

The Impact of Rural-Urban Inhabitants on the Consumption of Tea in North Gujarat Region

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ABSTRACT

The first thing people in India look forward to in the morning is a piping hot cup of tea. India, when it comes to volume of production, is the second largest in the world. Places like Darjeeling and Assam have put India on the Global map. Numerous studies have been undertaken to corroborate the claims of immense benefits of tea for the overall health. In Assam, 'Tea' is a state drink. The business of tea in India is ever changing and expanding. The ubiquitous site on Indian streets is vendors brewing tea for the customers and the sales are at peak in winter season and in cool climatic conditions. Indians very affectionally offer their guests tea as a preferential serving for it is anticipated and loved by all.

Keywords: Consumption of tea, Rural-Urban Inhabitants, Shopping sites.

INTRODUCTION:

Rank of India's tea production at the world level is second (Indian tea culture, Wikipedia, 2018). The Indian population domestically consumes 80 percent of national tea production. With regard to consumption of tea in India, a study was conducted in 2007 by the Tea Board of India in 2007 (Tea Board, 2018). Differences in the socio-economic status of the Indian population has not been a deterrent factor for the Indian population. The sales of tea across the nation has been a subject matter of research for years to come. Tea is taken in different forms. Some 80% plus population prefer to have tea with sugar. The recent years have seen rise of health-conscious people which in turn has prompted them to make changes in the way they make and have tea. These very health conscious people have started eliminating sugar from their drinks, including tea. Hence, tea vendors have been giving the option of brewing tea without sugar. This type of tea is labelled as 'sugarless'. There is a difference between sugarless and sugarfree drinks. The former is free of any additives and the latter contains artificial sweeteners like aspartame. Both the versions of tea are available in areas where people congregate in Tier I and Tier II cities. Healthier options like stevia, xylitol, etc. are mostly unheard of in Indian markets. For enhancing fragrance, taste, and pungency, tea is made with ginger and cardamom. Ginger is a quasi-default ingredient for tea vendors on Indian streets. Due to ginger's supposed medicinal benefits, and the aroma that it generates, it is included in tea. There is complementary demand created with consumption of tea. More often than not, the items devoured with tea are toast with butter and biscuits. Nankhatai - a special type of cookies - is also very popular amongst urban masses. In the states like Gujarat, tea with salted snacks (Namkeen) has a special place in the hearts of the people.

In rural parts of Gujarat and also with the people living below poverty line, tea is sometimes made with jaggery - a substitute to sugar. Jaggery, to a smaller extent, is given preference by people who love the taste of jaggery based tea. There is noticeable difference between the way tea is prepared by rural and urban folks. The people in the rural areas have a darker shade as a result of more raw tea and less milk. Whereas, in the urban areas consumers have less raw tea and more milk which makes the tea light in colour.

In the recent times, completely new segments in the market of tea has been created. Green tea, Premix tea:

Tulsi-Ginger-Honey, Masala Premix. Of these, Green tea has gained momentum in the area of Tea business. Some researchers are claiming a host of benefits of having green tea, most powerful of which are anti-cancer and weight loss. Yet, there are sceptics who doubt the benefits of green tea and have always questioned about the veracity of the claims made. All in all, tea and green tea have emerged as a potential threat to the cold drink and beverages segment of businesses. The fact of the matter is that if a consumer consumes tea then it is less likely that he would spend on other drinks and beverages at least for sometime even if he/she is backed by purchasing power. Companies like Wagh Bakri have been selling Organic labelled green tea. However, organic tea is more pricey than the non-organic ones. According to a study by Padel & Foster (2005) one of the factors why organic products are not bought by consumers is due to 'price'

The downside of having excessive tea is the sugar content present in the tea. The well documented disadvantage of tea consumption is 'inhibition of iron absorption in the human body'. The ferritin level in body reduces due to caffeine present in tea. Black tea has more amount of caffeine than other variants. Tea before bedtime can disturb sleep and worsen the problem for insomniac patients. Therefore, anaemic patients and people with sleep disorder should reduce the consumption of tea and should not take it with iron and vitamin supplements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- Whether preferences for the variants of tea (leaves) differ among Rural and Urban tea drinkers in the North Gujarat region.
- The variants of the tea (leaves) considered for the study are 1. Regular tea, 2. Green tea, and 3. Ginger-Honey premix tea.
- Whether preferences for the shopping sites differ among Rural and Urban tea drinkers in the North Gujarat region.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Exploring the areas of distinction between the rural and urban folks have been attempted by the researchers time and again. Agriculture is the main occupation of people in rural area (Tacoli, 1998). In the seminal work titled as Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology in the year 1929, two leading sociologists namely Sorokin and Zimmerman (House, F.N., Sorokin, Zimmerman 1930) have propounded points of differences between rural and urban community. The differences are based on occupational engagement, environment they live in, community size, magnitude of population, socio-economic status, migration, interactions and contacts. Social-cultural habits influence the behaviour of consumer of rural area (Velayudhan, 2007).

Education of people in rural and urban area is also a potential factor to dominate their buying decisions. According to the population census of India 2011, the total urban population is 37.7 crore, whereas the rural population stands at 83.30%. The literacy rate as per the same source is 84.98 % for urban areas and that of rural area is 68.91%. (Census of India, 2011) Therefore, the difference in intensity of population and literacy is considerable.

Consumers in urban areas are well-versed and comfortable with technology. They frequent the Ecommerce companies and make a specific choice as to buying products is concerned. But in rural areas, the people have to satisfy or rather compromise with what is available at their disposal. This is also a reason where the difference is noted. In a study by Keeble & Tyler (1995), the researchers have attempted to find the rural-urban shift.

METHODOLOGY:

The consumers of rural and urban areas both have tea as a regular commodity. The elasticity of this product 'Tea' is imperfect. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the respondents by way of questionnaire which was given to the rural and urban people in the vernacular language Gujarati. Test of Independence was conducted to test the hypothesis. Test statistic for independence used was Chi-Square. The areas of North Gujarat region were chosen for study, namely Patan, Unjha and Sidhpur for Urban areas and Nedra, Biliya and Bhandu for Rural areas.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION:

Hypotheses:

To give impetus to the research, the null hypotheses formulated for the current study are as mentioned below:

- 1) H_0 : Preference of Tea (leaves) variants is independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.
- 1) H_1 : Preference of Tea (leaves) variants is not independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.
- 2) H_0 : Preference of purchase site is independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.
- 2) H_1 : Preference of purchase site is not independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Data Collection: The researcher selected 150 respondents in Patan, Unjha and Sidhpur for Urban areas and Nedra, Biliya and Bhandu for Rural areas. Convenience sampling was used by the researcher to collect the data. Respondents were asked to mention the number of cups of tea consumed in a week and the type of it. Some consumers were also falling in multi-type category.

In the preference of shopping site more than one options were exercised by some respondents. Hence the grand total is 211 derived from 150 respondents.

Table 1

Area	Tea Preference			Total
	Regular Tea	Green Tea	Ginger-Honey premix tea	
Rural Area	60	10	5	75
Urban Area	45	20	10	75
	Total			150

Table 2

Area	Purchase site			Total
	Retail Store	ECommerce	Shopping Mall	
Rural Area	70	8	6	84
Urban Area	82	28	17	127
	Total			211

Chi-Square was used with **5% Level of significance** to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS: The results are as mentioned below:

Table 3: Chi-square test for the preference of tea in relation to the Rural-Urban areas

Results	Regular Tea	Green Tea	Ginger-Honey premix tea	Row Totals
Rural	60 (52.50) [1.07]	10 (15.00) [1.67]	5 (7.50) [0.83]	75
Urban	45 (52.50) [1.07]	20 (15.00) [1.67]	10 (7.50) [0.83]	75
Column Totals	105	30	15	150 (Grand Total)

The Chi-square statistic is 7.1429. The p-value is 0.028116.

The result is significant at $p < 0.05$

Preference of Tea (leaves) variants is not independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.

Table 4: Chi-square test for the preference of shopping site in relation to the Rural-Urban areas.

Results	Retail Store	Ecommerce	Shopping Mall	Row Totals
Rural	70 (60.51) [1.49]	8 (14.33) [2.80]	6 (9.16) [1.09]	84
Urban	82 (91.49) [0.98]	28 (21.67) [1.85]	17 (13.84) [0.72]	127
Column Totals	152	36	23	211 (Grand Total)

The Chi-square statistic is 8.9271. The p-value is 0.011522.

The result is significant at $p < 0.05$

Preference of purchase site is not independent of the location (Rural-Urban) of the Tea consumers.

CONCLUSION:

The study points towards a gap between the preference of the consumers in rural and urban areas. Number of firms, transportation facilities, level of education, high-speed internet connectivity and comfortability with technology will evolve the rural consumer not only for the products like tea but also for other products which are a part and parcel of consumers' daily lives. Companies like Amazon and Flipkart are creating a special niche for themselves by increasing the products and giving a great choice to consumer to choose from. This will too go a long way in influencing the choice of the rural consumer. Rural market is poised to elevate itself at par with urban market in the foreseeable future.

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