

**MARKETABILITY OF HOPCOMS PRODUCTS - A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS STANDPOINT
TOWARDS THE HOPCOMS OUTLETS IN MYSORE CITY.**

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ABSTRACT

The study mainly focused on Marketability of HOPCOMs products through its customers perceptible towards intention to buy fruits and vegetables at in Mysore City. As the increasing numbers of street vendors are growing every day, this leads to marketing of sub standardized fruits and vegetables to the customers which in turn affects the quality and health. According to the survey by a Delhi-based think tank (2016), "Majority of the Indian consumers prefers to buy fruits and vegetables from local stores and vendors than the organized retail stores in selected cities. Thus, the local stores and vendors do not face any threat from the organized retail stores". The street vegetable vendors sell their vegetables at lower prices and use several strategies to compete with organized retail stores such as HOPCOMs. Due to the rising number of street vendors, HOPCOMs face serious threats. The sample size taken for the study is 100 respondents in Mysore city and the data collected through questionnaire. The major findings of the study show that more number of HOPCOMS outlets needs to be established in the city and provide online delivery.

Keywords: Horticulture, Economic Development, Consumption, Micro-enterprises.

INTRODUCTION:

The retail Industry in India has gained a lot of popularity in recent decades because of the entry of many new firms. As per recent studies, around 10 percent of India's GDP consists of contributions from the retail sector, and approximately 8 percent of the people are employed by this sector. India stands in 5th position in the global market in the retail industry. It is due to the immense population, fast growth, and development in the economy and the field of agriculture.

The Indian Retail Market is aspiring to reach US dollar 1.2 trillion by 2024. It is because of the increased income level and changing standard of living in the digital era. In an earlier period, the overall market was expected to grow only 10 percent per annum, and now it has been increased to 20 percent per annum. The retail market in India has been divided into the organized retail market and the unorganized retail market, which contribute 93 percent and 7 percent of the sector, respectively. According to a recent survey, by 2020, Business to Business India's market is forecasted to arrive at US dollars 700 billion. The digital retail industries are showing hopeful profits five years soon. When compared with other marketing channel, other than cooperative, large numbers of middle men were involved in marketing of fruits and vegetables (Chandrashekar 2011). The main objective of Horticulture department in establishing HOPCOMS is to provide standardized rates for crops with good quality and The HOPCOMS provide that direct marketing of farmers and maximizes the profit of farmers. The main objectives of HOPCOMS are:

- a) Promote and encourage the development of horticultural products through grading, sorting.
- b) Providing technical skills and training to the vendors on crops
- c) Assisting the vendors with Cold chain plants and god owns.
- d) Enhancing the marketing facilities for the members of HOPCOMS through online support.
- e) Reaching out the standardized products to all major hospitals, hostels, factories, associations, and social events.
- f) Joining hands with cooperative societies and its branches.

Around 80 percent of the Indian economy is in the informal sector, and street vendors and hawkers are part of it. Due to the rising number of street vendors, HOPCOMs face a severe threat. In that case, organized outlets such as HOPCOMS need to frame new strategies in the business as they are selling standardized commodities to consumers to avoid competition from street vendors. The present study focuses on analyzing the strategies adopted to overcome competition from street vendors with particular reference to Mysuru city.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review presented below covers the perception of farmers, the working performance of HOPCOMS, the pattern of organized and unorganized outlets, etc.,

Dr. H.M. Chandrashekar (2018) article highlights the Role of the HOPCOMS development in Agribusiness in Karnataka and Farmers' awareness of HOPCOMS in the Mysore District. They also avail the following benefits, namely, correct weight, quality fruits, and vegetables at affordable prices, retail outlets in extensions, mobile sales, supplies to marriages and other functions, capital supplies to institutions, organizations, hostels, hospitals, and others, seasonal fruit drinks at reasonable prices, and conducting seasonal fruit fairs at discount prices.

AnuradhaArthanari (2015) focused on analyzing the behavioral pattern of Organized and Unorganized Vegetable Retail Shoppers. This study's main objective was to determine the significant factors influencing the purchase of vegetables in an Organized and Unorganized vegetable retail outlet. The result shows a meaningful positive relationship between the income level of the consumer and their preferred vegetable marketplace.

K. B. Ramappa, A. V. Manjunatha (2015) analyzed the attitudes of the consumers in Bangalore towards buying fruits and vegetables and their choice of retail outlets. The primary data was collected from 100 consumers belonging to Bangalore City in October 2014. The empirical result of the multinomial logit model revealed that annual net income was positively associated with the Big Bazar and Food World consumers and negatively related to the Reliance Fresh, More, and Nilgiris consumers, as compared with the HOPCOMS consumers.

Nethravathi, Gulkari, Onima (2014) conducted a study to make a comparison of various fruits and vegetable outlets in Bangalore's rural and urban regions. The study indicates that consumers prefer to buy fresh fruits and vegetables with good quality, service, and availability. Also, consumers from educated and more prominent families with good incomes prefer to buy in recognized outlets and HOPCOMS. Thus, it is clear that HOPCOMS attracts more consumers with better quality and service.

Krishna and Mokshapathy (2013) visualized a study to understand the operating performance of HOPCOMS in the State of Karnataka. The study measures the procurement, distribution, and turnover of HOPCOMS over the last twelve years. Also, it concludes that HOPCOMS acts as the middleman between farmers and consumers and sets a fair price for vegetables and fruits.

SeethaNaik (2013) focuses a research paper on bulk buyers in four districts of Karnataka. The study's objective was to determine the distribution of bulk buyers and reasons for buying from HOPCOMS. It was opined that most of the bulk buyers are within the easy reach of HOPCOMS outlets, and the main reasons given by the bulk buyers for frequent purchasing prices, easy terms of business, and supply of required quantity. Thus, the study helps to know the distribution and operational efficiency of HOPCOMS.

Chandrashekar (2011) studied the Role of HOPCOMS in the socio-economic change of farmers in Mysuru city. The study highlighted farmers' prices and varieties delivered to HOPCOMS and suggested a requirement for HOCOMS to increase the usage of technology and facilities like how other retail shops are following to engage more people towards it. Thus, the study helps to know the perceptions of farmers towards HOPCOMS.

PaulrajanRajkumar and Fatima Jacob (2010), in their research on "Business models in vegetable retailing," opine that the retail sector in India is at a crossroads today. A shift between the organized and unorganized retail sectors is apparent, especially in the vegetable retailing zone. They found this shift as a call for the transfer of consumerism towards organized retailing. They have said that the penetration of organized retail in vegetable retail will face fierce resistance from traditional retailers with their strong foothold.

Most of the earlier studies analyzed the pattern of the organized and unorganized retail and retail sectors in India. Hence based on the research gap, the present study attempts to understand the importance of organized outlets such as HOPCOMS and their reasons for existence and opportunities and threats by unorganized outlets such as street vendors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The following are the main objective of the study:

- 1) To assess the socio-economic background of the customers or HOPCOMs users in Mysore City
- 2) To analyze the customer perspective in view of intent to buy fruits and vegetable in HOPCOMs at Mysore City.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study is empirical in nature. The primary data is collected directly by providing the questionnaire to customers of HOPCOMs. The questioner has been issued to 100 customers randomly selected HOPCOMs users in Mysore City. The analysis of the data, we applied statistical tools such as, chi-square test, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis etc.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

H0: There is no significant differences between Socio-Economic background of the HOPCOMS Customers.

H1: There is a significant differences between Socio-Economic background of the HOPCOMS Customers

The below table shows that socio-economic background of HOPCOMS customers in Mysore city. The overall respondents numbering, 100 customers out of that 80% respondents are belongs to male category and 20% respondents are belongs female category this shows male customers more used HOPCOMs shops. In the context of age pattern, majority of the respondents numbering, 40% and 30% of customers belongs to age group of 31 -45 years and above 45 years respectively. Majority numbering 30% , 45% and 76%, customers are private and government employees their salary above 50,000 Rs per month and they had 3 to 5 members in a family, these category of customers are more buy fruits and vegetable sin HOPCOMs at Mysore City

Table No.1 Shows that Demographic Profile of HOPCOMS Customers

Personal Factors	Classification	Percentage
Gender Chi-Square Value= 3.481 P=0.001, (H0 Significant)	Male	80%
	Female	20%
Age Pattern Chi-Square Value=4.502 P=0.000 (H0 Significant)	Below 18 years	10%
	Between 19-30 Years	20%
	Between 31-45 Years	30%
	Above 45 Years	40%
Occupation Pattern Chi-Square Value=5.108 P=0.002 (H0 Significant)	Housewife	20%
	Students	05%
	Private Employees	25%
	Government Employees	30%
	Business and others	20%
Level of Monthly Income Chi-Square Value=4.321 P=0.091 (H0 In Significant)	Below Rs.25000	25%
	Between Rs.25000-50000	30%
	Above Rs.50,000	45%
Number of members in the family Chi-Square Value=3.627 P=0.004 (H0 Significant)	Less than 3	08%
	Between 3 to 5	76%
	Between 5 to 8	08%
	More than 8	08%

Source: Field Survey.

The above table results that chi square test for data of gender profile, age pattern, occupation pattern and number of members in the family of the respondents, the P value (Sig 2-tailed) is 0.001,0.000, 0.002 and 0.004 which is less than the Alpha value of 0.05, it was found to be significant. Therefore the results indicate that the stated null hypothesis to be rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Further the data of level of monthly income, the P value (Sig 2-tailed) is 0.091, which is more than the Alpha value of 0.05, it was found to be Insignificant. Therefore the results indicate that the stated null hypothesis to be accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected.

H0: There is no significant difference between consumers perspective towards intent to buy HOPCOMs.

H2: There is a significant difference between consumers perspective towards intent to buy HOPCOMs.

The below table shows that consumers perspective towards intent to buy HOPCOMs. The customer perceptiveness has been measured through mode of purchase, reason of purchase, habit of purchase, attribute of purchase, price of purchase and factors influencing to purchase fruits and vegetables respectively. Majority 52% and 32% of the respondents opined that customers buy more because fruits and vegetables are hygienic in HOPCOMs. Around 48% and 35% of the customers opined that variety of fruits and vegetables buy in once in a week in HOPCOMs. This was followed by majority 36% and 28% of the respondents opined that price is fixed and same and also location of the shop is one of the major factors influencing towards customers intent to buy more fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMs at Mysore City. To summarize that good quality fresh fruits and vegetables with more outlets are the reasons for buying it based on the requirements and services of HOPCOMs in Mysore city are good as there are 40 outlets in the Districts of Mysore with more outlets, consumers find it convenient to buy, and quality assurance is appreciated and also the customers' opinions towards the attributes are reasonably good, showing that HOPCOMs successfully satisfy the customers. Still, a lot of scopes are there for improvement in Mysore City HOPCOMs.

Table No.2 Indicates consumer’s perspective towards intent to buy HOPCOMs.

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables	Percentage	Average Mean
(X1) Mode of Purchase	HOPCOMS	52%	4.825
	Street Vendors	32%	3.100
	Super markets	16%	2.150
	Online marketing	00%	4.450
(X2) Reason for purchase	Convenience	16%	4.550
	Availability	16%	3.400
	Location	24%	3.600
	Hygiene	32%	3.524
(X3) Habit of purchase	Daily	08%	4.200
	Once in a Week	48%	3.400
	Once in fifteen days	40%	4.755
	Once in a month	04%	3.600
(X4) Attributes of Purchase	Freshness	20%	3.800
	Variety	35%	4.250
	Availability	25%	3.700
	Hygiene	20%	3.530
(X5) Prices of Purchase	Price is higher	22%	4.375
	Price is the same	36%	4.470
	Price is lower	28%	3.520
	Do not know	14%	4.200
(X6) Factors Influencing to Purchase	Location of the shop	28%	3.811
	Product Cleanliness	22%	4.223
	Reasonable price	22%	4.217
	Ease of access to product	22%	3.872
	Biological and infections free	06%	3.777

Sources: Primary Data.

Table No.2 (a) depicts that summary of model specification of the dependent and independent variables. From the below panel data were specified to address the consumer’s perspective towards intent to buy HOPCOMs.

In addition to the included control or conditioning independent variables for each parameters to be influencing intent to buy vegetables and fruits in HOPCOMs specified as follows:

Table No.2(a)Models Specification

Model Specification	Variables
X1	Mode of Purchase (MOP)
X2	Reason of Purchase (ROP)
X3	Habit of Purchase (HOP)
X4	Attribute of Purchase (AOP)
X5	Price of Purchase (POP)
X6	Factors of Purchase (FOP)
$MM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (MOP) + \beta_2 (ROP) + \beta_3 (HOP) + \beta_4 (AOP) + \beta_5 (POP) + \beta_6 (FOP) + \epsilon + \alpha(\beta)$	

Significant level is 0.05 (2-tailed).

According to the results of correlation matrix analysis of customers perspective towards intent buy fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMs. The correlation analysis result shows that habit of purchase has significantly affected towards attitude of purchase of the customers with positive correlation of **0.981 (Strong Correlation)** and factors of purchase has significantly affected towards price of purchase with moderate positive correlation of **0.583 (Moderate Correlation)** and also mode of purchase has not significantly affected on reason of purchase with negative correlation of **-0.188(Weak Correlation)** respectively. Therefore lastly the overall results shows that majority of the customers opinioned that habit of purchases, price of purchase, attitude of purchase of fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMs, these variables positively correlated to the increasing customer satisfaction. Therefore majority of the customers prefers to buy fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMs in Mysore City.

Table No.2.(b) Results of Correlation Matrix

Variables		MOP	ROP	HOP	AOP	POP	FOP
MOP	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.188**	-0.671	-0.532	-0.211	0.637
	Sig.	-	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99
ROP	Pearson Correlation	0.573**	1	-0.331	-0.677	0.412	-0.209
	Sig.	0.001	-	0.005	0.821	0.000	0.121
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99
HOP	Pearson Correlation	0.577	0.423	1	0.981**	0.324	0.311
	Sig.	0.222	0.312	-	0.444	0.331	0.001
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99
AOP	Pearson Correlation	0.555	0.612	0.631	1	0.342**	0.680**
	Sig.	0.741	0.522	0.369	-	0.342	0.621
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99
POP	Pearson Correlation	0.274	0.512	0.443	0.851**	1	0.555**
	Sig.	0.257	0.111	0.001	0.000	-	0.002
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99
FOP	Pearson Correlation	0.111	-0.281	0.743	0.567**	0.583**	1
	Sig.	0.512	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.581	-
	N	99	99	99	99	99	99

Sources: Primary data, Significant level is 0.05 (2-tailed)

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:

- a) Most of the respondents have number of family members range between 3 to 5 members, and the remaining equally belonged to other classifications.
- b) Many respondents prefer to buy fruits and vegetables from HOPCOMS
- c) The Majority of the respondents opined that the reasons for purchasing in HOPCOMS are convenience, location of the shop and availability.

- d) Most of the respondents buy fruits and vegetables once a week followed by once in fifteen days in HOPCOMS as more than half have smaller families and the availability of good quality fresh fruits and vegetables with more outlets are the reasons for buying them based on the requirements.
- e) The Majority of the respondents agree with the attributes such as freshness, variety, availability, hygiene, and value for money with more preference.
- f) Most respondents find the shop's location is one of the principal reasons for purchasing fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMS.
- g) The price of vegetables and fruits in HOPCOMS are mostly the same compared with other outlets.
- h) Most of the respondents provided suggestions to enhance the services of HOPCOMS. They are Payment mode needs to be changed, availabilities of greens need to be monitored, can include home delivery options, offers and discounts should be given for certain margin while purchasing in outlets, need to improve their service, need to sell all seasonal fruits and vegetables, need to maintain cleanliness, the extension of more outlets and must take competitive advantage as they are selling better quality of fruits and vegetables, etc.

Suggestions to enhance the services of HOPCOMS

The Majority of the respondents provided suggestions to enhance the services of HOPCOMS. They are Payment mode needs to be changed, availabilities of greens need to be monitored, can include home delivery options, offers and discounts should be given for certain margin while purchasing in outlets, need to improve their service, need to sell all seasonal fruits and vegetables, need to maintain cleanliness, the extension of more outlets and must take competitive advantage as they are selling better quality of fruits and vegetables etc. As HOPCOMS has been operating for many years, there is a need for re-designing the outlets, and the government should seriously consider expanding outlets in other districts of the Karnataka State.

CONCLUSION:

Most farmers market their products with the involvement of agents and intermediaries. The channel does not provide enough profit to the farmers. Hence, Horticulture Department decided to give a platform for the farmers to sell their quality products for excellent and standardized rates. In this view, HOPCOMS came into existence. But because of the private entries, new outlets and street vendors are tough competition with HOPCOMS. Hence, no new outlets can be seen, less prevalent in the city, delayed services, and non-availability of a variety of fruits and vegetables are the reasons for potential threats faced by HOPCOMS. Lastly the statistical inferences shows that correlation analysis result shows that habit of purchase has significantly affected towards attitude of purchase of the customers with positively influencing to buy fruits and vegetables in HOPCOMS

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