

Starbucks Market Entry Plan to India

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Abstract:- This report examines Starbucks' strategy for expanding into the Indian market. Starbucks Corporation, headquartered in Seattle, Washington, is a globally recognized American coffeehouse and roastery chain, and it holds the title of the largest coffeehouse chain worldwide. The report begins by analyzing the rationale behind choosing India as the host country, with a focus on the cultural and economic factors that were considered in the environmental scanning process. It then outlines a market entry strategy, proposing a potential joint venture between Starbucks and the prominent Indian company, TATA Global Beverages Limited. The discussion extends to a comprehensive marketing strategy, utilizing the 4Ps framework to strategically guide Starbucks' entry into the Indian market. Lastly, the report addresses potential challenges and presents a contingency plan to mitigate them.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this report, we assume that Starbucks has not yet entered the Indian market and outline a potential strategy for its entry into India. By leveraging its global network, a foreign subsidiary can achieve advantages beyond the host country's environment. With economic liberalization and free trade, these companies can develop an extensive multinational network, forming a large-scale and diversified enterprise. Being multinational offers advantages such as privileged access to capital markets, enhanced product and service capabilities, and economies of scale in both distribution and production. A multinational corporation can leverage its global connections to gain a competitive edge in the international market, potentially achieving a monopoly by introducing new products with less competition in certain regions. Focusing exclusively on the domestic market can expose a company to risks like economic downturns, political instability, and other unforeseen challenges. Having a presence in multiple markets can significantly mitigate these risks and enhance the company's reputation both internationally and domestically. Entering a new market can also ignite innovation and lead to more efficient versions of products or services. Internationalization provides opportunities for new ideas, customer feedback, and unique perspectives beyond a company's home borders.

When a business decides to internationalize, it must address several key questions: a) Is there international demand for the firm's product? b) Can the product be adapted to fit a foreign market? c) Is the foreign business climate conducive to imports? d) Does the firm have, or can it acquire, the necessary skills and knowledge to operate internationally? If the answers to these questions are

affirmative, the firm is likely ready to pursue international expansion.

Businesses often prefer to work with countries within the same cultural cluster, as these countries share common history, religion, languages, and customs. This reduces the liability of foreignness when operating in a new nation. For instance, Ikea, which was founded in Sweden in 1943, first expanded to Norway (1963) and Denmark (1969), countries with similar cultures and languages, making them more receptive to the brand. Theories of international trade and investment suggest that firms internationalize due to their entrepreneurial ambitions and business objectives. Internationalization is a complex process requiring substantial capital—both financial and human—as well as time, investment, and expected returns. The challenge lies in the fact that no two countries are identical in economic, social, or cultural terms. Launching a business in a new country introduces various tax, legal, and socio-cultural considerations. Moreover, it necessitates a team of globally minded individuals.

Given the complexity of internationalization, why do firms choose to invest in other countries instead of simply exporting or signing licensing agreements with foreign entities to sell their products? Exporting involves producing goods in the home country and shipping them abroad for sale. Licensing grants a foreign entity the right to produce and sell the product in exchange for a royalty fee per unit sold. While exporting may seem straightforward, it is not always the best option. Certain products can be costly to ship or may encounter trade barriers, such as protectionist policies. In such cases, companies often prefer to establish a presence in the foreign market rather than contend with these barriers. Operating as an international corporation involves navigating various regulations and cultures while balancing stakeholder interests.

II. BASIS OF HOST COUNTRY SELECTION

➤ *Characteristics of Market*

With a population of over 1.4 billion, India is the most populous nation globally. It also holds the title of the largest democracy and the largest English-speaking country in the world. India is home to nearly 2,000 ethnic groups, over 200 languages and dialects, and represents all major religions. As one of the fastest-growing economies, India is experiencing a transformation in consumer attitudes. By 2030, consumer spending is expected to increase fourfold. India is projected to have one billion residents by that time, making it one of the youngest nations in the world. Unlike previous generations, the emerging Indian consumer will be wealthier, more willing to spend, and will possess distinct aspirational preferences.



Fig 1 Starbucks First Store in India (Mint, 2012)

According to a 2022 study by McKinsey, if India maintains its current growth trajectory, average household incomes are projected to triple over the next two decades, positioning the country as the 5th largest economy by 2025. As spending power increases, consumer behavior is expected to shift, with discretionary spending becoming the dominant category of purchases. While India's potential is attracting the attention of major consumer goods companies, success in this market requires navigating the significant challenges posed by its vast and diverse consumer base.

➤ *Comparative Advantages*

India possesses a vast human resource base and favorable demographics that make it an ideal market for Starbucks' entry. The country benefits from low-cost labor and enjoys nine months of sunshine annually, which supports F&B-related foreign direct investment (FDI) and strengthens international supply chain agreements with Indian farms (Gulati et al., 2007). Additionally, India's skilled, English-

speaking workforce enhances its potential to become globally competitive (Dahlman and Utz, 2005).

India's potential for economic growth is immense, bolstered by several comparative advantages, including macroeconomic stability, an abundance of raw materials, a large domestic market, low-cost labor, and a well-educated workforce in engineering and science. These factors position India as a strong contender in the global manufacturing and service industries. Given its market size and growth potential, India presents a highly promising environment for attracting FDI.

➤ *Economic Growth Conditions*

"In the previous two decades, China and India have achieved remarkable success in their economic development, as seen by strong rates of GDP growth." Together, the two nations account for over one-fifth of global GDP¹" (Hubacek K., 2007).

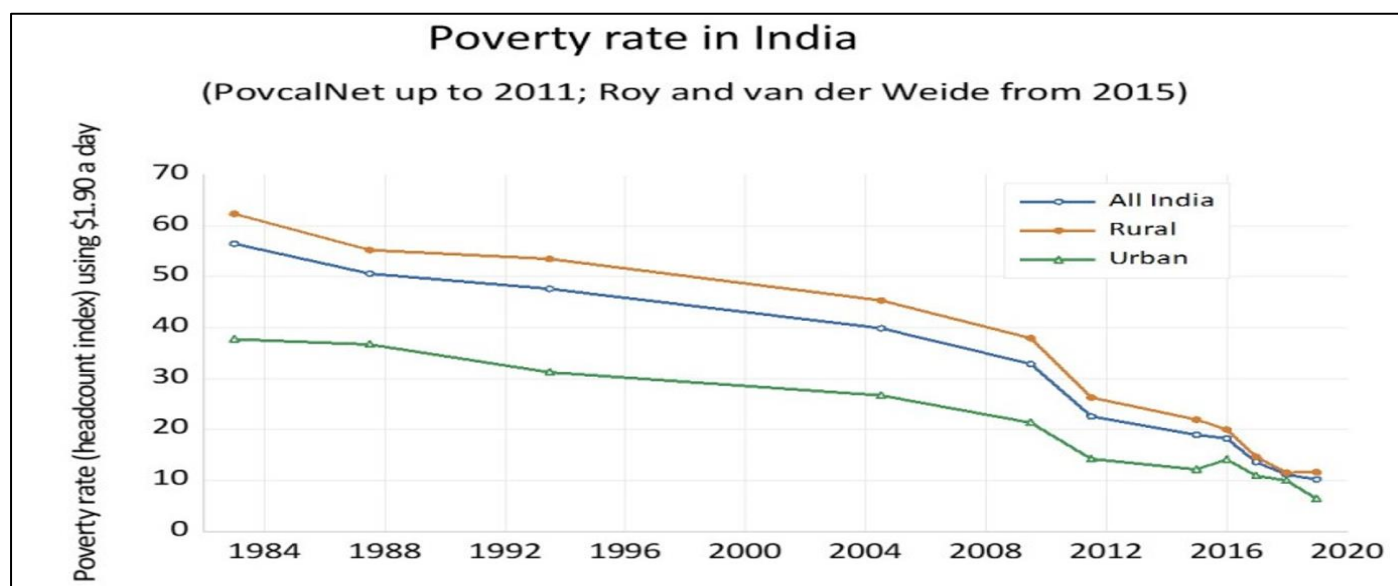


Fig 2 Poverty Rate in India (Ravallion, 2022)

² Gross domestic product

Over the years, India's poverty rate has seen a gradual decline, enabling more people to afford basic necessities like food and clothing. Meanwhile, a significant portion of the population has transitioned from lower-middle to a more comfortable middle class. The majority now aspire to a higher quality of life, which includes nutritious food, comfortable housing, easy access to healthcare, and other essential services, prompting many to migrate to urban areas.

In recent times, developing Asian nations, including India, have exhibited shifting consumption and lifestyle trends. Increased spending power has provided consumers with more choices, influencing not only economic growth but also the environment. In the coming years, India will present numerous opportunities for both established and emerging businesses. By fostering sustainable and equitable growth, India's progress could serve as a model for other rapidly developing markets, with stakeholders playing a crucial role in shaping the next phase of the country's growth story.

➤ *Legislative and Socio-Political Conditions*

The 2005 "Doing Business" report highlights that starting a business in India requires 11 steps and takes an average of 89 days, with costs amounting to 49.5 percent of the gross national income per capita. Despite this, India has experienced strong growth in recent years, significantly reducing poverty.

The country has made early strides in reducing trade barriers and other economic distortions. However, compared to labor regulations in countries like China, Brazil, Mexico, or Russia, Indian labor laws offer businesses less flexibility in managing their workforce. On the other hand, India provides a notable advantage in that manufacturing companies face fewer tax and regulatory inspections than in China and Brazil, and customs clearance processes are quicker. This results in fewer barriers to entry in the Indian market (Doing Business, 2005). Additionally, the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow in 2020-21 was USD 81.72 billion, up from USD 74.9 billion in the previous financial year (Economic Times, 2022). This indicates that India's legislative and sociopolitical environment is conducive to the entry and operation of foreign direct investments.

III. CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

➤ *Cultural Analysis*

India is recognized globally for its ethnically diverse culture, where various subcultures coexist, each with its own unique norms, values, dialects, and preferences (Banerjee, 2019). Research indicates that when entering a host economy, firms should place greater emphasis on non-material factors to craft a sustainable entry strategy (Conerly, Holmes, and Tamang, 2021). The table below offers a comprehensive analysis of the values and cultural aspects of the consumer market, providing deeper insights into the Indian economy.

Table 1 Culture and values in India

Dimensions	Category	Exclusivity
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Languages Symbols and signs Rituals and customs Traditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong linguistic diversity Distinct symbols and signs Multi facet and integrated Deep-rooted and enduring
Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual and family Society through conformity Success and growth Age and youthfulness Happiness and adaptability Religion and spirituality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal importance of individualism and collectivism Competition and cooperation coexists Success is more relishing once accepted by group Wisdom and experience of older generation is well acknowledged High degree of adaptability and rationalization Strive for both materialistic and spiritual gain

Source: (Banerjee, 2019)

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As of 2020, approximately 79% of the population practices Hinduism, followed by 15% who are Muslim, and around 2% who are Christian (Reilly, 2022). The remaining 4% of the population follows Sikhism, Buddhism, or Jainism (Sugden and Malhotra, 2022). Religion plays a significant role in shaping individuals' lifestyle choices, often influencing dietary preferences and other social practices. This, in turn, affects the market for products and services. For instance, certain Hindu castes avoid consuming poultry,

meat, and dairy products due to their vegetarian beliefs (Chouraqui et al., 2021). In Hinduism, eating beef is considered sinful because cows are revered in Indian culture. Conversely, Muslims are restricted from consuming pork and other haram (forbidden) items (Qureshi, 2022). These religious considerations are crucial when designing a Starbucks menu for the Indian market.

Understanding cultural preferences and attitudes is vital for foreign brands as it shapes customer behavior. Tea holds a prominent place in Indian heritage, symbolizing a sense of belonging and identity (Parik, 2021). The Indian Tea Board reports that approximately 64% of the population drinks tea daily (Chakraborty, 2022). However, the coffee market in India presents an interesting scenario. The influence of globalization has created a strong demand for coffee, indicating a shift in traditional norms and values toward a more global culture. While younger generations (Gen Z and Gen Y) are adopting a westernized lifestyle, traditional Indian culture continues to play a key role in defining brand perceptions (Prakesh, 2019).

➤ *Economic Analysis*

With a growth rate of 7.6%, India is recognized as the fastest-growing middle-income developing economy globally (Majumdar, 2022; The World Bank, 2022). It is expected to rank among the world's leading economic powers in the coming years, driven by its robust democracy and strategic alliances. Currently, India's nominal GDP positions it as the 5th largest economy worldwide (Myers, 2020). In terms of purchasing power parity, India is the 3rd largest economy globally (Suneja, 2020). If the growth rate persists, India's middle-income population is projected to reach 583 million by 2025 (Roy, 2020). Consequently, consumer spending among this income group is anticipated to rise significantly. From 2019 to 2020, many local and international companies and multinational corporations planned a 10% increase in wages and salaries (Sharma, 2022). This indicates a substantial improvement in the standard of living and consumer spending patterns in India. Recent reports show that 31% of total consumer spending in India is directed towards the food and beverage sector (Chowdhury, 2021). Despite a deep cultural affinity for tea, coffee consumption has surged due to global trends.

The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing trade disputes have significantly impacted global markets, temporarily stalling the growth of the coffee industry in India. However, as the world recovers and approaches pre-pandemic conditions, the Indian economy experienced an 8.7% GDP growth, surpassing 2020 levels (Kaul, 2022). Investment rates in India have also increased substantially over the past nine months. Despite the global economic challenges, the coffee industry in India is projected to grow at an annual rate of 10.15% (Clarence, 2021). These trends suggest a positive outlook for goods and services as future economic demand rises. Driven primarily by domestic consumption and investment, which accounts for 70% of economic activity (IBEF, 2022), India's improving discretionary income levels are expected to enhance the standard of living and quality of

life for its residents. These economic indicators position India as a promising investment opportunity for foreign companies.

IV. MARKET ENTRY STRATEGY

To enter the Indian market, Starbucks' optimal strategy would be to form a joint venture with a major Indian corporation. Given the complexities and cultural differences between the Indian and American markets, partnering with a well-established local company that has a deep understanding of the Indian business environment would be advantageous. Joint ventures are a preferred method for entering new markets, with about 40% of Fortune 500 companies utilizing this approach internationally (Bhargava & Bamford, 2021). This strategy is particularly effective in regions with diverse economic structures, social challenges, and market conditions like India (Menon, 2022).

Joint ventures offer notable benefits such as flexibility and shared financial risk. Unlike more permanent business models, joint ventures do not require the creation of a new corporate entity, allowing for greater operational flexibility—an ideal scenario for Starbucks' market entry (Corporate Finance Institute, 2018). Moreover, partners in a joint venture retain control over their own operations and can quickly return to their regular business activities once the venture concludes.

In terms of risk management, joint ventures enable participating companies to share the financial investment needed to introduce a product or service, thereby reducing the substantial costs associated with research and development. Sharing these costs among partners decreases the likelihood of project failure and its negative impact on profitability (Corporate Finance Institute, 2018).

For Starbucks, a strategic partner for a joint venture in India would be TATA Consumer Products (formerly TATA Global Beverages), supported by several compelling reasons:

- **Market Presence and Reach:** TATA has a significant presence and market share in India, which could greatly assist Starbucks in establishing a presence in the country.
- **Expertise in Market and Products:** TATA's extensive knowledge of the Indian market and its diverse product range provide valuable insights and experience.
- **Brand Recognition and Customer Loyalty:** TATA's strong brand reputation and customer loyalty in India would facilitate Starbucks' market entry and acceptance.
- **Alignment of Values and Ethics:** Both Starbucks and TATA are committed to high-quality products and ethical practices, making them well-suited for a successful partnership.

TATA Consumer Products is a prominent global beverage company and a major player in the coffee industry through its subsidiary, TATA Coffee. TATA Coffee is the third-largest exporter of instant coffee from India and operates Asia's largest coffee plantation, with 19 estates producing over 10,000 MT of Arabica and Robusta coffees and two instant coffee production facilities with a total

capacity of 6,000 MT (Tandon, 2017; Starbucks, 2011). This expertise aligns well with Starbucks' focus on coffee.

Additionally, TATA's international business experience in markets like Australia, the U.S., and the U.K. means that the company understands American business practices, which would ease collaboration with Starbucks (Reuters, 2014). TATA's established reputation and customer trust in India would benefit Starbucks' market entry. Furthermore, both companies share a dedication to ethical sourcing and high-quality coffee, reinforcing the compatibility of their partnership (Starbucks, 2011).

V. MARKETING STRATEGIES (4 P'S)

➤ *Product*

India's profound diversity is complemented by a unifying affection for tea, with approximately 90% of Indian households regularly consuming it (Smith, 2022). Given Starbucks' focus on coffee, adapting its product offerings to align with Indian tastes and lifestyles is essential. To address this, Starbucks should introduce a tea-centric menu, featuring

a variety of fruit, herb, and spice-infused teas tailored to Indian preferences. Additionally, developing a unique tea blend exclusive to the Indian market could enhance its appeal to tea enthusiasts.

Moreover, dietary habits in India are significantly influenced by religious practices. It is crucial for Starbucks to adapt its food menu to include vegetarian and vegan options, as well as non-pork non-vegetarian items, to cater to the diverse dietary needs of the Indian population, including Hindus and Muslims (Kramer, 2021).

Recent trends indicate that younger generations in India are gradually shifting towards coffee, contrasting with traditional preferences for tea (Smith, 2022). Thus, while Starbucks should adapt its offerings to local tastes, it is also important to maintain its core coffee products. Starbucks should continue to offer popular coffee items like lattes, cold brews, and Frappuccino to appeal to existing fans of the brand and those seeking its signature beverages, ensuring a balance between local adaptation and global brand consistency.

Table 2 Product Varieties Suggested for Starbucks India

Product Category	Products
Handcrafted Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshly brewed coffee and tea • Hot and iced espresso beverages • Frappuccino® coffee & non-coffee blended beverages • Tea lattes • Iced teas • Signature tea (spice infused)
Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savory bakery items • Sweet bakery items • Sandwiches & Wraps • Desserts
Consumer Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 30 coffee blends • Single-origin premium coffees • Coffee pods • Teavana® tea bags
Merchandise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold cups • Tumblers • Mugs • Water Bottles

➤ *Price*

Starbucks has cultivated a robust premium brand image, which must be preserved as it enters the Indian market. To maintain this image, adopting a premium pricing strategy is essential. Indian consumers often assess the price-value relationship before making purchases (Rajasekaran, 2015). By implementing a premium pricing model, Starbucks can reinforce its reputation for high quality and signal that it offers a superior and distinctive experience compared to local coffee shops and tea vendors.

A premium pricing approach will help emphasize Starbucks' commitment to quality and its unique brand proposition. When customers perceive a significant value in their experience, they are more likely to accept and justify the higher prices associated with a premium brand.

➤ *Place*

To effectively establish its presence in India, Starbucks should implement a place utility distribution strategy that ensures its products are accessible in convenient locations for local customers. Initially, Starbucks should focus on setting up physical stores in major Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bangalore. Strategic placement in high-traffic areas like retail malls, IT parks, and cultural events will enhance visibility and attract foot traffic (Rajasekaran, 2015). Additionally, Starbucks should aim to create a welcoming environment in these outlets, transforming them into destinations where customers can work, relax, and socialize in a clean, comfortable, and air-conditioned space with appealing décor and free Wi-Fi.

Given the anticipated growth of the Indian online food delivery sector at 28.94% annually from 2020 to 2026, and

the fact that 81% of customers use delivery apps for convenience (Businesswire, 2021; Joshi, 2019), Starbucks should also expand its distribution strategy to include online channels. Partnering with popular food delivery platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy will allow Starbucks to reach customers who prefer to enjoy their favorite products from home, thus broadening its market reach and catering to evolving consumer preferences.

➤ *Promotion*

With a median age of 28.4 years and millennials and Generation Z comprising about 65% of its population (Lu, 2016; Sharma, 2021), India presents a promising market for Starbucks, especially given that the millennial segment alone spends over \$300 billion annually (Sharma, 2021). To effectively capture this demographic, Starbucks should focus on enhancing brand awareness and promoting its new tea-based menu.

In India, where collectivist values prevail, Starbucks should highlight the "Starbucks experience" as a social activity suitable for enjoying with friends and family. This approach aligns with local cultural norms and can foster a positive brand image.

To engage the target audience, Starbucks should leverage viral marketing techniques on popular social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. Hosting online photo competitions and social media challenges can generate buzz and increase brand visibility (Singh, 2020). Additionally, incorporating Starbucks locations into Bollywood films and Indian TV serials—an effective marketing tactic in India (Raval, 2016)—can further enhance brand recognition and appeal. By integrating these strategies, Starbucks can effectively tap into India's dynamic and youthful market.

VI. HOST COUNTRY CHALLENGES AND CONTINGENCY PLAN

Table 3 Host Country Challenges and Contingency Plan

Host Country Challenges	Contingency Plan
Finding an appropriate partner in India	<p>The contingency plan is to enter India through a joint venture with India's most socially responsible and recognised corporate family, The Tata Group. Starbucks benefits from a strategic collaboration with a group of this prominence in establishing its branding strategy.</p> <p>The objective is to merge TATA Coffee's trust and tradition with Starbucks Coffee's distinct brand image. The target is to expand the company's retail coffee businesses into India and other Asian countries. Starbucks may source and roast coffee beans from TATA's Indian plants. Furthermore, TATA can assist Starbucks in the construction and development of locations in retail establishments and hotels (Revathy, 2015).</p>
Socio-Cultural Factors - Tea Culture	<p>The contingency plan is to have a clear product strategy for the Indian market that caters to Indian consumer preferences. The company's primary purpose is to cater to local tastes. Tata Tea is a significant player in the tea industry, controlling 22.2% of the market (Makwana, 2022). Tata Tea is the world's second-largest tea brand (Tetley, n.d.); therefore, the plan is to capitalize on this and offer tea-based items alongside premium Starbucks coffee.</p> <p>Food is central to cross-cultural studies of behaviour, thought, and symbolism (Baek et al., 2005). Indians' dietary preferences are greatly affected by their religious beliefs. Delicacies such as "Murg Kathi wrap," "Chicken Makhani," and other foods can be served in India to draw in more customers.</p>

Competition in the Indian Café Market	Starbucks must have a distinctive selling point to differentiate itself from its competition. The contingency plan is to always provide clients with outstanding service, a welcoming environment, and an aromatic cup of premium coffee.
Customer loyalty and satisfaction	Loyalty, prosperity, and success are all intertwined. By adapting the method of modern gamification, The idea is to add a rewards program that allows customers to earn "stars" through purchases (Collins, 2017). Customers who gain stars can obtain free coffee and merchandise. A free treat on the customer's birthday, added prizes like double star days, and access to unique games and offers can be granted. Furthermore, the organization may achieve loyalty and satisfaction by providing true 1:1 consumer personalization at scale (Flavin & Heller, 2021). Starbucks can benefit from behavioral segmentation by knowing customer behavioral tendencies and patterns. Rewards can be personalized based on a customer's activity via behavioral segmentation. Engaging experience for each consumer by developing a clear 360-degree customer view can be provided.
Pricing	Starbucks' higher prices will make it difficult to attract young people. As a result, the contingency plan is to open outlets in prime locations. The target demographic comprises corporate professionals with much discretionary income who can go out with their pals to an expensive cafe.
Real Estate - Store Location	The contingency plan is to use Tata company's local expertise in the real estate industry to identify chances and harness capabilities in the area (Revathy, 2015).

VII. CONCLUSION

Starbucks' foray into the Indian market presents a prime opportunity to broaden its global reach by entering one of the fastest-growing economies. Partnering with Tata Global Beverages Limited through a strategic joint venture will enable Starbucks to adeptly manage the complexities of the Indian market. Tata's deep local knowledge, well-established supply chains, and strong brand presence will be invaluable assets in this venture.

The marketing strategy will be meticulously designed to resonate with India's unique cultural and economic environment. This includes adapting products to local tastes, employing a premium pricing model to reflect the high quality of Starbucks' offerings, selecting high-traffic locations for outlets, and implementing targeted promotional tactics. Addressing potential challenges with a comprehensive contingency plan will be crucial.

By aligning its products and branding with Indian consumer preferences, Starbucks is set to build a robust market presence. This venture will not only drive Starbucks' growth but also align with and enhance the evolving tastes of Indian consumers, creating a win-win scenario that leverages both global expertise and local insight.

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