PREFACE.

India and especially Kerala is facing huge inflation and at the same time majority of Keralities are not rich enough to meet this difficult situation. The retailing in Kerala is concerned, the government and co-operative sector is very strong enough with the private sector to meet the requirements of consumers. The public distribution system headed with Kerala state civil supplies corporation (Supplyco) and Co-operative sector with all consumer co-operative stores, Neethi stores (Associated with primary agricultural credit societies-PACS) and The Kerala State Co-operatives Consumers’ Federation Ltd has gained enormous consumer support in recent years. The private retail outlets with various retail format especially supermarkets also catering the requirements of crores of consumers in Kerala. The study entitled “Retail Marketing in Kerala-Performance, Attitudes and Challenges” is to assess the attitude level of consumers of Kerala over these three formats and also how far the various retail outlets can provide over the key variables that may constitute the attitudes together with an assessment over major problems and challenges in retailing. The zonal and Urban/Rural analysis is also made.

In India there is no paucity of textbooks and studies that deal with the subject of marketing, retailing and consumer but the literature exclusively meant for consumer attitudes and performance of retail outlets to meet the consumers attitudes, especially in the context of Kerala is very limited. It studies government; co-operative and private retail outlets and these three different organized retail formats are trying to cater the same group-people of Kerala residing over fourteen districts. How far these three retail formats can able to satisfy the consumers. Here the study is to assess the satisfaction level of consumers of Kerala over these three formats and also how far the various retail outlets can provide over the key variables that may constitute the attitude spectrum.

The scheme of the study consists of eight chapters. Chapter one deals with the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis, and review of literature, methodology, scope and limitation of the study. An overview of retailing is given in the second chapter. The analysis of consumer attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets is given in the third chapter and the performance of government, co-operative and private retail outlets on the key variables that constitute consumer attitudes and major problems and challenges in
the retailing in the fourth chapter. The fifth chapter deals with Zone wise analysis-consumer and retail outlets. The sixth chapter explains the residence wise analysis-consumer and retail outlets. The seventh chapter concluded the major findings of the study. The last chapter (Eighth) presents the summary, suggestions and conclusions of the study. The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from government sector is discounts offered (77.52) followed by Lowest price in the area (75.96) and Reliability (65.13). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from Co-operative sector is Reliability (77.45), Store has the lowest prices in the area (74.22) and Discounts offered (72.86). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from private sector is Wide Variety/Choice (85.09), Sales man’s Service (84.95), Convenience in shopping (84.7), Display Models or Structures (83.91) and Computerized Billing (83.3). It is found from the study that there is significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets and it is also found that there is significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets in the three zones of Kerala. The study also reveals that there is significant difference among the two residences (Urban/Rural) towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets.

The majority of people are purchasing products from the private sector (54.2 %) followed by government sector (36.3 %) and co-operative sector (9.5 %) but at the same time Supplyco retail formats is the most preferred one and have the highest mean (5.763) and second position goes to private supermarkets. The co-operative stores have got fourth position and the co-operative way of retailing is one of the good and proved methods to satisfy the consumer needs especially at the village level. It is analysed that consumers in Kerala likes government retail outlets but purchase is from the private retail outlets (majority cases). So it is highly essential that government sector should imbibe good models and methods from private sector and at the same time private sector should incorporate the reasons of love towards government sector in their outlets-such as: affordable prices and reliability in the operations.

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