



A STUDY ON RURAL YOUTH AND RURAL ADULT CONSUMERS' AWARENESS ABOUT ADULTERATION OF FOOD AND SERVICES TOWARDS CUDDALORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to determine the level of consumer knowledge of food and service adulteration in the Cuddalore district among rural kids and rural adults. This study's first goal was accomplished using the right methodology. The stratified simple random sampling approach used in the Cuddalore district yielded a total sample size of 1066. A 5-point scale on a continuum of agreement is used in the questionnaire that the researcher prepared. The Z test and one way ANOVA were employed for data analysis, and the tool's reliability was 0.84. According to the study, there are noticeable differences between rural adolescent and rural adult customers in terms of their awareness of the adulteration of food and services, depending on their gender and age. The study brought attention to consumers reported moderate level of awareness regarding food and service adulteration among rural teenagers and adults. It is advised that an educational campaign had a positive impact on raising awareness of food adulteration among young people and rural adult customers. Manufacturers, distributors, and the government should educate customers in the Cuddalore district about food adulteration, according to the study's findings.

Keywords: *Rural youth and rural adult consumers'; awareness about adulteration of food and services; stratified simple random sampling technique and Cuddalore district.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the majority of people in Cuddalore district reside in rural areas, there is a lack of consumer knowledge regarding food and service adulteration. Every person is a customer, and every customer is a consumer. Food adulteration is typically taught by the trade in India. When the cost of producing food exceeds what the consumer is willing to pay, the seller is compelled to offer a lower-quality food product. One of the main issues we currently confront is adulteration. If we examine all food items from the perspective of adulteration, we see that they are all tainted in various ways. This includes milk and milk products, beverages like coffee and wine and sauces, vegetable oil and fats, tea, and many more. Nearly every personality uses these food items every day in the form of food. In addition to lowering the quality of food products, adulterants have very harmful effects on our health if we consume them frequently. Numerous illnesses include cancer, liver disease, heart failure, lathyrism, kidney ailments, and diseases of the nervous system are caused by adulteration. The government has made numerous attempts or adopted numerous regulations, but the problem still exists.

Adulteration is defined as the process by which the quality or the nature of a given substance is reduced through:

- The addition of a foreign or an inferior substance and
- The removal of vital elements

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Srinivasan. N, Elangovan et al. (1998) in their study entitled the study "Consumer perception towards processed fruits and vegetable products" sought to understand how Pondicherry consumers felt about these goods. The study's sample of 120 consumers showed that those with greater levels of education tended to consume more processed foods. Because they were ready to eat, processed foods were more convenient for consumers, but unbranded goods were more affordable. The wives divided up the shopping in the majority of homes, then the husbands. Financial study showed that the overall household spending and income had a substantial impact on how much was spent on processed fruit and vegetable products.

Selvaraju R. (2000) studied "Consumption in rural India with a focus on fair price stores." The study made an effort to learn about public awareness of cheating in fair price businesses and their

behaviour when they complain. The researcher used 150 ration card holders who were chosen at random and interviewed for this project. Using a straightforward statistical procedure, the author evaluated consumer complaint behaviour.

Kocha and Rumrillb (2008) in their article entitled, "Assessing Consumer Satisfaction in Rehabilitation and Allied Health Care Settings," the author discusses the difficulties in conducting consumer satisfaction research in the health and rehabilitation fields, as well as methods for enhancing the research's scientific rigour and psychometric soundness. She also provides examples from the recent literature of measurement and design approaches that have been recognised as effective. Emphasis is placed on using mixed-method and qualitative research techniques, such as in-depth interviews and focus groups, to enlarge and enhance the field's understanding of the complex construct of consumer pleasure.

Nidhi Gupta and Priti Panchal (2009) discussed in their article that food is essential for sustenance of life. Food adulteration deceives the consumer and, in some situations, poses a major health danger. The primary goal of the current study was to determine homemakers' purchasing habits and the degree of

knowledge they had regarding particular food items. Data were gathered using a stratified sampling technique and a questionnaire or interview schedule. The tool was standardised using the split-half reliability approach, the validity index, and the difficulty index. A number of statistical tests, including the chi square between awareness and occupation and the t-test between age group, education level, and awareness level, were conducted. According to the study, respondents had strong understanding of their rights and obligations but insufficient awareness of food adulteration. Education, family income and occupation had an effect on extent of awareness. Age and awareness has no correlation while a positive correlation was found between family income and awareness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Any research's validity depends on having sufficient and accurate data. Because of this, caution was taken when gathering the necessary data for this investigation. The current study is based on a descriptive analysis of the relationship between customer social demographic characteristics including gender and educational attainment and consumer awareness of food and service adulteration.

Both primary and secondary data are used to support the investigation.

Research Gap

The existing research has not concentrated on consumers' awareness of food and service adulteration among rural youth and rural adults, and it is important that future research identify this interlinking and integrated approach consumers' awareness about food and service adulteration among rural youth and rural adults. None of the studies demonstrate an integrated strategy for raising public awareness about food product adulteration, and none of the studies in Tamilnadu's Cuddalore area included both rural youth and rural adults.

Statement of the Problem

In a world market economy, the consumer has traditionally been regarded as the monarch. Due to the participation of too many intermediaries between the producers and consumers of various goods and services, some of the fundamental issues facing Indian customers include adulteration, manufactured scarcity, distribution errors, and skyrocketing pricing. The majority of customers in the research area are uninformed of the effects on consumer awareness of food and service adulteration. The majority of rural

consumers struggle to make ends meet since they are below the poverty line. They use all of their energy just trying to survive. They do not have the time or desire to consider their rights.

Objective of the Study

- To identify the rural youth and rural adult consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services towards Cuddalore District.

Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significant difference between gender groups of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards food adulteration.
- There is no significant difference among age groups of rural youth and rural adult consumers based on level of awareness towards food adulteration.

Sample Design

According to the provisional census estimate from 2011, there are 17, 18,249 rural residents in the Cuddalore district, or around 66.06 percent of the district's total population of 2600880. Using a basic random basis, the population was divided into two groups, namely rural

youth and rural adults. Using the following formula for the usual sampling size for a finite population, the respondents in the seven taluks of the Cuddalore District were chosen at a rate of 533 from each of the two categories, for a total of 1066 respondents.

Interview Schedule Design

The respondents' primary information was gathered utilising interview schedule tools. The interview agenda included inquiries about personal information like gender and educational background. The varying levels of awareness regarding the adulteration of food and services have been determined using the five-point scaling technique.

Tools of Data Collection

A descriptive was completed since it is thought to be the most appropriate type of analysis for the study, thanks to the large amounts of data gained through survey research as well as material from secondary sources collected and given in the thesis. The study question and interview schedule were both structured appropriately. The conclusions reached through simple statistical analysis of the

data gathered from the chosen sample respondents led to the recommendations made in the research report's final chapter.

Reliability

All of the chosen factors have Cronbach's alphas over 0.70, making the study credible for the analysis. The study has good validity to explore the outcomes, according to the Cronbach's alpha result.

Period of Study

The primary data were collected from November 2012 to April 2013 among the selected sample respondents in the study area.

Limitations of the Study

The study's sample of 1066 rural customers is restricted to the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu. The majority of responders are uninterested or reluctant to react. They do not keep accurate records of their economic data or their use of consumer forums and protection centres. As a result, it was determined that the information they provided was skewed, and the appropriate cross-verification was done to lessen the biased information.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table-1: Gender and level of Awareness towards Food Adulteration

Gender	Youth			Adult		
	Mean	SD	Z-value	Mean	SD	Z-value
Male	22.55	3.99	3.547*	24.21	4.20	2.548*
Female	23.73	3.69		23.32	3.85	

Source: primary data, * - Significant at 5% level

H₀ : There is no significant difference between gender groups of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards food adulteration.

It is clear from the above table that among rural youth and adult consumers, awareness of food and service adulteration varies by gender. Male customers (22.55) are less aware of the youth group than

female consumers (23.73). When it comes to adult consumers, male respondents in the research area are more aware of food adulteration (24.21) than female respondents (23.32). There is a substantial difference between gender and knowledge level of food adulteration among rural youth and adult customers, as evidenced by the 'z' value, which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected in both the youth and adult categories of gender.

Table-2: Age and Level of Awareness towards Food Adulteration

Age	Youth			Age	Adult		
	Mean	SD	F-value		Mean	SD	F-value
15-20 years	22.70	3.67	3.763*	36-40 years	23.53	3.97	0.871 ^{NS}
21-25 years	23.11	2.51		41-45 years	22.76	3.80	
26-30 years	21.99	3.89		46-50 years	23.40	3.90	
31-35 years	22.74	3.74		51-55 years	23.57	4.24	

-	-	-		56-59 years	23.07	4.58	
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Source: primary data, * - Significant at 5% level; NS – Not significant

H₀ : There is no significant difference among age groups of rural youth and rural adult consumers based on level of awareness towards food adulteration.

It is inferred from the above table that the awareness towards adulteration of food and services is measured according to age group among rural youth and adult consumers. It has been observed that consumers between the ages of 21 and 25 (23.11) are more aware of the young market. When it comes to adult consumers, respondents in the 51–55 age range are more aware (23.57) of food adulteration in the research location. There is a significant difference between age group and awareness level about food adulteration among rural youth consumers, but not a significant difference between age group and awareness level about food adulteration among rural adults, according to the 'F' value, which indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in the youth category of age group and accepted in the adult category.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- According to the analysis, there is a substantial difference between

gender categories with regard to the level of awareness about food adulteration among rural youth and adult consumers. The 'z' value indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected in both the youth and adult category of gender.

- According to the analysis, there is a significant difference between age groups with regard to food adulteration awareness levels among rural youth consumers, but not a significant difference between age groups and awareness levels among rural adults. The 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in the youth category of age group and accepted in the adult category of age group.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ✓ The study suggested that an educational programme would raise young people's and rural adults' awareness of food adulteration.
- ✓ Manufacturers, wholesalers, and the government should educate consumers in the Cuddalore district

about food adulteration, especially rural youngsters.

- ✓ Wholesalers should show a strong interest in the creation and distribution of wholesome food for the benefit of society.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

According to the study, "rural youth and rural adult consumers exhibit significantly different levels of awareness about food and service adulteration with respect to gender and age." The study brought attention to consumers reported moderate level of awareness regarding food and service adulteration among rural teenagers and adults. It is advised that an educational campaign had a positive impact on raising awareness of food adulteration among young people and rural adult customers. Manufacturers, distributors, and the government should educate customers in the Cuddalore district

about food adulteration, according to the study's findings.

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