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A STUDY ON MARKETING CHALLENGES FACED BY SELLERS OF SIDDHA PRODUCTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Siddha medicine which is one of the ancient traditional medicine systems, has gained increasing consumer interest due to rising awareness of natural solutions for human health problems. The attentiveness to natural medicine has expanded among people post COVID period. Even with this growth, sellers of Siddha products continue to face various marketing challenges that limit their outreach and business sustainability. This study surveys the key marketing difficulties encountered by Siddha product sellers in Coimbatore city. Primary data was collected from 120 sellers through a structured questionnaire. Tools such as the Simple Percentage Analysis and Rank Analysis were used. The study suggests strategic promotional effort, improved supply chain practices and government certification to enhance the market potential of Siddha products.

KEY WORDS: Siddha Medicine, Marketing Challenges, Traditional system, Consumer Awareness, Natural Medicines, Herbal Products, Promotion Strategies, Market Competition, Retail sellers.

INTRODUCTION

Siddha medicine has been an essential part of traditional culture for centuries and is known for its holistic approach to healing. The natural treatment was originated by Siddhar Agasthiyar who is considered as the founding father of medical system. There are 18 prominent siddhars who are main contributors to this medicine system. The system views illness as an imbalance of three humors like Vadham, Pitham and Kabam. It uses a combination of herbal medicines, dietary changes, physical activities and lifestyle adjustments. In recent years the herbal medicines have increased significantly. Because the other medicinal products has various side effects. However, despite potential, Siddha products sellers face numerous of marketing challenges that obstruct their business expansion. The study aims to explore these marketing constraints and recommended strategies to strengthen Siddha Product marketing in Coimbatore city.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1. The study is confined to sellers of Siddha products operating within Coimbatore city.

2. The study explores the major marketing challenges faced by sellers.
3. The study is based on data collection during the current period reflecting the present market environment and challenges.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Siddha medicine has been gaining renewed attention in the recent years due to its natural and holistic treatment. This therapy is valued and has growing consumer interest but sellers of siddha products continue to face significant marketing challenges as the market is dominated by allopathic and other alternative medicine systems that have strong branding and higher consumer awareness. Siddha product sellers struggle with issues such as lack of standardization. The study intends to provide insights that could help to improve marketing practices and enhance the growth potential of the Siddha product sellers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the study are framed as follows.

1. To identify the major marketing challenges faced by Siddha product sellers in Coimbatore city.
2. To evaluate the level of competition faced by Siddha product sellers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The responses are based on a limited number of sellers, which may not completely capture the perspective of all Siddha product sellers.
2. The study focuses only on the sellers and does not have manufactures viewpoints.
3. This study is limited to Coimbatore city only.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review is both a summary and explanation of the complete and current state of knowledge on a limited topic as found in academic books and journal articles. Thus it refers to the process of reading, analyzing, evaluating, and summarizing scholarly materials about a specific topic.

Kotler (2012)¹, highlighted that marketing challenges arise mainly due to changes in technology, competition and consumer expectations. He emphasized that sellers must adopt suitable marketing strategies to remain competitive.

Ramaswamy & Namakumari (2013)², in their study identified that low customer awareness significantly affects product sales, especially in traditional markets. The study concluded that awareness building is essential for sales growth.

Nithya & Priya (2015)³, made a study on herbal and siddha product marketing and revealed that competition from allopathic products affects market performance. They stated that traditional product sellers require stronger promotional efforts.

Rajan (2018)⁴, observed that traditional medicine markets face challenges related to consumer trust and lack of regulatory clarity.

Srinivasan & Devi (2019)⁵, found that herbal products sellers struggle with low promotional activities, inadequate consumer awareness, competition from modern medicines and limited brand recognition. Their findings suggest that improved branding and government support will help expanding the siddha products.

Lakshmi (2021)⁶, made a study on traditional medicine products and identified that inadequate promotional activities and low awareness are the primary reasons for poor marketing performance of Siddha products.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study adopts a descriptive research design conducted in Coimbatore city and 120 siddha product sellers were the selected sampling for analysis. Data was collected through structured questionnaire and used statistical tools of Percentage analysis and Chi-square test.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1
Percentage Analysis on Marketing Challenges Faced by Siddha Product Sellers

Marketing Challenges	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%	Total
High Competition from Brans	85	70.83	20	16.67	15	12.5	120
Low Customer Awareness	90	75	15	12.5	15	12.5	120
Inadequate Promotion	80	66.67	25	20.83	15	12.5	120
Price Challenging	70	58.33	30	25.00	20	16.67	120
Distribution and Supply Chain Problems	65	54.17	35	29.17	20	16.67	120

Interpretation

- Low customer awareness (75%) is the biggest challenge.
- High Competition (70.83%) strongly affects sales.
- Inadequate promotion (66.67%) limits products reach.
- Price fluctuations (58.33%) creates distrust which affects seller reliability and profitability.
- Distribution Issues (54.17%) affects product availability.

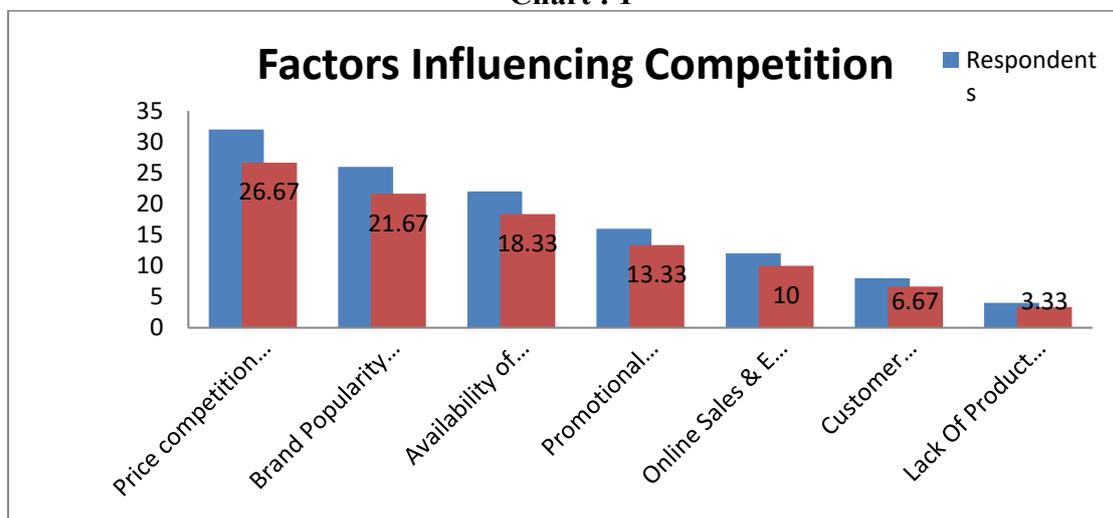
Rank analysis

To evaluate the level of competition faced by siddha product sellers, rank level analysis was carried out and the respondents were asked to the rank factors influencing competition.

Table 2
Rank Level Analysis of Factors Influencing Competition

Factors Influencing Competition	Rank
Price competition from Herbal and Ayurvedhic Products	I
Brand Popularity of Modern Herbal Products	II
Availability of substitute Products	III
Promotional Activities By Competition	IV
Online Sales & E commerce plat form	V
Customer Preference towards Allopathic	VI
Lack Of Product Standardization & Certification	VII

Chart : 1



Interpretation

- The rank level analysis reveals that **Price competition from herbal and ayurvedhic brands** is the most significant competition factor faced by Siddha product sellers, securing **First** rank.
- The **Brand Popularity of Modern Herbal Products** ranks **second**, highlighting the impact of strong brand image and advertising on customer buying behavior.
- **Availability of substitute Products** ranks **third**, suggesting that the Siddha products face stiff competition from multiple holistic alternatives.
- **Promotional Activities by Competition** ranks **fourth**, suggesting the Siddha products promotions is crucial.
- Factors such as **Online sales platforms** and **Customer Preference Toward allopathy** occupy **lower** ranks, indicating comparatively lesser but still notable influence.
- The **least** ranked factor is **Lack of Product Standardization & Certification**, though it still contributes to competitive pressure.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that siddha product sellers in Coimbatore city face various marketing challenges that limit their business growth. Strategic interventions in promotions, packaging, awareness and government support needs to improve the marketing performance and consumer acceptance.

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