

Study of Changing Pattern of Preference and Purchase Decision at the Time of Festivals: (Empirical Study of Purchase Decision of Edible Gift Items)

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Abstract

Across India people celebrate festivals with lot of pomp and show. Enthusiasm fills the air during the festival season and spending see a sudden rise in the households. The urban Indian is changing the way of celebration of festivals and this has led to major impact of the market. The market on the other hand has made several changes in products, packaging, advertising and marketing strategies which cast impact on consumption pattern during festivals. While the Indian market was dominated by traditional Indian sweets as gift item during festivals, the various changes in social circumstances, market conditions, and cultural submergence, new patterns of edible gifts have emerged. This paper tries to understand the change in consumption pattern with specific reference to the edible gifts market taking into consideration traditional Indian sweets, Chocolates and Cakes and Pastries.

Keywords: Festivals, edible gifts, consumption behaviour, Indian Sweets, Chocolates, Cakes and Pastries

Introduction

India is a land of diverse cultures and languages. Every corner of the country has its own cultural distinctiveness and traditions. However, there is a common thread that binds all the cultures together and that is – Festivals. Festivals in India are celebrated with great gusto and enthusiasm since times immemorial. Most festivals are about seeking blessings from almighty and celebrating victory of truth and righteousness. They have mythological and religious importance and celebrating them is about paying homage to our cultures. Apart from having religious and mythological relevance, festivities also foster a sense of togetherness and closeness amongst all. These are the times when we forget all the bitterness and enmities, and spread love and happiness all around. In short, festivals add a flavour of

sweetness to our lives! And perhaps this is the sole reason for exchanging sweets and savouries with our near and dear ones. Exchanging sweets during festivals is undeniably a significant part of celebrating festivals together. As a matter of fact, we have associated some of the traditional Indian sweets with festivals and it has become a customary to consume those sweets on the festival day. Some of the associations includes, *Modak*-Ganesh Chaturthi, *Jalebi* - Dussehra, *Tilladdoo*- Lohri, *Gujiyas*– Holi, *Kheer* – Rakshabandhan, *Gulabjamun* - Deepawali and so on.

There was a time when festivities meant home-made delicacies prepared by female members of the household. But with changing times and trends of the society, people prefer buying sweets rather than preparing them at home. As a matter of fact, with changing social and economic trends, eating out expenditure per household has risen over time and this is significantly reflected during festival times as well. A greater proportion of population now spends on edible gifts and this has given impetus to the market. A whole new variety of edible gift items have emerged in the market. Our traditional sweets stand in a tough competition with the newer versions of edible gifts like chocolates, cakes, pastries etc, which have been introduced to the market by multinational companies seeking better profit avenues in terms of changing cultural trends. There was a time when we could never think of gifting chocolates on Diwali. However, companies like Cadburys have changed that perception. They have come up with heart-touching advertisements and attractive advertising slogans - '*RishtePakne Do*', '*Moment of Love*', '*TohIss Diwali AapKiseKhushKarenge*', '*Is Diwali Khushiyan Le Chalo*'. This inevitably has struck the emotional chords, making Diwali Celebrations pack one of the most common gifts. Initially launched with occasions like Valentine's Day, Father's Day, Mother's day or Christmas and New year Eves, the sweet shops and bakeries too have been trying to woo the customers with their products by giving attractive packaging and discounts. Special festive packaging is being offered. Moreover, bakeries today offer more eggless options than before and this inevitably has made cakes and pastries another common option as edible gifts.

In a major part of the Northern India, *Diwali* is one of the most popular festivals as it is celebrated by most communities – Hindus, Sikhs and Jains. This is not to undermine the importance of other festivals, as they are equally significant. The common tradition of exchanging gifts and sweets makes this time the most favourable time for marketing activities by companies. It is during this time of the year when the household expenditure rises

manifolds and a major proportion of it goes into buying gifts. With the advent of internet, gifting across countries has also become common. Orders are placed online and get home delivered as per the requirement placed by the customer. The market tries to encash this celebratory mood by introducing new products, packaging and advertising strategies. However, with changing needs and choices, the strategies need to be revamped every year. Edible gifts capture a significant proportion in the gift market as food is an important part of any festive celebration.

Objectives Of The Study

The present study is an effort to gain insight about the changing purchase pattern with regards to edible gift items during the festival seasons in view of the emerging trends of consumption. The main objectives of the study are to understand and identify

- the changing purchase pattern of edible gift items during festivals
- the relationship between age factor and purchase decision of chocolates at the time of festivals
- the relationship between age factor and purchase decision of cakes and pastries at the time of festivals
- the relationship between age factor and purchase decision of traditional sweets at the time of festivals
- comparison of above purchase decisions

Research Methodology

The current study has been taken up in Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida) of National Capital Region (NCR) at the time of the festival of Diwali. The Research is based on primary data collected with the help of questionnaire from 195 respondents of various age groups. The main objective of study is to find out the impact of age on purchase decision of edible gift items at the time of festivals. Simultaneously the paper also tries to understand the changing trend of consumption during Indian festivals. This research has been conducted in two districts which reflect a blend of metropolitan culture and the middle town culture and thus becomes more relevant in understanding the overall thought process of the consumer and the impact of advertising and marketing efforts being taken up by the various confectionary companies during festivals. The study will be useful in making the strategies of product planning and identification of target group of customers of various products.

Chi –square test has been applied for analysis of data and reaching to conclusions.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Age Group/ Purchase Decision	Cake & Pastry	Chocolate	Indian Sweets	Total
Young (25 Yrs)	24	26	20	70
Mature (26 Yrs – 50Yrs)	10	34	23	67
Adult and Senior Citizens (above 50 Yrs)	6	20	32	58
Total	40	80	75	N=195

Age Group/ Purchase Decision	Young Upto 25 Yrs	Mature 26 Yrs – 50Yrs	Adult and Senior Citizens above 50 Yrs	Total
Cake & Pastry	24	10	6	40
Chocolate	26	34	20	80
Indian Sweets	20	23	32	75
Total	70	67	58	195
Average	23.33	22.33	19.33	65.00
Standard Deviation	2.49	9.81	10.62	17.80
C.V.	10.69	43.92	54.96	27.38

Testing of significance of difference between purchase decisions-We set up the null hypothesis that the purchase decision is not affected by age categories. Our alternate hypothesis is that the purchase decision is affected by age and there is significant difference in purchase decision of respondents of different age groups.

Chi-Square Test

Observed Frequency(fo)	Expected Frequency (fe)	(fo – fe)	(fo – fe)²	(fo – fe)²/fe
24	14.3590	9.6410	92.9494	6.4733
10	13.7436	-3.7436	14.0145	1.0197
6	11.8974	-5.8974	34.7798	2.9233
26	28.7179	-2.7179	7.3872	0.2572
34	27.4872	6.5128	42.4168	1.5431
20	23.7949	-3.7949	14.4011	0.6052
20	26.9231	-6.9231	47.9290	1.7802
23	25.7692	-2.7692	7.6686	0.2976

32	22.3077	9.6923	93.9408	4.2111
			Chi- Square = 19.1108	

$$\text{d.f.} = (r-1) (c-1)$$

$$\text{d.f.} = (3-1) (3-1)$$

$$\text{d.f.} = 4$$

Chi- Square table value at 4 d.f. at 95% significance level = 0.711

Since Chi-Square (calculated value) is higher than the tabulated value, we reject the null Hypothesis and conclude that purchase decision is not uniformly distributed over the all age categories.

Interpretations and Conclusions

The current study infers that there is a significant variation in the consumption pattern reflected by people of varying age groups. The following are the major interpretations formulated from the data collected and the analysis obtained after tests.

1. Cakes and pastries are mostly liked by young people and young customers are the major purchasers of these items.
2. Chocolate is mostly purchased by mature customers defined in the study by the age group of 26 to 50 years.
3. Adults and senior citizens mostly like the traditional Indian sweets.
4. Coefficient of variation is minimum in case of young purchasers, which indicates that their purchase decision is not specific. They try more products and are more creative and experimental than others.
5. Coefficient of variation is maximum in case of old purchasers, indicating more specific likes and inclinations towards product.
6. Coefficient of variation is different in various age groups, it is also showing the difference in purchase decision of various groups.
7. As per acceptance of alternate hypothesis, purchase decision is significantly different of various age groups. It is verifying the impact of age on purchase decision of edible gifts at the time of festivals.

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