



**PRODUCTS AND MARKETING STRATEGIES WITH HORTICORP-BEEKEEPING CONSORTIUM –OVERVIEW
MAVELIKKARA**

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Abstract

To compete effectively in today’s dynamic and competitive business environment marketers require carefully planned and satisfactory marketing mix for market planning. This is reached through a combination of all marketing activities coherently. Marketing managers strive to meet the real needs of the consumers by offering a quality product, price them fairly, place the product in the consumers’ mind (promote) and efficiently distribute them. In people’s perspective, the quality of the product will be the key success factor above all. Meanwhile, the Honey industry faced challenges for making and maintaining as well as preserving honey products. With the increasing market size and the increasing consumer demand each year, honey makers have to search for new approaches and to learn to understand the consumers’ needs to increase their product satisfaction and customer loyalty. This present study intends to understand the quality of bee products and marketing strategies. This study surveyed the customers of the hortincorp-beekeeping consortium and training center in Mavelikkara to find out their perceptions regarding the quality of honey products and to know whether the customers are aware of the marketing strategies of the company. At this outset, this paper tries to study the quality of products and marketing strategies with special reference to the Hortincorp Beekeeping Consortium and Training Centre.

Keywords: Hortincorp, Products, Marketing, Quality, Bee keeping.

I. Introduction

Honey and beekeeping have a long history in India. Honey was the first sweet food tasted by ancient Indian residing in forests and rock shelters. He hunted bee hives for this unique gift. India has the earliest records of beekeeping in the form of paintings by pre historic man in the rock shelters. With the development of civilization, honey captured a unique status in the lives of the ancient Indians. They regarded honey as a magical substance that controlled the fertility of women, cattle, as also their lands and crops. The recent past has witnessed a revival of the industry in the rich forest regions along with the sub-Himalayan mountain ranges and the Western Ghats, where it has been practiced in its simplest form.

In the past, honey was of great importance, particularly for its medicinal purposes. Today, honey is produced in almost every country of the world, with 90 percent being consumed directly as table honey. The remaining 10 percent is used as an ingredient in a diverse range of products. Beekeeping has transformed into an essential and increasingly commercial activity, the purpose of which is to increase revenue earning capacity. Beekeeping as the very low investment and skills, this industry has the potential to offers direct employment to lakhs of people especially hill dwellers, tribal’s, and farmers. Sustainability of this industry is therefore vital to the country’s economic wellbeing and development. Prime minister of India viewed these opportunities and advised the authorities to explore the opportunities to create employment in tribal regions to induce beekeeping, develop beekeeping potential districts viz. Left-Wing Effectuated (LWE) areas, backward districts.

Production is an activity have an ultimate importance for any economy. Production is the process of working upon the resources of nature and pushing or creating their utilities to satisfy the wants of consumers. In India, beekeeping is mainly forest and agro-based activity, as several natural plant species provide pollen and nectar to honey bees. Thus, the raw material for the production of honey is available at free. Honey production is a lucrative business and it generates employment.

Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to the customers for selling the products or services. Marketing involves all activities involved in the production, flow of goods, and services from point of production to consumers. It is defined as the set of human activities directed at facilitating and consummating exchange. Marketing has an intensive productive value, in that it adds time, form, place, and possession utilities to products and commodities. State Govt. has started training and development in beekeeping in Kochalummoodu, Mavelikkara, Hortincorp Centre. Beekeeping Consortium and Training centre is to be freely given to farmers, through this project. Those who complete successfully in this training will give certificates and equipments. There is a provision to start bee colonies and the equipments and the materials for producing honey will be given at subsidized rate. Producing, processing, and distribution in a regularized and systematic manner is this basic motto of this Hortincorp. With the co-operation of Kerala Govt. agricultural department Hortincorp started authorized beading units in different rural area, for giving training to the farmers. This is the first honey bee flora park in the country. This study focuses on the quality of products and marketing



strategies in the production of Honey with special reference to Hortcorp.

II. Significance of The Study

Beekeeping is an art and a mesmerizing science. Honey bees are a special gift to mankind because beekeeping can be done for both their pollination services and their cherished products such as honey, beeswax, propolis, bee venom, etc. These products have widespread use in different small- and large-scale industries in India. People have used bee products since time immemorial and they are a particularly suitable source of food in today's increasingly faster pace of life. Bee products are used in various foods and also enjoy extensive use in several industries including medicine, food processing, industrial manufacturing, and natural healing. Product quality is critical to satisfying the customers and retaining their loyalty. Quality products make an important contribution to long term revenue and profitability.

III. Scope of The Study

This present study intends to understand the quality of bee products and marketing strategies. This study surveyed the customers of the hortcorp- beekeeping consortium and training center in Mavelikkara to find out their perceptions regarding the quality of honey products and to know whether the customers are aware of the marketing strategies of the company.

IV. Statement of The Problem

To compete effectively in today's dynamic and competitive business environment marketers require carefully planned and satisfactory marketing mix for market planning. This is reached through a combination of all marketing activities coherently i.e. Marketing managers strive to meet the real needs of the consumers by offering a quality product, price them fairly, place the product in the consumers' mind (promote) and efficiently distribute them. In people's perspective, the quality of the product will be the key success factor above all. Meanwhile, the Honey industry faced challenges for making and maintaining as well as preserving honey products. With the increasing market size and the increasing consumer demand each year, honey makers have to search for new approaches and to learn to understand the consumers' needs to increase their product satisfaction and customer loyalty.

At this outset, this paper tries to study the quality of products and marketing strategies with special reference to the Hortcorp Beekeeping Consortium and Training centre.

V. Review of Literature

A review of the literature is needed for making a worthwhile contribution to the field in which the study is undertaken. Review of related literature is essential to keep updating the field of research. The study of related literature places the researcher in a better position to interpret the significance of the results obtained by him. Further, a review of literature helps in understanding the nature of the research investigation and provides evidence that the researcher is familiar with what has been already known.

- **Hilmi (2005)** in his research work "Honey and Beeswax market" says marketing is an important aspect of honey industry. This aspect is considerably undermined by many people who feel that the focus should be on production and then simply selling the outcome of production to customers.
- **Punitha K (2009)** in his research work "Marketing of honey in Kanyakumari District" points out that in Kanyakumari district with its ever-green forest, beekeeping is a main occupation and it is low-cost technology with high potentials for economic returns. Beekeeping is also done at the household and commercial level to generate additional income and employment.
- In the research of **Mennecke et al. (2006)**, **Chen and Cheng (2011)**, **Asshidin et al. (2015)**, **Jaafar et al. (2012)**, **Christiansen (2010)**, and **Sirfaz et al. (2014)** proved that there is a significant influence on the quality of product on the customer attitude. In addition to the research of product quality perception on the customer attitude, there is another study that examined the direct relationship between the perception of product quality and the sale volume.
- **Boisvert and Ashill (2011)** conducted a study on the perception of product quality to customer attitude, and the result is that there is positive influence of the perception of quality on the customer attitude.
- **Veronic (2011)** found that honey bee keeping could be adopted along with many other livelihood activities and natural resources used by them are forestry, agriculture and conservation activities. Pollination is the most economically significant value of beekeeping in production of the crop in the world.
- **Ayansola (2012)** studied that beekeeping is a self-reliance enterprise which provides employments to rural population and reduce the poverty and other social problems in the world while now a day, it is considered a profitable enterprise in all parts of the world.
- **Horvat and Dosen (2013)**, and **Ing Wu and Lie Lo (2007)** obtained the same results in researching the influence of the perception of product quality on the customer attitude. **Aynadis (2014)** from the research concluded that the quality of product is the dominant factor influencing the customer's attitude toward a product.



VI.Objectives of The Study

- To find out the problems associated with the production of honey.
- To analyze the multifarious benefits accruing to honey and its value-added products.
- To find out the health benefits achieved through the consumption of honey.
- To suggest ways and means improve the quality of production of Honey.
- To suggest novel & unique promotional activities for the marketing of natural honey and its value-added products.

VII.Research Methodology

The research methodology involves various methods and techniques that are adopted for collecting data and extracting information from the data and to prepare the report. It is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The sample size taken for the study is 120. The data has been collected from 120 respondents who are the consumers of honey of the beekeeping consortium and training center. The study depends on both primary data and secondary data

• Primary Data

The primary data were collected from the respondents with the help of a well-structured questionnaire using a personal survey method. In the survey method, a questionnaire was distributed to the respondents and their responses to these questions act as the primary data sources for the study.

• Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected with the help of web-based information, books, company brochures, journals, and magazines.

VIII.Tools Used for Analysis

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted using the following statistical tools:

• Tabular presentation

Statistical data usually pertains to an aggregate of numerical data that would eventually contribute to its collection, analysis, and interpretation. In a Tabular presentation, data is arranged in rows and columns and the positioning of data makes comprehension and understanding of data more accessible.

• Graphical representation

Graphical representation refers to the use of intuitive charts to clearly visualize and simplify data sets. Data is absorbed into graphical representation of data software and then it is represented by a variety of symbols, such as bars on a bar chart, or slices on a pie chart, lines on a line chart, from which users can gain greater insight than by numerical analysis alone.

• Simple percentage method

The percentage method is used for data analysis. This method to make a comparison of two or more series of data.

Percentage method = $\frac{\text{No. of respondents}}{\text{Total respondents}} * 100$

• Chi-square test

The Chi-square test is one of the simplest and most widely used non-parametric tests in statistical work. Therefore, chi-square test is a statistical test, which tests the significance of the difference between observed frequencies and the corresponding theoretical frequencies of distribution, without any assumption about the distribution of the population.

Chi-square = $\sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$

IX.Hypothesis

In the analysis question numbers 6 and 18 have been analyzed using the Chi-Square test of independence. The Hypothesis for the same is as follows.

1. H0: There is no significant dependence between the quality of products and consumer satisfaction levels.
H1: There is significant dependence between the qualities of products and consumer satisfaction level.
2. H0: There is a significant relationship between the income level and purchasing behavior of the respondents.
H1: There is no significant relationship between the income level and Purchasing behavior of the respondents.



X. Analysis

Table 1.1
Table 1 Showing the Opinion About the Quality of Respondents

Table with 3 columns: Responses, Number of respondents, Percentage. Rows include Excellent (70, 58.33), Good (38, 31.67), Fair (12, 10), Poor (0, 0), Very poor (0, 0), and Total (120, 100).

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: In table 1.1 shows that 58.33% of respondents are opined that the quality of the product is excellent and 31.67% is said that the product is of good quality. 10% of respondents opined that the products are of fair quality.

Chart 1 Showing Opinion About the Quality of Products

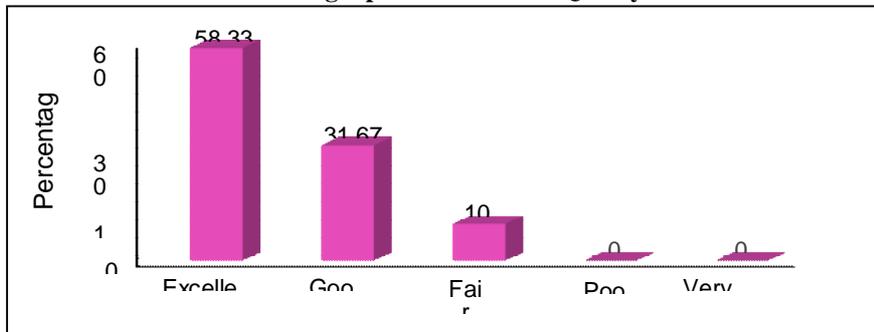


Table No.1.2
Table 2 showing The Satisfaction on the Products Provided by Company

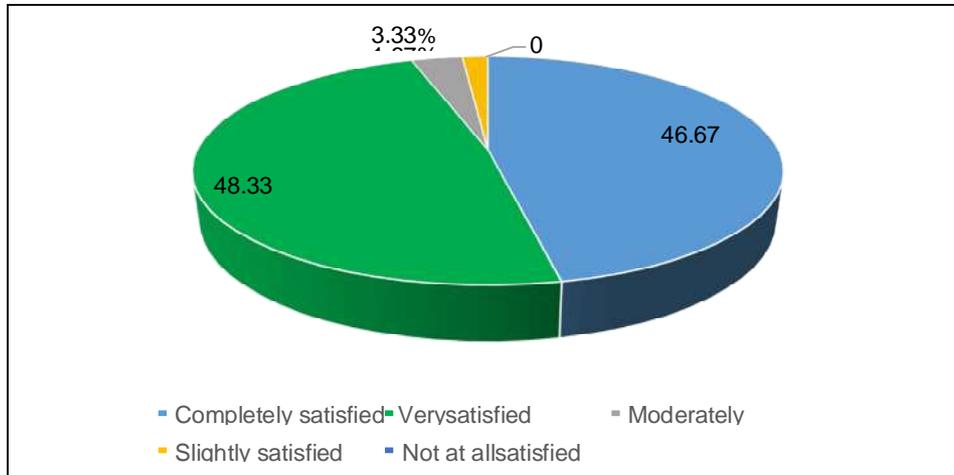
Table with 3 columns: Options, Number of respondents, Percentage. Rows include Completely satisfied (56, 46.67), Very satisfied (58, 48.33), Moderately satisfied (4, 3.33), Slightly satisfied (2, 1.67), Not at all satisfied (0, 0), and Total (120, 100).

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: In table 1.2 shows that the 46.67% of the respondents are completely satisfied and 48.33% are very satisfied with the products provided by the company. 3.33% of respondents are moderately satisfied and only 1.67% are slightly satisfied with the products of the company.



Chart2 Showing the Satisfaction on the Products Provided by the company



1. Testing of Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant dependence between the quality of products and consumer satisfaction level.

H1: There is significant dependence between the quality of products and consumer satisfaction level.

Table No. 1.3 Observed Frequency

Opinion	Completely satisfied	Very satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Total
Excellent	50	17	2	1	0	70
Good	6	31	1	0	0	38
Fair	0	10	1	1	0	12
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	56	58	4	2	0	120

Source: Primary Data

Table No.1.4. Expected Frequency

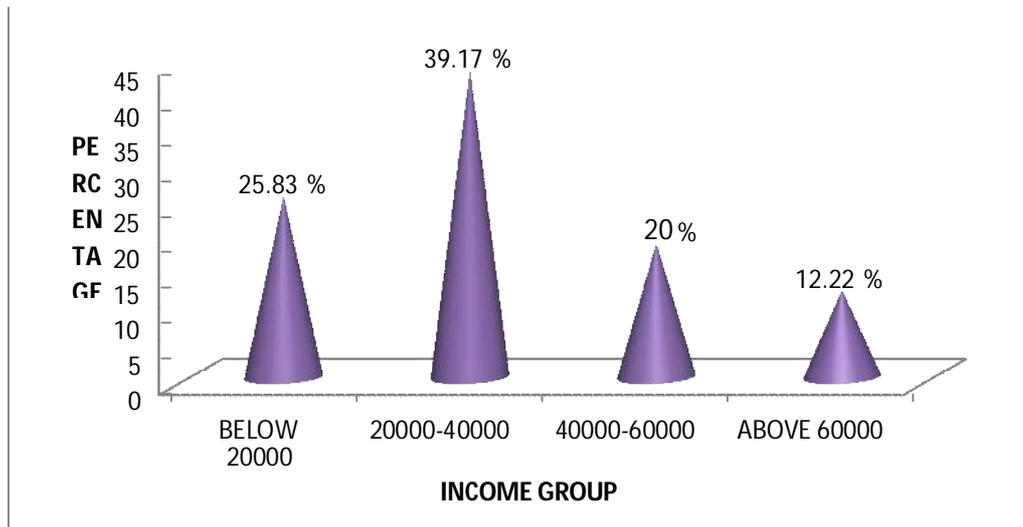
Opinion	Completely satisfied	Very satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Total
Excellent	32.67	33.83	2.33	1.16	0	70
Good	17.73	18.37	1.27	0.63	0	38
Fair	5.6	5.8	0.4	0.2	0	12
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Very poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	56	58	4	2	0	120

Source: Primary Data

Expected frequency = (Row total * Column total) / Grand total



Chart 3 Chart Showing Monthly Income of Respondents



Above diagram shows that 43.33% of respondents belong to income group 20000 to 40000, 25.55% of respondents belongs to below 20000, 18.88% of respondents belongs to income group 40000 to 60000, 12.22% of respondents belong to income group above 60000.

Table 1.8 Table Showing the Factors Influencing Purchasing Behaviour

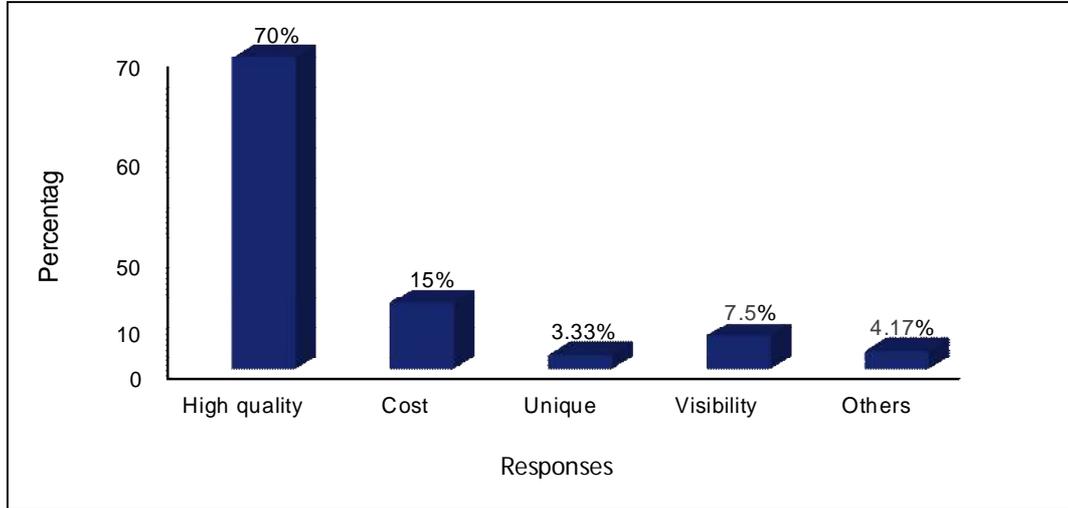
Factors	Number of respondents	Percentage
High quality	84	70
Cost effective	18	15
Unique	4	3.33
Looks & Feel	9	7.5
Others	5	4.17
Total	120	100

Source: Primary data

In table 1.8 shows that 70% of respondents opined that the product's quality has influenced their purchasing behavior and 15% responded that the main attraction was cost-effectiveness. 3.33% of respondents said that the product is unique and 7.5% of respondents opined that product looks & feel are the primary influencing factor. 4.17% of respondents are opinioned that other factors influence their purchasing behavior.



Chart No.4 Chart Showing the Factors Influencing Purchasing Behaviour



2. Testing of Hypothesis

H0: There is a significant relationship between the income levels and purchasing behavior of the respondents.

H1: There is no significant relationship between the income level and Purchasing behavior of the respondents.

Table No.1.9. Observed Frequency

Income Level	Factors influencing the purchasing behavior					Total
	High Quality	Cost Effective	Unique	Looks & Feel	Others	
Below 20000	21	5	2	2	1	31
20000-40000	33	7	2	3	2	47
40000-60000	17	4	0	2	1	24
Above 60000	13	2	0	2	1	18
Total	84	18	4	9	5	120

Source: Primary Data

Table No.1.10. Expected Frequency

Income Level	Factors influencing the purchasing behavior					Total
	High Quality	Cost Effective	Unique	Looks & Feel	Others	
Below 20000	21.7	4.6	1.03	2.32	1.29	31
20000-40000	32.9	7.1	1.57	3.52	1.96	47
40000-60000	16.8	3.6	0.8	1.8	1	24
Above 60000	12.6	2.7	0.6	1.35	0.75	18
Total	84	18	4	9	5	120

Source: Primary Data

Expected frequency = (Raw total*Column total) /Grand total



Table No 1.11. Calculation of Chi-Square Test

Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	(O-E) ²	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
21	21.7	0.49	0.225
5	4.6	0.16	0.035
2	1.03	0.94	0.912
2	2.32	0.102	0.044
1	1.29	0.084	0.065
33	32.9	0.01	0.0003
7	7.1	0.01	0.0014
2	1.57	0.184	0.117
3	3.52	0.27	0.076
2	1.96	0.0016	0.0008
17	16.8	0.04	0.0023
4	3.6	0.16	0.044
0	0.8	0.64	0.8
2	1.8	0.04	0.022
1	1	0	0
13	12.6	0.16	0.0126
2	2.7	0.49	0.1814
0	0.6	0.36	0.6
2	1.35	42.25	31.29
1	0.75	0.0625	0.083
		Chi square	35.118

Table: 1.12.Result of Chi- Square Test

Test	Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Calculated value	Table value
Person Chi-square	5%	12	35.118	21.03

Source: Primary Data

The calculated value of Chi-square,35,118 is greater than the critical value of Chi-square,21.03.

Decision: So, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis, that is, there is no significant relationship between the income level and purchasing behavior of the respondents.

XI.Findings

- Majority of the respondents aremales (57.5%)
- Most of the respondents (65%) agree that the products of the companyhave medicinal value.
- The study reveals that 26.66% of the respondents opinioned that major health advantage of the honey consumption is that it strengthens immune system of the human body,
- The study revealsthat58.33%of the respondent’s opinion about thequality of the products isexcellent.
- Most of the respondents (31.67%) are moderately satisfied with the price charged for the products.
- The majority of the respondent’s opinion is that the products of the companyare always available in the outlet of thecompany.
- The study reveals that for about 28.33% of respondents, the problems associated with the production of honey are Bee diseases and enemies.
- The study reveals that for about 70% of respondents, the main influencingfactor for their purchasing behavior is the highest quality of theproducts.
- Majority of the respondents (51.67%) agree that they get information about the hortcorp products mainly throughbrochures.
- Majority of the respondents (34.17%) areagreeing that the company maintains a proper customer feedback mechanism for



communicate with its customers.

- The study reveals that the 65.83% of respondent's opinion about the by-products and value-added products are excellent.
- As a whole, the majority of the respondents are satisfied with the products provided by the company.
- The majority of the respondents (82.67%) use natural honey as daily food.
- It is proved through Chi-square that there is significant dependence between the quality of products and consumer satisfaction levels
- It is proved through Chi-square that there is no any significant relationship between the Income level of the respondents and their purchasing behaviour.

XII. Suggestions

1. The company has to focus on satisfying its customer and gradually increase the level of its customer's satisfaction through having a clear-cut marketing strategy and integrating its various marketing activities.
2. The company must assure the quality of its products in order to win customer satisfaction and consequently achieve a competitive advantage and long run survival.
3. Company may start so many outlets for distribution of honey in public as well as private sector.
4. The company may develop effective advertisement programs of the products which show the benefits of its use as well as medicinal value. So that the common people in our state can understand about the products and the mission of the HORTICORP.
5. There are number of places such social media, websites etc. are all viable to advertise honey online. Many of these online avenues are free or low-cost.
6. The company must choose that reach its customers more effectively and other intermediaries that add value to the distributive process has to do more to expand its local market coverage.
7. Company must conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys and sample group interviews to track customer perceptions of the quality of its own and its competitor's products and services.
8. Efforts should be geared to alleviate the main constraints that hindered the production and marketing of honey products. Therefore, there is great need for attention in providing beekeeping equipments and accessories.
9. Beekeepers must be trained in hygienic collection of royal jelly, bee pollen, propolis etc. which have much higher value and demand for pharmaceuticals and health products.

XIII. Conclusion

Honey production and marketing has sprung forth as one of the most important agro based industry that helps to increase the crop yield manifold. The peculiarities of this agro based industry are that it does not require any raw materials from the artisan like other industries. The raw materials are in the form of nectar and pollen from flowers which is freely available in nature. The present studies found out that majority of the customers are regular customers and mostly lie in category of customers who have used higher quality products. This implies that better quality of product tends increase customer's loyalty. This study reveals that the product's highest quality is influencing the purchasing behaviour of the customers. This study analysis the distribution and marketing of honey product through the only one Governmental outlet of HortiCorp at Mavelikkara. It can be conducted that improving advertisement of these highly useful natural products may help the humanity to build up the highly good healthy community. Thus, the company can produce and distribute through so many outlets and company can make the image excellent.

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