

Neera-the natural nourishing health drink from God's own country

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Talk on the potential of Neera as a nutritious health drink has been in vogue for some time now. Major coconut producing countries like Indonesia, Philippines, Srilanka and Thailand have moved miles ahead in processing, marketing and export of Neera. Though Neera production is not restricted in the states of Maharashtra and Goa and in the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar islands, we are yet to utilize the immense potential of this product. Now, having realised the potential of Neera and its products, Governments of Kerala and Tamilnadu have permitted production of Neera by the coconut farmers. The entry of the two major coconut producing states into Neera production and processing is sure to bring about a drastic change in the utilization pattern of coconut in India. With the entry of Neera in the domestic market in the offing, a proper introduction of the product into the market, market placement and market promotion is vital.

Market segment of Neera as a drink

Neera is a natural health drink with high nutritive content. It should be introduced in the market as a natural nutritious health drink and not as a substitute for the soft drinks or fruit juices prevalent in the market. It can be considered on par with the protein enriched and vitamin supplemented foods and beverages available in the market, but the speciality of Neera is that it is natural, not man made or enriched



with growth promoters. This is the segment to be targeted for Neera – nutritious drink with almost all growth attributes required for growing kids, energetic youth, pregnant and lactating mothers, post surgery patients, old aged people

etc. It can also be introduced as a welcome drink for tourists, parties, wedding receptions, get together, official meetings etc. The low Glycemic Index of 35 will make it a desirable drink for the diabetic patients too.



Processing and Packaging of Neera

Neera production and processing should be undertaken with 'state of the art technology' and packaging undertaken on par with global standards. Combinations of Neera with tender coconut water or different flavours of Neera or blending with fruit juices re other options in order to bring in a variety of products in the market. Diversified products based on Neera suited for the various age groups should be developed. The pack size should also be in accordance with the target group. When retailing can be done with 200-330 ml packs, family packs of 1-2 litres can be introduced for bulk purchase.

Value added products from Neera

A variety of value added products can be processed from Neera which include Neera syrup, Neera honey, Neera jaggery and Neera sugar. The high nutritive value and the low GI of Neera products can be used as the main marketing strategies for promotion of the product. Neera syrup and honey finds immense applications in the food industry. Any bakery product or sweet using

Neera honey or syrup or sugar as the sweetening agent like chocolates, cakes, biscuits, jam, gulab jamun, laddoos, jalebis etc offers a finished food with low GI. The list is exhaustive and the market is huge.

Market introduction and promotion of Neera

Neera, being a new product and also surrounded with many apprehensions and confusions needs a proper market introduction. So the first step required is a proper introduction of Neera. This can be accomplished by a step wise



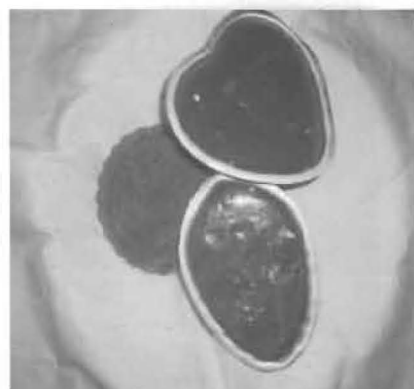
strategy.

Awareness programmes on Neera

Neera should be made known to the general public and the common man. Though coconut is a traditional crop cultivated over the years in the major growing areas, people are not aware of the attributes of Neera. Moreover, tapping for toddy has been undertaken from time immemorial and hence Neera has a stigma attached to it. To break out from this, proper awareness on Neera is essential. This can be done through conduct of seminars, publishing articles on Neera in dailies and popular magazines, talks shows or programmes in audio-visual media on Neera, publishing of booklets, leaflets and pamphlets on Neera, participation in fairs and exhibitions etc. Coconut Development Board has been making use of the potentials of the print and visual media during the past two years to propagate about Neera and it has proved beneficial. The strategy is to campaign intensively in all the major growing states initially and then move on to the areas where coconut is not cultivated.

Generic promotion of Neera

The production of Neera has been initiated on a pilot basis by the Coconut Producer Federations in Kerala. This is the first systematic commercial move towards Neera production from a consolidation of farmers. The Producer Companies in which the Federations are members will be undertaking marketing of the product in their own brand names. CDB will be supporting the Companies through generic promotion of Neera as a product. Short films on Neera, its nutritional attributes, advertorials and advertisements in print and visual media, hoardings and flex boards in strategic locations highlighting it as



a natural nutritious product etc are some of the mechanisms through which it is planned to create an impact in the minds of the consumers.

Promotion of nutritional attributes

Neera is better than many of the fruit juices in its nutrient content. It is iron rich and hence can be used for replacing the iron tablets fed to anaemic patients, post surgery patients, pregnant ladies, mothers and growing children. It has most of the major vitamins required for humans. It is refreshing, replenishing and rejuvenating when consumed. It provides instant calories and hence can be recommended even for sports persons. And more over, it is free from fat and cholesterol. The suagr present in Neera is having low GI. A product with the above health attributes has much potential in the Indian market and global market since the world is moving towards natural foods which do not contribute to life style diseases.

Support for brand promotion of Neera

Neera should be marketed in specific brands by the Producer Companies. The product should have its own identity to consolidate its position in the market. CDB can extend support to the Producer Companies for the support of their

brand of Neera.

Marketing of Neera

Marketing of Neera can be done in a systematic manner exploiting the various strategies for market penetration. Neera can be marketed directly by establishing exclusive specialized sales outlets for Neera like Neera parlours. Display and sale of Neera in super markets, malls, tourist spots etc will provide more visual impact and increase

awareness among consumers. Tie up with cooperative marketing institutions, retail chains etc for marketing of Neera in the 'shop in shop' model will be beneficial for the product. Collaboration with major hotel chains for introduction of Neera as a welcome drink for the tourists, associating with major caterers for supply of Neera for receptions, weddings etc will also provide an impetus to the launch of Neera. Products from Neera can be marketed highlighting the nutritional and health attributes.

