A Case Study of Mrs. Bector Food Specialties Ltd

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In these days, women are exhibiting their entrepreneurial spirit and competencies. They have come to the forefront of development process and have proved themselves successful in their multitasking roles at home and office. Entrepreneurship among women improves the wealth of their families and the nation as well. Some women have managed to break the proverbial glass ceiling against the odd and have established their businesses successfully in food processing sector. Women are more inclined for food processing enterprises since they spend most of their time in the kitchen normally. Many women have the expertise in preparing new cuisines, so they start small and grow further to become a much-acclaimed food processing entrepreneurs. The food processing industry in India has great potential and it brings about the synergy between the consumer, industry and agriculture. Therefore, there is a need to inspire, encourage, motivate and co-operate with women entrepreneurs for developing the spirit of enterprise among every segment of the society. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the success story of Mrs. Bector in the food processing sector and the challenges faced by her. This study proved that Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. owned by Mrs. Bector, based at Punjab has enough growth opportunities but to sustain itself in the market, the company has to pursue more competitive strategies to widen the operations and customer base.

Design: For the purpose of analysis, this study used secondary data sources - open access journals, Google, Google scholar and Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. websites. Furthermore, the literature is used to analyze the position of this company within SWOC framework and Michael Porter’s Five Forces analysis.

Findings: Based on the analysis, it is suggested that Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. has to expand its business beyond northern India and initiate campaign for its brand awareness. The study concludes that Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd.’s competitive pricing strategy is clearly defined to capture the market, but more proper execution of strategies is required to thrive in a competitive climate.

Value: This paper focuses on the growth of Mrs. Bector Food Specialties Ltd. in terms of its current status and future opportunities. Based on findings and their interpretation, new knowledge in the form of suggestions is presented.

Paper Type: Case study-based Research Analysis

Keywords: Cremica, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd, women entrepreneurship, food processing industry, marketing aspects, SWOC framework and Michael Porter’s five forces analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women’s entrepreneurship is becoming more common, with women accounting for more than one-third of all entrepreneurs [1]. Many women have become successful entrepreneurs in the world of business [2]. If one traces the evolution of women entrepreneurship in India, it gives some interesting readings. In the 1970’s, women were held back to their share of work and responsibilities at home though they had aspirations and ambitions for self-employment and employment generation. If a few
Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is a company founded by Mrs. Rajni Bector in 1978 in Ludhiana, Punjab out of her passion for cooking, baking and making ice creams. Cremica brand was established by Mrs. Bector and has become one of the India’s fastest-growing brands over a span of more than three decades. It offers a wide array of products of incomparable quality, innovative recipes and health-oriented ingredients targeting all ages and state-of-the-art standards. As a result of the split in 2013, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is managed by the eldest and youngest of Mrs. Bectors three sons, Ajay and Anup Bector respectively and Cremica Foods is managed by Akshay Bector. Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. comprises the biscuits and bakery segment and Cremica Foods comprises the condiments segment. The company markets its biscuits such as crackers, creams, cookies, glucose and digestives under the brand name ‘Mrs. Bectors Cremica’ and bakery products such as buns, breads, pizza bases and cakes under the brand name ‘English Oven’. Presently, the Cremica Group is Rs. 650 crore business empire and it includes group companies like Cremica Frozen Food, Mrs. Bector’s Desserts, Cremica Agro and EBI foods in UK. Moreover, it has strategic tie-ups with McDonald’s, Hindustan Unleaver, Big Bazaar, Spencer’s, Taj Group, ITC, Jet Airways, Air India, Barista, Café Coffee Day, Pizza Hut, Domino’s and Papa John’s. Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. collaborated with one of McDonald’s suppliers of Europe and expanded its businesses beyond baking to include providing bread and batters to McDonald’s India and other companies [8]. Presently, this company is listed in Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange. The company had made its Initial Public Offering (IPO) in December 2020 to raise funding for the issue of equity shares, raising Rs. 540.54 crores [10]. Recent days, its market price is quoted at Rs. 401.25 in BSE and Rs. 401.60 in NSE [11]. The proceeds of the fresh issue is utilized to finance the project cost
towards the expansion of the Rajpura Manufacturing facility in Punjab and to establish a production line for biscuits.

2.1 Product Range: The company offers products such as tomato ketchup, food curry/gravies, a range of mayonnaise and spreads, mocktail syrups and toppings, range of biscuits and bread. Due to fast-changing customer needs and preferences, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. through research and development and positioning technology secured the prominence by providing a wide array of products which include Opera Chips, Mayonnaise (Tandoori, Mint and Desi Express flavors), spreads, sauces, jams, salad dressings, syrups, food crushes, French fries and ketchup. The detailed product range of Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is exhibited in Figure 1.

![Fig 1. Exhibits the products of Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd.](image-url)

Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is well established itself in the retail sector and its brand focus is on ‘Customer Centricity’, relying on customer feedback and innovative products customized for local taste buds. Earlier, people prefer to cultivate a substantial portion of their food, however, in today’s developed economies, even the sustenance food items are secured from retail outlets [9]. The company has expanded in the Business to Business (B2B) segment and Business to Consumer (B2C) segment to generate revenue through volume orders by targeting Food Service Segment and HORECA (Hotel/Restaurant/Café) Segment through product innovation and expansion.

2.2 Quick Service Restaurant Chains: Quick Service Restaurant or QSR is a restaurant that serves food that requires little preparation time and is served quickly. They have implemented a bundle pricing model that combines their menu items into a bundle of complementary meals. For example, McDonald’s combo meal of fries, a soft drink and a burger wherein the burger buns are prepared by Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. The company is a supplier for many reputed Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) chains which have been listed below in Table 1.
Table 1: Exhibits the names of reputed Quick Service Restaurant chains.

| Sl. No. | QSR Chain                          | Relation with Mrs. Bector’s Food                                      |
|--------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | Connaught Plaza Restaurants Pvt. Ltd. | Sole supplier of burger buns and pan muffins since 1995              |
| 2      | Hardcastle Restaurants Private Limited (McDonald’s India) | Preferred supplier of burger buns and pan muffins, for nearly 13 years |
| 3      | Burger King India Limited          | The main supplier of burger buns since 2014                           |
| 4      | Yum! Restaurants (India) Private Limited | The main supplier of burger buns since 2013                             |
| 5      | PVR Limited                        | The preferred and main supplier of frozen burger buns, garlic bread and panini |

Source: https://blog.finology.in/investing/mrs-bectors-food-ipo

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR:

Several researchers have studied the food processing industry and its different facets. Some of the scholarly papers published relating to women entrepreneurship and the food industry are listed in Table 2 with the area of study, the focus of the research along references.

Table 2: Related publications on the food industry by different researchers.

| Sl. No. | Area of Study           | Focus of the Research                                                                 | References |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1       | Food Industry           | Women Entrepreneurial opportunities in the food industry and the societal changes that create new business opportunities for women. | Vanika, C., & Manish, J. (2013). [10] |
| 2       | Food Industry           | Identifying and assessing critical aspects for ICT (Information Communication Technology) applications in order to help SME’s (Small and Medium enterprises) expand more effectively and sustainably in their food supply chains. | Singh, S. P., et al. (2012). [11] |
| 3       | Women Entrepreneurship  | Problems and prospects of Women Entrepreneurship, reasons why women become entrepreneurs, reasons for growth, schemes for promotion and development of women entrepreneurship. | Goyal, M., & Parkash, J. (2011). [12] |
| 4       | Marketing and Logistics | The Supply Chain process increases the sourcing and manufacturing activities of companies making companies focus more on the supply chain aspect. Companies must gain control over logistics to be able to face a competitive advantage in the industry. Companies in the food industry use effective supply chain activities thereby capturing a good market share in the industry. | Behera, B. (2009). [13] |
| 5       | Women development       | Understanding Indian women, their identity, their role-taking, status and problems faced by them. The paper discusses the most successful women entrepreneurs and the trends of development in their field. | Arakeri Shanta, V. (2013). [14] |
| 6       | Marketing and Promotion | Analysis of Food Industry where 360-degree promotion strategy along with equally effective distribution strategy ensures deeper market penetration and coverage for the most successful food industries. | Narayan Sarkar, D. (2013). [15] |
4. OBJECTIVES:

This study is focused on the comprehensive analysis of one of the top Indian food processing company: Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. The main objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the company’s position through Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) framework.
2. To analyze the position of Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. through Michael Porter’s Five Forces Analysis.
3. To suggest new strategies to be formulated to retain the market position of the company.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study is based on secondary data sources that highlight Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. as a case of women entrepreneurship in food processing sector. Apart from it, this study uses the SWOC framework and Michael Porter’s five forces analysis to determine the growth opportunity and competitive strategy to be followed by the company for sustainable growth. Detailed analysis has been presented with the help of information collected from journal articles, business websites and company websites.

6. SWOC ANALYSIS OF MRS. BECTORS FOOD SPECIALTIES LTD:

The SWOC framework is the most extensively utilized method for tracking and evaluating a company’s competitive role. Its main goal is to assess corporate strategies in order to produce a business strategy that aligns the organization’s resources and skill sets with the market’s requirements [18]. Normally, organizations use this framework to assess their firms’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, as well as those of their competitors and goods. SWOC is a comprehensive examination of the industry’s operating environment that aids in the projection of many aspects of the environment as well as their incorporation into the organizations decision-making [19]. After an in-depth analysis of extensive literature on this company, following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges were arrived at:

6.1 Strengths: Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd has the following strengths:

(1) The company offers a diverse range of well-known medium and premium brands in India, particularly in biscuits and bakery products.
(2) Being a renowned biscuit exporter with numerous quality certificates, the company’s products are export ready. Its biscuits export has a 12% market share and has a market share of 4.5% of the premium and mid-premium biscuits market in North India as of FY 2020 [20].
(3) A leading provider of buns to the fast-growing QSR industry, Mrs. Bector’s has enhanced brand visibility.
(4) The company has an extensive and reputable sales and distribution network that spans India and 64 countries across six continents [21].
(5) The company has innovative offerings, packaging and commitment to quality keeping in mind the changing consumer preferences.
(6) Being the largest supplier of biscuits to Canteen Stores Department of Government of India, this company is also an approved supplier for Indian Railways in North India.
(7) Mrs. Bector’s is one of the top two Indian biscuit manufacturers in the premium and mid-premium segment in the states - Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir.
(8) The company is listed in National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange [22].

6.2 Weaknesses: Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd has the following weaknesses:

(1) Lack of brand awareness and availability of the company’s products among the general public outside Northern India. The company is much dependent on northern India especially Delhi, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh for its revenue growth.
(2) To stimulate point of purchase (POP) promotion, the company relies on retail outlets and small supermarkets to display products on their shelves.
(3) Due to a prohibition on using the brand name Mrs. Bectors Cremica for any food business other than biscuits, the company is unable to introduce a new category under the name ‘Cremica’
umbrella. The company is subject to a Brand Separation MoU among its promoters because it shares
the name ‘Mrs. Bectors Cremica’ with other family members of promoter Mrs. Bector.

4. Mrs. Bector’s premium category products may not be of interest to the rural and semi-urban market
due to its pricing.

5. The company does not have long-term contracts with its Quick Service Restaurant clients for
sustenance.

6.3 Opportunities: The opportunities of Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd are as follows:

1. The company already has an established pan-India distribution channel hence it has opportunities
to make its diverse products available to a bigger population across the country.

2. The company has a significant export potential to reach out to clients throughout the world with its
diverse line of products.

3. The company has a large domestic market as it has been expanding immensely over the years.

4. They have recently launched ‘BONHEUR’ Syrup in India which has been designed using the
French aroma and is tailor-made for the Indian market.

5. Due to urbanization, a large number of working-class, men and women, and students living alone;
and greater exposure to fast food patterns make Indian consumers prefer fried, baked or toasted
food straight from the freezer; and are willing to spend on bakery products and new launches
resulting in increased demand and growth in the bakery sector [23]. So, Mrs. Bectors Food
Specialties Ltd. can target such consumers to increase their sales.

6.4 Challenges: Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd has the following challenges to face:

1. The company is up against stiff competition from both local and national brands, making it difficult
to maintain market share at reasonable pricing.

2. Due to a decrease in demand for the company’s products in rural areas, it will be difficult to restore
sales volume.

3. The demand for local bakery products over the company’s products poses a huge challenge to its
profits.

4. Increase in the cost of the supply chain and transportation for delivery of products out of northern
India will be a challenge for the company, if it is interested to look beyond Northern India.

7. MICHAEL PORTER’S FIVE FORCES ANALYSIS OF MRS. BECTORS FOOD
SPECIALTIES LTD:

Michael Porters Five Forces Analysis is used to critically analyze the business model of Mrs. Bectors
Food Specialties Ltd as per company analysis-based research case study analysis framework [24-25].
Normally, a business model is a set of ideas that makes a value proposition by achieving a long-term
goal. It describes how it makes profit by defining an organization’s position in the value chain. And
hence, the twin challenges before an organization are: one, choosing a suitable business model that
increases customer value and corporate income; and two, updating such business model, whenever,
required [26]. Keeping in mind these two issues, Michael Porter’s Five Forces model is used to analyze
the competitive position of the company. This conceptual model was developed by Harvard
University’s Professor Michael Porter, who used industrial economics and principles of strategic
management, to analyze five interacting factors that are important for a company to become
competitive. The five interacting factors are competitive rivalry, threat of new entrants, threat of
substitutes, buyer bargaining power and supplier bargaining power. The analysis of Mrs. Bectors Food
Specialties Ltd. is here as follows:

7.1 Threat of new entrants: The threat of new entrants into the food sector is significant when new
competitors decide to enter an industry, reducing revenues produced by existing businesses and
decreasing client loyalty. Mrs. Bector faces few risks such as stiff competition, higher dependency on
the North Indian market for growth and a premium category target market that might not appeal to the
rural and semi-urban areas. However, with Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd’s product differentiation,
high brand name recognition and customer loyalty has reduced the threat of new entrants into the
market.

7.2 Bargaining power of buyers: Consumer’s attitude toward food and beverages alter on a daily basis
as a result of broader socio-economic and cultural changes which largely influence the changes in
consumer tastes and behaviours [27]. Buyers influence has the capacity to cut prices and improve product quality so it accounts for a significant amount of organization’s overall sales. Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd offers products at a low price to customers as they design and produce their products in their own factories. Since consumers’ tastes and preferences change as a result of their increased purchasing power, brand loyalty for these products is low. So, the company has to increase customer loyalty by providing a positive shopping experience through good service and customer feedbacks.

7.3 Bargaining power of suppliers: Suppliers have the power of raising the price or reducing the quality of raw materials. In comparison with buyers, there are many suppliers in the food processing industry; as a result, supplier power is limited and low supplier power increases profit for buyers. Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. adopted a strategy of building greater loyalty and long-term relationships with suppliers. Secondly, the bargaining power of suppliers of unorganized sector such as milk and vegetables is weak.

7.4 Threat of substitute products or services: Economic liberalization, globalization and multinational companies’ entry into the agro processing industry have increased market and competition largely giving customers a benefit [28]. If some products or services meet similar needs, customers are more likely to switch to substitutes for the increase of price of a product or service. Likewise, low switching cost makes it easy for consumers to switch from one supplier to another in the food industry. There are many substitutes for bread, jams, mayonnaise, sauces and biscuits such as Parle, Nestle, MTR and Britannia. However, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd employs a competitive pricing strategy and sells on the promise of quality. This expertise made the company remain profitable and keep their market share.

7.5 Internal rivalry: When there is internal rivalry between food processing sectors, it will lead to a reduction of the industry’s profits mainly because of competitive pricing. Moreover, the presence unorganized sector within the industry also increases competition. In the biscuits market, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd competes with Parle Biscuits, Britannia Industries, ITC, Anmol Industries and Surya Agro Food. While in the bakery market, they compete with Modern Food Industries (India), Harvest Gold Foods India and Bonn Nutrients. The intensity of rivalry among these firms in food industry is very high. In Figure 2, shown below, it can be understood that most of the Indian biscuit space is dominated by Britannia Industries Ltd, Parle Products Ltd and ITC India which collectively own 66% of the market. Parle derives a large portion of its revenue from Parle-G while Britannia’s top line is led by its mid-premium and premium products. However, ‘Mrs. Bector’s Cremica’ owns a market share of 1% of the biscuit segment and is a strong competitor as the company concentrates only in Northern India. If it increases its foothold beyond northern India, its market share and profitability will increase in the future.

![Market Share Of Brands In Biscuit Market](image)

**Fig 2:** Exhibits the Market share of brands in the biscuit market.

**Source:** Mrs. Bectors’ Red Herring Prospectus (Bloomberg/Quint) www.bloombergquint.com.
8. FINDINGS:

The following are the findings based on extensive literature analysis:

(1) Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties’ Ltd. has substantial turnover, possess a distribution network, and hence it can offer innovative products, packaging and quality assurance while keeping in mind the changing consumer tastes and preferences. Brand popularity, packaging, promotional strategy, complementary products and affordability are the factors influencing the consumption of jams, ketchup, bread, sauces, etc. resulting in an increase in demand for the company products.

(2) Though it is one of the leading food processing companies in India, it is not one among the top 20 food processing companies, mainly because it focuses on north India alone. In the case of bread and biscuits segment, the profit margin is low, but given the company’s vast output and consistent distribution, the company’s long-term viability is secured.

(3) Through the innovation initiatives, the company has secured a significant export potential to reach out to clients throughout the world with its diverse line of products.

(4) The company’s profitability is affected by - the consumer preference for local bakery products over the company’s products and increasing competition from both local and national brands.

(5) The threat of new entrants is less likely to affect Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd.’s product differentiation, high brand name recognition and customer loyalty.

(6) Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. provides low-cost products to clients since they design and manufacture their own products. As the buyer is able to get similar products from other suppliers, the company increases customer loyalty by attracting customers and offering a positive shopping experience through excellent customer service and feedback.

(7) As there are many substitutes available for buyers, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is using brand loyalty and long-term connections with its customers and retailers, as the channel partner.

(8) In the food market, consumers switch from one supplier to another due to low switching costs, therefore, Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. employed a competitive pricing strategy and focus on quality allowed the company to remain profitable among its many competitors.

(9) Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is facing high intensity rivalry among its competitors Parle Biscuits, Britannia Industries, ITC India, Anmol, etc. in food industry. Due to the existence of brand loyalty in certain products and continuous product differentiation helped the company to maintain its commanding position against the competitive rivalry.

9. SUGGESTIONS:

As it can be seen how Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. has expanded over the years and have proven to be a successful business model, the company is planning to expand its operations in all the metropolitan cities to seize its investment opportunities. Below are a few suggestions which have been listed that can be of help for further improvement:

(1) The company must expand their business out of northern India, and they have to initiate the steps to grow internationally.

(2) To motivate the distributors and retailers, the company has to offer some tour packages and extra benefits based on the targets achieved. This will help to increase their sales volume and profits.

(3) The company has to organize events and exhibitions in some corporate places which would help to increase their brand awareness.

(4) In addition to increasing their brand awareness, distributing samples of their products in colleges and school campuses would help to penetrate their brand to new generations.

(5) The company can have tie-ups with supermarkets and promote their products in small sachets to increase their availability across the markets especially out of Northern India.

(6) Teaming up with a few health clubs to build goodwill as a supplier of health-conscious products would help to increase their customer base. These days, neo rich customers are very health conscious irrespective of age or gender while purchasing the product especially biscuits.

(7) While expanding their markets outside India, the company may have to face high transportation costs, increased cycle time, higher inventory investment and consumers’ demand for low price. Therefore, they must concentrate more on the supply chain management specifically on logistics to secure a competitive advantage in the industry.
8. Brand positioning helps in increasing sales volume, the company can improve their promotional activities by increasing sponsorships, television advertisements and celebrity endorsement so the consumers will be aware and keen on buying the new brands.

9. The company should provide gifts with all types of flavor of biscuits like stickers, stationery, tattoos which are useful for children [29].

10. Appropriate policy assistance to develop women entrepreneurs in the processing sector by competing with successful models such as Samridhi Mahila Cooperative Society (Palampur, Kangra), M/s Mushran’s Bhuria Jams (Rajgarh, Sirmaur) and M/s Bector’s Cremica (Taliwal, Una) which are effectively operating in the State [30].

10. CONCLUSIONS:

The success of Mrs. Bectors Food Specialties Ltd. is inspirational especially to women entrepreneurs as it can be seen how Mrs. Bector, from being a homemaker rose to the level of being a successful woman entrepreneur in food processing industry. She had overcome many difficulties and established herself as the leading woman entrepreneur in Punjab. Presently, this company is one of the biggest food processing companies having a substantial turnover, financially sound and has been progressing since 1980’s. Apart from it, ‘Mrs. Bectors Cremica’ is the most visible brand in the condiments business. The company is following market penetration strategy to increase the retail sales and thereby accelerating the growth process. Accelerated investment in storage and transport capabilities has lowered wastage levels, improved nutrient retention during storage and transportation and improved the shelf life of products resulting in the growth of food processing sector. Increasing number of working women are coming to the forefront and the food processing sector is the one which many can bank on. A few of them who capitalized this opportunity have achieved success and recognition in the society. The progress in the food processing industry will add to the Indian GDP and if similar development space is given for other women entrepreneurs in India, it will give more chance for inclusive growth of Indian economy in the coming decades.

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