The Extent Consumer Awareness On Food Adulteration Influencing The Buying Behaviour Of Consumers With Special Reference To Chennai City

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ABSTRACT

Food is a most needed to live a healthy life. Food products give us with needed nutrition and play an important role to maintain good health which also prevents us from serious health issues. But, recent times the main cause for a diseases is food, because some of the foods are highly adulterated by producers to earn more gain. The core objective of this research paper is to know the awareness on food adulteration among customers, and to verify the customers’ preference for buying of food products. Primary and secondary data has been collected to justify the objective of the research paper and with the analysis like chi-square test, mean score and simple percentage method. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data. 50 respondents were collected through a structured questionnaire. The main finding of the research is that more number of the literate customers also had lacked in knowledge about food adulteration and customers are adopting poor buying practices which are a root cause for rise in food adulteration and food contamination.

1. INTRODUCTION

Customers need a nutritious food to live a life. With an increase in the per-capita income and development in the standard of living and changing in the food habits, the demand in the quality of food items has increase higher. Hence, the customer market is overflowing with new contaminated food products. Consumers are cheated by the manufacturers for producing more contaminated food products for gaining a competitive edge.

Food adulteration in India seems to be more dangerous every day. Food adulteration is a most common problem in all household commodities which causes serious health issues for the people. The supply of contaminated food items is harmful for public so it is assumed as a crime and offence. In spite of strict measures taken by the government against adulteration, it is still prevailing highly just to enjoy more gains by putting human lives under high risk.

Food Adulteration can be defined as “the process and procedure by which the quality or quantity or the nature of the food products changed by including a dangerous substance that leads to serious health issues.

- The inclusion of a chemical or an inferior substance. E.g. addition of formalin in milk to preserve it for more days.
- By removing the core vitamins. E.g. removing the fat from milk. This research work aims to identify the customer awareness on food adulteration.

2. THE VARIOUS REASONS FOR FOOD ADULTERATION MAY BE,

- Availability of more alternatives and choices for a products in the market
- Lack of knowledge in buying practices of customers.
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- Customer’s intention of bargaining.
- Most common habits of customers
- Availability of adulterants in the market in order to meet the demand.

KINDS OF ADULTERATION

There are three kinds of adulteration namely,

INTENTIONAL ADULTERANTS

Intentional adulterants are sand, stone, mud, chalk powder, water, and coal tar dyes. These are the substances included intentionally in the food products. These types of substance will cause harmful effects on the human health.

METALLIC CONTAMINATION

Metallic substances included arsenic from pesticides, lead from water, and mercury from effluents of chemical industries, tin from cans etc. Continuous intake of this metallic contaminations leads to death as these are considered to be slow poisons.

INCIDENTAL ADULTERATION

Incidental contamination included in the food products due to carelessness, breach of a duty of care which results in damage by the producers. However, these substances also cause serious health issues to the final customers.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

To examine about what are the various problems threatening the people who have consumed the adulterated food items and to identify the various items which are contaminated food items. Food adulteration is increased largely due to lack of awareness among customers, improper food policies, no ethics to producers as their intention is to maximise more profit and lack of standardization of food substances. Comparatively less number of people dies without food but more number of people has been suffering from serious diseases related to food adulteration and finally death happens. Food adulteration is one of the most serious problem which prevails in the society because more number of the customers having poor market knowledge while purchasing food products. Hence the researcher aims to analyze the influence of consumer awareness on Food Adulteration affects the buying behaviour or not.

3. HYPOTHESIS

- There is an association between age group and buying practices of customers.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the customers awareness on food adulteration.
- To analyse the buying habits of food products.
- To examine the type of adulterant in food products.
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5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research work is based on the awareness of customers towards food adulteration. This research is an attempt to know the current information and the current status of the research area to identify the facts acceptable and not acceptable on food adulteration.

AREA OF THE STUDY

This study is conducted in the Chennai city. The researcher strongly believes that Chennai has more production zones and has large demand to meet which invariably leads to adulterated and contaminated production. Hence, the researcher chooses as an area of research study.

DATA COLLECTION

Both the primary data and secondary data have been used for the study. The primary data were collected with the help of a questionnaire from the respondents. By referring various journals and books secondary data has been collected.

SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING METHOD

There are 50 respondents given with the questionnaire by the researcher and the relevant data has been collected from the respondents for the research. This research paper used convenient sampling technique for the data collection.

AWARENESS ON FOOD ADULTERATION BY THE CUSTOMERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION</th>
<th>AWARENESS ABOUT THE FOOD ADULTERATION</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (%)</td>
<td>No (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Level</td>
<td>4 (44.44)</td>
<td>5 (55.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Graduate</td>
<td>10 (83.33)</td>
<td>2 (16.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>19 (86.36)</td>
<td>3 (13.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>5 (71.43)</td>
<td>2 (28.57)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

TABLE NO 1

6. INFEERENCE

The above table reveals that, majority of the under graduate and post graduate respondents aware of food adulteration as it shows 83.33% and 86.36% respectively. It shows that the higher education bringing lots of awareness among the people. They are 55.56% school level respondents are unaware of adulterated products. Government has to conduct regular awareness programs on food adulteration among the school level kids.

7. TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

H₀: There is no association between age group and buying practices of customers.

H₁: There is an association between age group and buying practices of customers.
Chi – Square Analysis

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} \]

Calculation Value : 9.36
Table Value : 16.919
Degrees of freedom 9 (R-1) (C-1)
Level of Significance: 5%

The above table reveals that, null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted because the calculated (9.36) value is less than the table value (16.919). Hence, there is no association between age group and buying practices of customers.

HIGHLY USED ADULTERANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ADULTERANTS</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SDA</th>
<th>MEAN SCORE</th>
<th>RANK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone/mud</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low quality material</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical contamination</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seed and Bark dust</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary Data

The above table reveals that, out of the total respondents, based on the means score ranks are allotted to highly used adulterants in food products. It is evident from the table that, following adulterants are commonly used in food products stones/mud (3.7), Chemical contamination (3.5), Low quality material (3.3), Seed and Bark dust (3.1). The Results reveals that, highly used adulterants are stone and mud as it is increasing the weight of the core product.
8. FINDINGS

- Majority of the post graduate respondents (86.36%) had awareness about food adulteration and contamination.
- Null hypothesis (There is no association between age group and buying practices of customers) is accepted. This result proved by chi-square test (9.36 < 16.919).
- Majority of the respondents gave first rank to stones and mud (4.3) which was a highly used adulterant in food products.

9. SUGGESTIONS

- Government has to implement proper food policies and honest testing procedures should be adopted for standardizing the food items.
- Wholesalers have to acquire standard raw materials and store them under hygienic and clean environments. If the storage warehouses are properly maintained, it will avoid the mixture of unintentional adulterants.
- Retailers should take the initiative and guide the customers to choose the best products.
- Customers should select products with the quality standards like AGMARK and ISI symbols.
- Manufacturers should not only focus on maximising their profit but also taking care on the customer’s health.
- Various awareness programmes has to be conducted by Government to customers regarding their rights and responsibilities to consume any things in the market.

10. CONCLUSION

As of now adulterant is an uncontrollable fate of the society due to customers’ illiteracy and unaware of their rights towards food adulteration and contamination. From the research, it could be concluded that few of the educated people also had less awareness about food adulteration and contamination, so the government and educational institution should implement a well-structured educational programme on food adulteration which will improve the awareness on food adulteration. Majority of the respondents did not check label while purchasing packed food products. Greater customer’s awareness and action can alone improve the situation. Customers must be more aware while purchasing daily commodity otherwise adulteration will cause serious health issues. Everyone must purchase their food products by looking the manufacturing date and quality standards. BE AWARE CONSUMERS AND BE SECURE.

11. REFERENCES
