	Mean
Chennai	2.96	3.96	2.16	3.98	3.16	4.15	3.72
Coimbatore	2.12	4.15	2.15	4.11	3.12	3.96	3.59
Trichirapalli	3.15	3.86	2.10	4.21	3.52	3.88	3.83
Madurai	2.86	3.17	2.82	4.31	3.67	4.24	3.89
Salem	2.16	3.72	2.76	4.45	3.96	4.56	3.90
Thirunelveli	3.72	3.65	2.95	4.52	3.88	4.47	4.03
Overall average	2.82	3.75	2.49	4.26	3.55	4.21	3.82

A study of data in table 7 indicates the zone wise respondents' views on problems of marketing information technology goods. It can be accessed on the basis of 12 factors on a 5 point rating scale. These include development of competition and rival goods, recovery of credit, more advertisement cost, need of more sales promotion measures, price fluctuations, loss due to sudden price decline, frequency of getting approval from government agencies, sales stagnation and accumulation of goods, sales stagnation reduces money rotation, problem of selling damaged goods, forced to give discount and offers due to market competition, low priced Chinese goods and duplicate and low quality substitute products.

Out the taken 12 factors determining marketing problems of information technology goods, the problem of forced to discount and offers due to marketing competition ranks the first position as it secures mean score 4.26 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of need of more sales promotion measures in marketing information technology goods comes to second position as it secures mean score 4.24 on a 5 point rating scale. The factor availability of duplicate and low quality substitute information technology goods takes third order problem as it secures mean score 4.12 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of advertisement cost in marketing information technology goods comes to fourth position as it secures mean score 4.09 on a 5 point

rating scale. The problem of frequency of getting approval from the government agencies in marketing information technology goods comes to fifth position as it secures mean score 3.88 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of sales stagnation and its consequence on reduction in money rotation in marketing information technology goods ranks the six position as it secures mean score 3.75 on a 5 point rating scale. In marketing information technology goods the arrival of low priced Chinese goods poses a problem of marketing and it occupies the seventh position as it secures mean score 3.55 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of market competition and rival goods in marketing information technology goods ranks the eight position as it secures mean score 3.53 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of price fluctuation in marketing information technology goods records the ninth position as it secures mean score 3.14 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of credit recovery in marketing information technology goods register the tenth position as it secures mean score 2.99 on a 5 point rating scale. The problem of sales stagnation and its consequence in accumulation of information technology goods is rated at eleventh position as it secures mean score 2.82 on a 5 point rating scale. Lastly the problem of selling damaged goods in marketing information technology goods as it secures mean score 2.49 on a 5 point rating scale.

The zone wise analysis reveals following facts. The respondents of Thirunelveli Municipal Corporation rank the first position in realization of all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured mean score of 4.03 on a 5 point rating scale. The respondents of Salem Municipal Corporation record the second position in reporting all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.90 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The respondents of Madurai Municipal Corporation register the third position in rating all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.89 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The respondents of Trichirapalli Municipal Corporation occupy the fourth position in realizing all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.83 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The respondents of Chennai Municipal Corporation record the fifth position in reporting all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.72 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The respondents of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation occupy the last position in realization of all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.54 mean score on 5 point rating scale.

Table 8 Sales Man wise Respondents' views on problems of Marketing Information technology goods

Sales Man	competition and rival goods	recovery of credit	More advertisement cost	need of more sales promotion measures	price fluctuations	loss due to sudden price decline	frequency of getting approval from government agencies
Dealers	4.23	3.22	2.72	3.79	4.26	4.42	3.72
Agent	3.76	3.15	4.15	4.15	2.89	3.15	4.15
Whole Sales	3.42	2.52	4.26	4.47	3.75	2.53	4.21
Retail Sales	3.26	2.41	3.88	3.79	2.85	2.14	3.95
Total	3.53	2.99	4.09	4.24	3.14	2.92	3.88
Sales Man	sales stagnation and accumulation of goods	sales stagnation reduces money rotation	problem of selling damaged goods	forced give discount and offers due to market competition	low priced Chinese goods	duplicate and low quality substitute products	Total
Dealers	4.42	2.76	2.15	3.75	2.15	2.15	3.64
Agent	2.96	3.87	2.52	4.72	3.89	4.26	3.96
Whole Sales	2.41	3.89	2.45	4.56	3.87	4.44	3.89
Retail Sales	2.26	3.15	2.26	3.96	3.37	3.98	3.43
Total	2.82	3.75	2.49	4.26	3.55	4.21	3.82

A study of data in table 8 indicates the sales man wise respondents' views on problems of marketing information technology goods. The sales man wise analysis reveals following facts. The agent respondents rank the first position in realization of all the problems of marketing information technology goods as their secured 3.96 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The whole sellers come to second position in reporting all the problems of marketing information technology goods as their secured 3.89 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The dealers record the third position in rating all the problems of marketing information technology goods as their secured 3.64 mean score on 5 point rating scale. The retailers come to the last position in reporting all the problems of marketing information technology goods as per their secured 3.43 mean score on 5 point rating scale.

CONCLUSION

The findings of respondents' views on problems of buying information technology goods from the manufactures indicate the following facts. The respondents' state the first order problem of huge amount requirement in buying information technology goods from the manufacturers, followed by problem of immediate payment, difficult to get credit and interest for credit purchase. It is concluded that majority of the retailers refer the problem of immediate payment. The findings of respondents' proportion of commission on selling information technology goods reveal the following facts. Receiving commission in the range of 2-4 percent in selling different brand of information technology goods occupies the first position, receiving 4-6 percent of commission the second, receiving up to 2 percent of commission the third and receiving 6-8 percent of commission the last. It is concluded that majority of the retailers and whole sellers receive commission in the range of 2-4 percent in selling different brands of information technology goods.

It is observed from result of the study that the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of growing demand due to modernization ranks the first position as per the rating of the respondents, advantage of non-perishable nature of information technology goods the second, advantage of easy money rotation the third, advantage of more profit and more sales the fourth, advantage of easy consumer attraction the fifth and dynamic nature of business the last. It is observed that the whole sellers mainly refer the advantage of marketing information technology goods in terms of easy consumer attraction.

It is observed from the result of the study that the problem of forced to give discount and offers due to market competition ranks the first position as

per the reporting of the respondents, problem of need of more sales promotion the second, problem of availability of duplicate and low quality substitute products the third, problem of more advertisement cost the fourth, problem of frequency of getting approval from government agencies the fifth, problem of sales stagnation reduces money rotation the sixth, problem of low priced Chinese goods the seventh, problem of competition and rival goods the eighth, problem of price fluctuation the ninth, problem of recovering the credit the tenth, problem of loss due to sudden price decline the eleventh, problem of sales stagnation and accumulation of goods the twelfth and problem of selling damaged goods the last. It is observed that agents and whole sellers have more problems of marketing information technology goods than those of others.

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