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A study on the shift in the spending patterns of the Indian common man

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***Abstract*—Based on the data, consumer spending has risen considerably over the past five years, with a sharp increase in the last three. This growth is not uniform; it's most dramatic for high-value, non-essential goods like vehicles and transport services, as well as beverages such as alcoholic and mineral water drinks. In contrast, spending on necessities like oil has grown at a much slower rate. This suggests a general increase in consumer capacity for large and discretionary purchases, with spending on mobility items seeing a particularly rapid rise in recent years. The data reveals that consumer spending is on a clear upward trend, as shown by significant increases over both the last three and five years. The biggest drivers of this growth are big-ticket items and luxury goods, such as vehicle purchases, which consistently rank at the top. Spending on beverages, including alcoholic drinks and mineral water, also shows a strong increase. While investment in health and education is on the rise, spending on essentials like oil has grown the least. A key takeaway from the recent 3-year data is the surge in spending on personal mobility (vehicles and transport), which has overtaken other categories in terms of growth speed. Basically, people are spending more money, and they've been doing so for the last five years. But they're not spending it evenly across all products. The biggest spending jumps are on pricier, non-essential items like cars, transportation services, and drinks. Things like oil are seeing the smallest increases, which might mean people are buying less or prices are stable. The data also shows that in the last three years, spending on getting around has skyrocketed more than anything else, making it the most dominant trend.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer habits in average Indian households are changing significantly, impacting India's economy and society. With consumer spending accounting for about 60% of the GDP, these shifts are a major economic driver. The study, using data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy over the last five years, highlights key trends. A primary cause of this change is rising per capita income and rapid urbanization, which allows households to spend beyond basic necessities. This is evident in a notable decrease in the percentage of income spent on food, particularly in cities, and a corresponding increase in spending on non-food items. The widespread availability of affordable smartphones and internet access has created a "digital consumer," making a wider range of goods and services, including premium and branded products for travel, entertainment, and dining out, accessible to more people in smaller towns and rural areas.

Interestingly, the spending gap between urban and rural areas is shrinking, largely due to rising rural incomes and welfare programs. The declining share of food in household budgets, a classic sign of rising income, is a major trend in both rural and urban India. The average Indian consumer's spending is moving away from a focus on basic needs towards a more modern, convenient, and aspirational lifestyle. This is marked by a growing emphasis on non-food items, discretionary spending, and digital consumption. Over the past five years, a significant and sustained trend in Indian household spending has been the declining proportion of income allocated to food and a corresponding increase in spending on non-food items.

This shift is a key indicator of economic progress and a rising standard of living. Urban households, in particular, spend a notable portion of their budgets on food, which reflects the higher cost of living in cities. However, consumer spending is also expanding into other areas. Spending on durable goods, such as furniture and appliances, has more than doubled. Additionally, expenses for essential services like healthcare, education, and communication have become important across all socioeconomic classes. Overall, nominal household spending has been on the rise. With per capita income growing faster than inflation, households have been able to increase their real spending power and improve their quality of life. The study analysed spending on 23 items, categorizing them as follows:

1. Food Items: Grains and pulses, meat, milk and eggs, cheese, oil, fruits, vegetables, sugar, jam, and chocolate.
2. Drinks: Coffee, tea, mineral water, cold drinks, and alcoholic beverages.
3. Household and Utilities: House rent, water, electricity, and gas.
4. Apparel: Clothes, shoes, and slippers.
5. Transport: Vehicle purchases and transport services.
6. Essential Services: Health, insurance, and internet/communication.
7. Personal Activities: Entertainment and education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Essentials, especially food, accounted for a sizable amount of the average Indian household's expenses. This tendency has been reversed, though. Food spending as a percentage of total consumer expenditure for both rural and urban families has been steadily declining, according to a few studies, including those conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Statistical Office (NSO) (Dholakia, 2017).

2. Urbanisation is another important issue. More people are exposed to diverse purchasing habits and have more access to contemporary marketplaces because of the movement from rural to urban regions. Spending has shifted since urban lifestyles are often more demanding in terms of housing, transportation, and service costs (D'Souza & Mathew, 2019).

3. Economic shocks, like the financial crisis of 2008, can cause a large drop in discretionary expenditure, with durable goods being the category most impacted (McCarthy & McQuinn, 2017).

4. It has been demonstrated that spending patterns are influenced by financial knowledge and education. Instead of focussing just on current consumption, consumers with greater knowledge likely to make better decisions and allocate funds to long-term expenditures like healthcare and education (Rao & Singh, 2021).

5. There has been a notable rise in the cost of financial services, healthcare, education, and entertainment. According to Eurostat (2023), they are frequently seen as investments in human capital and quality of life.

6.Rising food and fuel costs put low-income households at greater risk of having to make reductions in other necessities. However, other research indicates that wealthy families could spend more on durable items in anticipation of future price hikes (D'Acunto et al., 2015).

7. Total expenditure during the first lockdowns, an increase in internet purchasing, and a shift in the importance of cleanliness and health items. This also demonstrated a trend towards "conscious consumption," where buyers are paying more attention to sustainable and local products (Dasgupta, 2023).

8.A number of socioeconomic variables have been shown to be important forces behind this shift. One of the main drivers has been rising disposable incomes, which enable people to spend money on a greater variety of products and services rather than just necessities. In this sense, India's middle-class expansion has been very significant (Sharma & Gupta, 2020).

9. The emergence of the digital age has completely changed how the average person spends his money. For millions of Indians, e-commerce and digital payments are already commonplace due to the extensive use of cell phones and the internet. Online purchasing for both products and services has

significantly increased, according to studies conducted by research organisations like as Nielsen and Forrester (Goyal, 2021).

10. New business models, such as online entertainment and food delivery services, have grown thanks to the digital payment ecosystem and are now a new source of income for the average person (Purohit & Jain, 2022).

11. For example, the availability of commercial healthcare services and growing health consciousness are directly responsible for the rise in healthcare spending (Mishra, 2022).

12. Consumer durables, lifestyle goods, and convenience services account for the majority of the growth in non-food expenditure. This illustrates a shift in perspective from one that is motivated by scarcity to one that places more emphasis on comfort and aspirational living (Srinivasan, 2019).

13. This shift is not uniform across all demographics. Research by Kumar and Sridharan (2018) indicates that while urban households were the first to demonstrate this pattern, the change is now increasingly evident in rural areas as well, albeit at a slower pace.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- TOOLS & TECHNIQUE

1. Time duration for the study: 2020-21 to 2024-2025 – 5 years
2. Data collection: based on secondary method - news articles and CMIE report
3. Hypothesis will be tested at 5% level of significance by time series analysis
4. Objective: to find the shift in the spending patterns of the Indian common man
5. Variable: Food Items, Drinks, Household and Utilities, Apparel, Transport, Essential Services &Personal activities
6. Sample: Grains and pulses, Meat, Milk-Eggs, Cheese, Oil, Fruits, Vegetables, sugar, jam, chocolate, Coffee tea, Mineral water & cold drink, Alcoholic Drinks, Cloths, Shoes and slippers, House Rent, Water connection & drinking water, Electricity, Gas, Vehicle Purchase, Transport Services, Entertainment, Health, Internet and Communication, Education, Insurance.
7. Population of the study: those expenses are included in routine life of common man
8. Data Analysis: Time series analysis as statistical tool and interpretation

IV. OBJECTIVE

1. To determine the change in the household expenditure
2. To identify which categories, have the most significant growth.
3. To analyse and quantify the shift in Indian household spending from essential goods to discretionary and lifestyle-oriented goods and services.
4. To identify key factors of this shift

V. HYPOTHESIS

1. Null ($H0_1$): There is no significant change in spent on Food Items over the recent years.
2. Null ($H0_2$): There is no significant change in spent on Drinks Items over the recent years.
3. Null ($H0_3$): There is no significant change in spent on Household and Utilities over the recent years.
4. Null ($H0_4$): There is no significant change in spent on Apparel over the recent years.
5. Null ($H0_5$): There is no significant change in spent on Transport over the recent years.
6. Null ($H0_6$): There is no significant change in spent on Essential Services over the recent years.
7. Null ($H0_7$): There is no significant change in spent on Personal activities over the recent years.

VI. ANALYSIS WITH HYPOTHESIS&TABLE

Hypothesis 1, Analysis&Table 1

Null ($H0_1$): There is no significant change in spent on Food Items over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_1$): There is significant change in spent on Food Items over the recent years.

Food Items	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Grains and pulses	11.2	10.27	9.77	8.14	7.48	149.73	114.64
Meat	2.44	2.24	2.06	1.86	1.64	148.78	118.45
Milk-Eggs, Cheese	12.77	11.67	10	9.1	8.38	152.39	127.70
Oil	2.6	2.45	3.05	2.76	2.01	129.35	85.25
Fruits	7.14	6.63	6.15	5.73	5.11	139.73	116.10
Vegetables	6.34	5.95	5.28	5.06	4.79	132.36	120.08
sugar, jam, chocolate	7.31	6.6	5.51	4.71	4.46	163.90	132.67

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	.988**	.987**	.992**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	.989**	.989**	.995**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
22-23	Pearson Correlation	.988**	.989**	1	.994**	.990**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
21-22	Pearson Correlation	.987**	.989**	.994**	1	.997**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
20-21	Pearson Correlation	.992**	.995**	.990**	.997**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=7

P=0.001<0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_1$): There is significant change in spent on Food Items over the recent years. null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 2, Analysis&Table 2

Null ($H0_2$): There is no significant change in spent on Drinks Items over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_2$): There is significant change in spent on Drinks Items over the recent years.

Drinks	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Coffee tea	3	2.81	2.69	2.51	2.24	133.93	111.52
Mineral water & cold drink	6.27	5.48	4.35	3.57	3.1	202.26	144.14
Alcoholic Drinks	1.37	1.2	0.95	0.78	0.68	201.47	144.21

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	.999*	.979	.946	.937
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.031	.130	.209	.227
23-24	Pearson Correlation	.999*	1	.988	.961	.953
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031		.099	.178	.196
22-23	Pearson Correlation	.979	.988	1	.992	.988
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.130	.099		.079	.097
21-22	Pearson Correlation	.946	.961	.992	1	1.000*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.209	.178	.079		.018
20-21	Pearson Correlation	.937	.953	.988	1.000*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.227	.196	.097	.018	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=3

P=0.031 & 0.018 <0.05, other p value is higher than 0.05,then accept Null Hypothesis($H0_2$): There is no significant change in spent on Drinks Items over the recent years, alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3, Analysis&Table 3

Null ($H0_3$): There is no significant change in spent on Household and Utilities over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_3$): There is significant change in spent on Household and Utilities over the recent years.

Household and Utilities	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
House Rent	17.31	16	15	13.64	12.06	143.53	115.40
Water connection & drinking water	1.77	1.59	1.46	1.32	1.06	166.98	121.23
Electricity	3.04	2.75	2.54	2.12	1.89	160.85	119.69
Gas	1.73	1.59	1.44	1.31	1.16	149.14	120.14

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
22-23	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
21-22	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
20-21	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=4

P=0.001 < 0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_3$): There is significant change in spent on Household and Utilities over the recent years, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4, Analysis&Table 4

Null ($H0_4$): There is no significant change in spent on Apparel over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_4$): There is significant change in spent on Apparel over the recent years.

Apparel	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Cloths	8.03	7.29	7.6	7.12	5.08	158.07	105.66
Shoes and slippers	2.18	1.97	1.92	1.69	1.33	163.91	113.54

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.	.	.
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.		.	.	.
22-23	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.		.	.
21-22	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.		.
20-21	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=2

P=0.00<0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_4$): There is significant change in spent on Apparel over the recent years, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 5, Analysis&Table 5

Null ($H0_5$): There is no significant change in spent on Transport over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_5$): There is significant change in spent on Transport over the recent years.

Transport	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Vehicle Purchase	3.8	3.26	2.64	2.12	1.65	230.30	143.94
Transport Services	17.92	15.5	14.32	12.55	8.23	217.74	125.14

P=0.00<0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_5$): There is significant change in spent on Transport over the recent years, null hypothesis is rejected.

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.	.	.
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.		.	.	.
22-23	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.		.	.
21-22	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.		.
20-21	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=2

Hypothesis 6, Analysis&Table 6

Null ($H0_6$): There is no significant change in spent on Essential Services over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_6$): There is significant change in spent on Essential Services over the recent years.

Essential Services	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Health	11.37	10.07	8.48	7.36	6.16	184.58	134.08
Internet and Communication	5.3	4.71	4.36	3.55	2.95	179.66	121.56
Insurance	1.9	1.71	1.77	1.14	1.13	168.14	107.34

Correlations[c]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	1.000*	.999*	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.019	.020	.002
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	1.000*	.999*	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.020	.021	.002
22-23	Pearson Correlation	1.000*	1.000*	1	1.000**	1.000*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.020		.001	.017
21-22	Pearson Correlation	.999*	.999*	1.000**	1	1.000*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.021	.001		.018
20-21	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000*	1.000*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.002	.017	.018	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

c. Listwise N=3

P=0.020<0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_6$): There is significant change in spent on Essential Services over the recent years, null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 7, Analysis&Table 7

Null ($H0_7$): There is no significant change in spent on Personal activities over the recent years.

Alternative ($H1_7$): There is significant change in spent on Personal activities over the recent years.

Personal activities	24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS
Entertainment	1.61	1.43	1.45	1.11	0.9	178.89	111.03
Education	9.44	8.43	7.26	6.21	5.4	174.81	130.03

Correlations[b]

		24-25	23-24	22-23	21-22	20-21
24-25	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.	.	.
23-24	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.		.	.	.
22-23	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.		.	.
21-22	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.		.
20-21	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

b. Listwise N=2

P=0.00<0.05 then accept Alternative ($H1_7$): There is significant change in spent on Personal activities over the recent years, null hypothesis is rejected.

VII. FINDING & CONCLUSION

Table 8: results of various hypothesis

Sr.no.	Based on	Null hypothesis	Results / Remarks
1	Food Items	Rejected	There is significant change
2	Drinks	Accepted	There is no significantchange
3	Household and Utilities	Rejected	There is significant change
4	Apparel	Rejected	There is significant change
5	Transport	Rejected	There is significant change
6	Essential Services	Rejected	There is significant change
7	Personal Activities	Rejected	There is significant change

Table 9: Ranking of spending pattern of selected products:

Food Items	CHANGE IN LAST 5 YEARS	Rank of spending pattern	Food Items	CHANGE IN LAST 3 YEARS	Rank of spending pattern

Vehicle Purchase	230.3	1	Alcoholic Drinks	144.21	1
Transport Services	217.74	2	Mineral water & cold drink	144.14	2
Mineral water & cold drink	202.26	3	Vehicle Purchase	143.94	3
Alcoholic Drinks	201.47	4	Health	134.08	4
Health	184.58	5	sugar, jam, chocolate	132.67	5
Internet and Communication	179.66	6	Education	130.03	6
Entertainment	178.89	7	Milk-Eggs, Cheese	127.7	7
Education	174.81	8	Transport Services	125.14	8
Insurance	168.14	9	Internet and Communication	121.56	9
Water connection & drinking water	166.98	10	Water connection & drinking water	121.23	10
Shoes and slippers	163.91	11	Gas	120.14	11
sugar, jam, chocolate	163.9	12	Vegetables	120.08	12
Electricity	160.85	13	Electricity	119.69	13
Cloths	158.07	14	Meat	118.45	14
Milk-Eggs, Cheese	152.39	15	Fruits	116.1	15
Grains and pulses	149.73	16	House Rent	115.4	16
Gas	149.14	17	Grains and pulses	114.64	17
Meat	148.78	18	Shoes and slippers	113.54	18
House Rent	143.53	19	Coffee tea	111.52	19
Fruits	139.73	20	Entertainment	111.03	20
Coffee tea	133.93	21	Insurance	107.34	21
Vegetables	132.36	22	Cloths	105.66	22
Oil	129.35	23	Oil	85.25	23

Consumer expenditure on a variety of goods has grown dramatically over the past three and five years, according to statistics in Table 9. This suggests that expenditure in all categories is generally on the rise. According to the research, there is a distinct hierarchy in the rise of expenditure, with high-value and non-essential products seeing the biggest increases in spending while fundamental requirements have seen slower growth. Purchases of vehicles often rank as the category with the highest rise, suggesting that customers' ability to purchase expensive goods has significantly increased recently. Strong expenditure rise is also shown in mineral water and cold drinks and alcoholic drinks, indicating a growing tendency in the consumption of both luxury and regular beverages. Education and health are major spending sectors that show rising investments in personal growth and well-being. Oil, on the other hand, is a glaring exception, with the smallest rise in spending over both three- and five-year periods. This indicates that it is a less dynamic expenditure category than others, either due to steady price or a change in consumption patterns. Compared to other commodities, clothing and insurance rank lower and have more modest development. The three-year trend shows that expenditure on vehicle purchases, and transport services has recently increased and is now at the top of the list. This means that expenditure on personal

mobility and associated services has increased significantly during the last three years. The mix has been more balanced over the past five years, with mineral water and cold drinks and alcoholic drinks at the top of the list. In a longer-term perspective, the increase in spending on transit was less prominent, albeit still being noteworthy. All things considered, although expenditure has gone up overall, the high-value discretionary and mobility-related sectors have seen the biggest shifts. Although more gradually, spending on necessities has also gone up.

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