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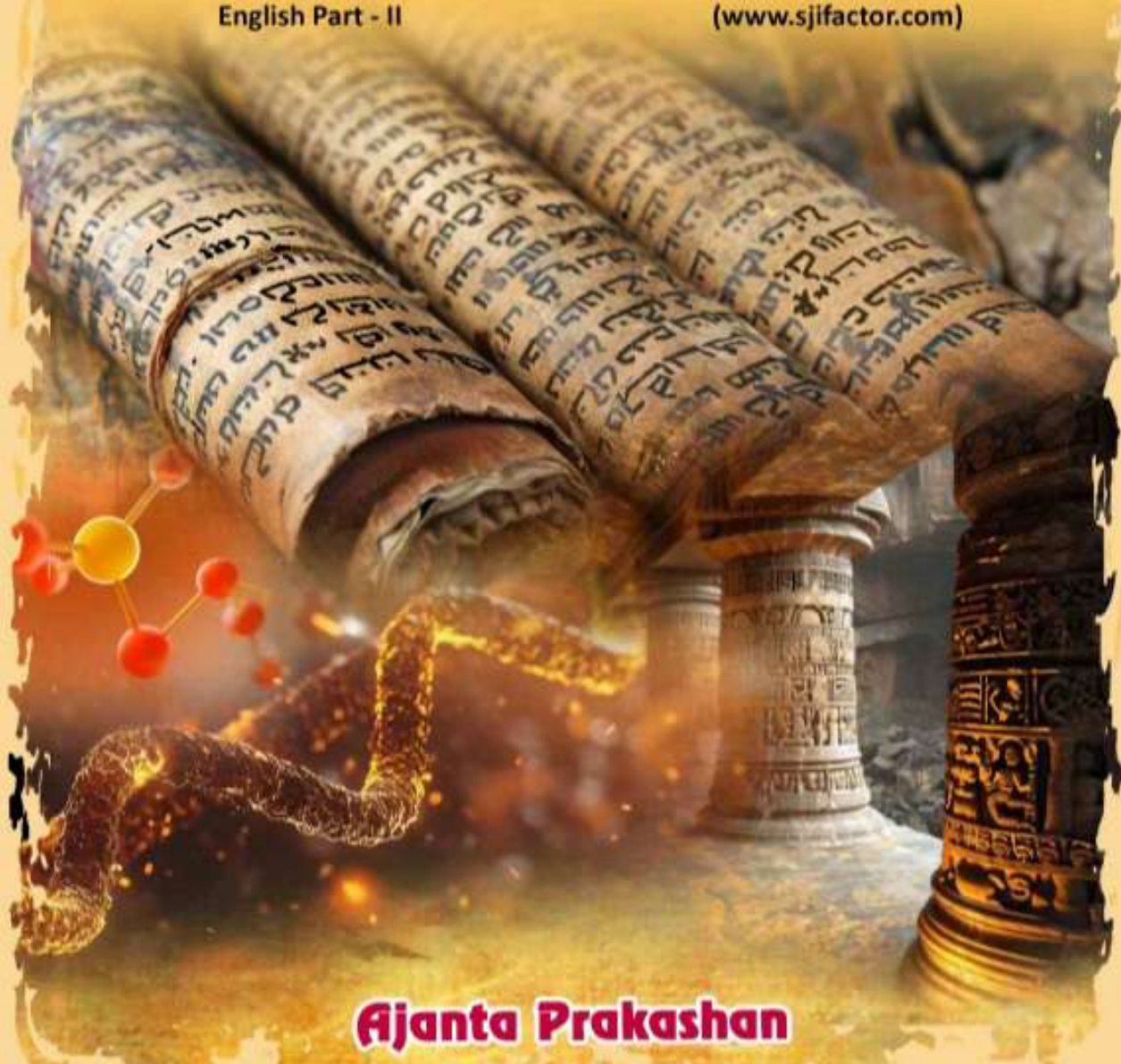


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## ❧ CONTENTS OF ENGLISH PART - II ❧

S. No.	Title & Author	Page No.
1	Study of Traditional Medicinal Plants and their Geographical Distribution: Contribution of Indian Knowledge Systems for Sustainable India (With Special Reference to Bhimashankar region, Pune, Maharashtra) <b>Dr. Swapnil Diliprao Satpute</b>	1-12
2	Review of Neural, Cognitive, and Clinical Studies of Anger and Aggression <b>Gajanan S. Helaskar</b>	13-16
3	The Paninian Machine: Bridging Ancient Grammar and Modern Linguistics <b>Asst. Prof. Jayashree Vilas Nalawade</b>	17-23
4	Khadi as a Model of Ethical and Sustainable Enterprise in Modern India <b>Dr. Laxmikant Ramkishor Kanojiya</b>	24-29
5	Folk Traditions, their Preservation, and Environmental Values : A Sociological Study <b>Dr. Malini Nair</b>	30-34
6	Rajput Resistance and Sovereignty in North India: Indigenous Political Knowledge in Medieval Traditions <b>Mohit Dahiya</b>	35-41
7	Exploring Indian Culture and Self in Contemporary Indian English Poetry <b>Mr. Abhijit Rajaram Mohite</b>	42-48
8	Ethical Trade Practices in Ancient India and their Relevance to Sustainable Business Today <b>Mr. Manjurelahi Salimbhai Bagwan</b>	49-54
9	Indian Cultural Values and Sustainable Marketing Strategies: A Path towards Responsible Consumption - An Analytical Study <b>Mr. Manoj Ramesh Gawale</b>	55-62
10	India's Emergence as a Global Soft Power: Opportunities & Challenges <b>Mr. Rushikesh Anjali Kiran Inamdar</b>	63-73
11	A Study of the Contribution of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in Accounting <b>Mrs. Jyoti Achyut Dharmadhikari</b>	74-80
12	Role of Indian Knowledge System in Ethical Marketing and Consumer Trust <b>Mrs. Sujata Chandrashekar Bhasme</b>	81-86
13	The Concept of Swarnim Bharat in the Literature of Brahma Kumaris <b>Naina Saxena</b>	87-91

## 12. Role of Indian Knowledge System in Ethical Marketing and Consumer Trust

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### Abstract

Ethical concerns in modern marketing such as misleading advertisements, unfair pricing, and manipulative promotions have significantly affected consumer trust. In response to these challenges, value-based frameworks rooted in indigenous traditions are gaining renewed relevance. This paper explores the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) as a holistic ethical framework for contemporary marketing practices. Drawing upon principles such as *Dharma* (righteous conduct), *Satya* (truthfulness), fairness, moderation, stakeholder welfare, and social responsibility, the study conceptually examines how IKS can guide ethical marketing behaviour. Using secondary data from books, journals, and reports, the paper analyses the role of IKS in promoting transparency, fair pricing, cultural sensitivity, and long-term relationship orientation in marketing. It further assesses the impact of IKS-based ethical marketing on consumer trust and highlights its relevance in ensuring sustainable marketing practices. The study concludes that integrating Indian Knowledge System principles into modern marketing not only strengthens consumer trust but also supports sustainable branding and long-term business performance.

**Keywords:-** Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Ethical Marketing, Consumer Trust, Sustainable Marketing, Dharma, Satya, Business Ethics

### Introduction

Marketing plays a crucial role in connecting businesses with consumers and influencing their buying behaviour. In recent years, increasing instances of misleading advertisements, unfair pricing, and unethical promotional practices have led to declining consumer trust in markets. As consumers become more aware and socially conscious, the importance of ethical marketing and sustainable business practices has gained significant attention. Ethical marketing not only protects consumer interests but also contributes to long-term brand reputation and business sustainability.

In this context, the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offers a value-based framework rooted in ancient Indian philosophy, ethics, and socio-economic traditions. Indian business

practices were traditionally guided by principles such as Dharma (righteous conduct), Satya (truthfulness), fairness, moderation, and social responsibility. These principles emphasized trust, long-term relationships, and societal welfare rather than mere profit maximization. Integrating Indian Knowledge System principles into modern marketing practices can help address ethical challenges, rebuild consumer trust, and ensure sustainable marketing. Therefore, this study examines the role of Indian Knowledge System in ethical marketing and its impact on consumer trust in the contemporary business environment.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the concept of Indian Knowledge System related to ethical conduct, ethical marketing and consumer trust.
2. To analyse the role of Indian Knowledge System in promoting ethical marketing practices.
3. To study the impact of IKS-based ethical marketing on consumer trust.
4. To assess the relevance of Indian Knowledge System in ensuring sustainable marketing practices.

### **Research Methodology**

The study is conceptual and descriptive in nature and follows a descriptive research design. It is based on secondary data collected from books on Indian philosophy, business ethics, and marketing, as well as research journals, published articles, and government reports. The scope of the study is limited to examining ethical marketing practices influenced by principles of the Indian Knowledge System.

### **Concept of Indian Knowledge System (IKS)**

Indian Knowledge System refers to the body of indigenous knowledge developed in India encompassing philosophy, ethics, economics, governance, and social organization. In the context of business and marketing, IKS emphasizes moral responsibility, fairness, truthfulness, moderation, and social welfare. Economic activities are viewed as a means of societal well-being rather than mere profit maximization. These principles make IKS highly relevant to ethical marketing practices in the modern era.

### **Concept of Ethical Marketing**

Ethical marketing refers to marketing practices that are fair, transparent, honest, and socially responsible. It ensures that products, prices, promotions, and distribution methods do not mislead or exploit consumers. Ethical marketing focuses on long-term relationship building,

consumer satisfaction, and trust rather than short-term sales gains. It aligns business objectives with societal expectations and ethical standards.

### **Concept of Consumer Trust**

Consumer trust is the confidence that consumers place in a company or brand regarding product quality, truthful communication, fair pricing, and responsible behaviour. Trust plays a crucial role in influencing purchase decisions, brand loyalty, and long-term customer relationships. Ethical marketing practices significantly contribute to building and sustaining consumer trust.

### **Role of Indian Knowledge System in Ethical Marketing and Consumer Trust**

#### **1. Dharma-Based Marketing Practices**

Dharma, meaning righteous conduct, forms the ethical foundation of Indian Knowledge System. In marketing, Dharma encourages businesses to act responsibly, avoid deceptive practices, and fulfil their moral duty toward consumers. Dharma-based marketing promotes fairness, honesty, and accountability, thereby enhancing consumer confidence.

#### **2. Truthfulness and Transparency (Satya)**

IKS emphasizes Satya, or truthfulness, as a core ethical value. Transparent product information, truthful advertising, and honest communication reduce information asymmetry and prevent consumer exploitation. Truthful marketing practices help build credibility and long-term trust among consumers.

#### **3. Fair Pricing and Value Orientation**

Traditional Indian business practices emphasized fair pricing rather than excessive profit-making. IKS discourages unfair pricing, price manipulation, and exploitation of consumer ignorance. Fair pricing strategies aligned with value delivery enhance consumer satisfaction and trust.

#### **4. Stakeholder-Centric Marketing**

IKS views business as a social institution responsible for the welfare of all stakeholders, including consumers, employees, suppliers, and society. Ethical marketing based on stakeholder orientation ensures consumer interests are protected, thereby strengthening trust and long-term relationships.

#### **5. Moderation and Responsible Consumption**

IKS promotes moderation and need-based consumption rather than excessive materialism. Marketing strategies influenced by these values discourage overconsumption and

promote responsible consumer behaviour. Such practices enhance brand credibility and social acceptance.

### **6. Long-Term Relationship Orientation**

Indian Knowledge System emphasizes long-term relationships built on trust and mutual respect. Ethical marketing practices guided by IKS focus on customer retention, loyalty, and sustained engagement rather than short-term promotional gains.

### **7. Social Responsibility and Cultural Sensitivity**

IKS encourages businesses to respect cultural values and contribute to social welfare. Ethical marketing campaigns rooted in cultural sensitivity and social responsibility resonate positively with consumers and enhance trust in the brand.

### **8. Institutional Support for IKS Integration**

Initiatives undertaken by institutions such as the Indian Knowledge Systems Division promote the integration of indigenous ethical values into education and professional practices, including marketing and management. Such initiatives strengthen ethical awareness in business decision-making.

## **Impact of IKS-Based Ethical Marketing on Consumer Trust**

### **1. Enhancement of Honesty and Transparency**

IKS emphasizes *Satya* (truthfulness), encouraging honest advertising and accurate product information. Transparent communication reduces misinformation and builds consumer confidence.

### **2. Reduction in Consumer Exploitation**

Ethical marketing based on IKS discourages deceptive promotions, hidden charges, and false claims. Consumers feel protected, which strengthens trust in the brand.

### **3. Strengthening of Brand Credibility**

Consistent ethical behaviour enhances the moral image of the company. Brands following IKS values are perceived as reliable and responsible.

### **4. Fair Pricing and Value Satisfaction**

IKS promotes fairness and moderation in pricing strategies. Consumers trust businesses that offer reasonable prices aligned with product value.

### **5. Long-Term Relationship Building**

IKS encourages relationship-oriented marketing rather than short-term sales focus. Long-term engagement increases loyalty and repeat purchases.

### **6. Positive Word-of-Mouth Promotion**

Ethical treatment of consumers' leads to customer satisfaction. Satisfied consumers voluntarily promote the brand, enhancing trust among new customers.

### **7. Cultural and Social Acceptance**

Marketing aligned with cultural values and social responsibility gains public approval. Consumers trust brands that respect traditions and social sentiments.

### **8. Improved Consumer Confidence in Decision-Making**

Ethical marketing reduces confusion and uncertainty in purchase decisions. Consumers feel confident while choosing products or services.

### **9. Reduced Risk of Brand Boycott and Complaints**

Ethical conduct minimizes consumer dissatisfaction and grievances. Lower complaints and disputes strengthen trust and brand stability.

### **10. Contribution to Sustainable Consumer Trust**

Trust built through IKS-based ethical marketing is long-lasting. Sustainable trust enhances brand equity and long-term business performance.

## **Relevance of Indian Knowledge System in Ensuring Sustainable Marketing Practices**

### **1. Promotion of Ethical Marketing Practices**

IKS emphasizes values such as honesty (*Satya*), fairness, and moral responsibility (*Dharma*). These values ensure ethical advertising, fair pricing, and responsible promotion which are essential for sustainable marketing.

### **2. Long-Term Orientation over Short-Term Profits**

Indian Knowledge System encourages long-term welfare rather than immediate profit maximization. Sustainable marketing focuses on building lasting customer relationships instead of aggressive short-term sales.

### **3. Enhancement of Consumer Trust and Loyalty**

Ethical and transparent marketing practices rooted in IKS help in gaining consumer confidence. Trust-based marketing leads to repeat purchases and long-term brand loyalty.

### **4. Encouragement of Responsible Consumption**

IKS promotes moderation and need-based consumption. Sustainable marketing influenced by IKS discourages overconsumption and promotes responsible buying behaviour.

### **5. Environmental Responsibility in Marketing**

Harmony with nature is a core principle of IKS. It supports eco-friendly packaging, green promotion, and marketing of environmentally sustainable products.

### **6. Stakeholder-Oriented Marketing Approach**

IKS considers business as a social institution responsible to all stakeholders. Sustainable marketing balances the interests of consumers, society, environment, and business.

### **7. Cultural Sensitivity and Social Acceptance**

IKS-based marketing respects cultural values, traditions, and social norms. Such culturally aligned marketing gains social acceptance and long-term sustainability.

### **8. Reduction of Marketing Malpractices**

Ethical guidance from IKS discourages misleading advertisements, exaggerated claims, and manipulative tactics. This ensures fairness and transparency in the marketing system.

### **9. Support for Sustainable Branding**

IKS helps in building brands based on trust, authenticity, and social responsibility. Sustainable branding enhances corporate reputation and competitive advantage.

### **10. Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals**

IKS-based marketing supports economic, social, and environmental sustainability. It aligns marketing activities with broader sustainable development objectives.

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