



THESIS

On

Cultural Branding of Indigenous Coffee Brands and Impact on Consumer Perception

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism

by

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Declaration of Originality

I, Miss Priyanka Mukherjee, hereby declare that my research paper on the topic “**Cultural Branding of Indigenous Coffee Brands and Impact on Consumer Perception**” is an original work done by the researcher. I further reaffirm that the paper has not been published yet.

Date: 21/04/2025



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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled "**Cultural Branding of Indigenous Coffee Brands and Impact on Consumer Perception**" submitted to Dr. Nidhi Singhal, faculty, Department of Journalism, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the **Bachelor of Arts in Journalism**, is an original work carried out by **Ms. Priyanka Mukherjee**.

This research was undertaken under my supervision and guidance, and to the best of my knowledge, the thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or any other similar title at any university or institution in India or abroad.

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Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I bow my head in gratitude to the Almighty, whose divine grace has granted me the strength, perseverance and wisdom to undertake and complete this research work.

I take this opportunity to express my deepest sense of respect and sincere gratitude to Dr. Nidhi Singhal, my esteemed supervisor, for her scholarly guidance, insightful suggestions, and continuous encouragement throughout the course of this research. Her valuable feedback and unwavering support have played a pivotal role in shaping the direction and quality of this study.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Neha Jingala, Head of the Department, for her academic leadership, constant motivation, and for fostering an environment of learning and research within the department.

I am also profoundly grateful to Dr. Rajiv Chopra, Principal, Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, University of Delhi, for providing the institutional support and infrastructure that made this research endeavour possible.

I would like to acknowledge the faculty members, administrative staff, and fellow students of Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, for their cooperation and moral support during the completion of my work.

Lastly, I extend my special thanks to my family and well-wishers whose unwavering faith, patience, and emotional support have been my greatest strength throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation uncovers the role of cultural branding in shaping consumer perception and purchase behaviour within India's indigenous coffee industry, focusing on Blue Tokai and Araku Coffee. The study aims to analyze how cultural elements such as regional heritage, storytelling, and experiential marketing strategies differentiate these brands in a competitive market that is dominated by global players like Starbucks, Third Wave Coffee Co. and more.

Employing a mixed methodology, the research integrates qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. Thematic analysis of secondary data, including brand communications, media coverage, and marketing campaigns, highlight key cultural themes, like sustainability, artisanal craftsmanship, and local narratives, used to foster meaningful emotional connections with consumers and establish brand authenticity. A consumer perception survey has also been conducted with 100+ respondents via Google Forms to evaluate consumer awareness, attitudes and behavioural responses to such cultural branding strategies.

The findings indicate that cultural branding plays a major role in terms of brand differentiation and customer loyalty, with experiential elements like cafe ambiance having significant impact upon consumer perception. However, methodological limitations like potential biases in secondary data and a restricted sample representativeness may hamper the generalizability of the findings.

Therefore, the study contributes to understanding cultural branding as a strategic tool for indigenous coffee brands to expand their market presence, while staying rooted to their unique cultural identity. Further recommendations emphasize upon leveraging storytelling methods and cultural aesthetic to create a distinct and resonant brand identity.

Keywords: Cultural Elements, Indigenous Coffee, Consumer Perception, Purchase Decisions, Branding Strategies

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Historical Background of Indian Coffee:

The vibrant and diverse mesh of culture in India extends to its choice of beverage as well. Primarily a tea-drinking nation since its five-thousand year old Indus Valley Civilization, coffee was introduced as a cultural export in India in the late seventeenth century.

The story goes such that an Indian pilgrim to Mecca named Baba Budan smuggled seven beans of coffee back to India from Yemen in 1670 and planted them in the Chandragiri Hills of Karnataka, now known as the Baba Budan hills. In the 17th century, the Dutch popularised the cultivation of coffee but it was the British Raj of the nineteenth century that turned coffee into a formalised commercial beverage.

Moreover, during the British Raj, a heavy tax was levied on tea which drove the Indian population towards coffee and heavy coffee cultivation of Arabica and Robusta hybrids.

Consequently, the India Coffee Board was established in 1907 to help improve the quality and reach of coffee through research and educational endeavours. However, upon liberalisation in 1995, coffee growers were given free rein to sell coffee to whoever they wished to. (Majumdar, 2022)

2. Evolution of Coffee as a Culture in India:

After the cultural adoption of coffee from the British, the wealthy Brahmin families of South India served filter coffee in a davra tumbler and the richness of their coffee flavours signified their family status in the society (Majumdar, 2022). Moreover, in the capital city of Kolkata, ‘coffee-house culture’ became prevalent in the twentieth century. The Indian Coffee House in Bankim Chatterjee Street of Kolkata has witnessed several moments of socio-cultural transformation with several film makers, newspaper editors of 1960s, 70s and 80s apart from students and professors of Calcutta University engaging in political debates and discussions over a cup of coffee. The Indian Coffee House had shaped several eminent literary and performance artists like the international film-maker, Satyajit Ray, bengali writer, Sunil Gangopadhyay and even the poet, Allen Ginsberg who spent afternoons at the Kolkata coffee house with Jack

Kerouac and formed friendships with Sunil Ganguly and Shakti Chattopadhyay and was inspired by the non-violent political activism in India. (Sen, 2009)

Thus, coffee unlike tea was acquiring a uniqueness and uncommonness (Verma, 2013). Tea is a ritualistic and ordinary drink in India that must be consumed on a timely basis. Contrastingly, coffee's socio-cultural meaning reservoir granted it a status of belonging to the wealthy and intellectually-refined class of the country. As the coffee house culture evolved across the country, it gave rise to a 'private space' in a public sphere (Sen, 2009). Similar to Habermas' public sphere, Ray Oldenburg in the 'Great Good Place' of 1989 defined a 'third place' in the socio-cultural fabric. The first place signified the home, which is a completely private space for the individual. The second place is work, which is where the individual practices productivity exclusively. The third place is where the individual goes for informal public interaction and the coffee houses of the twentieth century and the coffee shops of today explicitly serve this purpose.

Coffee today is an essential part of our daily lives. Our morning today starts with a sip of coffee. In the southern part of India, coffee is 'personified' in the culture in its form called Indian filter coffee and accompanies all breakfast to lunch dishes (Majumdar, 2009). Coffee today is not just a beverage to be had in an outside shop, but can also be consumed at home, in the form of powdered instant coffee, or coffee beans. In summary, Coffee is everywhere today.

3. Branding of Coffee in India:

Today, India is the world's sixth largest coffee producer, behind Brazil, Vietnam, Indonesia, Colombia and Honduras. Moreover, the domestic market of coffee in India is also growing to cater to the needs of the burgeoning middle class and coffee consumption in the country has doubled between 2000 and 2011 with an annual growth of 5-6%. (Mercanta, 2025)

While Robusta and Arabica are popular coffee varieties prevalent in India, the growing domestic market has given rise to several coffee brands that dominate the Indian coffee market today. Coffee brands in India have introduced a broad line of products from roasted beans, instant coffee powder, artisanal blends to cold brews and bottled coffee. Coffee besides being a retail product is also a service-based business through its cafe culture across the country.

Brands like Tata Coffee is one of India's oldest and most prominent coffee producers and provides product offerings like instant coffee as well as blends like Tata Grand and Tata Coffee Sonnets, while promising sustainability through Rainforest Alliance. (Tata Coffee Official Website, 2025)

Besides, brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters propagate an image of artisanal coffee deep-ingrained in Indian heritage and culture, by sourcing Indian single-origin coffee beans directly from regions like Chikmagalur, Coorg and the Nilgiris. Moreover, the brand has come to define the 'third wave of coffee culture' in India which prioritizes craftsmanship and quality over mass production. With events and workshops organized at Blue Tokai cafes, coffee is propagated not just as a commodity but as a social experience, which is amplified by the minimalist cafe design with traditional Indian motifs on the walls as well as the packaging of the coffee beverages. (Blue Tokai Official Website, 2025)

Apart from the home-grown coffee brands of India, foreign imported brands like Starbucks Coffee are striving to bridge the global third wave coffee culture with the local preferences of the Indian diaspora. Starbucks India, like Blue Tokai, sources single-origin Indian coffee beans from Coorg and Chikmagalur and fuses local and global flavours by introducing beverages like the Masala Chai Latte and the South Indian Filter Coffee. Moreover, Starbucks is redefining coffee as an artisanal beverage and not just a stimulant for the Indian population community tasting and brewing workshops, barista championships and much more. Moreover, the aesthetic and minimal design cafes invite consumers to work, socialize and relax and enjoy coffee as a lifestyle and not just a mass-produced commodity. (Starbucks Official Website, 2025)

4. Dawn of Third Wave Coffee Culture in India:

Maslow (1970) defined physiological and psychological needs, higher-order and lower-order needs through the Hierarchy of Needs triangle. A product in the market has a deep-imprinted socio-cultural meaning beyond its physical functionalities. Marketers inhabit this space of needs and wants to define and redefine meanings through physical commodities.

The ‘Third Wave’ of Coffee, a term that arose in the United States in 1999, denotes a movement that treats coffee as an artisanal beverage instead of a mass-produced commercial entity, with added emphasis on its quality, origin and flavour types. According to the LiveMint (2016), a growing number of Indian entrepreneurs like The Indian Bean, Flying Squirrel, Seven Beans, The Coffee Company, Black Baza and many more are shifting the coffee narrative from traditional instant brews to artisanal blend coffees, catering to a growing demographic of consumers seeking premium coffee experiences.

While the ‘First Wave’ of coffee emphasized on mass production and commercialisation of coffee through instant coffee, the ‘Second Wave’ defined coffee as a social and cultural phenomenon with specialty drinks and cafe culture through Starbucks, Costa Coffee and many more (Journal of Coffee Studies, 2016). The ‘Third Wave’ refined the movement further and redefined coffee as an exclusive artisanal beverage.

The ‘First Wave’ of coffee only catered to the physiological needs on Maslow’s hierarchy, where coffee was portrayed as a stimulant and energizer. ‘Third Wave’ of coffee also allows marketers to leverage safety needs of individuals by tagging coffee products as ‘ethically-sourced’ and ‘sustainable’ as done by brands like Blue Tokai, Tata Coffee and many more. The rise of cafe culture and workshop events at cafes deeply feeds the ‘Belongingness and Social needs’ of the individual. Moreover, esteem needs are delivered by the premium status of consuming specialty coffee. Marketers leverage self-actualization needs by enmeshing the consumer in exploring the artistry of specialty cafe and investing in their own private space in a public cafe. (Verma, 2013)

5. Discussion:

Coffee has evolved over the years to become a non-negotiable and mandatory lifestyle element of Indian culture. Whether consumed at home, or in cafes, coffee is deep-enrooted in the common lifestyle of the urban-middle class in India. While coffee is a foreign-imported entity, third-wave coffee brands are striving to bridge the gap between global coffee movement along with local tastes to create a unique cultural blend of indigenous coffee in India, serving to create different socio-cultural imprints upon the diaspora.

Whether through community events in coffee shops, introduction of various brewing techniques, personalized coffee education by baristas, or ‘glocal’ flavour profiles in indigenous coffee brands of the country, the socio-cultural significance of coffee in India has changed over the years, ever since the British popularized the beverage in the country. From an exclusive drink pertaining to heavy coffee house debates and discussions, today, coffee is a part of our everyday lifestyle and greater emphasis is being placed on redefining the coffee culture in the country with artisanal blends and the rise of the third wave of coffee consumption among the Indian middle class.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cultural branding of coffee has been studied through various perspectives and there is extensive published literature on it. For the purpose of review, the available literature has been divided into the following subsections:

- Studies on the evolution of coffee consumption.
- Studies on coffee as a socio-cultural entity.
- Studies analyzing the coffee brandscape.
- Studies on the consumer perception of coffee brands.

A detailed review of the following subsections follows below.

1. Studies on the Evolution of Coffee Consumption

Majumdar (2022) traces the introduction of coffee in a tea-drinking nation like India. Coffee production began in India in the 17th century when Baba Budan brought seven coffee beans from Yemen to Chikmagalur, Karnataka. This place then eventually came to be called the Budan Hills, the birthplace of Indian coffee. According to Majumdar (2022), India is also one of the largest producers of coffee, contributing 3.5% of the total global production. The country houses 52,000 coffee gardens and the production processes are mainly concentrated around Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu which produce 70% of the country's coffee. India has 16 different coffee varieties, including Arabica, Robusta and hybrids like S.795 and Cauvery (Majumdar, 2022). The Robusta variety is popularly exported to Italy, Germany and other European countries. However, the coffee industry in India faces several challenges like overcoming the cultural barriers in a tea-drinking nation, ethical concerns from huge corporations but initiatives like 'Make in India' and partnerships with global brands like Starbucks are navigating the underlying problems.

The evolution of coffee culture in India, particularly in Kolkata, reflects the intersection of heritage and globalized consumerism, offering significant insights into cultural branding strategies for indigenous coffee. Historically, spaces like the Indian Coffee

House at Albert Hall, established in 1938, served as hubs for intellectual and cultural exchange. Renowned figures such as Satyajit Ray and Sunil Gangopadhyay frequented these coffeehouses, making them iconic for fostering political discourse and debate (Sen, 2009). However, with the economic liberalization and the consequent globalization of coffee since the 1990s, cafe chains like Cafe Coffee Day and Barista have gained prominence, redefining coffee spaces according to the modern consumer lifestyle.

CCD uniquely positioned itself as a youth-centric brand, providing ‘third spaces’ for relaxation, interaction and social expression. By 2009, CCD held 24 outlets in Kolkata alone while Barista maintained a similar streak with premium offering and international coffee blends (Sen, 2009). Moreover, the study further highlights that these social institutions primarily cater to the upper-middle class and the middle class with 97% of their consumer base being within the 20-30 years old age demographic, comprising mainly students and young professionals. The author contrasts this with the humble Indian Coffee House which upholds its legacy of affordability and cultural authenticity, with prices as low as Rs. 8 for a cup of coffee in 2009. It focuses on Indian Coffee House’s efforts to sustain the culture of intellectual engagement rather than commercialization. For indigenous coffee branding, this study provides insights into the importance of maintaining local cultural narratives while addressing modern consumer needs for experiential and aspirational products. Such a dual and comprehensive approach will allow indigenous coffee brands to cater to both traditional as well as modern consumers.

Likewise, the evolution of coffee culture in Bangalore underlines the growing significance of cafe branding in urban India. As mentioned above, historically, coffee gained a prominent place in India’s cultural fabric with the introduction of the Indian Coffee House which was a hub of intellectual discourse (Sharma et al., 2022). Over time, Bangalore came to be known as the ‘coffee capital’ of India, driven by its cosmopolitan culture as well as its labelling as India’s ‘technological hub.’ The deregulation of the Coffee Board in the 1990s spurred the growth of the cafe culture with Cafe Coffee Day pioneering the industry. CCD launched its first cafe in 1996 in Brigade Road, Bangalore, and became India’s largest coffee chain, exporting over 27,000 tons of coffee annually by

2000, valued at 60 million dollars (Sharma et al., 2022). The study further revealed that 38% of Bangalore residents visit cafes weekly while 82% rely on traditional small coffee shops like Darshinis for daily needs (Sharma et al., 2022). Cafe typologies in Bangalore have also evolved by combining traditional interests within modern settings such as book cafes, themed cafes etc. Moreover, coffee brands like Blue Tokai and Third Wave Coffee focus on specialty brews and interactive workshops (Sharma et al., 2022). Moreover, ambiance, accessibility and price heavily influence customer decisions with high brand cafes leveraging their exclusivity while small shops like Darshinis provide affordability. Thus, indigenous coffee brands can combine cultural authenticity with modern experiential setting to cater to a diverse consumer group.

2. Studies on Coffee as a Socio-Cultural Entity

Cultural branding transforms products into symbols, embedded with socio-cultural meanings, aligning them with consumer identities, values and aspirations. Verma (2013) argues that coffee occupies a unique cultural space, different from tea, which is regarded as a ritualistic drink and consumed within family settings in India. Contrastingly, coffee is a social commodity and symbolic in nature, reflecting affluence, sophistication as well as intellectual evolution. The study also establishes that compared to tea, coffee's consumption is primarily outside the home and is often linked with upscale coffee houses. In India, 51% of coffee consumption is within cafes while 63% of tea consumption occurs within home settings. Thus, coffee is generally positioned as a social enabler, fostering interactions and self-expression. Thus, indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters can leverage this insight and promote their offerings as an experience that can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity. Further, the study emphasises on the symbolic meaning behind coffee like its cultural mystique involving several complex preparation methods and their association with exclusivity. Moreover, coffee is a form of celebration and indulgence which can also be realized from the brand tagline of Cafe Coffee Day which says, "A lot can happen over coffee." Thus, indigenous coffee brands can enhance their offering with cultural storytelling emphasizing heritage and authenticity and build a unique brand experience for their consumer base.

A similar study conducted by Hakim & Amir (2022) traces the development of coffee shops in Indonesia as a socio-cultural space. With the rising wave of globalization and Western consumerism, coffee consumption has become quite popular with modern establishments like Warkop Phoenam becoming iconic in Makassar, Indonesia.

According to Amir and Hakim (2022), coffee shops previously only fulfilled the physical needs of consumers like providing coffee. But today's coffee shops are equipped with internet, television as well as newspapers to cater to varied consumer needs. Enjoying coffee in modern cafes has become a sign of social prestige while several politicians in Indonesia also leverage such socio-cultural hubs as political tools. Informal discussions, poster campaigns and talk shows are held by politicians in cafes to connect with the public of Makassar (Hakim & Amir, 2022). Thus, it can be implied from such a study that while branding indigenous coffee brands, one must not only sell it as a product destined to fulfil physical needs but as a holistic experience that ties in with the social, cultural and political spheres of an individual.

3. Studies Analyzing the Coffee Brandscape

The coffee brandscape in India has been proliferated by global brands such as Starbucks, Costa Coffee and Third Wave Coffee. However, the rise of indigenous brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters present a strong contention to this. Likewise, the cultural approach to branding by Cayla and Arnould (2008) provides a comprehensive framework as to how indigenous coffee brands can leverage their cultural heritage to differentiate their brand identity in the competitive global market of coffee. The literature also emphasises the point that branding is not merely a managerial activity but is embedded within historical, social and geographical narratives. With the rise of the 'third wave' of coffee culture, this perspective presented by Cayla and Arnould (2008) aligns with the consumers' growing inclination towards authentic coffee, with products tied to specific regions and traditions.

Cayla and Arnould (2008) further go on to establish the idea of “brand cultures” which emphasises that branding practices differ across cultural contexts. They further highlight “myth markets” and explain that the usage of local mythology and storytelling increases brand resonance. The paper goes on to critique universal branding techniques, which are biased towards Western cultural notions and focuses on highlighting local nuances in branding practices. Thus, the cultural approach underscores the importance of context-sensitive branding which will enable indigenous coffee brands to connect with consumers seeking authentic, sustainable and culturally rich products.

The growth of Café Coffee Day also highlights India’s evolving cafe culture and provides significant insights into cultural branding strategies. CCD, a division of Amalgamated Bean Coffee Trading Company Ltd., opened its first outlet in Bangalore in 1996 and has since expanded to over 1,000 cafés in 141 cities, supported by vertically integrated operations on 6,000 acres of coffee estates (Bansal & Joshi, 2011). The brand has uniquely positioned itself as an affordable youth-oriented cafe which resonates with the 15-29 age demographic, a significant portion of its customer base. Cultural integration is a cornerstone of CCD’s branding strategy, reflected in its menu innovations and strategic tie-ups with youth focused brands like Levi’s and Airtel (Bansal & Joshi, 2011). An indigenous homegrown coffee brand, CCD’s cultural branding strategy heavily focuses on ambiance and social experiences, creating ‘third spaces’ where “a lot can happen over coffee.” However, consumer surveys have highlighted areas for improvement, such as decor, which allegedly displays excessive advertising (Bansal & Joshi, 2011).

CCD’s focus on lifestyle branding displays efforts towards reimagining a cultural shift from tea to coffee-consuming youth, weaving a brand experience through curating social spaces for meet-ups and hangouts. Moreover, CCD leverages Cafe Citizen Cards to enhance brand loyalty among the customers and build customer retention.

Similar to CCD, Starbucks is a prominent coffee brand in India. Starbucks, a multinational chain of coffeehouses, has expanded from 200 coffeehouses in 1990 to over 14,000 globally in 2004. Starbucks brands itself through portraying its cafes as a ‘third

place', an alternative to the home and the workplace, with European aesthetics and an upscale corporate ambience (Thompson & Arsel, 2004).

However, Starbucks' hegemony has also sparked anti-corporate discourse where several consumers blame it for cultural homogenization. Contrastingly, according to Thompson & Arsel (2004), local coffee houses invite consumers who value authenticity and community rather than 'corporate uniformity'. These places portray unique atmospheres, combined with local blends, creating an emotional connection with the local consumer. Indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai can learn from the Starbucks brandscape and employ more local cultural elements in their national cafe chain to build a stronger bond with their consumers and also, in turn, enhance brand loyalty.

According to Ramgade (2021), the cafe industry in India has been growing at a CAGR of 11% between 2014 and 2021 reflecting growing consumer preference towards lifestyle experiences. However, India's per capita coffee consumption remains low at 0.03 kg/month, compared to global coffee leaders like the United States. The specialty coffee industry is, however, gaining momentum with the rising popularity of espresso-based beverages and manual brewing methods like pour-over and French Press (Ramgade, 2021). The cafe industry also faces several challenges, like high operational costs with rentals consuming 15-20% of the revenue. This figure may hike up to 25% in prime urban locations. Several international brands like Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf and Gloria Jean's Coffee are trying to make their leeway into the Indian coffee market through franchising in urban and semi-urban areas. Nevertheless, according to Ramgade (2021), for long-term growth, cafe industries must tap into rural markets, product innovations as well as overcome cultural barriers in a majoritively tea-drinking nation.

4. Studies on the Consumer Perception of Coffee Brands

Starbucks' entry into India in 2012 through a joint venture with Tata Global Beverages highlights the role of cultural adaptation in building brand loyalty and customer satisfaction in a diverse market. By 2020, Tata Starbucks Private Limited had established 191 stores across India, emphasising on the need for local integration by sourcing coffee

beans domestically as well as introducing culturally relevant menu items like the Chicken Tikka Panini and the Cottage Cheese Rolls (Pandey et al., 2021). Thus, a global brand like Starbucks aligned its branding with the local cultural preference to drive customer engagement in a competitive market like India.

In a diverse market like India, customer satisfaction has been the cornerstone of Starbucks' success. According to the research survey among 105 respondents by Pandey et al. (2021), 39% of customers found Starbucks beverages expensive, 42.9% expressed high satisfaction with product quality, and 36.2% praised the brand's customer service. Additionally, 39% were moderately likely 23.8% extremely likely to recommend Starbucks to others, highlighting the strong customer loyalty that Starbucks enjoys in India (Pandey et al., 2021).

Ambiance and environment also play a huge role in driving Starbucks' customer loyalty. 51.4% of the respondents ranked taste and a good environment (41.9%) as key factors attracting them to Starbucks. Thus, these numbers highlight the importance of curating immersive customer experiences in coffee retailing. Indigenous coffee brands can draw inspiration from Starbucks' success and combine premium offerings with cultural narratives to grow a loyal customer base and establish competitive differentiation.

The concept of brand personality has gained significance in understanding consumer perceptions, especially in the case of global brands like Starbucks. According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality framework, a research survey of Malaysian consumers identified Starbucks as embodying four primary traits: Confident and Successful, Glamorous and Spirited, Cool and Trendy, and Rugged (Balakrishnan et al., 2011). Such brand personality highlights the ability of global coffee brands like Starbucks to resonate with consumers on an emotional level and build loyalty and preferences.

The study analyzed 261 responses collected through surveys across cities in Malaysia and revealed that respondents associated Starbucks with confidence and success due to its association with attributes like intelligent marketing and brand leadership. Moreover,

several respondents also associated Starbucks with “charming” and “upper class” values, driving an aspirational appeal among consumers. Furthermore, the Glamorous and Spirited dimension focus on Starbucks’ emphasis on creativity and originality (Balakrishnan et al., 2011). Cultural influences play a pivotal role in this sphere, implying that the ability of Starbucks’ to align its brand image with local values is critical with intangible attributes like charm and imagination. Thus, the study highlights the importance of a distinct brand personality that can allure local preferences and create an emotional connection with the consumer base.

According to the Coffee Board of India (2023), annual domestic coffee consumption in India stood at 91,000 metric tons in 2023 compared to the 84,000 metric tons recorded in 2012. The study by CRISIL 2024 found that 70% of coffee consumption could be attributed to urban areas, due to the rise of cafe culture, increased disposable income and diverse consumer preferences.

The Coffee Board of India (2023) also attributed maximum coffee consumption to the southern part of India, contributing 75-80% of the total volume. However, coffee has penetrated into non-southern regions as well due to the introduction of cafe chains (CRISIL, 2024). Instant coffee also makes up 60-65% of domestic consumption due to its affordability and convenience.

The study by CRISIL (2024) further established that 44% of the respondents drank coffee regularly, with higher per capita consumption among males, urban residents and consumers between the age of 25-34 years. The chicory-mixed coffee blend accounts for 70% of coffee consumed in India, compared to the 25% in 2010 (CRISIL, 2024). Such insights present several opportunities for indigenous brands to leverage cultural identity, local blends and affordability to attract the local crowd.

A study by Morphetou et al., (2022) focuses on brand perceptions that influence consumer decisions. The third wave of coffee has taken over currently, with coffee being positioned as an artisanal product associated with social status, lifestyle and pleasure. The

study finds that sensory attributes such as smell and taste are key drivers of coffee consumption as consumers associate coffee with pleasure and emotional well-being. According to Mahoney et al., (2018) and Hsu & Hung, (2005), price promotions also drive coffee consumption with price-sensitive youths being attracted to ready-to-drink products which are more affordable. Morphetou (2022) also points out that atmosphere and location of coffee shops are also important, sometimes ranking above coffee quality in customer preferences. For example, University students in Cyprus Europe prefer coffee shops with a convenient location and ambience. Cultural tastes also shape coffee consumption choices. In Greece and Costa Rica, family preferences also influence consumer decisions in terms of coffee consumption and hence, indigenous brands must employ strong, authentic local branding to attract crowds (Aguirre, 2016; Aurigemma, 2018).

Similarly, Grover et al., (2014) emphasises the importance of positive brand experiences in shaping customer loyalty. The 2014 survey conducted in Delhi NCR indicated that 58.6% of respondents preferred a coffee place with a comfortable ambience and cordial staff interaction while 42% attributed their preference to the quality of the coffee and the snack beverage. The rise of Cafe Coffee Day weaved a unique coffee experience for consumers with the rising popularity of experiential marketing. Reiterating, Cafe Coffee Day branded itself as a social hub for leisure and informal interaction for urban youths residing in Tier 1 cities of India. Grover et al., (2014) also emphasises how customers form a “deeply held commitment” towards coffee shops which is due to the emotional connection established via unique brand experiences. This is more so visible when customers end up choosing the same coffee shop despite several competitive options. Thus, indigenous coffee brands can also build long-term value by immersing themselves within local values, positive staff interactions and high standard of product quality.

Similar to Grover et al., (2014), Gautama & Rahadi (2020) notes that there are six key factors that affect a consumer’s loyalty towards a coffee brand. These key factors notably are: taste, product design, ambience, brand influence, location accessibility and price. These factors affect repeat visits, brand loyalty as well as purchase decisions. However,

different demographic groups are differently affected by these factors. In Indonesia, university students prefer affordable and conveniently located coffee shops that provide delivery services via GoFood. On the other hand, business professionals prefer well-known brands for client meetings (Gautam & Rahadi, 2020). Thus, the study further emphasises that ambiance and reputation can most of the times outweigh price considerations in coffee shops. Ambiance plays a critical role in attracting customers repeatedly and a pleasing environment within a coffee shop can allow customers to spend more time, order more food and visit repeatedly.

5. Research Gap within Existing Literature:

After a detailed review of the existing literature, there are several research gaps that have been identified which provide several opportunities for examining the cultural branding of indigenous coffee in India. These gaps primarily address the intersection of local cultural authenticity, consumer behaviour and strategic branding according to India's socio-cultural brandscape.

5.1 Localized Cultural Narratives in Branding:

The existing literature primarily focuses on global coffee brands like Starbucks that are shaping universal marketing narratives. However, there is a lack of exploration in terms of how Indian coffee brands can leverage their unique cultural perspectives like regional histories and traditional rituals to build unique brand stories. For instance, Chikmagalur's historical association with Baba Budan is yet to be utilized as a cultural branding tool (Thompson & Arsel, 2004). Consumers highly value authenticity in products and building unique local stories in brand narratives can allow indigenous brands to differentiate themselves in a market dominated by global players. This gap thus, calls for research as to how indigenous coffee brands can employ regional elements in crafting a unique cultural identity.

5.2 Consumer Perception of Indigenous Coffee Brands of India

Existing literature has in detail reviewed how consumers perceive global and national coffee chains like Starbucks and Cafe Coffee Day. However, there is sparse research as to

how Indian consumers perceive indigenous brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters. Research has also shown that aspirational traits such as “youthfulness” and “confidence” are associated with Starbucks but it is yet to be explored how consumers perceive the authenticity, sustainability and affordability of indigenous brands in the Indian context. Understanding consumer preference can allow indigenous brands to incline their branding towards cultural contexts and modern consumer interests. Thus, there remains ample opportunity to explore how Indian consumers perceive indigenous coffee brands compared to global chains and how it directly impacts brand loyalty.

5.3 Role of Ambiance and Experiential Marketing:

Existing research has delved into the importance of ambiance, interior setting and the role of experiential marketing in attracting consumers. However, there is minimal analysis concerning how indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai can employ local cultural aesthetics in their ambiance to create a distinct experience. While Starbucks utilizes a Euro-inspired decor, indigenous coffee brands can decorate their interiors with regional art forms or serve coffee in traditional brass tumblers to invoke local cultural elements and carve a unique experience (Hakim & Amir, 2022). Modern consumers heavily prioritize experiences over mere products. Thus, it is essential that indigenous coffee brands utilise local aesthetics to create a culturally immersive atmosphere. Thus, there remains ample opportunity to explore how indigenous coffee brands in India can use cultural aesthetics into their ambiance to enhance customer experience and loyalty.

5.4 Role of Packaging in Cultural Branding

Existing literature avoids delving into exploring the utilization of cultural elements in packaging methods. Usage of cultural elements like traditional motifs, personalized symbols as well as the type of packaging material can affect how consumers perceive the authenticity and sustainability effort of the coffee brand. Involving local aesthetics in personalizing the packaging can produce an emotional bond with the customers as well as create a distinct brand personality in the heavily competitive market. Thus, this lack of existing studies deems necessary a deep-dive into the world of coffee-packaging and how it adds to cultural branding efforts and drives brand loyalty.

5.5 Use of Sustainability as a Branding Tool

Studies have previously explored the adoption of Fair Trade practices by Starbucks and its overall impact on the brand persona (Thompson & Arsel, 2004). However, the usage of sustainability efforts by the indigenous coffee brands of India still remains under-explored. For instance, an indigenous coffee brand called Halli Berri, a women-led enterprise promotes an environmentally-conscious message through its brand image. Extensive research into the branding practices of such indigenous coffee brands could set an example on adopting genuine sustainability practices into cultural branding efforts to attract ethically motivated customers. Studies can focus on the marketing campaigns of such brands, focusing on their eco-friendly production practices as well as community-focused initiatives.

The present wave of consumers, especially the Gen Z and the millennials prefer brands that have environmentally conscious motives. Thus, adopting sustainability into their branding campaigns can give a competitive advantage to the indigenous coffee brands of the country.

5.6 Digital Marketing and E-Commerce of Indigenous Coffee Brands

Digital platforms are an essential part of brand storytelling. However, their role in promoting the cultural narratives of indigenous coffee of India has been under-researched. Indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai have been successful in leveraging social media for consumer education as well as storytelling. However, smaller brands may lack comprehensive digital strategies.

In an increasingly digital world, indigenous coffee brands must utilize the power of the Internet and social media platforms like Youtube, Instagram and e-commerce websites to reach out to the urban, tech-savvy demographic. Thus, it is pertinent that one must explore and study the impact of digital storytelling in carving out a unique cultural identity for indigenous coffee brands of India.

5.7 Regional Preferences and Market Segmentation

Research studies have delved into documenting the dominance of India's southern states in defining the coffee culture prevalent in the country. However, there is limited research

in terms of how indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai can tailor their branding strategies according to regional preferences across India. In a majority tea-drinking nation like India, the image of filter coffee resonates only with the southern part of the country. There needs to be deeper examination regarding branding strategies that can be employed in the northern part of the country which is more inclined towards tea.

Thus, customizing branding strategies according to regional tastes can allow indigenous coffee brands to expand further in the Indian market.

5.8 Competing with Tea in Cultural Branding

India's tea culture poses heavy competition for branding of coffee. For instance, Tata Tea's '*Jaago Re*' campaign posed tea as an essential drink for the aware and active Indian. In a similar way, there is pending research into how indigenous coffee brands like Bru and Tata Coffee position themselves as an alternative cultural beverage for the modern and fast-paced consumer. Thus, coffee brands can carve out a distinct cultural space in regions where tea is dominant and explore campaigns that position coffee as a drink of intellectualism, innovation and modernity.

5.9 Balancing Affordability and Cultural Branding

Pricing strategies adopted by indigenous coffee brands is an under-researched factor in studies related to expanding their market reach. Brands like *Darshinis* in Bengaluru offer affordable filter coffee to daily commuters however, there is a dearth of research into exploring how indigenous coffee brands can provide affordable premium quality coffee to consumers while maintaining their status as third-wave coffee providers and also uphold their cultural authenticity and distinctiveness. While the majority of the consumer base in India caters to the middle class population, affordability could be an essential factor while analysing how indigenous brands can expand themselves in the market.

5.10 Role of Coffee Shops as Socio-Political Spaces

In the past, the Indian coffee houses like the Indian Coffee House in Kolkata served as a hub for intellectual and political discourse (Hakim & Amir, 2022). However, contemporary studies have seldom focused on the potential of modern coffee shops to revive this role and contribute to socio-political branding. Thus, this necessitates further

research into how indigenous coffee brands can foster community engagement and social solidarity through such socio-cultural bubbles. Moreover, branding particular coffee shops as such social, cultural and political spaces can attract a niche but loyal base of customers, especially in urban areas. Hence, studies must focus on how indigenous coffee brands can promote cultural engagement through their branding efforts.

6. Discussion

The analysis of existing literature portrays the effective dearth of exploration of branding strategies of indigenous coffee brands of India. Such critical gaps offer rich opportunities into the cultural branding efforts of these indigenous brands. The gaps also further reflect the under-utilized potential of India's diverse cultural heritage, consumer preferences and changing market dynamics in shaping branding strategies. While studies have explored how global brands like Starbucks have crafted universal narratives that align with aspirational lifestyles, indigenous coffee brands in India remain under-represented within academic discussions despite efforts to resonate with authenticity and regional identity.

Moreover, indigenous coffee brands can leverage key areas such as localized cultural narratives, creating immersive experiences through ambiance as well as utilizing sustainable and eco-friendly practices. Furthering the legacy of Indian coffee houses of the past that posed themselves as intellectual and socio-political hubs, modern coffee brands are yet to explore the untapped potential of branding themselves through a socio-political lens. Additionally, indigenous coffee brands can expand their market reach via leveraging the power of digital marketing as well as tailoring their branding strategies through regional segmentation of the market.

Thus, this dissertation seeks to address these gaps in research by exploring the intersection of culture, branding and consumer behaviour in India's coffee arena. This study aims to provide actionable insights into how indigenous coffee brands of India can build robust brand identities rooted in cultural heritage while catering to modern consumer preferences. Ultimately, this research strives to contribute to the academic understanding of cultural branding while simultaneously providing practical strategies for indigenous coffee brands to thrive in a competitive and globalized coffee market.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Cultural branding is a growing field when it comes to the Indian coffee industry. With global brands like Starbucks, Third Wave Coffee dominating coffee markets across the world, cultural branding is a unique measure that can be taken up by indigenous coffee brands in order to carve a niche for themselves by leveraging their unique cultural heritage, regional identities, and traditional practices. Thus, cultural branding is an effective means for these brands to differentiate themselves by connecting with consumers on a deeper emotive level through narratives for authenticity, tradition and sustainability.

This dissertation aims to uniquely explore the intricate intersection between cultural branding and consumer perception, by focusing on the indigenous coffee brands of India. This research shall effectively address the existing gaps in literature and uncover how cultural elements in branding efforts influence consumer behaviour. Furthermore, it looks into how digital platforms and experiential branding help in promoting cultural narratives.

The objectives set for this dissertation aim to structurally understand cultural branding of indigenous coffee in the Indian context. The hypotheses are defined to challenge key assumptions related to consumer behaviours and attitudes, offering key insights to indigenous coffee brands regarding the strategies they can adopt in order to compete with global players while maintaining their distinct cultural identity.

Thus, through qualitative and quantitative methods, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for employing cultural branding as a tool of competitive advantage to stand out in the Indian coffee market.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the role of cultural branding in shaping consumer perception of indigenous coffee brands in India.

2. To identify key cultural elements (e.g., heritage, storytelling, aesthetics etc.) employed by indigenous coffee brands of India to differentiate themselves from foreign competitors.
3. To evaluate the impact of cultural branding on consumer purchase decisions for indigenous coffee products.
4. To assess the effectiveness of marketing campaigns in promoting cultural narratives and driving consumer engagement for indigenous coffee brands of India.
5. To provide actionable recommendations for indigenous coffee brands to enhance their branding strategies through cultural elements.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Cultural branding has a significant positive impact on consumer perceptions of indigenous coffee brands.
2. Traditional and digital marketing campaigns significantly enhance consumer engagement and brand visibility for culturally branded indigenous coffee brands.
3. Ambiance and experiential elements in coffee shops play a significant role in cultural branding of indigenous coffee brands.
4. Storytelling and regional heritage significantly influence customer perception towards culturally branded indigenous coffee.
5. Indigenous coffee brands that emphasize cultural branding may outperform global brands in building emotional connection with consumers.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation adopts a mixed methodology approach to uncover the cultural branding strategies of indigenous coffee brands in India, specifically Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee. The research employs a combination of secondary data analysis and primary data collection through surveys. The mixed methodology is beneficial in providing a comprehensive understanding of cultural branding by combining qualitative case study insights with quantitative survey findings, offering a holistic and well-rounded perspective on the topic.

1. Research Design

The mixed methodology design is structured around two main components: a qualitative case study based on secondary data and a quantitative survey. By integrating both approaches, the study seeks to achieve a deeper understanding of how cultural branding strategies influence consumer perceptions and the influence of these strategies on purchasing behaviour.

2. Data Collection Methods

2.1 Secondary Data Analysis (Case Study)

The first data collection method employed within this survey is secondary data, particularly focusing on case study analysis. This case study involves two indigenous coffee brands- Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee- which have been selected based on their prominent position in the market and their clear emphasis on cultural branding.

Secondary data was collected from variously publicly available sources, including company websites, marketing materials, annual reports, articles, and interviews with brand founders and employees published within digital media. This data thus, allows for an in-depth exploration of the cultural branding strategies employed by both brands, with a focus on the cultural elements that resonate with Indian consumers.

The analysis of secondary data will include a detailed review of the branding narratives employed by Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee, like their emphasis on regional heritage, sustainability and artisanal processes. The analysis will also include marketing channels used across various channels, both traditional as well as digital, to understand how the brands communicate their cultural value and appeal to the consumer base. Moreover, the analysis shall highlight brand imagery and symbolism, including the design packaging, and storytelling techniques that are used to establish a cultural identity.

Such a method is useful in understanding how these brands employ cultural elements to distinguish themselves from international competitors and build a strong and meaningful connection with their consumer base.

2.2 Qualitative Data and Thematic Analysis

The quality component of this research relies on a case study analysis of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee. The secondary data was collected from publicly available sources like official brand websites and blogs, marketing materials such as advertisements and brochures, media articles and press releases and social media campaigns.

Thematic analysis has been utilized to identify major patterns and themes within the data. Such a method involved familiarization firstly, reading and re-reading the data to gain an in-depth understanding. The data has then been categorized into meaningful segments that reflect the underlying ideas. The segments have been grouped under broader themes that align with the research objectives, such as heritage storytelling, artisanal values and sustainability. It has also been ensured that the themes are internally coherent and distinct from each other. The themes have been provided with clear definitions to clarify their significance in the context of cultural branding of each of the two brands.

The thematic analysis shall provide rich, qualitative insights into how indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee utilize cultural narratives to distinguish themselves in the coffee market and actively engage with their consumer base.

2.3 Survey (Primary Data Collection)

Besides the secondary data, primary data was collected through a survey to gauge consumer perception of cultural branding in indigenous coffee brands of India. The survey has been designed to explore how cultural branding influences consumer attitudes, purchase decisions and brand loyalty.

A structured questionnaire was designed, incorporating primarily close-ended questions to capture qualitative and quantitative data. The survey questions mainly addressed aspects like awareness and perception of Blue Tokai and Araku Coffee among consumers, perceived authenticity of the cultural narratives and brand image conveyed by these brands, impact of cultural branding on consumer purchase decisions, loyalty and willingness to pay a premium price for culturally branded products and consumer engagement with marketing campaigns like online ads, social media content and in-store experiences.

The survey was administered to a sample of 100+ respondents, including both coffee and non-consumers, who were asked to provide their perception of indigenous coffee brands and the role of cultural branding in influencing their attitudes towards these products. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, targeting individuals in the age group of 18-45 years residing in primarily urban and semi-urban areas.

2.4 Quantitative Data and Statistical Analysis

The survey was mainly created through Google Forms, in order to ensure a comprehensive understanding of consumer attitudes. The close-ended questions were used to quantify perceptions, like the significance of cultural elements in branding, the perceived authenticity of culturally-branded coffee, and the influence of branding on purchase decisions.

The survey data shall be analyzed to summarize demographic details as well as general trends. Responses to close-ended questions shall be analyzed and quantified to identify common patterns among consumers. Relationships between variables like age and the importance of pricing strategies of indigenous coffee brands were cross-tabulated to uncover significant insights.

2.5 Tools and Techniques

A manual approach to thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data, allowing for the identification and exploration of key cultural branding themes in detail.

Google Form was used as a survey platform to collect and organize data efficiently. Its built-in analytics provided an initial overview which was further refined through statistical analysis in Microsoft Excel.

Basic excel statistical tools were used to process and interpret the quantitative data, revealing significant insights into consumer perceptions of cultural branding of indigenous coffee.

3. Limitations of the Methodology

While the mixed methodology approach ensures breadth and depth in the analysis, it also comes with its limitations.

3.1 Limitations of Thematic Analysis

The manual nature of the thematic analysis introduces the possibility of researcher bias in interpreting the data. Although sufficient efforts have been made to ensure objectivity, the findings may be influenced by personal perspectives.

Moreover, the qualitative analysis relies on publicly-available information which may not reflect a complete picture of the brand's overall marketing strategies. Key insights may remain inaccessible which may limit the depth of the analysis.

3.2 Limitations of Survey-Based Data Collection

The convenience sampling method used for selecting respondents may not be fully representative of the broader population. Urban and semi-urban consumers may have different perceptions from those that are present in rural areas.

The survey responses are also based on self-reporting which may be influenced by social desirability and misinterpretation of questions.

3.3 Limitations of Statistical Analysis

While significant relationships were identified, the study does not establish causal relationships between cultural branding and consumer behaviour, as many additional variables may be influencing the findings

4. Discussion

The methodology employed in this dissertation, which combines thematic analysis and statistical analysis, provides a comprehensive framework for exploring the cultural branding tactics of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study captures both the strategic and consumer-driven dimensions of cultural branding.

Despite its limitations, the mixed methodology approach offers valuable insights into how indigenous coffee brands in India use cultural narratives to distinguish themselves and engage with consumers effectively.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Section 1: Case Study Analysis of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters

1. Introduction:



Figure 1. Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters is an emerging specialty coffee brand in India, founded in 2013. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

1.1 Overview of the Case Study:

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters has been an emerging indigenous brand in the specialty coffee market. It was founded in 2013 by Matt Chitharanjan and Namrata Asthana has transformed

from a small venture to a widely organized brand selling high-quality, single origin coffee. Both Matt and Namrata are extremely passionate about the coffee culture and played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between local coffee farmers and the coffee-drinking urban populace. The founders decided to focus on premium, ethically-sourced, and freshly-roasted coffee, and positioned Blue Tokai as an advocate for Indian coffee, bringing it limelight domestically as well as internationally (Blue Tokai, 2025).

India, a country majorly known for its vast tea consumption possessed a vast untapped market for specialty coffee. This gap laid the foundation of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters. While coffee farming in India has been carried out for ages, most of such beans were sold in bulk to large-scale roasters which left little room for branding and consumer connection. Blue Tokai aimed to redefine this status quo by connecting coffee-drinkers to the farm that produced their cup of coffee. The company mainly sources its beans from several regions in India like Coorg, Chikmagalur, and Nilgiris, and offers direct connection with the farmers and has thus cultivated a strong narrative around sustainability, transparency and quality (Chitharajan, 2019).

Blue Tokai began its functioning as a single cafe in New Delhi and has today vastly expanded its operation across India, with cafes, online stores, subscription models, which have become central to its growth trajectory. Besides selling freshly roasted coffee beans, the company has also introduced retail coffee brewing equipment, offering products like pour-over kits and grinders. Moreover, the company has built a strong online presence with a well-equipped e-commerce platform which allows it to cater to a growing segment of young, urban coffee-drinkers who are heavily inclined towards Blue Tokai's positioning as a premium coffee offerings (Madhusree, 2023).

Blue Tokai's initial success can be attributed to the changing preferences and tastes of Indian consumers and its strategic positioning in the Indian specialty coffee market. The demand for high quality coffee in India has increased exponentially and Blue Tokai has been at the forefront of this transformation. This shift towards specialty, high-quality coffee is commonly defined as the third wave of the coffee culture in the United States and such a phenomenon is being spear-headed by Blue Tokai in India. Blue Tokai has taken up several initiatives to educate

Indian consumers about the nuances of coffee culture, differentiate between robusta and arabica beans and even understand the benefits of freshly brewed coffee. Such a focus on education has allowed the brand to cultivate a loyal customer base and establish its premiumness in the specialty coffee market in India (Kumar, 2022).

However, Blue Tokai's impact on the Indian coffee scenario goes beyond its retail products. Blue Tokai's emphasis on sustainability and ethical sourcing has contributed to a broader consequence of creating a more transparent, accountable coffee supply chain in India. The company has ensured fair wages and support for the farming communities through its collaboration with local farmers and direct trade relationships. Besides benefiting farmers, such a transparent model also caters to ethically-minded consumers who are heavily concerned about the environmental and social impact of their purchases.

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters' evolution to a major player in the specialty coffee market is a testament to its branding efforts rooted in cultural authenticity, commitment to quality and an ethical and innovative approach to sourcing and selling coffee. Its rapid adoption in the Indian consumer market reflects changing consumer preferences towards coffee as well as an increased demand towards products that are grounded in cultural elements and are socially responsible.

1.2 Context and Relevance:

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters is an ideal subject for a case study for this dissertation aiming to analyze cultural branding of indigenous coffee brands of India due to the brand's pioneering role in redefining the Indian coffee landscape as well as its deep-rooted connection to Indian culture through its branding methods. The brand effectively represents a unique blend of traditional and modern marketing approaches by highlighting India's coffee heritage by appealing to new-age urban consumers with evolving tastes. Such a dual positioning is a testament to how indigenous coffee brands may position themselves by leveraging their rich cultural identity to create a unique narrative in the Indian coffee market.



Figure 2. Blue Tokai depicts distinct cultural elements through its packaging. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

Firstly, Blue Tokai sources its coffee beans directly from the coffee estates and it strives to highlight India's coffee-growing regions like Coorg, Chikmagalur, and the Nilgiris. Its added emphasis on single-origin coffee coupled with sustainable practices celebrates the cultural richness and biodiversity of such regions. Such a framework aligns with the research goal of exploring how cultural elements are embedded within branding strategies of indigenous coffee brands of India.

Moreover, Blue Tokai's unique marketing campaigns and collaborations with local artists and communities highlights how cultural elements can be combined with branding strategies to create a meaningful and immersive consumer experience. Blue Tokai, besides living up to global quality standards, also stays rooted to its cultural authenticity and hence, will provide valuable insights for studying the concept of cultural branding in India.

Thus, Blue Tokai provides valuable insights to analyze the interplay between cultural authenticity, consumer perception, and branding strategies in the indigenous coffee sector of India.

1.3 Objectives:

1. Analyze Blue Tokai's Cultural Branding Strategies:

- a) Examining how Blue Tokai employs elements of Indian culture into its branding, including its emphasis on local coffee estates, sustainable farming practices and traditional craftsmanship.
- b) Evaluating the effectiveness of its visual identity through its logo, packaging and design in communicating its cultural narrative.
- c) Analyzing the storytelling techniques used by the brand to connect its products to India's rich coffee heritage.

2. Understand the Role of Transparency and Sustainability:

- a) Exploring and analyzing how Blue Tokai's focus on transparency in sourcing and direct trade relationships with Indian farmers contributes to its cultural branding.
- b) Investigating the impact of such strategies on consumer trust and brand loyalty.

3. Evaluate Consumer Perception of Cultural Branding:

- a) Assessing how consumers perceive the cultural aspects of Blue Tokai's branding efforts, including its authenticity, association with Indian heritage, and connection to sustainable practices.
- b) Identifying cultural elements that resonate most with consumers and analyzing their impact on purchasing decisions.

4. Study the Influence of Cultural Branding on Market Position:

- a) Analyzing how Blue Tokai distinguishes itself in the specialty coffee market through its cultural branding practices.

- b) Examining its role in shaping consumer preference for premium coffee brands which are rooted in Indian identity.
- 5. Draw Broader Insights for Indigenous Coffee Brands:
 - a) Deriving lessons from Blue Tokai's branding methods that other indigenous coffee brands can implement to build a unique identity.
 - b) Exploring how cultural branding can allow indigenous coffee brands to achieve global relevance while maintaining local roots.
- 6. Provide Recommendations for Brand Development:
 - a) Offering actionable insights for Blue Tokai and similar brands on enhancing cultural branding strategies based on consumer perceptions and market trends.
 - b) Suggesting ways to further align branding efforts with consumer values and preferences.

2. Brand Overview:

2.1 History and Background:

In 2013, husband-and-wife duo Matt Chitharanjan and Namrata Asthana founded Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters with the aim of transforming India's coffee culture by introducing freshly-roasted, high-quality Indian coffee to urban consumers. The name 'Blue Tokai' is derived from the ancient Malabari term for the tail of a peacock, symbolizing the duo's commitment to celebrate India's diverse coffee heritage (Chitharanjan & Asthana, 2021).

The company started initially operating from a modest setup in New Delhi where the founders roasted beans in small batches and sold them directly to consumers through an online platform. Such a direct-to-consumer approach allowed the duo to control the quality and freshness of their

product which distinguished Blue Tokai from the existing instant coffee options in the market (Madhusree, 2023).



Figure 3. Blue Tokai follows a consistent muted blue colour across its branding. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

Blue Tokai employed a unique farm-to-cup model that attracted consumers who were inclined towards socially responsible purchase decisions. After its initial set-up, Blue Tokai gradually expanded into experiential cafes in cities like Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Such cafes served as immersive hubs for coffee enthusiasts to witness the brewing process, participate in the brewing workshops, and deepen their appreciation for specialty coffee. Thus, Blue Tokai effectively coupled education along with interactive experiences which helped the brand build a loyal base of customers who were moved by Blue Tokai's commitment to quality and transparency (Blue Tokai, 2025).

Thus, over the years, Blue Tokai has redefined the coffee terrain in India by evolving supply chains as well as forming deep emotional connections with the brand that's introducing the third wave of coffee culture in India.

2.2 Business Model: A Commitment to Quality, Transparency and Sustainability

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters' business model is based upon direct sourcing, artisanal roasting, and a commitment towards transparency that has built its towering reputation in the specialty coffee market. This unique business model aligns with the growing consumer demand for ethical and sustainable supply chains while promoting effective consumer education and engagement.

2.2.a Direct Sourcing from Indian Coffee Estates:

Blue Tokai's direct-sourcing approach is much renowned, where coffee beans are directly procured from local farmers in India. This method ensures that intermediaries are eliminated and the company ensures that farmers receive fair compensation while the company can also easily look over and control the quality of coffee beans. Blue Tokai sources its coffee beans from well-known coffee estates in India like Coorg, Chikmagalur, and the Nilgiris, areas which are widely popular for their arabica production (Chitharanjan & Asthana, 2021).



Figure 4. Blue Tokai founders Matt Chitharanjan and Namrata Asthana. Source: MensXP (Secondary Data).

Blue Tokai carefully selects farming estates committed to environmentally-friendly and ethical practices and enters into partnerships with them. Coffee estates like Kerehaklu and Bynemara, which are in business collaboration with Blue Tokai, adopt methods such as organic farming and reduced chemical usage. These practices besides enhancing the coffee quality also efficiently align with Blue Tokai's goal of promoting sustainable farming through its branding strategies. Blue Tokai also highlights the specific origins of the beans and thus, brings attention to India's coffee heritage through its distinct marketing strategies to cultivate consumer appreciation for local flavours (Madhusree, 2023).

2.2.b Artisanal Roasting and Personalization:

Artisanal Roasting is an important feature of Blue Tokai's business model. This artisanal roasting process ensures freshness and flavour preservation for the coffee batches. The coffee beans are roasted in small-sized batches to ensure consistent quality. Moreover, all such batches are closely monitored till they have reached the 'ideal roast profile' in order to maintain unique qualities of every batch (Blue Tokai, 2025). This process helps in reducing bitterness and enhances the flavour of the coffee beans which highly caters to consumers drawn to specialty coffee.

Moreover, customization is another crucial aspect of Blue Tokai's business model. Customers can easily select grind-sizes tailored according to their preferred brewing method- French Press, espresso machine, or pour-over. Such a personalization method improves the consumer experiences besides ensuring high quality of roasted coffee.

2.2.c Transparency and Consumer Engagement:

Transparency is a central component of Blue Tokai's branding strategy. The company shares detailed information about the farming estates from where it sources its coffee beans, the geographical location of such farming estates, and the sustainable practices followed in such estates. This openness to create a transparent communication channel enhances consumer trust in Blue Tokai and sets it apart from other coffee brands that are unwilling to maintain such a level of supply chain transparency (Kumar, 2022).

The brand also makes several efforts in fostering consumer engagement and education by using its cafes, workshops as well as digital platforms to teach consumers about specialty coffee,

coffee brewing methods and the importance of freshly roasted beans. Such interactive workshops hosted by the cafe baristas leads to increased brand loyalty and a growing appeal towards specialty coffee in India.

2.2.d Sustainability Focus:

Blue Tokai's business model also revolves around environmental sustainability. The company keeps a careful check on its environmental footprint by sourcing coffee beans from farms that employ environmentally-friendly practices and also roast the bean in small batches to reduce the amount of waste. Moreover, its branding techniques also promote such sustainable practices among consumers where the brand urges them to use reusable filters and compost coffee grounds (Chitharanjan, 2019).



Figure 5. Blue Tokai coffee beans are roasted in small batches to prevent wastage. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

Thus, Blue Tokai's overall business model rooted in ethical sourcing, artisanal roasting and consumer education not only appeals to the discerning coffee drinker but also contributes towards the broader movement of sustainable consumption in India.

2.3 Blue Tokai's Product Range and Services: A Comprehensive Overview

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters has become a notable name in India's specialty coffee market with its wide range of products and services that cater to both casual coffee drinkers as well as connoisseurs. This section aims to analyze in depth the company's product offerings, subscription models, cafe experiences and collaborative ventures.

2.3.a Product Range:

Blue Tokai offers a diverse range of coffee products through both its e-commerce platform as well its physical cafes. Such product offerings encompass several coffee blends, brewing equipment, food items, collaborative merchandise and much more.

Coffee Products:

Blue Tokai offers a range of single-origin coffee sourced from several Indian estates like the Attikan Estate, Vienna Roast, and Silver Oak Cafe Blend. Such products can also be customized for different roast levels and brewing methods. The company also offers a unique sampler pack like the 5-in-1 Explorer Pack which allows customers to explore a variety of flavours (Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, 2025).



Figure 6. Blue Tokai Coffee Products. Source: Blue Tokai Website (Secondary Data)

Ready-to-Brew Options:

To assure convenience to consumers, Blue Tokai also offers a range of Easy Pour Sachets, Cold Brew Bags, and Coffee in a Can. These options ensure quick preparation without compromising on the taste. Moreover, the brand also offers biodegradable coffee capsules which are compatible with Nespresso machines, furthering its vision for sustainability.

Subscriptions:

Blue Tokai also offers subscription models for customers which they can choose to opt for regular deliveries after choosing their preferred coffee types and delivery frequency. Customers can choose from various frequencies like weekly, bi-weekly or monthly and also have an option to select a 'Mixed Bag' subscription. This option is an effective tool to ensure flexibility for the consumer and also maintain consistent supply (Blue Tokai Help Center, 2023).

2.3.b Cafe Offerings:

Beverages:

Blue Tokai offers a range of hot and cold beverages. Hot options include Espresso, Americano, Flat White, Cappuccino, Mocha and much more. Cold beverages feature Iced Latte, Cold Brew with Milk and specialty options like the Vietnamese Style Iced Coffee.

Food Menu:

Beyond its specialty coffee, Blue Tokai has a diverse and thoughtfully curated food menu. There are options of Cinnamon Pancakes, Mushroom Scrambled Eggs on Sourdough, Guacamole on Toast served with a soft-boiled egg, Pesto Grilled Chicken Wrap and much more (Blue Tokai, 2025).



Figure 7. Food and Beverage at Blue Tokai. Source: Blue Tokai Website (Secondary Data).

2.3.c Cafe Experience:

As of 2025, Blue Tokai has significantly expanded all across the nation with nearly 152 cafes across India (Economic Times Retail, 2025). The brand is eyeing a fast-paced growth trajectory with an aim to open 80-90 outlets annually, targeting nearly 350 cafes by 2027 (The Print, 2025). Such a progressive growth reflects the brand's strong commitment to bring specialty coffee into the mainstream Indian market and make significant ripples in the dynamic and ever-evolving coffee culture of India.

Blue Tokai has also introduced larger-format Experience Centers in key metropolitan areas such as Gurugram, Mumbai and Bangalore. These centers aim to provide much more immersive experiences for customers with live-baking demonstrations and an expanded menu, which further

highlights the brand's focus on enhancing consumer engagement as well as appreciation for coffee craftsmanship (Economic Times Retail, 2025). Such Immersive Centers will celebrate the journey of Indian coffee from farm to cup, commemorating its heritage and artisanal values (Hospitality Economic Times, 2025).

More so, Blue Tokai cafes also serve as hubs of coffee education and consumer interaction. The brand has also introduced Coffee Play Bars, where customers can experiment with different brewing equipment and methods. Workshops and farm tours are also an important aspect of their community bonding, where consumers get a deeper look into the coffee production process (Economic Times Hospitality, 2025). Thus, Blue Tokai, besides offering a range of high-quality products, also strives to provide meaningful coffee experiences to its consumers that shall ultimately, allow in creating a loyal brand community.

2.3.d Collaboration and Community Engagement:

Blue Tokai has also effectively collaborated with other brands to expand its reach and appeal. Blue Tokai partnered with Royal Enfield in February 2024 to introduce the 'Royal Enfield Cruise Blend', a coffee blend that was inspired by the spirit of motor adventures. This blend is characterized by chocolatey and nutty flavours with subtle notes of roasted hazelnut, caramel and raisins. This unique blend was made available at select Blue Tokai cafes and online platforms. Such a collaboration also included a unique event where 12 explorers and coffee connoisseurs went on a ride through the Eastern Ghats to explore the rich heritage of coffee cultivation at MSP Gowri Estate (afaqs!, 2024).

Blue Tokai also introduced limited-edition products in collaboration with Adidas Originals in April 2019 called the 'Nite Jogger Blend'. This blend was curated to commemorate the 'Nite Creators', individuals who invest in creative activities during night hours. The blend consisted of medium-roasted beans with flavours of caramelized nuts, cane sugar and grapes. In order to celebrate the launch, Blue Tokai cafes in Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore hosted filter-brewing workshops and educated consumers on how they can make this blend while at home and keep the creative spark in themselves alive (Hospibuzz, 2019).

Moreover, Blue Tokai also collaborated with Bira 91 in 2021 to create the ‘Malabar Stout’, a unique beer that is infused with Blue Tokai’s cold brew blend (Shopflo, 2021). Thus, such partnership ventures reflect Blue Tokai’s vision to break traditional boundaries within the coffee industry and introduce new terrains of the coffee landscape in India.

Blue Tokai also offers a range of merchandise including the Coffee T-Shirt Series with designs like the Mokapot and Pour-over drinks, which are available in a wide variety of colours. They also provide the Coromandel Sipper and the Nilgiri Tumbler and for the ones interested in brewing, they offer the Moka Pot Hoodie and Coffee Journal which cater to both style as well as functionality (Blue Tokai, 2025).

Besides collaboration and merchandise, Blue Tokai maintains a dynamic digital presence through its e-commerce website and social media platforms like Instagram. The brand consistently uses such channels to share updates on new products, cafe opening, and educational content. The brand also hosts several workshops and events at its cafes, ranging from modern calligraphy to latte art workshops to build a community feeling among its customer base (Shopflo, 2023).

In 2023, while marking its tenth anniversary, Blue Tokai launched certain limited-edition coffee blends and hosted special in-cafe customer engagement activities. By combining coffees from 10 different estates, the brand curated the ‘10th Birthday Blend’ and showcased its offering at the World of Coffee event in Dubai and ultimately, took Indian specialty coffee to global audiences (Media Brief, 2023).

Thus, through such diverse branding efforts rooted in cultural authenticity, Blue Tokai positions itself as a leader in the specialty coffee arena. By leveraging digital platforms as well as hosting in-cafe community engagement events, Blue Tokai continues to evolve and innovate according to changing consumer preferences.

2.4 Market Position and Competitors:

Blue Tokai has established itself as a leading name in India’s specialty coffee market. In the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24), the company recorded a revenue of Rs. 216 crore, making a 70%

year-on-year increase from Rs. 127 crore in FY23. Such a significant growth can be attributed to its increasing retail presence, with more than 150 cafes across India and its diverse revenue streams from coffee sales and food products (Entrackr, 2025).

In contrast to this, Third Wave Coffee, another prominent special coffee company, recorded a revenue of Rs. 241 crore in FY24, up from Rs. 144 crore in FY23. Despite the higher revenue, Third Wave Coffee's net loss widened to Rs. 110 crore in FY24, compared to Rs. 54 crore in the previous fiscal year due to the challenges of rapid expansion and increasing operational costs (The Hindu Business Line, 2024).

Moreover, Tata Starbucks, a joint venture between Starbucks and Tata Consumer Products, remains a prominent player in the Indian coffee market. In FY24, Tata Starbucks recorded a revenue of Rs. 1218 crore operating nearly 400 cafes across India. Hence, this positions Starbucks significantly ahead of domestic specialty coffee brands in terms of scale and market penetration.

Cafe Coffee Day, once a market leader in the Indian coffee market is facing significant financial challenges in the present day which has led to a significant reduction in the number of operational outlets. Specific revenue figures for the brand are not available but the company's market share has diminished, making room for emerging specialty coffee chains like Blue Tokai and Third Wave to capture a significant segment of the market.

Blue Tokai's strategic branding efforts like the launch of the Experience Centers and plans to expand to over 350 locations by 2027, aim to enhance the customer base in the present. The company is highly focused on maintaining healthy profit margins as well as its ambition to achieve Rs. 1000 crore in revenue by 2027 underlines its commitment to sustainable growth and potential for a future IPO (Economic Times Retail, 2024).

While global brands like Starbucks dominate the Indian coffee market landscape in terms of revenue and scale, Blue Tokai's fast-paced growth, unique consumer engagement tactics and focus on high-quality coffee makes it a formidable competitor in the specialty coffee sector.

3. Cultural Branding Strategy:

3.1 Cultural Positioning and Storytelling:

Blue Tokai's unique branding initiatives have efficiently woven Indian cultural elements, positioning it as a premium provider of Indian specialty coffee. Such an integration is visible in its direct sourcing practices, product presentation, cafe experiences, and digital outreach campaigns, reinforcing its drive towards celebrating Indian heritage and promoting regional coffee varieties.

3.2 Emphasis on Indian Coffee and Regional Varieties:

Blue Tokai's branding strategies exclusively focus on Indian-grown coffee. The company sources its coffee beans from across 80 coffee estates in India including Coorg, Chikmagalur and Araku valley. This direct trade model ensures high quality of coffee and also supports local farmers by offering premiums above commodity prices. Each coffee package sold by Blue Tokai provides detailed information about the estate, roast level, and tasting notes, which allows in fostering transparency between the brand and the consumer and educating consumers about India's diverse coffee profiles (Brand Education, 2025).

3.3 Cultural Presentation in Branding and Packaging:

The brand's name 'Blue Tokai', derives from a Malabari word meaning peacock's plume, symbolizing grace and beauty. This cultural element is symbolized in their logo and packaging, which often features traditional art forms like Gond and Kalamkari. Such artistic components, besides paying homage to Indian aesthetics, also create a unique brand identity that caters to culturally-conscious consumers (Shopflo, 2023).

3.4 Cafe Experiences Reflecting Indian Heritage:

Blue Tokai's cafe aesthetics are rooted in a minimalist style of interior decoration that caters to Indian sensibilities. The interiors feature neutral color palettes, clean lines, and natural materials like pine wood and quartz, creating a peaceful and welcoming atmosphere. Large windows allow for ample amounts of natural light, making the space feel open and airy. Artworks by local Indian artists also adorn the walls, which adds a note of cultural authenticity as well as support for the local artistic community (Interiorlover, 2025).

The food menu at Blue Tokai highlights Indian flavors as well as ingredients. All-day breakfast options include Mushroom Scrambled Eggs on Sourdough and Guacamole on Toast with soft-boiled eggs and microgreens. For main courses, options like Spaghetti in Mushroom Florentine and Basil Pesto Pasta are offered. The cafe also serves exclusive flatbreads like Cherry Tomato and Olive Flatbread and salad options like smoked chicken and broccoli salad which incorporates Indian grains and spices (Zomato, 2025).

Moreover, Blue Tokai sources its coffee from Indian estates and each coffee baggage is tagged with detailed information about the estate, roast level, and tasting notes, simultaneously educating coffee consumers about coffee profiles (Blue Tokai, 2025).

To enhance the cafe experience further, Blue Tokai also hosts several community bonding sessions through workshops, farm tours, and educational content that is shared on their digital platforms. By integrating Indian culture into every aspect of the brand, Blue Tokai aims to position Indian coffee as a premium commodity in the global coffee scenario.

3.5 Digital Platforms and Consumer Engagement:

Blue Tokai's digital strategy is rooted in its focus to educate Indian consumers about Indian coffee profiles. The company's website also offers detailed information on coffee origins, roast levels as well as brewing techniques of Indian coffee beans. Each coffee package also provides details about the estate from where it is sourced, processing methods, and tasting notes which fosters trust with consumers.

On social media platforms, Blue Tokai has nearly 116,000 followers (Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters Instagram, 2025). The company posts mostly about new store offerings, product launches, brewing tutorials, and customer testimonials which sets the stage for an interactive community of consumers. The visual storytelling employed in their Instagram handle includes vibrant imagery of their cafes, products and coffee brewing methods which sets a strong tone of visual identity for the brand.

On World Barista Day, the brand also highlights its employees, sharing their stories and milestones, which humanizes the brand and forms a deeper emotional connection with the audiences. Blue Tokai also promotes both internal and external barista competitions, creating skill-sharing platforms for its employees as well as its audiences. The barista competitions feature latte art challenges, brewing technique showcases and much more, which are documented on their social media platforms and introducing the audience to the world of the specialty coffee craft. Such events allow the brand to highlight its expertise in coffee artistry which attracts coffee enthusiasts as well as a nurturing ground for talent in the specialty coffee industry (Marketing Monk, 2024).

3.6 Strategic Partnerships and Cultural Collaboration:

Blue Tokai has also collaborated with Swiggy's SNACC app to offer 15-minute delivery of its premium coffee beverages like Americanos, Cappuccinos, and Vietnamese-style Iced Coffee. This strategic partnership caters to the modern consumer's demand for convenience and quality (Curly Tales, 2025).

Moreover, Blue Tokai partnered with Bloomsbury India to launch the 'Blue Tokai Library' in select cafes. This initiative allows consumers direct access to a collection of books, curating a unique literary and coffee culture, giving birth to community hubs within cafes.

Thus, Blue Tokai's branding efforts strategically blend cultural authenticity and regional elements while elevating coffee as an exclusive commodity in the consumer market.

3.7 Visual Identity and Design:

Blue Tokai's visual identity is rooted in curating minimalist designs that are subtly curated with Indian cultural elements and is consistently communicated via its website, logo, packaging and cafe designs. The brand boasts of a cohesive aesthetic that besides enhancing recognition also reinforces its commitment to cultural authenticity and social responsibility.

3.7.a Packaging: A Cultural Canvas of Storytelling

Blue Tokai's packaging design stands out for its elegance and cultural resonance. The brand uses earthy tones like beige, brown and muted greens, and a clean typography that reinforces its

minimalist approach and Gond and Kalamkari art forms are incorporated as design elements to add to the cultural depth. Such colors and designs also evoke a sense of warmth and authenticity. Each coffee bag provides detailed information about the estate, roast level, flavour notes and a personalized touch is added with the phrase, “Roasted especially for you”, enhancing the brand’s emotional bond with the customer.

Blue Tokai’s takeaway food packaging is also crafted from eco-friendly materials, primarily recyclable kraft paper and low-density polyethylene and it aligns with the brand’s vision of fulfilling environmental sustainability. The boxes’ natural brown color resonates with the earthy tones used in the brand’s product range and ensures visual consistency (Blue Tokai, 2025).



Figure 8. Blue Tokai’s packaging is rooted in cultural elements. Source: YourStory.com (Secondary Data).

The minimalist design of the takeaway packages also feature the Blue Tokai logo, in monochrome or muted blue, maintaining brand consistency in terms of colour and design. Certain limited-edition or seasonal offerings include packaging with artistic elements inspired by Indian motifs, like peacock plume or regional patterns, further reinforcing the cultural narrative (DesignRush, 2025).

The takeaway boxes are also designed keeping in mind customer convenience and functionality. The boxes include features like compartments to prevent mixing of food items and snug fits to avoid spillage of drinks. For hot items, a heat-insulating layer is employed to ensure optimal temperature of the food or beverage items (Shopflo Blog, 2025).

The packaging also serves to convey the brand's sustainability focus, with messages like "Made from Recyclable Materials" or "Committed to Reducing Waste" subtly printed on the side of the boxes. Such initiatives aim to educate the consumer about eco-conscious methods (Blue Tokai, 2025).

Thus, by integrating cohesive colours, cultural motifs, and functional designs, Blue Tokai's packaging highlights its market position as a thoughtful, socially-responsible and culturally authentic brand in the Indian specialty coffee and cafe market (Lokus Design, 2025).

3.7.b Logo: Symbolism Rooted in Indian Heritage

Blue Tokai's logo depicts a peacock's tail, which is derived from the word in its name- 'tokai', which is a Malabari word for a peacock's plume. This symbolization not only pays homage to Indian fauna but also signifies the brand's dedication to uphold Indian culture. The logo is consistently used across digital platforms as well as in-store packaging, which enhances brand recognition further. It is prominently displayed on coffee bags, takeaway packaging, merchandise, and cafe signage. On digital platforms like its website and social media channels, the logo is attached to educational content, brewing guides, and farmer stories, making it synonymous with the brand's commitment towards connecting its consumers to the origin stories of its coffee (Blue Tokai, 2025).



Figure 9. Blue Tokai's logo depicts a peacock plume, furthering its cultural branding. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters Website (Secondary Website).

The logo is rendered in colors of a muted blue and black. The blue signifies trust, quality and sophistication while the black adds a modern touch to the overall feel. This color combination not only enhances visual impact but also sets out Blue Tokai as a premium provider of Indian coffee, combining traditional aesthetics with contemporary branding.

3.7.c Website Design: Seamless User Experience with Cultural Nuances

Blue Tokai's website presents a clean and intuitive design that can be easily navigated by any potential customer. The brand uses a muted color palette along with high-quality images that creates a sophisticated aesthetic. Moreover, the product pages are highly informative, offering detailed insights into coffee varieties, brewing methods, and origin stories which aim to educate consumers and further their knowledge and appreciation for Indian coffee.

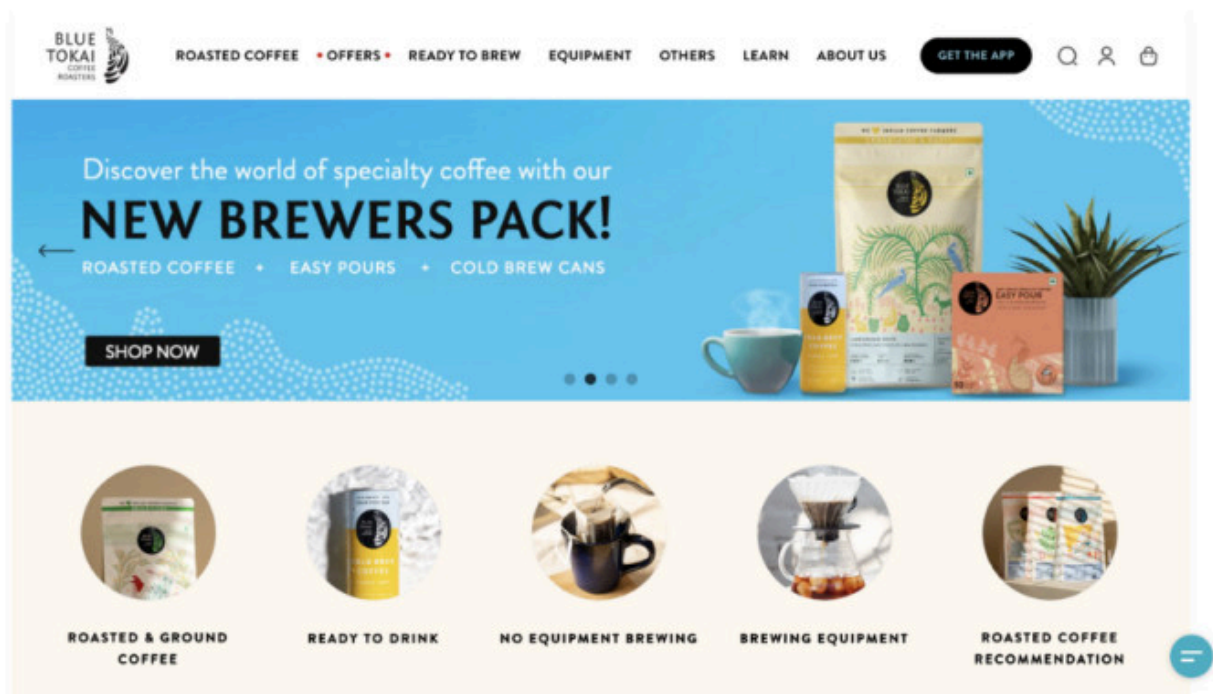


Figure 10. Blue Tokai's website is based on a minimalist design with seamless user experience.

Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters Website (Secondary Data)

The website uses a minimalist design scheme, which is dominated by white spaces, soft brown and subtle blues. Such colours curate a clean and peaceful browsing experience, ensuring that the user's focus remains on the products and their origin stories. High-quality imagery is also portrayed on the website which showcases coffee in warm, natural settings, adding an impactful visual narrative that complements the textual content (Blue Tokai, 2025)

3.7.d Cafes: Aesthetic Spaces with Cultural Warmth

Blue Tokai's colour philosophy extends to their cafe interiors as well, with wooden furniture, neutral tones, and a pop of green from indoor plants. The ambiance gives off a cozy and welcoming feel while the murals or art inspired by Indian aesthetics adds a cultural element to the overall atmosphere.



Figure 11. Blue Tokai interiors feature minimalist tones and modern designs. Source: Interiorlover (Secondary Data).

The interiors primarily feature neutral tones- white and grey walls combined with pine wood accents. The furniture consists of teakwood chairs with upholstered seats and birch wood tables which gives a cohesive look to the entire cafe. Large windows which allow natural light to get in provides a connection to outdoor nature and is amplified with the presence of indoor plants (Interiorlover, 2025).



Figure 12. The cafes feature paintings by local artists, integrating traditional elements with contemporary interior design. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

Murals and artistic expression of Indian aesthetics adorn the walls of every Blue Tokai outlet and consist of paintings by local Indian artisans, adding to Blue Tokai's cultural branding strategies.

Extending the minimalist design philosophy, Blue Tokai uses simple yet elegant tableware as well. Coffee is served in sleek mugs painted in the subtle blue shade of the Blue Tokai logo, which ensures brand consistency. The food service used for dishes are in the same shade of blue and are understated so that the maximum focus of the consumer remains on the presentation and quality of the food.



Figure 13. Exterior of Blue Tokai cafes, depicting brand consistency. Source: Magic Pin (Secondary Data).

Baristas at Blue Tokai cafes are also dressed in branded T-shirts in shades of the Blue Tokai shade of blue or grey in order to cohesively fit into the color theme. The staff is further trained to actively engage with customers and provide insights into brewing methods and coffee origins which enhances the overall consumer experience (Blue Tokai, 2025).



Figure 14. The Blue Tokai baristas are dressed in neutral tones to maintain brand consistency. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

Thus, Blue Tokai's visual aesthetic through its user-friendly website, environmentally-conscious packaging as well as the serene and minimalist atmosphere of its cafes communicates its comprehensive brand story, combining Indian heritage with modern aesthetics.

3.8 Marketing Campaigns and Partnerships:

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters has actively participated in marketing initiatives and collaborations that are focused on Indian culture, sustainability and community bonding. These marketing efforts besides promoting their products has also allowed them to reinforce their branding strategy rooted in cultural narratives.

3.8.a. Unnaki Coffee Collective Partnership:

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters collaborated with Unnaki Coffee Collective, a women-led initiative originating from Chikmagalur, Karnataka, to support small-scale farmers and promote sustainable coffee production processes. The collective was founded by Kathyayini Muddiah and Rakhee Vishwanath and it focuses on employing specialty processing practices and also empowering small-scale coffee farms. Blue Tokai exclusively sourced coffee from Unnaki which reflected its brand commitment towards supporting local farmers and upholding sustainable practices for community development (Madras Ponnu, 2023).

3.8.b The Switch Fix Partnership: 'Coffee Beans a Lot to Us' Initiative

In 2021, Blue Tokai partnered with the plant-based personal care brand, Switch Fix, which was an innovative step towards sustainability and waste reduction. The 'Coffee Beans a Lot to Us' aimed to tackle the issue of coffee waste by repurposing it into eco-friendly personal-care products. Switch Fix utilized the leftover coffee grounds from Blue Tokai's cafes and roasteries to prepare body scrubs for particular skin types.

The two flagship products that were introduced during the collaboration were the 'Clean Bean' scrub, exclusively for oily skin, and the 'Daily Grind' scrub, curated for dry skin. Both the products utilized the natural exfoliating features of coffee grounds, combined with the goodness

of plant-based oils and ingredients to create an effective skincare solution. To further the zero-waste ethos, the packaging was made from biodegradable and recyclable materials.

The collaboration also involved awareness campaigns where the two companies educated consumers about the benefits of upcycling coffee and leading a sustainable lifestyle, through their social media channels and websites. Such campaigns included interactive content such as DIY tutorials on how to make homemade coffee scrubs, behind-the-scenes footage of the production processes, and testimonials from early adopters of the newly-launched products.

Such an initiative deeply impacted environmentally-conscious consumers and also allowed Blue Tokai to stand out as a brand that embraces sustainability much beyond coffee, and garnered a lot of attention from sustainability advocates as well as media outlets (The New Indian Express, 2021).

3.8.c Goya and Blue Tokai Influencer Campaign:

Blue Tokai collaborated with Goya, a lifestyle-focused brand to launch an influencer campaign. In this initiative, both the brands collaborated to curate unique pantry boxes which were designed to inspire creativity among content creators and to enhance brand visibility.

The campaign employed a diverse group of influencers like chefs, food vloggers, and lifestyle content creators. Each influencer was sent a customized pantry box which was co-branded by Goya and Blue Tokai. Such boxes contained a carefully selected mix of Blue Tokai's coffee blends and brewing essentials, along with several other ingredients like artisanal syrups, spices and dessert bases. The task involved curating a unique recipe using the box's content depending on the recipient's expertise- whether in baking, mixology or innovative recipes.

Upon creating unique recipes, the influencers documented the process and shared them across Instagram and other social media channels. Several recipes like coffee-infused desserts, cold brew mocktails and savory dishes which featured coffee as a surprise ingredient. The campaign also utilized a hashtag #BrewWithBlue to enhance visibility and reach among diverse consumers.

This initiative heavily focused on storytelling with influencers promoting Blue Tokai's products, their personal experiences with the brand as well as insights upon how the customized pantry boxes sparked their creativity to tailor a unique recipe. Such authentic endorsement resonated with the audience and unconventionally tapped into the creator economy, blending both the coffee and the lifestyle ecosystems.

The campaign also highlighted the brand's cultural relevance as well as its urge to innovate and expand the Indian specialty coffee market (Marketing Insights India, 2025).

3.8.d Blue Tokai Library with Bloomsbury India

In 2022, Blue Tokai collaborated with Bloomsbury India to launch the Blue Tokai Library with curated collections of books that is prevalent across select Blue Tokai cafes across India.

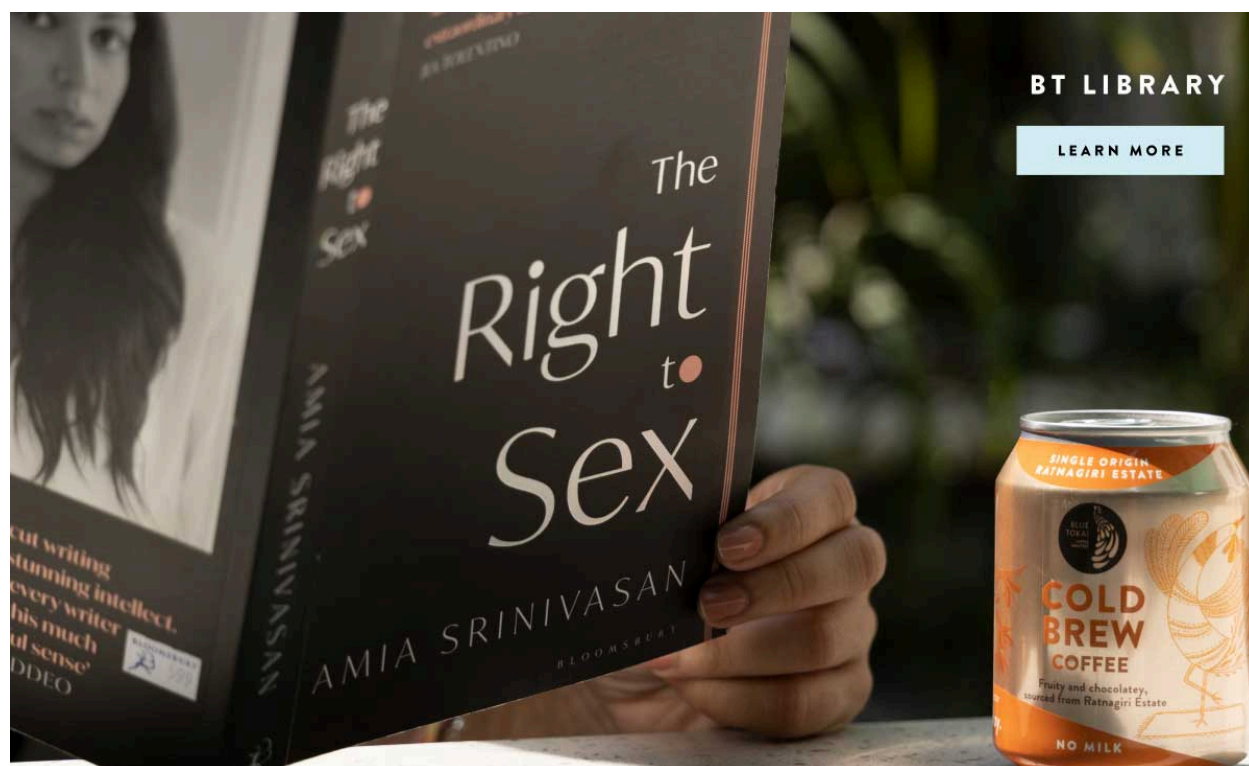


Figure 15. Bloomsbury Publishers collaborated with Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters to create 'Blue Tokai Library'. Source: Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters (Secondary Data).

This initiative aimed to integrate the coffee culture with literature and foster a wide community of readers with over 500 select titles from Indian authors, further enhancing the coffee

experience for its consumer base. The libraries were established in locations such as Vasant Vihar and Mehrauli in New Delhi, Kala Ghoda in Mumbai, Koramangala in Bangalore, and Park Street in Kolkata. Moreover, the cafes also hosted author events to further increase consumer engagement.

Such initiatives highlight Blue Tokai's inclination towards integrating Indian culture, sustainability and interactive tactics to form deeper and meaningful connections with its consumer base to further brand likeability and loyalty.

3.9 Consumer Engagement and Loyalty:

Blue Tokai's unique branding strategy rooted in Indian coffee heritage coupled with contemporary marketing methods, appeals to a wide consumer base in India.

3.9.a Social Media, Newsletters and Workshops:

Blue Tokai maintains an active presence on social media like Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn. The content shared on these platforms is oftentimes interactive and promotes direct engagement, such as, behind-the-scenes glimpses of coffee sourcing, brewing tutorials and user-generated content. Such engaging content ensures higher levels of brand affinity.

Moreover, the brand also sends email newsletters to its subscriber base, which is an added avenue for storytelling and coffee education. The newsletter content generally includes new product launches, brewing tips and stories about local farmers, enhancing the brand's image as rooted in cultural appreciation.

Blue Tokai also hosts several events like barista workshops, coffee brewing classes and 'Meet the Farmer' sessions. Such immersive experiences allow the customer to bond further with the brand and its cultural roots (Blue Tokai, 2025).

3.9.b Cultural Narrative and Marketing Analytics:

Blue Tokai has not disclosed specific marketing Return-on-Investment figures but its annual financial growth depicts the efficiency of its branding strategies. The company's revenue increased from Rs. 41 crores in FY21 to Rs. 216 crores in FY24, recording a compound annual

growth rate (CAGR) of 65% over four years. Such data suggests that the company's cultural branding strategies might be resonating with its consumers which in turn might be influencing their purchasing decisions (Entrackr, 2024).

In terms of social media engagement, analytics from a recent Hootsuite report related to Blue Tokai's Instagram indicates that posts which feature regional coffee origins receive 25% more interactions compared to other types of content. Such a finding reveals that Blue Tokai's cultural narratives strongly resonate with its audience which in turn decides purchasing decisions and loyalty (Hootsuite, 2025).

Moreover, Blue Tokai also interacts with its consumer base through email newsletters that provide educational and cultural content related to regional coffee. According to Campaign Monitor, Blue Tokai's email open rates exceed the industry average by 15% which highlights the effectiveness of their cultural branding approach in appeal to the average Indian consumer.

When it comes to interactive events and workshops, data from a 2025 customer survey highlights that 78% of participants in Blue Tokai workshops expressed a stronger brand loyalty post the event, citing that the workshop gave them a deeper understanding of Blue Tokai's cultural ethos (Economic Times Hospitality World, 2025).

A case study from 2025 by a third-party analytics firm also revealed that consumers who considered themselves to be 'culturally-conscious' are 35% more likely to purchase from Blue Tokai over its competitors (Media Brief, 2025). Thus, such metrics are reflected from the brand's consistent messaging around local emancipation as well as Indian heritage.

3.10 Discussion

A prominent player in India's specialty coffee market, Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters has adopted a transparent and contemporary approach to cultural branding. The brand emphasises traceability, craftsmanship, and urban appeal through its direct-sourcing model and immersive cafe workshops. By focusing on the origin of the coffee bean from local Indian estates, Blue Tokai connects consumers to their brand experience, fostering a sense of trust and authenticity. The

brand's packaging while being minimalist reflects modern sentiments that sits well with its urban ethos, appealing to younger, tech-savvy audiences. Moreover, its marketing campaigns, collaboration with local artists as well as digital storytelling highlight a blend of innovation and creativity, positioning Blue Tokai as a cultural progressive brand.

Additionally, Blue Tokai cafes serve as cultural hubs where community engagement, such as workshops and barista training, bridges the gap between artisanal practices and urban consumer lifestyles. The brand's alignment towards sustainability and artisanal values establishes its brand identity while appealing to eco-conscious consumers.

A thematic and comparative analysis with Araku Coffee, another indigenous coffee brand will provide deeper insights into how cultural branding is utilized differently by the two brands. This comparison will explore their strategies in storytelling, heritage representation and consumer engagement, shedding light on how each has crafted a distinct identity to stand out in the competitive coffee market.

Section 2: Case Study Analysis of Araku Coffee

1. Introduction:



Figure 16. Forged under the Naandi Foundation, Araku Coffee has made visible strides in bringing specialty coffee to the forefront. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

1.1 Overview of the Case Study:

In the realm of indigenous coffee brands, Araku Coffee is a compelling subject to study the intersection of cultural branding and its broader impact on consumer perception. Araku Coffee was founded under the aegis of the Naandi Foundation and it emerged from the lush Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh, India (Naandi Foundation, 2021). Araku Coffee aims to uplift tribal communities through sustainable agricultural practices, fair trade as well as organic cultivation practices. Thus, besides being a homegrown Indian brand, Araku Coffee is a unique blend of tradition, sustainability and global vision (Mukherjee, 2021).

Araku Coffee has a unique positioning in the specialty coffee market, as it offers premium organic coffee that is grown, harvested, and even processed entirely by tribal farmers. The brand's narrative is based on emancipating and empowering local communities, promoting environmental sustainability as well as highlighting the cultural heritage of the beautiful Araku Valley (Ganguly, 2019). Such a cultural ethos is reflected in every aspect of the brand's strategy,

including its cultivation methods, its packaging as well as its marketing efforts (Singh & Reddy, 2020).

Araku Coffee's journey is quite unique, as it started off as a grassroots initiative and developed into an international brand with a flagship cafe in Paris. The brand is highly committed towards quality and transparency which resonates with ethically and environmentally-conscious consumers across India and the world. Araku Coffee has set itself apart in the competitive Indian coffee market by highlighting its deep cultural roots as well as its sustainability practices (The Economic Times, 2021).

Thus, Araku Coffee is beneficial in this case analysis methodology as it provides valuable insights as to how cultural branding can allow brands to connect with consumers by highlighting their local heritage and combining it with global appeal to form lasting deep emotional bonds with their consumers (Jain, 2021).

1.2 Context and Relevance:

Araku Coffee is a prominent name in the Indian coffee industry when it comes to cultural branding. It is highly relevant to the study of cultural branding due to its seamless integration of sustainability, fair trade practices, and regional heritage to create a brand narrative that appeals to both local and global consumers. Araku Coffee has skilfully highlighted its origin through the tribal communities of Araku Valley and emphasises upon organic methods of farming. Thus, Araku Coffee serves as an ideal case study for understanding how cultural identity can be easily leveraged to carve out a premium brand (Naandi Foundation, 2021).

Araku Coffee is notable for its unique approach to sustainability. It promotes biodiversity in coffee plantations as well as ensures chemical-free cultivation, encouraging environmentally responsible agriculture. Such initiatives align with the growing consumer demand for environmentally-positive products, making Araku Coffee a relevant subject to analyze the

cultural branding efforts of indigenous coffee brands (Patel, 2020).



Figure 17. Araku follows a cooperative structure with added emphasis on a fair-trade model and equitable wages to farmers. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Moreover, Araku Coffee's fair trade model ensures that local tribal farmers receive equitable returns, education, and resources to enhance their livelihoods. Araku Coffee's focus on community development highlights how brands can embed social responsibility in their core operations, leveraging cultural branding as a tool for social change (Bhattacharya, 2022).

Araku Coffee's cultural branding efforts are also reflected through its storytelling practices, packaging as well as marketing efforts, making it a relevant subject in order to study the intersection of cultural branding and consumer behaviour in the indigenous coffee industry.

1.3 Objectives of the Case Study:

This case study aims to analyze the branding efforts employed by Araku Coffee, its special emphasis on cultural and sustainable branding, to establish its distinct identity as a premium coffee brand in the indigenous coffee market.

The specific objectives of this case study include:

1. Examining Araku Coffee's Cultural Branding Approach

- a) Investigating how the brand incorporates cultural heritage of the Araku Valley into its branding methods.
- b) Analyzing how visual identity, storytelling and marketing efforts of Araku Coffee reflect its cultural as well as geographical origins.

2. Evaluating the Role of Sustainability in Branding Mechanisms

- a) Assessing the significance of Araku Coffee's sustainability practices, such as organic farming, biodiversity promotion and fair trade practices, in its branding strategies.
- b) Understanding how the sustainability efforts contribute to the brand's market positioning.

3. Understanding the Impact of Global Appeal

- a) Examining how Araku Coffee balances its indigenous identity with its global ambitions, as is evident from its international cafe in Paris.
- b) Analyzing the role of global recognition in enhancing the brand's cultural and sustainable narrative.

4. Identifying Broader Implications for Indigenous Brands

- a) Exploring how Araku Coffee's branding strategies can serve as a model for other indigenous coffee brands aiming to differentiate themselves in the competitive coffee market.
- b) Providing insights into leveraging cultural and sustainable branding for long-term growth and consumer engagement.

2. Brand Overview:

2.1 History and Background:

Araku Coffee developed from a grassroots initiative to an internationally-acclaimed brand that highlights the combined power of cultural branding and sustainability practices. It was established by the Naandi Foundation in the early 2000s, aimed to uplift tribal communities in Andhra Pradesh's Araku Valley by embracing coffee cultivation as a means of sustainable livelihood. Initially established to address high maternal mortality rates, the Araku foundation provided coffee samplings to tribal farmers, encouraging organic and biodynamic farming methods under the guidance of experts like David Hogg (CNBCTV 18, 2019).

The project's success led to the formation of Araku Originals, a social enterprise that represents around 25,000 farmers across 720 villages, making it one of the world's largest organic cooperatives (CNBCTV 18, 2019). The farmers associated with Araku Originals employ biodynamic agriculture, in consideration with lunar cycles and ecological balance, in order to produce high-quality Arabica beans. Moreover, the cooperative also poses a democratic structure with 50% female representation to ensure inclusive decision-making and community empowerment (The Standard, 2024).

Araku Coffee also launched the 'Gems of Araku' program, which was initiated in 2009, where 1,800 micro-lots are evaluated annually through rigorous international cupping protocols. This program has been highly beneficial in elevating coffee's quality, with top micro-lots scoring 94 out of 100. The brand is globally recognized due to its Gold Medal at the Prix Epicures OR 2018 in Paris and exports to over 42 countries, including France, Japan and the USA (Daily Mirror, 2024).

In 2017, Araku Coffee introduced its flagship cafe in Paris, seamlessly making its way into the international market. The brand's expansion was accentuated with the launch of a cafe in Bengaluru in 2021, which served as a cultural hub, promoting the 'Arakunomics' model, which is a regenerative agricultural approach that balances agricultural, ecological and social factors. This model was awarded the Rockefeller Foundation's Food System Vision Prize in 2020 and the

Seeding the Future Prize Prize from the Institute of Food Technologists in 2023 (The Standard, 2024).

Thus, Araku Coffee's case study highlights how combining cultural heritage, sustainable practices, and community empowerment can create a premium brand with global recognition yet deeply rooted within its culture.

2.2 Business Model:

Araku Coffee's business model highlights the power of cooperative structures, direct trade, and sustainable agriculture in transitioning the livelihoods of tribal communities. The model primarily emphasises community ownership, environmental responsibility and economic emancipation.

2.2.a Cooperative Framework and Farmer Empowerment

Araku Coffee is based on its cooperative model, which employs over 25,000 farmers across 955 villages in the Araku Valley. Such farmers are also divided into Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), like the M. Nittapattu Mutually Aided Cooperative Society (MNMACS), recognized for its excellence in organic business practices. The cooperative model ensures that the farmers have a say in the enterprise, which promotes collective and inclusive decision-making as well as equitable profit-sharing (The Hindu Business Line, 2022).

2.2.b Direct Trade and Market Access

Araku Coffee's business model eliminates intermediaries which ensures that farmers receive fair prices for their produce. The brand has also partnered with organizations like TechnoServe and the Walmart Foundation, which have facilitated direct market access to the farming population. Such a model has connected farmers with institutional buyers like Tata Consumer Products and other international markets in Europe. Such a direct trade model enhances farmers' incomes and also ensures a transparent and traceable supply chain (The Hindu Business Line, 2022).

2.2.c Organic Cultivation and Sustainability

Araku Coffee is committed to organic farming practices. The Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) has secured an organic certification for organic coffee cultivated by 2600 tribal farmers

across 2275 hectares. This certification has been achieved by adhering to strict organic farming protocols over three years, which has opened doors to premium markets and ensured high returns for farmers as well. Moreover, the cooperative has also executed several reforestation programs by planting indigenous trees to restore ecological balance and promote biodiversity (Devdiscourse, 2025).



Figure 18. Araku's cultural branding focuses on sustainability and socio-economic development for the tribal communities of the Araku Valley. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

2.2.d Technological Integrations and Traceability Solutions

Araku Coffee has taken great leaps in adopting technology in its several processes. The brand has implemented digital identification systems for farmers and embraced traceability solutions like TraceX. Such technological tools allow consumers to trace their coffee back to the specific village of origin, thus, establishing the brand's commitment to transparency and authenticity (The Hindu Business Line, 2022).

2.2.e Socio-Cultural Impact and Inclusivity

Besides its technologically-advanced economic model, Araku Coffee has also made relevant social impact. The democratic cooperative structure ensures that one-third of the board members are women, encouraging gender inclusivity and empowering the women of the community (The Hindu Business Line, 2022). The brand also provides training programs to farmers in agronomy and sustainable farming practices that has highly enhanced the coffee-quality that is produced.

Thus, Araku Coffee's business model is rooted in cooperative governance, direct trade, organic cultivation, and technological advancements to mint a sustainable and a socially relevant coffee venture. With its core emphasis on the well-being of tribal communities and the environment, Araku Coffee has carved out a unique niche within the coffee industry of India.

3. Product Range and Services

Araku Coffee's diverse range of products and services which includes organic specialty coffees, reflecting its focus on quality, cultural heritage and sustainability. The brand offers a diverse range of coffee blends, premium packaging, and immersive cafe experiences for their consumer base.

3.1 Organic Coffee Blends and Single-Origin Products

Araku's coffee profile features finely crafted coffee variants, highlighting the unique offerings of Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh.

The Signature variant is a balanced and aromatic coffee product with hints of chocolate, green pepper and vegetal flavours. This variant is 100% Arabica and is available in whole beans, ground coffee, and compostable capsules compatible with Nespresso machines (Araku Coffee, 2025).

The Selection variant is a robust and full-bodied coffee featured by flavours of caramel, butter and dark chocolate. It is suited for espresso and Italian coffee methods. Similarly, the Early Harvest is a light and fruity coffee with red fruit, lemon, and vegetal notes, highlighting the freshness of early-season harvests (Araku Coffee, 2025).

The High Altitude variant is cultivated above 1000 meters and this coffee offers prominent hazelnut taste notes, highlighting the impact of altitude on flavour profiles. Lastly, the Grand Reserve variant, commonly termed as the peak of Araku offerings, presents a complicated blend of yellow and red fruits, caramel, vanilla and leather notes. Such a variant is sourced from certain select plots known for exceptional biodiversity and soil richness (Araku Coffee, 2025).

Within its cafes, Araku Coffee serves a diverse range of organic and single-origin coffee which are brewed using different methods, such as pour-over, French press, espresso and cold brew. Each of these preparations highlight the nuanced flavour profile of the various variants like Signature, Selection, Early Harvest, High Altitude and Grand Reserve. The cafes highlight the craft the coffee-making by offering several options like espresso-based drinks which include classic choices like cappuccino, latte, and macchiato; cold brew options which are served over ice or blended with organic flavours; and specialty brews emphasising unique techniques like siphon and aeropress to enhance the overall coffee experience for the enthusiasts.

Besides the coffee, the cafes also serve as assortment of beverage options like baked goods including croissants, pain au chocolat, and muffins; desserts such as coffee-infused cakes, tiramisu and cookies; breakfast and brunch options like avocado toast, granola with yogurt and farm-fresh egg dishes which are organically-sourced; light meals and snacks like sandwiches, wraps and salads which are prepared with a mix of global and regional ingredients from the Araku Valley; and non-coffee drinks like organic teas that are sourced from local plantations, fresh smoothies and juices made with seasonal selections and hot chocolate and matcha latte as alternatives to coffee.



Figure 19. Ethical supply chains, eco-friendly packaging and social impact are the cornerstones of Araku's cultural branding process. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Moreover, the cafe experience emphasises more on sustainable practices, using eco-friendly packaging and the ingredients are sourced from ethical suppliers. Moreover, much of the items on the menu are inspired from the traditional dishes of Araku Valley, combining modernity as well as traditional recipes. However, Araku Coffee also provides the coffee experience beyond the menu with tasting sessions that allow them to educate consumers about Araku's coffee-making process and workshops that focus on coffee-brewing techniques and pairing food with coffee (Araku Coffee, 2025).

Thus, Araku Coffee follows a well-rounded approach, transforming Araku's cafes into cultural hubs with thoughtfully-curated environments that expand the brand's mission related to sustainable specialty coffee.

3.2 Premium Packaging and Sustainability

Araku Coffee highly focuses on sustainability in its packaging choices. Coffee is offered in various different formats like 200g tins, 1kg pouches, and biodegradable capsules. Such capsules are also made from corn starch, potato starch, cane sugar, and beets, due to which they are fully compostable under domestic conditions within 20 weeks (Araku Coffee, 2025).

3.3 Experiential Cafes and Global Experiences

Araku cafes serve as cultural ambassadors of the brand with their global locations like in Paris as well as India.

Araku cafe located in the Le Meris district of Paris offers a curated selection of the Araku coffee variants. The cafe's decor also features an agronomic map depicting the coffee's origin in the Araku Valley. The Bengaluru cafe besides serving the special variants of Araku coffee, also houses the ARAKU World Specialty Coffee Academy, India's Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) certified coffee academy. The cafe's design also incorporates sustainable materials that highlights local craftsmanship, further reinforcing the brand's focus on sustainability and cultural heritage (Araku Coffee, 2025).

Therefore, Araku Coffee offers a unique range of products and services which offers an immersive experience to consumers by combining deep appreciation for sustainability as well as cultural authenticity.

4. Market Position and Competitors

Araku Coffee has carved a distinct niche in the specialty coffee market by positioning itself as a premium brand focusing on sustainable practices, direct trade, organic cultivation, biodiversity promotion as well as community empowerment. Unlike its direct competitors like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Third Wave Coffee which focus on artisanal coffee and contemporary cafe experiences, Araku Coffee specifically emphasises upon social impact and integrates into its core business model, connecting directly with tribal farmers from the Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh to produce high-quality, organic coffee.

4.1 Brand Positioning and Differentiation

Araku's core emphasis lies on sustainability and fair trade that makes it stand out in a market with an increasing number of ethical consumers. Their business model eliminates intermediaries to ensure that farmers receive fair compensation and focuses on not only delivering high-quality, premium coffee but working towards the socio-economic development of the area. Such a niche

highly appeals to the growing consumer segment that prioritizes transparency and social responsibility in their consumption decisions.

4.2 Competitive Landscape

Competing within the Indian specialty coffee segment, Araku faces competition from both domestic as well as international brands. One of its top domestic competitors is Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, which is known for its single-origin coffees and transparency in its sourcing methods. Blue Tokai operates from over 150+ coffee outlets in India and has even internationally expanded to Japan as well. Blue Tokai's core principles lie in establishing direct relationships with farmers and educating the Indian consumer about specialty coffee through a range of brewing techniques and equipment.

Third Wave Coffee, another of Araku's competitors, focuses mainly on precision brewing and customer experience, with over 140+ locations worldwide and plans to triple its roastery in the coming years (IndiaRetailing, 2024). Similarly, Starbucks India (Tata Starbucks), a joint venture between Tata Consumer Products and Starbucks Corporation, operates over 450+ outlets across the country and has specially localized its offerings to cater to Indian tastes, with items like Masala Chai and Chicken Kathi Rolls (Startup Chai, 2024).

4.3 Marketing Analytics and ROI

Specific sales figures for Araku Coffee have not been publicly disclosed, the brand's strategic efforts indicate a focus on long-term value creation over rapid expansion across the country. The brand invests in farmer training programs and sustainable farming practices, aiming to ensure consistent quality and supply, maintaining its premium positioning in the Indian coffee market. The brand's international presence, including a cafe in Paris, enhances its brand equity and global aspirations.

On the contrary, direct competitors like Blue Tokai and Third Wave place emphasis on rapid expansion methods, utilizing funding rounds to further increase their market share. For instance, Blue Tokai has secured investments from notable organizations and people like Deepika Padukone and A91 Partners to further its growth.

With Araku's emphasis on sustainability and social impact, the ROI profile of the brand may contrast vividly with that of its direct competitors. Araku Coffee may not match the rapid revenue growth of brands like Blue Tokai, as the brand primarily focuses on cultivating brand loyalty and appealing to a niche base of customers, leading to sustainable profitability in the long term.

As of April 2025, specific market share figures for Araku Coffee are not publicly available but several indicators reflect the brand's significant presence in the specialty coffee industry. Araku Coffee has a global distribution network, exporting to over 42 countries, including France, Germany, UK, the USA, South Korea, and Japan (Daily Mirror, 2024). The cooperative structure also supports 25,000 tribal Indian farmers across 720 villages, focusing on sustainable and organic farming practices. More so, Araku Coffee has ranked highly on the Specialty Coffee Association scale, with top micro-lots scoring as much as 94 out of 100 (The Business Times, 2025).

Thus, despite the lack of tangible public figures, Araku Coffee has carved out a unique niche for itself through its sustainability and socio-economic development programs in the domestic as well as international specialty coffee market.

5. Cultural Branding Strategy

5.1 Cultural Positioning

Araku Coffee uniquely weaves in Indian tribal culture and traditions into its brand identity, focusing on sustainability, community empowerment and authenticity.

5.1.a Integration of Tribal Culture and Traditions

At the core of Araku Coffee's branding strategies is its deep-rooted connection to Indian tribal coffee farmers of the Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh. The brand's narrative especially focuses on the rich cultural heritage of such tribal communities and bringing their stories to the forefront by highlighting their traditional practices and communal harmony. For instance, the 'Girijan Unity Ritual' is a community seed-planting ritual that symbolizes collective effort and prosperity for the tribal farmers of the Araku valley. Such a sentiment is also reflected in Araku Coffee's

operations that are based on rituals that empower communities and foster closer bonding (Curly Brew, 2025).

The annual coffee harvest festival also features celebration among traditional communities accentuated by music, dances and community feasts that rejoice over the bounty of the coffee harvest. Such events add to Araku's brand story, highlighting the gratitude associated with the community's produce and their harvest.

5.1.b Narrative of Sustainability and Community Empowerment

Araku Coffee's brand positioning is mainly focused on sustainability by fostering organic coffee cultivation practices. The coffee is grown without any synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, protecting and preserving the natural ecosystem of Araku Valley. Thus, besides ensuring high-quality coffee, Araku also promotes biodiversity preservation as well as soil health (The Economic Times, 2025).

Moreover, the brand's cooperative model also empowers nearly 40,000 tribal farmers, in which there are a significant number of women included in leadership roles. Such an inclusive governance structure ensures inclusivity, democratic participation and equitable growth within the community.

5.1.c Authentic Branding and Global Recognition

Araku Coffee's brand authenticity is reinforced by its holistic global presence as the brand was included in the Government of India's gift hamper for visiting heads of State at the G20 Summit in 2023 which underlines its status as a symbol of India's rich culture and agricultural heritage (Business Standard, 2024).



Figure 20. Araku Coffee's cafe in Paris has also set the stone for global recognition. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Moreover, the brand also invests in meaningful collaborations, like the partnership with jewelry brand MISHO, which resulted in a collection inspired by the tribal women of Araku, incorporating design features like coffee beans and traditional ornaments into contemporary aesthetics. Such a collaboration not only celebrates the artisanship of tribal communities but also brings their stories to global audiences.

5.1.d Araku Cafe in Bangalore

The Araku Cafe in Bangalore further exemplifies the brand's positioning rooted in authentic tribal culture. The cafe is designed with sustainable materials and local craftsmanship and it serves as a socio-cultural hub, educating visitors about the journey of Araku Coffee- from bean to cup. It features an in-house roastery, barista training areas, and spaces for community engagement, which reflect the brand's commitment towards sustainability and social empowerment.



Figure 21. Araku Coffee integrates authentic tribal culture with modern design aesthetics to create a unique brand identity. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Therefore, Araku Coffee's integration of Indian tribal culture into its branding strategies reflects its dedication to cultural authenticity and emancipation of communities. Through its cooperative model, cultural celebrations, as well as global collaborations, the brand shares the rich heritage of Araku Valley to the global world out there.

5.2 Brand Storytelling:

Araku Coffee intertwines a unique narrative of tribal heritage, sustainable agriculture, as well as global recognition. The brand has journeyed from local cultivation to international acclaim which is testament to the brand's commitment to storytelling by honoring its local roots while reaching out to global audiences.

5.2.a Origins Rooted in Community and Sustainability

The Araku Valley in the Eastern Ghats is home to diverse tribal communities who have perpetually practiced agriculture in harmony with nature. The Naandi Foundation recognized the potential of the region and initiated a project to cultivate high-quality, premium coffee in the region. Besides producing high-quality coffee, Naandi Foundation also aimed to enhance the socio-economic status of the coffee farmers of the region by providing them sustainable livelihoods (Araku Coffee, 2025).

5.2.b Global Recognition and Market Expansion

Araku Coffee's dedication towards quality as well as sustainability has garnered global attention. In 2019, it received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, affirming its distinct features tied to its specific geographical location. Moreover, the brand's inclusion in being presented as gift hampers during the G20 Summit 2023 hosted in New Delhi, highlights its active role in defining India's rich cultural heritage (The Times of India, 2023).

Moreover, Araku Coffee has collaborated with brands like Tata Consumer Products, which have facilitated Araku's entry into the European Markets, enhancing its global appeal as well as expanding the market for high-quality, ethically-sourced coffee (ET Hospitality World, 2025).

5.2.c Storytelling through Digital Platforms

Araku Coffee effectively uses its digital platforms like their website, social media pages and much more to bring their narrative to light. Araku's official website as well as Instagram page showcase the journey from bean to cup, throwing light upon the role of tribal farmers, sustainable practices and the distinct flavor profiles of their coffee. The digital platforms include ample visual content with images of the lush Araku Valley, farmers at work, and the coffee-making process, providing consumers a transparent window into the company's operations as well as cultural ethos.

5.2.d Cultural Celebration and Community Engagement

The 'Gems of Araku' is an annual harvest festival that celebrates the season's specialty coffee micro-lots and honors the farmers' contributions. The event aims to celebrate the participation of

these tribal communities and also serves as a platform to display the premium quality of Araku Coffee to premium buyers and connoisseurs (The Standard, 2024).

Such cultural celebrations highlight the brand's commitment towards preserving cultural heritage as well as providing consumers with a deeper understanding of the cultural significance behind each cup of coffee.

5.2.e Sustainable Practices and Environmental Stewardship

Araku Coffee's cultivation methods are rooted in sustainability as the coffee is grown organically without any synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, to enhance soil health and preserve the natural ecosystem of the Araku Valley. Moreover, shade-grown coffee practices help in afforestation, providing natural habitats for birds and other wildlife, reducing soil erosion and enhancing biodiversity (The Business Times, 2025).

Such ethically-curated products appeal to a consumer base that is increasingly shifting towards environment-friendly products.

5.2.f Empowerment Through Cooperative Models

The cooperative model adopted by Araku Coffee empowers over 40,000 tribal farmers, with several women involved within leadership roles as well. The cooperative works within a multi-tier system where small farmer collectives form a part of bigger federations. Such a layered approach is curated to ensure that even the smallest of farmers have a voice in the decision-making process.

One of the most distinct features of the cooperative is empowering women. A large portion of the leadership roles within the cooperative is held by women, creating a ripple effect of empowerment within tribal communities. Women leaders are not only involved in administrative roles but also look after quality control, financial planning, and marketing strategies. Certain programs like 'Women in Coffee' train women in such areas and provide them the skills and confidence to make a difference in the broader community (Business Today, 2025).

Moreover, the cooperative leverages indigenous knowledge of traditional farmers, such as using natural pest repellents like neem and intercropping with native species. Such practices not only align with organic farming practices but also reduce the overall costs for farmers. Such traditional wisdom is integrated with modern techniques like shade-grown coffee and scientific soil testing which allows Araku Coffee to achieve both ecological and economic sustainability.

The revenue generated by Araku Coffee is reinvested into the community. Besides ensuring fair wages, the profits fund educational initiatives, healthcare facilities, and infrastructure improvements within the community. The cooperative has also built schools for children of tribal farmers, with a curriculum that focuses on sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurship. Training programs have also been launched for farmers to understand international coffee markets and involve themselves in active trade negotiations.

5.2.g Araku Cafe in Bangalore: A Immersive Experience in Sustainability

The Araku Cafe in Bengaluru serves as a space for experiential retail that integrates storytelling along with sustainability. While being situated in one of the most bustling districts of the city, the cafe is a microcosm of the Araku Valley. Every element of the cafe, from the menu to the interiors reflect the brand's ethos towards economic and ecological sustainability.

The cafe is constructed using locally-sourced materials like reclaimed wood and eco-friendly paints, with designs that incorporate tribal motifs, bringing the art and cultural heritage of the tribal communities of the Araku Valley into an urban setting. Natural lighting along with an open floor plan creates a welcoming and earth-friendly atmosphere within the cafe (Architectural Digest, 2025).



Figure 22. The Araku cafe in Bangalore provides an immersive experience and is built using sustainable materials. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Beyond serving coffee, the cafe offers a holistic experience to its consumers as visitors can participate in workshops that are based on sustainable farming, led by representatives from the Araku Valley. An interactive display is also placed within the cafe that explains the coffee's journey, from seed to cup, highlighting the role of tribal farmers and the efforts of their sustainable practices. Such initiatives aim to create awareness as well as foment a deeper emotional connection with the brand.

The cafe also hosts an in-house roastery that allows customers to watch the entire roasting process live. The baristas are trained to provide an immersive experience to the customers as they can not only brew specialty coffee but also narrate the story of Araku Coffee to the consumers. Such a dual focus on technical skills and storytelling enhances brand loyalty among the consumer base (Araku Coffee, 2025).

Moreover, the cafe adopts local cuisine flavours with a modern twist. For instance, the coffee is generally paired with millet-based cookies or turmeric-infused cakes, reflecting Araku's dedication towards sustainable agriculture. The ingredients are directly sourced from local

farmer markets and the profits from the cafe are reinvested in the Araku Valley, ensuring that the benefits from the urban outlet flow back to the source.

The cafe also hosts several collaborations with sustainable brands and international coffee experts. Such initiatives showcase Araku's significance in the global specialty coffee niche while maintaining its unique cultural identity.

Thus, the Araku cafe in Bengaluru serves as a powerful extension of the brand, curating a tangible connection between the urban consumers and the tribal coffee farmers of the Araku Valley. The cafe is a unique place to enjoy one's coffee, an immersive experience that communicates the values of sustainability, authenticity and community empowerment.

Therefore, Araku Coffee's storytelling is a distinct blend of tradition, sustainability and global traditions. The brand highlights the journey of the Araku Valley farmers while providing world-class coffee that is rooted in cultural pride and sustainability.

5.3 Visual Identity and Design

Araku Coffee's visual identity is rooted in minimalist elegant designs along with cultural authenticity. Through several visual elements like packaging, cafe designs and marketing materials, the brand ensures a cohesive branding message and a commitment to organic practices, tribal heritage and sustainable luxury.

5.3.a Logo: A Concoction of Elegance and Storytelling

The brand's logo is a carefully designed representation of its brand ethos. The design elements, the color palette and the motifs are selected keeping in mind distinct ways to portray the brand's deep connection with Araku Valley's lush beauty and cultural heritage.

When it comes to the Araku logo, the design is minimalistic with the typography being clean and sans-serif, focusing on clarity and modernity. Such a choice reflects the brand's premium while ensuring versatility across diverse platforms. Subtle elements in the logo draw inspiration from tribal art forms, celebrating the culture of the distinct communities involved in the coffee

production process. Such symbols integrate into the overall design, avoiding overt ornamentation and ensuring a modern aesthetic. The logo also bridges the gap between the global and the local by combining contemporary design principles with motifs inspired by tribal art forms. Such a unique integration ensures that the logo appeals to both domestic and international audiences.



Figure 23. The logo integrates tribal motifs with contemporary designs, appealing to a large set of audiences. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

The primary color palette reflected within the logo are bright earthy tones like orange, blue, brown, green and beige. Such colours reflect the natural environment of the Araku Valley, like its coffee plantations, forested landscapes as well as organic farming practices. There are also several symbolic meanings within the chosen colour palette of the brand. Brown represents coffee itself and depicts the richness of Araku's beans and its connection to the soil. Green signifies its dependence upon sustainable practices and organic methods while beige and other

neutral tones evoke simplicity and authenticity, highlighting the brand's grounded and transparent values.

Araku Coffee also integrates tribal motifs like geometric and linear patterns that are inspired by traditional tribal art and is integrated into its visual branding and logo (Araku Coffee, 2025). Such motifs honor the indigenous farmers who are actively involved in the coffee production process and celebrate their artistry and craftsmanship. The patterns are adopted in a minimalist manner, curating a design that is both modern and culturally significant at the same time. Such methods align with the brand's theme of integration tradition with contemporary sophistication.

The Araku logo defines its brand identity. The logo depicts an alignment towards sustainability by using earthy tones and motifs, which reflects the organic and eco-conscious philosophy of the brand. Moreover, the integration of tribal art and cultural elements highlight the importance of the indigenous communities in Araku's overall brand narrative. The minimalist logo design also communicates the premium nature of the coffee while maintaining an approachable and authentic aesthetic.

The Araku logo also seamlessly integrates with all Araku packaging materials ensuring a consistent experience across all touchpoints. The brown and green logo is prominently visible against the matt-background of the coffee pouches, establishing a premium feel. More so, the motifs from the logo are expanded into patterns on packaging, linking visual identity to the broader brand narrative.

Thus, the Araku logo is not just a visual mark but a storytelling tool that showcases the brand's values and connection to the Araku Valley. The thoughtful logo design serves as a gateway into the world of Araku, a unique concoction of tradition and innovation.

5.3.b Packaging: A Canvas of Culture and Simplicity

Araku's packaging practices draw an overall picture of the brand's cultural ethos inclined towards sustainability and social empowerment. The takeaway packaging sold at the cafes or the

products sold online, Araku's packaging is rooted in minimalist-themed styles that reflect the brand's narrative.

Beyond functionality, Araku Coffee's packaging of its online products also serves as an important storytelling medium. The design philosophy is rooted in minimalism, cultural richness as well as sustainability. Araku uses eco-friendly materials like recyclable paper, compostable capsules, and minimal plastic components in its packaging. Thus, this reflects the brand's commitment towards sustainability as well as reducing environmental impact effectively.



Figure 24. Araku's design philosophy in its packaging is rooted in minimalism yet poses cultural richness. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

Mostly white, orange, green, brown, blue and green hues are used in the packaging which also depict coffee's journey from the soil to the cup (Araku Coffee, 2025). Geometric tribal patterns are also integrated into the design which are inspired by the indigenous communities of the Araku Valley. The overall design remains clean and modern and is not not overly ornate.

Each product's packaging is included with clear labels with details about the coffee's origin, flavour notes, roast dates and sustainability certifications. The 'Signature' coffee blend packaging highlights the balanced flavour with notes of chocolate and green pepper, along with information about organic farming origins. The 'Grand Reserve' packaging on the other hand, features intricate patterns, a metallic sheen as well as bold lettering to emphasize its premium nature. Moreover, consumer-friendly design involves easy-to-open resealable pouches that ensure freshness as well as convenience for consumers, especially the ones who are purchasing premium coffee products online.



Figure 25. Araku's packaging also provides transparent details about the coffee's sourcing and processing. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

For its cafes, such as the ones in Bengaluru and Paris, Araku Coffee designs takeaway packaging products with careful attention to detail as well as positive environmental impact. The coffee cups and sleeves are made from biodegradable materials, with the cups featuring earthy tones and the Araku logo that is prominently displayed. The sleeves incorporate tribal motifs and highlight the farm-to-cup journey, reinforcing the brand's cultural authenticity and identity. For food and merchandise, paper bags with reinforced handles are used and the bags highlight minimal branding, tribal art and a tagline that reflects Araku's commitment to organic and sustainable farming. The packaging also involves customized touches such as seasonal and festive designs that are occasionally introduced to reflect the brand's cultural ethos. For example, during Indian festival season, takeaway packaging incorporates vibrant hues or designs inspired by regional art forms.

Premium coffee blends like the 'Grand Reserve' are sometimes also offered in reusable metallic tins. Such tins are also designed to be aesthetically pleasing as well as serve as keepsakes for customers. Araku also offers specially curated gift sets with coffee blends, cups and brewing equipment, which are presented in elegant boxes made from sustainable materials. Such curated gifts also highlight the brand's premium positioning while maintaining eco-consciousness.

Thus, the packaging serves as an effective medium for engaging with customers by communicating stories of tribal farmers on labels, fostering a connection between consumers and producers. The packaging also highlights certifications related to the organic source of the coffee as well as fair trade mechanisms to build more trust and credibility among consumers.

Thus, Araku Coffee's packaging, whether for takeaway or online sales, serves as an effective element for conveying the brand's cultural and environmental value, creating a meaningful and memorable experience for its customers. The packaging creatively integrates minimalistic aesthetic along with rich cultural storytelling in order to elevate packaging into an art form that resonates with target audiences globally.

5.3.c Cafe Design: Spaces that Narrate Stories

The flagship Araku Cafe in Bengaluru serves as a testament to the brand's distinct design philosophy. Architects involved in crafting the design space were Jorge Zapata and Shonan Purie Trehan who envisioned it as a tranquil oasis, utilizing locally-sourced materials like oak timber, white lime plaster, and glimmering brass, to create a welcoming and serene atmosphere. The cafe's design also integrates elements from the Araku Valley, such as planters which are made from flower-market waste and shelves crafted from upcycled brass, establishing the brand's dedication to sustainability (Architectural Digest India, 2022).

In Mumbai, the Araku cafe extends such design elements with interiors that blend Scandinavian minimalism with local Indian artisanship with features like bamboo chandeliers crafted by artisans from North-east India and a 3D depiction of the Araku terroirs on the walls, celebrating the brand's cultural roots and the indigenous community it supports (Architectural Digest, 2023).

5.3.d Marketing Materials: Crafting a Cohesive Narrative

Araku Coffee's marketing materials maintain a consistent visual language that is similar to its packaging as well as cafe designs. The website and the social media platforms are primary mediums to connect the brand to global audiences, reflecting its cultural ethos while fomenting meaningful connections with customers.

Araku Coffee's official website provides an immersive user experience that aligns with the brand's core values. In terms of visual design, the website employs a minimalist and clean layout with a muted color palette involving earthy tones like browns, greens and whites, which evokes a deep connection to nature and coffee origins. High resolution images of coffee plantations, tribal farmers as well as product shots dominate the homepage of the website, focusing on the journey of coffee till the customer's table.

The website also delves in storytelling through content. The 'Our Story' section of the website explores the origin of Araku coffee, the active role of Naandi Foundation, as well as the empowerment of tribal communities, providing a detailed narrative regarding the overall brand

journey and mission. Individual product pages also include information regarding the various flavour profiles, origins, and sustainable farming practices, creating transparent communication channels with customers. A section in the website is dedicated to ‘Sustainability and Impact’, which primarily highlights key initiatives such as organic farming and farmer training programs, with data-driven impact reports.

The website also offers a streamlined shopping experience, with several categories for coffee blends, brewing equipment and gift sets. Interactive elements like product recommendations based on flavour preferences also enhance consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Several interactive features like a blog section providing insights into coffee culture, recipe and brewing techniques. Moreover, farmer stories and testimonials are added to further strengthen the bond between the consumer and the producer.

Araku Coffee’s instagram handle as well as other social media platforms are vibrant spaces for showcasing its brand journey, products and cultural initiatives. In terms of visual aesthetics, its posts feature high-quality, professionally curated images with earthy tones and tribal motifs, maintaining brand consistency in terms of visuals with other marketing materials. User-generated content such as customer pictures of coffee brewing or cafe visits also enhances authenticity.

The content theme on the social media pages mostly revolve around behind-the-scenes stories, product highlights and cultural campaigns. For behind-the-scenes stories, instagram posts and reels often highlight the coffee’s journey from the plantations to Araku Valley to the customer’s cup, emphasising on the lives of the indigenous tribal farmers. The product highlights mainly include detailed visuals and descriptions of coffee blends, brewing equipment, as well as seasonal offerings. In terms of cultural campaigns, collaborations and events, such as the sensory exhibition ‘Raaga’ at the Bengaluru Araku cafe, help to connect coffee with art and culture.

Social media is also actively used to curate interactive campaigns such as contests, polls, Q&A sessions which engage followers and encourage participation. Moreover, seasonal campaigns like those during harvest time or festive seasons, generate excitement as well as high sales. The brand also aims to educate its consumers regarding coffee production and posts educational

content related to coffee brewing techniques, sustainability practices, and the impact of organic farming which appeals to both coffee enthusiasts as well as ethically-conscious consumers. Moreover, to reinforce its social mission, regular updates with testimonials and videos are posted about Araku Coffee's initiatives to empower tribal communities.

Araku Coffee has also involved itself in several collaborative marketing initiatives such as the sensory exhibition 'Raaga' which exemplifies Araku's dedication to blending coffee with other cultural elements like art, textiles, and fragrances, creating a multi-sensory experience. Moreover, events and workshops like coffee brewing sessions along with farmer meet-and-greet are promoted on social media to foster meaningful relationships with consumers.

5.3.e 'Raaga' Exhibition: A Sensory Experience

In a collaborative initiative, the Araku cafe in Bengaluru hosted the 'Raaga' exhibition, which was an innovative approach to cultural storytelling. The exhibition drew parallels between cotton and coffee and offered a multi-sensory experience to visitors, engaging sight, smell and touch. This initiative not only highlighted the brand's commitment to sustainability also showcased its ability to combine diverse cultural narratives to weave a unique identity (The Hindu, 2021).

Thus, Araku Coffee's visual aesthetics and design choices are weaved carefully to communicate the brand's core values to its consumer base. The brand adopts minimalist yet culturally rich designs to communicate its story of sustainability, community empowerment and cultural depth.

5.4 Marketing Campaigns and Partnerships

Araku Coffee has strategically leveraged collaborations with international chefs, designers and fellow sustainable brands and initiatives to craft a brand narrative deeply rooted in the Araku Valley's rich ecological and cultural heritage. Such partnerships have not only elevated the brand's global presence but also reinforced its market position as a brand exclusively inclined towards sustainability, community empowerment and cultural identity.

5.4.a 'Raaga' Sensory Exhibition

Araku Coffee strategically collaborated with the textile brand Yali to curate a unique sensory exhibition at their flagship cafe in Bengaluru. The immersive campaign was termed as 'Raaga'

which explored the connection between coffee and cotton, both essential parts of India's agrarian culture. The exhibition featured interactive experiences like installations that allowed visitors to feel raw cotton as well as smell freshly-roasted coffee that created a multi-sensory experience. The brand also collaborated with chef Rahul Sharma and curated a seven-course coffee-inspired meal, integrating local ingredients along with nuanced coffee flavours, creating a unique cultural experience for the consumers. The campaign also included several workshops which included talks by experts related to sustainable farming and cotton cultivation, educating consumers about the parallels between coffee and cotton.



Figure 26. The 'Raaga' Exhibition at the Araku cafe depicted the parallels between coffee and cotton. Source: Araku Coffee (Secondary Data).

The campaign was successful in reinforcing Araku's narrative of sustainable coffee cultivation and tying its brand narrative to the tribal communities who are the ultimate producers of the organic coffee. It also provided a platform for environmental dialogue that further established consumer loyalty (Elle Decor India, 2023).

5.4.b Collaboration with Chef Alain Ducasse

Araku Coffee partnered with Michelin-star chef Alain Ducasse to create a curated line of coffee-based products, focusing on the brand's premiumness and global appeal. Chef Ducasse collaborated with Araku to curate coffee blends that suited European palettes while highlighting Araku Valley's distinct flavour profiles. The collaborative initiative was launched with exclusive tasting sessions hosted at Ducasse's cafe in Paris, which allowed consumers to pair Araku Coffee with gourmet dishes.

The partnership was further highlighted by joint campaigns on social media and Araku Coffee's official website, highlighting the marriage of Indian traditions and French culinary excellence.

This collaboration particularly introduced Araku Coffee to European audiences and also elevated its perception as a luxury brand. Moreover, it allowed to portray Araku's unique sustainable farming practices to a global clientele that also gave way to engaged dialogues regarding sustainability within organizational practices (Araku Coffee Official Website, 2021).

5.4.c Barista Training Initiative with Starbucks

Araku Coffee strategically collaborated with Starbucks India to provide barista training sessions, sharing expertise on sustainable and organic coffee farming practices. The campaign included training modules with sessions covering organic coffee cultivation as well as ethical sourcing of coffee, aligning with Araku's sustainable values. Araku and Starbucks then launched a joint-promotion campaign where Starbucks featured limited-edition drinks made with Araku coffee at select outlets during the collaboration timeframe.

Such a collaborative campaign expanded Araku's reach within the urban market while Starbucks gained sustainability credentials by partnering with Araku, creating a win-win scenario with both the brands (Business Insider India, 2022).

5.4.d 'Seed to Cup' Social Media Campaign

The 'Seed to Cup' campaign of Araku Coffee aimed to educate consumers about the farm-to-table journey of Araku Coffee beans, emphasizing upon creating transparent channels of

communication with the brand's consumer base. The campaign entails visual storytelling using posts that depict Araku Valley farmers at work, highlighting their organic farming practices and eco-friendly techniques. Spotlight was given to the indigenous farmers with video testimonials sharing their personal stories and connection to the brand. The campaign also strived to increase follower engagement by encouraging followers to share their personal experiences with the brand, fostering a sense of community.

The campaign is currently ongoing and has significantly increased customer engagement on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, boosting brand awareness and loyalty while strengthening Araku's dedication to community-driven narratives (Araku Coffee Instagram, 2025).

5.4.e Collaboration with Ekkis Studio

Araku Coffee also collaborated with a sustainable Indian design label, Ekkis Studio, to create exclusive merchandise collections inspired by aesthetics from the Araku Valley. The joint collaboration launched limited-edition merchandise including handcrafted ceramics, tote bags, and packaging designed with tribal motifs. The campaign also involved retail display with products being sold online as well as at Araku's flagship cafes, enhancing in-store experiences.

Such a collaboration helped to bridge Araku's coffee offerings with lifestyle branding, appealing to environmentally conscious consumers and further reinforcing its cultural narrative with deep Indian roots (Architectural Digest India, 2021).

5.4.f 'Taste of Araku' Pop-Up Events

Araku Coffee created pop-up events across major Indian cities like Delhi, Mumbai and much more to bring the Araku Valley experience to the urban clientele. Such pop-ups created an immersive experience of the Araku valley with tribal art, music, and storytelling. Live demonstrations involving coffee-making sessions portrayed Araku's unique brewing techniques, paired with local snacks inspired by each region.

Moreover, the campaign was further refined to be more interactive where visitors could interact with brand representatives and learn about the sustainable practices by the indigenous farming population.

The campaign highly enhanced brand awareness and fostered emotional connections with the urban consumer base, increasing footfall in the offline cafes as well as online sales (Mint Lounge, 2022).

Thus, through collaborations with international chefs, immersive sensory experiences and localized pop-up events, Araku successfully combined its roots in Indian culture with modern marketing strategies. Such strategies also highlight the brand's capability to appeal to both Indian and international audiences while staying true to its cultural ethos.

5.5 Consumer Engagement and Loyalty

Araku Coffee has created a distinct niche for itself that intertwines sustainability, Indian heritage, and community empowerment. Araku Coffee employs strategic use of social media, experiential marketing methods as well as events to foster deep consumer engagement and loyalty.

5.5.a The Power of Social Media

Araku Coffee aims to build a digital community through social media engagement. Araku Coffee's Instagram presence serves as a holistic platform to showcase the brand's focus on sustainability and community. The brand boasts of a follower count above 20,000 with the account featuring high-quality visuals of coffee cultivation, behind-the-scenes glimpses of cafe operations, and stories of the tribal communities, which are integral to the brand's story. The brand's content strategy is mainly focused on storytelling, with posts that highlight the journey of coffee. For instance, a recent post focused on highlighting the intricate hand picking process undertaken by women farmers in the Araku valley, underlining the brand's focus on ethical sourcing as well as female empowerment.

The recorded engagement rates in these posts are typically high, with more than hundreds of likes, reflecting a community of followers who are also advocates of the brand's mission.

Moreover, the brand also fosters interaction with its consumer base through polls, Q&A sessions, and user-generated content campaigns that further strengthen such engagement, driving a sense of belonging among its consumers (Araku Coffee Official Instagram, 2025).

5.5.b Immersive Experiential Marketing Campaigns

Araku Coffee also employs several experiential marketing campaigns that provide an immersive brand experience to its consumers. Such an approach has been epitomized within Araku's flagship store in Bengaluru, which has been designed by Jorge Zapata and Shonan Purie Trehan and offers a minimal aesthetic design that aligns with the brand's sustainability focus. The cafe hosts features like the Modbar that is a sleek, under-counter espresso machine, facilitating open communication between baristas and consumers, enhancing the cafe experience and also fostering transparency between the brand and the customers (Architectural Digest India, 2022).

5.5.c Events Celebrating Sustainability and Indian Coffee

The brand also focuses on educating its customers by hosting events and workshops related to coffee cultivation and brewing techniques. Such sessions also feature experts discussing topics such as regenerative agriculture and sustainable farming practices, providing the participants with a deeper understanding about Indian specialty coffee and Araku's core values.

Araku Coffee has been an active participant in events related to coffee culture and sustainability, solidifying its position as a socially responsible Indian brand. The 'Gems of Araku' festival brings together 20,000 farmers and coffee experts to evaluate and celebrate Araku Valley's finest micro-lots of coffee. This initiative has greatly enhanced the quality of coffee as well through rigorous international cupping protocols (Daily Mirror, 2024).

Moreover, Araku Coffee was also spotlighted on International Women's Day at the United Nations, celebrating women's role in sustainable farming. Through such an event, the brand's emphasis on empowering tribal women of the Araku Valley, showcasing its dedication to gender equality and community empowerment (Deccan Herald, 2024).

5.5.d Website and E-Commerce Integration

Araku Coffee's official website is both an informative platform as well as an e-commerce site providing detailed information about the brand's origins, farming practices, and product

offerings. The website features elements like brew guides as well as blogs that educate consumers about coffee and its journey till the cup, enhancing their appreciation for premium coffee. The e-commerce section is also designed in an interactive manner, allowing customers to purchase a variety of products, including ground coffee, ground coffee as well as brewing equipment. The website also provides limited-time offers as well as curated gift sets that cater to different consumer preferences, encouraging repeat purchases from the loyal consumer base.

5.5.e Strategic Collaboration and Partnered Campaigns

Araku Coffee has collaborated with several urban brands committed towards similar goals and vision as itself. Such strategic collaborations have allowed the brand to increase its urban footprint, increase its sales and profitability and direct it towards reinvestment in the Araku Valley.

Collaboration with Design Studio 'The Grid'

Araku Coffee collaborated with The Grid, an internationally-recognized design studio, in order to revamp its visual identity and packaging for global audiences. The Grid curated minimalist designs with bold yet organic typography which resonates with the brand's commitment to sustainability and simplicity. The updated packaging utilizes earthy tones, tribal patterns and locally-inspired textures that appeal to eco-conscious consumers as well as uphold the cultural heritage of the Araku Valley.

This redesign boosted global sales of Araku Coffee by 15% in the first year, as reported in an internal press release, and received accolades in international design forums such as Pentawards (Design Chronicle, 2024).

Partnership with Fair Trade International

Araku Coffee collaborated with Fair Trade International to participate in global sustainability campaigns like co-hosting webinars and on-ground workshops, increasing awareness about fair trade practices and showcasing the empowerment of tribal farmers in the Araku Valley area. Storytelling videos were crafted depicting the lives of tribal women transitioning from traditional farming practices to producing high-quality, premium coffee for global markets (Fair Trade International, 2023).

The campaign achieved over 1 million views on Instagram, increasing brand credibility and driving a 10% surge in online subscriptions (Instagram Analytics, 2023).

Araku Coffee at Slow Food Festival, Turin

Araku Coffee participated in the Slow Food Festival at Turin, Italy to showcase its regenerative farming practices and its premium single-origin coffee. The brand's booth recreated the lush Araku Valley with immersive scenarios narrating the farmers' stories. A guided tasting experience of Araku's micro-lots was also provided to visitors, giving them a first-hand experience of Araku's flavour profiles (Slow Food Festival Report, 2023).

The event was hugely successful in curating partnerships with European distributors and a 20% increase in international orders, marking a significant milestone for Araku's global expansion strategy (Event Marketing Report, 2023).

Partnerships with Bamboo India

Araku Coffee collaborated with Bamboo India, a Pune-based startup focused solely on eco-conscious products, to develop sustainable and eco-friendly takeaway packaging. Such an initiative helped Araku design biodegradable coffee cups and packaging that emphasized the brand's dedication towards reducing its carbon footprint. A campaign titled 'Sip Sustainably' encouraged eco-conscious coffee consumption among its customer base (Bamboo India, 2024).

The campaign gained huge traction in metropolitan cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad, leading to a 25% increase in cafe footfall after the launch of the campaign (Campaign Analytics, 2024).

'Flavours of Araku' Campaign

The 'Flavours of Araku' campaign aimed to combine food, art and music inspired from the Araku Valley. It featured several Indian chefs and food influencers crafting unique recipes using Araku Coffee, such as coffee-infused rasam and gourmet desserts. The campaign also hosted an art contest where participants illustrated their perceptions of the Araku Valley, with the winners receiving uniquely-curated gift hampers from Araku (Instagram, 2024).

Such an initiative boosted Araku's social media engagement by 30%, mainly driven by user-generated content and increased visibility among the younger audiences (Instagram Analytics, 2024).

Tie Up with The Better India

Araku Coffee also partnered with The Better India to produce a documentary series titled 'Roots of Araku', highlighting the transformation of the Araku Valley through sustainable coffee farming. The series primarily highlighted women's active participation in the coffee production process and other community-driven initiatives. The documentary series was distributed across social media platforms and The Better India's official website (The Better India, 2023).

The documentary had a widespread reach, leading to over 2000 new subscriptions on Araku's website and significant traffic from ethically-conscious consumers seeking sustainable options (Website Analytics, 2023).

Collaboration with The Bombay Canteen

The Bombay Canteen, one of India's most well-known restaurants, collaborated with Araku Coffee to curate a limited-edition Coffee Gastronomy Menu featuring unique pairings like the coffee-rubbed steak and Araku espresso martinis, highlighting the coffee's nuanced flavours in fine dining (The Bombay Canteen, 2024).

The partnership enhanced Araku's urban presence with the limited-edition menu selling out within days and receiving ample media coverage over the time period (Event Report, 2024).

Thus, such campaigns strategically expand Araku's footprint both domestically and globally, through the use of strategic cultural roots, sustainability ethos as well as premium offerings.

5.6 Pricing Point and Consumer Engagement

In terms of its pricing points, Araku is positioned as a premium, single-origin coffee brand with prices reflecting its organic, high-quality beans and sustainable farming practices. The brand's products also cater to urban, affluent consumers who highly resonate with ethical sourcing and superior tasting coffee.

In terms of its online retail pricing, Araku Coffee's signature blends range between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 for 250 grams, depending on the specific variant. Specialty coffee collections and limited-edition micro-lots are priced even higher, focusing on exclusivity (Araku Coffee Website, 2025). Gift hampers and curated packages which contain curated blends and accessories are priced around Rs. 2500, appealing to gift buyers and loyal customers.

When it comes to in-cafe prices, Araku's Bengaluru cafe provides beverages like espresso and pour-over coffee between Rs. 300 and Rs. 500 per cup, aligning with the expectations of the upscale clientele. The cafe menu offers unique pairings and artisanal desserts with items being priced above Rs. 400, reinforcing the luxury experience through its pricing points.

In terms of comparative pricing, direct competitors like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Third Wave Coffee offer similar pricing for their premium blends but Araku differentiates itself through its emphasis upon sustainability, community impact, and cultural storytelling.

In order to cultivate a loyal consumer base, the brand also leverages email marketing campaigns by personalizing emails for targeted consumers, with content related to brewing tips, product descriptions, and exclusive offers, in order to retarget customers and maintain engagement.

The brand also introduced a loyalty program by offering customers subscriptions on monthly or quarterly deliveries of curated coffee blends. Through this program, subscribers gain access to exclusive micro-lots, limited-edition products, and heavy discounts in cafe purchases. The program has cultivated a loyal consumer base, with a 20% increase in subscriptions within six months of the launch of the campaign (Subscription Analytics, 2024).

By aligning its prices with its premium market positioning and engaging its consumer base through unique cultural storytelling practices, Araku Coffee is carving a distinct niche for itself in the already competitive global coffee market.

6. Discussion

Araku Coffee integrates Indian tribal heritage, sustainability and social responsibility into its cultural branding practices. By sourcing coffee directly from the coffee farmers of the Araku Valley and promoting sustainable and organic farming practices, the brand positions itself as a socially conscious luxury coffee provider. Its minimalistic packaging, rooted in tribal motifs and earthy tones, highlight its dedication towards authenticity and cultural storytelling. Through its cafes, such as the flagship store in Bengaluru, Araku creates immersive experiences, blending coffee with Indian agrarian themes and traditions of sustainability. Its marketing efforts focus on its roots in tribal empowerment and ecological impact, with collaborations with international chefs and design studios enhancing its overall appeal.

In order to analyze Araku Coffee's cultural themes, a comparative thematic analysis with Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters is necessary. The analysis aims to uncover key cultural elements, their impact on consumer purchase decisions and perceptions, and the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. Further on, this research study shall also provide actionable insights for indigenous coffee brands to enhance their branding strategies.

Section 3: Comparative and Thematic Analysis of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee

Cultural branding has proved to be a vital strategy for coffee brands to differentiate themselves in the coffee market. The following thematic analysis aims to examine how Blue Tokai and Araku Coffee utilize cultural branding into their branding narratives, consumer engagement and marketing strategies. By applying a thematic analysis framework, this study examines key themes and compares the approaches utilized by the two brands for crafting a brand identity based upon storytelling, authenticity, and consumer connection.

1. Theme 1: Narrative of Origin

1.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters emphasises upon its coffee heritage by aiming to revive India's specialty coffee culture. The brand aims to celebrate Indian coffee estates through transparent sourcing methods and the direct trade model. The brand consistently highlights the journey of its coffee beans, from farm to cup, featuring stories of its collaborations with local estates in Chikmagalur, Coorg and the Nilgiris on its website and social media.

Such a distinct focus on regional coffee appeals to urban consumers who are looking for a middle ground between authenticity and quality. Blue Tokai's blog content as well as its Instagram posts consistently and regularly showcase farm visits, interviews with farmers, and insights into the coffee roasting process, making strong connections to its local cultural roots (Blue Tokai Website, 2025).

1.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee uses an immersive approach by embedding its identity in the tribal cultural heritage of the Araku Valley. The brand narrative focuses on the empowerment of tribal farmers, sustainable farming practices and community development. The brand employs visual

storytelling through its Instagram (@arakucoffeein), sharing high-quality images of tribal farmers in traditional attire, lush images of the Araku Valley, and the biodynamic methods that are utilized in the coffee cultivation.

Araku's brand narrative is focused on socio-cultural elements, emphasizing how tribal empowerment and biodynamic farming practices contribute to a unique and ethical coffee experience.

1.3 Comparison and Relationships

Both Blue Tokai and Araku Coffee leverage their origin stories as a part of their cultural branding project. However, Blue Tokai appeals to urban consumers with a focus on quality and local partnerships, whereas Araku highlights social and cultural sustainability. The former positions itself as a modern Indian specialty coffee brand while the latter upholds indigenous culture and ethical consumption. Such diverse narratives cater to different aspects of cultural branding- urban authenticity vs. tribal heritage.

2. Theme 2: Sustainability as a Cultural Value

2.1 Blue Tokai

For Blue Tokai, sustainability is centered on transparency and eco-friendly practices. The brand primarily encourages recyclable packaging, sustainable sourcing, as well as minimal waste. Blue Tokai cafes feature reusable utensils and highlight sustainability through compostable coffee pods and biodegradable bags.

Moreover, Blue Tokai's website openly communicates about its sourcing model from local estates in India, establishing a transparent channel of communication with its consumers (Blue Tokai, 2025).

2.2 Araku Coffee

Sustainability is embedded into the DNA of Araku Coffee as is prominent through its biodynamic farming methods and empowering tribal farmers to adopt environment-friendly processes. Moreover, it is built upon a cooperative model of business in order to ensure equitable distribution of profits and its operations avoid synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

The brand's sustainability narrative also extends to its packaging, which utilizes recyclable materials and earthy designs to reflect its dedication towards nature and organic materials. For example, posts on the Instagram of Araku Coffee highlight the sustainable design of its takeaway packaging and its cafes, which use locally-sourced materials and energy-efficient systems (Araku Coffee, 2025).

2.3 Comparison and Relationships

Both the brands actively highlight sustainability but Araku Coffee is committed more towards a grassroots and systemic approach while Blue Tokai's sustainable practices are directed towards urban eco-consciousness. Araku's focus on sustainability is woven into its cultural ethos which resonates with ethical consumers while Blue Tokai's initiatives cater to convenience and urban awareness about environmental sustainability.

3. Theme 3: Visual and Artistic Representation

3.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai's visual aesthetic is mostly sleek, minimalistic, urban and modern. The packaging features simple minimalist designs with illustrations of a peacock's plume along with the brand name, 'Blue Tokai', a reference to Indian heritage. The visual identity is further accompanied by a clean typography and muted color palettes that dominate its branding narratives and appeals to mostly urban millennials and Gen Z consumers.

The cafe interiors are an extension of this specific aesthetic with industrial elements, warm lighting and vibrant wall art that reflects a contemporary coffee culture. The brand utilises high-quality imagery and storytelling on its social media pages to further enhance its appeal, with images of latte art and cozy cafe settings.

3.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee's visual aesthetics are more inclined towards earthy and culturally-rich emblems. Its packaging primarily involves tribal motifs and neutral tones to reflect its deep connection to the Araku Valley and its indigenous tribal communities. The designs are mostly simple yet evocative with a heightened focus on authenticity and natural beauty.

Such a cultural ethos is also reflected within the spaces of Araku cafe, with locally crafted furniture, earthy textures as well as traditional patterns. For instance, the flagship Araku cafe in Bengaluru is designed to provide a holistic experience to consumers by educating them about the coffee production process and providing an experiential experience.

3.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai's visual identity specifically caters to a younger audience through its modern, minimalist design while Araku Coffee uses cultural motifs and earthy aesthetics to portray its brand identity based on authenticity and rootedness. Such distinct approaches align with their respective narratives- urban sophistication versus cultural heritage

4. Theme 4: Consumer Engagement

4.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai engages its consumers through workshops, roastery tours and brewing guides. It also aims to foster brand loyalty by rewarding consumers with discounts on repeat purchases. On social media, it consistently engages with its consumer base by sharing user-generated content and educating followers about brewing techniques.

The brand's website also features a blog section with several articles about the contemporary coffee culture, brewing methods, and farm stories, creating an educational and engaging experience for its consumer base. It also features a coffee subscription service that is relevant for convenience-focused consumers, ensuring consistent engagement (Blue Tokai Website, 2025)

4.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee's consumer engagement practices are rooted in immersive experiences like the sensory exhibition, 'Raaga' at the Bengaluru cafe, which aimed to combine coffee with cultural elements like textiles and fragrances, ensuring a holistic experience with the brand.

Araku's social media also focuses on community empowerment and sustainability, with several posts showcasing farmer stories and coffee tastings. The brand's focus on storytelling also caters to ethical consumers, forming a deep and meaningful connection with them.

4.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai primarily engages its audiences through modern, urban-oriented activities while Araku Coffee's methods are embedded in experiential and cultural storytelling. Both of such engagement methods build consumer loyalty but cater to different consumer preferences- urban convenience versus cultural immersion.

5. Theme 5: Authenticity and Storytelling

5.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai's storytelling primarily focuses on transparency and high quality. Its narrative mainly highlights the science of coffee brewing and the expertise of its roasters. Such a technical authenticity especially appeals to consumers who value knowledge and quality in their coffee choices.

5.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee emphasises upon its authenticity through the tales of the indigenous tribal communities of the Araku Valley who are the main producers of the coffee beans. Its narrative celebrates the journey of tribal farmers and the sustainable practices that make Araku Coffee distinct in the competitive market of global coffee. Such emotional authenticity highly resonates with consumers looking for cultural and ethical connections.

5.3 Comparisons and Relationships

Both the brands prioritize authenticity but approach it in distinct ways. Blue Tokai specifically focuses on technical and urban authenticity while Araku Coffee prioritizes emotional and cultural authenticity

6. Theme 6: Innovation in Offerings

6.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai has become an established name in the specialty coffee niche in India due to its regular experiments with coffee blends, roasts, and brewing techniques. Products such as cold brews and seasonal blends highlight its dedication towards innovation.

Moreover, Blue Tokai's subscription service offers curated offerings tailored to a particular consumer's taste profile, combining convenience with personalization, ensuring deep meaningful bonds with consumers. Such innovative efforts cater to tech-savvy urban audiences seeking diverse coffee experiences.

6.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee's innovation lies in its focus on biodynamic farming and eco-conscious production processes. The brand is uniquely positioned as a biodynamic coffee producer which allows it to distinguish itself in a market dominated by conventional organic practices.

Araku cafes are also hubs of innovation where signature blends are served using local flavours, such as turmeric latte and spiced coffee, uniquely blending Indian traditions with contemporary coffee culture.

6.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai innovates in consumer-facing offerings, such as product diversity and personalization while Araku Coffee focuses on innovation at the production and cultural integration levels. Both brands focus on innovation but in distinct ways that are aligned towards their unique brand narratives.

7. Theme 7: Community Building and Inclusivity

7.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai focuses on community building through workshops, cafe events and social media interactions. Its workshops about brewing methods, latte art and cupping encourage consumers to deeply engage with the brand. The brand's urban cafes serve as communal spaces where consumers can network and socialize and immerse themselves in the coffee culture.

Moreover, Blue Tokai's partnerships with local artists and creators help it to connect with creative communities, reinforcing its urban and inclusive identity.

7.2 Araku Coffee

At the heart of Araku's operations is the tribal community of Araku Valley and their empowerment. Being set upon a cooperative model also ensures that even the smallest of farmers have a say in the decision-making process as well as receive equitable profits.

The brand also engages consumers through several events within cafes, the most popular one being ‘Raaga’, which was a sensory exhibition and aimed to bridge the gap between rural producers and urban consumers.

7.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai’s community building focuses mainly on urban inclusivity and creative collaboration while Araku Coffee focuses on tribal empowerment and cross-cultural connection. Such differing approaches to community engagement also reflect the brands’ core values- urban engagement versus rural development.

8. Theme 8: Accessibility and Affordability

8.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai has positioned itself as a premium yet accessible coffee brand. Its pricing strategy is on the higher end compared to mass-market coffee but it remains affordable for urban middle-class consumers looking for specialty coffee experiences.

The brand’s cafe network and online store ensure easy accessibility, with products ranging from single-origin coffee to brewing equipment. Blue Tokai’s loyalty programs and occasional discounts also enhance accessibility for regular customers.

8.2 Araku Coffee

In contrast, Araku Coffee positions itself as a luxury coffee brand. Its pricing reflects its premium positioning as well as the artisanal quality of its biodynamic coffee. While such a pricing strategy makes it less accessible to price-sensitive consumers, it appeals to affluent, ethically-driven customers.

Araku's limited cafe network and focus on experiential retail also emphasizes exclusivity, making accessibility secondary to luxury branding.

8.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai effectively strikes a balance between premium and accessible, catering to a broader audience while Araku Coffee prioritizes exclusivity and luxury, targeting niche consumers. Such distinct strategies align with their respective narratives- urban specialty versus artisanal luxury.

9. Theme 9: Experiential Marketing

9.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai leverages its experiential marketing practices through its roastery tours, cafes and interactive workshops. The sensory experiences curated in such spaces allow consumers to engage directly with the brand, enhancing loyalty towards the brand.

The brand's cafe features open roasteries, allowing customers to observe the roasting process and learn more about Indian coffee. Events such as coffee tasting workshops further add to the immersive coffee experience.

9.2 Araku Coffee

Experiential Marketing is employed by Araku Coffee to immerse consumers within its cultural and ethical ethos. The flagship Bengaluru cafe is designed as a sensory and educational hub and the cafe's interactive elements such as workshops on biodynamic farming offers consumers a deeper understanding of the brand's origin and values.

9.3 Comparison and Relationships

While both the brands promote experiential marketing, they differ in approach and intent. Blue Tokai primarily focuses on urban experiences and creative collaboration while Araku Coffee uses its space to educate and immerse consumers in its cultural and ethical narrative.

10. Theme 10: Global versus Local Appeal

10.1 Blue Tokai

Blue Tokai's appeal is largely local with its marketing and branding strategies mostly focused on the Indian urban population. However, the brand's growing presence in the international market through online sales suggests an emerging global ambition.

10.2 Araku Coffee

Araku Coffee has positioned itself as a global brand since its inception by collaborating with international chefs as well as opening a global cafe in Paris. The brand has successfully created a global image that is rooted in local Indian traditions.

10.3 Comparison and Relationships

Blue Tokai currently serves a local audience with a gradual global outreach while Araku Coffee's branding strategy focuses on establishing it as a global luxury brand. The contrast is starkly visible in their growth trajectories- Blue Tokai is rapidly expanding locally before going global while Araku embraces global branding early on.

Section 4: Statistical Analysis of Consumer Survey

This chapter presents the findings of the consumer survey conducted to evaluate customer perceptions of cultural branding in India's indigenous coffee landscape. 101 responses were gathered from coffee consumers as well as non-consumers to analyze the results. The results are structured based on frequency analysis and cross-tabulation, offering valuable insights into demographic patterns, awareness levels, brand perceptions and purchase behaviour.

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

1.1 Age Distribution

The respondents were divided into age-groups of 'Under 18 years', '18-24 years', '25-34 years', '35-44 years' and '45 years and above. A majority of the respondents, nearly 92.1% fell in the 18-24 years age bracket, followed by approximately 3% falling in the 25-34 years bracket, almost 2% falling within the 35-44 bracket and nearly 3% falling in the under 18 years category.

Age Group:

101 responses

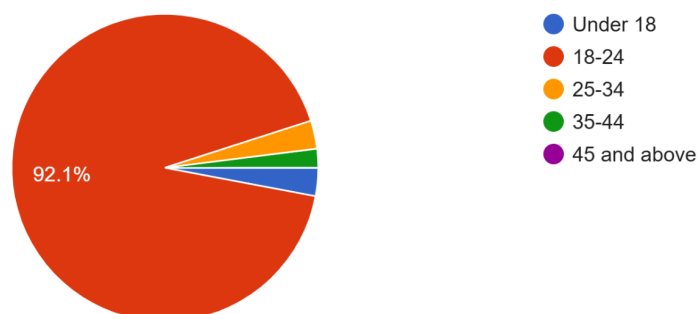


Figure 27. Statistical representation of age-group demographics of the consumer survey. Source: Primary Data.

1.2 Gender Representation

The sample consisted of 62.4% female respondents, 37.6% male respondents and none from the non-binary category.

Gender:

101 responses

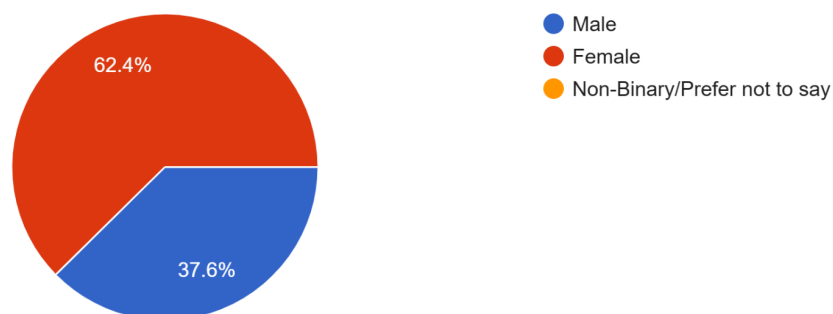


Figure 28. Statistical representation of gender demographics of the consumer survey. Source: Primary Data.

1.3 Geographic Location

Respondents were categorized as living in Tier-1 cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore etc.), Tier-2 cities (Jaipur, Indore etc.) or in rural areas. Respondents from Tier-1 cities dominated the survey, accounting for nearly 93.1% of the responses, while 6.9% of the respondents were from Tier-2 cities and none from rural areas.

Where are you currently located?

101 responses

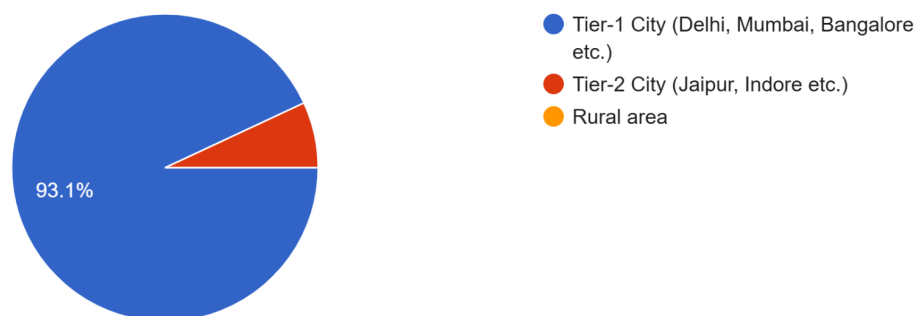


Figure 29. Statistical representation of location demographics of the consumer survey. Source: Primary Data.

1.4 Occupation

Nearly 86.1% of the respondents who participated in this consumer survey reported their occupation as students, while 9.9% listed themselves as working professionals. 1% of the respondents identify their occupation as an intern, while another approximate 1% identify themselves undergoing a work-study agreement, another 1% being on a sabbatical while the remaining approximate 1% is self-employed, providing diverse perspectives regarding contextual circumstances of the consumer base and their engagement with cultural branding initiatives.

Occupation:

101 responses

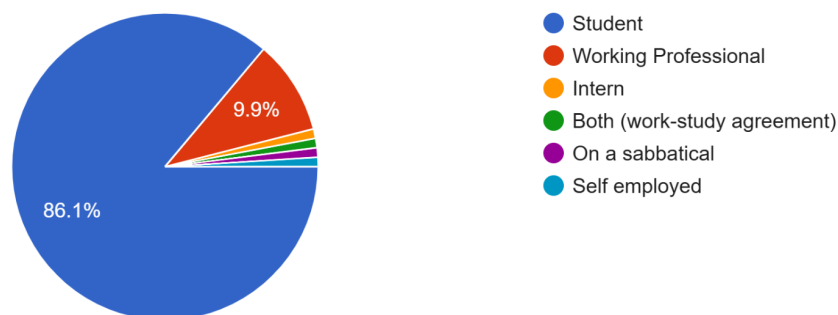


Figure 30. Statistical representation of occupation demographics of the consumer survey. Source: Primary Data.

1.5 Monthly Income

79.2% of the respondents reported earning below Rs. 25,000, followed by 14.9% recording monthly incomes of Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 and the remaining 5.9% having monthly income of above Rs. 50,000. Such a diverse set of data will allow us to analyze cultural branding and brand perceptions based on income levels.

Monthly Income:

101 responses

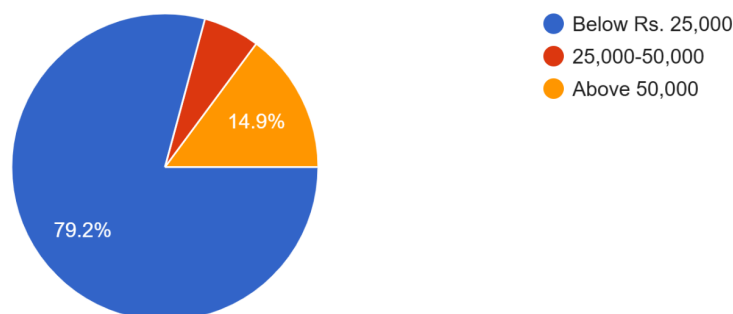


Figure 31. Statistical representation of the monthly income demographics of the consumer survey. Source: Primary Data.

1.6 Coffee Consumption Habits

Most of the respondents, 67.3% of the total respondents revealed that they consume coffee regularly, with 40.6% consuming coffee daily and 26.7% consuming coffee weekly. Besides that 11.9% consume coffee once or twice a month and the remaining 20.8% consume coffee rarely.

How often do you consume coffee?

101 responses

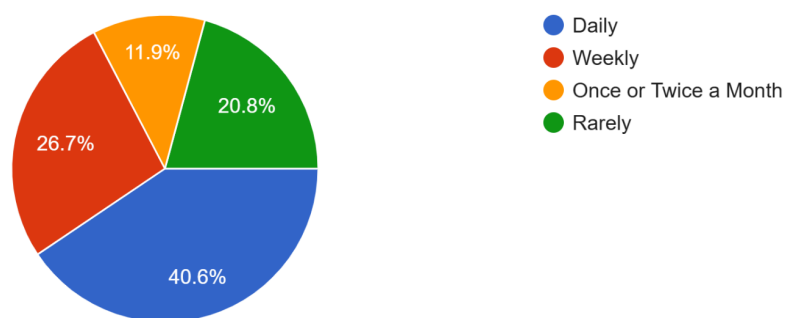


Figure 32. Statistical representation of coffee consumption patterns among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

2. Coffee Preferences

2.1 Type of Coffee

56.4% of the respondents reported preferring Instant Coffee while 28.7% showed an inclination towards Specialty Coffee (like Pour-over, Espresso etc.). 11.9% preferred filter coffee and 1% of the candidates flagged that they prefer filter or instant coffee with no special flavours like vanilla or say, while approximately another 1% prefer tea.

What type of coffee do you prefer?

101 responses

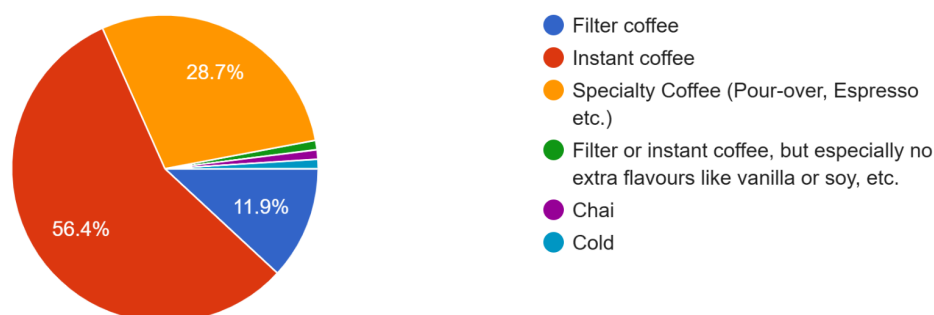


Figure 33. Statistical representation of coffee type preference among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

2.2 Coffee Consumption Place

59.4% of the respondents revealed that they prefer having coffee at home, while 32.7% reported having coffee at coffee shops/cafes. Approximately, 5% of the respondents reported to prefer having their coffee at the workplace and nearly 1% revealed that they like to have their coffee in all of the above mentioned three places.

Where do you usually consume coffee?

101 responses

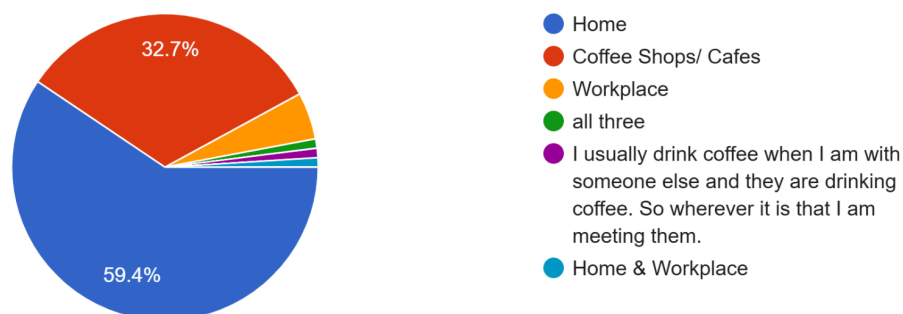


Figure 34. Statistical representation of the place of coffee consumption among respondents.

Source: Primary Data.

2.3 Willingness to Pay

34.7% of the respondents reported willing to pay for their coffee an amount between Rs. 51 and 100. 28.7% are willing to spend something below Rs. 50 while 23.8% are willing to pay between Rs. 101 to 200 for coffee while the remaining 12.9% are comfortable with spending above Rs. 200 for a single cup of coffee.

How much are you willing to spend on a single cup of coffee?

101 responses

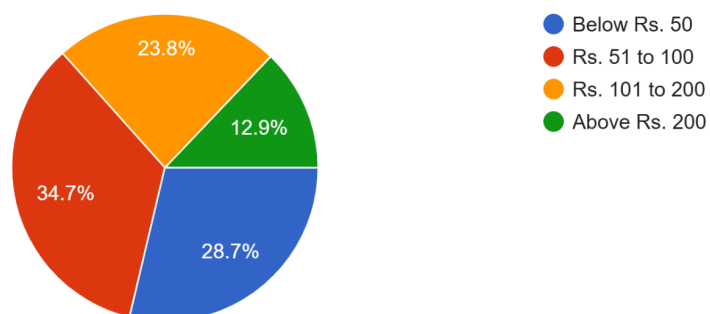


Figure 35. Statistical representation of willingness to pay among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3. Perception of Indigenous Coffee Brands

3.1 Brand Recognition of Indigenous Coffee Brands

Nearly 88.1% of the candidates reported to be familiar with indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Araku Coffee and more while the rest of the 11.9% of the respondents were unaware of such brands.

Are you familiar with any indigenous coffee brands? (Blue Tokai, Bru, Araku Coffee etc.)
101 responses

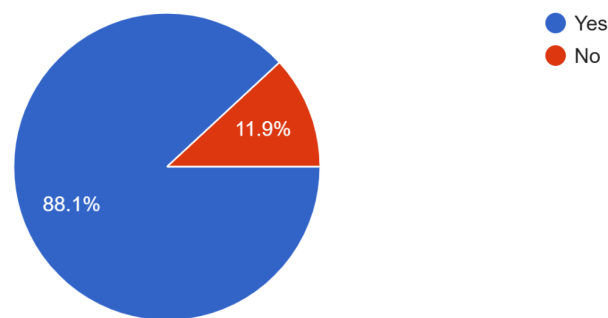


Figure 36. Statistical representation of brand recognition among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3.2 Importance of Cultural Heritage in Indigenous Coffee Brands

37.6% of the respondents commented that the significance of cultural heritage elements in indigenous coffee brands is only 'Somewhat Important' when it comes to influencing their purchase decisions while 33.7% showed an overall neutrality to such heritage elements. 13.9% indicated that cultural heritage elements are not very important when they are purchasing a cup of coffee from such brands while 6.9% indicated that it was not important at all for them. However, 7.9% of the respondents clearly indicated that the cultural heritage of a coffee brand was very important when it comes to swaying their purchase decisions.

How important is the cultural heritage of a coffee brand in your purchase decision?

101 responses

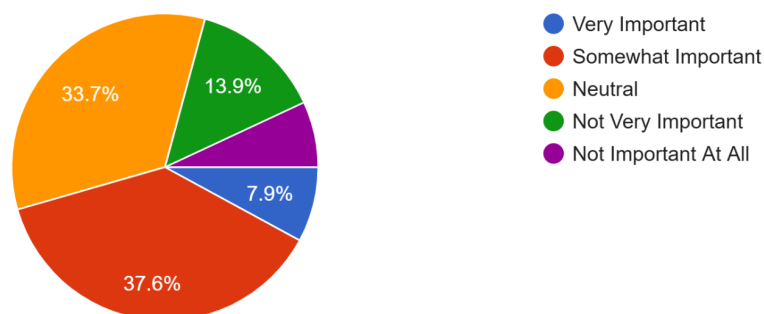


Figure 37. Statistical representation of cultural heritage importance among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3.3 Quality of Coffee

Majority of the respondents, around 46.5% rated the coffee quality as being a very important factor when it comes to choosing a coffee brand. 32.7% of the respondents tagged it as being important while 13.9% were neutral to this aspect. The remaining 4% and 3% (approximately) revealed that the coffee quality factor was slightly important or not important at all for them.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is the Quality of Coffee to you when choosing a coffee brand?

101 responses

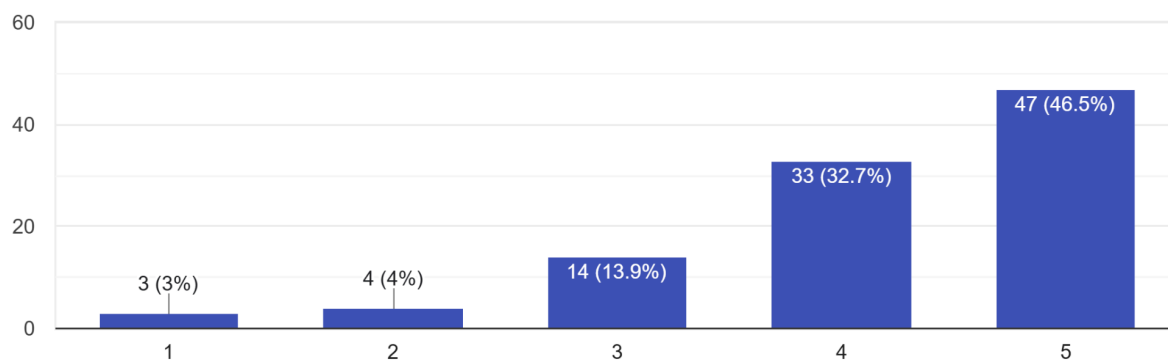


Figure 38. Statistical representation of coffee quality importance among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3.4 Coffee Pricing

When it comes to coffee pricing, 26.7% of the respondents reported that the price of a single cup of coffee is very important for them when choosing an indigenous coffee brand while 45.5% of the respondents revealed that the coffee pricing is important for them as well. In contrast, 24.8% showed neutrality towards pricing being a factor while choosing a coffee brand. The remaining 2% and 1% (approximately) indicated that the pricing of coffee is slightly important to them or not important at all, respectively when selecting an indigenous coffee brand.

On a scale of 1 to 5 how important is the Pricing to you when choosing a coffee brand?

101 responses

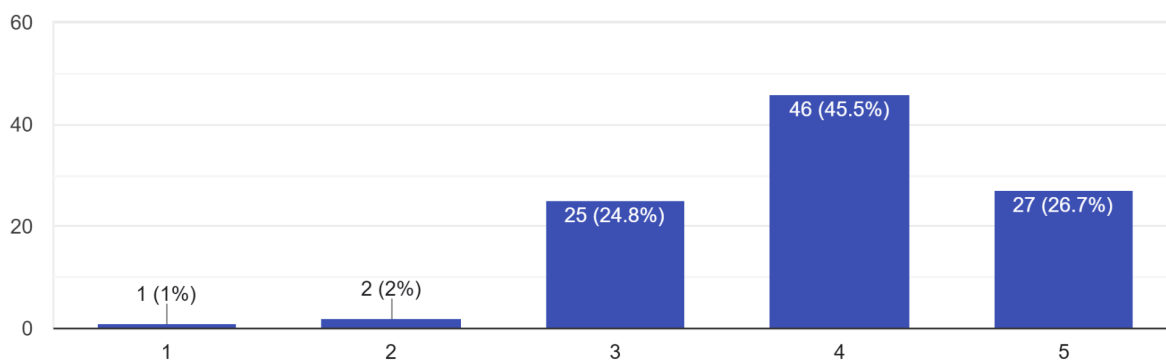


Figure 39. Statistical representation of pricing importance among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3.5 Brand Reputation

Out of the total respondents, 21.8% reported that brand reputation is very important for them when choosing a coffee brand while 27.7% of the respondents also similarly tagged it as an important factor when selecting a coffee brand. Moreover, 41.6% of the respondents were overall neutral to the brand reputation factor while an approximate 5% tagged it as slightly important. Nearly 4% of the remaining number of respondents mentioned that brand reputation was not important at all for them when choosing an indigenous coffee brand to purchase a single cup of coffee.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is Brand Reputation to you when choosing a coffee brand?

101 responses

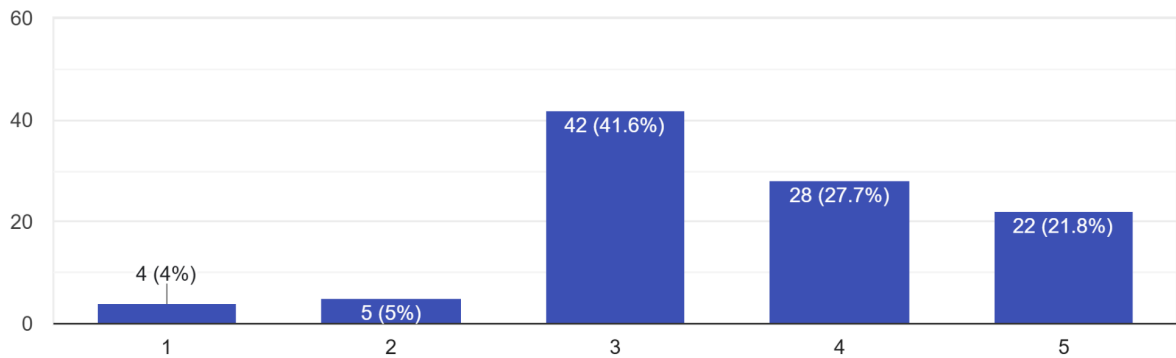


Figure 40. Statistical representation of brand reputation importance among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

3.6 Cultural Authenticity

12.9% of the respondents mentioned that the cultural authenticity of a coffee brand is very important to them when purchasing a single cup of coffee from the same brand. Another 22.8% of the respondents also reported that the cultural authenticity factor was important to them. However, 41.6% of the respondents showed an overall neutrality to the cultural authenticity aspect. 14.9% of the respondents revealed that this same aspect was only slightly important to them while the remaining 7.9% deemed it as not important at all.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is Cultural Authenticity to you when choosing a coffee brand?

101 responses

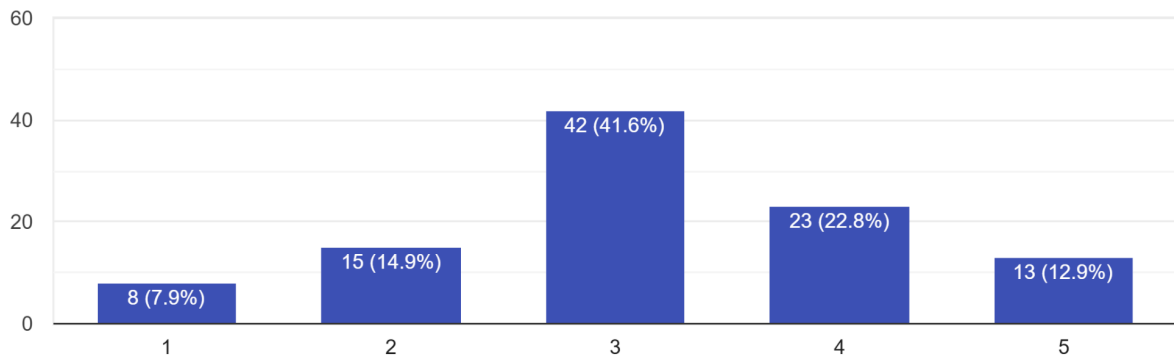


Figure 41. Statistical representation of cultural authenticity importance among respondents.

Source: Primary Data.

3.7 Sustainability Practices

13.9% of the respondents recorded that the factor of sustainable practices employed by a coffee brand is very important when influencing their decision to purchase a single cup of coffee from a particular indigenous coffee brand. Similarly, 33.7% revealed that this same factor was important for them as well. Nearly 28.7% of the respondents reported that they were neutral to such sustainability practices employed by brands. 12.9% reported that sustainable practices is only a slightly important factor when it comes to influencing their purchasing decisions while the remaining 10.9% of the respondents deemed it as not important at all.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is Sustainability Practices to you when choosing a coffee brand?

101 responses

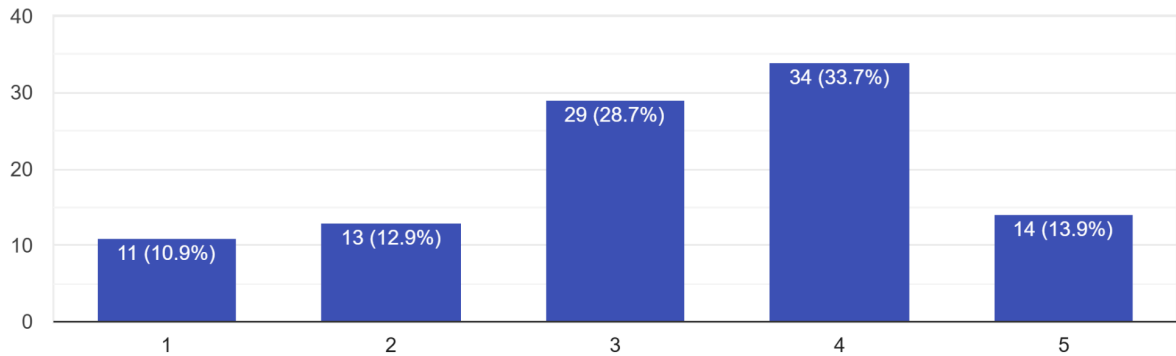


Figure 42. Statistical representation of importance of sustainability practices among respondents.

Source: Primary Data.

3.8 Cultural Elements in Branding Practices

When it comes to considering cultural elements that would make respondents more likely to select a coffee brand, 46.5% of the total number of respondents focused on local storytelling and narratives. Out of the similar pool of the total number of respondents, 53.5% showed an inclination towards traditional brewing methods and 51.5% preferred regional aesthetics and cafe design while only 12.9% did not find any significance of the above mentioned three factors. The respondents were all given the option to select as many options that seemed relatable to them and the percentages were derived from those particular responses.

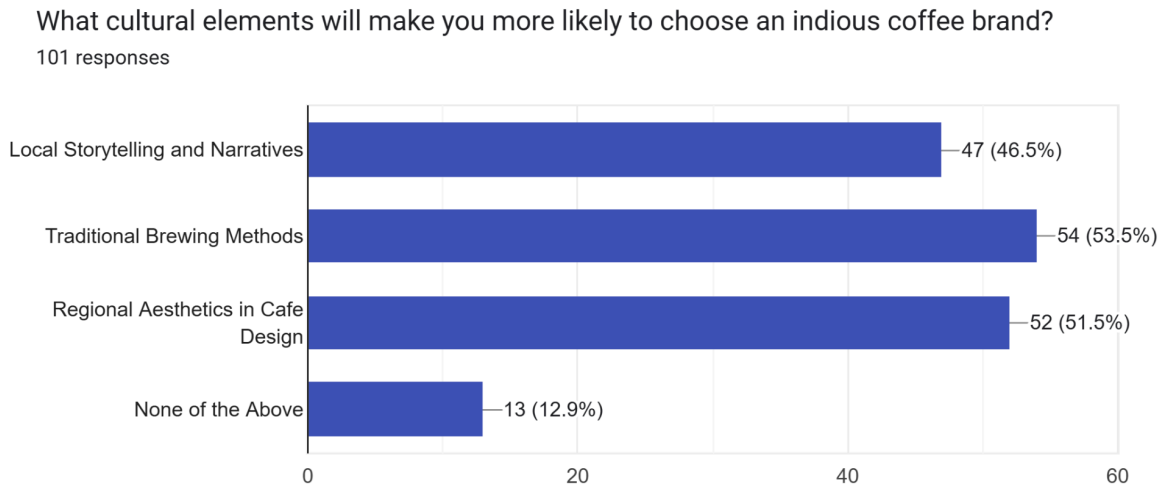


Figure 43. Statistical representation of importance of cultural elements among respondents.

Source: Primary Data.

4. Branding and Experience

4.1 Coffee Shop Ambiance

In terms of the coffee shop ambiance dictating the overall coffee experience, 40.6% of the total respondents deemed it to be somewhat important while 38.6% reported that it was very important to them. Only 12.9% of the total number of respondents were neutral to the ambiance enhancing their overall experience while 6.9% labelled it as not very important. Lastly, only 1% (approximate) of the sample indicated the ambiance of a cafe or coffee shop was not important to them at all.

How important is the ambiance of a coffee shop in enhancing your overall coffee shop experience?

101 responses

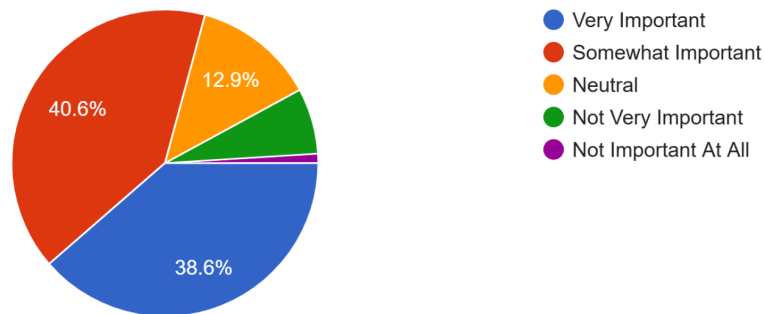


Figure 44. Statistical representation of importance of coffee shop ambiance among respondents.

Source: Primary Data.

4.2 Ambiance Preference

When it comes to a relaxing environment, 84.2% of the total number of respondents indicated that it was a significant aspect of their favourite coffee shop. In terms of cultural aesthetics, 55.4% of the respondents deemed it as a necessary factor influencing their overall experience of the coffee shop ambiance. 34.7% reported that modern decor was a must-have for their favourite coffee shop while 35.6% revealed that their coffee shop being a socializing space was the most preferred aspect for them.

Which of the following aspects do you associate with your favorite coffee shop? (Select All That Apply)

101 responses

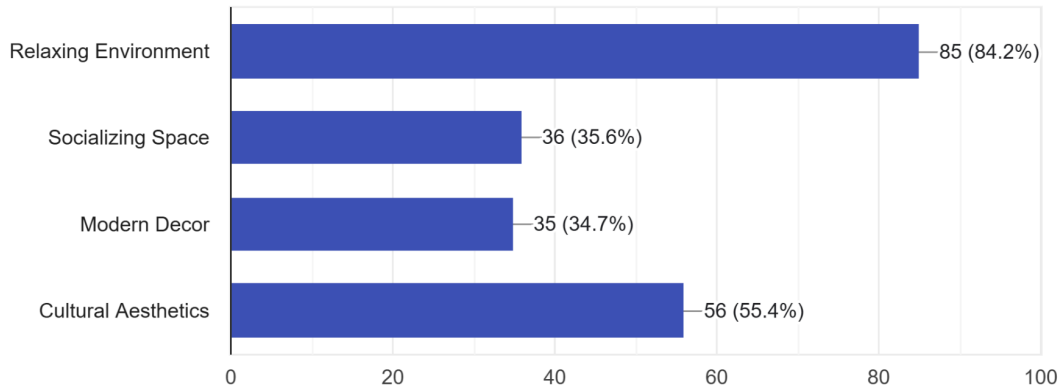


Figure 45. Statistical representation of preferred coffee shop aspects among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

4.3 Buying Motivation

42.6% of the respondents recorded that premium-quality coffee would motivate you to try an indigenous coffee brand while 30.7% highlighted that affordable pricing would be a significant factor for them to try an indigenous coffee brand. Moreover, 21.8% of the respondents recorded that a unique cultural story can be beneficial towards motivating them to try an indigenous coffee brand and lastly, approximately 5% of the sample indicated that sustainability and eco-friendly practices would positively push them towards an indigenous coffee brand.

What would motivate you to try an indigenous coffee brand?

101 responses

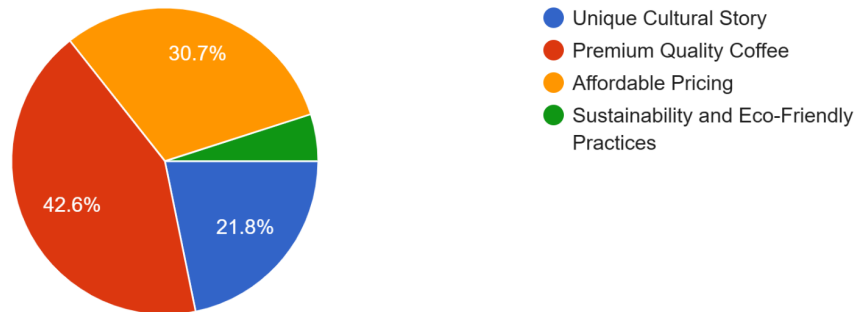


Figure 46. Statistical representation of buying motivation among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

5. Digital Marketing and Engagement

5.1 Awareness Channels for Coffee Brands

Out of the total 101 responses, 42.6% of the respondents indicated that social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and more, is their go-to place for creating awareness about coffee brands. 24.8% of the respondents also revealed that word-of-mouth was also an effective channel for creating brand awareness. 18.8% of the sample indicated advertisements, whether on television, online or print, were beneficial in enhancing their brand awareness while 13.9% recorded that their brand awareness improved through cafe visits.

Where do you usually learn about coffee brands?

101 responses

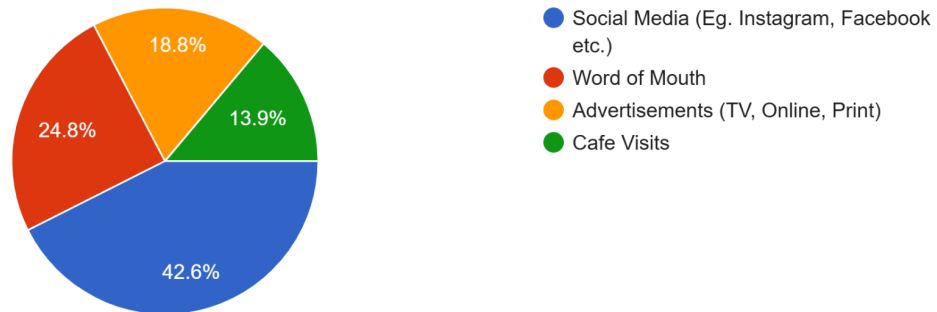


Figure 47. Statistical representation of awareness channels among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

5.2 Impact of Social Media

Respondents were asked to label the importance of social media in influencing their decision to try a coffee brand. To this, 43.6% of the respondents labelled the impact of social media as somewhat effective while 22.8% tagged it as very effective. However, 17.8% were neutral to the influence of social media and 8.9% reported that it was not very effective in influencing their purchase decisions. Lastly, only 6.9% of the respondents reported that the impact of social media in influencing their decision to try a coffee brand was not effective at all.

How effective do you find social media campaigns in influencing your decision to try a coffee brand?

101 responses

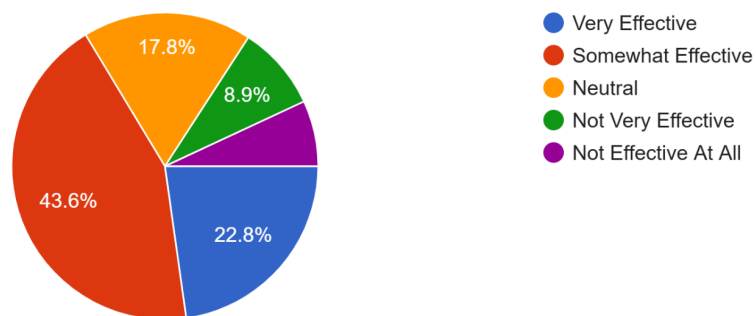


Figure 48. Statistical representation of the impact of social media campaigns among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

5.3 Digital Engagement

Respondents were asked through the questionnaire if they would be willing to engage with coffee brands through digital content such as stories about coffee farmers, brewing tutorials, or cafe experiences. Out of the total respondents, 49.5% responded that they would be willing to participate and interact with their brand if such initiatives arrive, while 32.7% indicate that they might engage in such events or workshops. Only 17.8% of the total respondents mentioned that they would not be willing to participate in such activities.

Would you be interested in engaging with coffee brands through digital content such as stories about coffee farmers, brewing tutorials, or café experiences?

101 responses

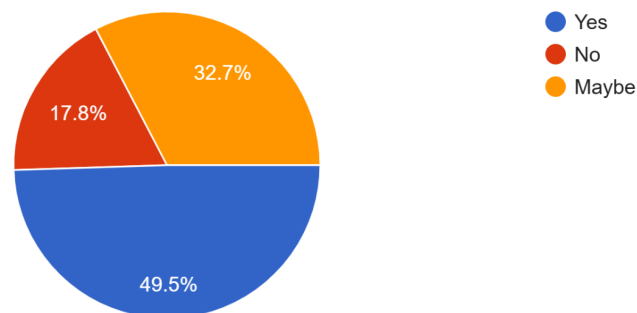


Figure 49. Statistical representation of digital engagement with coffee brands among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

6. Sustainability and Ethical Practices

6.1 Sustainability as a Factor

39.6% of the respondents mentioned that sustainability was somewhat important when it comes to choosing a coffee brand. 20.8% of the respondents also mentioned that it was a very important factor when choosing a coffee brand while 27.7% showed an overall neutrality to this aspect. 8.9% respondents recorded that the sustainability factor was not very important and approximately, 3% of the sample indicated that it was not important at all.

How important is sustainability in your choice of a coffee brand?

101 responses

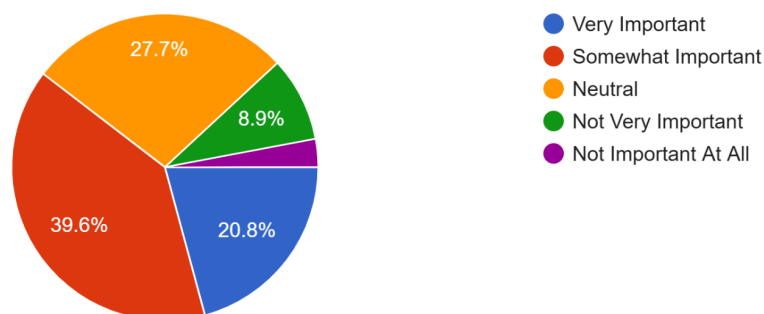


Figure 50. Statistical representation of importance of sustainability employed by coffee brands.

Source: Primary Data.

6.2 Paying a Premium for Sustainable Coffee

Respondents were asked if they would be willing to pay a higher price for coffee brands that support sustainable and fair trade practices. To this, only 14.9% of the respondents reported that they would be willing to pay significantly more while a majority of the 66.3% of the respondents revealed that they were willing to pay slightly more for sustainable coffee. However, 18.8% of the sample refused to pay a premium for a sustainable coffee brand.

Are you willing to pay more for a coffee brand that supports sustainable and Fair Trade practices?

101 responses

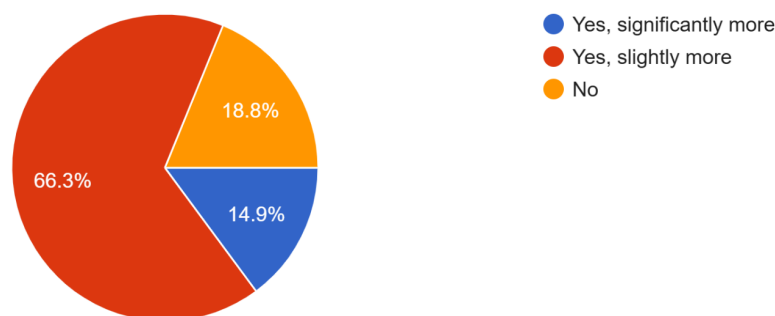


Figure 51. Statistical representation of the importance of Fair Trade practices among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

6.3 Sustainability Practices of Coffee Brands

Respondents were questioned regarding the different sustainable and fair trade practices employed by indigenous coffee brands and which of the following resonates the most with them and the value above all. An overwhelming 50.5% of the majority reported that they preferred coffee brands that supported local farmers while 18.8% of the respondents preferred eco-friendly packaging methods employed by coffee brands. 15.8% preferred coffee brands with ethical sourcing methods and fair trade certifications while 14.9% of the respondents were inclined towards brands making an effort in reducing carbon footprint.

Which of the following sustainability practices do you value most in a coffee brand?

101 responses

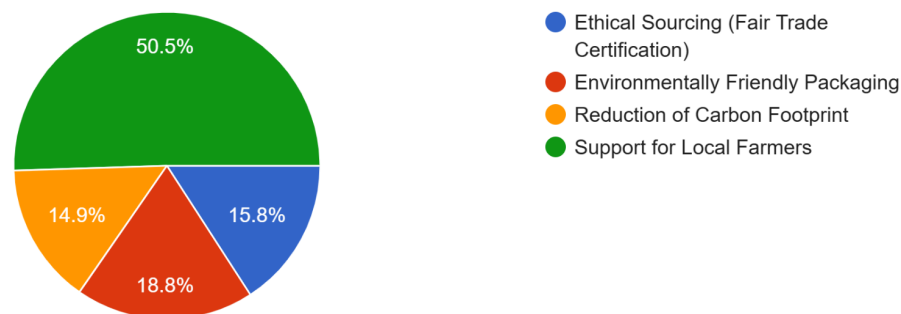


Figure 52. Statistical representation of sustainability practices valued by respondents. Source: Primary Data.

7. Brand Loyalty and Recommendations

7.1 Recommending an Indigenous Coffee Brand

A 1-5 likert scale was provided to the respondents, asking their likeness to recommend an indigenous coffee brand. 44.6% of the respondents reported that they were likely to recommend an indigenous coffee brand to others while 29.7% indicated that they were very likely to do so. 17.8% of the respondents were overall neutral towards the prospect while an approximate 5% and 3% were not very likely and not likely at all, respectively to recommend an indigenous coffee brand.

How likely are you to recommend an indigenous coffee brand to others?

101 responses

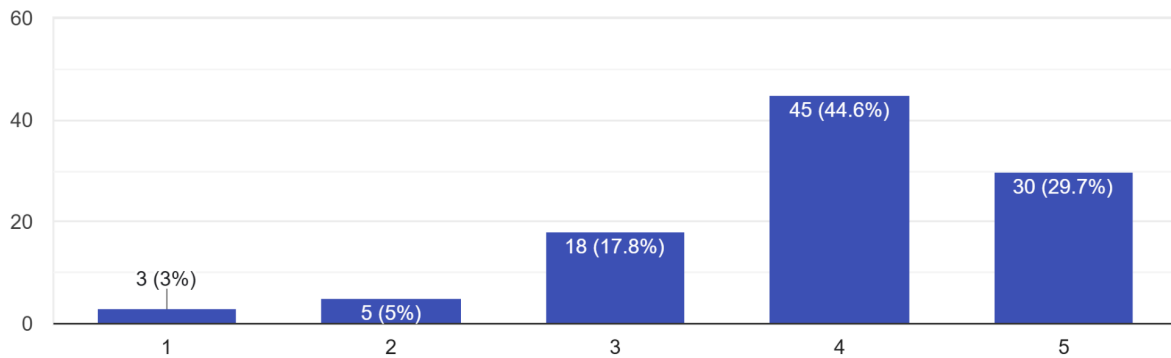


Figure 53. Statistical representation of the likeliness of recommending an indigenous coffee brand. Source: Primary Data.

7.2 Brand Loyalty

Respondents were provided with a variety of factors that would make them more loyal towards an indigenous coffee brand. In terms of consistent quality, 70.3% suggested that this factor would make them more loyal towards their indigenous coffee brand. When it comes to affordable pricing, 67.3% of the respondents indicated that it was a beneficial factor for enhancing their brand loyalty towards an indigenous coffee brand. 19.8% gave a nod to customer rewards/loyalty programs and 29.7% indicated that a unique cultural appeal could enhance their loyalty towards an indigenous coffee brand.

What would make you more loyal to an indigenous coffee brand?

101 responses

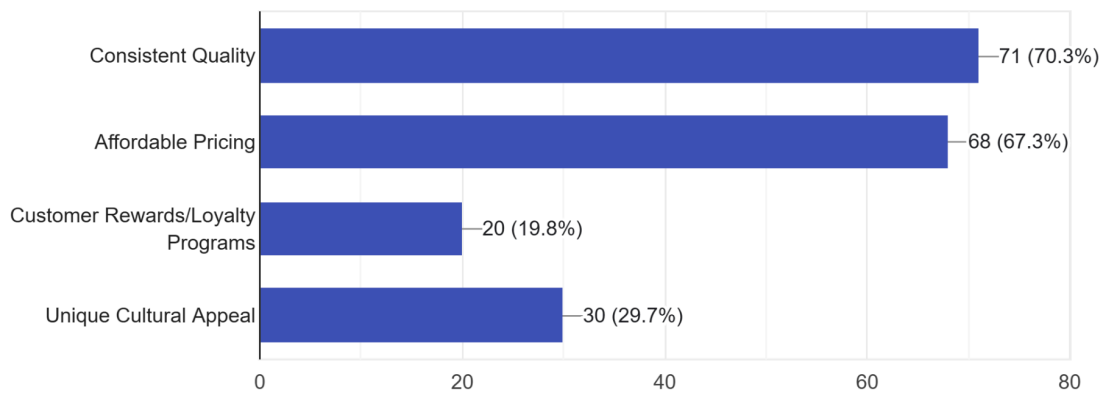


Figure 54. Statistical representation of brand loyalty among respondents. Source: Primary Data.

7.3 Comparison with Global Competitors

Respondents were asked about the challenges they perceived indigenous coffee brands might be facing while competing with global chains like Starbucks. 75.2% of the respondents identified brand visibility as a major challenge when it comes to competing against foreign competitors. 47.5% identified quality perception as a major factor as a major challenge as well, followed by pricing which was reported by 37.6% of the sample. Lastly, 18.8% also tagged ambiance as a major challenging factor when it comes to indigenous coffee brands.

What challenges do you see for indigenous coffee brands competing with global chains like Starbucks?

101 responses

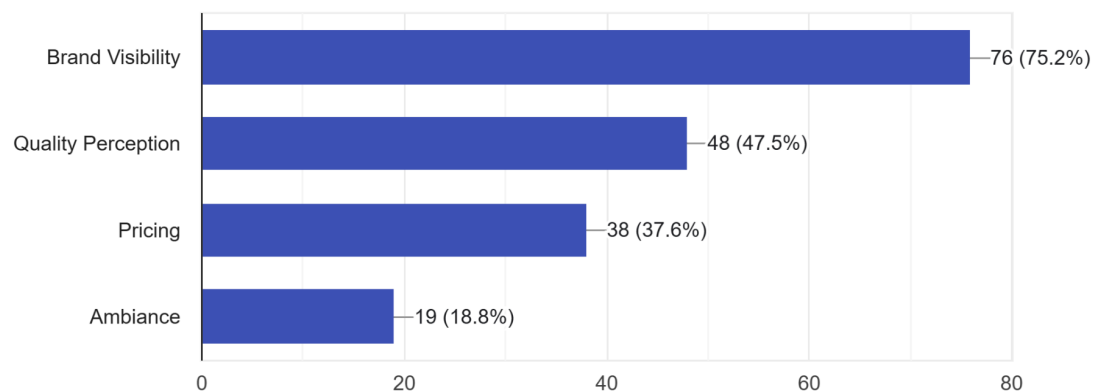


Figure 55. Statistical representation of challenges faced by indigenous coffee brands, according to respondents. Source: Primary Data.

Section 5: Cross-Tabulation Analysis of Consumer Survey

Cross-tabulation analysis has proven to be a meaningful way to establish relationships and meanings between data. For the consumer survey to gauge perceptions about the cultural branding of indigenous coffee brands, a cross-tabulation analysis method is being used to derive significant insights.

1. Demographics versus Brand Perception

1.1 Age vs. Brand Awareness

By cross-tabulating age groups against brand awareness, we determine which age groups are most familiar with indigenous coffee brands. Through this data we determine that the majority of the respondents, nearly 88.17% in the age group of 18-25, indicate that they are aware of indigenous coffee brands in India.

Count of Age	Column Labels		
Row Labels	No	Yes	Grand Total
18-24	11	82	93
25-34		3	3
35-44		2	2
Under 18	1	2	3
Grand Total	12	89	101

Table 1. Cross-tabulation of age vs. brand awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

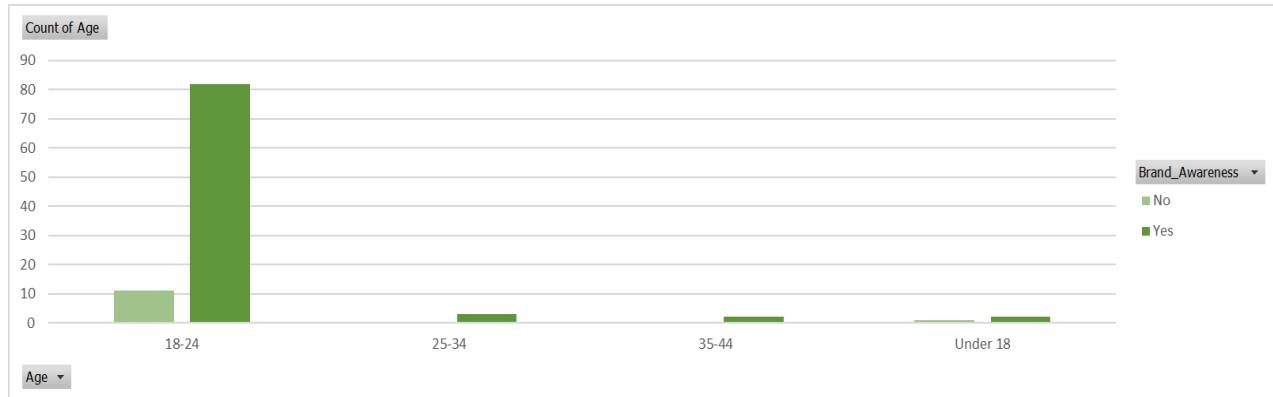


Figure 56. Cross-tabulated representation of age vs. brand awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

1.2 Gender vs. Cultural Authenticity

Respondents were asked to label how important cultural authenticity is as a factor that actively influences their purchase decisions. To this, a majority of females, nearly 44.4% rated it as 3 out of 5 in terms of significance while approximately, 37% of males gave it an equal rating in terms of impacting their purchase decisions.

Count of Gender	Column Labels		
Row Labels	Female	Male	Grand Total
1	5	3	8
2	6	9	15
3	28	14	42
4	19	4	23
5	5	8	13
Grand Total	63	38	101

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of gender vs. cultural authenticity. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

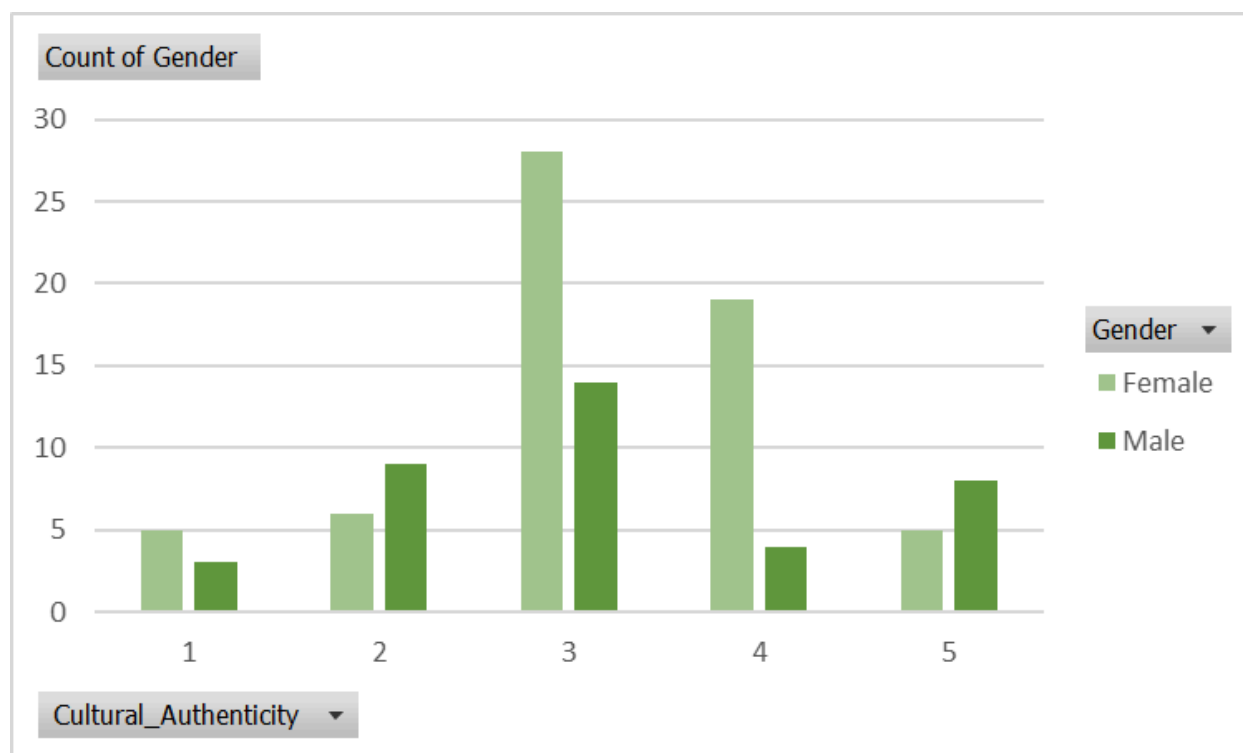


Figure 57. Cross-tabulated representation of gender vs. cultural authenticity. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

1.3 Monthly Income vs. Pricing

In order to gauge the price sensitivity of demographic groups, monthly income is being cross-tabulating against coffee pricing. From the analysis, it can be observed that 30% of the respondents earning below Rs. 25,000 per month prefer a single cup of coffee to cost below Rs. 50 while 37.5% of the respondents in this particular income group are also comfortable with paying somewhere between Rs. 51 to 100 for a single cup of coffee.

Count of Coffee_Price	Column Labels			
Row Labels	25,000-50,000	Above 50,000	Below Rs. 25,000	Grand Total
Above Rs. 200	3	4	6	13
Below Rs. 50	1	4	24	29
Rs. 101 to 200	2	2	20	24

Rs. 51 to 100		5	30	35
Grand Total	6	15	80	101

Table 3. Cross-tabulation of monthly income among respondents vs. pricing. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

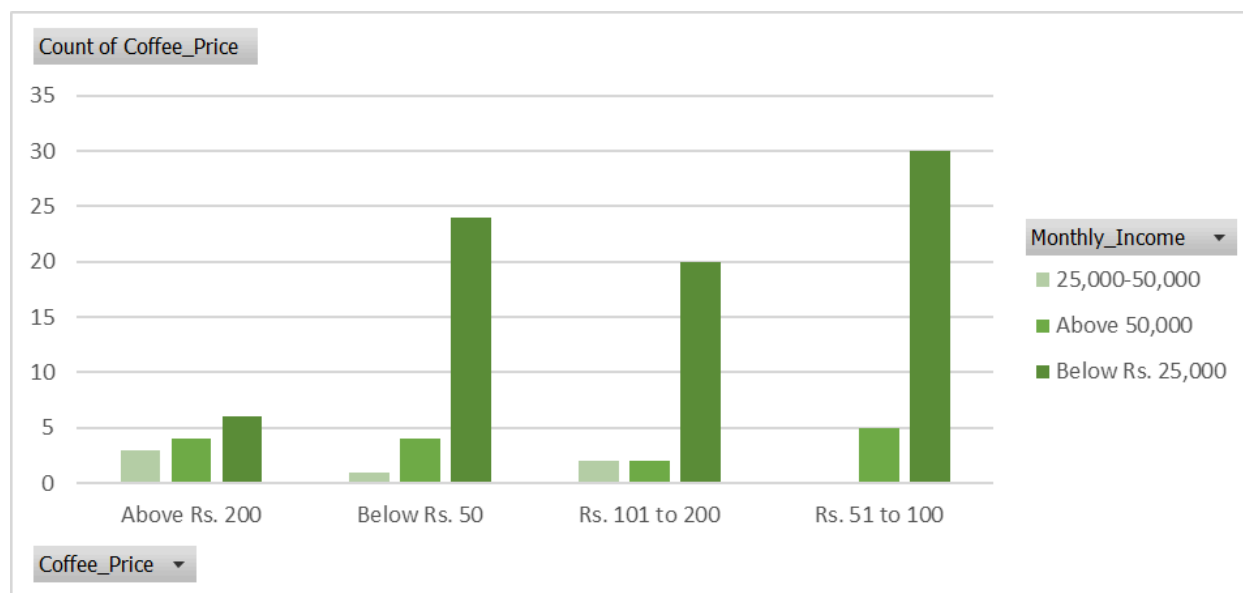


Figure 58. Cross-tabulated representation of monthly income of respondents vs. coffee pricing. Source: Consumer survey (Primary Data).

1.4 Occupation vs. Coffee Quality

A cross-tabulation analysis against these two variables will also analyze if professional roles correlate with perception of coffee quality. Nearly 44.8% of students labelled quality of coffee as a 5 out of 5 in terms of the level of importance it holds to them when selecting an indigenous coffee brand. Similarly, 60% of working professionals also labelled the coffee quality factor as a 5 out of 5, as in very important when deciding upon purchasing from an indigenous coffee brand.

Count of Occupation	Column Labels					
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total

Both (work-study agreement)				1		1	
Intern					1	1	
On a sabbatical				1		1	
Self employed					1	1	
Student	3		4	12	29	39	87
Working Professional				2	2	6	10
Grand Total	3		4	14	33	47	101

Table 4. Cross-tabulation of occupation vs. coffee quality. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

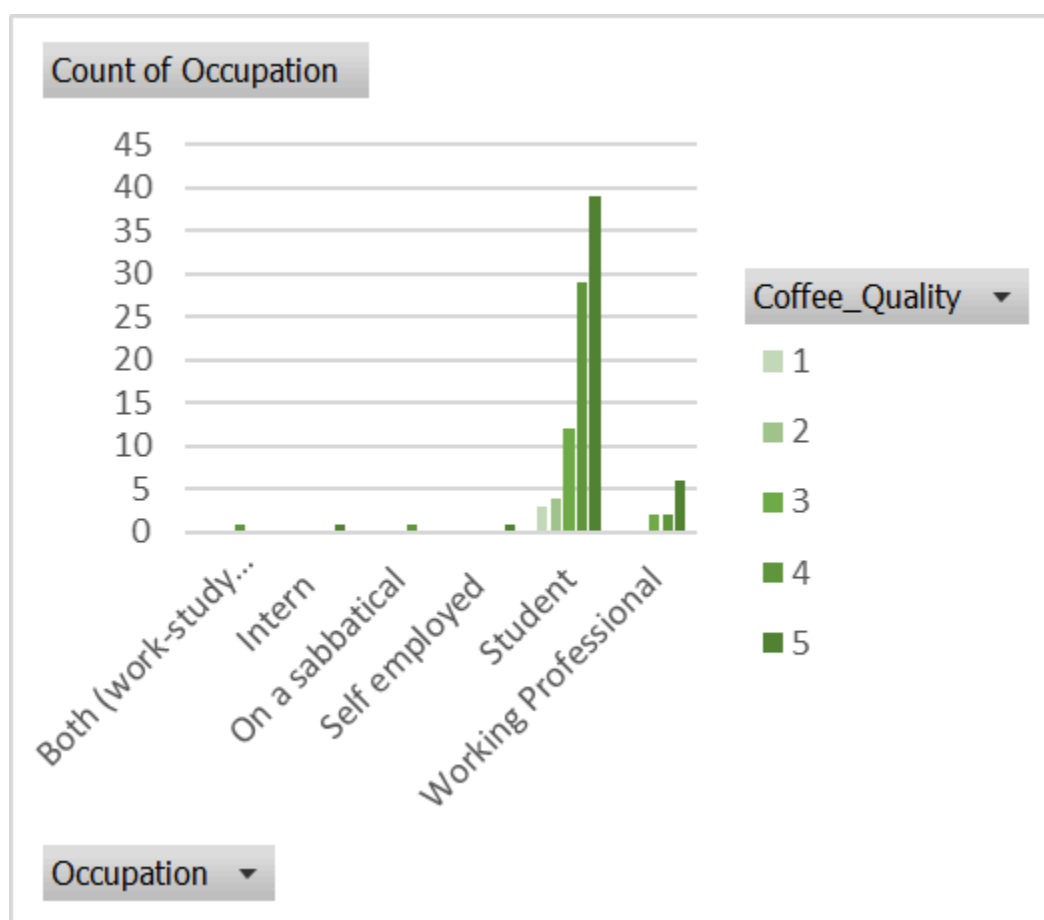


Figure 59. Cross-tabulated representation of occupation vs. coffee quality. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

2. Consumption Habits versus Preferences

2.1 Coffee Consumption vs. Coffee Type

Out of the weekly coffee-drinkers, nearly 70.4% of the sample drink instant coffee. Out of the daily coffee drinkers, approximately 43.9% drink instant coffee and another 43.9% prefer specialty coffee like espresso, pour-over and much more. Thus, we have gathered our findings related to the preferred drink of regular coffee consumers.

Count of Coffee_Type	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Daily	Once Twice Month	or a	Ra rel y	Wee kly	Grand Total
Chai	5	1		1		1
Cold				1		1
Filter coffee				3	3	12
Filter or instant coffee, but especially no extra flavours like vanilla or soy, etc.				1		1
Instant coffee	18	9		11	19	57
Specialty Coffee (Pour-over, Espresso etc.)	18	2		4	5	29
Grand Total	41	12		21	27	101

Table 5. Cross-tabulation of coffee consumption vs. coffee type. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

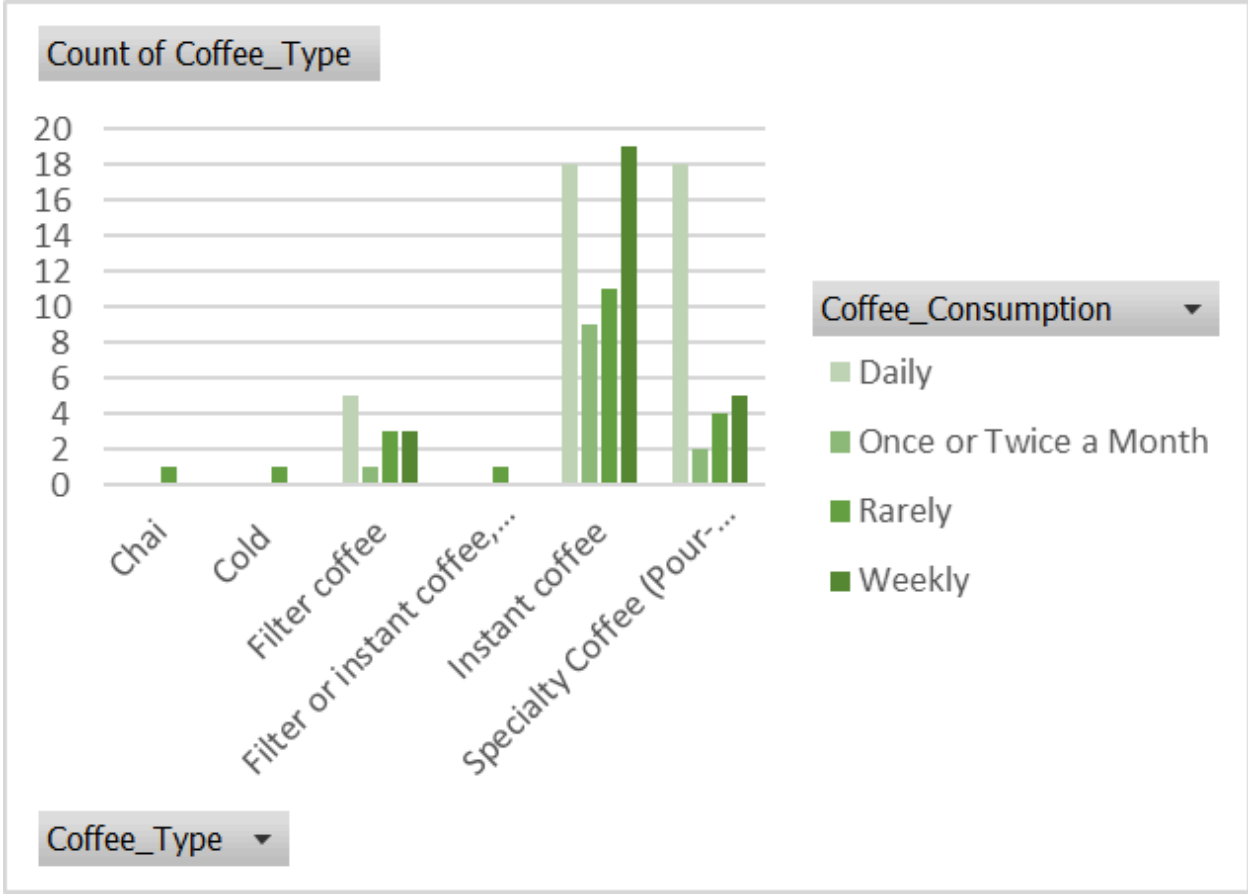


Figure 60. Cross-tabulated representation of coffee consumption vs. coffee type. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

2.2 Coffee Consumption vs. Ambiance

For daily consumers of coffee, nearly 43.9% indicated that ambiance was a very important factor for them while selecting a coffee shop. Similarly, 44.4% of weekly consumers of coffee also labelled the ambiance of a cafe as extremely important when it comes to choosing an indigenous coffee brand.

Count of Coffee_Consumption	Column Labels				
Row Labels	Daily	Once or Twice a Month	Rarely	Weekl y	Grand Total

Neutral	3	1	7	2	13
Not Important At All	1				1
Not Very Important	4	1		2	7
Somewhat Important	15	8	7	11	41
Very Important	18	2	7	12	39
Grand Total	41	12	21	27	101

Table 6. Cross-tabulation of coffee consumption vs. ambiance. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

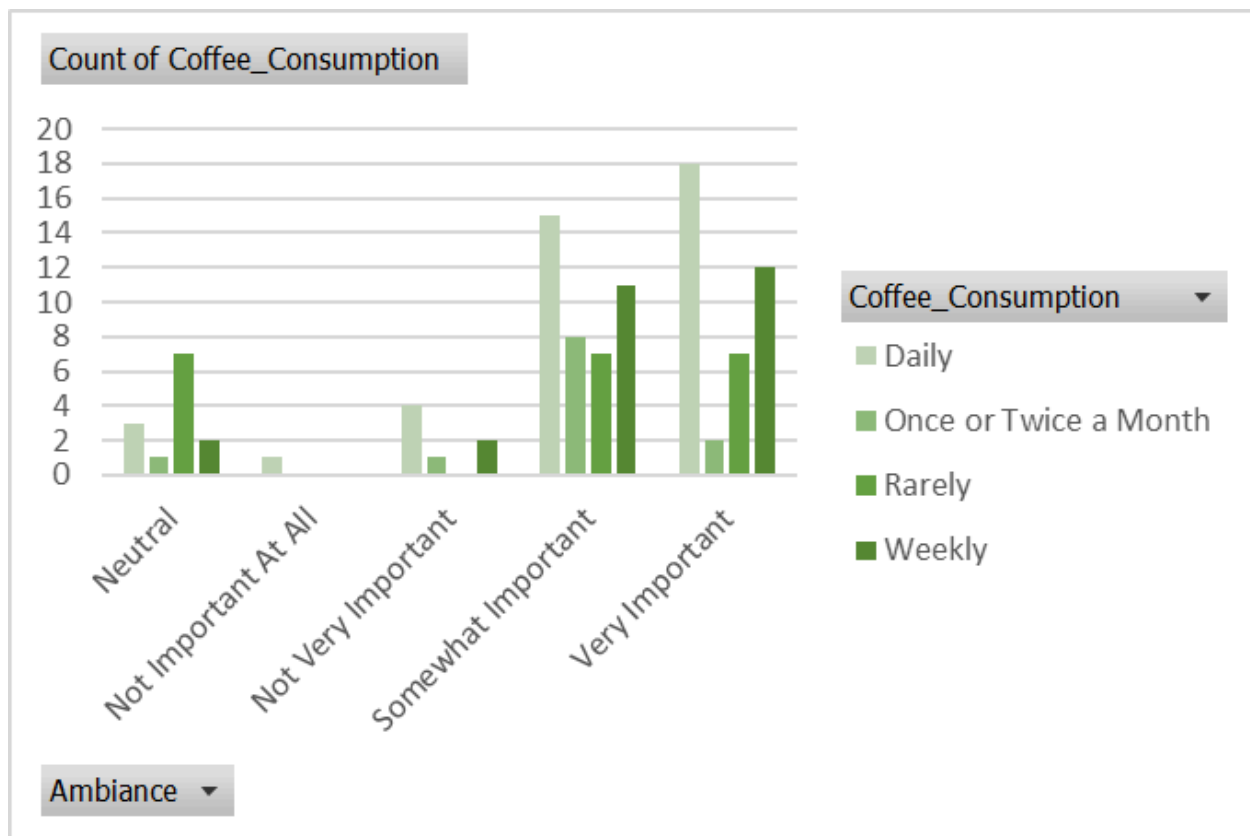


Figure 61. Cross-tabulated representation of coffee consumption vs. ambiance. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

2.3 Coffee Place vs. Coffee Price

Such a cross-tabulation analysis will allow us to gauge if cafe-goers are willing to pay a premium as compared to home-brewers. From the data, it can be observed that 36.36% of respondents who consume coffee in cafes prefer having coffee that costs between Rs. 51 to 100 while another 36.36% of cafe respondents depicted that they are comfortable with paying between Rs. 101 to 200 as well. Compared to that, nearly 36.6% of home brewers prefer their coffee to cost below Rs. 50 for a single cup. However, 13.3% of home-brewers and 12.1% of cafe consumers are also comfortable with paying any amount above Rs. 200 for a single cup of coffee.

Count of Coffee_Price	Column Labels	Coffee Shops/Cafes	Home & Work place	I usually drink coffee when I am with someone else and they are drinking coffee. So wherever it is that I am meeting them.	Work place	Grand Total
Above Rs. 200		4	8	1		13
Below Rs. 50		5	22	1	1	29
Rs. 101 to 200		12	12			24
Rs. 51 to 100	1	12	18		4	35
Grand Total	1	33	60	1	5	101

Table 7. Cross-tabulation of coffee place vs. coffee price. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

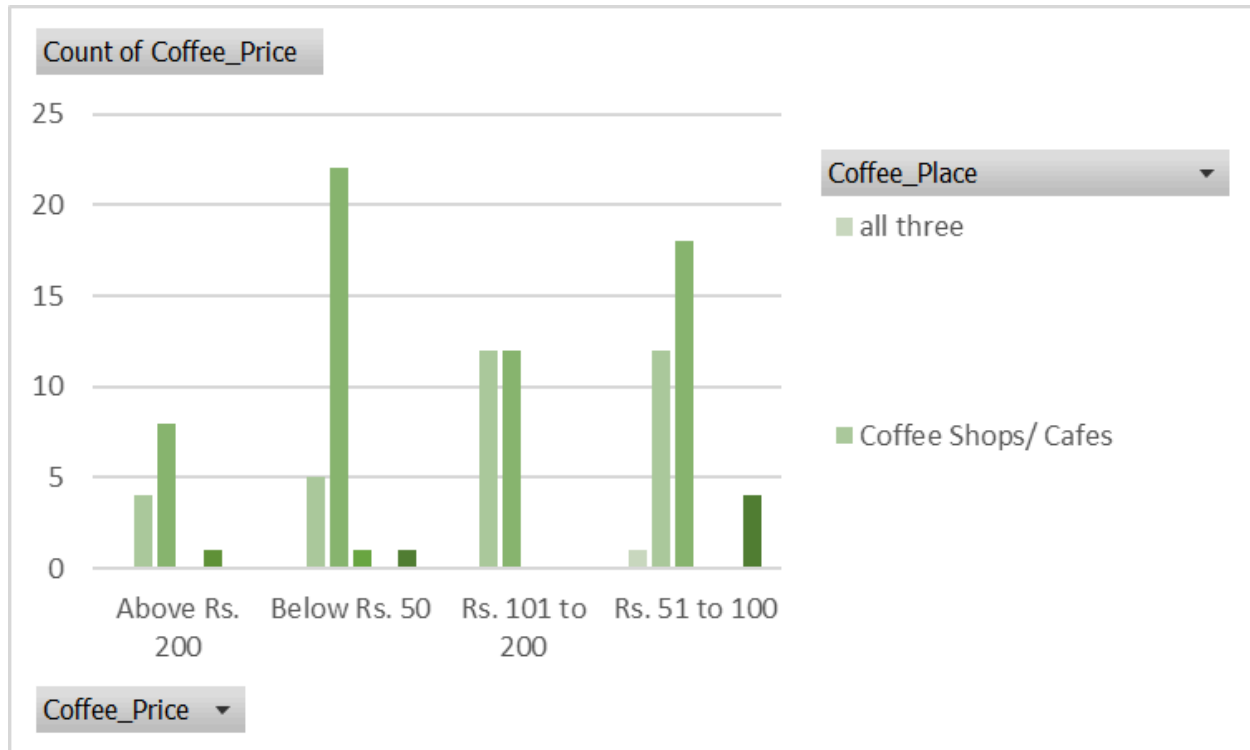


Figure 62. Cross-tabulated representation of coffee place vs. coffee price. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

3. Brand Awareness versus Engagement

3.1 Brand Awareness vs. Social Media Campaigns

A cross-tabulation analysis will help us to determine the impact of social media in creating awareness about the indigenous coffee brands of India. From the data, it can be observed that out of the respondents who are aware of indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai, Araku Coffee and more, 46.06% of them find social media marketing campaigns somewhat effective while 23.59% of such respondents find social media campaigns very effective.

Count of SM_Campaigns	Column Labels		
Row Labels	No	Yes	Grand Total
Neutral	4	14	18
Not Effective At All	3	4	7
Not Very Effective		9	9
Somewhat Effective	3	41	44
Very Effective	2	21	23
Grand Total	12	89	101

Table 8. Cross-tabulation of brand awareness vs. social media campaigns. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

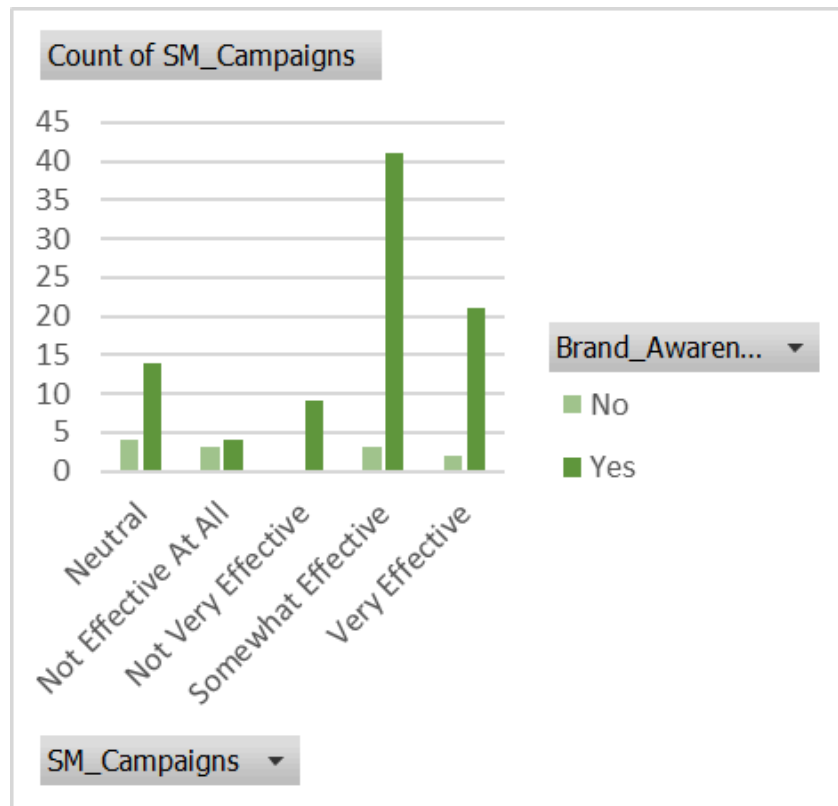


Figure 63. Cross-tabulated representation of brand awareness vs. social media campaigns.

Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

3.2 Brand Awareness vs. Source of Awareness

This method of data analysis will allow us to determine the most effective awareness channels like social media, word-of-mouth and advertisements. It can be observed from the data that the majority of the respondents who are aware of indigenous coffee brands in India, approximately 43.82% find social media the most effective channel for brand awareness. This is followed by word-of-mouth marketing, which 23.59% of the respondents find useful. 16.85% of respondents who are aware of indigenous coffee brands find advertisements on television, online or print to be beneficial while only 15.73% have grown their brand awareness through cafe visits.

Count of Source_of_Awareness	Column Labels		
Row Labels	No	Yes	Grand Total
Advertisements (TV, Online, Print)	4	15	19
Cafe Visits		14	14
Social Media (Eg. Instagram, Facebook etc.)	4	39	43
Word of Mouth	4	21	25
Grand Total	12	89	101

Table 9. Cross-tabulation of brand awareness vs. source of awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

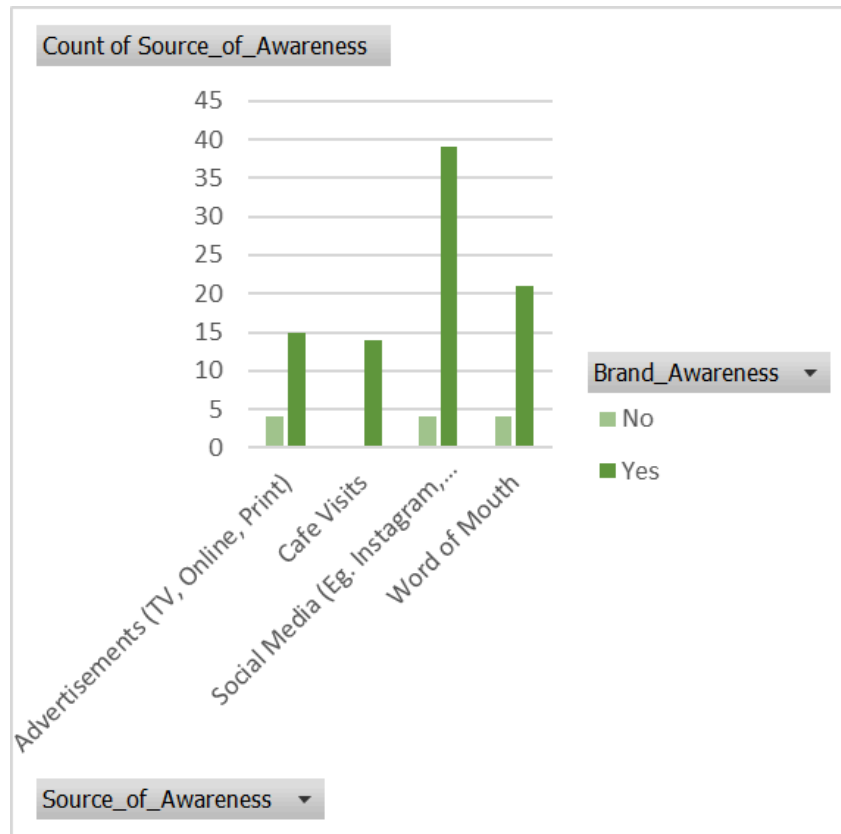


Figure 64. Cross-tabulated representation of brand awareness vs. source of awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

4. Sustainability Practices and Consumer Behaviour

4.1 Sustainability Practices vs. Engagement Interest

Such a cross tabulation will allow us to infer if environmentally-conscious practices increase consumer engagement. From the data, it can be observed that the respondents who highly rate sustainability practices, a 5 out of 5, in terms of the importance it holds as a factor in swaying their purchase decisions, are the most likely to take part in consumer engagement activities. Nearly 64.3% of participants who consider sustainability practices of a coffee brand to be very important in their purchase decisions will definitely take part in interactive experiences like farmer stories, in-cafe workshops etc. 52.94% of respondents who rated the sustainability factor as a 4 out of 5 are also highly likely to take part in interactive initiatives. Lastly, even the respondent group rating sustainable practices as a 3 out of 5 in their choice of coffee brands are highly likely to engage with the brand through events and workshops.

Count of Engagement_Interest	Column Labels					
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Maybe	6	5	9	9	4	33
No	2	2	6	7	1	18
Yes	3	6	14	18	9	50
Grand Total	11	13	29	34	14	101

Table 10. Cross-tabulation of sustainability practices vs. engagement interest. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

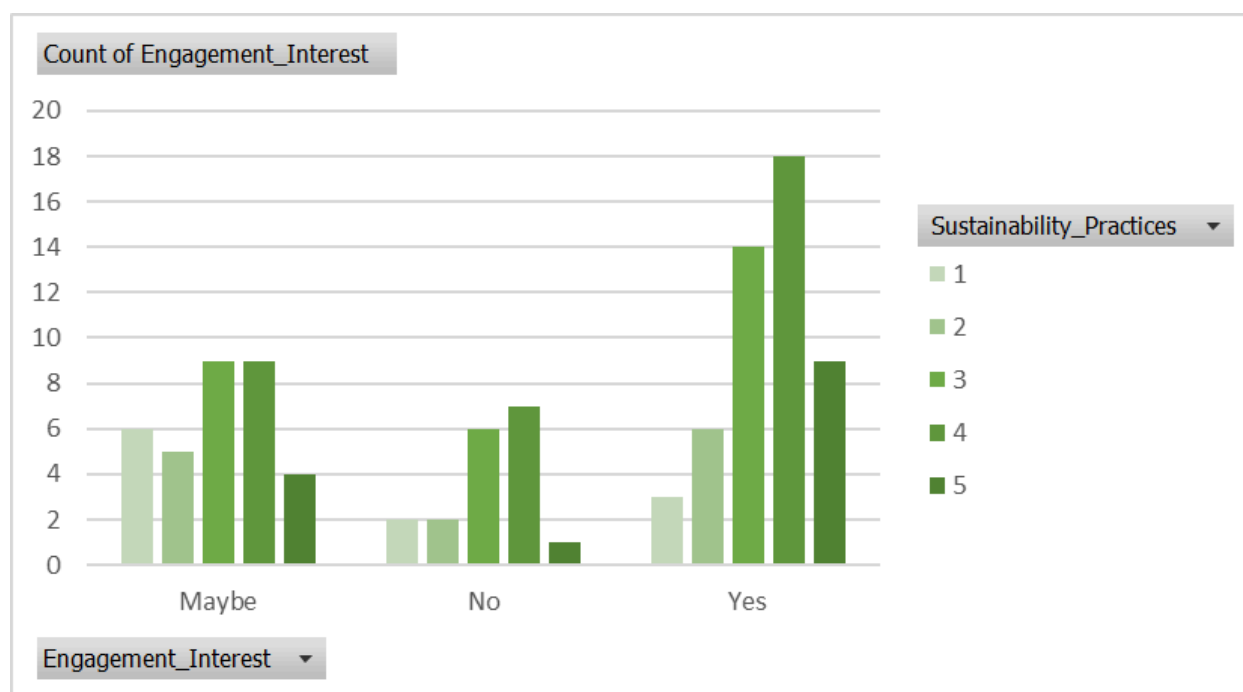


Figure 65. Cross-tabulated representation of sustainability practices vs. engagement interest. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

4.2 Sustainability Practices vs. Recommendation

55.55% of the respondents who were likely to recommend an indigenous coffee brand to another person indicated an inclination towards coffee brands that showed support for local farmers. 17.77% of the respondents who were again likely to recommend an indigenous coffee brand, showed support for ethically-sourced and fair-trade certified coffee. Moreover, 23.33% of the respondents who were highly likely to recommend a coffee brand preferred environmental-friendly packaging.

Count of Sustainability_Practices	Column Labels					
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Environmentally Friendly Packaging	1	3	2	6	7	19
Ethical Sourcing (Fair Trade Certification)		1	3	8	4	16
Reduction of Carbon Footprint	1		4	6	4	15
Support for Local Farmers	1	1	9	25	15	51
Grand Total	3	5	18	45	30	101

Table 11. Cross-tabulation of sustainability practices vs. recommendation. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

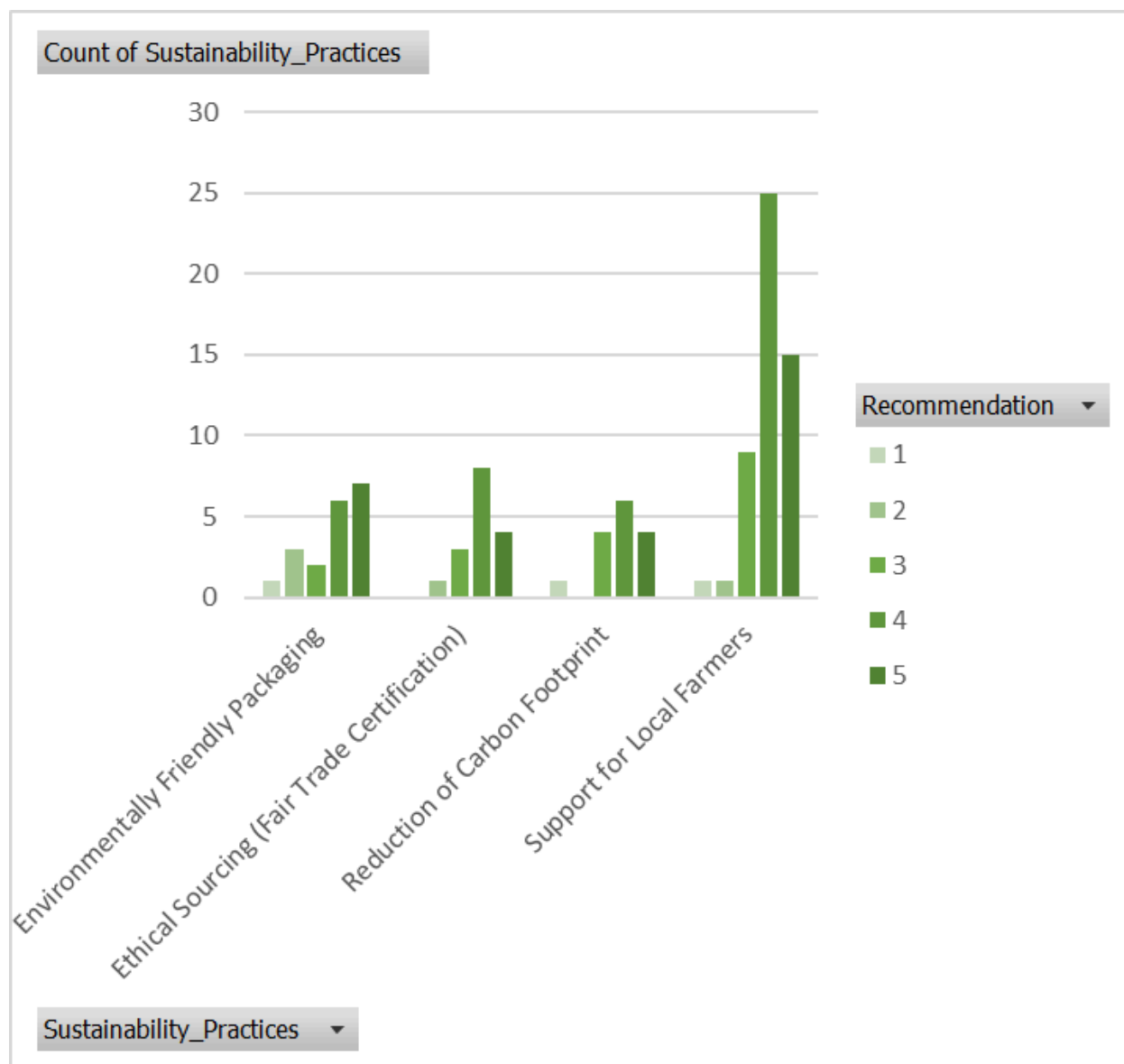


Figure 66. Cross-tabulated representation of sustainability practices vs. recommendation. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

5. Pricing and Purchase Behaviour

5.1 Pricing vs. Coffee Price

Cross-tabulating price sensitivities of consumers against their spending habits on coffee will allow one to correlate significant relationships. Consumers who voted for pricing of indigenous coffee brands as the most important factor (rated 5 out of 5) when it comes to deciding on the price for a single cup of coffee, 37.03% of the respondent group showed willingness to spend

something between Rs. 51 to 100 only. Another respondent group that voted pricing strategy as very important (rated 5 out of 5), also indicated with 30% majority that they would be willing to spend below Rs. 50 for a single cup of coffee.

Count of Pricing	Column Labels					
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5	Grand Total
Above Rs. 200		1	3	5	4	13
Below Rs. 50	1		9	10	9	29
Rs. 101 to 200		1	6	13	4	24
Rs. 51 to 100			7	18	10	35
Grand Total	1	2	25	46	27	101

Table 12. Cross-tabulation of pricing vs. coffee price preference among respondents. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

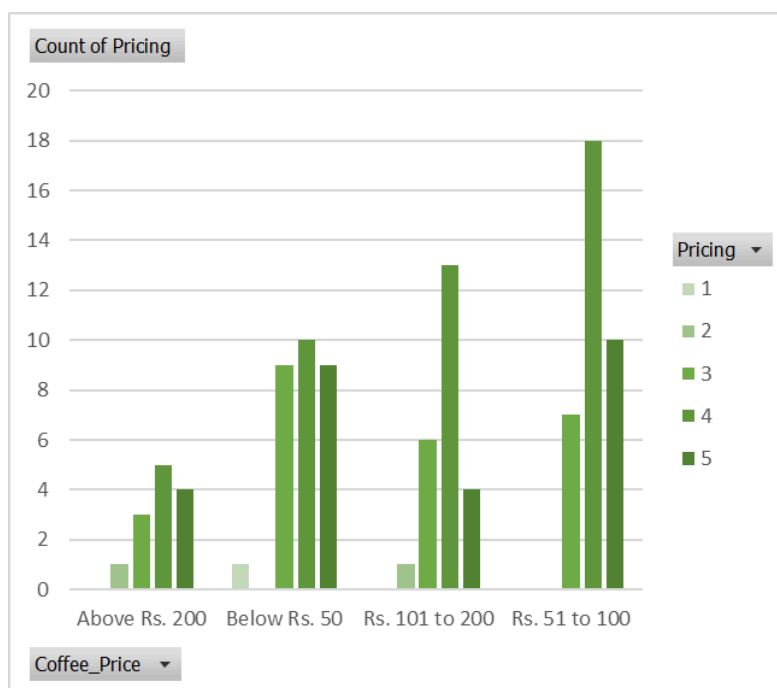


Figure 67. Cross-tabulated representation of pricing vs. coffee price preference among respondents. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

5.2 Fair Trade Price Premium vs. Monthly Income

62.5% of the respondents who earn below Rs. 25,000 are willing to pay a slightly more premium for sustainable coffee that is sourced through fair-trade practices. For those earning above Rs. 50,000, 80% of the respondents from the group are willing to pay only a slight premium for the fair trade prices of coffee. Moreover, only 16.25% of respondents earning below Rs. 25,000 are willing to pay significant amounts for sustainable and fair-trade coffee.

Count of FTP_Price	Column Labels			
Row Labels	No	Yes, significantly more	Yes, slightly more	Grand Total
25,000-50,000		1	5	6
Above 50,000	2	1	12	15
Below Rs. 25,000	17	13	50	80
Grand Total	19	15	67	101

Table 13. Cross-tabulation of fair trade price premium vs. monthly income of respondents.

Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

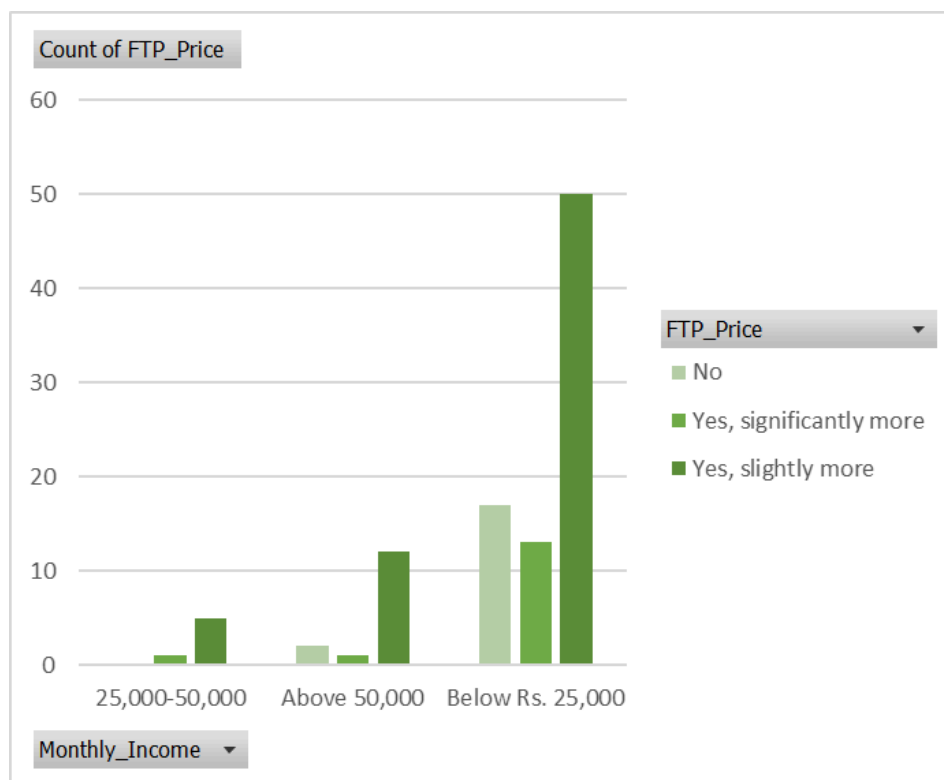


Figure 68. Cross-tabulated representation of fair trade price premium vs. monthly income.

Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

6. Ambiance and Experience

6.1 Ambiance vs. Coffee Place

Out of the 46.66% of respondents who consume their coffee at home, the ambiance of a coffee shop is only somewhat important to them. Moreover, 80% of participants who prefer having coffee in the workplace, for them the ambiance of a coffee shop is deemed to be very important. 48.48% of the respondents who consume coffee in coffee shops or cafes have underlined that the ambiance of a coffee shop is very important for them as well.

Count of Coffee_Place	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Neutral	Not Important At All	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Grand Total
all three				1		1
Coffee Shops/ Cafes	4		2	11	16	33
Home	8	1	5	28	18	60
Home & Workplace				1		1
I usually drink coffee when I am with someone else and they are drinking coffee. So wherever it is that I am meeting them.					1	1
Workplace	1				4	5
Grand Total	13	1	7	41	39	101

Table 14. Cross-tabulation of ambiance vs. coffee place preference. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

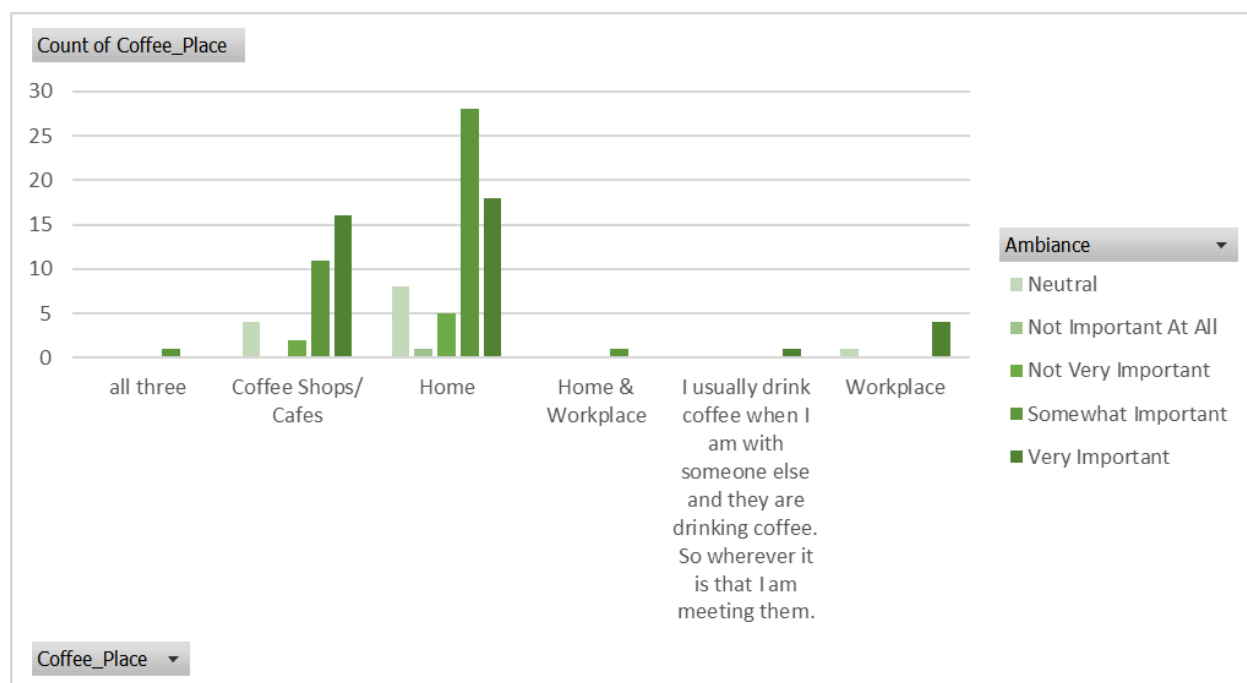


Figure 69. Cross-tabulated representation of ambiance vs. coffee place preference. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

7. Consumer Motivation and Brand Reputation

7.1 Motivation vs. Brand Reputation

54.83% of the respondents who reported being motivated to try an indigenous coffee brand by their affordable pricing have shown an overall neutrality to brand reputation. 37.2% of the respondents who were motivated to try an indigenous coffee brand due to their premium quality coffee also showed an overall neutrality to the brand reputation. 30.23% of the respondents who were again inspired by premium quality of coffee of indigenous coffee brands, indicated that brand reputation is somewhat important to them while 25.58% from the same group rated brand reputation as very important.

Count of Motivation	Column Labels				
Row Labels	Affordable Pricing	Premium Quality Coffee	Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Practices	Unique Cultural Story	Grand Total
1	1	2		1	4
2	3	1		1	5
3	17	16	2	7	42
4	5	13	2	8	28
5	5	11	1	5	22
Grand Total	31	43	5	22	101

Table 15. Cross-tabulation of buying motivation vs. brand reputation. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

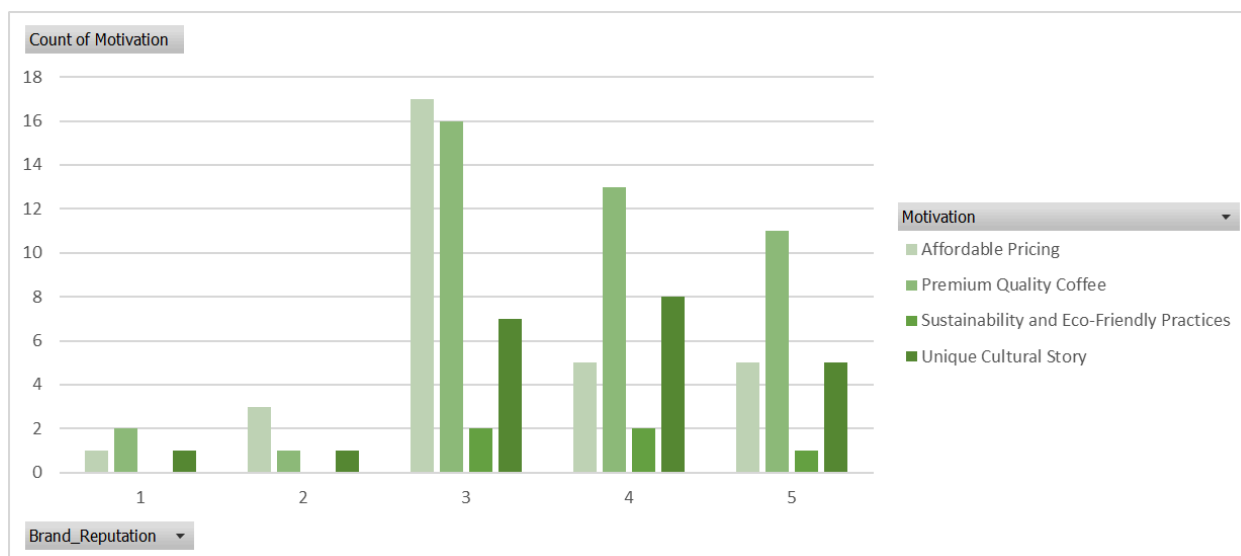


Figure 70. Cross-tabulated representation of buying motivation vs. brand reputation. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

7.2 Motivation vs. Recommendation

Respondents were also asked questions pertinent to factors that would motivate them to try an indigenous coffee brand. Such data is being tabulated against their willingness to recommend the same indigenous brand to others. 51.61% of the respondents of the candidates who reported that affordable pricing would motivate them to try an indigenous coffee brand also indicated that they were likely to recommend the indigenous coffee brand to others. On the other hand, 37.20% of the respondents who voted for premium quality coffee being an important factor for them to try an indigenous coffee brand, were very likely to recommend the coffee brand to another while 39.53% were likely to recommend the brand.

Count of Recommendation	Column Labels				
Row Labels	Affordable Pricing	Premium Quality Coffee	Sustainability and Eco-Friendly Practices	Unique Cultural Story	Grand Total
1	1	2			3
2	3	1		1	5
3	7	7		4	18
4	16	17	3	9	45
5	4	16	2	8	30
Grand Total	31	43	5	22	101

Table 16. Cross-tabulation of buying motivation vs. likeliness of recommendation. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

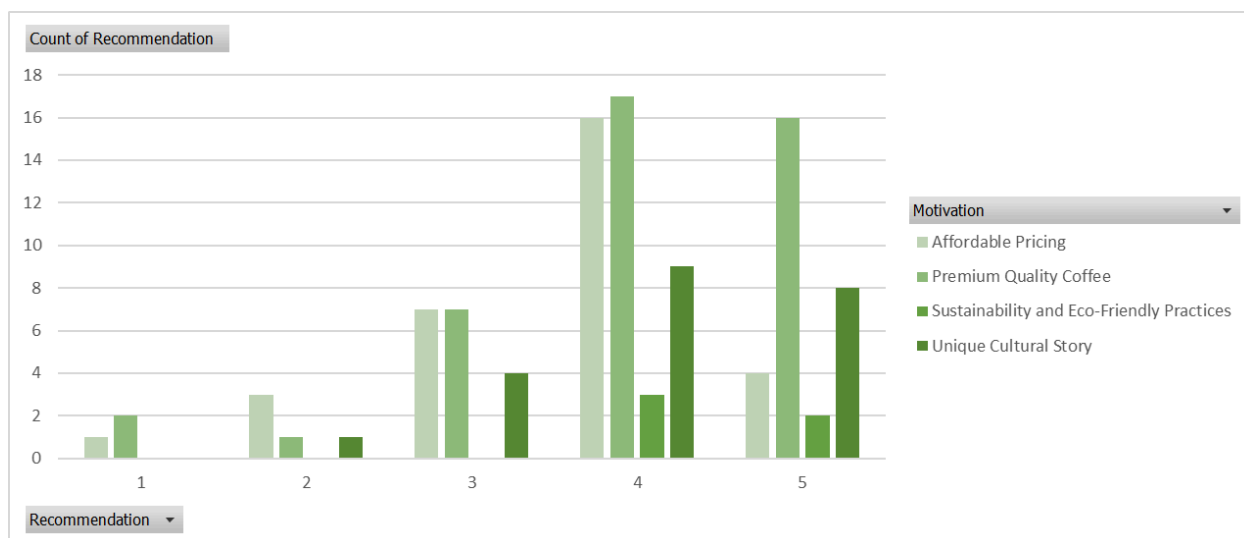


Figure 71. Cross-tabulated representation of buying motivation vs. likeliness of recommendation.

Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

8. Key Insights

8.1 Age vs. Coffee Price

34.44% of the respondents from the age group of 18-24 voted for spending somewhere between Rs. 51 to Rs. 100 on a single cup of coffee. This is followed by 30.10% of the respondents from the same group willing to pay below Rs. 50 for a single cup while 24.73% from the same age group are comfortable paying anywhere between Rs. 51 to 100 for coffee.

Count of Age	Column Labels				
Row Labels	18-24	25-34	35-44	Under 18	Grand Total
Above Rs. 200	10	2	1		13
Below Rs. 50	28			1	29
Rs. 101 to 200	23		1		24
Rs. 51 to 100	32	1		2	35
Grand Total	93	3	2	3	101

Table 17. Cross-tabulation of age vs. coffee price. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

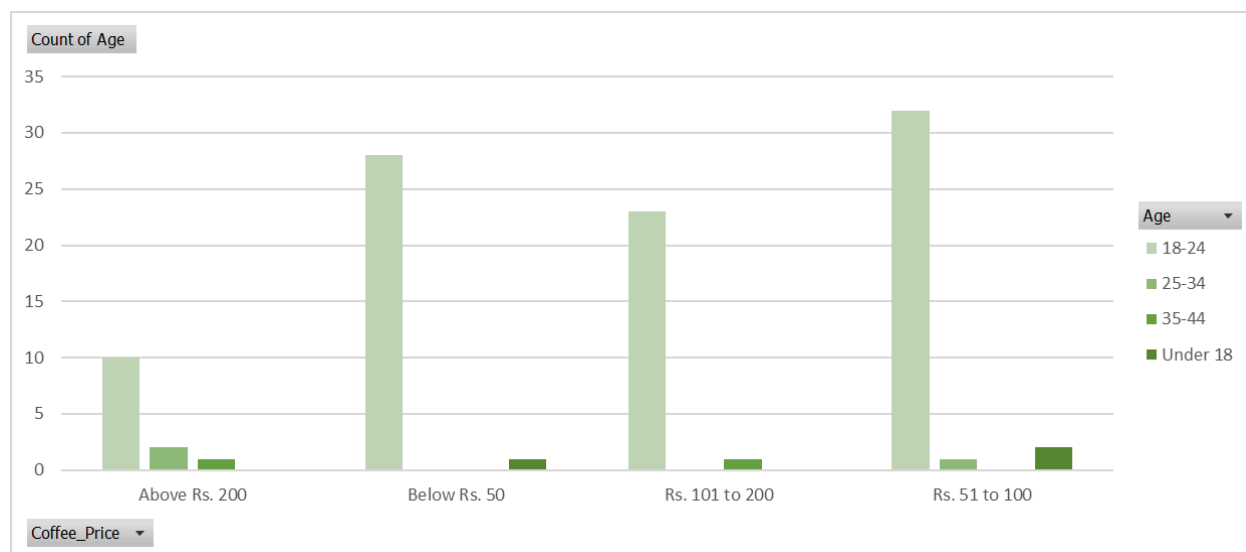


Figure 72. Cross-tabulated representation of age vs. coffee price. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

8.2 Cultural Heritage vs. Brand Awareness

40.44% of the respondents who are aware of indigenous coffee brands like Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters, Araku Coffee etc., have rated the cultural heritage factor of an indigenous coffee brand as somewhat important. Moreover, 32.58% of the people who are aware of such indigenous coffee brands are also neutral about the cultural heritage factor of these coffee brands and do not have explicit opinions on the same.

Count of Brand_Awareness	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Neutral	Not Important At All	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Grand Total
No	5	3	2	2		12
Yes	29	4	12	36	8	89

Grand Total	34	7	14	38	8	101
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Table 18. Cross-tabulation of cultural heritage vs. brand awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

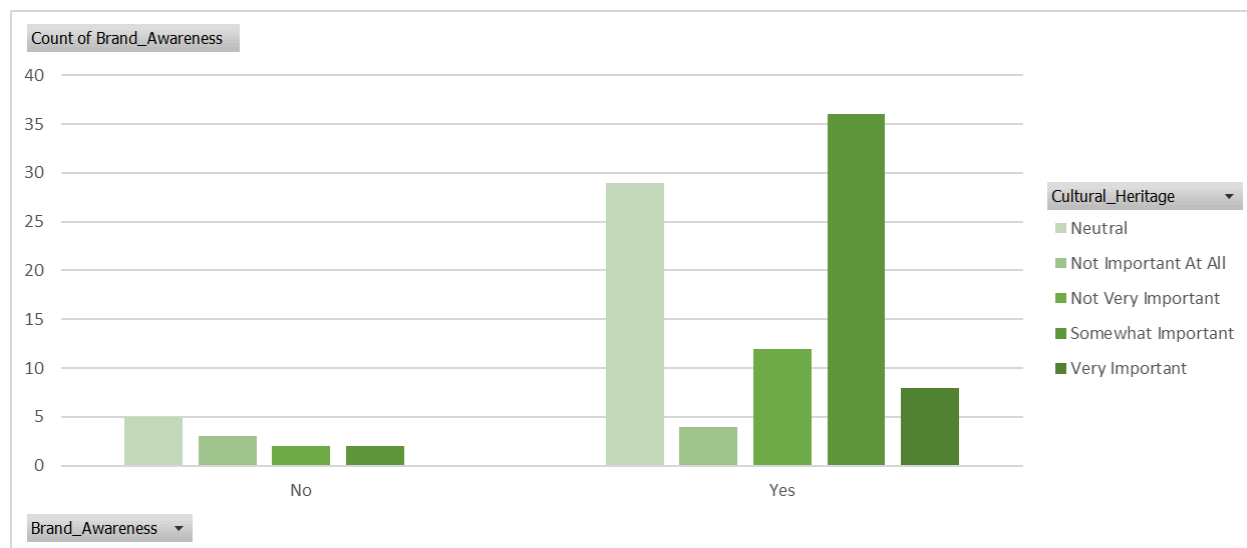


Figure 73. Cross-tabulated representation of cultural heritage vs. brand awareness. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

8.3 Ambiance Aspects vs. Recommendations

Nearly 53.84% of the respondents who rated 4 out of 5 in terms of recommending an indigenous coffee brand, implying that they are likely to recommend the brand, were also the ones who labelled the ambiance aspect of coffee shops as very important. Moreover, 39.02% of the respondents who again voted 4 out of 5 in terms of recommending their indigenous coffee brand were also the ones that deemed the ambiance of a coffee shop as somewhat important.

Count of Recommendation	Column Labels					
Row Labels	Neutral	Not Important At All	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Grand Total
1		1		2		3
2	1			3	1	5
3	5			9	4	18
4	3		5	16	21	45
5	4		2	11	13	30
Grand Total	13	1	7	41	39	101

Table 19. Cross-tabulation of ambiance aspects vs. recommendations. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

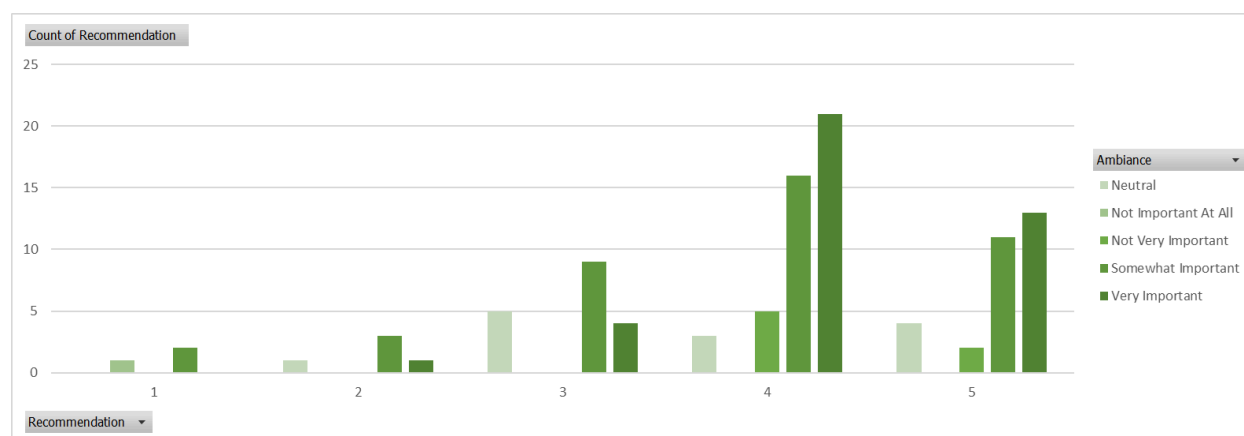


Figure 74. Cross-tabulated representation of ambiance aspects vs. recommendations. Source: Consumer Survey (Primary Data).

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

1. Findings from Thematic and Comparative Analysis of Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee

The thematic analysis reveals unique approaches by Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee to cultural branding, each leveraging distinct narratives to carve a niche for itself and standing out against foreign competitors. The cultural branding approach of each of these brands differ significantly in alignment with their brand ethos and target audience.

1.1 Key Cultural Elements

Blue Tokai primarily focuses on urban storytelling, artisanal quality and contemporary aesthetics to cater to a cosmopolitan demographic. It emphasizes transparency and craftsmanship by emphasizing upon the origins of its coffee beans from local Indian estates. On the other hand, Araku Coffee employs heritage, tribal culture, and sustainability as its core elements, focusing on the empowerment of tribal farming communities and eco-conscious practices. Such cultural narratives set both brands apart from foreign competitors like Starbucks, emphasizing local authenticity and meaningful connections to India's diverse cultural roots.

1.2 Impact on Consumer Purchase Decisions

Cultural branding directly influences consumer choices by fostering emotional connections. For Blue Tokai, the focus on artisanal excellence and experiential offerings such as brewing workshops and art collaborations appeal to urban consumers who prioritize authenticity and sophistication. Araku Coffee's focus on social responsibility and its premium positioning attracts a conscious consumer base looking for sustainability and ethical sourcing of coffee beans. The interplay of modernity and heritage in both brands significantly enhances consumer trust and loyalty towards the respective brand.

1.3 Effectiveness of Marketing Campaigns

Both the brands highly utilize marketing strategies to amplify their cultural message. Blue Tokai engages its consumer base through interactive and experiential strategies like social media

storytelling and cafe-based events, promoting inclusivity and creativity. On the other hand, Araku Coffee employs storytelling rooted in its tribal heritage, further strengthened by collaborations with international chefs and designers to position itself as a luxury brand while staying grounded in sustainability.

1.4 Actionable Recommendations

Indigenous coffee brands can further enhance their branding strategies by diversifying cultural narratives, such as integrating regional celebrations or culinary traditions into their branding campaigns. Indigenous coffee brands must leverage digital platforms more innovatively, such as through visual storytelling or interactive and immersive coffee experiences which could deepen consumer engagement and in turn, convert to brand loyalty. Finally, enhancing transparency about social impact initiatives, as Araku does, can enhance consumer trust and brand loyalty.

Thus, it can be inferred that cultural branding is pivotal for indigenous coffee brands in India to create distinctive identities, positively influence consumer purchase decisions, and compete in a heavily competitive global market. By harnessing their unique cultural assets and refining their marketing strategies, these brands may continue to thrive and expand their market presence.

2. Findings from Statistical Analysis of Consumer Survey

2.1 Cultural Branding and Consumer Perception

88.1% of the respondents are familiar with indigenous coffee brands which implies that cultural branding can influence significant awareness levels among consumers. The data findings also show that consumers value cultural elements integrated into branding efforts as 46.5% of the respondents preferred local storytelling and narratives and 51.5% of the respondents indicated an inclination towards regional aesthetics in cafe design. Moreover, the cultural heritage of an indigenous coffee brand is deemed to be somewhat important by 37.6% of the respondents and only 7.9% consider it very important. Thus, this shows that cultural branding, storytelling and leveraging the cultural heritage of a brand can be further enhanced to expand the consumer base.

2.2 Cultural Elements as Differentiators

Local storytelling by indigenous coffee brands was deemed to be significant by 46.5% of the respondent base while 53.5% highlighted that traditional brewing methods impacted their decision to purchase from an indigenous coffee store. There is a strong inclination towards visual and experiential branding as regional aesthetics and cafe design was preferred by 51.5% of the consumer base. It can be observed that only 12.9% of the respondents disregarded the cultural elements, reinforcing that such elements are crucial for differentiation and stronger push towards cultural branding can educate the isolated consumer base about the cultural significance of indigenous coffee.

2.3 Impact of Cultural Branding on Purchase Decisions

Cultural authenticity was deemed to be very important or important by 35.7% of the respondent base. Brand loyalty factors like unique cultural appeal was reported by 29.7% of the respondents as a significant factor fuelling repeat purchases. Nearly 78.2% of the respondents preferred ambiance and 55.4% showed an inclination towards cultural aesthetics, indicating that cultural branding in the form of experiential elements have the potential to influence purchase decisions.

2.4 Impact of Marketing Campaigns

42.6% of the respondents indicated that social media is the primary channel for brand awareness, while word-of-mouth marketing was effective for 24.8% of the respondent group. Nearly 49.5% of the respondents reported their willingness to engage with digital content like farmer stories, brewing tutorials and cafe workshops, depicting the potential of marketing channels to enhance consumer interaction and engagement.

2.5 Enhancing Branding Strategies

The survey clearly indicates that consumers highly prioritize sustainability, with 50.5% being inclined towards brands that support local farmers, 42.6% preferring premium-quality coffee and 30.7% supporting affordable pricing, and acknowledging these factors as drivers for trying out indigenous coffee brands.

75.2% of the respondent base has also identified brand visibility as a major challenge for indigenous coffee brands. In such a case, cultural branding must be effectively leveraged to foster greater brand awareness and education among consumers.

3. Findings from Cross-Tabulation Analysis of Consumer Survey

3.1 Cultural Branding Shaping Consumer Perception

Cultural heritage as a factor shows mixed levels of significance for consumers, particularly in terms of shaping their perception. 40.44% of the respondents who are aware of indigenous coffee brands find cultural heritage somewhat important, which highlights that there is room for stronger cultural narratives to appeal to consumers.

In terms of the gender diaspora, females and males perceive cultural authenticity in a similar manner, with 44.4% of females and 37% of males only giving it a moderate preference (3 out of 5), suggesting that cultural branding moderately influences different genders.

3.2 Cultural Elements Utilized by Indigenous Coffee Brands

Ambiance has proved to be a significant cultural element, especially for cafe-goers. Around 48.48% of cafe-goers have rated ambiance as a very important aspect of cultural branding.

Moreover, social media has proven to be an effective tool for spreading awareness about branding campaigns. 46.06% of the respondents have found social media as a somewhat effective tool for cultural branding.

3.3 Impact of Cultural Branding on Purchase Decisions

Coffee quality is the most significant factor that enhances purchase decisions. 60% of working professionals and 44.8% of students have rated it a 5 out of 5 in terms of its importance in influencing buying decisions. Therefore, this also aligns with the hypothesis that regional heritage and storytelling are important aspects of branding but must complement premium-quality coffee.

Price sensitivity is another significant factor that varies according to income group. 30% of respondents who earn below Rs. 25,000 have indicated that they would prefer their coffee to be priced below Rs. 50. Thus, price-conscious segments even exist for culturally-branded products.

3.4 Marketing Campaigns Promoting Cultural Narratives

Social media has proved to be the most effective awareness channel as indicated by 43.82% of the respondents. This is followed by word-of-mouth marketing, which has proved to be a beneficial channel according to 23.59% of the candidates. Therefore, this reinforces the hypothesis that digital marketing campaigns help in enhancing brand visibility and engagement.

Sustainability practices are also a major driver of engagement. Respondents who reported that sustainability practices of indigenous coffee brands are highly important to them have indicated that they are most likely to participate in interactive brand activities like workshops and farmer stories.

3.5 Recommendations for Enhancing Brand Strategies

Younger consumers in the age group of 18-24 years show willingness to spend around Rs. 51 to 100 on coffee, as indicated by 34.44% of the respondents. This suggests potential for targeting this segment with cultural experiential branding strategies.

Respondents who are motivated by affordable pricing are more likely to recommend the brand as has been indicated by 51.61% of the group. This suggests that pricing is a significant element for brand advocacy for cost-sensitive groups.

3.6 Hypothesis Validation

As per the first hypothesis, it was assumed that cultural branding significantly impacted consumer perception. This has been validated as cultural elements such as ambiance and authenticity are helpful in moderately influencing consumer perceptions, as indicated by the mixed responses to cultural heritage and authenticity ratings.

It was also assumed as per the second hypothesis that traditional and digital marketing are beneficial in enhancing consumer engagement. This has been validated as nearly 46% of the

respondents found them somewhat effective and digital platforms were ranked as the top brand awareness channel.

According to the third hypothesis, it was assumed that ambiance plays an important role within cultural branding. This assumption has been validated as well, since ambiance is a very important factor for cafe-goers, with more than half of the respondents labelling it as highly valued.

The fourth hypothesis assumed that storytelling and regional heritage influenced customer perception. This proposition has been partially validated as heritage and authenticity are moderately influential to the consumer base and require stronger storytelling and branding to resonate with a broader base.

The fifth and the last hypothesis assumed that indigenous brands outperform global brands in terms of emotional connection. Such a proposition has been supported indirectly as consumers engage with brands that value sustainability practices and cultural branding. Such brands also cultivate greater consumer loyalty, suggesting emotional resonance with consumers who value such aspects.

3.7 Recommendations

Indigenous coffee brands must leverage cultural heritage and storytelling techniques to further enhance their emotional connection with consumers. These brands can focus on social media platforms to amplify their cultural branding and awareness initiatives. In terms of cultural branding, higher focus must be given to coffee quality and ambiance while maintaining competitive pricing for the age-group of 18-25. Greater emphasis must be given to sustainable practices to appeal to ethically-conscious consumers. Most importantly, efforts must be made to position the cafe ambiance as a cultural-differentiator to appeal to the cafe-going consumer base who are willing to pay a premium.

Thus, the following cross-tabulation analysis proposes comprehensive insights into understanding consumer behaviour and actionable recommendations for indigenous coffee brands to differentiate themselves from foreign competitors through their cultural branding strategies.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research studies undergone through this thesis reveal that cultural branding is an influential tool that shapes consumer perception and purchase decisions for indigenous coffee brands in India. The responses collected through the consumer survey clearly indicate that storytelling, cultural aesthetics and traditional brewing methods are key differentiators for indigenous coffee brands against global competitors like Starbucks Coffee. Moreover, marketing strategies that leverage digital platforms and convey brand values such as sustainability, premium-quality and affordable pricing have been beneficial in enhancing brand visibility and loyalty.

1. Research Objectives and Hypothesis Testing

1.1 Cultural Branding Impacting Consumer Perception

The research shows that consumer perceptions are heavily influenced by cultural elements as 55.4% of the respondent base prefer cultural aesthetics in coffee shop ambiance while 46.5% of the respondents are inclined towards integration of local narratives into their overall coffee experience.

Moreover, the hypothesis suggesting that cultural branding positively impacts consumer perception is being supported through the results, as 80% of the respondents are positively inclined towards having cultural elements in their choice of coffee brand.

1.2 Key Cultural Elements

Local storytelling, regional aesthetics as well as traditional brewing methods are considered to be key cultural highlights of indigenous coffee brands. Nearly 53% of the respondent group indicated that traditional brewing was the differentiating cultural factor for indigenous coffee brands.

The hypothesis that storytelling and regional heritage highly influence consumer perception has been validated as proved by the consumer preferences for such cultural aspects.

1.3 Cultural Branding Impacting Purchase Decisions

78.2% of the respondent group reported being influenced by unique cultural narratives, ambiance and sustainable practices of indigenous coffee brands, to purchase their product.

The hypothesis that cultural branding has a positive impact on purchase decisions has been validated by the overwhelming support for cultural elements being integrated into branding practices.

1.4 Marketing Campaigns and Cultural Narratives

Social media has been identified as the primary source of brand awareness, as indicated by 42.6% of the respondents while 24.8% of the respondents found word-of-mouth marketing more reliable. The respondents also majoritively expressed a willingness to engage with digital content by indigenous coffee brands.

Therefore, this also proves the hypothesis that traditional and digital marketing campaigns positively enhance consumer engagement and brand visibility, as supported by the data.

1.5 Branding Recommendations

1.5.a *Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters*

Blue Tokai can focus on hyperlocal cultural collaborations with artists, craftspeople, or incorporate regional design elements in stores and packaging, according to specific regions. For instance, block prints from Rajasthan or Warli art from Maharashtra can further enhance the cultural appeal as per region-specific aesthetics.

The brand can also highly promote premium experiences for its consumers through coffee-trail experiences where customers can visit exclusive estates from where their particular blend of coffee is sourced as well as the farmer who produced the coffee. Such a strategy can create a unique and immersive experience for customers.

To further enhance the ‘Indian-ness’ of the brand, Blue Tokai can also offer subscription boxes that are tailored to regional preferences and come with a cultural twist like regional snacks, folk music playlists, or coffee brewing tools.

Cultural pop-up cafes can be a unique addition to Blue Tokai’s cultural ecosystem. Such pop-up cafes can feature in cultural hotspots themed around regional art. For example, a Durga-Puja themed pop-up with Bengali-inspired coffee flavours.

1.5.b *Araku Coffee*

Araku Coffee may be positioned as a pioneering carbon-negative coffee. This may be achieved by offsetting carbon emissions through tribal forest conservation efforts. Such efforts could be promoted via campaigns as well as infographics.

Araku Coffee may also introduce limited-edition cultural brewing kits which may include Araku coffee blends, handcrafted mugs by tribal artisans and brewing guides reflecting Indian traditions. The profits generated through this initiative could be directed towards tribal development.

To give a regional cultural twist to Araku’s branding strategy, the brand can organize events where Araku’s coffee is paired with unique regional cuisines, highlighting how coffee can complement diverse Indian flavours.

A stronger push must be given to cultural branding through digital marketing campaigns. The brand may use social media platforms to portray the stories of tribal farmers behind Araku Coffee, highlighting their lives, challenges and contributions in the production of sustainable coffee.

The brand can also introduce augmented reality packaging where customers may scan a QR code to watch interactive stories related to the coffee’s journey. Such an interactive experience could include videos, farmer interviews, as well as eco-friendly practices.

1.5.c Recommendations Tailored for Both Blue Tokai and Araku Coffee

Both Blue Tokai Coffee Roasters and Araku Coffee can delve deeper into developing coffee that are inspired by regional flavours like turmeric-spiced coffee or jaggery-infused coffee blends. Such unique product lines may be marketed as ‘India On Your Palette’ to provide a distinct coffee experience.

The brands may even consider collaborating with technology-driven AI startups in India to provide more personalized recommendations for coffee. For example, consumers may easily find a recommendation of coffee based on their personal preferences and browsing history.

Another innovative approach that both the brands can utilize is using biodegradable packaging that is embedded with seeds. In this way, once the coffee has been consumed, the seed can be planted to grow herbs or flowers, furthering sustainability.

Such brands can even promote coffee festivals featuring traditional music, dance as well as art along with coffee-tasting and education workshops. Moreover, a higher focus must be given to user-generated content, where customers share their coffee stories. Such an approach could enhance customer loyalty and engagement.

Lastly, the brands must strongly leverage the power of local narratives and invest in greater educational digital campaigns, workshops and events to bring regional storytelling to the forefront and enhance brand storytelling.

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APPENDIX

