

Report On  
'Opportunity in Ready to Eat food products market during the  
outbreak of Corona Virus in Bangladesh'

By

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Student ID: 15304041

An internship report submitted to the Brac Business School in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Business Administration

Brac Business School  
Brac University  
April 2020

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The internship report submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The report does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

**Student's Full Name & Signature:**



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**H.M. Afazuddin Nayan**

Student ID: 15304041

**Supervisor's Full Name & Signature:**

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**Mohammad Atiqul Basher**  
Lecturer, Brac Business School  
Brac University

## **Letter of Transmittal**

Mohammad Atiqul Basher

Lecturer,

Brac Business School

BRAC University

66 Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212

Subject: Submission of Internship Report

Dear Sir,

This is my great pleasure to submit the Internship Report on “Opportunity in Ready to Eat food products market during the Outbreak of Corona Virus in Bangladesh” which is the requirement for the BBA degree. I have done my internship from ShopUp ltd.

I have tried my best to prepare an effective and credible report by implementing my academic experience in practical field and tried to address the major in-depth issues to make the paper accurate and viable. While preparing of the report, I have tried my best to study related materials documents, and performed by duties in ShopUp and tried to gather information’s as much as I could. However, for any sort of inconsistency, I will be pleased to clarify regarding this report.

I would like to thank you for your co-operation and hope that this report will receive your kind appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

---

H.M. Afazuddin Nayan

Student ID: 15304041

BRAC Business School

BRAC University

Date: April 21, 2020

## **Non-Disclosure Agreement**

This agreement is made and entered into by and between ShopUp Ltd. and the undersigned student at BRAC University Student named H.M. Afazuddin Nayan for the commitment of preventing the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information of the ShopUp Ltd.

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ShopUp Ltd.



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H.M. Afazuddin Nayan

## **Acknowledgement**

This report is a summation on many people's endeavor. But at first, I would like to express my gratitude to almighty Allah for vesting the strength to complete this report successfully within the deadline period.

This report would not have been possible without the dedication and contributions of a number of individuals as it is involved diverse field of knowledge and experience. Hence, it will be unfair to ignore acknowledging some of them as they contributed so much.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my honorable supervisor Mohammad Atiqul Basher, Lecturer, Brac Business School, Brac University and Md. Zia Uddin, Head of Retail Distribution, ShopUp Ltd. for agreeing to supervise me during the internship period. Their willingness and encouragement boost my enthusiasm to prepare a credible report as well as learn something new about retail distribution industry. Secondly, my parents those who have given me support through mentally and financially whenever I need them in my tough time.

I am also very grateful to Mr. Jashim Uddin, Mr. Ali Hasan MD. Al Mamunur Rashid, Md. Jiaul Khayer and Mr. Susmoy Rozario of ShopUp Ltd., who have given their endless effort to guide me in the right direction during the internship period and processing of this report.

## **Executive Summary**

In the FMCG industry, retail distribution is now very important for every marketer because the days have been changed, now consumers want something different and unique and that is why marketers need to fulfill the need of retailers and as well as the consumers. Ready to Eat products are one of the parts of FMCG products distribution during the outbreak of Corona Virus Outbreak in Bangladesh. The report gives a concise idea about the people's preferences on consuming ready to eat products based on its taste, price, ingredients, packaging and availability. The marketers can also fulfill the gap of their services and products modifications after analyzing the report and people's feedback over their decision on buying ready to eat food products. This also meet the need of people in home quarantined or emergency office duty in this pandemic situation to have ready to eat food products as their daily meal if the marketers take this research into consideration as it has described the facts to develop ready to eat products market in details.

**Keywords:** Retail distribution, FMCG market, Corona Virus, Ready to Eat food products

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## **List of Acronyms**

FMCG	Fast Moving Consumer Goods
SUB	Strategic Business Unit
RTE	Ready to Eat
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
SME	Small to Medium Enterprise

# Chapter-1: Overview of Internship

## 1.1 Student Information:

**Name:** H.M. Afazuddin Nayan

**ID:** 15304041

**Dept.:** Brac Business School

**Program:** BBA

**Major:** Marketing and Human Resource Management

## 1.2 Internship Information:

**Internship Period:** 3 months

**Company Name:** ShopUp Ltd.

**Dept:** Distribution

**Address:** Civil House, B111, Road 08, Mohakhali DOHS, Dhaka-1206

**Internship Supervisor Name:** Md. Zia Uddin

**Position:** Head of Distribution

**My Job Description:** I was working as a B2B communication & client acquisition specialist for the distribution part of ShopUp. Basically, I was the responsible person for bringing in new client for distribution unit for ShopUp. I had to find out who are the market leaders of FMCG product manufacturer, who are deliverer of those products in the market. Then I had to make contact with the retailers, sales representatives of those companies. I had to take out information from them about the company's whole sales & distribution process and also the contact information of the people working in the sales field. After that, I used to analyze the distributor strength and opportunity of the current distributor of the product in the specific market/area. Having that information in my hand, I had to make some strategies about how ShopUp can contribute in that distribution area by having some unique idea in it to deliver a product to the retailer very smoothly. Moreover, I usually made contact with the territory sales manager or regional sales manager of different brands, and have a chat with them about their distribution

process, current distributor performance, current market potential and future sales target or delivery success rate. Then I approached them with offering some unique idea or concepts to make the distribution of those FMCG products more smoothly. After analyzing the potential, I let those territory or regional managers to think about our offer and let us have the chance to distribute their products and discover some new opportunities in the market for their products where both the retailers and consumers are happy with the products in hand. With our skilled manpower, we can deliver the products as dealer more than other traditional dealers in the market was our main motto. I generally used to make a list of potential of companies or products that can be our client and they may have found a better distribution service from us. Then analyze the opportunities that I can create by having a conversation (generally formal/informal meeting) and then decide whether there can be a deal or not. Also, I had to do the financial calculation of total market size, amount of commission my company will get, number of retailers, my employees and clients sales force, estimated starting cost and estimated profit after first quarter and future potential of the deal.

### 1.3 Internship Outcomes:

#### **My Contribution to the Company:**

In my 3 months period in ShopUp, I had acquired 7 clients for distribution opportunity and most of them were MNC and their products are the market leader. Like; Reckitt Benkiser, Transcom Beverage Ltd, Bombay Sweets, New Zealand Dairy, Abul Khair Group, Arla Foods, GSK Ltd. were the main client which I personally acquired by approaching them with better service that ShopUp distribution can provide. Financially my target was to at least achieve at least 100 million BDT in 3 months by getting the clients and make profit by distribution their product in the market. And I am satisfied that I successfully achieved that target and planned to have more. I was able to open distribution house for my organization in Uttara, Mirpur, Badda, Tejgaon I/A, Mohakhali, Rangpur and Chittagong because I found out distribution opportunities in those market. Also maintaining a good relationship with the clients as there are lot of sales forces working under our payroll but from their organization was the key to have a good business deal remain solid for a long period of time. Furthermore, I worked with few of the organization's product team to develop their product criteria as like the ultimate consumer's will like them for sure.

**Benefits that I got from the internship:**

During my internship period, I had to contact with so many professionals in the corporate, most of them are working in the MNC's. Fortunately, I had direct meeting with them, and also had the opportunity to meet & greet some of the country's talented 'head of sales' who changed the theme of 'sales & marketing' of FMCG products in Bangladesh. From my supervisor, I had earned the knowledge of how to handle pressure situation, how to deal with the renowned professionals and close a deal, maintaining admin & procurement dept. to stipend every need of my dept. Honestly, my supervisor even helped me with making a proper report of daily basis activity of my team members, budget preparation & presentation in front of the higher management, how to call for new budget where the opportunity is available, how to convince the higher authority to sanction money in different occasions from where I can manage profit for the company. Surprisingly, I also took interview & had a mutual contact with the field level sales force and the retailers from where I came to know so many insights of the customer about what they actually want. I believe these activities and networking with the corporate professionals will obviously help me to get in touch with those people and have better career path. Not to mention, the assistance I got from my supervisor and company's other colleague helped me understand the corporate environment and procedure of a duty/task of how it can be executed positively. The salary disbursement procedure to the employees from ShopUp was actually very cool that they usually provide salaries to all the employees within 2-3 working days in the beginning of a month via a suitable medium. The overall benefits that I got from working at ShopUp was pretty useful and also the experience was wonderful in sense of executing my knowledge in Marketing as a major.

**Difficulties that I faced during the internship period:**

There were less difficulties that I faced during the internship period, though I can mention some of them that I faced and did struggle to overcome. Firstly, I had faced difficulties making communication with the clients who are mainly working on sales & marketing. So, it was ponderous to find them on phone and even it was challenging to get a free schedule of them when we can seat and discuss our business potential that whether they can give us the distribution opportunity or not. Secondly, I collected feedback of our service from the retailers in the market and it was very challenging to get proper information out of them about the distribution smoothness that they feel or get from us and how we can develop our service after hearing from them personally about our mistakes. Thirdly, it was a bit pity for me to manage

the asset of new distribution house properly after launching a new one because our distribution dept. & procurement dept. wasn't really maintaining a clear communication so that we sometimes got our logistics support very lately from the vendors. Lastly, we sometimes got some misleading information from our client and non-valid data from them which actually led us to a dead end where it was really grievous for our team to overcome from that unexpected situation and hence it costs us even financially sometimes.

### **Recommendations:**

To the future internship seekers, it is necessary to be a bit careful about handling the admin, procurement & IT dept. of ShopUp because seeking urgent service out of them on time is very challenging that might cause a hectic situation for the interns. In the distribution dept., one needs to work as a team to support the whole functions because distribution dept. works on fully operative for like unlimited working hours until the client's satisfaction is fulfilled. So, timing knowledge should be considered carefully if anybody wants to fulfill a task under the deadline period. During preparing a proper report, one needs to think about the format carefully because wrong format can mislead the whole sheet and it may send to the higher management where they will find it difficult to have a proper information which ultimately costs the reputation of the team and the supervisor of the dept.. So, ShopUp admin and other dept. can sit together to meet the ultimate need for a beginner/intern and find a better solution to the challenges that an intern may face often. Hence, I can put the advice like this that the future endeavors can follow but the thing that I experienced was "survival of the smartest" in ShopUp where you obviously will find so many opportunities to learn as well apart from few challenges.

## **Chapter-2: Company Overview, Operations and Strategic Audit**

### **2.1 Overview of the Company:**

ShopUp is a big platform where the social media entrepreneurs can get proper sales service of their products and can get access to the proper financing to their business and also the FMCG product companies can get unique distribution service to their products. It started its journey back in 2016 with three entrepreneurs having a dream to provide all kind of solution to the other entrepreneurs and business. According to Global Digital Insights, more than 3.8 billion people daily have access to social media and among them, 2.5 billion people scroll to Facebook timeline daily. ShopUp targeted those SME's who run their business through social media

platform and also use other platform to sell their products but couldn't get expected profit because of different solution that a one-stop service provider can provide. That's why they have started shop management, delivery, reseller, assist, eLoan, fmcg distribution solution for the clients. This is called "One Stop B2B Platform for SME's and Corporates".

## 2.2 Management Practices of ShopUp:

Starting with the three entrepreneurs of this organization, Afeef Zaman, Siffat Sarwar and Ataur Rahim, ShopUp is now a family of more than 120 employees working in all the channel of its services. Here's the organization structure of ShopUp:

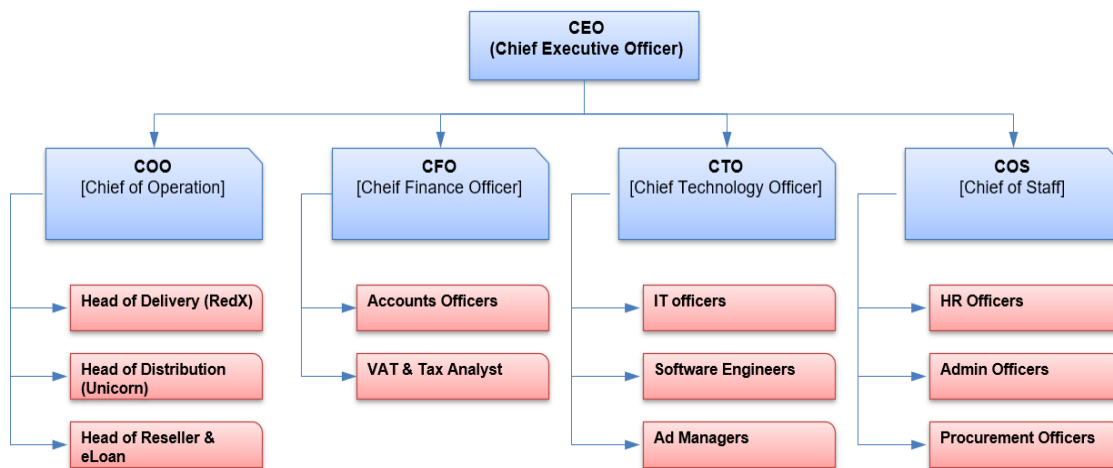


Figure 1: Organizational Chart of ShopUp

Senior authorities in ShopUp actually look over all the dept. along with the sheer assistance of the CEO. The managers from top to bottom has a unique style of getting the best out from the employees in all the dept. Like; employees always receive incentives for their performances and achievements, also everyone gets a yearly salary review for their contribution in the company. Moreover, giving regular feedback to the junior officers are the key factor for the learning of those employees so that can lead the dept. later and improve gradually. Respect employees in every occasion and value their emotion in times are also a phenomenal quality of the senior managers and the supervisors of the several departments of ShopUp. Proper training and support are the prime theory of getting an employee ready for the ultimate position is the key motive of every dept. heads. They often use to train them during the job so that the juniors and new comers get the absolute scent of what challenges they are going to face in tomorrows.



Showing proper leadership to solve a problem and teach to become a team member actually set a proper 'leadership by example' that often shown in ShopUp. Finally, most of the jobs in ShopUp are tech-based, so from the beginning the authority brings in skilled employees and provides latest technology solution to provide the best services to the clients.

### 2.3 Marketing Practices in ShopUp:

As a tech-based organization, ShopUp usually follow online marketing, direct marketing, advertisement and public relation. Mostly, in social media ShopUp is well known and can be seen often. They provide daily basis promotion towards the client through the social media and target customers. Also, they meet up the SME owners as a reseller meet up program where the resellers are being offered by good discounts and commissions. Financial organizations like IDLC also made collaboration with ShopUp to meet the loan need of the clients. ShopUp monthly visited top universities in Bangladesh to let the youth know about ShopUp and its activities so that the future leaders may join ShopUp or they can do some startup by themselves after getting influenced by the unique activities of ShopUp. In Bangladesh, ShopUp helped almost 60000 entrepreneurs to grow and excel their startup and ongoing business, so by using word of mouth strategy, ShopUp gather more community to listen to those successful entrepreneurs and their success story which was mostly evolved by ShopUp. For their distribution business, B2B communications expert generally meet and greet the sales officers of different brands to give them a visual idea of services provided by ShopUp distribution by showing them the growth rate, company profile, current clients, fiscal year financial performances so that the corporate clients can be convinced enough. RedX delivery system provides fast and professional delivery system to the customers in a best way so that the number of one-time customers will be less. Here's some example of ShopUp and its SBU's marketing concepts;

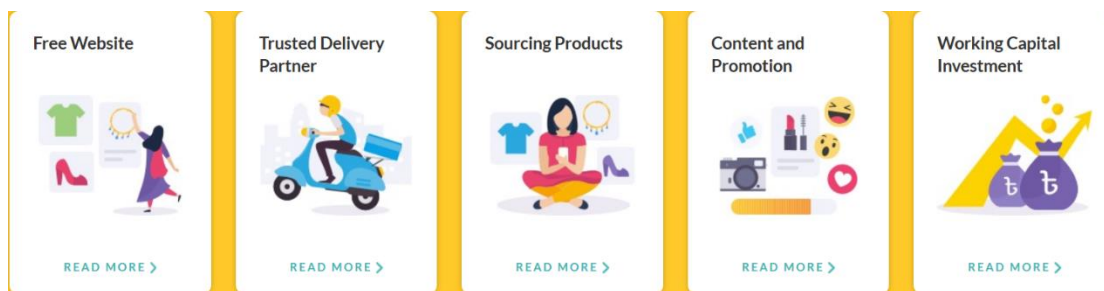


international banks. From other projects, mostly international, ShopUp received the grant of 25,000 US dollars as the first runner up and were awarded by Metlife foundation.

## 2.5 Operations Managements & Information System Practices in

### ShopUp:

To understand the daily operation and information system practices going on in ShopUp, we have to look over its basic activities on daily basis;



*Figure 5: ShopUp Daily Activities*

The above figure shows that from the start, ShopUp actually completed the basic demands of its client which is mentioned there. Providing free web service, deliver product via its SBU's RedX, sourcing product for the client for a better marketplace, creating content and promotion for the social media page or outsourcing for the clients, eLoan management for SME's and startups with lower interest and regular retail delivery management of FMCG products of different brands are the main tasks. These tasks are being done by the specific team that has appointed to do these, but the strategies, requirements fulfillment, resources management, planning for next approach, estimated costing for the task and full control over the task are being taken cared by the head of those dept. Those decisions are being presented to the COO and CEO for approval, if the head of the dept. can convince the COO & CEO enough to execute that decision, then the task is good to go. That's how the operation system works on a daily basis. Sometimes, taking little decisions for the betterment purpose can be taken by the heads of the dept. It's not always necessary to take approval of the CEO's and COO's. For HR, admin

and procurement help/requirements, the appointed officers need to get clearance from the Chief of Staff to execute the internal dept. orders.

For internal communication, ShopUp uses a software called 'Slack' which connects all the employees from various dept., and they can contact/have a chat with each other. Also, each dept. has WhatsApp chatting group among them to share their message while not being in the office. Moreover, most of the work in ShopUp are done in google sheet, google doc, google slides, google forms, google aps script etc. along with MS Office. For external communication, even with the clients; ShopUp has official mobile number for all the employees and hotline number for the urgent help and also social media communication for 14 hours a day. From the experience, I can say that the internal and external communication of ShopUp is smooth and quick.

## 2.6 Industry and Competitive Analysis of ShopUp:

ShopUp is in the tech-based solution provider industry and that industry is getting competitive now-a-days. (Kabir & Khan, 2020) stated that Bangladesh has now transformed into an 'Asian Tiger' for its prospect in SME's and startup's innovations. Although there is reason to be optimistic, Bangladesh still has a long way to go if it intends to periodically restructure and strive for new waves of development paradigm in supporting the SME owners and entrepreneurs to get a proper tech-based solution to get the right marketplace and proper financial support. To analyze ShopUp's competitiveness in the industry, SWOT and Porter's Five Forces analysis can suit here perfectly.

### **SWOT Analysis:**

- i. **Strength:** ShopUp has a large distribution network in 48 districts now via its SBU RedX, also has a big reseller and dealers' community who can provide dealer support, local support at any time. Then it has several apps for essential clients to get the proper service, this is where ShopUp is technically advanced than any other competitors. Skilled employees for each of the solutions it provides has given ShopUp a big advantage. Diversified employees from different backgrounds that help the organization by bringing in diverse ideas and methodologies of doing things a lot smoother. In every team, several qualified and accredited professionals are there to assist the team to complete any challenging task with their corporate experience. ShopUp has a wide range of products portfolio and innovative ideas to enter a new market so it's quite easy for them

to do that. The social media responding team is so fast and accurate that the solution seekers are always happy to get the proper service that they need according to the monthly customer's feedback index. ShopUp has strategic partnership with few of the best corporate dominant in the market that already increased its market value. Also, the retail distribution team are always getting in touch with corporate people and maintain a good communication and relation to spread their business in FMCG sector all around Bangladesh.

- ii. Weakness: ShopUp has detected problems with their research & development unit for few years, as the target customer's taste, view, demand and behavior are changing frequently, it faces real problem to give the proper solution to the respective dept. as needed in time. Most of the ShopUp properties are rented, so they face a real problem sometimes in their distribution channel and permanent office with proper management. Cash flow problem is another weakness of ShopUp as sometimes the money goes into unnecessary channel and unplanned borrowings so the urgent needed money can be delayed a bit when its needed.
- iii. Opportunity: Booming in the e-commerce sectors, and people's interests in SME's and startup has increased the opportunities of ShopUp in its business prospect. Technological advantages and a wide startup community also provides the number target customers weekly towards ShopUp to grab its offer. Trade barriers are very less for ShopUp as they maintain proper VAT and Tax system without any mystic with the govt. policy. (Anik & Hasan, 2018) told in their writeup that the uniqueness of ShopUp is that the algorithm analyzes 25 data points of a micro-enterprise and its owners, and also assesses their capital requirement and repayment capacity. For the clients, analyzing the proper their proper platform then refers these micro-enterprises to partner financial institutions that disburse the loans directly to the merchants to show the cause that they really have a great business potential for future and confirmed ROI.
- iv. Threat: Random technological development by the competitors is a threat for ShopUp in this industry. Substitutes ways & products are already available in the market for the target customers and also the competitors are highly engaged into promoting their unique products so that the current clients can be transformed into their service from ShopUp's service. Fraud service provider can take the patent of ShopUp and mess up with its clients to gain illegal profit. Cyber-crime like sending spam or malware into client's mail with ShopUp's name on it, where it exactly seems like an offer or

promotion sent by ShopUp, can harm the current clients even with their money. So, these are the threats remaining in the industry.

### **Porter's Five Forces Analysis:**

- i. Threat of New Entrants: Moderately High. Because there are lot of companies that can provide the same service that ShopUp is providing. Though ShopUp's business units are many so the number of services they are providing is many, that's why sometimes its moderate. Not all companies can enter and start alike ShopUp but now-a-days lot of tech companies are thinking differently and try to open one-stop solution for the SME's and entrepreneurs.
- ii. Threat of Substitute: Moderately High. As already mentioned, that there are lot of companies that are providing the similar services in a different way and in different name so that one can easily choose between which company they will prefer. Traditional media content providers can regularly put up promotional post to grab more customers so uniqueness is the key to seek customers attention other they will go for the substitute.
- iii. Bargaining Power of Buyers: High. The clients can easily bargain about the price otherwise they can switch to others services. Even if ShopUp try to be more innovative and unique, the diversification of services cannot hold back the customers if the price is not negotiable. Clients will compare between price and service at the same time so that make the bargaining power higher. Sometimes, competitors can provide incredibly lower pricing to the customers that ShopUp will think twice to cope up with.
- iv. Bargaining Power of Suppliers: Moderate. Here, there's less differentiate in the products among the rivals so as there are lots of suppliers available in the market, the bargaining power will not be that good. Moreover, the suppliers do not provide a credible threat for forward integration into the industry so this makes their bargaining power weaker. More clients mean more money, if that concept applies for the suppliers then also have to be reasonable in their pricing as well so that also make their bargaining power lower.
- v. Rivalry among Existing Firms: High. In Bangladesh, currently a lot of tech solution providers are ruling the market with specification and uniqueness in their service. For example, IBM Digital Bangladesh is providing the same

solutions that ShopUp is providing, even with more resources and skilled market experts. Considering higher fixed cost, lower price for the customers, it is getting more and more competitive among the rivals in the industry about who will be providing the best service to the clients. High investment and low exit barrier are also making the competition more acute among the rivals in this industry.

## 2.7 Summary and Conclusions:

ShopUp as a startup always tried to bring in new innovation in tech-service providing, helping SME's with all the support like; financially and technically and most importantly the entrepreneurs who actually want to bring some change in their interest, provide them ideas and all other support as a sister concern. ShopUp currently helping the entrepreneurs to excel their business in a better way and developed the condition of SME's to get a better marketplace to sell their products. It has good strengths and opportunities in the industry with some unique concepts to provide exceptional service to its clients. For instance; (Bhalla, 2019) in his article mentioned that after watching the potential and market opportunity of ShopUp, part of the first cohort of Surge, Sequoia Capital India's accelerator program, Bangladesh-based ShopUp is a social commerce platform that helps micro entrepreneurs in Bangladesh set up and run their businesses on Facebook, which accounts for more than 80 percent of the country's online commerce sector. Also, it has got the best startup award of 2019. Moreover, the combination of the all the dept. and teamwork of every dept. has helped ShopUp to reach in this position. In addition, to analyze the potential, (Monk, 2019) mentioned that founded by Afeef Zubaer Zaman, Siffat Sarwar, and Ataur Rahim Chowdhury, the ShopUp platform provides tools for sourcing, cataloging, payments, shipping, and access to business loans. There are currently over 95,000 micro-entrepreneurs on the ShopUp platform and over 5,000 more joining every week. So, the potential that ShopUp has, are the main factor for them to grow even bigger and better and as a result currently ShopUp is launching its operation in Nepal from mid-2020.

## 2.8 Recommendations for ShopUp:

With the diversified workforce that ShopUp has, and some unique concepts with technological advancement, it can easily be the no. 1 tech-solution provider within few years. If they can

maximize their assets, maintain proper ROI, control employee turnover rate, finding new market to spread their business platform, distributing FMCG products in a more professional manner with skilled sales workforce, trained employees to maintain 100% products delivery success rate, improvise themselves in front of the clients better than the rivals then obviously it will get a good future prospect. (Newlands, 2015) stated the reference that the CEO of Amicus, Seth Bannon once said that “Don't be a lone wolf. Lean on the experience and smarts of your teammates, investors, and mentors to help solve the tough problems and take advantage of the opportunities” which is exactly matched with ShopUp and their activities and future prospect in the industry.

## Chapter-3: Opportunity in Ready to Eat Food Product's market during the outbreak of Corona Virus in Bangladesh

### 3.1 Introduction:

Bangladesh's cooking and lifestyle have changed tremendously in the last 10 years (Hasan, 2020). Apart from the Corona Virus outbreak and people being quarantined, there are many major factors that are involved to make this change are reformation of liberalization , arising health consciousness among people, dual income family in cities, number separate living of couples or working couples, creative kitchen building ways and instruments and rapid reproduction of Media. Also, millennials reigning in the working sectors in recent are also a big factor (Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves). In Bangladesh, the cooking style and eating habits usually varies drastically from city to village part. Also, people who work in the big cities like Dhaka or Chittagong has a different kind of a cooking style or eating habits. Due to lifestyle pressure & tremendous workload, nowadays people prefer easy and short way of cooking food rather that spending too much time on traditional cooking in the house. Because of non-availability of raw materials to prepare spices and tiring process that involved in doing so, it has influenced people to choose such ready to eat products. In our country, there is no specific category and market potential for these products that can solve the problem of the millennials working under pressure and missing the time to consume their regular meal. In this



epic moment of all of us being in home quarantined and literally the whole country is under lockdown, in the segmentation of food portfolio varies from noodles, pasta, dairy products, meat and fish products. Including the restaurant ready cooking items like; roti, paratha and pre-cooked dishes etc. but those are closed considering the pandemic. Peoples that are randomly migrating to cities for job and education; it is really necessary that these people have to find the Ready-to-eat products are comfortable to eat rather than depending on restaurants also in addition to that, people getting quarantined they can't really depending on the restaurant all the time and also the safety concern matters. Other factors that influences these products to consume during the corona outbreak is that the availability of different flavors and dishes and sometime it tastes better than restaurants or home cooked food. Millennials consumers who are looking for variety of dishes and flavors now-a-days depend on these processed products and they can get lazier so RTE foods can relief their hunger in a different way. These products generally bring different tastes to their eating's and delicacy too. Certainly, there is no conclusion that one leads to-whether the availability or taste or time constraint, all these factors set off with each other in driving these product's consumptions. Digitalization, modernization, majority of young population going into job market, knowledgeable consumers, will make an obvious impact on the consumption of these products. Considering the factors like; increasing literary levels, rapid advancement of communication medium and technology, millennials consumers are becoming more aware of the foods they consume and they make this decision based on the wealth of resources available at any platform on the time of emergency situation in this country due to corona virus. Common RTE foods in Bangladesh are; cup noodles, cup soup, canned meat, canned sweet, snacks like packaged samosa, dosa, shingara and etc.

### 3.2 Objectives:

The primary objectives of this research are; analyzing the future market of Ready-To-Eat food products that consumers like; millennials are likely to have in their meals staying at home due to this pandemic and also perceive the consumption pattern of Ready-To-Eat food products in this quarantine time for the understanding for the brands that may work on this specific genre.

Secondarily,

- To study the perception of people about Ready-To-Eat food products.
- To find out how much people are liking the taste and quality of the existing processed food or it is changing in this quarantine time.

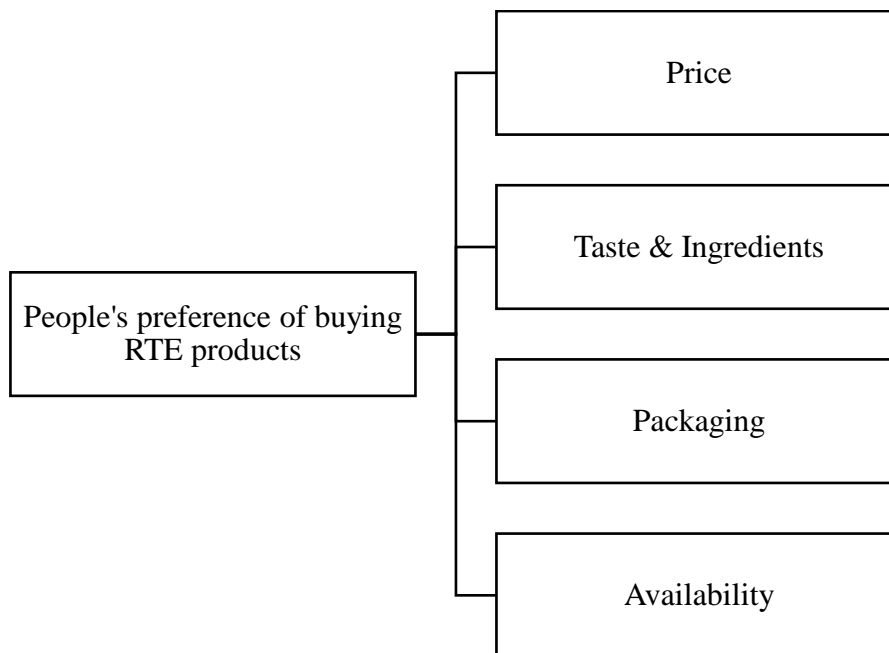
- To analyze that what needs to be changed in processed food items in terms of target consumer's taste buds.
- To acknowledge the need to revise the strategy of distributing the Ready-To-Eat foods through retail channel with longer expiry dates and availability in this emergency health situation.

### 3.3 Methodology:

The sample/population for this research were the home quarantined people and office goers Dhaka city, coming from age groups and different profession. The research tried to determine whether there was a sheer opportunity for ready to eat food industry to grow more in the big cities and being popular among the home quarantined people due to corona virus and job holders. Future reader also can get an absolute generalized idea about how the corporate people may get chance to have a healthy meal which can be processed and instantly served rather than cooked on a regular basis. In his report, we are conducting a customer perception survey on the opportunity of RTE products during this pandemic for all kinds of people. We have chosen descriptive technique for our research which is the most widely used research design around the world. The standardized way of descriptive technique includes the use of questionnaire, personal interviews through video chatting, etc.

To make the research more effective, we had to gather qualitative data to check the customer perception and satisfaction level for RTE products. A survey is therefore needed to do the qualitative research and as such we had decided to do an online questionnaire survey by the help of Google forms. However, I have contacted people through social media to ensure how they feel about RTE food products service in Dhaka city. As we already know that any kind of online research has become increasingly popular nowadays due to the advancement and convenience in accessing technology and specially during this pandemic time in Bangladesh. It has also become more epicuticular as it can be applied to numerous researches such as Marketing research, Financial Analysis. Despite, deriving data and statistics can be quickly done by online surveys. So, it is believed that original data is difficult to extract due to the lack of acuteness of the respondents in online research.

## Research Model:



With a research model at first, we wanted to execute a proper quantitative research but due to the unexpected occurrence of the pandemic. It was almost tough to initiate the quantitative research, yet we had to make it qualitative. Here, price, taste & ingredients, packaging and availability was dependent variables to test people's preference of buying RTE products as independent variable. Based on the dependent variables, the questions being made and asked.

### 3.3.1 Respondents and sampling procedures

#### **Population**

The sample in research contains the entities that have the information gathered by the researcher. Moreover, the population indicates to all types of people who live in Dhaka and consume RTE frequently or at least once. I have counted the respondents on the basis of how regular they use the service. Total number of respondents were 100.

## **Sample**

As already mentioned, the survey was conducted on the people of Dhaka city with different age range like; 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50 and above. Though we found out most of the responses from people of 30-40. Among them, male respondents were more.

## **Sample size**

The size of the sample defines whether the observations would be rejected or accepted. The higher the sample sizes the higher the chances of the validity of the data would be and as such the decision would be easier and unbiased. I have tried to choose the sample from consumers of RTE products. However due to lack of sufficient time and scope I had to conduct the survey based on 100 respondents. I needed to survey 100 people through online survey and got feedback of from all of them with no missing case.

### **3.3.2 Questionnaire and Analysis**

I have arranged 12 questions which are related with price, taste and ingredients, packaging and availability of RTE products. Moreover, I have used nominal and ordinal scale for example yes or no and also Likert Scale questions use a scale where people are not forced to express an either-or opinion, rather allowing them to be neutral, though at first the responders were asked to follow linear scaling but then the values were turned into Likert scale. The survey was required to conduct within short period of time so it was quick for the respondents to answers questions and it was easy for me to analyze them through Likert scale.

## **Collection of Data**

Primary and secondary data have been chosen to analyze the overall consumers preferences and satisfaction of RTE products. I used secondary data from different journals and articles. As I mainly used primary data which we got by conducting an online survey on 100 respondents who were from different profession and phenomenon. Additionally, I had to use the Google forms through which I distributed our questionnaire online using a link to the entire respondent. Moreover, it took me quite a while approximates 4 days to collect the data from the 100 respondents and input those data in the sheet.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

Getting all the responses from the respondents I have used SPSS software in order to analyze the information with arithmetic mean. Reliability analysis and significance testing were very more resourceful to me which made the validation quite easy. By using SPSS software, I have also learned to get beneficial output, effective data on management and various options like charts, graph, forms, etc.

### **3.4 Literature Review:**

Though it seemed very difficult to find any other research topic related to opportunity of RTE products during corona virus outbreak, I just had to manage few of the articles where food safety during corona outbreak were discussed and current RTE products market around the world were discussed.

(Litte, Omotoye, & Mitchell, 2010) stated in their article that people actually like the RTE products because of its taste and that's occurred due to usage of mouth-watering spices. While consuming that food, people feel like they are having a restaurant style food and its actually in their hand and even while they are at home or work. So, the microbiological quality or features of Spices are adding the advantages of brands and manufacturer to get the customers attention and selling their products over period of time. Moreover, people often find artificial ingredients interesting for their taste bud which also a popular option for the manufacturers because they already have so many artificial spices and tastes formulas which make their products tasty to some of the eaters.

(Norton & Monu, 2020) described in their write-up that food safety for the people during the Novel Corona Virus outbreak is more important now. Because, safety & hygiene of food personnel, viral transmission and control in food supply and proper prevention management for the food deliverer are the main concern for the food industry now and that applied for the RTE products too. The article clearly stated that there is no subtle way to serve or prepare food during this epic time without knowing who is affected or who is not. So, prevention measure for all the people who worked in the food processing industry should be well taken care of. So that, the infected people get themselves away from preparing and distributing RTE foods or any other foods. These steps can only prevent the spread of novel corona virus during this period and ensure the food safety of the people.

### 3.5 Limitations:

During the course of the research, I faced problems in getting proper and timely responses, though the sample results were not biased. I was not experienced enough to carry out professional research neither were I was able to directly pick out the key problems from the respondents, meet the sales professionals and retailers about asking the preferences and their steps to need the people's perceptions on RTE products the sample of the research were only 100 respondents. Furthermore, there were literally no previous research on this topic from which I could have taken guidance and help, thus, as they were no secondary data, it was no possible way for me to compare or get help from in order to further our research. At first, I was hoping to conduct a quantitative research with proper validation but I had to choose qualitative method because I could not assemble a proper help or discussion with the experts about quantitative analysis because of the pandemic situation. So, I literally had to sit in my home doing all these and finally ended up with a qualitative research though I added the responses from the responders with validation using the SPSS software.

### 3.6 Findings and Analyses:

Here's the descriptive analysis of the survey that has been conducted on people's preferences of buying RTE food during Corona Virus Outbreak in Bangladesh.

		<b>Gender</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	69	69.0	69.0	69.0
	Female	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

		<b>Age</b>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	28	28.0	28.0	28.0
	30-40	37	37.0	37.0	65.0
	40-50	19	19.0	19.0	84.0
	50 and above	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

**Q1. Price is important for me when I am buying RTE products**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	16.0
	Neutral	42	42.0	42.0	58.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	94.0
	Strongly Agree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 1: Question:1 on "Price" and Result*

**Q2. I will compromise the price if home delivery is available**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	40	40.0	40.0	41.0
	Neutral	37	37.0	37.0	78.0
	Agree	17	17.0	17.0	95.0
	Strongly Agree	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 2: Question:2 on "Price" and Result*

**Q3. I will consume a Cup Noodles or Cup Soup if it is available within the price range of 30-50 BDT if that maintains restaurant style taste**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	21	21.0	21.0	24.0
	Neutral	43	43.0	43.0	67.0
	Agree	29	29.0	29.0	96.0
	Strongly Agree	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 3: Question:3 on "Price" and Result*

**Q4. I prefer quality (taste & ingredients) over price when I am buying RTE products**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	6.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	22.0
	Agree	45	45.0	45.0	67.0
	Strongly Agree	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 4: Question:1 on "Taste & Ingredients" and Result*

**Q5. I will buy RTE products if it is available with "less oily", "less spicy" and "organic" tag on it and it actually tastes like home-made food**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Neutral	7	7.0	7.0	13.0
	Agree	49	49.0	49.0	62.0
	Strongly Agree	38	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 5: Question:2 on "Taste & Ingredients" and Result*

**Q6. I am health conscious, so i will prefer natural foods/cook foods rather than RTE products**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	11.0
	Agree	29	29.0	29.0	40.0
	Strongly Agree	60	60.0	60.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 6: Question:3 on "Taste & Ingredients" and Result*



**Q7. I will not buy RTE products if it is not well packaged according to the proper health code**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Neutral	38	38.0	38.0	53.0
	Agree	27	27.0	27.0	80.0
	Strongly Agree	20	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Question:1 on "Packaging" and Result

**Q8. I will buy RTE products if it is well packaged (with spoon) so that i can eat it without any plate or spoon**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Neutral	37	37.0	37.0	51.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	87.0
	Strongly Agree	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Question:2 on "Packaging" and Result

**Q9. I will prefer plastic coating in the packaging so that I can avoid risk of disease causes from Plastic products while having RTE products**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	11.0
	Neutral	37	37.0	37.0	48.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	82.0
	Strongly Agree	18	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 9: Question:3 on "Packaging" and Result

**Q10. I will prefer RTE products to be available in all grocery stores nearby me**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Neutral	14	14.0	14.0	19.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	59.0
	Strongly Agree	41	41.0	41.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 10: Question:1 on "Availability" and Result*

**Q11. I will order RTE products from online with higher quantity if it can deliver within 4-8 hours in my home**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	2.0
	Neutral	4	4.0	4.0	6.0
	Agree	45	45.0	45.0	51.0
	Strongly Agree	49	49.0	49.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 11: Question:2 on "Availability" and Result*

**Q12. I will always prefer RTE products it increases its expired date timeline and avail more flavor option that arouses my taste bud**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Neutral	6	6.0	6.0	9.0
	Agree	35	35.0	35.0	44.0
	Strongly Agree	56	56.0	56.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

*Table 12: Question:3 on "Availability" and Result*

<b>Reliability Statistics</b>		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.702	.714	12

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling		.624
Bartlett's Sphericity	Test of Approx. Chi-Square		247.696
	df		105
	Sig.		.000

To analyze the research significance, reliability statistics and KMO and Bartlett's Test were done in SPSS software. In reliability statistics, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.702 which is <0.7 which means the research was significant and responses were validated equally (Taber, 2017). Moreover, KMO and Bartlett's Test were also analyzed to see the sample adequacy. The result was 0.624 and it generally indicates that the factor analysis of the data is useful and also the sphericity significance level is .000 which is less than 0.05 which also evaluates the research result positively (Center, n.d.).

## **Analyses:**

### **Price:**

According to the result, people while purchasing RTE products doesn't think that much about pricing as they were being neutral about spending money on buying RTE foods. They can spend money if the products are good. Even if the home delivery is available for RTE food, people do not like to spend that much money on it, so the pricing has to be strategic as if people can afford it even if the home delivery for it is available during quarantine time. If the choice is given to people that they are offered to consume cup noodles or cup soup on a price range of 30-50 BDT, people play a safe game as they neutralize the price here. So, the price can be

decided into middle of 30-50 BDT range, for example; it can be 40 BDT for one cup noodles or soup, so people will be willing to consume them. Analyzing above all feedback, we can say that people are actually a bit price sensitive even in quarantine time in this pandemic while taking decision to buy RTE products. Getting a field level data from a renowned retailer name Jashim Howlader in the Uttara Sector-4, Dhaka area said people in the ‘posh area’ like Gulshan, Banani, Uttara, Dhanmondi don’t always think about products, but yet they give a second thought on buying RTE products if it is maintaining hygiene and organic or not. Though he said that from his retail-chain friends and distributors, he came to know that the office-goers and the employees from corporate offices in this areas almost stop having food from the restaurant, either they order food from the food delivery app or buy RTE foods if the price in mid-range (considerable) rate which is already mentioned in this topic above.

#### Taste & Ingredients:

People generally agreed to prefer quality over price in some cases if the taste and ingredients are concerned. They will always prefer the right product with good taste and ingredients which states its overall quality no matter if the price is a bit high. Producers now have the concern that, if the tag like “less oily”, “less spicy” and organic tag on the RTE products and it actually delivers the taste like that, then of course they will consume it. So, manufactures can take it in consideration that, people find organic and less oily-spicy RTE food rather than full of junk items/ingredients in RTE products. People are now becoming more health conscious so they are strongly agreed with the term that they will prefer home-made or cooked food rather than outside RTE food. So, here’s the challenge for the marketers to get the attention and gain the confidence of the consumers after making the RTE food healthier like home-cooked food whatsoever. In this process, they may need to add authentic spices and flavor to get proper taste. Like; in our country some of the brands of China & Korea, imported ready-made ramen with an authentic flavor & ingredients which has a higher demand in the posh areas. I have met a regular shopper from Gulshan-1, Dhaka while he was doing shopping from a chain super-shop that if Bangladeshi manufacturers can make the taste & ingredients very authentic like the imported RTE products, then the market will moved to the local manufactures/brands side because then consumers will consider those deshi brands if it can provide the products in a lower price with similar or even better ingredients & taste then of course they will gain more and more customers. The super-shop managers said eventually there is always a demand for

the ready-made food like frozen parathas, sausages, cup noodles and soup among the regular consumers. In addition, in this pandemic the demand is even higher and people are actually buying it in lots and choosing the brands which are actually providing authentic taste & ingredients and somehow giving the vibe of home-cooked taste and people are storing them in their home because of the lockdown and restrictions of people not to roam the area often said the super-shop manager.

### Packaging:

People being more concerned about the health code especially during this pandemic time. Which is why, they are not willing to take a chance to buy RTE products if the packaging is not properly done maintaining the proper health code. If they have a confusion on hampering their health by consuming any unhealthy packaged RTE food, they may stop buying those even in this quarantine which will be a huge loss for the potential of this market. Putting in spoon or fork inside the package in RTE food is necessary because people more likely to have the food with that manufacturer given spoon and has a tendency to not use home's spoon or plate to consume that. In this pandemic, many office going people had to do emergency duty and the restaurants are closed so they might need a combination of proper packaging with spoon/fork to have their RTE food in any meal. (NZ, 2012) mentioned in their report that, it might cause cancer if people eat food from a plastic package. The survey also suggests that people prefer only plastic coating on the packaging which will keep the food crispier and fresh and also not causing them with some diseases like cancer. The RTE products are actually very sensitive because it is a package of food and it can be broken at any point of the shipment from shop to consumers house. So, if the local manufactures set a standard packaging measurement for those RTE products and ensure that it will be unbreakable and no chance of being crushed and the plastic packaging causing no harm to the body then people will give more attention to those products thinking about that RTE foods that are well packaged said by one of the distributors of Nestle food products in Mohakhali area name NN Enterprise Ltd. Because they have experienced RTE products which are refrigerated or shelf-stable has a tendency of being crushed and become unusable.

### Availability:

The grocery stores near us in every area must have RTE products available because the consumer always feel to have this near themselves while they are quarantined. So that, they can buy RTE products now and then by avoiding going too far from the specific area. The distributors of RTE products must be developing the retail channel from back-end that the products availability and support are always on even the city is lockdown. From e-commerce point of view, they can make the RTE products available online. Though the delivery has to be done within 4-8 hours and that also should be home delivery as people gave their perception in the survey. The matter of fact is for the online platform is they have to make the delivery process smoother that consumers can get the products as soon as possible. For instance, Chaldal.com has always delivered the ordered product within shorter period of time because their delivery agent's location is always in shorter range within the consumers. If the delivery process can be initiated like that then, higher quantity of products will be ordered from the consumers and that will open up another door for the e-commerce sites during this pandemic. They also need to maintain proper kit for safety measure to be safe from Covid-19 and also not affecting the customers while delivering the products. Normally, the RTE products has expired date of 1 months approx. According to the people's preference, they want that expiry date even more like more than 2 months actually. So, that they can preserve the food for a longer time and consume whenever they want within the expiry date. So, the manufacturer needs to make the ingredients more likely to be stay raw for at least 2 months. Hence, the taste bud of consumers changes day by day so the ultimate challenge for the marketers and manufactures to keep pace with the health code, restaurant style taste in the products that actually goes with all the consumers taste bud from all segments.

### 3.7 Summary and Conclusion:

The purpose of the research was to calculate and understand the opportunity for RTE food during this quarantine time and the indicators that actually work while people making their buying decision to have RTE products. The data and responses that we collected actually portrayed that people are more aware of "taste and ingredients" and "availability" of the products while making the buying decision. We all know during the time of outbreak of Corona Virus in Bangladesh, almost all the districts are under lockdown and the situation can get

worsen. In this case, people cannot usually go to restaurants, markets far away from them so they may have to depend on homemade food or cooked food. So, as an alternative; RTE food can be the best option for those home-quarantined people to meet their cravings. Adding restaurant style taste, organic flavor and good packaging also can add more advantage to influence people to be make the buying decision and be the permanent buyer of those specific products. Furthermore, e-commerce sites can take the opportunity of providing home-delivery option with proper safety of their delivery man within 4-8 hours for the home-quarantined people or emergency duty office goers so that they may not leave their home. This is how, RTE food can be a great meal during this quarantine time for everyone living in the cities and rural areas.

### 3.8 Recommendations:

- ✓ The pricing strategy should be more perpendicular that the price sensitive customers can be well taken care of and then make them a permanent customer.
- ✓ Retail delivery channel can be faster by attempting own delivery system rather than not depending on local traditional distributors.
- ✓ Packaging with 'Plastic Coating' and providing spoon inside the box can be the reason of selling that product.
- ✓ Manufacturing factories can be operational in a different place/factory from generalized factories with all the products, so that in those factories, only RTE products will be made and delivered directly to the warehouse for retail distribution.
- ✓ Specialized delivery van can be made for delivering products in retail channel and even in-home delivery purpose.
- ✓ More flavors can be introduced like; chicken masala cup noodles, Thai-flavor cup soup, shrimp-flavor noodles/soup, other flavored processed food etc.
- ✓ Organic and green products concept can be promoted to boos up the awareness and sales for RTE products during this pandemic.
- ✓ Online delivery system must maintain safety for the delivery man from covid-19 while delivering the RTE item in order to ensure proper health safety of both the consumers and delivery person. Option for less quantity of RTE products delivery should be there.

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