Prospects of Restaurant Service in Silchar Town in Assam: An Attitudinal Study.

Rupam Roy[1] and Dr. Brajesh Kumar[2]

[1](Department of Commerce, Radhamadhab College, India)
[2](Department of Commerce, Assam University, India)

Abstract: *Prospect of any business depends on demand for services and utilities provided by a business besides other supply side situations including competition, factor market and business infrastructure. Therefore, demand side management is important for success in any business. Prospective demand in a business can be assessed on the basis of factors those which constitute a demand viz., Economic, demographic and psychographic details of the consumers. The present study proposes to examine the prospects of demand for Restaurant services in Silchar Town in Assam with the help of psychographic profile of the people of Silchar by examining association of demand for restaurant services by the consumers and their corresponding psychographic profile and projecting the said relationship between the two in to the future state of demography and market scenario of Restaurant business in Silchar town.*
Keywords: *Demographic, economic, psychographic, restaurant, Silchar.*

I. Introduction

The public dining room that came ultimately to be known as the restaurant originated in France, and the France have continued to make major contributions to the restaurants development. The first restaurant proprietor is believed to have been one A. Boulanger, a soup vender, who opened his business in Paris in 1765. Restaurant Industry is the key for the nation because it generates the large direct and indirect employment, the revenue it generates for the Government and the importance of its role in promoting tourism. At present the size of the industry at Rs 43000 Crores, growing at 5-6% annually. Accounting to the survey conducted by NRAI the restaurant Industry has the potential by 2015 to be approx Rs 62500 Crores. The evolving Industry is a significant contributor in terms of Tax or vat to the economy. Currently it contributes Rs 1000 Crores and has potential to reach Rs 3500 Crores. The Industry provides a direct employment to 5 million individuals. The restaurant Industry is a labour intensive and perhaps one of the largest employment generators in India. Thus the objective of the study is to examine the prospects of demand for Restaurant services in Silchar Town in Assam with the help of psychographic profile of Silcharians by examining association of demand for restaurant services by the consumers and their corresponding psychographic profile and projecting the said relationship between the two in to the future state of demography and market scenario of Restaurant business in Silchar town.

II. Profile Of Silchar Town

Silchar is the headquarters of Cachar district in the state of Assam in India. It is the economic gateway to the state of Mizoram and part of Manipur. The town of Silchar has tremendous commercial importance and is the second largest in the state of Assam. It consequently, witnesses the settlement of a sizeable population of traders from distant parts of India. Being a very peaceful place in the otherwise disturbed North-East earned it the bon mot of "Island of Peace" from India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Approximately 90% residents of Silchar are Sylhetis, the rest being Marwaris, Bishnupriya Manipuris, Manipuri-Meiteis and some tribal groups like Nagas. The Sylhetis settled here after migrating from Sylhet, a district of undivided India, after partition of India in 1947. Silchar is situated by the banks of the Barak River in what is popularly known as Barak Valley. Over the past few years, the city is constantly witnessing a huge influx of people from nearby smaller places due to city's increasing future prospects and other developments in the field of education, medical facilities and the more recently booming real estate market and other commercial businesses, making the city quite an overcrowded one. It has now the second highest population in the state. The growth of population in Silchar from 1951 to 2011 is shown below Table

Table 1: Population and Growth in Silchar Town, 1951-2011

Year	Population	Annual growth rate (%)
1951	34000	-
1991	115483	6
2001	142199	2.3
2011	172709	2.1

Source: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner (web), Population Census India (web)

III. Review Of Literature

Due to the abundant increase in the restaurant industry, it is vital to research the important aspects that contribute to its success, in order to gain benefit from this opportunity. Restaurant managers must be equipped and ready to develop their restaurant businesses to generate more sales from such a trend. The development goes not only in terms of the restaurant per se, but the preparation must also concern its stakeholders. The government also should be prepared to interact with an enormous culinary tourist who will visit the country, especially in relevance to a country like India which is being well-known as a country that develops individuals who exude culinary expertise [1]. Employees need to comprehend a level of consumers' expectation and practice how to satisfy consumers. In doing so, all stakeholders involved in restaurant development need to understand their customers deeply, in knowing their needs and wants, so as to generate strategies in rendering efficient and effective service. Such needs and wants include the customers' criteria for choosing a restaurant depending on the occasion, the factors that influence them for selecting restaurants, their decision-making process, and the sources of information they utilize. To sum this all up, knowing how consumers choose a particular restaurant depending on the occasion seems to be suitable question in answering and encompassing all the perceived needs and wants of consumers. The criteria of consumers in choosing a restaurant for dinner in visiting occasions intrigued the researcher to pursue with the study, based on reasons. Primarily, visiting occasion seems to involve more specific factor like emotion or impression than other occasion. The interest in the study regarding the factors that influence restaurant-choice has been developed in recent decades. In 1962, Becknell and Maher [2] identified the main criteria to select a food retailer, which include food quality, cleanliness, pricing, service, and unique features. It also mentioned fast-food criteria that influence choice, such speed of service, variety of menu, popularity with children, cleanliness, convenience, taste of food, and price [3].

IV. Statement Of The Problem.

Silchar is bestowed with rich natural- forest and agricultural resources and these could provide a strong base for industrial development. Despite enormous latent potentialities for setting up of various resources based industries, no significant progress could be achieved in the field of industrialization in silchar. With a view to bring about sustained and balanced development of the region and also to improve the living standard of the people of silchar, the present study aims to focus on problems and prospects of Restaurant business in Silchar. In order to make the study not only of academic interest but also of practical utility, the study has been attempted.

V. Methodology.

The present study is descriptive in nature. It is based on primary data. Restaurant service users have been interviewed with the help of schedule to assess their attitude regarding restaurant services selected by purposive sampling method from different restaurants of Silchar Town. The study is done in respect of the people in the age group of 16-55 years. Age group have been decided in the age group of 16-55 years keeping in mind the fact that students pass High school exams in most of the cases at this age of sixteen and that is the age of substantial awareness about life and expectations from it. On the other hand age of 55 is an active age of earning and rich family and social life. Sample size is drawn from infinite population (assuming the number of consumers using restaurant services is unknown) at 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval, sample size is 363. The calculation is based on sample size calculator available at www.surveyssystem.com/sscal.in. The data is analysed by the method of tabulation and graphical presentation.

VI. Empirical Findings And Analysis Of Data.

6.1 Attitude towards Restaurant

This section tries to understand the attitude of the market segment towards the restaurant as a product service. The same is gauged through ranking on a Likart scale or parameter-based inputs on specific aspects of this industry.

6.1.1 Frequency of visit

To understand the frequency of visits to restaurants, the sample set was asked to tick any of the following
- Visit very frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely

44.6 % people mentioned that the visit restaurants occasionally while 33.3 % are "frequent" visitors.

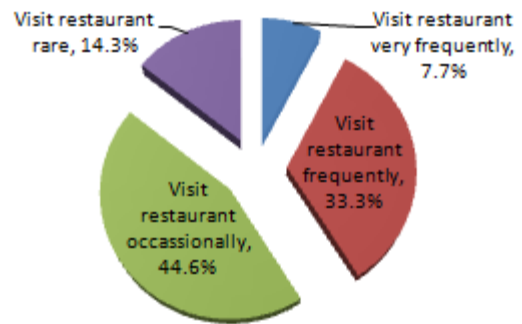| Table 1: Frequency of Restaurant Visit		
Frequency of Restaurant visit	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Visit restaurant very frequently	28	7.7%
Visit restaurant frequently	121	33.3%
Visit restaurant occasionally	162	44.6%
Visit restaurant rare	52	14.3%
Total	363	100.0%

Figure 1: Frequency of Restaurant Visit

From the above Table it can be stated that the persons involved in restaurant business should take necessary steps so that they can convert occasional visitors into frequent visitors and then further steps should be taken to make them very frequent visitors to increase the prospects of their business.

6.1.2 *Visit with whom*
For people who would visit restaurants, in whatever frequency, most of them do so with friends and/or families.

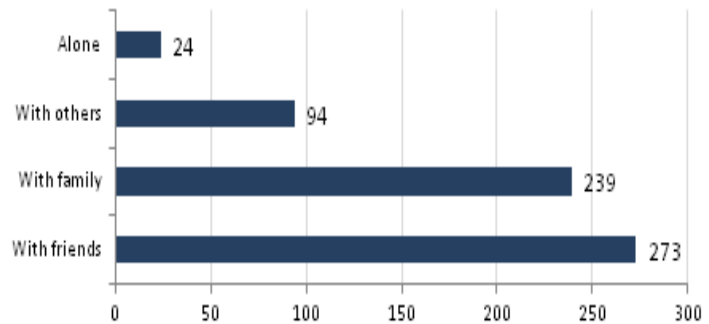| Table 2: Visit with whom		
Visit with whom	**Frequency**	**Percent**
With friends	273	75.2%
With family	239	65.8%
With others	94	25.9%
Alone	24	6.6%
Total	363	

Figure 2: Visit with whom

From the above Table it is found that restaurant used to visit restaurant most of the time with their friends and family. So, it can be suggested that the restaurant service providers should try to keep them as their regular restaurant customers and also try to attract other groups other than those who pay visit with their friend and family to increase the number of restaurant customers.

6.1.3 Purpose of visit
4 purposes were stated for visiting restaurants – refreshment, entertainment, companionship and celebrations. All the reasons were equally strong in the responses.

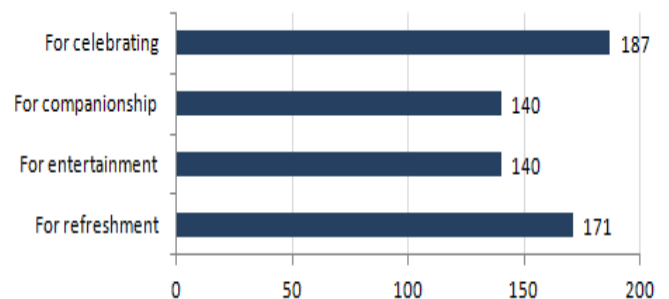| Table 3: Purpose of visit		
Purpose of visiting Restaurant	**Frequency**	**Percent**
For refreshment	171	47.1%
For entertainment	140	38.6%
For companionship	140	38.6%
For celebrating	187	51.5%
Total	363	

Figure 3: Purpose of visit

From the above Table it is found that refreshment and celebrations are the two most important reasons for visiting restaurant, so it can be stated that other factors should also be taken into consideration such as entertainment etc to increase the overall growth of the restaurant service.

6.2 New expectations from restaurants

Most of the respondents wanted improvement in quality of food – 64.7 % of the respondents. While 41 % mentioned that they expected better pricing and 30.3 % & 30.6% said that they wanted service & facility level improvements, respectively.

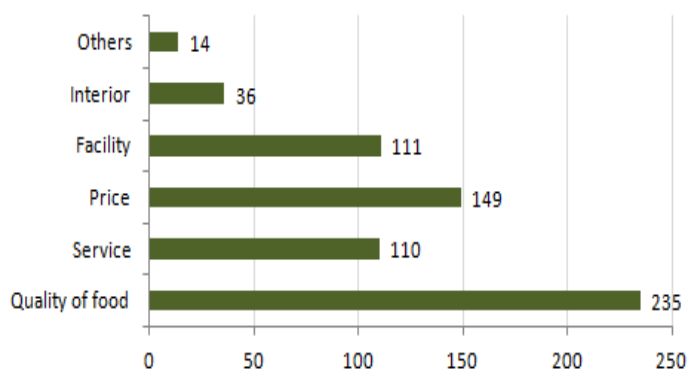| Table 4: Expectations from Restaurant		
Changes suggested	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Quality of food	235	64.7%
Service	110	30.3%
Price	149	41.0%
Facility	111	30.6%
Interior	36	9.9%
Others	14	3.9%
Total	363	

Figure 4: Expectations from Restaurant

From the Table as it is found that quality of food and reasonable pricing are the two most important considerations of the restaurant service users and therefore restaurant service providers should concentrate on improving the quality of food and also fixing reasonable price of various food items to fulfil the expectations of the customers which is necessary for increasing the prospects of their business. Besides these two, other factors such as service, availability of other facilities and interiors should also improved to provide overall good environment for restaurant users for attracting more customers.

6.3 Restaurant Service Type preferences

When asked on the restaurant format they would prefer, 58.4 % respondents wanted to be served by restaurant staff, 10.2 % wanted home delivery facility and 6.6 % also mentioned self-service mode at the restaurant. As from the Table it is found that most of the restaurant service users like to receive restaurant services by staff and therefore it is can be state restaurant should have well trained, skilled and well mannered staffs in the restaurant.

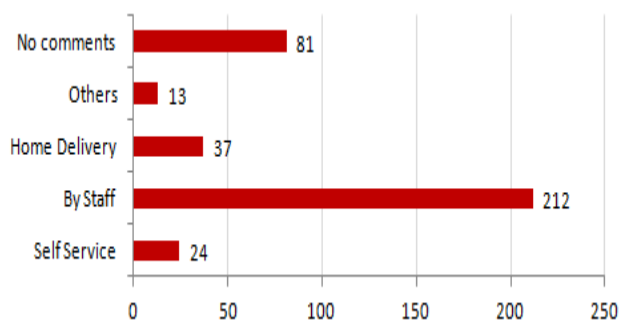| Table 5: Service reference in Restaurant		
Service preference in a Restaurant	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Self Service	24	6.6%
By Staff	212	58.4%
Home Delivery	37	10.2%
Others	13	3.6%
No comments	81	22.3%
Total	363	

Figure 5: Service preference in Restaurant

6.4 Attitude on Spending money in restaurants

In terms of the pricing of restaurants at Silchar, 60.88 % mentioned that the same is reasonable & 20.94 % mentioned that these are good value for money.

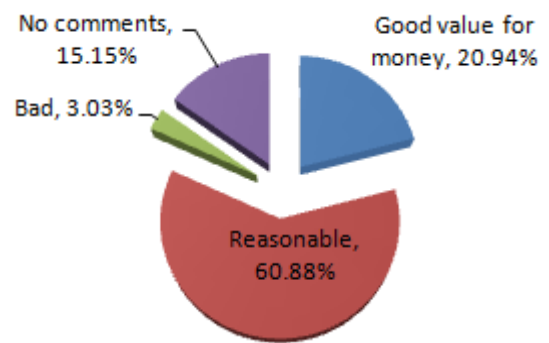| Table 6: Spending money on Restaurant		
Spending money on restaurant	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Good value for money	76	20.94%
Reasonable	221	60.88%
Bad	11	3.03%
No comments	55	15.15%
Total	363	100.0%

Figure 6: Spending money on Restaurant

From the above Table it is found that most of the restaurant visitors opined that spending money on restaurant is reasonable. In fact data showed that majority of the respondents agreed that spending money on receiving restaurant is reasonable which a positive attitude towards receiving the restaurant service is. So it can be stated that the restaurant service providers should capitalise this into their own favour to increase the prospects of their business.

6.7 Concern of services being offered by the restaurants
In order to understand how the service levels affect the psychology of a customer, respondents were asked their degree of concern on the same. 22.6 % mentioned that they were fully concerned while 54 % are partially concerned with respect to the kind and quality of services being offered.

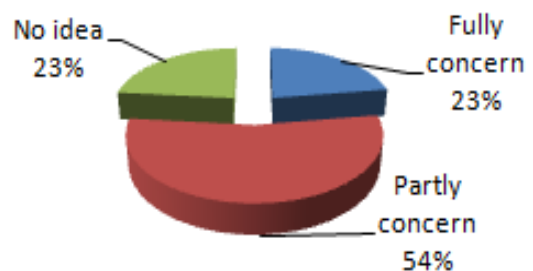| Table 7: Concern of services being offered by the restaurants		
Are you concerned about the services on offer by restaurant	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Fully concern	82	22.6
Partly concern	196	54.0
No idea	85	23.4
Total	363	100.0

Figure 7: Concern of services being offered by the restaurants

As it is found from the Table that restaurant users are not fully concern about the services on offer by restaurant but it is fact that the prospect of a particular business largely depends on the awareness among the customers regarding that particular business and therefore it is suggested that restaurant service providers need to take such activities through their services which can increase the awareness of the people regarding a restaurant business and thereby increasing their customers.

VII. Conclusions
This paper examined the prospects of Restaurant business in Silchar Town in Cachar district of Assam. Owing to changing lifestyle, the people are willing enjoy the restaurant service. They are also ready to pay for the restaurant service. Most of the people suggested that proper restaurant service will help in better prospect of Restaurant. Therefore it must be a positive sign for Restaurant business in Silchar Town.

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