

EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGY OF 'NEERA HEALTH DRINK' WITH REFERENCE TO THE 4P's OF MARKETING

K.Rajath¹ and Dr.N.Santhoshkumar²

Research Scholar¹ and Assistant Professor in Commerce²,
PG and Research Department of Commerce^{1&2},
Marudupandiyar College, Thanjavur, 613 403,
(Affiliated to Bharthidasan University ,Tiruchirappalli)
Tamil Nadu, South India.

Abstract

A Marketer must have a clear understating of his consumer and their behavior. It is only through understanding consumers and their behavior, a marketer can attempt to satisfy consumer's need and wants. Marketing mix has been popularly used by the Marketers for marketing their product. All the ingredients of the Marketing mix has to be mixed in the right proportion for satisfying the consumers. The present study focuses on the 4Ps of Marketing namely, Product, Price, Place and Promotion and how these 4ps influence the consumers whether positively or negatively in the purchase decision of Neera Health Drink. This study examines whether the blending of the marketing mix for Neera has been accepted by the consumers or not. 'Neera' or 'padaneer' is a transparent sweet juice with pleasant aroma. Neera is a non-alcoholic drink procured from the immature coconut flowers. Neera is a fresh juice and a delicious health drink. It is a sweet non-alcoholic drink. It is an innovative value added product from the coconut processing sector. It can be used as a soft drink as well as health drink which is highly delicious in taste. If not fermented chemically, it does not have any alcoholic content and therefore fresh in its form and hence can be consumed by any age group. Therefore, Neera can be termed as 'Keramritham' or Elixir from the Kalpavriksh or Coconut tree. The study is based on Convenience sampling, as Neera Health Drink is a new Product in the market and consumers are rare. The data is collected from 60 consumers divided into sub sample of 36 Male and 24 Female with the help of a Structured Questionnaire designed by the Researcher himself. This study will be useful to the marketer of Neera Health drink by helping them to make necessary changes in their Marketing Mix of Neera Health Drink based on the expectation of the Consumers.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Marketing Mix, Neera.

I. Introduction

Neera, otherwise called Sweet Toddy is a sap extracted from inflorescence of various species of toddy palms. Neera is a natural and non alcoholic beverage, high in nutritional value and an instant thirst quencher. It is sweet, oyster white, and translucent. It is obtained by slicing the spathes of the palmyra, coconut and sago palms, and scraping the tender most part, just below the crown. It requires neither mechanical crushing, as in the case of cane, nor leaching like that of beet-root. The extraction of Neera is generally done before sunrise. This is because of its high susceptibility to fermentation under ambient temperatures within a few hours of extraction. Tapped neera is filtered for removing foreign particles. Thereafter it is chilled and stored at refrigerated conditions. This is important because, otherwise it turns into toddy with 4 per cent alcohol content by natural fermentation. Several technologies have been developed to process and preserve neera in its natural form to retain its abundant nutrients store. After processing neera with anti fermenting agents, it is subjected to techniques like pasteurisation in order to remove the microflora present in it. The shelf life of Neera in room temperature is only about 2 months and about 4 to 6 months in refrigerated conditions.

Neera is rich in minerals like potassium, magnesium, zinc and iron. The role of potassium in lowering blood pressure has already been discussed here. It can be given as a natural supplement of these minerals in conditions like iron deficiency anaemias and zinc deficiency. Another advantage of neera is that, its a rich source of Vitamin B complex, Vitamin A and Vitamin C(ascorbic acid). The anti-oxidant property of these vitamins and the neutral pH makes neera a natural detoxifying health drink. Apart from the minerals and vitamins, the sweet drink is rich in glutamic acid (amino acid) which is necessary for protein synthesis.

This palm nectar is widely consumed in India, Sri Lanka, Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar. This sweet sap of the palm is fast becoming a popular drink on account of its highly nutritive value, delicious taste and agreeable flavor.

Although many value added products can be prepared with Neera with the same or additional health benefits, full-fledged production of the value added products have not begun yet. So the Researcher has for the time being focuses only on Neera Health Drink.

II. Review of Literature

Gigi Elias, The study conducted in Ernakulum district of Kerala found that 53.33 per cent of the respondents have the idea about neera and 46.66 per cent have no idea about neera. 40 per cent of the respondents favour other drink equivalent to neera and 60 per cent of the respondents against this opinion.

Deepa Chandran and Philo Francis, “The author studied about the perception of the consumers towards Neera Health Drink.

Abhishek Misra, The study indicated that each of these components is important for the company’s strategy. Amazon India has emphasized the ‘Place’ component of the marketing mix as focus lies on one-day delivery and beating incumbents such as Flipkart and Snapdeal.

G.M. Siddharameswara Swamy, In this study the author had mentioned about the health benefits and scope of Marketing Neera.

Chai Lee Goi, The author concludes that Marketing mix used by a particular firm will vary according to its resources, market conditions and changing needs of clients.

III. Research Objectives

- (i) To analyze the satisfaction of consumers towards quality of Neera Health Drink.
- (ii) To analyze the level of satisfaction towards the price of Neera Health Drink.
- (iii) To analyze the availability of Neera Health Drink at the right place and time.
- (iv) To suggest suitable measures for improving the consumers satisfaction towards Neera Health Drink on the basis of findings of the study.

IV. Research Hypothesis

Based on the objectives framed, the following statistical Null hypothesis were framed and tested in the appropriate places.

- (i) Ho1: Consumers are not aware of Neera Health drink.

- (ii) Ho2: Consumers are not satisfied with the quality of Neera Health Drink.
- (iii)Ho3: The price of Neera Health Drink is high as per the perception of Consumers.
- (iv)Ho4: Neera is not easily available in the retail outlets.

V. Research Methodology

The researcher use of Primary source that is, contacted the customers directly. A Structured Questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from selected 60 respondents from Malappuram district of Kerala State in India. The Sampling technique used was Convenience Sampling. For the calculation and analysis of data, statistical tools and techniques like, percentage and Mean were used.

VI. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table - 1.1 Descriptive Statistics of Respondents’ Demographic Variables

Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	36	60.0	60.0	60.0
Female	24	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
Education				
SSLC	29	48.3	48.3	48.3
Plus Two	11	18.3	18.3	66.7
UG Level	12	20.0	20.0	86.7
PG Level	8	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
Occupation				
Employees	24	51.7	51.7	75.0
Business	09	13.3	13.3	88.3
Farmers	27	11.7	11.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
Income				

>Rs.10000	39	65.0	65.0	65.0
Rs.10001 to 20000	9	15.0	15.0	80.0
Rs.20001 to 30000	10	16.7	16.7	96.7
Rs.30001 and above	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	
Taluk				
Tirur	27	45.0	45.0	45.0
Ponani	33	55.0	55.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Compiled from collected data.

The above table shows that majority of the respondents are male. It clearly indicates in comparison to females, males are mostly using the Neera Health drink. The reason behind this situation is that most of the women do not like Neera because the smell of Neera is just like Toddy.

Majority of the respondents (48.3), have the educational qualification of SSLC. It shows that other category, i.e. graduates are not using the Neera Health drink, because people having higher educational qualification, doing white collar jobs do not like to drink Neera. They feel that drinking Neera is not matching with their cultural beliefs, tradition etc. Instead they prefer other drinks like Pepsi, coco-cola etc. which suits their standard and to maintain their city standard.

The majority of the respondents were farmers, and the researcher found some interesting facts at the time of the survey. The farmers also do not consume Neera, even though they know the benefits of Neera, but due to social degradation they consume only Toddy. Majority of the respondents are having their income level of below Rs.10000. This is also one of the main reasons for the slow movement of Neera Health drink. The low level of income is not even sufficient for their food.

Table – 1.2 Opinion towards quality of Neera Health Drink.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	7	11.7	11.7	11.7
Sometime	26	43.3	43.3	55.0
Always	27	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Compiled from collected data.

The above table shows that Majority of the consumers like the taste of Neera.

Table - 1.3 Opinion towards price of Neera

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20 Rupees	45	75.0	75.0	75.0
25 Rupees	9	15.0	15.0	90.0
30 Rupees	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Consumers feel that Neera is priced very high. Consumers prefer the price to be around 20 Rs per 200 ml.

Table – 1.4 Opinion towards availability of Neera Health Drink in the Market

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	35	58.3	58.3	58.3
Sometime	24	40.0	40.0	98.3
Valid s Always	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Compiled from collected data.

Neera is not easily available in the market as per the responses of majority of the respondents.

Table 1.4

Respondent opinion towards watching the advertisement of Neera.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never	29	48.3	48.3	48.3
Sometimes	29	48.3	48.3	96.7
Valid Always	1	1.7	1.7	98.3
4	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Compiled from collected data.

VII. Findings

1. Consumers are satisfied with the product Neera, although some reported that sometimes they felt it sour.
2. Most of the Consumers felt that the price of Neera is very high. Most preferred the price to be around 20Rs per 200ml.
3. Neera is rarely available in the Market. Most of the Consumers are purchasing Neera directly from the factory.

4. Even though all the respondents were aware of the Product called Neera. Many have just tasted it once or twice. There are no regular consumers. Very few have seen any advertisement of Neera product.

VIII. Suggestions

1. The quality of the product should be ensured at all times. Sour drink will leave a negative impression in the minds of the consumers.
2. The price should be reduced. It is better to follow penetration pricing policy, where initially a product is sold at low cost.
3. Neera is not readily available at retail outlets, supermarkets etc. It was found that most of the consumers purchased Neera directly from the factory which makes it clear that the element Place or Physical Distribution of the Marketing mix needs improvement.
4. The promotional activities undertaken by the Marketers of Neera is very poor. Only a few respondents have seen any advertisement of Neera. Many also feel that the pack is not attractive.

IX. Limitations of the Study

The study was confined to only 2 Taluks of Malappuram district namely Tirur and Ponani for the sake of convenience. The study does not take into consideration the other Ps of Marketing Mix like People and Packaging. A small sample size of 60 has been used due to the time constraints.

X. Future Research Implication

The Researcher has made an attempt to study the Effectiveness of Marketing Strategy of 'Neera Health Drink' with reference to the 4ps of Marketing. The study has neglected some modern Ps of Marketing. So there is a scope for further research including all the elements of Marketing Mix. This study can also be conducted using a larger sample or a different geographical area. This study is conducted from the consumers perspective. Research can also be conducted from the perspective of Producers or Marketers.

XI. Conclusion

In order for any product to survive in the Global Market, it should carefully blend the ingredients of its Marketing Mix. This is not different for Neera also. Unfortunately a product like Neera with many health benefits is not accepted as it should have been. This is due to the inadequate Marketing effort of the Marketers of Neera Health Drink. High quality Neera should be made available to the consumers at low cost to the Consumers, to increase the sale. More promotional activities should be undertaken. Most of all, the product should have a steady supply in the Market and it should be readily available at the right time and Place.

XII . References

1. G.M. Siddharameswara Swamy, "Coconut Neera Production and processing in Karnataka", Indian coconut Journal, January 2013.
2. Narayan Kulkarni, "Coconut Neera: nutritional drink needs promotion", Nuffoods Spectrum, May 20, 2015.
3. Dr. Prasoon, "Why is Neera the best natural health drink?", Being the doctor, October 11, 2015.
4. Amutha Kannan, "TNAU to promote 'Neera' as health drink", The Hindu "News Paper, November 15, 2007.
5. Deepa Chandran and Philo Francis, "Awareness, perception and satisfaction towards Neera Health Drink: Consumers Perspective" Bonfring International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Management Science, Vol. 6, No. 3, August 2016.