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Urmi Paralikar

Godrej Refrigerators:
A Portrait of the Indian
Middle-class Identity (1958-
c. 2000)

A post-graduate in History, Urmi has a versatile teaching experience in varied disciplines including History, Art and Culture Studies and Modern Foreign Languages. She has also worked as a Research Associate with the Raksha Shakti University, Ahmedabad, on a project compiling Police History of Gujarat. She is an avid reader and a polyglot, which helps her reference and research sources transcending language barriers. Her prime research interests lie in Business History and Asian mercantile diasporas especially the business leaders and social entrepreneurs from the Parsi community.

The Project will trace the career of Godrej refrigerators in a historical perspective, from a product of luxury and indulgence, restricted to the cream class of society, to a must-have kitchen appliance made affordable to all. In doing so, it will explore their place in context of individual and collective narratives of modern India, as a marker of changing social status and a symbol of the Indian middle-class identity, offering new insights into evolving lifestyle of Indians. It will evaluate the idea of brand from a manufacturer's perspective, in the already well-established industry of refrigeration. Finally, this research will assess the impact of economic liberalization initiated in India in 1991 and the ensuing response of Godrej to the competition resulting from the entry of MNCs in the Indian market as well as to the changing economic and consumer trends.