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RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEW TRENDS IN MUMBAI CITY: POPULARITY OF DINING OUT

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ABSTRACT

More and more Indians are eating out. This creates a massive opportunity for the 100 billion dollar food-services industry. Also, working women find it easier to eat out. The study observes that cuisine, ambience, location and cost are major criteria's for deciding a restaurant. Also, families have started getting more health conscious and so a large number of them choose to eat healthy. Mumbaikars are also getting experimentative with food due to the growing international exposure.

INTRODUCTION

More and more Indians are eating out and their habit of consuming outside food is increasing every day. The trend is now borne by government data. As per the latest household spending data released by the National Sample Survey Office, the proportion of household expenditure on dining out has increased from 19% in 2000 to over 30% in 2012. Another report revealed a huge opportunity for India's food-services industry owing to changing food habits. The report pointed out, "Indians are quickly developing a taste for eating out. This creates a massive opportunity for the 100 billion dollar food-services industry. Catering to a population of 1.2bn, the market is still largely underpenetrated. Independent operators dominate, although fast food chains are tempting taste buds and attempting to gain market share."

Research aims and objectives

In the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of people eating out. The main purpose of this research paper is to identify the dining habit of middle income families in Mumbai. The paper aims to delve into the specifics of the family, their ordering routine and places they like to visit.

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The main aim of the research paper is as follows

- To understand the popularity of dining out and the shift from home cooked food to it.
- To gauge the percentage of people who prefer eating out.
- To understand the way they order when they do dine out.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted has been primary survey using questionnaire and interview method. The survey data was weighted to the middle class respondents (Family income: Rs.5-25lakh p.a.) in Mumbai city according to gender, age and place of residence so as to derive a result representing the dining out habits of middle class families.

Research limitations

- Due to the limited sample size, the result may not be adequate to indicate the trend of dining out for the larger population.
- Due to the time constraints, most of the people who were surveyed were the young population. This is may not be indicative of middle income families.
- Respondents may not provide accurate answers of their family incomes and amount spent.

Research Findings

Preferred cuisine when dining out

Table 1. Preferred cuisine when dining out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Cuisines | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Mexican | 6 | 11% | 10 | 12 |
| Italian | 12 | 22% | 20 | 25 |
| Thai | 5 | 10% | 10 | 9 |
| Mughalai | 10 | 19% | 25 | 15 |
| Chinese | 15 | 28% | 25 | 30 |
| Lebanese | 2 | 4% | 5 | 3 |
| Continental | 2 | 4% | 5 | 3 |
| Others | 1 | 2% | 0 | 3 |

The top favourite cuisines seem to be Chinese with (28%), Italian (22%) and Mughalai (19%).

Availability of global cuisines and an evolving taste of global flavours have led to higher demand for various cuisines from all over the world. Indians have started demanding new varieties and new restaurants, which is increasing the market for world cuisine.

Frequency of dining out

Table 2. Regularity or frequency of dining out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Frequency | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|--|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very frequently (More than 5 times a week) | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 |
| Frequently (3-5 times a week) | 16 | 30% | 20 | 24 |
| Weekly | 24 | 45% | 55 | 56 |
| Occasionally | 13 | 25% | 25 | 20 |
| Other | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 |

Almost half the respondents dine out weekly. A quarter of them occasionally and a little more than a quarter dine out frequently. There is not much difference on the frequency of dining out amongst males and females as seen above.

Thus it is observed, that majority middle class families do not really dine out frequently. Since Indians live in joint families, they have a culture of dining in together more frequently than dining out. Availability of domestic help makes it easier to dine at home. Also some people wish to eat particular and personalised dishes which can be only made at home.

Preferred ways of selecting a restaurant

Table 3. Opinion of the respondents on preference while choosing a restaurant (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Factor | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|----------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Location | 6 | 11% | 10 | 14 |
| Cuisine | 34 | 64% | 80 | 56 |
| Ambience | 8 | 15% | 5 | 22 |
| Cost | 3 | 6% | 0 | 13 |
| Calories | 2 | 4% | 5 | 5 |
| Others | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Majority of respondents preferred cuisine as the reason to select a restaurant. Ambience and location are also other preferred reasons while choosing a restaurant when dining out. Cost and calories did not seem to be a popular reason when choosing the same. Ambience, location and cost also seem to be a greater preference to women as compared to men when dining out.

The researchers believe that since people are eating out, they may choose to eat their preference which maybe contrary to what they get at home, and therefore choice of cuisine is the major factor. Ambience is the next preference as people prefer to have a luxurious experience. Location is the third preference as people prefer not to commute long distances for a meal. Since people do not dine out too regularly, cost and calories when dining out do not seem to really be of much importance. Between men and women, women are more conscious for better ambience and location. Also women are more conscious of cost when they dine out.

Types of dining

Table 4. Dining habit preferences on the basis of type (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Type | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Fine Dining | 17 | 32% | 30 | 35 |
| Casual Dining | 30 | 56% | 60 | 57 |
| Fast Food | 3 | 6% | 5 | 4 |
| (Self-Service) | | | | |
| Home Delivery | 1 | 2% | 0 | 2 |
| Home Cooked Meals | 2 | 4% | 5 | 2 |

More than half the respondents (56%) prefer casual dining over all other types, fine dining is also gaining importance as that is the second most preferred option. Home delivery seems to be the least preferred option.

Casual dining is an informal and more comfortable way of dining and people seem to prefer that, instead of dressing up and going to a formal fancy place. Casual dining is also cheaper in cost when it comes to dining as compared to fine dining restaurants, so you get the feel of going out affordably and comfortably.

Style of dining out

Table 5. Preference in style of dining (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Style | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Buffet | 21 | 40% | 45 | 40 |
| Ala carte | 32 | 60% | 55 | 60 |

Majority (60%) of the respondents prefer ala carte as compared to a buffet. Ala carte are the evolved habits of ordering what you prefer, rather than eating what you get. People are also more conscious of the quality they receive and have started valuing quality over quantity so as to get a better value of their meal.

Ala carte also turns out to be a more reasonable option as compared to a buffet, since you order only what you wish for

and not necessarily go through the various courses a buffet has to offer. Ala carte is also a healthier option of eating as you eat the desired amount and not extra, which is also a preferred choice to most aware and health conscious families.

Cost factor when dining out

Table 6. Importance of cost factor when dining out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Importance | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very | 4 | 8% | 0 | 10 |
| Quite | 15 | 27% | 20 | 35 |
| Somewhat | 29 | 55% | 60 | 52 |
| Not much | 1 | 2% | 10 | 0 |
| None at all | 4 | 8% | 10 | 3 |

A little more than half the respondents keep price as somewhat important when dining out, a little more than quarter say that cost is quite important. Women seem to be more cost conscious as compared to men when dining out as seen from the survey. Price is somewhat important for majority but not the sole concern when dining out; researchers also observe that women are more cost conscious and will make a more price-led decision when dining out.

Importance of variety when dining out

Table 7. Role of variety when dining out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Importance | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very | 19 | 36% | 45 | 30 |
| Quite | 21 | 40% | 35 | 42 |
| Somewhat | 11 | 21% | 10 | 28 |
| Not much | 2 | 4% | 10 | 0 |

Try new restaurants

Table 8. Experimentation amongst middle class families to try new places (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Importance | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very | 30 | 57% | 45 | 63 |
| Quite | 12 | 23% | 30 | 17 |
| Somewhat | 8 | 15% | 10 | 20 |
| Not much | 2 | 4% | 10 | 0 |
| None at all | 1 | 2% | 5 | 0 |

Trying out new restaurants and deals-discounts seem to be the most favoured amongst the respondents as well as amongst both male and female respondents. Variety is also quite important as the data shows. Amongst the men, they prefer trying out new restaurants and more variety but can do without deals and discounts.

This is because men are not as cost conscious as women and so deals and discounts do not excite them as much as women. Women, on the other hand, look out for exciting deals and discounts as well as new restaurants, but can do without much variety. Thus again ambience and cost prove to be major criterions for women when dining out.

Pace of eating

Table 9. Pace of eating (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Pace | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Fast (10-20mins) | 14 | 26% | 30 | 24 |
| Medium (20-40mins) | 36 | 68% | 65 | 70 |
| Slow (More than 40mins) | 3 | 6% | 5 | 6 |

As seen above, medium pace that is 20- 40 minutes is the most preferred pace of eating by most people, around a quarter of them consider they are fast eaters. There is not much difference between the genders on the pace of eating. When dining, people tend to chit chat and talk over their meals and so a medium pace is a consequence of that as well as since meals are served in courses, they end up eating food at the medium pace. Pace of eating is also proportional to the level of hunger and so fast eaters are generally the ones who are hungrier.

Reaction to poor quality food/ service

Table 10. Reaction to dissatisfaction due to faulty service/ food (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Reaction | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|--------------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Yell at the manager/chef | 2 | 4% | 5 | 3 |
| Ask for the comment card/book | 14 | 26% | 40 | 18 |
| Ask for a replacement | 30 | 57% | 45 | 63 |
| Ask for complimentary desserts | 3 | 6% | 5 | 6 |
| Accept it | 4 | 7% | 5 | 10 |

Majority respondents ask for a replacement on receiving poor quality food, a quarter of them prefers writing reviews. Men are more review writers than acceptors of dissatisfaction.

Both, men and women prefer a replacement when provided with poor quality service, women being more docile and passive, accept a dissatisfaction; men on the other hand, prefer to write reviews for improvement.

Eating Healthy

Table 11. Importance of eating healthy when out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Importance | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Very | 23 | 43% | 35 | 49 |
| Quite | 16 | 30% | 35 | 27 |
| Somewhat | 10 | 19% | 20 | 18 |
| Not much | 4 | 8% | 10 | 6 |
| None at all | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0 |

Most respondents prefer eating healthy as seen from data; it regresses towards less importance to eating healthy. People more aware and conscious of their health and fitness, have started opting for healthier options if available when dining out. Example, if given a choice, people prefer wheat over other options.

Ordering drinks, when dining out

Table 12. Frequency of ordering drinks when dining out (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Response | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|-----------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Always | 9 | 17% | 15 | 18 |
| Sometimes | 41 | 77% | 85 | 72 |
| Never | 3 | 6% | 0 | 10 |

Table 13. Type of drink ordered (n=50)

| Drink | Total Number | Total Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|----------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Water | 12 | 24% | 25 | 23 |
| Aerated drinks | 15 | 28% | 20 | 32 |
| Juices | 9 | 18% | 10 | 20 |
| Mocktails | 6 | 14% | 10 | 16 |
| Alcohol | 8 | 16% | 35 | 9 |

Most respondents order drinks occasionally and not regularly when out, of which women do not seem to be much drinkers and can also avoid as compared to men.

People becoming more health conscious and aware of the amount of sugar in various drinks as well as an additional cost are some deterrents which make people occasional drinkers. Also traditionally, Indian society only propagated men drinking alcohol and so when dining out figures show men as more alcoholics than women and women giving a higher preference to juices and aerated drinks when out.

Payment of bill when dining out with friends

Table 14. Desired way of paying the bill, when dining with friends (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Ways | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|---------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Split it | 42 | 79% | 70 | 85 |
| Alternatively | 5 | 9% | 15 | 6 |
| No specific | 6 | 12% | 15 | 9 |

Splitting the bill is the most preferred way of paying the bill when out with friends, it has a clear cut majority that proves it to be the most desired way. Amongst the genders, men seem to pay more often alternatively as compared to women.

Men are egoistic by nature and feel more secure when they pay the whole bill rather than splitting it up, women on the other hand maintain less formalities and so stand by splitting the bill, some also believe that they would not dine out with the same friends frequently and so like to split it.

Interest in learning good dining etiquettes

Table 15. Number of people interested to learn good dining etiquettes (n=53, m=20, f=33)

| Response | Number | Percentage | Males (%) | Females (%) |
|----------|--------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Yes | 44 | 83% | 65 | 94 |
| No | 9 | 17% | 35 | 6 |

Majority of the respondents wish to learn good dining etiquettes of which women are keener for the same. Women are more conscious and so have a higher desire to learn good dining etiquettes. People know some and wish to learn more as well as correct dining etiquettes so as to reflect a better image of themselves in society and for their own overall holistic development.

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Study

An increasing number of people are eating out mostly due to the erratic daily routines which leave one with less time to cook. Also, many families have both members working which leaves them less time to spend in the kitchen. An increasing number of women have joined the work force which means lesser home cooked food.

- Chinese, Italian and Mughalai are the favoured cuisines.
- Cuisine, ambience, location and cost are major criteria's for deciding a restaurant.
- Middle class families majorly dine out weekly and prefer casual dining over other forms.
- Women are more cost conscious than men when dining out, whereas men are more excited of more variety and new restaurants.
- Cleanliness, having balanced meals and not talking when are eating are some of the most important dining habits, whereas ill treatment to waiters and making noises while eating are some of the most disliked dining habits.
- Indian families have started getting more health conscious and so a large number of them choose to eat healthy.
- Splitting the bill is the most common way to pay the bill when out with friends.

Peoples taste is getting more expensive and they are going for fine dining and trying out new cuisines. They are getting experimental with food. This is due to the growing international exposure. A growing population is getting more and more calorie conscious by the day. They are choosing healthier options and prefer to know what's in their food. They count calories eaten per day and thus many restaurants are providing nutritional information alongside the prices. Desserts also are very selectively ordered. Availability of world cuisine has also led to an increase in the desire to be able to behave in a globally recognised and accepted manner for which one needs to be able to present them in a more sophisticated way.

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