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BUYING AND CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF TEA IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the buying and consumption behavior of tea among the rural and urban respondents in Coimbatore district. Data was gathered through personal interviews conducted among three hundred respondents (150 rural and 150 urban). Conventional analysis was employed in data processing. Results revealed that tea was the favourite beverage for majority of the respondents. Majority of the rural and urban respondents explained that the tea was consumed because it was refreshing and energizing. The rural respondents bought tea more frequently which might be because of the small quantities of purchase influenced by the wage type income of the respondents and the brand name was considered much by urban respondents than rural. Tea brands were selected and bought for its taste and flavor and majority of the rural and urban respondents were accustomed to their brand for more than two years

KEYWORDS: Buying Behaviour, Consumption Behaviour, Consumer Awareness, Brand

INTRODUCTION

Tea is the second most consumed beverage in the world next to water (Deng et al., 1998, *www.nutraingredients.com, 2012*). India is the world's largest consumer, second largest producer and fourth largest exporter of tea accounting for nearly 30 per cent of global output with nearly 25 per cent being recorded as national consumption (Rawat, 2012). Branded tea market accounted for more than half of the total market and it increased at a growth rate of about 20 per cent (Rawat, 2012). Packet tea market had highly proliferated and became a matured market with more than 300 brands in the country (Manish & Mathur, 2012). Creating effective communication with consumers had been one of the most important facets of marketing. Analysing the buying and consumption behaviour is an imperative process in designing the marketing programme of a product. Accordingly, the present study was taken up to analyse the purchase and consumption behavior of tea. Various aspects such as the most favourite beverage, frequency of tea and coffee consumption, consumer awareness and preference towards tea brands available in Tamil Nadu etc were covered in the study.

METHODOLOGY

The Coimbatore Municipal Corporation comprising of 100 wards and Pollachi taluk comprising 131 revenue villages were purposively selected for the study to represent urban and rural areas respectively. The 100 wards of the Coimbatore Municipal Corporation were divided into five zones viz., north, south, east, west and central zone with 20 wards for each zone. Thirty households from each zone were selected randomly for the study to represent urban population. The rural respondents were selected from the village's located 25 kms away from the urban limit to minimize the urban impact. Among 131 revenue villages of Pollachi Taluk, 68 villages were located 25 kms away from the urban limit. From the 68 villages, five villages' viz., Kumarapalayam, Servakaran palayam, Jallipatti, Poosaripatti and Arasampalayam which had minimal influence from the nearby urban areas were selected randomly for the study. From each of the selected villages 30 households were selected randomly. Therefore totally 300 households (150 rural and 150 urban) were selected for the present study. Data was gathered from the sample respondents and analyzed using conventional analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Most Favorite Beverage

Tea was the most favourite beverage of about 81 per cent rural respondents and only 19.33 per cent of them consumed coffee. In case of urban respondents 78.67 per cent liked tea and 21.33 per cent liked coffee (Table 1). This stands as evidence that tea is the second most popular beverage in the world after water and India the largest tea consuming country in the world (Alan and Iris, 2004, Saberi, 2010).

Table 1: Most Favorite Beverage

S. No.	Beverage	Rural	Urban
1	Tea	121 (80.67)	118 (78.67)
2	Coffee	29 (19.33)	32 (21.33)
	Total	**150.00 (100.00)**	**150.00 (100.00)**

(Figures in the parentheses represent per cent to total)

Frequency of Tea and Coffee Consumption

Tea and coffee were substitutes (Hopp and Foote, 1955) since consumption of one affects the frequency of consumption of the other. It was observed (Table 2) that a good number of respondents of both rural and urban had consumed tea twice a day.

Table 2: Frequency of Tea and Coffee Consumption (Perday)

S. No	Frequency (per day)	Tea		Coffee	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1	One Time	21 (14.00)	33 (22.00)	9 (6.00)	8 (5.34)
2	Two times	51 (34.00)	40 (26.67)	7 (4.66)	12 (8.00)
3	Three Times	31 (20.67)	32 (21.34)	5 (3.33)	6 (4.00)
4	Four times	11 (7.33)	9 (6.00)	3 (2.00)	2 (1.33)
5	Five times	4 (2.67)	2 (1.33)	4 (2.67)	2 (1.33)
6	More than five times	3 (2.00)	2 (1.33)	1 (0.67)	2 (1.33)
7	Occasionally	29 (19.33)	32 (21.33)	121 (80.67)	118 (78.67)
	Total	**150(100.00)**	**150 (100.00)**	**150 (100.00)**	**150 (100.00)**
		Calculated χ^2 value = 5.23; Table χ^2 value= 9.49; d(f)= 6		Calculated χ^2 value = 2.70; Table χ^2 value= 9.49; d(f)= 6	

Tea was consumed twice by 34.00 per cent of the rural respondents and 26.67 per cent of their urban counterparts. But coffee was consumed twice a day by only 4.66 per cent of the rural respondents and 8.00 per cent of the urban respondents. Six per cent of rural and 5.34 per cent of urban respondents consumed coffee once a day as against only 14.00 per cent and 22.00 per cent of tea consumers in rural and urban category respectively. Low share of respondents in both areas consumed tea or coffee even five or more times in a day. The chi-square values showed that there was no significant difference in the frequency of tea and coffee consumption among the rural and urban respondents.

Consumer Awareness and Preference towards Tea Brands Available in Tamil Nadu

The information on the awareness of respondents on individual tea brands was collected and analyzed. The results are presented in Table 3 and 4.

Table 3: Consumer Awareness about Tea Brands Available in Tamil Nadu

Sl. No.	Brand Name	Rural		Urban	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage* (n = 150)	No. of Respondents	Percentage* (n = 150)
1.	3 Roses	142	94.67	145	96.67
2.	Chakra Gold	133	88.67	144	96.00
3.	Taj Mahal	104	69.33	115	76.67
4.	AVT Premium	96	64.00	109	72.67
5.	Red Label	88	58.67	112	74.67
6.	TATA - Gold	57	38.00	59	39.33
7.	Kannan Devan	48	32.00	70	46.67
8.	TATA Tea	47	31.33	59	39.33
9.	TATA - Agni	41	27.33	49	32.67
10.	Lipton	38	25.33	55	36.67
11.	Darjeeling	38	25.33	45	30.00
12.	TAAZA	28	18.67	42	28.00
13.	Life	24	16.00	27	18.00
14.	AVT Rajah	21	14.00	18	12.00
15.	Yellow Label	13	8.67	25	16.67
16.	TATA Premium	12	8.00	24	16.00
17.	Surya	9	6.00	16	10.67
18.	Tetley	4	2.67	16	10.67
19.	Good Morning	2	1.33	4	2.67

(* - Percentage to sample size in rural and urban areas respectively)

The results from the Table 3. indicated that, major share of rural consumers were aware of the tea brand 3 Roses (94.67 per cent) followed by Chakra Gold (88.67 per cent). The trend was similar in the urban population also but the difference between the two brands was much lesser (96.67 and 96.00 per cent respectively).

A similar trend was observed in the preference towards tea brands also (Table 4). Among both rural and urban respondents about 70 per cent preferred Three Roses followed by Chakra Gold (16.00 and 8.67 per cent respectively).

The discussion with the respondents during the survey revealed that, most people were keen in their tea brand and were accustomed to their choice. The advertisements were the first factor in tea brand awareness and have some influence on the tea brand choice of the consumers.

Table 4: Tea Brands Preferred by Consumers

Sl. No.	Brand Name	Rural		Urban	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage (n = 150)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (n = 150)
1.	3 Roses	105	70.00	104	69.33
2.	Chakra Gold	24	16.00	13	8.67
3.	AVT Premium	12	8.00	12	8.00
4.	Taj Mahal	4	2.67	8	5.33
5.	Kannan Devan	3	2.00	4	2.67
6.	Red Label	2	1.33	2	1.33
7.	TATA Life	2	1.33	1	0.67
8.	Others	7*	4.67	14**	9.33

* - Tea day, Yaseen, Surya Premium, Darjeeling, Lipton, TATA Tea

** - Green tea, Gemini, Chamraj, TATA Tea, Tetley, Lipton

Reasons for Consuming Tea

Based on the literature review, the reasons for consumption of tea was listed to the respondents and their views were collected using 5 point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Table 5 indicated that the reason tea “Refreshing” was strongly agreed by 51.33 per cent of rural and 58 per cent of urban respondents and was agreed by 36 per cent of the respondents on an average. “Energising” was the second reason agreed by 46 per cent of rural and 40.67 per cent of urban respondents where as it was strongly agreed by about 27 per cent of the respondents of both the category.

Thirty per cent of rural and 22 per cent of urban respondents strongly agreed that tea is “to start a good day”, it was also agreed by 28 per cent and 37.33 per cent of rural and urban respondents respectively, whereas about 28 per cent of them where neutral to this factor and about 10 per cent of them disagreed. For 38.67 per cent and 42.67 per cent of rural and urban respondents respectively strongly agreed that tea drinking was habitual, whereas on an average 25 per cent of them agreed and 19 per cent of them were neutral to this view. Only about 13 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed that tea is an antioxidant and about 35 per cent of them were neutral to this view and on an average 7.50 per cent of them strongly disagreed that tea was an “antioxidant”.

About 15.33 per cent of rural and 18 per cent of urban respondents strongly agreed that tea is consumed for its health benefits; also this view was agreed by 20.67 and 24.00 per cent rural and urban respondents, but 28.00 per cent and 32.67 per cent of rural and urban respondents respectively expressed a neutral view. This view was once again strongly disagreed by 13.33 per cent and 9.33 per cent of rural and urban respondents respectively. Hence, tea was consumed because it provided refreshment and made the consumers feel energetic. A sizable number of both rural and urban consumers revealed that, drinking tea became a habit. The health benefit of the tea was realized more by urban respondents.

Table 5: Reasons for Consuming Tea (N = 150)

S. No	Factors	Rural					Urban				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Refreshing	77 **(51.33)**	57 (38.00)	13 (8.67)	3 (2.00)	0 (0.00)	87 **(58.00)**	51 (34.00)	9 (6.00)	3 (2.00)	0 (0.00)
2	Energising	41 (27.33)	69 **(46.00)**	31 (20.67)	9 (6.00)	0 (0.00)	40 (26.67)	61 **(40.67)**	42 (28.00)	5 (3.33)	2 (1.33)
3	To start a good day	45 **(30.00)**	42 (28.00)	44 (29.33)	14 (9.33)	5 (3.33)	33 (22.00)	56 **(37.33)**	42 (28.00)	15 (10.00)	4 (2.67)
4	Habituated	58 **(38.67)**	42 (28.00)	28 (18.67)	16 (10.67)	6 (4.00)	64 **(42.67)**	35 (23.33)	29 (19.33)	12 (8.00)	10 (6.67)
5	Antioxidant property	18 (12.00)	33 (22.00)	53 **(35.33)**	33 (22.00)	13 (8.67)	22 (14.67)	42 (28.00)	54 **(36.00)**	22 (14.67)	10 (6.67)
6	Healthy beverage	23 (15.33)	31 (20.67)	42 **(28.00)**	34 (22.67)	20 (13.33)	27 (18.00)	36 (24.00)	49 **(32.67)**	24 (16.00)	14 (9.33)

(Figures in the parentheses represent per cent to total)

Frequency of Purchasing Tea

The frequency of purchasing provides valuable guidelines in deciding the marketing efforts to be taken up by the companies.

Table 6: Frequency of Purchasing Tea

S. No	Frequency	Rural		Urban	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Weekly once	43	28.67	31	20.67
2	Fortnightly	41	27.32	25	16.67
3	Once in a month	37	24.67	48	32.00
4	Once in Two months	28	18.67	44	29.33
5	When required	1	0.67	2	1.33
	Total	**150**	**100.00**	**150**	**100.00**
Calculated χ^2 value =11.1; Table χ^2 value=9.49; d(f)= 4					

Majority of the rural consumers made their purchase weekly (28.67 per cent) while, 27.33 per cent of them purchased fortnightly (Table 6). In contrast, about 32.00 per cent of the urban consumers purchased tea once in a month, 29.33 per cent of them purchased tea once in two months. The calculated chi-square value was higher than the table value. Hence, it was concluded that the rural and urban consumers' frequency of buying tea was statistically different. The rural respondents bought tea more frequently which might be because of the small quantities of purchase influenced by the wage type income of the respondents. The occupation status of the urban respondents might be a reason for them to buy less frequently. The promotional offers for tea should be planned considering the frequency of purchase by the consumers.

Factors Considered During Tea Purchase

Respondents in both urban and rural areas purchase different brands of tea. The respondents who used the brands were inquired about the factors considered while buying tea brands (Table 7).

Table 7: Factors Considered During Tea Purchase

Sl. No.	Factors	Rural		Urban	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage* (n = 150)	No. of Respondents	Percentage* (n = 150)
1.	Taste	124	82.67	127	84.67
2.	Flavour	97	64.67	101	67.33
3.	Brand name	77	51.33	91	60.67
4.	Colour	74	49.33	73	48.67
5.	Price	73	48.67	81	54.00
6.	Aroma	61	40.67	77	51.33
7.	Strength	56	37.33	59	39.33
8.	Packaging	33	22.00	33	22.00
9.	Offers	12	8.00	13	8.67
10.	Special Attributes	11	7.33	14	9.33
11.	Health benefits	0	0.00	4	2.67

(* - Percentage to sample size in rural and urban areas, respectively)

Good taste (82.67 per cent) was the most important factor considered in rural area while purchasing tea followed by flavour (64.67 per cent) and brand name (51.33 per cent). Similarly good taste (84.67 per cent) followed by flavour (67.33 per cent), brand name (60.67 per cent) were the main factors considered while buying tea among urban consumers. The results were more or less similar for both rural and urban areas; on the whole, it was clear that, tea brands were bought for its taste and flavor.

Duration of Purchasing the Same Brand

The survey results revealed that about 72.00 per cent and 64.67 per cent of the rural and urban respondents were accustomed to their brand for more than two years respectively (Table 8). The share of respondents who changed their brand within last six months (4.00 and 5.33 per cent) was very low among the rural and urban respondents, respectively.

Table 8: Duration of Purchasing the Same Brand

S. No	Duration	Rural		Urban	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Last six months	6	4.00	8	5.33
2	Last one year	19	12.67	18	12.00
3	Last two years	17	11.33	27	18.00
4	More than two years	108	72.00	97	64.67
	Total	**150**	**100.00**	**150**	**100.00**

It could be observed from the beverage buying and consumption behaviour of the respondents that about 80 per cent consumed tea as their most favourite beverage. There was no significant difference in the frequency of tea and coffee consumption among the rural and urban respondents. Majority of the rural and urban respondents explained that the tea was consumed because it provided freshness and made the respondents feel energetic. The rural respondents bought tea more frequently which might be because of the small quantities of purchase influenced by the wage type income of the respondents. Good taste, flavour and brand name was considered by major share of rural and urban respondents while purchasing tea brands. About 72.00 per cent and 64.67 per cent of the rural and urban respondents were accustomed to their brand for more than two years.

CONCLUSIONS

About 80 per cent of the respondents consumed tea as the favourite beverage. There was no significant difference in the frequency of tea and coffee consumption among the rural and urban respondents. Majority of the rural and urban respondents explained that the tea was consumed because it was refreshing and energizing. The rural respondents bought tea more frequently which might be because of the small quantities of purchase influenced by the wage type income of the respondents and the brand name was considered much by urban respondents than rural. Tea brands were selected and bought for its taste and flavor and majority of the rural and urban respondents were accustomed to their brand for more than two years.

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