ABSTRACT

As the globalisation of markets is moving forward at a rapid pace, organizations are finding it tough to differentiate their offerings. Organizations have started linking their marketing and sales objectives to a social cause or charity. There are many organizations that have realized the significance of social alliances and based on that designed and developed various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. There are several modes or approaches in which organizations may manifest their CSR. Under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility, one of the modes known as cause related marketing (CRM) started receiving special interest among many Indian organizations. In India, cause related marketing over the past decade has developed into a versatile and cost effective tool accomplishing corporate objectives. CRM could be described as a phenomenon where an organization makes a commitment to contribute towards a specific cause or charity from the sale of a product or service over a particular period of time.

The literature review extensively undertaken on the subject of “Understanding Customer Awareness, Perceptions and Preferences towards Cause related Marketing” revealed that it is less explored in the Indian context. In this study, descriptive research has been adopted by the researcher to understand the awareness, perceptions and preferences towards CRM. The sampling technique used in this research study is non-probability sampling technique of quota sampling and convenience sampling. The sample size determined for this study is 500 and the data was collected from five cities of Gujarat - Ahmedabad, Baroda, Patan, Rajkot and Surat. These cities were chosen to geographically represent the state of Gujarat and therefore, the number of respondents were preferably selected from each of the five cities, respectively based on the population of these five cities. The data analysis for this research study was undertaken by using the SPSS software and AMOS software.

The results on CRM awareness lead us to understand that the relationship among the demographic variables and CRM phenomenon are worth noting since it is complex and this information gathered through the findings of this study
would be crucial for the managers in CRM decision making. The results on CRM perception lead us to understand that ‘perception towards company’ and ‘perception towards brand’ have emerged as two significant factors in this research study and these two factors significantly contribute to research in terms of decision making for marketing managers in understanding the overall design of CRM implementation.

One of the other major objectives of this study was to acquire knowledge regarding the antecedents of the CRM participation and study the context of CRM participation from the Indian perspective. Accordingly, this thesis through the review of pertinent literature has adopted the associative learning theory in the research study to improve our understanding of CRM participation. When the information regarding what is the preferred cause type or what is the preferred cause scope along with the nature of donation or what is the most preferred source of information for CRM awareness is available, then practitioners could design effective CRM programs for greatest extent of CRM participation. This study distinctly meets its objective in the sense that the contribution is theoretically backed by association learning theory and methodologically backed by the adoption of advanced techniques like structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the proposed measurement model. The utilization of advanced techniques increases the ability to test as well as uncover the association relationship that could provide future directions for successful CRM participation.

The major contributions of this research are (a) understanding CRM Awareness from demographic perspective (b) perception towards the company and perception towards the brand as the significant factors to be taken into consideration by the marketing managers when it comes to evaluating the perception towards CRM (c) antecedents of CRM participation which are precisely cause type, cause scope along with nature of donation and CRM awareness. This research culminates with a discussion together with managerial implication and conclusion. Lastly, the recommendations for future research are delineated.