

# Ice-cream companies hopeful of hot sales this summer season

**MEENAKSHI VERMA AMBWANI**

New Delhi, March 9

After two washed-out summer peak seasons, ice-cream companies hope to witness a bounce back in sales aided by uptick in the out-of-home channel as well as in hotels and restaurants. Players are gearing up with new launches and strengthening distribution networks aiming to clock growth over the pre-pandemic levels of 2019..

RS Sodhi, MD, Amul (GCMF) said, "In the past two years the ice-cream segment sales suffered due to the pandemic-induced restrictions. But this summer, we are expecting to see strong growth of 30-35 per cent over the same period in 2019."

While the accelerated in-home consumption did help the ice-cream sales in the past two years, pandemic-induced restrictions adversely impacted sales of the out-of-home channel, impulse portfolio (stick and

cone-based formats) and the HoReCa channel (hotels, restaurants and catering).

But now with restrictions eased, Covid cases dropping and offices and educational establishments reopening ice cream makers are hoping for growth.

## 'Strong growth'

Sanjay Sharma, Business Head – Dairy Products, Mother Dairy, said that the overall ice-cream category is likely to more than double this summer compared with 2021, and grow by 20 per cent as compared with 2019. "With rising day temperatures and upcoming festivities (Holi), we expect an uptick in sales of ice-creams across all portfolios. The onset of summer and commencing of demand from establishments has already pushed up sales of our ice creams by about 25-30 per cent in February, over the same period last year. Unlike 2021, when the demand

was more skewed towards take-home portfolio, this season is likely to boost the impulse portfolio as well, with the out-of-home consumption already gaining speed," he added.

Mother Dairy said it is introducing ten new products this season. "We plan to foray in additional 100 towns across the country with a mass media campaign to drive brand salience during this key consumption period," Sharma added.

Havmor Ice-Cream, part of the South-Korean-based Lotte Group, also expects to witness significant growth this summer. Vincent Noronha, VP-Marketing at Havmor Ice Cream, said, "Our exclusive stores have already seen an increase in footfalls. We now have a solid presence across leading metros and mini-metros, and expect to achieve substantial growth this year thanks to our extended distribution as a national player," he added.