

# Wagh Bakri: an early start helps

## Is in online tea trading since Internet was new in India

**SHASHWAT GUPTA RAY**

reporters@sakaaltimes.com

**Pune:** It has been almost two decades since the Internet arrived in India. However, online trading is still to find popularity among the masses.



But Gujarat-based Wagh Bakri tea has been using the Internet for online trading of tea for customers in India and abroad for past 15 years, when the Internet itself was at nascent stage in the country.

"I did my MBA from New York and returned home.

During my stay abroad, I saw how mail order was a big thing there. Then I decided to use Internet as trading mode to provide quality tea to customers. I was very much hopeful even then that online trading will catch on one day," Executive Director, Wagh Bakri Tea Group **Parag Desai** told Sakal Times.

He was in the city to launch his new brands for the Pune market and announce his future plans to increase its market share.

The company started its own website for online trading - Buytea.com. It has now gained lot of popularity as a medium to purchase tea, including the herbal variant.

"We had the first mover advantage. There weren't

any players in the online trading of tea. We decided to encash this situation and entered the market. While, actual cost of online purchase goes up to Rs 1500, there is additional freight cost of Rs 2,500. Despite such high cost, people are demanding our products online," he said.

Almost 50 per cent of company's online sales happen in India and rest in abroad markets. Sales volume may not be very high but it is growing at 60-70 per cent annually.

"We have also made our presence felt in the social networking sites. We have 30,000 dedicated fans on the Facebook. We would like to enhance this position further," Desai said.