



RETAILING IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Retailing provides a crucial link between producers and consumers in a modern market economy. The performance of this sector has a strong influence on consumer welfare. Retailers not only provide consumers with a wide variety of products, but also a wide range of complementary services (such as assurance of product delivery), which can lead to more informed choice and greater convenience in shopping. They also provide producers with much needed information on consumers demand pattern. Productivity and efficiency in retail operations lowers price level and reduce distortions in the price structure. Through backward and forward linkage, performance of retailing services affects the performance of interlinked sectors such as tourism, recreational and cultural services, manufacturing of consumers goods agro-good producing industries etc. The present paper is an attempt to explore retailing in India in Historical perspective

Key words: Retailing, Consumers, Productivity

Introduction:

Retailing is the largest private industry in India and second largest employer after agriculture. The sector contributes to around 10 per cent of GDP and 6-7 per cent of employment. With over 15 million retail outlets, India has the highest retail outlet density in the world. This sector witnessed significant development in the past 10 years – from small unorganized family-owned retail formats to organized retailing. Liberalization of the economy, rise in per capita income and growing consumerism have encourage larger business houses and manufactures to set up retail formats; real estate companies and venture capitalist are investing in retail infrastructure.

Many foreign retailers have also entered the market through different routes such as wholesale cash-and-carry, local manufacturing, franchising, test marketing, etc. With the growth in organized retailing, unorganized retailers are fast changing their business models and implementing new technologies and modern accounting practices to face competition. The retailing sector in India has undergone significant transformation in the past 10 years. Traditionally, Indian retail sector has been characterized by the presence of a large number of small-unorganized retailers. However, in the past decade there has been development of organized retailing, which has encouraged large private sector player to invest in this sector. Many foreign players have also entered India through different routes such as test marketing, franchising, wholesale cash-and-carry operation. With high GDP growth, increased consumerism and liberalization of the manufacturing sector, India is being portrayed as an attractive destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) in retailing. However, at present this is one of the few sectors, which is closed to FDI. Within the country, there has been significant protest from trading associations and other stakeholders against allowing FDI in retailing. In India, the retail sector is the 2nd largest employer after agriculture. Infact due to wide network of retailing in India it is known as nation of shopkeepers. There is about 12 millions retail outlet spread across India and the country has the highest density of shops in the world i.e. one shop for every 20 to 25 families or 11 retail shop for every 1000 persons. While it is only four shops per 1000 in USA. Retailing in India provides employment to about 7% of total work force in the country and contributes about 14% to GDP of India. However the retailing sector in India is highly fragmented and consists predominantly of small, independent and owner managed shop. The Global Retail Development Index developed by A.T Kearney has ranked India first among the top 30 emerging markets in the world. A look at the landscape of most of the cities in India shows the rapid phase of change. This changes in reflection of the changes in the Indian consumers his lifestyle and his habits. Goldman Sachs has estimated that the Indian economic growth could actually exceed that of China by year 2015. It is believed that the country has the potential to deliver the fast growth over the next 50 years. It took 10 years for the first 2500 organized retail stores to emerge in India; the next 2500 could easily get added in the next 5 years. Formats new to the India market place have emerged rapidly over the past ten years. There is little doubt that retail in India is reveling up for an exciting phase ahead.

EVOLUTION OF RETAIL IN INDIA:

The origins of retail are old as trade itself. Barter was the oldest form of trade. For centuries, most merchandise was sold in market place or by peddlers. Medieval markets were dependent on local sources for supplies of perishable food because Journey was far too slow to allow for long

distance transportation. However, customer did travel considerable distance for specialty items. The peddler, who provided people with the basic goods and necessities that they could not be self sufficient in, followed one of the earliest forms of retail trade. Even in prehistoric time, the peddler traveled long distances to bring products to locations which were in short supply. “They could be termed as early entrepreneurs who saw the opportunity in serving the needs of the consumers at a profit” Later retailers opened small shops, stocking them with such produce. As towns and cities grew, these retail stores began stocking a mix of convenience merchandise, enabling the formation of high-street bazaars that become the hub retail activity in every city.

TRADITIONAL RETAIL FORMAT IN INDIA:

It is important that for centuries now, India has been operating with in her unique concept of retailing. Retailing in its initial period was witnessed at the weekly Haats or Gathering in a market place where vendors put on displays their produce. Off course this practice is still prevalent in many towns and cities in India; then the market saw the emergence of the Local banias and his neighborhood Kirana shop. Infact these were the common local mummy-dady or multipurpose departmental store located in the residential areas such shops stocked goods and multipurpose utility and were with the vision of providing convenience at the door step of the consumer. While barter would be considered to be the oldest form of retail trade, since Independence, retail in India has evolved to support the unique needs of our country, given its size and complexity. Haats, mandis and melas have been a part of India landscape. They will continue to be present in most part of the country and form an essential part of life and trade in various areas.

EMERGENCE OF ORGANISED RETAIL IN INDIA:

The emergence of first phase of organised retailing in India can be traced back when a shopping centre into existence in the year 1869 with Mumbai Crawford Market. After that, in the year 1874 Hogg market, popularly and better known as new market came into existence in Calcutta (Now known as Kolkata) this shopping centre was designed by an East Indian Railways Co. Architect R.R. Banya and was named after the then municipal commissioner of Calcutta Sir Stuart Hogg. Earlier the Hogg market even had a garden with a beautiful fountain adding to its ambience and benches too for tired shoppers. Today, the New Market continues to be a premier shopping area in Kolkata despite a pat of it being incinerated in late 1985. Its red-brick Gothic clock-tower today bears testimony to the past Grandeur of this first shopping centre in India. Today from linen to cakes and fruits to fishes everything is available at the New Market Atta reasonable price and this has made the New Market sustain its popularity among the metro

customers of Kolkata. The tenant mix of this first shopping centre is unique as it has a large number of 2000 stalls which are organized in an order of merchandize. There are rows of stalls dealing with one particular line of Goods. A retail researcher by name Christine Furedy in 70s has observed in her article in the capital on 24th Dec. 1979 tracing the emergence of the New Market, thus “The most complex retail business of late nineteenth century Calcutta, establishment which were to dominate the modern retail sector, were the departmental stores. Although every one has closed its doors, many Calcuttans still remember the name or recognize their converted, subdivided building: Francis, Harrison and Hathaway; Hall and Anderson; the Army and Navy stores; white a way; laidlow and Co. In their scope and out reach these shops rivaled those to be found in cities of the same size in Britain, Europe or the United States”. The second phase of development of organised retailing can be traced back to the year 1931 when Bata shoe Co. took lead in opening its chain stores at various cities & towns. It was followed by DCM and Raymonds extensively. The earliest seed of the so-called specialty malls can be traced to shopkeepers who stocked goods of the same product category in a particular locality. If one were to go back to the early 80s, it can be said that organised retail, to a great extent was visible in the functioning of stores such as ‘Akbarally’ in Mumbai and ‘Nilgiris’ and ‘Spencers’ in Chennai. These stores later evolved into multichain outlet and were the first to bring on the ‘onset of organised retail’ in India. The evolution of PDS (Public Distribution System) of Grains in India having its origin in the rationing system introduced by the British during World War II was example of single largest retail chain in the country the canteen stores Department and the Post Offices in India are also among the largest network of outlets in the country, reaching populations across state boundaries. The Khadi and Village Industries (KVIC) was set during post Independence and today it has more than 7000 stores across the country. While Independence retail stores like Akbarally’s, Vivek’s and Nallis have existed in India for a long time, Reliance , Garden silk mills, Madhura Garments, Arvind mills etc have set up show rooms for retail sale of their branded products. At present India is rapidly evolving in to an existing and Competitive market place with potential target consumers in both the rich and middle class segments. Manufacturer owned and retail chain stores are springing up in urban area to market consumers goods in a style similar to that of mall in more affluent countries. Even though big retail chain like Crossroad, Saga and Shopper’s stop are concentrating on the upper segment and selling products at higher prices, some like A.V Birla Retails. More, RPG’s Spencers, Food World and Big Bazaars are tapping the huge middle class population. During the past two years , there has been tremendous amount of Interest in the Indian retail trade from global majors as

well as over the years, International brands like McDonalds, Swarovski, Lacoste, Domino's, Pepsi Benetton among a host of others have come in and thrived in India.

RETAIL FORMATS IN INDIA:

In India, at present, retailing activities are being carried through wide varieties of formats ranging from 'pheri wala' in streets to Modernised Malls in Metro cities. However from study point of view these formats can easily classified into following three Groups.

FORMATS OF RETAILING

A) TRADITIONAL FORMATS:

1. ITINERANT SALESMAN: It is a type of direct selling which started centuries ago. It is an example of door to door office to office delivery or marketing. Morning Milk man and sabji wala are the most famous examples of this category. This type of format has been very popular through out India in coping with daily needs. In rural areas this sales man use cycles, for carrying their stock for display of Goods.

2. HAATS: Haats are the unique examples of traditional malls in India. Just like Malls, different sellers sell different types of items along with the sale of vegetables, fruits, sweets, etc. Some entertainment arrangements are also made in available in these haats. There was tendency in rural as well as semi-urban area in India for visiting these haats with family members as a part of picnic cum purchasing programmes. Infact Haats are periodic markets (generally organized once in week or fortnight at a particular place

& time) that form a major part of the rural market system in India. In other words the term Haats refers to locations which witness a public gathering of buyers and sellers at fixed time and fixed locations. On account of organization of these haats these are called with the name of a particular day also such as Mangal Bazar, Budh Bazar etc. According to one estimate about 42,000 haats are organised in our country.

3. MELAS: Melas are fairs & they can range from commodities fairs to religious fairs. Virtually every state in India has melas for which it is known. It is estimated that more than 2500 melas are held annually in the country. It is also estimated that the average outlets in every Mela would be more than 800 & the average sale per mela would be Rs.143 lac . Nauchandi is an example of important annual mela in Meerut, at many places such as Gawalior, Aligarh, Bulendshahr annual exhibitions are organised. At Government level a number of fairs such as book fair, Trade fair and specific Commodity fair are organised by Trade fair authority of India.

4. **MANDIS:** Mandis are markets set up & regulated by State Government for the sale of agricultural produce directly from farmers. At present the number of such markets stands at 7521. These mandis are playing significant role in providing better prices to farmers.

B) ESTABLISHED FORMATS:

1. KIOSKS:

A kiosks is a small free standing pavilion or stall often open on one or more sides and used for information Sales and promotion. Generally a Kiosks is placed in a shopping centre, a bus stand or near by the prospective customers.

2. KIRANA SHOP & INDEPENDENT STORES:

This is one of the important & popular established formats of retailing in India. These shops are usually shops with a very small area, stocking a limited range of products, varying from region to region according to the need of the clientele or the whims of the owners. These are low cost structures mostly owner operated, have reliable real estate & labours cost. Consumer familiarity that runs from generation to generation is one big advantage enjoyed by such Kirana Shops. The retailer to consumer ratio has been very low with many such shops often located close to people residence, thus making location & convenience a major factor for their popularity. Branding has not been the key decision criteria for a majority of customers at such kirana shop or traditional retail Outlet, particularly in the Small Township and rural India. Infact traditional retailer themselves place a significant role in the purchase decision influence both the product & the brand perception. It is worth mentioning that India retail sector has traditionally been structured around 3 small retail entities – the grocer, the General store and the chemist. The grocer stocks non packaged, unbranded / Generic Commodities such as rice, floor, pulses, spices, salt etc. The Grocery Stores or Kirana shops located in neighbour-hood centres also sale branded & packaged fast moving consumer goods. The General store stocks only branded & packaged FMCGs. These are generally located prominently in the neighbourhood center & residential areas. The chemist, a part from dispensing pharmaceutical. Products, sales branded FMCGs such as personal Carrier Products & health food. Along side the three retail outfit, exist a large segment of smaller, unorganised playerspaan, beedi stores which stock products in sachats, batteries, confectionary & soaps; bakery & confectioners; fruit juice/ tea salts; ice-cream parlour; electrical, furniture & hardware stores. Kirana shops & independent small stores provide a wide variety of facilities to their customers, such as telephone order credit facilities, home delivery, customization on account of offerings & packaging & specific products produced on order in case of stock out. More importantly their available next door to offer personalized service. In this way their able to

develop a strong relationship with their customer, who over a period of time, become extremely loyal.

3. SUPER MARKETS/HYPER MARKETS

These are large (90,000 square feet plus) self-service stores selling a variety of products at discounted price. The best practice chains in this format are Carrefour (France) Wal-Mart (US). Supermarkets tend to be located in key residential markets and malls and offer competitive prices due to economics of scale in logistics and purchasing. The format is new to India and some important players in this field are Food World, Big Bazaar. Indian Super Market are smaller than others countries.

4. DEPARTMENTAL STORES

These large stores primarily sell non-food items such as apparel, footwear household products. They stock multiple brands across product categories, though some of them focus as their own store labels (e.g. Marks and Spencer's St. Michael). Departmental stores are found on high streets and as anchor shops of shopping malls. Some department stores chains are opened in India e.g. Shopper's stop, Westside and Ebony.

5. SPECIALTY CHAINS

These outlets focus on a particular brand as product category, usually non-food items and are located on high streets and in shopping malls. The most famous specialty chains include Gap, Levi's and Benetton.

6. DISCOUNT STORE

It is a general merchandise retailer that offers a wide variety of merchandise limited service and low prices. Subhiksha and Margin free markets are operating in this format in India.

7. WHOLESALE "CASH AND CARRY"

The wholesale cash and carry operation is defined as any trading outlets where goods are sold at the wholesale rate for retailers and business to buy. The transactions are only for the business purpose and not for personal consumption. Metro, cash and carry, Gmbh of Germany entered the India in this format.

8. CONVENIENCE STORE

It is a retail business of less than 5,000 square feet with primary emphasis on providing the public a convenient location to quickly purchase an assortment of food, gasoline and other consumable products. They are usually open seven days a week for extended hours

C) CO-OPERATIVE SHOPS/GOVT. ORGANISATION:

Cooperative stores in India are the result of the cooperative movement that can be traced to the Pre-independence period. They emerged as a reaction to the feudal system & attempted to place the fruit of labour in the hands of the producer himself to make himself relevant. The Cooperative movement was strengthened after independence in Western India. A consumer cooperative is a retail institution owned by member customers. A consumer cooperative is generally formed either because of dissatisfied consumers whose needs are not fulfilled by the existing retailers or on account of initiative by an enlightened consumer.

D) MOTHER DAIRY, DELHI & FRUIT & VEGETABLE PROJECT, DELHI:

Mother Dairy, Delhi & the fruit & vegetable project Delhi, set up by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in 1974, 1986, respectively, were merged to form Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable Limited (MD F & V) in April 2000. The new Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of NDDB, is involved in marketing & distribution of milk, milk products & horticulture produce. The companies' dairy plant handles more than 1.3 million liters of milk daily & undertakes its marketing operations through 636 own milk shops & more than 6500 retail outlets in and around Delhi. Ice-creams market under the brand name 'Mother Dairy' has a 41% market share in Delhi. The company markets horticulture produce in fresh, frozen & processed form under the brand named 'SAFAL' through a chain of 263 own fruit & vegetable shops & more than 20000 retail outlets in various parts of the country. Fresh produce from the producers is handled at the Company's modern processing facility in Delhi with an annual capacity of 120000 MT. A state-of-the-art fruit processing plant, a 100% EOU, set up in 1996 at Mumbai, supplies quality products in the international market. The Company's unique distribution network of bulk vending booths, retail outlets & mobile units gives it a significant competitive advantage. It is worth mentioning that the consumer cooperative structure in the country has 4 tiers, with the National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India Ltd. (NCCF) at the national level. Thirty State Cooperative Consumers Organisations are affiliated to the NCCF, the central/wholesale level there are 800 consumer cooperative stores. At the primary level, there are 21,903 primary stores. In the rural area there are about 44,418 village level Primary Agricultural Credit Societies & Marketing Societies undertaking the distribution of consumer goods along with their normal business. In the urban & semi-urban areas, the consumer cooperative societies are operating about 37,226 retail outlets to meet the requirement of the consumers. Established formats of retailing in India also include certain retail organisations initiated & promoted by Govt. They include Canteen stores, department stores, CCIE, KVIC and various cottage and Handicraft Emporium. The canteen store department has opened Canteen for Army persons & Govt. employees providing consumer goods at constitutional prices. It has about 3400

outlets through out the country.KVIC (Khadi & Village Industry Commission) was set up in 1957 to act as a Custodian of Cooperative institution & as an incubator of village Industrial Units. It has established more than 7000 outlets for the sale of the products of Khadi & Village Industry units. The items sold at these units includes Garment, Furnishing, Handicrafts, Cosmetics & Food Items like pulses, rice, sugar, tea etc.The Central Cottage Industries Emporium (CCIE) is a Government of India undertaking to promote sale of artisan goods to tourists as well as local customers. There are 6 stores across the country, by the same name, all keeping up the tradition of displaying the selling crafts from various regions of India. The Government runs CCIE, which has branches in each major city these are well appointed, multistoried complexes containing a selection of handicrafts from every corner of the country. In order to provide attractive markets in urban centers & right prices to the artisans & craftsmen, the Government launched the CCIE to provide them with an alternative retail channel.The central & state Government runs various cottage & handicraft emporium across the country in Delhi, the CCIE & the various state emporiums are located in Cannaught Place Cottage Emporium, as also many other such stores in the country, accept all major International Credit Cards. Each branch has an air freighting section where bulky purchases are delivered right at the customer's doorstep.These emporiums retail a wide variety of product categories, which they procure from every part of India. They offer a rich variety of silk with special colours & weaves. The heavy Kanjeevaram Silk of the South, the Soft and the richly brocaded one of Banaras, the light silks from the east, the Golden hued 'muga' of Assam, 'tanchoi' from surat, the magical tie and dye of Rajasthan and Gujarat, the 'ikat' or 'patola' of Orissa and artifacts in bronze, brass ivory, marble, or wood statues, lamp shades, Chairs, delicate filigree work on ivory of silver, marble inlaid with precious coloured stones enamed work; 'Kundan' or 'Mina' Jewellery of Rajasthan, silver from Orissa & Pearl of Hyderabad – the entire range of rich handicraft products of India can be obtained from them. This is especially useful for the shopper in a hurry. In New Delhi an entire street – full of the State Government Emporium - the Baba Kharag Singh Marg provides the shoppers with virtually everything that is available in the country. They bring to the customers a wide selection of textiles, leather goods, art & artifacts and the best of everything that a particular state offers. There are other emporia too like the Handloom House which sell equally good & genuine things.

E) PDS/FAIR PRICE SHOP:

The PDS or Public Distribution System would easily emerge as the single largest retail chain existing in the country. The evolution of PDS of Grains in India has its origin in the rationing

system introduced by the British during World War II. The system was started in 1939 in Bombay & subsequently extended to other cities and towns. By the year 1946, as many as 771 cities/towns were covered. The system was abolished post war, however, on attaining Independence India was forced to reintroduce it in 1950 in the face of renewed inflationary pressures in the economy. The system, however, continued to remain an essentially urban oriented activity. In fact, towards the end of the First 5-year plan (1956) the system was closing its relevance due to comfortable food grains availability. At this point in time, PDS was reintroduced and other essential commodities like sugar, cooking coal & kerosene oil were added to the commodity basket of PDS. There was also a rapid increase in the Ration shop and their number went up from 18000 in 1957 to 51000 in 1961. Thus, by the end of the second 5 year Plan, PDS had changed from the typical rationing system to a social safety system, making available food grains at a 'fair-price' so that access of household to food grain could be improved & such distribution could keep a check on the speculative tendencies in the market. The PDS has been functioning for more than 4 decades now and its greatest achievement lies in preventing famines in India.

F) CONVENIENCE SHOPS:

These shops are relatively small shops that are located near residential areas, are open for long hours & 7 days a week and offer a limited line of convenience products like beverages, ready to eat snack (Pastry, Sandwiches) bread, eggs, milk, confectionary etc. These shops have been quite common throughout the country.

G) SPECIALTY SHOPS:

A Specialty shop is a retail shop displaying merchandise which have narrow product line, specialising in a particular type of merchandise & offering specialized service to customers. Generally these shops concentrate on a specific items such as Apparel, Jewelry, Fabric, Sporting Goods, Furniture etc. Specialty shop can be sub classified by the degree of narrowness in their product line. e.g. A clothing store would be a single line shop, a mens clothing shop would be a limited time shop & a mens shirt store would be a super specialty shop. Such shops have always played significant role in relating of consumer durables throughout the country but particularly in urban & sub-urban areas.

RURAL MALLS HAVE MADE A BEGINNING:

Rural retailing is an important segment of the retail industry and it is only lately that companies are making investments in this area. ITC launched Chaupal Sagar, the first rural mall, with a variety of products and offering farmer's tools to adapt to new technologies and methods of farming and selling their produce. The DCM Sriram Group has opened a Hariyali Bazaar, offering farm-related services and plans to increase their product line to a full-fledged

grocery store. Godrej Group has opened Adhaar, a one-stop shop for farmers, focusing on farm related products.

CONCLUSION:

Indian consumerism, until the early 1990s remained a point of academic discussion due its immense potential. Similarly, access to cheaper credit and increased disposal incomes to enjoy their aspirations for private homes, cars, and a plethora of other consumer durables was a distant dream. This however, has changed dramatically over the past decade. The Indian economy has evidenced an unprecedented resurgence, with the GDP growth averaging close to 6% per annum placing India amongst the fastest growing economies in the world. This growth has meant an empowerment of the consumer. The transition from a protected economy to market driven regime is apparent as suspicions regarding competition from global players dissipate progressively. With domestic industries gaining confidence in their abilities, competition is no longer the deterrent that it had been. The retail landscape of the country is changing at a rapid pace with malls and multiplexes mushrooming in all major cities. In fact, having reached a substantial capacity at Tier-1 locations, the organized retail revolution is now percolating to Tier II and III cities. Retail has clearly been witnessing a transformation from neighborhood-shopping to the concept of malls and family entertainment centers. Entertainment and experience are becoming integral parts of shopping. Global industry analysts have often confirmed the country's potential as one of the most attractive emerging retail estinations in the world.

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