



Impacts of Cultural influences on food taste & food consumption: A Case of Delhi

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Abstract- People are faced with various food choices every day & make decision on what food to be eaten based on different principles. As simple as, food choices are very complex & not inevitably straight forward. We all have different learning experiences with different kind of food and, this causes different food choices. These learning experiences are highly individual in nature and can be defined as psychological factors affecting food preferences.

Study the Impacts of cultural influences on food taste & food consumption for significance in consumer research in different Indian cultures. Food is a basic need & every human have their own food taste. Culture is not just customs, ideas & social behavior but it maintains the several conditions for the growth of humans. People grow in different environment & social conditions. In every society eating habits & choices develop early. Eating habits are building by their parents in accordance with their view of what constitutes a healthy baby. The development of food taste begins very early, even before our birth. And likes and dislikes change as we grow into adults. This research will try to find the sources of certain national & sub-cultural food taste preferences & consumption. Examples will be drawn from northern India & some particular Indian states like Gujarat, Kerala, and Manipur. Delhi is also known as the cultural capital in India. Here we can find people from every Indian state. In demonstrating how taste is in some regards an expression of cultural capital. Postmodern studies of the differences in taste preferences are also analyzed. By this study of the deeper layers of our food taste based on cultural background should help food makers in market research issues & for new opportunities in food industry.

Keywords: Culture, Food Taste, Human behavior, Human Choice

1. INTRODUCTION

People from different cultural backgrounds eat different food. Food is not only important for human survival, it is not as a source of energy but also important for developing culture, trade, and information. In many area people are recognized for their food & they are connected to their culture through similar food pattern. The ingredients, methods of preparation of food, preservation techniques, and types of food eaten at different meals vary among cultures. The area in which families live and where their ancestors originated influence food likes and dislikes. These food preferences results in patterns of food choices within a cultural or regional group.

From old world days to new world days, food taste preferences have been closely linked to culture development. Both anthropologists in their study of old cultures have their different eating cultures in their civilization. In the new world “tastes” can take many forms in the way we prepare, cook & display our food. In markets food display is also important, many food store like Reliance fresh display a wide varieties of fresh food, different brands & own label processed foods from different locations local & foreign market.

Population wise India is the 2nd & area wise 7th largest country in the world. Indian sub-continent divided into 29 states with 7 union territories with different cultures. Culture is a good starting point & food taste preferences are influenced the culture in which we live in. Every state in India has their own different culture & food taste which is based on their ancient people, landscape & religion. Indian food taste is different from rest of the countries in the world; we use different kind of ingredients, spices & cooking methods. It shows a perfect blend of many cultures & ages. Spices play a very important role in Indian cooking. Every spice has different taste & nutritional, medicinal properties.

The Longman Dictionary of the English language (1984) defines “Culture” as:

The typical behavior, customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group And The enlightenment and excellence of “taste” acquired by intellectual and aesthetic training; refinement in manners, taste and thought.

Food, religions, languages, dance and customs different from place to place within the Indian states. Everything has been shaped & influenced by a history that is several thousand years old. From starting period of time Indian culture has been heavily



influenced by various religions. India is the home & birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism & other religion. Today India is one of the most ethnically & religiously diverse nation in the world. India is a secular country with Hindu-majority population; it has a large Muslim population. Christians and Sikhs are other significant minorities of India. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala, Assam, West Bengal and Telangana are some states with large Muslim populations. While only Lakshadweep & Jammu and Kashmir have majority of Muslim population.

In Bhagavad Geeta, food is classified into three categories based on property, quality and sanctity-sattvika, taamasika and rajasika. In north India Hindus are traditionally vegetarians but with the modern time their food habits has been changed. Brahmin Hindus do not eat garlic, onion, and intoxicant. During different festivals ethnic Indian food have social importance for celebration.

North India's food to begin with Kashmiri cuisine predominately non-vegetarian with "Halal" chicken, mutton and fish. They used hot species like saffron, ginger, cloves & cardamom. Kashmiri food reflects strong Central Asian influence. Other state like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh have their own food specialties but one common thing is that, high consumption of "Chapatis" prepared with varieties of floors such as wheat, rice & corn.

In Southern India, rice is a staple food with the great use of spices, lentils, fish & coconut and vegetables include tamarind, snake ground, garlic, ginger and plantain as the main ingredients. Tamarind is frequently made in order to impart sourness to the dishes in Tamil Nadu.

In Western India, Gujarati food is not only varied and tasty but also high in nutritional value. Their different cooking style and combination of spices are incorporated in preparing different dishes marking uniqueness of each. Maharashtra cuisine is a mix of both north and south cooking styles. Rajasthan and Gujarat both states represent Indian dessert flavor. Gujarat & Maharashtra share a long coast line & people also consume huge amount of sea food.

Connection between taste & culture Taste, culture & The Indian states, the food taste & culture of any state or area is reflected in the health of the local population. Food taste also connected with the cultural of states. Religion, also play an important role in food preference.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Foret (2006) has studied¹⁷ the factors that influence the behavior and decision making of consumers when buying beverages. The analysis was based on data on consumer behavior obtained within the period during 1993–2004. Based on the results obtained, it was concluded that hypermarkets were dominating not only as a place of purchasing foodstuffs in general but

also as a leading outlet for sale of beverages. Czech consumers preferred Czech brands of beverages and there was a new trend in increasing purchase of tea, juices and mineral water on the one hand and coffee and wine on the other. This indicates a change in consumption habits and reflects an interest in a healthier lifestyle. It can be concluded that hypermarkets are dominating not only as a place of buying foodstuffs sale in general but also as a leading outlet for the sale of beverages. It is also of interest that Czech consumers prefer Czech brands of beverages. There are new trends in this branch and, moreover, an increasing interest in purchases of tea, juices and mineral water on the one hand and coffee and wine on the other seem to indicate a change in consumption habits and reflect the effects of healthy life style. It is also obvious that a special attention should be paid to these changes and to study in detail the problems concerning the present lifestyle of Czech population as related to purchasing in suburban shopping and entertainment centers and hypermarkets. Vincent (2006) elicited¹⁸ that quality is an important factor that draws consumers towards branded products. Branded products are accepted as good quality products. People do not mind paying extra for branded products, as they get value for money. Media is a key constituent in promoting and influencing a brand. A child's insistence affects family's buying behavior. Children are highly aware and conscious of branded items. Although unbranded products sometimes give same satisfaction as branded products, customers would still prefer to purchase a branded product.

Renuka (2008) made an attempt to analyze the buying behaviour of ready-to-eat food products by consumers of Hubli and Dharwad. Samples of 200 respondents were selected for the study. Majority of the respondents were aware of Parle-G, Lays, Frooti and Amul brands in case of biscuits, chips, fruit juice and ice creams accordingly. Television was the major source for getting information about various brands in Page | 12 Review of Literature all the four products. Biscuits were consumed by all the respondents because of their convenience to use it as snacks. About 92 per cent, 93 per cent and 94 per cent of the respondents consumed chips, fruit juice and ice-creams respectively. Taste was the main driving force for purchasing of chips, fruit juice and ice creams. Health consciousness was the main factor for consumers not purchasing chips. Majority of the respondents were not purchasing fruit juice because they preferred home made products. Dislike towards the product was the main reason for not purchasing ice creams. The average monthly expenditure on ready-to-eat food products was found to be highest in case of high income group. Planned purchase was common among majority of the consumers for biscuits and fruit juice. However, most of the respondents did impulsive buying for chips and ice



creams. Parle-G, Lays, Maaza and Amul brands were highly preferred brands of biscuits, chips, fruit juice and ice creams respectively. The main factors influencing brand preference of biscuits, chips, fruit juice and ice-creams were quality, taste and reasonable price. If the preferred brands are not available in a particular shop, the consumers intend to visit other shops. Thus, the study revealed that young generation highly prefer ready-to-eat food products than the older groups. Besides the consumer behavior also varies from product to product.

Malik, Kadyan&Balyan (2013) in their article entitled "Food Habits of People In Haryana" made 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 equipment 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. People of Haryana have healthy eating habits. Consumers decide to eat away from home for many different reasons. They are looking for a fun-filled environment or a family-friendly atmosphere. Or perhaps they crave a favorite menu item or simply a convenient, budget-friendly meal. Often, the decision to eat out stems from more than one reason. (www.drinksindustryirel, accessed on Feb 26 2013)

Objectives:

- To understand the individual food choice preferences.
- Assess the impact of cultural factors on eating habits of individual.

• Hypothesis

Ho1- There is no impact of cultural factors on individual food tastes.

Ho2- There is no impact of demographic factors on food consumption.

• Research Methodology

Along with the discussions and literature review, a pool of forty one items was generated to identify the factors regarding the cultural food taste & food consumption. In the survey instrument, the eleven items were measured on a five point Likert-type scale, in which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Lastly, the questionnaire also consisted questions to solicit demographic information of the respondents such as age, gender, education, marital status and income group of respondents.

A sample of 50 respondents was collected. The survey was conducted in the Delhi city.

• Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic information collected with help of questionnaire was used to developed for general public using simple number and percentages,

followed by an chi – square test to identify the impact on lifestyle & eating habits of individual .

Individual food choice * eating habit Cross-tabulation							
Count							
		eating habit					Total
		strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
Individual food choice	strongly agree	2	2	0	4	4	12
	Agree	0	0	4	8	0	12
	Neutral	2	4	10	2	0	18
	Disagree	0	0	2	4	0	6
	strongly disagree	0	0	2	2	0	4
Total		4	6	18	20	4	52

The table of Expected Frequencies is below:

.923	1.38	6.23	2.30	.307	12
.923	1.38	6.23	2.30	.307	12
1.38	2.07	6.23	6.9	1.38	18
.46	.69	2.07	2.30	.46	6
.307	.46	1.38	1.53	.307	4

$$\chi_c^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

4	6	18	20	4	52
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Individual food choice * eating habit Cross-tabulation							
Count							
		eating habit					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Individual food choice	Strongly Agree	2	2	0	4	4	12
	Agree	0	0	4	8	0	12
	Neutral	2	4	10	2	0	18
	Disagree	0	0	2	4	0	6
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	2	0	4
Total		4	6	18	20	4	52

1	Chi-square test value	78.55
	Degree of	20



2	freedom	
3	Tabular value	31.4

• Interpretation

The above chi square test states that calculated value is more than the tabular value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it shows that the individual food choice of people affects their eating habits.

Gender * Eating Habit Cross-Tabulation						
Count						
		Eating Habit				Total
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Gender	Male	8	12	16	10	46
	Female	0	6	0	0	6
Total		8	18	16	10	52

The table of Expected Frequencies is below:

7.07	.92
15.92	.207
14.15	1.84
8.84	1.15

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Chi-square test value	309.647
Degree of freedom	6
Tabular value	12.6

• Interpretation

The above chi square test states that calculated value is more than the tabular value. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it shows that the gender affects the eating habits of people.

• Finding

- According to the survey conducted with the help of questionnaire of sample size 50, We conclude these finding
- Individual food choice affects the eating habits.

- With the help of review of literature the demographic factors also affects the eating habits of individuals.
- The overall quality & nutritional value also play an important role in the Impacts of Cultural influences on food taste & food consumption.

3. Conclusion

According to the survey conducted with the help of questionnaire of sample size 50, we conclude these finding

There are some cultural factors like set of beliefs, moral values, traditions which effects of an individual & his or her food choice have an impact on his or her eating habits i.e individual food choice depend on the quality & nutritional value of food products on the basis of their cultural traditions. In different culture who have higher purchasing power & better lifestyle prefer for better quality food products & vice versa.

Demographic factors such as geographical boundaries, national bounders, culture, age, religion, cast, gender also have an impact on the eating habits of the individuals. Individuals food taste, eating habits, method of preparation of food, serving temperature, methods of preservation, usage of raw material in the preparation of food have an effect on the eating habits of individuals.

A taste of sweet food is today linked to an overweight body shape. Nutritional value, food quality & food taste also have an impact on the final food product & its popularity amongst the individuals. People prefers those food product which have high nutritional value along with better taste but most of the individuals also stated that if the final taste of the product is not good but it have high nutritional value then also most of the individuals didn't like that food product.

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