

## **Customer Satisfaction In A Tribal Marketing Context: The Case Of Elam Industry In Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh**

**Anisha Kri, Yab Rajiv Camder, Koptik Mossang, Takam Mema**

*PG Student Department Of Commerce, Arunachal Pradesh University, Pasighat - 791103*

*Assistant Professor, Department Of Commerce, Arunachal Pradesh University, Pasighat - 791103*

*Assistant Professor (Guest), Department Of Commerce, Arunachal Pradesh University, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh – 791103*

*Phd Scholar, Department Of Sociology, Rajiv Gandhi University, Rono Hills, Doimukh - 791123*

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### **Abstract**

*The Elam industry maneuver in the tribal markets of Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, has eccentric consumer behavior patterns that are not wholly documented in existing literature. This study explores customer satisfaction within the Pasighat, Elam industry, capturing pivotal insights into demographics, preferences, and challenges faced in the industry. Primary data was accumulated using structured questionnaires from 30 respondents. Descriptive and exploratory approaches were applied through convenience sampling. The findings revealed moderate satisfaction levels, with issues such as home delivery, high pricing, product durability, and product availability being the major concerns for customers. Therefore, the study highlights the need for improved distribution channels and pricing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction in tribal regions.*

**Keywords:** *Customer satisfaction, Elam industry, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, Tribal Markets*

*Date of Submission: 26-07-2025*

*Date of Acceptance: 06-08-2025*

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### **I. Introduction**

A marketing concept can be defined as a mindset, a way of doing business, or both. Customers want to feel that a company's existence is justified both socially and economically. As a result, a company's whole marketing, engineering, manufacturing, and finance endeavors must be focused on first identifying the needs of its customers and then meeting that need of its customers and then meeting those needs at an acceptable profit (Kalaigannam et al., 2021). To improve customer satisfaction, retail managers must teach or choose retail employees who can carry out their responsibilities with a service-oriented mindset (Tran & Le, 2020).

The present study has explored various marketing concepts, including production, product, selling, marketing, and societal marketing, to learn what the impact is on consumer satisfaction and market leadership. It is also related to necessities to investigate how various notions have operated in the past and what practices have evolved. The development of the internet changed how businesses conducted business, especially in the retail sector, where e-commerce is the term for the business model used to deliver a service online. Though most marketers agree that's important to interact with clients on social media, just a small percentage of businesses have effectively planned their social media presence and activity (Li et al., 2021).

### **Meaning of Customer Satisfaction**

Satisfaction to customer is one of the vital issues however it is important for both customer as well as organization, satisfaction is defined as act of providing what is need and desire and the act of satisfying a need or desire in a particular way (Singh, Raj Kumar., 2022).

The satisfaction concept comprises of cognitive element but it also includes an emotional element while determining the customer's satisfaction. The organizations today are quick to note the element playing a role in satisfying and retaining their customer (Gadekar, Vitthal Laxman., 2018).

### **Meaning of Tribal Marketing**

An individual is no longer defined as a set of socio-economic criteria (age, sex, nationality) but as a socially active being who plays a role in different "communities" called tribes (Maffesoli, 1996). It is through the analysis of these tribes that marketers create the most accurate socio-psychological profile possible and relevant to postmodern society. Traditional segmentation has become a social segmentation (Cova & Cova., 2002). For example, a person living in the same house as their sister, being nearly the same age, can consumer differently and belong to two different tribes. The emotional and experiential dimensions of consumption have become much

more important than they are limited to traditional segmentation (Hetzel, 2002). The community dimensions make sense in tribal marketing, as the consumer is looking for a social connection (Maffesoli., 1988).

Each consumer has a different perception of things because their current world is subject to many external elements that influence their judgement, including the internet (Allen., 2019).

### **About Pasighat**

Pasighat, often known as the Gateway of Arunachal Pradesh, is the oldest town in the state, as in founded in 1911 by the British. Located in the East Siang district, it lies on the banks of the magnificent Siang River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra. Pasighat, serves as a key commercial and educational hub in the region integrated into smart cities Mission in June 2017, with major infrastructure investments around Rs 1,534 crore (Administration & Pasighat,2025). It is predominantly inhabited by the Adi tribe, referred for their rich traditions, vibrant festivals like solung, and handicrafts.

The economy of Pasighat, is largely engaged with rice, oranges, and ginger being prominent crops as a self- sufficiency livelihood. In recent years, small- scale industries like the Elam industry have incorporated, reflecting the gradual industrial development of the town. The growing number of tourism attraction is also expanding sch as the Daying Ering Wildlife Sanctuary, river rafting, and scenic viewpoints drawing nature lovers. Despite facing challenges like poor infrastructure and limited connectivity, Pasighat continues to progress as a bridge between tradition and modernity, symbolizing the dynamic vicinity of Arunachal Pradesh.

## **II. Statement Of The Problem**

Customer satisfaction is defined as an ‘evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations and the actual performance of the product’ (Tse and Wilton, 1988, Oliver 1999). Satisfaction of customers with products and services of a company is considered as most important factor leading toward competitiveness and success (Hennig-Thurau and Klee, 1997). Therefore, it becomes essential to understand the specific expectations, preferences, and satisfaction drivers of tribal consumers. Without this understanding, Elam Industry—and similar local enterprises—may struggle to adapt their strategies to retain customers and foster loyalty in a competitive environment. This study addresses the gap by investigating customer satisfaction levels, identifying key influencing factors, and evaluating the effectiveness of Elam Industry’s products and services from a local consumer perspective in Pasighat.

## **III. Research Methodology**

The study adopts a descriptive research design to systematically evaluate customer satisfaction levels among Elam Industry’s consumers in Pasighat. This approach helps to collect factual and attitudinal data from respondents. A sample of 32 customers was selected based on the Non-Probability Random Sampling technique, and the 2 leading heads of Elam industry were interviewed to assess collective ground information. Structured questionnaires were administered to customers to gather quantitative data on satisfaction levels. The secondary data were gathered from a range of sources, including both published and unpublished materials. The research was conducted in Pasighat, focusing on urban and semi-urban tribal populations who regularly engage with Elam Industry.

## **IV. Scope Of The Study**

The study is limited to the town of Pasighat i.e., Tebo village, Gtc, Main market in Arunachal Pradesh, focusing specifically on consumers of Elam Industry. The research includes a diverse range of customers from different tribal communities, age groups, and income levels. The study covers aspects of customer satisfaction including product quality, pricing, after-sales service, cultural relevance, and overall consumer experience. Focused solely on Elam Industry and its impact on the local market, without comparison to other brands.

## **V. Review Of Literature**

Prasurama, A, zeithaml, V.A & Berry, L.L, (1988), in their paper defined as a comparison between customer expectation and perception of service. Service quality in general consists of five distinct dimensions: tangibles (Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel), reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness to help customer and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence), and empathy (caring, individualized attention the firm provide its customer).

Narasimhan, P L (2015), studied industrial organization in general and Textile machinery industry for spinning in particular is concentrated in its market structure with hardly four or five major manufacturers engaged in manufacturing and marketing the capital goods. With a view to meet the competition, the individual units try to make the product more unique and perfect with lot of new features added and with improvements. In this process, profitability of the organization suffers not only because of cost push and high price, but also the sales

slowdown resulting in reduced profits. A high level of quality and along with the requirements of customers are required to satisfy the customer and at the same time the economy of the operation, and return of investment are to be considered.

Singh, Raj Kumar, (2022), study says packing and packaging both has become most significant issue measured by the customer on the time of purchasing and consumption of product. In the textile industry satisfaction level of customer always measured by various issues related to packing and packaging of the cloths as well as another product, therefore it has become great responsibility of textile industry to focuses on various issues who's directly dealt with packing and packaging of the products. packing and packaging may play important role towards consumption experience of the customer on the other hand consumer product companies focuses on packing and packaging directly impact on satisfaction level of customer.

Elaine Buxton, (2000), in his study research about Companies need customer satisfaction information in order to serve customers better both immediately and in the long run. In this article, customer satisfaction and service measurement studies, such as mystery shopping, are compared and contrasted.

Doug Berdie, (2004), on his research defined as an examination of the role of customer satisfaction research in the business-to-business and consumer settings highlight was show that how each situation influences the measurement of satisfaction.

David R. (2005), on his paper says Customer experience management (CEM) views the customer as a whole series of interactions across a variety of channels. CEM incorporated customer satisfaction and customer experience measurements, as well as customer relationship management, into one complete view of the customer across channels.

## VI. Research Gap

The study reveals a gap in so far that no study is specific in dealing with the Customer Satisfaction in a Tribal Market Context: The Case of Elam Industry in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh, nor does any work reviewed above tried to examine the performance of the textile industry in Pasighat or Arunachal Pradesh in general and the selected industry in particular. The present study is an earnest attempt in the direction of bridging this gap. Majority of the study deals with its scope, significance, necessity, advantages and issues concern for low growth of the industry, but lack concerns for its growth and development in Pasighat.

## VII. Analysis And Interpretation

### Demographic Profile of the Study Area

The study surveyed 32 respondents. Among them two factors such as female and male were interviewed, indicating a tribal female-majority respondent group. The majority belonged to the 21–30 years age group, suggesting a predominantly young population. In terms of education, the maximum respondents were postgraduates, followed by graduates, showing a relatively high educational background. Regarding occupation, most were students, highlighting the influence of educational institutions in the study area.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Variables	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentages
Gender	Male	12	37%
	Female	20	63%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	Below 20	4	12%
	21-30	22	69%
	31-40	5	16%
	41-50	1	3%
	50 and above	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>
Educational Qualification	Below 10th	3	9%
	10th pass	0	0%
	12th pass	5	16%
	Graduate	9	28%
	Postgraduate and above	15	47%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>
Occupation	Student	26	81%
	Government Employee	4	13%
	Private sector	1	4%
	Self- Employed	1	4%
	other	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Computation from Filed Survey Data, 2025

The table above presents the demographic profile of 32 respondents. In the study, it was observed that 37% of the respondents are male, while 63% are female. Regarding age distribution, the majority of the respondents 69% fall within the 21–30 years age group. This is followed by 16% in the 31–40 years category, 12% below 20 years, and 6% above 41 years.

In terms of educational qualifications, the largest proportion of respondents 47% hold a postgraduate degree. This is followed by 28% with graduate-level education, and the Higher secondary level is 16% followed by 9% with only primary-level education.

### Observation During Field Study

During the field study, it was observed that the majority of the respondents were young, educated individuals, primarily students. This suggests that the study area has a youthful demographic with a relatively high level of education. Most participants showed an interest in sustainable products and were open to learning about environmentally responsible practices, although they lacked awareness of specific terms such as "Green Retailing."

Furthermore, the interaction revealed that female respondents were more forthcoming in expressing their preferences and concerns about product quality, pricing, and availability. The dominance of student respondents also reflects that the market in this area may be influenced by educational institutions and youth-centric demand trends. Many respondents displayed limited awareness of local industries, such as Elam Industry, indicating a gap in consumer engagement and marketing reach.

### Elam Industry Products

Elam Industry, a local enterprise in Pasighat, manufactures a variety of consumer products aimed at meeting the everyday needs of the tribal and local population. The company's product range includes school uniforms, jerseys, traditional garments, file covers, handmade sling bags, etc. Henceforth, most products are developed with affordability and local accessibility in mind.

**Table 2:** Awareness Level of Elam Industry's Products (consumers)

Question	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentages
Are you aware of Elam industry products?	Yes	27	90%
	No	3	10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Computation from Field Survey Data, 2025

A total of 32 respondents were interviewed, comprising 30 consumers and 2 representatives from Elam Industry. Among the consumers, the majority (90%) indicated that they are aware of Elam Industry's products, while only 10% reported a lack of awareness. Specifically, 27 out of the 30 consumers expressed familiarity with the company's offerings, highlighting a strong level of brand awareness.

### Observation During Field Study

The field study revealed that while most consumers are aware of Elam Industry's products, their knowledge is limited to a few commonly items like school uniforms and traditional garments. Awareness is mainly driven by local retail availability rather than active marketing. Consumers appreciated the affordability but suggested improvements in packaging and product information. Company representatives recognized the need for better promotional efforts to enhance brand visibility and customer engagement.

### Customer Purchasing Patterns for Elam Industry Products

The purchasing pattern data indicates that 100% of the respondents purchase Elam Industry products occasionally, with none making regular purchases. The study revealed that while consumers are aware of and willing to buy the products occasionally, not regularly.

**Table 3:** Customer Purchasing Patterns for Elam Industry Products

Question	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentages
When do you purchase the product of the Elam industry?	Occasionally	30	100 %
	Regularly	0	0 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**Source:** Computation from Field Survey Data, 2025

All 30 respondents responded that they purchase Elam Industry products occasionally, while no other customer reported regular purchases. This depicts that customer buying behavior is infrequent, possibly influenced by specific needs, seasonal demand, or occasional usage patterns.

### Observation During Field Study

During the field visit, it was observed that most consumers view Elam products as backup options rather than a primary options. This occasional purchasing trend appears to be influenced by factors such as low product visibility, irregular marketing, and competition from other brands. Consumers reported that they often buy Elam products because of the convenience. This indicates a need for improved product development, consistent quality, and promotional strategies to encourage more regular use.

### Customer Satisfaction with Elam Industry's Product Line

The analysis of customer satisfaction shows that a majority of respondents hold a neutral opinion toward Elam Industry's product line. This indicates that while the products are generally accepted by the consumers, there is significant scope for improvement. The large neutral segment suggests that many users are yet to develop a strong preference or loyalty toward the brand and expecting home delivery system. Simultaneously, enhancing product quality, consistency, packaging, and promotional efforts could help improve customer perception and increase satisfaction levels.

**Table 4:** Overall Customer Satisfaction with Elam Industry's Product Line

Variables	Options	No. of Respondents	Percentages
What is your overall satisfaction with Elam Industry's product line?	Very Satisfied	5	16%
	Satisfied	6	20%
	Neutral	16	53%
	Dissatisfied	2	7%
	Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Computation from Filed Survey Data, 2025

The majority of respondents (53.3%) reported a neutral stance toward Elam Industry's product line. A combined 36.7% of respondents expressed satisfaction (either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"), while only 10% reported dissatisfaction. This indicates that while the products are generally well-received, there's potential to improve customer satisfaction and turn more neutral customers into loyal ones.

### Observation During Field Study

During the field study, it was observed that while consumers do not express strong dissatisfaction with Elam Industry's products, many remain indifferent or neutral. This neutrality often stems from a lack of product differentiation, limited branding, and minimal emotional or functional connection with the products. Some respondents mentioned that the products "get the job done" but do not stand out compared to alternatives. A few numbers of satisfied users appreciated the affordability and local production, but concerns were raised about product quality and packaging. The feedback suggests that improving product presentation, variety, and engagement could help convert neutral users into loyal customers.

### Challenges of Elam Industry

Elam Industry is currently facing multiple operational and market-related challenges that hinder its growth and sustainability. One of the primary issues is high production costs, which significantly reduce profit margins and competitiveness. Additionally, the shortage of raw materials, lack of skilled labor, poor infrastructure, low consumer demand, and price fluctuations.

**Table 5:** Major Challenges Affecting Elam Industry's Business

Question	Challenges
According to you, what are the major challenges affecting Elam Industry's business?	High production costs
	Raw material shortages
	Lack of skilled labor
	Poor infrastructure
	Low demand
	price fluctuations

**Source:** Computation from Field Survey Data, 2025

According to the proprietor and the manager of Elam Industry, the business is currently facing several critical challenges that impact both production and overall growth. One of the main issues is high production

costs, which reduce profit margins and make it difficult to stay competitive. The shortage of working capital raw materials complicates operations, often leading to delays and inconsistencies in product availability.

The owner also highlighted a lack of specialized labor, which affects the quality and efficiency of production. This overall issue is closely tied to the region's poor infrastructure, which not only limits access to resources and markets but also affects employee productivity.

Furthermore, the business is struggling with low demand, which the owner attributes to limited consumer awareness and purchasing power in the target market. Lastly, frequent price fluctuation in the supply of raw materials and transportation makes it challenging to maintain consistent pricing and profitability.

### **Observation During Field Study**

During the field study, several operational and market-related challenges faced by Elam Industry were directly observed. It was evident that infrastructure limitations, such as poor road connectivity and unreliable power supply, significantly hinder daily operations. The small production unit was functioning with minimal machinery as well as maintenance, and staff often lacked specialized skills, which affected both production efficiency and product quality.

In conversations with the management, concerns were raised about the irregular supply of raw materials and the rising cost of inputs, which often forced delays or changes in production plans. These observations support the industry's claim of facing multiple interconnected challenges from supply-side constraints to market demand issues all of which limit its growth potential and competitive advantages.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The study on customer satisfaction in the tribal market context of Pasighat reveals that Elam Industry plays a vital role in fulfilling the needs and expectations of the local population. The research depicts that factors such as product quality, reasonable pricing, cultural relevance, and personalized service strongly influence customer satisfaction in this region. Unlike urban consumers, tribal customers often value trust, local identity, and long-term relationships over aggressive marketing or other luxury brands.

The Elam Industry has managed to establish a strong local presence by aligning its operations with the socio-cultural preferences of the tribal communities. Additionally, challenges such as limited awareness, lack of digital reach, and service consistency remain areas of improvement. Developing customer satisfaction in such a unique market requires a blend of traditional values and modern business practices.

Future research can expand to include other tribal regions in Arunachal Pradesh or neighboring northeastern states to compare customer satisfaction trends across different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. With tremendous growth in smartphone penetration, future research could explore how digital platforms and online marketing affect customer satisfaction in tribal areas. Segment-based studies focusing on specific demographics, such as tribal youth or women consumers, could uncover more nuanced satisfaction drivers and consumption behavior patterns. More studies could also examine how government support, local entrepreneurship schemes, or rural development programs impact customer satisfaction and the performance of small industries like Elam.

The findings highlight the essence of understanding regional differences in consumer behavior and designing customer engagement strategies accordingly. This study contributes to the broader comprehension of customer satisfaction in under-researched, culturally distinct markets and provides valuable insights for local businesses aiming to grow sustainably in tribal regions.

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