

## A STUDY ON EVALUATING THE CONSUMERS LIKELINESS TOWARDS STREET FOOD OF KOLKATA CITY

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study aims to investigate the intricate link that exists between street food options and consumers, which helps create Kolkata's unique culinary identity. Kolkata's street food culture is a unique culinary phenomenon that has grown out of the city's rich history and cosmopolitan atmosphere. The study's primary goal was to examine the motivations behind street food consumption in Kolkata. Six parameters were the subject of inquiries. Structured questionnaire was framed to collect data from the consumers of street food of Kolkata city. Structured questionnaire were framed using Google forms and distributed to respondents using online platforms. Convenience sampling technique were used for the collection of the data. Total of 100 valid responses were found. Descriptive statistics were used for the analysis of the data. The first objective's findings indicate that trying out new flavours and commemorating important occasions rank as Kolkata city's top 2 motives for street food consumption. Examining customer inclination towards popular street food meals in Kolkata was the study's second goal. According to the results of the second goal, the top five street food items are Phuchka, Kathi Rolls, Chili Chicken & Fried Rice, Shingara and Fish Cutlet. Street food dishes which are less liked by consumers are Ghugni Chaat, Khichuri and ChhanarJilpi.*

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**Keywords:** Street Food, Consumers, Likeliness, Kolkata City.

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### Introduction

Street food is a fundamental feature of Kolkata's culinary scene, a vibrant tapestry of life created by the merging of cultures, histories, and traditions in a bustling metropolis. Kolkata's winding lanes resound with the sound of grills, the smell of spices, and the vivid hues of a wide range of cuisines, luring locals and tourists to experience a sensory tour through its busy marketplaces and narrow streets. The present study aims to investigate the intricate link that exists between street food options and consumers, which helps create Kolkata's unique culinary identity. Kolkata's street food culture is a unique culinary phenomenon that has grown out of the city's rich history and cosmopolitan atmosphere. A wide variety of culinary expertise is on display in Kolkata's streets, from the famous Kathi Rolls that tell stories of Mughal influence to the zesty Puchka that captures the essence of regional flavours. Given the continued prevalence of street food in Kolkatan society, it is critical for food industry stakeholders as well as food fans to comprehend the subtleties of customer attitudes towards these offerings.

Kolkata, a city renowned for its varied culinary options and rich cultural legacy, has a thriving street food culture that is both iconic and delicious. Of all the delicious possibilities, several dishes have gained notoriety and are now associated with the busy streets of this city. With its delicious skewered meats,

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wrapped in a paratha and liberally adorned with onions and chutneys, the Kathi Roll—a culinary jewel that originated in the lanes of Kolkata—stands out. Another popular street dish is puchka, also known as pani puri. It consists of hollow puris that are filled with a delicious concoction of mashed potatoes, spices, and tamarind water, giving each bite an explosive flavour explosion. Jhalmuri is a popular snack that is loved by both locals and tourists. It is a crispy and savoury mixture of puffed rice, peanuts, and other spices. The sound of deep-fried fritters known as telebhaja, or beguni (batter-fried eggplant) and alu chop (potato fritters), reverberates through the city's streets as well. Discovering Kolkata's Street food is a fun and important part of the city's gastronomic experience because these famous dishes not only entice the senses but also represent the cultural fusion that makes Kolkata who it is.

The goal of this study is to investigate the variables affecting consumers' choices, preferences, and experiences with street food in Kolkata. Through the use of a multifaceted methodology that incorporates social, cultural, and economic viewpoints, the study seeks to offer a thorough grasp of the mutually beneficial interaction that exists between street food vendors and customers in Kolkata. Additionally, the study aims to determine the influence of cultural importance, authenticity, and hygiene on customers' propensity to purchase particular street food items. It is anticipated that the results of this research will make a substantial contribution to the corpus of knowledge already available on consumer behaviour, urban studies, and culinary anthropology. Rapid urbanisation and globalisation in Kolkata have led to the emergence of a street food culture that is both a culinary treat and a dynamic barometer of sociological, economic, and cultural transformations. This study looks at customers' propensity for street food in an effort to provide insights that will help entrepreneurs, policymakers, and foodies all gain a more nuanced understanding of Kolkata's changing culinary scene. In summary, this study aims to explore the facets of Kolkata's street food culture by analysing consumer preferences and propensities within the framework of a city where modernity and tradition coexist on every corner. Knowing the dynamics of consumers' propensity for street food can shed light on the gastronomic nuances of Kolkata as well as the larger stories of urban life in the twenty-first century, since the city's streets remain the stage for this culinary theatre.

## **Review of Literature**

### **• Concept of Street Food**

The definition of street food provided by Anderson (2015) in his groundbreaking study is "ready-to-eat food and beverages prepared and sold by vendors in public spaces, emphasising their role as accessible, culturally significant culinary expressions within local communities" (p. 112). A thorough description of street food is put forth by Khan and Gupta (2019), who define it as "a diverse range of affordable, often hand-held or portable, ready-to-eat food items, reflecting local culinary traditions, and contributing to the vibrancy and social fabric of urban environments" (p. 235). For example, street food has "informal nature, often prepared and sold by small-scale vendors, offering an array of flavours, textures, and cultural experiences that captivate the sensory perceptions of consumers in public spaces" (p. 78), according to Lee and Wang (2018). Street food, according to Santos and Rodriguez (2018), is "a communal gastronomic experience, where diverse communities converge to enjoy a variety of affordable, locally-rooted food offerings, fostering a sense of belonging and cultural exchange" (p. 145). This definition emphasises the social component. Street food is described as "culinary expressions that transcend geographical boundaries, embodying the cultural essence of a community and serving as a dynamic reflection of its culinary history, adaptability, and creativity" (p. 210) by Wu et al. (2016) in their cross-cultural investigation.

### **• Aspects of Street Food**

Street food has garnered significant scholarly interest as it is a ubiquitous and ever-changing facet of culinary culture worldwide. Numerous academic fields, including anthropology, sociology, economics, public health, and tourism, have produced literature on street food. Many people believe that street food serves as a mirror reflecting the cultural diversity and unique identity of a community. Scholars like Simoons (2016) and Anderson (2018) have investigated the ways in which street food functions as a cultural emblem, representing regional customs, culinary traditions, and social customs. These studies demonstrate how street food may take on a tangible and approachable role as a symbol of a community's identity. The economic aspects of street food have been studied by academics such as Wang and Kim (2017) and Smith (2019), who have highlighted the significance of street food for local economies and livelihoods. Urban economies greatly benefit from the often marginalised street sellers. These studies examine concerns with licencing, laws, and the informal character of street food sellers' enterprises as they explore the economic challenges that these individuals face. Comprehending the

inclinations and conduct of customers about street food has been an ongoing subject. Studies by Kim et al. (2020) and Brown and Miller (2018) investigate the variables—taste, cost, hygienic conditions, and cultural appeal—that impact consumer decisions. These research offer valuable perspectives on the intricate decision-making procedures that influence people's propensity to consume street food. Studies by Nguyen and Nguyen (2017) and Li et al. (2018) have concentrated on the safety and hygienic aspects of street food in light of the growing number of health-conscious consumers. These studies evaluate consumer perceptions of street vendors' food safety procedures and investigate how those views affect the decisions that consumers make. There is a growing recognition that street food is an essential component of the travel experience. Studies by Hall and Mitchell (2016) and Jamal and Getz (2018) investigate how street food influences tourism, boosts the local economy, and improves the urban experience in general.

- **Street Food of Kolkata City**

The city of Kolkata, which is renowned for its diverse cultural fabric, is well-known for being a refuge for lovers of street cuisine. The body of research on Kolkata's most well-known street food meals offers a wide range of analyses that explore the gastronomic, historical, and cultural facets of these iconic foods. The extensive research conducted by Sen (2016) explores the historical foundations of the Kathi Roll and how it came to be seen as a symbol of Kolkata's culinary identity. In their investigation of the social elements of Puchka consumption, Chatterjee et al. (2018) throw light on the customs and features of community connected to this popular street snack. Das and Ghosh (2019) offer a cultural investigation of Jhalmuri, delving into its historical foundations and its function in showcasing Kolkata's diverse cultural landscape. Bhattacharya (2017) delves into the realm of Telebhaja, scrutinising the assortment of deep-fried delicacies that are a crucial component of Kolkata's street food landscape. Churmur's components, preparation techniques, and sensory experience were all explored by Mukherjee and Dasgupta (2017) in their gourmet adventure. The authors Roy and Banerjee (2018) explore the special qualities of Kolkata Biryani, revealing its historical origins and the distinctive features that make it stand out from other biryanis. The popularity of Ghugni was investigated by Gupta and Sharma (2019), who also offered insights into its variants, cultural significance, and the experiences related to its use. Sharma and Basu's (2016) study explores the cultural relevance of Shingara, looking at how this fried dumpling has developed into a staple of Kolkata's food culture. In their 2018 investigation, Basu et al. shed light on the gastronomic development of Kolkata's Chop as well as the cultural quirks surrounding this fried cutlet. Das and Khan's (2017) research explores the range of sweets that contribute to Kolkata's well-known dessert culture by delving into the realm of Mishti.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the consumers reasons for eating street food.
- To examine the consumers likeliness towards famous street food dishes of Kolkata city.

#### **Research Methodology**

##### **Type and Source of Data**

Structured questionnaire was developed to collect the primary data. Books, journals, previous researches, websites, government reports etc. helped in collection of secondary data. Both evidences were used for the study.

##### **Data Collection**

The questionnaire was distributed to 150 respondents and out of 150, 105 respondents had filled the questionnaire. Out of 105 received responses, 100 responses were found valid. Thus, analysis of the data was done based on 100 valid responses. Convenience sampling was used to collect data from respondents of the Kolkata city. The survey included respondents who reside in Kolkata city and like to eat street food of Kolkata city. The structured questionnaire was prepared using online platform Google forms and were circulated to respondents through their email ids and other social media platforms. The surveyed questionnaire consisted closed ended questions in two sections. The first section consisted questions on demographic profile of respondents. The second section consisted questions on the consumers reasons for eating street food and consumers likeliness towards famous street food dishes of Kolkata city. The questions of second section based on the consumers reasons for eating street food were asked on a likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 indicates strongly disagree, 2 indicates disagree, 3 indicates neutral, 4 indicates agree and 5 indicates strongly agree. The questions of second

section based on the consumers likeliness towards famous street food dishes of Kolkata city were also asked on a likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is extremely unlikely, 2 is unlikely, 3 is neutral, 4 is likely and 5 is extremely likely. All the variables in the questionnaire were framed after extensive review of literature and taking consultation from research supervisor, academicians, street food vendors and consumers of street food of Kolkata city. The survey was conducted in the month of December, 2023.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

- **Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

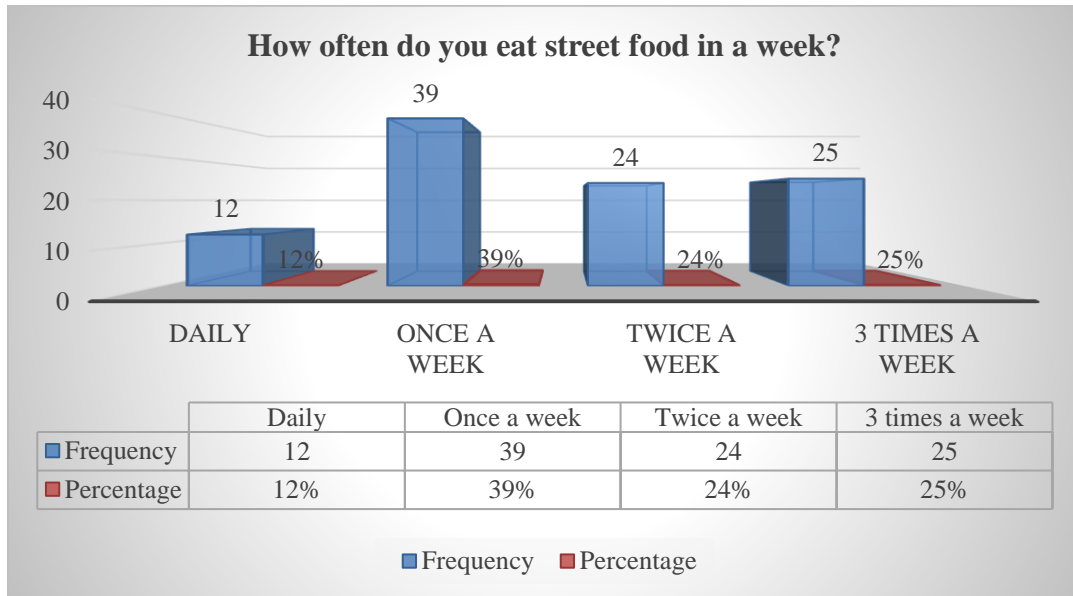
**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variables		(%)
<b>Gender</b>	Male	71
	Female	29
<b>Age</b>	15-20 years	16
	21-30 years	58
	31-40 years	12
	41-50 Years	14
	Above 50 Years	--
<b>Educational Qualifications</b>	High School	1
	Intermediate	20
	Graduate	55
	Postgraduate	21
	Doctorate	1
	Others	2
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	64
	Government Job	20
	Private Job	09
	Self-Business	3
	Others	4
<b>Annual Income</b>	Not Earning	61
	Up to 3 Lakhs	8
	3-6 Lakhs	11
	6-10 Lakhs	13
	More than 10 Lakhs	07
<b>Area of Residence</b>	Rural	80
	Urban	20

Table 1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 71% of the respondents are males and 29% are females. Age distribution shows that 16% of the respondents are between the age group of 15-20 years, 58% are between the age group of 31-30 years, 12% between 31-40 years and 14% of the respondents are between the age group of 41-50 years. Distribution on educational qualification shows that 1% of the respondents are having educational qualification of high school, 20% intermediate, 55% graduates, 21% post graduate, 1% doctorate and 2% of the respondents are having other educational qualification. Occupation distribution shows that 64% of the respondents are students, 20% are having government jobs, 9% are having private jobs, 3% are having self-business and 4% of the respondents are having other occupations. Annual income distribution shows that 61% of the respondents are not earning any annual income, 8% are earning up to 3 lakhs, 11% are earning 3-6 lakhs, 13% are earning 6-10 lakhs and 7% are earning annual income of more than 10 lakhs. 80% of the respondents are residing in urban area of Kolkata city and 20% are residing in rural area of Kolkata city.

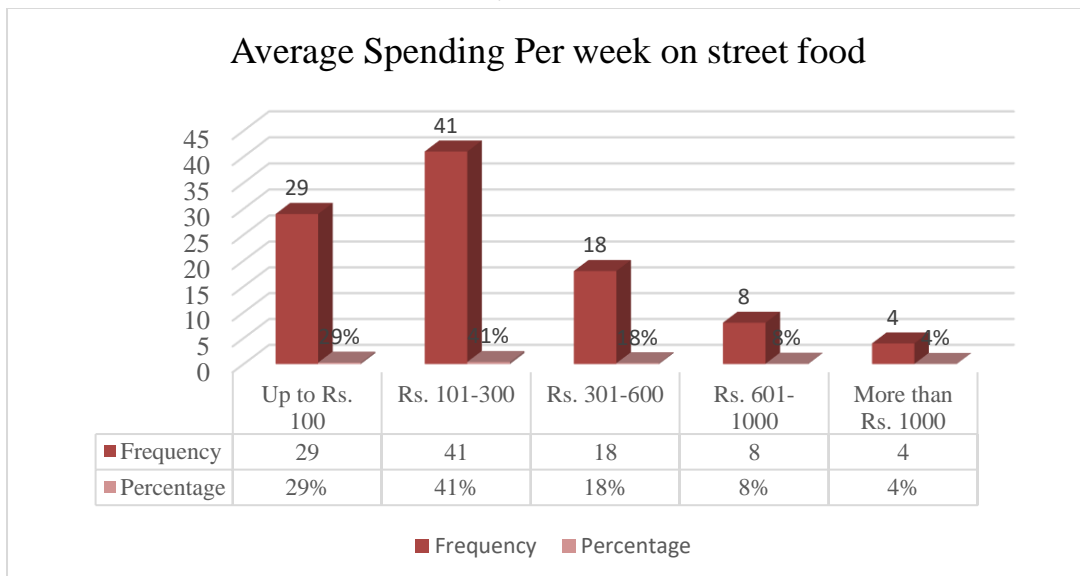
- **Profile of the Respondents Related to Consumption of Street Food**

Bar graph 1 shows frequency of eating street food in a week. 12% of the respondents mentioned that they eat street food all the seven days in a week. 39% mentioned that they eat street food once a week. 24% of the respondents mentioned that they eat street food twice a week and 25% of the respondents mentioned that they eat street food 3 times a week.



**Bar Graph 1: Frequency of Eating Street Food in a Week**

Bar graph 2 indicates the average spending per week on street food. 29% of the respondents mentioned that they spend up to Rs. 100 per week on street food. 41% spend Rs. 101 to 300, 18% spend Rs. 301-600 and 8% spend Rs. 601-1000 and 4% of the respondents mentioned that they spend more than Rs. 1000 on street food of Kolkata city.



**Bar Graph 2: Average Spending Per Week on Street Food**

• **Consumers Reasons for Eating Street Food**

The first objective of the study was to analyse the consumers reasons to eat street food in Kolkata city. Questions were asked on 6 parameters. Majority of the respondents (62%) agreed that they eat street food because they like to meet their friends at street food stalls. Only 26% of the respondents agreed that they eat street food due to work. Only 23% of the respondents agreed that they eat street food because they don't have time to prepare meals for themselves. Majority of the respondents (67%) agreed that they eat street food when they want to celebrate special occasion. Majority of the respondents agreed (75%) they eat street food because they like to discover new flavors. Only 12% of

the respondents mentioned that they eat street food because they can't cook. Thus, findings from table 2 suggests that major reasons for the consumers of Kolkata city to eat street food are discovering new flavors and celebrating special occasions.

**Table 2: Consumers Reasons for Eating Street Food**

Parameters	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	4+5
I like to meet my friends	11	5	22	23	39	62
Due to work	27	16	31	20	6	26
I don't have time to prepare meals myself	31	10	36	15	8	23
I want to celebrate special occasions	6	7	20	32	35	67
I like to discover new flavors	9	2	14	26	49	75
I can't cook	68	8	12	7	5	12

Note: All the data presented in the table 2 is in percentage

• **Consumers Likelihood Towards Famous Street Food Dishes of Kolkata City**

The second objective of the study was to examine the consumers likelihood towards famous street food of Kolkata city. 18 famous street food dishes were identified and questions on the dishes were asked on 5 pointlikert scale. Table 3 is indicating consumers likelihood towards street food of Kolkata city. Majority of the respondents (79%) mentioned that they like Phuchka very much. Only 41% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Ghugni Chaat. 56% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Churmur. Majority of the respondents (75%) mentioned that they like to eat Kathi Rolls. Only 43% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Macch& Bhat as their lunch meal. Majority of the respondents (70%) mentioned that they like to eat Chilli chicken and fried rice as their lunch meal. Only 41% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Khichuri as their lunch meal. 52% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Jhalmuri. Only 41% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat ChhanarJilpi. Majority of the respondents (63%) mentioned that they like to eat Shingara (Samosa) as a street food. 45% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Aloo Kabli as a street food. 50% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Telebhaja as a street food of Kolkata city. Majority of the respondents (60%) mentioned that they like to eat Aloo Dom Luchi. Majority of the respondents (59%) mentioned that they like to eat Mughlai Paratha. 58% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Kabiraji Cutlet. 54% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Dragon Chicken as a street food. Only 48% of the respondents mentioned that they like to eat Ghoti Gorom. Majority of the respondents (62%) mentioned that they like to eat Fish Cutlet as a street food in Kolkata city. Thus, findings of table 3 suggests that top 5 street food dishes in the order of their consumer's likelihood are Phuchka, Kathi Rolls, Chili Chicken & Fried Rice, Shingara and Fish Cutlet. Street food dishes which are less liked by consumers are Ghugni Chaat, Khichuri and ChhanarJilpi.

**Table 3: Consumers likelihood towards Famous Street Food of Kolkata City**

Parameters	Extremely Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Neutral (3)	Likely (4)	Extremely Likely (5)	4+5
Phuchka	8	3	10	27	52	79
Ghugni Chaat	18	13	28	19	22	41
Churmur	10	12	22	26	30	56
Kathi Rolls	4	4	17	27	48	75
Lunch Meal (Maach &Bhaat)	22	12	23	20	23	43
Lunch Meal (Chilli Chicken& fried Rice)	8	7	15	31	39	70
Lunch Meal (Khichuri)	16	15	28	14	27	41
Jhalmuri	13	13	22	23	29	52
ChhanarJilpi	18	19	22	24	17	41
Shingara (Samosa)	6	9	22	39	24	63
Aloo Kabli	13	16	26	19	26	45
Telebhaja	21	10	19	24	26	50
Aloo Dom Luchi	10	12	18	23	37	60
Mughlai Parantha	6	10	25	28	31	59

Kabiraji Cutlet	11	10	21	25	33	58
Dragon Chicken	7	6	33	26	28	54
GhotiGorom	11	15	26	24	24	48
Fish Cutlet	12	7	19	24	38	62

Note: All the data presented in the table is in percentage

### Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to analyse the reasons for eating street food in Kolkata city. Questions were asked on 6 parameters. The findings of the first objective concludes that top 2 reasons for eating street food by the consumers of Kolkata city are discovering new flavors and celebrating special occasions. The second objective of the study was to examine the consumers likeliness towards famous street food dishes of Kolkata city. The findings of the second objective concluded that top 5 street food dishes in the order of their consumer's likeliness are Phuchka, Kathi Rolls, Chili Chicken & Fried Rice, Shingara and Fish Cutlet. Street food dishes which are less liked by consumers are Ghugni Chaat, Khichuri and Chhanar Jilpi.

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