

CONSUMERS' AWARENESS TOWARDS FOOD ADULTERATION IN TENKASI

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Abstract

Food is essential for our life. Food provides us with important nutrition and plays a vital role in maintaining proper health which also helps in prevention and cure of diseases. But now a day the major reason for a few diseases is food, because many of the foods are adulterated by manufacturer for gaining more profit. The main objective of this study is to analyze the awareness of food adulteration among consumers, and to examine the consumers' preference for buying practices of food items. To achieve this objective data has been collected from primary and secondary sources and with effective analysis like chi-square test, mean score and simple percentage method. Judgment sampling technique was used. 60 samples were collected through a structured questionnaire. The major finding of the study is that majority of the literate consumer also had lack of knowledge about food adulteration and poor buying practice among consumer is a main reason for rising food adulteration.

Key words: Food adulteration, Consumers awareness, buying behaviour.

Introduction

Food is essential for sustenance of life. With rise the per-capita income and development in life style and food habits, the demand in quality and quantity of food products has increase so, the market is naturally overflowing with new products. In the "dog eats dog world" to lure the consumers the manufacturers resort to malpractice for gaining a competitive edge.

Food adulteration in India is getting deadlier day by day. Food adulteration is a commonest malpractice and an age-old problem which causes serious effects on health of people. Food adulteration is harmful for human being so it is considered as a crime. In spite of strict measures against adulteration, it is still practiced just for profit putting human lives in danger.

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. E.g. addition of water to milk.
- The removal of vital vitamins. E.g. removal of fat from milk.

This paper focuses on consumer awareness towards food adulteration.

The Causes of Adulteration may be

- Availability of too many products in the market
- Poor buying practices of consumers.
- Consumer mentality of bargaining,

- Consumer psyche.
- Availability of adulterants.

Types of adulteration

There are three types of adulteration namely

Intentional adulterants

Intentional adulterants are sand, marble chips, stone, mud, chalk powder, water, mineral oil and coal tar dyes. This adulteration cause harmful effects on the body.

Metallic contamination

Metallic contaminations include arsenic from pesticides, lead from water, and mercury from effluents of chemical industries, tin from cans etc.

Incidental adulteration

Incidental contamination is due to ignorance, negligence or lack of proper facilities.

Statement of the Problem

To know about what are the problems that have been faced by the customer's or people who have consumed the food adulteration products is whether necessary to know what are the products are to become a food adulteration. Food adulteration is prevalent largely due to lack of awareness among common people, proper food laws, business ethics among the money minded manufacturers and standardization of food substances. A limited number of people die without food but large populations have been suffering from complicated diseases related to food adulteration and finally die. Food adulteration is one of the most serious problem at present in our society because majority of the consumers having poor knowledge while purchasing food item. Hence the researcher attempts to analyze the Consumer Awareness towards Food Adulteration.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the awareness of food adulteration among consumers.
- To examine the buying practices of food items.
- To evaluate type of adulterant in food item.

Research Methodology

The research is based on the consumer awareness towards food adulteration. It is used to obtain the current information the current status of the phenomena to describe what exists.

Area of the Study

This study is conducted in the Tenkasi town.

Data Sources

Both primary data and secondary have been used for the study purpose. The primary data were collected from the respondents with the help of a structured questionnaire. The secondary data has been collected by referring to Journals (Indian Journal of Applied Research).

Sample Size and Sampling Method

The sample of 60 respondents was chosen for the study. For purpose of the study, judgment sampling technique has been adopted.

Consumers' Awareness towards Food Adulteration

Educational qualification	Awareness about food adulteration		Total
	Yes	No	
Secondary level	4 (44.44%)	5 (55.56%)	9
Graduate	21 (95.45%)	1 (4.55%)	22
Post Graduate	14 (93.33%)	1 (6.67%)	15
Professionals	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	5
Diploma	3 (33.33%)	6 (66.67%)	9

Source: Primary Data

It is obtained from the above table that 95.45% of graduate people have awareness about food adulteration. 66.67% of diploma people have no awareness about food adulteration.

Age and Buying practices

H₀: There is no significance difference between age and buying practices of consumer.

Age	Buying practices				Total
	Check MRP and weight	Nutritional label	Manufacture and expiry date	All these	
< 20	5	6	4	3	18
20 - 40	4	2	7	10	23
40 - 60	2	3	4	2	11
> 60	1	1	5	1	8
Total	12	12	20	16	60

Source: Primary Data

Chi - Square Analysis

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

Calculation Value : 11.20

Table Value : 16.919

Degrees of freedom : 9

Level of Significance : 5%

The above table shows that, null hypothesis is accepted because the calculated (11.20) value is less than the table value (16.919). Hence, there is no significance difference between age and buying practices of consumer.

Type of Adulterants

Type of adulterants	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean score	Rank
Stone	43	7	4	4	2	4.4	I
Low quality material	31	11	9	6	3	4.0	III
Chemical contamination	29	19	9	3	0	4.2	II
seed and seed powder	11	31	11	3	4	3.7	IV

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that out of the total respondents, based on the means score ranks are assigned to type of adulterants in food items. It is evident from the table that, following adulterants are commonly used in food items stones (4.4), Chemical contamination (4.2), Low quality material (4.0), seed and seed powder (3.7).

Findings

- Majority of the graduate respondents (95.45%) had awareness about food adulteration.
- Null hypothesis (there is no significance difference between age and buying practices of consumer) is accepted. It is proved by chi-square test ($11.20 < 16.919$).
- Majority of the respondents gave first rank to stones (4.4) which was a common adulterant in food items.

Suggestions

- Proper food laws should be formulated by the government and rigid testing procedures should be adopted for standardizing the food products.
- Wholesalers choose quality products and stock them under clean and hygienic environments.
- Retailers should take the initiative and suggests them the best products.
- Consumer should select products with the AGMARK and ISI symbols.
- Manufacturers should not only focus on increasing their profit but also take care on the consumer health
- Government should take necessary steps to create awareness program to consumer regarding their rights and responsibilities to consume any things.

Conclusion

Adulterant is rampant in poor strata of society due to consumer's illiteracy and ignorance of their rights responsibilities towards food adulteration. From the study, it could be concluded that few of the educated people also had no awareness about food adulteration, so the government and institution should implement a well-structured educational programme on food adulteration which would lead to increase the awareness regarding food adulteration. Majority of the respondents did not check label while purchasing packed food item. Greater consumer vigilance and action can alone improve the situation.

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