

Marketing Concept: Examining AMA Definitions, Evolution, Influences



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The concept of marketing has evolved with the changing demands on marketing discipline by the firm, customers, connected institutions and society at large over the years. The marketing concept defined by AMA in 1935 has undergone re-conceptualisation in 1985, 2004 and 2007. The underlying reasons for the evolution in the very conceptualisation of marketing are examined in this paper synthesising extant literature. The paper further explores the potential impact of some of the contemporary practice developments in further shaping the marketing concept.

1. Introduction

Marketing ideology is the worldview found among marketing practitioners, researchers, and commentators, including ideas and values that cohere, that are used publicly to justify marketing action and that shape and are shaped by market interactions and political regulations (Crockett and Wallendorf 2004, Levy and Luedicke 2012). Changes in marketing ideology in different stages of the development of the discipline has led to the changes in the understanding and definition of the marketing concept. The definition of marketing by American Marketing Association (AMA¹) has come to be accepted as the formal definition of the marketing concept. AMA formed in 1937 has been leading and fostering thought leadership in the domain of marketing.

The marketing concept defined by AMA in 1935 has undergone re-conceptualisation in 1985, 2004 and 2007. The reasons for the changes in the very definition of Marketing especially over the last four decades are analysed in this paper. This is expected to help students and practitioners of marketing appreciate the evolution of marketing concept with the changing demands on marketing by the firm, connected institutions and society at large and at the same time appreciate the new issues which are exerting their influence on the discipline. In order to examine the evolution of the definition we take the definitions formulated by the American Marketing Association (AMA) as the primary basis.

Need and Significance of a Definition of Marketing: Definitions are important because they set forth meaning, describe essential qualities, and delineate the boundaries or extent of something and differentiate it from other things (Ringold and Weitz 2007). In addition to laying clear the scope and content of the concept defined, it is expected to capture its varying perspectives. The definition brings common understanding among the practitioners as well the academe as to what marketing means. Further, clarity of the definition facilitates critical thinking and knowledge creation in the discipline.

AMA has re-defined marketing three times after its formation in 1937 with the merger of two predecessor organizations, the National Association of Marketing Teachers and the American Marketing Society (Table1). A formal definition from a leading professional organisation like AMA serves to bring a common meaning among various communities including the academe, practice, public policy makers and also the public at large what might otherwise cause confusion and lack of clarity (Lusch 2007).

The understanding of the domain and scope of marketing has continuously transformed with the evolution the discipline through various stages. Lusch 2007 “characterized the evolution of marketing thought and practice as going through three stages over the past 100 years: to market, market(ing) to, and market(ing) with. Briefly, “to market” means that the primary mission of marketing is taking things to market, “market(ing) to” means that the primary mission of marketing is identifying customers and marketing to them, and “market(ing) with” means that the primary mission of marketing is collaborating with customers to co-create value.” The three stages of evolution of marketing as characterised by Lusch 2007 as (a) “to market” or “marketing of” (b) “marketing to” and (c) “marketing with” could be seen in the successive expansion of the scope of marketing in different definitions.

¹American Marketing Association (AMA) is a professional association for individuals and organizations involved in the practice, teaching and study of marketing worldwide. It publishes five journals which include- Marketing, Journal, *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, *Journal of International Marketing*, and *Marketing News*. It organises leading conferences and also assesses the developments and issues in theory development and practice on a continuous basis. AMA has a membership strength over 36,000 with strong participation from different but related constituencies—approximately 17,000 marketing managers, 3600 marketing researchers, 3200 marketing academics, and 12,000 marketing students. The AMA’s definitions of marketing and marketing research are reviewed and reapproved/modified every three-years by a panel of five scholars who are active researchers.

The first official definition of marketing was adopted in 1935 by the National Association of Marketing Teachers, a predecessor of AMA; this definition was adopted by AMA when it was formed in 1937. Later AMA revised the definitions in 1985, 2004 and 2007. Going by the Lusch's three stage evolution of marketing, AMA 1935 definition which predominantly was concerned with the distribution of goods falls in the first stage of evolution – it takes a commodity view of marketing. The primary mission of marketing is to take things to the market. When marketing courses were first introduced in business schools in US the primary purpose was to address the issues in distribution of the goods. The theory of marketing assumed relevance during this time as marketing courses were offered in University of Michigan in 1902, University of Illinois in 1902, University of Pennsylvania in 1904-1905. With the publication of Journal of Marketing in 1936 academic activity in marketing got a boost as it provided a forum for exchanging thoughts and developing knowledge in the domain. Marketing was viewed a specialised function primarily responsible for making mass manufactured goods available through the channels of distribution.

Marketing Definition, AMA 1935: “Marketing is the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers”.

This original definition stood for 50 years, until it was revised in 1985. The definition was consistent with the positive definition of text book writers of those times till nineteen sixties with distribution of goods as the key focus. However this definition became less relevant during the seventies and eighties as marketing practice went much beyond distributing goods and services. One weakness of this definition was that it did not specify what activities marketers have to perform to direct the flow of goods from producers to consumers. Later thinking progressed to identify the tasks a manager has to perform to satisfy consumers and meet organisational goals. Further it takes predominantly the firm point of view of directing the manufactured products or delivering services to the consumers. In the managerial view which gained ground during the period after 1936, the marketer was seen as a mixer of ingredients; Neil Borden² of Harvard business school developed the concept of marketing mix which later got popularised with the publication of a marketing text book- *Basic Marketing: A Managerial* in 1960 by E. Jerome McCarthy's. In the book he outlines the marketing mix ingredients as the memorable 4P's namely product, price place and promotion.

Kotler (1972) introduced the concept of exchange and later Kotler 1984 normatively expand the scope of marketing to include individual and groups. Kotler 1972: “Marketing is a set of human activities directed at facilitating and consummating exchanges” p 12. “Marketing management is analysis, planning, implementation and control of programs designed to bring about desired exchanges with the target audiences for the purpose of personal and mutual gain. It relies heavily on the adaptation and co-ordination of product, price, promotion and place for achieving effective response” (p.13). The 1985 revision by AMA takes a normative approach - includes the notion of exchange, adds a process element considers individuals and organisations and emphasise the managerial aspect by including the elements of marketing mix.

Marketing Definition, AMA 1985: “Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods, ideas, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.”

This definition was not quite inclusive, did not define marketing in aggregate, from multiple perspectives but defined marketing management – i.e. marketing from the manager's point of view. The view of customers or of the society was not an important consideration in defining marketing during this period. It is worth noting that the journal of macro marketing was founded during this period to focus on the interactions of marketing and society with the mainstream marketing focusing on the firm and customer exchange. Further attention was to the value of the offer that was getting exchanged and not essentially the value realised during its use; value in use. The new definition clearly signalled that marketing was about organizations marketing to customers (Lusch 2007). One of the most popular marketing text books of the time by Philip Kotler in the first edition (Kotler 1967,p12) defined marketing as “*the analyzing, organizing, planning and control of the firm's customer-impinging resources, policies, and activities with a view to satisfying the needs and wants of chosen customer groups at a profit.*” However, in the 1972 edition, he distinguished marketing from marketing management. By 1972, he was defining marketing as the “set of human activities directed at facilitating and consummating exchanges” (p. 12) and marketing management as “the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to bring about desired exchanges with target audiences for the purpose of personal or mutual gain” (Lusch 2007).

The 1985 definition clearly gave importance to the manager's conception of marketing and more so the action he had to execute at an offering level and not so much at as an organisation. Marketing personnel in organisations came to be known more as implementers of “4P's”. However many scholars pointed out the inadequacies of the dominant marketing mix paradigm in 1990's. “The marketing mix is actually a list of categories of marketing variables and, to begin with, this way of defining or describing a phenomenon can never be considered a very valid one. A list never includes all relevant elements, it does not fit every situation, and it becomes obsolete. And indeed, marketing academics every now and then offer additional Ps to the list, since they have found the

²Neil Borden, in his AMA presidential address in 1953, articulated the concept of marketing mix.

standard “tablet of faith” too “Gronroos (1993). He observed that “the simplicity of the marketing mix paradigm, with its Four P model, has become a straitjacket, fostering toolbox thinking rather than an awareness that marketing is a multi-faceted social process, and notes that marketing theory and customers are the victims of today’s mainstream marketing thinking”. Many scholars suggested relationship marketing, based on relationship building and management, as a new marketing paradigm in place of the marketing mix paradigm. The four dimension of a relationship are- structure, purpose, interaction and emotion. The purpose of any relationship is to meet certain needs and in the commercial relationships customers seek value. Ravald and Gronroos (1996) elaborates on how customer value is an important constituent of relationship marketing. “The ability of a company to provide superior value to the customers is regarded as one of the successful strategies for the 1990’s. This ability has become a means of differentiation and a key to the riddle of how to find a sustainable competitive advantage.” Value – based marketing was proposed as a way to practice marketing (Doyle, 2000).

The phrase “value proposition” (VP) is credited to Michael Lanning and Edward Michaels, who first used the term in a 1988 staff paper for the consulting firm McKinsey and company. In the paper, which was entitled “a business is a value delivery system”, the authors define value proposition as “a clear, simple statement of the benefits, both tangible and intangible, that the company will provide, along with the approximate price it will charge each customer segment for those benefits”. This concept was developed by Robert Kaplan and David Norton in 1990, to help communicate value proposition in a way that businesses can understand.

Positioning was another central concept which got developed during eighties and became widely used by practitioners later. Positioning captures the idea of value in relation to a specific customer or customer segment. Al Ries and Jack Trout are credited with developing the concept of product or brand positioning in the late-1960s with the publication of a series of articles, followed by a book “*Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind.*” In 1981. Positioning became part of the broader marketing strategy which included three basic decision levels, namely segmentation, targeting and positioning, sometimes known as the S-T-P approach in nineties. These concepts were already captured in the definition of marketing in this period. Kotler’s 2003 has captured concepts of value and relationships in their definition-“*Marketing management [is] the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keep-ing, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value*” (p. 9).

Before the start of the second millennium the marketing activities were designed to create value to its customers alone. However attention to other stakeholders including employees, suppliers and society at large was not considered necessary and it was considered as a distraction to the central objective of serving organisational customers. This conception of marketing received a jolt toward the end of nineties and beginning of the second millennium. Information of Nike suppliers employing child labour in developing countries which spread through the internet in the year 2000 resulted in loyal customers boycotting its products. Depletion of ground water around a coca-cola bottling water in India (Kerala) resulted in lack of water availability to the residents and farmers located near to the plant. This generated widespread protests resulting the closing down the bottling plant. Water scarcity was a universal problem and it became evident that if the firm did not actively involved in water management in the local community where their global plants were located it could pose a threat to the firm’s existence itself. These and other similar incidents made organisation to pay attention to create value for not just its customers but also to its key stakeholders.

These developments around the idea of relationships, value , value to stakeholders than just customers resulted in changes in how marketing was practiced which was quite in contrast to how marketing was conceptualised, primarily in marketing mix (or 4p’s) terms. Day and Montgomery (1999, p. 3) observed that “with growing reservation about the validity or usefulness of the four Ps concept and its lack of recognition of marketing as an innovating or adaptive force, the four Ps now are regarded as merely a handy framework the message.” Sheth and Parvatiyar (2000, p. 140) emphasised the need for a change in the conceptualisation of marketing concept - “an alternative paradigm of marketing is needed, a paradigm that can account for the continuous nature of relationships among marketing actors.” These developments made AMA revisit the existing conceptualisation of marketing in 2004.

Marketing Definition, AMA 2004: “Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. “

The revised definition has (a) departed from the marketing mix paradigm and brought customer value and customer relationships as the *key focus of marketing* (b) *conceptualised marketing as a processes for managing customer value and relationships and not as a list of activities (4p’s) to be done and* (c) *indicated the need of marketing to benefit the organisation and also its stakeholders.* The revised definition considers “value in use” and not just the value embedded in the offer which is exchanged for a price as it was the case in the previous conceptualisation.

In spite of these improvisations over the AMA 1985 definition there was strong critique from the academe that the revised definition did not capture the different perspectives of marketing other than the managerial one and that the

extent of importance of different stakeholders was not emphasised adequately. AMA 2004 defined marketing as an “organisation function”; this characterization of marketing was criticised as overly narrow in its domain and perspective (Gundlach and Wilkie 2009). Many AMA members including academicians and practitioners were of the view that marketing involves many actors including society and culture at large. Hence there was demand for a more aggregate view of marketing, considering multiple perspectives rather than the firm’s perspective alone. Further, although attention to stakeholders was given in the revised definition the criticism was that they were merely treated as beneficiaries than stakeholders or actors themselves. The definition generated intense academic discourse in the discipline and this culminated in a special section of the fall 2007 issue of *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing (JPP&M)* titled “The American Marketing Association’s 2004 Definition of Marketing: Perspectives on Its Implications for Scholarship and the Role and Responsibility of Marketing in Society,” invited by Editor Ron Hill. AMA based on these and other inputs revisited the AMA 2004 definition in a few years after careful analysis and thought conducted in a democratic manner and this resulted in the current conceptualisation of marketing thought.

Marketing Definition, AMA 2007: “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. “

Gundlach and Wilkie 2009 analysed the definition based on four key aspirations concerning an appropriate definition of marketing put forward by marketing scholars, namely – (i) definition to be inclusive of larger domain of marketing (ii) adequately captures the alternative perspective of different stakeholders (iii) reflects extant scholarship in the academic field of marketing and (iv) adequately informs and provides guidance to marketing practitioners and others as to marketing’s role and responsibility in society.

“Defining marketing as an “activity, set of institutions, and processes” captures the larger domain of marketing beyond the firm and reflects its systemic nature. It acknowledges that the field of marketing includes (1) the activities of individuals (marketers and consumers) and organizations (e.g., manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, advertising agencies, distributors, marketing research firms), (2) the institutions that both individually and collectively help facilitate and govern these activities (e.g., governmental agencies, legislators, courts, professional associations, social norms, ethics and individual values), and (3) the various processes that result from these activities (e.g., networks, systems, markets, channels of distribution, communication flows, consumer processes). Defining marketing to include activities, institutions, and processes also captures more fully the perspectives of those involved in marketing. It expresses that the perspectives of those engaged in its activities, held by its institutions, and captured through its processes are a part of marketing. Finally, defining marketing to “have value for customers, clients, marketers, and society at large” addresses the role and responsibility of marketing in society. It expresses that marketing does and should have value not only for customers and the firm but also for others, including society at large. In meeting these goals, the AMA’s 2007 definition of marketing has the capacity to enhance marketing scholarship and practice into the future” (Gundlach and Wilkie 2009, p. 262).

Ringgold and Weitz, 2007 expressed hope that the 2007 marketing definition is expected to work as a lead indicator than a lag indicator in contrast to the previous definitions of marketing. The revised definition is not without its critics. Lusch 2007 points that “*the emergent market(ing)-with philosophy views the customer as endogenous and as a partner in the co-creation of value*” and marketing is more of a collaborative process than before. He critiques AMA definition for not incorporating the idea of value- co-creation by customers and other partners and also not taking a normative view in defining marketing. He has in fact proposed an alternative definition building on Sawhney 2006 as “Marketing is the adaptive process, in society and organizations, of collaborating to communicate, create, provide, and sustain value for customers through exchange relationships while meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders” Incorporating these aspects. In the next section we examine the contemporary macro-environment influences that are influencing the practice of marketing. Some of these influences could possibly has the potential to further refine the current conceptualisation of marketing. The paper further explores the potential impact of some of the contemporary practice developments in further shaping the marketing concept

Contemporary Influences and rethinking of Marketing Concept: The macro- environmental forces of digitisation, sustainability and the simultaneous play of globalisation and anti-globalisation forces (Bremmer 2014) are creating much turbulence an unpredictability for organisations in contemporary times. We identify three shifts in marketing practice and ideology which are making a strong case for the rethinking of fundamental purpose, premises and implicit models that has defined marketing (Webster and Lusch 2013). They are (i) Growing recognition of the impact of marketing at service ecosystem level from the focus on the firm- customer dyad (ii) Change in the nature of market offering from goods to services to customer experiences and increased customer involvement in the creation of value and (iii) Impact of marketing on society and society on marketing and shift from market orientation to sustainable market orientation (iv) Changing role of marketing in the organisation

- **Growing Recognition of the need for Marketing Analysis and Activity at Service Ecosystem Level**

Marketing has traditionally focused on the exchange between the firm and the consumer and consequently the focal systems at the firm and at the individual consumer or household level were given emphasis. What was external to the

focal system of the firm was considered as part of the environment. Kotler 1980 proposed five layers of environment: (i) internal organisation environment (ii) task environment comprising suppliers, marketing intermediaries and market (ii) competitive environment (iii) public environment that included government, media, financial, general, local and citizen action publics and (iv) macro environment which included demography, economics, natural resources, technology law politics and culture. In the strategic management approach firm had to find a fit with its capabilities and the opportunities in the environment.

The macro- environmental force of digitisation through development in social media, analytics, mobile and IOT technologies has the potential to make apparently different industries converge around satisfying a generic consumer need. Recently Weill and Woerner 2018 proposed that digitization is moving companies' business models on two dimensions: from value chains to digital ecosystems, and from a fuzzy understanding of the needs of end customers to a sharper one. For example, the consumer goods industry, retail and logistics industry is now getting more integrated driven by ecommerce firms like Amazon using different technologies including mobile, social media, cloud and IOT. This is enabling the development of consumer goods ecosystem exploiting the digital technologies and could result in convergence of different industries and consolidation too. In the era of industry 4.0 businesses (eg. Uber, Ola, Hyundai in improving mobility solutions, Amazon by meeting consumer needs for goods more efficiently and conveniently than the traditional system, Rivigo in logistics industry in India) are already moving beyond the traditional focus on the exchange dyad between the firm and customer to consider the value constellations or the service ecosystem in creating economic value. The need for analysis at the service eco-system level is fuelled further with these developments.

Contemporary influences on Marketing Conceptualisation	
Marketing Ideology / Marketing Practice Realities	Marketing Knowledge Influencing Marketing Conceptualisation
<p>Business Ecosystem: Growing recognition of the need for marketing analysis and activity at the service eco system level - Hieko et al 2014; Industry 4.0, Digitalised Interactive Platforms and emerging Business Ecosystem.</p> <p>Customer Experience Management: Shift in nature of offerings from goods and service to staging unique customer experiences Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004; firms beginning to consider enabling pleasant customer experience as their objective- Lemon and Verhoef 2016; "Is CEM is the new CRM?"- Davey 2012</p> <p>Organisations addressing Sustainability concerns: Sustainability emerging as a value proposition dimension in different markets (McDonagh and Prothero 2014)</p> <p>Role of Marketing in the firm: Recognition of the role of marketing at the level of tactics, strategy and culture- Webster 1992; Comstock et al 2004</p>	<p>Marketing Systems: Achrol; and Kotler 2012; Hunt 1981; Layton 2007, 2019; Webster and Lusch 2013.; Service –ecosystem- Hieko et al 2014</p> <p>Customer Experience: Homburg et al 2017; Lemon and Verhoef 2016 Customer experience - a recurring theme in MSI research priority list from 2010- 2020; Value Co-creation: Ramaswamy and Ozcan 2018 (a), (b)</p> <p>Sustainable Market Orientation: Mitchell et al 2010; Citizen Consumer: Webster and Lusch 2013</p>

Sensors, connections and networks in the industry4.0 world are enabling firms improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the marketing system by aggregating demand and organising production and service delivery in more efficient ways. Increased digitisation of business has made connecting different organisation in the value chain as well as across value chains forming value constellations (Norman and Ramirez 1993) or service ecosystem (Vargo and Lusch 2011) less difficult than before. In this changing industry context the successful firms are considering the service eco-system as the focal system and leveraging technology to create and co-create value in innovative ways.

• Shift in Nature of Offerings from Goods and Service to Staging Unique Customer Experiences

Active, informed and connected customers (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004) are now assessing their experience in dealing with the firm, in the consumption and disposal of the offerings and this experience is determining customer decisions of choice and loyalty. Organisations are looking at ways to better manage the customer experience by mapping the customer journey and managing the various customer touch points and interactions. Social Media, Mobile and analytics technology has made it possible for firms to offer personalised customer experiences also offer opportunities for customer to play an active role in creating value. Hence firms are competition not just to satisfy customers but to offer them a unique personal experience with a holistic view of all customer interaction with the firm, its brand, people and offerings. Achrol and Kotler 2012 observes that the sub-phenomenon of marketing is customer experience and the focus of the firm has shifted to offering superior customer experience than merely satisfying customers. In their view the phenomenon is the marketing system (or service eco-system) and the super phenomenon includes the interactions of marketing and the society.

In the age of digitalised interaction a new set of offering have emerged which Ramaswamy and Ozcan 2018 refer as digitalised interactive platform (DIP which is a digitalised networked arrangements of artefacts, persons, processes and interfaces. DIP offers an opportunity for the customers and firms to co-create through interactions enabled by the platform. Using these platform consumers and firms jointly create value depending on the resources

available as well as the consumer's wants. This co-creation of value could give rise to unique personal experience depending on the customer's context. In this case the value is not entirely embedded in firms offering but some part of the value is created through customer's engagement with the firm facilitated through DIP's.

Customer experience management has become a key management concern as well as a research agenda (Marketing Science Research priorities 2018-20) especially in the last decade. According to a recent study by Accenture (2015; in cooperation with Forrester), improving the customer experience received the most number one rankings when executives were asked about their top priorities for the next 12 months (Lemon and Verhoef 2016).

In practice CEM has started to be seen as the next CRM. Information technology products and services to map and manage customer experience is now being offered by many organisations (eg. SAP CX tools). "Customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company" (Meyer and Schwager 2007, p. 2). Lemon and Verhoef 2016 defines customer experience as a multidimensional construct focusing on a customer's cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to a firm's offerings during the customer's entire purchase journey. Conducting a comprehensive review of research in the area they call for research to further understand drivers and consequences of customer experience, customer journey analysis, customer experience measurement and management. The growing significance of customer experience outcomes is fuelling integration of marketing activities in the firm as well as in the value chain and this has the potential to change the value creation activities as well as the role of marketing in the firm.

- **Shift from Market Orientation to Sustainable Market Orientation**

Environment concerns and social issues are increasingly exposing the public consequences and social cost of private consumption. These developments are making it imperative for marketing to explicitly factor the interaction of the value creation process with the societal systems. Sustainability concerns of the global community at large and that of the local community is resulting in the politicisation of businesses and making them increasingly responsible for the long term consequences on the consumers as well as the society at large (Fabrizio and Bruno 2014). The growth and management of businesses as a result is not just remaining as a profit generating private activity but is also becoming a concern of the local as well as the global community. This is making business recognise its responsibility towards the society as well as the environment.

Customer orientation or market orientation has been a core philosophy of corporate marketing management since the middle of the nineteenth century (Mitchell et al 2010). They bring out the inadequacies of the dominant market orientation philosophy and argue for a shift in orientation to sustainable market orientation. A key issue of the customer orientation philosophy is that it is focused on the focal systems of the customer and the firm. The macro level systemic interaction with the society is not given due consideration in this organisational orientation. This is not in alignment with the practice realities; corporates making systematic attempts to integrate corporate responsibility of public consequences and social costs of production and consumption. Mitchell 2010 has conceptualised sustainable market orientation where the firm uses sustainable management principles to "anticipate and meet customer needs through the effective integration of comprehensive environmental intelligence with operational and marketing systems; apply profitable, socially and environmentally responsible value systems; generate positive, long-run outcomes in economic, social, and environmental terms that are acceptable for primary stakeholders who derive direct financial benefits from firms and secondary stakeholders who gain indirect economic, social, and environmental benefits."

Webster and Lusch 2013 observed that marketing is now at crossroads and points out the need to elevate marketing to a higher level of consciousness from narrow and short term focus on individuals as consumers to citizen consumers. They call for taking a systemic view of marketing and its role in the socio-economic systems at all four levels -customer and firm, service eco-system and society. Firms have so far only considered individuals and households as consumers of their offerings they have not paid much attention to the economic, social and cultural context in which the offerings are consumed; this means that the consumers have to be recognised as citizen consumers factoring in the economic, social and cultural consequences of consumption both in the short term as well as in the long term. The concept of consumer wellbeing might gain relevance in the changed context compared to consumer satisfaction. At the firm level it has become imperative for marketing to shift the analysis from consumer – firm dyad to the focal systems at the service eco-system and the society.

- **Transition in the Role of Marketing in the Organisation from Tactics to Strategy to Culture**

Webster (1992) has brought out the role the marketing has to play at three levels in the organisation- tactical, strategic and culture. At the tactical level marketer was seen as a mixer of ingredients formulating marketing mix (Borden 1964) and taking decision of four P's (McCarthy 1981). The business outcomes like the sales volume, change in awareness etc. attained through specialised managerial tasks or tactics is the focus at this level. Strategy should guide tactics. Marketing as strategy operates at the business unit level guiding decisions on target customer segment, value proposition and formulating marketing plans. The strategic decisions in relation to tactical decisions have implications to other organisational functions and hence at the business unit level. The strategic theme of marketing gained dominance in 1970s as a part of the focus on long range strategic planning. The development of positioning concept, customer orientation and focus on customer value during nineteen eighties contributed in

shifting the role of marketing from a tactical to a more strategic role in the organisation. As market orientation as a philosophy got accepted in practice as well as in the discipline marketing began to be seen as value creation and delivery process that each member of the organisation had to contribute. In successful organisation customer orientation became a part of the organisation culture influencing the cross functional processes of customer value creation and delivery. With digitalisation and the shift in thinking from managing firm- customer dyads to managing the service eco system and customer experience, the role of marketing has been in transition especially in the last two decades. Further the sustainability concerns has brought the interactions of marketing and society into focus resulting in a shift from customer orientation to sustainable market orientation.

The traditional role marketing played in the organisation is being critically analysed and organisations are experimenting with new ways of management. A case in point is the transformation of marketing in GE under the leadership of its previous Chairman Jeff Immelt and Vice Chair Beth Comstock. Research into what skills contribute to the making of an effective CMO in GE led to the identification of four key roles effective marketers perform in the organisation, of an instigator, innovator, integrator and implementer. (Comstock et al 2010). The organisation's principles, people and process were then restructured to meet its strategic goals thus making customer value orientation a part of GE culture. In practice, the digital technologies had an all pervasive influence and the increasing complexities in managing the market place has resulted in re-examining the role of marketing in organisations. A synthesis of the different developments in marketing discipline and practice is attempted in this paper to better understand the evolution of the marketing concept and the same time recognise the contemporary influences further transforming marketing. An understanding of the key elements of different AMA definitions, inadequacies of marketing conceptualisation by AMA in different periods and the contemporary influences is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the transforming discipline.

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