



To study the prospects of milk sweet makers and constraints faced by milk sweet makers (*Halwai*) in western Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT : The documentation data was collected from six district of Western Maharashtra (Jalgaon, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Satara and Kolhapur). Sixty respondents from each district were selected randomly. Disproportionate random sampling method was used to ensure a random selection of 60 milk sweet shop. Sweet maker urge to (i) establishment of regulating authority/apex body for technical guidance and policy support for unorganized sector. (ii) maintain standards of basic nutrition and food requirement. (iii) increase benefit-cost (B:C) ratio and capacity building of labour through training for improving quality of milk products is the main prospects for milk sweet makers. Raw material price inflation is the major constraint faced by them. It was followed by electricity problem, fluctuation and demand of milk product, increase in market competitor, availability of quality raw material and lack of availability of skilled labour, lack of guidance etc should be overcome by creating awareness among them.

KEY WORDS : Milk, Sweet, Product

HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER : Kadam, V.S., Khedkar, J.N., Choudhari, D.M. and Pawar, B.K. (2015). To study the prospects of milk sweet makers and constraints faced by milk sweet makers (*Halwai*) in western Maharashtra. *Res. J. Animal Hus. & Dairy Sci.*, 6(2) : 135-138.

INTRODUCTION

The milk sweet making business is dominated by *Halwai*, an ethnic group found in India. *Halwai*, is the Arabic word which means sweet maker. They are also known as '*Mithaya*' in Madhya Pradesh, '*Guria*' in Orissa, '*Mayara*' in West Bengal and other names in other regions of the country. The '*Halwai*' name is derived from the word *halwa*, a popular sweet made of milk,

flour, carrot, butter (ghee), sugar, almond, raisin and pistachio nuts and saffron (Anonymous, 2009).

Traditional dairy products and sweets are an integral part of Indian heritage. These products have great social, religious, cultural, medicinal and economic importance and have been developed over a long period with the culinary skills of homemakers and *halwais*. A variety of dairy products are made in our country. Some products are popular throughout the country, whereas, others are region-specific. These products conserve and preserve milk solids for relatively longer periods. However, lack of proper infrastructural facilities, coupled with inadequate technological support has impeded the growth of this sector. Traditionally, Indian dairy products have been manufactured by individual sweet makers- "*halwais*" and small entrepreneurs.

Production and marketing of traditional milk sweets

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is mostly a small scale and scattered affair confined to the 'halwai' (traditional sweet maker) shops in the local market. One reason for this is their short shelf-life. The tiny scales of operation and non-organized retailing have resulted in lack of data on the size of traditional sweets market and its various parameters. The traditional sweet sector, which absorbs substantial proportion of milk production, has received little attention due to its concentration in the non-organized sector (Steven *et al.*, 2008).

There is a great demand for sweets in India because of cultural significance in social functions like marriage ceremony, festivals etc. Moreover, sweets dishes are important part of the dietary pattern in India. Recently, some of the sweet makers have adopted modern manufacturing technology and produce packaged sweets in large quantity. Some of which are also exported to other countries with their specific brand names such as *Bikanery, Ghasitaram, Haldiram, Chandu, chitale, Dinshaw* etc. On the other hand, the Indian milk based sweets market is approximately estimated at 1 million tones. Their market is not easy to estimate as these are manufactured at home or in more than 60,000 sweets making shops in India (Anonymous, 2009). But other hand processing of milk under unorganized sector is always questionable from the point of view of cleanliness and hygiene, quality of raw materials and consumable end products. Also, from last decades some bad habits, serious issues etc. are coming forward in this sector and the expectation of populace from these sector is abridged.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Keeping these objectives in mind, the research work was undertaken in six district of Western Maharashtra viz., Jalgaon, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Satara and Kolhapur. Three hundred sixty respondents (milk sweet makers), sixty from each district were randomly selected for present study. The respondents were personally interviewed with the help of structured and pretested interview schedule. The collected data was analyzed by appropriate statistical tools like frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the respondents have been suitably organized and analyzed by taking into account the study objectives, hypothesis and the theoretical orientation guiding the study.

Prospects for milk sweet making business :

It is learned from Table 1 that a good number of (96.95 %) milk sweet makers were interested in establishment of regulating authority/ apex body for technical guidance and policy support for this sector. Secondly, 95.84 per cent of milk sweet makers would like to make advertisement of specific brand through media in particular locality, 90.00 per cent of *halwai* believe that maintaining standards of basic nutrition and food requirement as per specification, majority *halwai* (86.11%) interested in increasing benefit cost (BC) ratio. Only 20.55 per cent of milk sweet makers are interested in establishing direct contact with consumers and retailers.

The results are of thought provoking and indicate the position of milk sweet makers present status of traditional sweet making business and their prospects in near future. Ranking was allotted to the numbers of milk sweet makers according to the opinion on the particular prospect. Here we found some surprising opinion of the milk sweet makers regarding their business.

For instant, at first rank majority of *halwai* opined about the need of establishment of regulating authority/ apex body for technical guidance and policy support for unorganized milk sector means they are ready for organizing a system.

Next it is felt necessary and agreed the importance of advertisement of specific brand through print or electronic media in particular locality. Most of sweet makers opined that due to advertisement strategy of marketing, there was notable increase in the customer numbers and ultimately the sell of products.

Constraints faced by milk sweet makers :

Data on constraints faced by milk sweet makers is recorded in Table 2.

The issue of constraints faced by the sweet makers was raised with respondents and constraint wise numerical data was recorded in Table 2. It is indicated that cent per cent milk sweet makers informed that raw material price inflation be the major constraint faced by them. It was followed by electricity problem (96.38%), fluctuation in demand of milk product (93.61%), increase in market competitor (82.50%), availability of quality raw material (68.62%) and 61.38 per cent milk sweet makers reported lack of availability of skilled labour.

According to the milk sweet makers the main constraint was, raw material price increase and lack of

availability of quality raw material in the market. Due to increase in the prices of the raw material, the manufacturing cost of milk sweet product also increases. The rise in price we as consumer experienced, in market, the probable reason behind this is the increase in the prices of raw material.

It was observed that, items made of sugar and ghee are seeing a 10 per cent rise. Also prices of other raw material have increased, may it be oil, sugar or ghee and cost of raw materials. "Prices of allied items such as LPG and diesel have gone up too. This has increased production cost. The raw material like dry fruits, prices is increased and it ultimately affects on rise in milk sweet

prices. Also of packaging material, cost of the boxes has increased by rupees 100/- at least.

Here is an example of renowned brand "*Chitale Bandhu*"; a popular chain of sweet shops across the Pune city has raised prices for most of their products this year. Our prices have risen approximately by 10 per cent in this season. This is because of the price rise of cooking gas, diesel, sugar and other basic raw materials. Prices of most of all ingredients have increased and have been forced to increase prices, said Sanjay Chitale, partner of *Chitale Bandhu*. The price of cooking oil has also increased. Therefore it is not case of the sweetmeats have been priced higher.

Table 1 : Distribution of milk sweet makers according to the prospects for milk sweet making business

Sr. No.	Prospects	f	%	Rank
1.	Expansion of business through branches	114	31.67	18
2.	Improving quality of raw material	254	70.55	8
3.	Establishing direct contact with consumers and retailers	74	20.55	20
4.	Using standard quality packaging material	184	51.11	11
5.	Improving self-life of milk and milk products	109	30.27	19
6.	Reducing cost of investment and production	246	68.33	10
7.	Increasing periphery of business	169	46.94	12
8.	Increasing awareness about food rules/regulations	119	33.05	17
9.	Get knowledge about government programs and schemes/subsidies	148	41.11	14
10.	Capacity building of labour through training	288	80.00	6
11.	Increasing benefit-cost (BC) ratio	310	86.11	4
12.	Receiving quality inputs	147	40.84	15
13.	Improving state of art through scientific facility in shop	247	68.62	9
14.	Advertisement of specific brand through media in particular locality	345	95.84	2
15.	Improving clean and hygienic condition	287	79.73	7
16.	Maintaining standards of basic nutrition and food requirement as per specification	324	90.00	3
17.	Promote export of indigenous milk products	289	80.27	5
18.	Creating storage facility in shop	126	35.00	16
19.	Establishment of milk sweet makers federation at district and state level	168	46.67	13
20.	Establishment of regulating authority/Apex body for technical guidance and policy support for unorganized milk sector	349	96.95	1

Table 2 : Distribution of milk sweet makers according to constraints faced by them

Sr. No.	Constraints	f	%
1.	Lack of availability of skill labour	221	61.38
2.	Electricity problem (load shedding)	347	96.38
3.	Availability of quality raw material	247	68.62
4.	Fluctuation and demand of milk product	337	93.61
5.	Raw material price inflation	360	100.00
6.	Increase in market competitors	297	82.50
7.	Lack of consulting and counseling services	258	71.66
8.	Unnecessary and stipulations of conditions in credit accessibility	211	58.61

Second main constraint was the electricity problem. It has direct effect on the sweet making business. Due to this problem, there may be additional expenditure on diesel/petrol generator. But only the big sweet makers are able to purchase the generators or other replacement not the small *halwai*. So it has direct effect on the production of milk sweets.

Due to inflation, regular customers and other individual buyers are the only driving sales. Companies may have cut down on orders, but Diwali is a family festival, and especially during *Padva* and *Bhau beej* festivals. Traditional items like *kaju katli*, *gulab jamun* etc are purchased at an individual level as said by owner of sweet shop.

The third main constraint was fluctuation and demand of milk product. Seasonality may also affect on the milk fluctuation, because in summer season lack of green forage and water scarcity problem the milk production get decreased, it ultimately affects on the milk sweet production. In this summer due to less production in milk and higher demand, the milk prices get increased. Ultimately it gets resulted in the rise of prices of milk products by the *halwai*.

The fourth main constraint was increase in market competitors and fifth is lack of consulting and counseling services. There is a need to train them with basic fundamentals of the quality, hygiene and sanitation, modern manufacturing techniques, adulteration tests, newer products, packaging and proper management practices. It may be supported by government institutes, KVKs, Agricultural Universities, Dairy Co- operatives. It may help to sweet makers to gear up their business, and to supply quality milk products to the consumers.

The sixth constraint is lack of availability of skilled labour. Any food enterprise could not run successfully without the skilled technicians. Consumers prefer to purchase the quality product. If they get quality product, they trust on that particular sweet maker e.g., *Chitale*, *Kaka halwai*, *Haldiram* and *Brijwasi*... etc.

Labour issues remained another area of grief. Issues regarding the labours told by the owner of sweet shop, the problem has aggravated because of inflation.

“Workers agree to work with us only after an advance payment. Also they work only in particular season like *Diwali* for better income/wages.

We observed that most of the skilled labours gave preference to start their own business after getting the experience. It may be the probable reason behind shortage at or lacking of skilled labours.

The seventh main constraint was unnecessary and stipulations of conditions in credit accessibility. It was seen that only banks give finance only to the milk producers for dairy farming, dairy co-operatives, but there is no any scheme or policy by the financing institutes to uplift this (80.00%) unorganized sector which is mainly run by the *halwai*. If proper financing scheme or policy is implemented, definitely there will be qualitative and quantitative improvement in this business in India on each level of starting this business.

In case of fluctuation and demand of milk product the following opinions from milk sweet makers are recorded. Generally, and during *diwali* festivals, sale of sweets is not an issue, but other day limited demand is there. Individual customers are also slowdown or reduce the demand due to increase in prices of their essential requirement. The middleclass wants to keep this festive season economical, due to this their business has been hit by 10 to 20 per cent at least.

The similar results were reported by Patil (2002); Deka and Patwari (2006) and Kulkarni (1979) in their studies.

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Received : 10.08.2015; Revised: 10.11.2015; Accepted : 24.11.2015