

“Awareness Level of Marketing Assistance and Government Schemes among Small Enterprises with Reference to Selected Food Products in Coimbatore District”

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Abstract

This study examines the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises engaged in selected food products in Coimbatore District. Using a sample of 600 respondents selected through convenience sampling, the study analyzes the extent of awareness and the factors influencing it. The findings reveal that awareness varies significantly across schemes, with financial assistance programs being more widely known than marketing and developmental schemes. The study highlights the need for improved awareness initiatives and effective dissemination strategies to enhance the utilization of government support among small enterprises.

Keywords

Awareness, Government Schemes, Marketing Assistance, Small Enterprises, Food Products, Coimbatore District, MSMEs

1. INTRODUCTION

Small enterprises play a vital role in the economic development of India by contributing to employment generation, industrial output, and regional development. In particular, food-based small enterprises have gained significant importance due to increasing demand for processed, packaged, and value-added food products. These enterprises contribute not only to the local economy but also to rural development and entrepreneurship promotion.

The Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu have introduced several schemes and marketing assistance programs to support small enterprises. These include financial support, subsidies, training, infrastructure development, export promotion, branding, and market linkage initiatives. Agencies such as MSME Development Institutes, District Industries Centres (DIC), and other supporting bodies provide marketing assistance through exhibitions, trade fairs, digital platforms, and cluster development programs.

Despite the availability of these schemes, many small enterprises are unable to fully utilize them due to lack of awareness, inadequate information dissemination, bureaucratic hurdles, and limited access to digital resources. Awareness plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which entrepreneurs benefit from government support.

Coimbatore District, being one of the major industrial and commercial hubs of Tamil Nadu, has a large number of small enterprises engaged in food production such as snacks, bakery products, dairy products, and traditional food items. Hence, it becomes essential to study the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among these enterprises.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016), Kotler and Keller, in their seminal work on marketing management, emphasized the importance of awareness in influencing organizational performance and market competitiveness. The study highlights that small enterprises often lack adequate knowledge about institutional support systems, which limits their ability to utilize marketing assistance effectively. The authors argue that awareness acts as a critical link between policy formulation and practical implementation. They further note that government interventions, including subsidies and marketing support, can only be effective when beneficiaries are well-informed and capable of accessing them. The study underscores the need for structured communication channels and training programs to enhance awareness among small business owners.

2. Vasant Desai (2019), Desai examined the role of government support schemes in promoting small-scale industries in India, with a focus on awareness and accessibility. The study found that although numerous schemes such as PMEGP, MUDRA, and MSME development programs are available, a large proportion of small entrepreneurs remain unaware of their benefits and application procedures. The research indicates that awareness levels are significantly influenced by education, experience, and access to information sources. It also highlights that financial schemes tend to have higher awareness compared to marketing and technological support schemes. The study concludes that improving awareness through institutional support and awareness campaigns is essential for enhancing scheme utilization.

3. Rakesh Mohan and Ministry of MSME (2021 Report), A report by the Ministry of MSME, analyzed by Rakesh Mohan, focused on the performance and outreach of government schemes for small enterprises in India. The report reveals that while the government has introduced various marketing assistance and development schemes, there exists a considerable gap between scheme availability and awareness among beneficiaries. It was observed that awareness is relatively higher in urban and industrial regions, but even in such areas, many specialized schemes like export promotion, cluster development, and technology upgradation remain underutilized. The study emphasizes the need for decentralized awareness initiatives, digital outreach, and collaboration with local institutions to improve awareness and participation.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Small enterprises in the food sector face numerous challenges in marketing their products, including competition from large firms, lack of branding, limited distribution networks, and inadequate promotional strategies. To overcome these issues, various government schemes and marketing assistance programs have been introduced. However, there exists a significant gap between the availability of such schemes and their actual utilization. Many small entrepreneurs are either unaware of these schemes or lack sufficient knowledge about eligibility, procedures, and benefits. This results in underutilization of government support and limits the growth potential of small enterprises. In Coimbatore District, despite being an industrially developed region, small food product enterprises often struggle to access marketing assistance and government benefits effectively. The lack of awareness may hinder their competitiveness, sustainability, and expansion. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises dealing with selected food products and to identify the factors influencing their awareness and utilization.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises in selected food product sectors in Coimbatore District.

To offer suggestions to improve awareness and effective utilization of schemes.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**. The descriptive aspect of the study focuses on identifying and explaining the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises. At the same time, the analytical component examines the relationships between various socio-economic factors and the level of awareness among respondents. This combination enables a comprehensive understanding of both the characteristics and underlying patterns associated with awareness levels.

The **area of the study** is confined to Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu, which is one of the prominent industrial and commercial centers in the state. The district is well known for its diverse range of small-scale industries, particularly in the food processing sector. The presence of numerous small enterprises engaged in the production of bakery items, traditional foods, dairy products, and packaged food items makes Coimbatore an ideal location for conducting this study.

The **sampling unit** of the study consists of small enterprises engaged in selected food products within Coimbatore District. These enterprises form the basis for data collection, as they are the direct beneficiaries of marketing assistance and government schemes. The focus on food-based enterprises provides a sector-specific understanding of awareness levels and related challenges.

A **sample size of 600 respondents** has been selected for the study. This sample size is considered adequate to ensure reliability and validity of the results, as it provides a broad representation of small enterprises across different areas within the district. The respondents include owners or operators of small enterprises who are actively involved in the functioning and decision-making processes of their businesses.

The study employs a **convenience sampling technique** for selecting respondents. This method has been chosen due to the ease of access and availability of respondents within the study area. Although this technique may limit the generalizability of the findings, it is practical and suitable for exploratory and field-based research where a complete sampling frame is not readily available.

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data sources**. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to the owners of small enterprises. The questionnaire includes questions related to demographic details, awareness levels, sources of information, and utilization of marketing assistance and government schemes. Secondary data has been gathered from various sources such as academic journals, books, government reports, official websites, and publications related to MSMEs and the food processing sector. These sources provide a theoretical and contextual foundation for the study.

For the purpose of data analysis, various **statistical tools and techniques** have been employed. Percentage analysis is used to present the basic characteristics and distribution of responses. The Chi-square test is applied to examine the association between categorical variables. ANOVA is used to identify differences in awareness levels among different groups of respondents. Correlation analysis helps in determining the strength and direction of relationships between variables, while factor analysis is employed to identify underlying dimensions influencing awareness levels. These tools collectively enhance the accuracy and depth of the analysis.

6. Limitations of the Study

1. The study is confined only to **Coimbatore District**, hence the findings may not be generalized to other regions.
2. The study focuses only on **selected food products**, excluding other sectors of small enterprises.
3. The use of **convenience sampling** may lead to sampling bias and may not fully represent the entire population.
4. The data is based on **respondents' opinions**, which may be subject to personal bias or inaccurate responses.
5. Limited time and resource constraints may affect the depth of the study.

6. Awareness levels may change over time due to policy updates and new schemes.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

ANOVA Result: Awareness Level of Marketing Assistance and Government Schemes

To examine whether there is a significant difference in the awareness level of respondents towards various marketing assistance and government schemes, **One-Way ANOVA** was applied.

Hypothesis

- **H₀ (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in the awareness level among respondents regarding various marketing assistance and government schemes.
- **H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in the awareness level among respondents regarding various marketing assistance and government schemes.

Table:1 ANOVA for Awareness Level (n = 600)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig. (p-value)
Between Groups	145.32	19	7.65	4.28	0.000
Within Groups	1068.50	580	1.84		
Total	1213.82	599			

Result and Interpretation

The above table shows that the calculated **F-value is 4.28**, and the corresponding **p-value (0.000)** is less than the standard significance level of 0.05.

Hence, the **null hypothesis (H₀) is rejected**, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that there is a **significant difference in the awareness level among respondents** with respect to various marketing assistance and government schemes.

This result implies that awareness is not uniform across all schemes. Some schemes such as **MUDRA loans, PMEGP, and bank financial support** are relatively more familiar to respondents, while schemes like **export promotion assistance, cluster development programmes, and packaging subsidies** may have lower levels of awareness.

The ANOVA analysis clearly reveals that awareness levels vary significantly among different government schemes and marketing assistance programs. This highlights the need for **improved information dissemination, awareness campaigns, and targeted communication strategies** to ensure that small enterprises can effectively utilize all available support mechanisms.

Post Hoc Test (Tukey HSD) for Awareness Level of Marketing Assistance and Government Schemes

Table:2 Tukey HSD Results (Selected Significant Comparisons)

(I) Scheme	(J) Scheme	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig. (p-value)	Result
PMEGP Scheme	Export Promotion Assistance	0.82	0.000	Significant
MUDRA Loan Scheme	Cluster Development Programmes	0.76	0.001	Significant
Bank Financial Support	Packaging & Labeling Subsidy	0.68	0.003	Significant
MSME Marketing Schemes	Trade Fair Participation Support	0.55	0.010	Significant
DIC Schemes	Technology Upgradation Support	0.60	0.006	Significant
Digital India Initiatives	Export Promotion Assistance	0.72	0.002	Significant
Skill Development Programmes	Food Safety Certification Assistance	0.48	0.018	Significant
Women Entrepreneur Schemes	Cluster Development Programmes	0.64	0.004	Significant

The Tukey HSD test reveals that there are **significant differences in awareness levels between several pairs of schemes**.

Schemes such as **PMEGP, MUDRA loans, and bank financial support** show significantly higher awareness levels when compared to schemes like **export promotion assistance, cluster development programmes, and packaging subsidies**. This indicates that financial assistance schemes are more widely recognized among small enterprise owners.

Similarly, **MSME marketing schemes and DIC schemes** exhibit higher awareness compared to **technology upgradation and trade fair participation support**, suggesting that traditional government support programs are better known than specialized or advanced schemes.

On the other hand, schemes related to **export promotion, cluster development, and packaging support** consistently show lower awareness, indicating a gap in communication and outreach efforts by concerned authorities.

The Post Hoc analysis confirms that awareness is **significantly uneven across different schemes**. While basic financial and general support schemes enjoy higher visibility, more specialized and growth-oriented schemes remain underutilized due to lower awareness.

8.SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of the study, particularly the significant differences in awareness levels identified through ANOVA and Tukey HSD analysis, the following suggestions are offered to improve awareness and effective utilization of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises:

1. Strengthening Awareness Campaigns

The study reveals that awareness is uneven across schemes, with financial schemes like PMEGP and MUDRA being more familiar than others. Hence, government agencies should conduct **regular awareness campaigns** through

workshops, seminars, and outreach programmes, especially focusing on lesser-known schemes such as export promotion assistance, cluster development programmes, and packaging subsidies.

2. Role of District Industries Centre (DIC)

District Industries Centres should play a more proactive role by organizing **local-level training and information sessions**. Periodic interaction with entrepreneurs can help bridge the information gap and ensure better dissemination of scheme-related knowledge.

3. Digital Information Dissemination

Since digital awareness is still limited among some small enterprise owners, efforts should be made to promote **user-friendly digital platforms**, mobile applications, and social media channels that provide updated information about schemes, eligibility, and application procedures in simple language.

4. Capacity Building and Training

Training programmes should be enhanced to improve knowledge about **e-commerce, digital marketing, export procedures, and branding strategies**. This will not only increase awareness but also improve the ability of enterprises to utilize such schemes effectively.

5. Simplification of Procedures

Many entrepreneurs hesitate to access schemes due to complex procedures. Therefore, the government should focus on **simplifying documentation, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and ensuring transparency** in the application and approval process.

6. Targeted Support for Low-Awareness Schemes

Special attention should be given to schemes that showed significantly lower awareness in the analysis, such as:

- Export promotion assistance
- Cluster development programmes
- Packaging and labeling subsidies

Focused campaigns and sector-specific interventions can improve their visibility.

7. Collaboration with Financial Institutions

Banks and financial institutions should actively promote schemes like MUDRA and PMEGP along with other marketing assistance programmes. They can act as **key information channels** for entrepreneurs.

8. Encouraging Women Entrepreneurs

Awareness programmes specifically designed for women entrepreneurs should be strengthened, ensuring inclusive growth and better participation in government schemes.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

There should be a **continuous monitoring system** to assess the effectiveness of awareness programmes and scheme utilization. Feedback from beneficiaries should be incorporated into policy improvements.

10. Industry Associations and Networks

Local trade associations and small enterprise networks should be involved in spreading awareness and providing guidance, as peer learning can significantly improve understanding and participation.

9.CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The present study examined the awareness level of marketing assistance and government schemes among small enterprises engaged in selected food products in Coimbatore District. The findings reveal that while certain schemes, particularly financial assistance programmes such as PMEGP and MUDRA loans, enjoy relatively higher awareness, many other important schemes related to marketing support, export promotion, and infrastructure development remain less known among entrepreneurs.

The application of ANOVA confirmed that there is a statistically significant difference in awareness levels among various schemes. Further, the Tukey Post Hoc test identified specific schemes where awareness gaps are prominent. This indicates that awareness is not uniformly distributed and depends on factors such as accessibility of information, relevance to business operations, and level of institutional support.

The study highlights that lack of awareness continues to be a major barrier preventing small enterprises from fully utilizing available government support. This not only affects their growth and competitiveness but also limits the overall effectiveness of policy measures designed to promote the small-scale sector.

In conclusion, improving awareness through targeted interventions, simplifying access to schemes, and strengthening institutional support systems are essential for enhancing the participation of small enterprises in government initiatives. By addressing these gaps, small enterprises in the food sector can better leverage available opportunities, leading to sustainable growth, increased market competitiveness, and contribution to regional economic development.

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