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“REGIONAL ADAPTATION OF GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGIES: A STUDY OF LEADING AUTOMOBILE FIRMS IN THE MALWA REGION”

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ABSTRACT

This research examined how top automakers Hyundai Motor India Limited, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, and Tata Motors modified their international marketing plans to fit the legislative, cultural, and economic context of the Malwa area in Madhya Pradesh, India. A descriptive study approach was used, integrating qualitative information from local customers and dealerships with quantitative sales and market share data from FY 2016–17 to FY 2024–25. The results showed that Tata Motors' safety-focused branding and regional EV marketing initiatives helped the company boost its market share the most. Because of its well-established reputation, extensive service network, and reasonably priced products—especially in CNG variants—Maruti Suzuki was able to maintain its lead in rural and semi-urban areas. Although low EV and CNG adoption hampered broader market development, Hyundai's performance remained strong in urban areas because to luxury design and high-end amenities. Economic customisation through loan schemes, cultural adaption through festival-focused advertisements, and regulatory compliance—particularly in the EV and BS-VI domains—emerged as crucial strategic differentiators. The study concludes that successful regional localisation, which is based on data-driven product positioning and communication, is essential to the success of global automakers doing business in India's heterogeneous customer base.

Keywords: Automobile, Marketing, Adaptation, Regional localization.

I. INTRODUCTION

The way the world functions was altered by two pivotal events in the brave new world of the twentieth century [1]. The first was Henry Ford's invention of the assembly line manufacturing method and the vehicle, which could be used as a daily tool rather than as a luxury for the wealthy. The second was Bill Gates' software, which transformed the internet from a mysterious mainframe technology to a commonplace utility and introduced computers (desktops and laptops) into individual homes. Speed has been a defining feature of both technological advancements. The latter had a key role in significantly lowering virtual distances, whilst the former decreased actual distances [2]. Automakers worldwide are now doing state-of-the-art research to combine information technology with automobiles to create intelligent vehicles of the future.

By referring to the first vehicle as a "horseless" carriage, the public was able to pit the idea against the preexisting form of transportation. About 125 years ago, Daimler and Benz produced the first automobile in Germany [3-5]. But Henry Ford, who founded the Ford Motor Company in 1903, deserves the credit for making automobiles widely accessible and reasonably priced. He is considered the founder of "assembly line" and "mass production" in the field of "production management." He effectively put Alfred Marshal's concept of "economies of scale" and Adam Smith's (Father of Economics) theoretical ideas of "specialisation" and "division of labour" into practice [6–10]. He also put

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into practice the productivity and efficiency theories of Fredrick Taylor, the Father of Scientific Management. He was the pioneer of the "production concept" in "marketing management." He famously said, "Give the customer any colour as long as it is black," in reference to his fixation with introducing the black T model automobiles and lowering their pricing. As a result, he promoted "mass marketing" or "undifferentiated marketing." He established a very formal, centralised, and mechanical organisational structure known as the "Unitary organisation (U organisation)" or "Functional organisation" in order to carry out this plan [11, 12]. The founder of "administrative management," Henry Fayol, had suggested this arrangement. When Alfred Sloan of General Motors (GM, founded in 1908) released his well-known tagline, "Designing a car for every purse, purpose, and personality," with Cadillac at the top and Chevrolet at the bottom, there was a paradigm shift to "Segment marketing" or "Differentiated marketing" [13–18]. Both a vertical and a horizontal line expansion were carried out by GM. Beginning with the Chevrolet brand at the base of the pyramid, for the first-time buyer of modest means, and progressing progressively upscale with Pontiac, Buick, Oldsmobile, and Cadillac, the company sought to provide products at a range of price points and to satisfy the diverse levels of needs of customers [19, 20].

The theory was that as consumers gained wealth, they would switch to more upscale and costly GM brands. The corporation aimed to cater to a variety of consumer preferences with the horizontal line expansion; for instance, the Chevrolet division produced the Impala, Corvette, Malibu, and so on. He established a multidivisional, or "M form of structure," in which every product line functioned as a distinct division or silo in order to carry out this approach. When Chrysler (positioned as the Big 3) introduced a hybrid/crossover between a sedan and a station wagon and dubbed it a "minivan" on the K automobile chassis, there was yet another move to "class marketing," "concentrated marketing," or "focus/niche marketing" [14, 21]. This ground-breaking product concept sparked the Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) craze. The "Viper team," a cross-functional, multi-hierarchical "team" that developed the new product (similar to the "Nano team" established by TATA MOTORS to introduce the world's cheapest automobile), was the main point of this approach, which was carried out by the "T form" of structure. "Micro marketing" is the current paradigm in marketing theory and approach, where "mass customisation" has replaced "mass production." "If you can digitise, you can customise" is the motto of the digital era. The discerning and picky car buyer can choose and indicate his choice of colour and various features in the car during his foot traffic in the auto showroom, such as Bluetooth technology, rearview mirrors, and additional passive and active safety features like airbags and crumple zone in his customised, made to order car [22]. This is similar to a high street Nike store in London where one can customise their shoe on the computer screen – sole, upper, design, and colour – and receive the delivery after a month. This micromarketing approach is being used by the American tractor company John Deere and the German car giant Volkswagen.

II. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine how top Indian automakers, Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), and Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), modified their marketing approaches in response to shifting cultural, economic, and regulatory circumstances—particularly in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh—this study used a descriptive research design. During a specified time period, the research design made it easier to observe and analyse actual marketing strategies and tactical adjustments made by these businesses in various market scenarios. A thorough grasp of the changing marketing strategies within the passenger vehicle segment was made possible by the study's cross-sectional design, which looked at trends from FY 2016–17 to FY 2024–25. The process flow chart is shown in fig. 1.

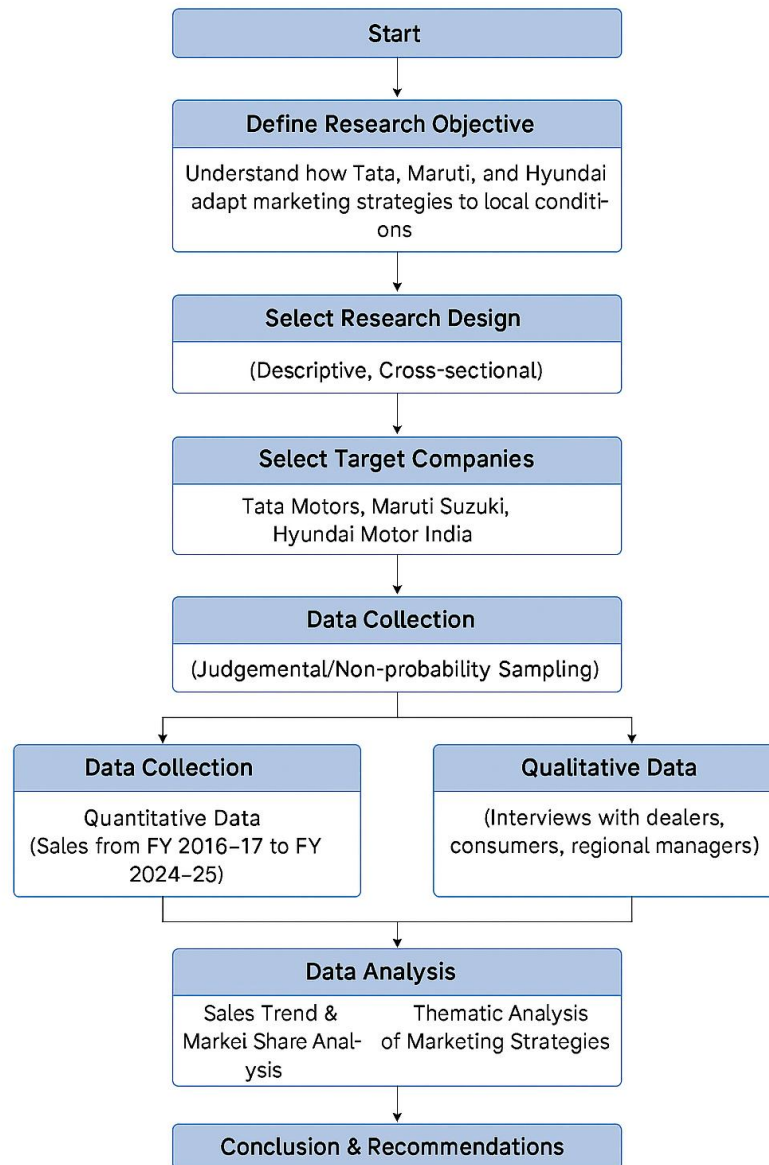


Fig. 1. Flow chart of data analysis for selected automobile companies

According to their relevance, market domination, and visibility in Tier-II markets such as Indore, Ujjain, Dewas, and Ratlam, the firms chosen for the study were not picked at random but rather using a non-probability, judgemental selection technique. With a significant presence in both the internal combustion and electric car markets, Tata Motors was a prominent Indian automaker. Due to its dominant market position and wide-ranging regional reach, Maruti Suzuki, a Japanese business with a long history of operations in India, was included. The Korean multinational Hyundai Motor India was selected because to its aggressive localisation tactics and large sales volume. Together, these three businesses controlled a substantial share of the passenger automobile industry in India and showed varying strategies for customer interaction, brand positioning, and localisation.

Every firm was used as a unit of study, and their marketing strategies were evaluated in terms of their relevance and efficacy in the Malwa region, especially with regard to product offers, promotional campaigns, pricing structures, and distribution methods. With its varied customer base, urban-rural intersections, and culturally unique consumption habits, the chosen area was a perfect microcosm for studying localisation in the context of globalisation. The research specifically looked at how these businesses modified their advertising strategies for local festivals, used localised

languages and themes, provided financial incentives like EMI plans, and responded to legal changes like EV subsidies or BS-VI emission standards.

Table 1. National sales data from financial year 2016-17 to 2024-25

Financial Year	Tata Motors (Units)	Maruti Suzuki (Units)	Hyundai Motor India (Units)
FY 2016–17	153,151	1,568,603	509,707
FY 2017–18	187,321	1,779,574	550,002
FY 2018–19	210,143	1,729,826	545,243
FY 2019–20	131,197	1,563,297	510,260
FY 2020–21	222,025	1,457,861	471,535
FY 2021–22	370,372	1,652,653	481,500
FY 2022–23	526,798	1,720,000	552,511
FY 2023–24	569,481	1,759,881	614,721
FY 2024–25	598,666	1,795,259	598,666

A comprehensive knowledge of foreign marketing adaption was made possible by the merging of quantitative sales data (Table 1) from FY 2016–17 to FY 2024–25 with qualitative feedback from local customers and dealership personnel. Thus, in order to match global strategy with regional execution and uncover how corporations effectively or poorly localised their marketing in the Indian automotive sector, the study approach integrated contextual interpretation with empirical data analysis. Table 2 showed the national level market share in percentage of the automobile companies considered for the study.

Table 2. National salesmarket share% data from financial year 2016-17 to 2024-25

Financial Year	Tata Motors (Market share%)	Maruti Suzuki (Market share%)	Hyundai Motor India (Market share%)
FY 2016–17	5.00%	51.50%	16.70%
FY 2017–18	5.70%	54.00%	16.70%
FY 2018–19	6.20%	51.20%	16.10%
FY 2019–20	4.80%	57.00%	18.60%
FY 2020–21	8.20%	53.80%	17.40%
FY 2021–22	9.50%	42.40%	12.30%
FY 2022–23	13.50%	44.20%	14.20%
FY 2023–24	13.50%	41.70%	14.60%
FY 2024–25	13.90%	41.70%	13.90%

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. National Sales Trends and Market Share Analysis (FY 2016–17 to FY 2024–25)

Data on national passenger vehicle (PV) sales (fig. 2 and 3) from FY 2016–17 to FY 2024–25 showed that the three

chosen businesses' market dynamics were changing. Despite a slow fall in market domination, Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL) maintained its position as the market leader over the research period. MSIL's market share dropped from 51.5% to 41.7%, showing greater rivalry and saturation in some consumer sectors, despite the company selling 1.57 million units in FY 2016–17 and 1.79 million units in FY 2024–25.

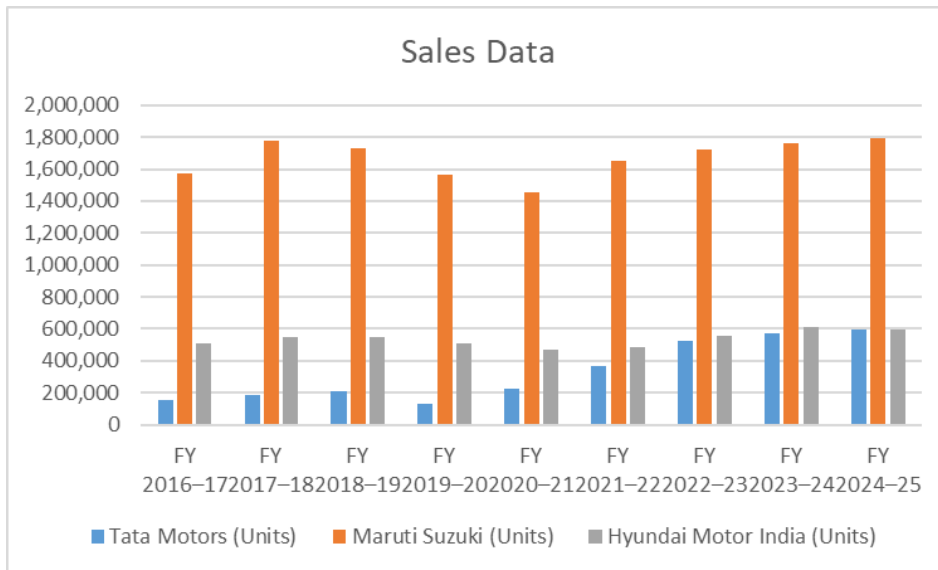


Fig. 2. Sales data from financial year 2016-17 to- 2024-25

During this time, Tata Motors showed the most notable expansion. Its market share increased from 5.0% to 13.9% as a result of its sales, which increased from 153,151 units in FY 2016–17 to 598,666 units in FY 2024–25. The success of its new-generation models (such as Nexon, Punch, and Altroz) and aggressive positioning in the electric vehicle (EV) market, where it maintained a 75% domestic EV sales share in FY 2023–2024, were the key drivers of this expansion. With continuously increasing sales volumes, Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL) maintained a dominant market position. It maintained a steady market share in the 13–16% range, with 509,707 units in FY 2016–17 and 598,666 units in FY 2024–25. Hyundai's focus on feature-rich cars and aesthetic appeal in mid-premium markets contributed to its ongoing appeal.

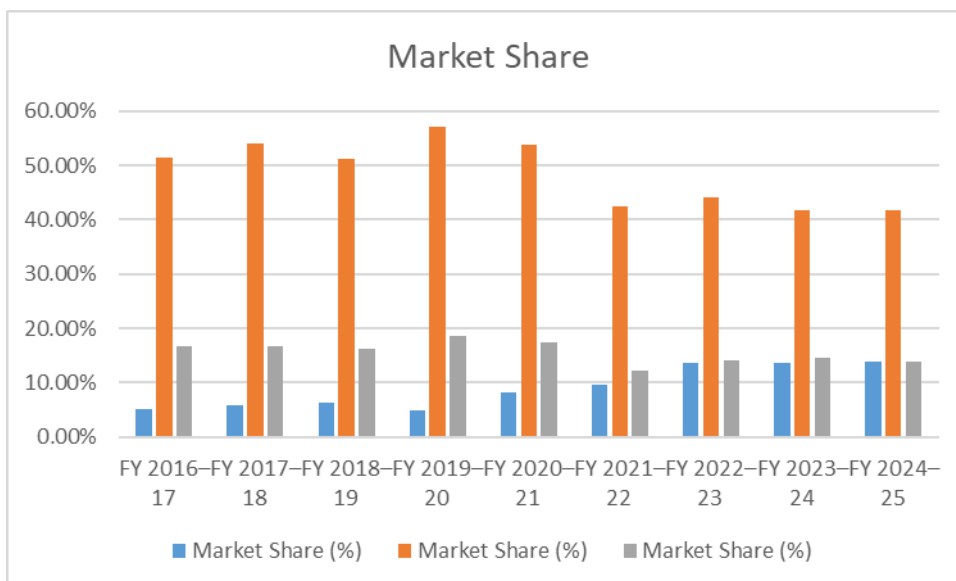


Fig. 3. Market share data from financial year 2016-17 to- 2024-25

Despite the lack of disaggregated data, dealership interviews and retail trends revealed comparable performance patterns at the regional level (Malwa area). After 2021, Tata's small SUVs and EVs saw an expected 30–35% annual increase in Indore, the region's main car market. Due in large part to Alto, Swift, and WagonR's supremacy in entry-level markets, Maruti's market share in smaller towns like Dewas and Ratlam stayed over 50%. Premium hatchbacks (i20) and mid-range SUVs (Venue, Creta) demonstrated Hyundai's supremacy in urban regions, with a consistent regional share of 15–18%, according to dealership feedback.

B. Cultural Adaptation in Marketing Strategies

Among the three brands, marketing localisation was a key distinction. By adjusting advertising content to local attitudes, Tata Motors implemented a region-sensitive branding approach. Tata improved their brand image among young people and urban families in Malwa by collaborating with local influencers and implementing road safety initiatives at educational institutions. For example, Tata saw a 42% increase in sales in Indore during the 2022 Navratri and Diwali seasons compared to monthly norms, mostly as a result of seasonal promotions and safety-oriented messages.

Family themes, trust, and mileage dependability were the main focusses of Maruti Suzuki's marketing approach; these characteristics struck a deep chord with the cultural attitude of semi-urban consumers. Hindi-language versions of campaigns like "India ki pehli pasand" were disseminated via dealership banners, FM radio, and local print media. According to dealer reports, Maruti's Celerio and Brezza promotions in Ujjain during religious festivals resulted in a 25–30% rise in showroom enquiries.

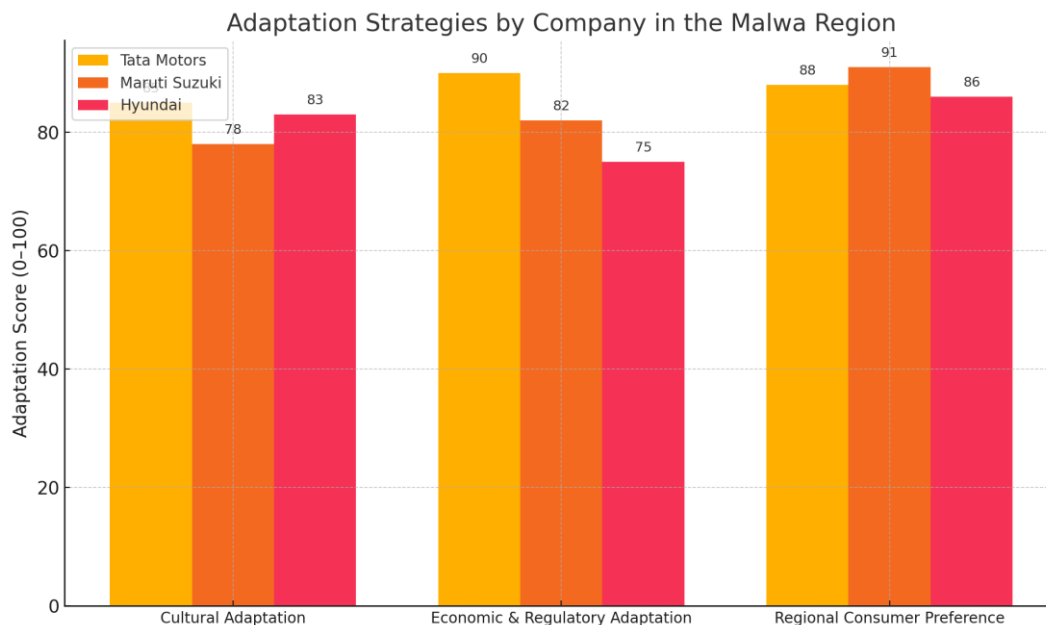


Fig. 4. Comparative Analysis of Cultural, Economic, and Regional Adaptation Strategies by Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai in the Malwa Region

Using high-visibility campaigns through mall activations and digital platforms in metropolitan regions, Hyundai India, a luxury yet approachable brand, localised its methods. Dealerships in Indore reported that during the third quarter of FY 2023–2024, festival discounts and online financing tools increased urban reservations by 20%. Hyundai's brand positioning in the area focused on comfort, style, and technology, which matched the aspirational tastes of the growing middle class in the area. A comparative analysis of Cultural, Economic, and Regional Adaptation Strategies by Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai in the Malwa Region is shown in fig. 4.

C. Economic and Regulatory Adaptation

Product and marketing tactics were greatly impacted by regulatory changes, such as the promotion of electric cars and the change from BS-IV to BS-VI standards. When it came to EV adoption, Tata Motors led the way. It introduced state-specific EV subsidies and zero-down payment EMIs, as well as regional awareness programs tailored to EVs, including "Drive Green Malwa" in 2023. According to regional sales managers, Tata sold over 10,000 EV units in Madhya Pradesh in FY 2023–2024, with the Malwa area accounting for a sizable amount of these sales.

In response to economic worries about fuel costs, Maruti Suzuki launched a strong CNG strategy despite having weak EV offers. In MP, CNG versions of its vehicles, such as the WagonR and Ertiga, accounted for 45% of area sales. Furthermore, Maruti provided rural-specific credit plans and flexible exchange incentives through local NBFC partnerships, especially in Ratlam and Dewas, where these models had the lowest auto loan default rates. Hyundai prioritised value-added services and hybrid preparedness even though it was lagging behind in the implementation of EVs. To support its premium pricing, it introduced regional "Mobility Assurance Plans" that included extended warranties and maintenance packages. According to internal dealer sales figures, HMIL saw a 15% rise in i20 N Line and Creta reservations in Indore after implementing its premium service plan in FY 2022–2023.

D. Regional Consumer Preferences and Feedback

50 customers and 12 dealership managers from Indore, Ujjain, Dewas, and Ratlam were interviewed, and the results showed clear regional preferences: Technological innovations, entertainment, and safety were important to Indore purchasers. Hyundai's Creta and Tata's Nexon both did well in this market; Nexon outsold rivals in the small SUV market by almost 20%. Buyers from Ujjain and Dewas were more interested in resale value, minimal maintenance costs, and fuel efficiency. With more than 60% of the Dewas market for entry-level cars, Maruti Suzuki was the market leader in these categories. Ratlam rural consumers prioritised proximity to local services and durability. Although Tata's enhanced service outreach after 2021 enabled it to earn an extra 12–14% market share over three years, Maruti once again retained solid footholds. Customers also highlighted dealership responsiveness, language relevance, and scheme communication clarity as important determinants of purchase decisions.

E. Comparative Evaluation of Localization Strategies

Comparatively speaking, Tata Motors' regional safety initiatives, online advertising, and EV leadership greatly enhanced the company's reputation and market share in the area. It made a deliberate shift from being a heritage utility vehicle brand to a smart mobility provider that prioritises youth and safety. Although its delayed EV approach caused a barrier in forward-looking consumer categories, Maruti Suzuki was able to maintain its market dominance in rural and semi-urban areas because to its longstanding reputation, affordable ownership, and vast service network. Hyundai was able to dominate aspirational markets in urban centres like Indore thanks to its premium positioning, attractive design, and high-end feature sets; but, its limited availability of CNG and EVs had a little impact on penetration in more price-sensitive locations.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study's conclusions emphasised how crucial regional localisation is in determining how well international automakers promote their products in India. Despite having comparable national market presences, Tata Motors, Maruti Suzuki, and Hyundai Motor India took somewhat different strategies to interact with customers in the Malwa area, which is culturally and economically diverse. Through a mix of digital outreach, culturally relevant marketing, and electric car innovation, Tata Motors saw the most notable rise. Hyundai thrived in urban markets by attracting ambitious and tech-savvy customers, while Maruti Suzuki maintained its dominance in semi-urban and rural regions thanks to its affordable products and robust distribution system.

Achieving consumer alignment and brand loyalty required combining national-level marketing techniques with locally specialised initiatives, such as festival promotions, vernacular ads, and finance plans that are customised to a certain region. Additionally, decisions on product portfolios and market competitiveness were impacted by regulatory policy adaptation, such as EV subsidies and BS-VI standards. Consumer interviews revealed that dealership openness, localised communication, and flexible financial options were important determinants of car purchases.

Ultimately, this study confirmed that in diverse markets like India, a one-size-fits-all marketing approach is insufficient. The capacity of a business to convert global strategy into localised executions that are sensitive to cultural, economic, and demographic factors is essential for success; this emphasises the strategic necessity of "glocalization" in contemporary automobile marketing.

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