

An Investigating Consumer Perception of Street Food Safety and Factors Influencing their Purchasing Decision- A Case Study Reference to Tumkur District

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Abstract: *Street food plays a vital role in the urban food culture of India, offering affordable, accessible, and diverse culinary options to people across all economic groups. However, concerns regarding food safety and hygiene have increasingly influenced consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. This study, titled “An Investigation into Consumer Perception of Street Food Safety and Factors Influencing Their Purchasing Decision – A Case Study with Reference to Tumkur District,” aims to analyze how consumers in Tumkur District perceive the safety, quality, and hygiene of street foods, and to identify the key factors that drive their buying decisions.*

The study examines variables such as food safety awareness, vendor hygiene practices, price, taste, convenience, and social influence in shaping consumer choices. Statistical tools are used to analyze the relationship between demographic factors and perception of food safety.

Findings reveal that while taste and affordability remain the most significant motivators for purchasing street food, concerns about hygiene, cleanliness, and vendor behavior play a crucial role in determining frequency and choice of purchase. The study concludes that enhancing awareness about safe food handling practices among vendors and implementing better municipal monitoring can improve consumer confidence and the overall quality of the street food sector in Tumkur.

Keywords: Street food, Consumer perception, Food safety, Purchasing behavior, Hygiene practices

I. INTRODUCTION

With the opening up of the Indian economy for global enterprises, the business environment of India has rapidly been changing. Consequently, the informal sector has also been grown in both manufacturing and distribution system. The lack of absorption of workforces in formal sector, the informal sector becomes the source of employment and earning for such workforces. Street food vending is one of the informal businesses where from many people earn their livelihood by selling goods and services to the people of the urban areas. Street food vending can be considered as small unregulated enterprises with low capital employed in their business. They are conducting their business through small means and in the form of sole trading concern. The owner of the organization is the sole risk bearer of the concern and he receives the profit as reward for taking risks and uncertainty in the business and he also bears loss arising out of the business. The Street food vendors are generally tiny retailers who are creating linkages between whole sellers and the end users. They sell different items like fruits, vegetables, fish, meats, sweets, electronics goods, readymade cloth, flowers, different seeds, utensils etc.



II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Street food is an integral part of the Indian urban economy and culture, providing affordable and convenient meals to a large segment of the population. In Tumkur District, street food vendors cater to students, workers, and travelers daily. However, despite its popularity, **concerns regarding food safety, hygiene, and quality remain significant issues**. Many vendors operate with limited awareness of safe food handling practices, inadequate infrastructure, and poor sanitation facilities.

Consumers often face a dilemma between **taste and affordability on one hand, and health and safety concerns on the other**. While some consumers continue to purchase street food due to convenience and low price, others avoid it due to fears of contamination or unhygienic conditions. There is limited research that explores **how consumers in Tumkur District perceive street food safety** and what specific **factors influence their purchasing decisions** in this context.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objective of this study is to investigate consumer perception of street food safety and the factors influencing their purchasing decisions with reference to Tumkur District.

To achieve this, the study aims to fulfill the following specific objectives:

- **To analyze consumer awareness and perception of street food safety and hygiene practices** in Tumkur District.
- **To identify the key factors**—such as price, taste, convenience, cleanliness, and vendor behavior—that influences consumers' decisions to purchase street food.
- **To examine the relationship between demographic factors** (such as age, gender, income, and education) and consumer perception of street food safety.
- **To assess the level of consumer satisfaction** with street food quality, hygiene, and service in the study area.
- **To suggest measures and recommendations** for improving food safety, hygiene practices, and consumer confidence in the street food sector of Tumkur District.

IV. METHODOLOGY / RESEARCH DESIGN:

The present study adopts a **descriptive research design** to analyze consumer perception of street food safety and the factors influencing their purchasing decisions in Tumkur District. Both **primary and secondary data** were used for the purpose of the study.

Data Collection Methods:

Primary Data:

The primary data were collected through a **structured questionnaire** administered to consumers who regularly purchase street food in various locations of Tumkur District, such as markets, bus stands, and near educational institutions. Personal interviews and direct observations were also used to gather additional insights about vendor hygiene and food handling practices.

Secondary Data:

Secondary data were collected from **research articles, government reports, journals, books, and online sources** related to food safety, consumer behavior, and street food vending in India.

Sampling Design:

A random sampling method was adopted to select respondents from different areas of Tumkur District. The sample size consisted of around 100–150 respondents, representing different age groups, occupations, and income levels to ensure diversity and accuracy in the findings.



Tools and Techniques of Analysis:

Data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using **statistical tools** such as percentages, averages, and cross-tabulation. Graphs, charts, and tables were used for data presentation. Where applicable, simple correlation or chi-square tests were used to study the relationship between demographic factors and consumer perceptions of food safety.

Tools for Research The following statistical tools and techniques are used for the analyzing of data: Simple percentage analysis Graphical presentation

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature provides an overview of previous studies and research findings related to street food safety, consumer perception, and purchasing behavior. It helps to identify research gaps and establish the foundation for the present study.

1. Street Food and Its Importance

According to **FAO (2019)**, street food plays a significant role in providing affordable and accessible meals to millions of urban consumers, especially in developing countries. It also serves as a major source of employment for low-income groups.

Rane (2011) observed that the street food sector in India contributes substantially to the informal economy and provides culturally diverse food options at low prices.

2. Food Safety and Hygiene Concerns

Mensah et al. (2002) emphasized that food borne illnesses are often linked to poor hygiene practices among street food vendors, including improper food handling, lack of clean water, and inadequate waste disposal.

Barro et al. (2006) highlighted that many vendors lack proper training in food safety, which increases the risk of contamination and health hazards.

Choudhury et al. (2011) found that consumers' trust in street food depends largely on visible hygiene factors—clean utensils, gloves, covered food, and personal cleanliness of vendors.

Alimi (2016) explained that consumers' perception of street food safety is influenced by a combination of **price, taste, appearance, and hygiene**. Although safety concerns exist, the affordability and taste of street foods often outweigh health risks for many consumers.

Tinku & Prasad (2018) revealed that in urban Indian settings, **convenience and location** are strong determinants of purchasing decisions, especially among working individuals and students.

Saha & Ghosh (2020) reported that while awareness about food safety has increased among consumers, there remains a gap between knowledge and actual purchasing behavior.

Bhat & Waghray (2018) conducted a study in Hyderabad and found that taste and cost were the most significant motivators for street food consumption, followed by hygiene and vendor behavior.

Kumar & Reddy (2021) in their study of Karnataka's urban centers noted that younger consumers are more concerned about hygiene than older ones and are more likely to demand improved safety standards.

VI. RESEARCH GAP

From the above studies, it is evident that while extensive research has been conducted in metropolitan areas, **limited studies have focused on medium-sized districts like Tumkur**. There is a need to understand how **local consumers perceive food safety** and what **factors specifically influence their purchasing decisions** in semi-urban environments.

Analysis Data interpretation:

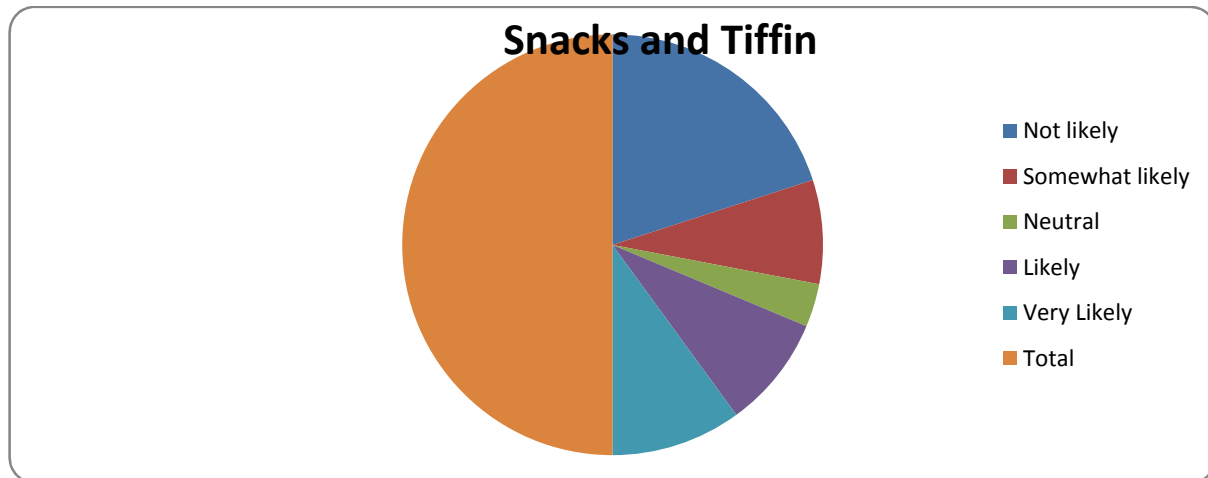
Analysis and interpretation of data is the process of assigning meaning to collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implication of the findings. It is an important and exciting step in the process of research. In all research studies, analysis follows data collection.

TABLE



Tables showing for what kind of street food do you prefer most:

Particulars	Not likely	Somewhat likely	Neutral	Likely	Very Likely	Total
Snacks and Tiffin	60	24	10	26	30	150
Meals and full dishes	30	47	22	30	21	150
Sweet and desserts	20	14	79	21	16	150
Beverages	21	17	23	64	25	150



Findings;

Snacks and Tiffin items (such as chaats, dosa, idli, etc.) are the **most preferred category**, with a total of **56 consumers (26 Likely + 30 Very Likely)** indicating high preference. This suggests that people in Tumkur District frequently choose snacks and light meals from street vendors due to taste, affordability, and quick service.

Meals and full dishes (like rice meals, biryani, chapathi meals) have **moderate preference** — 51 respondents (30 Likely + 21 Very Likely) prefer them. This indicates that while people enjoy them occasionally, they are less convenient for daily consumption due to time and hygiene concerns.

Sweets and desserts show **neutral preference** — 79 respondents (over half) are neutral, indicating that these items are consumed occasionally or seasonally, rather than regularly.

Beverages (such as juices, tea, coffee, etc.) are **highly preferred**, with **89 respondents (64 Likely + 25 Very Likely)** expressing a strong likelihood of purchasing. This shows beverages are among the most consumed street items, possibly due to ease of availability and low price.

Overall, the majority of consumers prefer **snacks and beverages** over full meals and desserts, reflecting typical urban consumption patterns of convenience, taste, and quick service.

Suggestions:

Vendors should maintain hygiene especially for snacks and beverages, as these are the most frequently consumed items. Clean preparation and serving areas can increase consumer trust.

Municipal authorities can offer short food safety and hygiene training programs for popular snack and beverage vendors to ensure quality standards.

Vendors selling full meals should focus on maintaining food temperature, covering dishes, and using clean utensils to improve consumer confidence.



Introducing innovative and healthy snack options (like millet-based or less oily items) may attract more health-conscious consumers.

Awareness programs can be organized to educate both consumers and vendors about food borne diseases and safe eating practices.

Since beverages are consumed widely, vendors should ensure **use of safe water, clean glasses, and proper waste disposal** to avoid contamination.

Interpretation:

The pie chart reveals that **snacks and Tiffin items** account for the highest consumer preference, followed closely by **beverages**, indicating that consumers in Tumkur District favor light and convenient food options. **Meals and full dishes** hold moderate preference, while **sweets and desserts** are the least preferred. This suggests that taste, convenience, and quick service strongly influence consumer purchasing decisions in the street food market.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that **street food continues to play a vital role in the daily life of consumers in Tumkur District**, providing affordable, tasty, and easily accessible food options to people from various income groups. The analysis shows that **snacks and tiffin items**, followed by **beverages**, are the most preferred categories among consumers due to their convenience, flavor, and low cost.

While taste and price remain the primary motivators for purchasing street food, the research also highlights growing **consumer awareness about hygiene and food safety**. Many consumers are concerned about cleanliness, safe water use, and vendor hygiene practices. However, these concerns do not entirely discourage street food consumption; rather, they influence the frequency and type of food purchased.

The findings suggest that **improving hygiene standards and food safety practices** among street vendors can enhance consumer confidence and satisfaction. Proper training, regular monitoring by local authorities, and awareness programs for both vendors and consumers are essential steps toward ensuring safe and sustainable street food practices in Tumkur District.

Overall, the study emphasizes that with better hygiene, organization, and support from local governance, the street food sector can continue to thrive as a **culturally rich, economically significant, and consumer-friendly part of the local economy**.

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- Related review “Indian Street Food Safety” (includes Tumkur paper reference) on Academia.edu: https://www.academia.edu/144653925/Indian_Street_Food_Safety

