ABSTRACT
As we all know that the SUPERMARKETS nowadays have got cut throat competition. In such a scenario, these Sellers should learn the buying behavior as well as the preference of the customers. The study focused out the major attributes. The SUPERMARKETS as perceived by the consumers on basis of six major factors that the consumers prefer to enter the supermarkets. The factors are availability, variety, service, discounts & price, quality of products and promotion. The knowledge of these factors are helpful to formulate new strategies and attract more and more consumers. The Supermarkets in India also offer other vital items like garments, home furnishings, toiletries, consumer durables, electronics etc. Although, India still lags behind in organized retailing as per international standards but recent trends show that the scope of growth of organized retailing is very high. Moreover, the number of individual retailers is around 12 million in India, which is highest in the world. The Indian Retail sector contributes around 10 - 11% to Gross Domestic Product, amounting to around US $ 180 billion. The growth of the Indian supermarkets can be accredited to the mounting of the Indian service sector. Today, a number of Indian industry houses are diversifying in to the retail sector to exploit the tremendous growth opportunity.

Keywords: Supermarkets; Reliance; Big Bazaar; Subhiksha; Development of Supermarkets in Punjab

INTRODUCTION TO SUPERMARKETS
A supermarket, a great form of the traditional grocery store, is a self-service shop offering a wide variety of food and household products, organized into aisles. It is larger and has a wider selection than a traditional grocery store, but is smaller and more limited in the range of merchandise than a hypermarket or big box store.

The supermarket typically comprises meat, fresh produce, dairy and baked goods aisles, along with shelf space reserved for canned and packaged goods as well as for various non-food items such as kitchenware, household cleaners, pharmacy products and pet supplies. Some supermarkets also sell a variety of other household products that are consumed regularly, such as condoms (where permitted), medicine, and clothes, and some stores sell a much wider range of non-food products: DVDs, sporting equipment, board games, and seasonal items (e.g., Christmas wrapping paper in December).

The Indian supermarkets in PUNJAB mainly retail food items and household goods. The Supermarkets also offer important items like garments, home furnishings, toiletries, consumer durables, electronics etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The objectives of the study are to find out the factors responsible for evolution of supermarkets, to understand the advantages and disadvantages of supermarkets, to study a hypermarket, a large supermarket , a defunct supermarket, to know the Leading supermarkets of Punjab, to find out the
Reasons for diffusion of supermarket, to know the different supermarkets over different cities of Punjab.

DATA COLLECTION AND AREA

Secondary data has been collected from magazines, internet and books in Punjab area.

Evolution of Supermarkets

Retailing in India is highly unorganized, fragmented and predominantly small and family owned business due to poor access to capital, technology and regulations. Emergence of organized food retail chains witnessed after liberalization and entry of corporate. The changing political, demographic and economic features like high economic growth, increasing income, proliferation of brands, consumer awareness favors emergence of food retail stores.

Retailing is undergoing a transition with the rise of super markets. Factors responsible for rapid growth of supermarkets in many countries can be urbanization, rise in income, increase in working women and allowing FDI. The process of evolution started with a shift from fragmented local markets to larger centralized wholesale markets. Organized retailing has occurred more rapidly in processed, dry and packaged foods than fresh food markets.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Supermarkets

The traditional supermarket occupies a large amount of floor space, usually on a single level. It is usually situated near a residential area in order to be convenient to consumers. The basic appeal is the availability of a broad selection of goods under a single roof, at relatively low prices. Other advantages include ease of parking and frequently the convenience of shopping hours that extend into the evening or even 24 hours of day. Supermarkets usually allocate large budgets to advertising, typically through newspapers. They also present elaborate in-shop displays of products. The shops are usually part of corporate chains that own or control (sometimes by franchise) other supermarkets located nearby—even transnational—thus increasing opportunities for economies of scale.

The advantages of supermarkets are:

- Saving in labour cost due to self-service system
- Supermarket has large turnover.
- Reasonable or low prices of goods.
- Low cost of operation.
- Freedom of selection.
- Shopping is very easy and quick.
- Due to adequate parking space, shopping becomes easy and pleasing activity rather than boredom.
- High degree of efficiency due to elimination of service.
- High margin of profit to organisers.
- Advantages of large scale operations.

The disadvantages of supermarkets are:

- Supermarket requires huge financial resources.
- It is normally situated at a long distance from the residential localities.
- There is lack of personal attention.
• Supermarket does not provide various services such as free home delivery, personal guidance, and credit facility and after sale service.

• It faces the problem of coordinating activities of various sections of the market.

• It requires large and extensive premises.

• Goods which require explanation by salesmen cannot be sold in such markets.

**Formats of Organised Supermarkets**

Supercentre-Large shopping area, sells an assortment of food and non-food items (E.g. Family Mart 100,000sq)

Hyper markets-These are similar to the supermarkets found in USA and Europe. Wide range and depth of products (E.g. Big Bazaar, Giant)

Large supermarkets (3,500-5,000 sq.ft) -Large, self service stores. Carry a complete line of food products and convenience items (Food World, Nilgiris, Reliance Fresh)

Discount shopping store-sell their products below MRP (e.g. BEST PRICE, 1-9 per cent below MRP)

**A Large Supermarket- Reliance Fresh in Detail**

Retail business of RELIANCE INDUSTRIES OF INDIA LIMITED headed by MUKESH AMBANI. Reliance plans to invest in excess of 250 billion in the next 4 years in their retail division. The company already has 1691 Reliance Fresh outlets across the country. These stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables, staples, groceries, fresh juice, bars and dairy products. A typical Reliance Fresh store is approximately 3000–4000 square feet and caters to a catchment area of 2–3 km.

After launch, in a dramatic shift in its positioning and mainly due to the circumstances prevailing in UP, West Bengal and Orissa, it was mentioned in news dailies that Reliance Retail is moving out of stocking fruits and vegetables. Reliance Retail has decided to minimise its exposure in the fruit and vegetable business.

When the first Reliance Fresh store opened in HYDERABAD last October not only did the company say the store’s main focus would be fresh produce like fruits and vegetables at a much lower price, but also spoke at length about its “FARM-TO-FORK” theory. The idea the company spoke about was to source from farmers and sell directly to the consumer, removing middlemen out of the way.

**Controversies against Reliance Fresh**

Recently their stores in JHARKAND faced the ire of mobs of local vegetable vendors. They vandalized and attacked the stores claiming that they were stealing their livelihoods.

IN AUGUST 2007, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati ordered to close 10 new stores keeping view of Law & order situation.

In November 2007, Reliance Fresh stores were attacked by Bharatiya Janshakti Party supporters headed by Uma Bharti

**A Hypermarket- Big Bazaar**

• Big Bazaar is the largest hypermarket chain in India

• Strategy = 3-C Theory

According to KISHORE BIYANI'S 3-C theory, CHANGE AND CONFIDENCE among the population is leading to rise in CONSUMPTION, through better employment and income.

On the occasion of completion of ten (10) years in the Indian retail industry (in 2011) Big Bazaar came up with a new logo for the company with a tag line that says: 'Naye India Ka Bazaar' (Market for New
India. This replaces the earlier tag line: 'Isse Sasta Aur accha Kahin Nahin' (Nothing is Cheaper and good than Here).

**Big Bazaar Has Divided India Into Three Segments**

- **India one:** The Consuming class which includes upper middle and lower middle class (14% of India's population).
- **India two:** The Serving class which includes people like drivers, household helps, office persons, liftmen, and washer men (55% of India's population)
- **India three:** The Struggling class (31% of India's population)

**Schemes and Innovations Launched By Big Bazaar**

1. *Wednesday Bazaar* promoted as 'Hafte Ka Sabse Sasta Din'
2. Initiated in January 2007, the idea behind this scheme was to draw customers to stores on Wednesdays, the day when consumer presence is usually less.
3. *Maha Bachat*
4. The concept of 'Maha Bachat' (Mega Saving) was introduced in the year 2006 as a single day campaign with promotional offers across the company outlets.
5. *The Great Exchange Offer*
6. Introduced on 12 February 2009, 'The Great Exchange Offer' allows customers to exchange their old goods for Big Bazaar coupons. The coupons can be redeemed later for buying brand new goods from Big Bazaar outlets across the nation.

**A Defunct Market: Subhiksha**

Subhiksha was started in 1997 by Mr. R. Subramanian and it has grown to become one of India's biggest supermarket chains. Subhiksha was an organization that was vibrant, managed by professionals and also multi-location. The stores of Subhiksha were spread across different states like Gujarat, Punjab, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. From 150 stores in Sept 2006 all of which were in Tamil Nadu the company grew rapidly to over 1600 stores by Sept 2008 across the country selling groceries, fruits, vegetables, medicines and mobile phones. It began operations in 1997, and was closed down in 2009 owing to financial mismanagement and a severe cash crunch.

**Reasons for Failure of Subhiksha**

- Expanding the number of stores rapidly without sufficient funds in hand.
- Expansion of Stores without adequate system control and IT Support.
- Government Intervention.
- Lack of strong HR policy and Staff.
- Strong Competition.

**Retail Strategy 2c's Model**

- Critically of cost
- Convenience of buying
There are various factors which are specifically considered by consumers to visit the particular store like availability and variety of products in the store, service provided by the storekeepers, ambience/show of stores, discount or fair price, quality of food and grocery items and promotion and advertising.

Top 10 Reasons for Diffusion of Supermarkets

- Neglect
- Disaster
- Access to capital
- Overhead
- Poor sales
- Management problems
- Economic factors
- Overexpansion
- Customer satisfaction
- Fraud

Supermarkets over the Parts of Punjab

1. Jalandhar - Big Bazaar, Vishal Mega Mart, Ritu Wears Big Life, More, Easyday, Metro, Walmart, Reliance Fresh
2. Ludhiana - Big Bazaar, Reliance Fresh, Walmart, Metro, Easyday, More
3. Patiala - City Center, Reliance Fresh, More, Easyday
4. Amritsar - Vishal Mega Mart, Ritu Wears Big Life, Reliance Fresh, Easyday, 6ten Store
5. Pathankot - City Center
6. Hoshiarpur - More, Reliance Fresh
**Number of Supermarkets Over Punjab B**

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**Source:** Google Maps

**Updates**

On 16th January 2014 Reliance Market - A Wholesale store by Reliance is opened for registered business owners.

Jalandhar has already Bharti Walmart's Joint venture "Best Price" at Paragpur Village, and Metro Wholesale Store at Pathankot Byepass. Now the main competition will be between "Best Price" and "Reliance Market" because of their common location.

Big Bazaar has launched a project called Seva in its Rajaji Nagar store in Bangalore, where it has grinders for wheat, soya or ragi and help make multi-grain floor. It also helps shoppers cut vegetables at no extra cost. The store also has counters that help shoppers with payment of utility bills. Big Bazaar plans to expand these services across its 166 stores.

In addition, RELIANCE RETAIL has entered into an alliance with Apple for setting up a chain of Apple Specialty Stores branded as iStore, starting with Bangalore.

**CONCLUSION**

Today’s customer wants the astonishing experience of overall shopping in these stores. In Punjab, it had been a new experience for the people who are from the nearby small towns since 2010. Day-by-day the consumers are in continuous practice of purchasing variety of items from supermarkets. The consumers of Punjab are also influenced by the different attractions factors. The sellers have also changed their strategies to get in more and more customers. They need to make more changes for the customers who are not frequently visiting the stores.

Thus, the consumers like to move up to such stores for the entertainment or to get rid of their stressful life. These stores should also focus on improving the convenience of the consumers. They should try to attract new consumers and also retain the existing ones by adopting promotional offers.

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