

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions:

- 1) Ice cream is a product with almost 100% household penetration in Pune city.
- 2) It's clearly an 'indulgence' category product and people seek hedonism in ice cream consumption. The joy of ice cream eating is to be shared as almost 85% consumers require company in ice cream consumption.
- 3) By and large ice cream purchase is impulse barring the children of age group 11-15 years who are dependent on their parents for their ice cream consumption and hence preplan their ice cream purchase.
- 4) Stage in life cycle and income of the consumer have big impact on their ice cream consumption pattern.

The ice cream can be very distinctly segmented into following 4 segments based on stage in life cycle.

- i) 11-15 years school going dependent.
- ii) 16-25 years unmarried students.
- iii) 26-45 years married youngsters and middle age adults.
- iv) > 45 years elderly adults driven by children and grand children.

These four segments are outstandingly different from one another as regards to ice cream consumption preferences and consumption pattern.

- 5) Both consumption preferences and consumption pattern are completely insensitive to gender.
- 6) Although, the consumption preferences are driven by profession (occupation) to some extent, consumption pattern of ice cream is totally independent of profession.
- 7) 'Amul' emerges as the most favorite and most consumed brand of ice cream in Pune city followed by Kwality Walls. Whereas, Amul and Kwality Walls cut across all SEC segments, Natural and Baskin Robbins are focusing higher middle and higher income class. In doing so, it is observed that they are not

harnessing their full potential as many consumers considering these brands as their favorite brands are not consuming them.

Unlike other food products, ice cream consumers are not very brand loyal as more than half of the consumers have changed their brand in last three years because of change in taste and unavailability. Dinshaws and Vadilal's presence is very weak in the market.

Whereas, lot of brand switching is happening in Amul and Kwality Walls, Natural and Baskin Robbins customer are very loyal to their brands so far.

- 8) 'Taste' is the most important quality parameter for ice cream; followed by hygiene flavor creaminess and sweetness, in order.
- 9) Pune city has broken the conventional belief of Vanilla being the most favorite flavor. Butterscotch clearly emerges as the most favorite flavor followed by Vanilla, Chocolate and strawberry in order. Interestingly, the most selling flavor of each of the brand is different. While Amul sells Vanilla most, Kwality Walls sells Butter Scotch most and Baskin Robbins sells Chocolate most. Natural's mango flavor is also very famous. School children favor Butterscotch and chocolate whereas the elderly with > 45 years age have stuck to Vanilla.
- 10) Consumers are totally self dependent to make their brand / flavor choice.
- 11) Family pack is largely preferred at home.
- 12) Cone is the most consumed pack outside home followed by cup and scoop. Consumption of cone equals to the consumption of cup and scoop together. While youngsters (<25 years age) prefer cones most; 30s onwards preference shifts to cup to a great extent.
- 13) About half of the ice cream being consumed at home is an encouraging figure. The ice cream consumption at home goes up significantly with increasing age.
- 14) About half of the consumer's have reported they store ice cream at home. Profession impacts storage at home significantly. Self employed and businessmen are less interested to store ice cream at home.

15) Evenings and nights are the most favorite times to eat ice cream. The school going children also prefer to eat ice cream in the afternoon. That means given an opportunity, other segments may also prefer to eat in the afternoon.

16) Marriages, birthdays, outing for dinner and evening walks are the favorite occasions for ice cream consumption.

The motive behind i.e. cream consumption is mainly for its 'taste' and 'cooling effect'. The children eat it more for cooling effect. As the consumer advances in life cycle; his / her motive shifts gradually to taste. The motive also shifts from 'cooling effect' to 'taste' as the income goes up.

17) Linking ice cream to 'taste' leads to higher frequencies and quantities consumption than linking it to cooling effect.

18) Seasonality in ice cream consumption applies to more than half of the consumers. School going children and senior adults (> 45 years) show very high seasonality. Fear of cold (predominant in winter season) and infection in throat (predominant in rainy season) are the major reasons for consuming less ice cream.

About 15% (which is significant number) consumers eat less ice cream in rainy season because they can't go out of home in rains.

19) Majority of consumers perceive ice cream as a means to express their love or affection putting ice cream in the third stage (need for love and belongingness) of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

20) The awareness about "frozen dessert" is very weak. Only about 20% of consumer's feel they are aware about what frozen dessert is; but all of them have a wrong understanding of the term 'frozen dessert'.

21) The consumer preferences significantly impact the consumption pattern of ice cream. The consumers storing ice cream at home, buying family or party pack, eating alone, preferring to eat into the afternoon and evening, eating at home and in parties are eating more quantities. Consumption in group and storage at home increases the frequency of consumption also. Those showing seasonality in consumption are also conservative about quantity of ice cream consumed per occasion but are making up the same through higher frequencies in summers. Brand and flavor preferences do not have any bearing either on frequency or quantity consumed.

- 22 Consumer's attributed reasons for consumption and placement of ice cream in Maslow's hierarchy of needs have highly significant impact on consumer preferences.
- 23 Ice cream availability is still an issue to be addressed vis-a-vis retailer's viability; while increasing the number of outlets.

6.2 Recommendations:

1. The marketers of ice cream should focus their communication on "Taste" part which will reduce the seasonality, as the consumers showing seasonality have linked ice cream more with cooling effect.
2. Since, the four segments based on the stage of the consumer in lifecycle are very distinct and exhibit significantly different preference and consumption pattern, a different communication strategy should be worked out for these four segments.
3. Since storing ice cream at home is significantly associated both with the quantity and frequency of consumption; the marketers of ice cream should workout strategy to build the culture of storing ice cream at home.
4. It is observed that those who are at home in the afternoon tend to eat ice cream in the afternoon also. Companies may think of putting small deep freezers in the office premises, based on the lines of tea and coffee vending machines. Company may create a separate distribution channel for this segment. In short, the people will eat ice cream after their lunch also at their workplaces, provided the product is made available to these customers at right time. Alternatively, the companies may think of delivering ice cream to these customers through their regular distribution channel. This will, of course, require an investment in building the cold chain from distributors' point to the offices.
5. As the study concludes that, the school children preplan their ice cream purchases mostly, the companies may tie-up with the suppliers of books, uniform or the school itself to distribute the discount coupons or ice cream vouchers (like Sodexo passes)
6. Currently there is no excitement built by the companies around ice cream. Whatever excitement exists today, is only intrinsic. The western countries have built this excitement through celebration of ice cream day or ice cream week.

The companies may think of arranging ice cream festivals or linking ice creams to some events (e.g. like shrikhand is linked to Gudi Padwa or Cadburys chocolate linkage to exam results -- "Papu pass ho gaya"). Or, the companies may think of launching valentine twin pack to build the excitement in the youngsters.

7. Special incentives to the consumers should be worked out, to boost the family pack and party pack consumption. Amul has been doing a wonderful job in this segment.
8. The consumers of scoop are observed to be eating more quantities. Amul and Kwality Walls have started building the chains of their parlors which is a welcome step and will definitely boost the ice cream consumption. This drive should be explored fast and needs to be extended beyond the metropolitan markets.
9. The consumers tend to eat only one pack (whether it is cone, cup or scoop). The consumption can be increased by building a culture of eating two packs at a time. The companies may show an adventurous character in their communication who is a challenger of the conventional beliefs and link it with consumption of two packs at a time.
10. Evenings have very strongly been linked to ice cream consumption. The companies may leverage on this fact and link this time of the day with ice cream in their communication and can build a strong bond of ice cream with evenings and create excitement. However, care needs to be taken not to dilute the importance of afternoons and nights for ice cream.
11. Majority of consumers have sighted 'fear of cold' or 'infection in throat' as the reason behind seasonality. It is a high time that the ice cream companies carry out the experimental research on these facts (or myths?) And if it is the fact, companies must find out the ways to avoid it and educate the customers.
12. Significant numbers of customers (about 15%) have sighted 'difficulty in going out of home' as the reason for them consuming less ice cream in rainy season. Companies need to activate their door deliver mechanism in rainy season strongly.
13. The companies should launch Birthday packs (both in cones and cups) and pass on the benefit of bulk sale to the customer by either reducing the total MRP or inserting a gift item (special candles or special paper caps. The communication

for such pack should be targeted at the children as they are very strong decision influencers for their Birthday celebrations.

14. Around 5% customers eat ice cream for health purpose. This base can definitely be tripled with focused communication on them and a niche segment can be developed. Amul has already launched. Prolilfe - Probiotic ice cream and low fat ice cream for this segment. Focused marketing to the right target customers is, however, required.
15. 'Hygiene' is second ranked quality parameter. Companies need to take ultimate care in maintaining the cleanliness and hygiene at retail points. This particularly applies to family pack and party pack.
16. 'Home delivery' mechanism needs to be strengthened to make ice cream available at an arm's length yet maintain the existing retailer's viability.