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A STUDY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS FAIR PRICE SHOP BUYING COMMODITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KALPAKKAM

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Abstract

A fair price shop is one that has been granted a license to distribute necessary items by the government under Section 3 of the necessary items Act. These shops sell food grains, sugar and paraffin at reasonable prices. The government procures foodgrains through FCI and distributes them to the underprivileged through ration stores. Ration stores are known as Fair Price stores because they provide food grains to the poor at a much lower and more acceptable price than the market price, which is often expensive. Every month, any family with a ration card can buy a set amount of food grains, sugar, kerosene and other necessities at a neighbouring fair price shop. In light of this, a fair price shop is really important for economically savvy individuals who benefit from the majority of the commodities they purchase and satisfy. As a result, state and federal governments should focus on providing all commodities within a fair time frame. The PDS system's ration stores benefit the populace by sustaining people's nutritional status by providing food to the impoverished at inexpensive prices. Non-Priority Household is one of two ration cards given by the Tamil Nadu government based on the BPL and APL classifications. In this reference, the researcher investigates consumer satisfaction with fair-priced shops for commodity purchases, with a focus on Kalpakkam.

Keywords: Fair Price Shop, Commodities, Food Grains, Sugar, Kerosene, BPL and APL.

Introduction

The Tamil Nadu government is adopting the Universal Public Distribution System (UPDS), with no exclusions based on income. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has made the universal public distribution system 'poor friendly' by ordering rice for free under the public distribution system for all qualified cardholders beginning June 1, 2011. The

Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation purchases rice and other vital commodities for the public distribution system from the Food Corporation of India and through bids. The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation and Cooperative Societies distribute commodities through fair pricing shops.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fundamental responsibility of this System is to deliver things to their intended recipients at the appropriate time, location, quality, quantity, and price. PDS workers are supposed to make the necessary steps to identify their customers' problems and address such complaints in a way that increases customer satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to determine the degree of satisfaction among customers who shop at fair-price stores on a daily basis, as well as the factors that influence their satisfaction levels. By assessing these variables, the study hopes to ascertain the overall level of client satisfaction with the services given.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **Velmuruga and Lavanya (2017)**, fair price shops will be met when the real beneficiaries have fully utilised the services provided by PDS. The general public will be satisfied if they can obtain goods from the PDS at all times, if goods are supplied with accurate weight and adequate staff members are employed, if the PDS is located in an easily accessible location, if a variety of goods are distributed, if goods are supplied on time, if goods supplied at the PDS are fit for consumption, and if fair price shops are opened on time.

Rahul J. Jadhav et al. (2022) discovered that more than half of respondents believe that not providing a receipt is normal at a fair pricing retailer. Short supply or out-of-stock is a common argument given by fair-priced shop owners. Ration card application forms are not available in fair-price stores. As a result, it can be inferred that not providing a receipt is usual at the fair pricing shop, that the fair price shop owner frequently cites a lack of supply or out-of-stock as a justification, and that ration card application forms are not available there.

Gurdeep Kaur Ghumaan and Pawan Kumar Dhiman (2016) noticed that the majority of vendors in rural areas have confessed that they are selling decent quality commodities under PDS in the state of Punjab. However, they stated that consumers occasionally abuse and threaten them when ration items are not available or are of poor quality.

According to **Vetrivel (2020)**, the majority of cardholders do not make purchases if they believe the shop's commodities are of poor quality. The shops do not open on a regular basis since the salesman owns multiple stores and must attend to others in various areas. Individual cards must wait in a queue to make purchases. Consumers confront numerous issues when

purchasing commodities from the FPS, including overcrowding and the non-availability of all commodities at the time of purchase, as well as delays in the FPS's supply of items in the study region.

Jothi Muthu and Kalidoss (2020) emphasise that public distribution in the country expedites the supply of food grains and the delivery of required merchandises to impoverished people through a network of fair pricing at subsidized prices on a regular basis. It is an attempt to provide comprehensive knowledge on the fundamental issues of fair price retailers. Financial issues facing civil supplies fair pricing shops and cooperative fair price shops are examined.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the Features and Schemes of Fair Price Shop.
2. To study the consumer satisfaction of Fair Price Shop with special reference to Kalpakkam.
3. To study the consumer benefits of Fair Price Shop with special reference to Kalpakkam.

Research Methodology

Research methodology is one of the most important aspects of research since it determines the structure and design of the study. The nature of the research, the source of data, and the tools used for data collecting, sampling, and data analysis are all examples of research technique components.

The nature of research

The current research study is descriptive in nature, using primary and secondary data.

Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was used to pick respondents for the marketing strategy of A Study on Consumer Satisfaction of Fair Price Shop Buying Commodities with Special Reference to Kalpakkam for study purposes. In the first stage, five villages were selected in Kalpakkam. The second stage involved selecting 50 responses (30%) as the study's sample size. In the third stage, ten responders from each village were selected. Proportionate stratified random sampling procedures were used to pick the sample respondents.

Sources of Data

The study requires original data. Primary data were acquired using structured interview schedules that were delivered to respondents in the A Study on Consumer Satisfaction with Fair Price Shop Buying Commodities with Special Reference to Kalpakkam for study purposes.

Sampling Size

Table Number: 1.1 Sampling Size

| S. No | Name of the Villages | No. of Questionnaire Issued | No. of Questionnaire Received |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Kunnavakkam | 15 | 10 |
| 2. | Veerapuram | 15 | 10 |
| 3. | Neikuppi | 15 | 10 |
| 4. | Vengabakkam | 15 | 10 |
| 5. | Kalpakkam | 15 | 10 |
| Grand Total | | 75 | 50 |

Source: Primary Data

Population Size : 74,589

Confidence level : 95%

Confidence Interval: 4.36

Sampling Size : 50

Statistical Tools for Analysis

The researcher employed advanced and relevant statistical procedures to examine the data, including descriptive statistics for percentage analysis, trend percentages, the Chi-square test, multiple regression analysis, and factor analysis.

Pilot Study

A pilot research was conducted prior to data collecting. The pilot study will include a sample size of 30 respondents from the study area. Interview schedules were updated and redesigned based on the respondents' responses, taking into account the study's needs and relevance.

Study Area

The research area is Kalpakkam. It is referred to as the 'universe' for the purposes of data collecting and analysis.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study of consumer satisfaction is significant since it pertains to consumer activities such as purchasing and using fair pricing shop products. These activities play a crucial role in the decision-making process that leads to purchases. Marketers believe that providing information to consumers increases interest and commitment to the programmes while also improving good user evaluations. A thorough understanding of consumer satisfaction is required to analyse the market and establish a competitive advantage for a product in a fair price shop. This study conducts an empirical investigation of postgraduate college students' satisfaction with the public distribution system. There have been attempts to determine the numerous aspects that influence consumer satisfaction and decision-making. This study will

provide useful data for developing strategies for the public distribution system to maximise consumer satisfaction.

Table Number – 1.1

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

| Demographic Profile (N = 140) | Description | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 94 | 67.15 |
| | Female | 46 | 32.85 |
| Marital Status | Single | 84 | 60.00 |
| | Married | 56 | 40.00 |
| Nature of Family | Nuclear Family | 45 | 32.14 |
| | Joint Family | 95 | 67.85 |
| Place of Living | Urban | 92 | 65.71 |
| | Semi-Urban | 38 | 27.14 |
| | Rural | 11 | 07.85 |
| Age of the Respondents | 17-21 | 13 | 9.28 |
| | 22-24 | 39 | 27.85 |
| | 25-28 | 88 | 62.85 |
| Educational Qualification | School | 63 | 45.00 |
| | Diploma | 29 | 20.71 |
| | Under Graduate | 38 | 27.14 |
| | Post Graduate | 10 | 7.14 |
| Descriptive Statistics (Age) | | | |
| Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
| 23.427 | 2.163 | 25 | 42 |

Table 1.1 shows that the majority of respondents are male (67.15%), single (60%), joint family (67.85%), urban (65.71%), 25-28 years old (62.85%), undergraduates (67.14%), engineers (46.42%), and self-financing/private (66.12%). According to descriptive statistics, the employees who participated in the evaluation ranged in age from 21 to 28 years old, with a mean of 23.427 and a standard deviation of 2.163.

Table Number – 1.2

Factor Loading Of Consumer Satisfaction Factor (CSF)

| SL.NO | Satisfaction Factors Relating to Variables | Factor Loading | Eigen Value | Variance Explained |
|-------|--|----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| SF01 | Located at a Place | 0.800 | 3.479 | 32.479 |

| | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------|--|--|
| SF02 | Easily Accessible | 0.769 | | |
| SF03 | Availability of Goods | 0.745 | | |
| SF04 | Quality of the Product | 0.718 | | |
| SF05 | Quantitative of the Product | 0.713 | | |

Table 1.2 shows that the satisfaction factor (SF) is the predominant and most important factor of consumer satisfaction when purchasing commodity variables, consisting of five statements with factor loadings: located at a place (0.800), easily accessible (0.769), availability of goods (0.745), quality of the product (0.718), and quantitative of the product (0.713). These five variables explain 32.479% of the variance in consumer pleasure while purchasing commodities, with an Eigen value of 3.479. It may be concluded that among the five Satisfaction Factor variables, "Located at a Place" is the most essential.

Table Number- 1.3
Factor Loading Of Preference Factor (PF)

| SL.NO | KF relating to CYF Variables | Factor Loading | Eigen Value | Variance Explained |
|-------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| PF01 | Accuracy of Weight | 0.841 | 2.195 | 21.954 |
| PF02 | Variety of Goods | 0.803 | | |
| PF03 | SMS Alert | 0.599 | | |
| PF04 | Service for Senior Citizens | 0.508 | | |
| PF05 | Service for Single Parent (women) | 0.756 | | |

Table 1.3 shows that the Preference Factor (PF) is the predominant and most important factor in consumer preference for purchasing products at a fair price. The variables consist of five statements with factor loading: accuracy of weight (0.841), variety of goods (0.803), SMS Alert (0.599),

service for senior citizens (0.508), and service for single parent (women) (0.756). It may be concluded that among the five Preference Factor variables, "Accuracy of Weight" is the most essential.

Table Number- 1.4
Descriptive Statistics and Test of Normality (Consumer Satisfaction Factor)

| C S E | M e a n | S D | V a r i a n c e | S k e w n e s s | K u r t o s i s | Kolmogorov-Smirnova | | Shapiro-Wilk | |
|-------|---------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| | | | | | | Statistic (df = 241) | Sig. | Statistic (df = 241) | Sig. |
| S F | 24.858 | 3.438 | 11.821 | -0.767 | 0.553 | 0.123 | 0.000 | 0.948 | 0.000 |
| P F | 18.087 | 1.738 | 3.021 | -0.432 | -0.974 | 0.184 | 0.000 | 0.880 | 0.000 |

Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 1.4 gives an investigation of the efficacy of descriptive statistics in the field of consumer pleasure while purchasing commodities from a fair price shop. A higher mean value and lower standard deviations indicate a regular distribution of data. The Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnova normality tests show that the data is normal, indicating that it is appropriate for higher-order multivariate analysis. Consumer satisfaction with commodity purchases has a mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis that are within the predicted range.

FAIR PRICE SHOPS

The Public Distribution System is implemented through 33,222 fair pricing shops that operate under the following agencies:-

Table Number- 1.5
Fair Price Shops

| Sl.No | Agency | Full-Time | Part-Time | Total |
|-------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation | 1,178 | 277 | 1,455 |
| 2 | Cooperatives (Under R.C.S) | 23,727 | 9,100 | 32,827 |
| 3 | Other Co-operatives | 314 | 162 | 476 |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 4 | Women fair price shops, including Self Help Groups | 370 | 41 | 411 |
| | TOTAL | 25,589 | 9580 | 35,169 |

Table Number 1.5 shows that Fair Price Shops, Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation obtains critical commodities from the Food Corporation of India and stores them in 284 operating godowns spread across the state. Lead Cooperative Societies / self-lifting societies transfer inventories from the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation operational godowns and distribute them to fair price retailers' doorsteps. Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation also purchases several other important commodities for the Special Public Distribution System directly from the market via tenders and through specified Government of India agencies. The Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation and Cooperatives collect paraffin from oil company wholesalers.

Table Number- 1.6
The details of family cards in circulation in Tamil Nadu

| Sl. No. | Type of Card | Commodities Entitled | No. of Cards |
|--------------|--------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | PHH | All Commodities including Sugar | 76,99,940 |
| 2. | PHH-AAY | All Commodities including 35Kgs of Rice | 18,64,600 |
| 3. | NPHH | All Commodities including Rice | 90,08,842 |
| 4. | NPHH-S | Sugar Option Card (All Commodities except Rice) | 10,01,605 |
| 5. | NPHH-NC | No Commodity | 41,106 |
| TOTAL | | | 1,96,16,093 |

Table 1.6 shows the details of family cards in circulation in Tamil Nadu. The issue of family cards to eligible families is a continuous process, and the government has issued necessary instructions to the Principal Commissioner and Commissioner of Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection to issue cards as soon as possible. At the same time, fake cards are being deleted.

CONCLUSION

The Public Distribution System (PDS) in India is responsible for distributing essential commodities to families living below the poverty line. The Public Distribution System in Tamil Nadu is the most comprehensive food distribution system in the country. Therefore, the Tamil Nadu

government should prioritise and allocate items to all ration holders within a fair timeframe. The fair pricing shop in many villages provides the highest level of support and encouragement for economically disadvantaged individuals. This reference highlights the fair pricing shop's ability to offer essential products at reasonable prices and within the specified timeframe. The fair price staff should identify the incorrect ration card holder. In this context, the eligible ration card holders receive all the advantages.

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