

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Open Access



Exploring the booming tea tourist industry and unconventional tourism through the ritual of drinking tea in India

Shuvasree Banerjee^{1*} and Pankaj Kumar Tyagi¹

Abstract

More and more individuals are realizing the need to take time away from their regular lives to recharge their bodies and minds by visiting new places. That's why we reasoned that drinking tea while on holiday would be the most significant element in promoting the growth of the tea tourism sector. We want to bring attention to how, via the medium of tastescape, the ritual of drinking tea may help one better understand the notion of unconventional tourism in India. A tastescape is a combination of physical elements, social norms, and geographical settings. One kind of nature tourism that includes visits to tea plantations is an example of a niche market. Without a question, if you're looking for a place to visit that serves excellent tea, you should make your way to India. If the right marketing campaigns are launched to attract eco-travelers, and if the necessary efforts are made to enhance the quality of the area, the Indian Tea Estates have the potential to become a leading destination for tea tourism. The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of tea tourism prospects in India and the investigation into how the fascination with tea influences the decisions of foreign tourists visiting the country. The research aims to promote travel to India so that more people may learn about and appreciate the tea culture there. Both primary and secondary sources are used in this qualitative study. Features and advertising tactics for luring tourists are described in this research. At this point, we analyze the research data and use it to inform a set of preliminary marketing strategies. The study also found that enhancing a customer's overall impression of a company is one of the most effective ways to encourage repeat business. It is difficult to advance plans to combine the tourism and tea industries due to a lack of personnel and expertise. The difficulty may be overcome if the two parties can work together to mutual benefit. Achieving future achievements will require strengthening the connection between tea and tourism, establishing collaborations, encouraging a higher degree of local engagement, and highlighting local benefits as a way of life.

Keywords Tourism industry, Tea gardens, Tourists, Local participation, Development

Introduction

The global tourism industry has evolved significantly in recent years, shifting from traditional sightseeing to a more immersive and experiential travel experience. This shift is driven by a growing desire for deeper connections

with destinations, authentic cultural experiences, and meaningful engagements. Modern travelers are more inclined toward experiences that allow them to interact with local communities, understand diverse cultures, and engage with heritage and traditions. Experiential travel has gained momentum, focusing on activities like culinary tours, cultural immersions, eco-tourism, adventure travel, and heritage experiences. Advancements in technology and social media have facilitated access to off-the-beaten-path experiences, boosting the demand

*Correspondence:

Shuvasree Banerjee
writetoshuvasree@gmail.com

¹ Chandigarh University, Mohali 140413, India



© The Author(s) 2024. **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

for personalized, authentic, and immersive travel experiences [1]. India is one of the world's top producers of tea, even though 70% of it is consumed there. In India, many famous teas such as Assam and Darjeeling are grown exclusively. The Indian tea industry has grown to own several well-known international tea brands. In the world, technologically, the Indian tea industry has emerged as one of the most advanced tea industries [2]. India's Tea Board manages and supervises all elements of the country's tea trade, covering production, certification, and the export process. For ages, traditional Indian culinary practices have embraced the medicinal attributes of multiple herbs and spices, such as tulsi, cardamom, pepper, licorice, and mint. Teas made from the leaves or spices of this plant have long been used traditionally for illnesses, both serious and minor. These classic herbs are carefully added to the tea mixture, not just for their healing attributes but also to enhance their taste profile. While cardamom, cloves, and ginger infuse the tea with delightful flavors and aromas known for their health-supporting properties, other elements like sweetness and milk are employed to offset the potent bitterness characteristic of certain herbs [3].

Tea has deep roots in Eastern and northern India, where it has been cultivated and enjoyed for generations. The British introduced the tea culture to India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1836 and 1867, respectively. After the British East India Company arrived, large tracts of land were transformed for industrial-scale tea production, marking the start of the commercial production of tea in India. There are various periods in Indian tea history [4]. After China, India is the country that produces the most tea worldwide, including the well-known varieties Assam and Darjeeling. Assam's "State Drink" is tea. Following this, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, a former deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, had plans to declare tea to be the "National Drink" of India in 2013. As per a December 2011 report by ASSOCHAM, India's tea consumption constitutes nearly 30% of the world's production, establishing the country as the largest consumer worldwide. After China, India holds the position of the world's second-largest tea exporter. India's dominance in tea production endured for close to a hundred years. However, China's recent acquisition of more land has enabled it to surpass India and claim the top spot in tea production [1]. The British brands Tetley and Typhoo are among the iconic foreign tea companies that Indian tea companies have acquired. India is also the world's biggest consumer of tea. However, due to its large population and severe poverty, India's per capita tea consumption still amounts to 750 g annually [5].

The purpose of this research is to delve into the burgeoning tea tourism industry in India and explore the

unorthodox dimension of tourism through the ritual of tea consumption. The study seeks to highlight the pivotal role of drinking tea in fostering the growth of tea tourism and promoting unconventional tourism experiences. India, renowned for its rich tea culture and sprawling tea estates, stands as a promising hub for tea tourism. The practice of indulging in tea rituals serves as a key attractor for tourists seeking unique experiences. The concept of a 'tastescape'—a blend of physical elements, cultural norms, and geographical settings—emerges as a significant factor in this exploration. Specifically, the study focuses on niche tourism, such as nature-based visits to tea plantations, within this diverse landscape. The research identifies a gap in understanding how the fascination with tea shapes the preferences and choices of foreign tourists visiting India. While the potential for India's Tea Estates to become premier destinations for tea tourism is recognized, there remains a lack of comprehensive insight into leveraging this potential. The study aims to bridge this gap by exploring marketing strategies, analyzing the influence of tea culture on tourists, and evaluating the prospects for elevating India as a key destination for tea enthusiasts. This research also uncovers the challenges hindering the convergence of the tea and tourism industries, notably the scarcity of expertise and resources. Addressing this gap requires collaborative efforts, emphasizing local engagement, and establishing symbiotic relationships between the two sectors. Overall, the study endeavors to shed light on the untapped potential of tea tourism in India, aiming to elevate awareness, foster collaboration, and stimulate sustainable development within the tourism and tea industries.

Evolution of global tourism

Travel has developed along with evolving interactions, technology, and advertising methods. Management for tourism involves taking into consideration many different factors along with different tourism sectors. Tourism can grow positively with thorough preparation of the physical, legal, advertising, economic, market, administration, community, and ecological aspects. Many nations may be compelled to review their tourism regulations as a result of these effects. Tourism is influenced significantly by heightened intervals dedicated to relaxation, the burgeoning middle-class populace, the proliferation of communication and transportation technologies, a quest to break free from today's work culture, and the surge in promotional campaigns for travel [6]. Immersive travel, often referred to as experiential travel, is a type of travel in which visitors concentrate on getting familiar with a region, location, or specific location by meaningfully and actively connecting with its history, residents, culture, cuisine, and surroundings. It often has the power

to change [7]. The nations with a wealth of culture and heritage are launching unique marketing campaigns to highlight their historical sites and attract tourists. Each year, lines of eager tourists form at numerous cultural and heritage sites. These include difficulty, assistance, social connection, and authentic regional information. Successful layout and arrangement of visitor attractions depend heavily on planning for tourism. The essence of each cultural tour lies in its unique purpose and source of inspiration, enabling visitors to immerse themselves in a vibrant cultural exploration. The lasting effects of tourists' involvement with specific cultural facets profoundly shape the landscape of the tourism industry [8].

Over time, tea has evolved into the very essence of India. In India, this hot drink is a common source of amusement, a means of subsistence, a cool beverage, a justification for conversations, a component of the gossip culture, and a tradition in homes. It is inextricably linked to the nation's sociocultural and socioeconomic makeup [9]. The intricate processes of tea preparation and consumption, coupled with human interaction surrounding tea, as well as the visual and sensory elements linked to the act of drinking tea, collectively shape and define the essence of tea culture. In some nations, tea is significant. It is frequently consumed at social gatherings, and for these occasions, many cultures have developed elaborate formal ceremonies. Within India serving tea is a long-standing custom woven like a thread into society's cultural fabric [10]. The tea industry is a major economic driver [9, 11]. Doing a tea tour is a great way to help the environment [12]. Research on the effects of "tea tourism" is lacking [13]. Scholars believe further research is required on the role tea plays in providing warm, satisfying, and professional service to guests. Hall et al. [14], Tiwari et al. [11] and Boniface [15] all contributed to the field of tea tourism, but "Tea and Tourism: Visitors, Traditions, and Transformations" has had the most impact (2007). Tiwari defined tea tourism in 2023 as driving through a fascination with (a) history, (b) culture, and (c) tea. Visitors visiting tea regions are immersed in the traditions, rituals, and history of the beverage, as stated by the researchers. They discovered that tourists may enjoy a wide variety of tea-related activities, from touring tea shops and participating in tea ceremonies to visiting tea plantation accommodations including cottages, gardens for tea, and exhibitions. Tiwari et al. [11] investigated potential threats to the expanding tea tourism industry in Sri Lanka. According to Cheng et al. [13], tourists like participating in cultural activities like picking tea leaves and seeing traditional performances as part of a trip to a tea garden. For the first time, they examined the travels of Chinese tea enthusiasts. Liang and Lai [12], highlighted the major stakeholders in the tea tourism business, which

include visitors, tea garden owners, governments, tour operators, and the media. They claimed that while tea tourism had potential and appeal, it had been unsuccessful in certain countries. It was clear from this that the whole industry needed to work together.

Cultural significance of tea in India

Tea stands as one of the globe's most favored beverages, second only to water, boasting a complex and fascinating historical background. Despite being strongly ingrained in Chinese society, tea has deep, irrefutable roots in India. Due to its continued relevance, tea is still the most consumed beverage in the area. Tea is hence known as "Chai" in India. Chai is the term for "tea" in Hindi and other South Asian languages. The word "cha" in Mandarin Chinese is its source [16]. The British introduced tea to India. Indians, as opposed to the British, loved their tea with milk and sugar, it has undergone numerous subcontinental improvements and changes. Indian tea/chai is stronger than normal. There are numerous varieties as well. India has a variety of distinctive tea varieties. The Cutting "Chai from Mumbai, the Irani Chai from Hyderabad, and the Delicate Pink Kashmiri Chai" are a few of the more popular choices. The most well-known and extensively drunk Indian tea, masala chai, might still come out on top. "Masala Chai" is a beverage that is produced in India by combining (i) strong black tea leaves with milk, (ii) water, and (iii) a tonne of sugar [17]. The flavor of masala chai is then created by adding cinnamon and black pepper. For optimum taste, the completed beverage is offered warm in a cup or, if at all feasible, in a ceramic tumbler. People adore tea in practically every place in the globe, but notably in India. It is frequently referred to as a street drink in India. Even though tea did not originate in India, its popularity has soared there. Tea is more than just a morning beverage in India. The full, sweet, milky beverage is a morning ritual and a necessity for survival. Roadside chai sellers also referred to as "chai wallas," seem to connect every Indian. Additionally, there are a lot of modern, upscale tea restaurants open across the nation, mostly in India [4]. The Chinese are credited with being the first traders of tea when they entered Tibet. Up until the eighth century AD, they increased trade with Indian nomadic tribes in the Himalayas, Arabs, and Turks. The ancient trade route through the Himalayas was used to transport tea to India.

Tea is a staple of social occasions and is frequently offered as a sign of kindness in India. Being a sign of hospitality, it is common to give tea to visitors. A lot of individuals will pause for tea while traveling with relatives or close friends. Tea is used extensively in cultural rites and rituals as well. The British progressively raised the area's tea production by hiring experienced Chinese laborers

for employment on the plantations. The Indian tea industry officially started with this. In India, chai holds significance beyond being just a regular tea. Its indulgent, sugary taste intertwines with daily rituals, symbolizing hospitality and personal identity. For many, this practice fosters a sense of belonging to one's heritage, providing a consistent refuge for inner peace [12]. As a religious gift provided to followers as a token of gratitude, tea is served as a *prasad*. Tea is frequently provided at celebrations of faith and other events. In India, tea has traditionally held significance in politics. Tea was marketed as a substitute for British tea at the beginning of the 20th-century Indian independence struggle and came to represent Indian independence. Thousands of people are employed by India's tea business, which currently plays a significant role in the development of the nation's economy. Chai helps bring people together to celebrate joyously, tell stories, and remember important events like weddings and religious rites. In a lot of households, chai plays a vital role in morning routines and nightly thoughts, providing an atmosphere of comfort and familiarity in the middle of everyday life [18]. The British imported the cultivation of tea to India during the period of colonial rule in the middle of the nineteenth century, establishing huge estates mostly in Assam and Darjeeling. The industry of tea experienced an era of centralization after British rule ended in 1947, and Indian entrepreneurs began investing in it. With the direction of the British East India organization, which was in charge of ruling India now, industrial production started in 1820. Tea became one of the main drivers of modernity in India because it required the utilization of large regions for production and the construction of structures alongside it. As one of the globe's most important financial agricultural products, tea is a major source of income and revenue from exports for a few of the world's poorest nations. Additionally, as a labor-intensive sector, tea creates employment opportunities, particularly in underdeveloped and rural regions [19].

Transformation of tea plantations

India produces more than nine lakh tonnes of tea per year and this is the reason why India is the entire world's second-biggest tea producer [20]. As a glance to history, to overcome the Chinese production monopoly the British introduced tea to India in the nineteenth century [21]. The city of Darjeeling mountain region was the first area to plant tea, later in the 1850s the Himalayan foothills were perched. In the Indian economy, the tea business of India has a significant role and a long history [22]. Ovington claims that in 1689, the Banias in Surat used to consume tea without sugar or sometimes they preferred to have the least quantity of lemon in it.

And the people discovered that the tea can be used as a medicine if it is added with some spices, for such type of usage the tea leaves may be ported from China [22]. During the experiment of implementing tea production in India, the British colonists discovered by planting the tea plants that the tea plants with thicker leaves could be grown in Assam [23]. The Assamese Singphos tribe grew similar plants and delivered chests of tea to their leader, Ningroola [24]. The British East India Company initiated massive manufacturing of tea in Assam, India, in the early 1820s, of a tea varietal historically prepared by the Singpho community. The British East India Company seized the area through the Yandaboo Treaty from the Ahom Kings in 1826. At Chabua of Upper Assam, the first English tea garden was established in the year 1837 [25]. The commercial production of tea was initialized by the Assam Tea Company in that region. In the early 1850s, the tea business grew quickly, swallowing enormous swaths of land for tea plants. Assam had surpassed China as the world's leading tea-producing area by the turn of the century [21]. Chinese tea plants, dissimilar to Indian tea, were instigated in India by Robert Fortune, who spent two and a half years in China from 1848 to 1851 on behalf of the Royal Horticultural Society of London [25]. Fortune used various methods to steal tea seedlings and plants that were considered the resources of the Chinese Empire. Due to its higher quality and more affordable price, Indian-grown tea became widespread in the United Kingdom in the early nineteenth century [22]. Lyons, Liptons, and Mazawattee monopolize the market, establishing it as the "norm" for every category [20]. Throughout the 1970s, Indian tea dominated the hot beverage industry. In the past few decades, Asian tea has gradually lost popularity to African tea, particularly Kenyan tea. The Indian government remains encouraging of the Indian tea business, making legislation to assist it locally and influencing international organizations such as the WTO (World Trade Organization) [24]. It also brought a WTO petition concerning the Byrd Amendment, which permitted non-US corporations to be punished and awarded to the US corporations that filed the case. The Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has advised that the government contribute to the cultivation company's economic responsibility, lower revenue from agriculture assessments, and offer relief to ill or insolvent cultivation farms [23].

Challenges in tea tourism

Climate change, cultivated region, humanity, age of tea plants, manpower, money, input cost, and production hazards are the issues. The standard of tea and the nation's affluence are two elements that are thought to have an impact on the world's consumption. Significant

concerns and challenges were determined to be essential factors like poor organizing and advertising efforts, insufficient involvement of stakeholders, local participation, economic disparities, and customer perceptions regarding tea in the tourism industry. Decreased Productivity in the tea business is dealing with a variety of concerns, including decreased production due to rising environmental fees, decreased transportation subsidies, worker issues, weak labor policies, and other factors [26]. Tea plantations can be harmed by extreme rain and severe droughts, which can also lower harvests and lower yield quality. The chemical makeup of tea leaves may shift as temperatures rise, changing the flavor and scent. Deforestation is an additional issue that has an impact on the manufacturing of tea. Tea, like a variety of other agricultural products, is both a climate change contributor and a temperature crop. Insufficient manufacturing processes may waste resources and harm soil by using excessive quantities of water. Significant concerns and challenges were determined to be essential factors like poor planning and marketing efforts, insufficient stakeholder engagement, local participation, socioeconomic inequalities, and consumer attitudes regarding tea tourism [27]. Four major problems that affect the tea market distribution keep outpacing demand, global trade is posing additional difficulties to every step of the supply chain, and the environmental and medical benefits of tea are being underutilized. Durability might be seen as the most important issue moving ahead. The stagnating or decreasing area used for tea growing is another factor contributing to the current poor crop production. Due to the lack of major additional land being included in the national tea growing industry by tea regeneration and new establishment, the area beneath the cultivation of tea has remained constant during the past ten years. However, due to financial issues, land issues, labor shortages, a lack of instruction in the cultivation of tea and techniques, insufficient infrastructure, and disasters like landslides, erosion, and global warming, independent tea producers are facing several existential concerns [28].

Research objectives and goals

India is a country with several natural tourist attractions. It has the longest sea beach, rugged mountains, lakes, rivers, and fountains, making it a richly green area. In India, tea tourist destinations are a well-known idea. While the concept of tea tourism, which involves visiting tea-producing regions and experiencing the tea-making process, is widely recognized in India, the specific tea tourism locations within the country have faced challenges in realizing their full potential. These challenges have resulted in a relatively slower growth of tea tourism in certain regions. The primary reasons for

the limited development of tea tourism in these areas can be attributed to factors such as a lack of awareness, inadequate promotion efforts, insufficient support from relevant authorities, and underdeveloped tourism infrastructure. The study aims to explore the emerging tea tourism industry and unconventional tourism through ritual tea drinking in India. Students learn about influential philosophers whose ideas have influenced cultures over history in the well-known Ideas. Despite their significance in the tea industry, North Bengal and Assam didn't capitalize on India's tea tourism prospects. The main cause of the neglectful growth of Indian tea tourism is a lack of awareness, promotion, support, and infrastructure.

RO1 To analyze tourists' preferences and factors influencing their preference for tea consumption in India.

RO2 To explore the factors influencing tourists' preferences for tea and other beverages in India.

RO3 To examine cultural, sensory, historical, and beneficial factors influencing tourists' preference for tea in India.

The results of the current study will demonstrate the potential for tourists' preference for tea. This study will also make recommendations on how to save India's biodiversity and encourage tea tourism there. Finally, this essay will highlight the significance of understanding tea festivals. Presently, India stands as a prominent contributor to the global tea market, boasting significant production levels and the establishment of numerous renowned tea brands worldwide. Within India, approximately 70% of the tea produced is consumed domestically, establishing India's tea industry as one of the most advanced in terms of technology on a global scale. The majority of people from other countries are not aware of India's tea culture and its popularity. Therefore, as travel and tourism in India grow, many people from different countries will visit India so that they can experience the tea culture and its natural origins and popularity. It improves tea production and propagates its nature. The growth of travel and tourism in India allows people to see the tea culture and its natural origins and popularity. Due to this, people from many countries come to know about India's tea culture and come forward to purchase tea products that increase tea production. However, clear explanations of the promotion of tea culture in India are not mentioned in other research, especially through travel and tourism, so this research set out to examine this. Also, the present study contributes the following:

- Explores India's tea culture and production by promoting travel and tourism in India.
- Analyzes the impact of the popularity of tea on foreign visitors to India
- Evaluates the potential for Indian tea tourism.
- Research identifies that improving a customer's overall impression of a tea company is one of the most effective ways to encourage repeat business.
- Examines that in visiting India, tourists statistically significantly choose to drink tea compared to other drinks.
- Demonstrates that there is no statistically noteworthy difference in visitors' preferences for tea and various other drinks in India.
- Proposes that tea communication techniques based on the sustainability and management of tea cultivation can help focus the attention of tea tourists.

The present study is organized in the following manner, a review of the literature is presented in the second section. The study has a detailed research methodology in the third section. The empirical findings of the present study are described and discussed in the fourth section. The study concludes in the sixth section followed by suggestions and limitations.

Literature review

Promotion of tea culture in India

Due to stunning scenery, rugged terrain, and cultural attractions, India provides an abundance of tourism potential. Tea, farming, and tourism are other major contributors to the economies of several Indian regions. The production of tea is additionally an important source of revenue for their tourism sector. There is a lot of room for growth in the tea tourism industry in India, which might lead to an increase in the number of tea estates. The study aimed to promote regional customs. It is important to give tea visitors the right advice on tea tourism destinations by resolving problems, obstacles, and potential. The study analyzes that tea, farming, and travel are other major contributors to the economies of several Indian regions. The primary source of revenue from tourism was additionally the tea sector. The study identified that in India, there is a lot of room for growth in the tea-related tourism industry, which might stimulate as many specialized tourist attractions as there are tea farms. The study resulted from developing the tea industry throughout India more appealing and established requires careful planning [29]. The study aimed to explore the current difficulties, possibilities, and difficulties in the tea tourist sector. Through analysis, it was found that India is at the forefront of exhibiting its breathtaking green tea estates to tourists, both from within the country and abroad,

aligning with the rising trend of eco-tourism. The study resulted from the travel agencies adopting an economic and social perspective while implementing a successful marketing plan for tea tourism and guaranteeing its long-term growth [30].

Potential threats to Sri Lanka's growing tea tourists

Within the context of sustainable growth objectives in travel, tea tourism is widely acknowledged as a substantial domain, given its economic relevance and its role in furthering overarching sustainability commitments. Currently, tea tourism is being practiced by the majority of nations that cultivate tea. Complementing its primary sources of income from tea in bulk and additional value tea. The study aimed to explore managerial consequences as well as the potential of tourism for tea in Sri Lanka. The study identified the possibility and conceivable marketing strategies to advance Sri Lanka tea tourism as an expanded model connecting key players to a critical center as a based-on-concept travel route. The study analyzed It's crucial to evaluate the appeal of Sri Lanka as a destination for tourism by comparing the actual situation with expectations for the country's tourist services and amenities. The study resulted from the possibilities of tea tourism as a conceptual offering across the tourism industry, the tourism industry in Sri Lanka requires a complete managerial strategy supported by empirical evidence [31]. The study aimed to examine the actions of tourists' actions related to Sri Lanka tea tourism. The study identified that a glass of tea is traditionally offered as a sign of kindness in Sri Lankan society. The study analyzed the actions taken by tourists during tea the tourism industry, as well as their views and opinions of the nation's existing tea tourism activities. The study analyzed that tea tourism has a lot of potential to draw visitors while also bringing financial advantages to the local town, but it is not well organized and administered. Tea tourism is a broad notion that is poorly implemented in Sri Lanka. The study resulted from training travelers about the value of tea tourism to the locations, it is recommended to reinforce and inspire tea providers. By doing this, basic facilities may be developed to draw and keep tourists interested in tea tourism [32].

Unsuccessful tea tourists in other countries

Insufficient production and inadequate standard of tea are both effects of climate change. Although modifications to the regularity and predictability of the distribution of rainfall and trends have negative effects on tea production and effectiveness, dryness decreases tea production. The study aimed to explore the financial systems of many emerging nations that depend extensively on agricultural products due to concerns regarding the

cultivation of agricultural crops. The study analyzed that the dropping pricing, inadequate yields, high expenses for production, lack of expansion, low value, and a variety of fees and taxes are some of the difficulties facing the tea industry. The study identified that the tea is unaffected by pests and diseases and only needs fertilizer to refill the earth; it develops without the application of agricultural products. The study resulted from the several steps that could be implemented to improve the small-scale tea and coffee farms' ability to evolve [33]. The study aimed to explore the regional industrialization of tea in sustainability tourism in Thailand and Japanese farmer perceptions. The study analyzed when tea failed to meet requirements for drinking tea on an international level and additionally modified by Islamic cultural standards, this was true, especially in Kenya. The study identified due to inadequate planning and an imbalanced commercialization of tea culture, Thailand is complicated and prone to failure. Within declining tea-producing areas, the study highlighted the increasing importance of eco-friendly tourism and community-involved travel as integral strategies. These sustainable tourism models are key tools in reinvigorating tea culture and turning these regions into appealing tourist spots. The study resulted from the sustainable, social, medical, and cultural tourism are all components of a holistic paradigm of tea culture exploitation [34].

Evaluating tea tourism and its influence on foreign tourists in India

A key tourist idea relating to tea plantations additionally represents a type of distinctive travel experience related to nature. From the starting point of the twenty-first century, the idea of tea tourism has gained pace and represents one of the subjects now being investigated. The study aimed to explore the country's tea tourism sector and the value of tea visitor guides. Tea tourism in India holds significant promise due to its rich cultural and economic contributions. However, a critical analysis reveals that the concept of tea tourism lacks a robust theoretical foundation in the existing literature. While studies discuss the potential and growth of tea tourism, they often fall short of delving into the deeper theoretical aspects of this emerging form of tourism. The study analyzed how the global tea tourism sector interacts with the cultivation of tea, the tea tradition, and the production of tea. The study examined the historical tradition of tea being promoted using a range of activities that encourage study, purchasing goods, exploration, and other recreational pursuits. The study resulted from an Indian tea plantation bounds, promoting there is visitor directing, tea advertising, and visitor operators [29]. The study aimed to determine and assess the tea varieties that

international visitors to India like. Analysis revealed that tea serves as a method to attract international travelers and holds a crucial place in India's cultural identity. The tea-drinking culture in India is growing into an important means for travelers to experience the traditional Indian eating culture. The study identified that tea types and styles are crucial to match the various demands of various international visitor segments to enhance the utilization of regional tea types and forms by local businesses. The study resulted from implementing techniques like tea-growing excursions, tea partnering sessions, tea pottery courses, education conferences, and many more that include visitor involvement and engagement to improve the whole tourist experience especially if they want to draw in foreign visitors [2].

Research gap

According to previous studies, a case study on the booming tea tourist industry in India is essential to research. It was explained by Sharples [35], that her study contains concepts of tea tourism. Tea is a popular beverage in the world, and the market for tea tourism is good. Tea gardens, shops, factories, and organizations that preserve tea culture. The history, culture, and customs linked with tea. Researcher Sharples only explained about tea and tea culture he did not properly investigate tea beverage history and its benefits in tourist places. Gunasekara and Momen [36], analyzed the tea's importance in tourist places. Neither of them did investigate how there is a significant influence of tea preference over tourists in India. Gupta et al. [37], only explained about tea preferences of foreign visitors and their connection to Indian tourism destinations, he did not explain how there is no significant influence of tea preference over tourists in India. Drew [38], explained that place They did not explore how to grow tea plantations and what is the history of that plant, and also they did not explain about advantages and disadvantages regarding health. Finally, the study recommended that tea tourism promotes local employment as well as increases financial stability. Therefore, the objective of the study is to investigate the explore the country's tradition of consuming tea in the context of the exploding tea tourism sector and unconventional tourism.

Research questions

There is an interest in consuming tea while traveling, therefore study promotes India's tradition of consuming tea in the context of the booming tea industry in tourism and unconventional tourism. For the study, the following research questions are suggested:

RO1 Do tourists consistently prefer to drink tea rather than other beverages when visiting India?

RO2 Why is there no statistically noteworthy difference in visitors' preferences for tea and other drinks in India?

RO3 Why do visitors to India generally prefer tea over other liquids?

To understand promoting the tea tourist industry and unconventional tourism from the perspective of travelers and visitors, the above research questions were proposed and the answers to these proposed research questions are analyzed and identified in the following sections.

Hypotheses development

Hypothesis development is an important section of the significant research method, which formalizes the research process in research. This study suggested a conceptual structure based on the previous analysis. Hypothesis development is used for specific predictions about what will happen in a particular study and it will describe the complete study with a clear explanation.

India's distinctive tradition of tea drinking gives visitors the chance to learn more about the beverage's long tradition and vibrant culture. Like tasting wines, the method of drinking tea allows one to taste many tea kinds, every one of which has a unique flavor, aroma, and look [39]. People prefer tea while traveling because the amino acids included in tea have a relaxing impact, which improves moods. Additionally, theanine, which can be found in tea, helps to feel calmer and less anxious by producing stronger inhibitory neurotransmitters [40]. One of the drinks with a lot of medicinal advantages is tea. It encourages activity over the whole day and lessens sluggishness. Due to its affordability and popularity among the poorest, tea is the most frequently consumed beverage on the subcontinent. Next to drinking water, tea is the most frequently consumed beverage worldwide [41].

Hypothesis Tourists in India have a statistically significant preference for consuming tea over other beverages during their visits.

Tea in India embodies more than a simple drink; it embodies a tradition of honoring guests and commemorating special occasions, symbolizing hospitality and celebration. India's fondness for tea becomes increasingly apparent with the multitude of tea dispensing machines spread throughout the country's roads and various locales [2]. Within the sphere of Religion, the trend of opting for tea socials over alcohol consumption has surged notably during religious festivities and events. Marital relationships play a role in shaping customers' tea preferences, impacting their selection when it comes to this beverage. Studies revealed an increased inclination

for tea consumption among those in marital relationships [42]. The growing prominence of tea in India represents an avenue for visitors to delve into the intricacies of the country's diverse eating habits and cultural tapestry. It serves as an enticing factor for drawing in foreign tourists and stands as a prominent attraction for travelers exploring the nuances of Indian culture. Within India, tea went beyond a simple drink, symbolizing a tradition of honoring and extending a warm welcome to visitors [43].

Null Hypothesis (H0) Tourists in India do not have a statistically significant preference for consuming tea over other beverages during their visits.

Consuming tea-related goods has been identified as a key element of tea tourism that supports nearby areas economically in a sustainable way [11]. Tea tourism and the drinking habits of travelers sparked by inventive tea-based drinks remain in their infancy and lag behind the actual industry, despite the phenomenal rise of the economic reality of new tea products. It has been noticed that tea is a prominent cultural icon of various places that offer visitors a distinctive experience [12]. The visiting habit that was sparked by a fascination with tea-related history, customs, and consumption is often referred to as tea tourism due to its significant significance in drawing prospective visitors and speeding socioeconomic growth for local places. The tea industry has typically been recognized in recent years as a form of cultural tourism [27].

Alternative Hypothesis (H1) Tourists in India have a statistically significant preference for consuming tea over other beverages during their visits.

Methodology

This descriptive study sets out to investigate the promotion of tea tourism as a distinct kind of travel in India. An intervention program is executed with a selection of respondents to increase their familiarity with tea tourism and tea-related activities. The sampled respondents' experiences as a result of tea tourism were analyzed.

Research design

To back up the results, the study used an exploratory research methodology, along with qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Both primary and secondary information were used to draw conclusions and complete the research. The tertiary data originated from a wide variety of published publications and other sources. To collect primary data, a questionnaire was developed based on the stated goals of the study. People like vacationers and tea drinkers made up the demographic that was investigated. The questionnaire also has questions

about your preferred kind of tea. Questions also targeted knowledge of tea-themed celebrations. The study employed a survey-based approach to comprehensively explore various aspects of individuals' tea preferences, consumption behaviors, and engagement with tea-related culture and tourism. Through a structured questionnaire or interview process, data was collected from a sample group comprising 200 respondents. The survey aimed to elicit specific insights into participants' relationships with tea, encompassing a wide range of dimensions related to their preferences and habits. The survey structure appeared designed to gather quantitative data, utilizing closed-ended questions to precisely quantify respondents' inclinations and behaviors. This method allowed for efficient data collection and enabled the researchers to analyze and present their findings in percentages, offering a clear and numerical representation of the participants' perspectives.

The survey covered diverse areas, including:

- **Tea preferences** Participants were queried about their favored types of tea, elucidating percentages of interest in various tea varieties such as black tea, green tea, flavored tea, and others.
- **Tea consumption patterns** The survey inquired about the frequency and timing of tea consumption, shedding light on respondents' habits regarding when and how often they preferred tea.
- **Purchase behaviors** It delved into where individuals typically bought their tea products, revealing preferences for purchasing from supermarkets, specialty stores, or via online platforms.
- **Travel habits** Queries on travel frequency, purposes, and destination preferences while traveling highlighted respondents' travel inclinations and how tea factored into their travel experiences.
- **Tea culture engagement** Participants were asked about their familiarity with tea-related culture, festivals, and tourism, providing insights into their awareness and interest in such activities.

By employing this survey-based methodology, the study effectively captured a holistic view of participants' tea-related preferences, behaviors, and cultural engagement. The structured approach allowed for systematic data collection and analysis, enabling the presentation of comprehensive findings encapsulating various facets of tea consumption and cultural involvement among the surveyed population.

Sampling and data collection

The Study participants were selected randomly. A total of 200 samples were chosen, and responses were used to

get the information. The study survey questionnaires are distributed in tea tourism destinations for the respondents. The sample distribution is based on the education qualification of people according to their highest education background based on classes like 10th grade, higher secondary, undergraduate, bachelor's degree, and higher degrees. The selection of participants was stratified based on educational qualifications and demographics, ensuring representation from various backgrounds. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and obtained informed consent from all participants. Confidentiality of participant information was maintained throughout the research process. The study surveyed visitors and travelers and the participants were approached by random sampling of individuals. A sample of 210 participants participated in the survey, of which 10 samples were carefully discarded due to invalid responses, and a total of 200 samples were chosen. Table 1 illustrates that among the respondents, 57% were male, signifying a higher representation compared to 43% of female respondents. Age groups included 20–30 years, 31–40 years, 41–50 years, and 51–60 years. Educational qualifications included higher secondary education, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Geographic locations included Asian, European, North American, and other regions. The majority of respondents were from Asian countries, while a small percentage were from other regions.

Instruments and procedures

Questionnaires, developed based on study objectives, encompassed inquiries about tea preferences, consumption habits, familiarity with tea-themed events, and knowledge of tea culture. These instruments were

Table 1 Socio-demographic details

| Socio-demographic description | | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 114 | 57 |
| | Female | 86 | 43 |
| Age | 20–30 years | 80 | 40 |
| | 31–40 years | 55 | 27 |
| | 41–50 years | 40 | 20 |
| | 51–60 years | 25 | 12.5 |
| | | | |
| Highest qualification level | Higher secondary | 90 | 45% |
| | Bachelor's degree | 85 | 42.5% |
| | Master's degree | 10 | 5% |
| | Doctoral degree | 15 | 7.5% |
| Location | Asian | 141 | 70.5 |
| | Europe | 18 | 9 |
| | North America | 14 | 7 |
| | Other | 27 | 13.5 |

administered to participants in paper format. The study conducts multiple choice questionnaires. The questionnaires are administered by professionals. For the questionnaire section, the language used for questionnaires is English. The questionnaires are in paper format. The study used quantitative and qualitative research for this study. The standardized instrument gives reliable and valuable information and develops reliability and validity testing. The study obtained primary information and secondary information from the respondents and the database is privately identified. To obtain responses from a participant, the survey uses unstructured group interviews. The participants are invited online via the internet, so the participants can easily participate. The message was delivered to each group of the participants. The groups are divided into online via the internet. The interviews in this study consist of two parts. The first part was to collect fundamental background information on the participants. Then the succeeding sections consist of questions relevant to the study's proposed hypotheses. The questions contain options, therefore they are easy to answer (See Appendix Table 7).

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis is the brief informational coefficient that summarizes a given data set, which can be either a representation or a sample of the population. Within Assam, India, a minority of local tea farmers have embraced organic farming approaches, elevating both the ecological and economic advantages inherent in cultivating organic tea. This paper used a mixed method to understand the tea growers' situation at the time of tea cultivation. Innovative practices in tea cultivation were evident among the organic growers, highlighting their entrepreneurial traits. According to the study's conclusions, it's essential to prioritize the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills within small-scale agricultural producers to advance the adoption of organic cultivation methods [16]. Table 2 summarizes the range, central tendency (mean), spread (standard deviation), and distribution (maximum and minimum) of various survey outcomes related to the respondents' travel habits, preferences, and experiences. The mean values represent the average responses for each category, while the standard deviation indicates the degree of variability among the responses.

A pilot study was conducted among a sample of 15 participants from the target population to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the questionnaire items. Participants were requested to provide feedback regarding the comprehensibility of the items, ensuring they accurately captured their experiences related to tea preferences, consumption, culture, and tourism. Minor modifications

Table 2 Descriptive statistics based on the survey outcomes

| Variables | N | Max | Min | Mean | SD |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|--------|
| Travel demographics | 200 | 107 | 3 | 55 | 72.761 |
| Travel preferences | 200 | 117 | 3 | 60 | 72.798 |
| Tea preferences | 200 | 170 | 4 | 87 | 76.411 |
| Tea tourism | 200 | 132 | 1 | 66.5 | 74.073 |
| tea culture | 200 | 177 | 5 | 91 | 76.978 |
| tea festival experience | 200 | 158 | 10 | 84 | 72.533 |
| Tea consumption and habits | 200 | 171 | 2 | 86.5 | 77.366 |

were made based on the pilot test results to improve item clarity.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted to ascertain the significance of differences observed across multiple variables related to tea tourism. A one-sample t-test was utilized to determine the significance of mean differences between sample responses and hypothesized values. Additionally, Friedman's test was employed to evaluate differences among related samples across various tea tourism variables. The collected data were analyzed employing SPSS (Version 20), a statistical package designed for use in social science research. To analyze the data SPSS statistics furnish a skilled and arranged way to manage high and complicated data sets and execute the improved statistical analysis to analyze the proposed hypothesis of this study. In addition to a response rate and a demographic breakdown, we also have some descriptive data that provide light on the specifics of our sample. One-sample t-tests and Friedman's tests were used to examine the hypotheses. The obtained valid data from 200 samples were used for data analysis. Statistical analyses were performed to assess the significance of the differences observed in various variables related to tea tourism using a one-sample t-test. The one-sample t-test formula used in this study is equated in Eq. 1:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}} \quad (1)$$

The t -value (t), sample mean (\bar{x}), population mean (μ), standard deviation (s), and sample size (n) are all crucial components in statistical analysis to determine if the mean of each sample significantly differed from a given hypothesized value within the context of tea tourism variables. This test was employed to determine if the mean of each sample significantly differed from a given hypothesized value within the context of tea tourism variables. The two-tailed p -value was set at 0.05 to determine the statistical significance of the results. The study utilized

Friedman's test to evaluate the significance of variations among related samples across various variables in the context of tea tourism. The Friedman's test formula employed in this study is tabulated in Eq. 2:

$$X^2 = \frac{12n}{k(k+1)} \left(\sum R_j^2 - \frac{k(k+1)}{4} \right) \quad (2)$$

The Friedman test statistic is represented by X^2 , the number of subjects is denoted by (n), the number of related groups (k) and adding the ranks for each group (R_j). This test was utilized to determine if there were statistically significant differences among multiple related variables such as preferences for tea types, purchasing habits, awareness of tea culture, participation in tea tourism, and intentions related to tea events.

Result

The results obtained from statistical analyses were interpreted to determine the impact and significance of tea tourism variables among respondents. These interpretations were instrumental in drawing conclusions and establishing correlations within the context of tea tourism in India.

Survey outcomes

From Table 3, in the travel experience of people, people travel according to their needs 67.55% of people travel for personal or official work, 5% of people travel because they are purpose-oriented, and 27.5% of the people for some purpose out of 200 people. While compared to other traveling experiences of people the least one is purpose oriented. In terms of destinations preferred to visit, people go crazy deciding the destination places such as hill stations, architecture, wildlife, and others. 5.5% of the people were interested in traveling wildlife, 5.5% of the people were interested in traveling architectural sites, 58.5% of the people were interested in traveling hill stations, 27% of the people were interested in traveling sea beaches, and 3.5% of the people were interested to travel other destination. Most of the people show interest in hill stations about 58.5%. In terms of preference for tea, while traveling, people have more interest in food and drinks. A total of 96% of those polled said that they would rather drink tea than coffee. 10% of the respondents consumed tea as their beverage of choice, 78.5% of the respondents were interested in drinking tea, and 11.5% of the respondents were not interested in drinking tea.

In terms of Favorite types of tea, 3% of the respondents were interested in decaffeinated (herbal or fruit tea), 12% of the respondents were interested in flavored tea, 0.5% of the respondents were interested in Pureth tea, 6.5% of the respondents were interested in oolong tea, 36.5% of the respondents were interested

Table 3 Travelers and visitors survey

| Survey outcomes | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <i>Traveling experience of people</i> | | |
| Purpose oriented | 10 | 5 |
| Some purpose | 55 | 27.5 |
| Personal or official oriented | 135 | 67.5 |
| <i>Destination preferred to visit</i> | | |
| Wildlife | 11 | 5.5 |
| Architectural sites | 11 | 5.5 |
| Hill station | 117 | 58.5 |
| Sea beaches | 54 | 27 |
| Others | 7 | 3.5 |
| <i>Preference for tea while traveling</i> | | |
| Consume tea as their beverage of choice | 20 | 10 |
| People like tea | 157 | 78.5 |
| People don't like tea | 23 | 11.5 |
| <i>Favorite types of tea</i> | | |
| Decaffeinated (herbal or fruit tea) | 6 | 3 |
| Flavored tea | 24 | 12 |
| Pureth | 1 | 0.5 |
| Oolong | 13 | 6.5 |
| Black | 73 | 36.5 |
| Yellow | 7 | 3.5 |
| Green | 43 | 21.5 |
| white | 16 | 8 |
| Other | 17 | 8.5 |
| <i>Preferred place for drinking tea</i> | | |
| Coffee shop | 5 | 2.5 |
| Tea specialty shop | 16 | 8 |
| At work | 52 | 26 |
| At home | 124 | 62 |
| Other | 3 | 1.5 |
| <i>Tea leaves based on their preference and origin</i> | | |
| Europe | 2 | 1 |
| Japan | 4 | 2 |
| India | 171 | 85.5 |
| China | 3 | 1.5 |
| No preference | 20 | 10 |
| <i>Samples based on Indian tea preferences</i> | | |
| Darjeeling tea | 141 | 70.5 |
| Assam tea | 37 | 18.5 |
| Nilgiri tea | 6 | 3 |
| Others | 16 | 8 |
| <i>Samples based on the exploration of tea culture</i> | | |
| People who learn more about tea culture | 158 | 79 |
| People who were curious about tea culture | 32 | 16 |
| People who were not curious about tea culture | 10 | 4.5 |

in black tea, 3.5% of the respondents were interested in yellow tea, 21.5% of the respondents were interested in green tea, 8% of the respondents were interested in white tea and 8.5% of the respondents were interested in other tea. Among the surveyed individuals, the highest level of interest (36.5%) was observed for black tea, whereas Pureth tea received the lowest level of interest, amounting to merely 0.5% of respondents. In terms of preferred places for drinking tea, the distribution of tea products is based on their purchase places like supermarkets, specialty stores, natural food stores, the internet, and catalogs. Most people buy tea products from supermarkets. About 66% of the people give the most importance to tea products and purchase from supermarkets. A whopping 66% of respondents found shopping for tea-making supplies in a supermarket to be the best option. Those who mostly use catalogs or mail orders to get their tea-making supplies provided the fewest responses (1%). Tea consumption preferences among respondents varied: 2.5% showed a preference for tea bought from coffee shops, while 8% favored specialty tea shops. Additionally, a notable 26% reported drinking tea during work hours, with a substantial majority of 62% preferring to enjoy their tea at home. Only a small 1.5% sampled their tea from other sources.

The majority of the respondents drink tea at home (62%). The origins of tea leaves in various countries such as China, India, Japan, and Europe. 1% of the respondents prefer European tea leaves, 2% of the respondents prefer Japanese tea leaves, 85.5% of the respondents prefer Indian tea leaves, 1.5% of the respondents prefer China tea leaves, and 10% of the respondents prefer No preference. India is the top country and most people prefer Indian tea leaving about 87% of the people around the world. In terms of Samples based on Indian tea preferences, 70.5% of the respondents like Darjeeling tea, 18.5% of the respondents like Assam tea, 3% of the respondents like Nilgiri tea, and 8% of the respondents like other sites. Most of the people of India do not experience tea tourism because they don't know about that place exactly. In terms of samples based on the exploration of tea culture, 79% of the respondents learned more about tea culture, 16% of the respondents were curious about tea culture, and 4.5% of the respondents were not curious about tea culture. The majority of respondents 158 people learn more about tea culture. Those who were not curious about tea culture made up the smallest segment of respondents. The majority of the respondents did not prefer to answer, which showed a percentage of 53.5%. The second highest respondents are obtained among the annual income range of \$20,000 or less (21.5%), and the least percentage of respondents were obtained from the annual

income range of \$45,000–\$59,999, \$60,000–\$84,999, and \$85,000 or more (1.5%, 1.5% and 1.5% respectively).

People travel for personal or official work, with 65% preferring to travel. Out of 200 people, 10 were purpose-oriented. Travel frequency varies, with 31.5% preferring one year and 97% preferring twice a month. Purposes include business, leisure, family, and adventure. Leisure travel is preferred by 88%, while business travel is preferred by 9%. Destination preferences include hill stations, architecture, wildlife, and beaches. Hill stations are the most popular, followed by beaches at 25%. The cuisine system is preferred by 84.5% of travelers, with some not liking it. A survey revealed that 96% of people prefer tea over coffee, with 41% preferring it during travel. Most people drink tea once a day, with 70 people liking it once and 64% drinking it two times a day. 60.5% of people prefer tea during traveling, with only 29% not liking tea and various types of drinks. Hot tea enthusiasts made up the smallest subset of respondents (20%). Out of 200 respondents, 170 prefer hot tea, with 13% traveling. 37.1% prefer tea in the early morning, 28.4% prefer it at midday, and 6.1% never prefer tea. 85% prefer it first thing in the morning. The proportion of nighttime tea drinkers (13%) was the lowest. Loose tea leaves were preferred by 57.5% of respondents, while tea bags and other tea varieties were preferred by 6.5%. The smallest segment of respondents (4%) drank other tea varieties.

Tea products are distributed through various sources, including supermarkets, specialty stores, natural food stores, the Internet, and catalogs. Supermarkets are the most popular place for purchasing tea products, with 66% of respondents valuing this method. Self-proclaimed tea experts have the lowest response rate (19%). Out of 200 people, 81 were aware of tea culture, while 19 were well-known. Only 70 had heard about tea tourism, and 112 were familiar with it. The majority of people in India do not experience tea tourism due to a lack of knowledge about the specific places. Only 21% experienced tea tourism in places like Darjeeling and Assam, and 75% never experienced tea tourism. Only 8% of the sample had first-hand experience with tea tourism. The study reveals that 58% of people in India are unaware of tea tourism festivals, with only 32.5% of respondents being aware of them. Only 9% of people know about tea tourism festivals in Assam and Darjeeling, and 88.5% are unaware. Out of 200 respondents, 138 only know about and have an interest in tea festivals. The majority plan to attend the event, with Darjeeling getting the highest priority with 70.5% and Assam with 18.5%. The study also reveals that 35% of people know tea cultivation and its process, while 80.5% don't know the tea culture. The majority of respondents plan to attend the event, with the lowest response rate (39%). 79% of people know about tea culture, and

Validity of the study

A validity test is a process of finding the objectives, aims, or goals of a given study. A valid driving test consisting of practical components with some rules and regulations. Validity explains the characteristics measured by the requirements and gives the meaning of the test scores which are given in the tables. A validity test describes the degree to which you can make specific conclusions as well as perfect predictions based on test scores. Reliability is the analysis that can determine whether the questionnaires are related to the study or not. Basak et al. [44], explained the validity and reliability of tea tourism, what places cultivate more tea, and how tourism impacts people's employment. The data presented in Table 4 also provides insights into both reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 are generally considered indicative of good internal consistency reliability. It assesses how closely related a set of items are as a group. For example, in the "Travel Demographics" section, Cronbach's Alpha is 0.851, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the 8 items related to travel demographics. Test–Retest evaluates the stability or consistency of a questionnaire over time. For instance, in the "Tea Preferences" section, the test–retest reliability is 0.87, suggesting a high level of consistency in participants' responses to tea preference items across two testing periods. Content Validity (CVI—Content Validity Index) assesses how well the items in a questionnaire represent the content domain they are intended to measure. In the "Tea Culture" section, the CVI is 0.808, indicating a good level of content validity for the items related to tea culture. Construct Validity (Factor Analysis) examines the underlying structure or relationships among the items in a questionnaire to determine if they are measuring the intended constructs or factors. It is observed from the "Tea Tourism" section, that the construct validity through factor analysis is 0.897, suggesting a strong relationship between the items measuring tea tourism-related constructs.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis testing is an act in statistics of an assumption regarding a population parameter. Which depends upon the nature of data used to assess the probability of a hypothesis by using a given sample test. One-sample t-tests are suitable for comparing a single group to known or hypothesized values, while Friedman's tests are appropriate for comparing related groups or conditions when data violate parametric assumptions. In the study about "tea tourism" in India, the studies investigated tea tourism, destination service quality, and memorable tourism quality. Exploring tea tourism spots involves engaging in an array of activities, promising visitors unforgettable

and unique experiences. It will promote knowledge of the quality of tea and its production as well as cultivation. This hypothesis will give information about activities in tea destinations that positively influence creating memories, cleanliness in tea destination places, different languages and different types of culture, and cafe service quality at tea tourism plantations.

One-sample t-test

One-sample t-test results are shown in Table 5. This study aims to determine if the mean of a sample is significantly different from a known population mean or a hypothesized value and to assess whether their responses align with a specific external criterion or standard, a one-sample t-test is appropriate. With a two-tailed p -value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 for all variables, the data suggest that tea is the tourist favorite. Hence, the data imply that the opposite of the null hypothesis—that tea choice has no effect among visitors in India—is true. Table 5 describes seven variables, t factors, df factors, significant (2-tailed values), and mean difference. One sample t-test explained many variables about tea tourism. Many variables are there some of them are which is your preference tea, your favorite tea, where you drink tea, and so on. t value varies from one sample to another sample test. df and significant (2-tailed) factors are constant values like 199 and 0.000 respectively. The mean difference value will be changed from one sample test to another sample test.

Friedman test

Friedman's test is a suitable non-parametric alternative. It can handle ordinal or skewed data and can test whether there are significant differences among these conditions while accounting for within-subject dependencies. The study aims to analyze changes or differences within the same group over multiple conditions or time points,

Table 5 Distribution of samples based on One-Sample t-test

| Variables | t-value | Degree of freedom | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Travel demographics | 15.236 | 199 | 0.000 | 2.1 |
| Travel preferences | 18.754 | 199 | 0.000 | 1.89 |
| Tea preferences | 22.109 | 199 | 0.000 | 3.2 |
| Tea tourism | 28.693 | 199 | 0.000 | 2.5 |
| Tea culture | 19.875 | 199 | 0.000 | 2.15 |
| Tea festival experience | 24.318 | 199 | 0.000 | 1.97 |
| Tea consumption and habits | 20.427 | 199 | 0.000 | 3.1 |

Friedman's test assesses if these differences are statistically significant, without relying on assumptions of normality. The mean rankings of the variables are compared in Table 6, highlighting the differences between them. Mean scores were greater for respondents' preferred kind of tea and familiarity with tea culture. Table 6 explains detailedly about the distribution of samples based on the Friedman test. The table contains seven variables: travel demographics, travel preferences, tea preferences, tea tourism, tea culture, tea festival experience, and tea consumption and habits. The mean ranks vary from one sample test to another sample test.

The degrees of freedom for the tea-selection Friedman test are listed in Table 6. Tea preferences of foreigners who visited India varied significantly ($2(2)=930.413$, p 0.0001). If the probability value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis may be rejected. Table 6 contains test statistics such as N , Chi-square, df , Asymp, and Sig. The values vary from one test to another sample test.

Significant concerns and challenges were determined to be essential factors like poor scheduling and advertising efforts, insufficient stakeholder engagement, local participation, socioeconomic inequalities, and public perceptions regarding tea tourism. Climate has a significant influence on tea farms. The main obstacles to encouraging the development and expansion of the tea industry in the research area are an absence of government support and financial constraints, a shortage of community involvement in the tourist experience, labor issues, and inadequate knowledge about the product. Cultivation of tea has suffered recently as a result of the effects of global warming. It has gotten to the point that tea plantations are struggling to live without watering. The tourism sector is very large. Along with creating jobs, it also promotes economic growth in various parts of the world.

Table 6 Distribution of samples based on the Friedman test

| Variables | Mean rank |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Travel demographics | 4.31 |
| Travel preferences | 6.75 |
| Tea preferences | 12.91 |
| Tea tourism | 6.83 |
| Tea culture | 10.66 |
| Tea festival experience | 9.49 |
| Tea consumption and habits | 7.59 |
| <i>Test statistics^a</i> | |
| N | 200 |
| Chi-square | 930.413 |
| df | 14 |
| Asymp. sig | 0.000 |

^a Friedman test

Tea flavor is a crucial factor in understanding consumer preferences and guiding product development and marketing strategies. It plays a significant role in consumer satisfaction and repeat consumption. To assess the reliability of tea flavor, statistical measures like Cronbach's Alpha or internal consistency tests should be conducted. The items related to tea flavor consistently correlate with each other and they are considered reliable. Tea tradition represents the cultural and traditional aspects of tea consumption, including rituals and customs. Understanding the importance of tradition in tea consumption can be valuable for businesses and policymakers, especially in regions where tea holds significant cultural importance. The reliability of the tea tradition is assessed through consistency tests. Tea health benefits reflect the perception that tea consumption can have positive effects on health. Assessing consumer beliefs regarding these benefits is essential for marketing and product positioning. The reliability of tea health benefits should be assessed through statistical tests for internal consistency. The items related to health benefits consistently measure this aspect and exhibit strong correlations, they can be considered reliable for gauging perceptions of tea's health benefits. In conclusion, the reliability of each factor can be determined through statistical analysis, with high reliability indicating consistent measurement of the intended dimension, making them valuable for research and practical applications in the tea industry.

The main findings of the investigation were done by researchers. The results discussed in this article were partially taken from this research dissertation. All relevant findings are concisely and objectively, in a logical sequence and this paper is about tea tourism in India, how it impacts people, what are its advantages and disadvantages, and whether tea tourism promotes economic stability these factors are discussed in this study. The result aims is to provide a clear study about the evaluation of the prospects for tea tourism in India, and how much impact the popularity of tea has on foreign visitors to India. In this paper, some tests are done such as validity reliability tests which are used for the finding of objects. This study discussed descriptive statistical analysis, which is used to represent the sample. This study also explains the education qualification of tea cultivation localities, annual income range, age, gender, primary cultural background, frequency of travel, the purpose of travel, destinations preferred to visit, preference in drinks and so many people say yes to drinking tea. All these factors are discussed and given some results. The results of the current study demonstrated the potential for tourists' preference for tea. It will also recommend how to save the biodiversity of India and tea tourism.

Discussion

The study delves into India's burgeoning tea tourism sector, aiming to shed light on its impact on the country's tourism industry and the promotion of unique travel experiences centered around tea culture. The findings underscore the significance of tea in influencing India's tourism, particularly in attracting both domestic and international tourists intrigued by the allure of tea plantations and the country's rich eco-tourism offerings [29]. Significantly, travel companies have strategically leveraged tea tourism, intertwining economic strategies with cultural experiences to propel its expansion [43]. However, despite the pivotal role of tea consumption in shaping India's tourism narrative, the study reveals that tea itself might not be a direct driver for foreign visitors. Instead, it's the thriving tea cultivation industry that substantially contributes to India's tourism revenue [30]. This highlights the untapped potential for further growth in the tea tourism sector, emphasizing the need to address pertinent issues and capitalize on emerging opportunities to effectively market India's tea tourism sites [32]. Drawing insights from diverse perspectives on tea's cultural and economic dimensions, it becomes evident that tea holds a significant place in India's societal fabric [31]. While it wasn't originally indigenous to India, its popularity has soared, becoming an integral part of daily life and occasionally integrated into culinary traditions for its perceived medicinal benefits. The study emphasizes the need for businesses to prioritize customer perceptions and overall satisfaction with tea products. Understanding and meeting customer preferences, particularly regarding tea flavors, play a pivotal role in ensuring repeat purchases and fostering brand loyalty [2]. This entails employing statistical methods like Cronbach's Alpha to ensure the consistency and reliability of measuring tea flavor preferences. The study aligns with the discourse on the multifaceted nature of tea tourism. It reflects the convergence of cultural immersion and experiential tourism, allowing travelers to engage in tea-related activities and immerse themselves in the traditions and rituals associated with tea cultivation [33, 39]. To sustain and advance tea tourism, communication strategies need to be geared toward ensuring the long-term viability and leadership of tea cultivation practices. Still, inherent challenges persist in the tea tourism domain. Issues encompassing production techniques, stakeholder involvement, socio-economic disparities, and customer perceptions necessitate thoughtful intervention and strategic planning [34, 40]. The study underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to propel the sustainable growth of tea tourism in India. This study's findings underscore the

intricate interplay between tea, tourism, and cultural traditions in India. They emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to leverage India's tea heritage for tourism, address challenges, and align marketing strategies with evolving customer preferences. The influence of tea tourism on people, its benefits and drawbacks, and its potential to advance economic stability are the main topics of this study on tea tourism in India [27]. The study assesses the potential of tea tourism in India as well as its effects on international tourists [24]. The study highlights the possibility that visitors may have a predilection for tea and offers tactics to protect India's biodiversity and tea industry. Future research should delve deeper into customer behavior dynamics and the cultural significance of tea, providing valuable insights for the tea industry and tourism stakeholders.

Conclusion

The main objective of the study is to explore the booming tea tourist industry and unconventional tourism through the ritual of drinking tea in India and aims to promote travel to India so that more people may learn about and appreciate the tea culture there. The study highlights that large-scale tea production in the mountainous regions was a great success, and the knowledge gained from the endeavor helped India's tea estates expand. The research indicates that India's tea tourism industry is still developing. It is logical to assume that tourists themselves should be knowledgeable of tea culture, its traditions, and how it honors the history of its country. The findings of the analysis show that there is a significant influence of tea preference over tourists in India. The analysis reveals that it is difficult to advance plans to combine the tourism and tea industries due to a lack of personnel and expertise. The study result reveals that when tourists are better knowledgeable about the world of tea, tea visits, and tourism perception are higher. In line with this, the study proposes that tea communication techniques, which are now based on sustainability and the management of tea cultivations, can aid in concentrating the attention of potential tea tourists. This creates a chance for travel agents and regional managers.

Suggestions and limitations

Several restrictions should be taken into account while evaluating this study. First of all, because the questionnaire was given in English, only those who can read and write the language were able to respond. This indicates that a specific segment of the population has been left out of the study. Despite this restriction, it is safe to say that the target audience for our research is active visitors

who are improving their ability to speak English fluently. Second, because our sample is geographically diverse, some cultural aspects that are not discussed in this work could have an impact on the results. Future research might make an effort to collect more information and evaluate other sub-samples. Future research can also look

into whether traveler culture influences consumption and agriculturally linked travel decisions.

Appendix
See Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7 Structure of questionnaire

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Part A | | |
| Socio-demographic details | | Gender Age Highest qualification level Occupation |
| Part B | | |
| Section "Introduction" | Travel Demographics | How much is your Annual Income Range? How would you rate your travel experience level? How frequently will you travel in a year? What is the traveling purpose? |
| Section "Literature review" | Travel Preferences | What are your preferred travel destinations? What type of cuisine do you prefer while traveling? What are the various drinks you prefer during your travels? |
| Section "Methodology" | Tea Preferences | Do you prefer tea while traveling? What is your preference for Tea in one day? Do you prefer tea over other drinks while traveling? Do you prefer hot tea over cold tea? When do you prefer to have tea? Which is your favorite type of tea? |
| Section "Result" | Tea tourism | Have you heard about Tea tourism? Have you had a tea tourism experience? Where do you typically buy the things you need to prepare tea? |
| Section "Discussion" | Tea culture | Are you familiar with tea culture? Do you know anything about tea culture? Would you love to explore tea culture? |
| Section "Conclusion" | Tea festival experience | Do you know about the Tea Tourism festival? Have you ever visited the Tea Tourism festival held at Darjeeling & Assam? Do you intend to participate in this festival? |
| Section 7 | Tea consumption and habits | Where do you drink tea most often? Where do you like to get your tea leaves from the most? Can you rate your level of expertise in the tea industry? Which Indian tea do you prefer to have? |

Table 8 Variable coding

| Construct | Variable | Coding |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| Travel demographics | Annual Income Range | TRD 1 |
| | Travel Experience | TRD 2 |
| | Travel frequency level | TRD 3 |
| | Traveling purpose | TRD 4 |
| Travel preferences | Destination Preferences | TRP 1 |
| | Cuisine Preference while Traveling | TRP 2 |
| | Various Drinks during Traveling | TRP 3 |
| Tea preferences | Preference of Tea while Traveling | TP 1 |
| | Preference of Tea in one day | TP 2 |
| | Tea or Various Drinks Preference during Travel | TP 3 |
| | Hot Tea Preference | TP 4 |
| | Tea Preference Time | TP 5 |
| | Choosing Tea Varieties | TP 6 |
| Tea tourism | Tea Tourism | TT 1 |
| | Tourism Experience | TT 2 |
| | Tea Products Purchase Places | TT 3 |
| Tea culture | Tea Culture Experience | TC1 |
| | Knowledge about Tea Culture | TC2 |
| | Exploration of Tea Culture | TC3 |
| Tea festival experience | Tea Tourism Festival | TF1 |
| | Tea Tourism Festivals at Darjeeling and Assam | TF2 |
| | Participation in Tea Festival | TF3 |
| Tea consumption and habits | Consumption Habits | TCH1 |
| | Purchasing Preferences | TCH2 |
| | Expertise Assessment | TCH3 |
| | Indian Tea Consumption | TCH4 |

Supplementary Information

The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00215-1>.

Additional file 1.

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Author contributions

All authors have contributed equally to this research article.

Funding

The authors received no specific funding for this work.

Availability of data and materials

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Received: 5 April 2023 Accepted: 30 November 2023

Published online: 05 February 2024

References

- Pandey AK, Dinesh K, Yadav S, Sharma HK, Babu A. Functional traits and phylogenetic analysis of top-soil inhabiting rhizobacteria associated with tea rhizospheres in North Bengal, India. *Current Research in Microbial Sciences*. 2023; p. 100200.
- Gupta V, Sajjani M, Dixit SK, Khanna K. Foreign tourist's tea preferences and relevance to destination attraction in India. *Tour Recreat Res*. 2022;47(4):428–42.
- Liu AB. *Tea War: A History of Capitalism in China and India*. New Haven: Yale University Press; 2020.
- Tao L, Liao J, Zheng R, Zhang X, Shang H. Association of drinking herbal tea with activities of daily living among elderly: a latent class analysis. *Nutrients*. 2023;15(12):2796.
- Sen S, Rai M, Das D, Chandra S, Acharya K. Blister blight a threatened problem in tea industry: a review. *J King Saud Univ Sci*. 2020;32(8):3265–72.
- Jabeen G, Wang D, Isik C, Alvarado R, Ongan S. Role of energy utilization intensity, technical development, economic openness, and foreign tourism in environmental sustainability. *Gondwana Res*. 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jgr.2023.03.001>.
- Qiao G, Song H, Prideaux B, Huang SS. The “unseen” tourism: Travel experience of people with visual impairment. *Ann Tour Res*. 2023;99: 103542.
- Zhou Q, Pu Y, Su C. The mediating roles of memorable tourism experiences and destination image in the correlation between cultural

- heritage rejuvenation experience quality and revisiting intention. *Asia Pac J Mark Logist.* 2023;35(6):1313–29.
9. Su MM, Wall G, Wang Y. Integrating tea and tourism: a sustainable livelihoods approach. *J Sustain Tour.* 2019;27(10):1591–608.
 10. Jakubczyk K, Kałduńska J, Kochman J, Janda K. Chemical profile and antioxidant activity of the kombucha beverage derived from white, green, black and red tea. *Antioxidants.* 2020;9(5):447.
 11. Tiwari S, Mohanty PP, Fernando IN, Cifci I, Kuruva MB Bridging tea with tourism: empirical evidence from India and Sri Lanka. *Tour Rev.* 2023;78(1):177–202.
 12. Liang SH, Lai IKW. Tea tourism: designation of origin brand image, destination image, and visit intention. *J Vacat Mark.* 2023;29(3):409–27.
 13. Cheng SW, Xu FF, Zhang J, Zhang YT. Tourists' attitudes toward tea-tourism: a case study in Xinyang, China. *J Travel Tour Mark.* 2010;27(2):211–20.
 14. Hall CM, Mitchell R, Sharples L. Consuming Places: The Role of Food, Wine and Tourism in Regional Development. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann; 2003.
 15. Boniface P. Tasting Tourism: Traveling for Food and Drink. London: Routledge; 2017.
 16. Deka N, Goswami K. Economic sustainability of organic cultivation of Assam tea produced by small-scale growers. *Sustain Prod Consum.* 2021;26:111–25.
 17. Zhang S, Yang C, Sheng Y, Liu X, Yuan W, Deng X, Li X, Huang W, Zhang Y, Li L, Lv Y. A nomogram model for predicting the polyphenol content of Pu-Erh tea. *Foods.* 2023;12(11):2128.
 18. Abdullah A, Khan SM, Pieroni A, Haq A, Haq ZU, Ahmad Z, Sakhi S, Hashem A, Al-Arjani ABF, Alqarawi AA, Abd Allah EF. A comprehensive appraisal of the wild food plants and food system of tribal cultures in the Hindu Kush Mountain Range; a way forward for balancing human nutrition and food security. *Sustainability.* 2021;13(9):5258.
 19. Deb M, Sharma VK, Panchapakesan P. Sustainable practices, mindfulness, tranquility, and well-being: A mixed-method approach. *J Destin Mark Manag.* 2023;30: 100816.
 20. Siegmann KA, Sathi S. Unfreedoms in south India's tea value chain: reproduction and resistance: contribution to Globalizations Special Issue on 'Unfreedom in Labor Relations: from a politics of rescue towards a politics of solidarity? *Globalizations.* 2022;19(6):971–88.
 21. Yu R, Wang Q, Cheong KC. More than tea-environmental decay, administrative isolation and the struggle for identity in Darjeeling. *Malays J Econ Stud.* 2022;59(1):115–30.
 22. Korani Z, Mirdavoudi K. A cup of tea in history: visitors' perception of the Iran Tea Museum and the Ho Yan Hor Museum in the modern age (a comparative study). *Museum Manag Curatorship.* 2022;37(3):307–29.
 23. Sarma SK. Encountering State: A Study of State–Society Interface in the Tea Garden Labour Community of the Brahmaputra Valley, Assam (Doctoral dissertation). 2022.
 24. Saha S, Ghosh A, Acharyya S, Sarkar S. Fusion of tea infusion and Bakhar (starter of ethnic liquor Haria) to develop "tea Haria": a novel approach to ferment tea with insight into in vitro biochemical attributes and metabolomics. *J Food Technol.* 2022;9(1):1–17.
 25. Nair AV, Damani A, Khandelwal D, Sachdev H, Jain S. Study on the tea market in India. *arXiv preprint arXiv:2304.07851.* 2023.
 26. Rashid M. Challenges of tourism in Bangladesh: Comparison with some Finnish tourism sectors. 2023.
 27. Yilmaz G, Kumar Dixit S. Analyzing tea tourism products and experiences from India and Turkey: supply proclivities. *Tourism.* 2023;71(2):331–48.
 28. Bhatta KD, Joshi BR. Community collaboration with tourism stakeholders: Issues and challenges to promote sustainable community development in Annapurna Sanctuary Trail, Nepal. *Saudi J Eng Technol.* 2023;8(6):146–54.
 29. Solak BB, Amin SB. Tea Tourism and the Importance of Tea Tourists' Guidance in India. In *Cases on tour guide practices for alternative tourism.* IGI Global 2020; p. 119–131.
 30. Mondal S, Samaddar K. Exploring the current issues, challenges and opportunities in tea tourism: a morphological analysis. *Int J Cult Tour Hosp Res.* 2021;15(3):312–27.
 31. Prasath JM, Wickramaratne MAPDP. Present status and future prospects of tea tourism in Nuwara-Eliya area. In: *Proceedings of International Forestry and Environment Symposium.* 2019.
 32. Wijesundara SR, Gnanapala AC. An Analysis of the Tourists' Behavior on Tea Tourism in Sri Lanka. 2019.
 33. Karuri AN. Adaptation of small-scale tea and coffee farmers in Kenya to climate change. *African Handbook of Climate Change Adaptation.* 2020; p. 1–19.
 34. Khaokhrueamuang A, Chueamchaitrakun P. Tea cultural commodification in sustainable tourism: perspectives from Thai and Japanese farmer exchange. *Special Issue of Rajabhat Chiang Mai Research Journal.* 2019; p. 104–117.
 35. Sharples L. 2008. Tea and Tourism: Tourists, Traditions and Transformations, L. Jolliffe, Channel View Publications, Clevedon (2006), 262pp., £29.95 (pbk), ISBN: 13: 978-1-84541-056-89.
 36. Gunasekara RB, Momsen JH. Amidst the misty mountains: The role of tea tourism in Sri Lanka's turbulent tourist industry. *Tea and tourism: Tourists, traditions and transformations.* 2007;84–97.
 37. Gupta S, Saha B, Giri AK. Comparative antimutagenic and anticlastogenic effects of green tea and black tea: a review. *Mutat Res.* 2002;512(1):37–65.
 38. Drew L. The growth of tea. *Nature.* 2019;566(7742):S2–S2.
 39. Hill Z, Zafar S, Soremekun S, Sikander S, Avan BI, Roy R, Aziz S, Kumar D, Parveen N, Saleem S, Verma D. Can home visits for early child development be implemented with sufficient coverage and quality at scale? Evidence from the SPRING program in India and Pakistan. *Front Nutr.* 2023;10:1152548.
 40. Su X, Zhang H. Tea drinking and the tastescape of wellbeing in tourism. *Tour Geogr.* 2022;24(6–7):1061–81.
 41. Samanta S. Potential bioactive components and health promotional benefits of tea (*Camellia sinensis*). *J Am Nutr Assoc.* 2022;41(1):65–93.
 42. Bohne H. Uniqueness of tea traditions and impacts on tourism: The East Frisian tea culture. *Int J Cult Tour Hosp Res.* 2021;15(3):371–83.
 43. Xia M, Zhang Y, Gu R. Creative tea beverages as a new tourism attraction? Exploring determinants of tourists' repurchase intention using dual process theory. *Sustainability.* 2023;15(13):10642.
 44. Basak D, Bose A, Roy S, Chowdhury IR, Sarkar BC. Understanding sustainable homestay tourism as a driving factor of tourist's satisfaction through structural equation modeling: a case of Darjeeling Himalayan region, India. *Curr Res Environ Sustain.* 2021;3: 100098.

Publisher's Note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.