

Customer perception of curry powder brands with special reference to Mohanlal's taste buds brand

Vishnu S. Kurup*, Daly Poullose

Department of MBA, School of Communication and Management Studies, Nalukettu - 683 576, Kerala, India

Received: 06.06.2015

Revised: 21.07.2015

Accepted: 23.07.2015

Published: 28.07.2015

***Address for correspondence:**

Vishnu S. Kurup,
Department of MBA,
School of Communication
and Management Studies,
Nalukettu - 683 576,
Kerala, India.
E-mail: vishnubvmc03@
gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to understand the customer perception about various curry powder brands with special reference to Mohanlal's curry powder brand and also to understand the effectiveness of AD campaigns and to analyze how effectively these campaigns lead to brand recall. A survey was conducted among women and was oriented toward understanding the various attributes which they consider for choosing a curry powder brand for purchase. The majority of the respondents were from the region of Cochin, and the survey included a sample size of 50 respondents. The sample was selected randomly from among a group of housewives and working women in Kerala, and hence the process of simple random sampling was adopted. One of the key findings was that Eastern curry powder brand is the most preferred brand when various attributes were taken into consideration and also an analysis of the favorite curry powder brand was done. Only 8% of the total respondents suggested Mohanlal's taste buds (MTB) as their favorite brand and this is a very small number when compared to Eastern. The major drawback of MTB as inferred from the study was poor marketing and advertising campaigns which affected brand recall. One of the key findings was that promotional offers were fewer in the case of curry powder brands and hence these brands should come up with more promotional offers to maintain a sound customer base. Second, quality and taste are the most important attributes preferred by customers in choosing curry powder brands. Hence, curry powder brands should maintain and upgrade these key attributes for ensuring customer satisfaction.

KEY WORDS: Customer perception, customer satisfaction, Eastern curry powder, Mohanlal's taste buds

INTRODUCTION

The term advertising originates from the Latin word "*adverto*," which means to turn round. Advertising thus denotes the means employed to draw the attention to any object or purpose. In the marketing context, advertising has been defined "as a paid and nonpersonal form of presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, and services by an identified sponsor." There is not only identified sponsor but also an identified media and message behind every advertisement. Through an advertisement, the advertiser, the advertiser intends to spread his ideas about his products/offerings among his customers and prospects. The popularization of the products is the basic aim of the activity.

Everyone living and working in the modern world today is influenced by advertising. In fact, at some time in their lives, most people become creators of advertising-whether they design fliers write classified ads for a garage sale,

or develop a whole campaign for a business, charity or political endeavor.

Advertising tends to represent the economic progress of societies, and in this respect, it ranges from the sophistication of the industrialized world to the new lifestyles of developing nations. A nation's prosperity is reflected in the extent to which advertising is used. That makes the study of advertising more important today than ever before, not only for students of business or journalism but also students of Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, Economics, History, Language, and Science or the Arts. Most of these people will become users of advertising; all will be lifetime consumers of it. The advertising world was open to overseas brands and multinational tie-ups, while on the other hand political instability at the center provided the inevitable challenge to a supposedly expanding market. The economic scenario the world over grew grimmer. The trend continues when we are at the threshold of the new millennium. The fingers

remain crossed. Advertising is a fascinating subject, yet it is also perhaps the aspect of marketing where it is most difficult to know for sure what “works” and thus to improve the productivity of marketing and advertising.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study conducted on the “customer perception of curry powder brand with special reference to Mohanlals taste buds (MTB) brand” was descriptive in nature. It is descriptive of the state of affairs of the advertising industry and the effect of AD campaigns on influencing customer behavior. The study was conducted among a sample of respondents in the state of Kerala, India. The respondents are primarily women with a keen interest in cooking and also regular viewers of AD campaigns in television, radio, newspaper, and the internet. The respondents were tested to know how well they recall the curry powder brand and also the extent to which the ad campaigns influence their purchase behavior.

The primary data collection procedure consisted of direct interviews, telephonic interviews, and mail interviews using a structured questionnaire. The sample size for the study was 50 respondents who got sound knowledge on curry powder brands and the sampling techniques used were simple random sampling and stratified sampling. Secondary data for the study were collected using company documents, rating reports, magazines, and journals. The statistical method used for analyzing data comprised percentage analysis which was used to record and display the response of the participants. The collected data were listed using tables and bar diagrams which graphically represents the response from the respondents.

The majority of respondents who participated in the study were of the age group of 40-60 years closely followed by respondents belonging to 25-40 age category. The reason why the respondents belonging to this age category was chosen for the study is that innovative tips and ideas can be obtained from these respondents. Moreover, this category of respondents has got greater experience in cooking using traditional methods as well as modern instant curry powder brands. This enables them to be in a position to comment authoritatively on the merits and demerits of using curry powder brands and also the effectiveness of AD campaigns done by each of these popular brands. To accomplish this task, open-ended questions were also asked in the questionnaire in the right context, which enabled them to elucidate their thoughts and ideas to the best of their ability.

Objectives of the Study

Primary objective

Study of customer perception of curry powder brands with special reference to MTB brand.

Secondary objectives

1. To understand the usage of branded curry powders and also analyze the frequency of its purchase.
2. To understand the various attribute that the customers expect from a curry powder brand and also know the importance given to each of them.
3. To analyze the degree of awareness of MTB brand.
4. To understand the effectiveness of advertising campaigns conducted by MTB and also know the most effective media for conducting these ad campaigns.
5. To know the opinion of the customers on the various products of MTB brand and thus find out the factors that need to be upgraded.
6. To know the main outlets of purchase of curry powder brands and understand the attractive aspect of the shop.
7. To analyze the methods adopted by the customer in making the purchase of a curry powder brand.
8. To know the type of promotional offers preferred for curry powder brands.
9. To know the preference of the customers toward curry powder brands on the basis of various attributes and thus understand the brand that is best preferred by the customers.

RESULTS

When the number of respondents who use curry powder brands was studied, it was found that 98% of the total respondents are regular users of curry powder brands. This shows that there is a great demand for branded curry powders among customers (Table 1 and Figure 1).

When the favorite curry powder of the respondents was studied, it was found that 40% of the respondents opted for Eastern curry powder. This is followed by 30% of the respondents who suggested Brahmins as their favorite curry powder brand. This shows that there is a great demand for Eastern curry powder followed by Brahmins (Table 2 and Figure 2).

Table 1: Use of curry powder

Count of curry powder use	
Use	Total
Yes	49
No	1
Grand total	50

When the respondents were asked to rank the attribute quality, 56% of the total respondents ranked quality as the most preferred attribute for curry powder brands. This shows that quality is the most preferred attribute for curry powder brands (Table 3 and Figure 3).

When the preference of the attribute brand value was taken into consideration, it was found that 40% of the respondents rated it as the fourth most preferred attribute. This shows that brand value acquires the fourth position among the various attributes (Table 4 and Figure 4).

When the attribute availability was studied, it was found that 41% of the respondents rated availability as the third most preferred attribute. This shows that availability is a key factor in influencing the purchase behavior of the customers (Figure 5 and Table 5).

When the attribute taste was studied, it was found that taste was ranked by 48% of the respondents in the second positions. The criterion taste is given importance by the customers in making choice of the most preferred curry

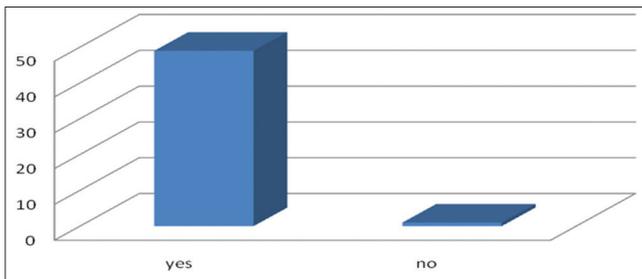


Figure 1: Use of curry powder analysis

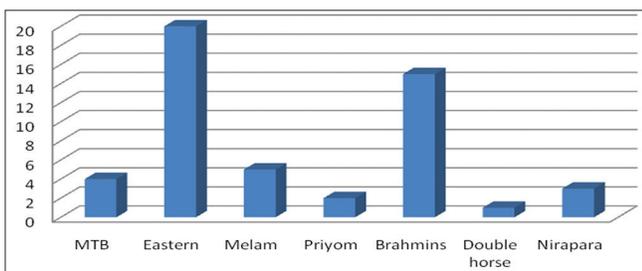


Figure 2: Favorite curry powder analysis

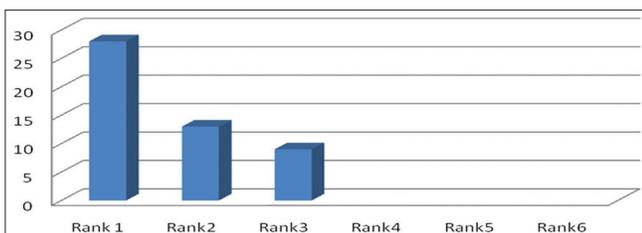


Figure 3: Quality analysis

powder brand. This shows that curry powder brands should focus on taste along with quality to create and maintain demand for the product (Figure 6 and Table 6).

When the attribute packaging was studied, it was found that 48% of the respondents rated it as the fifth most preferred attribute. This shows that packaging is not an important factor in influencing the customer's purchase behavior (Figure 7 and Table 7).

When the attribute advertisement was taken into consideration, it was found that a great majority that is 70% of the respondents rated it as the least important attribute. This shows that customers do not consider advertisement as an important factor in purchasing curry powder brands (Figure 8 and Table 8).

When the awareness among the respondents about MTB brand was studied, it was found that 94% of the respondents were aware of the brand. This shows that the brand was successful in familiarizing itself to the customers

Table 2: Favorite curry powder analysis

Count of favorite curry powder	
Curry powder	Total
MTB	4
Eastern	20
Melam	5
Priyom	2
Brahmins	15
Double horse	1
Nirapara	3
Grand total	50

MTB: Mohanlal's taste buds

Table 3: Choice of quality as key attribute

Count of attribute quality	
Quality	Total
Rank 1	28
Rank 2	13
Rank 3	9
Rank 4	1
Rank 5	14
Rank 6	3
Grand total	50

Table 4: Choice of brand value as key attribute

Count of attribute brand value	
Brand value	Total
Rank 1	1
Rank 2	12
Rank 3	20
Rank 4	14
Rank 5	3
Rank 6	50
Grand total	50

Table 5: Choice of availability as key attribute

Count of attribute availability	
Availability	Total
Rank 1	2
Rank 2	6
Rank 3	21
Rank 4	14
Rank 5	7
Rank 6	1
Grand total	50

Table 6: Choice of taste as key attribute

Count of attribute taste	
Taste	Total
Rank 1	14
Rank 2	24
Rank 3	8
Rank 4	2
Rank 5	2
Rank 6	
Grand total	50

Table 7: Choice of packaging as key attribute

Count of attribute packaging	
Packaging	Total
Rank 1	
Rank 2	
Rank 3	
Rank 4	21
Rank 5	24
Rank 6	5
Grand total	50

Table 8: Choice of advertisements as key attribute by customers

Count of attribute advertisement	
Advertisement	Total
Rank 1	
Rank 2	
Rank 3	
Rank 4	5
Rank 5	10
Rank 6	35
Grand total	50

through its marketing techniques and campaigns (Figure 9 and Table 9).

When the shop of purchase was studied, it was found that 66% of the respondents suggested super markets as the major source of purchase. This shows that a major part of the purchase is constituted by super markets. This is followed by convenience stores and in and out stores which accounts for 14% each of the respondents (Figure 10 and Table 10).

In the case of promotional offers preferred, 60% of the respondents rated discount offers as the most preferred

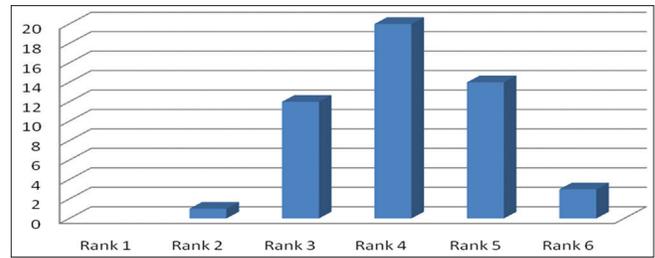


Figure 4: Brand value analysis

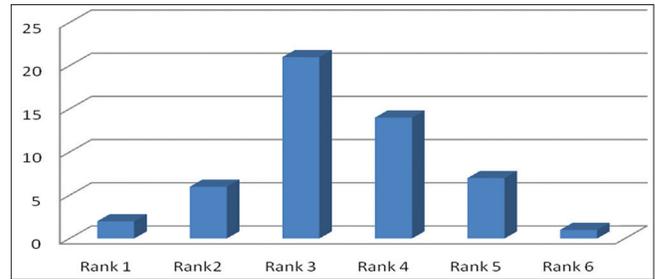


Figure 5: Availability analysis

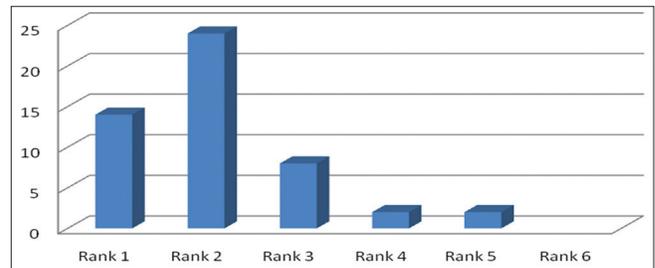


Figure 6: Taste analysis

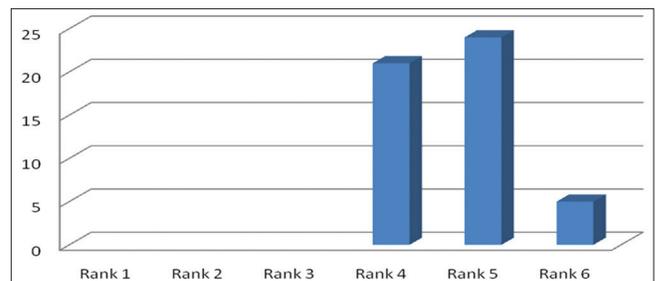


Figure 7: Packaging analysis

promotional offer. Free offers and complementary gifts are preferred only by 18% and 14% of the respondents, respectively. Gift coupons are the least preferred promotional offers (Table 11 and Figure 11).

An analysis of the various brands of curry powders was performed on the basis of various attributes. First, the attribute price was considered, and 36% of the respondents suggested that Eastern stands first in the case of providing the product at the most reasonable price. This is followed by Melam with 20% of the respondents favoring the brand and then

comes Nirapara and Brahmins with 16% and 12%, respectively. Only 6% of the respondents suggested MTB as their preferred curry powder brand with respect to price. According to Figure 12, 40% of the customers suggested Eastern as their most preferred curry powder brand, and when the attribute price was taken into consideration, a nearly equal number of customers (36%) suggested the same as their most preferred brand (Table 12 and Figure 12).

When the attribute quality was analyzed, 46% of the respondents suggested Eastern as having the best quality. Only 24% of the respondents suggested Melam as the best in quality product and 20% preferred Brahmins. The preference for MTB was shown by only 8% of the respondents (Table 13 and Figure 13).

Table 9: Awareness of MTB

Count of awareness of MTB	
Awareness	Total
Yes	47
No	3
Grand total	50

MTB: Mohanlal's taste buds

Table 10: Source of purchase

Count of shop of purchase	
Shop	Total
Bakeries	3
In and out stores	7
Super markets	33
Convenience stores	7
Grand total	50

Table 11: Type of promotional offers preferred

Count of type of promotional offers preferred	
Promotional offers	Total
Free offers	9
Discount offers	30
Complementary gifts	7
Gift coupons	4
Contests	
Grand total	50

Table 12: Ranking of brands keeping price as an attribute

Count of attribute price	
Price	Total
Eastern - 18	18
Melam - 10	10
Nirapara - 8	8
MTB - 3	3
Double horse - 5	5
Brahmins - 6	6
Grand total	50

MTB: Mohanlal's taste buds

When the curry powder brands were analyzed with respect to the degree of familiarity, it was found that Eastern stands in the top with 38% respondent support. 24% of the respondents suggested Brahmins as their most familiar brand. Nirapara and MTB stands in an equal position in terms of familiarity with 8% of the respondent support (Table 14 and Figure 14).

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

1. In the study conducted, 78% of the married respondents have two or more than two children. This has a major role in influencing the purchase behavior

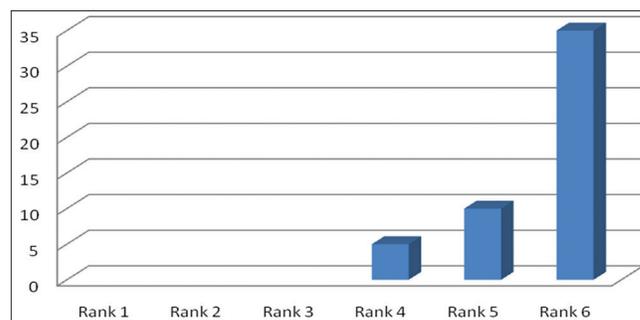


Figure 8: Advertisement analysis

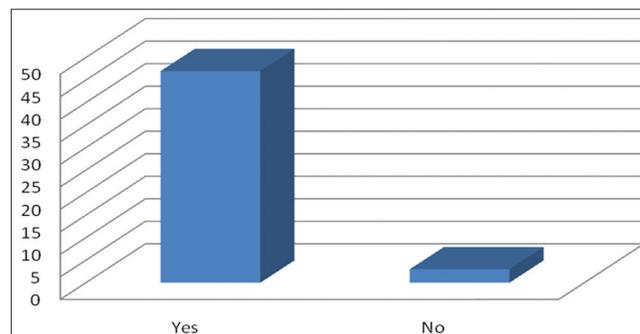


Figure 9: Awareness analysis

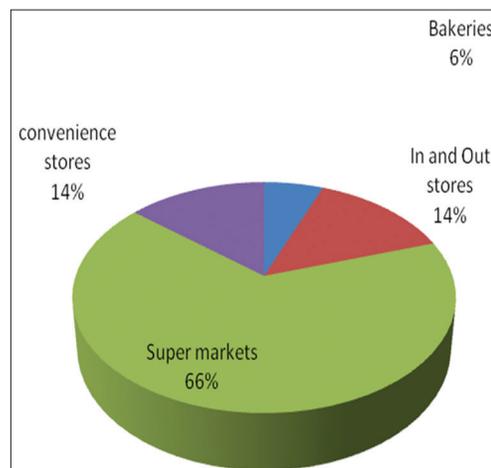


Figure 10: Source of purchase

Table 13: Ranking of brands based on attribute quality

Count of attribute quality	
Quality	Total
Eastern - 23	23
Melam - 12	12
Nirapara - 1	1
MTB - 4	4
Double horse	
Brahmins - 10	10
Grand total	50

MTB: Mohanlal's taste buds

Table 14: Ranking of brands based on attribute familiarity

Count of attribute familiarity	
Familiarity	Total
Eastern	19
Melam	9
Nirapara	4
MTB	4
Double horse	2
Brahmins	12
Grand total	50

MTB: Mohanlal's taste buds

of the respondents in the case of curry powder brands because children often have a key role in determining the purchase of such items as it should suit to their tastes and preferences.

- Great majority of 98% respondents are regular users of curry powder brands and more than 50% of them purchase curry powders in a frequency of once in a month or twice in a month. This shows that there is a regular demand for curry powder brands.
- When the favorite curry powder was analyzed, it was found that 40% of the respondents preferred Eastern as their favorite curry powder followed by 30% respondents who preferred Brahmins as their favorite one. This shows that Eastern and Brahmins are the leaders in the market of curry powder brands.
- When the attributes for preferring a curry powder were studied, it was found that quality, taste, and availability are the factors which the customers give utmost importance. The attributes of packaging and advertisement are the least important ones in purchasing a curry powder brand. Hence, curry powder brands should focus on these factors to develop and maintain their customers.
- MTB brand was successful in reaching the customers through its ad campaigns as 94% of the total respondents are aware of the brand and that too through TV ads.
- A great majority of the respondents, that is 66%, purchase mainly from supermarkets as inferred and service provided and assortment depth are the main



Figure 11: Promotional offer analysis

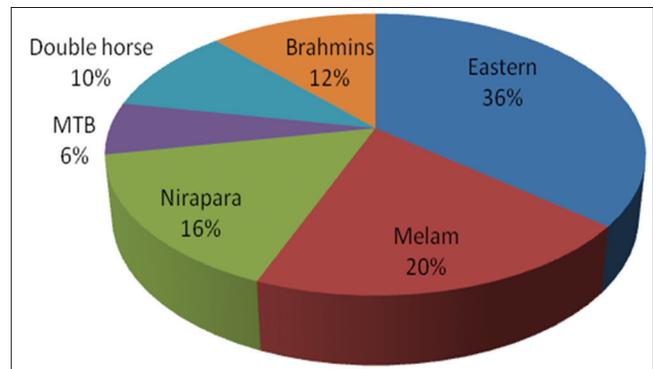


Figure 12: Price analysis

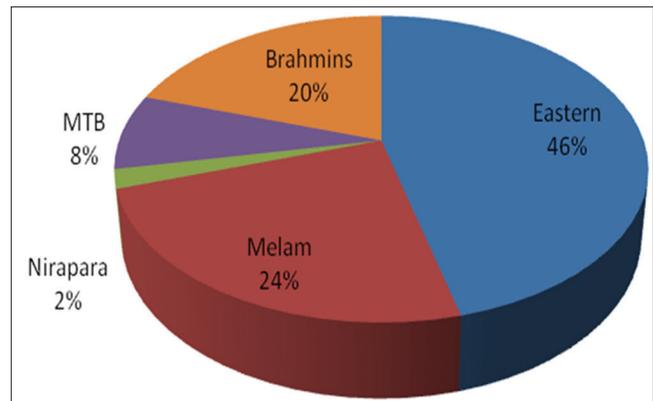


Figure 13: Quality analysis

factors for preferring super markets as suggested by 62% of the respondents.

- When the leading curry powder brands were analyzed with respect to various attributes, it was found that Eastern is the leading brand in terms of price, taste, availability, quality, packaging, and advertisement. This is followed by Melam and Brahmins. This shows that Eastern is the most preferred curry powder brand followed by Brahmins and then Melam.

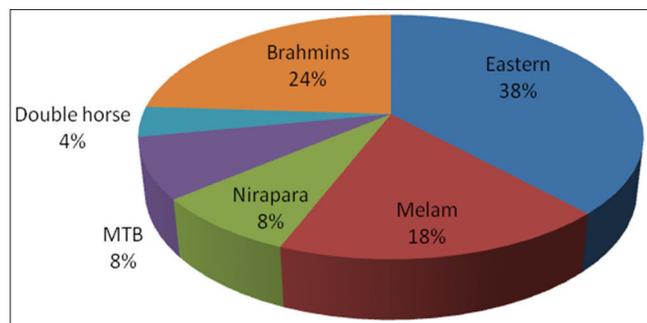


Figure 14: Familiarity analysis

- On interviewing the respondents, it was found that most of the respondents prefer the curry powder brand which they have been continuously using. Most of them normally refuse to switch to another curry powder brand even though they feel that other curry powder brands are also equally good. This is because they are often used to the taste and flavor offered by that particular brand.
- The major products of MTB that have been used by customers are chicken masala, meat masala, sambar masala, and fish masala. Regarding meat masala, the opinion of the respondents was that it was as good as that of other curry masalas, but regarding sambar masala, they suggested that the flavor was not up to the mark.

Suggestions

- The most preferred attributes in the case of curry powder brands are quality and taste. Hence, curry powder brands should focus on improving and maintaining taste and quality to develop and maintain a customer base.
- Promotional offers are fewer in the case of curry powder brands as inferred from the customers. Therefore, curry powder companies should come up with more promotional offers to promote their products and thus gain market share. Discount offers are the most preferred promotional offers for 66% of the respondents interviewed.
- MTB brand should focus on flavor, particularly for sambar masala category because respondents who tried out this product commented on flavor as lacking when compared to their favorite brand.
- Assortment depth and availability are two main factors generating demand for a curry powder brand as studied from the survey. Hence, curry powder companies should make the different variants of the product available to the customers in the right time so that they can purchase it whenever a need arises.

- The majority of the respondents choose products directly from the shelf. Hence, curry powder companies should take care of getting the most accessible shelf space for their product making it convenient for the customers to spot the product and purchasing it.
- MTB should improve their marketing and advertising campaigns to leverage their market share and gain a competitive advantage.
- Major retailers should be initiated to introduce effective point of purchase promotions for MTB to grab customer attention and thus enable them to buy the product.
- One of the major suggestions by the respondents was that the curry powders of this generation should focus on organically produced ingredients to avoid the use of inorganic chemicals.

CONCLUSION

In the contemporary world, cooking is a specialized art. Many professional courses and specialized professionals have entered this field due to the demand for food items with improved taste and quality. This has triggered demand for branded curry powders with various attractive flavors to suit to the tastes and demands of the customers. As more number of curry powder brands mushroomed, a wider option is now available for the customers to make a choice. This has led to competition in this category of products which in turn demanded for improvement in the marketing techniques and also in the various aspects such as quality, availability, taste, and packaging. This study mainly deals with the consumer perception of various curry powder brands with special reference to MTB brand. This study helps MTB to get information on the position of its major competitors in the market and also to design the strategies that should be adopted to gain more customer base and to improve its brand value.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With sincere gratitude of God, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the people that went along with me in the successful completion of this study. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr. Radha Thevannoor, Director SSTM, for her guidance and support. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Sumith G (Media Planner), Maithri Advertising Works Pvt. Ltd, for his valuable inputs, motivation and guidance which helped me shape this study in the present form. I bestow my sincere gratitude to Ms. Daly Poulouse, Faculty Guide who advised and guided me in the successful completion of this project.