



TEA IN DIFFERENT CONTEXT.....

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Abstract

Tea is a very important beverage of today used by 80% population all over the world. Next to water, it is the cheapest beverage. Tea plays an important part in our social cultural life. Economic condition are also influenced by tea in those countries where tea is produced. Role of tea is not limited to this only, it influence our environment too. This paper tries to analyse the key part Tea is playing in our life as a specific product. This paper will describe the impact of tea on social and cultural life of people of different countries, economic effect of tea, and environmental effect of tea. While analyzing this mainly secondary data has been used through various sources like journals magazines, tea board website etc.

Keywords: *beverage, social-cultural, impact, environmental, economic.*

Introduction:

Tea is not a new word for all of us. We all are aware of it. Today all over the world, the morning of people starts with hot cup of tea. Afterwards other activities of day are followed. If we talk about India tea not only acts as a beverage but it serves an important source to fulfill hunger. It is a medium to pass time, we can easily see people standing near roadside and sipping their cup of tea. Same condition is followed all over the world. Tea has made an important position in the heart of 80% of population of the world. Now it is very difficult to think a day without tea. History told us its origin in China, Tibet and northern India. When it was discovered in China it was named as Kia, but by the course of time Cha word has replaced it and now a days it is famous by the name of Tea.

Legends explain that the tea was discovered by Chinese emperor Shah Nang in 2737BC. But tea has made its exceptional influence on society, on their culture throughout the world that it has captured an eminent position in unique ceremonies function. Social etiquettes are followed in the preparation of tea. Tea has made itself a part of several poems and songs. From economic point of view tea plays an important role in earning foreign exchange for tea producing countries. Basically developing countries are involved in tea production. Some countries produce tea as their cash crop. Governmental policies, rules and regulations also

affect tea. So, tea may also be called as political product. Tea has some effect on our environment also. From the beginning of its processing till its final step it has to pass through several steps. This process leave some effect on our environment also, which is quite interesting. Though the tea companies today making many attempts to minimize the harmful effect. but still there are some effect which are beyond control completely.

Objective:

1. to present the status of tea in different countries.
2. to present tea as economic product.
3. to present tea as political product.
4. to explain effects of tea production on our environment.

Tea As A Socio- Cultural product

Tea In India

Tea plays different cultural role in different countries. As in India about 80% India's total production is consumed in the country itself. so, one can think that how important for Indians. Whether it is matter of hosting a guest or waking up in the morning. All these are associated with tea. In Indian culture it holds a dominant position in entertaining a guest in their home. Though today market is captured by other beverages like cold-drink, juices etc. but ,tea holds an important position, and it serves its own purpose. In a nation like India where hunger always remains part of society, at that condition it is tea which serves the purpose of satisfying hunger for poor for some time. so, it act as a staple food item in India. At street corner and roadside teashop, we can easily see people standing and sipping their cup of tea. Tea provides instant satisfaction and it is also a medium of energy and it helps in getting rid of tiredness. Tea provides a chance to linger for a moment to catch up on the news of the day, because going through newspaper in morning with a hot cup of tea in one hand has a different enjoyment for those who have enjoyed it. In India around 3-4 number of cup of tea is consumed daily. One can easily imagine the importance of tea in Indian life.

Tea in China

The Chinese basically drink green teas and some Oolong without milk. Black teas are there mainly for export purpose. Tea served in western style tea pots. At the time when communism was on peak in China, tea was considered as bourgeois. In those days visitors sits in tea houses at low tables to drink fine quality tea. Besides quenching of thirsts drinking of tea is about appreciating for its flavour, aroma and taste and appearance. At their offices and work place Chinese used to drink green tea in same mug. Many tea brewing mugs come with built in strainers. The same set of tea leaves will be infused three or four times. Second infusion generally regarded as best.

Tea in Australia

Teas are brewed in a billy (a metal can with wired handle) and is filled with water and kept on fire and when water starts boiling it is removed from fire and required tea leaves are added to it and after it is left to brew for a minute. Then billy is to make swung, so that tea leaves get collected to the bottom, there should be expertise in swinging the billy because any carelessness would result in painful scalding and when tea gets ready it is poured in a metal mug and milk and sugar is added to it. After that a few scented eucalyptus leaves with the tea are added. And this way tea in Australia is ready to sip and people enjoyed their cup of tea to satisfy their hunger or lesser down their tiredness and long days excursion.

Tea in Malawi

Like other countries of the world tea drinking is famous or popular in Malawi also. Malawians are famous to drink tea in black. They sweetened it with sugar, usually they use tea with bread by dunk it in tea to improve the taste of the bread with sweetened tea. Indians way of drinking is also famous in Malawi culture i.e. water, teabags, milk and sugar all brewed together in the pot collectively.

Tea in Malaysia

A different way is used to drink tea in Malaysia. Tea is served with condensed milk with plenty of sugar in it. In Malaysia iced tea is also popular. To prepare it, hot tea is covered with generous amount of condensed milk, then crushed ice is put on it as toppings. In Malaysia such type of tea are named as teabag or flying tea. The difference between the condensed milk tea and crushed ice tea is that it is poured in cup from as much as height pourer can raise his arm so that tea developed a wonderful frothy head.

Tea in Russia

Preference for tea as their social culture is not very old in Russia. Means the concept of tea drinking in Russia is not too old. Basically Russians prefer to have black tea with honey, sugar and jam. There is no fixed time for Russians to sip their cup of tea. They prefer tea at any time when they desire. In Russia a metal urn containing water having cradle on its top which holds a tea pot is used. They called it 'Samovar'. This is headed by a charcoal burning pipe, to heat the water, then little water is poured out and diluted with tea which is present in the tea pot. Samovar is the part of Russian culture. They can be easily found in homes offices, Restaurants as well as in the street corners and even on board trains.

Tea in U.S.A

Basically two types of tea is famous for drinking purpose in USA. They are Iced tea and Sun tea. The story of invention of these tea in USA is very interesting. In 1904 St. Louis world Fair Richard Blechyadin an Expatriate Englishman ran a hot tea stalls at the fair. The weather was hot so any potential customer was interested in cold drinks. In the light of

this Richard spotted an opportunity to serve his tea with few ice cubes and this experiment of this Englishman has proved instant success for him, and this way iced tea become popular in U.S.A. sun tea is a late twentieth century development of iced tea. The idea originated in southern state where there is always plenty of sunshine. This is prepared by using cold water and tea bags which are placed in a glass and capped for some couple of hours by placing the container in sunshine, then it is served liked iced tea. People in U.S.A enjoyed both type of tea a lot.

TEA AS ECONOMIC PRODUCT

The foremost item of trade chart under the heading Agriculture and allied product. In most of the developing country tea plays an important role in their economy. It acts as leading foreign exchange earner for that country. If we talk in Indian context it act as a major foreign exchange earner. In Kenya it is grown as their cash crop. Besides earning foreign exchange tea sector has provided employment to many people whether skilled or unskilled. The farmers engaged in tea estates earn their livelihood only through this, and meet their financial obligation. Farmers of tea growing regions are dependent upon the payment from tea growing for educating their children. It is source of their savings for their future requirements. Besides these in some countries when payment is made, farmer group themselves form saving credit and cooperative societies, saccos as they called it. Here they deposit their sum of money which acts as a security or guarantee loans and helps them in the time of their hours of need. Farmers generally take their loans to buy cows to buy cars, purchase piece of land for their daughter's marriage, build houses etc. Tea growing not only helps farmers but it also useful for society. The tax levied on tea by the local authorities has been used to improve road conditions in tea growing areas. This way tea growing sector also helps in building infrastructure for the country. The major countries which are commercially dependent on tea are India, Kenya, China, Australia, Indonesia, Malawi, Russia, Malaysia, USA, Britain, parts of Africa etc. All of these countries are engaged in tea production and they also export it and earn foreign exchange for their country. Out of this list some countries are tea importing countries also. First they import tea and after processing further, they export it to other countries. Below is the table showing the earning of different country from tea trade.

TEA AS POLITICAL PRODUCT

Since Boston Tea Party (in 18th century when tea arrived in northern America and British empire decided to place taxes on tea supply to colonies of North America who were under their power) till date tea remains the matter of International affairs and political intervention whether it is India, Srilanka, Kenya, SAARC, COMESA. The rules and regulations of all these always interfere in the matter of tea trade. As any policy affects trade so, it is but obvious that it will affect tea also. Whether it is production, consumption or trade.

Establishment of WTO in 1995 proved landmark in the history of trade. The policies implemented by WTO has its effect on tea trade also. The policies of tea tariff import/export rules and regulations affects trade of tea in the global market. Now, if we talk about SAARC countries many countries who were also member of SAARC are major tea producer and exporter and if any condition forces them to change their direction of tea trade it will definitely affect other members countries. Trade relations with other countries will get affected if due to change in policies SAARC countries start trade of tea between themselves only. In the year 1999 when India and Pakistan have their conflict over the matter of Kashmir it has affected tea trade to great extent between these two countries. So, SAARC always remains regional organization which is poorly integrated. No one is unknown to the huge bureaucracy of China which make its prediction about the market share on its own way and day by day strengthening its global tea market. One of the major tea producing area in Africa. Kenya belongs to it and an agency which formed for supporting trade is COMESA (common market for east and southern Africa). Any policy framed by COMESA affects its member countries put its effect on rest of the world also. Kenya Malawi, Sudan, all of these members of COMESA are major tea exporting country. Whereas, Egypt is an importing country of tea COMESA member countries trade their maximum between themselves and leave little prospects for other countries. WTO, Regional Trade Agreements (RTA's), Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA's) and Bilateral trade policies also influence the direction of trade. Changing Bilateral Trade Policies between the nation influence the non member trading countries to search for new market for their tea. Such trends in global market forced trading countries either to leave the market or search the the new market or becomes the member of existing trading partners of different agencies.

According to Baldwin and Jaimovich 2010, "exporters in non member countries push their government to join existing PTA's or create new ones to counteract the potential damage caused by Preferential trade liberalization." So, now a days the global trade is so dynamic that it is difficult for tea exporters to survive unless and until they seek new market and adjust them in new market conditions.

Eventhough local level trade policies and governmental interference affect the tea producer and exporter . so any countries government plays an important role for the development of tea industry of that country.

TEA AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Tea is the most simple and cheapest beverage all over the world. While consuming tea we never thought about its consequences over our environment. Like other crops tea too has some environmental impact. Around four billion kg tea is produced annually around the world. If we go back in the history we will find that there were forest on the land where tea is grown now a days. Those forest were shelter for many animals. Due to continous cutting of forest those animals lost their natural habitat and slowly- slowly they themselves lost. Today

deforestation is the major problem. Like other farming tea plantation also need use of fertilizers pesticides for their better growth which ultimately results in degradation in the quality of soil. It also results in flowing off or rain off of harmful chemicals into rivers. Which pollutes water and thereby polluting environment. Tea which we use in our homes is not grown in that form in which we use. It has to pass with several steps and process to obtain its final look, first step is picking of tea plants (only the top 1-2 inches of the mature plant). Next step is fermentation to achieve the required flavour, this step is known as Withering. In the process of fermentation the leaves do not get completely dried. So, next step is to dry it by the help of machines. In this process leaves are heated using fuels such as wood or gas. This process is known as rolling. This used fuel like wood or gas is definitely a source of environmental pollution. Some tea are packed in nylon tea bags which causes threat to the environment. Despite all these drawback of producing tea, it is preferred in our environment most. The reason behind this is that when we compare it to other beverages tea seems much better and eco-friendly than those for our surroundings. This is the reason of non concentrating on its drawbacks.

However, now a days some tea plant holders are paying attention towards environment and they are transferring them to organically grown tea leaves, they are using bio-degradable tea bags, pouch etc. they are actively paying attention to keep clean their environment from those pollutants which can be more or less avoided.

FINDINGS

After analyzing all the aspects of tea as a product we have found that whatever role tea plays the result is that overall tea is the inseparable part of our life, without tea our life will be dull. Today people are so habitual of it that it has become custom of drinking tea at every ceremony, function, entertaining guests etc. It holds dominant position in the society and in the heart of everyone who consumes it. Today consumer grocery list can no get completed unless including tea as an item in the list. Tea is not important on the part of consumer only but it is a major source of income for suppliers also. Today tea is grown at a very large scale. Though due to need of specific climate, its production is limited to only certain parts of every tea producing country. But the availability of land did not matter. Because whatever the availability of land is tea is grown at a very large scale. Tea has become the source of income as well as employment for million of people skilled or unskilled. In India alone tea sector provides employment to around more than a million of people. The taxes levied on tea is used for infrastructure development. The importance of tea did not stop here only. Tea served purpose of foreign exchange for the country also. Tea is also exported to other parts of the world market. There are some countries where demand of tea exist but they do not produce tea. These countries import tea for their local consumption. But sometimes countries import tea to re-export them. Kenya produces tea as their cash crop.

Though tea holds such an eminent position in the society but it is not free from political bias. It is also bound by several rules and regulations and policies like other trade items are bound. At international level several agencies are there who fixes tariffs on tea trade

agencies or association like **SAARC, WITS, WTO, COMESA, RTAs, PTAs**, all are one and the other way affect the tea situation or tea trade. Tea production also holds some adverse effect for environment but these effects are contiously checked by the producers. Now a days tea producers are always trying to searcg for those techniques and resources by which tea can be produced with minimum cost of environment. In the overall concept we can conclude that tea is becoming key part of our routine life.

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