

Consumer Behaviour in Small Urban Service Centres in Mountainous Region of Sri Lanka: A Case Study in Delthota Service Centre in Kandy District of Sri Lanka

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Consumer behaviour is defined as “the decision process and physical activity which individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services”. Consumer behaviour is a kind of geographical phenomena which may vary from place to place and time to time. Accordingly, as geographers, spatiotemporal changes and patterns are studied by considering location as urban, rural and both. The urban service centres in mountainous regions of Sri Lanka show clear speciality in terms of the consumer behaviour. By aiming to study the consumer behaviour in a service centre with urban characteristics and to identify the consumer periphery of the selected service centre, this study focuses on Delthota service centre in Kandy District of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, 54 consumers were interviewed purposively for the convenience of the study. Questionnaire method and informal discussion method were used in collecting the data. As findings, more than half of the people used Delthota service centre, mainly for commercial purposes while other purposes stand respectively such as financial, occupational, health and educational. Among the consumers, 35% purchase their goods weekly and another 35% monthly while only 24% purchase daily. When purchasing goods, 65% of the respondents use cash while other 35% taking goods on debt. Debt settling period is mainly on monthly basis and few others weekly. It is evident that this kind of consumer behaviour is mainly determined by the low wage employment and the livelihood activities such as estate sector employment and small scale agriculture. Radius of the consumer periphery area of the service centre was defined as less than 10km based on the consumer locations. It is identified that the significance of this service centre as a growing commercial cluster which provides urban services as well to the periphery.

Key words: *Consumer behaviour, Consumer periphery, Mountainous region, Sri Lanka, Urban service centre*