

Chapter – 1 (One)

Introduction

1.1 Introduction of the Study

Marketing is often seen and understood as what people buys and sells i.e. a simple notion of buying and selling of goods and services, usually tangible goods. However, this process of buying and selling is neither simple nor easy as it seems to be. People buy when they are satisfied with a product. Customers' satisfaction is not easy to attain and it is also dependent on a number of factors. Customers are said to be satisfied only when they get maximum utility from the product in terms of price, quality, design, service attached with the product and other physical attributes of the product. This has therefore made marketing a major, dynamic and complex activities that involve various kinds of operational and functional activities such as continuous gathering of information relating to consumer behaviour; thorough analysis and interpretation of the customers' needs, wants and desires; following through all the efforts and activities in offering the enterprise's products and then at last providing all kinds of necessary services which will render a huge assistance to the enterprise in providing the expected utility to the customers/consumers from the product that he/she has purchased.

It can be said that marketing is continuously dealing with the activities of collecting and analysing information, coping with changes and uncertainties, taking risks and chances, being creative and innovative, and most of all being predictive and forecasting in nature. Marketing, in modern time business is not only of selling but also of creating demand and motivating consumers to buy or make purchase. Hence, modern marketing is required to adopt a system or an approach that targets for consumer

satisfaction. When enterprises adopt a system which is specifically aimed at satisfying consumers/customers, it means the enterprises follow the customer oriented approach of marketing. Such enterprises which adopt the customer oriented concept in their business generally follow one basic principle while planning and making decision regarding their enterprise. The basic principle is that customers are the most prior element of their enterprises and fulfilling the needs, wants and demands of the customers/consumers is their ultimate goal. Enterprises which fail to understand and satisfy their customers/consumers are very much sure to exit from the competition and at last from the market.

Identification of customers, understanding their needs and wants are also one of the most challenging tasks of an enterprise. Because meeting the needs, wants and demands of customers is highly unpredictable. Besides, an enterprise will not always benefit from responding to the stated needs of the customers, sometimes they need to explore something new and create the demand. Above, in earlier period marketing effort was towards responding to the collective needs of the customers, but today the need of the hour is that entrepreneurs have to understand and respond to the individual needs of the customers. Customers are the critics and decision makers who can change the fate of enterprises either to become success venture or failure venture. Therefore, today marketing is no longer a simple notion of buying and selling, rather a wider and varied activity of not only understanding customers needs and wants and trying to satisfy the customers in terms of their needs and wants but also a more complex means of providing information, giving awareness, persuading, influencing and motivating the customers to act which will finally result in the exchange process.

Marketing has become a tool for enterprises that enables creative adaptation of its practices to the changing environment. It is continuously involved with “the task of

analysing, planning, organising, implementing, communicating and controlling” (Kotler, 2002)¹. Hence, marketing is not just a mere competitive compulsion of enterprises but also a significant factor for taking enterprises decisions. It is also the base and the backbone of an enterprise’s survival. Marketing is an important activity both for the enterprises and the customers. If marketing is an important means of getting the products sold from part of the enterprises then, marketing is also an important means of acquisition of the products by the customers.

Without marketing enterprises are aimless while customers are clueless. Through marketing, product reaches the customers and revenue reaches the producers. It is a two way process of connecting the producers with the customers and the customers with the producers. Since the producer and the customers are located at a physical distance, they are not fully aware of each other’s existence and marketing serves as a means of informing each other’s presence. This means marketing acts as a gap filling mechanism between producer and customer in order to complete the exchange process. However, marketing is considered as one of the most serious problems encountered by business enterprises especially women owned enterprises. This is clearly revealed from a number of studies conducted on women entrepreneurship in India. The studies on women entrepreneurs of Manipur also reveal marketing as one of the serious problems [Prabha (2006)²; Sorokhaibam & Laishram (2011)³]. It is also found that ranging from lack of confidence to exploitation by middlemen, women entrepreneurs all over our country faces problems in marketing; however these

¹ Kotler, P. (2002). *Marketing Management*, Millenium Edition. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.

² Prabha, D.T. (2006). Problems of Women Entrepreneurs: a case study of Imphal and Kamrup districts. In G.P. Prasain (Eds.), *Entrepreneurship and Small Scale Industries* (280-287). New Delhi: Akansa Publishing House.

³ Sorokhaibam, R. & Laishram, N. (2011). Women Entrepreneurship in Manipur, North-East India. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research in Business*, 1(5), 46 – 53.

problems can be attributed/associated either to the personal traits of the women entrepreneurs or their enterprise's nature which are generally micro and small in nature.

Marketing can create insurmountable hurdles to women entrepreneurs. If proper care is not taken at the right time; it can even lead to winding up of the enterprises. Many studies have pointed out that the only solution of marketing problem is the adaptation of an effective marketing practice which is innovative in nature and appropriate to the type and nature of enterprises. There are a number of marketing practices and women entrepreneurs can use any one or more of them after making considerations for factors such as the demand pattern, the competition pattern, the enterprise's objective or goal, the nature of the enterprise, the availability and the ability to utilise funds, the competence of the employees and entrepreneurs itself, the functioning of middlemen and other probable means, etc. Women entrepreneurs, however, requires to consider both the internal and external environment of their enterprise while deciding the type of marketing practices. The practices that women entrepreneurs decide to choose should be according to the suitability and ability to fulfil enterprise's goal. With this view, the study on 'Marketing Practices of Women Entrepreneurs of Manipur with Reference to Select Marketing Mix' is conducted to provide an understanding of the general concept of marketing as well as to bring out the literatures on the marketing practices adopted by women entrepreneurs all over the world in general and India in particular. It is also being conducted with an objective to identify those marketing practices which are practiced by women entrepreneurs of Manipur.

1.2(A) Marketing: Concept and Approaches

The term marketing which is often associated with buying and selling behaviour of both the consumer and producer can be understood either from the perspective of those persons who are practically involve in the marketing activities or from those persons who studies about marketing as a subject matter. Former is concerned with marketing among business enterprises and as such marketing involves not only strategic view but also practice while later is concerned with the persons who are studying marketing as an academic discipline; hence, they are much more involved in theorising and conceptualising the term marketing. In both cases where marketing is considered as a function of business enterprises or as an academic subject matter, it has always been understood in varied ways in terms of the nature, practice, concept, etc. As a function of business enterprises marketing, differs from one enterprise to another with regard to its strategy and its practice. Also, as an academic subject matter, marketing is considered to be of multi disciplinary in nature, and as such there are many differing opinions and views regarding the definition and concept of marketing. From the economic perspective as laid down by Pillai and Bagavathi (2010)⁴ marketing can be defined as: “the exchange function by maintaining supply and demand in equilibrium. In its descriptive definition, explains the functions involved in the activities of goods from the producer to the consumer”. Further, marketing can also be explained and understood as a discipline of commerce and management. Different experts and authors have their own way of looking at the functioning of marketing and defined it in their own ways however; each one of them plays a vital role in making an academic contribution to defining and widening the concept and scope of marketing. Some have defined it from

⁴ Pillai, R.S.N. & Bagavathi (2010). *Marketing Management*. New Delhi: Sultan Chand & Co. Ltd., p.7

societal approach, some from managerial approach and few others from practical approach. Kotler (2002)⁵ has laid down two distinctive definition of marketing from social and managerial point of view;

According to a social definition, marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products and services of value freely with others. Whereas, from the management point of view marketing is described as the art of selling products. [Indeed,] the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous as well as know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself.

There is no single definition of marketing that is universally applicable or accepted. The social and cultural behaviour of human beings keep on changing, as a result there is a change in the life style of people which brings change in the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. The changes brought to consumers' behaviour over time exert the greatest influence on marketing and hence, the definition and concept of marketing keeps on changing. It will continue to change in future also. Hence, marketing is always change oriented and it should keep on evolving. From barter system to today's modern consumer oriented system, marketing has crossed different phases in order to suit the system.

According to Pillai and Bagavathi (2010)⁶, Marketing is "one of the oldest professions of the world. It is an ancient art practised in one form or the other". According to Lusch, Laczniak and Svensson, the term marketing was introduced in the

⁵ Ibid (1). p.4

⁶ Ibid (4). pp.3-4

literature in the 1950s (Reijonen, 2009)⁷. During that period, marketing has been seen as a business philosophy, an ideal or a policy statement (Reijonen, 2009)⁸. Many authors have attempted to study the evolution of marketing concept; such attempts can be seen in the works of Pillai and Bagavathi (2010)⁹, Sontakki (2007)¹⁰, and Dixon (2008)¹¹, etc. According to these authors, a common opinion is that marketing could have been evolved from long back even before human civilisation and the industrial revolution. From the point of view of the authors mentioned, for better understanding of the present study the stages of evolution of marketing concept is presented in the form of diagram:

⁷ Reijonen, H. (2009). *Role and Practices of Marketing in SMEs*. Retrieved May 04, 2015 from http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-219-306-3/urn_isbn_978-952-219-306-3.pdf. p.6

⁸ Ibid (7).

⁹ Ibid (4)

¹⁰ Sontakki, S.N. (2007). *Marketing Management*. New Delhi: Kalyani Publisher.

¹¹ Dixon, D.F. (2008). *The Role of Marketing in Early Theories of Economic Development*. Retrieved January 09, 2015 from http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/19051_Jones_V1_ch_01.pdf.

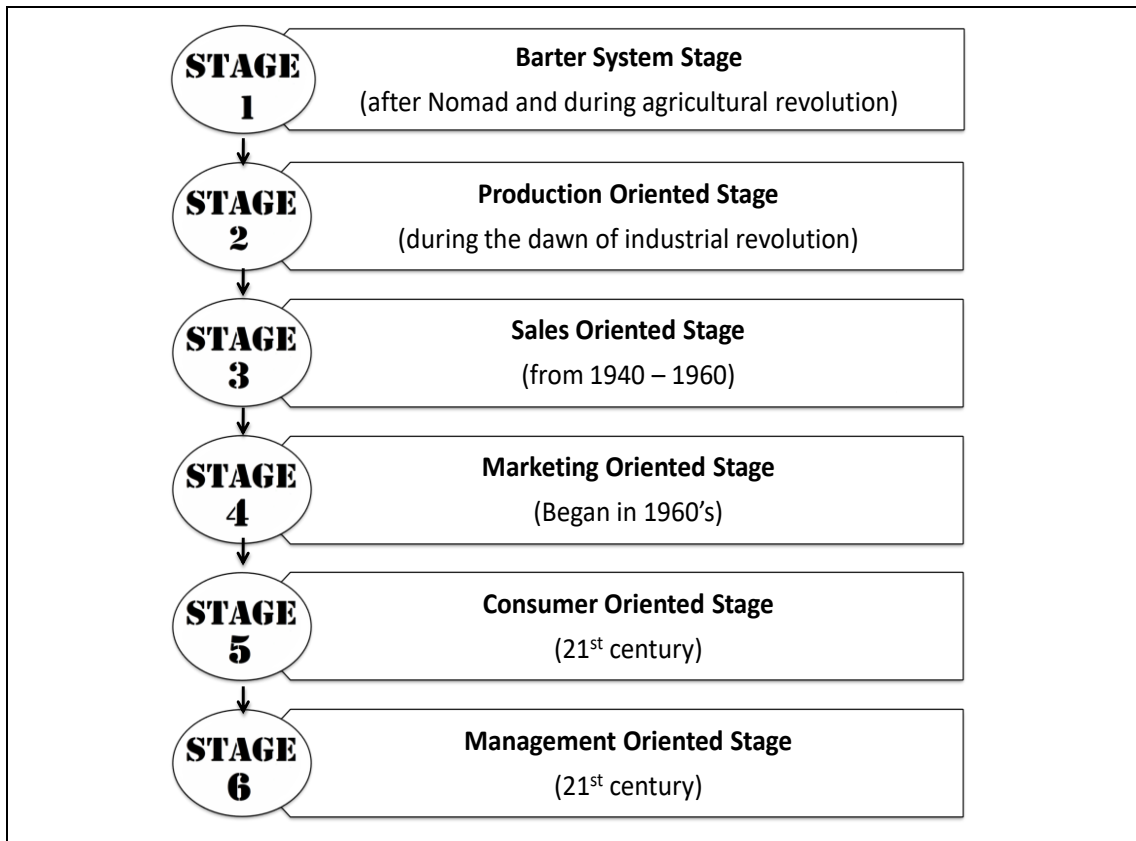


Figure 1.1: Stages of Evolution of Marketing Concept

Source: Compiled by the researcher

In the first stage where there was barter system, marketing was just “an exchange of one good against another good without any medium of exchange, like money” (Pillai & Bagavathi, 2010)¹². That means barter system involves a trading system accompanied by exchange of tangible physical products without the use of money. The barter system is believed to occur after the stage of nomads. During nomad, “human beings were just cave men and lived as hunters and food gatherers” (Pillai & Bagavathi, 2010)¹³ as such their basic needs were only food and shelter. With the event of agricultural revolution human beings became no longer rely on only hunting and gathering activities; they have started farming. As farming and agriculture began to

¹² Ibid (4).

¹³ Ibid (4).

grow and develop, human communities began to expand and as such “the search for one surplus producer by another surplus producer became more sophisticated which gradually led to the formation of an assembling place called local markets” (Pillai & Bagavathi, 2010)¹⁴ where people started exchanging goods with one another. It can be said that during barter system, the major task of marketing was confined to searching and communicating.

The production oriented concept is one of the oldest in business (Kotler, 2002)¹⁵. “During the production oriented stage the emphasis was given on mass production of goods. The production oriented stage was started during 1860’s with the dawn of industrial revolution till early 1920’s” (White, 2010)¹⁶. This period was witnessed by wide spread human population all over the globe, increased population at a rapid rate, increase in transportation system, technology advancement, production of wide varieties of agricultural products in large volume which turn to manufactured goods and ultimately development of centres for trade and manufacturing goods, etc. This period was witnessed with a relatively high level of demand which mostly remained unfulfilled and little or no competition between sellers because of which sales was not a problem for the manufacturers or producers (Eliss, 2011)¹⁷. Since, products are easily sold there was no concern for consumer needs and preferences. Enterprises kept on concentrating in maximising profit by producing quality oriented products at a reasonable price. The production oriented stage is premised on the assumption that

¹⁴ Ibid (4).

¹⁵ Ibid (1).

¹⁶ White D. S. (2010, June 18). *The Evolution of Marketing*. Retrieve June 01, 2015 from <http://dstevenwhite.com/2010/06/18/the-evolution-of-marketing/>

¹⁷ Eliss, N. et al (2011). *Marketing – A Critical Textbook*. Retrieve January 09, 2015 from http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/37775_02_Eliss_et_al_Ch_01.pdf.

consumers will favour product that are available and highly affordable (Keelson, 2012)¹⁸. This means if there is no need for considering other aspects of demand, there is no requirement of any kind of marketing effort. It can be said that during this period all kinds of marketing practices were related to product aspects only i.e. production of highly satisfactory goods in terms of cost and quality only and there was no need for considering other factors of demand. In such situation, neither the need for promotional efforts nor customer oriented specific practices are required by the producer. However, despite of high concentration on product aspect, it is found that during production oriented stage, marketing awareness began to take root among the producers and market place was established where producers used to dispose off their products. During this period, only maximum production could benefit the enterprises', hence, producers were concentrated on producing more and more.

During the period of 1940s, marketing evolved from production orientation phase to sales orientation phase. The development of technology, transportation and communication system along with it changes in the life style of the people, this phase was witnessed with the improvement in some of the people and started demanding luxurious lifestyle. The economy also started expanding which resulted to produce many groups who can exercise power in the market. It can seen that during this period more industries started to enter the market, competition increased, demand became saturated, mass production could no longer lead to compulsory sales and hence, the necessity on part of the producers arouse to give an extra effort besides production activities only. This effort can be put forward as one related to convincing of the customers to buy/purchased i.e. promotional activities. Hence, this period witnessed the

¹⁸ Keelson, S. A. (2012, April). The Evolution of the Marketing Concepts: Theoretically Different Roads Leading to Practically Same Destination. *Online Journal of Social Sciences Research*, 1(2), 35-41. Retrieve from <http://www.onlineresearchjournals.org/JSS/>

marketing function dominated by selling activity with promotional effort. The essence of sales oriented concept is that 'goods are not bought but sold' (Sontakki, 2007)¹⁹. The marketing practice involved during this period was to get the goods sold through extensive promotional efforts like advertising, personal selling and salesmanship. Since, during sales oriented period producers need to get the products sold, the marketing practices were woven around promotional activities, hence brought a change in the concept of producers regarding marketing. Thus, the sales oriented era mark the beginning of the realisation that sales does not depend only on the product rather there are forces that affects sales. Consequently, this leads producers to be innovative and strategic in their approach towards getting the products sold. The sales oriented stage is the period of rise of promotion concept among the enterprises. Gradually the sales oriented stage came to end and marketing oriented stage started taking shape.

It is after World War II that increased variations in the product offering were found, the consumers demand and producer's supply almost became equal, competition became more intense and hard selling could no longer benefit the enterprises. This paved the way for recognition of the significance and importance that customers' plays in getting their products disposed off by the producers. Since, customers had become one of the factors of marketing success, enterprises started adopting various kinds of practices. In order to get the customers satisfied, the marketing concept started depending on the needs for conducting marketing researches to define and identify market segments, their size and their needs.

Then the period of 1950s mark the biggest change in the history of evolution of marketing concept. This is the period which had started recognising the importance of consumer satisfaction at its fullest form. Here, customers became the king. The

¹⁹ Ibid (10). p.11

marketing philosophy i.e. 'customers are always true' became almost universally accepted philosophy of marketers as well as of business enterprises. During this period, the focus point of any enterprise is the customer not the product. Hence, it can be inferred that a drastic change in the marketing concept and philosophy is witnessed by the people of early twentieth century. From 20th century onwards customer oriented approach begin to take new venture and is believed to continue so long as customers remain supreme in marketing. Because of the increasing need for satisfying customers, both as an individual and as a group, marketing has become one of the most important management functions. Every business enterprises are now required to take marketing as the most crucial in their business planning and decision making.

In short, each stages of the evolution of marketing concept has made their own contribution towards the derivation of today's modern customer oriented marketing approach and practices. These contributions can be presented in a summed up way as follows:

- (i) the barter system led to the foundation of exchange concept though the exchange took place without a medium,
- (ii) the production oriented stage led to the foundation of market place along with exchange medium,
- (iii) the sales oriented stage led to the foundation of promotional activity,
- (iv) the marketing oriented stage led to the foundation of the marketing research concept,
- (v) the customer oriented stage led to the foundation of the concept of 4Ps and recognised as the important ingredients of marketing, and
- (vi) the management oriented stage had made marketing as an important managerial function not to be ignored by any kind of business enterprise.

By studying the history of evolution of marketing concept, it can be seen that the scope of marketing was very limited at its initial period. For a very long period, marketing has remained as an activity of buying and selling of physical goods. But this view never remains domain. Change is natural and time brings an end to everything for some new beginning. Marketing has witnessed changed in its practises and in its concept over time. It is regarded that today there is a progressive change in the concept of marketing as compared to the early period. The difference in the earlier concept of marketing with that of today is said to be in the degree of emphasis and importance attached to customers in the mental reorientation of the marketing functionaries of the enterprises. The shifting emphasis is from 'exchange' to 'satisfaction' which is in fact dramatic, wide, varied and complex. The modern marketing concept is replacing 'product' by 'customers/consumers'. The dramatic change in the concept of marketing also brought with changes in the activities, operations and functions of enterprises. Today, marketing definition can no longer be considered as simply or easily as is written down in the oxford dictionary i.e. marketing is the action or the business of promoting and selling products and services. Now, researchers in marketing attempt to define marketing after keeping in consideration the complexity and the wideness in the scope associated with it in today's consumer govern business environment. Marketing comprises of all the activities involved in the creation of place, time, possession and awareness utilities. It is the business process through which products are matched with markets and through which transfer of ownership are affected. Some has put forward marketing as a process, some has viewed it as an activity while others regard it as a management function.

Phillip Kotler who is considered to be the father of modern marketing has defined marketing as "the human activity directed at satisfying needs and wants through

an exchange process”. It was his earliest definition on marketing which was coined during the period of 1980s. His latest definition in marketing shows as “Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging of products and value with others” (Kotler, 2002)²⁰. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008)²¹, marketing is a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. There are a number of authors who had contributed to the modern definition of marketing and also to its thoughts and approaches. However, all have given emphasis on one basic element i.e., the value of consumers and their preferences rather than the enterprises or their sales volume or the products and services offered by them. Among all, the American Marketing Association (AMA) is one which keeps on revising the definition of marketing every five alternate year. Earlier, the association has given the definition of marketing as “Marketing is the performance of those business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producer to consumer or user” (AMA, 1935). The new definition of marketing is read as: “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2007). The latest reviewed definition of marketing has viewed marketing as a science, an educational process as well as a philosophy – and not just a management system and has also included within its role the significance of marketing in the present societal context. This means that today marketing is about activities, institutions, processes and such other means which are involved in initiating and motivating the customers to make purchase. Hence, after

²⁰ Ibid (1).

²¹ Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2008). *Principles of Marketing*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

thorough analysis of the modern concept of marketing, it can therefore be suggested for inclusion of another basic element of marketing and that is '*motivation*'. The modern marketing tends to direct all its effort towards satisfying customers and in doing so, customers at last are initiated and motivated to buy. Hence, it can be said that modern marketing also involves motivational approach and through motivation, sales are not only made but customers' demands are also created.

From the study it can, therefore, be known that the scope of marketing is very wide today and it has become an area of specialisation which enterprises needs to excel in order to serve their customers at the best level. For this, the higher is the need for satisfying customers the more will be the need for enterprises to specialise their marketing approach, consequently making marketing a more complex and difficult job for business enterprises. Subsequently, marketing function of business enterprises will need to associate with new behaviours, approaches and elements. Hence, marketing can no longer be regarded as selling. "There will always, one can assume, be need for some selling. But the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself" (Drucker, 1973)²².

The customer oriented approach of marketing is the most accepted approach among the enterprises. The approach says that customer is the most important ingredient in the whole marketing process. He is the cause and purpose of all marketing activities. Only his satisfaction and support will ensure the success of marketing. All marketing activities therefore should be directed towards meeting the needs of customers giving consensus to social welfare as well. In the words of Fred J. Poorch, 'marketing is a

²² Drucker, P. (1973). *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*. New York: Harper & Row. pp.64-65.

fundamental philosophy, fundamental to this philosophy is the recognition and acceptance of a customer-oriented ways of doing the business, under making, the customer becomes the fulcrum, the first point about which the business moves in operating for the balanced best interest of all concerned' (Sontakki, 2007)²³. Modern marketing is about understanding and responding to customer need, a prerequisite for any organisation's success. Nuzhat (2012)²⁴ "points out that understanding customers real needs and meeting them better than any competitor can and had become the key to professional marketing. The modern marketing system strives for discovering and producing solutions that customer did not ask for but to which they enthusiastically respond". Modern marketing starts with customers and ends with customers. It is a continuing offer of value added goods and services to the customers through better and more efficient products. It relies on the principle that products or services are bought by customers not merely because of their quality packaging or brand name, but because of the satisfaction they get. Hence, customer centric marketing enterprises require their products to reflect the needs of the customers and represents solution to customer's problems. The enterprises should always be passionate about the customer and should always concerned about innovation, quality of products and services, product attributes, differentiated products, product perceived as good value for money and opportunities to customer to individualise the offer.

The organisations are always required to remain close to the customer. Everything that they do should form a part of satisfying customer. It can be mentioned that the success of an enterprise/firm is not measured by its capacity to pass on the products lucratively or making huge profits and building up additional assets; but its

²³ Ibid (10). p.12

²⁴ Nuzhath, K. (2012). *Entrepreneurial Development*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House. pp.115-116.

success lies in its ability to satisfy the customer, his need and aspirations. The present and future organisational success is hinged on customer satisfaction which an alert marketer should never forget. It is therefore, important for organisations to examine ways and means to develop mutually satisfying long term relationships with their buyers. However, long run customer satisfaction cannot be achieved until and unless all personnel within the organisation understand the importance of customers and are connected to them. These, therefore, fringe the requirement of integrating the needs and wants of the customers with other organisational functions like production, finance, R&D, personnel, etc. The responsibility of business enterprises to market their products and also that of expanding and maintaining market share rests on every individual in the organisation. Hence, modern marketing incorporates almost all the functional areas of a business which helps in directing product planning, ascertaining demand, distribution and facilitating the entire marketing process. In short, modern marketing suggest enterprises to understand what customers wants and requires production to be done on the basis of the suggestions made after knowing the customers. In addition, modern marketing is also concerned with the issues of consumer welfare as well as the social welfare. Hence, modern marketing has made concern for factors like health of consumers, quality of human life, pollution free environment, etc. Social responsibility is also an added dimension of modern marketing.

As marketing incorporates a wide range of activities, it will take considerable expertise and effort to develop a sound marketing strategy capable of delivering success, growth and development to an enterprise. In a study made by Kuratko and Hodgetts (2005)²⁵, the elements of marketing success for entrepreneurs are identified as

²⁵ Kuratko, D. F. & Hodgetts, R. M. (2005). *Entrepreneurship- Theory, Process, Practise*. Singapore: Thomson- South Western.

Leadership, Listening, Teamwork, Coordination, Focus, Accountability, Flexibility, Continuity and Insight. These elements are mentioned as the necessary traits that are required from the part of the entrepreneurs, from the employees of the organisation and also from the enterprises. Hence, these elements highlight that entrepreneurs alone cannot be a force in achieving marketing success for their enterprises, there is also a need for combine and joint effort on part of both the entrepreneurs and the employees to make the enterprise more adaptive and responsive to the success tactics of marketing.

It is known from the above discussions that modern marketing is woven around customer satisfaction as their main task and assumes that if marketing fails to understand customers and satisfy them according to their needs, wants and desires, then enterprises will be on the path of destruction and disappearance. However, as seen from the stages of evolution of marketing concept, marketing concept never remain static and keeps on evolving with the change in time, change in technology, change in social behaviour which all together result in change in the behaviour of the customers/consumers. Since future is always unpredictable, marketing task is to foresee the changes to take place in near future and try to cope with the changes.

With the advancement of technology, the world has become a single market and communication and connection across boundaries are no longer becoming hindrances. Existence of internet based marketing is another major addition that removes all the barriers and restrictions in reaching the potential customers. It is now questionable whether marketing can still be segmented according to territorial distribution of customers and whether the tastes and preferences of consumers can still be view as similar. Modernisation concept itself reflects that people are not to be judged by the religion, culture and traditions. Decisions of customers are seemed to be influenced by a number of factors which walks hand in hand with the modern style of living and work

environment. Therefore, in modern world, marketing is not only customer oriented but also innovative, creative, insightful, predictive and responsive.

Although the modern concept and definitions of marketing had incorporated wider scope, it is hoped that in future, it will be more mysterious and critical. However, modern marketing concept is still new for most of the enterprises in Manipur. Most of the women entrepreneurs are neither marketing expert nor trained personals and there is a huge gap of marketing knowledge among women entrepreneurs. However, marketing holds great significance for any kind of modern business enterprise, realising this degree of importance big business units are investing huge amount of effort on marketing, in addition new strategies are taken up, experts are hired, separate marketing department is maintained.

But, this might not be the case of women entrepreneurs of India in general and of Manipur in particular. The reason being, majority of the women entrepreneur run/operate micro and small enterprise which needs little investment. Studies on women entrepreneurship of Manipur had pointed out that women entrepreneurs of Manipur lack knowledge in marketing and that the women enterprises are neither marketing oriented nor they adopt innovative marketing practices. This is revealed by studies conducted on women entrepreneurship in Manipur like Sorokhaibam and Laishram (2011)²⁶, Devi (2002)²⁷, Chanu and Chanu (2015)²⁸, etc. Whatever is the modern concept of marketing, its application and uses is still a new to women entrepreneurs of Manipur. The studies

²⁶ Ibid (3).

²⁷ Devi, C. N. (2002). *Women Entrepreneurship in North East Region of India Problems and Prospects – A Case Study of Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Manipur University, Canchipur, Manipur.

²⁸ Chanu, A.I. & Chanu, L. (2015). Branding and labelling of the Products of Women Entrepreneurs of Manipur. In S. Mishra, D. Awasthi & G. Batthini. *Eleventh Biennial Conference on Entrepreneurship* (491-499). Delhi: Bookwell.

which covers aspects like: modern marketing practices, various kinds of marketing practices and types of marketing practices which are adopted by different kinds of women entrepreneurial ventures in Manipur, etc. are required in order to have detailed understanding about the differences between the present form of marketing practices which are adopted by women entrepreneurs of Manipur and the applicability of the so called modern marketing practices which are developed by the theoreticians and academicians.

1.2(B) Marketing Practices: An Overview

Many studies have identified marketing as one of the most responsible factors for the success of any business enterprise and are suggested for adoption of suitable marketing practices which are innovative in nature (Devi, 2002;²⁹ Roy, 2008³⁰; Khanka, 2009³¹). The word suitable, according to Oxford Dictionary, means right or appropriate for a particular person, purpose or situation. Hence, suitable marketing practices may mean the right or appropriate practices of marketing used by entrepreneurs. It means that marketing practices of women entrepreneurs is the practices of marketing followed by women entrepreneurs. However, marketing practices followed by women entrepreneurs may vary from place to place, product to product, and enterprise to enterprise. Hence, for the purpose of the present study it is important to understand what a practice is and how is it defined from the theoretical point of view?

²⁹ Ibid (27).

³⁰ Roy, R. (2008). *Entrepreneurship*. New Delhi: Oxford Higher Education. p.296

³¹ Khanka, S. S. (2009). *Entrepreneurship in India: Perspective and Practice*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House.

Since the present study is an attempt to understand marketing of women entrepreneurs from practice point of view, an effort is made in the study to identify marketing practices of women entrepreneurs. According to Araujo, Kjellberg and Spencer (2008)³², practice is defined “as a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, how things are described and even how the world is understood”. It involves routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge”.

According to Meletsky (2010)³³ “one way to look at marketing is to consider it as a series of practices, as it is actualised and does not box marketing into a specific culture or structure. Further, it is also mentioned that contemporary marketing practices (CMP) is defined as bundles of marketing activities’, with a focus on the actions, ‘the doing or even the channels”.

Warde (2004)³⁴ is of the view that marketing practices are comprised of multiple elements. According to him marketing practices may involve processes, actions or in some cases practical and applied knowledge to actions.

The discussion and analysis on the concept of marketing as a practice has indicated the various activities (actions) that are involved in marketing practices. This is further added by Pillai and Bagavathi (2010)³⁵ who are of the view that: “marketing in

³² Araujo, L., Kjellberg, H. & Spencer, R. (2008). Marketing practices and Forms: Introduction to the Special Issue. *Marketing Theory*, 8(1), 5-14. DOI: 10.1177/1470593107086481.

³³ Maletsky, J. (2010). *Describing the Marketing Practices Through Social Theory of Practice*. Retrieve July 25, 2012 from <http://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/24691/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>. p.3.

³⁴ Warde, A. (2004). Consumption and Theory of Practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5(2).

³⁵ Ibid (4). p.17.

practice does not refer to any single activity such as selling, advertising or distribution; rather it involves the interaction of several business activities whose ultimate objective is the gratification of customer needs and desires”.

Base on the above definitions and literatures *marketing practices can be referred as the implementation of the plans and policies of marketing by applying suitable tools and techniques resulting in the actual performance of the interconnected marketing events and activities*. However, it is revealed that till now there is no definite or specific definition of marketing practices. Marketing practices is not yet conceptualised at institutional level and is usually contextualized within a situation or a discipline. Since marketing practice remain as a doctrine of idea or as an event, it becomes critical to lay down the conceptual definition of marketing practices. Therefore, it is questionable whether the marketing practices can be considered as complementary to the marketing strategies and policies or is it limited to the activities relating to 4Ps of marketing mix only. Whether marketing practices is just a task or whether it is the outcome of marketing strategies and polices that takes the shape of an action or an event. These are the critical views that have come out while trying to analyse the concept of marketing practices of business enterprises. Hence, before adopting the probable marketing practices by women entrepreneurs, there is a need to understand the scope of marketing, the elements, tools and techniques of marketing.

Whether marketing practices are complementary to marketing strategies?

Sahay and Sharma (2008)³⁶ mention two levels of marketing in their study viz. strategic and operational marketing. “The strategic marketing attempts to determine

³⁶ Sahay, A. & Sharma, V. (2008). *Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation*. New Delhi: Excel Books. p.286.

how an organization competes against its competitors in a market place. The operational marketing executes marketing functions to attract and keep customers and to maximize the value derived for them, as well as to satisfy the customers with prompt services and meeting the customer expectations”. According to Kotler (2002)³⁷ there are three kinds of marketing practices which are entrepreneurial, formulated and intrapreneurial. “Entrepreneurial marketing practices are visible in an entrepreneurial firm and it is often characterised by high risk taking and innovative ways to reach out to the consumers. Formulated marketing practices are research centric and well planned. These are meticulously planned efforts. Intrapreneurial marketing practices involves firms pushing their managers into the market, to live their customers, and conceptualise new ways to improve the customer’s life style, or add value to customers’ lives”. To Awan and Hashmi (2014)³⁸ “Entrepreneurial marketing is the marketing carried out by managers/owners of entrepreneurial ventures and entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial marketing concept is basically focused on the development of new ideas and innovations with an intuitive understanding of marketing needs, entrepreneurs target customers through a bottom up approach to the market place, not through the targeting positioning and top down segmentation of traditional marketing”.

The review gives an understanding of the difference between strategy and practice and what could marketing practices possibly mean for business enterprises. From the above studies, it can also be pointed out that strategies reflect determination i.e. decision making function while practice reflects operation i.e. execution. Hence, marketing practices of business enterprises involve visible efforts aimed at reaching the

³⁷ Ibid (4). p.2.

³⁸ Awan, A.G. & Hashmi, S. (2014, December). Marketing practices of small and medium size enterprises: a case study of SME’s in Multan District. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 2(6), 9-20. Retrieve from http://www.eajournals.org/wp-content/uploads/Marketing-Practices-of-Small-Medium-Size-Enterprises-A-Cae-Study-of_SME---s-in-Multan-District..pdf. p.10.

customers/consumers. Strategies do not require visible effort, it only involves the thinking process and are not a visible intrinsic. However, it is again in dilemma that whether strategy can be looked upon as invisible intrinsic and practices as visible intrinsic. In spite of the dual casualty, it is generally understood that marketing strategies are related to the thinking activity and making decisions on the course of action to be followed while practices meant the implementation of the course of action resulting into real action or event. Hence, it can be inferred that there is difference between practices and strategies. In fact, if a distinction is to be made between marketing strategies and practices, then it can be said that the thinking, involving planning and decision making aspects of marketing relates to strategies and converting the plan into action is the practice. This means that strategies can be converted into practices which often tend to highlight the synonyms in actions and events between the two. Practices can be said to take place in connection with marketing strategies. Hence, in this sense marketing practices can be said as complementary to marketing strategies. However, practices may not be viewed just as the activity of converting strategies and policies into action or effort. Marketing practices may cover much more than that and may incorporate within it a wider scope.

1.3 Women Entrepreneurs of India and Manipur: An Overview

There are many differing views on what an entrepreneur is and what makes someone an entrepreneur. Literatures also reveal a wide variety of possibilities for what this field of endeavour really is. The originality and definition of entrepreneur has been debated among scholars, educators, researchers, policy makers, etc. However, today in

the twenty-first century, ‘entrepreneurs are considered as the hero of free enterprise’. “He is an innovator or developer who recognizes and seizes opportunities; converts those opportunities into workable/marketable ideas; adds value through time, effort, money, or skills; assumes the risks of the competitive marketplace to implement these ideas; and realizes the rewards from these efforts” (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2005)³⁹. They are motivated not merely by profit but also by the “desire to find a private dynasty, the will to conquer on a competitive battle, and the joy of creating.

The word ‘entrepreneur’ is derived from 13th century French verb *entreprendre*, and the German word *unternehmen*, both have the meaning “to undertake”. It is of the view that entrepreneurship prevails from the period of 16th century. It was then, applied to business for the first time in 18th century, to designate a dealer who buys and sells goods at uncertain prices (Priyadarshi, 1997)⁴⁰. Richard Cantillon, an economist was the first to introduce the term ‘entrepreneur’ and he defined it as “an agent who purchased the means of production for combination into marketable products. In fact, all persons engaged in economic activity are entrepreneurs” (Priyadarshi, 1997)⁴¹. The term entrepreneur was further popularized by economist Jean Baptiste Say and John Stuart Mill (Mujuni, 2008)⁴², who in the early 1800s, used the term to define as “the economic agent who unites all means of production, creates value in an economy by moving resources out of an area of lower productivity and into an area of higher productivity

³⁹ Ibid (25).

⁴⁰Priyadarshi, H. (1997). *A Study on Entrepreneurship Development in Tribal Regions: A Comparative Analysis*. Retrieved March 02, 2016 from http://www.shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/22378/6/06_chapter_1.pdf

⁴¹ Ibid (40).

⁴² Mujuni, A. (2008). *Entrepreneurship Manual*. Retrieved March 02, 2016 from <http://www.slideshare.net/DOMINICEDGE/entrepreneurship-manual-bit>.

and greater yield” (Krishnan, 2013)⁴³. John Stuart Mill used the term entrepreneurs to refer to who assumes both the risk and the management of a business (Mujuni, 2008)⁴⁴. During the 19th century, three economists post views on entrepreneurship: John Baptiste Say, John Stuart Mill, and Alfred Marshall. By this time the “ability to take calculated risk” was added to the definition. During this period, what are to be performed and what are the skills to be possessed by the entrepreneurs have been included in the literature.

The 20th century owes much to the work of economist Joseph Schumpeter and other Austrian economist such as Carl Menger, Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Von Hayek. According to them, the entrepreneurs are innovators, can create new ideas, new product, new market, etc. From the above literatures, it is found that entrepreneurs are those who can create a venture/launch their own venture from scratch, nurses them into successful business with their instinct for opportunity and sense of timing, and idea-producing ability which are essential to overcome the resistance that social environment offers. Entrepreneurs are the risk-bearers, coordinators and organizers, gap fillers, leaders, innovators and creative imitators.

With reference to women entrepreneurs Khanka (2008)⁴⁵ has mention that “women entrepreneurs are those women or group of women who think of a business enterprise, initiate it, organize and combine the factors of production, operate the enterprise and undertake risk and handle economic uncertainty involved in running a business enterprise. She is a person who accepts challenging role to meet her personal

⁴³ Krishnan, L. (2013, November). *The m Factor for Women Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved March 02, 2016 from http://icebm.tarumanagara.ac.id/download/proceeding/15.%20Lata%20Krishnan%20_%20THE%20M%20FACTOR%20FOR%20WOMEN%20ENTREPRENEURS.pdf.

⁴⁴ Ibid (42).

⁴⁵ Khanka, S. S. (2008). *Entrepreneurship Development*. New Delhi: Sultan Chand. p.8.

need and become economically independent”. The government of India has defined women entrepreneur based on women’s participation in equity and employment of a business enterprise. Accordingly, women entrepreneur is defined as a “women who own and controlled an enterprise with a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 per cent of the employment generated in the enterprise to women. However, with a view of changing the outlook for the promotion of women entrepreneurs, this definition was revised by government of India in 1991, by omitting the condition of employing 51 per cent of women workers” (Khanka, 2008)⁴⁶.

From the above mentioned definitions of entrepreneurs, women entrepreneur can be defined as those who start enterprises with innovative ideas. In addition, women entrepreneurs are also those women who take the lead and organise business and provide employment to others. It signifies that section of female population who venture out in industrial activities. It may be defined as a woman or group of women who initiates, organise and run a business enterprise.

The emergence of women entrepreneurship in India is considered to be of late origin (Jasmer, 1998)⁴⁷. From the studies conducted on women entrepreneurship such as Satramani (2015)⁴⁸; Agarwal and Lenka (2015)⁴⁹; Palanivelu and Srividhya (2014)⁵⁰;

⁴⁶ Ibid (43).

⁴⁷ Jasmer, S.S. (1998). *Entrepreneurship Development – Programmes and Practices*. New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication.

⁴⁸ Satramani, H. (2015). Female Entrepreneurs in Rajkot City Beauty – Care Service Industry. In Sasi Misra, et. al (Eds.). *Eleventh Biennial conference on Entrepreneurship*. Delhi: Bookwell.

⁴⁹ Agarwal, S. & Lenka, U. (2015). An Analysis on Leadership Role: Case of Indian Women Entrepreneur. In Sasi Misra, et. al (Eds.). *Eleventh Biennial conference on Entrepreneurship*. Ahmedabad: Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India.

⁵⁰ Palanivelu, V. R. & Srividhya, T. (2014, May). To Study on the Problems Faced by the Women Entrepreneurs (Special Reference to Selected Districts of Tamil Nadu). *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 4(5), 99-101.

Ganapathy and Mayilsamy (2013)⁵¹; Singh (2012)⁵²; Ushakiran, Rajeshwari and Kunashree (2012)⁵³; etc., it can be inferred that there are a number of factors associated with entrepreneurship development among women which keeps on varying over the time – the early period marked extensive social norms on the mobility of women, then women started coming out of the four walls of their home and participated in economic activities like teaching, nurshing, etc. and gradually started participating in entrepreneurial venture as well. Because of the social barriers to women from time immemorial, their participation in entrepreneurial activity began mostly as an extension of kitchen work as was remarked by Khanka, S.S. Their areas were mostly confined to traditionally endowed sectors such as handloom, handicrafts, weaving, cottage, textile, pottery, etc.

However, the scenario of women entrepreneurs has been changed. Due to changes in economic and social environment as are seen today, women have started enjoying a more liberal and free environment than earlier. It is also seen from the studies that women has widen up their entrepreneurial activities and are found to venture in the areas like consultancy, textile printing, chemicals, advertising, garment exporting, beauty clinics, trade, fashion designing, pharmaceuticals, etc. This implies that women entrepreneurs are no more individuals who hail from communities or family who have been engaged in traditional profession or occupation. Their entrepreneurial activities surmount to being equal to those of male entrepreneurs.

⁵¹ Ganapathy, S. & Mayilsamy, C. (2013, January). Women Entrepreneurship: A Global Perspective. *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 3(1), 3-5.

⁵² Singh, R. (2012, October). Women Entrepreneurship Issues, Challenges and Empowerment through Self help Groups: An Overview of Himachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Democratic and Development Studies (IJDDS)*, 1(1), 45-58. Retrieve from <http://www.rcmss.org/ijdds/Vol.1/No.1/pdf>.

⁵³ Ushakiran, V., Rajeshwari & Kunashree, M. V. (2012, January). A Study on Business Women in Micro Enterprises. *Zenith International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(1), 211-219. Retrieve from <http://www.zenithresearch.org.in>.

However, women entrepreneurship in India still has a long way to go. Some studies have shown that women enter in this entrepreneurial sector because of pull and push factors (Jesurajan & Gnanadhas, 2011)⁵⁴. “The pull factors are continuing family business, earning money, secure self-employment, fulfilling the ambition of self/parents/husband and gaining social statuses, strong desire to do something, satisfaction, satisfaction in independent living, and self employment of their children, etc. While, the push factors are unemployment, dissatisfaction with the job or occupation, to make use of idle funds, diversification of economic interest, to make use of technical and professional skills, to gain equal status, etc.” (Kishore, 2013)⁵⁵. According to Fourth Census Survey of MSME, the share of enterprises which are owned by women is 13.72 percent out of which 15.27 percent belong to enterprises from rural areas while 12.45 percent belong to enterprises from urban areas. Further, according to the survey 50.47 percent of these entrepreneurs are engaged in manufacturing sector, 40.97 percent in service sector and 8.56 percent in repairing and maintenance sector. Out of the total enterprises, i.e. (15,63,974) 14.19 percent of micro enterprises, 5.06 percent of small enterprises and 4.21 percent of medium enterprises are found to be owned by women. Altogether their contribution to employment is almost 19.04 lakhs which is 20.45 percent of the total share of MSME sector.

In case of Manipur, according to Fourth Census Survey of MSME out of 4,490 enterprises 1,150 enterprises are owned by women which accounts for 25.61 percent of the total MSME in Manipur. The credit for this appreciable figure may be ascribed not only to the prevailing government policies and programmes rather it goes to the unique

⁵⁴ Jesurajan, S. V. A. and Gnanadhas, M. E. (2011). A Study on the Factors Motivating Women to Become Entrepreneurs in Tirunelveli District. *Asian Journals of Business and Economics*, 1 (1.1), 1 – 14.

⁵⁵ Kishore, S. (2013, December). Push and Pull Factors Influence of Women Entrepreneurs Towards Entrepreneurship: A Study in Chittoor District of Arunachal Pradesh. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Studies*, 2(12), 453-463.

characteristics of women in Manipuri society. The historical record shows that women in Manipur enjoyed freedom, mobility and explored to all kinds of social and economic activities since ancient time. This could be the most probable factor for the highly active involvement of women in social, economic and entrepreneurial activities. The establishment of Ima market which is also known as Sana Keithel (Golden market) of Khwairamband Bazar by the then King Paikhomba in 1614 A.D. at the heart of the Imphal city is a living proof of women's economic activities in the state. Today, Ima Market is the largest women market in Asia. The Ima market has become the nerve centre for disposal of various kinds of products produce by women folk from different places of Manipur. The product which are sold in this market are generally of the following nature – handloom, handicraft, pottery, weaving, traditional and cultural base items, food items and beverages, toys, etc. The Ima market has been playing an important role in Manipur in providing source of livelihood and encouraging entrepreneurial activities among women.

However, a number of women entrepreneurs in Manipur are found to be engaged in informal sector and it is reported that the entry of women in formal sector is a recent one. Women entrepreneurs started out venturing into such entrepreneurial areas as – handloom, handicraft, weaving, pottery, doll making, silk rearing, yarn making, met making, etc. Their Handloom and handicraft works are unique, innovative and excellent. The demand is not only from local and state market but also from national market which extends to even international market. Manipur enjoys a distinct place amongst the handloom and handicraft zones in India and these sectors are mostly dominated by women-folk in Manipur and still continue to be so. In a study of Chanu

and Chanu (2014)⁵⁶ reveals that: (i) the yearly growth rate of women enterprises in Manipur is never static and keeps on fluctuating; (ii) the growth rate of women entrepreneurs in MSME sector is higher in hill districts than the valley districts of Manipur despite high concentration of women entrepreneurs in valley districts; (iii) the women entrepreneurs of Manipur are involve in various kinds of activities like embroidery, weaving, servicing industry, tailoring, beauty salons and parlours, handloom, water reed items, videography, readymade garments, decorative items, studios, jewellery items, poultry, DTP and computer works, marketing consultancy, nursery of plants, photocopying centres, clinic and pharmacy, schools and boarding, hospitals, furniture, food processing, handicraft, brick making, household goods, bakery, carpentry, cattle rearing, fermentation units, press and printing, iron and steel, blacksmith, chemical products, etc.; (iv) majority of the women entrepreneurs of Manipur prefer to be engaged in manufacturing sector of products rather than providing services, and that (v) embroidery occupies the largest manufacturing sector of women entrepreneurs of Manipur in organised sector.

Besides, it is also found that majority of women entrepreneurs of Manipur operate in micro and small enterprises (Nucleus Cell, Directorate of Commerce and Industries, Manipur, 2013)⁵⁷. Government has also taken up various initiatives like EDPs that would help women entrepreneurs in acquiring training and consultancy services in technical, production, managerial, financial as well as record keeping areas. The women entrepreneurs are seen to enhance their skill and knowledge by participating in many leadership and development programmes (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015)⁵⁸. It means

⁵⁶ Chanu, Y.L. & Chanu, A. I. (2014, June). Women Entrepreneurs of Manipur after MSME Act, 2006: An Analysis. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management*, 3(2), 32–38.

⁵⁷ Nucleus Cell, Department of Commerce and Industries, Govt. of Manipur.

⁵⁸ Ibid (47).

that the various programmes of government, educational institutions and NGOs, etc. have helped in promoting entrepreneurship not only among women who are having inherent skills and creativity from their ancestors but also among who does not have inherent skills. A study reveals that “women entrepreneurs of Manipur are associated with problems in the areas of finance, labour, decision making and marketing as well. There is hesitance from the Meitei women of upper class society to put forth the idea of taking non-traditional one, and sometimes remained stick to those of the traditional handloom and handicraft. Besides it is also found that even after the 61 years of India’s independence the bias against women continues because of the cultural and mores, which has affected a lot on women’s status and role” (Sorokhaibam & Laishram, 2011)⁵⁹. A kind of patriarchal-male dominant social order still serves as a building block to women entrepreneurs in their way towards business success. This is also seen as a prevailing situation of women entrepreneurs in Manipur. Because, despite of high participation of women in economic and social activities, there is still lack of women’s participation in formal political institutions (decision making institutions) which thereby raises the question as to whether there is subordination of women in the guise of greater economic participation (Asem, 2011)⁶⁰. Hence, promotion of women entrepreneurs in Manipuri society is highly recommended in this regard.

1.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

As already mentioned, the marketing practices of entrepreneurs are depend on the type and nature of enterprise. The present study of marketing practices of women

⁵⁹ Ibid (3).

⁶⁰ Asem, S. (2011). *Women Market Participation and Empowerment*. New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House. p.63.

entrepreneurs of Manipur is concerned with the different kinds of marketing techniques which are used by them for getting their products disposed off. Hence, the theoretical framework of the study is presented here with an objective to study the **‘kind of marketing tools or techniques that are considered to be practiced by the women entrepreneur from marketing point of view’**.

It is found in the conceptualised marketing theories that marketing incorporates within its scope of four basic elements which are called as 4Ps; and these elements are known as elements of ‘marketing mix’. This Four Ps or elements of marketing mix are: Product, Price, Place and Promotion. The term ‘marketing mix’ is considered to be coined by Prof. N.H. Borden and according to him “Marketing mix covers two things: (a) a list of important elements or ingredients that make up this marketing programme, and (b) the list of forces having bearing on the marketing operations” (Pillai & Bagavathi, 2010)⁶¹. His first list i.e., elements or ingredients can be put forward as comprising of the product mix, price mix, promotion mix and place mix. And his second list can be put forward as comprising of the tools and techniques within each of the four basic elements of marketing mix that makes marketing planning and execution possible. Ehmke, Fulton and Lusk (2005)⁶² had also mentioned that there are four elements of marketing viz. (i) *Product* – The right product to satisfy the needs of the target customers; (ii) *Price* – The right product offered at the right price; (iii) *Place* – The right product at the right price available at the right place to be bought by customers; and finally (iv) *Promotion* – Informing potential customers of the

⁶¹ Ibid (4).

⁶² Ehmke, C., Fulton, J. & Lusk, J. (2005). *Marketing’s Four P’s: First Steps for New Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved May 03, 2015 from <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/exmedia/EC/Ec-730.pdf>.

availability of the product, its price and its place. Nuzhath (2012)⁶³ also mentions that marketing mix for small enterprises comprises of four basic elements – Product, Price, Place and Promotion. According to the study, for each one of the elements of marketing mix, the enterprises have to make certain decisions like:

- (i) For Product Element, it involve decision on (a) the product design, (b) packaging, (c) labelling, and (d) varieties of product;
- (ii) For the Price Element, it includes decision on either to charge (a) uniform price, or (b) different price for the same product in different market;
- (iii) For the Place Element, it involves decision on the market where products can be offered for sale; and
- (iv) For the Promotion Element, it involves decision on the ways and means of increasing sales.

Similary, Kotler and Keller (2007)⁶⁴ have mentioned that there are four P components of marketing mix which are Product, Price, Place and Promotion. According to him the product component of marketing mix comprises of product variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, sizes, services warranties, returns, etc.; the price component of marketing mix comprises of list price, allowances, discounts, payment period, credit terms, etc.; and the promotion component of marketing mix comprises of sales promotion, advertising, sales force, public relations and direct marketing.

According to the above mention studies, Marketing Mix comprises of four basic elements i.e. Product, Price, Place and Promotion. According to Marcati, Guido and

⁶³ Ibid (23). p.129.

⁶⁴ Kotler, P. & Keller, K. L. (2007). *Marketing Management*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited. p.19

Peluso (2008)⁶⁵ the elements are the marketing tactics that can “lead “to development of sales and firm size, improvement of consumers’ knowledge of the firm and its production, to satisfy niche customers, and also act as a tool to search for new markets”. Hence, for the study, marketing practices comprise of the tools and techniques of the Product mix, Price mix, and Promotion mix which have a bearing on the marketing operations. As such the theoretical structure of the present study ponders around the ‘Tools and Techniques of the following three Basic Elements of Marketing Mix’.

1. PRODUCT
2. PRICE
3. PROMOTION

1.4.1 Product Element of Marketing Mix

A product is the core element of every business enterprises. It is the reason for the existence of business enterprises and also a “medium through which entrepreneurs satisfies customers and earns revenue for themselves”. Product has been defined by a number of authors revealing along with it the attributes and features (both tangible and intangible form) attach to them. The attributes and features are the distinguishing point that differentiates a successful product from unsuccessful ones.

Usually, the term product is a synonym word used instead of goods in marketing. From marketing perspective, the term product has also been defined by a number of authors. According to Kotler (2002)⁶⁶ – “A product is any offering that can satisfy a need or want, such as one of the 10 basic offerings of goods, services,

⁶⁵Marcati, A., Guido, G. & Peluso, A.M (2008). *What is the Marketing for SME Entrepreneurs: The need to Market the Marketing Approach*. Retrieved May 04, 2015 from http://www.escp-eap.net/conferences/marketing/2008_cp/Materiali/Paper/It/Marcati_Guido_Peluso.pdf.

⁶⁶ Ibid (4). p.6.

experiences, persons, places, properties, organisations, information, and ideas”. Ramaswamy and Namakumari (1999)⁶⁷ define a product as a total package of benefits the customers receive when he buys it. “A product as a bundle of utilities consisting of various product features and accompanying services. It can be put forward as: a set of tangible and intangible attributes, including packaging, colour, price, manufacturer’s prestige, retailer’s prestige, and manufacturer’s and retailer’s services, which the buyer may accept as offering satisfaction or wants or needs” (Pillai & Bagavathi, 2010)⁶⁸. Kotler and Keller (2007)⁶⁹ defines, product as “anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need”. According to Kumar and Meenakshi (2006)⁷⁰, a product is anything which is capable of satisfying customer need.

From the above mentioned definitions of product, it is revealed that product is no longer confined to tangible aspect only rather it is a much more dynamic concept associated with a number of attributes which forms an important ingredient for getting the products sold. It means, in developing the product there are many activities which are to be performed by the entrepreneurs. According to Okpara (2007)⁷¹, product within its sphere, includes activities such as: (i) Develop and test market for new product; (ii) Modify existing products; (iii) Eliminate products that do not satisfy customer or client; (iv) Formulate brand names and branding policies; (v) Create product warranties and

⁶⁷ Ramaswamy, V.S. & Namakumari, S. (1999). *Marketing Management: Planning, Implementation and Control*. New Delhi: MACMILLAN India Limited.

⁶⁸ Ibid (4).

⁶⁹ Ibid (62).

⁷⁰ Kumar, A. & Meenakshi, N. (2006). *Marketing Management: Comprehensive Text, Best Practices and Corporate Insights*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. p.180.

⁷¹ Okpara, F.O. (2007, September). The value of creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship And Sustainability*, III(2). Retrieve from <http://www.asianentrepreneurshipjournal.com/AJESIII2Okpara.pdf>.

establish procedures for fulfilling warranties; and (vi) Plan packages (including material for package, sizes, shapes, colour and design). Kotler and Armstrong (2007)⁷² have mentioned that marketers make product and service decisions at three levels: Individual product decisions, Product line decisions and Product mix decisions. According to them, the important decisions that needs to be taken up in the development and marketing of individual products and services are: (i) Decisions regarding Product Attributes, (ii) Branding, (iii) Packaging, (iv) Labelling, and (v) Product Support Services. On a similar note, Kumar and Meenakshi (2006)⁷³ have identified product mix element of marketing mix as a total set of brands marketed by the company and mentioned that managing brands product lines are the key elements of product strategy. According to Desai (2011)⁷⁴, the product element of marketing mix consists of sub elements like Brand, Style, Colour, Design, Product Line, Package, Warranty, and Service.

According to Ramaswamy and Namakumari (1999)⁷⁵ the various component elements that make up the total product personality are: (i) The Core or the Basic Constituent, (ii) The Associated Features, (iii) The Brand Name, (iv) The Package, and (v) The Label. Further, they also mention that the product policy of a firm includes: (i) appraisal of the product line and the individual products, (ii) decisions on product differentiation, (iii) product positioning, (iv) brand decisions, (v) decisions on packaging, (vi) new product development. Few also mention that the structure of a product of any enterprise comprises of four dimensions viz. (i) *length*, (ii)

⁷² Ibid (21). p.223.

⁷³ Ibid (68). p.180.

⁷⁴ Desai, V. (2011). *The Dynamics of Entrepreneurial Development and Management: Planning for Future Sustainable Growth*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.

⁷⁵ Ibid (65).

Width/Breadth, (iii) *Depth* and (iv) *Consistency* [Kumar & Meenakshi (2006)⁷⁶; and Pillai & Bhagavathi (2010)⁷⁷]. According to them (i) *Length* is the total number of items in the product mix, (ii) *Width/Breadth* is the number of different product lines, (iii) *Depth* is the average number of items in each product line, and (iv) *Consistency* is the relatedness of the various product lines.

According to Booz, Allen and Hamilton (n.d.), there are six categories of new product: (i) *New-to-word products*: New, innovative products that create an entirely new market; (ii) *New product lines*: New, innovative products that create an entirely new market, for the first time; (iii) *Additions to existing product lines*: New products that supplement a company's established product lines (package sizes, flavours, and so on); (iv) *Improvements and revisions of existing products*: New products that provide improved performance or greater perceived value and replace existing products; (v) *Repositioning*: Existing products that are targeted to new markets or market segments; and (vi) *Cost reductions*: New products that provide similar performance at lower cost (Kotler, 2002)⁷⁸. Subsequently, it is not only at the initial period of establishment of enterprise that entrepreneurs decide on new product, entrepreneurs have to keep on appraising their existing products. Besides, developing of new product and constantly appraising the existing products, entrepreneurs also need to see the activities which enable the product and which can increase the scope of the product towards customer satisfaction.

It can therefore be contended from the theoretical perspective that a product of an enterprise includes within its sphere a number of policies and activities which begin from the decision of developing a new product, constantly appraising and monitoring

⁷⁶ Ibid (68).

⁷⁷ Ibid (4).

⁷⁸ Ibid (1), p.162.

the existing product and product lines, and attaching various attributes to the product in order to make the product most suitable for meeting the changing needs of the customers and the competitive market. Such activities which can be described as practice from the point of view of entrepreneurs are presented in the chart below:

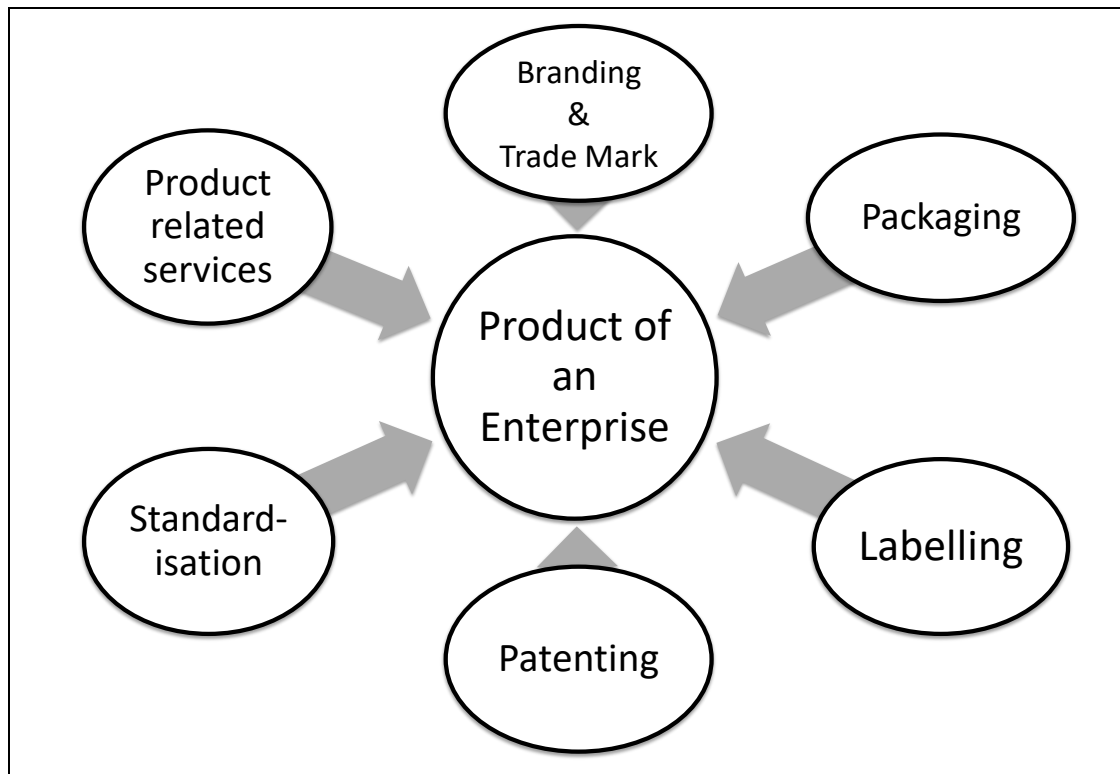


Figure 1.2: Theoretical Background on the product element of marketing mix

Source: Compiled by the researcher

1.4.2 Price Element of Marketing Mix

Price is also defined in varied ways by a number of authors; however, in connotation to marketing, the understanding of the meaning of price depends on the different views of the buyer and seller. According to Sahay and Sharma (2008)⁷⁹ price is the amount of money exchanged for the product which is not meant only for the purpose

⁷⁹ Ibid (35).

of generating profit but also has a composite role of market development. Price is the one element that produces revenue, the others produce cost (Kotler, 2002)⁸⁰.

A firm must set a price for the first time when it develops a new product, introduces its regular product into a new distribution channel or geographical area, and enters bids on new contract work (Kotler, 2002)⁸¹. Price [of a product] is not an optional rather a compulsory element of business enterprises without which not only the enterprise will defunct but the whole marketing system will defunct as today's economy is characterised by money economy (Chanu & Chanu, 2015)⁸². As such "it is best to price product sensibly and realistically from the beginning to ensure that customers will be with the store for the long haul (Regni, 2009)⁸³.

According to Sontakki (2007)⁸⁴ "there are various ways of determining price of a product, which are: (i) Cost Based Pricing Method – which comprises of cost plus pricing and target return pricing; (ii) Competition Based Pricing Method – which comprises of going rate pricing and sealed bid pricing; and (iii) Demand Based Pricing Method – which comprises of demand modified brake even analysis and perceived value pricing. According to Pillai and Bhagavathi (2010)⁸⁵, there are two kinds of pricing strategy viz. skimming pricing and penetration pricing. However, according to Kotler (2002)⁸⁶, there are five types of pricing strategies which are: (i) geographical

⁸⁰ Ibid (1). p.215.

⁸¹Ibid (1). p.216

⁸²Chanu, Y.L. & Chanu, A.I. (2015). Pricing Practices Among Women Entrepreneurs: A Case Study of Manufacturing Sector in Imphal West District, Manipur. In N.N.Hina et al. (Eds.) *National Seminar on Issues Challenges & Development of North East India*. New Delhi: Authors Press. pp.35–49.

⁸³ Regini, R. J. (2009). *Entrepreneurship In Action: A Retail Store Simulation*. New York: Fairchild Books, Inc.

⁸⁴ Ibid (10). pp.372-382.

⁸⁵ Ibid (4). pp.224-230.

⁸⁶ Ibid (1). pp.226-230.

pricing, (ii) price discount and allowances, (iii) promotional pricing, (iv) discriminatory pricing and (v) product-mix pricing. According to Katz and Green (2007)⁸⁷ the strategies which are available to small businesses that can be used as successfully as the larger firms are: “Skimming, Prestige or Premium pricing, Odd-Even pricing, Partitioned pricing, Captive pricing, Price lining, etc. However, techniques are also available that can be used by small businesses without starting price wars or reducing the quality perception of their products or services and which will at the same time lower down the prices for the purpose of attracting more business are: periodic and random discounting, off-peak pricing, bundling or multiple packs or bonus packs pricing, coupons, rebates and loyalty programs, and referral discounts”. According to Ramaswamy and Namakumari (1999)⁸⁸, the different methods of pricing can be grouped under the following broad categories: (i) cost based pricing, (ii) demand based pricing, (iii) competition based pricing; (iv) product line oriented pricing, (v) tender pricing, (vi) affordability based pricing, and (vii) differentiated pricing. According to them, the cost based pricing comprises of several approaches or methods which are mark up/cost plus pricing, absorption cost/full cost pricing, target profit/rate of return pricing and marginal cost pricing. The demand/market based pricing comprises of what the traffic can bear pricing, skimming pricing and penetration pricing methods. And lastly, the competition oriented pricing comprises of premium pricing, discount pricing and parity/going rate pricing methods.

The pricing policies and practices adopted by an enterprise are of varied in nature. This means that while selecting a particular pricing method by the entrepreneur, it is important to examine the type of price which will be appropriate for their product

⁸⁷ Katz, J.A. & Green, R.P. (2007). *Entrepreneurial Small Business*. China: Mc Graw Hill Irwin. pp.255-259.

⁸⁸ Ibid (65).

and their enterprise. Hence, from the theoretical perspective, it can be asserted that the pricing related practices available to entrepreneur are adoption of the appropriate pricing approach and then employment of the right method of price determination. For the purpose of the present study, it can be derived that enterprises have different kinds of approaches while making decision regarding price determination and these approaches can be presented in the following ways:

1. Single/Uniform Pricing Approach – This approach can be put forward as the practice of charging similar prices to all the buyers without distinguishing them on the basis of class, size of purchase, location of purchase and other conditions of purchases.
2. Discriminatory Pricing Approach – This approach can be put forward as the practice of charging different price to different buyers whether on the basis of location, time, customer segment, class, size of purchase or other conditions of purchases.
3. Promotional Pricing Approach – This approach can be put forward as the practice of charging different price to the buyer instead of the net price payable by them with the basic purpose of meeting competitive pressure or encouraging buyers or for meeting the financial objective of the enterprise.
4. Product-mix Pricing Approach – This approach can be put forward as the practice of setting the prices which will tend to maximize profits on the total product mix.

The chart below shows the practices which are derived from the theoretical perspective with regard to the Price element of marketing mix for the purpose of the present study:

<i>Pricing Methods</i>			
Uniform/Single Pricing Approach	Discriminatory/Differential Pricing Approach	Promotional Pricing Approach	Product Mix/Form Pricing Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Cost based pricing ◆ Demand based pricing ◆ Competition based pricing ◆ Administered pricing ◆ Penetration Pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Geographical Pricing ◆ Affordability Pricing ◆ Image Pricing ◆ Customer Segment Pricing ◆ Time pricing ◆ Negotiated Pricing ◆ Partitioned Pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Discounts and rebates ◆ Allowances and concessions ◆ Price cutting or Loss leader pricing ◆ Price leader and Premiums ◆ Special event pricing ◆ Psychological discounting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Product line pricing ◆ Optional feature pricing ◆ Captive product pricing ◆ Two part pricing ◆ By-product pricing ◆ Product bundling pricing

Figure 1.3: Theoretical background on the price element of marketing mix
Source: Compiled by the researcher

1.4.3 Promotion Element of Marketing Mix

Promotion is the third element of marketing mix which is also an important parameter of the present study. Promotion is generally referred to the activities to push forward or to advance an idea, in such a way as to gain its approval and acceptance (Joshi, 2012)⁸⁹. However, in case of marketing, promotion is defined as the business of communicating with customers (Khatoun, 2012)⁹⁰. It is “the co-ordination of all seller-initiated efforts to set up channels of information and persuasion to facilitate the sale of

⁸⁹ Joshi, M. (2012). *Essentials of Marketing*. Retrieved May 03, 2015 from <http://bookboon.com/en/essentials-of-marketing-ebook>. pp.29-30.

⁹⁰ Ibid (18). p.130.

goods, or service or the acceptance of an idea (Pillai & Bhagavathi, 2010)⁹¹. In short, promotion means “informing potential customers of the availability of the product, its price and its place” (Ehkme, Fulton & Lusk, 2005)⁹².

It can be seen that promotional activities among business enterprises started to paved way during 1940s when sales oriented concept of marketing was prevailing and at that time, the promotional activities were limited to advertising only. However, with the growing and advancing industrial process and marketing environment, the need for promoting the enterprise and its product become wider and larger. Today, promotion has become the most crucial and fundamental element of marketing their products by large and multinational enterprise which is also true for micro, small and medium enterprises. The increased necessity of promotion is the result of today’s customer oriented concept of marketing wherein acute emphasis is given on the preference, want, desire and need of the customers and their satisfaction. It is not only the product feature but also effective promotional practices which can lead to successful marketing. “Even the most useful and want satisfying product will be marketing failure if no one knows it is available” (Pillai & Bhagavathi, 2010)⁹³. Hence, promotion is the most suitable means to “provide information that will assist the customers in making a decision to purchase a product or service” (Nuzhath, 2012)⁹⁴. According to (Ehkme et al., 2005)⁹⁵ “the purpose of promotion is to get people to understand what your product is, what they can use it for, and why they should want it”. Hence, it is an important duty of the

⁹¹ Ibid (4). p.267.

⁹² Ibid (60).

⁹³ Ibid (4). p.269.

⁹⁴ Ibid (24). p.130.

⁹⁵ Ibid (60).

entrepreneurs to give information to the customers about where, how, when and at what price the product would be available. Promotion can only make it possible. Attractive promotion induces purchase acceleration, stock piling and brand switching on the part of a consumer which substantially reduces retailers' financial and inventory risk and consumer's financial risk and psychological risks (Vyas, 2007)⁹⁶.

According to Joshi (2012)⁹⁷, the various forms of promotion are: Personal selling, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Publicity, Public Relations, Point of purchase display, Packaging, Direct mail and other forms of promotion like sampling and coupons. According to him, personal selling includes techniques like prospecting, pre-approaching, approaching and attention, demonstration, handling objections, closing the sales and follow-up. In case of advertising tool of promotion, the media or medium becomes the means through which message is conveyed to the customers. These media which can be used by the manufacturers are: (i) Indoor advertising, (ii) Outdoor advertising, (iii) Direct advertising and (iv) Promotional advertising. The indoor advertising consists of the following kinds: Press – newspaper, magazine, radio, television, film and text messages on mobile phone. The outdoor advertising media consists of the following types: posters, advertising boards, vehicles, painted display, travelling display, electric display, sky advertising, sandwich men (dressed in fancy clothes) and handbills (leaflets). Direct advertising may be of the following types: sales letters, circulars, booklets and catalogues, folders, package inserts and store publications. Promotion advertising includes window display, interior display, showrooms and exhibitions. Again, sales promotion can be of three types: Consumer sales promotion, Dealer sales promotion and Sales force promotion. Consumer sales

⁹⁶ Vyas, H. P. (2007, November). *Sales Promotion Practices in Apparel retail Sector and Challenges Ahead*. Retrive from <http://iimahd.ernet.in/publications/data/2007-11-02Vyas.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Ibid (87). pp.30-47.

promotion includes within it activities like sampling, coupons, demonstration, contests, money refund offers, premium offer, price off offer, consumer raffle draw and free trial. Dealer sales promotion within its sphere includes techniques like buying allowance, merchandise allowance, price deals, push money or premium, cooperative advertising, dealer sale contests, dealer's listed promotion, dealer's gift and point of purchase. Sales force promotion includes methods like bonus to sales force, sales force contests, sales force meetings and conferences.

Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2007)⁹⁸ have identified promotion mix as communication mix and mentioned that communication/promotion mix comprises of advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling which are aimed at reaching the trade channels and the target customers.

While, Kotler and Armstrong (2008)⁹⁹ mention that a company's/an enterprise's total promotion mix consists of the specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing tools that the company/enterprise uses to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationship. Kotler (2002)¹⁰⁰ has also pointed out that not only company must relate constructively to customers, suppliers and dealers, but it must also relate to a large number of interested publics. According to him Public relations (PR) involves variety of programs that are designed to promote or protect a company's image or its individual products. The public relations approaches are identified as: (i) press relations, (ii) product publicity, (iii) corporate communication, (iv) lobbying, and (v) counselling. Besides, there is also marketing public relations (MPR) on which companies are turning their

⁹⁸ Ibid (62).

⁹⁹ Ibid (21).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid (1). pp.293-294.

directions. And, the major tools of marketing public relations comprises of: publications, events, news, speeches, public service activities, and identity media.

From the above discussions, it can be understood that there are various promotional tools which are available in the literature and these tools can be presented in the following chart:

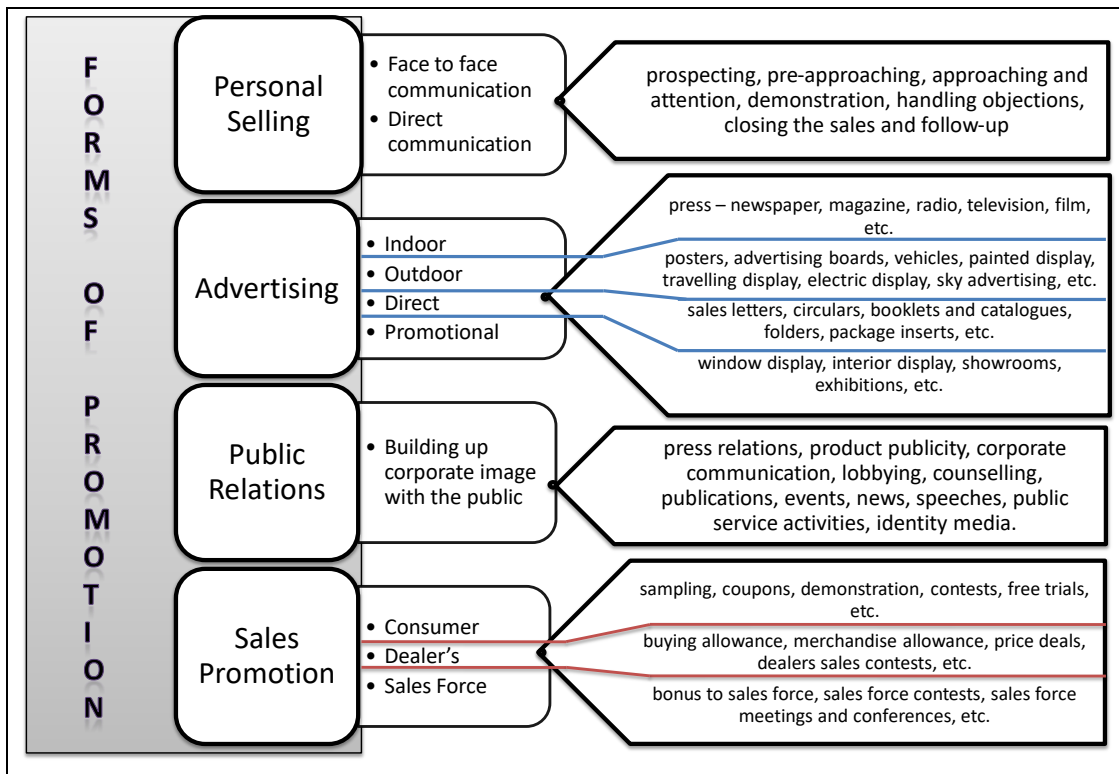


Figure 1.4: Theoretical background on the promotion element of marketing mix

Source: Compiled by the researcher.

The marketing elements and sub-elements which the study is going to analyse from the perspective of women entrepreneurs of Manipur are presented here at Figure 1.5 as theoretical background of the study.



Figure 1.5: Theoretical Background of the Study
 Source: Compiled by the researcher

1.5 Conclusion

It can be seen from the theoretical perspectives that marketing involves a wide range of practices and the practices cannot be same for all kinds of women enterprises rather it will differ according to place, time, season, nature of enterprise, and also from entrepreneur to entrepreneur. Hence, in order to identify the most relevant and appropriate marketing practices for their enterprise, women entrepreneurs are required to understand the nature of their enterprise. Because, the way women entrepreneurs use to run their business are quite different from men and large scale enterprises. Susan (n.d.)¹⁰¹ mentions that there are four differences in how women run their businesses

¹⁰¹ Susan, B. (n.d.). *Why Market to Women Entrepreneurs*. Retrieve July 07, 2012 from <http://www.baycomm.ca/imagespdf/Article-Why-market-to-women-entrepreneurs.pdf>.

compared to their male counterparts which are needed to be recognised and addressed while shaping marketing initiative for women and they are: (i) women welcome help, advice and practical business information this in turn makes calls for marketing strategy to include education component; (ii) women are more tend towards growing their business which implies that they are risk taker when they have sound information on which to base their decisions and hence, when women shapes their marketing strategy there is no need to reflect this need for information; (iii) relationship and a sense of community are important to women and hence, this makes their marketing efforts to recognise how they can develop and sustain such relationship; and lastly (iv) women entrepreneurs take a more holistic approach to their businesses and this makes marketing strategies to incorporate good ethical practices that can speak to women from a more holistic perspective.

Above points indicate that how difference in the nature of enterprise and its environment can create difference in adopting marketing strategies and practices. Therefore, in order to identify the most adequate and effective marketing practices of women entrepreneurs; it is required to know beforehand the nature of their enterprise and the environment in which they operate.

As mentioned, women enterprises in India in general and Manipur in particular are generally micro and small in nature. Besides, they are generally new and also lack managerial/functional knowledge and skills including marketing in operating their enterprise. As such, marketing for the women entrepreneurs would not be an easy task and would be more difficult compared to the marketing practices in larger firm. Above this, marketing in a small firm cannot be regarded as a scaled – down version of how it is practiced in a larger firm. Therefore, the problem of marketing is different in case of micro and small women entrepreneurs. And because of marketing problems women

entrepreneurs sometime may face with the situation of decline in their business even resulting to complete failure. Therefore, women entrepreneurs need to educate or trained themselves in the area of marketing and be marketing oriented in their approach while running the enterprise. In this background the study tries to analyse the marketing practices of women entrepreneurs of Manipur with special reference to select marketing mix viz. Product, Price and Promotion.

The next chapter of the study presents the available review of literature on marketing practices of women entrepreneurs, and it also presents the gap in the research and the significance this study in the present context.