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## MARKETING STRATEGIES OF DAIRY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KERALA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MILMA ERNAKULAM DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT

*Dairying has a long history in India, and Dairy Co-operative societies are the cornerstone of this long and proud industry. This study analysed MILMA, the Dairy Co-operative Society in Kerala with regards to how MILMA achieved such growth; why there is not even a major competitor for MILMA in Kerala; what are the marketing strategies adopted by MILMA, how MILMA maintain its customers etc. Focus of the study restricted to Ernakulam district. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and has made use of surveys and questionnaires. All data collected was tabulated to facilitate interpretation. Percentage analysis is used for analysis of data collection. Statistical device like tables, graphs are also used for the analysis of data. The study suggests that brand loyalty is the main reason for its success rather than other factors analyzed. The results of this study suggest that MILMA can increase sales through more advertising.*

### KEYWORDS

MILMA Ernakulam district, marketing strategies, dairy co-operative societies.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

In India, dairying is regarded as an instrument for social and economic development. The country's milk supply comes from millions of small producers, who are scattered throughout rural areas. Dairying as a discipline has received great amount of attention in India from economists, sociologists, scientists, and planners. As dairying covers a very wide area, the scope of this study of dairying is spread over the physical aspects such as size, number and growth of bovine population, economic aspects covering demand, supply, and cost of milk production, and operational aspects, such as procurement, processing, and marketing. Marketing is an important tier of the modernised productions and distribution. The contemporary marketer will set the marketing goals and objectives, develop the marketing plan, organize the marketing function, implement the marketing plan, and control the marketing programme to ensure that the marketing goals and objectives are achieved. The marketing programme covers product, price, place, and promotion. During last three decades, the sector witnessed uninterrupted growth in terms of animal production and milk production. It is still continuing. There are wide variety of products from MILMA and these products have been accepted by the people. There is a steady demand for its products. Therefore, it is relevant to study how MILMA achieved such growth, why there is not even a competitor for MILMA, what are the marketing strategies adopted by MILMA, how MILMA maintain its customers etc. The study was conducted with special reference to Ernakulam district.

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To ascertain the current level of competitiveness of Dairy Co-Operative Societies.
2. To evaluate the performance of Dairy Co-Operative Societies.
3. To examine the customer service level of Dairy Co-Operative Societies.
4. To assess the operational efficiency of Dairy Co-Operative Societies.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Only the marketing aspects of dairy sector are reviewed in this study.

(Jha and Debroy, 2000)<sup>1</sup> conducted a study on "globalizing Indian dairy sector". The study found that the impressive growth of India's dairy sector during the last 3 decades has been possible through supportive trade policies.

(Ashoke Kumar Ghosh and Keshav Lall Maharjan, 2002)<sup>2</sup> undertook a "study on milk marketing channels in Bangladesh". The study revealed that the price fluctuation in marketing was one of the most important constraints on the small dairy farmer.

(Rajendran and Samarendu Mohanty, 2004)<sup>3</sup> in their study "Dairy Co-operatives and Milk Marketing in India" made an attempt to review the existing status of milk marketing and dairy co-operatives in India. The results of the study indicated that 80 percent of the milk produced by the rural producers is handled by an unorganized sector and the remaining 20 percent is handled by an organized sector.

(Abinesh, 2004)<sup>4</sup> made a "Comparative study on consumer behavior towards loose milk and packed milk". The study found that the factors like quality, quantity, hygienic aspect, and government intervention influence consumer behavior.

(Karmakar and Banerjee, 2006)<sup>5</sup> conducted a "study on Opportunities and challenges in the Indian dairy industry". The study found that with the emergence of World Trade Organization (WTO) and the imports and exports getting liberalized in the global economy, the dairy industry faces both an opportunity for growth, as well as a threat for its growth.

(Srikanth, 2007)<sup>6</sup> in his thesis analyzed "the performance, working of dairy cooperatives, the cost return structure of milk production of dairy farmers and opinions of member producers on the problems of production and marketing of milk".

(Saiyed Sohelahmed, 2009)<sup>7</sup> in his study "customer bonding towards Amul milk & milk products in Anand district" made an attempt to understand the customer behaviour, satisfaction and the influence of various marketing mix towards Amul.

(Shankar Ambhore, 2010)<sup>8</sup> in his research paper "Dairy co-operative: an overview", made an attempt to study the functions of dairy co-operatives in India.

(Kumar and Staal, 2011)<sup>9</sup> in their study "Is traditional milk marketing and processing viable and efficient?" attempted to estimate the costs and returns of traditional milk marketing and processing.

(Thirunavukkarasu and Sudeepkumar, 2011)<sup>30</sup> in their study attempted to identify the various “milk marketing options for dairy farmers and to compare the cooperative system with the integrated contract system”. The study found that there are many milk marketing options like informal system, co-operative and contract system etc. A majority of dairy farmers, around 57.3 percent, had shifted from one marketing option to another. The rest, 42.7 percent, of dairy farmers remained in the same marketing option from the day they began commercial milk production.

### III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and has adopted the following methodology: The population for the study was customers of dairy Co-operative societies. Data was collected from the beneficiaries residing in Muvattupuzha Taluk. Random sampling was used as the sampling technique. Hundred beneficiaries were identified. Both primary data and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire elicited information regarding the profile of the customers, their current status, level of awareness, evaluation of the role of dairy cooperative societies, and changes in marketing strategies. The primary data was also collected through interviews held with customers of dairy products. The study also used secondary data in order to ascertain the success in the working of Dairy Co-operative Society. The publications which constituted the secondary sources of information were annual reports of MILMA in Kerala. All data collected was tabulated to facilitate interpretation. Here, percentage analysis is used for analysis of data collection. Statistical device like tables, graphs are also used for the analysis of data. The study was conducted for a period of three months, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Sample Profile

With regards to age classification of respondents, majority of respondents (70 percent) belonged to the category of Below 30 age group. 12 percent of respondents belonged to the category Above 50 age group and 10 percent belonged to the category 41-50 age group. With regard to educational qualification of the respondents, majority of the respondents (34 percent) belonged to the category of Graduate level. 28 percent of respondents belonged to plus two and 26 percent of respondents belonged to post graduate level. With regards to occupational classification of respondents, majority of the respondents (42 percent) belonged to the category of Daily Wages. 24 percent of respondents belonged to the category of professionals and 18 percent of respondents belonged to the category of Business. As far as the income of the respondents, majority of the respondents (32 percent) belonged to the category of Below Rs 15,000. 26 percent of respondents belonged to the category of 15,000-30,000 and 22 percent of respondents belonged to the category 30,000-50,000.

#### Findings

With regard to milk consumption pattern of respondents, majority of the respondents (68 percent) belonged to the category of Daily. 18 percent of respondents belonged to the category of 2-3 days and 10 percent of respondents belonged to the category of monthly users. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the milk product, majority of the respondents (50 percent) were aware about various milk products available in the market. 46 percent of respondents were fully aware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the branded milk product, majority of the respondents (64 percent) were aware of various branded milk products available in the market. 30 percent of respondents were fully aware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the certificate standards of MILMA products, majority of the respondents (48 percent) were aware about the certification standards of MILMA products. 38 percent of respondents were unaware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the label details of MILMA product, majority of the respondents (44 percent) were aware about the label details of MILMA products. 32 percent of respondents were unaware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the quality of MILMA product, majority of the respondents (58 percent) were aware about the quality of MILMA products. 24 percent of respondents were unaware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the quantity of MILMA product, majority of the respondents (64 percent) were aware about the quantity of MILMA products. 20 percent of respondents were unaware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the pricing pattern of Milma product, majority of the respondents (42 percent) was aware about the pricing pattern of MILMA products. 32 percent of respondents were unaware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the safety measures of MILMA product, majority of the respondents (46 percent) were unaware about the safety measures of MILMA products. 34 percent of respondents were aware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the major ingredients of MILMA product, majority of the respondents (54 percent) was unaware about the major ingredients of MILMA products. 36 percent of respondents were aware. Regarding the awareness level of respondents about the adulteration of milk product, majority of the respondents (42 percent) was aware about the adulteration of milk products. 32 percent of respondents were unaware.

The Milk Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (48 percent) preferred MILMA. 42 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 8 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Ghee Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (54 percent) preferred MILMA. 40 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 4 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Paneer Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (46 percent) preferred Amul. 46 percent of respondents preferred MILMA and 8 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Butter Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (52 percent) preferred Amul. 40 percent of respondents preferred MILMA and 6 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Curd Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (60 percent) preferred MILMA. 26 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 12 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Cheese Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (50 percent) preferred Amul. 46 percent of respondents preferred MILMA. The Lassi Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (68 percent) preferred MILMA. 22 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 14 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Peda Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (68 percent) preferred MILMA. 20 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 8 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Flavoured Milk Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (60 percent) preferred MILMA. 28 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 8 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu. The Kulfi Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (52 percent) preferred Milma. 22 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 4 percent of respondents preferred Jeeva. The Sambaram Brand preference of respondents show that majority of the respondents (76 percent) preferred MILMA. 16 percent of respondents preferred Malanadu.

Quality is a factor which influences the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (56 percent) belonged to the category strongly agree regarding the importance of quality. 40 percent respondents belonged to the category agree and 2 percent respondents belonged to the category disagree. Easy Availability is a factor which influences the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (54 percent) belonged to the category strongly agree. 34 percent respondents belonged to the category agree and 14 percent respondents belonged to the category neutral. Price is one of the factors, which influence the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (38 percent) belonged to the category strongly agree. 32 percent respondents belonged to the category agree. Dealer Relationship is one of the main factors, which influence the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (34 percent) belonged to the category disagree. 30 percent respondents belonged to the category strongly agree. Attractive packaging is one of the factors, which influence the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (40 percent) belonged to the category disagree. 32 percent respondents belonged to the category strongly agree and 18 percent belonged to the category Neutral. Regular Supply is one of the factors, which influence the respondents to buy dairy products. Majority of respondents (46 percent) belonged to the category disagree. 38 percent respondents belonged to the category strongly agree and 14 percent belonged to the category neutral. Majority of the respondents (42 percent) prefer Pasteurized Standardised Milk. 20 percent of respondents prefer Pasteurized Toned Milk and 18 percent of respondents prefer Smart Milk. Brand Loyalty is the tendency of Consumers to continue buying the same brand of goods. With regards to brand loyalty of respondents, majority of the respondents (40 percent) belonged to the category 4 years. 28 percent of respondents belonged to the category of 2 years and 24 percent of respondents belonged to the category 1 year. With regards to respondent's source of awareness about the product, majority of respondents (36 percent) were aware about the product through word of mouth. 22 percent respondents were aware about the product through advertisement. 18 percent respondents were aware about the product through the dealers. With regards to respondent's Ice cream preference, majority of the respondents (34 percent) preferred Merii Boy. 26 percent of respondents preferred Amul and 22 percent of respondents preferred Uncle John.

It is clear that most of the customers prefer MILMA brand products because of its easy availability. It gets the 1<sup>st</sup> rank of preference. The next reason for the preference is its reliability and purity. Customers ranked regular supply as the 3<sup>rd</sup> main reason for its purchase. The study shows that the main reason for the non-preference of MILMA products is its irregularity in supply. Also, customers say that the products are not fresh. The third reason is that the customers do not like its taste and smell. Regarding the question about how MILMA Dairy Products differs from Other Dairies, majority of respondents (40 percent) belonged to the category Hygiene. 25 percent respondents belonged to the category quality and 20 percent respondents belonged to the category packing. The MILMA dairy products are innovative in terms of product development. Most of the respondents (64 percent) responded Yes. 36 percent is under Category No. The MILMA dairy products are superior in packaging. Most of the respondents (60 percent) is under the category Yes. (40 percent) is under category No. Regarding the response of MILMA towards handling consumer’s complaint, majority of the respondents (40 percent) belonged to the category good. 36 percent of respondents belonged to the category of average. Regarding the response of MILMA towards innovation in market, majority of the respondents (52 percent) belonged to the category good. 24 percent of respondents belonged to the category of average. Regarding the price comparison of MILMA products against Milk & Milk products supplied by local residents, majority of the respondents (52 percent) belonged to the category rarely. 20 percent of respondents belonged to the category of frequently. Regarding the price comparison of MILMA products against Milk & Milk products supplied by other companies, majority of the respondents (42 percent) belonged to the category rarely. 32 percent of respondents belonged to the category of frequently.

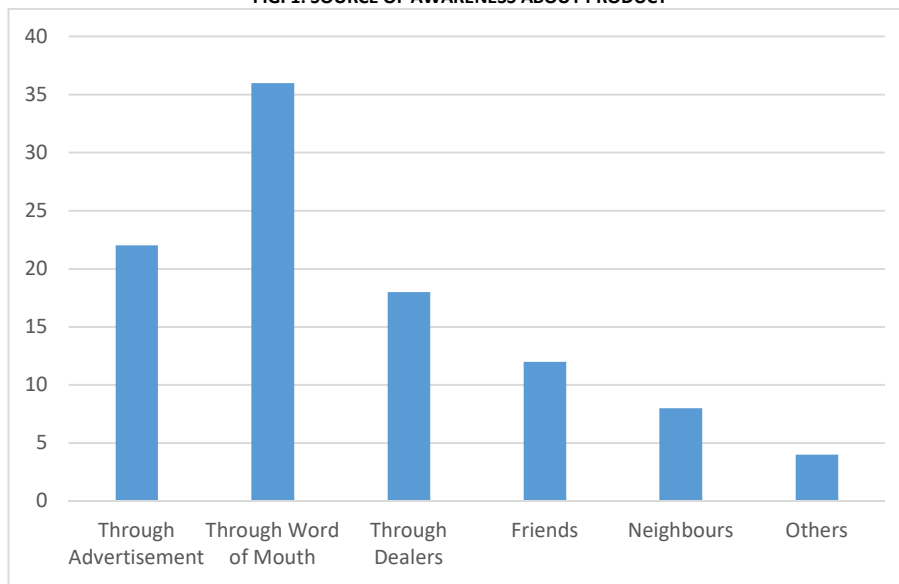
TABLE 1: AWARENESS LEVEL OF RESPONDENTS

Level of Awareness	Fully Aware	Aware	Unaware	Total
About Milk Products	46	50	4	100
About Branded Milk Products	30	64	6	100
About certificate standards of Milma Products	14	48	38	100
About label details of Milma products	24	44	32	100
About quality of Milma products	18	58	24	100
About quantity of Milma products	16	64	20	100
About pricing pattern of Milma products	26	42	32	100
About safety measures of Milma product	20	34	46	100
About major ingredients of Milma	10	36	54	100
About adulteration of milk products	24	42	32	100

Source: Primary Data

SOURCE OF AWARENESS ABOUT PRODUCT

FIG. 1: SOURCE OF AWARENESS ABOUT PRODUCT



Source: Primary

V. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The sample size is limited to 100 respondents which constitute a small part of the total. The study is only concentrated in Ernakulum MILMA dairy, so this result may not cover the entire details of MILMA in Kerala. Some respondents are biased in answering the questions. The study was also conducted over the course of 3 months; therefore, there was not enough time to conduct a proper study. In the future, I hope to expand this project into different districts to widen the data collected in order to get more accurate results.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Kerala Co-operative milk marketing federation (KCMMF) popularly known as “MILMA” was established in 1980, for the successful implementation of “OPERATION FLOOD” in Kerala. Milk co-operative is a form of economic organization in which farmers, willfully and voluntarily, pool their resources on the basis of equality for the advancement of their economic interest. The guiding principle of a cooperative is “self-help through mutual help”. The study was conducted to understand the marketing strategies of MILMA, which helps the company to retain its customers. The study was conducted among 100 respondents. Interview, questionnaire, ranking, percentage analysis etc. was used for collecting data and analyzing it. The study suggests that brand loyalty is the main reason for its success rather than the other factors analyzed. MILMA does not focus much on advertising. The results of this study suggest that MILMA can increase sales through more advertising. MILMA is successful despite its lack of advertising. However, with some creative and persuasive advertising, MILMA should be able to expand its market even further. Also it can boost the market through more retail outlets and franchising. As a whole, MILMA is a leading organization, which can potentially gain more markets and more success in the future.

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