CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION:

The till recently existing marketing environment in India was largely characterized by protectionism and was not very conducive for innovative marketing practices. But, the opening of the economy to the Multinational and Transnational organizations, has called for innovative marketing practices for maintaining and enhancing their competitive positions in the market. Symbiotic Marketing is an innovative perspective of the concept of Organizational Exchange, that enables the participating firms in improving their respective marketing potentialities. It is a better option in efficiently utilizing the precious marketing resources of a firm.

The preceding chapters have presented detailed discussions on the various theoretical aspects of Symbiotic Marketing and the results of the study. The current chapter enumerates a brief summary of all the preceding chapters, followed by a list of the major findings of the study and the respective implications to the practicing entrepreneurs and other parties involved. It concludes with a note on the possible areas of further research that enhances the theoretical comprehensibility and industrial applicability of Symbiotic Marketing.
7.2 Summary of the Preceding Chapters:

The increasing costs of technology sophistication, the growing importance and necessities for communications, the trend of Global economies and the social sciences that play a major role in making people to get on together - are the important implicit forces that shape the efforts to globalize the Indian economy. The objective of globalization would be achieved when the indigenous produce can match the International standards in quality, durability, performance and cost of production. The unavoidable component-value increment is to be compensated by adopting innovative strategies to retain control over the selling price of the product and maintain competitive advantage. These innovative strategies should either reduce the operational expenditure or enhance the efficient utilization of the existing resources.

The recent policy measures have broken the shackles of the protected Indian marketing environment, by opening it to the Multinational and Transnational organizations. These world-wide organizations with knowledge of efficient economies of scale, dormant market potential and abilities to practice "marketing" in its contemporary sense, intensify the competition necessitating various Inter-organizational co-operative systems. Symbiosis in business may be perceived as a state of two or more independent organizations mutually dependent on each other for specified resources or facilities for gaining mutual benefits. These agreements are not inevitable at any point of time and are sought only to enhance the
marketing capabilities of the participating firms, rather than as a source of survival. Symbiotic Marketing is a functional strategy to jointly utilize or perform specified Marketing resources for more mutual benefits to the participating firms. These cooperative agreements become strategically important, especially to the Small Scale Sector, in the light of its inherent weaknesses like limited resources and the limited scope of activities. Organizational Exchange has been the focal concept for various interorganizational co-operative strategies. Symbiotic Marketing also encompasses the nature and characteristics of this concept. The existing literature on Symbiotic Marketing is largely limited to the proposition of the concept and makes quite conspicuous the absence of a pragmatic framework for its practice. The present study is an effort to closely examine the nature and conceptual characteristics of Symbiotic Marketing. It also attempts to identify the confines of the strategy. Further, the perceptions of the Small Scale entrepreneurs are measured and analyzed to understand their inclination towards the practice of Symbiotic Marketing. The study also concentrates on developing a systematic procedure for selecting a more compatible partner-firm for practicing symbiosis. A few hypotheses are also proposed, to be answered through the study. These aid in enhancing the theoretical understanding of the concept. Further, an investigation on the obstacles in the propitious practice of the concept is also included into the province of the present study. Thus, the study has three focal objectives. They are:

1. To examine the perceptions of the Small Scale Entrepreneurs towards the concept of Symbiotic Marketing.
2. To examine the various criteria for selecting a Symbiotic partner-firm.

3. To identify the obstacles to the practice of Marketing Symbiosis in the Small Scale Sector.

Though, the study is basically exploratory in nature, it also involves descriptive and causal research. A pilot survey of about 20 Small Scale entrepreneurs is conducted to aid in designing the Descriptive and Causal research. The pilot study has guided in establishing the relationships among a few specified measures of Symbiosis, in framing the sample selection criteria and also in designing the data collecting instrument for the final study. The population for the final study consists of “all the Small Scale Units operating in the states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in Processed Foods and Cosmetics & Toiletries industries, which undertake the marketing of their produce on their own, under a registered or specified brand name”. A multistage stratified sampling approach is adopted in designing the structure of the sample, keeping the state and industry-type as the bases for stratification. The final sample size is determined by judgementally assigning a quota of 30 units for each of the four strata, depending on the Central Limit Theorem. Thus, the study initially intends to examine the perceptions of a total of 120 sample Small Scale entrepreneurs. The final sample units are selected randomly after validating their eligibility against three predetermined criteria.
The definitions of various moderator variables used in answering the hypotheses, and their respective measures are also presented while discussing the methodology adopted in the study. A fully structured questionnaire is personally scheduled to the respondents and their responses are noted mainly on nominal, Semantic or Likert-type scales. The questionnaire is organized into 5 modules collecting information on the Profile of the sample units and the respondents, their current marketing practices, their perceptions towards Symbiotic Marketing, information on their past alliances if any, and the partner-firm selection procedure. The various constraints like non-cooperation and non-availability of the resource persons have effected only a sample of 111 Small Scale Units for the study, instead of the intended 120.

The scope of the study is mainly restricted to ten specified operating resources for marketing and only one marketing asset, i.e. Marketing Knowledge and Expertise. Further, the study is limited to a few operational aspects like the different marketing resources or facilities that generate better symbiosis among firms with different marketplace relationships, the various conducive factors for its practice, and selecting a symbiotic-firm. The study is further affected by the limitations like lack of an established conceptual framework and unfamiliarity of the concept to the responding entrepreneurs.

The cooperation among economic entities may be envisaged at two levels - Organizational (Strategic alliances, Networks etc.) and Functional
Organizational Exchange is practiced by jointly sharing certain functional resources or facilities among the participating firms. Symbiotic Marketing, an inter-organizational cooperative service system in Marketing, enables the participants to access the resources or facilities of each other, for joint utilization and to enhance their respective Marketing efficiencies. It is defined as "the alliance of resources or programs, between two or more independent organizations, designed to improve the marketing potential of each". The five characteristics of Symbiotic Marketing that largely define the confines of the concept are propounded while analyzing the latent meaning of the definition. The existing literature on the concept is largely fundamental in nature and fails to develop a pragmatic model in operationalizing the strategy. The study formulated a model, incorporating the dimensions proposed by the pioneers on the concept, for explaining the nature of a Symbiotic Agreement. This model describes nine dimensions viz, Intimacy (Non-adaptive, Adaptive, Integrative), Multitude (Unifirm, Multifirm), Extent (Unidimensional, Multidimensional, Functional), Duration (One-shot, Short-term, Medium-term, Long-term, Permanent), Direction (Unilateral, Reciprocal), Axis (Existing resources, Jointly promoted new resources), Domain Similarity (Competitive, Complementary, and Unrelated product manufacturers), Function (Inter-functional, Intra-functional) and Sector (Inter-sectoral, Intra-sectoral). These Symbiotic agreements are different from the
marketer - marketing intermediary relationships as well as other Inter-organizational systems like Strategic alliances, Networks, Marketing Coalition Companies, Domesticated Markets and Hybrid Marketing systems. The changing nature and demands of Marketing in the competitive market oriented economy, make Symbiotic Marketing an alternative service system, more specifically to the Small Scale entrepreneurs.

Chapter 3 is organized into three parts presenting the results on the Profile of the sample firms and respondents, past alliances, if any, among the responding firms, and the current marketing practices of these sample firms. The first part presents the data on the profile aspects of the firms like Management Style, Industry sector, Number of products manufactured, and employee strength of firms and those of the respondents like Respondent type, Age structure, Academic Qualifications and their Industrial experience. The study results disclosed a positive association between the Aggregate Experience of the respondents and their preference for adopting Symbiotic Marketing strategies. The other demographic characteristics are found not to be influencing either the current practices, their preferences for Marketing Symbiosis or lack of initiative for leading the talks to develop such agreements. The second part discusses the nature of the alliances currently in vogue and practiced by the responding Small Scale entrepreneurs. It is observed that only fifteen per cent of the respondent firms have experience in cooperative arrangements. It is observed that most of these agreements
are Unidimensional, i.e. only for physically distributing the product, and have no time limit as the facility is needed over a long term. Moreover, these are adopted by only the entrepreneurs suffering from financial and other resource scarcities in developing even the minimum required facilities in their marketing programs, rather than for improving their marketing efficiencies. The results relating to various features of these agreements like number of participants, their satisfaction levels, marketplace relationships among them, initiative in approaching other firm, time consideration, extent of relationships, partner selection procedure, sources of information and their future intentions towards sharing activities are discussed in detail. The third part of the chapter discusses the current marketing practices of the respondent firms. Here, the levels of importance assigned to the five business functions, and specified marketing resources, adopted mode of marketing, their perceived marketing strengths and weaknesses, a few general problems in marketing and their marketing expenditure are discussed in the light of the study results. It is generally observed that most of the Small Scale entrepreneurs consider Marketing to be synonymous with physically distributing the products, and undermine to recognize the importance of the other marketing activities like Marketing Research, Sales Promotion, Direct Selling etc. Further, they fail to comprehend the changing nature and importance of various Marketing activities, as the function shifts its focus from “customer” to “relationship”.
The perceptions of the respondent Small Scale entrepreneurs measured through the questionnaire are presented and discussed in chapter 4. The results prove that both Production and Marketing facilities can be shared even among competitors. But, the respondents perceive no scope for cooperation among competitors in Finance, Personnel and Research & Development. Whereas, among non-competitors, i.e. Complementary and Unrelated product manufacturers, scope for cooperation is perceived in all the functions, except in Production. The respondents have expressed their willingness to share the established marketing resources possessed by them like Dealer Networks, Physical Distribution facilities, Marketing Knowledge and Expertise, and the resources possessed by others like Direct Selling, Marketing Research, Sales promotion, and Sales force. The study concludes that Intra-industry specific activities like Marketing Research programs, Overall Demand Improvement programs and Market Demand Estimation programs, provide maximum scope for efficient symbiosis generation among competitors. Similarly, Inter-industry Generic activities like Dealer Networks, Product Promotion, Sales Representatives and New Product Development programs provide more scope for efficient symbiosis among unrelated product manufacturers. Among Complementary product manufacturers, though the scope is as wide as the marketing function, the extent of cooperation is largely determined by the degree of complementarity among the products. This proves that the “extent and degree of Marketing Symbiosis between two organizations is determined by the marketplace relationship between
the two organizations." The results of the study also support that "in a Symbiotic agreement, the ability of a partner-firm to accept the power dominance of the other partner-firm is positively related to the degree of the need of the alliance to the former partner-firm". Similarly, the ability of the Symbiotic strategy to provide Competitive advantage, at least over a short-run, is approved of by the respondent entrepreneurs. In fact, the experience achieved by the forerunners in its practice, enable them to innovatively interpret the concept and thereby maintain their competitive positions even over a longer period. The study does not provide any strong evidence to establish the relationship between the importance of a marketing activity and the willingness of the firm to share the activity. The study results also prove that "growth oriented firms prefer bigger firms for Symbiotic Marketing", and "survival oriented firms prefer smaller firms for Symbiotic Marketing".

The ability of the partner-firm to influence the availability of the resources and skills, to exhibit opportunistic behavior and also the tendency to exploit the power imbalance accentuate the need for selecting a more compatible partner-firm. A systematic approach in the process enables to increase the probability of selecting the right firm. The process involves various steps from initially identifying the alternatives to finally evaluating them against a set of predetermined criteria for the purpose of final selection. It is observed that a considerable per cent of the respondents tend to approach only the known firms for developing
Symbiosis. This largely restricts the availability of the resources of varied nature and utilities. Further, though majority of the respondents specify the act of identifying various alternatives as most important, the moderate importance assigned to the activity by a considerable number of respondents may allow them to deviate from this activity to suit their convenience. Basically, four needs of information like the knowledge and experience of the other firm in the sharable activity, marketplace relationship among the firms, resources possessed by the other firm and the size of the other firm, help in evaluating whether a firm can be considered as an alternative. The required information about the partner-firms may be collected from varied sources. Friends who are in commercial activity and a Management Consultant are perceived as the most reliable sources in this regard. Though, a few other information sources are also identified, the reliability of these sources is perceived to be relatively low. Most of the respondents expressed their intentions to maintain equality in regard to the mutual dependence, benefits accrued and the importance assigned to the activity among the participating firms. Further, majority of them would like to be approached directly, without the help of any mediator, for developing Marketing Symbiosis. They said that they would evaluate the firms with equal care, irrespective of how the other firm has approached them. A firm which has or is having a cooperative agreement with the focus firm is the most preferred type of symbiotic firm for
majority of the respondents. But, limited practice of Symbiotic agreements force the entrepreneurs to select a firm which has no experience in cooperative arrangements. The most important information on the past alliances, if any, of the other firm the reason for terminating the alliance and the degree of cooperative attitude among the participant firms. The other information like nature of the activity shared, reasons for opting the alliance are relatively unimportant in the partner-firm selection process. The results on the Organizational Compatibility aspect reiterate the need for considering various features of compatibility, before selecting the final symbiont firm. Finally, the results of a total of 31 partner-firm selection criteria, compiled through the pilot study, are factor analyzed to understand the common dimensions in the selection process. The extracted four common factors are named as Profile, Operational Attributes or resources, Co-firm relativity and Extra-operational resources or attributes. The chapter concludes by presenting a flow-chart model depicting the various steps involved in the partner-firm selection process.

Symbiotic Marketing, in varied terminology, has been suggested by the academic, as a valid alternate Marketing strategy since a long-time. In spite of this, the practice of the concept has remained sporadic. The study of the obstacles that hinder the Small Scale entrepreneurs in putting the strategy into action, is the province of Chapter 6. The hurdles in the practice of Symbiotic Marketing are classified, for ease
of explanation, as intra-organizational and extra-organizational. Intra-organizational hurdles may further be either perceptible or imperceptible. Perceptible intra-organizational hurdles are those identified by the entrepreneurs as real hurdles. But, when the hurdles are unidentified and their presence may cause to undermine the applicability of the strategy, they are known as imperceptible intra-organizational hurdles. When the individual firms cannot have any influential control over the factors or when these are mainly controlled by an external agency like Government or product-market, they may be called as extra-organizational hurdles. A total of seven hurdles are discussed in detail under these heads.

Initiative in approaching the other firms has been one of the major hurdles. Most of the Small Scale entrepreneurs would not like to initiate the negotiations for varied reasons. But, the study results prove that majority of the entrepreneurs do not differentiate while evaluating the offers as to how the other firm has approached the focal firm. Further, the perceptions of the respondents are measured for five statements explaining the perceivable disadvantages like negative synergies, developing into cartels and effects of perceived collusion among the manufacturers on the consumer behavior and so on. The results are found to be in concordance with the popular perceptions. In addition to this, the respondents have identified unfamiliarity of the concept, others not approaching the focal firm, complete
utilization of the existing resources, no realized need for additional resources as the major reasons for their non-practice of the concept. All these only add to the lack of professionalism in the sector and the psychological attitudes of the Small Scale entrepreneurs. Marketing is perceived to be synonymous with physical distribution and collection of revenues. They undermine the importance of other marketing activities and conduct their marketing activities without proper planning and on ad hoc decision making. Most of them perceive other manufacturers as fierce rivals, rather as co-manufacturers. They need to understand that the diverse needs of the customers cannot be satisfied by any single firm and that the presence of competitors is controlled by the market itself. Two Extra-organizational hurdles like the existing Sales Tax and Excise Duty structures and Supportive Government organizations also are responsible for the non-practice of the concept. The currently prevailing tax systems have kept the scope of their operations limited, so as to avail the tax exemptions properly and do not motivate them to grow bigger as these exemptions are withdrawn at higher levels of turnover. Similarly, the Government sponsored supportive organizations like National Small Industries Corporation Limited, Small Industries Service Institute, Small Industries Development Corporation, state level Small Industry Promotion organizations, have been extending their helping hands through various programs in promoting the sector. But,
these organizations should comprehend the changing needs of the commercial environment and disseminate the same to the Small Scale entrepreneurs more efficiently and expeditiously. Further, these organizations should equip themselves to mediate the efforts in cultivating Symbiotic atmosphere by providing information on various dimensions of Symbiosis.

7.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The different findings of the present study are briefed in the following few paragraphs. In the prevailing fierce competitive Marketing environment, each customer is personally important, and a lost customer carries a cost of attracting a new customer, to maintain the current demand levels. This necessitated developing, maintaining and perpetuating a personal “relationship” with the customers for long-term benefits. But, the study finds that the Small Scale entrepreneurs have not identified this shift in the Marketing concept. Moreover, majority of them still believe in “production” or “product quality” concept and perceive marketing to be synonymous with physically distributing the product across the geography of the markets. But, a customer with wide choice of products, needs to be attracted through augmented marketing activities like regular Sales Promotions, Marketing Research programs, better after Sales Services and Demand Improvement programs. The results convince that these activities are given least importance by the Small Scale entrepreneurs and are not practiced by a strong majority of them.
Organizational Exchange is not completely new to the Indian Small Scale Sector. The study observes that approximately fifteen per cent of the firms in the sector practice resource exchanging relationships. Majority of these agreements are for physically distributing the products of one partner-firm by the other. These agreements are sought mostly by those firms, whose financial and other related resources are highly limited, disabling them to develop even minimum resources necessary for conducting their business operations. But surprisingly, the objective of none of these agreements is to complement the strategic weaknesses of each other or to jointly exploit new market opportunities or to develop operational synergies or to improve their marketing efficiencies, for better competitive positions. This perspective of Organizational Exchange has remained completely unrecognized in the sector.

The practice of Symbiotic Marketing is largely stunted by the absence of a pragmatic framework in operationalising the concept. The present study analyzed the latent and dormant meanings of the definition of Symbiotic Marketing as given by Lee Adler.¹ Five characteristic features of the concept are proposed that aid in more easily comprehending its scope and operationalities. A conceptual model is proposed incorporating Axis, Extent, Multitude, Direction, Intimacy, Duration, Domain Similarity, Function and Sector dimensions of a Symbiotic agreement. Further, the applicability of Symbiotic Marketing as an alternative Marketing service system to the Small Scale entrepreneurs is assessed in the light of the changing nature of the “Marketing”

concept and the immediate needs of the entrepreneurs. For an unambiguous understanding of the concept, Symbiotic Marketing is differentiated from the other Interorganizational systems like Strategic Alliances, Networks, Domesticated Markets and Marketing Coalition companies.

The respondent Small Scale entrepreneurs perceive the possibility of cooperation among competitors in Production and Marketing, but do not perceive any such possibility in Finance, Personnel and Research and Development functions. The results are in concordance with the theoretical propositions, excepting in Research and Development function. The fact that the Small Scale entrepreneurs lack direct involvement and experience in this function, alarms the need for validating their answers against the practices. In the West and the Far East, cooperation in Research and Development is more popular among competitors, especially in the high-tech industries, for very high capital and risks involved. Similarly, among the non-competitive firms, i.e. complementary and unrelated product manufacturers, the Small Scale entrepreneurs perceive the possibility of cooperation in all the functions, excepting in Production. The results are theoretically acceptable and the non-possibility of cooperation in Production function, may be explained through the differences in the production facilities, processes, raw material requirements and the personnel skills, needed for manufacturing two different products. But, the absence of competitive feelings enable them to extend cooperation in other functions viz., Finance, Marketing,
Personnel and Research and Development, for more mutual benefits. Quite realistically, all the marketing activities can be shared. But, certain marketing activities cultivate more efficient scope for cooperation among firms with different marketplace relationships, for the commonality in their objectives, resource requirements and for other similarities.

In accordance with the above proposition, it is concluded that *Intra-industry Specific activities* like Marketing Research Programs, Overall Demand Improvement programs and Demand estimation programs, provide scope for more effective cooperation among competitors. Whereas, the *Inter-industry Generic Activities* like Dealer Networks, Sale Representatives and New Product development activities and product promotion programs are more efficiently shared among the Unrelated product manufacturers. The complementary product manufacturers provide the widest scope for cooperation, i.e. all the marketing activities can be shared. But, the extent of cooperation is largely limited by the degree of complementarity among the two products. Thus, it can be concluded that the extent and degree of Marketing Symbiosis between two organizations are determined by the marketplace relationship between the two organizations.

The results on the six hypotheses tested through the study are briefly presented in the next few paragraphs. Symbiotic agreements are sought with firms of different sizes, for varying reasons. Consequently, power imbalance is ought to exist
in these agreements. The negative influence of this power imbalance on the success of the agreement is nullified when the dominant firm does not wish to exploit the imbalance or the dominated firm wishes to accept the dominance of the other firm. In this regard, the study accepts the proposition that “the ability of a partner-firm to accept the power dominance of the other firm is related positively to the need of the alliance to the former partner-firm.”

The responding Small Scale entrepreneurs perceive Symbiotic Marketing as enhancing their competitiveness through various benefits like reduced operational expenditure, availability of superior resources and skills, increased rate of profitability, improved marketing efficiencies and more aggressive marketing activities. But, they also believe that these strategies can also be easily adopted by their competitors. This implies that the competitive positions achieved through Symbiotic Marketing are short-living, i.e. till the competitors follow the suit. But, it may be said that the experience achieved by the initial pursuers enable them in more innovatively interpreting the concept, to maintain their enhanced competitive positions over a long-time.

The Key Marketing Activities will have high influence on the success of a firm’s marketing effort. So, the firms will prefer to have ultimate control over these Key Marketing Activities and consequently will not prefer to share these activities. But, the study results do not provide
any concrete evidence to establish a negative relationship between
the firm's preferred scope of sharing in a marketing activity and the
importance assigned to the activity. The study results establish the
proposed relationship between the Growth orientation of firms and its
preference over the size of the other partner-firm Consequently, the
two hypotheses "Growth oriented firms prefer bigger firms and Survival
Oriented firms prefer equal-sized or smaller firms for developing Marketing
Symbiosis" are accepted in the present study.

The study concludes that only half of the respondents prefer to follow
a more systematic and scientific approach in selecting a Symbiotic
partner-firm. While the other half would prefer to adopt a conventional
approach in the process, i.e. approaching only the known firms to
identify the activities that can be shared. A second majority of the
respondents assign only "moderate importance" to the act of identifying
various alternative firms, before a partner-firm is selected. This high-
lights the need for educating them as to the various benefits attached
to the act of identifying alternatives. Further, the study identifies four
information needs viz., experience and knowledge of the other firm
in the sharable activity, marketplace relationship with the other
firm, resources possessed by it and its size, as to be useful in
identifying the various alternative firms for developing Symbiotic agreements.

It is found in the study that majority of the respondents would like
to maintain parity among the participants, in regard to the benefits
accrued, mutual dependence and the importance assigned to the shared activity. Though, the perception of parity is ideally sought, the actions of various external entities like consumers, suppliers, Government etc., may develop an imbalance in any of these three aspects. So, the Small Scale entrepreneurs are generally advised to evaluate the achieved benefits against their own expectations, rather against the benefits achieved by the other partner-firm. But, the knowledge of this relativity shall be taken help of during the negotiations. A continuous appraisal of relativity during the execution of the agreement in regard to these three measures may only result in conflicting episodes.

The study finds that majority of Small Scale entrepreneurs would like to be approached directly, without the help of any mediator, for developing ‘Marketing Symbiosis. They further expressed that they would evaluate all the firms with equal care, irrespective of how the other firm has approached them. This finding encourages the Small Scale entrepreneurs to get rid of the notion that they should be approached only through a mutually known mediator.

In developing Symbiotic agreements, it is observed that most of the Small Scale entrepreneurs prefer firms which had or are having prior Symbiotic relationships with the focus firm. But, in the absence of earlier Symbiotic relationships, and to have relationships with diverse firms, they may be required to develop symbiosis with a firm having no former experience in cooperative resource exchanges or a firm
which is currently practicing resource sharing with other firms or a firm which had experience in resource sharing, but is currently not involved in any of such agreements.

The study results in respect of Organizational Compatibility are in concordance with Bucklin and Sengupta's finding. The respondents to the study perceive it as an important aspect having influence on the success of a Symbiotic alliance.

The exploratory Factor analysis conducted on the responses to the 31 partner-firm selection criteria, has resulted in four underlying common dimensions. The resultant four factors are named as 1. Profile, 2. Operational resources or attributes, 3. Co-firm relativity and 4. Extra-operational resources or attributes. But, these factors need to be confirmed and more appropriate measures for these four factors are to be developed.

The study developed a systematic method, specially applicable to the Small Scale Sector, in selecting the right partner-firm. The method incorporates various steps like identifying the sharable resources, their nature, growth orientation of the firm, preferred size of the other firm, identifying the alternatives, sources of collecting information, evaluating the alternatives, negotiating with the best alternatives and

finally developing the alliance. But, the method conveniently assumes that the firms know the methodologies in identifying the sharable resources and that the clear definitions of resource requirements and preferred alternatives are available with the firms.

The study observes that taking “initiative” in approaching other firms for developing cooperative agreements is one of the major hurdles in the practice of Symbiotic Marketing. More specifically, most of the Small Scale entrepreneurs do not like or wish to approach other firms, directly without any mediator for four main reasons. They are 1. feeling of intruding into other’s business 2. fear of exposing their business strategies 3. fear of expected negative effects on the terms of the alliance and 4. the perception that the other firm may not accept their offer.

The respondent Small Scale entrepreneurs do not attach any of the disadvantages like scope for cartelization, negative spillover effects, one partner-firm possibly becoming a competitor to the other firm, and the consumers reducing demand for their products, by perceiving a collusion among the participant firms, to the Symbiotic Marketing agreements. A strong majority of them believe that one of the partners may find the alliance to be more beneficial than the other. The results in all these regards are in accordance with the theoretical propositions
and aid in more aggressively propagating the strategy.

Further, the practice of Symbiotic Marketing is stunted by the reasons like lack of awareness among the businessmen, non-approachment of other firms and lack of identified inadequacy or underutilization of the resources. But, the reasons like confidential information leaking out and losing control over the markets or resources. are found to have little influence on the non-practice of the concept among Small Scale entrepreneurs.

The practice of Symbiotic Marketing needs a comprehensive understanding of the concept of "Marketing". The changing nature and importance of different marketing activities calls for a professional and systematic planning with strongly determined long-term marketing objectives and strategies. The Small Scale entrepreneurs should equip themselves in these regards for a more propitious use of the strategy. Further, they should change their psychological attitudes toward their competitors from perceiving them as "fierce rivals" to a more positive approach of viewing them as "co-manufacturers" and should welcome to cooperate with them to improve their overall competitive positions for providing better service to their customers.

The existing Sales Tax and Excise duty systems may also be seen to have indirect negative influence on the practice of Symbiotic Marketing. These systems fail to motivate the Small Scale entrepreneurs to grow
beyond a particular point, by withdrawing the various tax incentives. Further, the Government sponsored Supportive organizations like National Small Industries Corporation Limited, Small Industries Service Institute and similar organization, have to take more active part in fostering these Symbiotic Marketing practices in the sector. They should attempt to mediate such agreements by explaining the inherent benefits of the concept and also by providing the necessary information to the potential symbiosis adopters.

7.4 IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

The implications of the various findings of the study are discussed hereunder, alongwith a few suggestions for improving the status of the practice of Symbiotic Marketing.

The first implication relates to the contemporary marketing culture of the Small Scale entrepreneurs. The study results endorse the fact that these entrepreneurs are unperceptive to the changes in the marketing environment. Most of them still consider Marketing as concerned only with Physically distributing the product, and strongly believe that their sales are mainly due to the Quality of their product. The Marketing activities like Sales Promotion, Marketing Research, Personal Selling are performed only as reactions to the actions of the competitors. Further, these activities are implemented without clearly defining the objectives and strategies. The turbulent competitive environment and
the shift in the Marketing concept from ‘customer’ to ‘relationship’, calls for better integrated marketing systems. More concisely, the Small Scale entrepreneurs will have to augment their current practices by additional marketing facilities and programs. Further, the change shall occur in pace with the turbulence in the marketplace, to see themselves in the fray. Thus, the Small Scale entrepreneurs may necessarily have to adopt innovative strategies and practices without any more lapse of time.

Interorganizational cooperation in marketing facilities is neither unknown nor novel to the Indian Small Scale Sector. But, it may be assertively said that the Small Scale entrepreneurs have failed to interpret the broader utility of the strategy. The strategy is adopted mostly by those entrepreneurs, who are unable to develop the necessary marketing resources on their own. Thus, it is largely perceived as the strategy of the ‘unable’. But, the abilities of the strategy to improve the marketing potentialities of the participating firms have remained completely unrecognized in the sector. Here, the business schools and other supportive organizations like National Small Industries Corporation Limited, Small Industries Service Institute and other Industry associations may have to take greater initiative in providing momentum for practicing the strategy. These organizations can achieve the objective through various activities. They can adopt social advertising of the concept through various media, for increasing the awareness among the Small
Scale entrepreneurs. Further, the organizations like National Small Industries Corporation can promote centers of Symbiotic alliances and also develop a database about the resource capacities of the Small Scale firms. These centers can further aid them in finding the more suitable and amenable partner-firms for their Symbiotic Marketing practices. The Government can also promote these Symbiotic practices, by providing certain tax benefits and financial incentives to the participating firms. The Government's initiative is necessary, as the Symbiotic Marketing strategies are beneficial to the society on the whole by improving the optimal utilization of the limited resources available in the society.

The conceptual discussion on Symbiotic Marketing has identified the various dimensions of these agreements. The proposed dimensions guide the entrepreneurs in determining the terms of the agreement, during its initial stages. More specifically, the participating firms may have to decide on the marketing activities to be shared, the intended degree of cooperation, the intimacy (Non-adaptive, Adaptive or Integrative), duration (One-shot, Time-based or Permanent) and the direction (Unilateral or Reciprocal) of the agreement. An agreement defined in respect of these dimensions, would leave little scope for conflict, and would improve the mutual cooperation and efficiency of the sharing practices.

The study brings out the perceptions of the Small Scale entrepreneurs
towards the concept of Symbiotic Marketing. The results are mostly in accordance with the theoretical propositions. But, in certain issues like, scope of cooperation in Key Marketing Activities, the results are found to be slightly deviating from the propositions. This implies that though the Small Scale entrepreneurs are able to understand the broader aspects of the strategy, they lack a comprehensive understanding of the operationalities of the symbiotic strategies. This may be identified as one of the basic reasons for their non-practice of the strategy. Thus, the need for an expeditious dissemination of the conceptual knowledge and the method of operationalizing the concept is identified. These programs should also aim at clarifying the misconceptions and apprehensions of the potential Small Scale entrepreneurs about Symbiotic strategies. Here, the business schools, industry associations and Government sponsored supportive organizations may take greater initiative in educating the entrepreneurs by suggesting Symbiotic Marketing as a pragmatic strategy suitable to their immediate needs. This may be achieved by adopting innovative methods of communicating to the Small Scale entrepreneurs. These methods may include “mobile Classrooms” which enable the propagators to reach beneficiaries with ease. Further, such communication should be designed to provide broad guidelines and directives in suggesting solutions to the marketing problems of the individual entrepreneurs.

The study also provides certain specific directions in operationalising
the strategy. The results approve the association between the extent and degree of cooperation and, the marketplace relationship among the participating firms. This implies that either of the dimensions determines the desired status of the other. More specifically, if a marketing activity is given, the desired marketplace relationship can be identified. Similarly, if the marketplace relationship is given, the marketing activities that develop efficient Symbiosis may be identified.

Symbiotic Marketing strategies are capable of achieving competitive advantages to the participating firms. These strategies bring the additional competence, by reducing operational expenditure, the gestation periods in entering new markets, the capital commitments in promoting new resources and also by providing access to the established resources. A significant majority of the Small Scale entrepreneurs have identified these strategic benefits and are confident that Symbiotic strategies can accrue these benefits. Simultaneously, almost an equal majority of them feel that the concept can also be adopted by their respective competitors for achieving similar benefits and also for nullifying the competitiveness achieved by the earlier adopters. This is mainly due to the absence of any major hurdles in adopting the strategy. This perception implies that the future research on the concept should aim at developing methodologies that enable the Small Scale entrepreneurs in maintaining and enhancing the competitive positions achieved initially through Symbiotic Marketing.
Symbiotic Marketing may occur among firms of varying sizes, denoting different levels of resource possessions. Consequently, power imbalance ought to exist in Symbiotic agreements. The study finds that a certain degree of power imbalance is acceptable to the Small Scale entrepreneurs. They opine that the dominance of the other partner-firm may be evaluated against the benefits accrued to them through the agreements. This finding has two implications. Primarily, the benefits accrued to the dominated firm and its ability to accept the power of the dominating partner-firm are positively related. In other words, the more the benefits accrued to the dominated firm, the greater is the acceptance of the power dominance of the other partner-firm. Secondarily, power imbalance may not always result in inter-organizational conflict, reducing the efficacy of Symbiotic strategies. More precisely, when one of the two participating firms, identifies and accepts the dominance of the other firm, and also does not believe in being exploited, the dominated firm may not undertake steps to control the power of the other firm. In other words, such situations do not really transform into conflicts. This implication further supports that the presence of power imbalance is different from its being utilized in the exploitation of one of the exchange partners. The above implications suggest that Small Scale entrepreneurs should be concerned more with the intentions and abilities of the powerful partner to exploit the imbalanced situations. More specifically, they should try to restrain the dominating firm's intentions
to exploit the imbalanced power situations, rather than putting efforts
to balance the power among the participating firms.

The study finds that Growth oriented firms prefer bigger firms for
Symbiotic Marketing, whereas Survival Oriented firms prefer equal
sized or smaller firms for the same. This finding provides a basis
for deciding on the size of the other partner-firm. More precisely,
the entrepreneurs can first determine their orientation in relation to
growth, i.e. whether they are interested in either increasing the sales
of their product or maintaining the current demand levels, before they
determine the preferred size of the other firm. The growth oriented
firms can opt for bigger firms, because the bigger firms can provide
technical know-how to a certain level, support financially in times of
need and also can bring more growth opportunities to the smaller firms.
Similarly, the survival oriented firms, will be more interested in cutting
down their operational expenditures, increasing profit margins, possessing
control over their resources, which help them on maintaining the current
demand levels for their product. These objectives are not challenged
by equal sized or smaller firms as also the sources for achieving higher
power are very limited for these firms. So, these equal sized or smaller
firms are more preferable to the Survival Oriented firms.

The study results reiterate the importance of selecting an amicable
and proper partner-firm for Symbiotic Marketing practices. The results
on various issues relating to the partner-firm selection like importance of identifying the alternatives, the information required in identifying them, the reliability of different sources of information, relativity in mutual dependence, accrued benefits and importance of the shared facility, preferred mode for approaching them for Marketing Symbiosis, preferred type of Symbiotic firms, information on past alliances (if any) of the firms considered as alternatives and organizational compatibility among the participating firms bring out clearly the perceptions of the Small Scale entrepreneurs. This proves that they are fairly knowledgeable with a few mis-perceptions and largely are able to understand the different implications of these issues of the partner-firm selection.

Another major implication of the study relates to the various criteria employed while evaluating the firms considered as alternatives. The study has extracted four common factors as underlying the thirty one criteria considered. These factors help the Small Scale entrepreneurs in more objective evaluating the alternatives through clearly designed methods. Further, the academic research may aid the Small Scale entrepreneurs by its efforts to aid in identifying more representative criteria for each of the four common factors identified and also in developing more pragmatic methodologies in the process of evaluating the alternative firms.

The study has identified various Intra-organizational hurdles (lack of
to exploit the imbalanced power situations, rather than putting efforts to balance the power among the participating firms.

The study finds that Growth oriented firms prefer bigger firms for Symbiotic Marketing, whereas Survival Oriented firms prefer equal sized or smaller firms for the same. This finding provides a basis for deciding on the size of the other partner-firm. More precisely, the entrepreneurs can first determine their orientation in relation to growth, i.e. whether they are interested in either increasing the sales of their product or maintaining the current demand levels, before they determine the preferred size of the other firm. The growth oriented firms can opt for bigger firms, because the bigger firms can provide technical know-how to a certain level, support financially in times of need and also can bring more growth opportunities to the smaller firms. Similarly, the survival oriented firms, will be more interested in cutting down their operational expenditures, increasing profit margins, possessing control over their resources, which help them on maintaining the current demand levels for their product. These objectives are not challenged by equal sized or smaller firms as also the sources for achieving higher power are very limited for these firms. So, these equal sized or smaller firms are more preferable to the Survival Oriented firms.

The study results reiterate the importance of selecting an amicable and proper partner-firm for Symbiotic Marketing practices. The results
initiative, lack of awareness, inability to identify the right symbiont etc.) and Extra-organizational hurdles (existing Sales Tax and Excise Duty Structures and the lack of initiative on the part of Government sponsored supportive organizations like National Small Industries Corporation Limited). The findings provide the directions for designing programs aimed at facilitating a more propitious use of the strategy by the Small Scale entrepreneurs. More precisely, such programs may aim at removing the identified hurdles. Such programs must give more stress on developing professionalism in their marketing practices and also on convincing them to take initiative for promoting Symbiotic Marketing practices.

7.5 POTENTIAL DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

The scope of the present study is mainly restricted to a few operational aspects like developing a theoretical framework of the concept, identifying the Marketing resources that generate efficient symbiosis among firms with different marketplace relationships, envisaging the conducive environmental and organizational factors, effecting the propitious practice of the concept and developing a systematic methodology in selecting the right and proper symbiont firm. But, the concept requires answers to many more questions like how to identify the resources or facilities is which symbiosis is needed, what control systems are to be adopted while executing the sharing agreements, what are the
potential conflict situations and what are the respective resolution methodologies applicable specifically to Symbiotic arrangements, for developing a comprehensive and fully pragmatic framework, for ease in acknowledging its practice by the Small Scale entrepreneurs.

It is observed in the study that the enhanced competitive advantages achieved through Symbiotic Marketing can be maintained only over a limited time-span. This is because of the lack of strong barriers in adopting the strategy, and consequently, the competitors might also be motivated to incorporate the strategy into their business activities for similar benefits. But, the strategic values of the concept will be acclaimed only when the strategy can accomplish long-term competitive positions to the participating firms. Thus, the need arises to design systems for sustaining these augmented competitive positions over a longer time-span.

The Exploratory Factory Analysis, conducted for 31 partner-firm selection criteria, has resulted in four underlying common dimensions. They are Profile, Operational Resources/Attributes, Co-firm Relativity and Extra-operational Resources/Attributes. Further research in this regard may aim at ascertaining the appropriateness of these four factors and also to develop more efficacious methods in measuring.
these factors. Such research may desirably be based on the veritable industry experiences.

7.6 CONCLUSION:

The opening of the Indian economy to the Multinational and Transnational enterprises has exposed the so far highly protected Indian manufacturers to the fierce competition in the marketplace. Consequently, the marketing environment has also transformed into one characterized by innovative practices. The intensifying competition in the marketplace require the entrepreneurs to comprehend the concept of marketing with innovative interpretations and practices. These practices help the entrepreneurs in maintaining their competitive advantages over their competitors. The novel marketing practices of the multinational organisations backed by heavy financial budgets, magnify the necessity to the Indian entrepreneurs for organizing their activities with undue marketing orientation and achieve optimum productivity in their marketing resources. This need is more amplified for the Small Scale entrepreneurs as they have both strategic advantages and weaknesses over the Multinationals and other large organizations.

Symbiotic Marketing is an innovative interpretation of Inter-organizational cooperation, with inherent benefits that complement the immediate strategic marketing needs of the Indian entrepreneurs. The Indian Small
Scale entrepreneurs, whose perceptions are systematically collected in the study, possess a broad understanding of the concept and its utilities. But, its practice in the Sector is hindered by the absence of a pragmatic framework in operationalising the strategy and also by the presence of a few hurdles. In spite of all this, it is observed that they possess a positive attitude towards the concept and are willing to adopt these strategies, if the environment is made conducive by removing the hurdles. Here, the business schools, industry associations and Government Sponsored supportive organizations like National Small Industries Corporation and Small Industries Service Institute, have to take great initiative in disseminating and propagating the operational knowledge of the concept. Simultaneously, the Small Scale entrepreneurs must also develop professionalism, though not at par with multinational organizations, in conducting their marketing activities and also developing the abilities to comprehend the dynamics in the markets, competition and consumer behaviours to enhance their competitive positions in the marketplace. The symbiosis in the efforts of the Small Scale entrepreneurs and the benefactors like business schools, industry associations and other supportive organizations, will naturally be reflected in the increased practice of Symbiotic Marketing strategies.