

A study on problems faced by the consumers and retailers in modern and traditional retail store outlets in India

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ABSTRACT

The organized fruits and vegetables retailing is gaining momentum in the country as a result of increased share of consumer expenditure on fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables form a major category of commodities in retail chains. Understanding the problems faced by the consumers in the modern retail outlets are the purchase of fruits and vegetables will provide a feed back to the retailers. This input provides an opportunity to enhance the performance of retail outlets by way of fixing the problems encountered. The objective of the study is to find out the problems perceived by the consumers in the purchase of fruits and vegetables from both the modern and traditional mom and pop store. Total sample respondents selected from the retail stores for the study were 400. Primary data were collected with the aid of pre-tested interview schedule from consumer selected randomly by adopting "mall intercept survey method" (Phau and Teah, 2009) in the selected sample retail store outlets in Coimbatore. "Garrett's ranking technique" (Garrett, 1969) was adopted to analyze the problems faced by the consumers visiting different types of stores. The study has found that selling low quantity, poor refilling and slow checkouts are the major problems faced by the consumers in the modern fruits and vegetable retail store outlets. Whereas, narrow range of merchandise, limited quantity and high cost was identified as the major problem in the case of mom and pop stores. The importance of the study understands the problems faced by the consumers in the modern retail outlets are the purchase of fruits and vegetables will provide a feed back to the retailers. This input provides an opportunity to enhance the performance of retail outlets by way of fixing the problems encountered.

KEY WORDS : Consumers, Fruits, Merchandise, Organized, Problems, Retailers

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The organized fruits and vegetables retailing is gaining momentum in the country as a result of increased share of consumer expenditure on fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables form a major category of commodities in retail chains. Besides, fruits and vegetables are also sold in

localized organized retail departmental stores, some of which are exclusively meant for fruits and vegetables. Thus, consumers have a wide range of retailing formats for purchasing fruits and vegetables. Retailing per se means the sale of goods or commodities in small quantities, directly to the consumers. Legally retailing is for final consumption and not for sale or further processing. According to Economic Census of 2008, the number of Kirana shops, popularly called small shops grew rapidly to the tune of 15 million. During the earlier Census of 1998, the number of kirana stores was only 10.6 million, and the average growth was about 6 per cent every year. Organized retailing started as the economy opened up since 1990 and due to the advent of liberalization. Till 1990s, the single brand retailing emerged and after that multi-brand started creeping in. Retail initiation was essentially

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dominated by brand manufacturers. Subsequently the rapid retail expansion witnessed the active phase, inviting lot of new players, attracting luxury markets, allowing premier brands. The current phase is the consolidation of retailing. The projections carried out by reputed agencies indicate that 5 to 6 per cent of the overall retailing register an annual growth of 30 to 40 per cent. A major proportion of retailers of organized sector is food category consisting of 11 per cent food and grocery and 7 per cent food and beverage (Marketing Whitebook, 2009) embarking a significant impact on the consumption centers and livelihoods of farmers.

Emergence of modern retail :

Shopping habits of Indian customers, shopping priorities, decision-making approach and decision makers are changing. Riding on this phenomenon, consumers are shifting from traditional Kirana stores (Mom and Pop stores) and street side vendors to malls, supermarkets and hypermarkets. A pollution free, air-conditioned shopping ambience in the malls is preferable to the heat, humidity, noise and air pollution associated with road-side and way side shopping. For the consumers lacking confidence on bargaining and preferring to avoid crowded places and crammed market spots, shopping malls come in handy. India's urban population is projected to become 38.2 per cent of total population. The shopping pattern changes juxtaposed with the urban population. The migration towards cities for work and education is a growing phenomenon among rural areas, which might lead to tectonic shift in the consumer attitude (Bawa and Ghosh, 1999).

Currently, the total retail industry is Rs.18,04,000 crores (US \$ 410 billion) which is expected to grow up to Rs.27,06,000 crores (US \$ 615 billion) by 2013. Modern retail is estimated at Rs.79,200 crores (US \$ 18 billion), out of which Food and Grocery constitute 17 per cent and it is estimated to grow up to Rs.2,33,200 crores (US \$ 53 billion) by 2013. Organized food retailing has grown at about 25 per cent per annum for last two years and the momentum is likely to increase with the entry of large corporate. The organized form of food retail accounts for less than one per cent of food consumed in India. Organized food retailing has grown 25 per cent per annum for the last two years and the momentum is likely to increase with the entry of large corporate and possible relaxation in the Foreign Direct Investment policies. The proliferation of organized retailing in India is also altering food consumption patterns, promoting imported foods, branded foods, processed foods and a wider assortment. The organized retail is projected to grow at of around 30 per cent and is estimated to account for 13 per cent to the total Indian retail by 2012 (Technopak, 2008).

Presently in an urban area the fruits and vegetable

available in the consumer through a wide range of retail outlets such as farmers shandy, local markets, kirana stores, fruits and vegetables specialty organized retail outlets, organized super markets, fruits and vegetable mandies, mobile vendors etc. The present study will focus on the problems confronted by both buyers and sellers of the organized retail outlet formats available in second largest city of Tamil Nadu state.

Leonard Guelke (2006) defined perception as an approximation of reality. Brain attempts to make sense out of the stimuli to which we are exposed. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) described perception as the process by which an individual selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world.

According to Kotler (2010) retailers were those engaged in selling goods or services directly to final consumers for their personal and non-business use. NABARD (2011) described retailer who sell food products (food and beverage) to the consumers, which can be consumed, readily or after cooking as food retailers. In this study, a retailer is defined as a person who is engaged in selling of fruits and vegetables to the final consumers.

Retail store consists of the sale of physical goods or merchandise from a fixed location, such as a department store, boutique or kiosk, or by mall, in small or individual lots for direct consumption by the purchaser. Retail stores include, but are not limited to, boutiques, department stores, emporiums, markets, outlets and discount houses. In addition, they can be located in residential neighborhoods, shopping streets or strip malls (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retail>).

According to ICRIER (2008) unorganized retailing refers to any retail outlet that is run locally by the owner or the caretaker of the shop. Such outlets lack technical and accounting standardization. The supply chain and the sourcing are also done locally to meet the local needs. The Indian unorganized retail sector includes a large number of small retailers consisting of local kirana shops, owner-manned general stores, chemists, footwear shops, apparel shops, paan beedi shops, hand cart hawkers, pavement vendors, etc (Technopak Advisors Private Limited, 2008). In this study, unorganized retail refers to kirana stores (which are mostly family owned), hand cart hawkers, local mandies or local markets, etc., mainly involved in the trade of fruits and vegetables.

According to ICRIER (2008) organized retailing refers to any retail outlet chain (and not a one shop outlet) that is professionally managed (even if it is family run), can be termed as organized retailing in India if it has the following features – accounting transparency (with proper usage of MIS and accounting standards), organized supply chain management with centralized quality control and sourcing. According to NABARD (2011) organized retailing refers to trading activities

undertaken by licensed retailers. Organized agri food retailing refers to food and beverage retailing by licensed retailers (registered for sales tax, income tax, etc.) with proper technical and accounting standardization. In the present study, organized retail refers to the chain stores and independent self-service store who are involved in fruits and vegetables business.

Organized retailer is the one who generates higher skill employment opportunities, within its stores and in its support functions such as operational management, buying, merchandising, information technology, logistics etc. (Image Retail, 2008). In this study, organized retailer refers to the one who owns or runs the business of fruits and vegetable retail with relative uniformity and standardization retailing in fruits and vegetables. The organized retail formats in India include super markets (Food World, Food Bazaar, Subiksha, Reliance Fresh, More, Nilgiri's), department stores (Shoppers stop, Life style, Pyramid Mega store, Pantaloon, Westside) Hyper Markets (Spencers', Big Bazaar, Star India bazaar, Max Hyper City), Specialty Stores (Health and Glow, Crossword, Viveks', Vasanths') and Seamless Mall (Central, Crossroads) (A T Kearny Report, 2006). In this study, retail store format refers to the physical store which constitutes mix of assortments and strategies transactional convenience all organized retail formats where customers buy fruits and vegetables.

Lesser and Hughes (1986) found that active and inactive shoppers were the two types of shoppers which appear most often. Recreational shopping (Bellenger and Korgoankar, 1990) and purchasing involvement (Slama and Tashchian, 1985) are two traits that distinguish active shoppers from inactive shoppers, and both traits have proven to be important predictors of consumer behavior. This stream of research emphasizes that shoppers possess general tendencies regarding the shopping process that are consistent across situations. Bellenger *et al.* (1997) suggested that much could be learned about retail patronage behavior from the study of consumers' general shopping orientations, and they introduced the dichotomy of recreational and economic shopping.

O'connor (1990) and Peter and Olson (1990) studied convenience general, location convenience and parking. Martineau (1958) Terblanche (1998) Peter and Olson (1990) studied the sales - promotions, advertising, displays, trading stamps, symbols and colours. Nelson (1970) revealed that it is important to understand consumers' own perceptions and representations of quality and safety. Nevertheless, quality and safety are concepts that cannot be easily defined, because they are classified as credence attributes (*i.e.* product attributes that cannot be verified by the consumer). Consumers are likely to derive quality or safety perceptions from other product cues, either intrinsic (e.g., appearance of the product) or extrinsic cues (e.g., a quality label).

Both qualitative and quantitative research has addressed issues associated with cultural determinants of food choice (Shepherd and Raats, 2007). It is evident that when analyzing factors that influence food choice it is important to take consumers' cultural backgrounds into account (Askegaard, 1995; Hoogland *et al.*, 2005; Nayga, 1999; Overby *et al.*, 2004). People from different cultural backgrounds have different perceptions and experiences related to food (e.g., Rozin *et al.*, 1999; Lennerna's *et al.*, 1997). As a consequence, some consumers are more oriented towards food quality, whereas for others food safety represents their primary concern. The importance of cultural variation in food choice is recognized within the European context (Askegaard and Madsen, 1998; Fieldhouse, 1995). The distinction that is often made in Europe is between the more northern or central countries (e.g. UK, Scandinavia and Germany) and the more southern, or Mediterranean countries (e.g., France, Spain, Italy and Greece). Southern cultures are thought to be more involved with food quality and the pleasures that can be derived from eating. In comparison, northern cultures put more emphasis on food safety and ethical concerns (e.g., about animal welfare) play a more important role (Pettinger *et al.*, 2004).

Understanding the problems faced by the consumers in the modern retail outlets are the purchase of fruits and vegetables will provide a feed back to the retailers. This inputs provides an opportunity to enhance the performance of retail outlets by way of fixing the problems encountered. Similarly the information about the problems faced by the retailers in managing the retail outlets for sale of fruits and vegetables can enable the researcher to prepare suitable suggestions for the effective management of the retail outlets.

Objectives :

- To find out the problems perceived by the consumers in the purchase of fruits and vegetables from both the modern and traditional mom and pop store.
- To identify the constraints perceived by the retailers in the sale of fruits and vegetables.

METHODOLOGY

Coimbatore city was purposively selected as the study area as it is the second largest city in Tamilnadu. Retailers who also have fruits and vegetables in their portfolio. Coimbatore city can be broadly classified into five categories *viz.*, (i) National Corporate Retail Chains (NCRC), (ii) Regional Corporate Retail Chains (RCRC), (iii) Private Sector Specialized Stores (PRSS), (iv) Public Sector Specialized Stores (PUSS) and (v) Traditional Mom and Pop Stores (Kirana Stores) adopting the classification of NABARD (2011). One retail outlet from each of retail store type was selected based on sales volume (maximum) with respect to fruits and vegetables for conducting the study. Accordingly Reliance Fresh was

selected for NCRC, Shri Kannan Departmental Store was selected under RCRC, Pazhamudhir Nilayam for PRSS and Uzavar Santhai (Farmers Market for PUSS). Two kirana stores near each of the four retail stores type were selected by simple random method. In each kirana store, ten customers were selected. The adult consumers irrespective of gender and age who had purchased for at least one year at the same retail outlet were considered as respondents for this study. Among the customers visiting each of the retail outlet, eighty consumers were selected as respondents using simple random sampling. Thus, the total sample respondents selected from the retail stores for the study were 400. Primary data were collected with the aid of pretested interview schedule from consumer selected randomly by adopting “mall intercept survey method” (Phau and Teah, 2009) in the selected sample retail store outlets in Coimbatore.

Garrett’s ranking technique was adopted to analyze the problems faced by the consumers visiting different types of stores. The respondents were asked to rank the various constraints faced during the purchase. The ranks assigned to the above responses by the consumers were converted to scores using the formula :

$$\text{Per cent Position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for the i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual.

N_j = Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual.

The per cent position of each rank obtained was converted into scores by referring to the table given by Garrett (1969). Mean score was estimated for each factors. These mean scores for all the factors were arranged in descending order and factors with the highest mean score was given first rank. The most important factors were thus identified.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents were asked to rank the problems faced by them while purchasing of fruits and vegetables in the NCRC store in the city. The problems faced by the consumers were ranked based on the mean score and the results are presented in the Table 1.

The survey revealed eleven problems that were perceived by the consumers while purchasing fruits and vegetables from National Corporate Retail Chain stores (Table 1). The top three problems were selling low quality of F&V’s (79.36), lack of refilling the produce (74.98) followed by relatively higher price of the produce (67.58). The other problems identified by the consumers were lack of freshness (58.88), slow billing (58.13), poor customer relationship (51.10), poor handling (48.90), narrow merchandise (38.80), selling of old and damaged produce (36.94), limited check outs (31.80) and parking problem (31.03) in that order. The customers of Reliance Fresh felt that, very minimum quantity of F&V was made available for selling in the store. As the sales of F&V progress the bay were not filled with sufficient quantity of F&V. Consumers also felt that the cost of F&V was relatively higher compared to others stores. These three issues were ranked as the important problems by majority of the respondents.

Problems faced by the consumers at RCRC store :

The customers of Regional Corporate Retail Chain store indicated 10 problems in varying magnitude and these problems were ranked using Garrett’s ranking technique and results are presented in Table 2.

Majority of the consumers ranked non-availability of all kinds of F&V on day to day basis (67.23), slow checkouts (64.08), and poor quality (60.08) of fruits and vegetables as the top three problems in RCRC store. Other problems revealed by the consumers of RCRC store were poor customer service (58.80), lack of parking facility (47.31), poor display of the

Table 1 : Problems Faced by the Consumers in NCRC Store

Sr. No.	Problems	Total	Garrett’s score	Mean Garrett’s score	Rank
1.	Selling low quantity	6349.00	79.36	79.36	I
2.	Poor refilling	5998.00	74.98	74.98	II
3.	Higher price	5406.00	67.58	67.58	III
4.	Not fresh	4710.00	58.88	58.88	IV
5.	Very slow billing	4650.00	58.13	58.13	V
6.	Poor relationship with customers	4088.00	51.10	51.10	VI
7.	Poor handling of product	3912.00	48.90	48.90	VII
8.	Narrow merchandise	3104.00	38.80	38.80	VIII
9.	Old and damaged products	2955.00	36.94	36.94	IX
10.	Limited checkouts	2544.00	31.80	31.80	X
11.	Parking problem	2482.00	31.03	31.03	XI

Source : Primary data

produce, lack of produce refilling in the bays (44.75), location of the store at distance place (34.15), availability of old stocks (30.20) and improper weighing of the produce (19.65) in that order.

The store laid minimum emphasis on making available the F&V in the store on all days in a week. About 3 checkout counters existing in the Sri Kannan Departmental Store were not able to clear the customers in time. Hence, majority of its customers felt that slow check out result in loss of time. The fruits and vegetables sold in the store was not maintained under regulated temperature. Hence, the produce was perceived to be of poor quality.

Problems faced by the consumers in PRSS store :

The problems faced while purchasing of fruits and vegetable in PRSS store were ranked using Garrett’s ranking technique and results are presented in the Table 3.

It could be inferred from the Table 3 that, the customers of Private Sector Specialized store confronted with eight problems while purchasing F&V’s. Among the problems, parking (76.55) and long waiting time for billing (71.45) were the most important problems. Consumers also felt that forced sale of the selected quantity of produce to the customer rather than selling the required quantity of the produce as an

important issue in PRSS Store. Other problems included, local varieties are not available daily (52.60), stored product (48.40), not fresh product (38.86), distance (32.49) and high price for produce (22.65) in that order.

The store does not have its own parking facility for service its customers. Majority of the customers felt that during the peak hours of the business, the waiting time for billing produce was high. Whatever produce brought by the consumers was weighed and billed irrespective of the desired quantity of the produce. Hence, most of the customers felt the rounding off the produce was not desirable.

Problems faced by the consumers in PUSS (Farmers market) store :

The respondents were asked ranks the problem faced while purchasing of fruits and vegetable in PUSS Store and results are presented in Table 4.

The consumers of Public Sector Specialized Store indicated 13 problems confronted by them (Table 4). The three major problems listed out by them were rounding off the weight of produce (82.75) as the first and foremost problem. Poor access of the consumers (75.25) to select the produce by themselves was identified as the second important problem, followed by limited operational hours (67.00) of Uzhavar

Table 2 : Problems faced by the consumers in the RCRC store (n=80)

Sr. No.	Problems	Total	Garrett’s score	Mean Garrett’s score	Rank
1.	Daily all products are not available	5378		67.23	I
2.	Slow checkouts	5126		64.08	II
3.	Poor quality	4806		60.08	III
4.	Poor service	4704		58.80	IV
5.	Parking problem	3920		49.00	V
6.	Poor arrangement of product	3785		47.31	VI
7.	Refilling of product not done	3580		44.75	VII
8.	Distance	2732		34.15	VIII
9.	Old stock	2416		30.20	IX
10.	Weighing problem	1572		19.65	X

Source : Primary data

Table 3 : Problems faced by consumers in PRSS store (n=80)

Sr. No.	Problems	Total	Garrett’s score	Mean Garrett’s score	Rank
1.	Parking problems	6124		76.55	I
2.	Long waiting time for billing	5716		71.45	II
3.	Rounding off	4824		60.30	III
4.	Local varieties are not available daily	4208		52.60	IV
5.	Stored product	3872		48.40	V
6.	Not fresh product	3109		38.86	VI
7.	Distance	2599		32.49	VII
8.	High price for produce	1812		22.65	VIII

Source : Primary data

Santhai as the third major problem. Other problems expressed by the respondents included, billing is not done (61.20), poor quality (57.20), no grading (55.60), poor cleanliness of store (48.55), minimum quantity of fruits available (46.75), poor display of product (42.70), disorderliness of product (37.00), parking constraint (34.00), poor infrastructure (23.00) and only few stalls for basic vegetable (19.00) in that order.

The sellers in farmers market were interested to sell the produce equivalent to the nearest round digit price of the produce for want of change to be given back to the consumer. The produce was not displayed at appropriate a distance which can be reached by the consumers to select the produce. Uzhavar Santhai (Farmers Market) operated between morning 6 am to 11 am. Consumers preferred to purchase the vegetable even during evening hours. Hence, the limited hours of operation was felt as an important constraint by consumers.

Problems faced by the consumers in MOM and POP (Kirana) Store :

Consumers of the Mom and Pop store highlighted 10 problems while purchasing fruits and vegetable. These problems were ranked and presented in Table 5.

The three major problems identified by the consumers were narrow range of merchandise (80.80), limited quantity of produce sold (67.55) and higher margin for the produce sold (66.65). Other problems included no billing (56.90), poor quality (50.38), weighing not transparent (48.10), credit accounting problem (43.63), poor visual merchandising (34.11), not selling fixed amount to everyone (32.89) and change problem (19.65) in that order. The Mom and Pop stores offered a very limited range of fruits and vegetable for their customers and that to in limited quantity only. The produce was also sold at a higher price compared to other stores.

The overall analysis of the produce confronted by the consumers of fruits and vegetables in the modern retail stores

Table 4 : Problems faced by the consumers in PUSS store (n=80)

Sr. No.	Problems	Total Garrett's score	Mean Garrett's score	Rank
1.	Rounding off	6620.00	82.75	I
2.	Poor access to product	6020.00	75.25	II
3.	Limited hours of operation	5360.00	67.00	III
4.	Billing is not done	4896.00	61.20	IV
5.	Poor quality	4576.00	57.20	V
6.	Grading is not done	4448.00	55.60	VI
7.	Poor cleanliness of store	3884.00	48.55	VII
8.	Minimum quantity of fruits available	3740.00	46.75	VIII
9.	Poor display of product	3416.00	42.70	IX
10.	Disorderliness of product	2960.00	37.00	X
11.	Parking constraint	2720.00	34.00	XI
12.	Poor infrastructure	1840.00	23.00	XII
13.	Only few stalls for basic vegetable	1520.00	19.00	XII

Source : Primary data

Table 5 : Problems faced by the consumers in M&P store (n=80)

Sr. No.	Problems	Total Garrett's score	Mean Garrett's score	Rank
1.	Narrow range of merchandise	6464	80.80	I
2.	Limited quantity	5404	67.55	II
3.	High cost of produce	5332	66.65	III
4.	No billing	4552	56.90	IV
5.	Poor quality	4030	50.38	V
6.	Weighing not transparent	3848	48.10	VI
7.	Credit accounting problem	3490	43.63	VII
8.	Poor visual merchandising	2729	34.11	VIII
9.	Not selling fixed rate to every one	2631	32.89	IX
10.	Change problem	1572	19.65	X

Source : Primary data

revealed that the major problems were issues related to billing, rounding off the produce, lack of filling the produce at adequate intervals. In the case of M&P store the problems were related to narrow range of merchandise, limited quantity of produce and high cost.

Problems faced by the retailers :

Generally the retailers' viz., NCRC, RCRC, PRSS, PUSS and M & P store experienced different types of constraints in retailing of fruits and vegetables in the city. In this section the constraints in retailing of fruits and vegetables were identified and ranked based on the perception of the retailers.

Problems in retailing of fruits and vegetables :

The details regarding the problems as perceived and ranked by the five types of retailers in the city viz., NCRC, RCRC, PRSS, PUSS, M & P stores are presented in the Table 6.

The constraints expressed by the store managers of the following organized and unorganized retailers were classified as follows :

Procurement problems :

- Supply default
- Delayed supply
- Damaged produce

Infrastructure and economic problems :

- Parking problem

- Space constraint

Merchandising problem :

- Unsold produce
- Unavailability of uniform quality of product
- Lack of local varieties

Human resource problems :

- Lack of man power
- Attrition / theft and problems created by the workers and consumers

Pricing problem :

- Price volatility
- Fixation of price
- Produce rate is high

Market problems :

- Low foot fall
- High competition from other retailers

The NCRC store manager had confronted eight constraints and ranked them. The most important constraints perceived by the NCRC store manager was to take appropriate decision to dispose the half perished fruits and vegetables from the store as this has to be done with the concurrence of head quarters of the retail chain. The second problem felt by the manager was untimely/ delayed /default supply of the most preferred fruits and vegetables in the store from the procurement wing of the NCRC. The introduction of new

Table 6 : Problems faced by the retailers

Problems	NCRC	RCRC	PRSS	PUSS	M&P
Decision making	I				
Supply default	II		I		
Competition from other retailers	III	VI			
Unsold produce	IV		VII		II
Produce rate is high	V	II	II		III
Damaged products	VI		VI		
Low foot fall	VII				
Delayed supply	VIII	III	III		
Price volatility		I	V		IV
Parking facilities		IV	IV	IV	
Lack of man power		V		III	
Unavailability of uniform quality of product		VI		II	
Lack of local varieties			VIII		
Space constraint			IX		
Fixation of price				I	
Theft/ consumers creating problems					V
Repayment of credit					I

Source : Primary data

organized retailers created higher level of competition to the NCRC store and thus competition was perceived as the third major problem. The most important problem perceived by the RCRC store was price volatility of the F&V which created slow movement of produce from the stores to the consumers. The second major problem felt by the store was the higher procurement price paid for the F&V. This problem was followed by the delayed supply of F&V to the store due to collection of produce from various sources. In the case of PRSS store the manager had perceived the following three major problems viz., default supply, high rate of produce and delayed supply of produce in that order. Besides those, six other problems were also perceived by the PRSS store. The Agricultural officer in-charge of the PUSS stated that fixation of price for the fruits and vegetable was the first major issue confronted by them. The unavailability of uniform quality/ grade of the fruits and vegetables produce were felt as the second major issue. Shortage of man power to manage the PUSS was also felt as the third major problem. Most of the M&P store owners perceived that the repayment of credit by the customers as the major issue. In the event of unsold produce in the store, it was a waste (or) loss as it cannot be sold out to customers. The other major issues confronted by them were price volatility, theft by the consumers and problems created by the consumers in that order.

Conclusion and suggestions :

The major problems perceived by consumers in NCRC stores were selling low quality of fruits and vegetables and lack of refilling the produce. Frequent maintaining of selling the fruits and vegetables with adequate emphasis on maintaining the quality produce should be emphasized. Ensuring the quality can enhance the number of customers and their by chances to increase the sales can also be achieved. In the case of Mom and Pop store, the major problems perceived by the consumers was non-availability of wider range of fruits and vegetables coupled with higher price margin. Hence, it is suggested to wider range of fruits and vegetables in the mom and pop stores.

The study has found that selling low quantity, poor

refilling and slow checkouts as the major problems faced by the consumers in the modern fruits and vegetables retail store outlets. Whereas, narrow range of merchandise, limited quantity and high cost were identified as the major problems in the case of mom and pop stores. The study also found that decision making, supply default and competition from other retailers were the major problems perceived by the retailers. Suggestions to overcome the problems were indicated in the study.

This study was based on the primary data collected from sample consumers by survey method. As many of the consumers furnished the required information from their memory and experience, the collected data would be subjected to recall bias. The study area was limited to Coimbatore city and the findings may not be applicable to other markets, as vast differences exist among the consumers with regard to demographic and psychographics characteristics. Hence, the findings of the study may be considered appropriate for the situations similar to study area and extra care should be taken while generalizing the results.

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