

Eating out habits of individuals in Meerut City—an analytical study

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ABSTRACT: *The past two decades in Indian society has seen tremendous dynamic moves, the lifestyle of an average Indian has undergone many changes. Consumption habits of Indians have changed a lot. Today there is rise in working middle class as more and more Indians are educated. They are going outdoor for jobs and youngsters for studies. As there is rise in, disposable income of Indian households. Life has shown a rapid fast changing trend. Eating habits of Indians are changing Indian are opting to eat food outside their homes. In the form of breakfast, lunch, dinner or simply random eating for the satisfaction of taste and saving the time to prepare food at home. Earlier this trend was prominent in Metros but now cities are also not far behind. Globalization of India and the increasing number of working professionals, growth in our economy has significant contribution for change in eating habits. Time is also a factor. Scarcity of time leads to the outward eating habits. Meerut a large city of western Uttar Pradesh adjoining the National capital region is witnessing the same changes. Here the population of all age groups is opting to eat out. An attempt has been made to analyze the trends of population of Meerut, eating out habits on several dimensions.*

Key Words: *Lifestyle, Consumption, Disposable income, Globalisation, professionals, Age groups*

Introduction: Eating out habits has been spreading in India at a very fast rate. Metros, Large cities and average size cities are a fine example of it. Pizza hut, Dominos, KFC & the presence of foreign Hotels in our country has set the pace to it, this habit was started by western countries but now as the world has become a global village. The same trend is followed all across the world. Privatization of most of industrial sectors, and presence of a large number of Multi National Organizations have set the foreign culture of eating out at rapid rate. The presence of media influenced by foreign culture has also lead to change in eating habits. At present significant number of Indians are eating out especially youngsters those who will bring the change in country and the culture. Foreign cuisines such as Chinese, European and American have also lured the citizens to opt out in search for change in taste.

New locations of eating hubs are coming up in cities. Restaurants and hotels have a diverse range of varieties, prompting individuals to come and taste. This topic is of great importance now a day as eating out is becoming the part of modern human life.

As per the report by Organization for Economic Co-operation and development (OECD) the middle class population will rise by 3.2 billion till 2020 and up to 4.9 billion till 2030. 85% of this growth will be contributed by Asian continent. About 80 % of the growth in global spending by 2030 will come from Asia. China and Asia will come out as main spenders. In India young population and teenagers have developed a lot of habit of eating out of their homes.

Objectives of the study:

This research is based on eating out habits of individuals in Meerut a large city very near to National Capital. The research is focused on knowing the frequency of eating out per week on several dimensions. It has been tried to know the eating preference destinations such as Restaurant, Fast food outlets, Food courts etc. As money is an important factor for eating outside homes it is essential to know how much people spend for it. Age is another factor in deciding the outside eating habits, so people from which age group like the most to eat outside and the profession status of people has been analyzed as what impact it exerts. Several factors such as ambience of eating environment speed of delivering service, friendliness of the service person. Cleanliness of the eating place and promptness in handling complaints are important factors and they have been studied.

Hypothesis of the study:

H 1: There exists no significant difference between the different categories of eateries visited and profession of the customers.

H 2: There exists no significant difference between age of customers and friendliness of service personnel

H 3: There exists no significant difference between age of customers and promptness in handling complaints.

Research methodology: To conduct a successful research work a proper system was designed according to which actions on research work were taken.

Research design: Descriptive research design is used in the study; it is the appropriate one to trace out the demographic trends of the population. As we studied eating out trends of the population, age, income, gender etc.

Sampling technique: For it cluster sampling technique is used. Five different localities in the city were identified having sufficient distance from each other. Then twenty residents from each locality were chosen by simple random technique. Thus a total sample size of hundred consumers was taken.

Data collection: In the research both primary and secondary data is used. Secondary data is collected through News papers, Magazines, Journals and websites. It helped in construction of hypothesis also. Primary data is collected through the help of questionnaire. A close ended questionnaire containing options was constructed.

Data analysis: For it, SPSS software is used chi square tests were applied to test the hypothesis. It is useful when ultimately simple random sampling is used and the variables can be categorized.

Limitations of the study: Due to time and resource constraints a sample size of hundred was surveyed. If it would be larger than more effective work could be done.

Review of literature: Goyal and Singh (2007) did research in eating out habits of Indians, titled “Consumer Perceptions about ready-to-eat in India: an exploratory study” have explored that the young Indian consumer has passion for visiting ready-to-eat outlets for fun and change but they feel that homemade food is better than the outside food, easy, ready-to-eat. Their findings have revealed that consumer acceptability for ready-to-eat in the future would be decided only by the quality of food and customer service. According to the findings of the latest on-line survey from ACNielsen 96% of the urban Indian consumes food from take-away restaurants once a month and 37% of this is adult Indian consumers doing so at least once a week making India one of the top ten countries amongst 28 surveyed across the globe in terms of frequency of eating ready-to-eat. Binkley (2006) in his research titled “The effect of demographic, economic and nutrition factors on frequency of food away from home” has used a model explaining visits to table service and ready-to-eat restaurants that are estimated with nutrition variables added to standard demographic measures, where in nutrition factors have less impact on table service. Kashyap, & Sarda (2013) in their study, stated that 50% of the people prefer to visit the fast food outlets once in a week. They also studied about influential factors e.g. easy access, reasonable prices, fascination of eating out, changing lifestyle, taste and cultural impact etc. Malik, Kadyan & Balyan (2013) in their study entitled an attempt to examine the eating habits of people in Haryana which includes their liking for spicy/non-spicy food, number of meals taken in a day, preferred eating outlets and cooking equipments preferred. The people in Haryana have good eating habits and a large percentage of people prefer eating at home only. They don’t prefer eating spicy food and believe in simple living. Prabhavathi, Krishan Kishore & Ramesh (2014) in their study highlighted that young consumers are looking for healthy food for their lifestyle and they expect foods which are homemade, nutritious and more of vegetables ingredients to suit for their healthy lifestyle. Indians are eating out more than ever before—and they are taking their families along.

Dining out with families accounts for 25% of all meals outside home, according to a report released by National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and consulting firm Technopak. The report was based on a survey of the eating habits of 3,500 consumers in 24 cities. (<https://qz.com/india/737229>).

Regional Indian cuisine is luring Indians to eat outside. Taftoon restaurant in Mumbai. With its traditional looks and dishes is attracting a vast number of customers to eat outside. Restaurant culture is rising in our country. (Times of India, August 31, 2018).

Data analysis and findings: In questionnaire different categories of eateries such as (Restaurant, Fast food outlet, Food court etc) visited most by different respondents and about their professions has been asked. An attempt has been made to establish relationship between these two factors. That some relationship, exists between the visit of different food outlets and profession of the respondents.

Relationship between different categories of eateries visited and the profession of respondents:

Table 1

		PROFESSION					Total
		Student	Professional	Self employed	Retired	Housewife	
Restaurant	Count	14	15	13	1	6	49
	% within the category	28.6%	30.6%	26.5%	2.0%	12.2%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	45.2%	36.6%	61.9%	100.0%	100.0%	49.0%
Fast food	Count	11	10	4	0	0	25
	% within the category	44.0%	40.0%	16.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	35.5%	24.4%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Food Court	Count	1	5	1	0	0	7
	% within the category	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	3.2%	12.2%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%
Dhaba	Count	3	10	1	0	0	14
	% within the category	21.4%	71.4%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	9.7%	24.4%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.0%
Home Delivery	Count	2	1	2	0	0	5
	% within the category	40.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	6.5%	2.4%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
	Count	31	41	21	1	6	100
	% within the category	31.0%	41.0%	21.0%	1.0%	6.0%	100.0%
	% within PROFESSION	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

When we go through the data presented in table 1 we see that highest percentage is of students and professionals, 44% and 40 % respectively, who visit outside food outlets. It indicates that the younger generation is more eagerly eating food outside. Fast food outlets are more preferred in comparison to Food court’s and Dhaba.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	19.794 ^a	16	.230
Likelihood Ratio	22.174	16	.138
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.087	1	.079
N of Valid Cases	100		

On analyzing the value of p, we see it is .230 that is more than .05. So we can say no significant difference exists between the profession of customers and the type of eateries visited. Though usually in general we perceive that difference exists, but in our study there is no significant difference.

Relation between age variation of customers and giving importance to friendliness of service personnel in treating them:

Table 2
AGE * FRIENDLINESS OF SERVICE PERSONNEL Crosstabulation

		FRIENDLINESS OF SERVICE PERSONNEL				
		Extremely important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Extremely unimportant
AGE >20	Count	0	1	8	1	1
	% of Total	0.0%	1.0%	8.0%	1.0%	1.0%
20-30	Count	11	24	17	3	1
	% of Total	11.0%	24.0%	17.0%	3.0%	1.0%
31-40	Count	3	6	6	1	0
	% of Total	3.0%	6.0%	6.0%	1.0%	0.0%
41-50	Count	0	4	3	5	0
	% of Total	0.0%	4.0%	3.0%	5.0%	0.0%
51-60	Count	0	1	2	1	0
	% of Total	0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	0.0%
60+	Count	0	1	0	0	0
	% of Total	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	Count	14	37	36	11	2
	% of Total	14.0%	37.0%	36.0%	11.0%	2.0%

If we see the relationship, between the age and friendliness, required of service personnel. Then we come to know that 24% respondents between the age group of 21 to 30 lay importance to this issue. While only 1% above the age of sixty years lay importance on the issue of friendliness required of service personnel. Only 3% from the age group of 31-40 lay extremely importance to this issue.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.674 ^a	20	.047
Likelihood Ratio	30.984	20	.055
Linear-by-Linear Association	.600	1	.439
N of Valid Cases	100		

On applying chi square test. The value of p is .047 that is less than .05. So we can say that difference exists in the age group of respondents and their requirement of friendliness of service personnel. So the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between age of customers and promptness in handling complaints.

Table 3
AGE * PROMPTNESS IN HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS Crosstabulation

		PROMPTNESS IN HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS				
		Extremely important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	Extremely unimportant
AGE >20	Count	3	3	2	2	1
	% of Total	3.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	1.0%
20-30	Count	14	28	12	2	0
	% of Total	14.0%	28.0%	12.0%	2.0%	0.0%
31-40	Count	3	8	5	0	0
	% of Total	3.0%	8.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%
41-50	Count	2	2	6	2	0
	% of Total	2.0%	2.0%	6.0%	2.0%	0.0%
51-60	Count	0	2	0	0	2
	% of Total	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
60+	Count	0	0	1	0	0
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	Count	22	43	26	6	3

	% of Total	22.0%	43.0%	26.0%	6.0%	3.0%
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On analyzing table no 3, we see that 42% of the respondents from the age group of 20 to 30 years emphasized extremely important and importance to the issue of handling complaints. While from the age group of 31 to 40 years only 11% give due importance to this issue. From 51 -60 years of age only 2% and from sixty plus years respondents none gave importance to the issue of promptness in handling complaints.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.417 ^a	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.964	20	.026
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.175	1	.023
N of Valid Cases	100		

On applying chi square test the value of p is less than .05. It indicates that strong difference exists between the age of respondents and promptness in handling complaints. The younger generation is more active towards redressal of their complaints than in comparison to older population. Hence null hypothesis stands rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: we tested the consumer's response on several parameters like relationship between the profession and type of eateries preferred. In general as per the profession the types of eateries preferred varies. But in our case no significant difference existed. It indicates that now persons from the same profession opt for different types of eating outlets in different situations. It shows the change. Youngsters are more inclined and give importance to the friendliness of service personnel in comparison to older people. They are in need of more friendship like behavior. The young population is aware about their complaints. They require that their complaints should be resolved as soon as it is possible. It shows that they are active citizens determined to change the country. The older generation is not much bothered about. Probably they do not want be active in seeking their rights and they have spend their younger time when problems were not resolved immediately.

Suggestions: The service personnel should be more friendly towards the customers, be it be restaurant, fast food outlet, Dhaba or food court. It will improve their sales. The service personnel should be more active in handling the complaints of customers. As it will lead to their popularity and increase in sales. Food courts and fast food outlets should bring some changes to increase their customer traffic. Tomorrow is the era of eating outside so different types of eatries are available in the market. In order to remain competitive they should bring changes in their working pattern.

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