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## 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 article tries to find out the level of rural youth and rural adult consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services in Cuddalore district. One objective of this study is reached through proper methodology. Sample size is 1066 in all obtained through stratified simple random sampling technique in Cuddalore district. Researcher designed questionnaire is with 5 point scale in the continuum of agreeing. Reliability of this tool is 0.84. Z test and one way ANOVA were used for data analysis. The study found that there is significant difference towards awareness about adulteration of food and services with respect to gender and age of the rural youth and rural adult consumers'. The study highlighted that rural youth and rural adult consumers' perceived moderate level awareness about adulteration of food and services. It is recommended that that an educational programme had a positive effect to increase awareness of youth and rural adult consumers' about food adulteration. The study concluded that Manufacturers, wholesalers and Government should create awareness about food adulteration among rural youth and rural adult consumers' in Cuddalore district.

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

### Introduction

The most of the people are living in rural area, the consumer does not have awareness about adulteration of food and services in Cuddalore district. Every individual is a consumer and every consumer is a customer. Adulteration of food stuffs is normally trained in India by the trade. When the price of the food manufacture is higher than the price which the consumer is organized to pay, seller is forced to supply a food product of lesser quality. Adulteration is one of the major problems faced in present time. If we see, from the view of adulteration, we found that all the food articles like milk and milk product, beverages like coffee, species and condiments, vegetable oil and fats, tea etc. are adulterated from many ways. These food articles are used by near about every personality every day in the form of food. Adulterants of food articles not only lesser the quality of food articles but if we eat these adulterated food articles daily, than it affects our health very dangerously. Adulteration cause many diseases like cancer, liver disease, cardiac failure, lathyrisme, kidney diseases, and Nervous system related disease. Many efforts or rules have been taken by the Government but still the situation is alive. Adulteration is defined as the process by which the quality or the nature of a given substance is reduces 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) <sup>[1]</sup> in their study entitled "Consumer perception towards processed fruits and vegetable products" made an attempt to find the consumer's perception towards processed fruit and vegetable products in Pondicherry. From a sample of 120 consumers, the study revealed that the consumers with higher educational level were found to consume more of processed products. Consumers preferred processed products because of convenience of ready to eat form and un-branded products because of cheaper price. In majority of the households the buying divisions were made by the wives, followed by the husbands. Financial analysis revealed that the total household expenditure and the total income of the household significantly influenced the expenditure incurred on the processed fruit and vegetable products.

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Selvaraju R. (2000) [2] studied "Consumerism in rural India with reference to fair price shops". The study made an attempt to know about the awareness of public related to cheating in fair price shops and their complaining behaviour. For this purpose, the researcher used 150 ration cardholders who were randomly chosen and interviewed. The author critically analyzed the complaining behaviour of consumers by using simple statistical method.

Kocha and Rumrillb (2008) [3] in their article entitled, "Assessing consumer satisfaction in rehabilitation and allied health care settings", describes the challenges that inhere to consumer satisfaction research in the fields of rehabilitation and health care, discusses strategies for improving the psychometric soundness and scientific rigor of research in this increasingly important knowledge domain, and cites several examples from the contemporary literature of measurement and design approaches that have been identified as particularly useful in gauging consumer satisfaction with services. Mixed-method and qualitative research strategies such as in-depth interviews and focus groups are emphasized as ways of broadening and deepening the field's understanding of the multi-dimensional construct of consumer satisfaction.

Nidhi Gupta and Priti Panchal (2009) [4] discussed in their article that food is essential for sustenance of life. Adulteration of food cheats the consumer and can pose serious risk to health in some cases. The present study was planned with the main objective of identifying buying practices of homemakers and their extent of awareness related to selected food products. Stratified sampling method with questionnaire cum interview schedule was adopted to collect data. Tool was standardized by difficulty index, validity index and split half reliability method. Statistical test such as chi square between awareness and occupation, t-test among age group, educational level and extent of awareness were carried out. Study revealed that respondent's awareness related to rights and responsibilities was good but poor related to 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

The validity of any research depends upon accurate and adequate data. Hence, due care was given for collecting the required data for this study. The present study is based on descriptive study between consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services and consumer social demographic variables like gender and educational qualification, etc. The study is based on primary data as well as secondary data.

### Research Gap

The existing researches have not focused on rural youth and rural adult consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services and its states the importance of research needs to identify interlink and integrated approach consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services among the rural youth and rural adult. None of the research shows the integrated approach of awareness about the adulteration of food products and further no research is conducted both in rural youth and rural adult together in Cuddalore district of Tamilnadu.

### Statement of the Problem

The consumer has been considered as the king in a global

market economy. Adulteration, artificial scarcity, malpractices in distribution and sky-rocketing prices are some of the basic problems of the Indian consumers due to the involvement of too many intermediaries between the producers to consumers of various goods and services. Majority of the consumers in the study area are unaware about the implications in consumers' awareness about adulteration of food and services. Most of the rural consumer live below the poverty line and therefore are busy just keeping themselves alive. They mere struggle for survival uses up all their energy. They have neither the time nor the inclination to think of their rights. The literate and educated consumer feels helpless before the might of the exploiters and therefore acquiesces to condition.

### 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

For collecting primary data, field survey technique was undertaken in the study area. First-hand information pertaining to the awareness about adulteration of food and services by the consumer and the data were collected from rural youth and adult consumers in Cuddalore district.

### Sample Size

Under the provisional census report 2011, the rural population of Cuddalore district is 17, 18,249 which is around 66.06 percent of the total population 2600880. The population has been stratified into two heads, viz., rural youth and rural adult by using simple random basis. In the seven taluks of Cuddalore district of the respondents were drawn from the two heads at the rate of 533 each and total of 1066 by using the following standard sampling size calculation for finite population.

### Interview Schedule Design

The primary data has been collected from the respondents by using tools of interview schedule. Interview schedule contained questions regarding the personal data such as Gender and Educational Qualification. Five point scaling technique has been used for finding the awareness of the different awareness about adulteration of food and services.

### Tools of data collection

By virtue of mass data obtained from survey research, as well as data of secondary sources collected and presented in the thesis, a descriptive was done, since it is considered as most appropriate for the study. The research problem, interview schedule were all framed accordingly. The suggestions offered in the final chapter of the research report emerged from the inferences drawn by using simple statistical analysis among the data collected from the selected sample respondents.

### Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha of all the selected factors are having above 0.70 and the study is reliable to do the analysis. Further,

the result of Cronbach's alpha revealed that the study has good validity to explore the results.

### 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 is confined to Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu with the sample of 1066 rural consumers. Many of the respondents are indifferent and unwilling to response. They do not maintain proper records for their economic data and utilization of consumer protection centers and consumer forums. Therefore the information rendered by them is found biased and necessary cross verification was made to reduce the biased information.

### Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1:** Shows 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

**H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between gender groups of rural youth and rural adult consumers with respect to level of awareness towards food adulteration.**

From the above table it is understood that the awareness towards adulteration of food and services is measured according to gender among rural youth and adult consumers. It is identified that female (23.73) consumers are having more awareness than male (22.55) in youth category. In the case of adult consumers, male respondents are having more (24.21) awareness about food adulteration than female (23.32) in the study area. The 'z' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in both youth and adult category of gender and hence, there is significant difference between gender and awareness level about food adulteration among the rural youth and adult consumers.

**Table 2:** Shows Ages 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 <sup>NS</sup>
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	

Source: primary data, \* - Significant at 5% level; NS - Not significant

**H<sub>0</sub>: 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 is noted that the age group of 21-25 years (23.11) consumers are having more awareness in youth category. In the case of adult consumers, the respondents with the age group of 51-55 years are having more (23.57) awareness about food adulteration in the study area. The 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis

is rejected in youth and accepted in adult category of age group and hence, there is a significant difference between age group and awareness level about food adulteration among the rural youth consumers and there is a no significant difference between age group and awareness level about food adulteration among the rural adult consumers.

### Findings of the study

- It is found from the analysis that 'z' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in both youth and adult category of gender and hence, there is a significant difference between gender groups with respect to awareness level about food adulteration among the rural youth and adult consumers.
- It is found from the analysis that 'F' value indicated that the null hypothesis is rejected in youth and accepted in adult category of age group and hence, there is a significant difference among age groups with respect to awareness level about food adulteration among the rural youth consumers and there is a no significant difference between age group and awareness level about food adulteration among the rural adult consumers.

### Recommendations of the Study

- The study recommended that an educational programme had a positive effect to increase awareness of youth and rural adult consumers' about food adulteration.
- Manufacturers, wholesalers and Government should create awareness about food adulteration among rural youth and rural adult consumers' in Cuddalore district.
- Wholesalers to take keen interest in the production and supply of hygienic and nutritious food for the well being of society.

### Conclusion of the Study

The study found that there is significant difference towards awareness about adulteration of food and services with respect to gender and age of the rural youth and rural adult consumers'. The study highlighted that rural youth and rural adult consumers' perceived moderate level awareness about adulteration of food and services. It is recommended that an educational programme had a positive effect to increase awareness of youth and rural adult consumers' about food adulteration. The study concluded that Manufacturers, wholesalers and Government should create awareness about food adulteration among rural youth and rural adult consumers' in Cuddalore district.

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