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KELLOGG'S JOURNEY IN INDIA: FROM BEING BLAND TO SCRUMPTIOUS IN CULTURALLY DIVERSIFIED INTERNATIONAL MARKET

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Abstract

Kellogg's a 110 year old American brand that makes savoury snacks, cookies and crackers and frozen foods has grown to become a global brand. This Case Study describes the journey of Kellogg's in international market especially in a culturally diversified developing nation. Kellogg's initial entry to India was a total failure but later on with the revised repositioning strategies it made a remarkable comeback in the heart of Indian consumer. An Exploratory research has been done to analyze that how improper implementation of Marketing–Mix, wrong positioning, lack of product customisation and inability to analyse the cultural and preference difference of Indian consumers has played a major stint in the initial failure of Kellogg's in India to becoming a major breakfast provider by changing its marketing mix strategy, and how advertising is an integral part of product promotion, especially the role played by advertising in the repositioning of a failed brand. It also discusses the future prospective and competition of Kellogg's in Indian market as it is now a major cereal breakfast provider and many other well established firms are entering in India to leverage the current growth of Indian market.

Keywords: Marketing-Mix, Repositioning, Brand, Cultural difference, Advertising, Kellogg's in India, Consumer Behaviour

Overview

The birth of Kellogg's, the world's topmost Cereal Company; a principal maker of savoury snacks; second major manufacturer of cookies and crackers; and a leading North American frozen foods company is exceptionally interesting, as in 1898, W.K. Kellogg and his brother, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg fortunately failed their attempt at making granola and changed the future of cereal breakfast sector for forever. W.K. Kellogg kept on experimenting till he flaked corn, and created the scrumptious recipe for Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Kellogg's a US based multinational food-

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manufacturing firm was founded as the 'Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Company' in 1906, by W. K. Kellogg in Michigan, United States. W.K. Kellogg put his signature on each package, claiming that these Corn Flakes are the "The Original" to make his product stand out and consumers can distinguish it from other cereal manufacturer's products in Battle Creek, Michigan.

It was the first American firm to enter foreign market in ready-to-eat cereal segment; the company entered Canada with Kellogg's Cornflakes in 1914 and with the time became the leading brand in the field of breakfast cereals compared to any of its rivals.

From 1960's to 1980's, Kellogg's strategically acquired firms like Pure Packed Foods and Mrs. Smith's Pies and expanded internationally to South America, Scandinavia, Central America, Great Britain and Spain and became the brand to reckon with.

During the late 1980s, nearly 40% of the total ready-to-eat breakfast was captured by Kellogg's brands alone with a yearly sale of US$ 6 billion with 20 plants in 18 countries. Now, they are operating in 180 countries all over the globe. But it was not a bed of roses for Kellogg's with approximately US $14.6 billion sales in 2014 and to be a market leader in cereal breakfast segment as its market share dipped down to approximately 36 per cent due to the fierce competition from General Mills in the early stage of 1990's. Kellogg's decided to enter into other potential markets as not only its market share declined but also due to the stagnant cereal industry in US and UK with limited space for further growth in this particular segment. So, Kellogg's started working on for searching an untapped market for its products away from US and European territories in 1990's and without any apprehensions selected India, a nation with 900 million of people in 90's and a growing middle class population for its expansion in international market.

Kellogg's: A Global Brand

Kellogg's, a 110 years old brand has its global presence in North America, Latin and South America, Europe and Middle East, Africa, Asia and Oceania and as of25th February, 2015 it is manufactured in 20 countries and marketed in 180 countries.

Kellogg's has an invincible geographic footprint in most of the regions globally. This provides it a great opportunity to drive its growth in developed market as well as strong market in emerging nations. It has around 27 manufacturing plants in its home nation and 29manufacturing plants in other

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corners of globe, out of which two plants were in India.

It was first American country, who started its expansion in early days of 19th century and kept on the flow since then. The international expansion of Kellogg's has seen many ups and down, but with its strategic acquisitions and brand positioning it nailed the global market and emerged as one of the leading cereal breakfast provider in current time. Initial foray of Kellogg's in 'India- A nation with different culture and eating habits' was a not a walk of ease, as there is a saying that - "*You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs*". Similarly, Kellogg's fall made them learn a lesson for further internalization of their products in culturally diversified land like India.

In this case study we will analyse that how a global brand like Kellogg's initial entry in India was a total dud with significant fall in its sales to repositioning its brand again in India by launching India-centric products according to the cultural and taste preference of local Indian consumers. A combination of innovation, right price points and improving distribution has helped Kellogg's in attaining sustainability and growth in culturally diverse overseas market like India.

Acquisitions and Joint Ventures of Kellogg's

Acquisitions have played a vital role in growth of Kellogg's as it helped it in diversifying the entire product range initially offered by them. In 1970's Kellogg's initially acquired Fearn International and entered in frozen foods with the line of *Eggo* and after that in very same year it also acquired Mrs. Smith's pie company and pure packed foods. 1990 was an extremely difficult phase for Kellogg's in cereal segment due to fierce competition in its home base as well as in overseas market. Still in 1999 Kellogg's made a significant acquisition by acquiring Worthington foods, which was a top producer of soy-based meat alternatives at that time. 90's were also the time when Kellogg's entered in Indian Market.

In 2000's Kellogg's made various strategic acquisitions which not only increased its sales volume but also shown significant profitable growth. Kellogg's acquisition in 2000's were the purchase of US $ 4.56 billion Keebler Foods Company, Morning star farms, Kashi, and United Bakers firm.

In 2013, it acquired Pringles and signed a joint venture initiative in China than recently in 2015; it acquired Mass food group and Bisco Misr in Egypt and also did joint venture with Tolaram in Africa and invested money in Multipro. **(Refer Fig 1)**

Initial ingress of Kellogg's in India

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In 1990's Indian economy has seen significant changes in its policy for economic reforms with the introduction of new model of LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation). The prime aim of this model was to build the economy of India to match it with other developed nations. As the Indian government open the doors for international trade, many international firms found India lucrative to set up their operation base over here. Kellogg's was also one of them, who were keen on to increase international base for their products in other developing nations. Hence, Kellogg's entered India with a huge pomp and show after a still in its growth in US and European market in 1994.Kellogg's came with calculation that if a country of 900 million people will consume on an average as much cereals as Americans then merely 2 per cent of Indian population would be more profitable than the entire US market. On this basis of its deficient analysis they initially invested whopping amount of US $ 65 billion and a high-profile launch of its products backed by frenzied media activity in India. Initially, Kellogg's offered its most sought after product 'cornflakes', wheat flakes and Basmati rice flakes to Indian consumers but despite being a quality ready- to- eat product it failed miserably in Indian market due to a blunder made by Kellogg's official regarding the different culture and eating habit of Indians from there US and European counterparts. Firstly, the product was not accessible in many cities and after that as per the reports, out of every packet sold; only two were being bought by regular customers. Though the initial sales figures of the product were encouraging and indicated that consumption of breakfast in the form of cereals was augment but soon it became visible that many customers had purchased it as novelty. Company was not able to convert their first time buyers into regular one and by the end of 1995; sales of Kellogg's had come to a standstill and it became extremely difficult for Kellogg's to sustain in Indian Market.

Raison d'être behind the initial failure of Kellogg's were not implementing 4 P's of Marketing (Marketing–Mix) properly, wrong positioning, lack of product customisation and inability to analyse the cultural and preference difference of Indian consumers towards Ready-to-eat cornflakes breakfast (Vignali, 2001).

Marketing-Mix (4 P's of Marketing)

The concept of marketing mix is one of the basic ideas of marketing. This concept introduced by Neil Borden in 1953 and later on reviewed by many more and finally in 1960's McCarthy came up with the concept of 4 P's of marketing, that is, Product,

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Price, Place and Promotion. Marketing mix is defined as set of actions, or tactics, that a corporation adapts to prop up its brand or product in the market. The 4Ps of marketing mix are – Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

Product

Kellogg's launched its product in India in 1994 with initial offerings of cornflakes, Basmati rice flakes and wheatflakes. Though they entered Indian market with quality product with a huge technical, managerial and financial backing, it miserably failed to make a blow in Indian market. The key reason of Kellogg's failure was the fact that the flavour of its products do not matched the cultural and taste preference of Indian consumers. In other nations, eating habits were more or less same but in India it changes after every 100 kilometres from idli-dosa in south to parathas-kachori in north. Secondly, Kellogg's did not customise the product according to the Indian consumers' preferences and eating habits and blindly copied its product being offered in US and other European countries (Vignali, 2001).

In Western nations milk is usually consumed warm or lukewarm whereas Indians consume it by boiling and love to add sugar in it but pouring hot milk on the flakes made them soggy and eating flakes with cold milk was not sweet enough as sugar did not get dissolved properly in cold milk. This failure of customising the product according to customer preference as Indian culture and eating preference were poles apart from its US and European counterparts, has created a disconnect between Indian consumers and Kellogg's products. It was a massive blunder committed by Kellogg's during its product internationalisation on foreign land.

Price

Pricing is used as a demarcation, to differentiate and enhance the image of a product. When Kellogg's entered Indian market, it cost nearly double the amount of Kellogg's cornflakes compared to its sole domestic competitor Mohan Meakin's Mohun brand of cornflakes in India. In 1994, a 450 gm packet of Kellogg's cornflakes carry a price tag ofRs 63 whereas a 500 gm packet of Mohun's cornflakes cost Rs 33. The product was directly 33 per cent more costly than its rival brand. Indian consumers are cost savvy and so unwilling to shell out such a high price for quite a new product in the market and also Kellogg's do not introduced different pack sizes according to the differential need of the varied consumer group in India.

Place

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Place is also referred as point of sale for any product and catching the eye of the consumer which is a main aim of any distribution strategy. During its inception phase in 1994 in Indian market Kellogg's distribution strategy failed miserably and became one of the prime reason of its failure as it solely concentrated on metros city. They overlooked the fact that keeping its product in high end store only will debarred the huge section of Indian population as it is out of the reach for them to buy products from these stores.

Promotion

Kellogg's advertised itself as a health food and indicated that Indian breakfast is not a healthy alternative. By doing so they moved away from their main concept of 'fun-and-taste' and made an image of 'health product' and indirectly pointed fingers on Indian eating habits, which did not gone well with consumers over here.

Flawed promotion created wrong positioning for Kellogg's

Effective product positioning is compulsory for success in any new market and to do effective positioning marketer needs to understand the customer buying preference.

Positioning is the positioning of the brain, not the product positioning, and the final battle of the marketing is the brain (Ming and Ke, 2012)

Positioning is the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market (Kotler, Marketing Management, p.282).

Positioning may be simply defined in terms of how a brand is positioned in the mind of the consumer with respect to the values with which it is differentially associated or which it 'owns'(Ries and trout, 1982).

The mistake made by Kellogg's was to position itself as a substitute for the regular Indian breakfast. This concept of total breakfast backfired on Kellogg's as Indian breakfast is totally different with paranthas, idli, puris and dosas and gives the feeling of fullness at the end whereas Kellogg's cornflakes breakfast do not provide the same feeling. Most of the Indian consumers felt hungry despite having cornflakes breakfast. Indians relish hot and spicy food and ask them to eat the sweet chilled cornflakes breakfast is similar to alienating them from their own culture. Mistakes done by Kellogg's in understanding the cultural difference before venturing overseas nosedive its sales and made them revisit their strategies once again.

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Revision in entry strategies of Kellogg's for Repositioning in International market: Phase II in Indian Market

Brand repositioning is basically all about shifting the status of the brand by altering its appeal according to the current need of customers and prospective consumers. Brand repositioning simply does not mean a change in design, logo or name rather it starts by depicting a deep insight of customer preference. It mainly requires a deep focus to realign the customer needs with the promises made by brand to them. If repositioning is done at the correct time and in the require way is frequently the impetus that stimulate a turnaround which leads to an organisation sustained success. Since a considerable half a decade after the launch of Kellogg's in India, Management was still wandering that why Indian consumers were not munching their stuff more keenly.

As a return strategy, Kellogg's launched two of its extremely successful brands in other nations in India, Kellogg's Chocos in September 1996 and Kellogg's Frosties in April 1997 in India. This time Kellogg's offerings to Indian customers favoured to them and the sales increased significantly.

The main issue with these blue-blooded multinational companies like Kellogg's is that they are frequently driven by strategic policies made in headquarters, not in India or the country concern. Secondly, they are suffering from multinational ego which is basically a condition that compels them to think that what product they sell in New York ought to be fine enough for the inhabitants of Mumbai. Kellogg's started out in India with the thought of "changing India's breakfast habits" which made no sense as Indian consumers love their warm/hot food alternatives. Though Indians consume milk but it is mainly consumed after boiling only.

Kellogg's was not only the one in this league, Nestle an another multinational firm too has successfully ventured in India with its product 'Maggie' with the same thought but it succeeded because it got one thing right, that is, the hot part of Indian food habits.

The main objectives of an organization are to first survive and then grow. To attain these, an organisation must be competent enough to create a centre of attention as well as retain customers. To face these challenges the company must be able to boost the Customer Perceived Value of the product and a proper marketing and promotional activities were required to grab the attention of the customers.

A revised Marketing- Mix approach of Kellogg's

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Product

Lately, Kellogg's realised that the major reason of its failure is that the taste of the products do not match to the taste preference of Indian consumers. So, they came up with an idea of India-centric or localisation of products according to the taste of its consumers in India launched Chocos in 1996 and Frosties in 1997.

Kellogg's Chocos were basically wheat scoops with a coating of chocolate whereas Frosties had sugar frosting on each individual flakes. To the very surprise, these two variants succeeded in Indian market and sales of Kellogg's significantly risen. This new product development strategy has worked for Kellogg's (Vignali, 2001). Success of these two variants in Indian market boosted the confidence of Kellogg's and after one year of an extensive research on Consumer behavioural pattern in India, Mazza series was launched in August 1998. It was a crunchy, almond-shaped corn breakfast cereal positioned as tasty, nutritional breakfast cereal in three local flavours of Rose, Mango Elaichi, and Coconut Kesar. In 2000, Iron Shakti variant was launched offering a new dimension to health with iron fortified in it and further on in 2008, adding its success story Special K plus variant has been launched in particular targeting the female and projected as a low-fat breakfast.

Price

Price or cost of the product/services is the main factor for consumers to go for any product/services rendered by manufacturers as it is not only willingness to buy can serve the purpose rather than that ability to pay with willingness to buy may serve the actual purpose of any product manufacturers or service providers. Kellogg's also worked on its pricing strategy by reducing the cost of its product to some extent by replacing glossy cardboard packaging to pouches and introduced wider range of packs of suitable sizes to cater the requirements of culturally diverse classes' of India. These packs became extensively popular as it appealed to the Indian consumers due to their consumption patterns and purchasing power thereof. Kellogg's main catch was 500 grams family pack with a price per kilogram brought down to 20 per cent and Mazza pouches of 60 grams, as it attracted the large consumer base of India who are not premium customers.

Place

Distribution strategies of any firm can either place it on the top or can make it vanished even from the market. As

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mentioned earlier Kellogg's made its product available only in metro cities forgetting that major population of India resides in Tier II cities and villages. With its new strategies Kellogg's expanded nationally and launched its products in 60 cities making it available to all. Since 1994 to 1998 it opened around 40,000 outlets in all over India and it not only increased its sales but also helped in penetrating the larger consumer base, which was earlier just confined to prime metropolitans.

Promotion

Promotion is vital as it tells consumers that a product exists and persuades them to go for it. To promote products and services above and below-the-line methods were used. Above-the-line methods are directly paid for and include Television and press advertisements whereas Below-the-line methods include special offers and (PR) public relations.

The new promotion strategies were adopted to reposition the brand Kellogg's in India. Their earlier advertisements claimed that Indian food were not nutritious whereas Kellogg's product were, it sent a wrong message to Indian consumers. The new advertisement positioned it as fun brand and removed the tag of premium brand by making it available for all to make them a regular buyer of Kellogg's. It localised not only its branding strategies but also revamped its advertising.

Kellogg's in its new stint in India tried the glocalisation strategy, that is, think global but act local, which made it a market leader.

How advertising became one of the foremost driver for Kellogg's to reposition its base in India?

Advertising is mainly a paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. Advertisers include not only business firms but also charitable, non-profit, and government agencies (Kotler and Keller, 2008). The three main parts of a good promotion are to attract consumers, have a clear strong message and to encourage the retail trade to support the event.

After its initial failure in Indian Market, Kellogg's not only came up with new products according to the taste preference of Indian consumers but also simultaneously changed its advertisement strategy. Kellogg's understood that operating across national borders need to appreciate the cultural differences of their stakeholders and consumers. It is a basic requirement, if any firm is expanding overseas that they follow the local tradition and customs as customers are not going to

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adapt the product if it does not match with their cultural preferences, consumer habits and the local norms.

Kellogg's learned a lesson from its previous mistake and Position its products as fun and health product required for whole family and this time they did not compared their product with the traditional Indian breakfast in their TVC (Television Commercial). The new TVC's were aired with catchy taglines and localization of campaigns was done instead of merely copying its international advertisements. The new TVC's depicted various relations, which are the integral part of Indian culture from the mother child selfless relationship to the family member's relationship with each other.

Some of the famous taglines of Kellogg's in India were 'Jago jaise bhi, lo Kellogg's hi'; 'Khusiyon bhari har subah'; 'Breakfast full of fun'; 'Kellogg's Chocoskhao breakfast khud bnao'; 'School ke liye ek badhiya shuruwat'; 'Sunehari Shuruwat Apno ke saath'; 'Andar se Khush Bahar se Khush' and 'there's only one way to eat Kellogg's the way you want' and the latest one for Kellogg's Brownie delight is ' Breakfast ka irresistible taste' etc. These taglines have played a major role in connecting Indian consumers with the Kellogg's brand. **(Refer Fig.2)**

Kellogg's Products in India: 2016

Currently Kellogg's is offering variety of products to Indian consumers. These products were launched in India according to the need and taste preferences of Indian consumers. Kellogg's is mainly resolute on creating awareness among the Indian clients about the significance of breakfast cereal. In India, Kellogg's flagship brand Kellogg's Corn Flakes offers five variants of the product and positioned as for all members of the family and Kellogg's Chocos offers three variants. The other brands in India of Kellogg's are Kellogg's All Bran Wheat Flakes, Kellogg's Special K, four variants of Kellogg's Muesli, Kellogg's Oat-bites and the Kellogg's product in eight variants, offered in Rs. 10 single-serve pouches. Kellogg's Honey Loops are specifically positioned as kids' cereal breakfast. Kellogg's entered in the hot cereal segment in India in 2010 with the launch of Kellogg's Oats and came up with two savoury oats variants, that is, Tomato Salsa and Green Pudina launched in year 2013. **(Refer Table.1)**

Future approach and Prospectives for Kellogg's in India

Since, 2010 Kellogg's is growing at a scorching pace in India. As per the Report "India Breafast Cereal Market Overview", January 2016 published by Research and Markets, Kellogg's India, Bagrry and

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PepsiCo Quaker are the top three companies capturing more than 75% of the market. But it was not an easy ride for Kellogg’s to reach the position in India where it is right now in 2016. The India-centric innovations, customization of products, revamping the positioning strategy and single-serve reasonably priced packs are some of the key reasons behind the sucess of Kellogg’s in India.Kellogg’s decision to localise its flavourings, and to name its brands to appeal the Indian consumers has fell right and brand names such as ‘shakti’ (power) has proven fruitful while selling products of Kellogg’s fortified with iron. The success of special K product and program among Indian consumers has made Kellogg’s more confident. In 2013, it came up with ‘Anaaj ka nashta, aapki solid shuruat’ and the aim of this campaign was to demystify the brand. In second phase that is currently the Kellogg’s campaign aims to help folks accomplish their dreams by providing them with a healthy breakfast option and for that the new tagline is ‘Bade sapno ki sahi shuruat’. Saina Nehwal, a famous badminton player of India was roped in for this with a lieu of celebrity endorsers. In the past also Kellogg’s rope in Hindi film actors Deepika Padukone for Kellogg's Special K and Juhi Chawla for Kellogg's Chocos, as well as television personality Saakshi Tanwar for Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

Kellogg’s strategic supply chain management process has also played a key role in this success. Raw materials, as well as packaging are procured within India, and the main manufacturing plant of Kellogg’s is located nearby to the leading local market. So, all this factors makes its production cost effective and helped Kellogg’s to work on its costing. Its distribution network is also exceptionally strong and effective with the large responsibility of sales on distributors itself which has also played a significant role in minimising the overheads of the firm.

Urbanization and increased income of Indian middle class has increased market share of breakfast cereals in India. The breakfast cereal market is divided into hot cereals (bran, oats, and wheat bran) and ready-to-eat (RTE) cold cereals (wheat flakes, cornflakes, and muesli). Indian prefers hot breakfasts so this segment is increasing at a more rapid pace than ready-to-eat (RTE) cold cereals. Though cornflakes dominate market but oats and muesli are growing more rapidly than cornflakes as consumers are nowadays became more health conscious.

But its not the end, with rising competition, nonetheless, it won't be trouble-free for

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Kellogg's to keep up its scorching pace and market share as its rivals such as PepsiCo and MTR Foods have already launched packaged Indian breakfast foods like idli, upma and poha. These ready to eat products may give an huge comprtition to Kellogg's Indianisation strategy. Though Kellogg's holds above 60% share in Indian Market but the brand is facing augmented competition with firs such as Marico, PepsiCo, Dr Oetker and GlaxoSmith-Kline as they had entered the oats and muesli segments. The strategic vision for 2020 of Kellogg's also considers to double the growth in emerging market. Kellogg's is working every bit to maintain its figures and grow more in Indian breakfast cereal market. Firstly they are investing a lot in research and development, expanding in-store capabilities and specially investing huge on brand building in India. Now Kellogg's is investing more on innovative strategies and product innovation to offer the food that Indian consumers were looking for as opportunity is huge as there is huge unmet market potential and future growth in retail volume of cereal and overall breakfast segment in India (Euromonitor, 2016) with a CAGR value of 22.07% according to 'India Breakfast Cereal Market Outlook, 2021' and the penetration is very low as compared to other markets.

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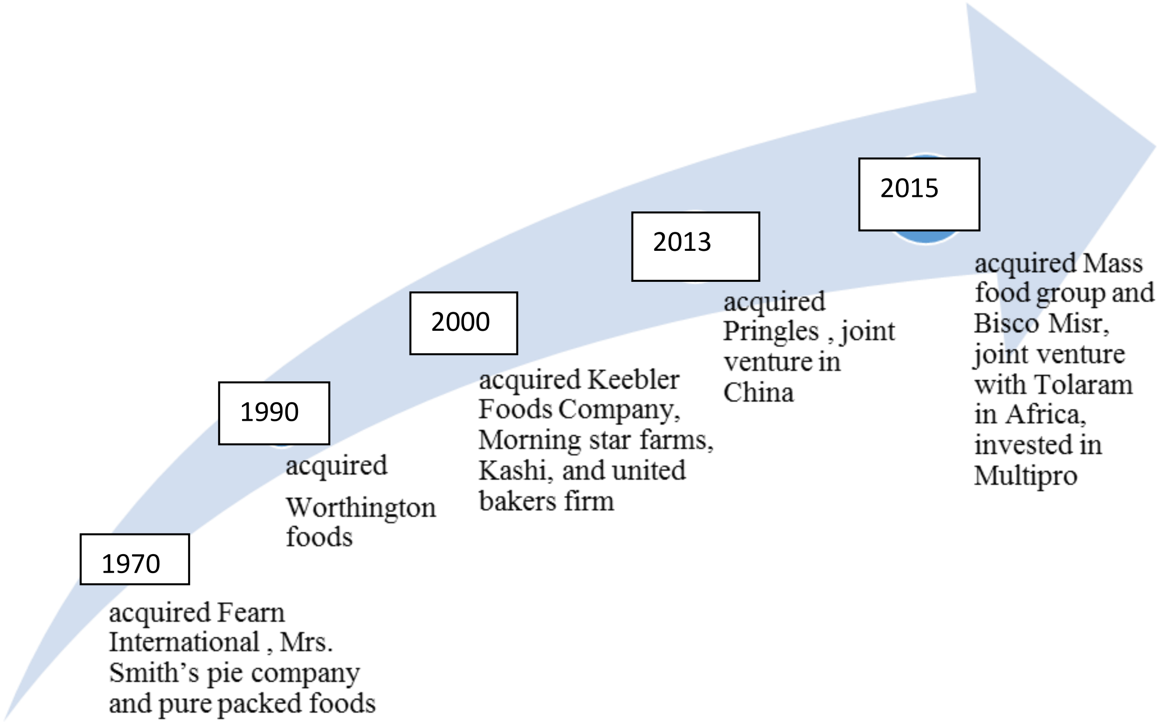

Source: https://www.kelloggs.com/en_US/who-we-are/our-history.html

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Fig: 2 Commercials of Kellogg's in India

Source: www.kelloggs.com

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Table: 1 Kellogg’s Products in India

Kellogg’s All-Bran Flakes	Kellogg’s Chocos Crunchy Bites
Kellogg’s Chocos Duet	Kellogg’s Chocos Moon and Stars
Kellogg’s Corn Flakes Brownie Delight	Kellogg’s Corn Flakes Original & the Best
Kellogg’s Corn Flakes with Real Almond & Honey	Kellogg’s Corn Flakes with real banana puree & chips
Kellogg’s Corn Flakes with Real Honey	Kellogg’s Corn Flakes with Real strawberry Puree
Kellogg’s Honey Loops	Kellogg’s Muesli Fruit & Nut
Kellogg’s Muesli Fruit Magic	Kellogg’s Muesli No Added Sugar
Kellogg’s Muesli Nuts Delight	Kellogg’s Oats Bites
Kellogg’s Oats	Kellogg’s Oats Green Pudina
Kellogg’s Oats Simply Pongal	Kellogg’s Oats Tomato Salsa
Kellogg’s Special K	