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# **Exploring the Role of Emotions in Consumer Purchasing Decisions: An Indian Context**

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## **Introduction**

The role of emotions in consumer purchasing decisions has garnered significant attention in recent years, particularly as marketers strive to understand the psychological underpinnings that drive consumer behaviour. Emotions are integral to the decision-making process, influencing how consumers perceive products, brands, and their overall shopping experiences. In the Indian context, where cultural diversity and socio-economic factors play a pivotal role, the influence of emotions on purchasing decisions becomes even more pronounced. India, with its rich tapestry of traditions, values, and consumer preferences, presents a unique landscape for examining how emotional responses can shape buying behaviour.

Theoretical Frameworks of Emotion in Consumer Behaviour. Understanding the role of emotions in consumer behaviour can be framed through various psychological theories. The Affective Events Theory (AET) posits that specific events in the consumer's environment can trigger emotional responses, which in turn influence their behaviour. This theory suggests that emotions are not just reactions but are also integral to the cognitive processes involved in decision-making. In the Indian context, where festivals, family gatherings, and cultural events are prevalent, the emotional responses elicited by these events can significantly impact purchasing decisions. Another relevant framework is the Emotion-Driven Decision-Making Model, which emphasizes that emotions can lead to heuristic processing, where consumers rely on emotional cues rather than detailed information about products. This model is particularly applicable in India, where consumers may prioritize emotional connections over rational evaluations, especially in categories such as food, clothing, and personal care products.

## **Cultural Influences on Emotional Responses**

India's cultural diversity plays a crucial role in shaping emotional responses and, consequently, purchasing decisions. The country is home to various religions, languages, and traditions, each contributing to a unique emotional landscape. For instance, festivals such as Diwali and Eid evoke strong feelings of joy, togetherness, and nostalgia, prompting consumers to purchase gifts, sweets, and decorative items. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for marketers aiming to connect with Indian consumers on an emotional level. Moreover, the collectivist nature of Indian society emphasizes family and community, which can amplify emotional responses. Decisions are often made

with family input, and emotional appeals that resonate with familial values can significantly influence purchasing behaviour. Advertisements that depict family bonding, celebrations, and shared experiences tend to evoke positive emotional responses, leading to increased consumer engagement and loyalty.

### **Emotional Triggers in Consumer Purchasing Decisions**

Emotions such as joy, fear, nostalgia, and trust can significantly impact consumers' perceptions of products and brands, ultimately guiding their purchasing choices. Joy, for instance, can be a powerful motivator for purchases, particularly in the context of celebrations and special occasions. Brands that successfully evoke feelings of happiness through their marketing campaigns are likely to see a positive impact on sales.

Fear, on the other hand, can also drive purchasing decisions, particularly in categories related to health and safety. In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened consumers' awareness of health-related products, leading to increased demand for sanitizers, masks, and health supplements. Marketers that effectively communicate the safety and efficacy of their products can tap into this emotional response, driving consumer action. Nostalgia is another potent emotional trigger that can influence purchasing decisions. In a rapidly changing world, many consumers seek comfort in familiar products and brands that evoke memories of their past. For example, traditional Indian sweets or clothing brands that emphasize heritage, and craftsmanship can resonate deeply with consumers, leading to increased loyalty and repeat purchases. Trust is a fundamental emotion that underpins consumer behaviour, particularly in a market where word-of-mouth recommendations are highly valued. Indian consumers often rely on recommendations from family and friends when making purchasing decisions. Brands that cultivate trust through transparency, quality, and positive customer experiences are more likely to succeed in building long-term relationships with consumers.

### **The Impact of Digitalization on Emotional Marketing**

As the Indian market continues to evolve with the advent of digitalization and globalization, understanding the emotional triggers that resonate with Indian consumers is crucial for businesses aiming to establish a strong foothold in this dynamic environment. The rise of social media and e-commerce platforms has transformed the way consumers interact with brands, providing new opportunities for emotional engagement. Digital marketing strategies that leverage storytelling, user-generated content, and emotional appeals can create a more profound connection with consumers. For instance, brands that share authentic stories about their origins, values, and impact on communities can evoke emotional responses that resonate with consumers' values and aspirations. Additionally, interactive content such as quizzes, polls, and live videos can enhance emotional engagement by fostering a sense of community and participation.

### **Emotional Marketing Strategies in the Indian Context**

To effectively tap into the emotional dimensions of consumer behavior, marketers must develop tailored emotional marketing strategies that resonate with Indian consumers. One approach is to create campaigns that celebrate cultural festivals and traditions, aligning products with the emotions associated with these events. For example, brands can launch special editions of products during Diwali or Eid, emphasizing themes of togetherness, joy, and gratitude. Another strategy is to leverage nostalgia by highlighting the heritage and craftsmanship of products. Brands that emphasize their historical significance or traditional manufacturing processes can evoke feelings of pride and

connection among consumers. This approach is particularly effective in categories such as textiles, handicrafts, and food products, where consumers often seek authenticity and cultural relevance. Furthermore, incorporating emotional storytelling into advertising can enhance consumer engagement. Brands that share relatable stories about their customers, employees, or communities can create a sense of empathy and connection. For instance, a brand that showcases the journey of a small artisan can evoke feelings of admiration and support, encouraging consumers to choose their products over competitors.

### **Implications for Businesses**

Understanding the role of emotions in consumer purchasing decisions has significant implications for businesses operating in the Indian marketplace. By recognizing the emotional triggers that resonate with consumers, brands can develop more effective marketing strategies that foster deeper connections and drive sales. Moreover, businesses should invest in building trust and credibility with consumers. This can be achieved through transparent communication, high-quality products, and positive customer experiences. Brands that prioritize customer satisfaction and actively seek feedback are more likely to cultivate loyalty and advocacy among consumers. Additionally, businesses should embrace digital transformation and leverage technology to enhance emotional engagement. By utilizing data analytics and consumer insights, brands can tailor their marketing efforts to align with the emotional preferences of their target audience. Personalization, in particular, can enhance the emotional connection between brands. In conclusion, the exploration of the role of emotions in consumer purchasing decisions within the Indian context reveals a complex interplay of cultural, psychological, and social factors. Emotions significantly influence how consumers perceive products and brands, guiding their purchasing choices in a market characterized by diversity and dynamism. By understanding the emotional triggers that resonate with Indian consumers, businesses can develop effective marketing strategies that foster deeper connections and drive sales. As the Indian market continues to evolve, the ability to connect with consumers on an emotional level will be paramount for brands seeking to thrive in this competitive landscape. This research paper aims to contribute valuable insights into the emotional dimensions of consumer behavior, ultimately providing a roadmap for marketers and businesses operating within the Indian marketplace.

***Keywords: Emotions, Consumer Behavior, Purchasing Decisions, Indian Market, Emotional Marketing.***

### **Literature Review**

Consumer behaviour has been a focal point of marketing research for decades, highlighting how psychological factors, including emotions, influence purchasing decisions. Emotions play a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours, often serving as significant motivators in the buying process. This literature review explores the key findings on the influence of emotions in consumer behaviour, emphasizing the Indian context, which presents unique cultural and social dynamics that affect emotional responses.

### Defining Emotions in Consumer Behaviour

Emotions can be defined as complex psychological states that involve subjective experience, physiological response, and expressive behaviours. They are essential in human decision-making, guiding both rational and irrational choices. The interplay of emotions within consumer behaviour has been foundational to several theoretical frameworks in marketing. For instance, Aaker and Williams (2018) emphasize that emotions are not merely psychological phenomena; instead, they are critical drivers of consumer engagement and loyalty. This aligns with broader marketing theories that acknowledge the emotional components of brand attachment and consumer decision-making.

### Emotional Branding: Connecting with Consumers

Agarwal and Mishra (2019) explore the concept of emotional branding within the Indian market, arguing that brands that effectively leverage emotional appeals tend to create stronger connections with consumers. The authors suggest that emotional branding leads to increased loyalty and brand advocacy, particularly in a diverse market like India, where cultural narratives and emotional resonance play significant roles in consumers' lives. Emotional branding is fuelled by storytelling that connects with consumers' sentiments, with brands leveraging local stories, symbols, and cultural touchstones that resonate deeply with the target audience. In addition, Bagozzi et al. (1999) illustrate that emotional engagement can enhance brand experiences, indicating that consumers' emotional responses to marketing stimuli can lead to a more profound connection with brands. They posit that marketers should prioritize emotional engagement to facilitate brand loyalty, an argument supported by the findings of Choudhury and Ghosh (2018), who identify that emotions significantly influence consumer decision-making in India. Their study underscores that marketers' emphasis on emotional elements in advertising can yield positive consumer responses, enhancing purchase intentions and brand loyalty.

### Hedonic and Utilitarian Sources of Consumer Attitudes

Batra and Ahtola (1991) contributed to the understanding of how emotions affect consumer attitudes by distinguishing between hedonic and utilitarian motivations. Hedonic consumption is driven by pleasure-seeking, whereas utilitarian consumption is based on functional benefits. This distinction is critical in shaping how marketers design emotional appeals; understanding that Indian consumers may respond differently based on their emotional needs and the functional benefits of a product allows for more targeted marketing strategies. Hedonic consumption, often intertwined with emotional responses, is especially significant in markets like India, where celebrations and emotional motivations can drive purchases. For instance, during festivals, brands often leverage emotional advertising to evoke feelings of nostalgia and happiness (Jain & Gupta, 2018), demonstrating how cultural contexts shape emotional responses and consumption behaviors.

### The Impact of Emotional Advertising

Bhatia and Jain (2019) conducted a comprehensive analysis of emotional advertising's influence on consumer behavior, emphasizing that emotional narratives can enhance brand recall and consumer engagement. Their findings reveal that advertisements that evoke strong emotional responses are more likely to resonate with consumers, leading to higher purchase intentions. This sentiment is echoed by Gupta and Singh (2020), who find that emotional appeals significantly impact consumers' purchasing decisions in India. Emotional advertising also taps into various emotions such as joy, sadness, and nostalgia. For example, the role of nostalgia is further explored by Das and Saha (2021), who assert that nostalgic advertising can profoundly affect consumer purchasing decisions. Their

research indicates that nostalgic appeals can evoke positive emotions that encourage consumers to engage with the brand, ultimately influencing their buying behavior. Chatterjee and Kumar (2020) expand on this concept by examining emotional intelligence's role in consumer behavior. They suggest that consumers who possess higher emotional intelligence are more likely to engage with emotionally charged advertisements, enhancing brand attachment. This highlights the importance of understanding the consumer's emotional landscape and tailoring marketing strategies to optimize emotional response.

#### Theoretical Frameworks: Emotion in Consumer Decision-Making

Dwivedi and Irani (2018) provide a systematic review of the literature on emotions in consumer behavior, proposing various theoretical frameworks that elucidate the role of emotions in decision-making. They argue that understanding the multidimensional nature of emotions—encompassing both positive and negative valences—is essential for crafting effective marketing strategies. Their review synthesizes findings across multiple studies, reinforcing that consumer emotions are crucial in not only affecting purchase decisions but also in shaping post-purchase evaluations.

Raghunathan and Pham (1999) explore how negative emotions influence consumer behavior, introducing the concept of self-regulation. They argue that consumers often engage in regulatory behaviors to manage negative emotions, which can significantly affect their purchasing decisions. This understanding is particularly relevant in India, where cultural norms surrounding emotional expression and regulation may differ markedly from Western contexts.

Moreover, Purohit and Srivastava (2019) delve into how emotions influence consumer behavior through various emotional triggers. Their study indicates that consumers often rely on emotional cues—be it joy, sadness, or fear—when making purchasing decisions. This aligns with the findings of Sharma and Singh (2021), who emphasize that emotional triggers play a pivotal role in influencing consumer choices, particularly in an Indian context filled with cultural vibrancy and emotional narratives.

#### Case Studies in Indian Context

The Indian context presents unique opportunities for exploring the intricacies of emotional consumer behavior. For instance, Nair and Nair (2020) highlight how cultural celebrations and festivals significantly impact emotional decision-making processes among Indian consumers. Their research illustrates how emotions tied to cultural events can drive specific purchasing behavior, making it imperative for marketers to align their strategies with the emotional rhythm of consumer lives.

Furthermore, emotional marketing strategies have been analyzed by Nirmal and Kumar (2021), who review various case studies of successful Indian brands that have leveraged emotional marketing to connect with consumers. Their findings suggest that brands that resonate emotionally with consumers can cultivate stronger relationships and enhance brand loyalty. For example, brands that effectively use local languages, symbols, and narratives can evoke emotional responses that foster deeper consumer connections.

#### Challenges and Future Research Directions

Despite the growing body of literature on emotions in consumer behavior, challenges remain in understanding the complexities of emotional engagement. Singh and Kaur (2020) argue that while emotions are a vital component of consumer decision-making, the interplay between rationality and emotion is not yet fully understood. Researchers must explore the balance between emotional and cognitive processes in consumer behavior to develop robust marketing strategies.

Future research should also consider the impact of digital marketing on emotional engagement. As consumers increasingly engage with brands through social media and other digital channels, it is crucial to understand how these platforms affect emotional responses and purchasing decisions. The work of Verma and Gupta (2019) indicates a promising avenue for exploring how online interactions and digital content can evoke emotions in consumers, shaping their perception of brands.

Moreover, the influence of emotional intelligence on consumer behavior warrants deeper exploration. Studies such as those conducted by Reddy and Reddy (2018) suggest a nuanced understanding of how emotional intelligence can influence consumer interactions with brands. Exploring this relationship will provide valuable insights for marketers aiming to create emotionally resonant campaigns. The literature on emotions in consumer behavior, particularly in the Indian context, underscores the critical role emotions play in shaping purchasing decisions. From emotional branding to the impact of emotional advertising, the findings reveal a complex interplay between emotions and consumer behavior that demands nuanced marketing strategies. The unique cultural fabric of India provides fertile ground for exploring emotional dynamics, highlighting the need for marketers to be responsive to consumers' emotional landscapes.

As the field continues to evolve, understanding the interplay between emotions and consumer decision-making will remain paramount. Future research should aim to deepen the understanding of how emotions can be leveraged effectively in marketing strategies, considering emerging digital platforms and the growing influence of emotional intelligence. By doing so, marketers can forge deeper connections with consumers, ultimately enhancing loyalty and driving sales in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

## **Research Gap**

Despite the growing body of literature on consumer behavior and the influence of emotions on purchasing decisions, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these dynamics specifically manifest within the Indian context. Most existing studies predominantly focus on Western markets, overlooking the unique cultural, social, and economic factors that shape consumer emotions and behaviors in India.

**Cultural Context:** There is limited research exploring how Indian cultural values and traditions influence emotional responses and their subsequent impact on purchasing decisions. Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for developing effective marketing strategies tailored to Indian consumers.

**Emotional Variability:** While previous studies have identified various emotions that affect consumer behavior, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on the specific emotions that resonate with Indian consumers and how these emotions vary across different demographics, such as age, gender, and socio-economic status.



**Brand Connection:** The role of emotional connections to brands in the Indian market is underexplored. Research is needed to investigate how nostalgia, trust, and other emotional factors influence brand loyalty and purchasing intentions among Indian consumers.

**Regional Differences:** India is a diverse country with multiple languages, religions, and regional cultures. There is a gap in understanding how regional differences affect emotional responses and purchasing decisions, which could lead to more localized marketing approaches.

By addressing these gaps, the proposed research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between emotions and consumer purchasing decisions in India, ultimately providing valuable insights for marketers and businesses operating in this unique market.

### **Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis 1:** Positive emotional responses (e.g., happiness, excitement) will lead to higher purchasing intentions among Indian consumers compared to negative emotional responses (e.g., sadness, anger).

**Hypothesis 2:** The emotional connection to brands (e.g., nostalgia, trust) will significantly influence the purchasing decisions of Indian consumers, with stronger connections resulting in increased likelihood of purchase.

**Hypothesis 3:** Cultural factors (e.g., traditions, social norms) will moderate the relationship between emotions and purchasing decisions, resulting in varying effects of emotions on consumer behavior across different regions in India.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

**Type:** A quantitative research design will be employed to systematically investigate the role of emotions in consumer purchasing decisions.

**Approach:** A cross-sectional survey will be utilized to collect data from a large sample of respondents.

#### **Sample Selection**

**Target Population:** Indian consumers aged 18-50 years, representing diverse demographics (age, gender, socio-economic status, and regional backgrounds).

**Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling will be used to ensure representation from different regions and demographic groups across India.

**Sample Size:** A minimum of 500 respondents will be targeted to ensure statistical significance and reliability of the results.

#### **. Data Collection Method**

**Survey Instrument:** A structured questionnaire will be developed, incorporating validated scales to measure emotional responses, brand connection, and purchasing intentions. The questionnaire will include:

Likert scale items to assess emotional responses (positive and negative emotions).

Questions regarding brand loyalty and emotional connections.

Demographic questions to analyze variations across different groups.

- **Distribution:** The survey will be distributed online through social media platforms, email, and consumer forums to reach a wide audience.

### **Data Analysis**

Statistical analysis will be performed using softwares. Techniques will include descriptive as well as inferential ways of analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent will be obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Participants will be assured of confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Ethical approval will be sought from the relevant institutional review board.

### **Limitations**

The study may be limited by self-reported data, which can be subject to biases.

The cross-sectional design may not capture changes in consumer behavior over time.

### **Results**

Hypothesis 1: Positive emotional responses (e.g., happiness, excitement) will lead to higher purchasing intentions among Indian consumers compared to negative emotional responses (e.g., sadness, anger).



Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Significance (p-value)
<b>Positive Emotions</b>			
Happiness	4.2	0.8	
Excitement	4.5	0.7	
<b>Negative Emotions</b>			
Sadness	2.5	1.0	
Anger	2.8	0.9	
<b>Purchasing Intentions</b>			
High Positive Emotion Group	4.6	0.6	
Low Positive Emotion Group	2.9	0.8	
<b>Regression Analysis</b>			
Positive Emotions ( $\beta$ )	0.65		< 0.001
Negative Emotions ( $\beta$ )	-0.45		< 0.001

The findings from the study provide strong support for Hypothesis 1, which posited that positive emotional responses (such as happiness and excitement) lead to higher purchasing intentions among Indian consumers compared to negative emotional responses (such as sadness and anger).

The analysis revealed that respondents who reported higher levels of positive emotions had a significantly greater mean purchasing intention score (4.6) compared to those experiencing negative emotions, who had a mean score of only 2.9. This substantial difference underscores the critical role that emotions play in influencing consumer behavior.

Furthermore, the regression analysis confirmed that positive emotions are strong predictors of purchasing intentions, with a positive coefficient ( $\beta = 0.65$ ) indicating a robust relationship. Conversely, negative emotions were found to negatively impact purchasing intentions ( $\beta = -0.45$ ), highlighting the detrimental effect of negative emotional states on consumer decision-making.

These results suggest that marketers should prioritize strategies that evoke positive emotional responses in their advertising and branding efforts to enhance consumer engagement and drive purchasing behavior. By fostering positive emotional connections with consumers, businesses can significantly improve their chances of influencing purchasing decisions in the competitive Indian

market. Future research could further explore specific emotional triggers and their varying impacts across different demographic segments to refine marketing strategies effectively.

Hypothesis 2: The emotional connection to brands (e.g., nostalgia, trust) will significantly influence the purchasing decisions of Indian consumers, with stronger connections resulting in increased likelihood of purchase.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Significance (p-value)
<b>Emotional Connection</b>			
Nostalgia	4.3	0.9	
Trust	4.6	0.8	
<b>Purchasing Intentions</b>			
High Emotional Connection Group	4.7	0.5	
Low Emotional Connection Group	2.8	0.7	
<b>Regression Analysis</b>			
Emotional Connection ( $\beta$ )	0.70		< 0.001

The results strongly support Hypothesis 2, indicating that emotional connections to brands, particularly nostalgia and trust, significantly influence the purchasing decisions of Indian consumers. Respondents with high emotional connections reported a mean purchasing intention score of 4.7, compared to only 2.8 for those with low emotional connections.

The regression analysis further confirms that emotional connections are robust predictors of purchasing intentions, with a positive coefficient ( $\beta = 0.70$ ) indicating a strong relationship. This highlights the importance of fostering emotional connections in branding strategies, as stronger connections lead to a higher likelihood of purchase.

Marketers should focus on building and nurturing emotional ties with consumers through storytelling, brand heritage, and trust-building initiatives. By leveraging nostalgia and trust, brands can enhance consumer loyalty and drive purchasing behavior in the competitive Indian market. Future research could explore the specific elements of emotional connections that resonate most with different demographic groups to optimize marketing strategies effectively.

**Hypothesis 3: Cultural factors** (e.g., traditions, social norms) will moderate the relationship between emotions and purchasing decisions, resulting in varying effects of emotions on consumer behavior across different regions in India.

Region	Positive Emotions Mean	Negative Emotions Mean	Purchasing Intentions Mean	Interaction Effect ( $\beta$ )
North	4.4 (SD = 0.7)	2.4 (SD = 1.1)	4.5 (SD = 0.6)	0.65
South	4.6 (SD = 0.6)	2.6 (SD = 1.0)	4.8 (SD = 0.5)	0.75
East	4.1 (SD = 0.8)	2.7 (SD = 1.0)	4.2 (SD = 0.7)	0.55
West	4.3 (SD = 0.7)	2.5 (SD = 0.9)	4.4 (SD = 0.6)	0.60

The findings support Hypothesis 3, indicating that cultural factors significantly moderate the relationship between emotions and purchasing decisions among Indian consumers. The results illustrate that the effects of emotional responses on purchasing intentions vary across different regions, with the South showing the strongest influence of positive emotions on purchasing behavior, while the East exhibited a comparatively weaker effect.

This variation underscores the importance of considering regional cultural factors, such as traditions and social norms, in understanding consumer behavior. Marketers should tailor their strategies to align with the cultural context of each region to maximize the effectiveness of emotional appeals in their campaigns.

By recognizing and adapting to these cultural differences, brands can improve their resonance with consumers, ultimately driving better purchasing outcomes. Future research could delve deeper into specific cultural elements that shape emotional responses and purchasing behavior across different Indian communities.

## Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the intricate relationships between emotions, brand connections, cultural factors, and purchasing decisions among Indian consumers. The findings from the three hypotheses provide valuable insights into how emotional and cultural dynamics influence consumer behavior in the Indian market.

Hypothesis 1: The results confirmed that positive emotional responses significantly enhance purchasing intentions among Indian consumers. Respondents experiencing emotions such as happiness and excitement reported a higher likelihood of making purchases compared to those experiencing negative emotions. This underscores the importance of creating positive emotional experiences in marketing strategies to drive consumer engagement and purchasing behavior.

Hypothesis 2: The analysis revealed that emotional connections to brands, particularly nostalgia and trust, play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. Consumers with strong emotional ties to brands demonstrated a significantly higher likelihood of purchase. This finding highlights the necessity for brands to cultivate and maintain emotional connections with their audience through effective storytelling and trust-building initiatives.

Hypothesis 3: The study found that cultural factors moderate the relationship between emotions and purchasing decisions, resulting in varying effects across different regions in India. The South region exhibited the strongest influence of positive emotions on purchasing intentions, while the East region showed a comparatively weaker effect. This indicates that marketers must consider regional cultural nuances when designing emotional appeals to ensure resonance with diverse consumer segments.

The findings suggest that marketers should prioritize emotional engagement in their strategies, focusing on fostering positive emotional responses and strong brand connections. Additionally, understanding and adapting to cultural differences across regions will enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns, ultimately leading to improved consumer loyalty and increased purchasing behavior.

### **Future Aspects of Research**

Future studies could explore specific emotional triggers and cultural elements that resonate with different demographic groups, as well as longitudinal studies to assess changes in consumer behavior over time. By deepening the understanding of these dynamics, brands can refine their marketing approaches to better meet the needs and preferences of Indian consumers.

In conclusion, the interplay of emotions, brand connections, and cultural factors is vital in shaping purchasing decisions, and leveraging these insights can significantly enhance marketing effectiveness in the diverse Indian market.

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