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AHEAD OF WHAT'S NEXT

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- √ Foreign Foods
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- √ Food Safety
- ✓ Balance of Power
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- ✓ Innovation on the Plate
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Problem of Abundance

India's massive opportunity needs to be tapped intelligently.

Over the past few years, India's food, grocery and FMCG sectors have been especially dynamic. From being merely one of the basic necessities of mankind, food has now become a medium to fulfill the aspirations of an upwardly moving population that's enjoying a higher purchase power parity and the global exposure that accompanies it. This is precisely why even unprecendented food inflation has failed to dampen the growing investment in this sector. Or perhaps smart food entrepreneurs have been intelligent enough to create new, 'aspirational' categories and encourage consumers to explore a plethora of offerings inspite of the surging prices. Considering the variety that the industry is adding to each plate, it can be safely stated that today, the Indian gourmand is truly spoilt for choice.

There are three major trends amongst the consumption patterns that modern Indian grocers need to address. The first is marked by the wealthier households that are growing at a faster pace. In such homes, consumers are not only eating more, they are also buying and consuming differently. The second is the mammoth rural market that is graduating financially, albeit slowly. According to a research conducted by McKinsey & Co, India is recorded to have 224 million households in the year 2010 as compared to 206 million households in 2005. These households are further categorised according to the respective household incomes, which breaks the data into five categories. The top three segments that range between the income levels of \$7000 to \$34000 constitute 14 million households. The other two categories - within \$3000 to \$7000 and below \$3000 - constitute a major chunk of 192 million households. At present, the top three income segments are the core consumers that are

driving the force. However, the latter ones are also catching up. With gradual increase in the income levels, this segment – majorly represented by rural India – holds a lot of potential. The third and the inevitable segment that will fuel growth is the youth. Approximately 240 million Indians are below 18 years of age and 300 million are aged between 18 to 36 years. Apart from the rich and the upcoming, reatailers also need to address this young and emerging consumer base, that is going to provide tremendous impetus for growth in times to come.

In terms of consumer preferences, the gradual shift from traditional to modern retail format is taking place slowly yet steadily. As compared to the traditional outfits, cluttered and stacked with food items in the shelves, modern retail has in true sense of the term 'organised' it all for the mutual benefit of the retailer as well as the customer. Modern retail has also triggered the growth of private labels that now share the same shelf space alongwith leading national brands. All these observations point towards latent potential, but also towards the rising complexity of operating volume-driven businesses in such a diverse marketplace.

There are many other challenges as well. The key issues include the quest for an efficient supply chain and traceability system that conforms to food safety regulations and ensures opperational efficiency, educating retail staff, upgrading the retail technologies to be more consumerfriendly and localisation of SKUs. The focus will also be on agricultural rejuvenation by developing holistic and sustainable farming practices. Besides boosting market share, modern retail should also focus on ecologically sound business practices across the various channels of growth.

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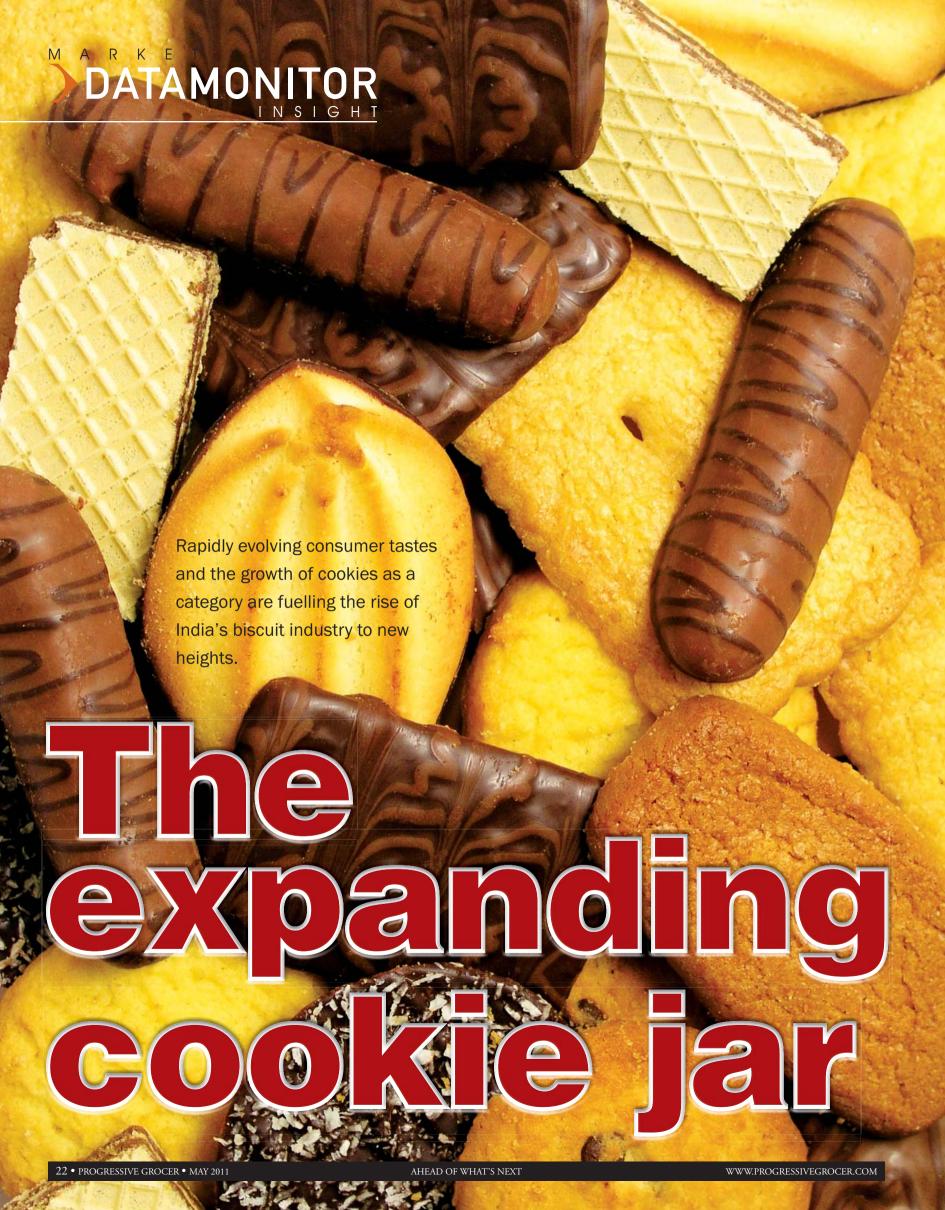
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By Rahul Ashok

biscuits was not exactly the most exciting part of shopping for the average Indian consumer. Mostly being impulse-driven, the category saw low and sporadic activity in terms of new flavours or brands. It was only in 2006 – with the foray of ITC into the biscuit market in India – that the predictability of the market landscape was shaken. Biscuits, which were previously associated mainly with teatime, and mostly came in the form of well-established brands, now had newfound consumption occasions and product concepts.

The market is witnessing another wave of activity now, with the entry of PepsiCo's Quaker cookies, Cadbury's Oreos, and Unibic Cookies, all of which have a relatively premium positioning. This is spurring even more optimism in the Indian biscuit market, not only for domestic players, but also among international brands.

How the Cookie Crumbles

In 2006, the biscuit market in India was worth ₹70.9 mn, and Britannia and Parle held over 75 percent share of the total market value. Five years down the line, the change is more than apparent. The market size has almost doubled to ₹134.2 mn, growing at a CAGR of over 17 percent. Additionally, the combined market share of Britannia and Parle is down to 70 percent, owing to the surprisingly strong emergence of ITC in this space, growing from nothing to take 10 percent of the total market share.

With the changing competitive landscape, the market has seen a huge increase in terms of flavour and format combinations, stock-keeping units and price-points, and ingredient modifications intended to target a broader range of consumption occasions. Therefore, from children to the elderly, and across income groups, biscuit have emerged as one of the few categories that manage

to straddle different consumer segments with ease.

With such a strong and diverse platform pushing uptake, it is no surprise that India's ₹134.2-mn biscuit market is the seventh largest in the world, and accounted for a substantial 13 percent of the total domestic packaged foods market value as of 2010. But in terms of per capita consumption, Indians eat only 1.9 kg per year, whereas consumers in the US and the UK get through 5.4 kg and 9.4 kg, respectively. Since the category has plenty of advantages in terms of price, nutrition, and convenience, this leaves a lot of room to position biscuits to account for a more relevant and larger component of Indians' dietary intake.

Creating 'Value Niches'

As major brands scramble to differentiate their product propositions and chase the elusive concept of consumer relevance, the industry is seeing increased focus on growing the non-glucose segment and, more specifically, cookies. With glucose biscuits driving volumes, the last few years have seen the launch of various cookie brands from companies such as McVitie's, Britannia, Unibic and even Horlicks, which are creating what can be called "value niches".

These niche markets could potentially help companies to work around the thin margins that they are currently operating on, because

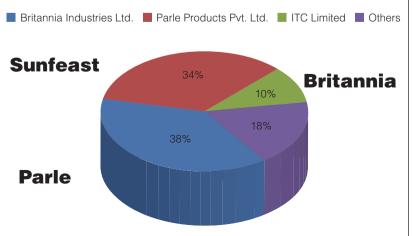


of the slightly premium price positioning that such brands are able to maintain. It makes sense for new entrants to also consider catering to such areas, as it would be impossible to compete with the likes of Britannia, Parle, and ITC due to their strong distribution channels, which help raise volumes while keeping profit margins in check.

The niches in the market are largely emerging with two themes – experimenting with flavour concepts and catering to health concerns

such as diabetes and digestive health. While the latter is seeing a lot of traction in the market lately, flavour concepts are still mostly based around chocolate, strawberry and vanilla, so there is a lot of room for blended concepts to be launched. In creating these mixed flavours, companies could potentially take their inspiration from the processed snacks industry, where traditional flavours have been successfully incorporated into more contemporary product formats.





By Shubhra Saini, Varun Jain and Utpala Ghosh

rogressive Grocer India summarises the discussions at Food Forum India 2011 into 10 take-homes. Read on to discover what India's leading food brands, retailers and suppliers feel most strongly

Food & Grocery

Role Model for **Private Labels: Germany** or UK?

Once considered a low-price, low-quality substitute for national brands, private labels are now viewed have they really come of age? Are private labels in a position to compete with heavyweight national brands? Also, is our private label story following the German, the UK or the U.S. model?

Indian food retailers need to mature to answer these questions clearly, but many questions were put to positively by Indian consumers. But ! rest at the 'Developing Food Brands

about.

and Private Labels' conclave held on Day I of Food Forum India 2011.

"What the private label business will be in the future depends on how we as retailers behave today. In the UK, the share of private labels is as high as 55 percent, while in Germany, it is somewhere near 30 percent. In India, though, the private label share is not that high, so right now we can mould the market the way we want," opined Sumit Chandna, vice-president, buying and merchandising, FMCG, Aditya Birla Retail.

"In Germany, Lidl and Aldi, both hard discounters, have set the tone for their domestic retail market. Whereas the UK model – of Tesco and Sainsbury – is the kind where private labels range from being value products to premium products and they all do pretty well," he added.

He further said, "Looking at the aspirations of customers and growing household disposable incomes, the UK and U.S. model can do well in India."

"Giving value-for-money to consumers is the classic strategy on which private label brands bank the world over. But, can we create key differentiation only based on value-for-money strategy? The answer is no, because as the retail industry matures, so should we and so should private labels. It is high time they [private labels] are called private brands," explained Devendra Chawla, head, private brands business, Future Group.

Giving an instance, Chawla said, "We have three lines of our own products – Food Bazaar (for staples), Tasty Treat (for chips, jams and cookies), and Premium Harvest (our premium range). In many categories, Premium Harvest is one of the most expensive products present in our stores. I think consumers in India look for money-saving options in certain categories, while in some others they look for quality."

Viney Singh, MD, Max Hypermarket (Spar) India, a special invitee at the conclave, talked about how seriously retailers take brands and how they fulfill the need gap. "As private labels are still evolving in India, the first challenge before us is to realise the market gaps and to fill those gaps with our private labels. Our USP is freshness, so we have sub-brands in our fresh category; we are also into



L To R: Gurnam Arora, Siraj Chaudhry, Malik Sadiq, Harpreet Singh Tibb



Ireena Vittal, Principal, McKinsey & co.



Damodar Mall, Head, Integrated Food Strategy, Future Group

organics. Our food products contribute 16-17 percent of our total food sales and in future we want to take it to 30 percent," he said.

The session was conducted by Viren Razdan, MD, Interbrand India. Those who participated in it included Vishal Mehrotra, head, private brands, Spencer's; Oliver Mirza, MD, Fun Foods; Pattabhi Rama Rao, president, Cookie Man India; Rajan Warrier, MD, Fresh N Natural Foods India; and Gopal B Jumani, CEO, Go Green Health Care.

2. How Viable is Foreign Food Retailing?

With rising incomes and aspirational lifestyles, upper middle-class



Ashok Sinha, Secretary, MOFPI, Govt of India



Atul Singh, President & CEO, Coca Cola India & SW Asia, Chairman FFI 2011

Indians are now upbeat on everything that is experimental and expensive – be it sushi or fig. But there is still lack of awareness about foreign food retailing and that is why the market is growing at a slow pace.

Foreign food retailing can grow in India as there is a potential market for this segment; but are retailers ready to take up the challenges involved in this business? On Day II of the Food Forum, a few questions related to the future of the imported food industry were addressed at the Forum of Indian Food Importers (FIFI) Conclave.

Asserting that the foreign food segment is doing well in India, Mohit Khattar, MD & CEO, Godrej

Nature's Basket, said, "It is different from mass market as the target group of consumers is at the top of the pyramid. But the value of products under the foreign food category is growing at 25-30 percent anually. It caters to consumers who have deep pockets and are experimentative."

He continued, "The foreign food category evolves with the change in consumer choice; for instance, if the demand for Japanese cuisine grows, you will see more of Japanese products on our shelves."

The future foreign food retail in India depends on the growth of the food import industry, because most products present on the shelves of foreign food retailers are imported items. However, for this segment to grow, the major roadblocks need to be removed. But what are these? "Foreign food products in India have not done as well as FMCG products have. The kind of cold chain facility required to manage perishable items, such as sushi or salmon, is not available in india. This is one reason why, despite being a demand in market for these products, we are unable to fill in the gap," expressed Rakesh Banga, WMMC, India.

He suggested that the modern retail industry should come up with solutions for the cold chain management in order to get fresh products on the shelves. "This is the only way for developing the market further for imported food items," he stressed.

Comparing the present-day scenario with a decade-ago period, Uday Chugh of Vriddhi Speciality, said, "Ten years ago, imported food items were restricted to chocolates. But now people are ready to experiment with their cuisines and new products are not only coming in the market, but also doing well. Definitely, there are certain bottlenecks that need to be removed, but India has potential for foreign food retailing and imported food can do extremely well here."

Harshita Gandhi, Tree of Life, spoke about the need to innovate in order to catch up with consumer demand. "There is huge depth in certain categories, while other categories are shallow. At Tree of Life, we pick up products where we see a gap in the market. We introduced Pillsbury

SUPERMARKET BUSINESS

Health-and-wellness issues are guiding development of new refrigerated dip products.

Smart Snacking

By James Dudlicek

onsumers are making food choices that are part of a well-balanced diet while still seeking great taste and variety, and makers of refrigerated dips see strong category growth potential.

"From a health-and-wellness : according to Schaumburg, Ill.-based perspective, consumers are also eat- Nielsen. That follows a dip of 0.1

ing small meals more frequently throughout the day, and veg-Summer Fresh Avocado Hummus gies with dip is a terrific op-Hummus d'avocat tion,' says Beth Marv Cowardin, senior marketing manager for produce dips at Columbus-based T. Marzetti Co. "As a result, people's perceptions of dips are shifting from being used not only as a party platter option, but also an everyday snack."

Refrigerated dips are enjoying healthy sales as well, especially in the wake of the recent perennial spike leading up to Super Bowl Sunday. Sales of refrigerated dips were up 2.8 percent to nearly \$445.7 million for the year ending Dec. 25, 2010, at grocery stores with at least \$2 million in sales (excluding supercenters),



Sales of refrigerated dips were up 2.8 percent to nearly \$445.7 million for the year ending Dec. 25, 2010.

percent for the same pe-

riod a year earlier and minor gains the two previous years.

Units sold also were up 2.8 percent for that period, following an anemic 0.2 percent increase for the same period a

year earlier and two previous consecutive years of declines.

Name-brand dips hold an especially strong position, especially in a dairy department otherwise dominated by private label products. Branded products held an 80.3 percent share of the dip segment for the year ending Jan. 22, 2011, at U.S. food, drug and mass merchandiser stores (including Walmart), according to Nielsen data.

"In this \$450 million category,we

products. "Dips are not just for parties anymore. Consumers are adding them to dinner or using them as a mini-meal throughout the day."

Altman says the line between condiments and dips is blurring: "Healthy dips like hummus, salsa and guacamole continue to be on the rise as their usage extends to the lunch and dinner table."

Cowardin concurs: "Consumers are looking for foods that not only taste great, but [also] have more nutritional value. As a result, consumers' interest in refrigerated dips that offer a well-balanced snack option is rising, and innovative choices, like Marzetti Otria Greek Yogurt Veggie Dip, are becoming increasingly popular."

Dip Into Goodness

From the probiotic power of yogurt to the addition of "superfood" ingredients, dips are tak-

ing advantage of the wellness trend from many angles.

Gluten intolerance and celiac disease are of increasing concern consumers, notes Leslie Gordon, marketing director at Woodbridge, Ontariobased Summer

Fresh Salads Inc. "All

of our dips are gluten-free, offering consumers a wide selection. We also use symbols for vegetarian and lactose-free, as these are also areas of increasing concern," she says. "Another trend is that consumers want their foods to have more than one nutritional benefit. Hummus is relatively low in fat and a good source of protein, and Summer Fresh has added superfoods like avocado and sweet potato, which add their own additional set of nutritional benefits."

And though avocado is considered a superfood, "guacamole still carries a bad rap with some consumers," Fresherized's Altman says. "They look at the fat and don't distinguish between good fat and bad fat. Our guacamole and salsa are available in the produce section, since they are all natural and have no additives or preservatives."

The challenge for some wellness products is convincing consumers they taste as good as what they've been used to. "Consumers still buy



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What's next

Editors' picks for innovative products



Dairy start

Frozen yoghurt chain Cocoberry has recently introduced Mango Parfait – a delectable fusion of mango, granola and yoghurt, which makes it a non-fat, healthy and yummy breakfast option. Served in a transparent glass, The parfaits look colourful and tempting. The Parfait comes in two contented sizes – the small pack is priced at Rs 99, while the large one comes for Rs 169. The Mango Parfait is available at all Cocoberry stores across the country.

Power of four

Processed food and beverage brand Del Monte has announced a unique offering – Del Monte Four Seasons Fusion – to add to its the fruit drink portfolio. It is a signature fruit drink offering a unique mixed fruit combination that has been created after extensive R&D in FieldFresh Foods' lab and manufacturing facility in India.

The launch of Four Seasons Fusion is noteworthy as the flavour has been specially created for the Indian market for the first time. Del Monte Four Seasons Fusion will be sold through modern trade as well as traditional retail counters across major cities in India. The drink is available in a 500-ml PET bottle priced at Rs 28.

Muesli mornings

Gaia has launched Crunchy Muesli (Strawberry), which is loaded with essential vitamins, minerals. proteins and fibre and serves as the perfect meal-in-a-bowl for the young ones. Made from rolled oats, wheat and corn flakes and honey, it is laced with the goodness of fresh strawberries. It is a healthier alternative to oily paranthas and iunk food and can be savoured as an all-time snack to kill those untimely hunger pangs. Priced at Rs 165 for a 425-gm pack, Gaia Strawberry Muesli is available at all leading pharmacies and grocery stores across Delhi-NCR, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Gujarat.



Traditional gets trendy

LT Foods Limited, India's leading producer of Basmati Rice under the flagship brand of Daawat, has launched four new variants of basmati rice – Daawat Biryani Basmati

Rice, Daawat
Traditional Basmati
Rice, Daawat Super
Basmati Rice and
Daawat Pulav
Basmati Rice. The
new variants cater
to the four most
commonly prepared
dishes in Indian
homes – biryani,
pulay, aromatic plain

Del Monte



white rice dish and daily consumption of basmati rice with curries and pulses. The new range is available – in one-kg and five-kg packs priced between Rs 60 and Rs 150 – at leading retail outlets and supermarkets across India.

Maid for health

Coca-Cola India has announced the launch of its Minute Maid 100% juice range in India. The launch strengthens Coca-Cola India's diverse product portfolio. The Minute Maid 100% juice is available in three flavours: apple, grape and orange. The juice comes in two pack sizes – 200 ml



and one litre priced at Rs 20 and Rs 85, respectively. The product is available at leading modern trade outlets across the country and in grocery retail outlets in Punjab.

Spirit of the rising sun

Radico Khaitan Ltd, one of India's largest liquor companies with a diverse mix of brands, has announced its exclusive marketing and distribution tie-up with Japanese spirits giant Suntory Liquors Ltd. As part of the tie-up, Radico Khaitan will launch Yamazaki and Hibiki - Suntory's super-premium whisky brands – in India. This strategic affiliation aims to further premiumise Radico Khaitan's brand portfolio. With the growing liquor market in India, this tie-up will provide Suntory the right platform to establish its foothold in India. The two whisky brands would soon be available at exclusive retail outlets for Rs 6,500 onwards.





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