National Research Journal of Business Economics
ISSN: 2349-2015
Volume No: 13, Issue No: 2, Year: 2026 (July-December)
Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal (IF: 6.74)
PP: 75-79
Journal Website: www.nrjbe.in

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE SPICE INDUSTRY: THE CASE OF MANGAL MASALA MAZAGAON MUMBAI

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ABSTRACT

For more than a century, Mangal Masala has been a trusted name in the Indian spice industry. Established in 1912 and headquartered in Mumbai, the company has built its reputation by offering authentic, high-quality spices and masalas prepared using traditional recipes and modern manufacturing techniques. Its products are sold across India and exported to several countries, making it one of the oldest surviving spice brands in the market.

Despite its strong legacy, the business environment has changed significantly. Consumers now prefer attractive packaging, online shopping, and brands that actively engage with them through digital platforms. At the same time, competitors such as Everest, MDH, Catch, and Badshah have strengthened their market position through aggressive marketing and wider distribution. This case study analyses Mangal Masala's current business model, identifies the challenges affecting its growth, and recommends practical strategies that can help the company strengthen its market position while preserving its heritage.

COMPANY BACKGROUND AND CURRENT SITUATION

Founded in 1912, Mangal Masala has earned customer trust by consistently delivering pure, fresh, and flavorful spices. The company manufactures a wide variety of products, including whole spices, powdered spices, blended masalas, herbs, and ready-to-cook spice mixes. Its manufacturing facility at Mazagaon, Mumbai, follows modern food safety standards and is certified under FSSC 22000, ensuring high product quality and hygiene.

Unlike many competitors, Mangal Masala has built its business primarily through customer satisfaction, retailer relationships, and word-of-mouth recommendations rather than large-scale advertising. This strategy has been successful for many decades because customers associated the brand with purity and authenticity.

However, today's spice market is different. Consumers, especially younger generations, discover products through social media, online reviews, and e-commerce platforms. Attractive packaging, digital campaigns, and influencer recommendations now influence buying decisions. While Mangal Masala enjoys a loyal customer base, its limited digital presence has reduced its visibility among new consumers.

The company therefore faces an important question:

How can Mangal Masala preserve its traditional identity while adapting to the changing expectations of modern consumers?

BUSINESS ANALYSIS

- **Product Strategy**

Mangal Masala offers more than 100 varieties of spices and spice blends, including Garam Masala, Pav Bhaji Masala, Biryani Masala, Chicken Masala, Chana Masala, Tikka Masala, whole spices, and customized blends for commercial buyers.

The company's biggest strength is product quality. Raw materials are carefully selected, cleaned, processed, and packed using modern machinery to preserve freshness and aroma. This consistent quality has helped the company maintain customer trust for over a century.

- **Pricing Strategy**

Instead of competing only on low prices, Mangal Masala follows a value-for-money pricing strategy. Customers are willing to pay slightly more because they trust the brand's quality and authenticity. This pricing approach allows the company to maintain profitability while offering products that remain affordable for middle-income households, restaurants, and retailers.

However, growing competition from both national brands and private labels means customers now compare prices more frequently. The company may therefore need promotional offers, combo packs, and festival discounts to attract price-sensitive consumers without damaging its premium image.

- **Marketing Strategy**

Mangal Masala's marketing has traditionally depended on retailer recommendations, distributor relationships, and customer word-of-mouth. These methods continue to generate repeat purchases, especially among long-time customers.

The challenge is that younger consumers rely on Instagram, YouTube, online recipes, and food influencers before trying new products.

Compared with competitors, Mangal Masala has a relatively low digital presence. This limits its ability to attract first-time buyers despite having products of comparable quality.

A balanced marketing strategy that combines traditional trust with modern digital promotion can help the company reach a much larger audience.

Supply Chain and Marketing Mix

SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYSIS

The strength of Mangal Masala lies not only in its products but also in its efficient supply chain.

The process begins with sourcing high-quality spices from trusted suppliers across India. These raw materials are transported to the manufacturing facility, where they undergo cleaning, grading, grinding, blending, and quality testing. After packaging, finished products are stored in warehouses before being supplied to distributors, wholesalers, retailers, hotels, restaurants, and export markets.

SUPPLY CHAIN FLOW

Raw Material Suppliers → Transportation Manufacturing Plant → Cleaning & Grinding Quality Testing → Packaging →Warehouse Distributors Retail Stores →Customers

Maintaining quality at every stage enables the company to preserve freshness and customer satisfaction.

MARKETING MIX (4PS)

Product

A wide range of high-quality whole spices, powdered spices, spice blends, and ready-to-cook masalas manufactured under strict quality standards.

Price

Competitive pricing that reflects superior quality and provides value for money while remaining affordable for a wide range of customers.

Place

Products are distributed through wholesalers, retailers, supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, institutional buyers, and export markets across several countries.

Promotion

Current promotion mainly relies on dealer networks and customer recommendations. To strengthen market presence, the company should increase its investment in social media marketing, recipe-based content, food festivals, influencer collaborations, and online advertising.

PRODUCT LIFE CYCLE AND BUSINESS CHALLENGES

After more than 100 years in business, Mangal Masala is clearly in the maturity stage of the Product Life Cycle. The company enjoys strong brand recognition and stable demand but faces intense competition from established national brands.

At this stage, maintaining market share becomes more important than introducing the brand to customers. Growth depends on innovation, customer engagement, and adapting to changing consumer behaviour.

The major challenges facing the company include:

- Increasing competition from Everest, MDH, Catch, and Badshah.
- Limited digital marketing and online visibility.
- Rising raw material and packaging costs.
- Growing popularity of online grocery shopping.
- Low brand awareness among younger consumers.
- Expansion of private-label spice brands.

Unless these challenges are addressed, Mangal Masala may gradually lose market share despite maintaining excellent product quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE STRATEGY

To strengthen its competitive position, Mangal Masala should focus on modernizing its marketing while protecting its traditional strengths.

The company should actively use Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to publish recipes, cooking tips, and product demonstrations.

Collaborating with food bloggers and chefs can increase brand awareness among younger consumers. Listing products on Amazon, Flipkart, Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart would also improve accessibility.

Packaging can be redesigned with modern graphics and QR codes that provide recipes and cooking suggestions. Small trial packs and festive gift boxes could encourage first-time purchases.

Introducing customer loyalty programmes, retailer incentives, and seasonal promotional campaigns would help increase repeat purchases and strengthen relationships with distributors.

These initiatives would allow Mangal Masala to modernize without compromising the quality and trust that define the brand.

ANSOFF MATRIX

Mangal Masala's future growth strategy can be explained using the Ansoff Matrix.

Market Penetration (Existing Products Existing Markets)

- Festival discounts
- Combo offers
- Retail promotions
- Customer loyalty programmes

Product Development (New Products Existing Markets)

- Organic spice range
- Low-sodium spice blends
- Premium gourmet spices
- Ready-to-cook meal kits

Market Development (Existing Products New Markets)

- Expansion into rural India
- Greater presence in supermarkets
- Entry into additional export markets
- Stronger e-commerce distribution

Diversification (New Products - New Markets)

- Instant curry pastes
- Pickles
- Ready-made gravies
- Healthy seasoning products

Implementing these strategies would reduce business risk while creating new growth opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Mangal Masala has successfully preserved its reputation for more than a century by focusing on product quality, authenticity, and customer trust. These strengths continue to differentiate the company in a highly competitive spice industry.

However, changing consumer behaviour and increased competition require the company to evolve beyond traditional marketing methods.

By combining its rich heritage with modern branding, digital marketing, innovative packaging, and wider online availability, Mangal Masala can strengthen its position in both domestic and international markets. Rather than changing its identity, the company should build on its existing strengths while adopting strategies that meet the expectations of today's consumers. This balanced approach will enable Mangal Masala to preserve its legacy and achieve sustainable growth in the years ahead.

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