

Issues and challenges in Economics and Commerce: A perspective



Editor

Ratul Mahanta & Amrit Pal Singh

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Consumers Preferences towards Organic Tea: Special Reference to Golaghat Town, Assam

✎Chinzakhum

Abstract:

Due to increase in climate change and global warming, the public concern for environmental problems is continuously increased over the past decades. There has been a change in consumer attitudes towards a green lifestyle. Consumer's concern for food safety, increasing health awareness and awareness of environmental degradation, the consumer behaviour is changing towards purchase of many environmental friendly and organic products. Tea is a part and parcel of Indian social, economic and cultural life. It is the most popular non-intoxicating beverage in the world enjoyed by the rich and poor alike. Among the organic products, organic tea is one of the major consumer food products produced in India. India ranks first in world organic tea production. Tea Board of India defined organic tea as tea made using environment-friendly methods. In this study, a consumer is considered as an individual who purchases organic tea for personal and for family consumption.

Thus, the present papers examine the consumer preferences of organic products. The researcher would use descriptive type of research. Primary data was collected by using structure questionnaire from consumers who visited retail store dealing in organic products from Golaghat town. Secondary data was collected from published research and general articles from journals, books and internet etc. Data were analysing with the help of SPSS software.

Keywords: *Environmental degradation, Organic tea, Consumer's, Preferences, Production.*

1. Introduction

Tea is a part and parcel of Indian social, economic and cultural life. It is the most popular non-intoxicating beverage in the world enjoyed by the rich and poor alike. The average per head consumption of tea varies widely from country to country. The consumption is highest in Turkey (3.20Kg), Afghanistan (2.20Kg) and around 2 Kg in United Kingdom, Libya, Morocco, Qatar. The consumption of tea in India is around 800 grams. Even though per capita consumption of tea is lower in India as compared to other countries, due to its population the tea consumption in India accounts for 19% of the global consumption. Almost 76% of the total production is consumed within the country (63rd Annual Report 2016-17, Tea Board of India).

Nowadays due to rapid urbanization, growing consumer's concern for food safety, increasing health awareness and awareness of environmental degradation, the consumer behaviour is changing towards purchase of many environmental friendly and organic products. India is one of the largest Asian countries that have area of land under organic cultivation. Among the organic products, organic tea is one of the major consumer food products produced in India.

2. Review Of Related Literature

Bora, D.K & Gogoi, M (2018) conducted a study on benefits of

green tea and they found that green tea is a rich source of polyphenols which act as powerful antioxidants. Among these polyphenols, a compound called catechins helps in neutralisation of free radicals in the human body which are released during various metabolic processes. Metal analysis of green tea reveals that it is a rich source of zinc, iron, manganese, magnesium, silver, copper, aluminium, bromine, nickel, chromium and phosphorus. In their study they also mention that study conducted at Rochester University, USA, that green tea extract was effective for the treatment of patients who suffered from skin damage following radiotherapy for cancer.

Balaji & Injodey (2017), conducted a research study on Organic Food Products: A study on Perceptions of Consumers in Bangalor city. They found that all the three variables "Consumers Ideology", "Free from Chemical", and "Health Benefits", jointly influence consumer buying. Of the three variables, "Consumers Ideology" and "Free from Chemical" are statistically significant. The result shows that "Consumers Ideology" (Taste) of consumers towards organic food products does have a significant positive effect on their purchase behaviour when compared to the factor "Free from Chemical". The study reveals that consumers' overall preference for purchase of organic food products is primarily determined by two factors of perception that have emerged from the study.

Prakash & Mohan (2016) studied Consumer's attitude and buying behaviour of organic/green products in erode district with the objectives to understand attitude of consumers' towards organic food products, to find out the buying behaviour of the consumer towards organic food products. The study revealed that 34.42% of the respondents opined that there is no pesticide in the organic food products is the reason for their preference. Maximum (43.23%) of the respondents preferred organic food products because of their health consciousness. Consumer's attitude is found to be high in avoiding fertilizers and pesticides which are harmful to their health.

3. Need For The Study

Several studies have been conducted to understand the consumer

preference for organic tea. Most of the studies were conducted in foreign countries. Some of the research studies are conducted in India outside North East India. Still very few studies have been conducted in North East India particularly in Assam with an attempt to focus in detail on consumer's preferences on organic products in general and organic tea in particular. Therefore, there is a need for the study to understand the consumer's preferences for organic tea.

4. Objective Of The Study

- 1) To study the demographic profile of the respondents
- 2) To study the consumer opinion about organic tea
- 3) To understand the reasons for consumer preferences towards organic tea

5. Methodology

Golaghat gets its name from the shops of the Marwari community members who settled their business at the bank of river Dhansiri near Golaghat town during mid 20th century. Golaghat is a combination of two words that 'Gola' means shop & 'Ghat' meaning the leading point of river ferry. The district is also the gateway to Kaziranga National Park. Golaghat is an administrative district of Assam with headquarters located at Golaghat town. The district is bounded by the river Brahmaputra on the North, state of Nagaland on the South, District Jorhat on the East and Karbi Anglong & Nagaon district of Assam on the West. The district has been divided into 3 Sub Divisions (Golaghat, Bokakhat, Dhansiri H.Q. - Sarupathar) and 8 Development Blocks with 102 Gaon Panchayats.

A descriptive research design was chosen for this research. The study has obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data for the present study was collected using structure questionnaire from consumers who visited retail store dealing in organic products from Golaghat town. Sample selection was done as per the discretion of the researcher, focusing on consumers who had purchase organic tea at least once at the time when the study was conducted. Questionnaires were distributed to 32 respondents. Off the total questionnaires distributed 20 respondents correctly filled and answer the questionnaires yielding a response rate of 62.5 %.

the rest 12 (37.5) questionnaires were incomplete filled, hence could not be considered for analysis. Secondary data from published materials was collected from various journals, reports, magazines, newspapers, internet etc. For analyzing the data SPSS, Simple Percentage Method were used.

6. Limitations Of The Study

There has been some problems in getting information from respondents as they had to be interviewed in a very short time and a few of them are were quite busy to give proper though of the questions. The study is confined to Golaghat town only and therefore findings may not be generalised to other areas. Products considered for the study were only limited to organic tea and hence lead to limitations of the study.

7. Result And Discussion

The study analyzes demographics of the respondents, opinion about organic tea, reasons for preferring organic tea.

1. Demographics Profile of the Respondents

It is observed from the table nos.1 that the respondents are categorized based on their demographics such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, occupational status, annual family income and size of the family. It is seen from the table below that 20.0% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 26 – 35 years, 50% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 36 – 45 years, 20.0% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 46 – 55 years and the remaining 10.0% of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 56 years. More than half (70.0%) of the respondents are male and 30.0% of the respondents are female

Table.1: Demographic of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Demographics	Nos. of Respondents(20)	Percentage (100%)
1	Age		
	26 - 35 years	4	20.0
	36 - 45 years	10	50.0
	46 - 55 years	4	20.0
	56 & Above years	2	10.0
2	Gender		
	Male	14	70.0
	Female	6	30.0
3	Marital Status		
	Married	15	75.0
	Unmarried	5	25.0
4	Educational Qualification		
	High School	3	15.0
	Bachelor Degree	1	5.0
	Master Degree	11	55.0
	Doctorate Degree	5	25.0
5	Occupational Status		
	Service	16	80.0
	Business	2	10.0
	Agriculturist	2	10.0
6	Annual Family Income		
	Less than Rs. 2,00,000	1	5.0
	Between Rs. 2,00,000 – 4,00,000	4	20.0
	Between Rs. 4,00,000 – 6,00,000	8	40.0
	More than Rs. 6,00,000	7	35.0
7	Size of the Family		
	2 to 3 members	8	40.0
	3 to 5 members	12	60.0

Source: Primary Data

It is also observed from the table that 75.0% of the respondents are married and the remaining 25.0% of the respondents are unmarried. It is cleared from the table below that maximum (55.0%) of the respondents are post graduates, 25.0% are doctorate degree holders, 15.0% are in the high school standards and the rest 5% are graduates. Majority (80.0%) of the respondents are government employees, 10.0% of the respondents are engaged in business, and 10.0% of the respondents are agriculturist. It is cleared from the table that 5.0% of the respondents are earning annually as high as Rs.200, 000, 20.0% of the respondents are earning annually from Rs. 200,000 to Rs.400,000, 40.0% of the respondents annual incomes falls from Rs. 400,000 to Rs. 600,000 and the remaining 35.0% of the respondent are earning annually of Rs. 600,000 and above. It is cleared from the table below that more than half (40.0%) of the respondents have 2 – 3 members in their family, 60.0% of the respondents had 3 – 5 members in their family.

1. Opinion about Organic Tea

Opinion of respondents about preferring organic tea was analysed. Table No.2 shows the respondents opinion about preferring organic tea. It is cleared from the table that 30.0% of the respondents opined that organic tea are potentially healthy than non organic, 25.0% of the respondents feels that organic teas are tastier than non organic tea, 15.0% each of the respondents are indicated that organic teas are exclusions of synthetic pesticides, exclusions of chemicals fertilizers and exclusions of added flavour are the reasons for preferring organic tea.

Table. 2: Opinion about organic tea

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Organic tea are potentially healthy	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
Organic teas are tastier than non organic tea.	5	25.0	25.0	55.0
Exclusion of synthetic pesticides	3	15.0	15.0	70.0
Exclusions of chemical fertilizers	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
Exclusions of added flavour	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

2. Reasons of Preferring for Organic Tea/Products

It is cleared from the table below that off the total respondents 25.0% of the respondents indicated that they preferred organic tea for their health consciousness, 35.0% of them indicates that their main reasons for preferring organic tea was because of their environmental concern, 20 % said that they preferred organic tea because of the advice by the doctors and 20% also said that they preferred because of only affordability of the price.

Table. 3: Reasons for Preferring Organic Tea/Product

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Health Consciousness /Nutrition value	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
Environmental concern valid	7	35.0	35.0	60.0
Doctor's advice	4	20.0	20.0	80.0
Affordability	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data

Findings

➤ To sum up, majority (70.0%) of the respondents are male, 50% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 36 – 45 years, 75% of the respondents are married, maximum (55.0%) of the respondents are post graduates, majority (80.0%) of the respondents are government employees, 40.0% of the respondents annual income falls from Rs. 400,000 to Rs. 600,000 and 60.0% of the respondents had 3 – 5 members in their family.

➤ The results indicates that 30.0% of the respondents opined that organic tea are potentially healthy than non organic, 25.0% of the respondents feels that organic teas are tastier than non organic tea, 15.0% each of the respondents are indicated that organic teas are exclusions of synthetic pesticides, exclusions of chemicals fertilizers and exclusions of added flavour are the reasons for preferring organic tea.

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8. Suggestions and Conclusion

The study revealed that majority of the respondents opined that organic tea are potentially healthy than non organic tea, organic teas are tastier than non organic tea, exclusion of pesticides and fertilizers. Hence, it is suggested that mass of the consumers shall be made aware and initiate their buying motive towards organic tea/products by the promoters and producers is the need of the hour.

The findings concludes that most of the respondents indicates that their main reasons for preferring organic tea was because of their concern for environmental degradation and their health consciousness. Thus, it is necessary for the promoters, producers and the government to give more awareness to the consumers to protect the natural environment, to instil the good nature of the organic product/tea in the minds of the consumers through promotional events

The Government should also made mandatory to obtained certification for their production to the producers and the producers should considered important factors in viewing of the consumers characteristics before they set their price.

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