

## **“Eating Out Habit of Individuals – An Analytical Study” (With Special Reference to Puducherry City)**

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**ABSTRACT :** *Three years after independence, Indian lifestyle has undergone many changes. Food and taste habits are no exception to this. Indian households today welcome food with convenience in cooking and purchase. The Indian economy has been growing at a tremendous pace for the last few years, with growth rates of 9.6 percent in 2006 and 9.2 percent in 2007. Despite the global slowdown that hit economies across the globe, India is considered to have survived it to a satisfactory extent. The Indian economy is growing at a steady pace with the direct impact being steadily rising income levels of the Indian population. The rising income levels in the population is a very interesting phenomena because of two reasons one being the fact that 55 percent of the population is under the age of 25 years and secondly, the changed family structure of the population, especially in cities (nuclear families with more than one earning member). What this leads to is an increase in spending, but an increase in spending with a changed consumer behavior. This is also seen in the change in the eating-out habits of the population. It is seen that more and more people eat out these days and for a multitude of reasons, ranging from lack of option for a home cooked meal to wanting to have a relaxing experience from a hard day at work to spending time with friends/family and so on. The avenues available to them have also increased over the last few years. Rising disposable incomes and changing consumer behavior brought about a complete change in the way people choose to eat out. The eating out frequency and habits has undergone a total change over the last decade. One reason for such a significant change has been along with the income and a demographic profile is the growing influence of the west. It is because of this that food habits of countries like India are changing and there is a rapid growth in the fast food industry. It is seen that the trend of going to eat out has increased tremendously. And to cater to this of the basic need for food. There is a plethora of other factors on which this decision depends. Demand a number of restaurants have come up. The eating out decision now no longer is based in the satisfaction.*

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### **I. EATING OUT**

Eating habits refers to what food we eat, how we eat it and why we eat it. Eating habits are influenced by social, cultural, religious, economic and environmental factors. Basically, all people eat to stay alive, but they also eat to show belonging to family or other social groups. Economic factors such as the availability of food and its cost also affect food choices. The food price and availability, in turn, are related to political factors including trade agreements and food laws. Food labeling also influences what food we choose. Eating out is no longer just for special occasions. It appears that modern living is causing people to eat out more and more and the energy and nutrient intake of individuals who frequently eat out (at restaurants, canteens, cafeterias, fast food outlets and similar establishments) may differ from that of individuals who generally eat at home.

#### **Definition of eating out**

Following are the definition for “eating out”:

“meals, beverages, snacks consumed out of home (core definition) If more detailed data are available, eating out will be defined as:

Meals eaten outside home prepared by food services (it is understood that food services refer to catering, formal and informal eating out)

Meals prepared by food services and consumed in home“ Three criteria were discussed when developing the definition of eating out:

a) **Where** the food was eaten (home, restaurant, canteen/cafeteria, take-away, picnic). It is clear that eating at a restaurant or cafeteria falls into the definition. But what about having a picnic meal on a beach, or a take-away-meal bought from a restaurant and eaten at home?

b) **Who** prepared the meal (members of the household, hired help, canteen cook, restaurant chef, food industry) or **where** it was prepared. Two points can be taken into account: (1) Whether a money transaction took place

between the producer and the consumer, and (2) Whether there was a possibility for choosing the ingredients the meal or snack was composed of.

c) The nature/category of the food eaten, basically, whether it was a meal or a snack (meal, salad, sandwich, tea or coffee, ice cream, etc). People may connect eating out with meals rather than with snacks, so that eating out is considered as something special in people's minds.

Eating out has evolved from an occasion driven activity to an occasion in itself. It has become a form of entertainment for consumers today. The market potential is encouraging home grown and existing players to expand their foot print, while new European and US brands are charting India entry plans. London's dim sum eatery ping pong will make its debut next month in Mumbai, while other global brands like nobu, carluccios and zuma are preparing strategies for the second largest food services market in Asia-pacific. China is far ahead, leading the pack with a \$510- billion industry. The fact that New York listed yum brands, which operates KFC and pizza hut among others and McDonald's have talked up the Indian potential has sustained international interest despite recent domestic economic woes. New locations, unique formats, innovative menus and exciting themes are influencing increased consumption. More and more restaurants are opened up recently. This made me to choose this as research article to undergo a deep study and to analyse the factors involved in eating out.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- [1] To find the eating preferences and likes of individuals relating to age and occupational income.
- [2] To rank the factors that influences more on individuals to eat out.
- [3] To determine the relationship between individuals income and their spending out nature.
- [4] To identify which gender of the population prefers more in eating out and find the reasons for choosing a restaurant.
- [5] To analyze the factors for which individuals give importance when they decide to eat out.

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

**H1:** There is no significant relationship between age and the number of times eats out in a week.

**H2:** There is no significant relationship between marital status and the amount spends per week on eat out.

**H3:** There is no significant relationship between income and the amount spends per week on eat out.

**H4:** There is no association between gender, profession and the amount spend per week on eat out.

The research design used for this study is exploratory and the sampling is non-probabilistic method and the sampling is convenience sampling. The sample respondents taken for the study is 300.

The main aim of this research study is to analyze the food preferences and eating out habits of people of different age, sex, education and income groups in the city. This analysis is to be done keeping in focus, the regular and occasional eaters. The research will determine the factors which influence the population to prefer a restaurant.

**Schroder and McEachern(2005)** in their research ,titled "Ready-to-eats and ethical consumer value: a focus on McDonald's and KFC" aims to investigate the effect of communicating corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to young consumers in the UK on their fast-food purchasing with reference to McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) It has been concluded by the authors that Ready-to-eat has been perceived as convenient but unhealthy and therefore Ready-to-eat companies can no longer rely on convenience as USP unless the implications of same on consumers health is given equal importance.

**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 ,wherein nutrition factors have less impact on table service. However the frequency of consumers very conscious of nutrition factors is significantly very less to table service and Ready-to-eat restaurants vis-a-vis others.

**Goyal and Singh (2007)** in their research work, 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 convenience 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.

**TABLE SHOWING DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS, PERSONAL INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**

PARTICULARS	OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE
Age	Below 20	44	14.7	14.7
	20-30	154	51.3	66.0
	31-40	39	13.0	79.0
	41-50	37	12.3	91.3
	51-60	11	3.7	95.0
	Above 60	15	5.0	100.0
Gender	Male	138	46.0	46.0
	Female	162	54.0	100.0
Marital status	Single	181	60.3	60.3
	Married	119	39.7	100.0
Profession	Student	124	41.3	41.3
	Professional	93	31.0	72.3
	Self-employed	33	11.0	83.3
	Retired	10	3.3	86.7
	Housewife	40	13.3	100.0
Own Vehicle	Yes	184	61.3	61.3
	No	116	38.7	100.0
Monthly Income	0-15000	118	39.3	39.3
	15001-30000	103	34.3	73.7
	30001-45000	36	12.0	85.7
	above 45000	43	14.3	100.0
Weekly Eat Out	1-3	205	68.3	68.3
	4-6	46	15.3	83.7
	7-9	10	3.3	87.0
	10-12	7	2.3	89.3
	13-15	14	4.7	94.0
	more than 16 times	18	6.0	100.0
Categories of Eateries visit the most	Restaurant	174	58.0	58.0
	fast food	87	29.0	87.0
	food court	12	4.0	91.0
	Dhaba	12	4.0	95.0
	home delivery	15	5.0	100.0
With whom eat out	Alone	17	5.7	5.7
	with partner	28	9.3	15.0
	with family	142	47.3	62.3
	with friends	104	34.7	97.0
	with colleagues	9	3.0	100.0
Spend per week	0-300	168	56.0	56.0
	301-600	73	24.3	80.3
	601-900	30	10.0	90.3
	901-1200	15	5.0	95.3
	1201-1500	6	2.0	97.3
	above 1500	8	2.7	100.0
Reasons for eating out	no option of home cooked food	37	12.3	12.3
	special occasion	66	22.0	34.3
	Leisure	42	14.0	48.3
	to spend time with friends and family	127	42.3	90.7
	Others	28	9.3	100.0
Preference time to eat out	Weekdays	29	9.7	9.7
	Weekends	128	42.7	52.3
	any day	143	47.7	100.0
Taste of food	extremely important	181	60.3	60.3
	Important	95	31.7	92.0
	Neutral	21	7.0	99.0
	extremely unimportant	3	1.0	100.0
Presentation of food	Extremely important	88	29.3	29.3
	Important	117	39.0	68.3
	Neutral	59	19.7	88.0
	Unimportant	18	6.0	94.0
	Extremely unimportant	18	6.0	100.0
External look and feel	Extremely important	75	25.0	25.0

	Important	102	34.0	59.0
	Neutral	70	23.3	82.3
	Unimportant	34	11.3	93.7
	Extremely unimportant	19	6.3	100.0
<b>Ambience</b>	Extremely important	89	29.7	29.7
	Important	96	32.0	61.7
	Neutral	93	31.0	92.7
	Unimportant	16	5.3	98.0
	Extremely unimportant	6	2.0	100.0
<b>Price</b>	Extremely important	97	32.3	32.3
	Important	100	33.3	65.7
	Neutral	62	20.7	86.3
	Unimportant	26	8.7	95.0
	Extremely unimportant	15	5.0	100.0
<b>Menu Variety</b>	Extremely important	77	25.7	25.7
	Important	98	32.7	58.3
	Neutral	71	23.7	82.0
	Unimportant	35	11.7	93.7
	Extremely unimportant	19	6.3	100.0
<b>Speed of the services</b>	Extremely important	98	32.7	32.7
	Important	97	32.3	65.0
	Neutral	47	15.7	80.7
	Unimportant	38	12.7	93.3
	Extremely unimportant	20	6.7	100.0
<b>Friendliness of the service personnel</b>	Extremely important	92	30.7	30.7
	Important	94	31.3	62.0
	Neutral	73	24.3	86.3
	Unimportant	21	7.0	93.3
	Extremely unimportant	20	6.7	100.0
<b>Cleanliness of the restaurant</b>	Extremely important	212	70.7	70.7
	Important	55	18.3	89.0
	Neutral	26	8.7	97.7
	Unimportant	5	1.7	99.3
	Extremely unimportant	2	.7	100.0

Source: Primary Data

H1 – There is no significant relationship between Age, and number of times eats out in a week

Actually there is no direct relationship between the age of the respondents and the number of times eats out in a week. To prove this a cross tabulation was used.

		Week Eat Out						Total	
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	more than 16 times		
Age	below 20	Count	34	7	0	0	2	1	44
		% within week_eatout	16.6%	15.2%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	5.6%	14.7%
	20-30	Count	95	30	6	4	8	11	154
		% within week_eatout	46.3%	65.2%	60.0%	57.1%	57.1%	61.1%	51.3%
	31-40	Count	28	4	1	1	1	4	39
		% within week_eatout	13.7%	8.7%	10.0%	14.3%	7.1%	22.2%	13.0%
	41-50	Count	27	5	0	2	1	2	37
		% within week_eatout	13.2%	10.9%	0.0%	28.6%	7.1%	11.1%	12.3%
	51-60	Count	10	0	0	0	1	0	11
		% within week_eatout	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	3.7%
	above 60	Count	11	0	3	0	1	0	15
		% within week_eatout	5.4%	0.0%	30.0%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	5.0%

Total	Count	205	46	10	7	14	18	300
	% within week_eatout	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The above analysis clearly stated that people in the age group of 20-30 going maximum times to eat out. It proves there is no direct relationship between age and the number of times eats out in a week. The respondents falling in the age group of 20-30 are working youngsters and not married category.

H2: There is no significant relationship between marital status and the amount spends per week on eat out.

			Spend perweek						Total
			0-300	301-600	601-900	901-1200	1201-1500	above 1500	
Marital status	single	Count	106	39	21	8	4	3	181
		% within spend_perweek	63.0%	53.0%	70.0%	53.3%	66.7%	37.5%	60.0%
	married	Count	62	34	9	7	2	5	119
		% within spend_perweek	36.0%	46.0%	30.0%	46.7%	33.3%	62.5%	39.0%
Total		Count	168	73	30	15	6	8	300
		% within spend_perweek	100%	100%	100%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%

Source: Primary Data

From the above cross tabulation table between marital status and the amount spend per week, it is observed that 70% of the respondents who are all single are spending approximately 601-900 per week on eating out in restaurants. The results indicate that unmarried is spending more comparatively than married individuals.

H3: There is no significant relationship between income and the amount spends per week on eat out.

			spend_perweek						Total
			0-300	301-600	601-900	901-1200	1201-1500	above 1500	
Monthly income	0-15000	Count	86	23	4	5	0	0	118
		% within spend_perweek	51.2%	31.5%	13.3%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	39.3%
	15001-30000	Count	56	31	7	5	3	1	103
		% within spend_perweek	33.3%	42.5%	23.3%	33.3%	50.0%	12.5%	34.3%
	30001-45000	Count	14	9	11	1	1	0	36
		% within spend_perweek	8.3%	12.3%	36.7%	6.7%	16.7%	0.0%	12.0%
	above 45000	Count	12	10	8	4	2	7	43
		% within spend_perweek	7.1%	13.7%	26.7%	26.7%	33.3%	87.5%	14.3%
Total		Count	168	73	30	15	6	8	300

	% within spend_perweek	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
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Source: Primary Data

From the above cross tabulation table between marital status and the amount spend per week, it is observed that 87.5% of the respondents who are all earning monthly income of above 45000 are spending more than Rs. 1500 per week on eating out in restaurants. The results indicate that with increase in income the spending out also increases.

**H4:** There is no association between gender, profession and the amount spend per week on eat out.

A two way anova was used to analyse the association between gender, profession and amount of spend per week on eat out. This is used to analyse the relationship between gender, profession and amount of spend per week on eat out.

**Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>**

Dependent Variable: spend\_perweek

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.053	8	291	.040

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + gender + profession + gender \* profession

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: spend\_perweek

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	30.311 <sup>a</sup>	8	3.789	2.767	.006
Intercept	492.977	1	492.977	360.013	.000
gender	1.843	1	1.843	1.346	.247
profession	25.811	4	6.453	4.712	.001
gender * profession	8.651	3	2.884	2.106	.100
Error	398.475	291	1.369		
Total	1408.000	300			
Corrected Total	428.787	299			

a. R Squared = .071 (Adjusted R Squared = .045)

There is no significant main effect for gender. Males (M= 1.85) did not spend significantly higher than females (M= 1.77), F (1,299) = 1.346, p = 0.247

There is a marginally significant main effect for profession. Results show that those in professional category (M= 2.13) spend higher than respondents in students (M= 1.60) and self employed category (M= 1.70), F (4,299) = 4.712, p=0.001 There is no significant gender by profession interaction. Despite the lack of statistical significance, spend per week between males and females did not differ much in the first three categories of profession, in the retired category females (M= 3.50) spend more than did males (M= 1.83), F (4,299) =2.106, p=0.100

**III. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS**

- Two way analysis result shows that there is no significant main effect for gender and there is a marginally significant main effect for profession on spending.
- It is observed that 70% of the respondents who are all single are spending approximately 601-900 per week on eating out in restaurants. It indicates that unmarried is spending more comparatively than married individuals.
- It is found that, nearly 27% of the respondents have given neutral importance to promotional offers and 15% of the respondents said that it is extremely unimportant.
- It is observed that, 30% of the respondents have given neutral importance to recommendations from friends and others when they decide to eat out and nearly 9% of the respondents said that it is extremely unimportant.

- Almost 27% of the respondents have given neutral importance to promptness in handling of complaints and 2% of the respondents said that it is extremely unimportant.
- The chances of eating healthful are tossed out the window
- It is never healthy to become eating out greater than as soon as or two times per week.
- Eating out at a restaurant is really a good so long as its' completed in moderation. An excessive amount of anything will always be negative.
- A key benefit of eating in restaurants is that it provides the opportunity to try something that normally we wouldn't cook or serve ourselves.
- Everyone enjoys the sense of occasion and atmosphere of eating out whether it be a family occasion dinning out for Sunday lunch.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on existing studies on eating out, the use of food services and eating outside the home has increased. While the volume and trends vary in different countries, the background for this development lies in the societal and cultural changes that have taken place. The growing trend of both spouses working full-time, the quest for convenient eating and cooking as well as meals for children provided by the public sector reduce the number of meals at home. Along with the rise of income and living standards, the share of food in total expenditure has declined and food consumption habits have changed. In wealthier countries people tend to eat out more frequently. It is evident from the study that majority of the consumer have visited different restaurant at different times. So the restaurant owner has to take steps to retain the customer and make them a permanent customer. From the study majority of people are female who visit to restaurant ,and mostly are youngsters ,income level of respondents is good they mostly visit in restaurant at least once in a week and around 41% are go for dinner .It shows that majority of people visit the restaurant for taking dinner. Quality, cleanliness and taste are the major factors consider by the respondent in selecting a restaurant, so the restaurant owners should not compromise on these aspect at any cost.

This study finds that attributes people consider when they select a restaurant are ones that directly relate to peoples' dining out experience, such as quality of food and types of cuisine, service quality, price, and restaurant atmosphere. These attributes can be modified or adjusted according to potential customers' needs and preferences by restaurant operators. Fixed items that are not directly related to actual dining out experience and which are difficult to be changed by staff, such as architectural design, location of the restaurant, name brand and convenience, appeared to be not as important to respondents as ones that are directly related to the dining out experience. Even though restaurants compete in the same market, the market can be seen as different segments based on the characteristics they have. The restaurant operators should develop strategies that can be flexible to different segments in the market according to market characteristics.

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