Chapter 8.
Summary, Suggestions and Conclusion of the Study.

Introduction.

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.

Consumers and the Retail Outlets under Government, Co-operative and Private Outlets.

Consumers are very keen in selecting the grocery products and retail outlets. Consumers are seeking fair goods/services for their hard earned money and scarce time. They want products or service that meet their specific needs or wants and that are offered at competitive prices with higher values. The study focus on the benefits/facilities/offers/services provided to the consumers in Kerala by major three types of retail formats. The purpose of government sector is not profit and maximization of profit but better service to the citizens of Kerala; ensure the availability of good quality and quantity products throughout Kerala. In the case of co-operatives, the objective is to satisfy the requirements of consumers especially members of co-operative society, again the objective is not the maximization of profit but better service to the consumers especially members. The private retail outlets are concerned, their modern objective is to provide and ensure consumer satisfaction and through providing exactly what they need and thus ensuring satisfaction, and earn profit.

These three different organized retail outlets-Government, Co-operative and Private are trying to cater the people of Kerala. How far these three retail formats can able to satisfy the consumers. Here the study is to assess the attitude level of consumers of Kerala over these three formats and also how far the various retail outlets can provide satisfaction over the key variables that may contribute to the consumer attitudes.
Objectives of the Study.
1. To evaluate the consumer attitudes towards the government, co-operative and private retail outlets.
2. To assess the performance of government, co-operative and private retail outlets on the key variables that constitute consumer attitudes.
3. To evaluate the regional and urban/rural differences among consumers of Kerala over government, co-operative and private retail outlets.
4. To identify the major problems and challenges experienced by government, co-operative and private retail outlets and give suggestions for improving the performance of retail outlets in Kerala.

Major Hypothesis.
4. There is significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets.
5. There is no significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets in the three zones of Kerala.
6. There is significant difference in the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets among the Urban and Rural Consumers.

Methodology & Data Source and Collection
The methodology to be adopted for a particular research project would depend up on the purpose and objectives to be achieved. The sampling is based on multistage sampling. On the first stage we divide the entire state into three zones namely south, central and north zones and two districts from each zone is selected. From the each district a sample of hundred consumers and eighteen retail outlets (six from each category-Government/Co-operative/Private retail outlets) is selected. Primary sources of data are used for the study. The required data has been gathers from primary sources. The collection of all relevant data and other basic information relating to the operations of the retail outlets have been collected from the retail outlets run by Government sector (Like Supplyco, Labham markets etc.), Co-operative sector (Triveni, Consumerfed and Primary Agricultural credit Societies-Neethi consumer stores) and from the private consumer retail outlets. Personal interviews, observations and discussion with the consumers of the retail outlet form part of the data and information gathering.
Out of the 600 respondents, scores of 3, 2 and 1 is given to respondents providing first, second and third ranks. The rank offered by the respondents is multiplied with the scores and a total figure is arrived and the same is divided with the number of respondents (May not be always 600 but the total actual respondents who gave any rank at all- zero rank is avoided). The arithmetic means of government, co-operative and private outlets are calculated and first rank is provided to the maximum mean score followed by second rank and third rank for the lowest mean score.

**Hypothesis Testing.**

**Major Hypothesis.** (1) There is significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets. The quality, wide variety/choice, nearness of the shop, self service system, popularity and good fame variables are concerned; respondents gave first rank to private retail outlets followed by co-operative and government outlets. In the case of reliability matters, respondents find co-operatives as the first preference followed by government sector and least preferred are private sector. The respondents’ response towards the variable- discounts offered, their first choice is government sector followed by co-operatives and least preferred is private sector. The rank of the Quality of the Grocery, Wide Variety/Choice, Nearness of the shop, Self service system, Popularity and Good fame, Advertisement/ Business Communication, Parking facility, Computerized Billing, Attractive Carry bag, Display Models or Structures, Shopping hours of the shop, Lay out of the store, Rate Tags/Price stickers, Availability of Latest Trends, Knowledge of employees, Fast and error-free transactions, Behaviour of employees, Safety in the transactions, Ability to handle customer complaints directly and immediately, The store and its physical facilities, Store promises, The quantity of products supplied through the shop, Individual attention, The floor area of the Shop, is in the order Private, Co-operative and government from 1 to 3. To test this is significant or not we conduct the Kruskal Wallis Test, which is found to be significant with p<0.001. {Degree of freedom is two and in this test mean will be equal to median}. Since the table value is of much greater than <.001 the result is significant.

The sectors-Bakery products, toiletries and laundry, packaged drinks/mineral water, dairy products, condiments-Sauce, Jam, Pickles, Chips/Snacks/Nuts, Paper products and Personal care is concerned, the most preferred sector is private sector followed by co-operative sector and least preferred is government sector. The sectors-Cereals/Rice/Wheat etc and spices is concerned
the most preferred sector is co-operative sector followed by government and the least preferred sector is private sector. The sector-oils- Coconut/Palm etc is concerned the most preferred sector is government followed by co-operative sector and least preferred is private sector. The sectors-canned food articles, fruits, vegetables and fish food is concerned, the most preferred sector is private sector followed by co-operative sector. The sector-meat (all major types) is concerned; the most preferred sector is private sector. The sector-

Bakery Products, Toiletries & Laundry, Packaged Drinks, Mineral Water, Dairy Products, Condiments- Sauce, Jam, Pickles, Chips/Snacks/Nuts, Paper Products and Personal Care is in the order Private, Co-operative and government from 1 to 3. To test this is significant or not we conduct the Kruskal Wallis Test, which is found to be significant with p<0.001. {Degree of freedom is two and in this test mean will be equal to median}. Since the table value is of much greater than <.001 the result is significant. The rank of the Cereals/Rice/Wheat etc and Spices, the rank for co-operatives, government and private sector is in the order of 1 to 3. The oils-coconut/Palm etc the rank for government, co-operative and private is in the order of 1 to 3. To test this is significant or not we conduct the Kruskal Wallis Test, which is found to be significant with p<0.001.

It is also interesting to note that the 36.3 % of the total respondents are purchasing from government owned retail outlets and 54.2 % of the respondents are purchasing from the private sector. Only 9.5 % of the respondents are purchasing from the co-operative sector. It is found that majority of the respondents are purchasing from the private sector.

So the hypothesis is accepted that there is significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets.

Major Hypothesis. (2) There is no significant difference among the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets in the three zones of Kerala.

The zone wise analysis based on quality reveals that private sector is the most preferred sector as far as central and north zone is concerned but in the case of south zone the most preferred sector is co-operative sector. The variable-wide variety and choice is concerned, private sector is the most preferred sector as far as central and north zone is concerned but in the case of south zone co-operative is the most preferred sector. The variable-reliability is concerned; the most preferred sector is co-operative sector in the case of south zone and north zone. Government sector is the most preferred sector in the case of central zone. The variable—discounts offered, government sector is considered the most preferred sector is central and north zone and in the case of south zone, the most preferred sector is co-operative sector. The variable-rate tags and
price stickers and safety in transactions is concerned the most preferred sector is private sector as far as south and central zone is concerned and co-operative is the most preferred sector in the case of north zone. The variable store promises is concerned, the central and north zone prefer government sector but co-operative sector is the preferred sector for south zone. The variables-quantity of products supplied, floor area of the shop and individual attention is concerned, the private sector is the most preferred sector for south and central zone but co-operative sector is the preferred sector for north zone. The variable sincere interest in solving problems is concerned, co-operative is the most preferred sector for south and north zones but in the case of central zone, private sector is the most preferred sector.

The variable-cereals/rice/wheat etc is concerned the most preferred sector is co-operative sector in the case of south and north zones but most preferred sector is government sector in the case of central zone. The variables-laundry and toiletries, condiments, pickles, spices the most preferred sector is co-operative sector in the case of south and north zones and private sector for central zone. The variables-packaged drinks/mineral water and dairy products is concerned the most preferred sector is private sector in the case of south and central zones and co-operative sector for north zone. The variable-oils-coconut/palm/sun flower etc is concerned the most preferred sector is government sector in the case of central and north zone but it is co-operative sector in the south zone. The variables-chips/snacks/nuts, paper products and personal care products is concerned the most preferred sector is private sector in the case of central and north zones and co-operative sector for south zone.

Marketing presence, The value of products purchased, Time of Purchase, Consumers Preference Regarding Place of Purchase, Which Store/ Type of Store, Duration, Distance, Door delivery, Purchase frequency - It is found that there exist differences among the three zones. (Test used is Chi-square test)

So the hypothesis is rejected and 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.

Major Hypothesis. (3) There is significant difference in the consumer’s attitudes towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets among the Urban and Rural Consumers.

The variable-store have lowest prices is concerned the most preferred sector is co-operative sector in the case of urban consumers but it is government sector in the case of rural consumers. The variables-cereals-Rice/wheat is concerned the most preferred sector for urban area is co-
operative sector where as in rural area it is government sector. The variable-condiments (Sauce/Jam) is concerned the most preferred sector for urban area is private sector where as in rural area it is co-operative sector. The retail key factors findings such as Consumers Preference Regarding Place of Purchase, Duration, Distance, Purchase frequency - It is found there is significant difference among the two residences as far as residence is concerned. (Test applied is Chi-Square test).
So the hypothesis is accepted, it is analysed that there is significant difference among the two residences.

Summary of the study.

It is concluded that private sector is the most preferred sector among other retail outlets in the minds of consumers except reliability and discounts offered .The private sector has extra edge among other retail outlets in the minds of consumers except retail categories like cereals/rice/wheat and oils category. The majority of customers are purchasing from either local or district level shops and the value of products purchased are less than Rs.1000 at a time. The majority of the respondents entrust either father or mother for purchasing their groceries and are purchased in the evenings or in other words immediately after their work. The 36.3 % of the total respondents are purchasing from government owned retail outlets and 54.2 % of the respondents are purchasing from the private sector. Only 9.5 % of the respondents are purchasing from the co-operative sector. The study reveals that majority of the customers are not travelling much for shopping and spending less than 30 minutes in the shop and majority cases consumers are purchasing on monthly basis.
The majority of the outlets have branches and 80 % of retail outlets are only maintaining employees at the level of maximum 10 persons. The rest rooms, training facilities for employees are far less in the retail outlets of Kerala. Cereals/Rice/Wheat etc, Toiletries/Laundry, Condiments-Syrup/Jam and Pickles, Oils-Coconut/Palms, Spices, Paper products etc, Chips/Snacks/nuts etc are stocked by the entire outlets of Kerala while compared to other sectors.
The majority of the retail outlet’s floor area is about less than 1500 Sq.ft (about 88 %) and majority are adopting self service system. The maximum discount percentage offered by the retail outlets is up to 20 % of the maximum retail price. The cash and carry is the system adopted by the outlets and credit facility is not the policy of the none of the outlets. The almost entire
outlets have computerized billing facility, adequate display models or structures and rate tags and price stickers. The number of billing points of majority of the outlets ranges from two to four billing points.

The less than one out of five outlets are only providing safety measures against fire and less than one out of twenty outlets have safety measures against theft and none of the outlets have any safety measures against natural calamity. The promotions offered by the government, co-operative outlets are comparatively very less compared to the private sector. The one out of five private retail outlets are actively engaged in the hardcore promotions.

The zone wise analysis reveals that private sector is the leading sector in dealing various retailing sectors while compared to government and co-operative outlets. The facilities/Key retail variables analysis, safety measures adopted and promotions offered analysis revealed 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 supplyco retail formats is the most preferred one and have the highest mean (5.763), second position goes to Supermarkets (Private) (5.60) and third position goes to convenience stores (5.080). In the south zone the most preferred retail formats are supermarkets (5.53-Mean), followed by Convenience Stores (5.475 Mean) and Supplyco (5.40 Mean). The retail variable analysis and product sector analysis are concerned private sector is dominating over the government and co-operative outlets with significant difference of attitudes over the three zones.

The rural and urban customer analysis reveals that Supplyco is the most preferred outlet both in urban area and rural area followed by supermarkets and convenience stores. The study also reveals that there is significant difference among the two residences (Urban/Rural) towards government, co-operative and private retail outlets except some retail variables and sectors. The private sector is leading sector even though there are significant differences of attitudes over the residences.

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).

The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from government sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- Oils-Coconut/Palm etc (74.22), Spices (70.55) and Cereals/Rice/wheat. Etc (66.67). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from co-operative sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- Oils-Coconut/Palm etc (72.37), Toiletries & Laundry (72.14), Condiments- Sauce, Jam (72.05) and Cereals/Rice/wheat. etc (71.03). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from private sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- Personal Care (77.92), Toiletries & Laundry (76.17), Pickles (75.4), Chips/Snacks/Nuts (75.4), Paper Products (75.05) and Packaged drinks/Mineral water (74.99).

**Suggestion for Improving the Performance of Retail Outlets in Kerala.**

**Suggestions for the Improved Performance of Retail Outlets-Government Sector.**

1. The government sector should ensure quality, wide variety/Choice etc. it is a general complaint that in government sector quantity restrictions is there, in majority instances and the same should avoided as far as possible.
2. The shops should be established with better access to consumers and self service systems should be supported by enough spacious showrooms and trolleys.
3. The adequate parking facility should be provided especially to urban outlets. Better business communication should also be made in order to attract all types of consumers.
4. It is always better for the government sector to attract more and more consumers with gifts/Schemes applicable to all their outlets especially on festival seasons.
5. Adequate measures should be taken to ensure overall convenience in shopping and shopping hours of the shop based on the local demand from the consumers.
6. Layout of the store should be constructed and maintained at par with the competing private retail outlets.
7. Behavior of employees should have an empathetic attitude towards the consumers’ especially illiterate consumers.
8. The physical facilities of the shop, floor area of the shops, ability to handle customer complaints directly and immediately should be improved as far as possible.
9. More and more practical steps should be taken to start retail outlets even in the remote areas of Kerala without considering much on profitability.
10. Measures and practical steps should be introduced to control price escalation especially in rural areas and other remote places.
11. Adequate training and refreshment courses should be provided to all the employees with modern retailing practices including behavioral skills.
12. Supplyco in association with the Horticultural Corporation should arrange special fruits and vegetables counters within the retail outlets/super markets. Meat counter (All major types) may also be opened based on the local demand for it.

**Suggestions for Co-operative Sector.**

1. The sales man’s service should be improved on demand and adequate display models and structures should be ensured.
2. Computerized billing, Rate tags and price stickers and attractive carry bags must be ensured especially in the primary consumer co-operative societies.
3. Availability of latest trends, fast and error free transactions should be ensured at all levels of co-operative sector.
4. The facility of lift system should be provided in the case of outlets located in the third floor and above.
5. Practical steps should be made to the competent authority regarding the subsidies, concessions and tax exemptions available to consumer co-operative societies operations especially in the rural Kerala.
6. Sufficient steps should be taken to ensure regularity of consumers; Customer complaints if any, the same should be redressed as early as possible. There should be complaint/suggestions box in every consumer co-operative society and the same should be addressed within 15 days.
7. Adequate bakery products, dairy products and meat counter (all major types) should be opened within the supermarket/retail outlets.
8. Air conditioning facility will maintain the customer in the shops for good period of time basically because of environment of comfort; Co-operative societies should provide this facility to the consumers especially in the urban retail outlets.
9. Refreshment to the bulky consumers or consumers who are purchasing for long time should be offered small refreshment in form of tea/coffee/cool drinks and the same will positively contribute to customer loyalty.

10. Number of billing points should be increased to meet the billing requirement especially in the peak purchasing time.

**Suggestions for Private Sector.**

1. Private sector should ensure reliability in their business-products, services, price and sales promotions. Discounts should be available to consumers at the genuine level and not gimmicks with the quality, quantity etc.

2. Credit facility may be provided to the bulk and regular consumers on demand basis and the same will attract consumers especially from the lower income group.

3. Children’s play area is a good strategy to free themselves especially for women consumers while shopping, only very few private retail outlets are maintaining this and the same should be extended to more and more retail outlets on the basis of survey among the consumers.

4. Special effort should be made to reduce the long queues at the billing points especially during the peak purchase time. Door delivery system should be strengthened to the consumers who opt for it.

5. The majority of consumers are purchasing on monthly basis, so that adequate stock should be maintained especially at the beginning and end of the month.

6. The number of employees maintained should be revised at periodic intervals and steps should be taken to ensure that the purpose of employees is met.

7. Adequate rest rooms should be arranged with in the retail premises so that they can take a small rest and get refreshed back in the retail outlets. The period of rest should not disturb the consumers shopping experience.

8. Good quality fish should be supplied in the possible retail outlets based on the local demand. The retail outlets near to fishing centers must use their Strategic Locational advantage.
General suggestions to All Retail Outlets.

1. A billing counter should be opened after 6 p.m exclusively for ladies, so that waiting in the queue for long time can be avoided and they can be at home as earliest as possible.

2. All retail outlets should consider the probable chance of fire from short circuit, poor wiring etc. the wiring should be according with the standards and facility of fire extinguisher should be ensured.

3. Theft is now a day’s increasing in the different parts of Kerala state. Adequate anti-theft measures including high tech locks, digital cameras, alarms, proper security officers at night etc should be ensured.

4. Safety measures for natural calamity should be taken into consideration especially for those shop premises where there is a previous natural calamity history.

5. Sales promotion techniques such as gifts/schemes should be established on group basis like all government retail outlets, all co-operative outlets and all private outlets. It is always better to promote products especially during festival seasons.

6. Sales promotion techniques such as daily gifts-Lucky draws, free holiday trips, credit point discounts, prizes, name card discount schemes, scratch and win offers may be provided with the various retail outlets without comprising the quality and quantity of products.

7. Parking facility should be provided with the retail premises or in other words retail outlets should not be established without any parking facility.

8. More and more billing points should be arranged especially in the peak period to reduce the number of persons in the queue.

9. The shops should be spacious as far as possible so that problems arise on limited or congested shopping space can be avoided.

10. The expired products and duplicate products should be avoided from the shops, because it will create a serious injury to the goodwill of the firms too.

11. The printers used in the shops should ensure clarity in amounts and items every time.

12. The facility of purchase returns and product replacement should be offered to the genuine consumers.

13. Credit card purchase is now a days the fashion of day. Retail outlets should arrange credit card acceptance (All major ones) in their outlets.
14. Availability of good quality meat (All major type) and fish will be added advantage to the all the outlets providing these.

15. Playing good quality music with medium sound, will add entertaining platform for good number of purchases. At the same time, music should not be played very loud as a disturbance to the consumers.

16. Refreshments, Air conditioning facility, music will helps the consumers to spent their valuable time without much botheration. So retail outlets should arrange all facilities to increase the purchase comfort at the outlet.

17. A consumer redressal cell or even a small complaint box should be established, this helps the retail outlets to find out their own problems and formulate a strategy to get out of it.

18. Behaviour of employees has a positive correlation with the loyalty of consumers. So employees having emotional stability and good smiling face should be appointed and adequate assessment and training should be provided.

19. Functions with relate to anniversary or the beginning of festival seasons should be arranged with much pride and the message should be communicated with all types of media.

20. Better public relation should be ensured with all types of media and also with the neighborhood groups and other local bodies.

21. Participation in the socio-economic development of the locality will create a good public image so the retailers should try as far as possible-small or big contributions in the socio-economic development process of the people in which retail outlets are operating.

**Conclusion.**

The Kerala state is a consumer state and consumer retail outlets have enormous scope in this comparatively small state of India. With ever growing expectations about the functioning of retail outlets, a good quality research is highly essential for any organization to grow and survive. The Kerala state, unlike to any other states in India have powerful government and co-operative sector together with private sector to cater the needs of consumers. The big players like Big Bazzars-future group, Reliance group, Spenser group are already established their share in the retail pie together with margin free shops etc. The traditional convenience stores are also
playing a huge role in the retailing sector of Kerala. It is concluded the scope of retail sector is very high in Kerala. The government retail outlets with its 1266 plus retail outlets and co-operative stores with their more than 1087 outlets gained much support and faith from the consumers especially among the lower income group. The customer attitude towards retail variables is concerned, majority are attracted towards private sector.

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).

The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from government sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- The most purchased sector from government outlets is Oils-Coconut/Palm etc (74.22), Spices (70.55) and Cereals/Rice/wheat. Etc (66.67). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from co-operative sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- The most purchased sector from co-operative outlets is Oils-Coconut/Palm etc (72.37), Toiletries & Laundry (72.14), Condiments- Sauce, Jam (72.05) and Cereals/Rice/wheat. etc (71.03). The important factors contributed by the consumers with the help of mean percentage score for the purchase from private sector in the case of retail sectors is as follows- The most purchased sector from private outlets is Personal Care (77.92), Toiletries & Laundry (76.17), Pickles (75.4), Chips/ Snacks/ Nuts (75.4), Paper Products (75.05) and Packaged drinks/ Mineral water (74.99).

The retail sector wise analysis is concerned the private sector bags the consumers in majority sectors. The customers are interested in purchasing in the nearby shops and value of products purchased corners around Rs.1000. The father or mother is the main purchaser of the family and majority of purchasing is in the evening or in other words the time immediately after their work. The duration of purchase of customers comes around 30 minutes in majority cases and majority are purchasing on monthly basis. The majority of people is 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 customer needs especially at the village level. 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 the outlets are operating in the urban area and 80 % of the outlets are only maintaining the employees at the level of maximum 10 persons. The majority (88 %) of the retail outlet’s floor area is about less than 1500 Sq.ft and the service system (84.3 %) adopted is self service system. The discounts offered is in the range of 1-10 % (43.5 %) and 11-20 % (56.5 %). The huge majority of the outlets are providing the computerized billing facility and offering up to 10 hours of shopping. Almost all retail outlets are attaching rate tags and price stickers and number of billing points comes around 2-4 billing points in majority cases. The less than one out of five outlets are only providing safety measures against fire and less than one out of twenty outlets have safety measures against theft and none of the outlets have any safety measures against natural calamity. The promotions offered by the government, co-operative outlets are comparatively very less compared to the private sector. The one out of five private retail outlets are actively engaged in the hardcore promotions.

The Ownership wise- Government/Co-operative/Private-Private sector has more floor area having shops, more quality products, storing more groceries, more salesman and heavy sales assistants, more gifts/schemes, rest room facility, playing more music, providing refreshments, air conditioning facility, more shopping hours, lift system, attention for ensuring the availability of latest trends, maintaining more number of billing points, more safety measures against fire, more problem solving ability, more daily gifts than other two sectors-Co-operative and government sectors. But at the same time the government sector is providing more discounts and private sector is providing lesser discounts.

The Zone wise- South zone/Central zone/North zone-Local shops are more in south zone, district and state level retail outlets are more situated in north zone, national and international
level ships are more in the central zone. The value of products above Rs 3000 at a time is higher in central zone at the same time, less than Rs 500 purchase at a time is higher in south zone. The time of purchase during 12.01 p.m to 3.30 p.m is more in central zone and purchase during 3.31 p.m to 7.00 p.m is more in north zone. The persons purchasing products from faraway places is more in south zone and persons purchasing products from residing places is more in central zone. The consumers purchasing from the government and co-operative outlets are more in north zone and in the case of south zone, the consumers are purchasing more from private outlets. The purchase duration more than 60 minutes is more in central zone while purchase duration ranging less than 15 minutes is more in north zone. The distance of purchase having more than nine Kilometers is more in south zone at the same time distance of purchase having less than one kilometer is more in central zone. The door delivery system is more in the north zone and comparatively less in the south zone. The monthly purchase is more in north zone at the same time weekly purchase is more in the central zone. The south zone has above twenty five years experienced shops and at the same time north zone has highest percentage of new retail outlets (i.e. less than five years). The north zone has highest percentage of advertisement/business promotion while compared to other two zones. The north zone retail outlets have more safety measures against fire compared to other two zones.

**The Residence wise-Urban/Rural**-The urban consumers are purchasing more from residing places, spending less time for purchase in the retail outlets, when compared to rural consumers. The urban consumers are travelling less to purchase, at the same time rural consumers are travelling more distance to purchase. The urban consumers are purchasing monthly at the same time rural consumers are purchasing weekly or fortnightly. The urban retail outlets have bigger turnover, employing more number of employees, more floor area, more high quality stock, stocking more groceries in the store at a time, providing rest rooms, more refreshment, more shopping hours, more lift system, ensuring more safety measures against fire, more prizes, more scratch and win offers and air conditioning facility when compared to rural outlets. The rural retail outlets are located mainly in a residential area with normal population but urban retail outlets are located mainly in the highly populated area. The advertisement/business promotion is used more in urban retail outlets but it is only occasionally in the case of rural retail outlets. The rural outlets are only offering less parking facility when compared to urban retail outlets. But the availability of natural parking (not offered by the rural retail outlets) is bigger when compared to natural parking space of urban retail outlets.
It is concluded that consumers in Kerala likes government retail outlets but because of lack of benefits and facilities, purchase is from the private retail outlets (majority cases) it is mainly because of restricted supply of products and lack of choice and availability that may seen in the government sector. 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. It is also concluded that to meet the price inflations, hoardings, black marketing, cheating with duplicate and substandard products etc - A Public-Private partnership model may be established in the retail sector, with high coverage all over Kerala, without restrictions in the quantity and quality, together with empathy towards problems of consumers.

Directions for Future Research
The various areas for future research are as follows.

1. The Inventory management practices of retail outlets.
2. The working capital management of the retail outlets.
3. The financial performance of the retail outlets.