



INFLUENCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES OF RESPONDENTS ON GROCERY SHOPPING

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ABSTRACT

Influences of eight socio-economic variables of the consumers viz. Locality, Residential Type, Nature of House, Structure of House, Educational Level, Occupation, Monthly Household Income and Employment of Family Head were evaluated in the store choice of consumers for the purchase of grocery items in Mayiladuthurai District, a coastal District of Tamil Nadu, India. Supermarkets were the most preferred store type followed by Departmental Stores, Big Grocery Stores, Local Grocery Stores and other types of stores, in that order. Monthly Household Income and Educational Level of the consumers were the major socio-economic variables of the consumers that influenced their store choice, although the Nature, type and structure of their inhabitations (Houses) had a significant influence as well.

Keywords: Educational level, Grocery, Monthly Household Income, Store Choice.

JEL Classification: D12, F60, R20

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in the changing scenario of Indian economic development, the consumers have taken the drivers' seat in business decisions. Consumption behaviour is "all psychological, social and physical behaviour of potential consumers as they become aware of to evaluate, purchase, consume and tell others about products and services" (Kotler, 1999).

“Consumer behaviour is the process whereby individual decides whether, what, when, where, how and from where to purchase goods and services” (Walter and Pacel, 1970).

Consumer includes each and every human being and the human being is a part and parcel of the society. The socio-economic background of the consumers, when taken into consideration, helps in formulating consumer theories, in making suitable marketing strategies and for regulating consumer affairs in the country. Various socio-economic characteristics of consumers such as locality (rural vs urban), social status, education, income and employment, have been found by earlier researches to influence consumer choices (Moyer and Hutt, 1978; ; Zeithaml, 1988; Rodkin, 1990; Crispell, 1994; Sivadas *et al.* 1997; Health, 1997,1998; Bawa and Ghosh, 1999; Henry, 2001; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2003; Lindquist and Sirgy, 2003; Landes *et al.* 2004; Manivannan and Raghunathan, 2004; Sinha and Banerjee, 2004; Rao *et al.* 2005; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Batte *et al.* 2007; Goyal and Singh, 2007; Waterschoot *et al.* 2008; Seock, 2009; Pattanaik *et al.* 2017)

Haynes *et al.* (1994) stated that shopping behaviour of consumers is influenced by consumer characteristics, retailer's attributes and choice context. Consumer from different segments of socio-economic categories differ in their preferences which are reflected in their selecting and patronising a retail format i.e. their store choice (Seock, 2009). Shoppers' socio-economic attributes were found to be significant predictors of their consumption behaviour and choice of retail store (Kau and Ehrenberg, 1984; Zeithaml 1988; Bawa and Ghosh, 1999; Leszczyc *et al.* 2000; Fox *et al.* 2004; Carpenter and Moore, 2006; Moharana and Pattanaik 2016; Pattanaik *et al.* 2017). Pattanaik *et al.* (2017) reported that consumers of different social class groups, level of education, employment status and annual income to execute different shopping behaviour. However, most of the previous retail researches mainly focused on store image and store attributes in understanding store choice behaviour (Medina and Ward 1999; Sinha and Banerjee, 2004, Sinha *et al.* 2005; Carpenter and Moore, 2006). Relationships between consumers' socio-economic features and store patronage was not evaluated adequately and this research attempts to fill up this lacuna to some extent by testing the following research hypothesis.

Research Hypothesis: Store choice for the purchase of grocery items is associated with the socio-economic profile of the consumers.

The above hypothesis is tested for the purchase of groceries in retail grocery stores and their association with eight socio-economic variables of the consumers in a coastal district of Tamil Nadu, India *viz.* Mayiladuthurai district.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in Mayiladuthurai District, a coastal district of Tamil Nadu, Southern India due to its uniqueness in terms of socio-economic, demographic and geographic factors. The data for the present study were collected through primary sources by directly contacting the respondents. Adequate care was taken that the respondents represent different socio-economic features *viz.* their locality, residential type, nature and structure of house in which they were living, educational level, occupation, monthly household income and employment of family head. The tools employed for the collection of the data were questionnaire and Random Sampling Technique. For assessing the consumer's attitude on the purchase of groceries, a questionnaire with both structured and semi-structured constructs were used. The questionnaire consisted of two parts with Part 'A' being data on the consumers' socio-economic profiles, Part 'B' on purchase of grocery products categories.

2.1. Socio-economic profile of the Respondents

The socio-economic profile of the respondents of the present study is given in Table 1. Totally 316 respondents were sampled, 157 (49.7 per cent) from rural and 159 (50.3 per cent) from urban areas. Among the respondents, 59.2 per cent were males and 40.8 per cent were females. 70.6 per cent of the respondents lived in their own houses and 29.4 per cent in rented houses. With regard to the nature of house of the respondents, 78.8 per cent were individual houses, 19.0 per cent apartments and 2.2 per cent were Others. In the case of the structure of house of the respondents, 30.7 per cent were tiled, 64.2 per cent were terraced, 2.8 per cent were hut and 2.2 per cent were Others. The educational status of the respondents sampled was as follows: 4.4 per cent were having education less than primary, 11.1 per cent upto secondary education, 19.3 per cent were graduates and 65.2 per cent were post-graduates. The occupational level of the respondents were such that, 5.7 per cent were housewives, 2.8 per cent were earning daily wages, 4.1 per cent were involved in contract employment, 70.3 per cent were having regular employment, 2.8 per cent were business people, 11.4 per cent were students, 0.9 per cent were retired people, and 1.9 per cent were unemployed. With regard to the respondents' monthly household income (earning level), 19.9 per cent were earning less than Rs. 10,000, 22.8 per cent between 10,001 – 20,000, 12.3 per cent between 20,001 – 30,000, 12.7 per cent between 30,001 – 50,000, 23.4 per cent between 50,001 – 1,00,000, and 8.9 per cent were earning more than Rs. 1,00,000 as their monthly household income. With regard to the employment of the family head, 72.5 per cent were both employed, 7.3 per cent were unemployed, 6.0 per cent were retired people, and 14.2 per cent were involved in business.

3. RESULTS

In this study, the respondents' choice of stores for the purchase of grocery items *viz.* rice, wheat, edible oil, sugar, pulses, spices, other cereals and other grocery products were assessed. The types of stores considered were Supermarkets, Departmental Stores, Big Grocery Stores, Local Grocery Stores, and "Others" i.e. retail sources comprising of street salesman, week end santhai and other types.

To get adequate sample sizes for statistical analyses some of the categories of the respondents were pooled and the results are presented according by hereafter.

3.1. Socio-economic profile of the respondents and store choice for the purchase of Grocery items

The overall store choice of stores with regard to different grocery items are given in Table 2. In general, for the purchase of rice (28.8 per cent), wheat (29.7 per cent) and, sugar (32.6 per cent), most of the respondents preferred Supermarkets, and for the purchase of edible oil (24.4 per cent), spices (29.1 per cent) and other cereals (24.1 per cent) the Departmental Stores. For the purchase of pulses the respondents', the store choice was Supermarkets and Departmental Stores (25.6 per cent) equally. The respondents preferred the retail format "Others", (street salesman, weekend santhai, etc.,) (7.2 per cent) for the purchase of other grocery items. There is significant difference with regard to store choice in the purchase of various grocery items namely, rice, wheat, edible oil, sugar, pulses, spices, other cereals and other grocery items (chi-square test-'p', < 0.05).

Table 1: Socio-economic Profile of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Variable	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Locality		
	Urban	159	50.3
	Rural	157	49.7
2	Residential Type		
	Own House	223	70.6
	Rented House	93	29.4
3	Nature of House		
	Individual	249	78.8
	Apartments	60	19.0
	Others	7	2.2
4	Structure of House		
	Tiled	97	30.7
	Terraced	203	64.2
	Hut	9	2.8
	Others	7	2.2
5	Educational Level		
	Less than primary	14	4.4
	Secondary	35	11.1
	Graduate	61	19.3
	Postgraduate	206	65.2
6	Occupation		
	Housewife	18	5.7
	Daily wages	9	2.8
	Contract employment	13	4.1
	Regular employment	222	70.3
	Business	9	2.8
	Student	36	11.4
	Retired	3	.9
	Unemployed	6	1.9
7	Monthly Household Income		
	Less than 10,000	63	19.9
	10,001 – 20,000	72	22.8
	20,001 – 30,000	39	12.3
	30,001 – 50,000	40	12.7
	50,001 – 1,00,000	74	23.4
	More than 1,00,000	28	8.9
8	Employment of Family Head		
	Employed	229	72.5
	Unemployed	23	7.3
	Retired	19	6.0
	Business	45	14.2

3.2. Socio economic characteristics of the Respondents and Store choice

Grocery item-wise variations in the store choices of respondents are given in Tables 3 to 9. A comparison of store preferences (cross-shopping) behaviour is given in Table 10 and a summary of number and percentage of socio-economic groups that used different type of stores to buy various grocery items are given in table 11 and shown in Figure 1.

3.2.1. Purchase of Rice

Supermarkets were the most preferred store choice for the purchase of rice by most of the socio-economic categories studied i.e., 11 out of 18 categories (Table 3). Respondents who had own house preferred Supermarkets, while those with rented house as their Residential type, preferred Departmental Stores.

Consumers who lived in individual houses choose Supermarkets while those living in apartments other types of houses prefer the Departmental Stores for the purchase of rice. Respondents in the educational level upto Graduates showed a preference to Supermarkets while post graduates to the Departmental Stores for the purchase of rice. The responses of consumers varied with their monthly household income, with the preferences being Supermarkets for those whose monthly earnings were $\leq 20,000$, Big Grocery Stores whose monthly earnings were from Rs. 20,001 to 50,000 and to Departmental Stores for those with monthly household income $> Rs. 50,000$ (Table 3). All categories of the three socio-economic variables, viz. Structure of house, occupation and employment of family head preferred only the Supermarkets (Table 3). Category-wise differences were significant with regard to four socio-economic variables only viz. Residential type, Nature of House, Occupation and Monthly Household income, in store choice for the purchase of rice (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 3).

Table 2: Respondents' Store Preference for the Purchase of Grocery Items

TYPE OF STORE		Super market (SM)	Departmental store (DS)	Big grocery store (BGS)	Local grocery store (LGS)	Others (Street salesman / Week end santhai/etc.,)	Chi-square	df	'p'
Rice	No.	91	70	58	64	26	35.935	4	0.001
	%	29.4	22.7	18.8	20.7	8.4			
Wheat	No.	94	86	53	52	25	50.806	4	0.001
	%	30.3	27.7	17.1	16.8	8.1			
Edible oils	No.	63	77	75	65	32	20.885	4	0.001
	%	20.2	24.7	24.0	20.8	10.3			
Sugar	No.	103	67	54	57	31	44.154	4	0.001
	%	33.0	21.5	17.3	18.3	9.9			
Pulses	No.	81	81	62	53	31	28.623	4	0.001
	%	26.3	26.3	20.1	17.2	10.1			
Spices	No.	42	92	60	78	35	37.251	4	0.001
	%	13.7	30.0	19.5	25.4	11.4			
Other cereals	No.	39	76	59	60	46	14.536	4	0.006
	%	13.9	27.1	21.1	21.4	16.4			
Other grocery	No.	13	18	12	15	23	4.864	4	0.302
	%	16.0	22.2	14.8	18.5	28.4			

3.2.2. Purchase of Wheat

For the purchase of wheat, Supermarkets were the preferred choice by rural respondents, while urban respondents' preferred choice was Departmental Stores (Table 4). Respondents with own house and those living individual houses preferred Supermarkets, where as those with rented house, and with apartments as their nature of houses preferred Departmental Stores. Respondents with education less than Graduate level preferred the Supermarkets while the post graduates preferred Departmental Stores for the purchase of wheat.

With regard to occupation, when it was ‘Non-earning’ category, the preference was to Supermarkets while the ‘earning’ respondents preferred Departmental Stores. Respondents with monthly household income of \leq Rs. 20,000 preferred Supermarkets, while those with higher income levels preferred Departmental Stores. All categories of the other variables viz. “Structure of house” and “employment of family head”, preferred Supermarkets only (Table 4). Categories of four socio-economic variables only viz. Nature of house, Educational level, Occupation and Monthly Household Income, had significant differences in the store choice for the purchase of wheat (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 4).

3.2.3. Purchase of Edible Oils

Supermarkets were preferred by the respondents, who were earning less than or equal to Rs. 20,000 as their monthly household income for the purchase of edible oils (Table 5). Other than those, Departmental Stores was the preferred choice store choice by most of the respondents’ socio-economic categories (8 out of 18), followed by Big Grocery stores (6 out of 18) and the Local Grocery stores (2 out of 18) for the purchase of edible oils (Tables 5 & 10; Figure 1). Departmental Stores and Big Grocery Stores were equally preferred by respondents’ of one category i.e. having “Terraced” Structure of House (Table 5, 10; Figure 1). Only one socio-economic variable viz. Monthly Household Income had category-wise significant differences in their store choice for the purchase of edible oils (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

Table 3: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Rice

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	‘ p ’
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	50 (32.5)	33(21.4)	31(20.1)	29(18.8)	11(7.1)	2.017	4	0.733
	Urban	41(26.5)	37(23.9)	27(17.4)	35(22.6)	15(9.7)			
Residential Type	Own House	72(33.0)	41(18.8)	44(20.2)	45(20.6)	16(7.3)	9.857	4	0.043
	Rented House	19(20.9)	29(31.9)	14(15.4)	19(20.9)	10(11.0)			
Nature of House	Individual	81(33.3)	46(18.9)	50(20.6)	45(18.5)	21(8.6)	17.479	4	0.002
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	10(15.2)	24(36.4)	8(12.1)	19(28.8)	5(7.6)			
Structure of House	Terraced	59(29.8)	43(21.7)	38(19.2)	41(20.7)	17(8.6)	0.308	4	0.989
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	32(28.8)	27(24.3)	20(18.0)	23(20.7)	9(8.1)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	22(45.8)	7(14.6)	5(10.4)	11(22.9)	3(6.3)	11.493	8	0.164
	Graduate	21(34.4)	12(19.7)	11(18.0)	12(19.7)	5(8.2)			
	Post Graduate	48(24.0)	51(25.5)	42(21.0)	41(20.5)	18(9.0)			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	25(43.1)	10(17.2)	5(8.6)	14(24.1)	4(6.9)	9.824	4	0.039
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	66(26.3)	60(23.9)	53(21.1)	50(19.9)	22(8.8)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	\leq 20000	47(35.6)	22(16.7)	18(13.6)	30(22.7)	15(11.4)	16.709	8	0.033
	20001 to 50000	17(22.1)	17(22.1)	21(27.3)	17(22.1)	5(6.5)			
	> 50000	27(27.0)	31(31.0)	19(19.0)	17(17.0)	6(6.0)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	70(31.5)	54(24.3)	37(16.7)	44(19.8)	17(7.7)	4.830	4	0.305
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	21(24.1)	16(18.4)	21(24.1)	20(23.0)	9(10.3)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 4: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Wheat

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	'p'
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	55(35.3)	37(23.7)	24(15.4)	25(16.0)	15(9.6)	5.934	4	0.204
	Urban	39(25.3)	49(31.8)	29(18.8)	27(17.5)	10(6.5)			
Residential Type	Own House	76(34.7)	54(24.7)	39(17.8)	34(15.5)	16(7.3)	8.727	4	0.068
	Rented House	18(19.8)	32(35.2)	14(15.4)	18(19.8)	9(9.9)			
Nature of House	Individual	84(34.4)	59(24.2)	45(18.4)	36(14.8)	20(8.2)	15.632	4	0.004
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	10(15.2)	27(40.9)	8(12.1)	16(24.2)	5(7.6)			
Structure of House	Terraced	59(29.6)	52(26.1)	35(17.6)	35(17.6)	18(9.0)	1.564	4	0.815
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	35(31.5)	34(30.6)	18(16.2)	17(15.3)	7(6.3)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	23(47.9)	9(18.8)	4(8.3)	9(18.8)	3(6.3)	16.996	8	0.025
	Graduate	20(33.3)	13(21.7)	7(11.7)	13(21.7)	7(11.7)			
	Post Graduate	51(25.2)	64(31.7)	42(20.8)	30(14.9)	15(7.4)			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	24(41.4)	11(19.0)	3(5.2)	14(24.1)	6(10.3)	14.491	4	0.004
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	70(27.8)	75(29.8)	50(19.8)	38(15.1)	19(7.5)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	50(37.9)	28(21.2)	12(9.1)	25(18.9)	17(12.9)	25.580	8	0.002
	20001 to 50000	19(24.4)	23(29.5)	18(23.1)	15(19.2)	3(3.8)			
	> 50000	25(25.0)	35(35.0)	23(23.0)	12(12.0)	5(5.0)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	69(30.8)	67(29.9)	37(16.5)	35(15.6)	16(7.1)	3.075	4	0.545
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	25(29.1)	19(22.1)	16(18.6)	17(19.8)	9(10.5)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 5: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Edible Oils

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	'p'
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	37(23.6)	39(24.8)	36(22.9)	29(18.5)	16(10.2)	2.446	4	0.654
	Urban	27(17.3)	38(24.4)	39(25.0)	36(23.1)	16(10.3)			
Residential Type	Own House	46(20.8)	53(24.0)	54(24.4)	48(21.7)	20(9.0)	1.705	4	0.790
	Rented House	17(18.7)	24(26.4)	21(23.1)	17(18.7)	12(13.2)			
Nature of House	Individual	53(21.5)	56(22.8)	62(25.2)	50(20.3)	25(10.2)	3.592	4	0.464
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	10(15.2)	21(31.8)	13(19.7)	15(22.7)	7(10.6)			
Structure of House	Terraced	26(23.4)	28(25.2)	28(25.2)	19(17.1)	10(9.0)	2.416	4	0.660
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	37(18.4)	49(24.4)	47(23.4)	46(22.9)	22(10.9)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	11(22.9)	8(16.7)	9(18.8)	15(31.3)	5(10.4)	7.839	8	0.449
	Graduate	11(18.0)	14(23.0)	17(27.9)	10(16.4)	9(14.8)			
	Post Graduate	41(20.2)	55(27.1)	49(24.1)	40(19.7)	18(8.9)			

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	'p'
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	11(18.6)	11(18.6)	12(20.3)	19(32.2)	6(10.2)	5.653	4	0.224
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	52(20.6)	66(26.1)	63(24.9)	46(18.2)	26(10.3)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	31(23.3)	29(21.8)	24(18.0)	27(20.3)	22(16.5)	24.067	8	0.002
	20001 to 50000	10(12.8)	15(19.2)	30(38.5)	19(24.4)	4(5.1)			
	> 50000	22(21.8)	33(32.7)	21(20.8)	19(18.8)	6(5.9)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	53(23.6)	56(24.9)	53(23.6)	45(20.0)	18(8.0)	8.887	4	0.064
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	10(11.5)	21(24.1)	22(25.3)	20(23.0)	14(16.1)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

3.2.4. Purchase of Sugar

For the purchase of Sugar, Supermarkets were preferred by almost all respondent socio-economic categories (16 out of 18) and only two categories preferred the Departmental Stores, i.e. by respondents living in apartments and other nature of houses and those with monthly household income ≤ Rs. 50,000 (Tables 6 &10; Figure 1). Four socio-economic variables viz. Nature of House, Structure of House, Occupation and Monthly Household Income showed category-wise significance variables in the store choice for the purchase of Sugar (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 6).

3.2.5. Purchase of Pulses

For the purchase of pulses, the respondents' store choices were varied with 6 out of 18 categories of respondents preferring Supermarkets, 7 out of 18 categories of respondents preferring Departmental Stores, 1 out of 18, preferring the Big Grocery Stores and another category i.e. respondents of 'non-earning' category, preferring the Local Grocery Stores only. (Tables 7, 10; Figure 1).

Two categories of respondents viz. those with education upto Graduate level and with Monthly Household Income from Rs.20, 001 to 50,000, showed equal preference to Supermarkets and Big Grocery Stores (Table 7, 10; Figure 1) for the purchase of pulses. Respondents with educational level below Secondary level had equal preference for the Supermarkets and Departmental Stores (Table 7, 10; Figure 1). Only two socio-economic variables viz. Nature of house and Monthly Household Income showed category-wise significance in the store choice for the purchase of Pulses (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 7).

3.2.6. Purchase of Spices

With regard to the purchase of Spices, most of the respondent categories i.e. 11 out of 18 preferred Departmental stores (Table 8, 10; Figure 1). Four categories of respondents (out of 18) preferred Local Grocery stores, one type of respondents' viz. with monthly household income of ≤ Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000 gave an equal preference to both Departmental Stores and Big Grocery Stores, and two other types of respondents' viz. those with "Own House" as residential type and with "Apartments and Others" as Nature of House showed and equal importance to the Departmental Stores and Local Grocery Stores, (Table 8, 10; Figure 1).

Respondents of three socio-economic variables viz. Educational level, Occupation and Monthly Household Income exhibited category-wise significant variations in their store choice for the purchase of spices (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 8).

3.2.7. Purchase of Other Groceries and Cereals

For the purchase of other groceries and cereals, Departmental Stores were preferred by most of the respondent categories i.e. 14 out of 18 categories (Table 9, 10; Figure 1). Local Grocery Stores were preferred by respondents of ‘non-earning’ category and with monthly household income of \leq Rs. 20, 000. Respondents of ‘graduate’ category had equal preference for Big Grocery Stores and Local Grocery Stores for the purchase of other groceries and cereals (Table 9, 10; Figure 1). “Others” (unemployed, Retired and Business People) Category under the variable “Employment of Family Head” preferred the retail format “Others” for the purchase of other Groceries and Cereals (Table 9, 10; Figure 1). Categories of two socio-economic variables viz. Educational level and Occupation showed significant variations with regard to the store choice for the purchase of other groceries and cereals (chi-square test; $p < 0.05$) (Table 9).

Table 6: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Sugar

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	‘ p’
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	55(35.3)	33(21.2)	27(17.3)	25(16.0)	16(10.3)	1.383	4	0.847
	Urban	48(30.8)	34(21.8)	27(17.3)	32(20.5)	15(9.6)			
Residential Type	Own House	77(34.8)	42(19.0)	41(18.6)	42(19.0)	19(8.6)	5.189	4	0.268
	Rented House	26(28.6)	25(27.5)	13(14.3)	15(16.5)	12(13.2)			
Nature of House	Individual	90(36.6)	45(18.3)	46(18.7)	41(16.7)	24(9.8)	12.951	4	0.012
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	13(19.7)	22(33.3)	8(12.1)	16(24.2)	7(10.6)			
Structure of House	Terraced	32(28.8)	31(27.9)	25(22.5)	16(14.4)	7(6.3)	10.648	4	0.031
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	71(35.3)	36(17.9)	29(14.4)	41(20.4)	24(11.9)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	23(47.9)	6(12.5)	5(10.4)	10(20.8)	4(8.3)	12.942	8	0.106
	Graduate	24(39.3)	10(16.4)	8(13.1)	13(21.3)	6(9.8)			
	Post Graduate	56(27.6)	51(25.1)	41(20.2)	34(16.7)	21(10.3)			
Occupation	Non-Earning (House wife, student and unemployed)	22(37.3)	7(11.9)	6(10.2)	19(32.2)	5(8.5)	12.754	4	0.011
	Earning (Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	81(32.0)	60(23.7)	48(19.0)	38(15.0)	26(10.3)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	\leq 20000	55(41.4)	20(15.0)	17(12.8)	25(18.8)	16(12.0)	20.357	8	0.009
	20001 to 50000	23(29.5)	15(19.2)	16(20.5)	19(24.4)	5(6.4)			
	> 50000	25(24.8)	32(31.7)	21(20.8)	13(12.9)	10(9.9)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	73(32.4)	54(24.0)	39(17.3)	42(18.7)	17(7.6)	5.681	4	0.224
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	30(32.6)	13(14.1)	15(16.3)	25(27.2)	9(9.8)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 7: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Pulses

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	‘p’
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	47(30.9)	35(23.0)	32(21.1)	23(15.1)	15(9.9)	4.550	4	0.332
	Urban	34(21.8)	46(29.5)	30(19.2)	30(19.2)	16(10.3)			
Residential Type	Own House	59(27.2)	51(23.5)	48(22.1)	39(18.0)	20(9.2)	4.625	4	0.328
	Rented House	22(24.2)	30(33.0)	14(15.4)	14(15.4)	11(12.1)			
Nature of House	Individual	69(28.5)	57(23.6)	51(21.1)	39(16.1)	26(10.7)	11.825	4	0.019
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	12(14.3)	24(28.6)	29(34.5)	14(16.7)	5(6.0)			
Structure of House	Terraced	29(26.6)	30(27.5)	24(22.0)	16(14.7)	10(9.2)	1.77	4	0.882
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	51(25.8)	51(25.8)	38(19.2)	37(18.7)	21(10.6)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	17(35.4)	8(16.7)	10(20.8)	8(16.7)	5(10.4)	7.438	8	0.490
	Graduate	14(23.3)	12(20.0)	14(23.3)	12(20.0)	8(13.3)			
	Post Graduate	50(25.0)	61(30.5)	38(19.0)	33(16.5)	18(9.0)			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	14(23.7)	11(18.6)	10(16.9)	17(28.8)	7(11.9)	7.603	4	0.099
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	67(26.9)	70(28.1)	52(20.9)	36(14.5)	24(9.6)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	40(30.3)	26(19.7)	23(17.4)	23(17.4)	20(15.2)	19.146	8	0.012
	20001 to 50000	20(26.3)	16(21.1)	20(26.3)	16(21.1)	4(5.3)			
	> 50000	21(21.0)	39(39.0)	19(19.0)	14(14.0)	7(7.0)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	58(26.2)	62(28.1)	45(20.4)	38(17.2)	18(8.1)	3.805	4	0.433
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	23(26.4)	19(21.8)	17(19.5)	15(17.2)	13(14.9)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 8: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of Spices

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	‘p’
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	22(14.4)	45(29.4)	27(17.6)	42(27.5)	17(11.1)	1.226	4	0.874
	Urban	20(13.0)	47(30.5)	33(21.4)	36(23.4)	18(11.7)			
Residential Type	Own House	32(14.7)	60(27.6)	42(19.4)	60(27.6)	23(10.6)	3.837	4	0.428
	Rented House	10(11.1)	32(35.6)	18(20.0)	18(20.0)	12(13.3)			
Nature of House	Individual	19(17.1)	37(33.3)	25(22.5)	23(20.7)	7(6.3)	8.408	4	0.078
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	23(11.7)	55(28.1)	35(17.9)	55(28.1)	28(14.3)			
Structure of House	Terraced	38(15.6)	68(28.0)	47(19.3)	62(25.5)	28(11.5)	4.975	4	0.290
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	4(6.3)	24(37.5)	13(20.3)	16(25.0)	7(10.9)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	3(6.5)	11(23.9)	8(17.4)	19(41.3)	5(10.9)	21.461	8	0.005
	Graduate	2(3.3)	17(27.9)	13(21.3)	18(29.5)	11(18.0)			
	Post Graduate	37(18.6)	64(32.2)	39(19.6)	41(20.6)	18(9.0)			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	3(5.1)	12(20.3)	9(15.3)	27(45.8)	8(13.6)	17.893	4	0.001
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment,	39(15.7)	80(32.3)	51(20.6)	51(20.6)	27(10.9)			

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	'p'
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
	Regular Employment, Retired and Business)								
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	13(9.8)	32(24.2)	17(12.9)	45(34.1)	25(18.9)	33.166	8	0.000
	20001 to 50000	9(11.8)	23(30.3)	23(30.3)	17(22.4)	4(5.3)			
	> 50000	20(20.2)	37(37.4)	20(20.2)	16(16.2)	6(6.1)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	35(15.8)	66(29.9)	46(20.8)	54(24.4)	20(9.0)	7.454	4	0.114
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	7(8.1)	26(30.2)	14(16.3)	24(27.9)	15(17.4)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 9: Socio-economic variables of the respondents and store preference for the purchase of other Groceries and Cereals

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	TYPE OF STORE*					Chi-square	df	'p'
		SM	DS	BGS	LGS	Others			
Locality	Rural	28(15.9)	43(24.4)	33(18.8)	40(22.7)	32(18.2)	1.813	4	0.770
	Urban	24(13.0)	51(27.6)	38(20.5)	35(18.9)	37(20.0)			
Residential Type	Own House	38(15.1)	62(24.7)	47(18.7)	57(22.7)	47(18.7)	2.794	4	0.593
	Rented House	14(12.7)	32(29.1)	24(21.8)	18(16.4)	22(20.0)			
Nature of House	Individual	46(16.3)	67(23.7)	55(19.4)	59(20.8)	56(19.8)	6.274	4	0.180
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	6(7.7)	27(34.6)	16(20.5)	16(20.5)	13(16.7)			
Structure of House	Terraced	24(18.8)	32(25.0)	27(21.1)	23(18.0)	22(17.2)	4.024	4	0.403
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	28(12.0)	62(26.6)	44(18.9)	52(22.3)	47(20.2)			
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	4(6.9)	18(31.0)	13(22.4)	16(27.6)	7(12.1)	22.412	8	0.003
	Graduate	3(4.2)	15(20.8)	19(26.4)	19(26.4)	16(22.2)			
	Post Graduate	45(19.5)	61(26.4)	39(16.9)	40(17.3)	46(19.9)			
Occupation	Non-Earning(House wife, student and unemployed)	4(6.3)	11(17.5)	12(19.0)	19(30.2)	17(27.0)	11.484	4	0.021
	Earning(Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	48(16.2)	83(27.9)	59(19.9)	56(18.9)	51(17.2)			
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	16(10.5)	38(25.0)	26(17.1)	39(25.7)	33(21.7)	13.765	8	0.088
	20001 to 50000	11(11.3)	26(26.8)	23(23.7)	20(20.6)	17(17.5)			
	> 50000	25(22.5)	30(27.0)	22(19.8)	16(14.4)	18(16.2)			
Employment of Family Head	Employed	43(17.0)	69(27.3)	51(20.2)	49(19.4)	41(16.2)	9.090	4	0.059
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	9(8.3)	25(23.1)	20(18.5)	26(24.1)	28(25.9)			

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 10: Comparisons of Store Preferences (Cross shopping behaviour) by respondents of different socio-economic characteristics for the purchase of different Grocery items

SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES	CATEGORY	*PREFERRED TYPE OF STORE FOR THE PURCHASE OF						
		Rice	Wheat	Edible oil	Sugar	Pulses	Spices	Other Groceries and Cereals
Locality	Rural	SM	SM	DS	SM	SM	DS	DS
	Urban	SM	DS	BGS	SM	DS	DS	DS
Residential Type	Own House	SM	SM	BGS	SM	SM	DS, LGS	DS
	Rented House	DS	DS	DS	SM	DS	DS	DS
Nature of House	Individual	SM	SM	BGS	SM	SM	DS	DS
	Apartments and Others (Villa, Others)	DS	DS	DS	DS	BGS	DS, LGS	DS
Structure of House	Terraced	SM	SM	DS, BGS	SM	DS	DS	DS
	Others (Tiled, Hut and Others)	SM	SM	DS	SM	SM, DS	DS	DS
Educational Level	< Primary and Secondary	SM	SM	LGS	SM	SM	LGS	DS
	Graduate	SM	SM	BGS	SM	SM, BGS	LGS	BGS, LGS
	Post Graduate	DS	DS	DS	SM	DS	DS	DS
Occupation	Non-Earning (House wife, student and unemployed)	SM	SM	LGS	SM	LGS	LGS	LGS
	Earning (Daily Wages, Contract employment, Regular Employment, Retired and Business)	SM	DS	DS	SM	DS	DS	DS
Monthly Household Income (in Rs.)	≤ 20000	SM	SM	SM	SM	SM	LGS	LGS
	20001 to 50000	BGS	DS	BGS	SM	SM, BGS	DS, BGS	DS
	> 50000	DS	DS	DS	DS	DS	DS	DS
Employment of Family Head	Employed	SM	SM	DS	SM	DS	DS	DS
	Others (Unemployed, Retired and Business)	SM, BGS	SM	BGS	SM	SM	DS	Others

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

Table 11: Number and percentage of socio-economic groups used different types of stores to buy various types of grocery items

Type of Stores*	Rice	Wheat	Edible oil	Sugar	Pulses	Spices	Others
SM	13	11	1	16	6	0	0
DS	4	7	8	2	7	11	14
BGS	1	0	6	0	1	0	0
LGS	0	0	2	0	1	4	2
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
DS & BGS	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
SM & DS	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
SM & BGS	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
DS & LGS	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
DS & BGS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BGS & LGS	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

* See Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types

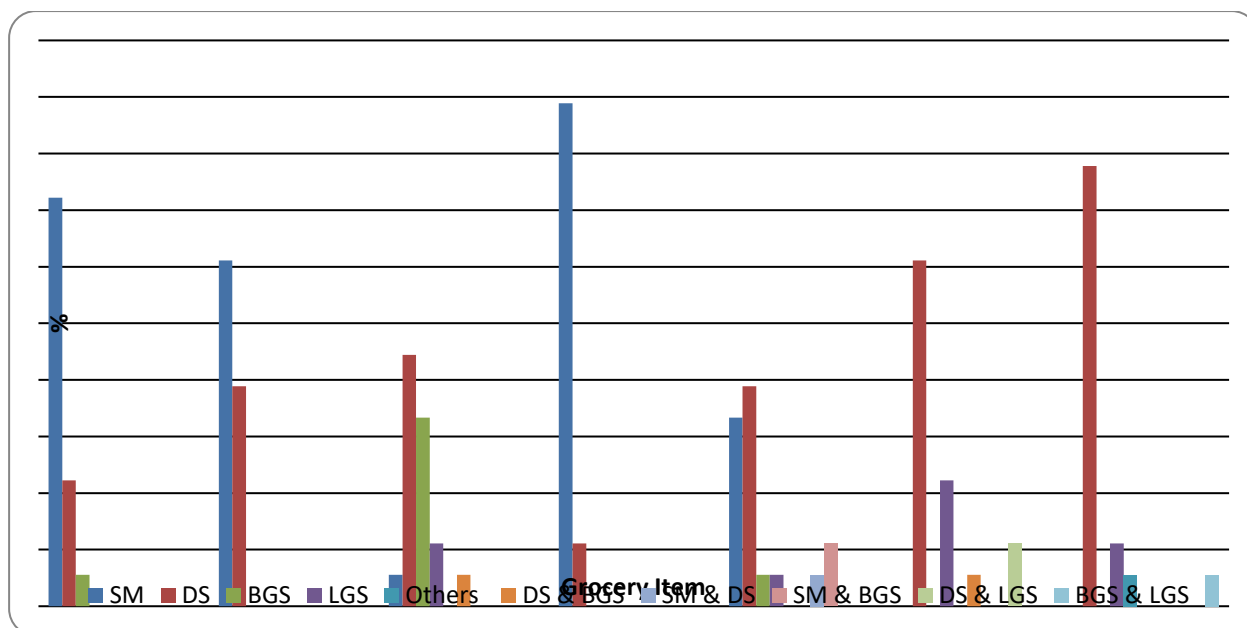


Figure 1: Percentage of socio-economic groups that used different store types for the purchase of various types of grocery items. (* see Table 2 for expansion of abbreviations of store types)

4. DISCUSSION

Among the socio-economic variables studied, respondents' Monthly Household income played a major role in store choice for the purchase of grocery items, with the Higher Income groups (< Rs. 50,000) always preferring Departmental Stores, the low income groups (\leq Rs.20, 000) mostly favouring Supermarkets and the middle income groups showing a wider choice with preference towards Big Grocery Stores, Supermarkets and Departmental Stores. However, the middle income group's major choice seems to be the Big Grocery Stores Diversified spending by middle income group of consumers was reported by Landes *et al.* (2004) as well.

The second major socio-economic variable was Occupation of the respondents with the "Earning group" always preferring the Supermarkets, while the "Non-earning" group mostly preferring Local Grocery Stores, for the purchase of sugar, spices and Others. The Departmental stores were the other choice for the "Earning" group, while Supermarkets were the other choice for the "Non-earning" group of consumers in the purchase of sugar, spices and others. Occupation was reported as the best documented measure of Social class. (Health, 1998) and occupational status was reported to directly affect purchasing power and behaviour (Henry, 2001).

The third significant socio-economic variable was Nature of House, but with regard to the purchase of rice, wheat, sugar and pulses only. The store choice of respondents with Individual houses being always the Supermarkets for the purchase for all the above four grocery items. For the purchase of pulses, the respondents living in Apartments and other "Nature of Houses" preferred mostly the Departmental Stores with big Grocery Stores being their other choice.

The Educational level of the respondents influenced the purchase of wheat, spices and other groceries and cereals only. Supermarkets were the preferred store for wheat by all the three categories of 'Educational Level', While Departmental Stores for the purchase of spices by respondents of less than secondary education and Post Graduates.

The store choice of Graduates varied with preference to Supermarkets for the purchase of wheat, Local Grocery Stores for the purchase of spices, and either Local Grocery Stores or Big Grocery Stores for the purchase of Other groceries and cereals.

The level of a person's formal education is a commonly accepted approximation of social standing (Crispell, 1994) and it has been reported earlier also that education affects the way consumers make decisions (Henry, 2001).

The "Residential Type" and "Structure of House" were the other variables which showed significant variations in store choice for the purchase of rice and sugar, respectively. Respondents with "Own Houses" as Residential type preferred Supermarkets while those having "rented houses" as their Residential Type preferred Departmental Stores for the purchase of rice. Supermarkets were the preferred type of stores by both the types of respondents of variable "Structure of House" for the purchase of sugar.

In short, it may be summed up that the Monthly Household Income was the major socio-economic variable influencing consumers' store choice, followed by "Educational Level" and "Nature, type and structure of houses" of them, in the purchase of grocery items. Earlier researches also clearly established that the determinant of the store choice behaviour was closely associated with their characteristic difference in consumers' psychological and behavioural patterns across their social strata (Brown and Fisk, 1965, Monroe and Guiltinan 1975; Sheth 1983; Kohn *et.al* 1990; Shim and Kotsiopoulos, 1993; Gupta and Chintagunta, 1994; Shim and Bickle, 1994; Morganosky, 1995; East, 1997). Further, the within-store and between-store cross-shopping were reported to be common grocery consumer strategies by earlier reports of, Carpenter and Moore (2006); Bustos-Reyes and Gonzalez-Benito (2008) and Skallerud *et.al* (2009), as well.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present study suggest that the store choice of the consumers for the purchase of grocery items is generally in the following order: Supermarkets>Departmental Stores>Big Grocery Stores>Local Grocery Stores>Others. The most important socio-economic variable influencing the store choice of consumers was their Monthly Household Income, though their Educational level and Nature, type and Structure of inhabitants (Houses) also had significant influences. In short, we conclude that the economic status and educational level are the key factors influencing consumer choice of store formats for grocery shopping.

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