



# Marketing in a Transition Economy

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New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects

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Muhammad Ismail Hossain ·  
Nasrin Akter · Abureza M. Muzareba

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*This book is dedicated to all the martyrs who sacrificed their lives to free Bangladesh in 1971, and all the honest souls who have been fighting, still today since then, against all odds and the darks that keep us going with our identity as Bangladeshi.*

## PREFACE

The case book, *Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects* is unique in the sense that it accommodates the marketing practices of companies from planning to implementation in the context of Bangladesh. The operational realities of Bangladesh are considerably different than other markets including neighboring South Asian markets. It is also to be acknowledged that the Bangladeshi market is becoming more integrated into the world market due to the entry of quite a few Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in Bangladesh and the entrance of Bangladeshi-origin MNCs to other markets. Though these cross-national operations led to matching the standard of global operational practices, the inherent differences in the do's and don'ts of the Bangladesh market drive companies to customize their business operations to a considerable extent. Against such a backdrop, the case book is positioned to provide insights into the marketing approaches and their applications in Bangladesh that in many cases are in sync with international and global practices and in some cases challenge the international and global realities.

The broader coverage of different sub-disciplines of marketing and an in-depth analysis of the practices around those sub-disciplines are the core points of difference of this case book as opposed to the existing cases on Bangladeshi companies presented in articles, social media posts, and blogs. The case books that are available on the Bangladesh market operation of companies either focus on a few elements of marketing or discuss

the cases from a holistic perspective. This is the first Bangladesh market-focused case book highlighting all major elements of the marketing sub-disciplines that a marketer needs and wants to know while sensing the changes of the market, creating, and delivering value to the customers, and building long-term relationships with them. The case book includes a total of 39 cases on different marketing and business practices of companies operating in Bangladesh. It presents the cases in 13 sections representing 13 sub-disciplines of marketing with 3 different cases in each section.

The cases presented in different sections offer in-depth insights into—the environment in which marketing planning and strategies are devised; the social and psychological factors that influence the behavior of consumers; the market realities and consequent tweaking in segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies; the prevailing diversity in devising market-focused marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) strategies and service marketing strategies; and how the offerings are promoted through context-specific integrated marketing communication efforts. The uniqueness of the retail environment of Bangladesh is also highlighted through the lens of supply chain management. The cases in digital marketing unfold that new marketing opportunities across all three modalities—brick and mortar, brick-and-click, and pure click are available for companies in Bangladesh. However, capitalizing on such opportunities depends on balancing and meeting the diverse requirements of both the most-informed netizens and the least-informed mass customers. The ground realities concerning customer relationship management practices and their effectiveness, marketing ethics, and organizational ethos as practiced by companies operating in Bangladesh are also presented in this case book.

The goal of this case book, *Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects*, is to assist students, teachers, and professionals in making a transition from living in the bubble of a ‘sheltered’ textbook-dependent global knowledge to an open and evidence-based context-specific marketing, business knowledge. This is what they are meant to prepare for if theories and realities are to coexist in a symbiotic manner in their psychic sketches. This case book is fully equipped to serve as a core case-based text to assist the intended users in comprehending the contents that the students and professionals of

marketing and business are expected to consult in marketing and business books. With the spirit of upholding ‘everybody does marketing’, this case book is perfectly aligned with diverse marketing and business-related courses but not limited to Principles of Marketing, Marketing Management, Strategic Marketing, Marketing Channels, International Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communications, Distribution Management, and Digital Marketing for both graduate and postgraduate levels. Readers can learn the concepts, techniques, and methods of different branches of marketing and business more deeply, not only through simple reading, hearing, or seeing but also through actively involving themselves in real-life company-specific problem-solving activities. The case-based exercise, as promoted in this book, is expected to influence readers to enhance their skills in finding and using evidence, and choosing concepts, theories, and methods that are relevant to particular marketing contexts, no matter how different those are from the standardized practices of the world.

The practice-oriented focus of this book can be a highly valuable asset both for reading and writing-based classroom learning at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as for various professional marketing and business learning programs. In addition, the supplementary materials suggested in each case are expected to enhance the visual and auditory learning of the students and professionals.

The cases as exhibited in the book are well-equipped to be used as the core material of workshop-based employee training where employees can learn marketing and business strategies to be adopted, nourished, and maneuvered in an application-oriented manner. This is expected to assist on-the-job trainees to be active producers of marketing and business knowledge rather than passive recipients of only classroom knowledge. Foreign institutions, including business and non-business entities, that intend to enter into the Bangladesh market through a new venture, or existing venture, or have an interest in the overall business practices of a developing country like Bangladesh, can benefit from this case book by using it as an evidence-based beginners’ guide, which currently is not available.

The case book, *Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects*, is one of the most comprehensive, evidence-enriched, and strategy debate-triggering case books for academia and corporates that are keen to see, analyze, and critically appreciate the ground-level marketing and business realities in Bangladesh. This case book presents the means and lessons through representative cases by



answering—how to tap business and marketing opportunities in the promising blue ocean in the global south. This is expected to draw the attention of local and international academics, marketing, and business experts thereby fostering the use of the book within and beyond academia.

Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Dhaka, Bangladesh  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Abureza M. Muzareba

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Director of Operations, Holiday Inn Dhaka City Center

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Business Manager, Consumer Brands, ACI Limited.

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Former Director of Customer Service, Biman Bangladesh Airlines

## ENDORSEMENTS

“Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects” is an invaluable resource for anyone eager to comprehend the complexities of the burgeoning Bangladeshi market. This new case book immerses readers in real-world scenarios, allowing a deeper understanding of marketing dynamics in this growing market.

This book embodies the usefulness of case studies as a learning tool. Its strength lies in an impressive array of case studies carefully curated to showcase the intricacies of marketing in Bangladesh. Collectively, the case studies highlight a comprehensive set of marketing issues, consumer behavior, market trends, and unique sociocultural nuances prevalent in Bangladesh, providing key insights for students, marketers, and entrepreneurs.

This new book bridges the gap between academia and practice, enabling readers to learn how marketing theories manifest in actual market scenarios in Bangladesh, a rapidly evolving economy.

In today’s interconnected world, understanding emerging markets such as Bangladesh is pivotal. “Marketing in a Transition Economy” is a timely guide for navigating the marketing landscape of this market.”

—Hean Tat Keh, *Professor, Head (Chair), Department of Marketing, Monash Business School, Melbourne, Australia*

“A must-read for both academics and practitioners who seek a new perspective on marketing strategies in transitioning economies, this book

is a beacon of insight, shedding light on the intricacies of business practices in the developing world. ‘Marketing in a Transition Economy: New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects’ is not just a book; it’s a revelation that challenges and expands our understanding of global business dynamics.

Readers dive into thought-provoking discussions on paradoxical technology and social change, demographic dividends, and the digital divide, meticulously presented across various chapters. The authors delve into the profound impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on business dynamics. Uncover the nuanced differences in business realities, the profound effects on livelihoods, and the intricacies of purchasing decisions during both the pandemic and the subsequent post-pandemic era. The book ingeniously challenges prevailing stereotypes by illustrating that developing country business practices are not inherently crisis-prone, urging global business leaders to reconsider their preconceived notions.”

—Prem Chhetri, *Professor, Former HoD, Supply Chain and Logistics, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia*

“An eye-opening read into the practicalities of marketing in Bangladesh, unveiling original insights and strategies applied to this dynamic market landscape. A must-read for any marketer looking to understand and effectively penetrate the Bangladeshi market.”

—Dr. James Abdey, *Associate Professor (Education), London School of Economics and Political Science, UK*

“‘Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects’ is an essential resource for understanding the unique marketing landscape of Bangladesh. It offers an in-depth exploration of various marketing sub-disciplines through a variety of case studies, highlighting the distinct consumer behavior, strategies, and challenges in this evolving market. This case book bridges global marketing theories with the practical realities of the Bangladesh economy, making it an invaluable tool for students, educators, and professionals. Its comprehensive approach and case-based learning method make it a must-read for anyone looking to navigate or understand the dynamic and diverse market of Bangladesh.”

—Pernille Rydén, *Dean of Education, IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

“No emerging market is the same and no single marketing strategy can work across markets. I really enjoyed how the book “Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects” dives into the unique characteristics of the Bangladesh market and distilled innovative ideas that the best companies in Bangladesh have used to drive their marketing success.”

—Zarif Munir, *Managing Director & Senior Partner, Kuala Lumpur, Boston Consulting Group*

“This insightful book presents the nuances of the diverse operational realities encountered by companies operating in Bangladesh. It offers an interesting exploration in the mix of synchronous and asynchronous local and global strategies employed by local and multinational companies to compete and cooperate in the Bangladesh market. It is the most comprehensive case book today in the Bangladeshi market because it covers almost all sub-disciplines of marketing. Of note is the fact that a number of case studies are written based on primary data collected solely to write cases on that specific company. This becomes a significant strength of the book because the insights generated are oven-fresh, and not available in typical published sources. Another point of difference of this book is it tells the story of companies that at times define the product category in the country. I believe the book is suitable for classroom and non-classroom contexts because it presents a good mix of theory and practice keeping in mind its users in academia and industry.”

—Arash Azadegan, *Professor, Vice-Chair, Supply Chain Management Department, Rutgers Business School, Newark, New Jersey, USA*

“The collection of cases in this book presents a comprehensive overview of modern marketing practices in Bangladesh and will be of great value to scholars and practitioners interested in how business operates in this region.”

—Harmen Oppewal, *Professor, Former Head (Chair), Department of Marketing, Monash Business School, Melbourne, Australia*

“Marketing has significantly evolved over the years and got nuanced into various dimensions. Professor Hossain, Professor Akter, and Professor Muzareba present a timely work through their book Marketing in a Transition Economy—New Realities, Challenges, and Prospects, where they bring to life some of the theoretical concepts of marketing and present

them with practical examples. While the jury is still out regarding the convincing success of some of the organizations illustrated here, the book still provides some great examples of how organizations have identified opportunities, experimented, and in cases scaled and built competitive moats. I believe that this book will be a great addition to Bangladesh's business literature and will aid students and new executives to get some practical perspectives of businesses in real life. It is a wonderful read and will go a long way in driving people's learning agenda and help in stepping up the quality of our resources that enter the marketing fraternity."

—Zaved Akhtar, *President, Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), Chairman & Managing Director, Unilever Bangladesh Ltd.*

"This unique case book offers a comprehensive exploration of marketing practices in Bangladesh, addressing the evolving dynamics shaped by local nuances and global influences. With 39 cases covering diverse marketing sub-disciplines, it provides invaluable insights for students, teachers, and professionals seeking a transition from textbook-dependent knowledge to context-specific, evidence-based marketing and business understanding. The practice-oriented approach, suitable for various courses and professional programs, makes it a valuable asset for both classroom and on-the-job learning. Foreign institutions eyeing the Bangladesh market will find it a crucial evidence-based guide. In essence, this case book stands out as a thorough, evidence-enriched resource, fostering critical appreciation of ground-level marketing realities in Bangladesh, drawing attention from academia and corporate circles alike."

—Kamran Tanvirur Rahman, *President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Dhaka, Chairman & Managing Director, Pubali Jute Mills Limited and The Kapna Tea Company Limited*

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