

India's weekend economy: How households step up spending on Saturdays and Sundays

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Nearly two-thirds of urban consumer spending in India now takes place over the weekend, led by discretionary purchases such as fashion, entertainment and electronics, according to a report released on Saturday.

Women spend more on the weekend, as do postgraduate households, larger families, and dual-income households. The report titled “The Many Urban Indias” showed that western India has the highest weekend-to-weekday ratio (1.8x), while northern India has the lowest (1.4x).

It said that, on average, urban consumers spend Rs 6,724 on weekdays and Rs 10,732 each weekend, implying that 61.5 percent of weekly spending is concentrated on just Saturday and Sunday.

The report by think tank People Research on India’s Consumer Economy (PRICE) and Tata Sons said the spending on fashion and apparel rises from Rs 529 on weekdays to Rs 1,075 on weekends, entertainment from Rs 328 to Rs 662, electronics from Rs 350 to Rs 695, and dining and food delivery from Rs 525 to Rs 959.

“By contrast, essential categories move more moderately. Groceries show a weekend multiplier of 1.64x and healthcare 1.54x, reflecting routine, planned weekly household management,” the report authored by Rajesh Shukla, Roopa Purushothaman and Vishal Vaibhav said.

It said that at the city level, the divergence is even more striking. Jaipur records the highest weekend multiplier at 2.76x, followed by Surat (2.44x), Pune (2.19x), Kochi (2.04x), Indore (1.96x), and Ahmedabad and Mumbai (both at 1.73x).

“These cities are characterised by rising incomes, young and mobile populations, robust retail and service ecosystems, and a predisposition toward discretionary spending,” according to the report.

Big cities and weekend spending

It said the big six cities show a strong weekend multiplier of 1.65x, but the other 94 cities were not far behind (1.55x), indicating that weekend-centric, lifestyle-led consumption is no longer confined to the largest urban centres.

Cities such as Dhanbad (0.92x), Mysuru (1.00x), and Kanpur (1.02x) display more stable weekday-weekend patterns, suggesting either a more constrained discretionary capacity or more traditional consumption habits, according to the report.

It said income remains the most powerful differentiator of discretionary spending behaviour.

The weekend spending multiplier rises steadily with income—from 1.37x among individuals earning below Rs 25,000 per month to 1.56x for those earning Rs 25,001-Rs 50,000, 1.78x for those earning Rs 50,001-Rs 100,000, and 2.53x among those earning more than Rs 100,000 per month. In the highest income bracket, households spend an average of Rs 21,779 on weekends compared with Rs 8,622 on weekdays, according to the report.

It said that by 2030, 630 million people will live in India's cities, as many as the world's third- and fourth-most populous countries (the US and Indonesia) combined.

The report said that India's growth story will be shaped by 100 cities across four distinct, but interdependent, types of urban India.

"A particularly important contribution of the report is its recognition that there is no single urban India. The country's urban landscape comprises cities at different stages of development, with distinct economic structures, demographic profiles, and growth trajectories," Saurabh Garg, secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Mospi), said in a note.

"The report's classification of India's top 100 cities provides a useful framework for understanding these differences and for appreciating the diverse pathways through which cities contribute to national development," said Garg.

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