

E-cigarettes in India

(Availability, Usage and Perceptions).



VOICE

(Voluntary Organisation in the Interest of Consumer Education)

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Introduction

E-cigarettes are largely unregulated and mostly sold through online and e-commerce sites such as Flipkart, Amazon etc. and also dedicated E-Cigarette sites such as JOMO E-Cigarette (www.littlegoa.com), ITC's EON (<https://planeteon.in>) , www.vapourindia.com etc. Generally, online sale is considered to be substantial, but many of the brands are also available in Indian shops. This study mainly examines (i) sale through shops in the five Indian cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Lucknow and (ii) brands also sold through some of the prominent web sites.

What are Electronic Cigarettes? Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) are battery-powered nicotine delivery systems. They come in many varieties but can generally be grouped into three categories:

1. Cigalikes: These cigarettes more or less resemble conventional cigarettes in shape and size.
2. eGos: These are larger than Cigalikes in size and come with removeable tank which can be refilled with nicotine containing e-liquid.
3. Mods: These cigarettes are usually larger than eGos and almost endlessly customisable.

The awareness and use of E-Cigarettes are increasing worldwide. In US and other countries, as pointed out in some of the large-scale survey, more than two third of smokers and non-smokers have heard about E-Cigarettes. Some of the conventional cigarette companies in the US, such as Lorillard, Altira and RJ Reynod, have started producing or acquiring e-cigarette brands.

Studies have also pointed out that E-Cigarettes are equally harmful if not more than the conventional cigarette on smokers. A study conducted by Rachel Becker (<https://www.theverge.com/2018/12/14/18141057/electronic-cigarette-health-toxic-chemical-exposures-heavy-metals>) point out that E-cigarette users' pee contains more heavy metals as well as signs of exposure to carcinogens and other irritating chemicals than the pee of non-vapers, and pointing that this might have serious health risks.

In India the sale of E-Cigarette is largely unorganised and unregulated. Although the popular conventional brand such as ITC is promoting EON brand E-Cigarette popularly known as electronic vaping device.

Current study:

In order to understand E-Cig brands sold in India, a five-city survey was conducted in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Lucknow. The objective of the survey was

1. To identify the major brands of E-Cigarettes being sold in India.
2. To determine the actual prices for the various brands available in the market.
3. To assess the sellers' perception of demand of E-Cigarette
4. To assess the buyers' perception on need and use of E-Cigarette

Methodology:

Two-pronged strategy was adopted to meet the objective of the study.

1. Desk research: This involved two steps:

- i. This involved assessing the availability of E-Cigarette in the Indian market, listing of brands and their approximate price.
- ii. Listing of web sites/ e-commerce sites and dedicated sites selling E-Cigarettes, listing of brands sold on these sites and their approximate prices.

2. Field survey:

Based on the desk research, a questionnaire was prepared to interact with the sellers and buyers. The purpose of the survey was to

- i. Find out the availability of E-Cigarettes in various shops such as pan shops, electronic gadgets shops or any other shops. Investigators were trained to observe as well as interact with the sellers depending on accessibility and readiness of the sellers. Sellers were also interviewed to find out the popular selling brands and their perception on sales, demand, requirement and perception of buyers.
- ii. Assess the buyers' perception on use, liking and reasons for smoking E-Cigarettes. Investigators were trained to interact with buyers who were found visiting shops at the time of survey. Altogether 24 buyers were interviewed therefore the outcomes should be considered as indicative and not conclusive.

The field work was carried out in the month of Mid Feb 2019. The actual sample size covered was 100 respondents with 25 each in Mumbai and Delhi, 20 each in Bengaluru and Kolkata and 10 in Lucknow.

Therefore, the report is divided into two parts:

PART A: Survey outcome

PART B: Online desk research – E-Commerce and Dedicated sites

PART A

1. Popular Brand sold OTC: Survey Outcome

During the survey it was found that E Cigarettes in India are mainly sold in Pan shops.

Overall: The survey found all together 36 brands of E-Cig in the four metro cities – Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Lucknow. Almost all were rechargeable E-Cigarettes. In the five Indian cities mentioned above, EON, a brand promoted and sold by ITC in India, leads as highest available brand with 17.3% units' availability in the shops selling E-Cigarettes in the sample of 100 shops covered (*Table 1.0*). This is closely followed by a China based SMOK brand of E-Cigarettes with 15.6% of unit share found in the shops covered. There were two more brands whose share was found to more than 10% of units in the Indian shops. They were Los Angeles based brand called MAYA with 11.6% of units and CE with a share of 10.4%.

Other brands whose unit share was found to be less than 5-10% included VAPE (6.4%), VERGE (5.8%) and JOMO (5.2%). Although information about VAPE, which also comes in various variants such as VAPE 1, VAPE 2, VAPE 3 and VAPE 4, could not be ascertained through desk research. This brand was mainly found in Lucknow and Mumbai. VOPORESSO, another popular brand with unit share of 4% was found mainly in Mumbai and Delhi. This was followed by ELEAF brand with 2.9% unit share and again mainly in Mumbai and very few units in Delhi and Lucknow.

2. City wise popular brand

Delhi: In Delhi altogether eight brands were found and mostly in the pan shops. EON and CE brands which with various variants such as EON charge and CE 4 and CE 5 in almost two out of five (37.5%) shops covered. VERGE was another brand found in Delhi with a unit share of 9.4%. SMOK, overall found to be second most popular brand in India, had a unit share of only 3.1% in Delhi. Therefore, it was found only in one of total 26 shop covered in Delhi.

Mumbai: In Mumbai the survey found the highest number of brands. Altogether 28 brands were found in 25 shops covered in Mumbai. SMOK with 20% of the unit share acquired top position in terms of availability. This was followed by VERGE with 11% and VAPORESSO with 9.5% of unit shares.

Kolkata: Normally the city is known as one of the smoking hubs of India. However, the trend of E-Cig in Kolkata is not too high as only 4 of the brands were found here. MAYA, a Log

Angeles based brand with 50% followed by ITC's EON brand with 41% unit shares were the only two popular brand which were found in almost all the 20 shops covered in Kolkata.

Table 1: City wise unit distribution of popular brands of E-Cigarettes in India

	All		Delhi		Mumbai		Kolkata		Bengaluru		Lucknow	
Brand	unit	% Share	unit	% Share	unit	% Share	unit	% Share	unit	% Share	unit	% Share
EON	30	17.3%	12	37.5%	2	3.2%	9	40.9%	3	8.6%	4	19.0%
SMOK	27	15.6%	1	3.1%	13	20.6%			12	34.3%	1	4.8%
MAYA	20	11.6%			4	6.3%	11	50.0%	2	5.7%	3	14.3%
CE	18	10.4%	12	37.5%					4	11.4%	2	9.5%
VAPE	11	6.4%			1	1.6%	1	4.5%	1		8	38.1%
VERGE	10	5.8%	3	9.4%	7	11.1%						
JOMO	9	5.2%	1	3.1%	1	1.6%			7	20.0%		
VAPORESSO	7	4.0%	1	3.1%	6	9.5%						
ELEAF	5	2.9%	1	3.1%	3	4.8%					1	4.8%
ASPIRE	3	1.7%			3	4.8%						
I STICK	3	1.7%			3	4.8%						
MYA	3	1.7%			2	3.2%	1	4.5%				
JOMS	2	1.2%			2	3.2%						
STICK V8	2	1.2%							2	5.7%		
VEBOOR	2	1.2%			1	1.6%			1	2.9%		
BETA	1	0.6%							1	2.9%		
ELIET	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
ERAP	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
EROD	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
EVIC V	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
I JUST 2	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
IKONN	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
IWAVE	1	0.6%									1	4.8%
JOMTEEN	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
JOYTECH	1	0.6%	1	3.1%								
JUUL	1	0.6%							1	2.9%		
JWELL	1	0.6%							1	2.9%		
KARMA KIT	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
LITE LIO KIT	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
MAGNETO	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
MYLE	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
RENOVA	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
REVENGER VAPORESSO	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
SUMONO	1	0.6%									1	4.8%
VOOPOO	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
WISMEC	1	0.6%			1	1.6%						
All brand units	173	100.0%	32	100.0%	63	100.0%	22	100.0%	35	100.0%	21	100.0%

Bengaluru: In Bengaluru, 11 brands were found in the 20 shops covered. SMOK E-Cig were at the top in terms of availability with 34.3% unit share. JOMO, sold as JOMO LITE , JOMO TECH and JOMO BGO followed as second popular brand in Bengaluru with 20% unit share found during the survey. CE stood at the third place with 11.4% unit share.

Lucknow: Altogether 10 shops were covered selling E-Cigarettes and seven brands were found. VAPE, mostly sold in different variants, was found to be most available brand with 38% unit share. Although as noted earlier this brand could not be ascertained through desk research. It could be the same brand as VAPORESSO which was mainly found in Mumbai shops. EON with 20% unit share was found as the second most available brand followed by MAYA with 14.3% unit share.

3. Price Range

Price of E-cigarettes sold through shops ranges from Rs 200 to more than 6800 depending upon the brand, capacity, flavours and other variants. Secondly, there was no MRP printed on the packet in case of almost all the brands. Since most of the brands were from China and other countries, the MRP in the Indian Rupees (INR) was not printed. Since it was a mystery shopping survey and mostly based on observation, price in some cases was disclosed by the sellers once the identity was revealed.

The highest Actual Retail Price was found to be in the case of Juul, Jewel and Aspire brands which ranges above Rs 6000. Juul is a popular brand in USA. However, during the survey only one shop had revealed its availability.

Average Price of Popular brands:

Overall ITC's EON was found out to be most popular brand in the five cities survey. Average price of this brand was found to be Rs 440 with minimum of Rs 200 to maximum of Rs 800, depending upon different variants. The range is based on the 29 units of this products found in different shops in all the five cities surveyed and where the price was revealed by sellers. The average price of SMOK E-Cigarettes, the second most popular brand was Rs 1985 with min of Rs 300 to max of Rs 6000, depending on the variants.

Average price of Chinese brand CE, which had emerged as fourth most popular brand during the survey, was found at Rs 470 with min of Rs 300 and max of Rs 2000.

The price range of other popular brands, MAYA, MYA JOMO and VAPE, ranges from min of Rs 300 to max of Rs 3500. This is shown in the table below:

Table 2: Actual Retail Price Popular Brands of E-Cigarettes in India (in INR)				
Brand	freq	Average	Min	Max
EON	29	440	199	800
SMOK	24	1985	300	6000
CE	18	469	300	2000
JOMO	14	1850	500	3200
MYA	11	398	280	500
MAYA	10	328	200	450
VAPE	9	987	300	3500
VERGE	9	443	400	499
ELEAF	5	1455	375	3000
ASPIRE	4	3000	1500	6500
STICK	3	367	300	450
SWAG KIT	3	2933	1800	5000
VAPERFSSO	3	3500	3000	4500
I STICK PRO	2	2500	2500	2500
IKONN	2	1200	1200	1200
VEBOOR	2	1640	1600	1680
BETA	1	1250	1250	1250
ELIET	1	720	720	720
ERAP	1	1500	1500	1500
EVIC V	1	1700	1700	1700
I JUST 2	1	1500	1500	1500
I STICK	1	1200	1200	1200
IWAVE	1	550	550	550
JUUL	1	6000	6000	6000
JWELL	1	6850	6850	6850
KARMA KIT	1	1700	1700	1700
LITE LIO KIT	1	1200	1200	1200
MAGNETO	1	2200	2200	2200
MYLE	1	4800	4800	4800
SUMONO	1	250	250	250
TAROT NANO	1	1500	1500	1500
TOOL KIT	1	6000	6000	6000
VAVE	1	400	400	400
VOOPOO	1	3100	3100	3100
All Brands	166	1264	199	6850

Sellers popular perception on Sale of E-Cigarettes:

Most of the shopkeepers were of the view that sale of E-Cigarettes in India is not legal therefore there are very few buyers. Secondly awareness about the product is also very low. Price of the product is also one of the important factors for its low demand. Only high profile people are able to afford smoking E-Cigarettes. Product from China are more popular because of its comparatively low price. Indian brand EON could become competitive as its quality is better than Chinese brands. However, most of the other brands has to come with attractive offer.

Buyers'/ Smokers perception

E-Cigarette Smokers were mainly those buyers who were present at the shop during the time of survey. Field investigators approached them requested to be part of a short interview on usage, and perception of interviews. Altogether 24 buyers had given their views but not candid in their response. There is no clear picture emerging on behaviour of E-Cigarette smokers and a larger survey is required to assess the perception of E-Smokers in India. Following indicative buyers' perception emerged from the survey:

1. Most of the buyers' interacted recorded that they started smoking E-Cigarette recently. Overall range of years of smoking E-Cigarette fall in less than 1 year (as recent as 1.5 months) to 8 years.
2. Most of the buyers were also the habitual conventional cigarette smokers ranging from 5 to over 15 years. Only 10-12%, i.e 2-3 out of 24 and all of them from Delhi confessed that they never had conventional cigarette. However, one of them had occasional puffs but had emotional disregard for tobacco.
3. Four out of five buyers' (82%) considered E-Cig to be comparatively less harmful than the conventional cigarette. Although most of them were unable to explain the factors or referred to any study which they had gone through. The larger narrative was that they have heard so or mere perception or even feelings.
4. Some of the buyers (around one fourth) consider E-Cigarettes to be cheaper than conventional cigarettes in indirect way. Overall cost, according them has gone down as urge of tobacco has gone down and they feel that their overall smoking has come down. Secondly, they don't feel guilty in using E-Cigarette at places where smoking was banned.
5. Few of the buyers (one of 5) considered E-Cigarette as a tool effective for smoking cessation aids. They had also tried other means to quit smoking but were unable to do so. These two of the buyers, one each from Delhi and Bengaluru, feel that smoking E-

Cigareete ultimately act as a deterrent to smoking. Since both has shifted to E-Cigarette recently (3 and 5 months), its outcome is yet to be seen.

PART- B

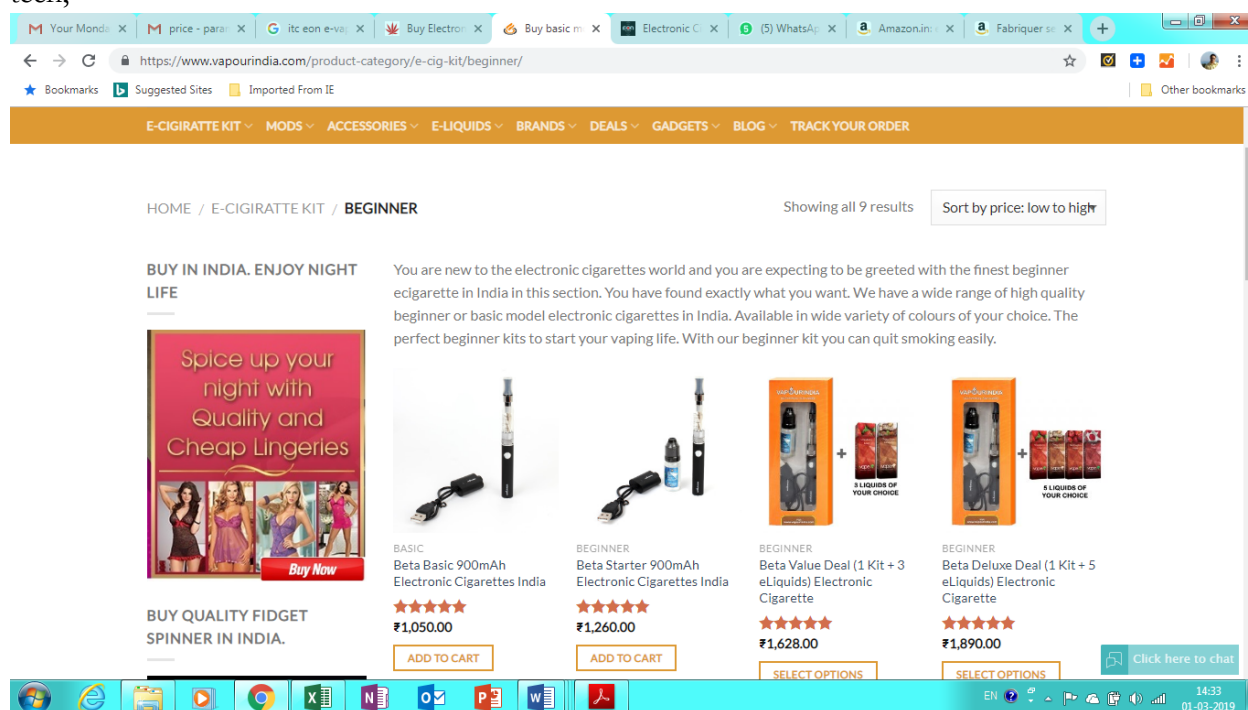
A desk research was conducted to list the sites which were selling E-Cigarettes. Few e-commerce sites such as Flipkart showed the products and price, however, but upon clicking buy showed either out of stock or not deliverable at the location given. There were few other sites which required lot of details, some personnel, before giving prices. The section below gives the list of five sites which were selling various brand of E-Cigarettes (kit):



1. VAPOURINDIA

<https://www.vapourindia.com/product-category/e-cig-kit/beginner/>

tech,



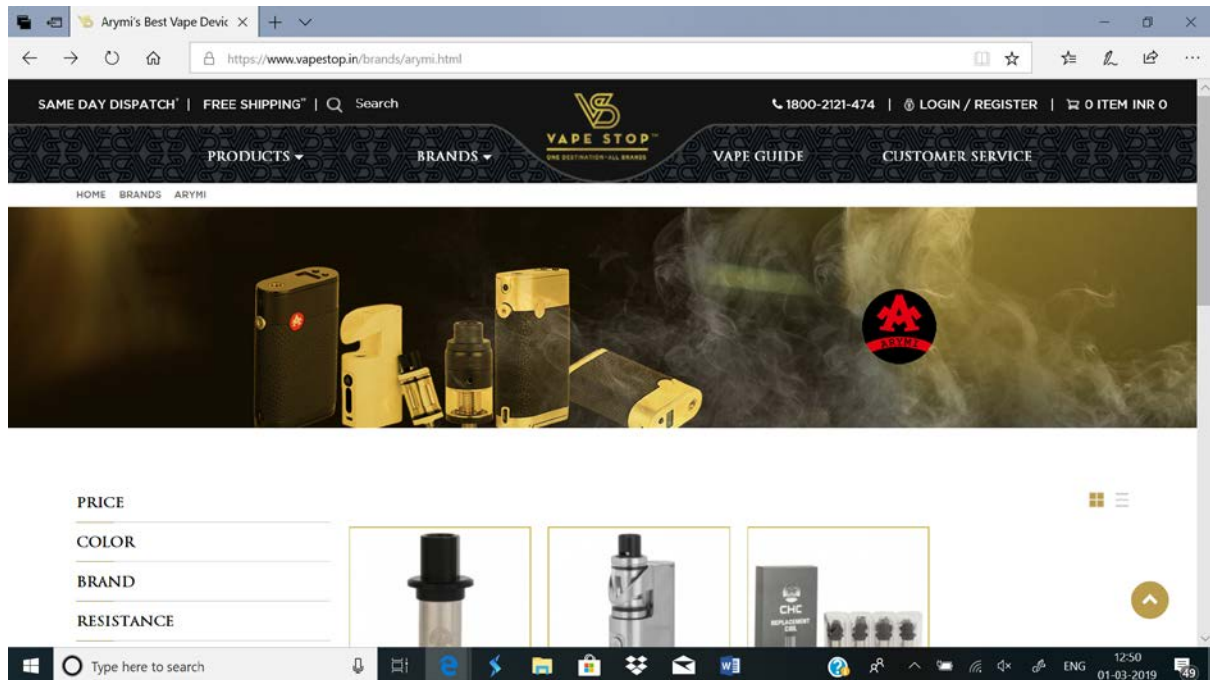
This site is a dedicated multiple brand E-Cigarette site selling E-Cigarette KIT, Accessories and E-Liquids. The brands include Aspire, Innokin, iSmoka, Joyetech, Kangertech, Vision, Wismech and others

E Cigarette on Vaporindia.com - Brand and Price Range	
Brand	Price-Range
Aspire	472-5300
Innokin	5775
iSmoka	2730-6195
Joyetech	2900-9975
Kangertech	1950-6995
Beta	1050-1890
Wismech	5995

Therefore Vapour India is selling at present 7-8 brands. Aspire has the lowest price at Rs 4472 and Kangertech with around Rs 7000.

2. VAP STOP

<https://www.vapestop.in/brands.html>

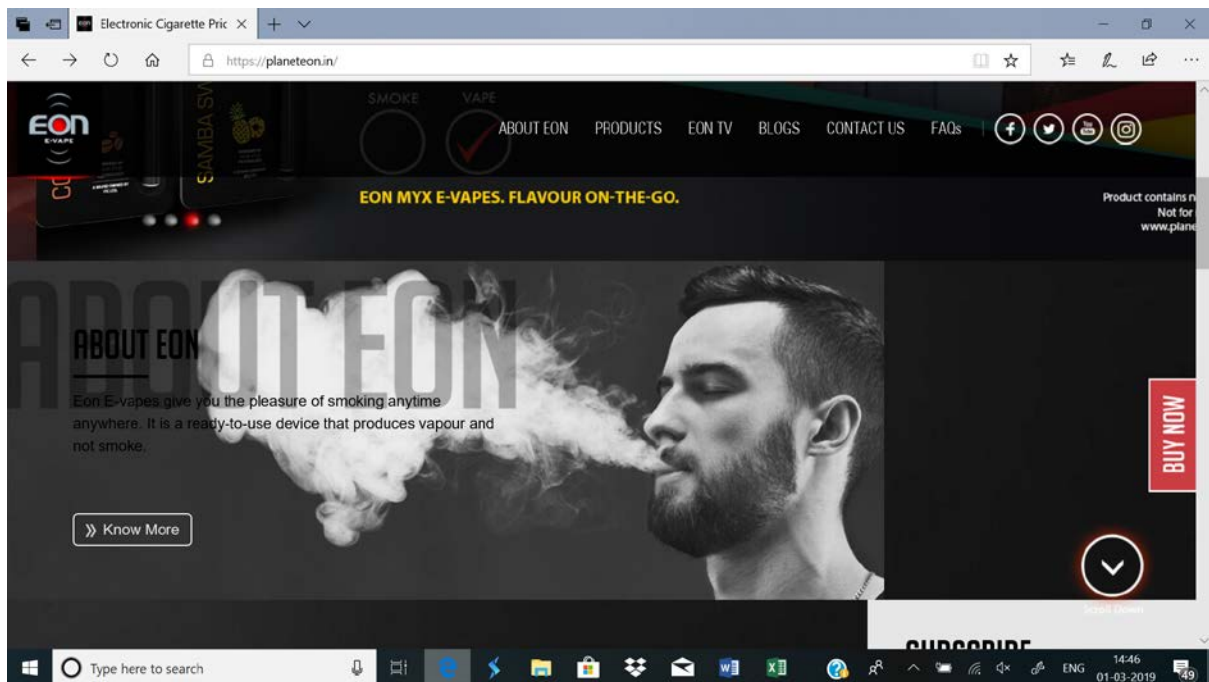


E Cigarette (kit) on vapestop.com - Brand and Price Range		
Serial No	Name of Brand	Price in INR
1	Joytech	2990-6500
2	Juul	4990-7590
5	Smok	4200-6700
6	Kangertek	1900-5990
7	Aspire	3995-5590
14.	E- Leaf	3650-4750
15	Vaporesso	5500-6990
18.	Innokin	5690-5875

3. Planet EON



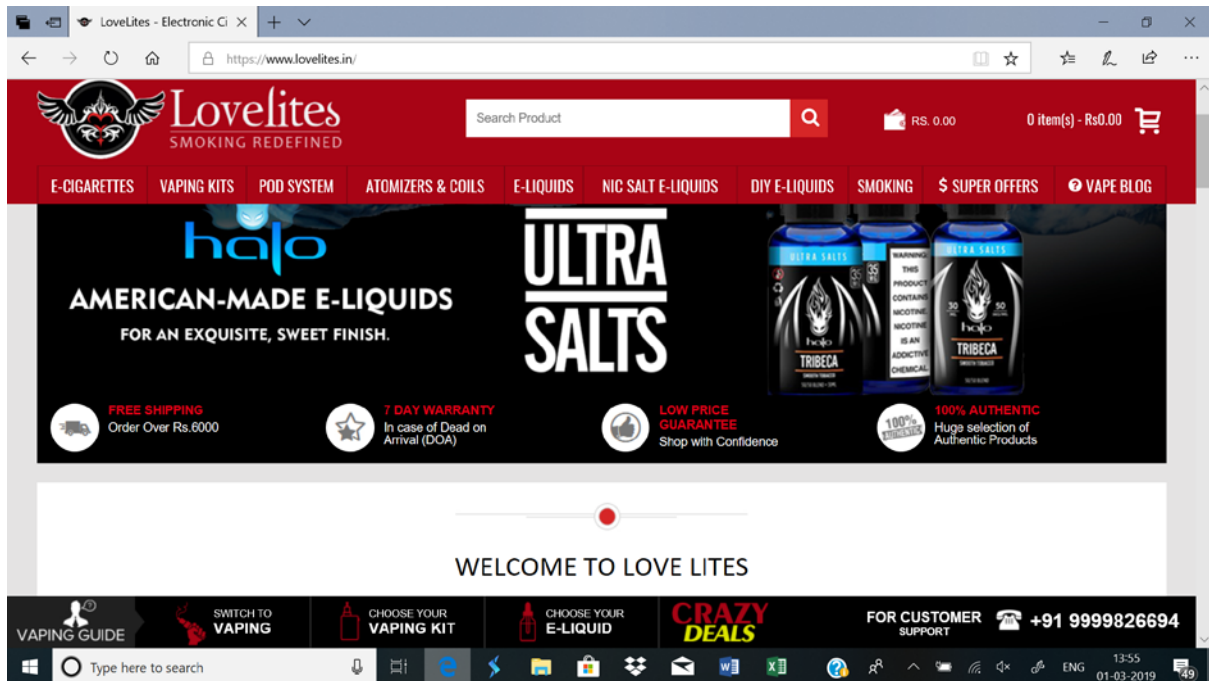
<https://planeteon.in/>



This website sells e- cigarettes and other accessories, however, unless one enters person details it is not possible to get details of products prices etc.

However, when the buyer clicks on the BUY NOW connection the site diverts the purchaser to the website mentioned below known as Lovelites, the details of which are mentioned as one reads along the sites

4. LOVELITES



E-Cigarette on lovelites.com – Brand price range		
Serial No.	Name of Brand	Price In INR
1	EEON	449
2	Aspire	2999
4	Halo	1299
5	SMOK	3999
6	Verge Atom kit	5000

5. Little Goa

<https://www.littlegoa.com/pages/e-cigarette/pgid-1176886.aspx>

Little Goa is a popular website for those seek pleasures of e-smoking



E-Cigarettes (kit) on littlegoa.com – Brand and Price		
Serial No.	Name of Brand	Price In INR
1	KrmaX	2790
2	Krmax Vape Kit	2630
3	Smok slimmer Yet Stronger	3570
4	Smok G 8	7339

Conclusion:

The market of E-Cigarettes in India is still at the nascent stage where the buyers are still not clear about its regulations. Most of the buyers are of the view of that demand is low because people don't know about its legal state. Chinese brands are ruling the market, although EON being promoted by ITC is catching up because of its competitive price. US brands such as MAYA and JUUL are available online and kit prices are high. Number of brands available in Mumbai were found to much higher as compared to other cities where the survey was conducted.

Buyers are using E-Cigarettes for various reasons. They consider it to be less harmful then the conventional cigarettes. However, the number of buyers surveyed were too low therefore the outcome is not conclusive but indicative.