

Awareness and Satisfaction in E-Filing of GST: Insights from Dealers

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ABSTRACT

A pivotal transformation in the Indian indirect tax landscape came with the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The GST represents an integrated tax system applicable to the supply of both goods and services. Operating as a value-added tax, it enables suppliers to offset their tax liability by crediting the tax paid on inputs, including materials and services procured. Notably, the GST applies across all stages of the supply chain, encompassing manufacturing through to retail, thereby streamlining taxation processes and ensuring uniformity throughout the supply chain. The study focuses on the implementation and filing of GST within the state of Kerala, with a particular emphasis on dealers in Thiruvananthapuram district. It aims to explore both the problems faced by dealers while practicing GST system and their level of satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Goods and Services Tax, Awareness towards E filing, Satisfaction of E filers

INTRODUCTION

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) operates by levying taxes at different points of supply for goods and services. Sellers can claim Input Tax Credit (ITC) at the time of sale or service provision, which refers to the GST previously paid on input materials or services. Unlike the State-centric VAT system, GST operates nationally, encompassing both goods and services taxation. Previously, India's ITC concept lacked seamlessness, with Central VAT applicable only up to manufacturing and State VAT confined to individual states, preventing cross adjustments of ITC. Consequently, manufacturers and registered dealers missed out on comprehensive ITC benefits. However, with the implementation of GST, various central taxes have been subsumed, integrating taxes on goods and services to enable ITC benefits throughout the production and distribution chain. This integration captures value addition, marking a significant improvement over the previous disjointed tax regime. GST stands as a justified and welcome advancement from the outdated system.

Businesses, particularly taxpayers, express apprehension towards GST due to several factors. These include the perceived complexity surrounding billing, price determination, return filing, and the need for infrastructure upgrades. The technical aspect of GST processing relies on the Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN), a centralized portal, which is unfamiliar to the general populace. Additionally, there exists a significant gap between the demand for skilled personnel and their availability to navigate

GST processes effectively. The application of the Reverse Charging Mechanism (RCM) further compounds concerns, particularly regarding the tax implications of purchasing inputs from unregistered dealers, leading to ambiguity and potentially increasing the tax burden. Clarifications on RCM are yet to provide the necessary clarity to address these issues.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Maheshwari and Mani (2019) suggested making an effort to examine customers' understanding of and perceptions of the efficacy of the GST rollout in India. The questionnaire method was employed in this study to gather primary data. The North Indian regions of Delhi, Noida, and Ghaziabad were the study's locations. 200 customers from the NCR Region, including working class people, professionals, businesspeople, and military personnel, made up the sample size. The Kruskal Wallis test, Spearman's correlation, descriptive analysis, and Mann-Whitney U test were used to analyze the degree of awareness regarding the implementation of the GST

Joseph and Jacob (2018) conducted a study to give a better understanding of the factors influencing MSME compliance with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, enabling both MSMEs and policy makers to put improved tax compliance strategies into practice. The conceptual model put out in this paper can be empirically tested and validated. In order to determine whether MSME compliance with the Goods and Services Tax system, the researchers looked at five aspects: taxpayer awareness, tax knowledge, service quality,

satisfaction, and demographic factors. To determine the efficacy of taxpayer awareness, tax knowledge, and tax compliance with reference to MSME's, they generated hypotheses.

Upashi(2017) investigated the impact of India's goods and services tax on various industries. Descriptive and exploratory research designs were used in this study. The sample data was gathered from websites, research papers, and newspapers, among other secondary sources. The benefits of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) were examined in this study along with its effects on many industries, including banking, insurance, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, real estate, consumer durables, oil and gas, cement, telecom, real estate, airlines, and gold.

Jayakumar and Beemabai (2017) presented a study on tax reforms in India. The major goals were to determine the amount of knowledge about GST, its characteristics and mechanisms, and the level of awareness regarding GST implementation. This study used the explanatory research method. This study gathered the necessary secondary data from journals, articles, newspapers, and magazines, and a descriptive research design was used to analyze the data. The researchers identified several key areas of influence for businesses, including technology adoption, access to the pan-India market, cash flow planning, easier compliance, branch / supply chain re-engineering, pricing strategy, and re-negative contracts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In order to ensure a seamless transition, it is important to properly assess the challenges associated with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a revolutionary tax reform in India's history. In terms of its potential for growth and development, GST is essential, but a hurried introduction a nation like India's progress will be hampered by inadequate and delayed preparedness.

The implementation of GST can bring either costs or benefits depending on the specific needs and structure of the economy, as well as the viewpoint of each state. To understand the problems and potential of GST for Kerala, this study is crucial. Reviewing existing literature reveals several issues like Federal Structure, complexity, amendments, Lack of Understanding, GST network etc. Through this study, identifying various problem faced by the dealers while practicing GST system and satisfaction level of dealers.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In the current landscape, multiple taxes with varying rates, often tailored to industries' health and buoyancy, prevail. GST aims to streamline this complex structure into a single tax law

with five tax slabs. However, this consolidation affects different industries in distinct ways. While the intention is to simplify the tax regime by encompassing numerous indirect taxes, certain indirect taxes remain excluded, allowing states to impose them alongside GST. Thus, a comprehensive study is necessary to assess whether these omitted taxes and items could undermine the success and envisioned goals of GST in India. Furthermore, post-GST implementation, the compliance and efficacy of the system hinge significantly on traders falling under exempted categories and exemption threshold limits. Additionally, the dissolution of state boundaries to facilitate seamless flow of goods and services may necessitate a reevaluation of the logistics framework for trade and services. Therefore, thorough research is essential to identify and address the gaps within the GST framework.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To measure the awareness and satisfaction level of E filers
- To investigate the problems faced by the respondents during E filing

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H01: The respondents' opinion regarding awareness and satisfaction level of E filing is equal to average.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature since it details the viewpoints of a specific group on the electronic filing of GST returns. The study has been limited to the Thiruvananthapuram district due to the study's advantageous location and timing constraints. The population consists of the dealers in Thiruvananthapuram district who take GST registration and filing GST return. Eighty dealers are chosen and using the Purposive Sampling technique. People who are willing to fill out the questionnaire, are available, and have adequate time are the ones from whom data is gathered. Two types of data have been used in the study: primary and secondary. Questionnaires are used to help collect primary data. We gather secondary data from publications like journals and magazines. Statistical tools such as one sample t-Test and descriptive analysis were used to analyze the data that was gathered.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study may be impacted by the respondents' personal prejudice.
- ❖ The Thiruvananthapuram district was the sole location of the survey. As a result, the study's findings might not apply to different contexts.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Demographic factors	Categories	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 30 years	12	15
	30-45 years	38	47.5
	Above 45 Years	30	37.5
Gender	Male	55	68.75
	Female	25	31.25
Taxpayer	Normal	52	65
	Composition	28	35

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-45

years. Majority of the respondents are Males and major portion of surveyed sample are from Normal taxpayers.

Table 2: Awareness level of GST

Statements	Mean	SD	T value	P Value
Official website of GST department and services offered by the site	2.7750	.42022	16.496	<.001**
Familiar with the various GSTR (GST Return Forms)	2.2125	.56689	3.353	.001**
Knowledge of using GSTR wherever applicable	2.2125	.63033	3.015	.003**
Computations regarding GST Return and ITC	1.9875	.78746	-.142	.887
E filing services	2.0625	.86190	.649	.518

(Source: Primary Data)

** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=2)

Interpretation

With the exception of 4th and 5th, all of the assertions' P values being less than 0.01 means that the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% significance level. Therefore, the opinion of the respondents in these statements cannot be considered

average. It is clear from the mean ratings that the opinions are above average. It demonstrates that the responders are aware of the several GSTR forms and the official website. Additionally, they are knowledgeable enough to choose the appropriate GSTR form.

Table 3: Statements Relating to E Filing Procedure and Easiness

Statements	Mean	SD	T value	P value
The registration process is simple	4.3000	.53722	21.644	<.001**
It is easy to fill the details in GSTR forms	4.3125	.56465	20.791	<.001**
It offers various services which makes E filing easier such as calculation of tax liability at a single click	4.2625	.79147	14.267	<.001**

(Source: Primary Data)

** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

Interpretation

At the 1% level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected because the P values for each of the claims are less than 0.01. Therefore, the opinion of the respondents in these statements

cannot be considered average. It is clear from the mean ratings that the opinions are above average. As a result, all respondents concur that the electronic filing process is straightforward and easy.

Table 4: Showing Satisfaction on Statements Relating to Security Aspect

Statements	Mean	SD	T value	P value
The website has the mechanism to ensure the safe transmission of user's information.	4.3875	.68425	18.137	<.001**
The website has sufficient technical capacity to ensure that the data entered cannot be modified by hackers.	4.2125	.72380	14.983	<.001**
The website shows concern for privacy of its users.	4.1125	.63632	15.638	<.001**

(Source: Primary Data) ** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

“Awareness and Satisfaction in E-Filing of GST: Insights from Dealers”

Interpretation It is evident from the preceding table that the P values for each of the three claims are less than 0.01. As a result, at the 1% significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. It indicates that opinions on the security aspect of

electronic filing differ from one another. It is clear from examining the mean scores that the respondents' viewpoints are above average.

Table 5: Showing Satisfaction on Statements Relating to Website Accessibility and User Friendliness

Statements	Mean	SD	T value	P value
It is easy to navigate within the site	4.1000	.49299	19.957	<.001**
The website is visually appealing	3.7125 .	.65976	9.659	<.001**
The website is ready to answer all the queries of the user	3.6500	.67693	8.589	<.001**

(Source: Primary Data)

** indicate significance at 1% level (test value=3)

Interpretation

Opinions on website usability and accessibility are displayed in the above table. The P values are clearly less than 0.01 in these figures, and as a result, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 1% significance level. Therefore, the responses from the

respondents to these statements do not match the average. It can be inferred that respondents are content with website accessibility and user friendliness because the mean values of all these assertions are higher than normal.

Table 6: Problems Faced by the Respondents during E Filing

Problem Faced	Weighted Total	Weighted Average	Rank
Lack of experience and knowledge to do E filing	254	16.93	2
Network problem during peak hours	297	19.8	1
Exact procedure is not specified by the income tax department	186	12.4	5
Website is not accessible always	249	16.6	3
Unsuccessful attempt to E Filing or delay in execution	214	14.26	4

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

By applying the weighted average technique to get the ranks for each variable, the issues that respondents faced are analyzed. From this, it is clear that the respondents' most pertinent problem is a network issue. Another issue preventing simple GST return filing is a lack of experience. The third key issue is non-accessibility, which is followed by execution delays and a lack of precise protocol, in that order.

- Using weighted average approach, the issues that the respondents encountered with electronic filing are assessed. The primary problem with online GST return filing is thought to be a network issue. Using the weighted average technique, inexperience and inaccessibility are placed second and third, respectively.

FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents, 47.5 percent are between the ages of 30 and 45.
- Male make up 68.75% of the group questioned.
- The majority of responders (65%) are regular taxpayers.
- Every respondent is sufficiently informed about the official website and the different GSTR forms. However, the majority does not have complete faith in tax calculations.
- The majority of respondents said that the E filing process is straightforward and uncomplicated.
- The majority of respondents concur that filing taxes online is secure and safe.
- The respondents' perceptions of the usability and accessibility of websites are above average.

CONCLUSION

It may be inferred from the study of dealers that the majority of them are aware of the fundamentals of electronic filing. Their level of knowledge regarding numerous factors is average; yet, they lack confidence in their ability to calculate taxes and handle them. The majority of respondents are happy with the existing electronic filing system, according to their opinions regarding satisfaction levels. It should be mentioned, though, that they have encountered numerous difficulties in the process. Even if the current system is simple, the adoption of E-filing is being threatened by the subpar network. Insufficient experience is another significant problem that can be resolved with the right training.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

One author conceptualized the study, conducted data collection and analysis, and drafted the manuscript, while the other provided expertise in the subject matter, contributed to

conceptualization and offered critical insights throughout the writing process. Both authors approved the final version and are accountable for the integrity of the work.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

This is to bring to your kind consideration that this research work has no conflicts of interest.

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