

Preferences for packaged and unpackaged milk-A study of consumers in Ludhiana

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ABSTRACT

India is the world leader in milk production and Punjab is the second largest milk producing state in India producing 10 per cent of country's milk. Per capita availability of milk in Punjab is the highest in the country. Generally milk is sold loose, in bottles or in polythene sachets. Selling loose milk or milk products like ghee, butter paneer etc has possibility of contamination, problem of adulteration, etc. These problems can be controlled by offering packaged milk and milk products. But only 14 per cent of the milk produced in Punjab is marketed by the milk plants in the cooperative and private sectors. Demand for packaged milk and milk products depends a lot upon consumer preferences. This paper presents some findings about consumer preferences for packaged and unpackaged milk in Ludhiana city.

Key words : Consumer preference, Milk, Packaged milk, Milk products

Milk, the major product of livestock sector has long been recognized as complete natural food. It is good for growth and maintenance of health. In 2001, India became world leader in milk production with a production of 84 million tones (Hemme *et al.*, 2003). Milk processing in India is around 35per cent (with the organized dairy industry accounting for 13% of the milk produced) while the rest of the milk is either consumed at farm level, or sold as fresh, non-pasteurized milk through unorganized channels. Milk is processed and marketed by 170 Milk Producers' Cooperative Unions, which federate into 15 State Cooperative Milk Marketing Federations. Over the years, several brands have been created by cooperatives like Amul (Gujarat), Vijaya (AP), Verka (Punjab), Saras (Rajasthan), Nandini (Karnataka), Milma (Kerala) and Gokul (Kolhapur).

Punjab is the second largest milk producing state in India producing 10 per cent of country's milk. Per capita availability of milk in Punjab is the highest in the country. Generally, milk is sold loose, in bottles or in polythene sachets. Selling loose milk or milk products like ghee, butter, paneer etc has possibility of contamination, problem of adulteration, etc. These problems can be controlled by offering packaged milk and milk products. But only 14 per cent of the milk produced in Punjab is marketed by

the milk plants in the cooperative and private sectors. The state has 62 milk plants in the private and cooperative sectors with capacity to process 57 lakh litres per day out of which about 59 per cent is being utilized (Taneja, 2007).

Variations in the factors such as income levels, size and composition of a family, educational levels and thereby awareness on the nutritive front, availability of the substitutes and prices, tastes and preference of the consumers affect the consumption of milk and milk products across the various socio-economic groups in the urban areas.

Consumer's decision to purchase or reject a product is the moment of final truth for the marketer. Consumer preferences in terms of pricing, easy availability etc should be considered as important aspect than merely developing a good product (Mohan, 1977).

Therefore, in the present study has been carried out with specific objective of understanding consumer preferences and satisfaction towards packaged and unpackaged milk and milk products.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ludhiana city of Punjab. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Secondary data related to sale of packaged milk and milk products were taken from Verka milk Plant, Ludhiana – Punjab's leading cooperative milk plant. Primary data were collected from the residents of Ludhiana. Three colonies namely, Luxmi Nagar, Vikas Nagar and Sarabha Nagar, which represent low, middle and high-income group consumers, respectively were selected on judgment basis.

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