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Market Penetration Strategies of Sid's Farm: Challenges and Solutions in General and Modern Trade in Pune

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Abstract

A new premium dairy brand has to win over retailers and shoppers before it can count on repeat purchases, and dairy's short shelf life makes that harder. This paper is a descriptive, exploratory case study of how Sid's Farm tried to do this in two Pune retail channels: General Trade (GT) in Ravet and Modern Trade (MT) at Deli Essentials, Baner. The data come from an on-the-job training placement between 21 May and 21 July 2026, and include face-to-face conversations with retailers and customers, a 53-store retailer audit, and direct observation of merchandising and sampling. In GT, 27 of the 53 retailers approached (50.9%) showed interest, 21 (39.6%) placed a first order, and 13 of those 21 (61.9%) were recorded as reordering. Govind and Amul appeared in 94.3% and 88.7% of audited stores, so a newcomer is clearly competing with entrenched brands. In MT, about 30–35 customer interactions were observed. Price was the main objection, High Protein Curd and Paneer attracted the most interest in a store below a gym, and moving products to the front of the freezer and running two weekend Cow Dahi sampling sessions were followed by purchase interest. Overall, GT penetration was driven by the retailer and hinged on margin, reliable supply, returns support and cold-chain care, while MT penetration was driven by the shopper and hinged on visibility, trial and health-focused messaging. The paper closes with channel-specific recommendations and suggestions for more structured research.

Keywords: Market Penetration, General Trade, Modern Trade, Dairy Marketing, Retailer Acquisition, Product Sampling, Pune

1. Introduction

India's dairy sector is one of the biggest in the country's agricultural and food economy. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB, 2025) expects milk production to reach about 250 million tonnes in 2024–25, with roughly 490 grams available per person each day. Demand is being pushed along by value-added products, growing nutrition awareness, urbanisation and the spread of organised retail. Shoppers can pick from cooperative brands, national private brands, regional dairies and premium labels. So for a newer premium brand, the real question is how an existing product earns a place on the shelf, gets tried, and gets bought again in a market where incumbents already have familiarity and trust on their side.

Ansoff's (1957) product-market framework calls this market penetration: selling more of an existing product in a market you already serve. A dairy company can do that by adding outlets, making products easier to see, building better retailer relationships, getting people to try the product and encouraging them to buy again. These ideas are well known. What is harder to find is practical evidence of how they play out on the street in an Indian city, and how they differ between traditional shops and organised stores.

This paper tries to add some of that evidence through a case study of Sid's Farm, a privately held dairy manufacturer headquartered in Telangana. The company presents itself around safe food, milk quality, testing and purity (Sid's Farm, 2026), and is reported to have been founded in 2016 with 201–500 employees. Between 21 May and 21 July 2026 I worked as a management intern selling in two very different settings in Pune. In General Trade in Ravet, the person to



convince is the retailer. In Modern Trade at Deli Essentials, Baner, it is the shopper standing at the freezer. My field records from this period cover a retailer funnel, a competitor audit, the objections I heard from retailers and customers, a merchandising change and two sampling sessions, and they form the evidence base here. This is an applied case study of specific locations, and it does not claim to describe the whole Pune dairy market.

2. Review of Literature

In Ansoff's (1957) matrix, market penetration sits beside market development, product development and diversification. It fits a firm that is already present in a market and wants to sell more there. Two familiar marketing tools help turn the idea into action. Segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) points a brand at the people most likely to value it, such as health-conscious and fitness-minded buyers for protein-rich dairy. The AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) describes how a shopper goes from noticing a product to buying it. Freezer placement can catch attention, a personal pitch can build interest, an explanation of quality and testing can create desire, and a free sample can make the final step feel less risky.

In traditional retail, retailer relationships matter just as much. A shopkeeper judges a new dairy brand mostly by the risk it brings, so margin, how fast it sells, regular supply, freshness and the option to return stock can count for as much as consumer appeal. On the consumer side, Srivastava, Das and Giri (2021) looked at how Indians buy dairy products, including purchase frequency, brand loyalty and what influences choice. Parasuraman et al. (2021) reviewed research on dairy preferences and found that quality and nutrient content were major influences, with price and promotion also playing a part. Arora (2020) reported that taste, price, availability and brand were significant in packaged-milk preference. Dash and Anand (2013) and Tandle and Dubey (2025) carry this line of work to dairy buyers in Jaipur and Parbhani.

Sampling research is also relevant, because a new brand has to get people to try it. Harshil and Khan (2020) studied how sampling and trials relate to purchase intention among Indian FMCG consumers, and Jacob and Aruwaji (2021) discuss in-store sampling as a way into the market for consumer goods. I use this work as background, not as a benchmark for identical results.

The sector analysis done for the original report (PESTEL and Porter's Five Forces) rated rivalry in dairy as high and buyer power as moderate to high, since both retailers and shoppers can switch easily. Entry barriers were rated moderate because brand, cold chain, quality systems and distribution all take effort to build. Taken together, this literature points to three propositions that Sections 5 and 6 examine. First, in General Trade a retailer's commercial risk (margin, supply, returns, freshness) matters alongside product quality. Second, in Modern Trade people need to see and try a product before interest turns into a sale. Third, for a premium-priced brand, explaining value is a better answer to the price barrier than cutting price.

3. Research Objectives

Building on the literature above and the fieldwork described in Section 4, the study set out to meet four objectives:

- To study how Sid's Farm approached market penetration in General Trade and Modern Trade in Ravet and Baner.
- To understand the retailer and customer barriers to penetration, especially price, competition, brand familiarity, supply, cold-chain conditions, visibility and trust.
- To use the GT retailer funnel and field observations to see how retailer acceptance, value communication, merchandising and sampling affected trial and purchase.
- To draw out practical, channel-specific recommendations for winning retailers, keeping them, encouraging consumer trial and building local awareness in Pune.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The study is descriptive and exploratory. It describes what I saw in the market during the on-the-job training (OJT) and looks at how penetration might work, and it makes no claim to be a statistically generalisable survey of Pune. Fieldwork



ran from 21 May to 21 July 2026 under the guidance of the company's Retail Head. In General Trade I worked in Ravet from 9 AM to 2 PM, visiting about 9–10 retailers a day and taking orders face-to-face against a target of ₹25,000. In Modern Trade I worked at Deli Essentials, Baner, from 2 PM to 9 PM against a target of ₹20,000, promoting Curd, Lassi, Buttermilk, Butter and Paneer.

4.2 Data Collection

Primary data came from face-to-face conversations with retailers and customers, observation of store and freezer placement, and a GT retailer audit workbook covering 53 outlets (brands seen, SKU availability and average daily sales). I used GPS/map and camera apps to document field activity. Secondary information came from the NDDB Annual Report 2024–25, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations and the company's website (see References).

4.3 Sampling

I did not draw a probability sample. In GT I covered the assigned Ravet territory outlet by outlet, so the retail outlet is the sampling unit, and 53 retailers appear in the recorded funnel and audit. In MT I spoke with customers who approached or browsed the freezer during my shift, so the unit is a single customer interaction. I did not record how many different customers I met, so I make no claim about MT sample size.

4.4 Data Integrity and Tools of Analysis

I have kept three kinds of evidence separate. Exact records are the GT counts: 53 approached, 27 interested, 21 first orders, 13 reorderers and 6 stopped. Approximate observations are the MT figures of roughly 10–15 approaches and 30–35 interactions. Qualitative evidence covers objections and customer reactions. The paper contains no survey responses, competitor market-share figures, sampling-uplift percentages or company financials, because I did not have reliable data for any of them. The analysis uses simple descriptive statistics (counts and percentages), shown in tables, a funnel chart, a pie chart and a bar chart.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Channel Overview

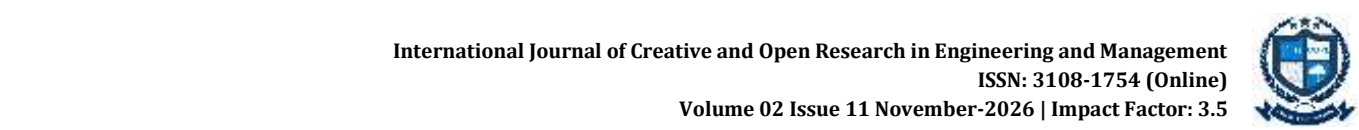
Table 1 sets the two channels side by side. In GT the retailer decides, and in MT the shopper does. That is why the same product story had to be told differently in each.

Dimension	General Trade (Ravet)	Modern Trade (Baner)
Working time	9 AM–2 PM	2 PM–9 PM
Primary decision-maker	Retailer	Consumer
Approx. daily activity	9–10 retailers	10–15 customer approaches
Target	₹25,000	₹20,000
Main barrier	Price, margin, demand, supply	Price, loyalty, trust
Main lever	Retailer economics and relationship	Visibility, sampling and personal selling
Product opportunity	Broad portfolio with retailer support	High Protein Curd and Paneer
Peak opportunity	Route coverage	Saturday and Sunday footfall
Key risk	Cold chain / spoilage	Low visibility / price resistance

Table 1: General Trade and Modern Trade Compared

5.2 General Trade Retailer Funnel

Of the 53 retailers I approached in Ravet, 27 (50.9%) showed interest, 21 (39.6%) placed a first order, and 13 of those 21 (61.9%) were recorded as reordering (Figure 1). Working from these counts, 26 of the 53 (49.1%) were not interested



at all, while only 6 of the 27 interested retailers (22.2%) never placed an order. In other words, once a retailer was interested, 77.8% went on to buy. Most of the loss happened in the first conversation, which tells me the opening pitch has to speak to the retailer's commercial risk and not just the quality of the product.

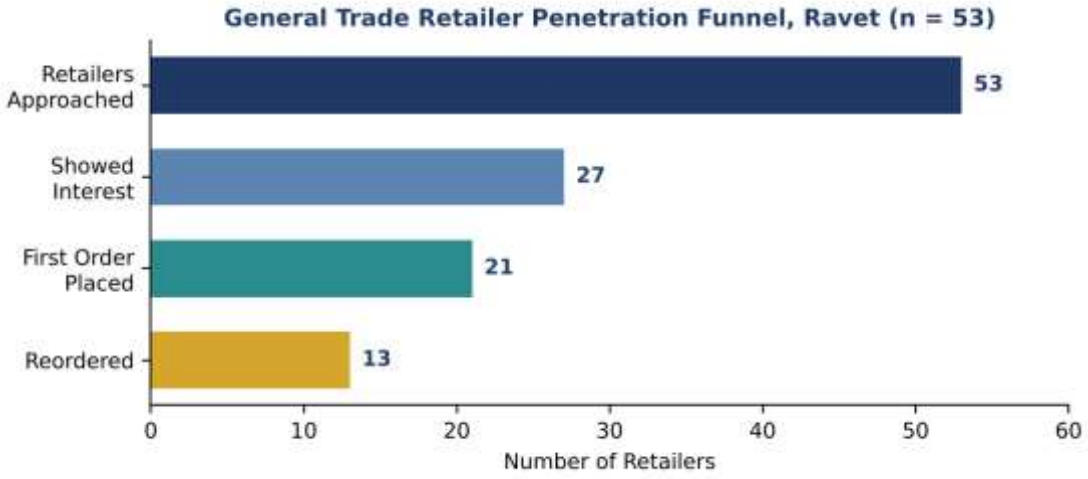


Figure 1: General Trade Retailer Funnel, Ravet (n = 53)

Winning a retailer did not mean keeping one. Of the 21 who ordered, 13 were recorded as reordering, 6 as stopped or never ordering again, and 2 had no follow-up status in the record (Figure 2). These figures show the position at the end of my placement and say nothing about long-term retention. Still, they make a clear case for following up properly after the first order. The 21 retailers acquired are the main measurable result of the GT assignment.



Figure 2: Follow-up Status of the 21 First-Order Retailers

5.3 Competitive Landscape in General Trade

The 53-store audit shows that Sid's Farm was walking into outlets where other brands already held the shelf and freezer space (Figure 3). Govind (94.3% of stores) and Amul (88.7%) were seen almost everywhere, followed by Katraj (67.9%), Gowardhan (54.7%) and Chitale (43.4%). Premium and value-added labels were much rarer: ID turned up in 18.9% of stores, Epigamia and Milky Mist in 13.2% each, Mother Dairy in 3.8% and Pride of Cows in 1.9%. That could mean the premium segment is under-served, or it could mean local demand for premium dairy is thin. The audit cannot tell us which.

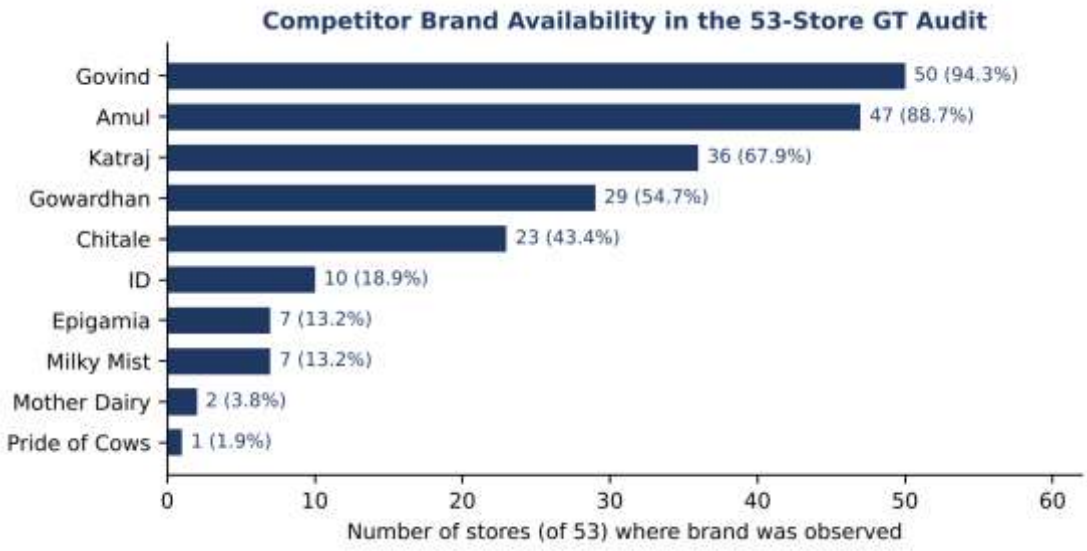


Figure 3: Competitor Brand Availability in the 53-Store GT Audit

Table 2 gives average daily unit sales from the numeric entries in the audit, where *n* is the number of stores that gave a figure for that brand. Govind and Gowardhan had the strongest reported movement for curd, and Govind, ID and Gowardhan for paneer, among the stores that supplied numbers. These are retailer estimates, not market shares, and several brands rest on only a handful of stores.

Brand	Paneer (n)	Paneer: avg. daily units	Curd (n)	Curd: avg. daily units
Amul	20	5.50	2	10.00
Govind	17	7.06	51	11.27
Gowardhan	20	6.25	20	8.75
ID	8	6.88	5	6.00
Milky Mist	3	6.67	1	5.00
Mother Dairy	0	None	1	10.00
Pride of Cows	1	5.00	0	None
Other brands	10	6.00	12	7.92

Table 2: Average Daily Sales per Store in the GT Audit (Stores with Numeric Entries Only)

5.4 Retailer Objections and Responses

My pitch paired quality and testing claims with practical commercial support (Table 3). Sid's Farm was clearly priced above several competitors, but the premium came with a story: laboratory testing, purity and no preservatives. So the issue was less about lowering the price and more about explaining the value and showing retailers how the economics worked for them. The audit's field notes also captured interest in specific products at some outlets (curd, buttermilk and lassi at one, blueberry lassi at another, paneer and buttermilk at a third), while two outlets do not stock paneer at all.

Retailer Objection	Observed Response / Selling Point
High price	Explain premium quality, testing and product value
Existing brand loyalty	Explain differentiation and offer trial
Demand uncertainty	Build confidence through supply and product movement
Margin concern	Explain retailer margin



Retailer Objection	Observed Response / Selling Point
Supply concern	Highlight good and regular supply
Damaged or expired product risk	Explain Return to Vendor (RTV) availability
Early spoilage	Explain the importance of cold-chain maintenance

Table 3: GT Retailer Objections and Responses

The spoilage complaint is a reminder that penetration is an operations problem as well as a marketing one. Some retailers told me products went off early when refrigeration was not kept up. A dairy brand can be accepted on the pitch and still lose the retailer if handling goes wrong.

5.5 Modern Trade Observations

At Deli Essentials I approached about 10–15 customers and observed around 30–35 interactions during my shifts, with Saturday and Sunday the busiest days. The store is below a gym, so many shoppers were health-conscious, and High Protein Curd and Paneer drew more interest than the rest of the range. That supports picking the right product for the right customer rather than pitching everything to everyone. Price was the main objection. Some customers already bought Sid's Farm on quick-commerce apps, which suggests online availability helps people discover the brand, and competitors gained from lower prices, familiarity, loyalty and trust.

I made two practical changes. First, I moved products that were hard to spot towards the front of the freezer. That made them easier to see and made it easier to start a conversation, and it showed that a product being in the store does not mean anyone notices it. Second, I ran two weekend sessions giving out small packs of Cow Dahi. People were happy to try it, and I saw interest in buying other Sid's Farm products afterwards. Because I had no before-and-after sales data, I treat this as a pointer and nothing more. The study reports no percentage uplift and does not claim that sampling alone caused those purchases.

6. Findings

- General Trade penetration is led by the retailer. About half of the retailers approached (49.1%) showed no interest, yet 77.8% of those who did went on to order, so the first conversation is where most are lost.
- Winning a retailer is not the same as keeping one. Of 21 first-order retailers, 13 were recorded as reordering, 6 as stopped and 2 as unclassified, so follow-up after the first order matters.
- Competition is heavy. Govind and Amul were present in over 88% of audited stores, while premium and value-added labels were found in only a minority of outlets.
- Price came up in both channels. The response that was used was to explain value (testing, no preservatives, margin, supply and RTV support) rather than to offer discounts.
- Cold-chain care is part of penetration. Spoilage complaints show that poor handling at the retailer can undo an otherwise successful sale.
- In Modern Trade, better visibility, targeting health-minded shoppers and sampling went hand in hand with more customer interactions and purchase interest. High Protein Curd and Paneer suited a gym-linked store best. These are pointers, not proof of cause.

7. Recommendations

- Set up a follow-up system for GT retailers. Track the 21 acquired retailers on a simple sheet that records the first order, reorder date, leading SKU, any issue, action taken and next follow-up, and use a standard pitch on margin, supply and RTV.
- Strengthen cold-chain support with simple storage instructions and some retailer education, to cut spoilage and build confidence.



- Make High Protein Curd and Paneer the lead products in suitable MT stores, such as those near gyms, with clear benefit-led messaging.
- Turn weekend sampling into a measured programme by recording samples given out, customers approached, trials and purchases observed.
- Improve in-store branding and freezer visibility with front-facing placement, clear shelf messages and small branded materials where the store allows.
- Use targeted offers, such as introductory bundles or sampling-linked deals, instead of across-the-board price cuts, and build local awareness through in-store communication, fitness partnerships, local digital content and retailer branding. Quality claims should follow the food advertising and claims rules (FSSAI, 2026).

8. Limitations and Scope for Future Research

The study covers one brand, one GT territory in Ravet and one MT store in Baner over about two months, so its findings cannot be generalised. There was no statistically selected consumer sample for Pune and no structured MT questionnaire, and the MT figures are approximate. The 21 GT customers show that retailers were won during the placement, but not that they stayed. The total number of different retailers approached over the whole period was not recorded, so the funnel rests on the 53 that were. No controlled experiment measured the effect of sampling, no SKU-wise daily sales data were available, and the audit's sales averages come only from stores that gave numbers. I also had no verified market-share data for competitors and no internal company financials. These gaps define what the study can be used for: an applied field case, not a definitive market measurement.

Future work could survey at least 100–200 Pune consumers across GT and MT, gather retailer-level margin and reorder data, and measure awareness and consideration against the main competitors. It could also compare sales before and after sampling, study price elasticity for selected SKUs, cover more Pune neighbourhoods and look at quick-commerce availability and ratings. With enough data, a predictive model of repeat purchase would be a natural next step.

9. Conclusion

This paper looked at how a premium dairy brand tries to break into the Pune market through General Trade in Ravet and Modern Trade in Baner. Three conclusions stand out. First, GT penetration is led by the retailer: acceptance depends on margin, regular supply, returns support and cold-chain care as well as on the product, and the retailers you win need proper follow-up. Second, MT penetration is led by the shopper: visibility, trial and health-focused messaging help turn interest into purchase, although the sampling evidence is only indicative. Third, price is a barrier in both channels, and explaining the value clearly looks like a more promising answer than blanket discounts. For Sid's Farm, keeping quality and testing as the core strength while making that message easier for retailers and shoppers to grasp is likely to pay off more than relying on premium quality to speak for itself.

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