

Conceptualization and Development of a Supply Chain-Customer Relationship Management (SC2R-M) Synergy Mode

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ABSTRACT

The ability of an organisation to add on a service envelope to the core product, overcome the constraints related to time and place of delivery and thereby, satisfying the customers' need with an edge over the other players or competitors in the market place, is the prime concern in today's context. This could take several forms as those branding with unique benefits, extensive knowledge exchange between organisation and customers, control of intellectual properties, exclusive supplier-buyer interface and relationship management with customers, employees and other value chain partners resulting in streamlining the flow of entire supply chain. SCM seeks to optimize supply whereas CRM seeks to optimize demand. SCM is cost focused and deals with production and execution while CRM is revenue focused and involves identifying and responding to customer needs.

In this paper, we propose and try to analyze the synergistic approach of supply chain management with customer relationship management (SC2R-M). The paper starts with tracing the development of CRM and SCM, focusing the (SC2R-M) synergistic mode followed by a proposed model, which depicts the specific inputs for customer and organisation, as to how customer processes the data, what are the efforts of organisation for relationship with customers, employees and channel members, what are the connecting links of focal firm with customer and finally what would be the outputs of focal firm's (SC2R-M) synergistic efforts in terms of benefits derived by customers and focal firm and ultimately by business and society.

Keywords: Supply Chain, CRM, SC2R-M, Synergy Mode, Marketing.

1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

The functionally excellent delineation between Supply Chain Management (SCM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) may have been sufficient in an era when the competition also had uncoordinated, dysfunctional supply and demand integration. But in today's era of intense, technological focused competition, leading companies in nearly every industry are working to seize first mover advantage by focusing on the strategies and technologies that enable SCM and CRM to coalesce. The title of paper looks like a chemical formula of some compound but actually, it denotes the specific corporate actions accomplished by clubbing the practices of Supply Chain Management (SCM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) together as the (SC²R-M) to avail the synergistic advantages and multiplier effects of the same.

In the new millennium, customer relationship management (CRM) has already transformed many corporate all over the world. It is recommended as a strategy for attracting, maintaining and enriching customer relationships (Berry and Gresham, 1986, Parvatiyar, 1991). Relationship marketing management has been the subject of much academic research in recent times. Relationship marketing has been studied in several areas of marketing as in the context of a buyer-seller partnership (Dwyer, Schurr and Oh, 1987; Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Ganesan 1994), sales management (Swan and Nolan, 1985, Tzokas et al., 2001, Kanagal, 2009), service marketing (Crosby and Stephens, 1987; Berry, 1983; Crosby, Evans and Cowles, 1990; Tzokas et al., 2001), business alliances (Bucklin and Sengupta, 1993; Heide and John, 1990; Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995; Morgan and Shelby, 1999; Swaminathan and Moorman, 2009).

These studies have contributed a lot to our understanding and knowledge about CRM (Agariya and Singh, 2011).

Similarly, more than four decades back, Forrester (1958) introduced the theory of management, which recognized the integrated nature of organisational relationships in distribution channels. In the last decade, the term Supply Chain Management (SCM) has come to stay (Cooper, Ellram, Gardner and Hanks, 1997; Cooper, Lambert, and Pagh, 1997). This concept is getting popular at a fast pace by virtue of global sourcing, an ever-increasing emphasis on time, quality, services and cost based competitiveness and ever increasing uncertainty in business volume and variety.

While some authors treat SCM in operational terms involving the flow of materials and products (Tyndall, Gopal, Partsch and Kamauff, 1998; Bowersox et al., 2002), others view it as a management philosophy (Ellram and Cooper, 1990; Mentzer, 2002; Agrawal, 2003; Christopher, 2005; Shah, 2009) and still others view it in terms of management process (La Londe, 1997; Lambert et al., 2005). SCM has evolved through different phases, the earliest phase being that of following the practices of purchasing and materials management followed by the phase of physical distribution system practices. As a sequel, concept of logistics and integrated logistics management came into existence, which in turn now has taken the shape of supply chain management.

1.1 Definitions

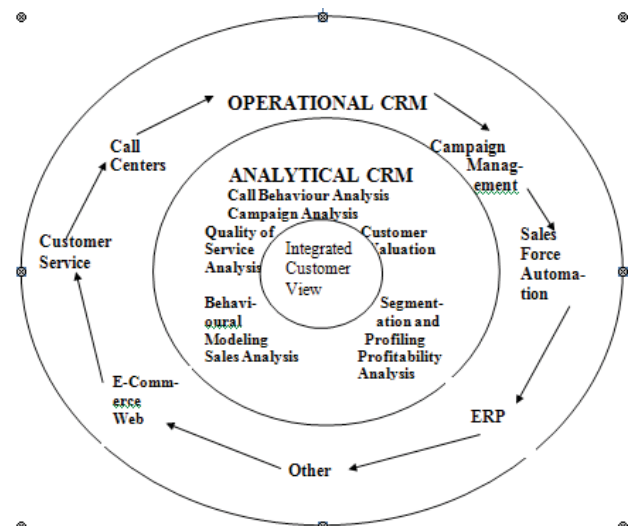
Several authors have defined the relationship marketing. Some of them have defined it with narrow view and others in broader terms. According to Vavra (1992), the aim of CRM is only to retain customers through variety of after-marketing tactics for customer bonding. Shani and Chalasani (1992) define relationship marketing as 'an integrated effort to identify, maintain and build up a network for the mutual benefits of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value added contacts over long period of time.' According to Morgan and Hunt (1994), 'Relationship marketing refers to all marketing activities directed toward establishing, developing and maintaining successful relationships.' Sheth and Parvatiyar (2000) define it as 'the ongoing process of engaging in cooperative and collaborative activities and programmes with immediate and end-user customers to create or enhance the mutual economical value at reduced cost.' Finally, Gartner Group, a reputed research organisation defines CRM as 'a business strategy, the outcomes of which optimize profitability, revenue and customer satisfaction by organizing around customer segments, fostering customer satisfying behaviours and implementing customer centric processes.' SAS

Institute Incorporation defined the customer relationship management (CRM) as a process by which a company maximizes customer information in an effort to increase loyalty and retain customers' business over their lifetimes. SAS Institute tries to give CRM overview (Figure 1), in which two circles of CRM, one focusing on operational initiatives and other focusing on analytical initiatives have been described as follows:

- ◆ Operational CRM, which shows that customer management plays an important role in company's success with the automation of horizontally integrated business processes as customer contact points and interconnected delivery channels etc.
- ◆ Analytical CRM, which involves the implementation of the advanced data management and analysis tools that make progressive customer relationship management possible.

As the authors' view it, CRM can be defined as the combination of business strategies and processes with technologies to acquire and analyze the customers for gaining and retaining the customer's confidence on organisation and it's offerings, while keeping in mind cost, quality and profitability of its offer.

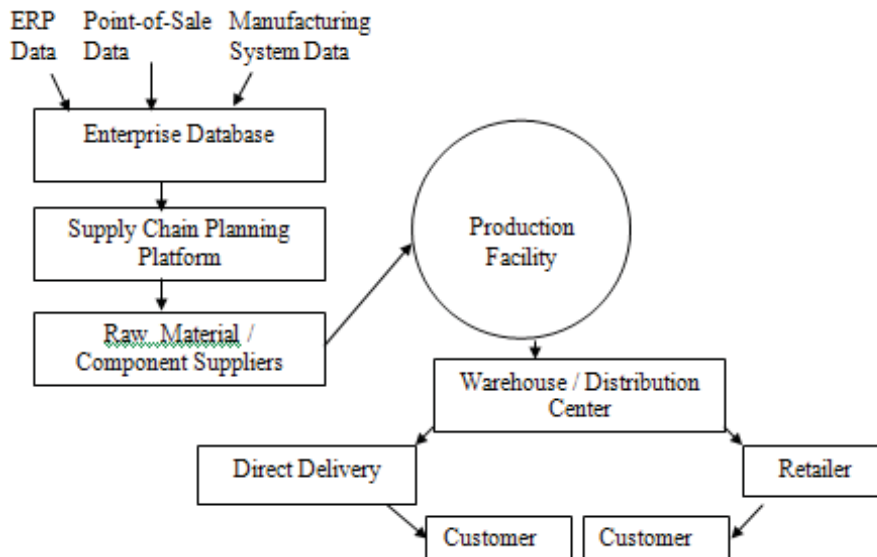
Figure 1: CRM Overview



(Source : SAS Institute Inc.,2001)

When we talk about cost, quality and profitability of organisation's offer, it is naturally related with the selected strategies and processes of organisation. The concept of supply chain management (SCM) has impact on the nerve of organisation's processes in terms of its

Figure 2: Simplified Supply Chain Structure



contribution towards lowering the cost and enhancing the quality. Before deliberating on the same, we would like to analyze as to what other scholars have to say about SCM.

Jones and Riley (1985) state that 'supply chain management deals with the total flow of materials from suppliers through end users.' Stevens (1989) states that the objective of managing the supply chain is to synchronize the requirements of customers with the flow of materials from suppliers in order to affect a balance between what are often seen as conflicting goals of high customer service, low inventory management and low unit cost. Ellram and Cooper (1990) define SCM as an integrative philosophy to manage the total flow of a distribution channel from supplier to ultimate user. Monczka et al. (1998) state that SCM is a concept whose primary objective is to integrate and manage the sourcing, flow and control of materials using a total systems perspective across multiple functions and multiple tiers of suppliers.

Mentzer et al. (2001) define SCM as the systemic, strategic coordination of the traditional business functions within a particular company and across businesses within the supply chain, for purposes of improving the long-term performance of the individual companies and the supply chain as a whole. Supply chain management represents the convergence of all facets of the manufacturing and sales process, which is reflected in its simplified supply chain structure (Figure 2).

So the philosophy of supply chain management extends the concept of partnership to manage the total flow

of goods from the supplier to the ultimate customers (Monczka et al., 1998; Mentzer, 2001, Shah, 2009).

According to the authors' view, supply chain management is a cyclic process, which starts from customer and ends on the customers. The process of SCM starts when a customer places his/her order and accordingly the different cycles i.e. replenishment, manufacturing and procurement, start rolling to fulfill the order requirements effectively and efficiently. The feedback of this cycle would obviously affect the next cycle.

1.2 Need for SC²RM

Supply chains chronically under-perform if they fail to analyze and respond to the needs of end customers. A company cannot reach its full potential in terms of developing, refining, supporting or delivering products and services without using customer insights to shape and refine the supply chain. The company may achieve economy of scale in production, but it may lose opportunities for product refinement and breakthrough performance. Specifically, SCM without CRM results in:

- ♦ Suboptimal product and service development because consistent, timely information on customer needs does not flow across the supply chain to key partners.
- ♦ A lack of product and service differentiation because customer information does not flow to supply chain

functions leading to commoditization and relentless pressure to consistently eliminate cost from supply chain processes.

- ◆ Inefficiencies because companies can not provide the necessary back – office resources to customers according to their value to the company.

CRM on top of a weak supply chain merely provides customers with a clearer view of the mediocrity of the underlying logistical capabilities. CRM that is not effectively tied to SCM results in:

- ◆ Under-delivering – Front-office strategies and processes will increase customer interactions and customer expectations, but if the back office can not deliver on front-office promises, hollow CRM results and customer satisfaction decreases.
- ◆ Over-delivering – CRM strategies and processes that do not provide cost transparency into SCM information may result in delivering products or services that are unprofitable.
- ◆ Lost share of customer opportunities – Without integration, the supply chain can not capitalize on the customer needs information that CRM uncovers and a company can not form new supplier partnership that intelligently and profitably increase the scope of its offerings.

To avoid costly scenarios like these, firms are moving to integrate their supply chain and customer relationship management processes. ‘Pursued separately supply chain management and customer relationship management can result in missed opportunities and poor performances. Enterprises must build bridges between them.’ states a 2005 commentary by Gartner Research. In simple words, the maturation gap between SCM and CRM has closed considerably and the time for integration has arrived.

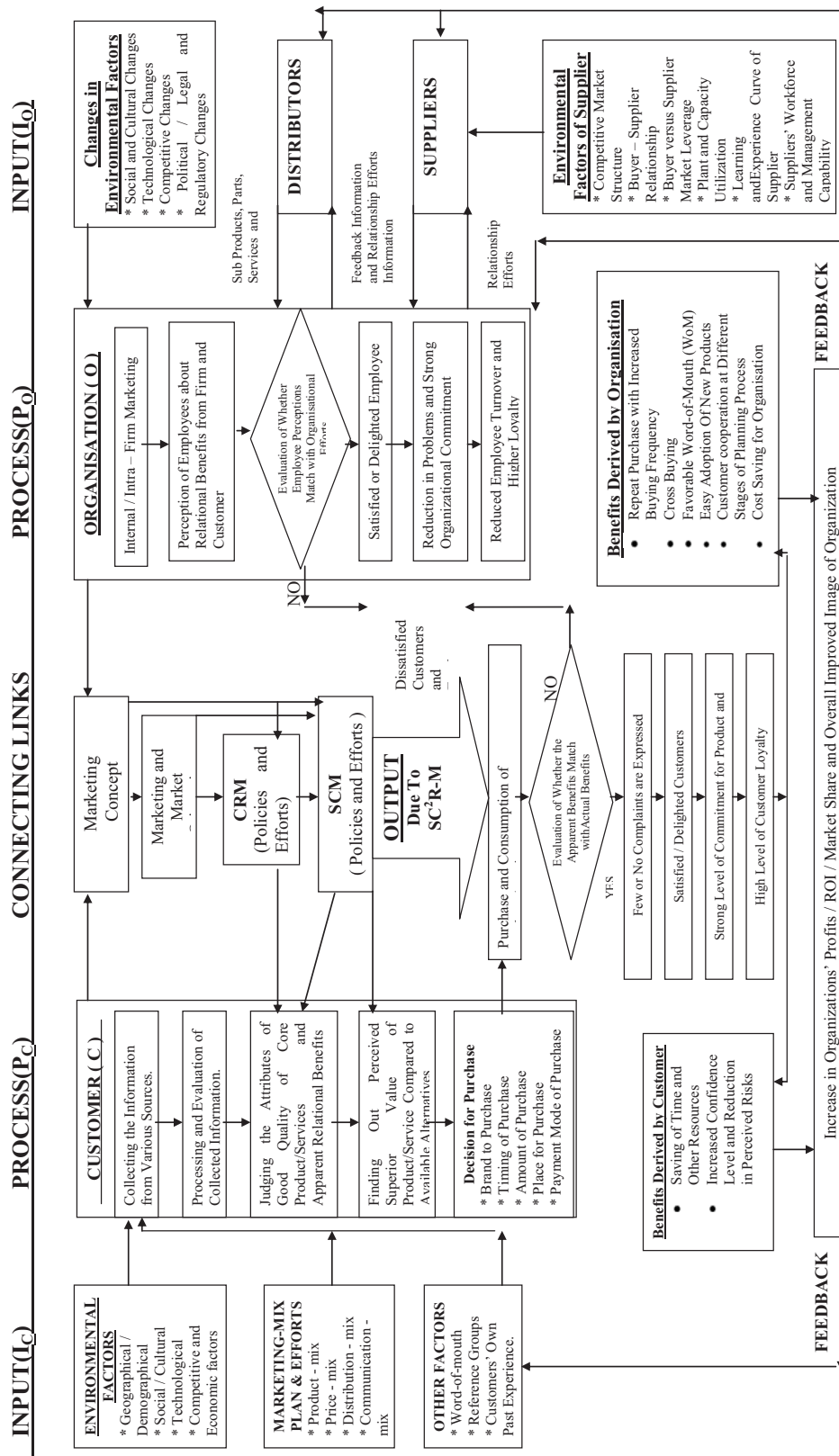
Michael Treacy and Fred Wiersema (1995) link customer demand to three distinct and mutually conflicting competitive disciplines. They contended that firms must focus primarily on just one of the following disciplines to achieve competitive success – operational excellence, customer intimacy and product innovation. The three disciplines framework is useful for viewing how traditional SCM and CRM approaches have evolved and why they will inevitably fall short in terms of generating strategic advantage in the modern marketplace. For example, a scale focused operationally efficient organisation typically concentrates its efforts on refining its supply chain so as

to build it or provide it – at the lowest cost and customer will come. This is one extreme SCM-CRM integration continuum, where organisation is highly focused on SCM. At the other end of the continuum are customer intimate organisations. These organisations focus on building rich customer relationships rather than optimizing the supply chain. Product leadership organisations occupy the middle ground of the SCM-CRM continuum. While relying on customer insights and CRM to anticipate customer needs, a steady stream of new products requiring new suppliers also means that such organisations is likely to see SCM as a critical success factor in its business.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The extensive literature survey, which is referred to in earlier discussions, sets the perspective for the supply chain management (SCM), customer relationship management (CRM), and their potential synergistic mode. The proposed model and its description that follows are based on shared observations by virtue of in-focus group discussion with executives and in-depth analysis of selected Indian organisations in a personal capacity on part of the authors. These organisations were selected through a stratified random sampling of Indian FMCG industry. As part of our research project, we contacted nearly 30 top and senior – middle level executives supply and / or sales and distribution and marketing planning and / or research department of various FMCG organisations in India directly or through telephone and email. We tried to get insight view on supply chain and customer relationship management practices through these executives with the help of structured interviews. The views of middle level executives were grabbed by structured questionnaire and in-focus group discussions. The questionnaire included sections regarding SCM and CRM strategies, manufacturing practices, supplier and distributor relationship, transportation and warehousing, information technology (IT) tools and techniques and measurement of performance of organisation on various SCM parameters. The questionnaire also included a number of general questions regarding SCM and its relationship to various elements within the firm. Additionally, a number of potential SCM and CRM concerns or problems were also identified. The authors in order to validate the proposed model, provide discussions among executives as well as among academicians, which provided an insight in the functioning of SCM and CRM separately and in a combination mode.

Figure 3: (SC²R-M) Synergistic Model



3. THE (SC²R-M) SYNERGISTIC MODE

By now, it is explicit that both SCM and CRM have phenomenal bearing and impact on a host of processes in an organisation. The key impact is in terms of synergistic effect of SCM and CRM on the functioning of an organisation. In this regard, the authors propose a conceptual model, the (SC²R-M) Synergistic Model based on extensive in-focus group discussions as a part of a project to study SCM and to analyze the cooperative and cumulative effect of both on the organisation operations.

The entire model is divided into four parts: Input, Process, Connecting Link and Output. In fact, the model has two ends, one end represents the customer and other end represents the organisation. Both ends have different types of inputs, which they process to generate the desired information. The two sides of model are linked through marketing concepts. Finally, the combination of organisational efforts with customer's expectation leads to final output. To understand the entire model, we will dissect and open the model in parts, as illustrated in Figure 3.

3.1 Inputs (I)

As shown in the model, it has customers on the left hand side whereas on right hand side, it has organisation. Customers as well as the organisation have different sets of inputs. Let us take the inputs one by one.

3.1.1 Inputs for Customer (I_C)

For generating any type of information or taking any decision, one requires the input data to be processed. Similarly, customer tries to collect the information in terms of input data to process and generate vital information for her future purchasing decisions.

The Macro Environmental Factors become the first set of input for customers. The macro environmental factors comprise of:

- ◆ **Geographical / Demographical Factors:** These factors provide information related to age, educational background, ethnic and racial makeup, household patterns and geographical shift of population. These factors have major influence on customer decision-making process.
- ◆ **Social / Cultural Factors:** Social and cultural surroundings of individual shape and guide the values, beliefs, views and actions. Core beliefs and values

are passed from one generation to another through parents to children and through various social institutions.

- ◆ **Technological Factors:** The dramatic force of technology is shaping and changing the lives of people. Every new technology that provides superior value in satisfying needs leads to obsolescence of old technology. The advent and growth in infrastructure and telecommunication technology have made it possible for people to work through their virtual offices and also for customers to enable them to seek information and/or product anytime and anywhere in the world.
- ◆ **Competitive and Economic Factors:** The available purchasing power of customer in an economy depends on current income, prices, savings, debt and credit availability. Similarly the expense pattern of available disposable income of customer is guided by achieving best possible value for money and the options and opportunities for best possible value is provided by competitive scenario at marketplace.

Organisation's Marketing Efforts: As we try to analyze the various macro-environmental factors, the various factors not only provide inputs for customer decision-making process but also play a very important role in building relationship with customers.

- ◆ **Product-Mix:** Product-mix factor provides inputs in terms of different product offerings related with various quality, design, features, branding and packaging parameters. A key impact of product-mix factor is concerned with the amount of customization, which is noticed by the customer in favorable manner.
- ◆ **Price-Mix:** One promising approach is to identify several price functions by taking the perspective of the customer as she goes through the various stages of decision process (Diller, 1997). Such approach stresses the relevance of pricing for customer satisfaction and trust. However, price mix is mostly used to promise customers about immediate benefits or in terms of value of money spent.
- ◆ **Distribution-Mix:** The distribution mix factor includes the various activities the company undertakes to make the product accessible and available to target customers. For getting the favor from customer, distribution mix should get closer to the customer e.g. the integration of electronic shopping into dis-

tribution system. However, countries like India are still in the process of framing cyber laws and their implementation mechanism.

- ◆ **Communication-Mix:** The communication mix factor includes all the activities the company undertakes to communicate and promote its products to target customers. Generally, customer would favor the integrated and interactive type of communication mix provided by the company.

Other Factors: Besides understanding the macro-environmental factors and various organisations' marketing efforts, few other factors also serve as inputs to customer force of the processes. Those are listed as:

- ◆ **Word-of-Mouth (WoM):** Word-of-mouth referral channel plays very vital role in customer decision-making process. More often, prospects would ask their friends, relatives and acquaintances – for a recommendation. To generate positive WoM, recommender must have been potentially benefited by the use of product / service.
- ◆ **Reference Groups:** A person's reference group consists of all the groups that have a direct or indirect influence on the person's attitudes or behaviour. (Kotler, 1997). The reference groups influence people because these groups expose an individual to new behaviours, lifestyles, attitude and beliefs.
- ◆ **Customer's Own Past Experience:** Every customer has to take purchasing decisions on her own. It might be possible that she takes decisions after getting the opinions of others. Nevertheless, the customer's own experience is the best guide for future decisions.

3.1.2 Inputs for Organisation (I₀)

In the first section of inputs, we try to analyze the various inputs for the purpose of customer decision-making. Similarly, organisation needs various types of inputs to analyze, plan, co-ordinate and control its functioning. Nevertheless, these inputs provide vital information to organisation in terms of future opportunities to capitalize and to avoid future risks.

The Changes in Environmental factors: At macro level, the changes in environmental factors guide the organisation for future direction, slowly but surely.

- ◆ **Social and Cultural Changes:** Social and cultural shift in any society changes the buying pattern of consumers. Accordingly, organisation has to take a close look at these changes and exploit these with respect to customers' needs, wants and desire. For example, in Indian society, the concept of fast foods, theme parks, multiplexes and shopping malls among the urban higher and middle class has caught up.
- ◆ **Technological Changes:** Technological changes provide entirely new opportunity to encash, at the same time it can wipe out the old technology application and solutions. The winners in rapid technology changes will be those either who make things happen or follow the changes quickly. As a part of this, organisations have also to adopt suitable product/service design, processing and delivery systems in order to gain competitiveness. The extent of on-line buying of products and services has already increased in Indian cities.
- ◆ **Competitive Changes:** The various changes at market place like convergence of industries, threat of new entrants and threat of competition from substitutes, lead to competition at market place. These competitive changes also provide a major input for organisation's future strategies.
- ◆ **Political / Legal and Regulatory Changes:** Every organisation has to keep tab on the changes related with political / legal and regulatory scenario. No one can ignore these changes as these might have the strength to jeopardize the existence of organisation itself. Enron Power Corporation brings home the fact in India.

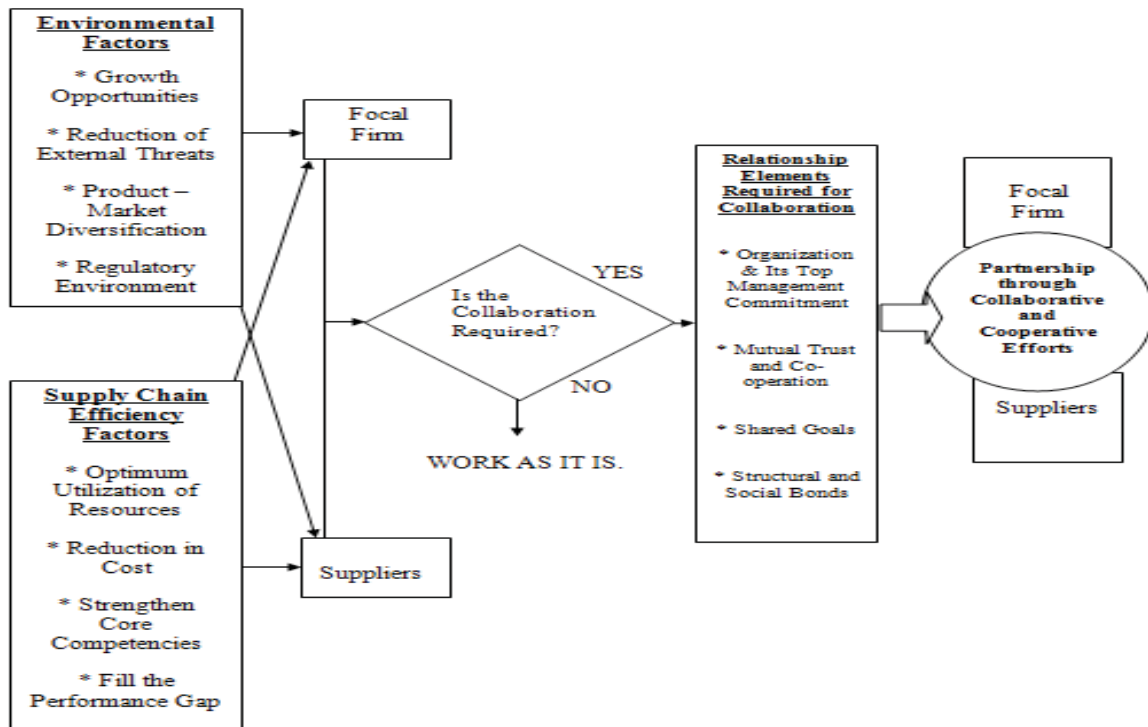
These changes in environment force the organisation to analyze breadth and depth of competencies / skills / capabilities required to capitalize on environmental opportunities and avoid the threats. A timely SWOT analysis would serve the purpose well.

Suppliers and distributors provide the other inputs to organisation. In fact, suppliers and distributors provide many inputs to the organisation and at the same time, they receive many inputs from the organisation itself so as to assume a two-way processing.

Suppliers

There are two major types of relationships between buyer and suppliers as defined by most researchers - Adversarial

Figure 4: Supplier Relationship Model



Competitive and Collaborative Partnership. Robert and Mackay (1998) argue that the primary goal of traditional adversarial approach, which was used mainly until late 1980's, is to minimize the price of purchased goods and services. It is adversarial in the sense that both buyers and suppliers try to achieve a profitable deal at each other's expense. Under this scenario, a buyer / focal firm relies on large number of suppliers and uses only short term contracts in order to remain at best bargain position.

Speakman, Kamauff and Myhr (1998) detailed the transition from open market negotiation to collaboration. They emphasized on how to move from co-operation to collaboration within a supply chain. This phenomenon can be well understood by the proposed Supplier Relationship Model (Figure 4).

The model identifies the set of reasons, which have potential to force buyer (focal firm) and supplier to collaborate their efforts. The first set of reasons is related with environment as firms analyze the future growth opportunities or want to reduce the external threats. Similarly, the desire of organisations to expand their wings for flying high and long in terms of product – market diversification leads them towards partnership. Sometime, the regulatory

environment also forces organisations to work as partner with local vendors.

These environmental factors trigger a thinking process within organisations, as to whether the organisations are capable enough to work independently for achieving their desired objectives and goals. Organisations should examine the facts such as:

- ◆ Are they able to utilize the resources optimally?
- ◆ Is there any possibility to reduce the cost of operations?
- ◆ Can they strengthen their core competency? and
- ◆ Whether there is any opportunity to fill the performance gap?

Focal firm and supplier, both undergo through this type of analysis and if they realize that something is lacking to outperform the competition, they start trying to build collaborative efforts. Collaboration, *per se*, may require some essential relationship elements to nurture, grow and capitalize by virtue of collaborative efforts. These are:

- * Organisation and its Top Management Commitment:

Commitment is an important variable in discriminating between stayers and leavers (Mummalaneni, 1987). In a similar vein, Moorman et al. (1992) define commitment as an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship. In fact, commitment of organisation's top management shows its faith that relationship will bring future benefits to the partners.

*** Mutual Trust and Co-operation:**

Mutual trust and cooperation act as basic building blocks for partnership between focal firm and supplier. Moorman et al. (1992) define trust as willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence. Anderson and Narus (1990) define cooperation as – similar or complementary coordinated actions taken by firms in an interdependent relationship to achieve mutual outcomes or singular outcomes with expected reciprocation over time.

*** Shared Goals:**

Shared goals provide a major cause for partnership. Wilson et al. (1995) suggested that mutual goals influence performance satisfaction, which in turn, influences the level of commitment to the relationship.

*** Structural and Social Bonds:**

Structural and social bonds are developed over time and when these flourish, both parties share equally the risks and rewards of relationship. Structural bonds among organisations may be at level of investment, adaptation in organisational hierarchy and it's functioning as well as use of shared technology. Similarly, when two organisations are working very closely, it is quite natural that many individuals develop personal relationship across the organisational boundaries. Cumulative effect of these types of cooperative and collaborative efforts will lead towards partnership between focal firm and suppliers.

Reverting to our basic model, we list now some vital external as well as internal environmental factors, which play a prominent role in focal firm and supplier negotiations e.g. as follows:

- ◆ **Competitive Market Structure:** Competitive market structure refers to the number of players present in the market with the existence of entry barrier for new player. It may range from pure competitive situation to monopoly. So, supplier's market structure plays a major role in negotiation with focal firm.
- ◆ **Buyer-Supplier Relationship:** The various decisive factors of this relationship and their impact have been already discussed to show the importance of a good relationship. Joint action, continuity and verification of each other's capability have been held as critical dimensions in buyer-supplier relationships. (Heide and John, 1990). Lyons et al. (1990) listed few actions of focal firm, which can facilitate and strengthen the buyer supplier relationship and are given as:
 - more consensual, cross functional team decision making
 - supply base rationalization
 - longer-term contracts and relationships
 - more outsourcing of professional and staff functions ; and
 - acquisition of components and subassemblies rather than individual parts.
- ◆ **Buyer versus Supplier Market Leverage:** Leverage refers to the relative position of power or influence one party has over another. Leverage of buyer versus supplier is decided by factors like relative size of organisations, purchase volume a buyer offers the seller, degree of seller expertise etc. Accordingly items are classified as bottleneck items, leverage items, routine items and critical items. (Kraljic, 1983).
- ◆ **Plant and Capacity Utilization:** The utilization rate of productive assets contributes directly to a supplier's cost structure. Current vendor quotations and operating costs along with the costs at different operating volumes becomes a major point of consideration during negotiations between focal firm and supplier.
- ◆ **Learning and Experience Curves of Supplier:** Learning and experience curve indicates whether a supplier can lower its cost due to the repetitive production of an item and utilizing economies of scope, which directly affect the total cost curve being faced by a buyer.
- ◆ **Supplier's Workforce and Management Capability:** A supplier's workforce and its management capability affects the cost structure as well as assurances about responsiveness to customer needs because management should be able to direct the workforce in a most efficient manner, commit resources for long term productivity, define firm's

quality requirements and assign financial resources in an optimum manner.

These and other factors have been duly analyzed by Monczka et al., (1998). Finally, organisation as a focal firm has to collaborate with suppliers and in this process suppliers provide sub-products, part/units, services and information to focal firm. Focal firm is bound to keep trust of its supplier through inter-firm relationship efforts and timely feedbacks to reap the advantages in terms of frequent and reliable deliveries, small and exact quantity shipment size and reduction in delivery time and paperwork – all prerequisites of a lean operating system, so conspicuous a corporate requirement today. Needless to mention that all these physical and information flows have to be aligned with process flows. Obviously, adequate process mapping and business process re-engineering (BPR) exercise should precede all these actions.

Distribution Channel Members / Distributors

According to Barton and Jap (2001), distribution channel activities are a major source of value-added benefits to end users, even greater than the value added by other marketing activities. Focal firm and its wholesalers, distributors and retailers have to recognize that only joint working with their partners can open the doors of marketing success. The relationship between focal firm and its channel members is entirely different from the relationship between focal firm and suppliers or focal firm and customers. In later case, focal firm can build consumer loyalty or develop key suppliers to ensure long lasting relationships, whereas for channel members organisation faces lot of difficulties. Even though focal firm can opt for vertical integration for distribution channels but this act will divert its attention from its core competency. Under this scenario, focal firm should try to build, nurture and maintain relationships with its existing channel members, which, in turn, usually have to deal with multiple competitive suppliers at different levels in a product category to satisfy the needs of their respective customers. Thus, it is required to originate the need for a trusted and committed relationship between focal firm and its channel members. This can be achieved by developing excellent communication media and methods to pass the information on real-time basis with a mutual trust, honesty and capacitated ability to deliver value for money to relevant customers.

3.2 Processes (P)

In our model, we have two processes at customer's end and organisation's end.

3.2.1 Processes at Customer's End (P_C)

By virtue of the various input sources, the customer by now collects a bundle of information. Next, she starts to organise the inputs and process the same to know the exact information and evaluate whether collected information is able to solve her problem or not. After collection and primary evaluation of information, she starts to examine and analyze the various available options in detail. Under this stage of processing, she tries to categorize various options of purchases available. Customer tries to judge not only quality aspects of products/services but also the apparent benefits derived by relationship efforts of different organisations. At this juncture of customer decision-making process, organisation's effort to build, nurture and grow the relationships with its customers, guides customers to opt for its offerings. Beside the organisation's CRM policies and efforts, SCM efforts play a vital role in sorting out the available options in the hands of customer. Customer always wants to make purchase decision in a manner so as to increase or select the best 'value for money' offer. So at this stage customer tries to find out which organisation's offering would provide best value for money. Under the intense competitive scenario, an organisation cannot distinguish its offering only by manipulating the traditional 4 P's of marketing because these changes can be easily imitated by the competitors. The cutting edge over others can only be achieved by those organisations, which opt for the practice of CRM and SCM. This customer-centricity in marketing efforts carves out a logically favorable image of the company and its offerings in the minds of customer and they prefer or opt for the same.

Finally, after collection, evaluation, analysis and comparison, customer has to make final purchase decision in terms of

- ◆ Which is the preferred brand for purchase?
- ◆ What should be the time of purchase?
- ◆ What should be the amount of purchase?
- ◆ From where purchase should be made?
- ◆ What should be payment mode for purchase? and
- ◆ What would be the preferred distributors' delivery mode?

These decisions lead the customer towards final purchase and consumption, which has been dealt under output section of the proposed model.

3.2.2 Processes at Organisation's End (P_o)

Relationship marketing, in general understanding, denotes the organisation's efforts to build relations with external customers, whereas organisation is itself a group of individuals, the internal customers, implying thereby that relationship with both internal and external customers, are important. Unless the relationship with internal customers is good, relationship with external customers can not be good particularly when customer interaction involves front desk employees. It is thus validated through several studies that a good employee attitude towards the company has positive effect on customer satisfaction. Internal marketing / intra-firm marketing should consist of all activities that develop and maintain relationship with employees. According to George and Grönroos (1991), although internal marketing is directed towards employees, its ultimate goal is increased service-mindedness and higher level of customer satisfaction. It is obvious that every front-line employee who is in direct contact with external customers affects her (customer's) satisfaction. Even those employees, who do not interact with external customers, may interact with internal customers i.e. other employees, who in turn may interact with external customers. So organisation has to start with internal marketing activities first to provide relational benefits to external customers. If internal customers are dissatisfied, external customers are unlikely to be satisfied. Relational benefits can take different forms. It may be same for all or customized for customer after considering his/her needs and desires. These efforts strive to create a win-win situation where both company and its employees get benefits from the existing relationships.

McCarthy (1997) proposes a list of benefits that could be offered to employees by different organisations.

- ◆ **Work / Life Adjustments:** Organisations should pay attention to employee's individual needs and aspirations in life and try to make it possible for them to organize their work accordingly. Some organisations provide flexibility in working hours by providing short-leave of two-three hours according to needs of individual employee.
- ◆ **Fun at Work:** Providing fun at work is practiced by organisation to increase productivity and attachment of employee with organisation. It may be practiced by providing an unexpected day out for staff or by organizing picnic or parties.
- ◆ **Economic Benefits:** These types of benefits are more traditional type of efforts made by organ-

isations to enhance the motivation of employee. Generally, these benefits include the bonus and incentives to employees based on their performance. Profitable companies could give option to buy company's stocks.

- ◆ **Family Care:** Providing family care options to employees contribute significantly towards the good relations of employee with his/her organisation. It can be in the form of paid maternity and paternity leave or providing childcare or bearing medical expenses of dependable family members etc.
- ◆ **Job Security:** Now-a-days, benefits of job security play a crucial role in accomplishing the good relations with employees. Even those organisations, which cannot promise job security, are trying to give employees a guarantee of employability through individual career programmes. However, if company is reluctant to provide job security, it will face high employee turnover, low morale of workforce and low level of customer satisfaction.

After analyzing pros and cons of organisation's relationship efforts towards its employees, employee tries to evaluate whether the organisation's efforts are matching with his/her perception and expectations. If he/she finds a mismatch, then he/she will feel dissatisfied. These employees either leave the organisation or spread negative word-of-mouth about the organisation, which is definitely not desired by organisations.

In just the reverse case, when employee feels that organisation's efforts are fulfilling his/her expectations, then he/she will feel satisfied with organisation, which in turn creates conducive environment for work with fewer problems in organisation. This will also lead the employee to perform his/ her best and show commitment towards work and organisation. So, when the product is of high quality and employees are ready to work with their full potential and commitment, it will originate fewer complaints from customers, thereby meaning that employees have to deal with lesser number of dissatisfied customers.

The overall consequence of internal marketing efforts of organisation is higher level of satisfaction for employees as well as customers, reduced employee turnover, high morale of workforce and high degree of loyalty with organisation. Accordingly, incentives for other members of supply chain i.e. suppliers and customers should be designed and implemented.

3.3 Connecting Links

Up to this stage, we have dealt with the various inputs and processes related with two sides of model i.e. customer side and organisation side. Under this section, we will try to establish interface between two sides.

3.3.1 Marketing Concept

Marketing concept is business philosophy, which guides an organisation and its functioning. King (1965) proposed that the marketing concept is concerned with profits, returns on investment (RoI) as well as with customer orientation. McCarthy and Perreault (1984) suggested that an organisation aims all its efforts at satisfying its customers at a profit under marketing concept. Webster (1992) proposed that marketing as a culture means a basic set of values and beliefs about the importance of the customer, expressed by the marketing concept, which guide the firm. Kohli and Jaworski (1990) argued that the marketing concept consists of three pillars namely customer focus, coordinated marketing and profitability.

By interweaving the marketing concept in the proposed model, a basic bridge has been constructed between customer and organisation. Customer remains at the core of any organisational move and marketing concept provides the desired direction to organisation in terms of formulation of policies and channelizing the efforts. It further helps the organisation and its employees in maintaining customer relationships as well as streamlining the supply chain operations to provide best services to customers.

3.3.2 Marketing and Market Orientation

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) proposed that a market orientation is the implementation of the marketing concept and that it is composed of three sets of organisation wide activities as follows:

- i. Generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs.
- ii. Dissemination of the intelligence across departments and
- iii. Responsiveness to market intelligence.

Narver and Slater (1990) defined market orientation as an organisational culture in which all employees are committed to the continuous creation of superior value for customers through their behavioural component.

In fact, the guiding force of marketing concept unifies the focus of organisation towards customers with the help of marketing and market orientation. They provide not only a framework for operations within organisation, which requires cooperation and coordination of different departmental efforts as well as individual employee's efforts, but also guide organisation in formulation and implementation of customer relationship and supply chain management policies and efforts.

3.3.3 CRM - Policies and Efforts

On the basis of marketing concept and orientation, CRM policies and efforts of organisation are constructed to match with customer's expectations. We identify some of these policies and efforts, which can help organisation to achieve its objectives and goals.

- ◆ Identifying and segmenting the more profitable and strategic segments (including those customers, who can influence others as opinion leaders) and directing best services to them.
- ◆ Not only attracting new customers but also retaining the existing customers.
- ◆ Leveraging customer knowledge in reducing the cost and time so that to serve each customer with better preparation.
- ◆ Emphasize on better understanding of customer's needs and her expectations so that organisation can guide her towards best channel for service with profitability.
- ◆ Organisation must direct its resources i.e. time, money, human etc. to those points where these have the greatest impact on customer relationship.
- ◆ Capturing, managing and analyzing real-time customer information from all channels for measuring the performance of all contact points and overall improvement of organisation functioning.
- ◆ Maintaining a good organisational culture and atmosphere to work with motivational doses to employees so that both parties must feel the commitment and trust i.e. employees and customers.

These efforts and policies of organisation towards customer relationship will make a long lasting impact on the minds of customer.

3.3.4 SCM - Policies and Efforts

Execution of customer-centric policies and efforts would require a strong backup of Supply Chain Management (SCM) policies and efforts. SCM tries to integrate several processes within and outside the organisation. From procurement to final delivery of finished products, SCM processes can help organisation a lot in terms of reduction of cost, enhancement of quality and most importantly delivering value for money to customer. Some of the policies and efforts, which can help organisation in developing customer-centricity are given as:

- ◆ SCM must be treated as a part of corporate strategy for gaining competitive advantage.
- ◆ Formal and accurate demand and supply forecasting system should be in place to provide integration across supply chain planning and movement of goods and services.
- ◆ Automation of SCM is essential for real-time information flow and decision-making.
- ◆ Organisation must select and establish strategic partnership with suppliers and dealers with their involvement in new product development process and in sharing of risks and rewards.
- ◆ Outsourcing of non-core competent activities improves on-time delivery and lead times.
- ◆ Lean approach of manufacturing leads to operational improvement across the supply chain.
- ◆ Organisation must access all channel opportunities and create channel synergy for reducing customer lead-time and on-time delivery performance to strengthen the customer relationship.

These measures related with SCM not only make a positive image of organisation and its offerings in the minds of consumer but also make it possible for organisation to deliver the products / services at right time with right quality and quantity through appropriate channels.

3.4 Output of the (SC²R-M) Synergistic Mode

By now, it has been described as to how customer reaches her decisions for purchase and how organisation can make it possible to deliver the required product / services to customer. As an output section of the proposed model, when consumer purchases and consumes the products/ services, she again tries to evaluate whether products actual performance and benefits are matching with the

apparent and expected performance and benefits. If she finds that there is a wide gap between these two, she will feel dissatisfied and definitely switch to other company's offerings.

Under prevailing conditions, she may find that actual and expected performance and benefits could be quite close, exactly matching, or exceed expected levels. The first condition forces the customer to express a few complaints, which must be handled by organisation carefully to rectify the problem as quickly as possible because these types of customers are boundary customers and they can jump to other side very easily. The latter two conditions will make customer satisfied and delighted with no complaints. In these two states of customer, organisation must not show complacency, instead, it should work much harder to maintain, enhance and fulfill the higher level of expectations of customers. This effort does not require a great deal of resources but it requires a perseverant and mature approach of organisation to build a long lasting relationship with customers.

The satisfied and delighted customers will show a strong level of commitment for organisation and its offerings. At the same time, a mutual trust, faith and commitment on each other will convert the customer into a loyal customer and in turn a partner of the organisation.

Thus by virtue of synergistic efforts of SCM and CRM benefits will accrue for both the parties namely customer and organisation, which are given as follows:

3.4.1 Benefits Derived by Customers

The following benefits can be derived by customers as an outcome of synergy of SCM and CRM.

- ◆ A committed and loyal customer does not have to start the entire process of decision making again and again, which will save precious time and other resources of customer.
- ◆ The customer confidence level will increase with her purchase decision and she will be less apprehensive of perceived risks related with purchase.
- ◆ Last but not least, customer will receive preferential treatment and respect from the organisation.

3.4.2 Benefits Derived by Organisation

The following benefits can be accrued by the organisation following execution of synergy of SCM and CRM.

- ◆ By making customers loyal, organisation will get benefit in terms of repeat purchases by customer with increased buying frequency and amount of purchase.
- ◆ Customers will not limit their scope with one product/service but they will opt to purchase different product lines or even cross-buy the products because they have faith in organisation's offerings.
- ◆ Satisfied / delighted customers will disseminate the favourable words among their relatives and friends. This will help organisation in lowering their advertising budgets and increase the reach.
- ◆ Loyal customers will feel a sense of partnership with organisation, which will force them to cooperate and help organisation in different stages of planning and implementation process.
- ◆ This type of cooperation by customers will make it easy for organisation to successfully launch the new products or variants.
- ◆ Finally, well-directed and guided efforts of organisation towards customers and vendors will save lots of operational wastages and save the cost.

The overall benefit of these efforts will be realized by organisation in terms of increase in its profits, return-on-investment (ROI), market share and overall improved image.

3.5 Feedback

The final benefits derived by organisation will simultaneously work as a feedback to concerned business partners for their contribution, performance and future reference.

- ◆ Firstly, the impressive image of organisation will generate more and more prospects with positive feelings for increasing the customer base.
- ◆ The growth of organisation will serve as glue for employees, suppliers and channel members (distributors) because they will be able to grow with organisation. Employees will get more benefits in terms of monetary benefits, career growth opportunity and security of job. Similarly, suppliers and channel members will simultaneously realize the increase in their profits and return on investments.

4. EXPLORABLE DOMAINS OF PRESENT RESEARCH

In authors' opinion, the mainstream theory development related with interface of marketing with other streams of management, particularly supplies and operations management, is close to a paradigm shift and we are only at the beginning of the same. Future research directions are getting more and more clear in the field as increasing amount of work is being done now in the basic CRM and SCM framework. The present model can be studied with respect to augmentation of these frameworks and their components. The study needs to be projected and extrapolated in terms of practical exposure of corporate while they integrate SCM and CRM for better supply management, building and retaining the customer base and finally, better management of relationships with customers and suppliers. Nevertheless, we feel that future research should increase further the empirical understanding of synergistic mode of SCM and CRM, in terms of links that join the SCM and CRM with the overall business performance – both marketing and operational - of the organisation under study. Further, varieties of such relationships have to be examined with special emphasis on development of proper network to streamline the product, material and service flows to ultimately best-value-deliver the product/service to customer. At this juncture, we would like to mention that these relationships though perceived to be a little bit static, in actual conditions, these may exhibit adequate dynamism and this very fact opens the door for future research to explore the applied nature of customer-centric relationships throughout the supply chain at various levels. There is also a wide scope to explore the impact on organisational structure and culture due to (SC²R-M). The parameters for benchmarking of performance in SCM and CRM individually and for their synergistic efforts, particularly in Indian context, could also be developed. Incentive systems for vendors, employees and customers can be researched in the light of SCM-CRM synergistic efforts in an organisation. The model can further be analyzed with respect to various enablers and facilitation factors particularly encountered while using state-of-art technology and software packages for SCM and CRM e.g. SAP R/3, Siebel etc.

5. CONCLUSION

The vision of customer centric adaptive supply chain may be in the process of becoming reality, but the migration towards greater level of supply chain and

customer relationship integration begins internally. As the paper highlighted the significant benefits await those organisations able to enter into the large adaptive networks, but the process of SCM-CRM integration must take place logically and incrementally. It involves calculated deployment of strategic initiatives and technologies to facilitate greater coordination followed by analysis and identification and application of lessons learned. These are the steps that will help in ensuring smoother SC²R-M realization, mitigate risk and position the organisation for strong RoI as key members of customer centric adaptive supply networks.

Furthermore, both academicians (Agrawal et al., 2010; Shaw and Kotler, 2009; Juttner et al., 2007) and practitioners (Garner, 2013, Demand and Supply Chain Executive, 2012, Fisher, 1997) began capturing the nerves of the market and competition therein, and strongly believe that today the competition is not among the companies but it exists among their supply chains. Today's cutting edged and technologically focused advancements in business supply chain calls for an effective inter-functional coordination and collaboration. SC²R-M explained thoroughly in the study is aimed at such collaboration between the two key distinctly separated functional processes in an organisation, so as to reap the advantages of the synergy and its associated multiplier effects. The conceptual model exhibited in the study is endowed with immense theoretical vis-à-vis pragmatic potential for integrating the two domains or rather the two aspects of the same coin for mutual gain of the two. The possible outcome of the integrated synergy can benefit all stakeholders in the chain or demand/ supply networks. This synergy is now unanimously acknowledged with a new term such as Demand Chain Management (DCM) which synergizes the demand creation function of CRM and Demand fulfillment function of SCM. This, however, requires more research to elicit the broader view with wider acceptance by practitioners. Future researches may take up this conceptual model for empirical testing along with the role of advanced ICT and automation tools and software in both SCM and CRM and their integrated version i.e., DCM.

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