



A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS UZHAVAR SHANDHAI IN RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

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Abstract

The present study has been conducted in Ramanathapuram district to appraise the customer satisfaction level of the Uzhavar Sandhai (Farmers' Market). A sample of 60 respondents has been contacted for this purpose. Farmers have many problems that may be solved for betterment of Uzhavar Sandhai. Uzhavar Sandhais have more marketing effectiveness because government provides free place, weighing machine, free entry, cold storage, market information, preventing middle men, and other infrastructure and 95 per cent of share from consumer's price. Consumers satisfied with required quantity purchase, low price, quality, correct weight, fresh vegetables and sufficient place and so on.

Keywords: *Satisfaction level of the Customer, Market, Price, Purchase*

I. INTRODUCTION

Uzhavar Sandhai had its birth in the concept of Kal Ghaj in Russia. The former Union agriculture secretary, MS Gill on his visit to this country was impressed by this concept of farmers' market and he replicated this concept by initiating Apna Mandis in Punjab and Haryana in early 1987. The ruling DMK Government in Tamilnadu subsequently replicated this concept in 1999 in the form of Uzhavar Sandhais. Andhra Pradesh followed suit and started the Rythu Bazar on similar lines. In order to eliminate the involvement of intermediaries the state government introduced Uzhavar Sandhai (Farmers' market) where the farmers and consumers can have direct dealings. The idea of setting the Uzhavar Sandhai exclusively for selling vegetables grown by the local growers was conceived in the early 1990s by former Union Agricultural Secretary, M.S. Gill. The First "Uzhavar Sandhai" of the state inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on 14/11/1999 at Madurai. The "Uzhavar Sandhai" opened at Madurai has proved to be very successful as it was attracting more and more farmers as well as consumers daily and was considered to be a model for other districts in the state. Within a year, 103 such markets were operational.

This top-down scheme has provided a valuable space for direct interaction between producers and consumers. Uzhavar Sandhai aims at organising local farmers and helps them to maximise their income. It does so by providing a bridge between urban customers and rural vegetable growers. In this novel design, tracing the origin of vegetables becomes easy. The ramanathapuram district Uzhavar Sandhais serves as a

nodal agency for the farmers and consumers. Agricultural development is a continuous process which in the long run depends on the marketing of agricultural produce in an organized manner to benefit both the farmers and the consumers. The Green Revolution has ushered in a host of inventions and innovations in agricultural operations leading to self-sufficiency. The increase in the production of food and commercial crops has resulted in a surplus which should be marketed at a reasonable price by the farmers. Proper marketing gives the farmers a high net income and encourages them to adopt latest techniques in farming. According to the National Commission on Agriculture, it is not enough to produce a crop, but it must be satisfactorily marketed. Enhanced agricultural productivity and efficient marketing facilities are considered essential in this regard.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To identify the performance of Uzhavar Sandhai in Ramanathapuram districts.
- ❖ To study the opinions of the customer regarding the functioning of the Uzhavar Sandhai.
- ❖ To offer suitable suggestions for the improvement of the Uzhavar Sandhai.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Any improvement in the efficiency of the marketing process, which results in a lower cost of distribution and lower prices to the consumers, really brings about an increase in the national income. The marketing cost reduction is a direct benefit to society as a whole. This principle is applicable to agricultural marketing also. To help the vegetable growing farmers to get the reasonable prices for their produce and the consumers quality produce at reasonable prices, the Tamil Nadu Government conceived the idea of starting the Uzhavar Sandhais where the farmers can sell their produce directly to the consumers as in the “Apna Mandies” in the Punjab and Haryana and the “Rythu Bazaar” in Andhra Pradesh. The three main entities involved in agricultural marketing are the farmer, the consumer and the middleman. The middleman is eliminated in the Uzhavar Sandhai; the success of this system depends on the return it offers to the farmers and the supply of quality vegetables to the consumers at reasonable prices. Hence it is appropriate to examine how far the Uzhavar Sandhai has been successful in satisfying the specific needs of the customer. For this purpose a study on the customer satisfaction towards Uzhavar Sandhai in Ramanathapuram Districts was undertaken.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The study covers the performance of the Uzhavar Sandhai, and satisfaction level of the customers there. Its performance is studied on the basis of secondary data maintained by the authorities.
- The opinions of the customers about its functioning are studied on the basis of primary data collected by the researcher. The present study aims at analyzing the customer satisfaction level of Uzhavar Sandhais at the micro level.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ashok kumar P and K. Sundar K (2011) present study has been conducted in Salem district to appraise the level of strength and performance about the Uzhavar Sandhai (Farmers' Market). A sample of 200 respondents (100 Farmers and 100 Consumers) has been contacted for this purpose. It has brought to light the negative factors interfering with the smooth functioning of Uzhavar Sandhai (Farmers' Market). The study has proposed some valid measures for enabling Uzhavar Sandhai to operate more transparently. If these measures are implemented in true letters and sprits, there would be a spectacular growth of Uzhavar Sandhai (Farmers Market) in Tamil Nadu.

Paridhi Bhandari, Mishra A.K. (2014) had studied about the Agriculture is an important element of Indian economy. The vast majority of this country's population depends on agriculture for its livelihood. So it becomes very important to offer farmers a fair market for his produce at fair price .Governments agricultural policies and Agri-marketing schemes should be huge, effective, organized and systematic. For fulfilling this purpose the Agricultural produce marketing committees were established. They work under district regulated market set up by the different state governments to sell the agricultural produce directly from farmer to purchasers. There is no middleman in between the market transactions. The present study is focused on the factors influencing farmers' satisfaction level towards Agricultural produce marketing committee of Rajnandgaon district.

Rajendran G and Karthikesan P (2014) observed from In India, the organised marketing of agricultural commodities has been promoted through a network of regulated markets. Most state governments and UT administrations have enacted legislations to provide for the regulation of agricultural produce markets. While by the end of 1950, there were 286 regulated markets in the country, their number as on 31 March 2006 stood at 7566. In addition, India has 21780 rural periodical markets, about 15 per cent of which function under the ambit of regulation. The advent of regulated markets has helped in mitigating the market handicaps of producers/sellers at the wholesale assembling level. But the rural periodic markets in general and the tribal markets in particular, remained out of its developmental ambit.

VI. DATA

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study. Primary data are collected from the customers in the Uzhavar Sandhais with structured questionnaires. Before undertaking the survey, a pretest was conducted and then the questionnaires are modified and restructured suitably. The primary data were collected six months between April 2021 and September 2021. The sample size consists of 20 respondents from each of the 03 regulated markets respectively summing the overall sample to 60. The secondary data were collected from the records maintained by the authorities in the Uzhavar Sandhais and also from books, journals and magazines.

Table .1 List of Uzhavar Sandhai's in Ramanathapuram District

S.No.	Place	Opening Date
1.	Paramakudi	22.2.2000
2.	Ramanathapuram	22.2.2000
3.	Kamuthi	22.2.2009

VII. Tools of Analysis

7.1 Factors influencing the level of customer satisfaction

An attempt has been made to study the factors influencing the level of customer satisfaction.

In this study there are three analyses have been made that is the perception on price is measured in 2 point likert scale. The scope of 1 indicates the feeling that the price of Uzhavar Shandhai is less costly and 2 indicates the price is more costly.

7.1.1 Gender wise classification of the Customers

Gender is an important factor in determining the level of satisfaction of customers.

Table 2. Gender-wise Classification of the Customers

S.No.	Gender	Number of consumers	Percentage
1.	Male	32	53.3
2.	Female	28	46.7
	Total	60	100.0

It is observed from the table out of 60 customers, 32 (53.3) percent are male and rest 28 (46.7) percent are female. It is concluded that large volume of the sample respondents in ramanathapuram city is man.

In order to find out whether there is any relationship between gender of the customer and their perception on price, independent sample t-test analysis is used.

**Table 3. Comparison of male and female perception on price level
(n=60: 32 males and 28 females)**

S.No.	Commodities	Mean		Standard Deviation		T	P-Value
		Male	Female	Male	Female		
1	Tomato	1.84	1.83	0.37	0.32	-0.55	0.58
2	Ladies Finger	1.84	1.82	0.39	0.39	0.23	0.82
3	Chilies	1.75	0.86	0.44	0.36	-1.01	0.30
4	Onion	1.78	1.88	0.42	0.36	-0.75	0.46
5	Bringal	1.99	1.86	0.48	0.36	-1.58	0.12
6	Bitter Guard	1.78	1.68	0.42	0.48	0.88	0.38
7	Drum Stick	1.66	1.75	0.48	0.44	0.78	0.44
8	Carrot	1.69	2.00	0.34	0.01	-2.10	0.04
9	Beet root	1.75	1.82	0.44	0.39	-0.66	0.51
10	Beans	1.69	1.86	0.47	0.36	-1.58	0.12
11	Chaw-Chaw	1.66	1.79	0.48	0.42	-1.11	0.27
12	Cauliflower	1.78	1.86	0.43	0.36	-0.75	0.46
13	Cabbage	1.69	1.79	0.47	0.42	-0.85	0.39
14	Radish	1.66	1.82	0.48	0.39	-1.47	0.15

The degree of freedom in t-test is adjusted for the heterogeneity of variances the using Levine's t-test.

The above table 3 indicates the man of males and females and t-values. For all the vegetables the mean value if more than one and so majority feels that the price is costlier at Uzhavar Sandhai. In this table there are 24 commodities most of the commodities indicate that the perception about prices is not significantly for the different commodities are except a few. For instance beet root t-value is -2.104 this indicates that the males and females perceive differently about the prices. Males feel that the price is higher compared to females.

7.1.2 Educational Qualification of the Customers

Table 4. Educational Qualification wise classification of the Customers

S.No.	Educational Qualification	Number of consumers	Percentage
1.	School Level	28	46.7
2.	College Level	32	53.3
	Total	60	100.0

It is inferred from the table 4 that 46.7 percent of the customers belong to school level. This table elucidates that majority 53.3 percent of the customers of Ramanathapuram Uzhavar sandhai are educated.

**Table 5. Comparison of the perception on price of college educated and school educated
(n=60: 32 school educated = 28 and college educated 32)**

S.No.	Commodities	Mean		Standard Deviation		T	P-Value
		School Level	College Level	School Level	College Level		
1	Tomato	1.75	1.97	0.44	0.18	-2.46	-0.22
2	Ladies Finger	1.82	1.84	0.39	0.37	0.23	0.82
3	Chilies	1.71	0.88	0.46	0.34	-1.53	0.13
4	Onion	1.82	1.82	0.39	0.39	-0.09	0.93
5	Bringal	1.75	1.78	0.44	0.42	-1.28	0.78
6	Bitter Guard	1.75	1.72	0.44	0.46	0.27	0.78
7	Drum Stick	1.71	1.68	0.46	0.47	0.22	0.82
8	Carrot	1.85	2.00	0.36	0.01	-2.12	0.04
9	Beet root	1.71	1.84	0.46	0.37	-1.19	0.24
10	Beans	1.64	1.87	0.49	0.34	-2.12	0.04
11	Chaw-Chaw	1.75	1.68	0.44	0.47	0.53	0.59
12	Cauliflower	1.89	1.75	0.31	0.44	1.46	0.15
13	Cabbage	1.71	1.75	0.31	0.44	-0.31	0.76
14	Radish	1.85	1.63	0.36	0.49	2.11	0.04

This above table 5 shows the mean of school educated and college educated E-values. The college educated feels that the price is lower than school educated For example: Carrot, Beans. But school educated feels that the price is costlier than college educated. In this table there are 14 commodities most of the commodities indicates that the perception about prices are not significantly for the different commodities are except few for beans t-value is -2.116, Carrot t-value is -2.121 and Radish t-value is 2.111. This indicates that the school educated people and college educated people's percentage differently about the price. People feel that the price is college educated higher compared to school educated people.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- Garbage clearance must be done daily to avoid bad smell and keeps the sandhai in tidy manner. The Garbage pit may be formed for collecting the daily vegetable wastages. These wastes may be used for vermi-composting.
- Training for the farmers about cultivation of hilly vegetables and other vegetables and new techniques may be disseminated to the farmers.
- Every year ID card holders must be verified. If we find they have not cultivated the vegetables, their cards must be withdrawn. The right farmers may be permitted to sale in Sandhai.
- Farmers may be permitted and encouraged to bring their value added products like panai vellam, milk and milk products and so on.
- The authorities of the Uzhavar Sandhai have to visit the local vegetable markets frequently and study the customers' attitude to other markets (other than Uzhavar Sandhai). This step may help in toning up the operational efficiency of the Uzhavar Sandhai.

IX. CONCLUSION

The study is imperative as it reveals the potential to contribute to the enhancing performance of these markets in future and brings awareness to both the farmers as well as consumers in making these markets more efficient and economical. Moreover the study reveals that majority of the respondents have a positive perception towards these markets and these markets are really proving to be proficient and reasonable. It concludes from the investigation and result of this study that majority of small and marginal farmers have

been benefited from Uzhavar Sandhai. More than one third of women farmers and one third of women consumers have participated in Uzhavar Sandhai farmers gets market information's from farmers and then officials. Farmers have many problems that may be solved for betterment of Uzhavar Sandhai. Uzhavar Sandhais have more marketing effectiveness because government provides free place, weighing machine, free entry, cold storage, market information, preventing middle men, and other infrastructure and 95 per cent of share from consumer's price. Consumers satisfied with required quantity purchase, low price, quality, correct weight, fresh vegetables and sufficient place and so on.

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