



# CROSS BORDER TRADE: CHINESE PRODUCTS IN INDIAN MARKET - A STUDY FROM CONSUMERS PERSPECTIVE IN THE CITY OF GUWAHATI, ASSAM

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**Abstract:** Liberalization of the economy of India in 1991 has paved the way for various foreign country products to enter in the country. Chinese products in the Indian markets are not a rare sight. They have taken up shelf spaces in many of the retail stores in India giving quite a threat and competition to the Indian products. Also the consumers of India face quite a dilemma in choosing their preferred product between Indian and Chinese. The present research investigation makes a genuine attempt to understand the attitude of the consumers towards the various Chinese products and to study the impact of some predetermined factors on the attitude of the consumers in Guwahati city. The research investigation further tries to find out the level of competition between the Indian and Chinese products in Guwahati city. For serving the purpose of the study both primary data and secondary data has been used. Primary data have been collected with the help of a structured questionnaire. Secondary sources of data include journals and internet. The sample size for the study consists of 96 respondents and the collected data has been analyzed with the help of the statistical tool; SPSS software

**Keywords:** Indian products, Chinese products, Consumers attitude, Competition.

## I. INTRODUCTION

India and China bestowed with the greatest ancient civilizations, ranks among the world's largest developing nations, the fastest growing economies and are among the foremost rising powers in Asia.

India initiated its economic liberalization in the year 1991, with the goal of making the economy more market-oriented and expanding the role of private and foreign investment. China, the world's largest exporter of goods since 2009, has liberalized its economy since 1978. The political relationship between the countries has improved and developed continuously since 1990s, and the trade cooperation especially the trade in goods area have entered a rapid development period.

Chinese products in Indian markets are not a rare sight. They have taken up shelf spaces in most of the Indian stores in a phenomenal level. Sabnavis (2003) opined that the economic liberalization in 1991 brought various products and brands into India and transformed the lifestyle of consumers in the country. Chinese electronic goods such as torch, radio, lights etc along with various decorative items, receive huge responses in India and the Indian consumers readily make a beeline to purchase those Chinese goods.

Even though, the political relationship between China and India has improved and developed continuously since 1990s, but still it cannot be termed as 'Good'. However the Indian consumers continue to show interest towards Chinese products. Gopalan (2001); Luce and Kynge (2003) found out in their research that the value added products

from China, especially consumer durable and non-durable, are more supplementing Indian markets. The reason may be cited from one of the studies by Balabanis *et al.*, (2001) that consumers who exhibit higher levels of patriotism do not necessarily oppose other countries, to which R.K. Srivastava,(2014) added nor are against purchasing foreign products. Swoboda *et al.*, (2012) opined that it is unclear in emerging countries whether consumers favor global or local brands

Also this purchase behaviour of the Indian consumers for the Chinese goods can be because of the reason that Chinese goods are substantially cheaper than Indian goods and come in wide varieties. Han (2001) found out in his research that consumers perceive the price below their reference price as a gain while they perceive the price higher than their reference price as a loss. Chinese firms pursue a "price leadership" strategy by setting low prices for its products which surely sends shocks to the Indian retailers. Chinen and Sun (2011) opined that China has an image and reputation of a low cost producer in the global market place. A wrist watch for Rs. 10, a washing machine for Rs. 1250, a ceiling fan for Rs. 75, a mixer grinder for Rs. 350. The price list is up in many places (Basu, 2007).

Assam being in the Northeastern part of India is quite close to the Chinese border and the Chinese goods have not failed to flood the city of Guwahati, be it toys or electrical items or plastic items etc.

R.K. Srivastava (2014) opined that purchase behaviour of Indian towards Chinese product is fairly more inclined due to psychic distance factors as culturally Indians are more nearer to Chinese due to proximity of religion and culture.

There has been such a rise of Chinese goods in the markets of Guwahati that during the Durga Puja time of 2016 the Assam Government boycotted the use of Chinese items like lanterns, toys etc.

The buying behaviour of the consumers in respect of Chinese goods is surely interesting. On one hand their lies Nationality of the people and no-so-good political relationships India and China and on the other the low priced, trendy designs of the Chinese goods. These contrasting factors surely lay its impact on the buying behavior of consumers towards Chinese goods.

The present research paper tries to understand and highlight the attitude of the consumers of Guwahati towards various Chinese products and the impact of the predetermined factors, namely, Price, Durability, Usability, Trustworthy, Design and Nationality on the behavior of the consumers. The paper further tries to highlight the challenges faced by the Indian products from the Chinese products.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

World Bank (2003) opined that the magnitude of India-China trade highlights that the trade between the two countries has grown very robustly with a growth of 54 per cent rate during 2002-2007. Cui and Liu, (2001) found out in their research that Asians are more pricing conscious. R.K. Srivastava (2014) opined that Chinese firms most easily achieve a "strategic fit" by pursuing a "price leadership" strategy. Ma, Ngyuen, and Xu (2006a) opined that China is the second largest market for and the largest exporter of electronics/ICT products. R.K. Srivastava (2014) also found in his study that in emerging market like India, purchase of a product is directly related to product functionality, affordable price with quality linked to functionality, psychic distance and animosity. Psychic distance could influence the purchase of Chinese products as they are nearer to India. Srivastava (2011a) also opined that psychic distance has a role in brand purchase behaviour. Ahmed and Astous (2001); Bilkey and Nes (1982); Dickerson (1982); Morganosky and Lazard (1987); Samiee (1994) opined that in a developed countries, consumers in general tend to have a higher quality perception of domestic than foreign products. The reverse has been observed, however, in developing countries such as in Nigeria Agbonifoh and Elimimian, (1999), Romania and Turkey by Ger *et al.*, (1993), India by Batra *et al.*(2000), and China by Li *et al.*, (1997); Sklair, (1994). Yagci, (2001) found out in his research that even ethnocentric consumers may positively evaluate the quality of imports to some extent if they are perceived as being associated with a country with a better image (e.g. it is highly-industrialized or economically-developed).

T. N. Srinivasan (December 2003) opined that there is one service sector, viz. Information Technology (IT), in which India has notably outstripped China. Luce and Kyng (2003) opined that interestingly and tellingly, 40% of China's IT exports involved Indian IT companies based in China, according to a report by consultants Gartner. The same authors further quoted the Chief Financial Office of Infosys, the Indian IT giant that has won contracts with China's financial sector, as saying that India is five to seven years ahead of China in the software sector, primarily

because of the lack of facility with the English language among Chinese and the absence of experienced project managers in China. However, he expects that China will catch up with India very quickly.

Luce and Kynge (2003) pointed out in their research that the United Nations buys more than half of its vaccines from a private Indian company, Serum Institute. Srinivasan (2002) also found in his research that the competition from lower priced imports of manufactures from China elicited a defensive response from Indian industrialists to seek protection, and the government granted it through the levy of antidumping duties on China's imports. Recently, Indian entrepreneurs have joined their counterparts in the industrialized countries in viewing the huge and growing Chinese markets as commercial opportunity.

Luce and Kynge (2003) quote K. K. Modi, the head of an Indian manufacturing company that exports specialty chemicals to China's leather industry as saying that, "nobody fears the Chinese market any more—everybody just wants a piece of it."

### III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

After the economic liberalization of India in the year 1991, there has been a significant change in the markets of India as foreign products started to flood in. Amongst all the foreign products, Chinese products are a very common sight in the Indian markets which surely sends threats to the Indian manufacturers. The Indian consumers face the dilemma of choosing between the Indian and Chinese products according to their preferences. On one hand are the cheaply priced with good design Chinese products and on the other hand there's nationality for the Indian products. The present research investigation tries to find out the attitude of consumers towards the various Chinese products along with the impact of some predetermined factors on their attitude and to study the level of competition between the Indian and Chinese products. The present investigation will help in highlighting the areas where the Indian products need to work so that they can give a good competition to their Chinese counterparts. The research work will also help future researchers to do a more in depth research in this area.

### IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research investigation has been carried out to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To understand the attitude of the consumers towards the various Chinese products.
2. To study the impact of some predetermined factors on the attitude of the consumers.
3. To find out the level of competition between the Indian and Chinese products.

### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research investigation is an empirical one is based on survey method. The target population of the study consists of consumers using both Indian and Chinese products in the city of Guwahati, Assam. Convenient and judgment sampling technique has been adopted to select individual respondents from the target population. Respondents in the present investigation consist of individuals of all age groups starting from 18 years of age to senior citizens. The sample size in the present investigation is 96. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed out of which 96 fully completed usable questionnaires were received back. A self structured questionnaire was framed consisting of both close ended and open ended questions. The questionnaire was designed on the principles of simplicity and understandability. The primary data collected from the respondents were analyzed with the help of statistical tools like correlation, regression and simple percentage method. A reliability test was conducted to find the consistency, accuracy and predictability of the scales of the questionnaire and the reliability index was ascertained with the help of Guttman Split-Half Coefficient and it was found to be 0.885

### VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Profile: A brief overview of the respondents' profile has been highlighted in the following tables.

Table 6.1: Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18-25	37	38.5	38.5
26-33	41	42.7	81.2
33-41	12	12.5	93.8
42-49	1	1.0	94.8
50-58	2	2.1	96.9
59-66	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Table 6.1 above depicts the age of the respondents involved in the investigation. The above table clearly depicts that 38.5% of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-25 years of age and 42.7% of the respondents belong to the age group of 26-33 years of age group. That means most of the respondents involved in the investigation belong to a very young age group.

Table 6.2: Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	39	40.6	40.6
Female	57	59.4	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

The table above shows the gender of the respondents. 40.6% of the respondents are male and 59.4% of the respondents are female.

Table 6.3: Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Govt. Employee	16	16.7	16.8
Pvt. Employee	41	42.7	60.0
Self Employed	13	13.5	73.7
Pensioner	2	2.1	75.8
Student	20	20.8	96.8
Housewife	3	3.1	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

Table 6.3 above shows the occupation of the respondents involved in the investigation. 42.7% of the respondents belong to the private sector, 20.8% belong to the students group and 16.7% of the respondents belong to the government sector.

Table 6.4 outline the income level of the respondents. 36.5% of the respondents have an income of 10000-30000 per month, 21.9% of them have an income of 30000-50000 per month and 20.8% of the respondents have an income of less than 10000 per month.

Table 6.4: Income of the Respondents

Income	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
>10000	20	20.8	20.8
10000-30000	35	36.5	57.3
30000-50000	21	21.9	79.2
<50000	14	14.6	93.8
None	6	6.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

**Objective 1: To understand the attitude of the consumers towards the various Chinese and Indian products.**

Correlation of the Factors with Satisfaction:

Here an attempt has been made to find out the relationship between factors affecting the purchase of Chinese products and the satisfaction level of the consumers.

Table 6.5: Correlation between Satisfaction with Chinese products and predetermined factors

Satisfaction_Chinese	Price	Usability	Design	Satisfaction_Chinese
Pearson Correlation	.311	.220	.220	1
Sig(2-tailed)	.002	.031	.031	
N	96	96	96	96

The table above clearly reveals that price, usability and design are the major factors which have a significant correlation with the satisfaction level of the consumers purchasing or using Chinese products.

Table 6.6: Correlation between Satisfaction with Indian products and predetermined factors

Satisfaction_Indian	Price	Usability	Durability	Design	Trust	Nationality	Satisfaction_Indian
Pearson Correlation	-.105	.053	.031	-.055	.362**	.057	1
Sig(2-tailed)	.310	.606	.763	.593	.000	.579	
N	96	96	96	96	96	96	96

The above table shows that none of the predetermined factors other than trust has any significant correlation with satisfaction of the consumers purchasing Indian products.

**Objective 2: To study the impact of some predetermined factors on the attitude of the consumers**

Table 6.7: Impact of the predetermined factors

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.381 <sup>a</sup>	.145	.087	.765

a. Predictors: (Constant), Res\_nationa\_ind, Res)\_trust\_ind, Res\_usa\_ind, Res\_price\_Indian, Res\_design\_ind, res\_dura\_ind

Table 6.7(a): ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.830	6	1.472	2.513	.027 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	52.129	89	.586		
	Total	60.958	95			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Res\_nationa\_ind, Res)\_trust\_ind, Res\_usa\_ind, Res\_price\_Indian, Res\_design\_ind, res\_dura\_ind  
 b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction\_Ind

Table 6.7 shows the aggregate impact of the predetermined factors upon the consumers' satisfaction. The table shows that all the factors have a total impact 8.7% upon satisfaction of consumers using Indian products. The factor which has the greatest impact upon satisfaction is the trust that the Indian consumers have on the Indian products.

Table 6.7(b) Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.099	.150		20.606	.000
	Res_price_Indian	-.125	.196	-.065	-.639	.524
	res_dura_ind	-.060	.087	-.073	-.687	.494
	Res_usa_ind	.034	.068	.053	.498	.620
	Res)_trust_ind	.147	.041	.367	3.541	.001
	Res_design_ind	-.016	.061	-.028	-.261	.794
	Res_nationa_ind	.014	.026	.054	.547	.586

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction\_Ind

**Table 6.8 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.315 <sup>a</sup>	.099	.070	.777

a. Predictors: (Constant), Res\_design\_chi, Res\_usa\_chi, Res\_price\_chi

**Table 6.8(a) ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.128	3	2.043	3.379	.022 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	55.612	92	.604		
	Total	61.740	95			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Res\_design\_chi, Res\_usa\_chi, Res\_price\_chi

b. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction\_Chinese

Table 6.8 shows the impact of some of the pre determined factors on the level of satisfaction among consumers using Chinese products. The adjusted r square is 0.070 which shows that all the three identified factors have an impact of 7% on consumer satisfaction. Although from the ANOVA table we find a significant impact upon customer satisfaction ( $0.022 < 0.05$ ), but the three factors doesn't show any significant impact upon the dependant variable.

**Table 6.8 (b) Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.365	.084		28.324	.000
	Res_price_chi	.770	.451	.280	1.708	.091
	Res_usa_chi	.077	.145	.064	.527	.599
	Res_design_chi	-.005	.105	-.007	-.052	.959

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction\_Chinese

R.K. Srivastava (2014) found out in his study that the most important factor for purchase of Chinese products is price followed by functionality and then quality.

**Objective 3: To find out the level of competition between the Indian and Chinese products.**

Table 6.9 Preference in types of products purchased by the consumers

Sl. No.	Items	Indian	Total	Chinese	Total	Grand Total
1	Toys	40.63%	39	59.38%	57	96
2	Lights	56.25%	54	43.75%	42	96
3	Electronic Gadgets	61.46%	59	38.54%	37	96
4	Gift and stationery	56.99%	53	43.01%	40	93
5	Plastic items	49.46%	46	50.54%	47	93
6	Medical and Pharmaceuticals	95.79%	91	4.21%	4	95
7	Fabrics	89.25%	83	10.75%	10	93
8	Furniture	93.62%	88	6.38%	6	94
9	Building Materials	91.21%	83	8.79%	8	91

Table 6.9 shows the preference in types of products purchased by the consumers.

- In case of Toys it can be seen that 40.63% of the consumers prefer Indian toys and 59.38% prefer Chinese toys which clearly depicts that the competition here is quite tough for the Indian products.
- In case of Lights it can be seen that 56.25% of the consumers prefer Indian lights whereas 43.75% of the consumers prefer Chinese lights which highlights that Chinese lights are giving quite a competition to the Indian lights.
- In case of Electronic Gadgets it is observed that 61.46% of the respondents prefer Indian and 38.54% of the respondents prefer Chinese which clearly shows that competition is quite less in this area.
- In case of Gift and stationery it has been found that 56.99% of the consumers prefer Indian products whereas 43.01% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which depicts that competition is tough for the Chinese products.
- In case of Plastic items 49.46% of the consumers prefer Indian products and 50.54% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which clearly show that the Indian products are giving a stiff competition to the Chinese products.
- In case of Medical and Pharmaceuticals it can be seen that 95.79% of the consumers prefer Indian products whereas only 4.21% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which clearly that Indian markets are quite ahead of the Chinese in this regard and the competition is near to negligible for the Indian products from the Chinese.
- In case of Fabrics its is seen that 89.25% of the consumers prefer Indian products while only 10.75% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which shows that Chinese markets are very much behind the Indian markets in this regard and the competition is far too less for the Indian products against the Chinese.
- In case of Furniture it is seen that 93.62% of the consumers prefer Indian products while only 6.38% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which shows that there is very little to none competition of the Indian products against the Chinese.
- In case of Building Materials it is seen that 91.21% of the consumers prefer Indian products while only 8.79% of the consumers prefer Chinese products which shows that the competition is far too less for the Indian products against the Chinese.

Table 6.10: Competition (Indian Vs Chinese)

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Definitely Yes	56	58.3	58.3
Probably Yes	25	26.0	84.4
Might or Might Not	10	10.4	94.8
Probably Not	5	5.2	100.0
Total	96	100.0	

Source: Field Survey

The above table depicts the level of competition between the Indian and Chinese products which is the third objective of the research investigation. The table clearly shows that 58.3% of the respondents feel that there is definitely tough competition between Indian and Chinese products. Whereas 26% of the respondents feel that competition is there, but it is not so stiff. And 10.4% of the respondents have couldn't say anything about the level of competition and 5.2% of the respondents don't find any competition between the Indian and Chinese products.

## VII.CONCLUSION

Chinese products are giving a very tough competition to the Indian products. Chinese products have captured the Indian markets in a drastic manner. It is not possible for the Indian government to directly stop the flow of the Chinese products into the Indian markets because of the international relations and trade agreements. But the only step that the government can take is to aware the Indian consumers about the negative impact of the purchasing the Chinese products on our economy. Chinese products have been well accepted in our markets only because of it's dosing and affordable prices which the Indian products are lacking. Besides this Indian products are still there in our markets because of the feeling of patriotism and nationality among our citizens which has already been proven in the study. Thus it can be concluded that the manufacturers of the Indian products have to work a lot in the area of research and development and marketing to give a cut throat competition to the Chinese counterparts.

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