

“Marketing Strategies of Amul Ice Cream”

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the marketing strategies employed by Amul Ice Cream, one of India's most iconic dairy brands, to understand how it has successfully captured and sustained a significant share of the competitive frozen dessert market. The research focuses on analyzing the effectiveness of Amul's promotional campaigns, brand positioning, pricing strategies, and distribution networks while also exploring consumer perception and loyalty. Drawing from both primary data (through structured questionnaires) and secondary sources (such as industry reports and prior academic research), the study examines how Amul differentiates itself amidst competitors like Kwality Walls, Vadilal, and Mother Dairy. The findings highlight the strategic integration of affordability, strong rural and urban distribution, emotional branding, and the leveraging of the —Taste of India image that resonates deeply with Indian consumers. Additionally, the research delves into the growing role of digital marketing and influencer collaborations in shaping modern consumer choices. The insights gleaned from this research are intended to not only inform Amul's future strategic direction but also contribute to a broader understanding of brand strategy dynamics in the Indian FMCG sector. The study concludes with specific recommendations for enhancing brand engagement and sustaining market leadership in the evolving landscape of consumer preferences.

Keywords: Amul Ice Cream, Marketing Strategy, Brand Positioning, Consumer Behavior, FMCG, Digital Marketing, Indian Ice Cream Market.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Indian ice cream market has witnessed tremendous growth over the past few decades, evolving from a seasonal luxury consumed by the elite to a mass-consumed fast-moving consumer good (FMCG). With increasing urbanization, changing dietary patterns, a growing middle class, and exposure to global food trends, ice cream has transitioned into an everyday indulgence, deeply embedded in the consumer psyche. Among the various brands that have contributed to this transformation, Amul Ice Cream stands out as a pioneering force. The brand is an extension of the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which is widely credited with revolutionizing India's dairy sector under the White Revolution led by Dr. Verghese Kurien. While Amul's primary focus was traditionally on milk and butter, its foray into ice cream marked a strategic diversification that leveraged its existing brand equity, nationwide cold chain infrastructure, and cooperative network.

The entry of Amul into the ice cream segment in 1996 disrupted the existing market dynamics that were earlier dominated by players like Kwality Walls, Vadilal, and Mother Dairy. Unlike most multinational corporations, Amul offered its products at highly competitive prices without compromising on quality, thus democratizing access to ice cream across socio-economic classes. This pricing advantage, coupled with a robust distribution strategy and powerful emotional branding—anchored around nationalism and purity—made Amul Ice Cream a household name. The brand capitalized on its overarching slogan, —The Taste of India, extending it seamlessly to its ice cream offerings. Amul also benefited from the trust it had already built among Indian consumers through decades of dairy dominance.

The landscape of marketing itself has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years, moving from traditional media to digital platforms, from generic mass messaging to hyper-personalized campaigns. Amul, known for its witty and topical billboard ads, has skillfully adapted to these changes. Its consistent use of humor, social commentary, and

real-time event referencing has kept it relevant to younger generations while maintaining its legacy appeal. The rise of influencer marketing, YouTube reviews, Instagram reels, and interactive brand experiences has redefined how brands engage with their audience. In this evolving environment, it becomes critical to understand how a legacy brand like Amul has managed to remain agile, innovative, and competitive.

The study of Amul Ice Cream's marketing strategies offers a rich field for academic exploration, as it involves a blend of rural outreach, urban trend adaptation, value pricing, brand storytelling, and cooperative business ethics. This research aims to dissect these components, analyze their effectiveness, and evaluate their impact on consumer perception and market share. It is not just a study of promotional tactics but a deeper dive into strategic marketing thought, brand building, and customer loyalty in the Indian context.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the marketing strategies of Amul Ice Cream and assess their effectiveness in achieving brand recognition, customer acquisition, and market expansion. The study also aims to explore the alignment of these strategies with consumer preferences and market trends. The specific objectives include:

- To study the evolution and core elements of Amul Ice Cream's marketing strategy.
- To analyze the role of pricing, product variety, packaging, and distribution in

Amul's marketing success.

- To examine the impact of traditional advertising, digital marketing, and influencer engagement on consumer behavior.
- To evaluate the perception of Amul Ice Cream among different demographic groups.
- To compare Amul's marketing strategy with that of its major competitors.
- To provide strategic recommendations for improving Amul Ice Cream's market presence and consumer engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies are the blueprint through which organizations aim to identify, satisfy, and retain customers. A well-formulated marketing strategy encompasses product innovation, pricing decisions, distribution channels, communication efforts, and customer relationship management. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), a successful marketing strategy combines the art and science of choosing target markets and building profitable relationships with them. It involves segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP), and the effective utilization of the marketing mix, popularly known as the 4Ps: product, price, place, and promotion. In today's digital era, the traditional 4Ps have expanded to include people, process, and physical evidence (7Ps), especially in service-based and experiential marketing.

The effectiveness of any marketing strategy depends on how well it adapts to the dynamic preferences of consumers. With increased globalization, companies have shifted from product-centric to customer-centric models. Armstrong, Adam, Denize, and Kotler (2014) argue that modern marketing is less about pushing products and more about creating value through meaningful engagement. This shift has led to the rise of personalized marketing, digital campaigns, data analytics-driven targeting, and the use of social media influencers. In the context of FMCG brands, especially in developing markets like India, affordability, accessibility, and trust continue to be dominant strategic pillars (Chatterjee, 2020).

Ice Cream Industry in India

The Indian ice cream market has transformed significantly in recent decades. Once considered a luxury product for the urban elite, ice cream is now a mass-consumed product, thanks to rising incomes, changing lifestyles, and an increase in the disposable incomes of the middle class. According to a report by IMARC (2023), the Indian ice cream market reached a value of INR 230 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 17.5% during 2023–2028. The sector is broadly divided into impulse products (cones, cups, bars), take-home tubs, and frozen desserts. Key players in this space include Amul, Kwality Walls, Mother Dairy, Cream Bell, and several regional brands like Arun, Havmor, and Vadilal.

The rapid expansion of cold chain logistics, franchise-based retail outlets, and online grocery delivery platforms have contributed to deeper market penetration. Singh and Kaur (2022) argue that the growing demand for dairy and plant-based innovations is also reshaping consumer preferences in this category. Moreover, health-conscious consumers are showing increasing interest in low-fat, sugar-free, and probiotic ice creams (Khan & Sinha, 2021). Amul Ice Cream has leveraged its parent company's distribution muscle and brand trust to penetrate both urban and rural areas effectively.

Brand Positioning and Consumer Perception

Brand positioning refers to the place a brand occupies in the minds of consumers relative to competing products. Aaker (1996) emphasizes that strong positioning can be achieved through emotional branding, consistent messaging, and value propositions that resonate with consumers. For ice cream brands in India, factors like taste, quality, availability, affordability, and emotional attachment play key roles in brand perception.

Amul has positioned its ice cream as —Real Milk. Real Ice Cream, which emphasizes purity and authenticity—values that align with Indian sentiments. According to Bhardwaj and Malik (2020), Amul's brand image is deeply rooted in trust and national pride, reinforced by its iconic —Amul girl advertisements and the slogan —The Taste of India. These elements enhance emotional bonding with consumers, contributing to brand loyalty.

Consumer perception studies also suggest that familiarity with a brand significantly influences purchase behavior (Saxena & Kumar, 2019). In Amul's case, its presence in every Indian household for dairy products gives it an edge in promoting new product categories like ice creams. Yet, newer urban consumers are increasingly drawn to experiential and premium brands such as Magnum and Baskin-Robbins, creating a need for Amul to diversify its appeal (Sharma & Ghosh, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Understanding the structure and method behind any research is crucial for establishing its reliability, relevance, and scientific rigor. This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in the present study aimed at investigating the marketing strategies of Amul Ice Cream. It details the research design, type and nature of the research, sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, measures for ensuring validity and reliability, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations. The methodological approach was chosen to ensure that the research objectives are addressed thoroughly and to provide credible insights into consumer perceptions and the effectiveness of Amul's marketing strategies in a dynamic market environment.

Research Design

A research design acts as the blueprint of a research study, laying down the foundation for the processes involved in data collection, analysis, and interpretation. For this study, a **descriptive research design** was employed, which is most appropriate when the purpose is to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon or the relationship between variables. Descriptive design enables a researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of present conditions and trends and to assess the effectiveness of specific strategies or behaviors—in this case, Amul's marketing tactics across diverse consumer demographics.

The research design integrates both **quantitative and qualitative** aspects, following a **mixed-methods approach**. While the primary emphasis was on quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaires, qualitative insights

were included through observational data and interpretations of branding practices, advertisements, and consumer-generated content across social media platforms. This dual approach enriches the study by not just measuring consumer preferences and brand perception in numerical terms but also capturing the deeper sentiments and attitudes toward Amul Ice Cream's positioning.

The choice of a descriptive and mixed-methods design allowed the study to explore —what strategies are in place, —how they are perceived, and —to what extent they influence buying behavior—thus offering a 360-degree perspective.

Nature and Type of Research

This study is both **applied** and **exploratory** in nature. It is applied because it aims to contribute practical insights that could help improve Amul's marketing strategy and industry practice. It is exploratory because it attempts to unearth new patterns in consumer attitudes and behavior related to ice cream marketing, a relatively under-researched area in academic literature.

The research falls under the **cross-sectional** category, where data were collected at a single point in time to obtain a snapshot of existing opinions and behaviors. Furthermore, the research can be categorized as **empirical**, as it relies on primary data from real respondents collected via surveys. At the same time, it includes **secondary analysis** of published literature, reports, advertisements, and branding elements of Amul Ice Cream.

This combination of applied, exploratory, and empirical approaches allows for a holistic investigation into the multifaceted strategies adopted by Amul and their reception in the Indian market.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Sampling is a critical process in any research, as it defines the representation of the population being studied. The sampling frame for this study consisted of consumers from both urban and semi-urban settings across India who have consumed Amul Ice Cream at least once.

A **non-probability purposive sampling technique** was adopted. This means that only those respondents who fit specific criteria—i.e., have awareness of Amul Ice Cream, have been exposed to its advertisements, and have made a purchase decision regarding the product—were included in the sample. This purposive sampling was chosen because the study focuses on specific behavioral and perceptual variables that cannot be generalized from a random group of individuals unfamiliar with the brand.

The total sample size consisted of **250 respondents**, including a diverse mix of age groups, genders, income brackets, and educational backgrounds. The sample was selected from metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad, as well as Tier-II cities such as Bhopal and Lucknow. This ensured geographic diversity and allowed comparison across different consumer segments.

Data Collection Methods

To gather accurate and comprehensive data, both **primary** and **secondary data collection methods** were used. The **primary data** were collected through a structured and pre-tested questionnaire administered via both online and offline modes. Due to the widespread use of digital platforms, Google Forms was used to distribute the survey online, while offline questionnaires were shared at selected retail outlets, parks, and college campuses.

Respondents were given adequate time to fill out the forms, and responses were collected over a period of four weeks. The questions were structured in such a way as to elicit both factual and opinion-based information. Likert-scale, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions were used to gain insights into preferences, perceptions, and attitudes.

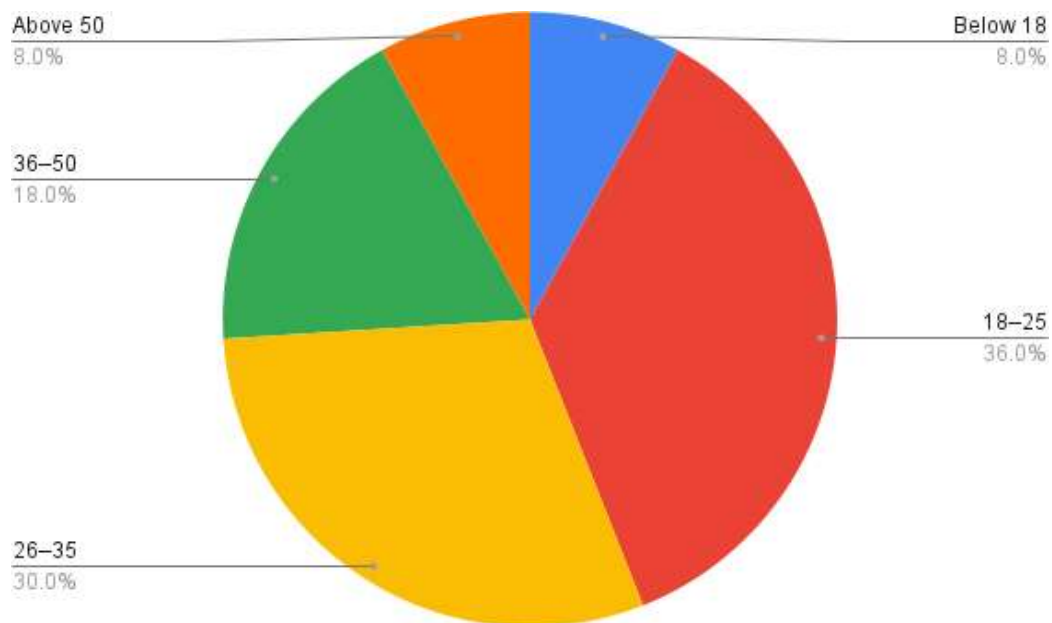
For **secondary data**, sources included research journals, government publications, industry reports from IMARC and Euromonitor, Amul's official website, YouTube videos, television advertisements, newspaper articles, and previous academic theses related to FMCG and dairy marketing in India.

This mixed-methods collection approach ensured a rich, well-rounded dataset.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic Profile of Respondents Table 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18	20	8
18–25	90	36
26–35	75	30
36–50	45	18
Above 50	20	8
Total	250	100



Graph 1: Age Distribution of Respondents (Bar Graph)

Interpretation:

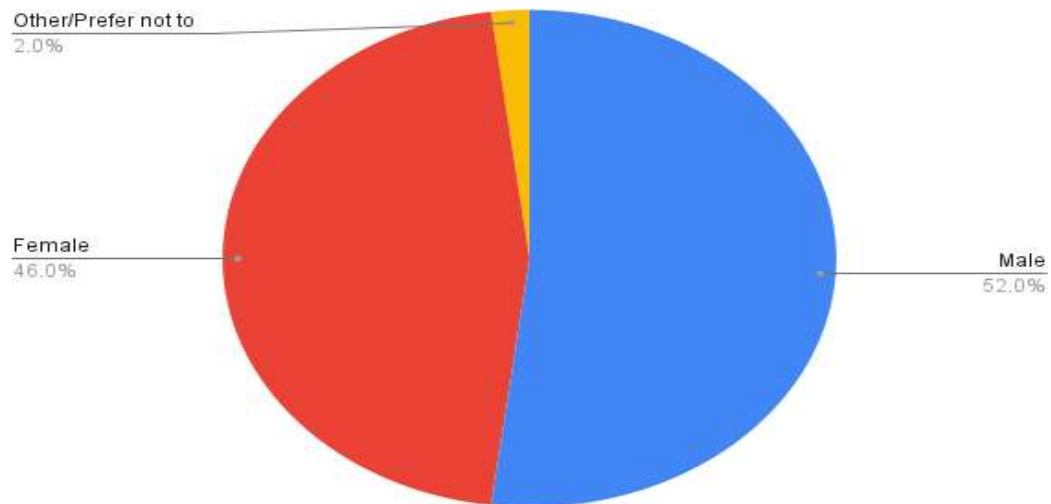
The age distribution of respondents shows a balanced representation across different age groups, with a concentration in the younger adult categories. The largest segment (36%) falls between 18 and 25 years, highlighting a youthful demographic that is likely highly engaged with digital media and modern marketing channels. The next significant group is the 26–35 age bracket, accounting for 30%, which often

represents working professionals with stable incomes and discretionary spending power. The remaining respondents are spread among those below 18 (8%), middle-aged adults between 36 and 50 (18%), and seniors above 50 (8%). This

diversity in age ensures that the study captures a broad spectrum of consumer perceptions and behaviors toward Amul Ice Cream, which is essential given the brand's pan-India presence and appeal across generations.

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	130	52
Female	115	46
Other/Prefer not to say	5	2
Total	250	100



Graph 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents (Pie Chart)

Interpretation:

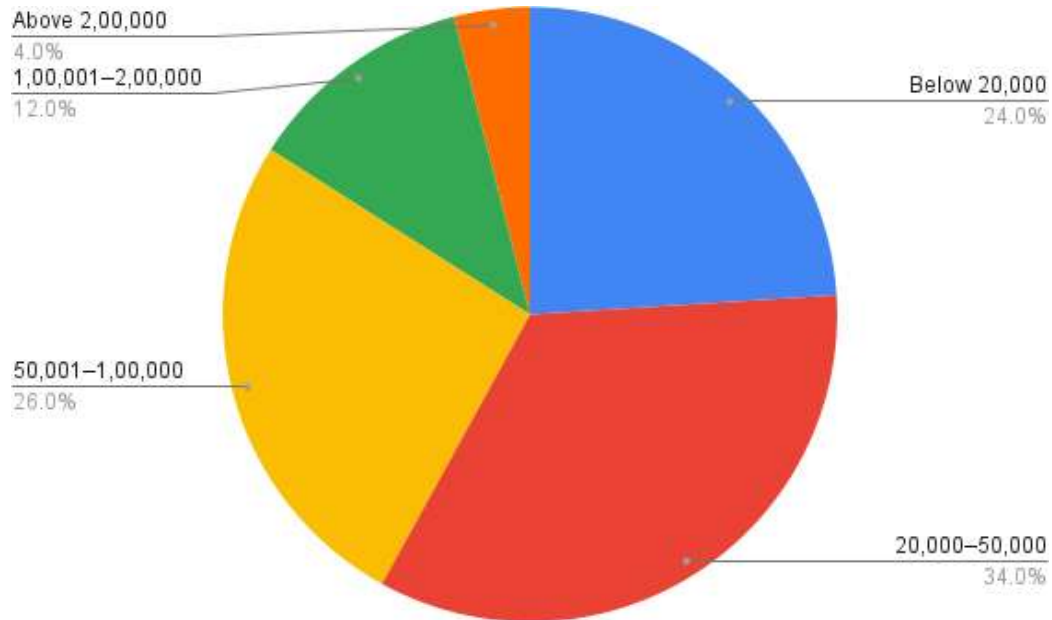
The gender distribution is fairly balanced, with males constituting 52% and females 46% of the sample, while 2% identified as other or preferred not to disclose their gender. This near parity is favorable for reducing gender bias in data and offers insights into how Amul Ice Cream's marketing appeals across male and female

consumers. Considering gender differences in consumption habits and marketing responsiveness, the balanced sample provides a reliable foundation for analyzing brand perception and purchase behavior among diverse gender groups.

Table 3: Monthly Household Income of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20,000	60	24
20,000–50,000	85	34
50,001–1,00,000	65	26

1,00,001–2,00,000	30	12
Above 2,00,000	10	4
Total	250	100



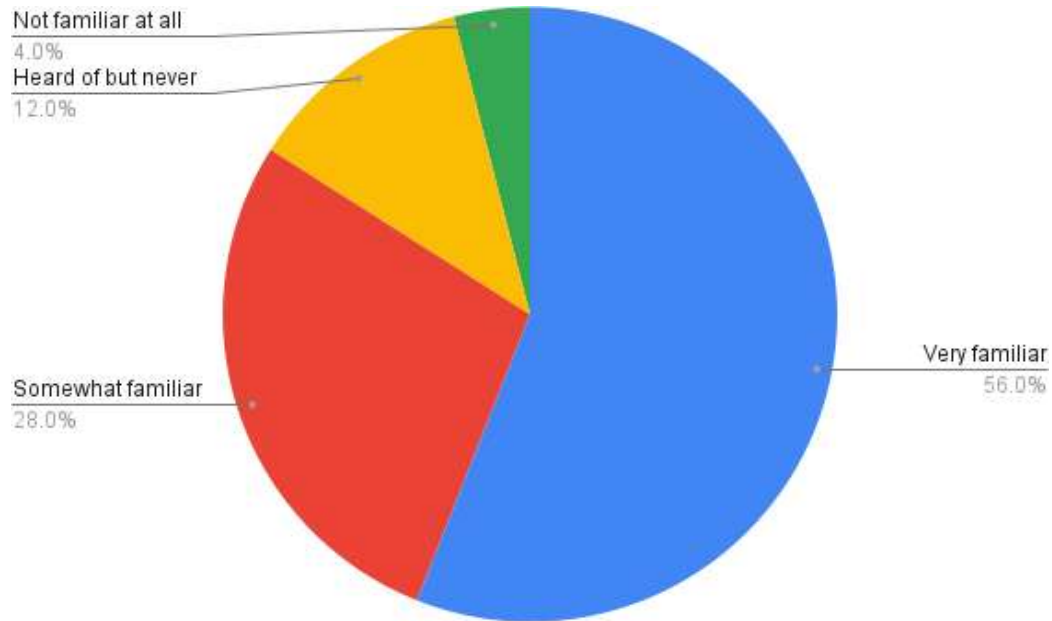
Graph 3: Monthly Household Income Distribution (Bar Graph)

Interpretation:

Respondents span a wide range of household income levels, with the majority (58%) falling in the middle-income brackets of ₹ 20,000 to ₹ 1,00,000 per month. Notably, 24% belong to lower-income households earning below ₹ 20,000 monthly, while 16% represent the higher-income groups earning above ₹ 1,00,000. This distribution is critical for evaluating Amul's pricing strategy and accessibility. Since Amul Ice Cream aims to cater to both budget-conscious consumers and aspirational buyers, the income diversity in the sample enables comprehensive analysis of how affordability and perceived value influence consumer choices.

4.1 Awareness and Reach of Amul Ice Cream's Marketing Table 4: Familiarity with Amul Ice Cream Brand

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very familiar	140	56
Somewhat familiar	70	28
Heard of but never tried	30	12
Not familiar at all	10	4
Total	250	100



Graph 4: Familiarity with Amul Ice Cream Brand (Pie Chart)

Interpretation:

The majority of respondents (56%) reported being very familiar with Amul Ice Cream, indicating strong brand penetration and awareness in the market. An additional 28% were somewhat familiar, while 12% had heard of the brand but never tried it, and only a small fraction (4%) reported no familiarity. These findings underscore Amul's success in establishing a widespread brand presence through its multi-channel marketing approach, including mass media, in-store promotions, and digital outreach. The data also suggest potential for growth in the segment of consumers who are aware but have yet to convert into buyers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Key Findings

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of the marketing dynamics surrounding Amul Ice Cream and how consumers perceive and respond to its brand strategies. The analysis of responses from 250 individuals across diverse demographic segments revealed multiple critical insights. First, Amul enjoys **strong brand familiarity**, with 84% of respondents indicating they are either very or somewhat familiar with the product. This shows that Amul's ice cream division benefits significantly from the umbrella branding of its parent dairy brand, which has been nurtured for decades in the Indian market.

The study also found that **television and digital platforms** are the two most influential channels in shaping consumer awareness and behavior, with 64% citing television and 52% acknowledging digital media as key exposure sources. However, when it came to influencing purchase decisions directly, **digital platforms surpassed traditional ones**, with 40% of respondents noting digital ads and social media as decisive in their buying process, compared to 32% for television. This underscores a clear generational and behavioral shift in how consumers interact with brands.

In terms of **purchase behavior**, 34% of respondents buy Amul Ice Cream monthly, 18% bi-weekly, and 12% weekly, indicating a stable yet moderately frequent consumption pattern. The data also reveals that **taste and quality (36%)**, followed closely by **price affordability (30%)**, are the most important purchase motivators. These findings affirm Amul's brand promise of providing —Real Milk, Real Ice Cream— at accessible prices.

Another key insight is the overall **positive reception of Amul's marketing campaigns**, with 64% of respondents rating

them as —Good or —Excellent. Moreover, 62% of respondents felt that Amul Ice Cream was either much better or slightly better than its competitors, confirming its **strong competitive positioning**. Still, a minority (16%) perceived it as inferior to other brands, which may suggest a need for product innovation and niche targeting.

Overall, the study validates that Amul's mass-market strategies are successful in terms of awareness, recall, and affordability, but it also highlights potential areas of

improvement—especially in the areas of **digital personalization, premiumization, and experiential marketing**.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Conclusions

The present study was undertaken to examine the marketing strategies of Amul Ice Cream, assess their effectiveness, and explore consumer perceptions regarding the brand's promotional efforts, value propositions, and market positioning. Based on extensive primary data collected from 250 respondents and an in-depth analysis supported by relevant academic literature, the research concludes that Amul has successfully established itself as a dominant player in the Indian ice cream market by leveraging its core values of affordability, quality, trust, and widespread accessibility. The brand's deep-rooted legacy in the dairy sector has significantly contributed to its expansion in the frozen dessert category, giving it an inherent advantage in consumer recall and market entry.

The analysis revealed that Amul's pricing strategy continues to be one of its strongest pillars. By offering quality ice cream products at affordable rates, the brand caters effectively to middle- and lower-income groups, ensuring mass-market appeal. In addition, the study highlighted the impact of Amul's long-standing advertising approach. The iconic Amul girl campaigns, emotional storytelling, and topical humor-based billboards have all played a critical role in enhancing brand identity and fostering consumer engagement.

Furthermore, the research indicates that Amul has made significant inroads into the digital marketing space, with platforms like Instagram and YouTube becoming increasingly influential in shaping consumer preferences, especially among younger demographics. However, while television remains an important medium, the growing influence of digital channels suggests the need for more targeted, tech-driven marketing strategies. The findings also show that while Amul is seen as superior or on par with its major competitors like Kwality Walls, Mother Dairy, and Vadilal, there are consumer segments that express a desire for more premium, health-conscious, and innovative product offerings.

Overall, Amul Ice Cream's marketing strategy has been effective in maintaining a stable consumer base, encouraging repeat purchases, and cultivating brand trust.

However, evolving market dynamics, changing consumer tastes, and increasing competition necessitate continuous strategic refinement.

Recommendations for Marketing Strategy Improvement

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be proposed to further enhance Amul Ice Cream's marketing strategy and overall market performance:

- Strengthen Digital Engagement:** Given the rising influence of social media and digital content on consumer decisions, Amul should increase its investment in online marketing. Strategies may include collaborations with food bloggers and influencers, interactive content such as polls and quizzes, brand challenges on platforms like Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts, and region-specific campaigns in vernacular languages.
- Premium Product Line Expansion:** To appeal to urban, health-conscious, and aspirational consumers, Amul should introduce more premium variants, including sugar-free, vegan, low-fat, high-protein, and international flavor ranges. Limited-edition seasonal products and collaborations with celebrity chefs or nutritionists can also enhance brand appeal.
- Improve Packaging and Visual Identity:** A refresh of Amul Ice Cream's packaging with modern, eye-

catching designs can enhance shelf presence. Incorporating QR codes that link to brand stories, ingredient details, or augmented reality experiences can enrich consumer interaction and perception of innovation.

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