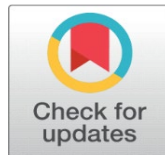


# REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MARKETING STRATEGIES AMONG MSMES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOOD PROCESSING UNITS IN JAMMU DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) are an important part of economic growth and job creation in developing countries. MSMEs make up over 30% of India's GDP, 45% of its manufacturing output, and 40% of its total exports [Ministry of MSME \(2023\)](#). These businesses are very important for encouraging balanced growth in all parts of the country and for encouraging new ideas and business ownership. Food processing companies are a major part of the MSME sector. They connect agricultural productivity to consumer markets and create value along the supply chain [Food and Agriculture Organization \(2020\)](#).

**Keywords:** Msmes, Food Processing Units, Implementation, Marketing Strategies, Jammu

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) are an important part of economic growth and job creation in developing countries. MSMEs make up over 30% of India's GDP, 45% of its manufacturing output, and 40% of its total exports [Ministry of MSME \(2023\)](#). These businesses are very important for encouraging balanced growth in all parts of the country and for encouraging new ideas and business ownership. Food processing companies are a major part of the MSME sector. They connect agricultural productivity to consumer markets and create value along the supply chain [Food and Agriculture Organization \(2020\)](#).

The food processing MSME sector in Jammu, which is part of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, has grown a lot, especially in the industrial hubs of RS Pura, Bari Brahmana, and Gangyal. These places have a lot of small and micro food processing businesses that serve local and regional markets. However, the way marketing techniques are used and adopted in various areas is very different because of variances in operational capabilities, financial resources, market access, and competitive pressures. To make good policies and support systems that work for everyone, it's important to understand these differences throughout regions.

The 4Ps—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—are all parts of a marketing plan [Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#). For MSMEs, good marketing tactics can help them get over problems like not being able to see their brand well, not having enough distribution networks, and not having strong relationships with customers. Research has indicated that MSMEs that put money into making their products different, pricing them competitively, advertising them, and organizing their distribution tend to do better than other businesses [Raju \(2018\)](#), [Sharma and Yadav \(2021\)](#).

Even though marketing techniques are important in theory and in practice, MSMEs don't use them enough because they don't have enough resources, don't know enough about the market, and have poor management [Rathore et al. \(2019\)](#). In Jammu, these problems are made worse by being geographically isolated, having trouble with the supply chain, and not knowing anything about government support programs. The way the local market works is also very important. For example, Bari Brahmana has a more developed industrial base, which means that it can try out new things and reach more people than RS Pura and Gangyal.

The goal of this study is to look into how MSMEs in the food processing sector use marketing tactics in various parts of Jammu's industrial areas. This study looks at how different strategies are used in product development, pricing, organizational capabilities, and promotional practices by using structured questionnaires and statistical methods like Chi-Square tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis to collect quantitative data.

The reason for this study is to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of specific areas. Existing literature is largely generalized at the national or state level, ignoring the heterogeneity within regions [Kumar \(2022\)](#). As such, this research provides an empirical lens into the strategic behaviour of MSMEs within a specific context, offering actionable insights for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and industry stakeholders.

The study further aligns with the Government of India's emphasis on MSME growth through initiatives like the MSME Champions Scheme, PMEGP, and Digital MSME programs. By identifying gaps and strengths in marketing strategy implementation, especially in geographically and economically distinct sub-regions, this research contributes to the discourse on inclusive economic development and competitive positioning of MSMEs.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing strategies have long been considered a critical determinant of business success. According to [Kotler and Keller \(2016\)](#), the 4Ps framework—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—serves as the foundational model for designing marketing strategies that align with business goals and customer needs.

For MSMEs, which often don't have a lot of resources, using these features in a strategic way might help them stand out and get more business [Tambunan \(2011\)](#).

The design, features, and quality of products are all part of product strategy. To compete with bigger companies, MSMEs that process food frequently focus on making goods that offer value. [Chauhan and Singh \(2019\)](#) say that small food processors in India depend a lot on new packaging and consistent quality to get local customers. Branding, diversity, and standardization are some of the main ways that businesses in Jammu distinguish out from the crowd.

Pricing methods are just as crucial. MSMEs commonly employ demand-based pricing to stay competitive and keep their costs down. [Mishra and Sahoo \(2018\)](#) found that micro and small businesses often adopt cost-plus and market-based pricing. However, not enough market research and competition analysis means that dynamic pricing techniques are still not used enough.

Place strategy, which encompasses distribution and logistics, is very important for getting to customers. [Seth and Kalra \(2020\)](#) say that MSMEs have logistical problems that make it hard for them to serve markets that are far away. In distant locations like RS Pura and Gangyal, there aren't many ways to get goods to market, so enterprises have to rely on local networks. On the other hand, Bari Brahmana has a better transportation network because it has a strong industrial base.

Advertising, market research, and branding are all ways to get customers involved in promotional strategies. [Singh and Ahuja \(2020\)](#) say that MSMEs that do more marketing see more loyal customers and more sales. But smaller businesses generally don't use full promotional programs because they don't know about them or because they don't have the money to do so.

Several studies also show that MSMEs have trouble carrying out their marketing strategies. [Rathore et al. \(2019\)](#) said that not knowing how to sell, not getting formal training, and not using digital tools are still big problems. [Sharma \(2022\)](#) said that MSMEs in Jammu frequently rely on word-of-mouth and traditional marketing, with very little usage of digital tools and analytics.

Policies can help MSMEs improve their marketing tactics. [Kumar and Rajan \(2021\)](#) say that programs like Digital MSME and MSE-CDP (Cluster Development Programme) can help businesses improve their branding and competitiveness. However, these programs are still not being used to their full potential since information is not widely available and there are bureaucratic barriers.

In general, the research shows how important it is to do research that is particular to a certain setting or sector. General frameworks are helpful, but MSMEs in specific areas like Jammu have their own problems that need to be looked at in depth and solutions found.

### **3. OBJECTIVE**

To analyse the implementation of marketing strategies by MSMEs in Jammu District.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a quantitative research method to look at how food processing MSMEs in three industrial zones in Jammu District—RS Pura, Bari Brahmana, and Gangyal—put their marketing plans into action. Researcher chose these places because they have a lot of registered MSMEs and are important for food processing in the area.

#### 4.1. SAMPLING AND DATA COLLECTION

A total of 120 MSMEs were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation from each zone: RS Pura (40), Bari Brahmana (40), and Gangyal (40). Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires administered face-to-face to enterprise owners and managers. The questionnaire was divided into sections based on the 4Ps of marketing strategy and included both closed-ended and Likert-scale-based questions.

#### 4.2. VARIABLES AND CONSTRUCTS

- **Product:** Variables included product diversification, quality control, branding, packaging, standardization, and pre-production research.
- **Price:** Measured using pricing methods, pricing objectives, and pricing policies.
- **Place:** Covered organizational capabilities, competitor strategies, and environmental adaptability.
- **Promotion:** Encompassed advertising, consumer research, marketability testing, and market research.

#### 4.3. ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES

Researcher used SPSS to look at the data. Researcher used descriptive statistics to sum up the answers across all the variables. Researcher used chi-square tests to look at the links between marketing variables and motivating factors. Researcher utilized one-way ANOVA to look at how strategic influence varied between different zones. Researcher used regression analysis to find out how well variables like pricing policy and market research could predict how well a business would do.

#### 4.4. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Values ranged from 0.875 to 0.947 throughout the districts, which means they were very reliable. Expert reviews made sure that the content was valid.

#### 4.5. ETHICAL CONCERNS

People who took part in the study were told why it was being done and that their answers would be kept private. Everyone could choose to take part, and all answers were kept private.

### 5. ANALYSIS

The statistical results demonstrate that there are strong links between competition strategy and production motivation in all districts, with Bari Brahmana being the most dependent. The ANOVA results show that Bari Brahmana has a stronger link between competitive strength and pricing, which shows that it has a more mature approach to pricing. Regression models, on the other hand, show that they don't explain much, which means that other things may affect pricing and marketing outcomes. Even said, pricing tactics and market research are still

important determinants, especially in Gangyal, where businesses seem to rely more on structured and well-informed marketing to get ahead of their competitors.

**Table 1**

<b>Table 1 Chi-Square Test: Strategy Competitor * Production Motivation</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>Chi-Square Value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
RS Pura	6.102	0.013
Bari Brahmana	8.273	0.004
Gangyal	6.387	0.011

In all three districts, the Chi-Square test demonstrates a statistically significant link between competition strategy and production motivation. Bari Brahmana ( $\chi^2 = 8.273$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) has the strongest link. This means that MSMEs in Bari Brahmana are more likely to change their production plans based on what their competitors do. The numbers in RS Pura and Gangyal are a little lower, but they still show a significant effect, which means that competition is an important part of strategic planning across the whole region.

**Table 2**

<b>Table 2 ANOVA: Competitive Strength and Pricing Methods</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
RS Pura	0.206	0.012
Bari Brahmana	1.807	0.026
Gangyal	0.333	0.013

The ANOVA results suggest that competitive strength has a big effect on pricing strategies in all districts, with Bari Brahmana ( $F = 1.807$ ,  $p = 0.026$ ) having the biggest effect. This means that firms in Bari Brahmana change their prices more quickly when they face competition. The p-values are significant in RS Pura and Gangyal, but the smaller F-values suggest that other factors, such as manufacturing cost or market demand, have a bigger impact on pricing strategies.

## 6. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

**Table 3**

<b>Table 3 Model Summary</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R-Square</b>
RS Pura	0.066	0.004
Bari Brahmana	0.079	0.006
Gangyal	0.087	0.008

The R-square values for all three places are quite low (0.004 to 0.008), which means that the variables pricing tactics and market research explain less than 1% of the differences in outcomes. Gangyal's R-square value is a little higher, which means that it is a little better at predicting, but the existing models don't take into consideration other important factors.

**Table 4**

<b>Table 4 ANOVA Summary</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>F-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
RS Pura	0.074	0.024

Bari Brahmana	0.112	0.014
Gangyal	0.140	0.030

The regression models are statistically significant in all districts, but Gangyal ( $F = 0.140$ ,  $p = 0.030$ ) has the greatest fit. The low F-values across districts, on the other hand, show that the models only explain a small part of the variance. To make them more useful, more predictors need to be added.

**Table 5**

Table 5 Coefficients		
Location	Pricing Strategies (t-value)	Market Research (t-value)
RS Pura	0.254 ( $p=0.012$ )	0.307 ( $p=0.031$ )
Bari Brahmana	0.343 ( $p=0.033$ )	0.343 ( $p=0.033$ )
Gangyal	0.348 ( $p=0.030$ )	0.421 ( $p=0.036$ )

In all districts, pricing tactics and market research are good indicators of how well a business will do. Gangyal has the greatest t-values, notably for market research ( $t = 0.421$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ). This means that structured, research-based marketing decisions are more common here. RS Pura and Bari Brahmana also care about these things, although not as much.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The study shows that MSMEs in Jammu District use different marketing techniques in different parts of the region. Bari Brahmana is the most advanced at using systematic marketing techniques, especially when it comes to pricing, standardizing products, and reaching out to customers through advertising. The presence of medium and big businesses in this area probably makes it easier to learn about competitive practices and get resources. While RS Pura and Gangyal are active, they don't have a lot of strategic depth, especially when it comes to pricing and promotion.

The statistical tests show that production motivation is strongly linked to competition strategies in all zones. This shows that MSME operations are becoming more focused on the market. Pricing policies and market research don't explain everything, though. This means that we need to look into other aspects that might be affecting things, such how people use technology, how much help the government gives, and how well people understand money.

The variances show how important it is to customize interventions to meet the needs of each district. For example, Gangyal MSMEs would get more out of training on how to promote their businesses and digital marketing tools, whereas RS Pura might need help with their supply chain and pricing strategy. In general, the results confirm the importance of localized strategy for the success of MSMEs and advocate for policy measures that take into account the reality on the ground.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The study looked into how food processing MSMEs in three major industrial areas of Jammu District—RS Pura, Bari Brahmana, and Gangyal—used marketing techniques. The study found important information about how geographical factors



affect the use and success of marketing strategies in the MSME sector by using real-world data and strong statistical analysis.

The study shows that even while marketing methods are generally seen as important, they are used very differently in different areas. Bari Brahmana is more involved with organized initiatives within the 4Ps framework since it has better infrastructure and is more mature as an industry. Conversely, RS Pura and Gangyal, which consist predominantly of micro and small enterprises, face challenges in deploying comprehensive marketing tactics due to resource limitations and lack of technical know-how.

## 9. KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE

- 1) **Product strategy** is widely implemented, especially in quality control, packaging, and standardization.
- 2) **Price strategy** shows heavy reliance on demand-based methods, with limited experimentation in dynamic pricing.
- 3) **Place strategy** is constrained in RS Pura and Gangyal, requiring capacity-building initiatives.
- 4) **Promotion strategy** is underutilized, particularly in digital and research-based marketing.

The study's statistical tests, including Chi-Square and ANOVA, confirmed the significance of competitor strategies in influencing production motivations and pricing decisions. However, regression analysis revealed limited explanatory power of current pricing and research strategies, pointing to the need for broader frameworks.

From a policy perspective, the findings underscore the necessity for localized interventions. One-size-fits-all strategies are inadequate in capturing the ground-level complexities of MSMEs. Tailored training, better access to digital infrastructure, simplified financial support mechanisms, and promotion of export readiness are some of the recommended interventions.

Future research can build on these findings by exploring longitudinal data and incorporating qualitative insights from MSME owners. Integrating supply chain dynamics, digital transformation trends, and environmental sustainability metrics could offer a more comprehensive view of MSME competitiveness.

In conclusion, the research contributes to academic and policy discourses by offering a micro-regional analysis of MSME marketing strategy implementation. The insights derived can inform both government and industry efforts in nurturing a robust, market-responsive MSME ecosystem in Jammu and beyond.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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