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A Study on Effect of Consumption Taxes on Household Behaviours

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Abstract: *This study examines that how consumption taxes affect its household buying behavior, paying attention to saving and budgeting behavior, spending trends on any household products and its financial decision-making. All indirect taxes including Value-Added Tax (VAT), Sales Tax, and Excise Duties are examples of consumption taxes, which are indirect taxes and imposed on goods and services. These are effective to generating income for governments in many ways. If will compared to income taxes, they are easier to administer and have lower opportunities for evasion and avoidance. Thus, because they are regressive, they may not appropriately affect low-income households, affecting their necessary consumption and their lifestyle choices. Therefore, particular reference to the US, Japan, and India, this study investigates the historical background of consumption taxes and looks at how they relate to other types of household taxes and its household behaviors.*

Keywords: Consumption Taxes, Household behaviors

I. INTRODUCTION

A consumption tax can be paid directly or indirectly by the consumer and is imposed on the purchase of products and services. The money spent on consumption is subject to this kind of indirect tax. Sales taxes, excise taxes, value-added taxes (VAT), and tariffs are a few types of consumption taxes. A tax which was levid on domestic consumption is tax which the government collects after the sale of a particular commodity . The tax may be imposed as a particular tax as an ad valorem tax (a percentage of the good's worth)

Excise taxes, in particular, have been a part of a number of significant historical occurrences. Stamp taxes, tea taxes, and whiskey taxes all led to uprisings in the United States; the first two were against the British authority, and the last one was against the federal government. An excise levy on salt in India sparked Mohandas Gandhi's well-known Salt March, which was a pivotal moment in the Indian Independence Movement.

1.1. Objective of household taxing:

Household taxation plays a critical role in ensuring governments have the financial resources needed to deliver essential services and maintain stable economies. By imposing taxes on households, governments aim to achieve several economic, social, and administrative goals. The following provides an in-depth exploration of the objectives of household taxation:

1.2. Revenue Generation:

One of the primary objectives of household taxation is to raise revenue for the government. Taxes collected from households provide the financial backbone for various public services and initiatives. These funds ensure the functioning of the government and the welfare of its citizens. Moreover, household taxation ensures that funding is distributed across regions and communities to maintain equitable access to public services. Taxes like property tax, local council tax, and utility tax also create a steady revenue stream for municipalities to manage their day-to-day operations.

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1.3. Redistribution of Wealth

Another critical objective of household taxation is the redistribution of wealth to reduce income inequality. Progressive tax systems, where higher earners pay a larger percentage of their income in taxes, are designed to narrow the wealth gap between rich and poor. By collecting higher taxes from affluent households, governments can fund programs that directly benefit low-income families, such as subsidized healthcare, housing, and education.

1.4. Economic Stabilization

Taxes are vital tools for maintaining economic stability. Through household taxation, governments can regulate inflation, control spending, and influence economic growth. During times of economic expansion, higher taxes can be used to curb excessive spending and prevent inflation. Conversely, during recessions, tax relief or reductions can stimulate economic activity by increasing disposable income for households

1.5. Classification of Tax

They are divided into direct and indirect taxes. Direct taxes are on income, and indirect taxes are levied on goods and services. Examples of direct taxes include income tax. Example of indirect taxes includes Goods and Service Tax {GST}

1.6. Legal and Regualary Framework

Taxes in India are levied by the Central Government and the State Governments by virtue of powers conferred to them from the Constitution of India. Some minor taxes are also levied by the local authorities such as the Municipality. The authority to levy a tax is derived from the Constitution of India which allocates the power to levy various taxes between the Union Government and the State Governments. An important restriction on this power is Article 265 of the Constitution which states that "No tax shall be levied or collected except by the authority of law". Therefore, each tax levied or collected must be backed by an accompanying law, passed either by the Parliament or the State Legislature. Nonetheless, tax evasion is a massive problem in India, catalyzing various negative effects on the country. In 2023–24, the Direct tax collections reported by CBDT were approximately ₹1,900,000 crore (equivalent to ₹21 trillion or US$260 billion (about $800 per person in the US) in 2023).

Household taxes are levies imposed by governments on individuals or families, typically related to their homes, income, or personal activities. These taxes vary by jurisdiction and may be imposed at national, state, or local levels. Below are detailed definitions of various types of household taxes:

1) Property Tax: A tax levied on the value of real estate owned by individuals or households.
2) Income Tax: A tax on the income earned by individuals or households.
3) Sales Tax: A tax on goods and services purchased by households. Value-Added Tax (VAT)/
4) Goods and Services Tax (GST): A consumption tax added at each stage of production or distribution of goods and services.
5) Capital Gains Tax: A tax on profits earned from selling assets like property or stocks.
6) Inheritance/Estate Tax: A tax on the transfer of wealth upon an individual's death.

These taxes together form the financial obligations households face, and the specifics vary widely by location and governing laws.

1.7. Rights and Obligation

The government is obligated to provide clear information on tax liabilities and any amendments in tax laws. 2) Right to Privacy: Taxpayers' financial and personal information is protected under law, and the tax authorities are required to maintain confidentiality.

II. RESEARCH AND METHODLOGY

2.1. Objective of Study

i. To evaluate how changes in consumption taxes affect households' choice of goods and services.

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ii. To investigate how households adjust their spending habits due to changes in their disposable income.
iii. To examine how consumption taxes affect households across different income groups.
iv. To determine if and how consumption taxes influence household savings rates
v. To explore whether changes in consumption taxes affect households' labor supply decisions.

2.2. Scope of Study

The scope of a study on the effects of consumption taxes on household behavior includes several key dimensions. Geographically, it may focus on specific countries or regions, as well as comparing urban and rural households. It also examines different household characteristics, such as income levels, demographics, and consumption preferences. The study typically analyzes several types of taxes, including VAT, sales tax, and excise duties, and how changes in tax rates impact behavior. The time horizon could involve both short-term and long-term effects, assessing immediate and gradual adjustments in consumption, saving, and labor supply. The study also considers key economic variables like disposable income, savings, and labor market participation. It evaluates how different households are affected by the tax burden, particularly whether the tax is regressive (disproportionately impacting lower-income groups) or progressive

2.3. Limitations of Study

1) Due to limitation of time and sources, data was collected only from respondents.
2) In some primary data collection methods, there is no control over the data collection.
3) Some respondents do not give timely responses. Sometimes the respondents may give fake, socially acceptable and sweet answers and try to cover up the realities.
4) The data collected by the third party may not be a reliable party, so the reliability and accuracy of the data may go down.

2.4. Significance of Study

The significance of studying the effects of consumption taxes on household behavior lies in its potential to inform policymaking, promote economic equity, and improve overall social welfare. Understanding how consumption taxes influence household decisions help governments design tax policies that are both efficient and equitable. This is particularly important because consumption taxes, such as VAT or sales taxes, often have regressive effects, meaning they disproportionately affect low-income households. By studying these impacts, policymakers can better address income inequality and consider measures such as tax exemptions or rebates for essential goods to protect vulnerable populations. Additionally, this research provides insights into household consumption patterns, savings, and labor supply responses to tax changes.

2.5. Types of Study

• Non – Probability. Exploratory and Descriptive Experimental research

The research is primary, exploratory, and descriptive. Primary and Secondary sources of information are considered. A well–structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the perception of the respondent, through this questionnaire.

2.6. Hypothesis Testing

H1- Increases in consumption taxes significantly reduce household consumption, with a greater impact on lower-income households compared to higher-income households.

H0- Increases in consumption taxes have no significant effect on household consumption behavior across income levels

H1- The impact of consumption taxes is uniform across all income levels, with no significant differences between low- and high-income households.

H0- Consumption taxes have a greater negative impact on the consumption behavior of lower- income households compared to higher-income households.

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2.7. Sample Size

The sample size denotes the number of elements selected for stud. For the present study questionnaire distribution of 132 individuals is made.

Sample method: Random sampling is used for research project., Data representation techniques and tools: Columns charts and pie charts were used for the Representation.

2.8. Data Collection Method

Survey Method: Online

Survey Instrument: Questionnaire

Method of Survey: Through the personal interaction with the help of questionnaire

2.9. Questionaire Design

Here in our research, we set questions for individuals for which answers can be filled out with minimum amount of time and effort and request the respondents to answer these questions with correct information. The questionnaire consists of close ended questions.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pigovian Taxes (1920): Pigou introduced the idea of corrective consumption taxes to address externalities, such as environmental damage from fuel consumption. These taxes are designed to alter behavior by encouraging households to shift towards more socially desirable consumption patterns.

Ramsey Rule (1927): Ramsey's seminal work established that to minimize economic distortions, taxes should be levied at rates inversely proportional to the elasticity of demand for goods. This implies that essential goods with inelastic demand (e.g., food and medicine) should be taxed more lightly, as higher taxes on such goods disproportionately burden households.

Modern Taxation Theories: Contemporary theories highlight the trade-offs between equity and efficiency. Consumption taxes are often considered regressive, as they impose a higher relative burden on lower-income households. However, proponents argue that they are less distortionary than income taxes, making them more efficient for economic growth.

Short-Term Effects: Studies show that an increase in consumption taxes leads to an immediate reduction in household spending. For example, Crossley, Low, and Sleeman (2014) examined the introduction of VAT in the UK and found a sharp decline in household spending following the tax hike. Households tend to delay discretionary purchases, particularly for durable goods, in anticipation of higher taxes.

Long-Term Effects: Over time, households may adjust their consumption habits by substituting taxed goods with untaxed or lower-taxed alternatives. Research by Taubinsky and Rees-Jones (2018) highlights how households with lower financial literacy are slower to adapt, leading to prolonged financial strain for vulnerable groups.

Elasticity of Demand: The impact of consumption taxes varies based on the price elasticity of goods. Luxuries with high elasticity, such as electronics, show a significant reduction in demand, while necessities with inelastic demand, such as food, experience relatively minor changes.

Shift from Spending to Saving: Higher consumption taxes incentivize households to reduce consumption and increase savings. This shift is particularly evident in high-income households, which have greater flexibility to delay consumption. Auerbach and Kotlikoff (1987) developed intertemporal models showing that consumption taxes promote long-term savings but may reduce short-term economic activity.

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IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. AFFECT ON YOUR HOUSEHOULD SPENDING

AFFECT ON YOUR HOUSEHOULD SPENDING	NUMBER OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	4	4%
2	17	17.2%
3	52	52.5%
4	12	12.1%
5	14	14.1%

INTERPRETATION

The image shows a data table and a bar chart analyzing the effect of a factor on household spending. The table consists of three columns: "Effect on Your Household Spending," "Number of Response," and "Percentage." Five response categories are provided, ranging from low (1) to high (5). Most respondents, 52.5%, selected a rating of 3, indicating a moderate impact on household spending. Smaller percentages rated it as very low (4%) or very high (14.1%). The bar chart visually represents this data, showing the distribution of responses across the five categories. This analysis highlights that most participants perceive a moderate impact on household spending due to the surveyed factor.

4.2. FAMILIAR WITH CURRENT TAX POLICY

FAMILIAR WITH CURRENT TAX POLICY	NUMBER OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
VERY FAMILIAR	27	26.5%
SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR	56	54.9%
NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR	19	18.6%

INTERPRETATION:

The chart shows responses from 103 individuals regarding their familiarity with current tax policies impacting their households. The majority of respondents, 55.3%, indicated they are "not familiar at all" with these policies. A smaller group, 26.2%, reported being "somewhat familiar," while only 18.4% claimed to be "very familiar." This data highlights a general lack of awareness among respondents about tax policies, which could have implications for their financial decision- making and household management strategies.

4.3. STRATEGIES

STRAGIES	NUMBER OF RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
BUDEGTING MONTHLY EXPENESES	40	39.2%
CONSULTING A FINACIAL ADVISOR	25	24.5%
TAKING ADAVANTAGE OF DEDUCTION	32	31.4%
SAVING TAX	22	21.6%
INVESTING IN TAX EFFICIENT FUNDS	13	12.7%

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INTERPRETATION: The data shows that the most common strategy households use to manage tax consumption is budgeting monthly expenses, with 39.2% of respondents adopting this approach. Taking advantage of tax deductions is the second most popular strategy (31.4%), followed by consulting a financial advisor (24.5%). Saving more and investing in tax-efficient funds are fewer common strategies, used by 21.6% and 12.7% of households, respectively. This indicates a preference for straightforward financial management methods over more specialized approaches.

4.4. MANAGE THE HOUSEHOLD TAXES

MANAGE THE HOUSEHOLD TAXES	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	4	4%
2	2	2%
3	18	17.8%
4	10	19.8%
5	32	31.7%
6	8	7.9%
7	10	9.9%
8	4	4%
9	0	0%
10	3	3%

INTERPRETATION: Most households feel moderately confident about their ability to handle taxes, which may suggest a general understanding of the subject but also room for improvement through education or guidance.

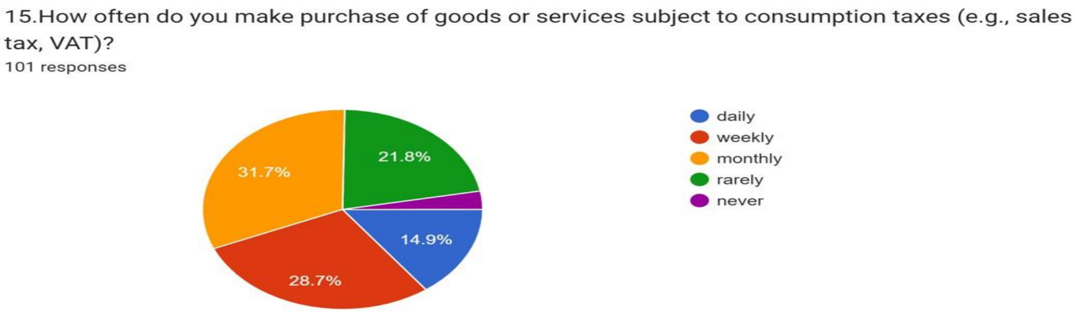
4.5. FINANCIAL DECISION WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBER

FINANCIAL DECISION WITH HOUSEHOLD MEMBER	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
DAILY	16	16%
WEEKLY	30	30%
MONTHLY	24	24%
RARELY	23	23%
NEVER	7	7%

INTERPRETATION: About 30% of respondents discuss financial decisions related to taxes weekly, followed by 24% who do so monthly. Rarely and never responses are also significant at 23% and 7%, respectively. Only 16% discuss taxes daily.

4.6. FACTOR FOR PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES

FACTOR FOR PURCHASE OF GOODS AND SERVICES	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
DAILY	15	14.9%
WEEKLY	29	28.7%
MONTHLY	32	31.7%
RARELY	22	21.8%
NEVER	3	3%



INTERPRETATION

The data shows how frequently respondents make purchases of goods or services subject to consumption taxes (e.g., sales tax, VAT). The largest portion of respondents (31.7%) reported making such purchases monthly, followed by 28.7% making them weekly, and 14.9% making purchases daily. Meanwhile, 21.8% indicated they rarely make these purchases, and a small minority (3%) stated they never do. This suggests that the majority of respondents engage in taxable transactions regularly, with most making purchases either weekly or monthly.

4.7. TAX AFFECT HOUSEHOLD FINACIAL WELL BEING

TAX AFFECT HOUSEHOLD FINACIAL WELL BEING	RESPOND	PERCENTAGE
VERY NEGATIVELTY	17	16.8%
SOMEWHAT NEGATIVELTY	54	53.5%
NO IMPACT	23	22.8%
VERY POSITIVELY	7	6.9%

INTERPRETATION

The data shows the impact of consumption taxes on household financial well-being. A majority (53.5%) of respondents feel somewhat negatively affected, while 16.8% feel very negatively impacted, totaling 70.3% experiencing a negative effect. About 22.8% report no impact, and only 6.9% feel very positively affected. This indicates that most households perceive consumption taxes as having a detrimental effect on their financial situation.

4.8. MANAGING YOUR HOUSEHOLD TAX

MANAGING YOUR HOUSEHOLD TAX	RESPOND	PERCENTAGE
YES	81	81.8%
NO	18	18.2%

INTERPRETATION

The data indicates that 81.8% of respondents believe higher consumption taxes lead to changes in how they manage their household budgets, while only 18.2% do not see any impact. This suggests that the majority of individuals adapt their financial planning and spending habits in response to increased taxation, highlighting its influence on household financial decisions.

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4.9. HOW DO YOU MANAGE LUXURY AND NON ESSENTAIL GOODS

HOW DO YOU MANAGE LUXURY AND NON ESSENTAIL GOODS IF GOVENMENT INCREASES THE TAX	RESPOND	PERCENTAGE
VERY LIKELY	24	24%
SOMEWHAT LIKELY	47	47%
NOT VERY LIKELY	23	23%
NOT AT ALL LIKELY	6	6%

INTERPRETATION

The data reveals that 71% of respondents are likely to adjust their consumption of luxury or non- essential goods if the government increases consumption taxes (24% very likely and 47% somewhat likely). Meanwhile, 23% are not very likely, and only 6% are not at all likely to change their consumption habits. This suggests that the majority are sensitive to tax increases and willing to reduce spending on non-essential items.

4.10. FACTOR WHICH HAS HIGHER CONSMPTION TAXES

FACTOR WHICH HAS HIGHER CONSMPTION TAXES	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
ALOCHOL	33	32.4%
TABACCO	25	24.5%
JUNK FOOD	19	18.6%
GASOLINE	4	3.9%
LUXURY GOODS	21	20.6%

INTERPRETATION

The data reveals that most respondents (32.4%) believe alcohol should have higher consumption taxes, followed by tobacco (24.5%). Luxury goods (20.6%) and junk food (18.6%) received moderate support, while gasoline (3.9%) was the least favored for higher taxes. This indicates a preference for taxing products associated with health risks, while essential items like gasoline are less supported for increased taxation

4.11. HYPOTHESIS TESTING: ANOVA Testing

HYPOTHESIS 1

H1: Increases in consumption taxes significantly reduce household consumption, with a greater impact on lower-income households compared to higher-income households.

H0: Increases in consumption taxes have no significant effect on household consumption behavior across income levels.

SUMMARY	Count	Sum	Average	Variance		
	2	36	18	0		
1	2	37	18.5	0.5		
	2	6	3	0		
	2	38	19	0		
	2	38	19	0		
1	1	1	1			
4	2	202	101	8		
22	6	176	29.33	1203.467		

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24	7	182	26	1215.667		
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Rows	13338.73077	6	2223.121	-405.717	1	4.950288
Columns	35.8974359	1	35.89743	-6.55124	1	6.607891
Error	-27.3974359	5	- 5.4794872			
Total	13347.23077	12				

INTERPRETATION

The ANOVA results indicate that the F-values for rows and columns exceed the critical values (F crit), and the P-values are below the standard significance level (e.g., 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that the tested factors significantly influence consumer behavior

V. FINDING, SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. FINDINGS

The pie chart on household income reveals a wide income distribution, with a majority of households earning less than ₹4,00,000 annually. Higher tax rates on lower-income groups could severely impact consumption behavior, as these households may already prioritize essential expenditures. For the “less than ₹2,00,000” and “₹2,00,000–₹4,00,000” categories (each at 28.4%), increased taxation may force them to cut back on discretionary spending or delay significant financial decisions like education or home ownership. Conversely, households earning “more than ₹8,00,000” (11.8%) may have more capacity to absorb tax burdens, suggesting that progressive taxation can achieve greater equity without severely disrupting consumption for lower-income groups. Education Levels and Financial Planning (Chart 4 - Education Qualification): With 49.5% of respondents being graduates and 27.2% holding postgraduate degrees, households with higher educational qualifications are likely to have greater financial literacy. This suggests they may be more responsive to tax incentives and deductions, such as those for investments, health insurance, or savings. However, 11.7% of respondents with only 12th-grade education may lack access to such tax-planning opportunities, indicating the need for simplified tax systems and better financial education for lower-educated households.

The employment status chart indicates that 30.4% of respondents are in jobs, and 21.6% are engaged in businesses, meaning a majority contribute directly to taxable income. Taxation policies that promote entrepreneurial activities (such as reduced taxes on small businesses) could benefit the business group, while tax deductions for salaried employees could incentivize productivity and stability. On the other hand, the unemployed group (24.5%) and students (23.5%) represent segments that may rely on government support or lower tax liabilities. Taxation designed to redistribute resources effectively can ensure financial security for these groups without compromising growth. Taxation and Savings Behavior: Across income and employment categories, savings behavior is sensitive to tax incentives.

5.2 SUGGESTION

Taxation plays a crucial role in shaping household behavior, influencing decisions related to consumption, savings, investments, and labor supply. Households respond to changes in taxation based on how taxes impact their disposable income, financial priorities, and overall economic stability. These responses, while varying across income levels and demographics, often highlight key economic trade-offs and behavioral adjustments.

5.2.1.Impact on Consumption and Savings: Higher taxes reduce disposable income, which directly impacts a household’s ability to spend on goods and services. As a result, households may prioritize essential expenditures while cutting back on discretionary spending such as entertainment, travel, or luxury goods. This shift in consumption patterns can have ripple effects on various industries, particularly those dependent on discretionary spending. Simultaneously, higher taxes may reduce households’ capacity to save, particularly among lower-income groups, which could limit their ability to invest in long-term goals such as education, retirement, or property acquisition.

5.2.2. Effect on Investments: Tax policies, especially those related to capital gains, interest income, and dividends, significantly influence household investment decisions. For instance, favorable tax incentives on retirement accounts or housing loans may encourage households to allocate more funds toward these goals. Conversely, high taxation on investment returns can discourage risk-taking and reduce participation in financial markets. Households may opt for safer, tax-efficient investment options or shift their focus toward tax-advantaged schemes to maximize returns.

5.3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of the relationship between taxation and household consumption reveals insightful dynamics shaping economic behaviors. The study highlights a diverse demographic representation, with significant variations observed across income levels and regional settings. A distinct emphasis emerges on the sensitivity of lower-income households to consumption taxes, particularly indirect taxes such as GST, which disproportionately affect their spending on essential goods and services. Urban households demonstrate greater adaptability to tax changes, reflecting higher disposable income and access to tax-saving mechanisms. Gender-specific trends indicate nuanced patterns, with women-led households often allocating a larger share of their income towards healthcare and education, sectors heavily influenced by tax policies. Employment type and income stability emerge as pivotal factors influencing the capacity of households to absorb tax burdens, revealing economic disparities that demand targeted interventions.

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