



A STUDY ON ATTITUDE OF CUSTOMERS TOWARDS SRIVILLIPUTHUR PALKOVA

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ABSTRACT

Srivilliputhur is famous for Pal Kova - a delicious sweet item made from deep boiling of milk, sugar, etc. Srivilliputhur Palkova unique is the traditional method used to prepare it. The milk is not just cooked, but also stirred continuously by hand throughout the process. This technique gives the Palkova is distinctive texture and flavour, which is different from other milk- based sweets. It is also known for its rich, creamy, distinct aroma and mild sweet taste that is not overpowering and melt-in-your-mouth texture. The traditional recipe for Srivilliputhur Palokova does not include any artificial flavours, preservatives, or colours, making it a healthier option compared to other sweets. The Goddess Aandal (The only woman among the 12 Alwar saints) presented this Pal khova to the Great God Vishnu which she prepared on her own in Srivilliputhur, which makes this sweet as one of the Gods own Favorite. So, the uniqueness of the taste only stays with Srivilliputhur Pal Kova. There are more than 300 Pal Khova shops in Srivilliputhur, a lot of Mobile Pal Khova shops and some online shops as well all around the city. Hence, there is a need to identify the customer attitude towards Srivilliputhur Palkova. The objectives of the present study are to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, to know about the regularity of customers in a particular shop, to identify the purpose of bulk order of Palkova, to find out the reasons for preferring a particular shop and change the particular shop and to offer suggestions based on the finding of the study. The scope of the study is confined to the preference of particular shop by the respondents, reasons for preferring particular shop and the overall satisfaction about the Palkova and shop among the respondents.

Key words: Srivilliputhur, Palkova, Customer, Buying bulk order, Shop

INTRODUCTION

Srivilliputhur is a municipality town in the Virudhunagar District of Tamil Nadu. This place is famous for palkova, a sweet made from fresh, creamy milk that is slowly cooked over a low flame for several hours, until thickens and turns into a solid form. Sugar is then added to the milk and cooked further, until the mixture becomes a rich and creamy dessert. One important reason for the invention of the Srivilliputhur Palkova was the abundant availability of milk in the Srivilliputhur region. The story of palkova started around 1921 and the dish earned a Geographical Indication tag in 2019¹. Due to the familiarity and famous of Srivilliputhur Palkova, the research was conducted to identify the customer attitude towards Srivilliputhur Palkova.

Palkova is definitely one of the most loved sweets of Tamil Nadu and in fact, the entire country loves it and its various versions. Palkovas have been around since the time of the great Kings and Queens of India and were popular back then as it is today². Palkovas were first made by the Rajputs who traveled down to the South of India from the North.

The Rajputs who were brought to Tamil Nadu as cavalrymen for the kingdom of Sakkampatti is said to have brought the concept of Palkovas to the state and Srivilliputhur³. The mouth-watering delicacy became more of a staple of this town soon after the White

Revolution that took place in the 1970s. Srivilliputhur is known as the hometown of Palkova in Tamil Nadu. In fact, among the natives, Srivilliputhur is synonymous with Palkova. Since the 1970s, the Srivilliputhur Milk Cooperative Society Ltd. and other local dealers have been making this sweet product due to the abundant milk production in this town. The people who dealt with the Palkova production is also said to have been the members of the Tirunelveli Halwa family. Today, every pilgrim who visits the famous Andal Koil has taste the Srivilliputhur Palkova and takes home packets of this delicacy. It would be astonished to know that around 1000 kilograms of Palkovas are prepared and exported from Srivilliputhur. Moreover, the Palkova, also known as Thiratipaal is an offering of the very famous Andal Koil to its Goddess. Today, the Srivilliputhur Palkovas has a GI tag associated with them. It identifies and specifies the most popular specialty of a particular region. Palkovas have been so much in demand that it is now available in so many different towns and cities of Tamil Nadu. Only a very few places like Srivilliputhur offer Palkovas prepared in the traditional style. Due to these specialties, the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the attitude of customers towards Srivilliputhur Palkovas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study consists of both the primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected from 50 respondents of Srivilliputhur town at the time they purchased palkova through questionnaire by applying a convenient sampling technique. The study also depends on the secondary data. The secondary data have been collected from relevant websites. For analysing the primary data percentage

analysis, simple ranking technique and Likert five point scaling technique has been used.

In the demographic section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked questions such as their gender, age, educational qualification, monthly family income and native place. The reason behind the demographic questions helps to determine basic personal information of the respondents. Table 1 describes the details of the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1 shows Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Profile	Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage to Total
Gender	Male	24	48
	Female	26	52
	Total	50	100
Age	Below 20	4	8
	20 – 30	26	52
	30 – 40	12	24
	Above 40	8	16
	Total	50	100
Educational Qualification	SSLC	10	20
	HSC	12	24
	UG	14	28
	PG	5	10
	Diploma	9	18
	Total	50	100
Monthly Income	Upto ₹ 10,000	18	36
	₹ 10,000 – ₹ 20,000	18	36
	₹ 20,000 – ₹ 30,000	6	12
	Above ₹ 30,000	8	16
	Total	50	100
Native Place	Srivilliputhur	9	18
	Virudhunagar	12	24
	Rajapalayam	14	28
	Tirunelveli	7	14
	Sankarankovil	8	16
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 1, it was found that, among the 50 respondents, 52% of the respondents were females whereas the remaining were males.

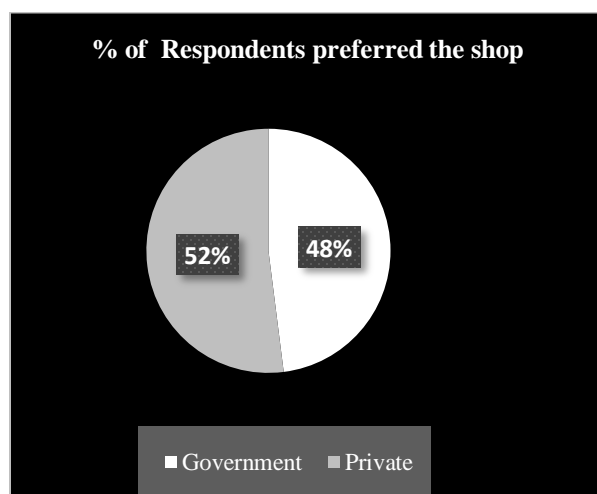
Regarding the age group, 52% of the respondents come under the age group of 20 – 30 years, 24% was in between 30 and 40 age

group. In the present study, 28 % respondents have come undergraduate level educational qualification and 20% of the respondents have completed the basic level qualification SSLC. The maximum percentage of respondents, 36% have a monthly income of Upto ₹ 10,000 whereas, the minimum 16% of the respondents earned above ₹ 30,000. The present findings also revealed 24% respondents live in their native place Rajapalayam whereas others are migrated people from nearby towns such as Rajapalayam, Tirunelveli, Sankarankovil and Virudhunagar.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher has made an attempt to identify the shop whether it is Government recognized or private shops preferred by respondents (Figure 1) while purchasing the Palkova.

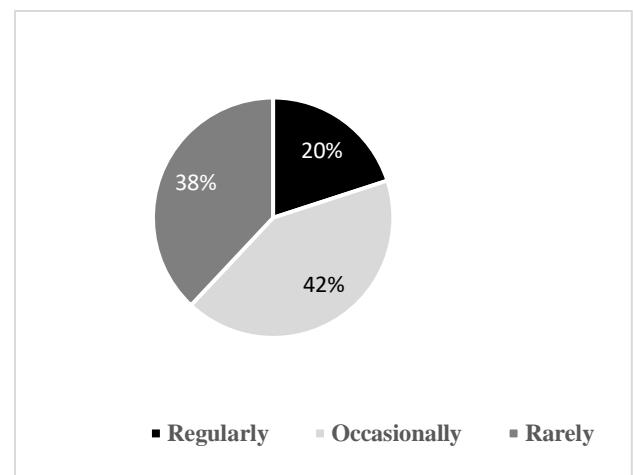
Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents preferred the shops for Palkova purchase



Source: Primary data

It was found from Figure 2 that, out of 50 respondents, 52% respondents preferred the Private shops and 24 (48%) respondents preferred the Government shops for buying Palkova. Likewise, they were asked to give the details of the availability of the Palkova whether it was available regularly, occasionally and rarely during the purchase of Palkova.

Figure 2 highlights the availability of Pal kova in Srivilliputhur



Source: Primary data

Figure 2 exhibits that, out of 50 respondents, 42% respondents buy Palkova occasionally, rarely by 38% respondents and 20% buy regularly. In order to identify the “Quantity Purchase” per time by the respondents, the details regarding quantity purchase were asked among the customers. Some of the options like 100 gms, 250 gms, 500 gms and 1000 gms. Table 2 gives the details of quantity purchase per time by the respondents.

Table 1 highlights the quantity purchase of Pal Kova per time

Quantity (g)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
100	8	16
250	20	40
500	16	32
1000	6	12
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 exhibits that, out of 50 respondents, 40 % respondents bought 250 gms, 500 gms by 32% respondents, 100gms by 16% respondents and remaining 12% respondents bought 1000gms of palkova per time. In order to know about the amount spent for purchase of Palkova per month by the respondents, the options were given to them like upto ₹ 150, ₹ 150 - ₹ 200 and above ₹ 300. The details of the amount spent per month for purchase of Palkova are described in Table 2.

Table –2: Amount spent per month for purchasing the Palkova

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Upto ₹ 150	16	32
₹ 150 - ₹ 300	22	44
Above ₹ 300	12	24
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

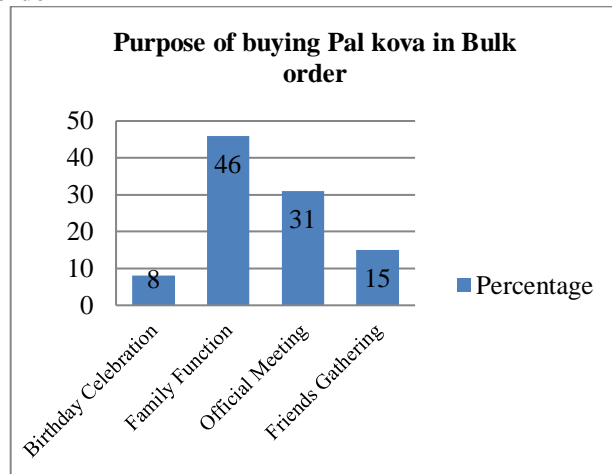
It was found from Table 2 that, out of 50 respondents, (44% respondents spent ₹ 150- ₹ 300 per month for purchase of Palkova, 32% respondents spent upto ₹ 150 per and 24% respondents spent above ₹ 300 per month for purchase of Palkova. The respondents spent above ₹ 300 per month for purchase of Palkova. The respondents were asked whether they were buying a bulk order of Palkova or not. The details of buying bulk order or not presented in Table 3.

Table 3 showing the nature of order place of Srivilliputhur Pal Kova

Bulk Orders	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	52
No	24	48
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

It is understood from Table 3 that, out of 50 respondents, 52% respondents buy bulk order and the remaining 48% respondents do not buy bulk order. In order to identify the purpose of buying bulk order by the respondents, questions related to the purpose of buying bulk order are added to the questionnaire. The purpose may be a birthday celebration, family function, official meeting and friends gathering. Figure 3 indicates the details of the purpose of buying palkova in bulk order.

Figure 3 shows the purpose of buying Palkova in Bulk order**Source: Primary data**

From the figure 3, it was found that, among the 26 respondents who buy bulk orders of palkova, 46%, 31%, 15 % and 08 % respondents buying bulk order for Family function, official meeting, friends gathering respectively for birthday celebration. There is a need to know about the regularity of customers in a particular Palkova shop. The respondents were asked whether they are regular customers or not (Table 4).

Table 4: Reasons for being regular in purchasing the Palkova

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Regular Customer	36	72
Unsure Customer	14	28
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 4, it was found that, among the 50 respondents, 72% respondents are the regular customers of a particular Palkova shop and 28% respondents are not the regular customers of a particular Palkova shop. The researcher has made an attempt to find out the reasons for being a customer in particular Palkova shop by the respondents. The reasons are good customer service, variety of choices, reasonable price and good quality. For analysing these factors, simple ranking technique has been used for this purpose. Table 5 indicates the details of the reason for being regular customer for purchasing the tasty sweet product, Palkova.

Table 5 represents the reasons for being regular customers in purchasing the product Palkova.

Purpose	Rank				Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	I	II	III	IV			
Good Customer Service	8 (32)	14 (42)	9 (18)	5 (5)	97	2.69	II
Variety of Choices	14 (56)	4 (12)	12 (24)	6 (6)	98	2.72	I
Reasonable Price	10 (40)	14 (42)	5 (10)	7 (7)	63	1.75	IV
Good Quality	4 (16)	4 (12)	10 (20)	18 (18)	66	1.83	III

Source: Calculated Value

It was found from Table 5, among the 36 respondents those who are the regular customer in a particular shop, 'Variety of Choices' is the first and foremost reason among the customer to prefer a particular shop with the mean score of 2.72, the reason 'Good Customer Service' is ranked second with the mean score of 2.69, the reason 'Good Quality' is ranked third with the mean score of 1.83 and the reason 'Reasonable

Price' is ranked fourth with the mean score of 1.75. An attempt has been made by the researcher to identify the reasons for changing the shop by the respondents. Some of the reasons for changing the shop are Poor Customer Service, Poor Quality, Rate Variation and Less Choices. Simple ranking technique has been used for this purpose.

Table 6 indicates the details of the reason for changing the shop by the respondents.

Reasons	Rank				Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
	I	II	III	IV			
Poor Customer Service	12 (48)	0 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	52	3.71	I
Poor Quality	0 (0)	4 (12)	0 (0)	10 (10)	22	1.57	IV
Rate Variation	2 (8)	6 (18)	4 (8)	2 (2)	36	2.57	II
Less Choices	0 (0)	4 (12)	8 (16)	2 (2)	30	2.14	III

Source: Calculated Value

From Table 6, it was inferred that among the respondents (14) those who are not the regular customer of a particular shop, the reason 'Poor Customer Service' is ranked first with the mean score of 3.71, the reason 'Rate Variation' is ranked second with the mean score of 2.57, the reason 'Less choices' is ranked third with the mean score of 2.14 and the reason 'Poor Quality' is ranked fourth with the mean score of 1.57. An attempt has been made by the researcher to find out whether the respondents recommend their preferable shop to others or not (Table 7).

Table 7 shows the recommendation of the respondents to purchase the Palkova

Recommend to others or not	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Recommend	28	78
Not Recommend	8	22
Total	36	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 7, it was found that among the 36 respondents, those who prefer the particular shop for buying palkova, 78% respondents recommended their preferable shop to another person and the remaining 22%

respondents did not recommend their preferable shop to another. In order to find the overall satisfaction among the respondents about the Palkova and the shop, Likert five point Scaling technique has been used. Some of the options

were given to them like excellent taste, availability of all varieties of flavours, improved customer service, cleanliness and fulfilling important needs.

Table 8: Overall satisfaction about Palkova and the shop

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agreed	No	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
Cleanliness of the shop	22 (110)	18 (72)	4 (12)	6 (12)	0 (0)	206	4.12	II
Availability of all varieties of flavours	6 (30)	20 (80)	12 (36)	10 (20)	2 (2)	168	3.36	V
Improved customer service	16 (80)	24 (96)	6 (18)	4 (8)	0 (0)	202	4.04	III
Excellent taste	30 (150)	20 (80)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	230	4.6	I
Fulfilling important needs	10 (50)	26 (104)	10 (30)	4 (8)	0 (0)	192	3.84	IV

Source: Calculated Value

From the Table 8 it was found the overall satisfaction among the 50 respondents, ‘Excellent Taste’ is the ranked first with the Mean Score of 4.6, ‘Cleanliness of the Shop’ is ranked second with the Mean Score of 4.12, ‘Improved customer service’ is ranked third with the Mean Score of 4.04, ‘Fulfilling important needs’ is ranked fourth with the Mean Score of 3.84, and ‘Availability of all varieties of flavours’ is ranked fifth with the Mean Score of 3.36.

To conclude that the study was undertaken with the main objective of finding

out the regularity of customer, it was found that 28% respondents are not the regular customer of a particular shop. The reason for changing the shop is ‘Poor Customer Service’. Hence the shop owners are advised to provide proper customer oriented services to their customers while they come to purchase Palkova even at first time and the respondents were advised to gather detailed knowledge about Palkova like the quality, variety of choices and price of Palkova from their friends or relatives to minimize the reasons for changing from one shop to another shop. If the above mentioned suggestions are carried out,

the overall satisfaction among the respondents will be improved.

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