



An Assessment of Consumer Awareness and Perception of South Indian Cuisine Restaurants in Ghaziabad

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Abstract-This study assesses consumer awareness and perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad, a rapidly urbanizing city within the National Capital Region (NCR). With growing interest in diverse cuisines, South Indian food is gaining popularity due to its authenticity, health benefits, and unique taste. However, limited research exists on consumer perceptions outside traditional South Indian cultural geographies. To address this gap, a structured survey was conducted among 50 respondents using a stratified random sampling method across four localities: Indrapuram, Vaishali, Raj Nagar, and Sahibabad. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis in SPSS. The findings reveal that consumers in Ghaziabad hold favorable perceptions of South Indian restaurants, particularly regarding hygiene, food safety, value for money, and authenticity. Dosa and Uttapam emerged as the most preferred dishes, with home delivery being the dominant dining mode. Moderate concerns were noted regarding pricing and discount schemes, while taste consistency was identified as an area needing improvement. Correlation results highlight strong links between food authenticity, hygiene, and dining environment, reinforcing their importance in customer satisfaction. The study offers actionable insights for restaurant operators to enhance service quality, consumer trust, and brand positioning in a competitive market.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Perception, South Indian Cuisine, Ghaziabad, Restaurant Industry, Dining Behavior, Food Authenticity, Hygiene.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is positioned as a country with an evergreen, rich and varied heritage comprising numerous regions and states within having striking contrasts and enormous food habits, ideologies, beliefs, faiths, living standards, civilizations, traditions, geographic locations, climates, religions, ethnic and linguistic diversity [1]. Traditionally, only North Indian and South Indian cuisine were popular in India. Gradually, Chinese food made inroads and recorded steady growth. Over the years, restaurants serving international cuisine became more popular, such as Italian, Thai, Mexican and Mediterranean [2].

Ghaziabad, as part of the National Capital Region (NCR), has witnessed a rapid increase in urban dining culture [3]. South Indian cuisine, with its perceived authenticity, health benefits, and unique taste profile, is gaining traction [4]. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how aware consumers are of South Indian restaurants and how they perceive such establishments. This study attempts to fill this research gap.

The primary purpose of this study is to assess consumer awareness and perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad. Specifically, the research investigates demographic profiles, dining behaviors, and perceptions regarding food quality, hygiene, pricing, service, and ambience. By examining these factors, the study aims to identify key determinants influencing customer satisfaction and provide actionable insights for restaurant management.

The structure of the paper is organized as follows: Section 1 introduces the topic and outlines the study's objectives. Section 2 reviews relevant literature on consumer perception and dining behavior. Section 3 explains the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques. Section 4 presents the results and discussion, incorporating descriptive statistics, correlations, and interpretations. Finally, Section 5 provides conclusions, recommendations, and implications for restaurant practices and future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have analyzed consumer perception and awareness in the food and restaurant industry.

In Wani, Dada and Shah, (2025) endeavors to unravel the complex interplay of psychological, cultural and contextual factors, thereby enriching theoretical discourse and presenting actionable insights for systemic change. Data from 476 participants were acquired through an online survey to rigorously interrogate the proposed model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) ensured construct validity, while structural equation modeling (SEM), utilizing SPSS and AMOS, disentangled the intricate interdependencies among latent constructs within the hypothesized framework. The analysis reveals that



consumer attitudes ($\beta = 0.37$) serve as the most salient predictor of their intention to curb food waste, with subjective norms ($\beta = 0.23$) demonstrating a comparatively modest effect. Concerning perceptual influences, environmental concern ($\beta = 0.24$) significantly shapes consumers' perceptions toward waste reduction, while food taste ($\beta = 0.15$) exhibits the weakest influence in guiding such perceptions. Wani, Dada and Shah, (2025)

In Suhane, Bakshi and Soni, (2024) delves into the intricate tapestry of food preferences among South Indian populations, specifically in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh/Telangana. By meticulously analyzing historical records, contemporary surveys, and emerging consumption patterns, this study offers a thorough understanding of how traditional dietary habits interact with modern influences. The findings highlight a delicate balance between cultural preservation and evolving consumer behavior. This dynamic interplay is influenced by factors such as urbanization, health consciousness, and technological advancements, which collectively shape South Indian food preferences while maintaining cultural authenticity. [6]

Murthy and Kumar, (2023) The purpose of this qualitative study is to know the expectations and perceptions of customers on different services offered to them in restaurants, along with the estimation of the gap that exists between them. A sample of 250 respondents with different demographic profiles has been selected for conducting the study. The different dimensions that are considered for the study include tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. The results of the study concluded that the highest expectation of the customers is on sincerity in providing error-free service followed by providing a menu for diet and offering prompt services to customers even during peak hours. The lowest perception is on creating a feeling of safety and a pleasant environment followed by individual attention to customers and staff availability as and when needed. The analysis of the gap between expectations and perceptions of customers in various dimensions indicates that there is a gap in every dimension except in the tangible dimension. The highest gap was found in the responsiveness dimension followed by the reliability dimension and assurance dimension. The lowest gap is found in the empathy dimension. [7]

In another work, Kumar and Parkash, (2019) explores the food preference on the basis of fusion and authentic food at 'Dosa Plaza', Amity University, Gurgaon, Haryana. Objectives of the study are to evaluate the preference of food on the basis of authenticity and to analyze the impact of fusion food over South Indian dishes. The study requires both secondary and primary data. Secondary data could be gleaned from past research papers and primary data could be collected from the respondents by the closed ended questionnaire. The findings reveal that the students, employees and visitors those who visited Dosa Plaza have really enjoyed the food. Kumar and Parkash, (2019)

In R.Kalaivani, (2018) investigated the different elements which affect the customer's satisfaction or which can increase the customer satisfaction, such like promotion is one variable through which you can enhance the satisfaction level in promotion through personal selling and public relation ,advertising. This research is mainly based on hotels in Coimbatore, a major city of Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore which is known as Manchester of South India is the fastest growing cities in India and a major hub for various industries. Coimbatore cuisine is predominantly south Indian with rice as its base. Most local restaurants still retain their rural flavour, with many restaurants serving food over a banana leaf. Coimbatore has an active food culture and various cuisine options for dining. R.Kalaivani, (2018)

Table 1 presents a comparative summary of key studies examining consumer perception, awareness, and satisfaction in the food and restaurant industry, with particular emphasis on South Indian cuisine. These studies adopt diverse methodologies—ranging from quantitative surveys and structural equation modeling to qualitative explorations—to analyze different aspects of consumer behavior. While some focus on food authenticity and cultural identity, others emphasize service quality gaps, promotional strategies, and the influence of evolving socio-cultural factors. Collectively, these works enrich the understanding of how consumer perceptions are shaped by both tangible and intangible dimensions of the dining experience.

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF LITERATURE ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION IN FOOD AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Author(s) & Year	Context/Area of Study	Methodology	Key Findings	Contribution
Wani, Dada & Shah (2025)	Consumer attitudes toward food waste	Online survey (476 participants), CFA, SEM	Attitudes ($\beta=0.37$) strongest predictor of intention to curb food waste; taste least influential ($\beta=0.15$)	Links psychological and environmental factors to food perception
Suhane, Bakshi & Soni (2024)	South Indian food preferences in 5 states	Historical records, surveys, trend analysis	Balance between cultural authenticity and modern influences shaped by urbanization, health, and technology	Provides cultural and regional insights into evolving preferences
Murthy & Kumar (2023)	Customer expectations vs. perceptions in restaurants	Qualitative study, 250 respondents	Gaps in responsiveness, reliability, and assurance; sincerity in service most expected	Highlights gaps between service expectations and perceptions
Kumar & Parkash (2019)	Fusion vs. authentic South Indian food (Dosa Plaza, Gurgaon)	Primary (questionnaire) + secondary data	Students and employees enjoy fusion, but authenticity still valued	Explores authenticity vs. innovation in dining preferences



R. Kalaivani (2018)	Customer satisfaction in Coimbatore restaurants	Exploratory study on promotions and dining practices	Promotion, advertising, and cultural dining practices enhance satisfaction	Connects promotional practices with satisfaction in South Indian dining
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Although the reviewed literature provides valuable insights into consumer perceptions of food authenticity, service quality, and evolving preferences, few studies have specifically examined consumer awareness and perceptions of South Indian cuisine restaurants in semi-urban and metropolitan transitional regions such as Ghaziabad. Most prior works either focus on South Indian states or institutional dining contexts, leaving limited understanding of how consumers outside traditional South Indian cultural geographies perceive authenticity, hygiene, pricing, and service in such restaurants. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates consumer awareness and perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad, thereby contributing context-specific insights that can guide both practitioners and researchers in the food service industry.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the research framework, procedures, and tools employed to conduct the study on consumer awareness and perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad. Since the study aims to explore both the awareness and perception of consumers, a combination of descriptive and exploratory design was used. The methodology also explains the population under study, sampling methods, survey instrument, and the analytical techniques used to interpret the data.

A. Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design. The descriptive component is used to measure and analyze the levels of consumer awareness and perceptions about South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad. The exploratory aspect helps identify emerging patterns, customer preferences, and critical factors such as food quality, hygiene, service, price, and ambience. A quantitative (structured survey) was employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem [10].

B. Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises adult residents of Ghaziabad (aged 18 years and above). Ghaziabad is a rapidly urbanizing district within the National Capital Region (NCR) and has a growing demand for diverse cuisines, including South Indian food. As the study focuses on consumers who are either potential or existing diners at South Indian restaurants, residents from different socio-economic backgrounds were considered.

C. Sample Size

In this study a survey with 50 respondents was conducted. This sample size is adequate for identifying trends in consumer perceptions. The findings from the 50-

person survey provide valuable insights and guide improvements for the larger-scale data collection.

D. Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation across different localities of Ghaziabad [11]. Four key residential and commercial areas were chosen:

1. **Indirapuram** – A hub for middle and upper-middle-class consumers with high restaurant density.
2. **Vaishali** – Known for its cosmopolitan culture and preference for diverse cuisines.
3. **Raj Nagar** – An upscale locality with a rising number of modern dining establishments.
4. **Sahibabad** – Representing working-class and industrial areas with a mix of affordable restaurants.

From each locality, approximately 12–13 respondents were selected randomly, making a total of 50 participants. This stratification reduces sampling bias and ensures the results reflect varied socio-economic conditions.

E. Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The tool consisted of both closed-ended questions (Likert-scale items, multiple-choice).

The questionnaire was divided into five sections:

1. **Demographic Information** (age, gender, education, occupation, income, and locality).
2. **Dining Behavior** (frequency of visits to South Indian restaurants, mode of dining—dine-in, takeaway, delivery).
3. **Awareness Sources** (social media, food delivery apps, advertisements, word-of-mouth, etc.).
4. **Perceptions** measured on a **5-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) across dimensions such as:
 - Food Quality and Authenticity
 - Hygiene and Safety
 - Pricing and Value for Money
 - Service Quality
 - Ambience and Comfort

F. Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected online (Google Forms link) to capture responses targeted residents through local WhatsApp groups and community forums. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and confidentiality of their responses was maintained [12].

G. Data Analysis



The collected data (N = 50) were processed using SPSS software for statistical analysis. The following techniques were applied:

1. **Descriptive Statistics** – To calculate frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations for awareness levels and perception measures [13].
2. **Correlation Analysis** – To identify the strength of relationships between perception dimensions (food quality, hygiene, price) and customer satisfaction [14].

H. Ethical Considerations

All respondents participated voluntarily. Prior informed consent was obtained, and anonymity was assured. The data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, including demographic profiles, dining behavior, descriptive statistics of perceptions, and interrelationships among key variables. The results are discussed in detail to provide insights into consumer awareness and perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants in Ghaziabad.

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2. The study surveyed 50 participants, with a higher representation of females (64%) than males (36%). The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents fall within the 18–25 years and 36–45 years categories, each representing 30% of the sample. The smallest group comprises respondents aged 46–55 years (14%).

TABLE 2: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (FREQUENCY & %)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 years	15	30.0
	26–35 years	10	20.0
	36–45 years	15	30.0
	46–55 years	7	14.0
	56 years and above	8	16.0
Gender	Male	18	36.0
	Female	32	64.0
Education	Up to Higher Secondary	8	16.0
	Graduate	10	20.0
	Postgraduate	16	32.0
	Professional Degree / Diploma	12	24.0
	Other	4	8.0
Occupation	Homemaker	8	16.0
	Business / Self-employed	10	20.0
	Student	6	12.0

TABLE 4: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Food Authenticity	3.78	1.266	1.604	-1.011	.337	.117	.662
Taste Consistency	3.90	1.093	1.194	-.968	.337	.428	.662

	Retired	7	14.0
	Salaried (Private/Govt)	6	12.0
	Other	13	26.0
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	8	16.0
	₹25,000–₹50,000	11	22.0
	₹50,001–₹75,000	9	18.0
	₹75,001–₹1,00,000	8	16.0
	Above ₹1,00,000	14	28.0
Locality	Indirapuram	10	20.0
	Raj Nagar	14	28.0
	Vaishali	10	20.0
	Sahibabad	16	32.0

The demographic distribution indicates a predominance of young and middle-aged respondents, primarily female, with a majority holding postgraduate or professional qualifications. Income levels are spread across all brackets, with a notable proportion earning above ₹1,00,000, reflecting a diverse socioeconomic sample.

4.2 Dining Behavior

Table 3 highlights respondents' dining frequency, preferred dining mode, and favored South Indian dishes. A majority of respondents (36%) reported visiting South Indian restaurants very often, with home delivery (48%) being the most popular mode of dining. Among dishes, Dosa (26%) and Uttapam (24%) were most frequently consumed.

TABLE 3: DINING BEHAVIOR VARIABLES (FREQUENCY & %)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Dining Frequency	Very Often	18	36.0
	Often	14	28.0
	Sometimes	10	20.0
	Rarely	4	8.0
	Never	4	8.0
Dining Mode	Home Delivery	24	48.0
	Dine-in	15	30.0
	Takeaway	11	22.0
Preferred Dish	Vada	10	20.0
	Dosa	13	26.0
	Uttapam	12	24.0
	Idli	9	18.0
	Meals/Thali	6	12.0

Consumers in Ghaziabad display a strong inclination toward frequent consumption of South Indian cuisine, predominantly through home delivery services. Dosa and Uttapam appear as the most preferred items, suggesting their popularity and wide acceptance among the target audience.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions

Descriptive statistics for consumer perceptions of South Indian restaurants are summarized in Table 4. The mean scores reflect general agreement with positive attributes of restaurants, with values ranging from 3.60 to 4.16 (on a 5-point Likert scale).



Portion Size	3.64	1.225	1.500	-.998	.337	.309	.662
Hygiene	4.02	1.134	1.285	-1.178	.337	.624	.662
Food Safety	3.96	1.195	1.427	-1.342	.337	1.068	.662
Safe to Consume	4.16	.976	.953	-1.019	.337	.089	.662
Price Reasonable	3.62	1.292	1.669	-.661	.337	-.516	.662
Value for Money	4.04	1.029	1.060	-1.252	.337	1.528	.662
Discounts Useful	3.60	1.262	1.592	-.838	.337	-.106	.662
Service Courtesy	3.96	1.009	1.019	-.786	.337	.173	.662
Order Time	4.00	1.212	1.469	-1.504	.337	1.551	.662
Menu Knowledge	3.80	1.161	1.347	-.734	.337	-.334	.662
Ambience	3.86	1.229	1.511	-1.234	.337	.749	.662
Seating	4.00	1.178	1.388	-1.014	.337	.065	.662
Dining Environment	3.94	1.058	1.119	-.847	.337	.023	.662

The highest mean score was observed for Safe to Consume (4.16), followed by Value for Money (4.04) and Hygiene (4.02), indicating that respondents perceive South Indian restaurants in Ghaziabad as maintaining good food safety and hygiene standards while offering satisfactory value. Lower means for Discounts Useful (3.60) and Price Reasonable (3.62) suggest moderate perception regarding pricing and promotional offers. Skewness values are

negative for most variables, indicating a tendency toward higher agreement with positive statements.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis (Table 5) was conducted to examine relationships between restaurant perception variables. Only two decimal points are reported for clarity.

TABLE 5: PEARSON CORRELATION MATRIX OF PERCEPTION VARIABLES

Variables	Food Authenticity	Taste Consistency	Portion Size	Hygiene	Food Safety	Safe to Consume	Price Reasonable	Value for Money	Discounts Useful	Service Courtesy	Order Time	Menu Knowledge	Ambience	Seating	Dining Environment
Food Authenticity	1.00	0.12	-0.09	0.03	-0.13	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.01	0.04	-0.04	0.08	-0.05	0.14	0.26
Taste Consistency	0.12	1.00	-0.15	0.15	-0.30	-0.04	0.09	0.06	0.03	-0.15	-0.14	-0.18	0.02	0.27	0.21
Portion Size	-0.09	-0.15	1.00	-0.29	0.02	0.02	0.16	0.06	0.13	-0.23	-0.22	0.01	-0.16	-0.11	0.09
Hygiene	0.03	0.15	-0.29	1.00	0.05	0.09	0.05	-0.05	0.19	0.00	0.24	-0.07	0.22	0.20	0.29
Food Safety	-0.13	-0.30	0.02	0.05	1.00	0.06	-0.06	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.03	0.14	0.07	-0.09	-0.02
Safe to Consume	0.05	-0.04	0.02	0.09	0.06	1.00	0.29	0.18	0.00	-0.16	-0.09	-0.15	-0.10	-0.07	-0.05
Price Reasonable	0.06	0.09	0.16	0.05	-0.06	0.29	1.00	-0.13	0.16	-0.04	0.01	-0.13	0.06	0.01	-0.21
Value for Money	0.02	0.06	0.06	-0.05	0.07	0.18	-0.13	1.00	0.03	-0.14	-0.21	0.09	0.10	-0.02	0.21
Discounts Useful	0.01	0.03	0.13	0.19	0.07	0.00	0.16	0.03	1.00	-0.19	-0.03	0.06	-0.01	-0.03	0.10
Service Courtesy	0.04	-0.15	-0.23	0.00	0.07	-0.16	-0.04	-0.14	-0.19	1.00	0.22	-0.13	0.29	-0.09	-0.16
Order Time	-0.04	-0.14	-0.22	0.24	0.03	-0.09	0.01	-0.21	-0.03	0.22	1.00	-0.17	0.11	0.23	0.06
Menu Knowledge	0.08	-0.18	0.01	-0.07	0.14	-0.15	-0.13	0.09	0.06	-0.13	-0.17	1.00	0.09	-0.19	0.09
Ambience	-0.05	0.02	-0.16	0.22	0.07	-0.10	0.06	0.10	-0.01	0.29	0.11	0.09	1.00	-0.10	0.03
Seating	0.14	0.27	-0.11	0.20	-0.09	-0.07	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.09	0.23	-0.19	-0.10	1.00	0.05
Dining Environment	0.26	0.21	0.09	0.29	-0.02	-0.05	-0.21	0.21	0.10	-0.16	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.05	1.00



Interpretation:

- Positive correlations were observed between *Food Authenticity* and *Dining Environment* ($r = 0.26$), indicating that authentic food contributes to the overall dining experience.
- *Hygiene* and *Dining Environment* are also positively correlated ($r = 0.29$), highlighting the role of cleanliness in consumer satisfaction.
- *Price Reasonable* shows a moderate positive correlation with *Safe to Consume* ($r = 0.29$), suggesting that respondents perceive reasonably priced restaurants as safe.
- Negative correlations, such as *Taste Consistency* with *Food Safety* ($r = -0.30$), may indicate that inconsistent taste affects perception of food safety, requiring managerial attention.

4.5 Summary of Findings

- **Demographics:** The sample consisted mainly of young to middle-aged adults, predominantly female, with diverse educational and income backgrounds.
- **Dining Behavior:** Frequent visits and preference for home delivery reflect the convenience-oriented consumer segment. Dosa and Uttapam are top favorites.
- **Perceptions:** South Indian restaurants in Ghaziabad are perceived positively for hygiene, food safety, value for money, and overall dining environment. Discounts and pricing, however, are moderate concerns.
- **Interrelationships:** Correlation analysis highlights significant links between food authenticity, hygiene, safety, and dining experience, emphasizing the importance of quality standards in shaping consumer perception.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study highlights that consumers in Ghaziabad hold a generally positive perception of South Indian cuisine restaurants, particularly regarding food safety, hygiene, authenticity, and overall dining environment. Respondents frequently visit these establishments, favor home delivery, and show a strong preference for dishes such as Dosa and Uttapam. While value for money is well recognized, moderate concerns exist regarding pricing and the usefulness of discounts. The correlation analysis further emphasizes that food authenticity, hygiene, and safety significantly influence the overall dining experience, suggesting that restaurants maintaining consistent quality and cleanliness are more likely to satisfy and retain customers. These findings underscore the importance of operational excellence, menu quality, and environment in shaping consumer awareness and preference.

Based on these insights, it is recommended that South Indian restaurants in Ghaziabad focus on enhancing taste

consistency, offering attractive promotions, and ensuring visible adherence to food safety standards to strengthen consumer trust and loyalty. Expanding seating capacity, improving ambience, and training staff in menu knowledge and service etiquette can further elevate the dining experience. Additionally, leveraging feedback mechanisms and social media engagement may help in understanding evolving customer preferences and building a strong brand presence. By addressing these areas, restaurants can not only meet but exceed consumer expectations, fostering repeat visits and long-term growth in a competitive market.

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