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**A CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY ON EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE LABEL BRANDS IN INDIAN ORGANIZED RETAIL****AJAY SINGH****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****JAYPEE BUSINESS SCHOOL****A CONSTITUENT OF JAYPEE INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY****NOIDA****DR. NRIPENDRA SINGH****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****JAYPEE BUSINESS SCHOOL****A CONSTITUENT OF JAYPEE INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY****NOIDA****ABSTRACT**

Private Labels are taking the world by storm and are also flooding the Indian markets. This research traces the origin and evolution of the retail industry along with private labels in Europe and North America, and ends with a note on the evolution of private labels in India. The emergence of retailing in India in an organized format has made private labels familiar among Indians. Go to Shoppers' Stop outlet and you will find a brand called 'STOP' which is Shoppers' Stop's own brand. Similar is the case of the 'Westside' brand of Westside from the house of Tata's. In Pantaloon's food retail outlet, 'Food Bazaar' and the RPG counterpart, 'Food World,' one can find packets of groceries marked with a 'Food Bazaar' or a 'Food World' stamp. The growth of private labels is quite impressive in food and grocery segment, in spite of presence of leading national manufacturers brand in most of the categories. Though, initially private labels were considered as cheap alternative and therefore visible in copycat and generic categories. But today they are part of well defined retail mix strategy, therefore are developed in value innovators and premium category by most retailers for profit maximization and customer loyalty. This paper, based on the analysis of reports of various consultants, expert opinions an available literature, highlights the evolution of Private Label brand in India. A chronological order study has been made from the earlier researches about the various ways in which PLB (Private Label Brand) and NB(National Brand) Image were understood and defined. An attempt was then made to distinguish between PLB and NB and how retailer have designed their Commercial objectives to launch Private Label brand in organized retail.

**KEYWORDS**

Private Brands, Indian Retail, Organized retail, Private Labels, Store brands, Store Image, Customer Loyalty, PLMA, Grocery Retail.

**INTRODUCTION**

There has been a significant increase in Private Label brands in recent years worldwide. Private Labels are growing faster than manufacturer's brands. They are more popular today than at any time before. Private Labels have gained an increased market penetration and are growing at a rapid rate. A Private Label is defined as 'the products retailers sell under their own names'. According to the Private Label Manufacturers' Association (PLMA), "Private Label products encompass all merchandise sold under a retailer's brand. That brand can be the retailer's own name or a name created exclusively by that retailer". The term retailer's own-brand is often used interchangeably with private label, own-label, retailer brand or store brand. Private labels have come a long way over the past three decades. In the past, Private labels were a cheap, low-price alternative to manufacturer brands but today, private labels have taken on a premium brands image. They are no longer seen as just cheap and poor quality products bought by less affluent customers but rather they Endeavour to be an alternative option of value or quality to manufacturer's brands. Retailer's brands are to be found next to national brands in every category.

**MARKET REVIEW OF PRIVATE LABELS IN INDIA**

Private label is still an emerging concept in the Indian Environment and there is an increasing acceptance of private labels in India. According to a Global Private Label consumer study by AC Nielsen, 56% of their survey respondents in India considered private labels to be good alternatives to manufactures brands. A study done by the AC Nielson (2006) named "Asia pacific Retail and shopper trend", stated that, although private labels are a fairly recent phenomenon in India, it is a trend that is catching up very fast. According to this report, out of a total number of shoppers who shop in supermarkets or hypermarkets in India, 69% are aware of private labels.

The AC Nielson study forecasts the launch of a good number of private labels in India; it revealed that an Indian spends \$50 on food, groceries and personal care items every month of which, 42% is entirely spent on fresh foods. Management consultancy, A.T. Kearney has placed India third on its global Retail Development Index in 2010. The retail market is about \$410 billion, but 5% of sales are through organized retailing. Thus, with the growth of organized retail in India, private label are also growing. Retailers have launched a wide range of private labels and are gaining acceptance in categories beyond the staple.

According to Image Retail Report 2009, as quoted in the "Indian Retail: Time to Change Lanes" by KPMG, Private label brands constitute 10-12% of organized retail in India. Of this, the highest penetration of private label brands is by Trent at 90%, following by Reliance at 80% and Pantaloon's at 75%. Big retailers such as Shoppers stop and Spencer's have a penetration of 20% and 10% respectively. Private label are spreading its focus from wheat flour, masalas and papads to high technology electronic gadgets like mobiles, apparels, furniture etc. With the growth of private label brands, national brands are grabbing the share from the national brands. Private labels are not only low priced but are also high on quality and for the retailers its high margin.

Private labels are growing faster than the manufacturer's brands. They have studies the taste and preference of customers and improved on quality & offer a value proposition to the customers. As compare to National brands, Private labels give higher margin and greater bargaining power to retailers and hence retailers promote more private labels. Even some private labels have positioned themselves as premium brands; they have started their own outlets.

**METHODOLOGY**

To write this conceptual paper, around 70 research papers have been reviewed, out of which 38 research papers were found useful for the study. The research articles have been collected mostly from Emerald, ABI/INFORM and other sources. Books and electronic resources have also been widely used for the research. A chronological order has been made from the earlier researches about the various ways in which PLB and NB were understood and defined. The findings have been presented in the table I in this article. An attempt was then made to distinguish between PLB and NB and how retailer have designed their Commercial objectives to launch Private Label brand in organized retail

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Private labels of retail stores in India are on the growth path. With the emerging private players, national brand manufacturers will have to compete with the competition within the sales promotion and distribution channel, which needed to change in marketing strategy, locally, the threat of the private label in a store. The phenomenon also offers national brand manufacturers the opportunity to efficiently service the production needs of the private labels. The main objectives of all such studies had been to identify the effect of different variables such as Price, Quality, Brand, Store Image & Store loyalty on PLB purchase. So that market segment could be identified. Another objective is to review the effect of demographical/ psychological factors on PLB purchase. The chronological chart of studies on different factors has been presented in Table 1 as shown below.

TABLE - I: CHRONOLOGICAL CHART OF THE STUDIES ON PLB AND NB

Sno	Year	Name of Author	Findings
<b>PRICE</b>			
1	1995	Diane Halstead and Cheryl B. Ward	The absence to date of any changes in retail prices or margins suggests that the wheel of retailing hypothesis as applied to private label brands cannot be completely supported. No clear trends across product categories can be noted at this time.
2	2005	Kristof De Wulf, Gaby Odekerken-Schroder, Frank Goedertier and Gino Van Ossel	The results confirm the common belief that private label products can offer the same or even better quality than national brands, but at a lower price.
3	2006	Jorge Tarzija'n	The analysis allows for different degrees of competition in the retail market, and for linear and non-linear pricing.
4	2007	Hsu Huei-Chen	Price consciousness is very important to choose domestic PLB across all purchase situations, whereas the other types of factors have differential impact. It seems that Chinese respondents get used to surf on the internet, that is, their perceived risk is not low, which is different from other literatures studied.
5	2009	Rainer Olbrich and Gundula Grewe	The empirical results indicate that, in all studied outlet formats, there is evidence of decreasing product variety and increasing prices over time. Moreover, the results show that the turnover in the supermarkets and especially in the hypermarkets is in decline. A positive turnover trend can only be found in the discount stores.
6	2010	Robert A. Lupton, David R. Rawlinson and Lori A. Braunstein	US consumers indicate that price has a greater effect on the decision to purchase when compared with Chinese consumers. The data seem to indicate that Chinese consumers believe that private label food products may be of inferior quality compared to manufacture brands. Additionally, the data indicate indirectly that Chinese respondents either do not have an understanding of private label products, or that private label names are not recognized as such.
7	2011	Michael S. Pepe, Russell Abratt, Paul Dion	The findings show that overall dollars spent by loyal customers significantly impacted overall profitability.
<b>QUALITY</b>			
1	1996	Paul Richardson, Arun K. Jain and Alan Dick	Consistent with the hypothesis, study participants rated the overall quality of the sampled private label product (i.e. grape jelly) to be much lower at the aesthetically unattractive branch than at the aesthetically attractive branch of the chain
2	2009	Mark S. Glynn&Shaoshan Chen	The results indicate that quality variability, price consciousness, price-quality association and brand loyalty influence consumer proneness to buy PLBs.
3	2012	Zhiliang Zhou, Yajiong Xue, Qineng Ping	A total of 45 percent of the variance in private label drug purchase intention is explained by the five predictors. Price advantage, store trust, manufacturer trust, and drug quality are all significantly related to purchase intention, whereas appearance is not. None of the control variables (age, gender, health literacy, and income) has a significant relationship with purchase intention. Product quality and service quality are significant predictors of store trust, accounting for 44 percent of its variance.
<b>BRAND</b>			
1	2000	Rajiv Vaidyanathan & Praveen Aggarwal	Result showed that a private brand with a name brand ingredient was evaluated more positively. However, the evaluation of the national brand was not diminished by this association.
2	2005	Astrid Jonas and Jutta Roosen	Interviewed processors of the 62.7 per cent produce organic PL. Retailers sell organic PLs, because they care about "food safety", "retail as a brand" and "health", hoping to reach new customers. Requests for entry fees, investment grants and equipment allowances are less important for processors of organic PLs than for those not producing PLs. However, PL producers have to meet other conditions imposed by retailers and feel slight more dependent on few customers.
3	2007	Julian Ming-Sung Cheng, Lily Shui-Lien Chen, Julia Ying-Chao Lin, Edward Shih-Tse Wang,	The findings revealed that on the whole national brands were perceived as significantly superior to international private labels, while international private labels were perceived as being superior to local private labels in terms of all perceptions except price perception.
4	2007	Mo'nica Go'mez, Natalia Rubio	On average, manufacturers consider that retailers are favoring unequal competition terms between manufacturer and store brands through better merchandising management for their own brands. Nevertheless, different groups of manufacturers are identified according to their perceptions.
5	2008	Magnus Hultman, Robert A. Opoku, Quang Thong Bui	The perceived advantages of private labels are connected to their overall control of the market in which they operate, whereas the advantages of BGMs are seen to be linked to product development and superior brand reputation. BGMs respond to private labels by taking them seriously and striving to increase the perceived distance of their brands from private labels in the eyes of the consumers. The overall benefit of these strategies is perceived to be preparedness for increased private label competition, while the drawbacks vary between companies.
6	2009	Magda Nenycz-Thiel and Jenni Romaniuk	Results suggest that the perceptual categorization into private label brands and national brands differs once private labels have been purchased. Users of private label brands did not see them as being any less trustworthy than national brands. However, non-users of private labels did use trust to discriminate between the two types of brands, and tended to use negative attribute information to categorize the brands into groups.
8	2010	Julie McColl & Christopher Moore	Participants identified the motivations, dimensions, success factors and problems associated with the creation, development and management of the own brand
9	2010	Ioannis E. Chaniotakis, Constantine Lympieropoulos, Magdalini Soureli	Data analysis results, using structural equation modeling , showed that consumers' purchase intention is directly affected by consumers' attitudes towards own-label olive oil, which in turn are influenced by consumers' perceived benefits, economic



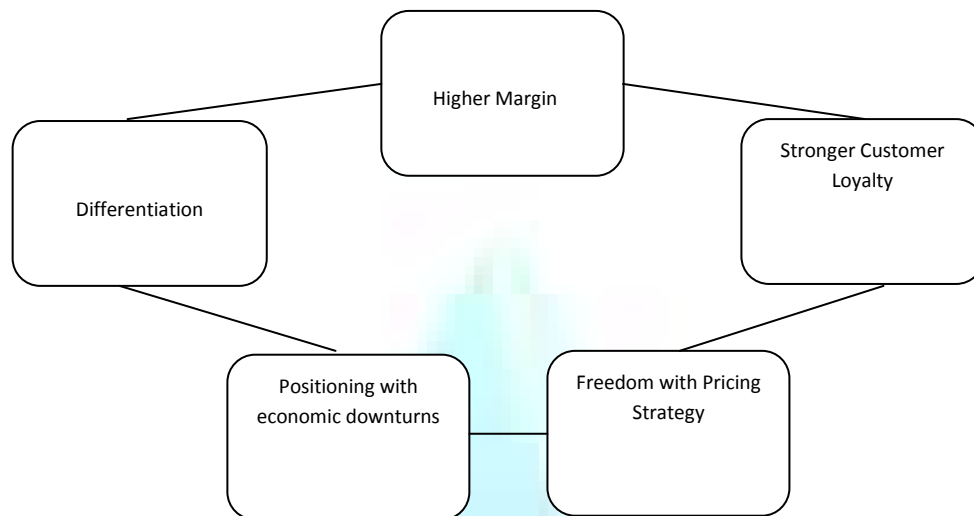
			situation, brand loyalty and trust.
10	2010	Takuya Urakami, Xueying Wu	The main findings are as follows: large-scale apparel wholesalers tend to own specialty private label stores but these wholesalers experience a worse financial outcome; apparel wholesalers with brand strength tend to possess their own specialty stores; and apparel wholesalers, who do not currently own specialty stores, plan to strengthen their brands in order to take advantage of apparel distribution channels.
11	2011	Ranga Chimhundu, Robert P. Hamlin, Lisa McNeill	The results indicate the existence of long-term equilibrium points between the shares of manufacturer brands and retailer brands in grocery product categories in the USA, New Zealand and Australia. Only the UK shows strong growth of retailer brands in line with retailer consolidation and power, but this trend is arrested, reversed and brought to equilibrium in 2001.
12	2012	Shalom Levy and Hanna Gendel-Guterman	The results show the salience of creating a strong and sustainable store brand through advertising and innovation. A store brand's perceived quality was found to be the most important factor in predicting store brand purchase intention, and advertising was found to have an indirect effect on perceived quality, shaped through extrinsic cues and novelty lovers' tendency variables.
13	2012	Andres Cuneo, Pilar Lopez	It is shown that PLB have been able to build brand equity throughout their development, across product categories; however, brand equity is capitalized across only some consumer segments. The use of consumer-level factors to segment the market prior to measuring brand equity is necessary to allow the identification of consumer groups where equity is created.
<b>STORE IMAGE/STORE LOYALTY</b>			
1	2005	Alain d'Astous Odile Saint-Louis	The results of the experimental study showed that consumer evaluations of store brands and national brands were influenced by the joint effects of store image and intended usage situation.
2	2006	George Baltas and Paraskevas C. Argouslidis	Specific consumer characteristics are associated with interpersonal differences in store brand demand. Store brand preferences derive from a broader evaluation process, in which quality has the most significant role.
3	2006	Archana Vahie and Audhesh Paswan	The results indicate that the store atmosphere and store quality positively influence the perception of PLB's quality, whereas, the congruence between national brand and store image (NBSI) has a negative influence on PLB's quality.
4	2009	Johan Anselmsson and Ulf Johansson	The study shows that there is a correlation between perceived quality and the price customers are willing to pay for private label products. Results also show that there is a strong correlation between perceived value of private label products in specific categories and the stores' overall product variety image. The study further supports the assumption that store loyalty is influenced by the perceived value of the grocery retailer's private label products.
5	2011	Yongchuan Bao, Shibin Sheng, Yeqing Bao, David Stewart	The paper finds that the combination of two diagnostic cues does not necessarily enhance the positive evaluation of private labels. Instead, store image reduces the effect of product signatureness. Further, product familiarity induces a positive moderating effect on product signatureness, whereas risk aversion exerts a negative moderating effect on store image.
<b>DEMOGRAPHIC/PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR</b>			
1	2008	Kyoung-Nan Kwon, Mi-Hee Lee and Yoo Jin Kwon	Support existed for the significant effects of all three product characteristics on the intent to purchase private brands. A moderating effect by value consciousness on the product type (search versus experience) emerged
2	2009	Amelia Yuen Shan Au-Yeung and Jessica Lu	The development of retail own label products in Taiwan does not follow the pattern witnessed in the West as described in the literature. Only some of the strategic motives of using own label as stated in existing literature are fully echoed in this study. Furthermore, the progress of most of the retailers studied in Taiwan does not mirror the typical stages of evolution as advocated by Laaksonen and Reynolds.
3	2010	Marguerite Moore & Jason M. Carpenter	Findings indicate demographic predictors as important drivers of private label apparel purchase among retailers positioned as providers of value, while behavioral drivers are more common among patrons of retailers that are differentiated on service or brand. Cross-shopping is more common among the retailers positioned on value.
4	2010	Murat Hakan Altintas, Serkan Kilic, and Gokhan Senol & Feride Bahar Isin	Three strategic objective factors were found to have an effect on competitive advantage, production efficiency, market embeddedness and product selling control.
5	2010	Ram Herstein, Kalanit Efrat and Eugene D. Jaffe	The most attractive MEDA markets with regard to private brands for retailers and manufacturers are the emerging countries, which have the most rapid growth potential in this region.
6	2010	Sigal Tifferet and Ram Herstein	Individualism predicted the inclination to purchase store brands better than demographic variables such as age, sex and income. Culture affected the importance of country of origin, and moderated the effect of individualism on the importance of manufacturer identity..
7	2011	Dr Ranga Chimhundu	While the literature has depicted private label share growth as gradual and incremental in nature, this study found that it is only on average that the yearly increase in private label share could fit the gradualist description. In reality, the actual process is not always gradual. Often, a period of gradual change and/or stability is followed by a punctuation, and vice-versa.
8	2012	Justin Beneke, Anne Greene, Inge Lok and Kate Mallett	This study revealed that functional and time risk both have a significant negative influence on consumers' purchase intention of premium grocery private label brands (at the 5 per cent significance level), while financial, physical, psychological and social risks do not significantly influence their purchase intention.
9	2012	Lay Peng Tan, Jack Cadeaux	The findings show that organic private label stock-keeping units are more likely to be present in categories with supermarket competition. They also show that concentration of shares amongst manufacturer brands (as measured by the Herfindahl index) negatively affect the probability that the retailer will enter a category with a private label stock-keeping unit (SKU) but positively affects the share of that private label SKU.
10	2012	Marta Arce-Urriza and Javier Cebollada	The results indicate that, whereas both PL and NB increase their loyalty online (versus offline), only the PL increases market share and conquering power online. Several specific category-level effects are also found.

Source: As adapted by the authors from various publications

It is evident from the table-I, 'Chronological Chart of the studies on PLB and NB' that the term PLB was initially used by researchers and academicians as a cheap alternatives to national brand but now the perception of PLB has changed as a better quality product at reasonable prices soon they will compete with national brand and increase the profitability of retailer. So over a period of time they will be part of well defined retail mix strategy use by the retailer to increase the customer base.

**COMMERCIAL OBJECTIVES BEHIND LAUNCHING PRIVATE LABELS**

There are certain objectives that a retailer has in mind before getting into private label goods. Figure 1 lists the benefits that a retailer expects from the in-store brands.

**FIG 1****1. HIGHER MARGINS**

Private label goods are cheaper to produce than branded goods. Besides, due to the lack of advertising and marketing expenses they provide double advantage to the retailer when it comes to the profit margins. While majority of branded goods provide margins in the range of 6-12%, private label goods can offer margins up to 40%. Not only they give a higher margin to the retailers, private labels have also changed the balance of power between brand manufacturers and retailers, giving the latter a decided advantage when negotiating terms with the brand manufacturers.

**2. STRONGER CUSTOMER LOYALTY**

As the private label offerings increase and the quality is assured, a high sense of loyalty is cultivated among its customer base. This customer loyalty is the result of an affinity with the retailer brand which implies that the development of private label brands can tangibly enhance the retailer's brand itself. So in the long run, the private labels become an important tool for the retailer to establish its positioning and strategically attract the target customers to its outlet. Numerous studies have also shown that private label buyers are more store-loyal and not as easily influenced as brand buyers.

**3. DIFFERENTIATION**

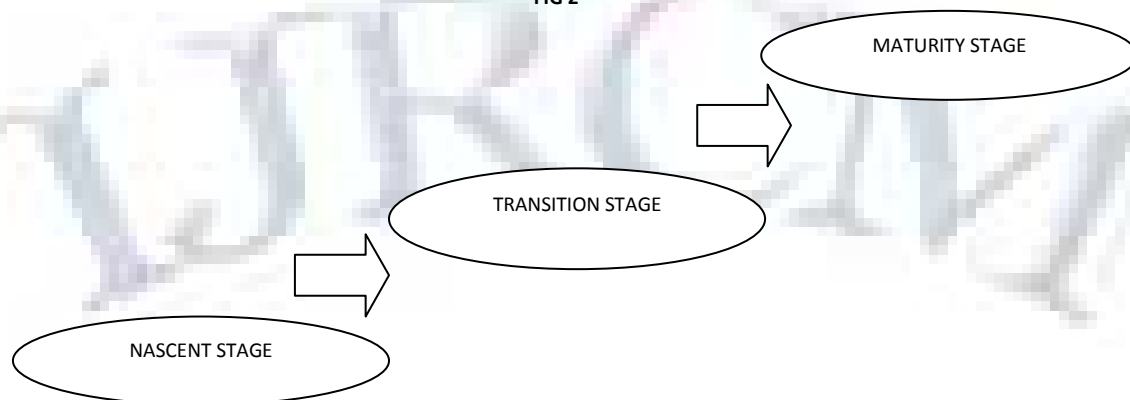
Through private labels, retailers get a chance to bring in unique products in their supply chains that have not been branded before. So if a retailer can cater to the local tastes and preferences of the consumers well by top quality private labels then they can differentiate themselves from other stores and become destination stores. In effect, it's a win-win situation even for the producers who get a chance to display their produce.

**4. FREEDOM WITH PRICING STRATEGY**

A retailer promoting a private label has the added benefit of greater freedom to play with pricing strategies, as a result of which these are overall cheaper than brand leaders. For instance, in USA, some private labels are 25 percent cheaper than leading brands. In addition, since it is an own private label, the retailer has the freedom to create its own marketing strategy and have more control over its stock inventory. This command of all the stages that a product goes through, gives the retailer high flexibility in pricing.

**5. POSITIONING DURING ECONOMIC DOWNTURNS**

The growth of private labels is likely to continue in the current financial environment as cash-strapped consumers' perception of the products as a cheaper option changes. The price advantage of private labels leads to the belief that these score in times of economic meltdown, and further that this newly-acquired market share is maintained even as the recession swings out. Even after the economy bounces back, consumers will naturally gravitate towards products marked at lower prices yet offering the same quality, especially where the retail name is a trusted national or regional player.

**PRIVATE LABEL MATURITY CURVE****FIG 2**

The share of private labels is related to the level of retailer sophistication and concentration in the country. In economies where retail is more consolidated, private label shares are both higher and expected to grow faster. However, the Indian retail industry is highly fragmented at the moment and organized retail is in its nascent phase presently with contribution of about 5% to the whole market. In this stage, the private labels that are launched play mostly the price game to compete with the branded products. At this stage, most private labels which have acceptance are at the bottom of the pyramid of retail products. However, as the retailers mature and gain experience they want to move up the pyramid where realizations are higher. As the figure depicts, over a period of time as the market matures, the retailers shift their focus from price to product quality which leads them to a stage where they can launch their own brands in the premium

category expecting to capture the brand equity and the customer loyalty built over years of good service. The consumers too, at this point, have enough trust and confidence to accept premium products from the retailer.

## CONCLUSION

The growth of private labels in the Indian retail industry is inevitable but retailers do need to keep a few things in mind. Promotion of own label and allocation of large shelf space at the expense of well-marketed national brands can depress the overall size and value of the category while on the other hand, joining hands with them and following principles of category management can create a win-win situations for both. Retailers need to realize the importance of consistent brand message and should ensure that the product quality backs it well. Moreover, when used as an umbrella brand, the brand portfolio should be managed properly as to avoid any negative impact on the store brand. To conclude it is quite evident that as the Indian retail industry consolidates over next decade, retailers will look to differentiate among themselves and private labels will form a highly significant part of their strategies.

## SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a large scope of research on Private Label Brand in India. As a part of the ongoing study, the authors have brought in the conceptual understanding through this paper, which is validated by an empirical study in the forth coming research paper. Research may also be conducted in other situations and geographical regions to validate the same.

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