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Perfect!

The article, Tandoori Tastes: perceptions of Indian restaurants in America was an explanation of a study conducted in 2000 on Indian restaurants, and how patrons' different ethnicities affect their expectations about Indian dining. The study was carried out by distributing questionnaires at five different Indian restaurants in the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota. Researchers were hoping to gain insights into what Americans value most when going to an Indian restaurant, so that restaurant-owners could make changes where necessary. Such changes would ideally result in a more enjoyable dining experience for patrons and a more lucrative business for owners. The data revealed noteworthy differences in the values of South Asian patrons from the other ethnicities. Areas rated as more important to South Asians than to other groups included: “hygiene and cleanliness; cleanliness of restrooms; employee friendliness; value for money” (Josiam 2004: direct quotes need page numbers). It was hypothesized by the authors that South Asians may have shown higher expectations than other ethnic groups because of their familiarity with the culture. There may have been some problems with this conclusion however, considering the size of the sample of South Asians. Of the surveys collected, 361 were filled out by White Americans while only 57 were completed by South Asians. The demographics were clearly lopsided, and more South Asians would need to be surveyed to determine if these conclusions were truly valid. From the data collected, the authors made recommendations for owners of Indian restaurants to improve in the general areas of hygiene, staff training, and value for meals.

While this study sought an in-depth analysis for ways to improve Indian restaurants, many of the suggestions the authors made were simplistic as well as idealistic, and did not examine the methods by which these changes would be carried out. For example, it was suggested that the restaurants should offer larger meals for lower prices. While this would be wonderful for the consumer, from the businesses’ standpoint, it might not be possible. The owners need to make enough of a profit to maintain a living, and while it is very easy to say prices should be lower, it might not be financially feasible. Another improvement that was suggested was in the area of staff training. Some specific elements to this topic were listed; for instance, training staff to be able to properly describe meals. However, the authors did not fully explain how this would differ from current practices. It should also be noted that this study analyzed a mere total of five restaurants in the Minnesota area. They attempted to compensate for this by obtaining a large sample of data, approximately 500 completed surveys. However, five restaurants all located in one state cannot possibly provide a complete picture of the quality of Indian restaurants in the rest of the US. Though it would be more expensive, this study would be more impactful if it analyzed surveys completed about Indian restaurants throughout the United States.

The article, Tandoori Tastes: perceptions of Indian restaurants in America provides a foundation for research into the realm of ethnic restaurants in the US, but there is still room for improvement. The quality of Indian restaurants in Minnesota may vary greatly from that of New York. Indeed, location is one of the most important considerations to make when determining if one should open a restaurant. While the data the study contains is interesting, it does not provide enough information to those in the restaurant business by itself. You write very well (no stylistic edits - very rare!) and there is good evidence of critical thought. Nice job.