AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARAMETERS AFFECTING THE SALE OF CEMENT TO B2B CONSUMERS IN THANE REGION

V Ravi Shankar[1]
Dr. Kamini Khanna[2]
Arya V. Tondwalkar[3]

Abstract

This study was undertaken during January toJune 2019 in order to understand the buying behaviour of B2B cement consumersin Thane district & its neighbouring areas, Maharashtra India. The present literature has very few papers on the topic of B2B buying of cement brands. From an initial set of 9 brands , a set of four brands labelled as Brand A(ACC,UltraTech,Ambuja&Bharathi) and Brand B(Coromandel,BirlaA1, Sanghi, JSW, Birla Shakti & Birla Gold)were chosen for analysis. The Inter correlation matrix was used to study the relationship between Quality, Brand, Price, Credit terms, Ease of ordering, Company Sales Personnel, Advertisement, Technical support, Digital E marketing, & Trade shows and exhibitions. The perceptual map showed that Ultra Tech, ACC &Ambuja in Brand A &Coromandel&Birla Shakti in Brand B was preferred by B2B customers like Builders and Engineers. This study found that Quality & consistency of cement, Trade Shows & Exhibitions played a major role in Brand A& Brand B.The study further found that Quality and consistency of cement & Trade Shows & Exhibitions is strongly correlated with Brand Name & company name. There is a strong positive correlation between Brand Name & company name with Quality & consistency of cement in both Brand A & B respectively. In Brand A, Advertisement & Sales promotion hasweak correlation with Price, whereas in brand B, it has weak negative correlation with price In Brand A, Company sales personnel has a negative correlation with Brand name & company name, which is serious ,whereas in brand B,it is moderate positive correlated. Interesting finding was that in both brand A & B; the price of cement is moderate positive correlation with Quality of cement & Brand name. We hope these findings would help the Manufacturers & B2B Marketers of cement with better understanding of B2B consumer behaviour to meet their expectations effectively.

Keyword: B2B cement buying, parameters for B2B cement buying, cement brands.

[1] Assistant Professor in Department of Management Studies, Rajiv Gandhi College of Arts, Commerce & Science, Vashi, Navi Mumbai

2 Associate Professor, Guru Nanak Khalsa Institute of Management Studies, King's Circle, Matunga, Mumbai-400019.Email:Kaminiptk@gmail.com

3 Registrar, SGPC's Guru Nanak Institute of Management Studies, King's Circle, Matunga (East), Mumbai - 400019

Introduction to Cement Industry in India with reference to Thane Region

Thane Region is part of the Thane District which is the largest district of Maharashtra, and has a vast geography & varied demographics ranging from the City of Thane to semi-rural & rural parts of the Thane districts including Bhivandi, Karjat & Kasara. Most of the construction is new housing buildings, gated community buildings, most of them relatively new builders, including some old builders, corporate builders like TATA housing, Lodha, Hiranandani & local builders like Podar, Mohan, Puraniketc.This region is predominantly consisting of affordable housing, with low income group to middle income groups.

Indian Cement industry plays a very significant role, in the rapid growth and development of country because cement is a fundamental requirement for all constructions activities. Cement is basic construction material used in housing, dams, bridges, industrial construction, roads etc.

Till 1985 in India cement was a regulated commodity, with limited production, pricing was arbitrary& quality was unheard of. After the deregulation, many companies expanded their capacities & with excess supply, concept of branding of cement started, but still in nascent stage & only one or two companies took the lead.

India post Liberalisation, Privatisation & Globalisation (LPG) introduced the concept of Branding in Business to consumer markets B2C markets & Business to Business (B2B) markets was still in an infant or Idea stage, not ready for implementing branding.

With nearly 455 Million Tonnes (MT) of cement production capacity, India is the second largest cement producer in the world.   The cement production capacity is estimated to touch 550 MT by 2020.

The top 20 companies account for around 70% of the total production.

Factors such as rains & festivals affect the demand for cement in India every year. The prices are always under pressure & discounts offered by the multinational cement companies to meet their targets (year End) also lead to reduction in realisations Top & Bottom line of the companies respectively. Some of the exogenous factors which affect the demand & realisations of cement are ban on sand mining, shut down

of brick kiln, shortage of railway wagons, slow down of the construction activities & hence affecting the demand for cement.

Affordable housing projects were implemented in last two fiscals has had impact on demand for cement. InIndia, in last fiscal, there was Green shoots seen in rural economy which aided demand growth, rainfall & increased agriculture produce had impact on the cement consumption.

India is the world's 2nd largest cement market, both in production and consumption, Supported by high level of activity going on in real estate and high government spending on smart cities and urban infrastructure. The Top four Cement producers in world in 2017 in Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MTPA) are:

Country	FY 2017 Production (Mt)
China	2400
India	290
USA	86
Vietnam	86

*Source: IBEF.ORG October 25, 2018-10-28 last updated October 2018-10-28 &
https://www.globalcement.com/magazine/articles/1054-global-cement-top-100-report-2017-2018

Capacities have increased in excess of demand and a glut in capacity is created. Competition increases, prices fall and margins come under pressure. Capacity addition comes to a halt; weaker players shut shop or sell off to larger ones. Demand catches up and the cycle is repeated all over again. Perhaps, of all the cyclical industries, the Indian cement industry exhibits this boom-and-bust cycle most visibly.

The present study covers one of the most important segments in Cement marketing i.e. cement sales to Builders who are a part of Business to Business B2B segment in the area of Thane to Bhivandi, Kalyan to Karjat&Kasara which is both urban &semi rural in nature.

Builders most of whom are affected by common problems related to construction at sites, which impact their buying behaviour when it comes to a basic raw material like cement which is perishable & having a shorter product shelf life. The builder is unable to plan their cement consumptions due to sudden stoppages in work at site dues to various Municipal & regulatory issues. When they get a window period

for construction they are at the mercy of the cement suppliers & cannot dictate any pricing power as a buyer.

The B2B segment is considered to be more Rational in its decision making, with many people involved in the decision making, yet their decision making is not fully understood.

In B2B buying scenario, cement is purchased by builder or an institution and is used by an Engineer and or mason, recommended either by builder, Architect Engineer, Mason, Contractor or even by retailer/dealer/stockist. Thus in B2B cement buying processes there are many participants such as:

- Initiators like masons, Engineer, Builder, Architect, RCC consultant.
- Users like Mason, Engineer.
- Influencers like Architect, RCC consultant, Quality Control of user who defines the specifications.
- Deciders like the buyer/builder, purchase department, finance department.
- Approvers like the Quality Control department, engineer, builders or Architect.
- Buyers like builders, Institutions, Government bodies, Contractors, Purchase department.
- Gate keepers are anybody at the client's place, who allow or does not allow information to pass from Seller to buyer or filters the same.

After 2008 & till now 2019, with recession setting in the housing industry & therefore affecting the cement industry progressively, the buying behaviour of B2B consumer is all the more changing.

Cement as a Brand Concept

Cement being a commodity, it is challenging for cement companies to differentiate cement manufactured by one company from cement manufactured by other companies. This is where an effective branding and marketing exercise may play an important role.New players are making a foray into the Indian market and existing players are trying to stave off the competition and consolidate their positions. The skill here lies not just in capturing a market and selling a commodity but creating a distinct brand space for the commodity.

In India Cement is a widely used commodity in bulk, next to probably consumption of wheat, and proper branding of the product is a very critical part of the overall marketing strategy. A brand has to be created around some significant Unique Selling Points (USP), which could either be the strength, reliability, quality, trust or heritage etc.Leading cement brands in India like Ultratech and ACC have been in a position to improve their market across the country through their brand image. The driver of the brand value includes the brand's ability to attract consumers and improve relationship with them, thereby improving sales.

REIVEW OF LITERATURE

In the present era of intense competition, branding plays an important role. It has emerged as one of the important priorities of top management. As is well known, brands have many roles to play, besides serving as an identifier and differentiator for the products or services offered by firms, it makes it convenient for the customers to choose one brand over the other. It also provides an implicit promise of a particular quality level and trust.

Prasad S. Shyam , RathoreVishwajeet Singh , Kathawala Aslam Ahmed, (January 23, 2019) in their study found thatquality and brand reputation was the most influential factors in determining the brand choice. Price was a close third. Yet, presently, academic literature has very few papers on the topic of Inter correlation analysis of B2B Consumers of cement Brands in Mumbai. This paper may be one of the first of its kind on the consumer perceptiontowards B2B cement brands.

It is often thought that branding is just a good name or symbol: whereas it is created by salespersons in B2B market.Baumgarth, Wirtschaft & Berlin (June 2010), in their study have found that, there is a high relevance of the sales force to the building and maintenance of a strong B-to-B brand. The most important driver of brand equity in b2b environment is the salesperson's behaviour, followed by the salesperson's personality, product quality and non-personal marketing communications, in that order. Effective management of a B2B brand is impossible without the support of the sales force. The study furthermore confirms that brand equity can also be influenced by the two elements of the marketing mix investigated: the product and marketing communications. It also offers an alternative approach to the measurement of brand equity in B2B marketing.

Brennan, Canning & McDowell (2017) in their book "Business To Business Marketing" have mentioned that in B2B the demand is derived, demand is volatile, customers are heterogeneous, Buying influences are many, purchase cycles are often long and more of personal selling is involved in B2B selling.

Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob (2015) in their book "Strategic Brand Management" have concluded that Purchase decisions in business to business situations are complex and are often high risk, so branding plays an important role in B2B markets. In B2B value perceptions have to be framed.Branding reduces risk for the buyer.

Grewal, Linen, Bharadwaj, Jindal (2015), they laid out the challenges and research opportunities associated with business-to-business (B2B) buying.B2B buyers are more interested in satisfying their total need than in buying any specific product, the offering can be complex and include training, technical support, financing, delivery terms, and so forth, such that neither the buyer nor the seller can easily determine which offer is best for the buyer.

Kotler & Pfoertsch (2006) in their book "B2B Brand Management" have mentioned: Even commodities can be branded & they have taken examples from India. Emotions in B2B branding play a major role in business decisions. The major communication instruments in B2B are Direct Sales, Direct Marketing, PR, Specialised Press, Sponsorships, Trade Shows, and Exhibitions, Advertising, sales Promotion, and E-marketing.

Although different studies reveal various aspects of cement buying mostly at retail levels, no study yet has been conducted on the topic of B2B buying behaviour in cement industry in Thane. If the B2B Buyer is a Rational Buyer then he must be influenced only by quality & price, then by this logic only a low price & good quality cement brand must be selling in B2B segment. In reality many brands at different price points are being sold & the quality of each brand is perceived differently. This academic study is an attempt to throw some light on these gap areas.

Further, no attempt, however, has been made either to study the B2B Inter correlation analysis of B2B Consumers of cement industry or suggest a branding strategy to the industry. There is lack of understanding of positioning of brands in B2B market, particularly in the state of Maharashtra (Thane).

Hence, in order to bridge this gap, this paper is limited to understanding the positioning of the different brands in B2B brands of cement industry in Thane region.

OBJECTIVE

1. To find the correlation or the existence of a relationship / interdependence between parameters affecting the buying of cement by B2B consumer.
2. To find if advertising is helping Branding in B2B context & is Brand name creating differentiation amongst Brands in B2B context.
3. To find out if Personal Selling is creating a differentiation amongst brands or its importance in B2B buying scenario.
4. To find out the importance of Price Parameter in B2B buying.

TENTATIVE HYPOTHESIS

With these objectives in view, the following hypotheses have been framed to test and make the study in a proper manner.

1	H_0	There is No relationship between parameters affecting the buying of cement by B2B consumer
	H_1	There is Relationship between parameters affecting the buying of cement by B2B consumer
2	H_0	There is no association between Brand Name & Advertisement including sales promotion.
	H_1	There is association between Brand Name & Advertisement including sales promotion
3	H0	There is No relationship between company sales personnel & brand choice made by B2B consumer.
	H1	There is Relationship between company sales personnel & brand choice made by B2B consumer.

Research methodology

The data for this research was collected from B2B consumers, which has been categorized into five categories i.e. Architect, Builder, Purchase Department, Quality Control, & Engineer, during Jan – June 2019. The aim of this study is to find out the impact of various parameters affecting brand choice made by B2B consumers. For this study 9 brands of cement were taken and categorized into Group A (Acc, Ultra Tech, Ambuja and Bharathi) and Group B (Coromandel, Birla A1, Sanghi, Jsw and Birla Gold). On doing an intercorrelation analysis of primary data, on 10 parameters like Quality & consistency of cement, Brand name & company name, price of cement, credit and payment terms, Ease of ordering & availability OTIF on time in full, company sales personnel, advertisement & sales promotion, Technical meeting, Digital & E marketing activities and Trade shows & Exhibition, it was found that brands such as Group A brands were well known to the customers as compared to Group B.

The data collection consisted of gathering both qualitative and quantitative data through a questionnaire. The population of the study comprised specifically builders from Thane to Bhiwandi, Kalyan to Karjat & Kasara. A total of 101 respondents consisting of Architect, Builder, Purchase Department, Quality Control, & Engineer were contacted and data was collected. The questionnaire was designed to understand the customer perception towards the brands and information on their purchasing behaviour.

Questionnaire Structure

Section		Content
Section One	General	This section contains general information like name of the B2B customer & category, gender of respondent, age group, no of years in business & Location.
Section Two	Brand Awareness	This section was about brand awareness both unaided & aided response & the brand purchased or used by the B2B customer.
Section Three	Parameters affecting purchase and ranking	This section was about important parameters for each brand purchased or used & it's ranking by the by the b2b customer
Section Four	Rating the parameters of brands	This section was about rating the various parameters of the brands like product quality, price, brand name, sales personnel, advertising technical support, by the b2b respondent.
Section Five	Rating the options Integrated Marketing Communication IMC	This section was about rating the options in Integrated Marketing Communication activities like Advertising, Technical Training programme, trade shows, interactive web sites, social media, and digital media of the brands selected.
Section Six	Level of Brand satisfaction	This section contained rating of satisfaction level with the brand, trust level, value for money, brand switching with the existing brand
Section Seven	Rating of Personal Selling	This section contained rating of quality of sales personnel & personal selling of the brands used by the b2b customer like satisfaction level, customer service provided, trust on sales person, technical knowledge, and commercial knowledge of the sales personnel.

Input Variables:

Category of customer, Parameters, Integrated Marketing Communication options like Advertising, personal selling, Technical training, trade shows, digital marketing.

Output Variables:

Top of Mind Recall Brand, Brand selection or brand purchased,

Satisfaction levels with the brands, trust, value for money, brand switching, satisfaction levels with personal selling.

THANE TO BHIVANDI, KALYAN TO KARJAT & KASARA: BRAND – AN ANALYSIS OF INTER CORRELATION MATRIX

Correlation estimates the strength of the Linear Relationship between two (and only two) variables. Correlation coefficient, r, ranges from -1.0 (a perfect negative correlation) to +1.0 (a perfect positive correlation). The closer the correlation coefficient gets to -1.0 or +1.0, the stronger the correlation. The closer a correlation coefficient gets to Zero; weaker is the correlation between the two variables. The sign* (2 tailed) P-value tells you if your correlation was significant at a chosen alpha level (in present study 1% and 5%).the p- value is the probability you would see a given r-value by chance alone. If your p- value is small, then the correlation is significant.

The inter-correlation matrix between different parameters of cement brands industry in table 1.1 depicts the following results.

The correlation coefficient for Quality and consistency of cement is strong perfect correlated with the Brand name and company name (1.000**), Trade Shows & Exhibitions (.780**). Aaker (1996) in his study found that branding and the concept of brand equity however are increasingly important in industrial markets, because it has been shown that what a brand means to a buyer can be a determining factor in deciding between industrial purchases alternatives. The researcher found that there is strong correlation between Brand name & company name, Trade Shows & Exhibitions with Quality and consistency of cement. Secondly, Quality and consistency of cement is moderately correlated with Price of cement (.686**), Credit & payment terms (.458**), Ease of ordering & availability On Time in Full OTIF (.458**), & Advertisement& sales promotion (.481**).

It shows a negative correlation with Company sales personnel (-.132**). I0t seems that there is no effective contribution of company sales personnel in Quality & consistency of cement .maybe they are unable to convince quality or technical knowledge to consumers. Both the brands UltraTech& ACC have to seriously look into their company sales personnel's technical knowledge levels & their role.

Baumgarth, Wirtschaft & Berlin (June 2010) explained that The most important driver of brand equity in b2b environment is the salesperson's behaviour, followed by the salesperson's personality, product quality and non-personal marketing communications, in that order. Effective management of a B2B brand is impossible without the support of the sales force.

Brand name and company name is moderately and positive correlation with Price of cement (.686**), Credit& payment terms (.458**), Ease of ordering & availability On Time in Full OTIF (.458**), Advertisement & sales promotion (.481**). It means Price of cement, Credit & payment terms, Ease of ordering & availability On Time in Full OTIF & Advertisement & sales promotion play some rolein Brand name and company name.

Aaker and Jacobson (2001) have found that an increasing number of B2B companies are now undertaking brand building activities. Mudambi (2002), Wise and Zednickova (2009) concluded through their studies that, branding is a relevant aspect of B-to-B marketing.

Price of Cement is having positive strong correlation with Credit and payment terms (.859**), Ease of ordering & availability On Time in Full OTIF (.859**) & moderately correlated with Quality & consistency of cement (.686**) & Brand name (.686**).

Researcher found that the above factors have moderate to strong impact on the price of cement. So the study concludes that there is relationship between the parameters affecting the buying of cement by B2B consumers.

TABLE NO: 1.1 THANE TO BHIVANDI, KALYAN TO KARJAT & KASARA:
BRAND A - INTERCORRELATION MATRIX:

	Quality & Consistency Of Cement	Brand Name & Company Name	Price Of Cement	Credit & Payment Terms	Ease Of Ordering & Availability OTIF On Time In Full	Company Sales Personnel	Advertisement & Sales Promotion	Technical Support & Technical Meetings	Digital & E Marketing Activities	Trade Shows & Exhibitions
Quality & Consistency Of Cement	1	1.000**	.686**	.458**	.458**	-.132	.481**	.351**	.144	.780**
Brand Name & Company Name	1.000**	1	.686**	.458**	.458**	-.132	.481**	.351**	.144	.780**
Price Of Cement	.686**	.686**	1	.859**	.859**	.301**	.260**	.141	-.027	.302**
Credit & Payment Terms	.458**	.458**	.859**	1	1.000**	.481**	.116	.112	.162	.159
Ease Of Ordering & Availability OTIF On Time In Full	.458**	.458**	.859**	1.000**	1	.481**	.116	.112	.162	.159
Company Sales Personnel	-.132	-.132	.301**	.481**	.481**	1	.056	.190	-.136	-.012
Advertisement & Sales Promotion	.481**	.481**	.260**	.116	.116	.056	1	.659**	-.036	.774**
Technical Support & Technical Meetings	.351**	.351**	.141	.112	.112	.190	.659**	1	.318**	.677**
Digital & E Marketing Activities	.144	.144	-.027	.162	.162	-.136	-.036	.318**	1	.180
Trade Shows & Exhibitions	.780**	.780**	.302**	.159	.159	-.012	.774**	.677**	.180	1

<u>**Statistical Test Applied**</u>: **Pearson Correlation**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

THANE TO BHIVANDI, KALYAN TO KARJAT & KASARA: BRAND - B: ANALYSIS OF INTER CORRELATION MATRIX

Table 1.2 depicts the correlation coefficient between Quality & Consistency of cement with Brand Name & Company Name, Price of cement, Technical support & meetings, & Trade shows & exhibitions. Quality &consistency of cement has strong and positive correlation with and also significant at 1% level with Brand name & Company name (.747**), Technical support & technical meetings (.793**), & Trade shows & exhibitions (.733**).This shows that Brand name & company name, Technical support & meetings along with Trade shows & exhibitions play a major role in Quality & consistency of cement.

Brand name & company name has strong correlation with Quality & consistency of cement (.747**), & Trade shows & exhibitions (.813**). Observation is that in Group B brands, Quality & consistency of cement & Trade shows & exhibitions, playa vital role in branding of the product and shows significant and positive correlation. Other parameters like Price of cement (.456**), Company sales personnel (.626**), Technical support & meetings (.512**), & Digital & E marketing activities (.638*8), are moderately correlated with Bran & company name. Big cement companies like Ambuja, Ultra Tech, ACC, India Cement, and JK are spending heavily on Advertisement and Branding activities along with personal selling, unlike relatively smaller regional companies like Coromandel,who may spend relatively less on advertising but still sell in a B2B.

So, researcher concludes that the variables like Brand name & company name, Technical support &meetings, Trade shows & exhibitions influence the perception of Quality & consistency of cement & Perception of Brand & company name. Hencethe hypothesisis proved that, there is a relationship between the various parameters and brand choice made by B2B customers.

In Group B, it is revealed that Quality & consistency of cement, Company sales personnel, Technical support &meetings, Digital & E marketing activities, Trade shows & exhibitions play a vital role for Brand & Company name in a B2B marketing scenario & should increase such activities for promoting the brand.

1. TABLE NO: 1.2   THANE TO BHIVANDI, KALYAN TO KARJAT & KASARA: BRAND - B: ANALYSIS OF INTER CORRELATION MATRIX

	Quality & Consistency Of Cement	Brand & Company Name	Price Of Cement	Credit & Payment Terms	Ease Of Ordering & Availability OTIF On Time In Full	Company Sales Personnel	Advertisement & Sales Promotion	Technical Support & Technical Meetings	Digital & E Marketing Activities	Trade Shows & Exhibitions
Quality & Consistency Of Cement	1	.747**	.465**	-.284**	.278**	.631**	.658**	.793**	.680**	.733**
Brand Name & Company Name	.747**	1	.456**	-0.192	.243*	.626**	.361**	.512**	.638**	.813**
Price Of Cement	.465**	.456**	1	.431**	.722**	.818**	-.200*	0.156	-0.113	0.075
Credit & Payment Terms	-.284**	-0.192	.431**	1	.383**	.242*	-.460**	-.392**	-.447**	-.368**
Ease Of Ordering & Availability OTIF On Time In Full	.278**	.243*	.722**	.383**	1	.773**	0.077	.410**	0.107	0.154
Company Sales Personnel	.631**	.626**	.818**	.242*	.773**	1	0.182	.492**	.293**	.326**
Advertisement & Sales Promotion	.658**	.361**	-.200*	-.460**	0.077	0.182	1	.917**	.923**	.732**
Technical Support & Technical Meetings	.793**	.512**	0.156	-.392**	.410**	.492**	.917**	1	.877**	.753**
Digital & E Marketing Activities	.680**	.638**	-0.113	-.447**	0.107	.293**	.923**	.877**	1	.895**
Trade Shows & Exhibitions	.733**	.813**	0.075	-.368**	0.154	.326**	.732**	.753**	.895**	1

Statistical Test Applied: Pearson Correlation

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Managerial Implications

Quality & Consistency of cement is perfectly correlated with Brand name & company name in Thane region for brand A, which shows that Brands Ultratech& ACC who are leading in branding activities

have been perceived as having good quality & consistency of cement. Branding has been playing a major role for B2B products in traditional as well as in this modern era of globalization (Desai, 2002). In spite of certain limitations to this study, it is useful for both Brand A & brand B. However Company sales personnel of brand A is having small negative correlation with Brand name & company name which is serious & warrants attention by the respective brand incharge. They can explore and correct their situation. Finally, the Quality & consistency of cement, company sales personnel, Advertisement & sales promotion, Technical support & meetings, Digital & E marketing activities & Trade shows &exhibitions play an important role in influencing the customers especially in both group A & B brands. In most consumer industries, retailer brands and manufacturer brands are independent of each other. Due to the impact of branding, an increased understanding of the perceptions of branding by the management is essential (Horan, O'Dwyer, &Tiernan, 2011). Companies have recognized the importance of brand personality in the development of brand equity (Ahmad &Thyagaraj, 2015). The cement manufacturers can accordingly plan their marketing strategies. Trade shows & Exhibitions played an important role in Brand name & company name for both Brand A & B which is significant &brands can make use of such activities to promote their respective brands.

Limitations of the study and scope for Further Research

There are few limitations to this study. The first one is that the data collected is confined to areas of Thane to Bhiwandi, Kalyan to Karjat & Kasara, and hence cannot be generalized for the entire country. It is suggested that the sample collected from different parts of India would give a better picture of Indian cement brand positioning in India.

Although different studies revealing various aspects of the Parameters Affecting the Sales of Cement with Emphasis on Retailers, have been done in various parts of Maharashtra, Tamilnadu & West Bengal, substantial study on parameters affecting sales of cement with emphasis on B2B customers is yet to be done in Thane & its neighbouring areas. Thane & its neighbouring areas are one of the leading markets for B2B customers in cement industry.

The construction of affordable homes is largely taking place in this region. The cement companies on several occasions had appointed various marketing research agencies to evaluate the parameters affecting the Retail sales & especially after the 2008 recession in the construction industry in many parts

of India, the research has taken a back seat at the national as well as state level. Most of the cement companies which have a national presence did research on Retail Branding & its impact. The present inquiries revealed that no comprehensive study has so far been carried out & no comprehensive academic study on the area of B2B consumers of cement has been conducted in this region. It is in this context, that the present study which deals with the nature of B2B buying process, parameters which B2B customers are looking for while buying a brand, is carried out. It is expected that the study would help cement marketing companies to evolve suitable strategies for B2B Marketing in Thane region.

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