Boom in Brand Preference for Food and Marketing Avenues in Kerala

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Abstract

India is fast transforming itself from a quantity driven price sensitive economy to quality driven price insensitive economy. Decades back, quality and brand preference was specific to durable goods only. Food is a basic requirement and the first item of family budget allocation, irrespective of income strata to which it belongs and did not prima facie carry any brand preferences. However, there is clear evidence of brand preference in food items too. This study traced the extent and degree of brand preference among the different urban income strata of Kerala. A micro level study was conducted among 448 urban dwellers of Kerala, who exhibited that there is evidence of brand preference in food. Though the trend was comparatively weak among the lower-income strata, it was strong among the upper-income strata. One - way- analysis of variance test showed that there was significant variability in the expenditure on branded food among the rich and the poor classes compared to the rich and the middle classes. The trend and pattern in the expenditure on brands and non-brands showed that as income increased, expenditure on non-branded food products fell considerably, while that of branded food products increased significantly. Empirical evidence also exhibited a convergence in the attitude and preference of the urban rich and poor in branded food with an increase in their income. The statistical test results of multiple regression analysis showed that the variables, such as income, presence of children, employed women, and education had a significant positive influence on the purchase of branded foods.

Keywords: **brand preference in food, non brand, food choice, consumption inequality, Kerala, urban, convergence, income, economic growth**

JEL Classification : I3, M31 Q02

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Economic growth and urbanization are two but equally important factors contributing immensely towards quantitative and qualitative change in the food habits of the urban dwellers across the world (Kennedy, Guy, & Shetty, 2004). With changes in lifestyle, including the increased entry of women in workforce and long distance travel to urban workplaces, convenience has become a matter of concern for many (Bhagat & Ravi, 2018 ; Delisle, 1990). Paucity of time in the selection and preparation of food has forced many to prefer processed, convenient, and ready-to-eat food (Kamath, 2011). No doubt, choice of the poor and the rich would differ with respect to food. Most often, concern of the poor is quantity rather than quality, and for the rich, it is quality rather than quantity. The rich have enough money and insufficient time, while the poor have insufficient money and enough time for food making (Davis & You, 2011). A pursuit for convenience in food may tend to branded food products as they are often in packed and convenient form, which ensures a certain degree of quality and shelf life (Baskar, Kamaraj, & Runmozhi, 2013). Globalization has facilitated an inflow of a plethora of branded products and outlets into the Indian food market (Nandgopal & Chinnaiyan, 2003). Increased interest of local and national food producers has enriched the entire food market with new and variety of branded food

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products (Amarnath & Vijayudu, 2011). Urbanites have begun to attach their preference for quality, safety, convenience, and food variety with branded food products. Quality of the brand becomes a big concern for urban consumers, at least among the well-off sections, and they begin to strive for hygiene and convenience; accordingly, certain segments of consumers are not much interested in cheap variety and are willing to pay a premium if the product is branded (Kamath, 2011).

Context of the Study

India, one of the fastest-growing economies of the world, has registered a commendable growth in per capita income and other growth trajectories after the liberalization. A perusal of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data for consumption expenditure reveals that in the post liberalized regime, the monthly per - capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) on food and non - food items are increasing both in absolute and real terms across different income strata of both urban and rural India (Santhosh, Priyesh, & Shajahan, 2015). At par with that, it is worrisome that there exists a wide disparity in the MPCE on food among rural and urban dwellers of India (Subrahmanian & Prasad, 2008). It is also interesting to note that inequality in the expenditure on food is showing a divergence tendency than converging. Along with the growing inequality, a trend of preference for convenient, ready to eat, and value added food products is visible in India (Santhosh et al., 2015).

Since liberalization, there has been a dramatic transition - from being a supply-constrained and price sensitive economy to a quality conscious, value specific, and demand driven economy. Quality and convenience have become a decisive factor for Indian consumers, especially for the urban elites. Along with a substantial diversification that has taken place in the Indian food basket in favour of non-cereal food items as well as to value added food products, a significant change in the quality perception among the urban people has also been noticed (Minten, Reardon, & Vandeplas, 2009). In the present day context, brand preference is not unique to durable goods ; in the post liberalized regime, there are cues of brand preference in food too. In this context, the study examines the level, pattern, and brand preference in food among the urban dwellers of Kerala. Kerala is being selected for the study since it is the largest rural - urban continuum in the country, and the study is delimited to urban Kerala only.

Data Sources

The study is based on primary data only. Since the data on brand preference on food among Kerala urban dwellers are not available with any of the secondary sources, a micro level study was conducted among 448 urban dwellers of Kerala during the period from 2015 - 16. A total of 28 NSS Urban Frame Survey (UFS)[1] blocks were selected at random for the study, of which 12 blocks were from Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation and 8 each from Kochi and Kozhikode municipal corporations. From the 28 blocks, a total 192 households from Thiruvananthapuram city were selected for detail enquiry. Likewise, in Kochi and Kozhikode, it amounted to 128 households each. A total of 448 households were selected for detailed enquiry from the 28 selected blocks of the three municipal corporations, that is, Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, and Kochi during the period from 2015-16.

Methodology

To portray the contrasts and similarities in the level and pattern of food consumption of branded food products,

[1] Urban Frame Survey (UFS) is an urban geographical map prepared by NSSO for conducting socio-economic survey. Each unit is an Investigator Unit (IV), an IV unit consists of 20 to 30 blocks and each block consists of 80 to 100 households.

the technique of fractile analysis was used. A total of 448 households were arranged in ascending order of their expenditure and placed in 10 groups, and each group consisted of 10% (decile) of the population. Therefore, there are 10 deciles denoted by D1, D2, …., D10. D1 is called as bottom decile and D10 is termed as top decile. The bottom three deciles are collectively termed as bottom groups or the lowest 30% of the population ; the next four deciles are termed as middle group or the middle 40% of the population. The top three deciles are termed as top group or the top 30% of the population. For the sake of simplicity, these groups are loosely called as the poor, middle, and the rich, respectively. Deciles also denote different MPCE classes from 1 to 10.

In order to embark upon a discussion on brand preference, it is necessary to define what brand preference is in the present context. In the study, a product is labeled as branded if it is processed (at any degree), packed, and marketed with a particular brand name and demanded by the consumer in question by its name, irrespective of the fact whether it is produced by local, national, or international manufacturers. The study also ignores the fact that whether it is advertised or not. On the other hand, if the product is primary (without any processing), not packed, and not advertised but demanded by the consumer in loose without asking for a brand name, it is defined as non-branded/generic. There are, therefore, branded and non-branded products available simultaneously in the same product category. Though there are ordinary, premium, and super premium brands available in the market in the same product category, in the study, only two-fold classification is made, whether it is branded or not. Expenditure elasticity is estimated by double log: $Y = \alpha + \beta \log E$, where *'Y'* is the item of expenditure, *'E'* is the total expenditure, and 'β' is the expenditure elasticity. From the functional form, the parametric values and the *'ee'* are estimated.

Analysis and Results

In the study, brand preference is analyzed in two facets. In the first part, distribution of expenditure to branded and non - branded foods among different deciles is examined. In the prevailing market situation of Kerala, some products have both brand and non-brand options in the same product category (for e.g. rice, *atta, maida*, milk, dates, cashew nuts, edible oil, etc.). In some products, brands alone are available (for e.g. salt, curry powder, biscuits, oats, cornflakes, milk powder, etc.). On the contrary, in some products, though some brands are available, non-brand alone is preferred more (e.g. fish, vegetables, wheat, coconut, dry chilies, fruits, etc.). However, the present study considers all as a single unit and only two-fold classifications are made, whether it is branded or non-branded. It is quite natural to expect that the expenditure on branded food would be less as people of Kerala spend a substantial part of their expenditure on eggs, fish, meat, vegetables, and coconut, where brand preference is insignificant.

For the entire class as a whole, it appears that roughly 30% of the total expenditure on food is on branded food products (Table 1). A decomposition analysis shows that even among the bottom deciles, brand preference is significant. If the poor spent roughly 20% of their expenditure on branded food, the middle group expended 26%, and the rich spent 35% on branded foods. Though the variability among a group is less in percentage terms, it is drastic in absolute terms. If the bottom group spent ₹ 133 on branded food, the middle group spent ₹ 364, and among the rich, it amounted to ₹ 910 per capita per month. Alternatively, if the poor spent ₹ 1, the middle group spent ₹ 2.73, while the rich spent ₹ 6.84 on branded foods. It showcases the extent of brand preference among the upper - income strata. This brings to light the fact that non-brand products in food outweigh the branded products in the expenditure pattern across classes and as a whole.

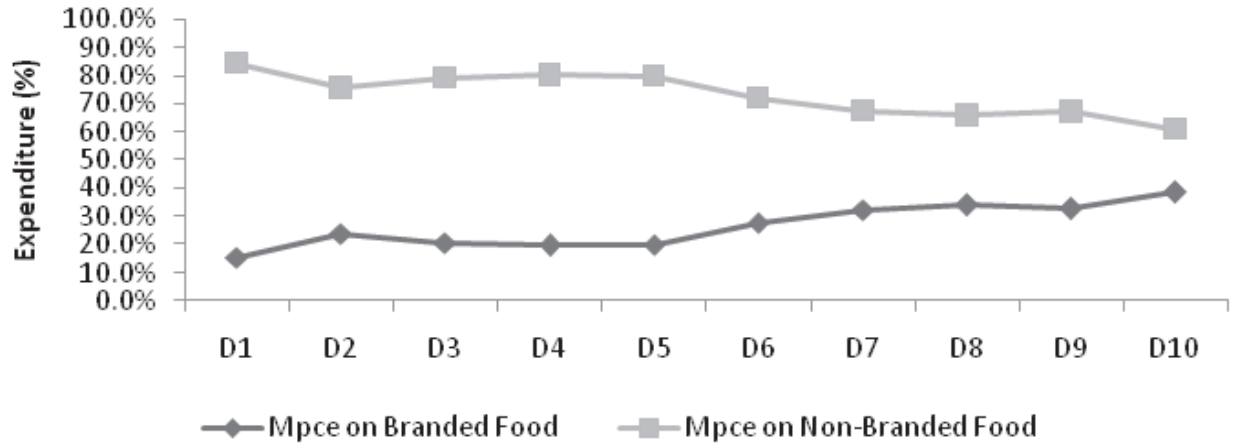
Trends and patterns in the expenditure on branded foods show that it increases appreciably with an increase in income, while non - brands decline with an increase in income. When income increases, consumption of both branded and non-branded food products increases, but the propensity to consume branded food is more than the propensity to consume non-branded food items (Figure 1).

Table 1. AMPCE on Branded and Non - Branded Foods (in ₹) and Their Percentage (0.0%) Break-up by MPCE Classes

MPCE Class as Deciles	AMPCE on Food (₹)	AMPCE on Food			
		Branded		Non - Branded	
		(In ₹)	(In %)	(In ₹)	(In %)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
D1	544	84	15.5	460	84.5
D2	602	145	24.0	457	76.0
D3	791	164	20.7	627	79.3
Bottom 30%	662	133	20.1	529	79.9
D4	1017	200	19.7	817	80.3
D5	1203	241	20.0	962	80.0
D6	1604	448	27.9	1156	72.1
D7	1672	541	32.4	1131	67.6
Middle 40%	1395	364	26.1	1031	73.9
D8	1821	621	34.1	1200	65.9
D9	2714	884	32.6	1830	67.4
D10	3184	1235	38.8	1949	61.2
Top 30%	2585	910	35.2	1675	64.8
All	1561	470	30.1	1091	69.9

Note. AMPCE = Average monthly per capita consumption expenditure

Figure 1. Distribution of MPCE on Branded/Non - Branded Foods by Deciles



After a stage is reached, there is a convergence in the expenditure on brand and non-branded food items, especially from D5 onwards. It means, among the upper income strata, there is a convergence in the expenditure on branded and non - branded foods. However, there exists a wide disparity among different income strata with respect to the expenditure on branded foods, both in absolute and percentage terms.

Expenditure elasticity *(ee)* is estimated on micro level data by regressing the variables after log transformation. Estimated expenditure elasticity on branded food shows that branded food products are found to be a luxury item

Table 2. Expenditure Elasticity and Inequality for Branded Food Products

Expenditure Group	Gini - Coefficient	Expenditure Elasticity	*t*- ratio	*p*-value
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Bottom Group	0.3544	1.8223	4.681	0.0000
Middle Group	0.3161	1.1530	6.108	0.0000
Top Group	0.2814	0.4321	4.109	0.0000
All	0.4704	0.9176	19.770	0.0000

Table 3. ANOVA and Post-Hoc Test Results for Expenditure on Branded Foods Among Classes

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	*df*	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.
Between Groups	29169906.244	2	14584953.122	14.932	0.000
Within Groups	434662791.470	445	976770.318		
Total	463832697.714	447			

Table 4. Post-Hoc Test Results

(I)	Status *(J)* Status	Mean Difference *(I - J)*	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Poor	Middle	-572.307*	121.835	0	-859.79	-284.82
	Rich	-1793.312*	123.001	0	-2088.55	-1508.08
Middle	Poor	572.307*	121.835	0	284.82	859.79
	Rich	-1226.005*	109.514	0	-1484.41	-967.59
Rich	Poor	1798.312*	123.001	0	1508.08	2088.55
	Middle	1226.005*	109.514	0	967.59	1484.41

Note. Tukey HSD * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Dependent variable : branded food (BF).

for the poor and middle income group (*ee* >1) ; whereas, it is not for the top group (Table 2). As income increases, expenditure elasticity for brands declines and luxury turns into a necessary item. It is contrary to the findings of Limbagoud (2012) that the elasticity of demand for food products in India is less than one.

The estimated Gini coefficient reveals that intra inequality is much higher among the bottom and middle income groups ; whereas, it is very low among the top group. It means that it is the rich who used brands evenly. However, overall, the Gini - coefficient value of 0.4704 shows that there exists wide inequality in the expenditure on branded food among different expenditure groups. One-way ANOVA and post - hoc test examines the variability of means among the three groups, such as poor, middle, and rich on the consumption of branded food (Table 3).

Post-hoc test results also show the significance of variation in the consumption of branded food among each of the three groups (Table 4). The variation in expenditure is high between the poor and the rich (-1798.3) as compared to the difference with the middle group (-572.3) (Table 4). It is evident that brand preference is increasingly visible across all income groups. However, there is a significant variation in the expenditure on branded foods among classes, and it is the upper income strata that spent heavily on brands.

The allocation of MPCE on branded food among different expenditure groups exhibits that brand preference varies across product and expenditure groups. If the bottom group expends an MPCE of 8.1% of total cereals on branded cereals, it accounts for 75% for the top group (Table 5). It throws light on the extent of brand preference among the upper income group on a basic food, cereals. Likewise, in all other food products, there is a preference for brands among different expenditure groups at different magnitudes. In the case of milk, the poor preferred branded milk over non-branded. An important reason that can be attributed to this is that branded milk is packed and convenient to buy as and when required since the poor have no refrigeration facility. The rich preferred raw milk sometimes since it is fresh, and they have a refrigeration facility of their own. Overall, brand preference in milk is governed by availability rather than intention.

It is worth mentioning here that there are some products, like cereal substitutes (tapioca, raw - jackfruit, etc.), vegetables, fish, meat, and fresh fruits in which brand preference is hardly found across classes, since it is preferred in the primary form. On the other hand, it has been noticed that there are products, such as cereals, edible oil, processed food, and non-alcoholic beverages (including tea, coffee powder) where brand preference is stark compared to other products. It is obvious that the poor spent only a negligible amount on branded items when compared to the middle and the rich (Table 5). Considering the extreme inequality in the expenditure on food among different income groups, there exist significant differences among different expenditure groups in the expenditure on branded and non-branded foods also. However, as a whole, it appears that MPCE on branded food increases with income. This analysis here underlines the findings of Prais and Houthakker (1955) that as income increases, consumers go for quality products or costly substitutes.

Table 5. Break-up of MPCE (in ₹) on Branded and Non - Branded Foods for Broad Group of Foods by Expenditure Classes and Their Percentage to the Total (in Brackets)

Product Group	Poor		Middle		Rich	
	Branded	Non-Branded	Branded	Non-Branded	Branded	Non-Branded
	(₹) (%)	(₹) (%)	(₹) (%)	(₹) (%)	(₹) (%)	(₹) (%)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Cereals	7(8.1)	79(91.9)	56(30.8)	125(69.2)	233(75.0)	77(25.0)
Cereal Substitutes	-	4(100)	-	10(100)	-	7(100.0)
Pulses	-	20(100)	13(19.7)	53(80.3)	41(36.0)	73(64.0)
Milk and Pdts	74(100)	-	134(97.8)	3(2.2)	227(87.3)	33(12.7)
Edible Oil	10(33.3)	20(66.7)	33(58.9)	23(41.1)	69(86.3)	10(12.6)
Dry Fruits	-	-	5(33.3)	10(66.7)	34(62.9)	20(37.1)
Sugar and Pdts	-	13(100.0)	1(3.7)	26(96.3)	10(25.6)	29(74.4)
Coconut, Salt, and Spices	12(15.0)	68(85.0)	18(15.6)	97(84.4)	37(25.0)	111(75.0)
Beverages	3(23.0)	10(77.0)	16(72.7)	6(26.1)	36(97.3)	1(2.7)
Egg, Fish, and Meat	-	124(100)	-	226(100)	-	383(100)
Vegetables	-	42(100)	-	96(100)	-	196(100)
Fruits (Fresh)	-	8(100)	-	59(100)	-	196(100.0)
Processed Food	21(70.0)	9(30.0)	73(77.7)	21(22.3)	198(92.1)	17(7.9)
Eating Out	6(4.3)	132(95.7)	15(5.2)	277(94.8)	25(4.4)	523(95.6)
Food Total						
@	133(20.0)	529(80.0)	364(26.1)	1031(73.9)	910(35.0)	1675(65.0)

Note. (-) = item not reported for consumption ; @ Approximately equal to. Values in parentheses are percentages.

To get into a close picture, brand preference can also be analyzed by excluding items, which do not have any brand or brand preference is less intense in the existing market in Kerala (e.g. egg, fish, vegetables, coconut, fruits, etc.). In this case, the incidence of brand preference is more pronounced than the former. In contrast to what has been observed in the former case, the share of expenditure on branded food goes on increasing with income and surpasses the expenditure on non-branded even among the middle class, both in absolute and percentage terms (Table 6). It is fascinating to note that from the 6th decile onwards, MPCE on branded food has surpassed non-branded foods. Even among the poor, 37.5% of their expenditure was on branded foods. However, there exists wide disparity as the middle income group spent 50.5% and the rich spent 72.2% of their expenditure on branded food products.

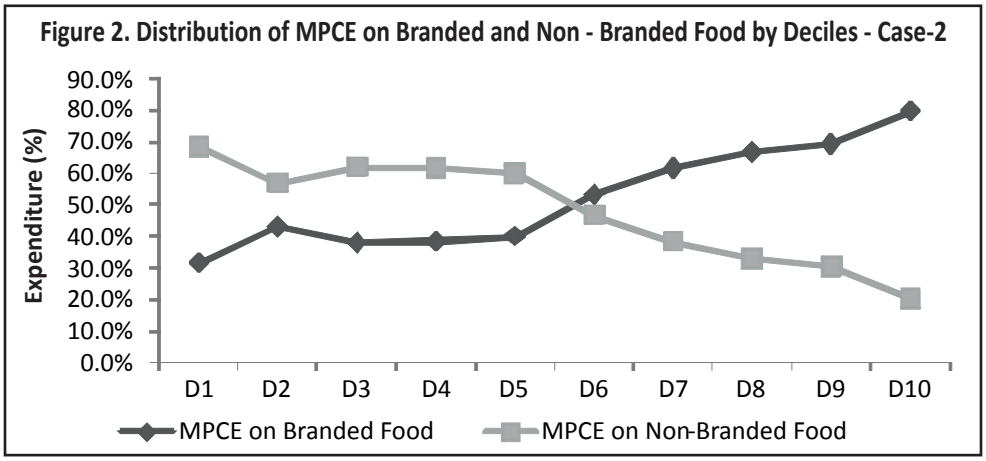
Table 6. Break-up of MPCEF on Branded/Non - Branded Food Items (in ₹) and Their Percentage Share (0.0%) to the Total among MPCE Classes - Case-2

MPCE Class as Deciles	AMPCE on Food (₹)	AMPCE on Food			
		Branded		Non-Branded	
		(In ₹)	(In %)	(In ₹)	(In %)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
D1	265	84	31.7	181	68.3
D2	337	145	43.0	192	57.0
D3	431	164	38.0	267	62.0
Bottom 30%	354	133	37.5	221	62.5
D4	519	200	38.5	319	61.5
D5	602	241	40.0	361	60.0
D6	844	448	53.1	396	46.9
D7	878	541	61.6	337	38.4
Middle 40%	720	364	50.5	356	49.5
D8	929	621	66.8	308	33.2
D9	1274	884	69.4	390	30.6
D10	1546	1235	79.8	311	20.2
Top 30%	1260	910	72.2	350	27.8
All	774	470	60.7	304	39.3

Note. MPCEF= Monthly per capita consumption expenditure on food

Alternatively, if the poor spent ₹ 1 on branded food, it accounted for ₹ 2.73 and ₹ 6.84 among the middle group and the rich, respectively. In percentage terms, the rich spent more than double of the poor on branded foods ; whereas, in absolute terms, it comes to seven times. Expenditure on food traces a change in pattern that as and when both brands and non - brands are available in the same product category, and as income increases, expenditure on branded food increases and that of non-brand declines. It may be a signal of next generation consumption trend of urban Kerala.

The trend and pattern in the expenditure on brands and non - brands show that as income increases, expenditure on non-brand declines considerably while that of brands increases significantly (Figure 2). It is interesting to note that at first, expenditure on brands starts from a slump point, then it increases, while that of non-brands begins from a point of zenith and then declines. Later, it runs parallel to each other and after a certain stage, expenditure on brands surpasses the non-brands and goes on increasing. The trend curve finally assumes the shape of a pair of



'scissors'. Thus, the expenditure pattern shows that after a stage, there is a divergence in the expenditure on brands and non-brands and the expenditure on brands increases and that of non-brands declines as income increases.

Available empirics show that there are certain socioeconomic factors, such as income, education, presence of children, and women employment having a profound influence on the selection of branded foods (Liana, Radam, & Yacob, 2010 ; Ong, Kitcehn, & Jama , 2008 ; Radam, Yacob , Siew, & Selamat, 2010). It has also been observed that these factors have some influential role in the selection of branded food products in the context of Kerala also. A statistical test is done to examine the influence of these variables on the choice of branded food products. However, focus is on testing the influence of income on the consumption of branded foods. For this purpose, the technique of multiple regression model is used. The response is assumed to be numerical, in the sense that changes in the level of the response are equivalent throughout the range of the response. The hypothesis of this model tests for a change in the expenditure on branded food *(BF)* is influenced by a set of other variables.

In the model, *BF* is taken as the dependent (response) variable and income (income), presence of children (*Child*), education (*Edu*), and women employment (*WE*) are taken as predictor variables. In the model, *BF* denotes per capita per month expenditure on branded food in rupees. The variable *"child"* denotes the household having or not at least one child below the age 15 years, expressed in binary. Education (*edu*) is the education level attained by the principal wage earner of the household that varies from below primary level to graduation and above expressed in cardinal numbers from 1 to 8. Higher the value, higher will be the level of education and vice versa. *'WE'* denotes a household with at least one employed woman employed outside home during the reference period. Required data is extracted from the primary survey. All expenditure and income variables in the model are log transformed. The equation of the model is given as :

$$BF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * Income + \beta_2 * Child + \beta_3 * WE + \beta_4 * Edu + \mu_1 \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (1)$$

The fitted model according to the output is given by :

$$BF = 0.340 + 0.932 * Income + 0.031 * Child + 0.051 * WE + 0.077 * Educ + u_i \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (2)$$

Results from the analysis show that the variables - income, children, *WE*, and education are statistically significant. The parameter estimates (Table 7 & Table 8) show that all significant variables have a positive influence on the dependent variable (*BF*). This means that when income increases by 1%, the expenditure on *BF* increases by 0.93%, and households with children tend to have increased expenditure on Branded Food of 0.031 units more as compared to the households without children. Women employment also has a positive influence on

Table 7. Results and Summary of Regression for the Determinants of Branded Foods

Model Summary				
Model	***R***	***R* square**	**Adjusted *R* square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.890	0.792	0.790	0.33619

Table 8. Coefficient [a]

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	***t***	**Sig.**
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1 (Constant)	0.340	0.240		1.418	0.157
Income	0.831	0.025	0.932	33.261	0.000
Children	0.041	0.050	0.031	2.567	0.011
WE	0.085	0.037	0.051	2.324	0.021
Education	0.028	0.010	0.077	2.763	0.006

Note. [a.] Dependant variable : BF.

branded food, which shows that households with employed women have an increased consumption of *BF* (0.051) compared to the rest. Education also has a positive influence on the consumption of branded food. As the level of education increases, the consumption of branded food also increases.

Discussion and Conclusion

The study attempts to examine the extent of brand preference in food items among different expenditure and income strata in urban Kerala. It reveals that brand preference in food is not an odd concept as far as urban consumers of Kerala are concerned. There exists preference for branded food in different magnitudes among different expenditure groups. One-way ANOVA test shows that there is significant variability in the expenditure on branded food among rich and poor classes compared to rich and the middle classes. Moreover, brand preference varies among expenditure classes, and it increases with an increase in income. The trend and pattern in the expenditure on brands and non-brands show that as income increases, expenditure on non-brand food products falls considerably, while that of brands increases significantly. However, empirical evidence exhibits a convergence in the attitude and preference of the urban rich and poor in food consumption with an increase in their income. The test results of multiple regression analysis show that the variables, such as income, presence of children, employed women, and education have a significant positive influence in the purchase of branded foods. It can be inferred that growing brand preference in food is at par with the growth trends of the country in the post liberalized regime. An increase in the preference for branded food products with an increase in income is indeed a golden avenue and opportunity to seize the marketers and managers in manufacturing and marketing domain of food products.

Research and Policy Implications

The findings of the study have many useful research and policy implications. The study gives valuable insights into the brand preference of the people in one of the most basic requirements of human beings, food. Brand preference in food is found even among the poor. Among the middle and upper income strata, expenditure on branded foods outweighs the expenditure on non-branded foods. Estimated expenditure elasticity shows that

branded food products are not all luxury for the rich income group. It opens up an avenue for the marketers engaged in food production and processing industries into the food market of Kerala, which stands top among the States of the Indian union in the urban MPCE on food. On the other hand, brand preference in food escalates the expenditure on food, and it may affect the intake of calories of all, especially of the poor. Expenditure elasticity of demand for branded food products enables the government in raising its revenue by taxation.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Though this research expands our knowledge about the brand preference in food, ample prospects for further research remain. This study is only a bird's eye view of the brand preference in food. Further research can be extended to each and every food product instead of a broad category of products. There are enough of signals of brand preference visible even in the products of vegetables, meat, and fish in the present day scenario of Kerala. Another important limitation of this study is that it delimits its scope in urban Kerala only ; whereas, rural Kerala is the largest urban - rural continuum in the country. There are clear cues of brand preference in rural Kerala, and future studies should investigate the trend and extent of brand preference among the rural people of Kerala. Finally, our knowledge about the brand preference in other states of the Indian union is unknown.

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