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DISCOVER  
INDIA

# *Sadkon-Ka-Zaiqa*

STREET FOOD OF LUCKNOW





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Street Food of Lucknow

**DISCOVER INDIA PROGRAM**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this report titled “*Sadkon ka Zaiqa*” submitted by the undersigned Research Team was carried out under my mentorship. Such material as has been obtained from other sources has been duly acknowledged.

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## Abstract

This research on the well-established street food of Lucknow was conducted because of the worldwide popularity of the same. The subtle flavours of the Lucknowi food are at par with the soft spoken nature of the Lucknowis and hence was explored upon. The study aimed to understand the historical context, cooking techniques and belief systems associated with the popular joints. With a focus on certain areas in Lucknow, the on field research span of the study was seven days. Interviews of owners of eleven legendary food joints, side interviews, consumer interviews and that of a food scholar were conducted. Namely, both the Tunday Kababi outlets, Ali Hussain Sheermaal, two chaat outlets, Sharma ji Tea Stall, Prakash Kulfi, King of Test Makkhan Malai, Idrees Biryani, Deva Food Mart and 1090 *Chauraha* were studied. Employment of literature as secondary sources was done to analyze the received information. The initial belief of most recipes being a secret and consumers being the prime source was contrary to our final findings. The results indicated most joints being rooted in a significant historical context and that every joint had a unique cooking technique. In the process of the research, belief systems were also associated with the joints and the food served. It was found that food is a binding essence between people and especially street food with regard to Lucknow. These findings are important to the food industry, food enthusiasts and critics, historians, philosophers as well as students. This research explored aspects of the Lucknowi street food that are not usually associated with food and contributes to the wider world. In order to expand information in this area, a whole new focus of financial aspects of street food can also be explored further.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction to Topic

*“Kuch to mohabbat mere sheher mein rehti hai,*

*Aise hi ise nazakat ka sheher nahin kaha jata,*

*Kuch to izzat bashindon ke dilon mein rehti hai,*

*Isiliye ise tehzeeb ka nagar hai kaha jata,*

*Hai chaand choone ki khwaaish, apne tarik se,*

*Yuhin nawabon ka sheher nahin kaha jata.”*

*-Ram Asrey,*

*Lucknow.*

Lucknow- the city of Nawabs, *kebabs* and *aadab*; is a perfect combination of ancient and modern. You see this blend in every corner of its streets, from its architecture to its people. You see it in its performing arts, in its literature and even its food. The city’s unique identity was brought about by the Nawabs who ruled the region. In the 1850’s, Lucknow proved to be one of the most important cities in India when it was at the centre of the war of independence in 1857. Centuries later, it still remains culturally and politically integral to India.

Lucknow is a stellar example of the unity in diversity that India is known for, with people from all religions and cultures coming together and living in harmony. Each one has the freedom to practise a religion of choice and pass it on to future generations. Despite being a progressive state, it also holds religion and social traditions very dear. In spite of being home to some of the holiest places of Hinduism, Lucknow boasts of a thriving Muslim community. Located in the most

populous state of India, Uttar Pradesh; Lucknow gets its name from the Hindu Hero Lord Ram's brother Lakshman (O'Brien, 2013). When the Nawabs of the Awadh region made Lucknow its capital, the city became the centre of the Muslim rule and a new culture and cuisine emerged.

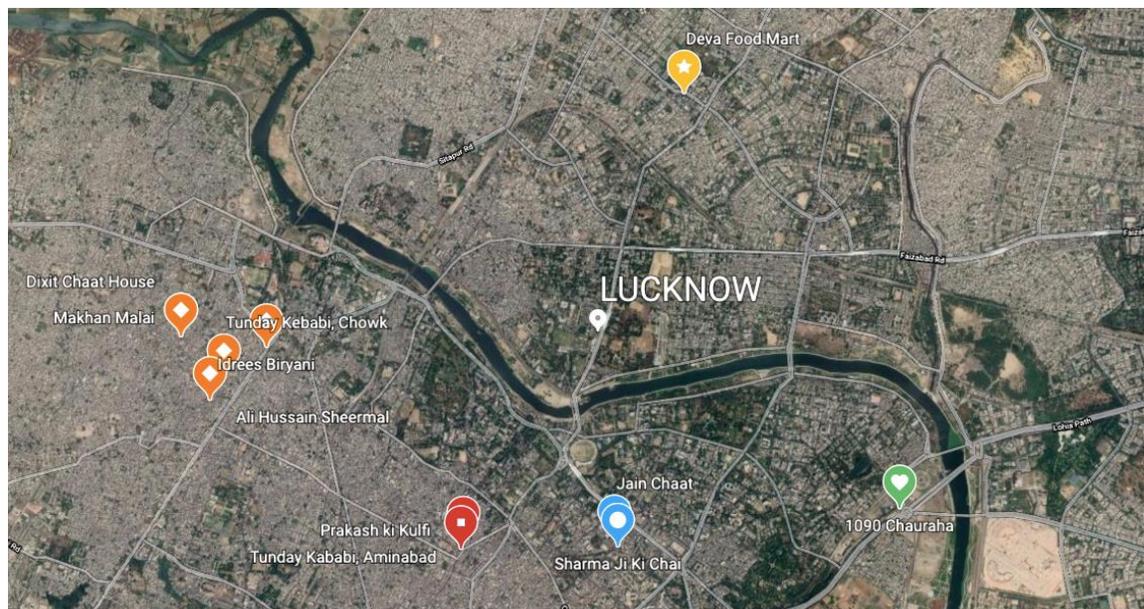
The golden city of the East is all things royal; be it its world famous Nawabi cuisine or the grand Nawabi lifestyle. 'Lucknow ki Tehzeeb' is well known by everyone and most people consider the polite mannerism of Lucknowi's unmatched (Mr. Brown, Personal Communication, 2020). The culinary narrative of Lucknow mirrors the diverse culture of the city. The Nawabs of the city admired the Mughals and enjoyed splurging on cultural pursuits. Their love for food made them pay special attention to it and develop a unique cuisine. They soon outdid the Mughals of Delhi by developing their own take on Mughalai cuisine. The Nawabs were more sophisticated and this was translated into their food. Firstly, they switched curd with cream, perfecting the Mughal *Korma*; used a softer meat for their dishes and used their spices in a more subtle manner (O'Brien, 2013). They modified the Mughal *Biryani* into a *Pilaf* to avoid the overpowering smell of the spices. The Nawabs considered the Mughals to be barbaric and felt that their food in its original form was not refined enough to serve as a representation of their culture (O'Brien, 2013).

By offering the cooks from other Mughal courts wages they could not refuse, the Awadhi Nawabs made a mark for themselves in terms of their culinary delights. They loved showing off their creations especially in the faces of their Mughal counterparts. The cooks from the Awadh region had unlimited access to the high quality produce from the region thanks to the Ganges running its course through the region. It was extremely important to the Nawabs that their food was superior and they would go to any lengths to achieve this (O'Brien,2013).

The lanes of the iconic *bazaars* of the city are witness to hordes of people filling them throughout the day. The polite mannerisms of the people are reflected even in the names of the dishes. *Tikki* became *Tikiya* and *Gol Gappe* became *Batashe*. Everything about Lucknowi food is delicate and proper. The Awadhi cooks had a knack for taking everyday ingredients and putting together something exquisite (O'Brien, 2013). Lucknow boasts of a thriving street food culture- one of the best in the country. Its street food attracts food enthusiasts from all corners of the world. A healthier alternative to the fast food industry- street food is fresh and ingredients are used the same day they are bought due to the lack of storage space.

We undertook this project in order to understand the city's intimate connection with food. Through the course of this project, we aimed to study the origin and historical context of popular Lucknowi street food joints and dishes, to understand the belief systems that influence and guide popular Lucknowi street food joints and to study the traditional cooking techniques and practices of Lucknowi street food. We chose the most popular street food joints in order to carry out our study.

## 1.2 Historical Overview and Geographic Information



**Map 1. Pinned Locations of the joints discussed in the study**

Source: (Google Earth, n.d.)

The place that is known for its *Tehzeeb* and *Nazaquat*, Lucknow, has a rich chronicled foundation to offer. This city has given the world two literary epics- the 'Ramayana' and the, 'Mahabharata'. Likewise, we can trace the roots of the city to the Suryavanshi Dynasty. It is said that Lord Rama gave a bit of his kingdom to his sibling Lakshmana for supporting him. In this manner, the city was initially named, 'Lakshmanpura'. Because of the changes in rulers, such as the Mughals, Nawabs and the British Empire, Lakshmanpura eventually became known as

Lucknow. (Department of Tourism Govt of India, Indian Association of Tour Operators, International Organization for Standardization, n.d.).

The various rulers infused the culture and traditions with their delicacies. The royal cooks were under strict supervision that the food should be made up to royal standards and each dish should be unique. The inception of most of the new dishes took place in the royal kitchen and then were passed on to the common man. The Nawabs would not only give importance to taste but also the preparation and presentation. Nawab Shuja-Ud-Daulais was considered an important personality (Firoz, 2016).

Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, lies in the Heritage Arc (Department of Tourism - Government of Uttar Pradesh, n.d.). Popular for its Nawabi era artfulness and astounding food, the city is a unique blend of the historic and the modern. The city is situated in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, and experiences a generally warm, temperate climate (Climate-data.org, n.d.). It is home to phenomenal landmarks portraying an interesting mix of old age, colonial and oriental design. There are monuments such as the ‘Roomi Darwaza’, ‘Bara Imambara’, ‘Jama Masjid’ and many more which showcase the Islamic influence in the architecture of the city. Even in the food with items such as *kebabs*, biryanis and *Sheermaals* the Nawabi influence comes through with the aromatic dishes and subtle flavours. Apart from the royal-historical aspect, it is interesting to understand the context in which most well known and established joints, that provide famous Lucknowi food, were started. The most famous and prominent places to sell these delicacies are situated in the same stalls that were started ages ago.

The main areas of the research were located in Aminabad, Chowk, Gomti Nagar, Aliganj and Hazratganj. To be precise, in Aminabad Tunday Kababi and Prakash Ki Mashoor Kulfi were studied, research in Chowk included Tunday Kababi, Idrees Biryani, Dixit Chaat, Ali Husain Sheermaal and King of Test’s Makhan Malai. We also studied the stalls of 1090 Chauraha in Gomtinagar, and Deva Food Mart in Aliganj. Lastly, places of focus in Hazratganj were Sharmaji ki Chai and Jain Chaat.

Most of the joints studied were situated in small narrow lanes with the exceptions of those located in Hazratganj and Gomtinagar which are the relatively newer, and more developed areas of Lucknow.

### 1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The aim of our research is to study the historical evolution of Lucknowi street food. The study investigates the different cooking techniques of ancient times of the Nawabs to what has translated into the street food culture seen in present day Lucknow.

The research topic of our study is :

**To examine the socio-cultural and philosophical factors that influence street food in Lucknow.**

The research topic honed in on three separate objectives, of which were explored through a series of questions. This then enabled us to venture deeper into our research topic more effectively.

Our first objective was **to study the origin and historical context** of different types of popular

Lucknowi street food joints and dishes that are offered to customers. To trace the exact moment of creation in respect to the royal heritage of the Nawabs of Awadh or the context in which the joints and dishes were initiated.

#### **Questions:**

1. What is the origin of the particular Lucknowi dish?
2. What was the context in which the popular street food joints were established?
3. What are the legends associated with popular Lucknow street food?

Our second objective is **to understand the belief systems that influence and guide popular Lucknowi street food joints**. Within our study, the drive of theological and theoretical beliefs was increasingly prevalent and we were able to draw conclusions from these.

#### **Questions:**

1. Which theories do the different belief systems of these vendors accommodate?
2. What is the prevalence and significance of these beliefs among popular street food vendors?

Our third objective is **to study the traditional cooking techniques and practices of Lucknowi street food**. Through this, our research explores the technical aspects that occur during the preparation and cooking process of popular Lucknowi street food.

#### **Questions:**

1. What are the traditional cooking techniques followed by present-day street food

vendors?

2. How do these techniques affect the features of the dishes original to Lucknow?
3. How has the street food of Lucknow evolved from the Mughal era to present day?

#### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The approach that followed the process of understanding aspects of street food through research was multifaceted and majorly qualitative. The theoretical paradigm adopted for this particular research initially aimed to target the historical lineage, cooking techniques and consumer preferences associated with the popular street food of lucknow. These parameters were specifically chosen so as to understand the city that is a perfect amalgamation of history and authentic flavours through the lens of the food it has to offer. The research conducted was structured keeping in mind the objectives of the study and to further analyze the reviewed sources that focus on legends about the Lucknowi food and the techniques applied that distinguish the food from that of other parts of the world.

In terms of sources that provided information about the topic, primary as well as secondary sources were used. The primary sources included audio and video recordings of street food vendors, shop owners, kitchen staff, consumers and food scholars. Secondary sources on the other hand refer to the scholarly articles, books, thesis papers and governmental archives that were used to analyze the primary sources at hand. A variety of methods were employed to obtain the data from primary sources after having followed a process of informed consent.

With regard to tools of data collection, the majority of the tools employed aimed at receiving qualitative responses. In order to obtain information from primary sources a pre-field, on field as well as a post-field plan ensured a structured research design for the process. The methods used for this process were mainly online surveys, interviews (telephonic and face to face), obtaining oral histories through historical research and ethnographic observation. Before going on-field, the research associated with primary sources was mainly done through an online survey and three telephonic interviews which were drafted in accordance with our initial objectives. It was on- the field where most of the methods to obtain the research were employed. Interviews were used to study the origin and historical context of the dish as well as the street food joint and also to understand the process of cooking the dish. These interviews ranged from telephonic to face to

face and while the former was employed for a food enthusiast, the latter for the owner of the street food joint, the staff working there, consumers of the food and a food scholar.

The questions of interviews were semi structured and unstructured in the sense that the direction in which the questions were to be asked was formatted to an extent beforehand. The interview, however, focused on open ended and subjective questions rather than objective or straightforward ones. This is because all the objectives of this research require qualitative and descriptive information than quantitative data. Through these interviews, the main data collected was associated with the origin of the dish and the process of preparing it alongside the factors that make it unique to the city of Nawabs and *kebabs*. Historical research is used to reconstruct the context of the past and interpret its projection onto the current scenario of the phenomenon or situation (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). To understand the historical context of the dish and place, the stories behind how the popular street food joint came to be, how the dishes have evolved over time and legends associated with the dish, oral histories were provided by those who witnessed the historical aspects concerned - vendors, owners and loyal consumers. Another method employed was short term ethnographic observation which involved interaction with the participants of the study in their natural setting (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). This was done to observe the details of the dish such as the texture and taste as well as to understand the popularity of the joints. One of the main observations that occurred whilst conducting the ethnographic research was that most of the street food joints are rooted in philosophical ideologies that influence the food in a certain way.

While most interviews were conducted in and around the popular shops selling the iconic street food, the owner of the Makkhan Malai shop preferred to have been interviewed at his house itself. The food scholar was interviewed at his office and all the observations took place in their natural setting of the populated street food areas itself. The interviews were scheduled before hand and the time, location and language were chosen as per the convenience of the interviewee. The consumers however, were interviewed when encountered at the shops itself. The process of data collection was done over the course of seven days.

The data was collected by recording the interviews of the primary sources with a variety of materials and equipment. A mirrorless digital camera attached to a tripod and/or gimbal alongside a microphone connected to a recorder were used to audio and video record the interviews of the main sources such as shop vendors, owners and the food scholar. The interviews of the consumers were not video recorded but were audio recorded with a smartphone. Almost always one member of the research team took down notes on a notepad simultaneously as a precautionary

measure. This process of data collection involved gathering informed consent from the participants so as to ensure ethics of the research study that suggested no harm to any participant. The participants' right to withdraw their consent at any time, and to have their identity disclosed whenever requested was also reiterated. All the participants were comfortable with having their identities revealed and hence none of the names have been changed.

With regard to the sampling of the population to conduct the research upon, it was majorly purposeful sampling. The pre field survey was sent out to thirty five residents and ex residents of Lucknow. Based on prior research and understanding of the places that constitute iconic Lucknowi food, the particular street food joints and their owners were chosen to interview. The interaction with consumers was based on convenience sampling as and when we moved from one location to another. Fourteen interviews were collected of the main primary sources - owners, main vendors and their family who will take over the joint. Twenty seven consumers and one food scholar were interviewed. The main aim of the sampling was to cover the owners of the most famous street food joints as they would be most knowledgeable about the dishes.

Data analysis was the process that followed which involved transcribing the recorded interviews and organizing the obtained information from primary sources based on the objectives of the study. Next, parts of the data from primary sources were compared, critically analyzed and verified with the help of secondary sources. This was done in terms of the objectives and the secondary sources used were books, scholarly articles, dissertation papers, governmental archives and documentaries.

However, whilst conducting the research, there were two main findings with regard to the initially planned objectives. Firstly, the relevancy of consumer preferences as one of the objectives was relatively weak and there was no substantial information procured regarding the same in spite of conducting a semi structured interview including a Likert scale among other tools. Hence, the absence of adequate primary as well as secondary sources for consumer preference as one of the objectives resulted in excluding this data from the study as a whole. Apart from this limitation, the other finding that occurred was rooted in the observations on-field and beneficially contributed by transforming into an objective of the study. In the initial phase of research on- field, it was observed that most popular street food joints of Lucknow seemed to follow certain belief systems and ideologies which could further be explored. Thus, the influence of these beliefs on the street food gave the study a philosophical outlook by connecting the intangible concept of belief systems with the tangible concept of street food.

## 2.0 Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the existing literature on Lucknowi street food, popular Awadhi foods and relevant theories and beliefs in relation to the same. The range of literature specific to Lucknowi street food is limited to mainly blog posts, a wide range of articles and recipes. However, there exists substantive literature on Awadhi cuisine and its culture which represents the origin of most present day popular dishes. Dishes such as Biryani, *kebabs* and *Chai* have a range of literature regarding their historical significance, recipes and ingredients used. These include original historical texts such as *Ain- I- Akbar* and *Nushka e Shahjahani*. Our on-field research led us to explore the belief systems in the form of religious philosophies and business practices that guided these prominent vendors. Specific to each vendor there exists literature on these inferred belief systems.

Based upon our findings and observations, we chose to focus our literature under the umbrella of three major themes: History (of the dishes and of its Lucknowi origin), the cooking techniques of the dish and the emergent belief system or theories pertaining to the vendors.

### 2.1 History

The history of present day Lucknowi food begins in the kitchens of the royal Nawabs. According to O'Brien, in his book *The Penguin Food Source Guide to India*, with the disintegration of the Mughal empire by the early 18th century, the previously appointed Nawabs assumed direct control over Awadh. It was Nawab Asaf- ud- Daula who made Lucknow the capital of the region. Due to high agricultural productivity of the region, the Nawabs had a rich treasury (O'Brien, 2013). The food served in these courts essentially came from their long Mughlai ancestry. However, O'Brien states that the Nawabi take on these dishes had subtle flavours and distinguished it from the Mughals "rustic ancient heritage". The Nawabs originally came from a Persian origin, more "refined and sophisticated" (O'Brien, 2013). O'Brien's book acts as an extensive food guide to Indian cuisine and relates Lucknow's history to its food. It also suggests to its readers, popular spots to visit in the city.

The great importance placed on food within these courts can be traced to several dishes and techniques that sprang up from this time. Further, several anecdotes from the court circles also illustrate this. According to one such story, there was a “food trickery” played out between Nawab Waji Ali Shah and Prince of Delhi Mirza Asman Qadar (Collingham, 2007). According to Collingham in her book, *Curry: A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors*, the Nawab tricked the Prince, an avid food connoisseur with special dishes that he had prepared for his visit. In response, the Prince did the same to the Nawab on his visit to Delhi. Both rulers were put down for their lack of judgement and this was assumed to be part of a political power struggle (Collingham, 2007). It is clear that the importance of gastronomy extended to more than just the kitchen. Curry acts as an important source of literature in studying the food of Lucknow and effectively traces and differentiates the dish- specific history of foods.

According to Mohd Firoz in his paper “Reviving the Street Food of Lucknow” (2016), there existed six separate kitchens for Nawab Shuja- ud- Daula. In the main kitchen alone, two thousand rupees were spent apart from the daily wages of cooks and other servants. The cooks in the royal kitchens were also paid generously. According to one source, a cook was paid as much as 1,200 rupees a month (Collingham, 2007). Further, it is claimed that during the reign of Nawab Shuja- ud- Daula, “19 types of kebabs, 37 types of breads, 35 types of Zarda, 47 types of *pulao* and 37 types of sweets” were created (Firoz, 2016). Several gastronomical- rituals and traditions also arose from this period of the Nawabs. *Dastarkhwan*, for example, “a meticulously laid out ceremonial dining spread” became a customary practice within the royal and rich households (Firoz, 2016). This paper is a detailed thesis highlighting the economic, cultural, scientific and technical aspects of Lucknowi food. It also includes locality- specific case studies of popular foods in the city known for its street food culture.

Centuries of Awadhi food has created a culture around this gastronomical hub. Our on-field research would observe the presence of that culture. While reading anecdotes and stories behind this rich food, we also aim to further explore the personal connection and tales the vendors themselves have grown up listening to; strengthening their relationship with their food.

## 2.2 Cooking technique

Although there exists a wide range of literature on the various cooking techniques and modifications of popular Lucknow street food, the majority of this work is informal. In the form of blogs, opinion pieces, recipe books and newspaper articles, the cooking techniques of the various dishes being explored would primarily be an on-field study. Popular joints such as Sharmaji Tea Stall and Tunday Kababi have been studied for their popularity, growth and business strategies. For example, a paper in the St. Theresa Journal Humanities and Social Sciences, Tunday Kababi: A Journey from Small Scale to Big Business House by Dr. Fatima Beena traces the failed business expansion strategy of Tunday Kababi to overseas operations. Describing the joint as “providing best quality food at an affordable price” there are several descriptions of the dish and reason for its popularity (Beena & Srivastava, 2017).

The recipe for the famous *kebab* of Lucknow has been documented in a few books such as Curry. Collingham includes a brief recipe of *kebabs*, including a list of ingredients and short description of the dish and its consumption: “Babur might have eaten in camp the Afridis would have served at the tea party they held for the British.” (Collingham, 2007).

In comparison with most other dishes, Sheermaal has the most number of literature on its preparation process. The specialty of this bread came from replacing water with egg and mixing other ingredients such as sugar and ghee (O’Brien, 2013). The thinly rolled dough was then brushed with a layer of saffron milk and cooked in a traditional tandoor (O’Brien, 2013). A thesis written by Dr. A. Hashmi titled Wheat and Flour Properties Affecting Tandoori Bread Quality (1996) provides scientific details of the various ingredients used. Processes such as mixing, fermentation, dividing and rounding, resting, baking etc. are also mentioned (Hashmi, 1996). A detailed explanation of the various nutritional values achieved at each stage is also provided. The paper also compared older to newer forms of mechanized tandoors and the difference in outcome of the *rotis* by the two (Hashmi, 1996).

The famous *Kulfi* of Lucknow has been defined under the food Adulteration Act of 1974 as “frozen milk product obtained from cow or buffalo milk or a combination thereof or from cream and/ or other milk products with or without addition of sugar, eggs, fruits, chocolate, edible flavours and permitted food colours.” (Zombade, 1992). Due to variety in the method of production, the composition, cost and quality of the sweet dish varies and there is no one standardized recipe that exists (Zombade, 1992).

Lucknowi *pulao* can also be attributed to the Nawabs taste for subtle flavours and aromas. O’Brien in his Food Guide to India describes the cooking process of the *Yakhni pulao*. A stalk of *Yakhni* is made from thirty odd kilograms of chicken meat. The rice is cooked in this broth and layered with saffron milk and let cook in the *dum pukht* method. The rice was served with silver and gold coated eggs mimicking pearls (O’Brien, 2013).

Finally, the cold *Makkhan Malai* made with milk and several spices is made via the consistent churning of the milk at the right temperature. (U.S Patent No. 4,899,553, 1937). This patent application, titled “Motor driven food churning device” by McFerran (1937), focuses on the mechanized cooking technique of churning of ice cream and other similar food items. The source is backed with extensive scientific research and detailed diagrams about similar churning devices, the source provides a technical analysis of such devices.

Other prominent foods such as *chaat*, *chai*, veg kebabs etc. were dishes we aim at exploring on- field and rely on information regarding authentic cooking techniques directly from the mouth of the creators. As part of our on-field study we would like to get a better understanding of these dishes and how the cooking process is unique to each vendor.

## **2.3 Belief System**

Based upon on- field research, belief systems and philosophies became one of the major research objectives in our study. The innate culture created and evolved around this aliment has been the result of diverse belief systems adopted by the specific vendors interviewed. These beliefs, philosophies and practices followed can be broken up into religious beliefs and practices, business- related philosophies, environmentally- oriented practices and other general theories followed by these vendors.

Joints such as Tunday Kababi, Idrees Biryani and Ali Hussain Sheermaal are all come from an Islamic religious background. Deeply rooted in Islamic practices and perspectives, based upon personal communication, these establishments elucidate strong Islamic teachings of dedication,

cooperation, creativity and social relations (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). The strong work ethic followed at these joints can also be understood based upon Islamic scriptures, and analyzed via the Islamic Work Ethic (Aldulaimi, 2016). By bridging the gap between the teaching of the *Quran* and how that translates to everyday practices highlights the influence of this scripture on the target vendors interviewed. UNESCO published, *The Foundation of Islam Volume 1- The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture* is a aid though those studying the religion while the “Fundamentals of Islamic perspective of work ethic” (2016) in the *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Ethics* creates a relationship between business and religion; two concepts which seem to run deep within Lucknow’s street food culture.

The recent rise in popularity and demand for vegetarian foods such as soya and veg kebabs has been due to various reasons. However, one of the strongest being the morals associated with vegetarian food as opposed to non- vegetarian. “The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism” (1959) authored by M.K. Gandhi explains the ideologies behind different food items in terms of their morals. Also concerning what a minimum diet should look like, this book aims to explain the bases of vegetarianism from a health and moral perspective as understood by Gandhi throughout his stay in India as well as outside of it. Along the lines of what vendors believed (Personal Communication), relating the two findings helps in interpreting the practices and rationale of the vendors.

Business strategies followed by joints such as The King of Test in terms of competitor orientation strategy and ethics (Paine, 1991) are well backed and can be interpreted under the light of corporate and business policies. “Corporate Policy and the Ethics of Competitor Intelligence Gathering” (1991) by Paine relates several business practices such as the above mentioned ones to economic and business theories via surveys in order to justify the same.

Other belief systems such as environmentalism, psychological theories, Hinduism etc. can aid the better understanding of the working of these various street food joints and how the food created is placed within a strong justifiable rationale.

## **2.4 Gaps in Literature Identified**

While searching for literature on the street food of Lucknow, we came across a wide variety of sources. There exists extensive literature on the history of Lucknow and its significance under the Nawabi era. There is also a great deal of literature regarding the Nawabs gastronomical and

other cultural contributions to the city and empire. However, there is a lack of history and a traceable source with respect to specific dishes. While there exist tales and legends surrounding a few dishes there are very limited authentic sources to back these up.

The biggest gap we came across within the literature surrounding the street food of Lucknow was the lack of formal sources such as journals, articles or credible papers. There exists however, a wide ambit of informal pieces such as blogs, recipe books, opinion pieces and newspaper articles which. Hence one of the aims of our research was to study and identify the most authentic histories and stories behind these dishes from a highly reliable source: the vendors.

There also existed limited literature on the belief system aspect of the street food that we decided to explore. Although there was extensive literature on the various inferred beliefs, there is a lack of literature specifically connecting the two subjects, or there existed very brief mentions of the same.

Further, there was limited literature on the establishments itself and there is a clear hierarchy of Lucknowi foods in the field of research. Also, several sources had references to Lucknow and the subject matter it explored, however this was restricted to only a few references while the rest of the literature had no further mentions of the relationship between the two. As part of our on-field research we found it necessary to explore the stories of the vendors via our objectives in order to contribute a formal source of literature pertaining to the very practices and rationale of these stakeholders.

### 3.0 Memoirs of Melting Meat

*One cannot miss the huge and flashy sign that reads ‘Tunday Kababi’ in Aminabad, while it is extremely easy to walk past the original Galawati makers at the Chowk area. A must visit place for anyone in Lucknow; Tunday Kababi is to Lucknow what Karim’s is to Delhi. Walking through the layered streets of the iconic Chowk area, you find the pride of Lucknow hiding behind huge crowds. Thick disks of unevenly formed meat, and the tantalizing smell wafting through the literal hole in the wall, still manages to attract the bigwigs from all parts of the city. Past the grand old buildings of the city, bang in the center of Aminabad; the creators of Lucknow’s signature dish are witness to extended families retelling stories of the week that went by. Hidden away in the depths of time, The City of Kebabs remains incomplete without Tunday Kababi.*

#### 3.1 Tunday Kababi

Entering the busy, narrow lanes of Aminabad and Chowk in Lucknow, one finds themselves amongst the ever so aromatic smells of a century old technique of cooking *kebabs* and *Mughlai paratha*. In the narrow confines of Chowk, there stands a bright red and yellow sign hung large upon a building that states “Tunday Kababi.” This famous street food joint is commonly known to be the “personification of rich Awadhi cuisines” (Beena & Srivastava, 2017). However pertaining to its authenticity, both joints have contrastingly different set ups.

Tunday Kababi in Aminabad is more lavishly decorated with an inside seating area for a large crowd of people to indulge in. On the other hand, due to the lack in space, paired with the rush of the populated streets of Chowk, Tunday Kababi of Chowk receives large crowds that are required to be moved in and out quickly to allow the highest number of sales, but most importantly, satisfied appetites all requesting for the same combination of *kebab* and *paratha*.



**Figure 1. Tunday Kababi's Chowk Outlet at Night**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Tunday Kababi is famous for their special *Galawati kebabs*. Popularity of the *kebabs* has arisen for many reasons: taste, convenience and nostalgia but one is crucially important- texture. The story of how this *kebab* came to be has changed over the years, since its inception during the times of the Nawabs of Awadh.

*Galawati kebabs* at Tunday Kababi are known to be “so soft that they lose half their form by the time they reach your table, and the rest goes when you pick them up. The texture of the *paratha* perfectly complements the smoothness of the *kebabs*; sliced onions and lime add zing. Together, it is a match made in heaven.” (Krishna, 2018). The texture of the *kebabs* can be described to be as soft as velvet due to the consistency of cooking and preparation of the meat. There are silky *parathas* and other condiments that are served alongside the *kebabs* to give the consumer an optimal experience whilst indulging.

### **(3.2) The Nawab's One Armed Chef**

Tunday Kababi is a street food chain that was first started by a man called Haji Murad Ali. The franchise has been continued since by his grandson Haji Mohd Usman and is still running under his leadership. This is a family run business that has stood strong and “impenetrable” (Beena & Srivastava, 2017) since the first creation of the *Galawati kebab* during the time of the Nawabs. The story of how it started begins at the time of Nawab Asaf-ud-Daulah. There was a large famine

that came over Lucknow and created a large amount of distress amongst the Lucknowi society. Through this, the nawab decided to employ his local people to build the Great Imambara (Shia Mosque) and in repayment for the construction, the nawab paid the hungry. It was a win-win scenario for both the people, as they were able to sustain themselves better, and for the nawab as the city was beautified and kept up to the highest standards (Collingham, 2007).

The workers who were building the mosque were fed by “*nanbais*” (bazaar cooks) employed who were employed by the Nawab (Collingham, 2007). They were to supply the workers with fresh, warm food during meal breaks. This in turn created a vast number of efficient and excellent cooks within the city of Lucknow. The king was so impressed by the quality of the food that the workers were provided with, that he demanded these recipes be sent to the royal kitchens to be prepared for him. After a long life, the nawab aged and consequently began to lose his teeth up until the point where he had none left. This made eating his favourite foods increasingly difficult.

Haji Mohd Usman narrated that there was a day when the king had had enough of being unable to eat the delicious delicacies of the land and so held a large competition between the chefs of the royal kitchen. The idea was to determine who could make the softest *kebab* for the Nawab to be able to enjoy without the use of his teeth. The grandfather of Mohammed Usman was the one armed chef that came out on top of the competition as he was able to create the softest, silkiest *kebab* (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). However, due to the contradicting timelines, this would not actually be possible and so it is inferred that the grandfather was not the chef who created it, however there is a clear ancestral linkage. This well textured *kebab* due to its ability to melt in one’s mouth came to be known as *Galawati kebab* (Collingham, 2007). In contrast to Mughal rulers, who enjoyed the taste of beef that had been minced, the Lucknowi nawabs preferred to indulge in lamb mince, due to the softer consistency of the meat when it was cooked. According to Mohammed Usman, the *Galawati kebab* was made with the ideology that their health and happiness was the crux of life (Collingham, 2007).

Tunday Kababi as a franchise began as a small joint on the streets of Lucknow that, in the last 10 decades, has grown to become the oldest and most popular brand of *Galawati kebabs* in the city (Beena & Srivastava, 2017). It first began with the Chowk outlet, with a much smaller area for entertaining customers, and as the popularity of the *kebabs* grew, they expanded to open up the Aminabad outlet too. As this family business continued to grow in succession of sales and popularity, the decision to expand the franchise was made.

### 3.3 Religious *Kebabs*

Whilst talking about the kebabs, Usman displayed a sense of pride. He was an old man who spoke with a lot of diligence. As the interview progressed, the mention of “By the Grace of Allah”, “By the Grace of God” and many thanks were expressed towards his Islamic background. He stated that “*sadakat khud ba khud karti hai zamaane mein, munaafa chaahiye jitna ho namak khaane mein* (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020)”, which in a literal translation means the truth of every generation is that if you want to benefit from life, you just need to know how much salt to put in your food (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).

From this, it was inferred that the owner of Tunday Kababi runs on one crucially important life motto. He discussed that in life, one must not run behind excellence through methods of shortcuts, by cutting costs and reducing quantities. But instead, to be patient and diligent enough with your food to learn how to perfect it to the point of irresistibility. Usman proudly explained that if one knows how to cook good food, then the masses of people will come from far and wide without the need of force. He also continued to state that another important aspect that he follows in life is that one should never cut on the quality of food that is served to their customers (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). No matter what the reason, whether to save money, increase ease of dishes produced in a day or try and increase their returns, quality of dishes should never be compromised on. If one “adds the optimal amount of salt” to their dish, crowds will love the food and return back tenfold. The investments and returns would be effectively made back with the making of full, satisfied bellies of their consumers (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).



**Figure 2. Galawati Kebabs and Paratha from Tunday Kababi**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

In addition to this, throughout the interview with Haji Murad Ali (Tunday) within the journal “*Tunday Kababi: A Journey from Small Scale to big business House*” (Beena & Srivastava, 2017), he states “By the Grace of Almighty” (Beena & Srivastava, 2017). Through this, the inference of how strong the link between religious views and food are. In Islam, the belief that “maintaining the soul means the point of view of food and drink which maintain the soul from the inside” (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). From this, it can be understood that the role of food is not just that of physical consumption to be able to sustain life and grow, however, that food plays a role of maintaining all essential aspects of life.

*Sawm* is known to be one of the five pillars of Islam that are required to be followed in order to be a faithful Muslim and a good human being in the eyes of *Allah*. *Sawm* is the pillar that discusses the fasting period during the month of Ramadan (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). This entails the importance that Muslims put on their food. They take away the essential right to life every day from sunrise to sunset to be able to learn and inculcate self-discipline in life. Alongside this is the notion of self-control and sacrifices (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). This therefore depicts the importance that one puts on food due to their strong religious beliefs and the reason as to why the

*Galawati* kebab has remained authentic and loved by all, not only consumers, but also those who create it (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016).

### 3.4 Sizzling Secrets

One of the main reasons why Tunday Kababi has flourished to be the best place for *Galawati kebabs* and *Mughlai paratha* in Lucknow is due to their secrecy. In the interview with Mohd Usman, an attempt to identify the specific ingredients he utilised in his recipe was made, however, due to the tradition and specificity of special herbs, spices and *masalas* mixed, he refused to go into much detail. He discussed that the recipe of his specific *Galawati kebab* has been patented so that no one else is able to take away his success or thrive off of the hard work of his family (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). However, our research was able to gain knowledge that Tunday Kababi utilises fifty-five different *jadi bootis* (ayurvedic herbs). Following this, he discussed that the meat he utilised in the past was mainly lamb and beef, however after the beef ban in 1905, black buffalo meat replaced beef (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). He also introduced chicken in his dishes after the ban to increase the variety of food on the menu. Usman discussed that chicken is actually a much more expensive alternative to beef, but it had to be done to increase consumers, as he stated that “customer satisfaction is the key to success” (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).

Alongside these one hundred and thirty-five different *masalas* are incorporated to the mixture of minced meat to emphasise and illuminate the flavours and textures of the *Galawati kebab* (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). Usman heavily stressed on the usage of ayurvedic herbs and *masalas* within the ingredients list of the *kebab* as they are heavily beneficial for the health of their consumers. A study stated that “many of them possess medicinal properties and have a profound effect on human health, since they affect many functional processes. For instance, spices intensify salivary flow, they cleanse the oral cavity, they help to check infection and protect the mucous membrane. Spices act as stimuli to the digestive system” (Rathore & Shekhawat, 2008). Usman confirmed that the use of *jaadi bootis* in the *kebabs* is due to the benefits of healthy digestion, reduction in constipation and acidity (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).

The *kebabs* themselves are cooked on a copper *tawa*, using coal as a fuel. This technique has been passed down from the time of the Nawabs as they utilised these *tawas* to cook a majority

of their food. The reason for sticking to the authentic cooking technique is the sheer quantity of the dish that is necessary to be made at a given time and therefore a large *tawa* allows for the most effective way of cooking the *kebabs*. Additionally, due to the high demand for the dish, the relative ease of procuring coal as a fuel source remains a large incentive to stick with the traditional cooking techniques (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). The copper *tawas* are expensive to purchase however it is vital in maintaining the quality of their product (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). Gas stoves today are also much more expensive to purchase and maintain for longer periods of time and due to the fact that Tunday Kababi runs an outdoor kitchen, the negative impacts of weathering to a modern day gas stove could incur more costs to the franchise in the long run.



**Figure 3. A chef fries the famous *Galawati Kebabs***

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

The spices and *masalas* are all mixed together by women at a home kitchen that Usman utilises and it is then sent to both outlets (Beena & Srivastava, 2017). The additives are then mixed in with the meat in the kitchen at the back and the kebabs are fried in the outdoor kitchens for everyone to see (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020). Usman personally visits the meat markets at 10 am every morning to buy the meat himself. He also stated that it takes approximately 1 hour to create a mixture of 10 kgs of meat, and that is still finished quite fast due to the popular and high demand of the *kebabs* (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).

The efficiency of creating the optimal texture and taste of the *Galawati kebab* is based on how well the meat is minced. The more the meat is pulverised, the higher the softness. It aids to create a velvety smooth texture, that when fried, creates a golden fried casing, that when bitten into is a creamy burst of spices and flavour (Usman, Personal Communication, 2020).

## 4.0 Circles of Saffron

*Every morning, at the break of dawn; begins the preparation of the regal saffron infused bread. Specially prepared in a burning pit of fire, the flavour of Sheermaal lingers on long after the plate is empty. A delicacy that tastes like luxury, these circles play out the perfect balance of flavours and do not overpower the taste of the kebab. These circles of joy are pure delectation.*

### 4.1 Ali Hussain Sheermaal

Walking further along Chowk, a congested main road is passed, and one finds themselves entering another winding lane that looks to meander forever. Passing multiple different kinds of street food stalls offering *kebabs, rotis, parathas, chaat* and many more mouth-watering delights. Behind the Nakhas Police Chowki, inside the stone walls of one of the nooks and crannies sits a large blue and red signpost, big and bold stating “Ali Hussain Sheermaal.” The sign reads “all types of *Sheermaal*” surrounded by photographs of the different varieties offered by the joint. This street food joint was mentioned multiple times upon the visit to Lucknow and the immaculately fluffy texture that was created upon cooking was raved about.

Ali Hussain Sheermaal in Chowk is a must visit. It is spoken about by many and said to have never disappointed. The set up is minimalistic, but effective in procuring the large quantity of *Sheermaal* that is demanded daily. Strolling up to the joint, one is first bombarded with large, deep brown, wooden, woven baskets. Each of these contain identical Sheermaals, of yellow, red and white colours. Gleaming against the sun of Lucknow, the *Sheermaal* lays looking crispy and hot for the taking by those who pass by. Further into the cavern, three men are sat, cross legged, on the stone flooring in *dhotis*, all experienced and hard working.

One man is seen measuring the size dough of the *Sheermaal* with his experienced hands from a large batch of a pre-mixed concoction. The second man is sat with a roller and some flour, rolling out the *Sheermaal* to a perfect thickness and circular shape. And lastly, the third man is sat with a round cushion covered in cloth in front of a hole in the ground. He coats the *aata* mixture with either a red dye oil base or a yellow saffron base. He places it skillfully unto the cushion, leans forward, reaches his hand into the darkness of the hole and when his arm returns, the *Sheermaal* is gone. A few moments later, the same man reaches into the *tandoor* oven with a sharp,

long, metal rod and out flies a steaming hot *Sheermaal roti*. It is thrown straight into the basket and the process is repeated constantly throughout the day.

Ali Hussain Sheermaal is the most famous street food joint that offers this unique *roti* for sale. The distinctive quality of this bread in Lucknow is the fact that it is crisp and flaky on the outside. But when one is to bite into the *Sheermaal*, the texture is soft and doughy. There is a variety of *Sheermaal* that is offered by Ali Hussain Sheermaal and each of these have a slightly manipulated taste for the pleasure of their customers. The red-dyed Sheermaal is slightly oilier but pairs well with kebabs (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). Following which, is the white-looking *Sheermaal*. This is known to be the plainest of the *Sheermaals* however the beauty of its taste comes from its simplicity. Replicating that of an American pancake, although it comes with a slight sweetness in each bite. Lastly, the yellow *Sheermaal* is said to be seasoned with saffron and it is the most preferred by the locals due to the floral aroma (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020).



**Figure 4. *Sheermaals* in the *tandoor***

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

An interesting point to note is that Ali Hussain Sheermaal solely deals with the sales of *Sheermaal roti*. Most other street food joints have expanded their menu varieties and offer more to their customers such as *kebabs* with *rotis*, or *kebabs* with *biryani*. However, this *Sheermaal* stall

is so popular, that most locals and tourists come to solely pick up bags of *Sheermaal* to pair with *kebabs* from other restaurants or street food joints.

#### 4.2 *Badshah ke Din*

Ali Hussain Sheermaal is a street food cavern that was first introduced to Lucknow in 1830 and continues to stand as the most prominent *Sheermaal* selling joint in today's day as well. It was first procured by a man named Muhammed Ali Hussain in old Lucknow (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). *Nihari* is a type of stew that consists of a process of cooking meat (either lamb, beef, chicken, goat or mutton shank that is accompanied by the bone marrow in one whole broth) (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020) that is slow cooked to a thick, fatty soup, with meat so tender it falls off the bone and melts in one's mouth. The story as depicted by Umar Ali Hussain (current owner of the street food joint), a relative along the lineage, was that nihari was one of the most famous of the land and so following this fame and increased desire of consumption, the *Badshah* called Muhammed Ali Hussain to the court. Within Northern India, calling one by the name of "*badshah*", "which is of Persian origin" (Chaudhuri, 2013), derived from the word "*padishah*" means a "chief ruler" (Chaudhuri, 2013).

Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, a highly effective military leader, was a prince from Timurid, who came into northern India to conquer this foreign land to him. He managed to do so skilfully and went on to become the first ever emperor within times of the Mughal reign. This successful ruler took many parts of India such as Lahore and continued to defeat many non-Muslim rulers such as "the Hindu ruler Rana Sanga of Chittor" (Harrison, 2012). After this event is when the Persian descending ruler took on the "regnal title Padishah-I Ghazi (Supreme King who Fights for the Faith), having vanquished a non-Muslim ruler and sealed the conquest of Hindustan for Islam" (Harrison, 2012).

#### Figure 5. Preparing the dough of the Sheermaal

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020



The *badshah* asked Muhammed Ali Hussain that the way in which Hindu's have made accompaniments with their main dishes for consumption, why hasn't something been made to eat and accompany the *nihari*. According to Hussain, during that period of kitchens and confectioners, there was no such existence of a tandoor within the Indian context to utilise for cooking. This, therefore, motivated the Persian partial *Badshah* to state that he wanted one in his royal kitchen and so decided to import it from Iran (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). A *tandoor* oven is an "oval shaped oven, made of either clay or steel, and is fired by gas, diesel, charcoal or wood fire" (Hashmi, 1996). This was known to be the traditional cooking method of Islamic heritage foods such as the *tandoori* wheat-flour-based breads, which's name varies from region to region as "*tandoori, tandoori, roti, naan, taftoon, Sheermaal, kulcha, khamiri*" (Hashmi, 1996).

The first *roti* ever made in a tandoor oven was called "*naan*" (bread) and "*baakhar kaani*" (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). It was presented to the Persian conqueror and the response from the *Badshah* was that he wanted more. Muhammed did what the emperor wanted and continued back to the royal kitchen to create multiple varieties of *rotis* with different tastes and textures. The *badshah* went around and tasted all of the different kinds and to his amazement, was enamoured by one specific *roti* that he was presented. This was because this particular *roti* had a peculiar design that had become imprinted upon it during the cooking process. The *Badshah* was so impressed by the *roti*, he decided to name the *roti* as "*Sheermaal*", which translates to milk rubbed (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). In eager delight, the *Badshah* announced to Muhammed and his kingdom to continue to make it like this from now on (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020).

Hussain continued to explain that once *Sheermaal* was introduced, the flat bread *kulcha* was then created to eat alongside the *nihari*. The main chef who made the *Sheermaal* was known as the *shensaab* and had opened a store selling solely *Sheermaal* bread, however once he and the *Badshah* passed, there was no one left to continue this unique recipe and cook it anymore. This therefore resulted in the store closing for good for a long period of time. Umar Ali Hussain is the heir of the 7th generation of his lineage coming from Muhammed Ali Hussain (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). He had decided to restart the *Sheermaal* industry within his family and experienced success in both modernization and commercialization. From this he introduced four different types of *Sheermaal* in 2011 to increase his scope of sales and the variety of dishes offered and stated that he will not limit himself to traditional forms of *Sheermaal* for sale. He is open to

introducing new varieties of recipes for the *Sheermaal* mix, to experiment and find the best and tastiest options possible (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020).

### 4.3 “Allah ke Naam pe”

Due to the strong connection of Lucknow with Islamic heritage and ruling in the past, by the Nawabs of Awadh, it is apparent that this influence of religion has been depicted in the dishes sold and consumed on the streets. For Umar Ali Hussain, his religious views were the main driving factors for his decision to re-open and continue his ancestral family business. Hussain works hard, day in and day out, with his three brothers to carry on the legacy of *Sheermaal* bread. It is clear that his familial values are rooted deep into his practice of Islam as he states multiple times “Allah ke naam pe” (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020), which translates to “By the name of Allah”, in regards to his street food store. He has managed this through passing along the secret recipes of his infamous *Sheermaal* to his children and have taught them to master the art. Alongside this, he often brings his eldest son to the Chowk joint to observe and understand the hard work and precision that goes into the creating and cooking of the traditional bread. Not only this, but he expanded to teach them the ways of how to run a business and more importantly, how to run his business (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020).

He continued to reveal that the most amount of *Sheermaal* that is sold is during the *Ramzaan* and *Muharram* period of the year. This is because during this period of time, Muslims maintain a fast, withholding from food and water (essential needs to life) from the period of sunrise to sunset to practice the art of self-control and discipline (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). Islam is based on five different pillars that are utilised as a framework to live a healthy, happy life for a Muslim. The fifth pillar of Islam is *Ramadan*, but another important pillar of Islam is third one called *Zakat* (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016). *Zakat*, when literally translated means “obligatory almsgiving” (Ansari & Nawwab, 2016), is the ideology that one can purify their wealth and property acquisition through the art of giving. Hussain discussed that during the month of *Ramadan*, the importance to be an individual that is content with life and gives to the less fortunate is heavily stressed upon (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). He stated that even as a street food joint, he often provides the lower strata of Lucknow’s society with meals to begin and break their fasts (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). *Sheermaal* as a dish is not only loved for the taste, but the fact that it is wheat-based and a carbohydrate, it ensures a feeling of being full. Due to the long hours

that the fasting period goes on for, one is able to maintain energy levels for prolonged periods, as to not feel too fatigued.

#### **4.4 Taste of *Tandoor***

Ali Hussain Sheermaal utilises the traditional form of a *tandoor* oven to cook his *Sheermaal*. He has two adjacent holes in the stone floor of his joint allocation that go deep into the ground, of which he uses to cook his product. A tandoor oven is one that in the past was made out of clay and typically created and handled by the men in society. However in today's day, modern tandoors are being procured in large manufacturing factories, utilising metallic materials as the base of these ovens (Khodaparast, 2015). Traditionally as well, the utilisation of fire wood to power the tandoor was popular, as time has evolved and wood as a fuel source has become slightly less desirable, the usage of coal has surpassed as a new fuel source in Lucknow's street food markets (Khodaparast, 2015). Hussain explained that coal as a fuel source was much cheaper than that of firewood (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). The availability of coal is much higher in Lucknow and therefore with the high demand for *Sheermaal* to be cooked, the necessity to have a higher supply of coal to fire the *tandoor* ovens exists as well (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020).

An important point to note from this, is the fact that, even with an emerging era of technological advancements and booming innovation, Ali Hussain Sheermaal is still deeply rooted in the techniques of the past to curate his crispy *Sheermaals* daily (Khodaparast, 2015). His tandoor oven burrows into the concrete grounds of his shop and is coated in clay to create the exact conditions of a traditional, old-school oven (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). India has undoubtedly moved out of the agricultural sector at grace to the incorporation of constant technological advancements and innovations. Thus resulting in the reduction of traditional forms of cooking and the progression into more modernised versions of these appliances, although Hussain discussed that the only way to grasp authentic tastes of Lucknow is through incorporation of the past (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). This is a large reason as to why Hussain has chosen to continue using a traditional tandoor oven still. In addition to this, the implementation of modern ovens is too tasking to install. Modern ovens require pipelines for gas, plug points for electricity and require regular servicing due to the constant exposure to the natural elements

(weather changes) (Khodaparast, 2015). Therefore, utilising a traditional tandoor is beneficial in terms of both cost and maintenance for this street food business.



**Figure 6. Cooked Sheermaals are coated in saffron**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

The type of utensils used are mostly basic and traditional. A wooden rolling pin, on a marble slab placed on the floor, a cushion covered in cloth to stick the *Sheermaal* into the *tandoor* oven and a long, hooked metal rod to remove the crisp and cooked *Sheermaal* once done. The instruments used are still widely traditional and minimalistic but the beauty about this is clearly highlighted. Even with the conventional utensils of cooking, the authenticity and the quality of *Sheermaal* made is precise each time. The fascination is derived from the science of long-established forms of cooking that have been mastered and passed down through generations. This therefore ensures the highest satisfaction from consumers due to the reliability and constance of taste and texture of the product sold.

Whilst in conversation with Hussain, he revealed that within his *Sheermaal*, there is a wide variety of ingredients that he mixes into to create a perfected taste and texture. Hussain said there was “*maida, ghee, milk, elaichi powder, sugar*” (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020) and from time to time, the *Sheermaal* can be cooked by adding various different fruits, dry fruits and saffron for seasoning and intensifying the flavour more (Hussain, Personal Communication, 2020). He continued to describe his process of cooking as well. It takes around one to two hours to prepare the *Sheermaal* however there is a large amount of space inside the tandoor oven and therefore the number of *Sheermaals* that can be cooked at a time is just enough to keep up with the high consumer demand in Lucknow.

## 5.0 Sirf “Chit-Chaats”

*Grand and Pompous in line with the Lucknowi spirit, chaat under the streetlights of Lucknow is an experience like none other. It's inviting aromas and perfectly balanced textures transport you into a whole new world that has fueled hundreds of people for years past. Chaat is a perfect representation of India and the chaatwalla's seem to perfectly trap the flavours of the dynamic country. A dish that started amongst the hustle and bustle of the dainty lanes of Lucknow, chaat is now a part of the global cuisine and is relished by people world over.*

### 5.1 Chaat House of Lucknow

*Chaat*, a dish that literally translates into ‘to lick’, is known world over for its tangy and intense taste. A perfect balance between freshly prepared hot and sour flavours makes this dish unique. A mix of crunchy and soft filling, the dish usually utilised chickpea, white *mattar*, ginger, mashed potatoes, puffed rice, lentils and sprouts along with different powders made from homemade spices (Ray, K and Srinivas, T, 2012). A typical *chaat* store, Dixit Chaat House, located in the old Chowk area of Lucknow, has been satisfying the taste buds of local Lucknowis for over forty years now. The third generation *chaat* house is especially known for its *dahi aloo tikki* and *mattar chaat*. Gaurav Dixit, whose father started the stall, stands behind the counter and proudly explains that his father's stall is no stranger to celebrities and politicians, many of whom frequent his stall for their famous *Tikkis* (Dixit, Personal Communication, 2020). Jain Chaat House, which hides in the bustling Hazratganj area, is known for its unique Jain *chaat* that strictly follows the principles of Jainism. Started thirty years ago, the *chaat* house is witness to tourists all year round. What started as a small roadside stall, has now expanded over the years. Most *chaat* places even today are roadside stalls.

### 5.2 From the Gullies of Lucknow

Said to have originated in Uttar Pradesh, legend goes that the dish was invented back in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century during Emperor Shah Jahan's reign. There was an outbreak of cholera so bad, that even the doctors and sorcerers were left stumped. In order to contain the spread of the disease, it

was suggested that they add more spices to the food which they believed would kill the bacteria (Balasubramaniam, 2019). Hakim Ali, Shah Jahan's court physician, is credited for the tanginess of *chaat*. He believed that adding spices like red chilies along with tamarind, mint and coriander would prevent the spread of waterborne diseases (Balasubramaniam, 2019).

**Figure 7. Chaat at Dixit Chaat House**



Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Started forty two years ago, Dixit Chaat House today is one of Lucknow's must visit places for *chaat*. The old man behind the counter handles bills and cooks simultaneously while proudly informing us about his stall's history. Originally an authentic street food stall, Dixit Chaat has only recently expanded into a slightly bigger stall. Started by his father, Sanjeev Kumar Jain has now happily taken over the operations of Jain Chaat House. A business idea that Sanjeev's father thought of thirty years ago is now a full-fledged family business venture (Jain, Personal Communication, 2020).

### **5.3 Where Religion meets Food**

Uttar Pradesh is considered to be the birthplace of Hinduism. It became a way of life for its residents due to the Aryan influence over the Gangetic plains. Jains constitute less than 1% percentage of this (Cheema, 2011). Originally started in India, Jainism spread throughout the world through migration (Flügel, 2012 ). Jainism is one of the oldest surviving religions in the world. They believe in the concept of reincarnation and everyone must strive to attain salvation. Jains

abstain from eating non-vegetarian foods and underground foods (Flügel, 2012). This limits the meal choices for its followers since a major chunk of Indian cooking uses ingredients like garlic, potatoes, etc. When it comes to *chaat*, it is especially difficult to find places that make dishes in line with their beliefs as most *chaats* use onions. The Chaat House is one of the very few options for people that practise the religion since most *chaat* dishes use ingredients that are typically forbidden for its followers. Ingredients like ginger and garlic are made up for by adding more spices and one cannot feel the absence of such essential ingredients (Jain, Personal Communication, 2020). Jain makes it a point to use clean and pure water and no trace of underground vegetables like onion can be found in his stall. The Chaat stall named after Jainism substitutes forbidden ingredients with other ingredients like peas to ensure the texture of the dish remains the same (Jain, Personal Communication, 2020).

#### **5.4 Fresh Ingredients**

The fresh produce obtained from the fertile lands of the Gangetic plains, enabled the Awadhi chefs to use a variety of ingredients to create new dishes. A typical *chaat* contains chickpea, sprouts, mashed potatoes, lentils, ginger, white *mattar*- which is a speciality in Lucknow *chaat* and tangy powders generally made from mint, tamarind, raw mangoes, cumin, pomegranate, cilantro, black salt and yogurt (Sen, 2012). Dried white peas or '*Matara*' as the locals call it seems to be a staple in almost all Lucknow *Chaats* (Jain, Personal Communication, 2020). They are an extremely rich source of nutrients and are easily available in the region. The easy availability of the ingredient and its low price along with its health benefits make *matara* an ideal choice for the dish. While the white peas have high starch content, they also contain fibres that lower cholesterol and stabilise blood pressure levels. Apart from this, they are rich in protein and contain vitamin B. Fat content in the peas is minimized when the peas are dried (Vishal, 2018).

Indian *Chaats* have made use of yogurt or curd for centuries now (Vishal, 2018). A rich source of probiotics, it also aids with digestion and is cooling for the gut (Prabhu, 2014). Potatoes are used in a number of dishes and contain high amounts of starch which apart from supporting gut health enhances satiety (Prabhu, 2014).

**Figure 8. Common Chaat Ingredients being prepared**



Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

At Dixit Chaat House, most of the ingredients are used in their raw form and are freshly prepared (Dixit, Personal Communication, 2020). The ingredients are freshly obtained, cut and utilized within the same day which adds to the freshness of *chaat*. The *masalas* and *chutneys* however are used over a period of time and are usually stored in clay pots or *matkas* so that they remain cool (Dixit, Personal Communication, 2020). Dixit Chaat House is known for its *Pani Batata*, *Soan Papdi*, *Khaste*, *Aloo Paratha* and *Veg Tikki*. Dixit explains that they only require one *tawa* for cooking as much of their food does not require heat and is served raw (Personal Communication, 2020). Pieces of ginger are cut and used in all their dishes to give it a special taste. A typical day starts at 8 am when the mixes for their *aloo* and *mattar chaat* are prepared. While the actual *Tikkis* are made on the spot at the stall, the pre-preparation for the dishes begin much in advance. Every *Chaat* vendor believes it is the masala that makes the *chaat* and each has their own secret recipe for homemade powder. At the Jain Chaat House, the masalas are made by hand at the home kitchen. The famous white *mattara* used in almost every dish are soaked overnight, boiled, seasoned, mashed and fried into a patty. The white peas that were inspired by the traditional European garden peas are first dried like pulses instead of boiled and mashed like most in most other parts of India. The seasoned peas are eventually pan fried until they are perfectly crisp on the outside (Vishal, 2018).

*Chaats* aim to achieve the perfect balance in texture and temperature. Hot *mattara* patty is served with cold curd and fresh chutney made from a variety of spices. An otherwise heavy dish

is made light and fresh by simply combining unexpected ingredients together. A hard and crunchy *papad* is complemented by the soft curd. A fried *Tikki* is incomplete without fresh chutney. The beauty of *chaat* lies in its texture and special attention is always paid to maintain it. The way in which the vendors cook the dish brings out the crispy freshness of its ingredients instead of its mushiness (Vishal, 2018).

## 6.0 A Warm Sip of Nostalgia

*It is not everyday that you see a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation tea stall being endorsed by the state government's tourism department. Sharma Ji's mouth-watering Bun Makhan and famous Chai have managed to put the stall on the global map. A literal melting pot of culture and people, Sharma Ji's is frequented by grandparents and singletons alike. It is perhaps only at Sharma Ji where you will see a student and a professor engaging in a heated debate alongside two lovers making memories for life. One can smell the aromatic tea from a mile away and sniff their way to Sharma Ji's humble chai shop. For most Lucknowis, mornings are simply not complete without chai time at Sharma Ji's. Sharma Ji ki Chai promises you happiness in a cup and it is impossible to leave this tea shop by the corner without a smile on your face.*

### 6.1 Sharma Tea Stall

Established in 1955, this small tea stall was started in the heart of Hazratganj area in Lucknow by Sharmaji of Aligarh district who had just moved to the city at the time. In addition to his famous *chai*, Sharma Ji's is also very well reputed for its fresh *bun makkhan* and *round samosas*.



**Figure 9. Large Morning Crowd at Sharma Tea Stall**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Situated in a comparatively developed area of the city, having a mixed demographic of Hindu and Muslim population, Sharmaji is located in one of the key locations of the city therefore contributing to its success. Today, Sharma ji ki chai has become a meeting point for having many political and general discussions. People from all walks of life can be seen at the stall sipping on the hot *chai* and biting into the scrumptious *bun makkhan* and tasty *samosas*. Manav Sharma, the third generation Sharmaji speaks of how social media has helped the stall gain more publicity. They started off with Facebook and LinkedIn to advertise their brand. Now they use it to keep a track of consumer responses for feedback to better the service of their stall. Over the years, through word of mouth and social media, Sharmaji ki *chai* has become extremely crowded.

## 6.2 Tea Travels

The hills of China’s southern Yunnan Province can be called the motherland of tea (Fuller, 2008). According to anthropologists this was the first area where human beings discovered that tea leaves are edible and could be brewed into a flavourful and aromatic beverage (Fuller, 2008). “In his article on tea and opium Solomon Bard states that during his fateful embassy to China in the late 18th century Macartney ‘was allowed to collect shoots of tea plants. These were later carefully transported to Bengal with samples of soil where they flourished and very likely gave rise to present Indian tea” (Merz, 2002).



**Figure 10. Tea being poured into a *Kulhad***

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Today, the most consumed beverage in the world, excluding water is tea. (Stone,D.2014) and this plant that had been introduced in India as a cash crop can be considered as the country’s national beverage. (Lutgendorf, P. 2012). Tea or *chai* as coined by the Indians is quite literally a

hot favourite beverage of the Indian society. *Chai*, a drink of a hundred years old, tastes different in every stall that one drinks it from. One such stall that has proved to stand the test of time is Lucknow's famous Sharmaji ki *Chai*. Located at the corner of the famous hangout spot of Lucknow, Hazratganj street is the famous 65 year old *chai* stall. This stall was started three generations ago by the hardworking Sharmaji. His grandson, Manav Sharma recalls the days when he used to go with his grandfather for tea every morning as a child (Personal Communication, 2020). This therefore led him to get into the habit of waking up early and familiarising himself with the marketplace and its surroundings; leaving him equipped to take over his grandfather's pride and joy (Sharma, Personal Communication, 2020). Shaken up by the death of his grandfather, Manav Sharma's aim is to work harder and make the business more stable and successful. Sharmaji gained a large amount of popularity over the years, in that they converted land around the stall to a park, just so that its visitors could enjoy the *chai* and eateries.

### **6.3 A Cup full of Eco- friendliness**

The most popular item, as the name of the stall suggests, is the *chai*. Twenty odd years ago, a twist was introduced with regard to serving the warm tea. The introduction of the classic *kulhad*, a glass made of clay soil, did not replace the original glass tea but was a concept encouraged and promoted by providing extra tea at the same price as the glass one (Sharma, Personal Communication, 2020). The idea behind adopting these disposable cups was rooted in a greater cause ; one concerning the environment. Made of mud, *kulhads* are biodegradable in nature and hence were extensively used in the Indian Railways so as to discourage plastic cups which contributed to the rising pollution on railway tracks (Verma, 2014). The promotion of using *kulhads* was a scheme that attempted to contribute towards a greener society (Verma, 2014). Similar to the situation of the polluted railway line, Sharma's apprehension of the surroundings of the stall being littered, specially by non-biodegradable materials such as glass, was the reason behind introducing *kulhad* chai at the stall and the authentic aesthetic followed (Personal Communication, 2020). This eco-friendly belief played a large role in determining the type of waste produced by the stall.

### **6.4 Simple Ingredients, Meticulous Techniques**

The cooking techniques used by Sharmaji's chef is brought about from years of research, hard work and passion, making it the most popular tea stall in the city. The main tea maker at Sharmaji Ki *Chai*, Guddu, describes Sharmaji as a "*kalakar*" or an artist whose tea making process has been followed for the last sixty-five years (Personal Communication, 2020). The current tea leaf supplier whose tenure has been the longest, was chosen through a process which involved ordering samples of tea from different suppliers of which the best one was chosen (Guddu, Personal Communication, 2020). Even after the selection of the tea supplier, 40 grams of tea leaf samples are tested at regular intervals to ensure that the quality and taste have not changed (Guddu, Personal Communication, 2020). "Just the regular process, like any other tea. With our special twist.", Sharma ji stated when asked about the process (Personal Communication, 2020). The lack of scholarly articles on the detailed process of making tea did not pose an issue as Mallik, the food scholar who has mastered the skill of critically observing the behind the scenes of the best dishes of Lucknow shared with us the secret. As per Mallik's research with regard to Sharma's Tea stall, the perfect *chai* consists of milk, 25% water in proportion to the milk, tea leaves and sugar, all of which are boiled for 1 ½ mins and brewed (Mallik, Personal Communication, 2020). The globe trotter, Mallik, made daily attempts at the 'perfect tea' so as to have it tasting exactly like that of Sharma ji's and through his research found that the key is the temperature of the milk - three hundred and eighty degrees Fahrenheit (Personal Communication, 2020).

This famous *chai* is served in a small glass as well as a *kulhad*, as per the customer's preference. Made of terracotta clay and relatively larger in size, a *kulhad* provides a greater quantity of tea and is not reusable like the other glasses (Sharma, Personal Communication, 2020). It was found that even though there was no significant change in the taste of the tea when consumed in a *kulhad*, it gave an authentic feeling and was something different to drink from (Consumer, Personal Communication, 2020). Sharma ji tea stall is popular for its *chai* throughout the year but mainly during winter. The seasonal popularity for this perfectly warm *chai* could be rooted in the explanation that hot foods have a greater thermogenic effect (Herman, 1993).



**Figure 11. Bun Makkhan- a popular combination at Sharma Tea Stall**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Apart from the tea, the other well-known dishes of the stall are bun *makkhan* and samosa. The specialty of the bun *makkhan* lies in the homemade white butter and the texture of it. Sharma shared that after having observed the colour and components of regular butter for a few months, his father decided to produce fresh white butter that would go perfectly between slices of the bun (Personal Communication, 2020). The secret behind the consistent quality of the *makkhan* remains a mystery but the combination of the dish with the *chai* is a well-known tale amongst Lucknowis. Also known for their *samosas*, the unique feature of the dish is the round shape which differs from the common triangle shaped fried dish. According to Mallik, it is this difference in shape that encourages more consumers to indulge in the dish (Personal Communication, 2020). Contrary to this belief, a research article mentions that abnormal food shapes do influence consumers' purchase intentions negatively, but only that is only if the food deviates extremely from the norm; there is no difference in purchase intentions if it has a moderate abnormal shape (Loebnitz et al., 2015).

The selection of tea leaves alongside the special *makkhan* and the round *samosas* are the reason behind the success of Sharmaji's tea stall among the people of Lucknow as well as those outside of it.

## 7.0 Cream of Delight

*Merely a whiff of this rich and creamy dessert is enough to take you back to a hot summer day lying on your grandmother's porch. The familiar and comforting flavours of the immortal Kulfi have remained a constant in the memories of generations alike. Only the bravest can resist a bite of the modest Kulfi. Everyone's favourite summer dish will leave even the most proper gentleman guilty with cream running down his chin. You know summer is here when kulfi is here.*

### 7.1 Prakash ki Mashoor Kulfi



**Figure 12. Storefront of Prakash Ki Mashoor Kulfi**

Source: (Zomato, 2016)

*Kulfi* is a traditional, indigenous frozen dessert that is said to have originated from India and Pakistan (Zombade, 1992). It is similar to ice cream but is denser and chewier and is usually served on a plate or a cup with *falooda* (an ingredient used to balance the sweetness of the *Kulfi*) or on a stick. Prakash Ki Mashoor Kulfi, a place that is famous all over the City of Nawabs, for its soft and delicate *Kulfis* and *falooda*. Situated in the heart of the city, in Aminabad, Prakash *Kulfi*

started off as a tiny stall. Now, it has evolved into a 2 storey, 16-seater establishment that is prominent in the food industry of Lucknow. It has also provided employment to many over the years (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). They now also provide the option of home delivery and have not only expanded in terms of size and options, but customers as well.

## **7.2 Frozen Through the Years**

The word *Kulfi* is derived from the Farsi (Persian) language, which translates to “covered cup”. This means that it is of Arabic origin. *Kulfi* is also known as kulfa, kulphy, kulfy etc. It is also said to be well known in Myanmar, Bangladesh and the Middle East (Pacific Rim Gourmet, 2012). It is generally prepared and sold by street vendors by the conventional *matka* method” (Zombade, 1992). It dates back to the Mughal era in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Just like ice cream, *Kulfi*’s origin is also uncertain, “but it could have become widely used only after artificial ice became available” (Zombade, 1992). “Mughal emperors enjoyed flavoured ice brought down from nearby mountains. Later, confectioners developed *Kulfi*, a milk-based dish (Weiss, 2012). Unlike in other countries, India is said to have an aboriginal ice cream culture. Although it is unclear when and where exactly the dish was born and also the person responsible for its creation, *Kulfi* is believed by many to be of Indian origin and is said to have originated from the Himalayas where its inhabitants would experiment with different types of frozen desserts by mixing the snow with milk and other ingredients. It is also said that Mughal emperor Jahangir's wife Noorjahan is behind the original preparation of the dish (Benayoun, n.d.). This 400-year old recipe is said to be slightly different from the cooking methods used in today’s world. Noorjahan was said to prepare it by mixing a concoction of fruit pulps with sweetened milk and crushed ice which was fetched from the Himalayas (Benayoun, n.d.). This same dish was later developed and enhanced by confectioners and turned into what we call *Kulfi*.

**Figure 13. Plated serving of Prakash ki Mashoor Kulfi**

Source: (Zomato, 2015)



As this frozen treat has been gaining popularity in the Indian subcontinent since its creation during the Mughal era, it has also ultimately found its way into the Indian and neighbouring households. Forced to relocate, resettle and restart due to the India-Pakistan partition, many families including Prakash Chandra Arora's had migrated to India (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). Leaving home and coming to a land he was not so familiar with did not hamper his determination to work. In 1956, he set up shop in the form of a small *Kulfi* stall in Aminabad, Lucknow. Being a street vendor, Prakash made many connections meeting new customers everyday. Prakash's *Kulfi* eventually became locally famous. As his customer base grew, his goal to further expand and refurbish the stall seemed more achievable. Prakash, through his vigour and diligence, eventually expanded in 1987, by revamping his joint as well as its menu (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). He moved into a bigger space where people could now sit down and enjoy his palatable dessert, which was now offered in many different flavours and serving sizes. He also introduced and educated his son, Harsh Arora, about the *Kulfi* business. Harsh has been the acting owner since the passing of his father and he rightly stands by his father's wish to grow the establishment through hard-work and honesty. He has made some key changes and has also upgraded the menu as he felt the need for it. He claims that one of the reasons that some people prefer ice cream over *Kulfi* is that ice cream is available in a vast variety of flavours (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020).

### **7.3 Hardships to Hard Work**

The late Prakash Chandra Arora, founder of Prakash Ki Mashoor Kulfi and father of current manager Harsh Arora, migrated to India from Pakistan, right into the heart of the partition. Conjecture surrounding the partition talks about a large presence of refugee camps, a claim that Harsh made as his voice lowered. Prakash was confined to the throes of poverty, according to Harsh, and touched base in Lucknow with just a rupee in his pocket. Harsh went on to describe how his father used the relative stability of the camp to pivot into finally owning a stall of his own, in 1956 (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). Harsh runs his establishment with values of hardwork and honesty that he learned from his father. (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020).

Prakash is a staunch believer of the religion, Hinduism (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). Throughout his interview, Harsh often mentioned his Hindu heritage and gave homage to how his life decisions were heavily guided and influenced by his religious beliefs. Prakash's true inspiration to work hard and break through the barriers of poverty is the result of his religion's influence on him. "The concept in Hinduism states that work is dharma or it can be said that work is an obligation for both men and women (Marhaeni, 2008)" (Parmadhi & Utama, 2019). Stemming from the religion, are the four yogas, one of which Prakash truly imbibed in his efforts to master the art of making *kulfi*. (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). "As according to Anggraeni (2018), there are values contained in the Teachings of Karma Yoga according to the Book of Bhagavad Gita as moral values (ethics) in life, service values, educational values, values of yadnya [and] values of professionalism" (Parmadhi & Utama, 2019). In Hinduism, "man must be disciplined and diligent in working at a predetermined position and man must be sure that the work position will deliver himself to happiness in the world and in the hereafter" (Parmadhi & Utama, 2019).

Prakash's beliefs were the main driver in his journey to create the well-established street food joint that stands popular in Lucknow today. The Hindu belief of *Karma* (action) has led Prakash's determination to work hard and achieve more from the life he was given. The success he found through incorporating Hinduism and its teachings into his business choices was then strategically passed down to his son, Harsh, who applauds his father's efforts. Prakash believed that the results of his work are a spiritual offering rather than an individual accomplishment (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). By applying himself completely into perfecting his *kulfi*, he has been able to make people happy through taste and historical experience. Prakash provides his customers with a service that in his opinion is a true reflection of the hard work and time he has

dedicated. Bringing joy to others, brings him peace and accomplishment in his life. (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020).

#### **7.4 Flavours of Summer in a Cup**

“Throughout India, street vendors or *kulfiwalas* sell *Kulfi*- recipes vary but *Kulfi* is often made from sweetened condensed milk, cream and sugar and flavourings such as pistachios, cardamom and saffron – from carts where they keep it cold in pots called *matkas*” (Weiss, 2012). In spite of its prevalence in the Indian market, there is no standardised way of preparing *Kulfi* except the basic ingredients that go into making it. “The method of *Kulfi* production varies from individual to individual, resulting in wide variation in composition, quality and cost of the product. A *Kulfi-falooda* is a very famous combination among the older generations (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). The dish is served in a glass, which is a multi layered dessert. It consists of rice noodles, a *ras* made with sugar, saffron and milk, sabudana (tapioca pearls) boiled in water, and pieces of *Kulfi* and then topped with rose syrup and nuts. The rice noodles are made from a simple 50% hydration dough of rice flour or rice starches and water, this dough is then passed through a fine mesh strainer, and boiled. (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). They then add a base, soaked tapioca flavours, a rose syrup and then the noodles which is finally topped with the *Kulfi*.

Despite the new advancements in the preparation methods of *Kulfi* and due to the absence of a standardized method of preparation, it is still made using the traditional method at Prakash Ki Mashoor *Kulfi*. Milk is half boiled in a large container, followed by adding sugar. This mixture is very rich as it contains milk, cream and sugar. It is then cooled and all ingredients like saffron, pistachios and rose water are added. The mixture is frozen manually without the use of a freezer. It is put into metal cones which are sealed with a dough made from just flour and water. This dough lining helps seal it airtight, preventing any heat from melting the mixture, keeping its temperature constant. This is the mother batter. Into the mother batter is where the flavors, toppings and garnishes can be added. These small cones are then put into one large metal container followed by adding rock salt and ice. The whole process is 3-4 hours long and after it is done, the final product is brought to the shop, as the kitchen is located away from it (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020).

Service styles include *Matka Kulfi*, on a stick or directly on a plate. These styles also cause variations in their recipes, since the moisture content changes their texture. The *Kulfis* meant to be served on sticks are lesser in moisture content, due to which they include condensed or evaporated milk in their products, but the *Kulfis* served on a plate are not this way, as they use full fat milk giving a creamier and softer texture (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020). The *Kulfis* that are served in the *Matkas*, are also drier in texture as the *Matka* which is made out of sand, absorbs the water/ moisture content from the mixture, which is the same reason for which curd is made to set in *Matkas* (Arora, Personal Communication, 2020).

## **8.0 Baadal in a Bowl (A Cloud in a Bowl)**

*One mouthful of this ethereal dish will show you glimpses of heaven. Freshly churned out by hand each morning before sunrise; this dessert promises to bring out the child in you. Light as air, but fluffy and creamy at the same time; every spoon of Makhan Malai is packed with rich flavour and sends each of its patrons into a trance; one that is not easy to come out of. One simply cannot pass by the Makhan Malaiwalla's with their baskets of joy hung around their bicycle without a sudden flux of drool. This divine dish and its flavour will intoxicate your taste buds and leave you wanting more. A bowl full of Makhan Malai must be what love feels like!*

### **8.1 'The King of Test' Gaya Prasad**

At the very heart of Chowk, in Lucknow's Indian City, one of the oldest markets in India, lies Gol Darwaza (Kapur, 2019). "The King of Test" established at this very location is one of the most prominent street food hawkers one will lay their eyes upon at first visit. *Makkhan Malai* or *Nimish* is a light, creamy and fluffy sweet dish. Subtly flavoured with cardamom, saffron and rose essence, and tastefully garnished, it holds a dear place in most Lucknowis' hearts. Its gentle flavours juxtaposes the soft-spoken and humble nature of the people of Lucknow (Mallik, Personal Communication, 2020). *Makkhan Malai* is known by different names in different parts of India: *Daulat ki Chaat* in Delhi, *Nimish* in Lucknow, *Sola Maze* in Agra, *Malaiyo* in Varanasi (Niru, 2000).



**Figure 14. Gaya Prasad's Stall**

Source: Discover India Program,  
2019-2020

Of the *Makkhan Malai* stalls in Chowk, the oldest one is the bearded old man, Gaya Prasad's half a century old stall. Prasad's son Brajesh has taken over the stall in the recent past but has retained the authenticity of their cloudy delicacy. The old bearded man confidently expressed that he has stuck with his physical characteristics - a beard and glasses because they have become his identity over time and is now known as the most original *Makkhan Malai* seller in the city (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020).

## 8.2 Early Establishments

The “King of Test: Since 1965” was established as a small street food joint over 50 years ago. Situated in the heart of old Lucknow, this small establishment consisted of one table and a cloth tied up around to keep the set-up a secret. With originally only 3 shops back when it was established, King of Test now sits right at Chowk's most bustling circle (Prasad, personal communication, 2020). The origin of this dish itself is unknown and the lack of literature on the same keeps *Makkhan Malai* in the shadows. Known by different names in different parts of India, indicates the fact that it has a long line of existence from its origin, to its spread and regional modifications. Important to keep in mind is that there exists no source of literature regarding the origin of this dish. According to Gaya Prasad, one legend stated that in the times of the Nawabs, the churning process would begin late at night and carry on till dawn. The reason behind this was to let the “os” (dewdrops) of cold winter nights soak in the milk and give it its airy consistency (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020). However, there exists no credible literature to back this up and it remains a folklore.

According to owner and founder, Gaya Prasad, the establishment of “King of Test” can be attributed to the generosity of then local *neta* Lal Ji Tandon (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020). Famous and highly influential at the time, Gaya Prasad and him shared a close relationship and did not cause any objections to the set-up of the stall back in 1965 (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020).



**Figure 15. Makkhan Malai as a finished product**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

“The King of Test” now stands as one of the most popular *Makkhan Malai* stalls in Lucknow, and this is also credited to their originality. It was three years after their establishment that Gaya Prasad had an inventive idea to store the *malai* (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020).

### **8.3 Beliefs behind the Butter**

In comparison to most other vendors that were interviewed as part of this research, Gaya Prasad and Brajesh had the most to highlight in terms of their business strategies. The father-son duo spoke extensively about their invention with ice and this secret that they retained for a long period of time (Brajesh, Personal Communication, 2020).

According to Brajesh, when they originally came up with the idea, a cloth was tied around the *malai* stall in order to keep the ice slab, at the base of the serving vessel, concealed. It was in their efforts to devise a technique to sell *makkhan malai* in every season and not just summer, a

concept not thought of by any other vendor at the time, that led them to this creation (Brajesh, personal communication, 2020). “Motivated by a vision of excellence” which led them to brainstorm and experiment is what resulted in their success (Paine, 1991). This competitive approach to their business is another reason for why they stand out in today's market (Brajesh, Personal Communication, 2020).

As most new developments go, other vendors caught on to the technique and the success of the same spread throughout Chowk (Brajesh, personal communication, 2020). All other vendors at the same location, when questioned today, claim that there exist familial ties to “The King of Test”. However, when asked about the same, Brajesh denied any relation. As he stated, claiming relations would only give them more credibility (Brajesh, Personal Communication, 2020). However, there was no sense of bitterness or acrimony from their side.

This approach to business and competitor orientation has been described by Adam Smith. The Father of Economics states that “in the race for wealth...(a person) may run as hard as he can, and strain every nerve and muscle to outstrip all his competitors. But if he should jostle, or throw down any of them... it is a violation of fair play.” (Smith as cited in Paine, 1991). “The King of Test” in this case can be said to have engaged in fair play, while at the same time following profit-making business strategies and this can be classified as one of the theories followed by this business.

While in conversation with Prasad, an interesting anecdote that was recalled followed how he was invited by a major food catering company to Meerut for an event in the city. While narrating this story, Prasad once again highlighted how they were able to churn the perfect *makkhan malai* despite it being the peak of summer in the city. He then went on to narrate how he was offered a position by that company to work with them for a few months. Prasad believes he was offered the job only as long as he was able to teach them the technique that went behind making this *malai*, and would be fired once he was of no more service.

According to the surveys referred to in the source, “The hiring of rival’s employee to gain access to confidential information appears to be a widely used and approved intelligence- gathering technique.” (Brenner et al. & Sutton as cited in Paine, 1991). Based on this very theory, one can reason why Prasad chose not to take up the offer. There have been several other instances as such, all of which were rejected by Prasad with the very same rationale. In the 1976 Harvard Business Review study conducted by Brenner and Molander, around half of the tested executives stated that they would “hire a rival’s employee to learn about an important scientific discovery that could

substantially reduce profits during the coming year” for their respective businesses. (Paine, 1991). Such studies corroborate Prasad's business strategy and understanding and prove that it is this that takes forward “The King of Test”.

The interaction with Mallik included his emphasis on the association of an individual's personality characteristics and the consumed aliment (Personal Communication, 2020). The concerned aliment in this focus being *Makkhan Malai*, it was observed that even though the ingredients of the dish are individually overpowering with a strong flavour - the cardamom, saffron and rose essence, give out a subtle taste when put together in a certain fashion. On having questioned Prasad about the reason behind these underlying yet impactful flavours, the ideology behind this was rooted in a philosophical analysis of viewing food. According to Prasad, “*Aadmi ka dil aur dimaag uske khaane ke mutabik chalta hai*” (Personal Communication, 2020). This literally translates into “an individual's heart and mind work in accordance to the food they consume”. This belief was further elaborated upon by analyzing the softness of *Makkhan's* flavours and how it affects the persona of the Lucknowi people. Because one can get a sense of the light and humble flavours, consuming this dish directly affects the temperament of the individual (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020). Mallik also believes that while most other cities of the country are filled with hints of arrogance, those who reside in Lucknow are more hospitable, accepting and humbly kind (Personal Communication, 2020). The good hearted and soft spoken nature of Lucknowis can be attributed to the food they consume. *Makkhan Malai* is the perfect example of humble flavours that can be counterfeited with the positive nature of the people of this city (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020).

Prasad's belief of viewing one's personality through the items they consume can be further understood through the well known adage - “You are what you eat”. The analogy reasoning of qualities of food and that of people can be drawn when the saying is looked at in terms of dietetics at the time of Galen, an ancient Greek physician with philosophical theories (Shapin, 2014). Furthermore, the French gourmand who predicted ‘what one is’ if you told him what you eat, and the theory of the Feuerbach, the German philosopher related to the link between an individual as a being and their food can all be sourced to the one saying - “You are what you eat” (Shapin, 2014).

## 8.4 Discovery leads to Success

The utensils employed for *Makkhan Malai* witnessed a technical evolution over time because of a variety of reasons. First, the need to maintain the low temperature of the dish and prevent it from melting. Second, to be able to provide this dish throughout the year and not specifically during the months of winter. Third, the requirement for an appliance that would make the manual churning easier yet retain the original texture of *Makkhan*. Initially, the only vessels used for the process were namely a pot and a wooden churner (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020). For almost three years, Gaya Prasad's joint followed the basic process of using these two materials to prepare the dish. It was only in 1968 that Prasad's innovative idea of using ice as the base for the pot of *Makkhan Malai* was put into practice. In the earlier years of executing this idea, the only drawback was that only small pieces of ice were available. Over time, with the availability of larger ice blocks, it became more convenient to use ice in the process (Prasad, Personal Communication, 2020). The installation of a planar slab of ice can be made effective by having it directly supporting the bottoms of the containers (U.S Patent No. 4,899,553, 1990). While the adoption of ice as a support under the bottom of the vessel helped fulfill the needs of maintaining the temperature of the dish and enabling its provision throughout the year, the back breaking task of manual churning still remained. To overcome this cumbersome task, the adoption of a machine was taken under consideration. The machine would naturally make the churning process easier and speed it up but the problem lied in the fact that the machine only churned the butter uni directionally. Moreover, churning devices involve pieces such as a dasher and a motor which increase the cost of production because of the high cost of expenditure (U.S Patent No. 2,100,549, 1937). Prasad was not in favour of the machine not only because of the financial aspect of it but also because of its effects on the texture. Because manual churning blended the butter in a straight as well as backward manner, Prasad invented a device that was designed in a specific manner. It involved a small rope at the end of which there were two small handles and the center of this rope was attached to a traditional churner. This would provide ease to the individual churning as they would simply have to pull both ends of the rope at a fast pace, be it seated or standing. The invention of this device and the idea of featuring ice as a main component provided a drastic technical evolution to the process.

A dish as simple and minimalistic as *Makkhan Malai* contains a limited number of ingredients of which most are easily available. The two items that make this dish dairy rich are milk and cream which make up the *Makkhan or* butter as well . Apart from these staple supplies,

sugar, cardamom, saffron and rose essence are also essential ingredients to the dish. While one may consider sugar as the most vital ingredient of a sweet dish, Prasad explains that the significance of cardamom exceeds anything else with regards to a sweet dish (Personal Communication, 2020). The flavour added by this spice has a huge impact on the taste and without it the sweet would be futile. Especially common in India and known for delicious flavour and aroma, cardamom can also be used as a remedy to treat stomach aches (Kubo et.al as cited in Sharma, 2012). Apart from this spice, another flavouring that not only affects the taste of the dish but also its appearance is saffron. While saffron gives the *makkhan* a yellowish orange tinge, the rose essence added further enhances the flavours of the dish. Finally, the dish is beautifully garnished with a sheet of silver foil, chopped up pistachios and almonds so as to add a different texture of crunchiness. Prasad highlights the importance of ‘decorating’ the *Makkhan* in a particular way and how that has seen no change since the start (Personal Communication, 2020). The art of garnishing is such that once you are in a habit, surely you will never stop, as serving your foods in an attractive manner and with originality will be more fascinating than the process of actually planning the real food (Mildred B., 2016, p. 15).

**Figure 16. A mixture of milk and cream is churned by hand**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020



The previous afternoon, milk and cream were separately boiled and kept aside to cool down. The cream is then mixed into the milk in a big vessel under which a slab of ice is placed. After resting this vessel and allowing it to be cooled by the ice, the next step is performed the next morning as early as 2:30 am. The milk mixture is churned manually for about five hours. The extensive churning leads to a creamy texture which is kept over ice again. Gradually, a layer of butter gets deposited on top and the remaining milk is churned again. The milk that remains at the end of the entire process is then boiled, skimmed so as to procure the layer of *malai* which is used to be mixed with the *makkhan*. The two main components are mixed together, flavoured, and garnished to achieve the final product - *Makkhan Malai*.

The technique of using ice has proven to be the key element which is most crucial to sustain the dish and is original to Prasad's venture. By giving the dish a cooling element and the ability to be prepared, the utilization of ice has been done in a judicious manner by these makers of *Makkhan Malai*. The requirement for the dish to have temperature below that of thirty seven degrees at the maximum, finds its reason in a physiological aspect. The body temperature of an individual is thirty seven degrees and because the *Makkhan* is ideally not supposed to stick to the roof of the mouth, it needs to be below the mentioned temperature (Mallik, Personal Communication, 2020). Another observation that is rooted in the decision to stick to the authentic method of churning while also giving it an edge of innovation is the creamy and irreplaceable texture of the *Makkhan Malai*.

## 9.0 The Royal Rice

*Packed with subtle flavours that leave you desperate for more, it is nearly impossible to pass the Idrees corner without giving in. Serving biryani fit for the royals, the popular joint serves the aromatic, finely flavoured, layered dish like no place else. The subtly scented rice and the perfectly seasoned meat is a reminder of Lucknow's glorious past. One interaction with the owners and workers here will make you feel at home. A gift from the kitchens of the Nawabs, this hidden delight of Lucknow is nothing short of poetry on a plate.*

### 9.1 Idrees Biryani



**Figure 17. Abu Bakr serves his famous biryani**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

In the 1960s, when the youth of Lucknow had penned down the term “*Ganjing*” to describe their casual strolls through the Hazratganj area of the city, a street food joint that would soon turn out to be a monumental part of Lucknow's street food culture was in the works of being established

in Chowk (Chowdhury, 2019). The joint was just off the road, but was a world of its own. A small brick building, its walls painted Pistachio Green, now stained from years of weathering and accumulation of left over *paan*, Idrees Biryani managed to balance the innate rush of the city of Lucknow with the slow, precise cooking techniques that are trademark to the royal Awadhi cuisine of the region. The first thing that Idrees Biryani offered the team when it arrived was a sense of solace from the bustling, deafeningly loud roads of Chowk. The owner of the joint- Mr. Abu Bakr was a sturdily built man, wore thick rectangular glasses and sported a bushy moustache. Abu Bakr wore a white undershirt that was surprisingly unstained considering that he sat cross legged on a platform, serving plate after plate of biryani to the hundreds of patrons who visited this historical joint every day.

## 9.2 Road to Royalty

Idrees Biryani was established in 1968 by Abu Bakr's father- Mohammed Idrees (who was referred to by his son as *Walid Saheb*) and like a majority of the street food joints in Lucknow is a family run business (Fatma, 2016). The joint has remained seated in its corner off an intersection since its inception and has remained more or less the same throughout. The minimal provisions made for seating in the form of plastic chairs outside the building and a long wooden dining table inside the building paired benches on either side provides a place of retreat from either extremes of the weather that is native to Lucknow.



**Figure 18. A plated serving of Idrees Biryani's Product**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

Biryani is a dish with a long and complex history. It is an intricate and delicate mixture of rice, meat (chicken, mutton or even sea-food) and sometimes even vegetables. The roots of biryani can be traced to various Mughlai roots as well as the Spanish *paella* which is a rice based dish seasoned with saffron containing meat, vegetables and/or sea-food (an influence that could be rooted in the Islamic domination of Spain) (Umachandran et al., 2018). There is evidence of biryani being served in the lavish banquets hosted by the emperor Akbar in various accounts which only ascertain the West-Asian roots that the dish holds in India (Umachandran et al., 2018). Biryani always came with the connotation of being royal food that was served in the courts of the *Nawabs* and the Mughals but off late has made its way into the fast food industry in India (Umachandran et al., 2018). This change came with time, when consumer patterns started leaning towards an increased demand for fast food that was healthy and not of empty nutritive value (Umachandran et al., 2018). Biryani is an entire meal on its own and the increased demand has encouraged vendors to accommodate the fast food needs of the youth. The average biryani consists of all the basic nutritive values that are prescribed by doctors as necessary in one meal (Umachandran et al., 2018). The price of a plate of mutton biryani at Idrees Biryani- which is sufficient for a single person as an entire meal can be covered in a simple Rs. 100. The novelty of Idrees, is something that has grown over time through word of mouth attributed to consistent customer satisfaction- a main driving force of the work environment at Idrees. This fused with the novelty and association of Awadhi cuisine with royalty, in general adds to the charm of Idrees' product. While paying a visit to Idrees Biryani, the team was soon made aware of the fact that the famous meat and rice preparation is actually to be called *pulao* and not biryani. It is only recently that the dish has come to be called biryani due to the constant misconceptions made by people in differentiating between the Awadhi and Mughalai cuisines.

### **9.3 Counted Blessings**

When asked about what sets Abu Bakr and his team of cooks' food apart from their competitors, they insist that it is nothing but the grace of *Allah* and the blessings of their patrons that has allowed them a long and steady success. They believe in doing whatever is in their hands to make their customers happy (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). They believe in working with integrity and honesty, and the effect that these values have in the food that they put out to the customers (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). The importance given to faith is not surprising.

It is taken for granted by scholars that most discourses about food in India revolve around social and religious rituals (Nandy, 2004). Upon analysing Abu Bakr's business philosophy, a lot of similarities can be drawn between it and the Islamic Work Ethic. The Islamic Work Ethic or IWE are based on the teachings and principles of Islam. The source of these teachings and principles for Muslims can be found in the *Quran* and were revealed to the Prophet Mohammed by *Allah*. The Islamic Work Ethic describes the expectations one has to fulfil with respect to their behaviour in a work environment (Aldulaimi, 2016). They encourage a close relationship with God in order to develop one's attitude to be consistent with the Islamic teachings. IWEs require one to work to the best of their abilities not just in order to produce the best quality of work but also to please God (Aldulaimi, 2016). According to Islamic tradition one's competitive advantage lies in the values and ethics that one works with and not the material resources that they possess (Aldulaimi, 2016). IWEs discuss one's efforts, cooperation, creativity, dedication, social relations as well as the responsibilities that one must take upon themselves at work. The word "Islam" can be traced to its Arabic roots meaning "submission to the will of God (*Allah*)" (Aldulaimi, 2016). The Islamic Work Ethics had been set so as to prevent sinful acts from being committed by Muslims. It takes a clear stance against "bribery, cheating, manipulation and suppression" (Aldulaimi, 2016) of others. It is clear through Abu Bakr's description of the manner in which he runs his establishment that he believes strongly in the values and guidelines put down by the *Quran*. He stated time and time again that the only thing in his hands is the way he treats his patrons, the dedication with which he works and the integrity of his work. Everything else according to him is in the hands of *Allah* and credits the smooth sailing of his business to his submission to the will of God (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). Abu Bakr's persistence on the integrity of the business and the product too can be linked to his strong rooted beliefs in Islamic tradition as the *Quran* itself states "God hath permitted trade and forbidden usury" (Quran, 2:275). Abu Bakr believes that every detail matters when it comes to satisfying one's customers and this goes down to the very act of how much water is filled in the glasses served to the customers upon their arrival and the seasoning of the vessels that is done every fifteen days, to the freshness of the food that is served throughout the day which is maintained by the preparation of multiple batches of the food offered on the minimalistic menu card at Idrees Biryani. Perfection is strived for at the establishment and Abu Bakr's relationship with his father with respect to the business is a testimony to this. The Idrees frontman recalls his father disciplining him physically when he failed to deliver food that was up to the trademark Idrees standards (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). When in conversation

with a food scholar in Lucknow- Vikas Malik- he stated that a major component of the quality of the food served in the city comes from the heart that is put into the food and the warmth of the people who welcome visitors from all over the world with their unique taste and culture (Malik, Personal Communication, 2020). The heart put into the food also comes from the long and intricate cooking process which leads to a close attachment to the food the vendors sell (Umachandran et al., 2018).

Abu Bakr has seen a growth in the demand for his product over the years with the growing wealth of his patrons and remembers a time when he only used to sell a single batch of his Biryani as compared to the three to four batches he sells out these days (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). Indians on an average did not choose to eat out as often in the past and this is a trend that has rapidly changed over time as eating out has now become a fairly day to day affair amongst the youth (Fatma, 2016). Like many other outlets of the type, Idrees Biryani too is catering to customers of the fast food industry. Fast food can be categorised into organised and unorganised fast food outlets. Idrees Biryani like its counterparts in the unorganised fast food industry of India that were established before and up to the 1990s, is a family business run out of a *dhaba* style stall (Umachandran et. al, 2018). Though the cooking process is a long drawn out one that is very intricate and technical in its nature, the speed of service at Idrees is undeniable. Though a lot of fast food is considered to be unhealthy and contain minimal nutritive value, biryani is considered to be a nutritious meal in itself and is a very popular fast food option amongst much of the Indian youth (Umachandran et. al, 2018). Though a lot of the new fast food versions of biryani gather inspiration from the Chinese fried rice, Idrees boasts of the authenticity of their product (Nandy, 2004). Abu Bakr has refused to compromise on technique in exchange for quantity and still continues to man the ship in the same way that his father did. The ingredients, the procedures and the overall ambience of the joint have barely been revised from the old days and customers have continued to be satisfied with the consistent quality of the food being put out by the establishment regardless of the increased influx of patrons. The biggest reasons for this influx has been attributed to the growth of the youth population in India (ages ten to twenty four), the growth of disposable income in families, entering of women in the workforce as well as the increased ease of mobility amongst the general public (Fatma, 2016). In a nutshell, people are more willing to spend and an entrepreneur like Abu Bakr is greatly benefitted from the same.

#### **9.4 Layers of the Rice**

The famous *Yakhni Pulao* of Lucknow is extremely labour intensive and a single batch of the dish takes close to four hours to prepare, according to Abu Bakr. The subtlety of the flavours in the dish is what sets it apart from the various other biryanis that are native to other parts of India such as the famous Hyderabadi and Malabari biryanis (Umachandran et al., 2018). Fresh garlic, ginger and onions are chopped finely and ground into a paste and fried in a large vessel to increase the ease with which the flavours get infused into the meat and rice in the later parts of the cooking process (Umachandran et al., 2018). The saffron used in the preparation gives the rice a pleasant yellow colour as well as an aroma that fills the air surrounding the joint which provides an instant relief from the smoke and dust of the city around it. The lamb is cooked separately and is later added to the rice. It is prepared and cooked over a period of four hours during which the meat is cleansed of any bacteria, blood and enzymes, and then cooked in milk and spices that give it the signature taste and texture that sets it apart. A lot of importance is given to the texture of the meat itself and it is cooked in such a way that the meat falls right off the bone and melts away into one's mouth.

The biryani is prepared by putting together the three layers that go into the dish, to create a single homogenous dish (Umachandran et al., 2018) (Bakr, Personal Communication, 2020). The biryani is served along with a spicy *salan*- which is served with a glossy layer of oil on top to make it more appealing to the eye- and chopped onions for added flavour. Copper vessels are used in the preparation of the dishes and Bakr cites health to be the main concern for his choice in utensils. He claims that the use of copper in the preparation of food helps deal with issues like blood pressure. The use of copper utensils can be traced all the way back to Ancient Egypt (2000 BC) as well as Ancient Rome (400 BC). This is not really a foreign concept to Indians either as copper vessels have been used to store *Gangajal*- a blessed offering given to devotees that plays the role of a holy water in Hindu culture. More recently, during World War II, the Japanese soldiers would use a piece of copper in their water bottles to help prevent dysentery (Borkow & Gabbay, 2009).

Abu Bakr and his team at Idrees Biryani have found a way to bring the royalty of the courts of the *Nawabs* and the novelty of a core Awadhi dish to the streets of Lucknow. They have made the royal dish accessible to patrons who contribute heavily to the unorganised fast food industry (or the street food industry) in Lucknow while still maintaining its authenticity. There are various ways in which a dish can be authentic or inauthentic- especially in a country like India where food is a culmination of various cultures from the world over. A dish can be considered authentic as

long as there have not been changes made to it in a way that alters the composition or taste of the dish in a way that does not does not comply with the ethnic characteristics of that cuisine for commercial or any such extraneous reasons (Nandy, 2004). Not compromising on the long drawn out and intricate process of making the Awadhi delicacy and still following the various steps using traditional utensils to prepare them have only contributed to the authentic taste that Idrees Biryani boasts of. The fame and novelty of the product served by the team at Idrees Biryani can hence be attributed to the refusal to budge from traditional cooking techniques stirred in with the staunch devotion to the values and principles of the Islamic Work Ethics that are strictly followed by Abu Bakr.

## 10.0 A Vegetarian ‘Storey’

*Serving you food that truly brings out the flavours of the Awadhi Cuisine- with a twist- Deva Food Mart tells us a story of transition from the streets to an air-conditioned restaurant. The freshness of the tender food and it’s earthy taste immediately transports one into a stupor. An easy gateway to beat the lucknow heat, the joint is paradise for any vegetarian seeking the taste of a perfect kebab, without compromising their eating habits.*

### 10.1 Deva Food Mart



**Figure 19. Outdoor Kitchen at Deva Food Mart**

Source: (Tripadvisor, 2018)

Off the busy streets of AliGanj, is a small restaurant called Deva Food Mart. Known for its vegetarian *kebabs*, Yadhav’s restaurant is a two storeyed building that produces some of the best vegetarian kebabs in the grand old city.

## 10.2 The Story of the Storeys

Yadhav had first made his debut in Lucknow's booming food industry in 1997. Yadhav used to run a stall, where he sold tea, *samosas*, and *bun-makkhan* (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). Along with the quality of his product, he credited his youth as a major reason for his success at the time as his main customer demographic were the students from the university close by and the various other coaching centres in the area. He ran his stall for close to 13 years and had become very popular in the area, gathering large crowds around him (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). Manoj was ambitious and wanted to expand his menu to compete with the growing influence of big corporations like Dominos and McDonald's in Lucknow's fast food landscape. His idea was to think of something out of the box that was both tasty and healthy while altogether maintaining its roots in Lucknowi street food culture. He recognised the fact that a majority of people associate Lucknowi food with the likes of the famous Tunday Kababi's signature kebab parathas (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). He recognised that a majority of the food that Lucknow was popular for were non-vegetarian and hence, left out an entire group of vegetarians whose lifestyle and/or beliefs did not allow them to indulge in the same. Given, there were various options for the vegetarian street food crowd, none of them however were in the business of creating vegetarian alternatives of novel Awadhi dishes. Yadhav recognized this and began to experiment with various different recipes in order to create the perfect vegetarian kebab paratha. Yadhav claims he was the first to conceptualise and execute making the closest vegetarian alternative to the famous *Galawati* kebab, in 2008. He firmly stands by the notion that although many have tried to recreate his recipe, nobody else has been able to achieve the perfect vegetarian kebab paratha (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020).

## 10.3 The Vegetarian trend

“The word vegetarian is derived from the Latin root “vigitor,” meaning giving strength and health.” (Jayanthi, 2001). Though Yadhav himself does not subscribe to the philosophy of vegetarianism, he did recognise the need for an establishment that catered to the people who did. In a city like Lucknow, where a majority of its identity lies in the Awadhi culture- whose cuisine primarily consists of non-vegetarian delicacies, creating a vegetarian alternative to one of the most novel dishes of the same can be considered a significant milestone. While a large number of people in India are vegetarians for religious purposes, over the years, there has been an increase in the

number of people turning vegetarian due to a rise in awareness in the health benefits of abstaining from meat. Typically, vegetarians survive on a diet strictly made up of vegetable foods and exclude meat. They may include animal foods such as milk (Jayanthi, 2001). Lately, myths with regard to animal protein have been busted and studies have shown plant based foods contain the required amount of nutrients on their own. What makes a joint like Deva so popular among the public is the fact that their kebabs taste very much like meat based kebabs while eliminating the risks of a non-vegetarian diet like diabetes, cholesterol and heart related issues.

Gandhi heavily believed and advocated the concept of Vegetarianism. He was of the opinion that “flesh eating was unsuited for our species.” (Gandhi, 1959). He believed that giving in to the idea of non-vegetarianism was a sign of weakness of the mind and that we must diet not to “please the palate” but merely to “keep the body going” (Gandhi, 1959). We are a product of what we eat according to Gandhi and the grosser one eats, the grosser he becomes (Gandhi, 1959). One of the best outcomes of the concept of vegetarianism is the fact that no animals are harmed (Jain, Personal Communication, 2020). The meat and poultry industries have often come under fire for mistreating animals. The animals are subject to the harshest conditions for capital gain in breeding farms. Vegetarianism wholly eliminates this issue. Together with the ingredients used to make the base and the seasoning used for their dishes, the nutritional value mirrors that of a non vegetarian kebab and so makes for a healthy delicacy for a vegetarian.

#### **10.4 The Vegetarian kebab of Lucknow**

The main attraction to the Lucknowi *Galawati* kebab is its melt-in-the-mouth nature. The hardest part of recreating its vegetarian counterpart would be to maintain the same texture of the product to retain its novelty. To achieve the same effect, Manoj Yadhav tried various different recipes before finally landing on the perfect one. The main base of the kebab was to be made out of raw bananas, *chana dal* (chickpea) and *masoor dal* (red lentil). Along with the base ingredients, a variety of special spices are added to the mix, a combination of which has been tried, tested and perfected over the years (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). Yadhav explains that the kebab is not the entire product on its own and has to be eaten with parathas as the real taste lies in combining the two individual dishes together. Along with these two preparations, sliced raw onions, and a special chutney are served on the side- which he says is the icing on the cake (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). Yadhav goes on to say that one can not replace the

parathas in the dish with any other form of bread (he takes the example of a *roomali roti*, which he explains would make the dish seem dry) as it would counter the texture of the dish. The dish is then seasoned with *jeera* (cumin), *kaali mirch* (black pepper) and *kaala namak* (black salt). Yadhav says that these are powdered and sprinkled over the kebabs to help improve digestion as well as to complement the taste of the product (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020). Yadhav explains that the process of grinding all the individual ingredients takes over an hour to complete and then an additional two to three hours goes into the preparation of the kebabs during which all the ingredients are mixed together and cooked. The final step of frying the kebab itself only takes close to ten minutes (Yadhav, Personal Communication, 2020).



**Figure 20. Deva Food Mart's famous Veg kebab Paratha**

Source: (Swiggy, n.d.)

## 11.0 *Nayein Swaadon ka Raasta* (The Road of New Flavours)

*Framed by the warm yellow evening light, the stall keepers at Chauraha welcome you with a smile so bright, it puts the moon to shame. Serving vegetarian food that oozes flavour, almost everyone that enters the bustling lanes comes out with a satisfied tummy. The fresh flavour of the unique dishes leaves it's patrons in awe. Happy chatter of new friendships and reconnecting families can be heard echoing throughout the tiny street. One bite of the famed soya chaap; and even the proudest meat lover turns into a content vegetarian.*

### 11.1 1090 Chauraha

Gomtinagar is the “new” area Lucknow. Placed strategically along the outskirts of Gomtinagar, one finds 1090 Chauraha. Chauraha when directly translated means circle. This is because the lane in which all of these unique stalls are found diverges from a large four crossing roundabout. Twenty-five to thirty different street food vendors lined up neatly, side by side. Each stall completely distinctive to the other, this cluster of street food is highly popular within Lucknow.



**Figure 21. A stall at Gomtinagar**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

1090 Chauraha only serves vegetarian dishes due to the strong political influence in the area (Kumar, Personal Communication, 2020). Items which are allowed to be sold within this area tends to vary according to the preference of parties and therefore there is high volatility in the potential of work for some of the vendors. However, our research came across one non-vegetarian stall selling food. The joint was selling eggs. It was peculiar to find one stand out stall from all the others, although this brought an excitement and intrigue to the unconventional kind of street food. The vendor stated that there often tends to be objection to selling his eggs within this zone, however as each political *palti* changes, his business opportunities in the area changes coincidentally (Kumar, Personal Communication, 2020).

The joints offered a variety of delicious and delectable items to their customers. Ranging from *tandoori momos* to *tandoori chai*, *schezwan* noodles to the local favourite of *pani puri* and lastly, a fairly new concept, *soya chaap*, but in conventional local flavours such as *malai*, *butter masala* and *tandoori chaap*. It is important to note that these dishes do not directly derive from historical lucknowi food preferences. The diversification and commercialisation of this street food is what truly highlights the essence of *Chauraha*. There is a large culture of fusion cuisine that attracts the majority of consumers to this area. Both of which were locals and tourists, however just as eager to try the new-concept foods offered.

## **11.2 Origin of the Fusion Foods**

Started barely four years ago, this street in Lucknow serves street food with a twist. This street serves food brought in from all corners of the country, not restricted to just Lucknow alone. Right from *schezwan momos* to vegetarian *kebabs* to Indian Pastas, The vendors here whip up dishes with their own special twist. What makes this single street unique is the fact that this street is an integral part of Lucknow despite the fact that most of the dishes served here are not originally from the city. Interestingly, the political parties presiding there have a say in the kind of food being served as the street is ultimately owned not by the individuals, but by the State.



**Figure 22. Soya chaap being grilled over coal**

Source: Discover India Program, 2019-2020

### **11.3 The Politics and Morals of Food**

A lane in Lucknow that forbids meat is a rare find as it deviates from the ideology of most established street food joints of the city. When asked about the reason behind only vegetarian dishes being served on the street, it was the politics to blame (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). According to Vendor 1, the politically associated group that owns 1090 *Chauraha* ensured the ban of non-vegetarian dishes in the area because it leads to violence (Personal Communication, 2020). As per the belief of the association, the provision of non-vegetarian food would result in the consumption of alcohol in the premises which would then lead to violence and chaos making it an unsafe destination (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). This statement can be understood in terms of the philosophy of types of arguments. Slippery slope argument is one wherein the first step is a mere idea which is followed by a series of ravelled up arguments leading to a detrimental outcome that may not even be related to the idea initially proposed (Walton, 1992). In this case, the initial argument against non-vegetarian food was followed by the assumption of

alcohol being involved and finally reached the outcome of resulting violence. The jump from non-vegetarian food to violence is rooted in a slippery slope argument which may be used reasonably in some cases but is considered a fallacy otherwise (Walton, 1992).

Even though there exists a strict policy of vegetarian food only, the stall selling dishes made of eggs was an interesting find. The presence of a stall that sells eggs would have been likely to cause conflict due to the belief of sticking to vegetarianism in the area. When asked about the concerned issue, Kumar explained that the ‘vegetarian diet’ is perceived differently by different people and can be interpreted in a variety of ways (Personal Communication, 2020). According to Kumar, “Eggs are not considered a non-vegetarian item anymore because most customers we get here are vegetarians and they enjoy our omelets, *bhurji*, and egg rolls” (Personal Communication, 2020). Gandhi’s ‘Moral Basis of Vegetarianism’ explains that eggs are considered as flesh food or non-vegetarian by laymen whereas milk is not (1959). While milk cannot be a part of a strict vegetarian diet, eggs can because the production of sterile eggs means it cannot develop into a chick (Gandhi, 1959). The perception of eggs as a non-vegetarian item is nullified when even milk is considered vegetarian as it is more of a flesh food than eggs (Gandhi, 1959).

1090 *Chauraha*’s food is influenced by the beliefs and ideologies of those who own the concerned street food community. This is not only in terms of a slippery slope fallacy of associating consumption of non-vegetarianism with chaos and violence due to the factor of alcohol but it can also be analyzed by varied perceptions of vegetarianism.

#### **11.4 *Chaap* Techniques**

Soya *chaap* and *tandoori chai* are the two most popular dishes that are cooked and served at 1090 *Chauraha*. ‘Roadstar Tandoori Chai’ is the sole stall selling this dish in Lucknow. Tandoori chai is famous for its unique flavour which is a result of its innovative cooking technique. According to Vendor 4, the process of making *tandoori chai* is very simple (Vendor 4, Personal Communication, 2020). The *chai* is cooked in two parts to achieve its earthen flavour (Vendor 4, Personal Communication, 2020). The process begins with earthen clay pots made of “*peeli mitti*” (yellow soil) heated directly on a tandoor of raw coal, until it turns dark red (Vendor 4, Personal Communication, 2020). *Chai*, which has already been cooked to about 70-75% is then poured into these steaming hot cups to complete the cooking process. This steaming of the *chai* in the heated

clay pots is what gives the tea its *tandoori* taste (Vendor 4, Personal Communication, 2020). The tea used is also special to Roadstar and is prepared at the stall itself.

In just over a year, 'Roadstar' has made hefty profits from the operations of just one stall in Lucknow. Vendor 4 attributes this to the incomparable flavours that this dish provides.

Soya *chaap* is the other signature dish of 1090 Chauraha. The special technique of *chaap* is authentic to soya bean dishes and has gained rising popularity in the last few years (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). The use of soya bean in cooking has occurred for "more than a hundred generations" in the "Orient" and India (The British Medical Journal, 1941). According to Rizzo and Baroni, the need for alternate sources of protein in the decade of vegetarianism has made way for the soya bean (2018). Soya is now being used as a surrogate for dairy and meat products and in India this refers to paneer and white meat (Rizzo and Baroni, 2018).

The high nutritional value of soya also renders it a preferred substitute to meat. Amino acids, B12, vitamin B, fibre, zinc, iron and calcium are a few of the micro and macronutrients present in soya (Rizzo and Baroni, 2018). It also aids in digestion and cooking the soya would further enhance this attribute (The British Medical Journal, 1941).

According to Vendor 1 at Delhi Waale Soya Chaap, the soya prepared here is done via mincing the soya and forming tikkas which is followed by adding various *masalas* and flavours (Personal Communication, 2020). The final cooking process of frying, grilling or roasting is the same as what can be done with meat (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). The stall provides a wide variety of flavours and these are factory made additives which go into the *chaap* (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). Flavours such as *dum biryani*, *hariyali*, *malai*, fish, chicken etc, are served here. According to the order, the specific dishes are then prepared using several secondary *masalas* and sauces which give it that final "non-veg" taste (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020). Fish *chaap* for example, uses mustard and other Indian spices which go into marinating fish (Vendor 1, Personal Communication, 2020).

The previously perceived dislike towards soya is often attributed to a lack of options and cooking skills (Arora, 2019). According to Vendor 1 as well, the stall has gained such popularity since they are one of the few individuals who know how to make the most of soya (2020). Due to its high versatility in preparation, the global popularity of soya is on the rise (Rizzo and Baroni, 2018). This versatile, compact dish can be prepared dry, *masala*, *gravy*, *fried*, *boiled*, *tandoor* etc. and is served with a side of *roti* or *paratha*.

## 12.0 Conclusion

The title of this report is *Sadkon ka Zaiqa* with an aim to study the socio-cultural and philosophical aspects of the street food of Lucknow. For the longest time, the city has been associated with bustling lanes full of street food and even today, that is the first thing one pictures when speaking about the place. It should be noted that it is the well known flavours of the street food that are not only famous amongst Lucknowis but also globally. While aspects such as popularity of the street food, financial implications of it and recipes of certain food items have been researched upon, it was the gaps in the literature available that our study aimed to research.

The review of existing literature led to the understanding that even though the rich historical context of Lucknow has been a topic of interest, there exists a lack in literature about its association with today's street food. A complex background and historical lineage indicate the presence of certain beliefs and ideologies followed that may have influenced the food in the process. The absence of such literature resulted in conducting research to fill out these gaps. Hence, the observations were analysed through philosophical and ideological inferences. After having covered the factors that influence popular Lucknowi street food, the actual techniques and ingredients used by present day vendors was aimed to study. While there is an availability of sources such as blogs and cooking channels that list out their understanding of the recipes, it is important to note that there is a lack of research based articles that explain the authentic techniques and the original process of preparing the street food served. In this sense, this research was conducted to study the street food of lucknow through a holistic approach of situational/environmental factors in terms of historical context, psycho-social domains in terms of philosophy and ideologies believed, and the actual cooking techniques followed.

After having identified the most popular street food joints of the city, the owners, other vendors and a food scholar were mainly interviewed. In terms of historical context, it was found that the origin of the joints as well as that of the food items ran across a wide range of variation. For instance, while places like Ali Hussain Sheermaal can be traced back to the 1830s, those like Sharma Tea stall and that of Makkhan Malai were established around 1965. The newer ventures such as Deva Food Mart and 1090 Chauraha can only be traced back to a few years ago. With regard to origin of the dishes, some such as the *biryani*, *Galawati kebabs* and *Sheermaal* are

original to this city of Nawabs, those like *chaat*, *kulfi*, *makkhan malai* and soya dishes have simply traveled to Lucknow but have now become the identity of it.

On analysing the beliefs behind the street food sold with established ideologies, it was found that they were not always indigenous to each place. Our interaction with the owners of the street food joints helped understand that while a cluster were environmentalists and propagated vegetarianism, the others prepared their food with strong religious beliefs and value systems. In terms of cooking techniques, our observations and research found that while some street food joints claim to have secret ingredients, others are relatively open about the items used to make the dish. In some cases, such as that of the *makkhan malai wala*, an interesting find was their invention of a device so as to make the cooking process easier and effective.

This research studied the mentioned aspects of the Lucknow street food scientifically by observing, analysing and drawing inferences to the primary sources with the help of secondary sources and vice versa. The study conducted by us aims to add to the literature concerning food scholars, enthusiasts and those studying food science. It will also provide detailed information to those interested in the Nawabi history with regard to legends of food, and also serves as a reliable study about cooking techniques of popular Lucknowi food.

“Whenever anyone visits Lucknow, I always suggest an ideal day for them. Breakfast at Sharma’s, lunch at Tunday Kababi, *chaat* as an evening snack, Idrees *ki* biryani for dinner and end the day with a kulfi if summer and *makkhan malai* if it’s winter. That is how you experience the real Lucknow in one day. Every time I eat biryani or sip on tea, I just feel so blessed I’m in Lucknow” (Mallik, Personal Communication, 2020).

The street food of Lucknow can be considered the last gift of the Mughals to India. The subtle flavours of Lucknowi food found in almost every lane of the city are not only rooted in deep history but also in multi faceted beliefs and innovative techniques. Food in Lucknow is known as a socially binding factor and the understanding of the vitality of it, especially that of street food, can be enhanced by viewing it from the perspectives this research focuses upon.

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## 14.0 Appendix

### 14.1 Glossary

*Aadab* -etiquette

*Aata*- flour

*Aloo paratha*- unleavened dough rolled with a mixture of mashed potato and spices, which is cooked on a hot tawa with butter or ghee.

*Baakhar kaani*- a thick, spiced flatbread that originated in modern-day Bangladesh during the Mughal period.

*Batashe*-puff-pastry balls filled with spiced mashed potato, spiced water, and tamarind juice.

*Bazaars*- a market

*Biryani*- an Indian dish made with highly seasoned rice and meat, fish, or vegetables.

*Bun makkhan*- a small bread spread with makkhan- butter

*Chai*- tea made by boiling tea leaves with milk, sugar, and sometimes spices.

*Chapati*- (in Indian cooking) a thin pancake of unleavened wholemeal bread cooked on a griddle.

*Chappals*- slippers

*Chikkan*-a delicate and artfully done hand embroidery on a variety of textile fabric like muslin, silk, chiffon, organza, net, etc

*Chutney*- a thick sauce of Indian origin that contains fruits, vinegar, sugar, and spices and is used as a condiment.

*Dahi aloo tikki*- a popular street food snack of potato patties topped with yogurt, sweet tamarind chutney, green chutney and spice blends.

*Dhaba*- a roadside food stall.

*Elaichi*- cardamom

*Galawti*- melts in the mouth

*Ghee*- clarified butter made from the milk of a buffalo or cow, used in South Asian cooking.

*Gol gappa*- a popular bite-size chaat consisting of a hollow, crispy-fried puffed ball that is filled with potato, chickpeas, onions, spices, and flavoured water, usually tamarind or mint, and popped into one's mouth whole.

*Kadak*- strong

*Kalakar*- artist

*Karma Yoga*-the discipline of selfless action as a way to perfection.

*Kebabs*- a dish of pieces of meat, fish, or vegetables roasted or grilled on a skewer.

*Korma*-a mildly spiced Indian curry dish of meat or fish marinated in yogurt or curds.

*Khaste*- khasta kachori is one that is puffed up and flaky outside but hollow inside as the filling sticks to the crust. Khasta actually means "flaky"

*Kulhad*- sometimes called a shikora, is a traditional handle-less clay cup from North India and Pakistan that is typically unpainted and unglazed, and meant to be disposable.

*Kurti*- A blouse is a kind of shirt worn by girls or women.

*Likert scale*- a scale used to represent people's attitudes to a topic.

*Lungis*- a garment similar to a sarong, wrapped around the waist and extending to the ankles

*Mahabharata*- A Sanskrit epic

*Maida*- wheat flour

*Makkan malai*-sweet snack made from milk cream during the winters in North India

*Masala*- a mixture of ground spices used in Indian cooking.

*Mattar*-peas

*Mashoor* - mesmerizing

*Momos* -a steamed dumpling filled with meat or vegetables.

*Mughlai*- A style of cuisine developed in the Indian subcontinent by the imperial kitchens of the Mughal Empire

*Muharram*- annual celebration in the month of Muharram commemorating the death of Husayn, grandson of Muhammad, and his retinue.

*Naan*- leavened bread baked in a clay oven in India

*Naam*- name

*Namak*- salt

*Nanbais*- bazaar chaats

*Nawabs*- honorific title

*Nazaquat*- elegance

*Neta*- a politician or leader of an organization.

*Nihari*-a stew from the Indian subcontinent consisting of slow-cooked meat, mainly shank meat of beef or lamb and mutton, goat meat and chicken, along with bone marrow.

*Paan*- an Indian after-dinner treat that consists of a betel leaf (Piper betle) filled with chopped betel (areca) nut (Areca catechu) and slaked lime (chuna; calcium hydroxide), to which assorted other ingredients, including red katha paste

*Pakka*- sure

*Palti*- turnover

*Pilaf*- a dish in which rice is cooked in a seasoned broth.

*Pani batata*- pani means water and batata means potato

*Papad*- a thin, crisp disc-shaped food typically based on a seasoned dough usually made from peeled black gram flour (urad flour), fried or cooked with dry heat.

*Paratha*-a flat, thick piece of unleavened bread fried on a griddle.

*Pulao*- a Middle Eastern or Indian dish of rice (or sometimes wheat) cooked in stock with spices, typically having added meat or vegetables.

*Quran*- The holy book

*Ramayana*- A Sanskrit epic

*Ramzaan*- the ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed from dawn to sunset.

*Ras*- juice of something

*Rotis*- Indian bread

*Sadko*- the streets

*Salan*- curry

*Samosas*-a triangular savoury pastry fried in ghee or oil, containing spiced vegetables or meat.

*Schezwan*- a style of Chinese cooking that is spicy, oily, and especially peppery.

*Shensaab*- title given to the Persian emperors, meaning King of Kings.

*Sikander*-Sikandar is the Persian rendition of the name Alexander. When the Greek emperor Alexander the Great conquered Persia, the Persians called him Sikandar, meaning "defender" or "warrior"

*Soan papdi*- Soan papdi is a popular Indian dessert. It is usually cube-shaped or served as flakes, and has a crisp and flaky texture.

*Suryavanshi dynasty*- celebrated dynasty from Hindu mythology

*Tawa*- a large, flat or convex disc-shaped griddle made from metal, usually sheet iron, cast iron, sheet steel or aluminium. It is used in South, Central, and West Asia for cooking a variety of flatbreads and as a griddle for meat.

*Tehzeeb*- culture of *tikki*

*Tikki*- small cutlet or croquette

*Tunday*- Tunde is an urdu word meaning "without an arm", hence the name Tunday Kababi.

*Yadnya*- Holy fire

*Yakhni* -Yakhni is a light curry or broth made using yogurt and saffron among other ingredients.

*Zaika/Zaiqa*- Taste

## 14. 2 Survey questions

(Only for people living/have lived in Lucknow)

1. How long have lived or have been living in Lucknow?
2. How often do you consume street food in Lucknow

Very Often/Often/Rarely/Never

3. How would you define street food?
4. What specific place(s) comes to mind when you hear the term 'street food of Lucknow'?
5. Would you prefer street food over larger franchises? Why?
6. Do you have any sentimental association with street food? If yes, what?

## 14.3 On-field Questionnaire

### General Questions:

1. What is this dish? What does the name mean?  
(*Yeh kya cheez hai? Aur iske naam ka matlab kya hai? Iska naam kaise pada?*)
2. Have you modified your cooking practices? Eg: Fuel, utensils etc.  
(*Kya aapne apne khane ke tarike me koi badlav lae hai? For example: bartano mein koi badlav aaya hai ya pakane ke tareeqe me*)
  - If yes, what have these changes been? (*agar han, to wo badlaw kya hain?*)

- Do you prefer these changes to previous practices? (*kya aapko yeh badlaw achhe lagte hai pahle ke muqable?*)
  - What has been the reaction of your customers? (*Iss badlaw ko leke, aapke customers ka kya bartaw raha hain?*)
  - Have these changes provided benefit? (*kya yeh changes aapke liye acche rahe hain?*)
3. What part of the cooking process is unique to your dish and makes it stand out?  
(*Kya aapke khaane pakane mein koi khaas tareeka hai jo isko alag banata hai?*).
  4. What are the ingredients used in making this dish?  
(*Iss pakwan ko banaane ke lie kin ingredients/saamagriyon ka istemaal kiya jaata hai?*)

## **Cooking techniques**

### **1. Sweet dish**

1. How long is the process of getting the perfect consistency for the *Makkhan Malai*?- for Vendors  
(*Makkhan malai ki sabse acchi rachna pahuchne ke liye kitna samay lagta hai?*)

### **2. Chaat (Mostly Vendors)**

1. What is the procedure of making this *chaat*?  
(*Iss chaat ko banane ka kya tareeqa hai?*)
2. On an average, how long do you take to prepare one dish?  
(*Aam taur se, iss chaat ko banane ke liye kitna waqt lagta hai?*)
3. What is the most significant ingredient in this dish that makes it stand out? -  
(*Kya aap apni chaat mein koi aise cheez ka istemaal karte hai jo ise itna lazeez banati hai?*)
4. What is the significance of *matar* (white peas) in Lucknow chaats?  
(*Lucknow ki chaat mein mataara ki kya ahmiyat hai?*)
5. Does presentation matter in your preparation process? What is its uniqueness?  
(*Aapke pakwaan mein khaane ke sajaavat ki kya ahmiyat hai? Iss sajaawat ki kya khaasiyat hai?*)

### 3. Biryani (vendors)

1. What is the procedure of making this *biryani*?  
(*Aap iss biryani ko kaise pakate hain?*)
2. What meat is used in this *biryani*?  
(*Iss biryani mein kaunsa ghosht ka istemaal hota hai?*)
3. How long do you marinate the meat used in the different *biryani* dishes?  
(*Aap iss ghosht ko kitne waqt ke liye khatai mein dalte hai?*)
4. What are the layers in the *biryani*?  
(*Iss biryani ki teh ke baare mein hume bataaiye.*)
5. In which utensil is the marination, cooking of rice as well as *biryani* done ?  
(*Yeh khatai dalna, chawal pakaana aur biryani banana kiss bartan mein hota hai? Aur yeh bartan kiss cheez se bana hai?*)
6. What type of stove is used to make the dish? Why? (does it add to flavour/more efficient cooking?)  
(*Iss pakwaan ke liye kaunsa chulha istemaal hota hai aur kyun? aur iski ahmiyat kya hai?*)
7. What is the cooking time/ what part of the process takes the longest?  
(*Iss pakwaan ko banane ke liye kiss tareeqe mein sabse zyaada waqt lagta hai?*)
8. What is the best side dish with each of the *biryani* and why? - for consumers as well  
(*biryani ke saath sabse acchi cheez kya hai or kyun?*)

### 4. Kebab (mostly vendors)

1. What is the procedure of making this *kebab*?  
(*Kebab banane ke tareeqe ke baare mein kya bataana chaahenge?* )
2. How long do you cook the *kebab* to get the perfect texture?  
(*Kebab ki banawat ke liye isse kitne waqt ke liye pakaana chahiye?*)
3. How long do you marinate the meat for?  
(*Iss kebab ko kitne waqt ke liye khatai mein dalna hota hai?*)
4. What is the difference between *Tunday* and *Galawti*?  
(*Galawti aur Tunday kebab mein kya farq hai?* )

### 5. Tea (vendors)

1. What is the procedure of making this tea?  
(*Iss chai banane ki tayaari ke baare mein kya batana chahenge?*)
2. How long does it take to make this tea? Why?  
(*Iss chai ko banane ke liye kitna waqt lagta hai aur kyun?*)
3. What utensil is used to make this tea? What material is it made of ?  
(*Iss chai ko kiss bartan mein banaya jaata hai? Ye bartan kiss cheez se banaya jaate hai aur kyu?*)
4. What ingredients make this tea different from the rest? (Color)  
(*Iss chai ki taiyyari mein kaunsi khaas cheez ka isstemaal kiya jaata hai jo isse alag banaati hai? ) (Rang)*)
5. Does presentation matter in your preparation process? What is its uniqueness?  
(*Kya aapke pakwaan mein Sahil aawat ki koi ahmiyat hai? Iss sajaawat ki kya khaasiyat hai?*)
6. What makes *Sharmaji* special to you?  
(*Aapke liye Sharmaji ko kya khaas banata hai?*)
7. What are the demographics of the people that come here?- foreigners, locals, morning walkers, office goers?  
(*Yaha par kiss prakaar ke log aate hai?*)
8. Which day is the busiest and why?  
(*Din mein sabse zyada bheed kab aati hai?*)
9. How long have you been working here?  
(*Aap yaha kitne saalo se kaam kar rahe hai?*)
10. Where have you worked previously?  
(*Yaha par kaam karne se pehle aap kya karte the?*)

**Consumer Preference** -for mostly consumers to answer

1. What's your favourite dish here?  
(*Yahaan pe aapki sabse manpasand khaane ki cheez kaunsi hai?*)

2. Are you a frequent customer/ how often have you been here?

*(Kya aap yahaan pehli bahaar aaye hain? Kitni baar aaye hain?)*

If yes:

-Do you have any reasons for coming here apart from the food/ dish served here?

*(Aapko yahaan khaane ke alava kya pasand hai/ Khane ke alava, aap kiss wajah se yahaan aate rehte hain?)*

-How did you find out about this place?

*(Aapko iss jagah ke baare mein kaise pata chala?)*

-How has the restaurant/ stall changed since you've started coming?

*(Kya is jagah/restaurant mein koi khaas badlav aaya hai?)*

- Do you prefer having this dish here compared to other spots?

*(Kya aap ye khaana yahaa khaana zyada pasand karte hai ya koi aur jagah pe?)*

If no:

*(Agar nahi)*

- How has your experience of this place been?

*(Iss jagah ka tajurba aapko kaisa laga?)*

-Would you come back again?

*(Kya aap dubara yahan wapas aana chahenge?)*

- What suggestions would you have to better this experience?

*(Iss jagah ka tajurba/experience ko aur bahtar banane ke liye aap kya tajweez/suggestion de sakte hai?)*

On a scale of 1-5, (1-Very poor | 2 - Poor | 3 - Mediocre | 4 - Good | 5 - Very Good)

How would you rate the following: price, quality and hygiene? *Ask vendors*

*Aap qeemat, quality aur safai ko 1-5 main jawaab deejiye, (1 - bahaut kharaab / 2 - kharaab / 3 - theek / 4 - achha / 5 - kaafi achha)*

4. Have you found any common characteristics between dishes that attract customers? - *for Vendors to answer*

*( Kya aapko koi aisi ek aise cheez mili jo customers ke sab manpasand khaane mein istemaal hoti hai? )*

5. Why apart from the dish do people come back? *or Vendors to answer*

*(Khaane ke alaava yaha log kyu aate hai?)*

### **3. Authenticity-***for mostly vendors to answer*

1. Have you had this dish before? If yes, where? According to you, is this a more authentic form of the dish? - *for customers to answer*

*( Kya aapne isse pehle kabhi khaaya hai? Agar haan, toh kahaan? Aapke mutabik, kya yeh iss dish ki sabse original form hai? )*

2. Have any characteristics of the dish changed since you've started eating here?

*(Jabse aapne yahaan pehli baar khaya tha, tabse yahaan ki khaane ki item mein koi khaas badlav aaya hai kya?) - for customers to answer*

3. What makes your dish authentic?

*(Aapki dish ko kya cheez original banati hai?)*

4. Are there any general practices you follow to keep all your dishes tasting authentic?

*(Kya iss dish ko original banane ke liye aap koi khaas tareeqa aapnaate hai?)*

#### 4. **Tourism-** *for vendors to answer*

1. How many tourists now do you see coming now compared to before?  
(*Kya aaj kal mein tourists zyada badh gaye hain?*)
2. Have you changed products/ services to accommodate tourist preferences? (ingredients, ambience, food presentation, cooking style)?  
(*Kya aapne tourists ki pasand ke mutabiq product ya service mein koi farq laya hai?*)

#### **Legends and Tales**

1. Have you heard of the story behind how this *kebab* came to be?  
(*Kya is kebab ke peeche koi puraani kahaani hai?*) - *for vendors to answer*
2. Do you prefer beef or lamb while making the *kebab*? (which is softer)  
(*Kebab ki banavat ke liye aap gai ka ya bakre ka gosht pasand karte hai?*)- *for vendors to answer*
3. What is the difference between a *biryani* and a *pulao*?  
(*Biryani aur pulao mein kya farq hai?*) - *for vendors to answer*
4. Do you think the presentation of the *biryani/pulao* is important?  
(*Kya aapke hisaab se isko pesh karne ka tareeka zaroori hai?*) *for both vendors and customers to answer*
5. Do you have any family connection/tales to any dishes? *for vendors to answer*  
(*Kya iske peeche aapki koi viraasat hai?*)
6. Is there a specific story that you were told about the dish type/preparation you make today?  
*for vendors to answer*  
(*Kya aapko iss pakwaan ke baare mein koi khaas kahaani batayi gayi thi?*)
7. What brought you into the line of street food? - *for vendors to answer*  
(*Aapko kiss cheez ne iss kaam ke liye amaada/tayyar kiya?*)
8. What is street food to you?  
(*Aapke ke liye street food kya hai?*)-*for both vendors and customers to answer*
9. One interesting experience in your line of street food?  
(*Aapke khaane ke business ki koi khaas kahaani/tajurba hai?*)-*for vendors to answer*

10. What legacy/one important thing for future generation?  
*(Aap apne bacho ko kya batana chahenge iske baare mein?)*-for vendors to answer
11. Do you know anything about the connection between *biryani* and the Persian *pulao*?  
*(Kya biryani aur persian pulao mein koi mel hai?)*-for both vendors and customers to answer
12. Is asafoetida an important part of your dishes?  
*(Kya aapke khaane mein heeng daalna zaroori hai?)*- for vendors to answer
13. Can you tell us something about *dopiaza* if you have heard of it or use it?  
*(Dopiaza ke baare mein kya batana chahenge aur kya aap iska istemaal karte hai?)*-for both vendors and customers to answer
14. What have you heard about *Nawab Asaf ud Dullah*?  
*(Aapne nawab Asaf ud Dullah ke baare mein kya suna hai?)*- for customers to answer
15. What's the difference between *biryani* and *pulao*?  
*(Biryani aur pulao mein kya farq hai?)*-for customers to answer
16. Have you heard of any famous tales behind the *kebabs*?  
*(Kya aapne kebab ki koi mashhoor kahaani suni hai?)*- for customers to answer

### 14.3 List of Interviewees

Main Vendors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mohammed Usman</li><li>2. Grandson of Tunday- Chowk</li><li>3. Umar Ali</li><li>4. Gaurav Dixit</li><li>5. Sanjeev Kumar Jain</li><li>6. Sharmaji</li><li>7. Harsh Arora</li><li>8. Gaya Prasad</li><li>9. Abu Bakr</li><li>10. Manoj Yadav</li><li>11. Chauraha Vendor 1 - name not to be disclosed</li><li>12. Kumar</li><li>13. Chauraha Vendor 3 - name not to be disclosed</li><li>14. Chauraha Vendor 4 - name not to be disclosed</li></ol>
Side Vendors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Manav Sharma</li><li>2. Guddu</li><li>3. Brajesh</li></ol>
Food Scholar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Vikas Mallik</li></ol>

