



CHAPTER X

Summing Up

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The problem for the research chosen relates to rampant adulteration of food articles. The geographical area is confined to Kolhapur district and among the food articles subjected to adulteration is in respect of groundnut oil which is the major food article of the population. In the recent past there have been increasing incidents of food adulteration and cases filed against them. Therefore, an attempt is being made to investigate into the causes of unchecked adulteration and also to examine an adequacy or otherwise of the existing institutional measures and of the administrative set up to implement the provisions of the (PFA) Prevention of Food Adulteration Act of 1954.

In the very first chapter various definitions of food adulteration as envisaged in the PFA Act have been discussed and implications thereof have been stated. There are different trade practices amounting to food adulterations which are being covered under the act. Under the definitions the scope of adulteration has been widened hence the practices indulged in by trading community to cheat the consumers have been brought under the purview of the act. For example when the trader supplies the product to the buyer other than ^(the buyer) he demands

amounts to an act of adulteration. Even the traders mix up the principal food article with substitute food articles of inferior/lower quality and sells it to the consumers can be treated as adulteration under the provisions of act. The adulteration of groundnut oil has been described in the first chapter by taking into account the definition of adulteration. The detailed discussion as to adulteration in ^{the} very first chapter aims at presenting the nature and scope of food adulteration with special reference to ground nut oil adulteration.

The trend of adulteration in developing countries has been on the rise since the beginning of economic development and diversification of the economies. The two basic factors that motivate the traders in essential commodities to adulterate are : (1) frequent short falls in the production of those essential commodities and (2) to earn wind-fall profits by taking advantage of short falls of those commodities.

Chapter two relates to hypothesis, objectives, methodology and the sources of the data. The hypothesis tested in research is the adulteration of food articles in general and of groundnut oil in particular has tended to become common feature of the market of edible oils and other food articles. Moverover the tendency towards adulteration of essential articles has remained almost unchecked.

The objectives of the research have been enumerated in the same chapter. Those are briefly to explore and locate the possibilities of adulterations to analyse the factors that induce the manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers to adulterate food articles to describe both economic and social effects of food adulteration on the population, and to suggest remedial measures to keep down the tendency towards adulteration and further to evaluate the success of the implementation of PFA Act.

The method used is a field inquiry in connection with the sources of adulteration and impact of administration of PFA Act on food adulteration. The inquiry has been restricted to Kolhapur district and adulteration of groundnut oil in the district. Again to assess the impact of PFA act, the records for 5 years of the FDA department have been examined (1988-1992).

The sources of data tapped are primary and secondary. Secondary sources include, the seasonal crop reports from agricultural department, government of Maharashtra (PDS), Public Distribution System and the monthly arrivals of edible oils from outside states, from Kolhapur Municipal Corporation (KMC).

Chapter three is mainly concerned with an examination of factors behind adulteration. The factors considered are mainly of economic nature. First the imbalance between demand for and supply of the product creates a room for

adulteration. The price inelasticity of demand create more and more opportunities for the trading community to adulterate essential food stuff. The strong profit motive of the traders in essential commodities strengthens the trend of adulteration in the scarcity conditions.

Chapter four has been devoted for the analysis of the supply position of edible oils by considering area and production of edible oil seeds in Kolhapur district and the contiguous districts of Satara and Sangli. The statistics relating to those two areas and output of edible oil seeds reveals that the domestic supply of edible oils in the district falls short of its requirements. The area under edible oil seeds has increased marginally over the period but the output has decreased. In view of the limited cultivated land the increase in per hectare yield of oil seed crop will be the solution to bridge the demand-supply gap which is the source of adulteration.

In Chapter five an attempt is made to examine the supply conditions in respect of edible oils in Kolhapur district. The sources of supply are (1) domestic supply, (2) supply from nearby states, and (3) the supply of public distribution system. The three constitute the total supply in the district. Since domestic supply being inadequate and the supply of edible oils through PDS being irregular, untimely and too insufficient quantities, the reliance on supply from nearby states has been increasing in the recent past years.

Chapter Six which forms the crux of the research deals with the quantitative analysis of the samples drawn, reported adulteration and cases launched against adulterations. The samples drawn are multi levels viz. corporation area, municipal area and rural area which are the divisions of the Kolhapur district of the FDA. Again at each level the samples are divided into three levels of trading viz. retail wholesale and manufacturing. Over the period of five years (1988-92) the total number of samples drawn by FDA vary from year to year and there has been a declining trend during the latter part of the period. Since the samples drawn are spread over different layers of trading and administrative divisions, the uniform trend of samples drawn at various levels of trading and also at the administrative divisions are not found. In the study of samples drawn, we find that there is a concentration at wholesale level and that too in the corporation area. It seems that the FDA personnels have more inclination to collect the samples of groundnut oil from the wholesalers located in the Kolhapur city which coincides with the corporation division of the FDA. The reasoning behind this is that, the wholesalers are more accessible to the FDA personnels as the head quarters of the FDA being Kolhapur city proper. The another reasoning behind this is that, once the adulteration is checked at the wholesale level the possibilities of adulteration are remote at the retail level. The number of samples drawn at retail level is relatively small on account of the complicated and lengthy procedure to be

followed, before launching the cases against adulterations. The divisionwise analysis also shows that the number of samples drawn in the municipal areas is comparatively very small. This is on account of the dependence on LHAs. who are least interested in the administration of the PFA act. as they are overburdened with their principal work and also they are not from the department itself. Out of the total samples drawn by the FDA the reported adulterations are very few. The number of cases launched against the reported adulteration too is negligible. However, during the current half year 1992-93 though the total number of samples drawn by FDA is small but the number of reported adulterations and cases launched against them are relatively high. This better qualitative performance took place on account of the new Commissioner S.S. Puri who gave incentive to food inspectors to work hard in detecting the adulterated food items rather than mere collection of samples. At manufacturing level we found the samples drawn are less and also reported adulteration are less mainly on account of the manufacturers/mill owners are conscious about the quality products. Further adulteration if any could easily be located at the manufacturing level. When we talk about Kolhapur manufacturers of groundnut oil it should be noted that they get premium price for their product, so they are not interested in adulterating.

We also drew 22 samples out of which only four samples are reported as adulterated. The rest of the samples

conformed to the standards of the PFA Act. After that we made an experiment by mixing 20% of substitute oils with groundnut oil and tested them in the laboratory. These mixtures conform to the standards of PFA act. Only one sample failed to conform to the standards. Again we made an experiment by mixing 50% substitute oils with groundnut oil and tested them in the laboratory. The results show that only one sample conform to the standards only rest did not. We did such experiment because, there is a large range between the minimum and maximum limits of parametric values laid down by the PFA act. Therefore, the chances are more for adulterating the edible oils which are likely to remain undetected. The hypothesis with which we started is accepted with sufficient evidence as to adulterated edible oils sold in the market though they are not adulterated according to PFA act.

The Chapter Ninth is devoted to making suggestions for keeping down adulteration of food articles in general and groundnut oil in particular. The suggestions made in this chapter are in the context of the empirical study of groundnut oil adulteration in Kolhapur district. The measures suggested could be divided into two categories, preventive and positive measures. In the preventive category the measures relate to strict enforcement of PFA Act. Under this head the measure is concerned with reduction of range between maximum and minimum parametric values. The PFA Act

itself is not yet settled and therefore, there is flexibility in the interpretation of the provisions of the act. Because of this a number of adulterated cases have been acquitted. Therefore, every word used in the PFA Act should have definite meaning. This will enable the FDA department to enforce the act very strictly. In the category of positive measures the suggestions have been made to expand the output of edible oil seeds wither by increasing the area under edible oil seeds or increasing the productivity of land through new technology. ~~The~~ another measure relates to the distribution of edible oils through PDS and timely releases of edible oils from the buffer stock. The resistance of the consumers should be built up through educating the public about the adulteration and its bad effects on the health of the human beings. The code of conduct as to adulterations should be imposed by the voluntary organisations of traders. To minimise the scope for adulteration the commodities should be bought and sold in packages with brand names.

Provided these measures are accepted and are given effect to, there is no doubt that, the adulteration would be reduced or kept at down.