

Abstract:

Food is an integral part of any culture and changes occurring in food culture can indicate changes in the cultural environment of the society. The main purpose of the study was to understand behavior and perception of the Norwegian customers towards sub-continental food in Norwegian food market. This study has used a descriptive design. To find answers for research questions, questionnaire survey was used and two unstructured interviews were conducted with restaurant managers to get insight about the Norwegian food market. To conduct the questionnaire survey cities of Stavanger and Oslo were chosen and both of the interviews were conducted in Stavanger with the managers of sub-continental (Indian/Pakistani) restaurants who are operating restaurants in different cities of Norway. During the study it is observed that Norwegian food culture has changed over the period of two decades and sub-continental (Indian/Pakistani) food is gaining its popularity in the major cities of Norway. The conclusive remarks of the study shows positive trend in the acceptability and perceptions of Norwegian people towards sub-continental food. However, it is a complex phenomenon to understand food culture and its changes. Because of the sample selection, study design and limitations of the study results may get influenced.

Key words: Sub-continent (India/Pakistan), Food Authenticity, Food Culture, Ethnic food

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1: Introduction.

1.1: Globalization

Globalization has affected our lives in every possible way. The highly advanced mode of communications has changed the way people interact with each other and faster means of transportation have made travelling a common experience. Food markets of the world are also not excluded from the effects of globalization. This has happened because of the increased trade among countries and introduction of different local food products in the global markets (Nygård & Storstad, 1998). “The world food industry is in a state of change, with globalization of the food industry and consumption occurring rapidly” (Nygård & Storstad, 1998, p.38). The food industry is rapidly growing with diversified flavors and traditional foods travelling across the borders. All types of concerns whether small or large, food chains or independent businesses are being established in different countries. According to estimation it is observed that small businesses with less than twenty employees make up three-quarters of the total number of food businesses in most of the EU countries. The EU, American and Asian food markets are very diversified with their own cultural characteristics and the consumers in these markets are widely eating cross-cultural food (Nygård & Storstad, 1998).

Food is an important part of any culture. Foods that come from other cultures may also be distinguished to maintain the group identity. There are different appropriate uses of food in different cultures and discomforts may arise if a person is unfamiliar with the food culture or deliberately ignores them (Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016). “Another function of the food symbolization is to define status” (Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016 p.5). Different kinds of foods are related to different categories of people living in one culture and foods are used as status symbols in a society. “In general, eating with someone connotes social equality with that person”

(Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016 p.5). Different societies may also contain restrictions that people from different social classes cannot eat together. Men may eat separate from children or they may eat first and then women and children can eat afterwards. In India different people from different social classes cannot dine together and traditionally it is also not allowed to eat food which is prepared by the person of some lower social class (Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016). Food is not only the way of getting required nutrients to the body but also it is a way of self-identity as it is said that “you are what you eat”; food consumption represents different symbols of association at different occasions; and food is also an expression of cultural belonging. “Foods that demonstrate affiliation with a culture are usually introduced during childhood and are associated with security or good memories” (Kittler & Sucher, 2008. p.4).

1.2 Dining Out:

Restaurants of different ethnic origins are increasing in Norway especially in cities like Oslo and Stavanger. During the last decade, eating out has become an important part of daily life in Norway (Bugge & Lavik, 2010). According to Bugge & Lavik (2010) eighty percent of Norwegians eat at least one meal away from home every month. It shows two evolving trends in the Norwegian culture. One is that people are more inclined towards dining outside home and the second is that people are encouraging cuisines from different cultures and origins. “Recent decades have seen growing interest in foreign and ethnic foods, combined with a greater interest in culinary matters in general” (Bugge & Lavik, 2010). There can be a number of possible reasons for dining out more often. However, increase in Pakistani and Indian restaurants which are typically presenting food with spices, are an indication for the acceptability of new tastes and flavors.

1.3: Research Question.

Based on the increased availability of international food in Norway, in particular Asian food, the present study investigates trends in the tastes and preferences of the food market. This leads up to the following research question; What are the perceptions and attitudes of customers towards sub-continental food (India & Pakistan) in the Norwegian food market. A specific goal is to comprehend the acceptability of Pakistani and Indian food for Norwegian customers. The research question will be evaluated further in the chapter on methodology.

Short Outline of Thesis.

After the introductory chapter the thesis is brought forward with chapter two, a literature review where different aspects of international restaurants, ethnic food and trends in dining habits and tastes are presented. Chapter three presents the methodology used. Chapter four then goes on to present the research findings in the form of a questionnaire survey among Norwegian customers in Indian and Pakistani restaurants followed by two extensive interviews with restaurant managers. This leads up to the final chapter five that presents a concluding discussion and some recommendations.

2. Literature:

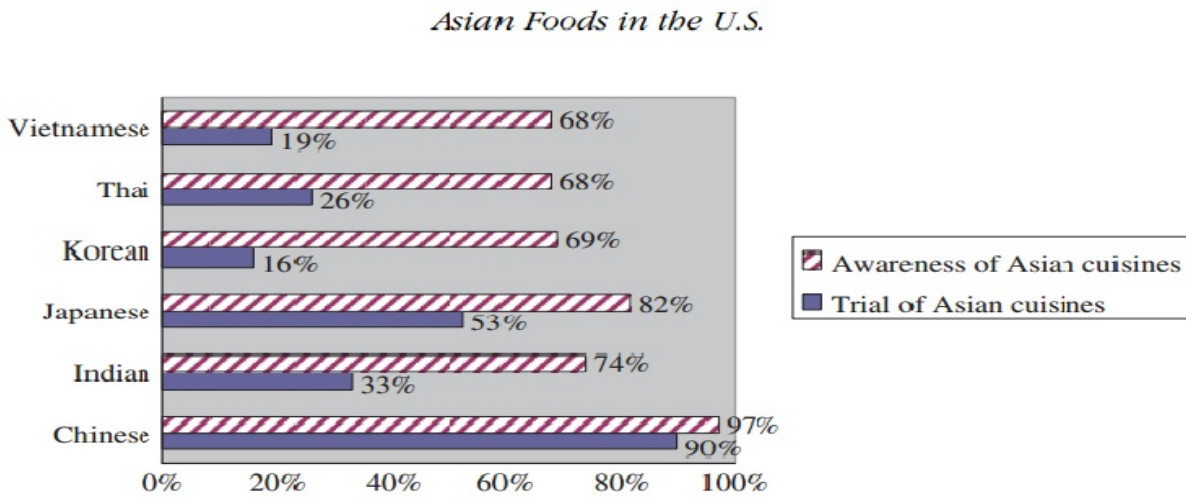
2.1 Ethnic Food.

Many literatures show that food choices of people are associated with their identity or ethnicity (Gabaccia & Gabaccia, 2009). “Food thus entwines intimately with much that makes a culture unique, binding taste and satiety to group loyalties. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures.” (Gabaccia & Gabaccia, 2009. p.9). Ethnic food represents cultures and offer different tastes, ingredients etc. Ethnic food facilities and procedures are ones that focus in foods related with particular cultures.

In the present time, the world is full of different cuisines. We can see the globalization of food and availability of different ethnic foods in various food markets of the world. Studies show that in the United States a big part of food market is covered by the Asian food market which serves different ethnic foods like Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Thai, Korean and Vietnamese. But most of the three tried and popular cuisines are Japanese, Chinese, and Indian, as indicated by the table below (Jang & Ha, 2009). Due to a shortage of literature about related topics we did not find any reliable figures about the Norwegian food market but in findings we will present a comparison of some international cuisines in the Norwegian market. These will document the popularity level of 5 international cuisines in the Norwegian food market.

Figure-1. Awareness & Trial of Asian Cuisines.

Note: Data from Restaurant USA (2000).

*Figure 1 Awareness & Trial of Asian Cuisines.*

(Jang & Ha, 2009. p.405).

In the Norwegian food market we can see the availability of the Asian cuisines from 1980. Nowadays restaurant industry is filled with different ethnic food restaurants, but according to Nygård, & Storstad, (1998) it was not easy to introduce international products in Norway as they preferred to use the products made in the Norwegian market. “The domestic food market in Norway has, up to now, been protected from foreign competition through quantitative regulations. In other words, as long as the country was self-sufficient in a food product, it was forbidden to import that particular product.” (Nygård, & Storstad, 1998. p.42) During recent years there is a change in the Norwegian market as after boom in the oil industry many foreigners came to Norway and the food market changed as it was need of the time. Now we can see good globalization of food market here in Norway. As the society is changing so the market trends are also evolving with the requirements. According to Trip advisor’s present calculations there are 1124 Asian restaurants in Norway and we can say that now the Norwegian food market is having a good collection of ethnic foods.

2.2: Restaurant Industry in Norway.

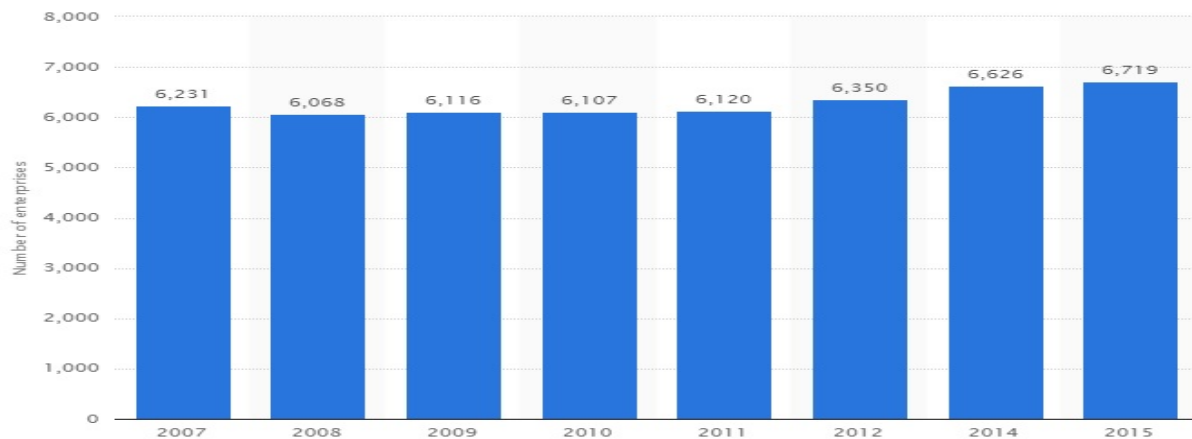
The lifestyle of people is changing fast and during the last two decades we can see major changes in the daily living style of people. Changes in lifestyle are affecting the restaurant industry all over the world. The hospitality industry is one of the most expanding industries in the world and same happening in Norway. During the last few years culinary changes are evident in the Norwegian food market.

“Many Norwegians have acquired new eating habits and a multicultural cuisine, indication acceptance and inquisitiveness—this is a country where just a few years ago red peppers were considered to be dubious vegetables.” (Krogstad, 2004. P.1). Studies show that the restaurant industry in Norway is evolving fast and one reason of this is the increasing tourism in Norway along with the globalization of the world and its foods. Thirty years back a family from Hong Kong named ‘Wong’ established the first Chinese restaurant in Oslo and according to one survey in 2002 this family gave employment to around one hundred and seventy people (Krogstad, 2004). In 1988, an Indian man open the first Indian restaurant in Stavanger and currently after 29 years we can see many Indian and Pakistani restaurants in the Stavanger region. We can see good growth of Asian restaurants in the Norwegian food market. In *Aftenposten*, 30 March 2001, an article named “*Fra Oslo til India*” clearly mentioned the popularity of Indian cuisine in Oslo city. “In Oslo's food related sector, however, the picture is different. People with a minority background own almost 30 percent of the businesses in this sector. Restaurants serving non European dishes account for more than 40 percent of dining-out places in Oslo (*Opinion/Aftenposten*, 27 March 98)” (Krogstad, 2004 P.198, Onsager, & Sæther, 2001). These figures show the changing trend and eating habits of the new generation of Norway. They want to try the taste and aroma of different foods from all over the world.

We can also see a new trend in the restaurant industry of Norway, the catering services; these

services were introduced by Chinese restaurants in Norway; and one famous food item for catering today is Sushi. People make gathering arrangements at home or in some party halls and then order the food of their choice. After Chinese restaurants Indian restaurants started catering services for big events like gatherings of 100, 200 or more people. It was a totally new concept in the Norwegian restaurant industry but people like it because it was easy for the people to plan gatherings at the place which they liked and ordered food of their choice and this concept is still very popular as, One author of this thesis works in an Indian restaurant and she observed that Norwegian people celebrating the confirmation gathering of offspring and other big gatherings at their home and serve their guests with catering services. The restaurant industry in Norway is growing fast with different cuisines and services. The National Restaurant Association presented the following graph of the number of restaurant enterprises in Norway from 2007 to 2015

Figure 2 The number of restaurant enterprises in Norway from 2007 to 2015



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/697728/number-of-restaurants-and-mobile-food-service-enterprises-in-norway>

2.3: Authenticity and Food.

Authenticity can be called something ‘genuine’ because of its originality, faithful reconstruction or representation, or containing an original stamp or seal of approval (Leeuwen, 2001). At the

same time authenticity can be perceived in many different ways, not least in tourism and the restaurant industry, and can be seen both as a symbolic construction and an existential experience (Wong, 1999). Food fraud is the term used by D.C.E. Roberts in his journal article “Food Authenticity” (1994), which refers to different names and disguises used by businesses to keep them unique and ahead in the market. For this purpose modern technology is being used, misleading names, descriptions and claims are made to duplicate the authenticity of food (Roberts, 1994). In such circumstances where business earnings are of more value than of the originality of the product itself, it is difficult to experience authenticity.

Authenticity is a challenge to replicate outside its original or traditional setting in the case of food. The presence of non-durum wheat in pasta that is described as pure durum wheat, Basmati rice mixed with non-basmati rice, olive oil diluted with low quality of olive oil, use of synthetic vanilla essence and artificially carbonated water labeled as mineral water are among examples cited by Roberts (1994) as food fraud and as a challenge to food authenticity. When we talk about the restaurants presenting authentic food outside their original ethnic environment, it is considered to be a difficult job to remain original especially in Nordic countries. The cultural values of these countries are very different from the Asian countries like Pakistan and India and there are some major social, cultural and environmental differences. Similarly the food taste, ingredients, cooking procedures and presentation style are also very different and some modifications take place in Nordic contexts. Indian cooking is considered to be technical and requires intense laboring efforts (Sen, 2015). Food presentation and cooking style play a vital role in the development of region specific dishes and help to present such dishes as international brands (Tsai & Lu, 2012).

It is also evident through the literature that other than food, different aspects like service, costumes, decoration, presentation and music also reasonably contribute to the perceived authenticity of the

restaurant (Tsai & Lu, 2012). All together these factors help restaurants to predict customers repurchase behavior and consumer confidence is estimated from the purchase or non-purchase of different services and products even from the same facility (Nygård & Storstad, 1998). It is further noted that Swedish sociologist Sallerberg (1991) claimed that trust in food has a influence on the repurchase behavior of the consumer (Nygård & Storstad, 1998). The familiarity of the customers with the culture and food is an important factor in determining perceived authenticity in the sense of recognizing taste and quality; being habituated with the food. People less experienced or familiar with a particular culture may consider non-authentic exposure as an authentic experience. The findings in a research paper “The Role of Authenticity in ethnic themed restaurants” by (Ebster & Guist 2008 p.48), indicate that people familiar with Italian culture were better at identifying the difference between the Italian themed or authentic restaurants. Similarly, management of a restaurant may face some serious difficulties if their background is not aligned with the restaurant's origin.

Many restaurants with ethnic food and lay out are owned by individuals who migrated and have their cultural background different than the location of the restaurant and they serve cuisines representative of their home country (Ebster & Guist, 2008). “The environment in ethnically themed restaurants is considered to be representative of the ethnic origin of the food. Nevertheless, nationals of the culture of origin often feel that the environments of ethnically themed restaurants do not really reflect the culture they are supposed to represent, i.e., the home culture”(Ebster & Guist, 2008. p.42) and members of the presented culture and food in a restaurant are not always satisfied with the authenticity (Ebster & Guist, 2008).

However, it is also noticeable that customers of a restaurant or tourists looking for authentic experiences are not always welcoming the exact authenticity of a food as in its origin. They may

look for a certain level of acceptability and comfort while looking for a seemingly authentic experience.

2.4 Sub-continental and Nordic food trends & Innovation.

Food trends in Pakistan and Indian markets are getting more diversified. As more people from these regions are travelling to Europe and other parts of the world, they are causing change in both Asian and European food markets; but according to Nygård & Storstad (1998) food culture is an important component in creating or maintaining identity and it changes very slowly among immigrants. Strong and exotic flavors are the main supportive elements behind the popularity of Asian food (Ahmed, 2004). Fast food, which was a distinction for western culture is now becoming part of daily life for Asian habitants. Similarly, immigrants from Asia to Europe are exploring potentially new markets to Asian food. Nowadays the dietary habits of Asians show more of western patterns than ever before (Pingali, 2006). One side of food culture helps to maintain cultural identity; *Lefse* and *Lutefisk* (old traditional Norsk dishes) are important sign of Norwegian society in USA; while on the other side we cannot ignore the global food culture which is not bound for cultural boundaries and Mcdonald is one of the best examples to take in this regard (Nygård & Storstad, 1998). In the last few decades dining out have become an important part of daily Norwegian lifestyle and fast food is a considerably successful innovation in Norwegian food culture (Bugge, 2011). Such food products offered by large food chains like Mcdonald's and Burger King are largely consumed by the young generation in Norway and normally it is claimed that young people have many irregular eating habits (Bugge, 2011). However according to Øverby and Andersen (2002) studies regarding eating habits of Norwegian teenagers show increasing focus on nutritional facts (Bugge, 2011).

Many Asian countries are in rapid economic and demographic transition, the growth in income,

urbanization and global integration are the key factors changing sub-continental food trends and habits (Pingali, 2006). The increased interest in western cuisines, during the twentieth century, can be seen in Asian societies (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002). Young generations are more inclined towards fusion food and normally taste new flavors more often. The dietary habits are acquired in young age and are difficult to change in the later stages of life; therefore these transformations are more visible in young generations (Pingali, 2006).

Food trends in Nordic countries are different than the rest of Europe. The interpretation of food culture in Northern-Europe is more connected to health, technique, nutrition value, and hygiene which have given the food culture a different dimension than taste (Bergflødt, Amilien, & Silje, 2012). In history, Nordic food culture was more connected to necessity rather than pleasure and the main reason for this was seasonal foods (Bergflødt, Amilien, & Silje, 2012). Ecological factors like geographical location and climate conditions are basic factors which determine the availability and consumption of food in different parts of the world; for example, people living in colder parts of the world require more of proteins and fat in comparison to the people living in the warmer or tropical parts of the world (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002). However today, factors like culture and economic conditions are the key determinants for the food differences in different parts of the world (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002).

Food culture is transformed through the process of exclusion and incorporation of different aspects like availability, desirability, politics and social behaviors and will lead towards food traditions (Bergflødt, Amilien, & Silje, 2012). People living in Nordic region are less exposed to the spices in comparison to the people living in Asian region. Spices and sauces are integral parts of the Asian food and they are used to give food unique blend of tastes and outlook (Ahmed, 2004). However this trend seems to be changing with the fusion of Asian food ingredients with western cooking

techniques. Different flavors originating from East are widening the taste perceptions of thousands of people who are looking for variety in their menu (Ahmed, 2004). “The topic of food and culture cannot easily be constrained to demarcated geographical regions, as it is generally the result of cultural meetings and exchange” (Bergflødt, Amilien, & Silje, 2012. p.5). The recent increase in connection between different parts of the world has led to a culinary globalization and there is no doubt in saying that never before can so many varieties of food be presented on a single table under one roof (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002). There is a blend of unfamiliar cooking techniques with familiar ingredients and adding unknown flavors to very known tastes (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002). Asian food from different regions has its own distinctive taste and unique cooking style and the making of Asian food is itself a challenging task because of the involvement of many different ingredients and spices containing their own unique flavors (Ahmed, 2004).

2.5 Restaurant Selection: Price, Taste or Style.

People looking forward to spend their time and money for food, but have to make some important choices before they can take a decisive position. This includes prime factors like price offered for the quality of meals, the taste of food and the style and atmosphere of the restaurant. It can be a very simple decision in stopping by a drive-through at a fast food restaurant and get the quickest possible service; or a very complex decision to enjoy family prime time with excellent quality and taste of food in attractive setting. Occasion is a considerable factor while selecting a restaurant, one restaurant appropriate at one occasion can be completely out of choice at some other occasion (Auty, 1992). The growth of theme restaurants and studies of competition in the restaurant industry present a view that consumers are more appealed towards the styling and atmosphere of the restaurant than the value of the original food itself (Auty, 1992). If the quality and origin of the food is the same in two different restaurants, in such cases the restaurant atmosphere can possibly

be the main reason of restaurant selection (Auty, 1992).

The purchase behavior of consumers depends upon the perceived value of the product and service that they are paying for (Ashton, Scott, Solnet, & Breakey, 2010). The price of the menu of a restaurant offered to customers is in fact a complex combination of original intrinsic value of food (ingredients), price of the locality where the restaurant is situated, the efforts and investment made to create ambiance, and the services being offered that may provide a distinctive advantage. According to Ashton et al. (2010) Perceived brand image (everything customer is willing to pay for), Perceived sacrifice (price and value of product) and Perceived quality (value of satisfaction in comparison to its alternatives) collectively create the actual value of the product that the consumer is willing to pay. The findings of Ashton et al. (2010) show the results that if Perceived brand image & Perceived quality is high and Perceived sacrifice is low then consumers are more likely to purchase the products. Different restaurants may have a recognizable customer base in relation to their income levels, however if pricing is similar for comparatively different restaurants, the ambiance and style can be strong attribute to attract customers in different age groups. (Auty, 1992).

2.6 Quality and Safety of Food.

Quality and food safety are among the factors which are highly compromised in underdeveloped societies because of many reasons. However, in developed parts of the world food safety is considered an integral part of quality of food. Food safety concern is a threat to all types of medium, low and high income level countries (Fatimah, Boo, Murali, & Salleh, 2011). Different studies indicate the condition that domestic consumers often make compromises with food-handling during food preparation at home (Redmond & Griffith, 2004).

Whereas, government authorities try to keep a close eye on the organizations directly or indirectly involved in food service and food handling and the “Norwegian food market is strongly regulated” (Nygård & Storstad, 1998 p.40). “Foodservice is almost the last part in food preparation” (Fatimah et al. 2011 p.1) and good a number of studies indicate that food related illnesses are often related to food service (Fatimah et al. 2011). In a country like Malaysia, food poisoning incidents show a continuous rise from 1990 to 1999, large numbers of food related sickness arise from restaurants in Brazil (Fatimah et al. 2011) and there was a six times increase in the number of people suffering from food poisoning between 1982 and 1997 (Leach, Mercer, Stew, & Denyer, 2001).

Such food borne illnesses also known as food poisoning can be caused because of different reasons like lack of proper cooking, cross contamination and low personal hygiene of the people working in restaurants, and approximately 96% of consumers believe that restaurants are most responsible for foodservice related safety (Fatimah et al. 2011).

To ensure food safety at restaurants in some places consumers have to rely on the outlook of the restaurant and look for clues like cleanliness of the premises and hygiene of staff dealing with food. However certain factors like food storage and reliability of the sources from where restaurants purchase daily goods (Fatimah et al. 2011) and other different contributors towards food safety are beyond consumer's control (Nygård & Storstad, 1998). According to Leach et al. (2001) research indicates that food safety is not a decisive factor which can change consumer's choice while making decision for restaurant selection. However, in the last few decades food safety has become an important part while selecting a restaurant and consumers pay more attention while making dining decisions (Fatimah et al. 2011). As mentioned by Nygård and Storstad (1998) groups like visible quality, experience based quality and trust based quality (nutrition and actual contents); these are factors used by Lein and Dovig (1996) to describe different aspects of food

quality.

The Norwegian food market is highly protective through quantitative regulations and Norwegian customers are more likely to buy locally produced food products in comparison to foreign products given the prices are the same because they consider Norwegian-produced food products more of high quality (Nygård & Storstad, 1998).

2.6.1 Allergy and Nutrition.

Awareness of risk of food allergy is increasing in the public and also in medical professionals and well conducted research shows a ratio of 3-6% in children and 1-2% in adults (Bahna & Mayer, 2005) and there are 20% of Swedish children who show an adverse reaction to different foods (Kristjansson et al., 1999). Food allergy can be caused by different methods involved in food processing and Buffet style food preparation may also cause food allergy because of increased risk involved of cross contamination (Bahna & Mayer, 2005). Human food is amazingly diverse, however there are few foods which are mainly responsible for causing food allergies like milk, egg, peanuts, tree nuts and fish. Regional food habits also play an important role in determining food allergies like, per capita consumption of peanuts is the same in China and USA, and however, there is virtually no peanut allergy cases in China which may be partly because of the way Chinese and American prepare peanuts and partly the prevalence of allergy (Sampson, 2004).

Literacy for nutritional facts about what is included in our diet is increasing and now people are more concerned with the actual nutritional value of their diet. An Indian meal, most of the times, is based on starch, especially in rice producing regions where the basic food is rice and in the wheat producing northern part of India where wheat meal is used (Sen, 2015). Indian diets are mostly based on vegetarian food, meat is also expensive and most people cannot afford to eat meat in their

everyday diet. On average 92% of the calories come from vegetable related products and only 8% calories are derived from animal sources (Sen, 2015). Because of religious reasons Indians do not eat beef. After rice and meat the main source of proteins comes from pulses, whereas milk and dairy products, fruits and vegetables, and spices and pickles provide different vitamins and minerals necessary for the human body (Sen, 2015).

2.7 Culture and food

Many authors define culture as the way people in a society are living their lives and the living pattern of the society (Axelson, 1986). The link between food and culture is defined by different authors in diverse ways, in many articles authors defined food itself as culture. “Food is culture when it is produced, even “performed,” because man does not use only what is found in nature (as do all the other animal species) but seek also to create his own food, a food specific unto himself, superimposing the action of production on that of predator or hunter. Food becomes culture when it is prepared because, once the basic products of his diet have been acquired, man transforms them by means of fire and a carefully wrought technology that is expressed in the practices of the kitchen” (Montanari, 2006).

Food is not consumed as it is obtained, most of the times. We transform it into forms which as supportive to human digestion and acceptable to taste buds. The process of transforming raw food into edible cuisine is termed as cooking, and this process is connect to many other processes of life (Warde, 1997). Activities like planning, shopping, storing and serving make out a complete process of cooking and depicts different cultural aspects of society (Warde, 1997). In most of the Asian societies, especially in Indian culture cooking is performed by household women (Sen, 2015), however this concept is a little different when it comes to European culture. Because of such wide applications of food related activities, food practices can be used as an understanding

of social relations in a society (Warde, 1997). Food culture may display strong gender divisions in some societies (Warde, 1997) such as in Arab culture where men may eat before women can have food; even a strong sense of racism can be felt in societies like India where people from an inferior class cannot prepare food or have food with the people from a superior class (Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016). These are different ways in which cultures can preserve their traditions through the utility of traditional food practices, such as eating rotting trout in Norway (Warde, 1997). “According to ancient Hindu dietary theory, every meal is supposed to include all six tastes in the following order; sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent” (Sen, 2015. p.239). Food is embedded in culture and it is affected by social and environmental changes, local availability of ingredients and migrations (Gillespie Jr., 2003). Because of tourism and societies exposed to migrant food cultures, interest in foreign food culture has significantly increased in Western Europe and some regions of Asia (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002). Global increase in capitalism, dramatic increase in advertising of food products through print and electronic media, global expansion of fast food chains like Burger King and McDonald have made multicultural cooking a fashion and it is also known as ‘fusion cooking’ (Cwiertka & Walraven, 2002).

Indian food culture is different from European food culture; in much of Europe the order of food serving is quite precise; food is served starting with starter, main course and then finally closure with something sweet. Whereas Indian food is served all together in one big plate like conglomerate and fusion of flavors. These large plates are typically called ‘*Thalis*’ and can be made of silver or bronze or even steel and all the dishes are placed on it in small portions (Sen, 2015).



A *thali*, or metal tray, with small bowls is a traditional way of serving food.

Figure 3 Indian Thali Food

(Feasts and Fasts by Sen, 2015. p.240)

3. Methodology

During the research process, it is important to choose a proper and suitable approach or strategy (Neuman, 2013. p.93). It may be difficult or confusing to choose the right alternative or method to answer your research questions (Flick, 2006. p.13), and it does not mean that the results obtained after completing the research process are always true and valid; results have to be critically examined. In this segment, we will describe the research process and how the study was made and also write about data analysis and limitations. The primary purpose of the study is to know the behavior and attitude of Norwegian customers towards the Indian/Pakistani food.

3.1 Research Design and Purpose

As already noted the strain of our master thesis is to know the perceptions and attitudes of customers towards sub-continental food (India & Pakistan) in the Norwegian food market. Our primary goal is to comprehend the acceptability of Pakistani & Indian food for Norwegian customers. The purpose behind this study was how Norwegian customers see the different practical aspects of Sub-continental food, its taste and quality and theoretical aspects like authenticity, food safety and trends.

To answer our research questions about the perceptions and attitudes of Norwegian customers towards sub-continental food (India & Pakistan), descriptive research method is used. A questionnaire survey was performed to collect the data and also interviews were conducted of two restaurant managers where one is with 25 years of experience and the second one 6 years. These two interviewees were very knowledgeable and provided much information about understanding the place of sub-continental food in the Norwegian food market.

3.2 Survey Instrument, Sample, and pilot test.

To assess the aims of the study and to collect the data for this study we used a questionnaire survey. The survey was made for the customers or guests coming to Pakistani and Indian restaurants in Oslo and Stavanger. The questionnaire survey was developed with the help of our supervisor and consisted of 15 questions and some basic demographic questions such as age, gender and nationality. The questionnaire was comprised of different questions consisting in options of multiple choice, Likert scale and ranking question. The questionnaire was reviewed and tested to check the understanding level of the questionnaire to avoid any ambiguity, confusion or biases. We also conducted structured interview of two different restaurant managers. One of the managers/owner has managed Indian restaurants for the last 25 years and is running two restaurants in Stavanger and Sandnes, whereas the other manager/owner runs Pakistani restaurants with and has more than 6 years' of experience of running a restaurant in Stavanger and has recently opened a new restaurant in Oslo.

The population in this study was the random guests of the Indian and Pakistani restaurants in Oslo and Stavanger. We picked a total of 4 restaurants, two in Oslo and two in Stavanger. For this survey the sample size was 110. To conduct the survey, permission was granted by the restaurant administration and all the survey questionnaires were filled after the customers placed their orders and were waiting for the food to be served. Survey was conducted between February 22, 2017 to February 26, 2017.

The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts, the first part covered general information such as demographics and customer experience. The other part covered that what they think about the sub-continental food in this market; if it is authentic, healthy, value adding, about prices and how they rate the sub-continental food among other cuisines etc.

We conducted a pilot test, with 8 guests at the restaurants, to increase the validity and reliability of the survey. Interview questions were also developed with the help of supervisor to avoid an ambiguity.

3.3 Data Collection

Collecting data through the questionnaire survey was an interesting experience. The response of the people was very pleasant. We found people very excited to fill in the survey, give their opinion and share their experiences. We took permission from the restaurant management and started distributing survey on 22nd of February 2017 and finished on 26th of February 2017. It was very important for us not to affect the service quality of the restaurants where the survey was conducted. For this purpose we utilized the time window between ordering and serving of the meals which was approximately 15-20 minutes. Since we were two team members who conducted the survey, one male team member conducted questionnaire survey in Oslo whereas the other female team member conducted questionnaire survey in Stavanger. We arranged and placed survey questionnaires and pens in the small basket on all the dining tables in the target restaurant. To explain the purpose of the study we attached a paper, describing purpose of the survey. Participation was voluntary and unidentified in this research, but the response of the guests was good and almost all the customers were very cooperative. We distributed 110 questionnaires and managed to collect 95% with a total number of 105. Table 1 below shows the survey time plan:

Table 1.*Table1*

26/02/17	25/02/17	24/02.17	23/02/17	22/02/17	Date & Time
X	X	X	X		Lunch 14:00-17:00
X	X	X	X	X	Dinner 17:00-22:00

“X” = survey conducted.

We also have conducted two semi-structured interviews of the managers/owners of Indian and Pakistani restaurants. According to Flick (2006), congregating verbal information or data is one of the most important methodological approaches in qualitative research. We believe that these interviews were very significant for our study and gave us some key insights. Both interviews were conducted face to face and took between 45 and 60 minutes each. Interviews were conducted in the participant’s restaurant after an appointment, by the same interviewer assisted by the team member. A total number of 13 semi-structured open-ended questions were asked. These open ended questions gave maximum opportunity to the interviewer and interviewee to talk and get more information about the subject. Conducting this kind of interviews gives opportunity to get more extensive information on the subject (Flick, 2006).

3.4 Data Analysis.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Raw data was entered in this program (SPSS) which provided descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviations). The frequency distribution for each variable was calculated with the help of the program. We also did T- test assessments in this study.

It is considered important to record the interview when gathering data through interviews (Flick, 2009, 4th ed.); they were recorded and also written notes were taken off. Questions were reasonably clear so that there was little chance of ambiguity. We transcribed and wrote out these interviews in the best possible way and in the same order as we collected the data. In order to candid or unbiased answers efforts were made to appear neutral during both of the interviews; we did not share our personal views but tried to get the personal interpretation of the interviewee.

3.5 Limitations

This study was noted to have the following limitations:

1. Related to the topic the available literature was very limited, especially when we talked about Pakistani/Indian food.
2. Sample of the study was not so big because of limited resources. We covered 4 different restaurants and as it was not a random setting so the results may be influenced by the sampling technique.

4. Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis of the collected data will be presented. The purpose behind this study was to examine the preferences of the customers and perceptions among customers towards the Indian/Pakistani food in the Norwegian food market. We wanted to know whether eating Indian/Pakistani food mainly a trend or something more than trend, like a habit. Whether restaurant guests really like this food or not. A questionnaire method was used to collect the data and the findings were analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and then conferred in the following order: Demographics of respondents, where they have tried this food first time, dine out routines and dine out in Indian/Pakistani restaurants, health and safety points of view, the authenticity of available food, cooking the same food at home, prices of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway, food and culture and comparison of the popularity of different cuisines.

4.2 Demographic Profile

Section one of the survey was used to get a demographic profile of the respondent. In section one the questions were related to age, gender, and nationality of the respondent.

4.2.1 Gender

In the sample of 105 we got response by all the customers for the gender profile. There were 56 male (53.3%) and 49 female (46.7%) guests participating in this survey.

Table2

Demographics of Respondents by Gender

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
53.3	53.3	53.3	56	Male
100.0	46.7	46.7	49	Female
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.2.2 Age.

In the survey, we made four age groups to get the age of the respondent. 39% of the respondents were above 45 years.

Table3

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
13.3	13.3	13.3	14	15-25
34.3	21.0	21.0	22	26-35
61.0	26.7	26.7	28	36-45
100.0	39.0	39.0	41	Above 45

	100.0	100.0	105	Total
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n =105

4.2.3 Nationality.

From the sample of 105 respondents, there were 82 respondents (78.1%) who were local and 23 respondents were international.

Table4

Demographic Profile of Respondents by Citizenship

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
78.1	78.1	78.1	82	Local
100.0	21.9	21.9	23	International
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.3 First time tried this food, how long you have been eating and perceived authenticity of the food

From the total of 105, 64.8% respondents said that they tried this food first time Norway. People who tried this food in Pakistan and India are in total only 4.8%. 38.1% respondents eating this food for more than 10 years.

Table5

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
64.8	64.8	64.8	68	Norway
67.6	2.9	2.9	3	India
69.5	1.9	1.9	2	Pakistan
100.0	30.5	30.5	32	Other Country
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

Table6

Since how long you have been eating this food?

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
38.1	38.1	38.1	40	More than 10 years
62.9	24.8	24.8	26	5 to 10 years
85.7	22.9	22.9	24	1 to 5 years
100.0	14.3	14.3	15	Less than 1 year
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

Table 7

Perceived authenticity of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
41.0	41.0	41.0	43	Yes it is Authentic
48.6	7.6	7.6	8	No, it is not Authentic
81.9	33.3	33.3	35	Somewhat Authentic
100.0	18.1	18.1	19	Do not know
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.4 Eating Indian/Pakistani food and dining out.

The survey respondents were asked to different questions to know that how often they eat Indian and Pakistani food and the other question was about how many times they dine out. Response of these two questions was very useful for us in the discussion of the study to show that this food is just trend or eating habit in Norwegian food market.

Response shows that 41.0% dine out occasionally and 25.7% respondents dine out twice a month, the minimum were 8.6% with once a week dine out.

Table8

How often you dine out?

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
8.6	8.6	8.6	9	Once a week
32.4	23.8	23.8	25	Twice a week
58.1	25.7	25.7	27	Twice a month
99.0	41.0	41.0	43	Occasionally
100.0	1.0	1.0	1	Other
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

When it comes to how often they eat Indian/Pakistani food, 55.2% of respondents said occasionally, 32 respondents with 30.5% twice a month and minimum is 1.9% with twice a week.

Table9

How often do you eat Indian/Pakistani food?

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
6.7	6.7	6.7	7	once a week

8.6	1.9	1.9	2	Twice a week
39.0	30.5	30.5	32	Twice a month
94.3	55.2	55.2	58	Occasionally
100.0	5.7	5.7	6	Other
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.5 Trend of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway.

A question about, how people feel about the trend of Indian/Pakistani food in Norwegian food market, was very interesting for us and 52.4% people answered that they feel interested about this increasing and 38.1% answered very interested. Only 1.9% respondents answered least interested.

Table10

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
1.9	1.9	1.9	2	Least Interested
9.5	7.6	7.6	8	Neutral
61.9	52.4	52.4	55	Interested
100.0	38.1	38.1	40	Very

				Interested
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.6 Satisfaction level towards quality and safety of the food

Respondents were asked two different questions in context of health and safety and Satisfaction towards quality and safety of Indian/Pakistani food. To ask about the satisfaction level we used Likert scale 1 to 5 and other question was closed ended question with four options.

53.3% respondents answered that the quality and safety of Indian/Pakistani food is satisfactory and 36.2% respondents were highly satisfied. 1.9% were highly dissatisfied and 8.6% were neutral.

For the second question, according to 54.3% respondents Indian/Pakistani food is healthy.

Table11

Quality and Safety of Indian/Pakistani food

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
1.9	1.9	1.9	2	Highly Dissatisfied
10.5	8.6	8.6	9	Neutral
63.8	53.3	53.3	56	Satisfied
100.0	36.2	36.2	38	Highly Satisfied

	100.0	100.0	105	Total
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n =105

Table12

Do you think Indian/Pakistani food is healthy

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
54.3	54.3	54.3	57	Yes
83.8	29.5	29.5	31	Maybe
89.5	5.7	5.7	6	No
100.0	10.5	10.5	11	Do not know
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.7 Cooking Indian/Pakistani food at home

66.7% respondents are cooking Indian/Pakistani food at home and coming to restaurants too to enjoy this food. 20.0% respondents do not like to cook this food at home.

Table13

Do you like to Cook Indian/Pakistani food at home or No

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
66.7	66.7	66.7	70	Yes
80.0	13.3	13.3	14	Maybe
100.0	20.0	20.0	21	No
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.8: Satisfaction level with the prices of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway

46 (43.8%) respondents said that they satisfied with the prices of this food in the Norwegian market. But other side a big number of respondents (37.1%) were neutral about this question and 5.7% respondents were dissatisfied with the prices of Indian/Pakistani food in Norwegian food market.

Table14

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
5.7	5.7	5.7	6	Dissatisfied
42.9	37.1	37.1	39	Neutral
86.7	43.8	43.8	46	Satisfied

100.0	13.3	13.3	14	Highly Satisfied
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.9 Food and culture

97.1% respondents believe that food is an important representative of culture.

Table15

Do you think food is an important representative of any culture?

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
97.1	97.1	97.1	102	Yes
100.0	2.9	2.9	3	No
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.10 Indian Pakistani food out of Norway.

We asked a question, to know the behavior of people towards this cuisine, that do you like to eat Indian/Pakistani food out of Norway. 75.2% respondents said yes they like to eat Indian/Pakistani food if they are out of Norway.

Table16

When you are out of Norway do you like to eat Indian/Pakistani food?

Cumulative Percent	Valid Percent	Percent	Frequency	
75.2	75.2	75.2	79	Yes
98.1	22.9	22.9	24	Maybe
99.0	1.0	1.0	1	No
100.0	1.0	1.0	1	Do not know
	100.0	100.0	105	Total

n =105

4.11 Indian/Pakistani and Other foods

In this question, we gave five options and ask to rate them according to their view the popularity level of different cuisines including Indian/Pakistani food. Results are shown in the table below.

Table17

Total	Most Popular	Popular	Neutral	Not popular	Less popular	
100.0%	20.0%	7.6%	11.4%	25.7%	34.3%	Norwegian food

100.0%	20.0%	23.8%	24.8%	12.4%	18.1%	Chinese food
100.0%	19.0%	19.0%	23.8%	23.8%	13.3%	Italian food
100.0%	6.7%	9.5%	21.0%	33.3%	28.6%	Spanish food
100.0%	31.4%	41.0%	18.1%	4.8%	3.8%	Pakistani/Indian food

4.12: Summary and Discussion

The results of frequency analysis of the respondent's demographic information shows that the main features of Indian/Pakistani restaurant customers consist of:

1. male (53.3%)
2. age group of above 45 is 39% and
3. 78.1% customers are local (Norwegian)

Demographic analysis shows that male and female from different age group and nationalities are visiting Indian/Pakistani restaurants in Norwegian food market but frequency of male customers is more. People aged above 45 and local customers makeup major part of customers visiting these restaurants. As mentioned by Bugge 2011 mostly Norwegian young generation is inclined towards fast food but can also experiment with different foods; and similar trend can be seen during this study here all age groups are represented and people are willing to taste other foods. The possible reason for a large number of local customers can be low number of tourist visitors especially in the city of Stavanger; but there are also indications that Norwegians are becoming accustomed to appreciate sub-continental food.

The second part of the survey results shows that eating Indian/Pakistani food is a growing trend in

the Norwegian food market, however it is also evident from results that a good number of people have affiliation with this food lasting more than a decade and for many customers such food is more like a habit. According to the results 38.1% of the respondents are eating this food more than 10 years and 24.8% respondents have eating this food for 5 to 10 years. When we combine the results of question 3 and 11 we found that many (41.0%) people in Norway are eating out occasionally, and this agrees with Bugge & Lavik (2011) 80% of Norwegians eat at least one meal outside their homes every month. When it comes to eating Indian/Pakistani food one segment responded that they are eating this food occasionally and 30.5% respondents said they eat twice a month. These results show that many people in Norway are eating out in restaurants occasionally and they prefer to eat in Indian/Pakistani restaurant. However we believe that these results can be effected affected by the sample selections since the sample selection was in sub-continental restaurants, the results will refer specifically to the dining out habits of these customers that may differ from the general population. Survey was conducted within the Indian/Pakistani restaurants, which indicates two primary factors that majority of the customers visiting these restaurants were familiar with sub-continental food, and many of them were regular customers of these restaurants.

We were also looking for the perceptions of people about the Indian/Pakistani food available in the Norwegian market. What are their impressions about the authenticity and taste of Indian/Pakistani food.? Results of question number 6 show that for 41.0% respondents the food served at Indian/Pakistani restaurants in Norway is considered to be authentic. This indicates that the customers believe that this food is real Indian/Pakistani food but when considering the results of question 1 about where they have tried this food first time, 64.8% respondents tried this food in Norway. Since most customers have tried sub-continental food in Norway at Indian/Pakistani restaurants and have not tasted such food in its origin, this will influence how they perceive

Indian/Pakistani food. From another point of view and according to Ebster & Guist (2008) it can have influence on the customer to visit original country of the food being served to establish the level of perceived authenticity. According to interviewee 1 Indian food in Norwegian food market is not 100% authentic food as they have changed it little bit just to develop the customer taste and to make it according to local requirements, such as to make it tasteless spicy by mixing with some creams or nut pastes. People who tried this food in India and Pakistan would know that this is not purely Indian/Pakistani food as the flavors there are more intense; and results also show that for 7.6% respondents it is not an authentic Indian/Pakistani food because total 4.8% respondents tried this food in India and Pakistan.

Most customers of Indian/Pakistani restaurants are satisfied with the prices of food and they find it worth paying for this food. When it comes to health and safety of food 54.3% respondents said Indian/Pakistani food is healthy so this shows that people are not afraid of eating this food and they are satisfied with the health and safety standards of Indian/Pakistani restaurants in Norway.

Results of the question shows that Indian/Pakistani food is popular in Norway. There was option of five different cuisines was presented and respondents asked to rate the cuisines from less to most popular. 41.0% respondents said that Indian/Pakistani food is popular rating it above Norwegian, Chinese, Italian and Spanish food and as more defining factor of this picture we can say these results are affected by the population because all the respondents were customers of Indian/Pakistani restaurants and they answered that. The survey results indicate that customers have a positive attitude towards Indian/Pakistani food as a (perceived) authentic cuisine. These results are significant when considering Indian/Pakistani food as a part of today's food trends, which will be further discussed in the following sections.

Interview 1.

First interview was conducted on March 28th, 2017 with the owner of an Indian restaurant in city of Stavanger. He is 70 years old Indian Norwegian and running this restaurant from the last 25 years at the same place. This is now turned out to be his family business and he is running two other Indian restaurants in Sadness (Rogaland) and Bergen with the help of his daughter and son.

Question 1:

How do you see the trend in changing taste of food?

“Indeed, it was very challenging in the beginning, to introduce this food to Norwegian society because they were afraid of the smell of garlic and hotness of spices. They actually never tried it but they heard it that Indian food is very hot. But, 25 years ago there was already a restaurant which was trying to survive, before I started, in the city of Stavanger. British people were familiar with the taste of Indian (sub-continental) food and they liked the taste. At that time, many of the British engineers were working here in shipping and oil companies and have Norwegian colleagues at work, so Norwegians started coming along with them. Initially they were asking for food without Hvitløk (garlic) and considerably less or no spices. However now, after two decades the story is completely different. People ask for extra garlic in their meals, considering the various health factors and now we always ask for customer’s choice for spices ‘Mild’ or ‘Spicy... ?’”

Question 2:

What is popularity level of sub-continental food in your perception/experience on scale of 1-5

and why?

“In my opinion, the popularity is very high and I would give it 5 on scale of 1-5 since 5 is highest. It is because now people are familiar with taste and health benefits, so that our food is very popular and people from all walks like it. Our food is properly cooked according to the traditional standards and freshly made with fresh ingredients.”

Question 3:

How important is it to know the Norwegian market?

“It is very important to understand the local market, not only Norwegian but any market you are operating in. 20-25 years ago, this market was captured by Chinese food mostly. We could see cues outside Chinese restaurants. I introduced Indian food with traditional taste because of British tourists and work immigrants, but when I realized that this food is too spicy for Norwegians, then we offered the same food with three kinds of spices e.g. mild, medium and hot and since after many Norwegians were attracted towards this food. Before that, there was a time when i did not have even a single Norwegian customer for days and days.”

Question 4:

What makes sub-continental food distinctive or attractive?

“The spices of sub-continental food are specialty of this food. Norwegians are travelling a lot and now they have developed sensibility of taste and immunity to spices and now they are eating almost all kind of spices. Even our new blend of spices, that we use in food, is liked by all, especially the new generation. And of course the serving style is also different from Chinese, Italian or Spanish food. ”

Question 5:

How important is the understanding of local culture for developing the market for sub-continental food?

“Well, of course it is very important, we developed and improvised the spices in accordance to Norwegian culture to develop our market. Chinese food, who was ruling the market decades back is hardly surviving whereas Indian food is in trend. But I must also say that it is very hard to know the culture. We got to know about Norwegians after many years of wine and dines. We use to invite them to our private parties and serve them with our food and get to know about them more. It is very hard to understand or get deep into Norwegian culture because they are less social in comparison to us, the language barrier and cultural differences.”

Question 6:

What are the main challenges and opportunities you see in the Norwegian market related to sub-continental food?

“Investment (money) itself is big challenge in Norwegian market and I, myself got money from my brother to start my business here. Making good food is also a big challenge. There was only one Indian food restaurant named Mughal India, which also had not a good reputation and it was a challenge too, to redefine the taste and reputation of Indian food. Due to limited and low population, the opportunity is not so high. Norway is a cold and expensive country, so we can not rely much upon the tourist activities, we have to satisfy the local market and this is the only opportunity, in my opinion. Considering the current economic situation, the steep decrease in oil prices, have serious impact on the city like Stavanger, which is mainly stuffed with the offices of

oil companies. We do not have any direct concern with oil sector, but in fact we can feel the decrease in number of customers and their buying behavior.”

Question 7:

How do you see the authenticity of the food and its adaptation according to the local requirements?

“I think the food we are serving here is not purely authentic because just to develop the taste we make some changes in the authentic recipes, as we are adding cream to make spice level low or to make the food less strong. Also serving style is not a traditional style. Fork and knife is not a regular Indian food culture, we have adapted it according to the acceptability of people in local market and to face the competition.”

Question 8:

Are there any external challenges like, infrastructure, economy, food authority etc.?

“There are no external challenges. Indeed, food authorities are very helping. If we keep following rules and regulations then there is no problem which is very good for everyone’s safety. And economic conditions are something about which we cannot do anything as individuals. So we only have to wait and see...”

Question 9:

How did your interest in sub-continental food get started?

“I came to Norway as an Engineer after completing my education in UK. Unfortunately I had an accident on job and got medically unfit for the job. I had Engineering Architectural diploma but there was no job in the market. In 1980’s I started working at a “gate kjokken” (fast food vendor) in Oslo and it was such a hard time in Norway as well. Even big companies were getting bankrupt. I also got this building through bank and a friend suggested me to start a restaurant, since i have some work experience in ‘gate kokken’ and I knew Indian food very well, so just did it...”

Question 10:

What is your main competition?

“The Italian and Thai food is very good and I believe I have a competition with Italian and Thai restaurants. I do not consider Pakistani restaurants as my competition, as i believe that we have major similarities in our food.”

Question 11:

Can you add your own views about the development of sub-continental food?

“According to me the sub-continental food is becoming more popular in this food market day by day. Now three generations of Norwegian people are coming in my restaurant and new generation also like it very much.”

Question 12:

Is food and service quality of sub-continental restaurants adequate in comparison to the other fine dining restaurants?

“Stavanger is an international city and people like all kinds of food. As far as quality and service is concerned, I believe that good service and quality of food is a one of key factors that we have our regular Norwegian customers.”

Question 13:

How do you see the future of sub-continental food market in Norwegian culture?

“Indeed, you cannot expect it to go way high but it would be maintained.”



Figure 4 Punjabi Thali

Mix Punjabi Thali.

Photo Courtesy: Indian Tandoori Facebook Page.

Interview 2

The second interview was conducted on April 6th, 2017 with a 33 year old Norwegian born Pakistani co-owner of the restaurant in Stavanger. This Pakistani restaurant is jointly operated by two Pakistani male owners for the last 6 years. While we were busy in interview, the second co-owner of the restaurant was occupied in the final arrangements of their new restaurant which would be launched on May 4th in Sandvika (near Oslo).

Question 1:

How do you see the trend in changing taste of food?

“6 years back when I started the Pakistani restaurant it wasn't quite challenging for me because Norwegian people already knew about Sub-continental food, as there were many Indian restaurants in the market, so, to offer some different taste was very important and It worked and now people love to try different taste of sub continental food.”

Question 2:

What is the popularity level of sub continental food in your perception/experience on a scale of 1-5 and why?

“The response I am getting from my customers is really good so in my opinion, the popularity is high and I would give it 5 on scale of 1-5 since 5 is highest.”

Question 3:

How important is it to know the Norwegian market?

“It is very important to understand the local market. If you know about the market and your customers you can give them better products or taste and this is really good for your business. Not knowing the market is jumping blindly in water whose depth is unknown to you!”

Question 4:

What makes sub continental food distinctive or attractive ?

“The spices of sub continental food are specialty of this food. And our special cooking methods like coal grills and slow covered cooking is also very famous in the world and now also in Norwegian food market. B.B.Q dishes we are offering are not available at any other place. We normally use 12 or more different kind of spices depending upon the recipe and flavors we are looking for.”

Question 5:

How important is the understanding of local culture for developing the market for sub continental food?

“Well, it is important, but when I started this business, Norwegian people already had good knowledge of sub continental food through some Indian restaurants in Stavanger and Pakistani restaurants in Oslo. It is also a fact that Pakistani community is the largest ethnic community in Norway. So it was not much difficult to introduce some new recipes as they were ok with spices. So for me it was not that difficult as expected.”

Question 6:

What are the main challenges and opportunities you see in Norwegian market related to sub continental food?

“For me the biggest challenge is the other restaurants in the same cuisine. It is very important to offer something new, different, and delicious. The opportunity is high for me, we believe that day by day Norwegian people like to eat more outside, and try new flavors. Because of this believe we are opening one more restaurant in Oslo and expecting very good response.”

Question 7:

How do you see authenticity of the food and its adaptation according to the local requirements?

“The food I am offering in my restaurant it is purely authentic and now, because Norwegian people are used to eat spices, so I introduced some authentic recipes and they like it very much.”

Question 8:

Are there any external challenges like, infrastructure, economy, food authority etc.?

“There are no big external challenges. Things like economic conditions, oil prices and weather are not controllable and we cannot do much about it. Indeed, food authorities are very helping. If we keep following rules and regulations then there is no such problem. When we started business it was little difficult to get ingredients by nearby places so we have to order most of our ingredients from Oslo, but now after all these years ingredients are easily available in the local market.”

Question 9:

How did your interest in sub continental food started?

“I am Norwegian born but we are a Pakistani family so from my childhood I am eating such food

and I saw my Norwegian and other friends eating this food too but in the restaurants so I observed the market and it drove me in this business.”

Question 10:

What is your main competition?

“My main competition is other Indian and Pakistani restaurants in the market, Thai and Italian restaurants are also very popular in the Norwegian market so they are also my competitors.”

Question 11:

Can you add your own views about the development of sub continental food?

“According to me the sub continental food is very popular in this food market and people love to try some new recipes from the different parts of the Pakistan and India. And with the time it will become more popular. We can see people, including ourselves opening new restaurants at different places, though it is slow, but I am positive about the progress.”

Question 12:

Is food and service quality of sub continental restaurants adequate in comparison to the other fine dining restaurants?

*“As far as food quality is concern, we are monitored and regulated by the same food department as any other restaurant in town, so there is no chance of compromise on quality, to maintain and grow our business we definitely need to provide good service as well. During the year 2016 people of Stavanger have voted for us for ‘**Byas.no**’ best takeaway in Stavanger. I believe this is a big achievement for us.”*

Question 13:

How do you see the future of sub continental food market in Norwegian culture?

“Future! I think we are the future. I believe sub continental food will soon cover a big part of Norwegian food market.”



Figure 5 B.B.Q Lamb Pakistani Food

B.B.Q Lamb Chops with Nan-bread.

Photo Courtesy: Zouq Restaurant & Take away Facebook page.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1: Discussion

As noted, the survey indicated a growing popularity of Indian/Pakistani food. This opens for discussion of how sub-continental food is a part of current food trend. This will be further discussed on the basis of the interviews. The interviews provide some of the most interesting insight in the thesis. Before discussing the interview of two different restaurants managers from two different backgrounds it is important to have some understanding of sub-continental history. Subcontinent was comprised of Pakistan and India jointly before August 1947. After the independence of these two countries geographical boundaries were created and majority of the Muslims were migrated to Pakistan. Since these two nations were living together for a long time, some of the similarities of traditions and food flavors are still visible. It is because of the shared history, geographic location and similarity of ingredients. However, cooking style & procedures, combination of different flavors and spices makes the key differences.

The changes in Norwegian society with respect to food trend and flavors are clearly visible when considering the first interview question, answered by two different managers. These managers/owners commenced their businesses in Stavanger during two different time periods. According to first interviewee, it was very difficult 25 years back to introduce Indian food with the basic regular ingredients. People were afraid of having ‘*Garlic*’ because of its smell. Norwegian people were also certainly not familiar with the intense flavor of spices and availability of ingredients and spices was not easy. However, second interviewee who is operating Pakistani restaurant in the same city from the last 6 years has not mentioned any of these issues, in fact he has mentioned that when the they (co-partners) decided to start Pakistani food restaurant,

Norwegian people were already familiar with Asian food flavors and their focus was to differentiate themselves from Indian restaurants. There is roughly 17 years difference between the opening of these two restaurants, and the acceptability of such food was key encouragement for the new entrants in this local market.

According to both interviewees, the popularity level of sub-continental food is very high. Both of them believed that distinct flavors and combinations of spices are the unique selling point for this food. In answer to the question of cultural awareness of local people, manager from Pakistani restaurant replied, Pakistani people make the largest ethnic society in Norway, and couple of Pakistani restaurants in Oslo has worked hard to introduce our cultural flavors to the Norwegian society. However this was not the case when Indian restaurant stepped into market. According to Indian Manager/owner, they have to experiment with the original flavors to match the level of acceptability of Norwegian customers. It was very hard for him to get to know about the Norwegian culture and present them accordingly.

Both of the restaurants believe that they are serving their customers with authentic food, with the exception of some changes. Indian restaurant have made some changes in authentic recipes and dining experiences are also inspired by western culture. While analyzing the rest of the interview, manager from Pakistani restaurant looks more ambitious, looking forward to take on new challenges and ready to explore new local markets. He believes that future is very bright for such cuisines and somewhere in future Norwegian food market will definitely give them enough space.

Whereas, on the other side Manager/owner of Indian restaurant looks worried about the economic challenges and he believes that economic conditions prevailing from last few years are responsible for diminishing the chances of growth. He also believes that Norwegian food market is not very

big and does not allow a lot of experiments.

During these interviews some of the key perspectives about ethnic restaurants have shown similarity in connection to the literature review. For instance, both of the restaurants are operated by the immigrants having cultural background different than local food market as discussed by Ebster & Guist, 2008 and food presentation and cooking style are the major distinctions between these two restaurants which makes them unique and provides best chances of survival in the same market as mentioned by Tsai & Lu, 2012.

5.2: Conclusion.

Food is a basic necessity for every human being which can be categorized even before clothing and shelter. Food is also described as a symbol for cultural identification, hospitality, leisure, social status and health. With the rise of the Global age where social media has become an integral part of daily life, cultural shifts are gaining prominence. Despite of the fact that Norway is located in one of the far reaching destinations and faces some of the harshest climates in the world, cultural changes are also visible here. Norwegian live in a country with a sound economy, travel extensively, and follow current trends that also include food.

During this study where we have observed the perception and behavior of Norwegian customers towards Sub-continental food, it is interesting to know that food culture has changed over a period of two decades. People are more open towards tasting new foods and flavors and there is significant increase in the acceptability of sub-continental food. There could be a number of possible reasons for this change such as; increase in travelling, increase in immigrants moving to Norway from Asian countries, global outreach of products, economic conditions, climate and weather, cultural contacts and many more. However, it is believed that it would be very early to categorize this as a trend in Norwegian society without further investigation and it is also not advisable to consider

sub-continental food as a general eating habit for Norwegian people. This is because of the circumstance that many people have shown interest in cooking this food at home but we believe that very few will adopt this cuisine mainly because of its time consuming and complex cooking process a still limited motivation for cultural shift. We believe that food culture is a very complex phenomenon, which involves many different dimensions and require intensive research and considerable time. However, the results of this study are encouraging and give ways to further research in the case of the Sub-continental food market in Norway.

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2- Since how long you have been eating this food?

- More than 10 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 1 to 5 years
- Less than 1 year

3- How often do you eat Indian/Pakistani food?

- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Twice a month
- Occasionally
- Other _____

4- How do you feel about the increasing trend of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway?

1 2 3 4 5

Not interested

Very interested

5- What is your satisfaction level towards quality and safety of the food?

1 2 3 4 5

Highly dissatisfied

Highly satisfied

6- Do you think food provided by Indian/Pakistani restaurants in Norway is authentic to its

original culture?

- Yes, it is authentic
- No, it is not authentic
- Somewhat authentic
- Do not know.

7- How do you compare Indian/Pakistani cuisine to other cuisines?

1 2 3 4 5

Not prominent

Very prominent

8- Would you like to try to cook this food at home?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

9- Are you satisfied with the prices of Indian/Pakistani food in Norway?

1 2 3 4 5

Highly dissatisfied

Highly satisfied

10- Do you think Indian/Pakistani food is healthy?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Don't Know.

11- How often you dine out?

- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Twice a month
- Occasionally
- Other _____

12- Do you think availability of Indian/Pakistani food is value addition in Norwegian food market?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Don't Know

13- Do you think food is an important representative of any culture?

- Yes
- Maybe

14- When you are out of Norway do you like to eat Indian/Pakistani food?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No
- Don't Know

15- How popular do you think these cuisines are? Response scale 1-5 (1 lowest, 5 highest):

- Norwegian food
- Chinese food
- Italian food
- Spanish food
- Pakistani/Indian food.