

Role Of Cultural And Regional Factors In Shaping Consumer Engagement With Food Delivery Apps In India

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of food delivery applications in India has transformed consumer purchasing behaviour and marketing practices. In this context, cultural and regional factors have emerged as important determinants of consumer engagement on social media platforms. The present study examines the role of India-specific cultural factors, including festive consumption patterns, cricket and IPL promotions, Bollywood and OTT influences, regional and local-language content, and social-cause campaigns in shaping consumer engagement with food delivery applications. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design and is based on primary data collected from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire. Frequency analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the collected data and interpret consumer perceptions regarding cultural and regional marketing strategies. The study concludes that culturally relevant and region-specific social media strategies play a crucial role in enhancing consumer engagement with food delivery brands in India. Food delivery companies should therefore integrate local culture, festivals, regional identities, and socially responsible initiatives into their marketing strategies to strengthen customer relationships and achieve sustainable competitive advantage in the rapidly growing digital marketplace.

Keywords: Food Delivery Apps, Consumer Engagement, Social Media Marketing, Cultural Factors, Regional Identity, Festive Campaigns.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

India has witnessed a remarkable transformation in its food delivery industry over the last decade. The increasing penetration of smartphones, affordable internet connectivity, urbanisation, and changing lifestyles have accelerated the adoption of online food delivery applications [1,2]. Companies such as Zomato and Swiggy have revolutionised the food ordering experience by offering convenience, variety, and personalised services [3,4]. Along with technological advancements, social media has emerged as a powerful platform for influencing consumer behaviour and enhancing customer engagement [5].

In a culturally diverse country like India, consumer engagement is not shaped solely by technological or economic factors. Cultural and regional elements play an equally important role in influencing purchasing behaviour and brand interactions. Festivals such as Diwali, Eid, Navratri, Durga Puja, and Christmas create unique consumption patterns, leading food delivery companies to launch festive campaigns and special offers. Similarly, regional food preferences, local languages, and cultural identities significantly affect consumers' emotional attachment to brands.

1.2 Growth of Food Delivery Apps in India

The Indian food delivery market has expanded rapidly due to increasing digital adoption and changing consumer lifestyles [2]. Consumers increasingly prefer online food ordering because of convenience, time savings, and access to diverse cuisines. This growth has intensified competition among food delivery companies and increased the importance of consumer engagement strategies [3,4].



1.3 Cultural Diversity and Consumer Behaviour

India is characterised by immense cultural diversity in terms of languages, traditions, religions, festivals, and food habits. Consumer choices are often influenced by cultural values and social norms. Therefore, businesses must align their marketing strategies with regional and cultural preferences to create meaningful consumer experiences.

1.4 Importance of Regional Food Identity

Food is an integral part of regional identity in India. Consumers often exhibit emotional attachment to local cuisines and traditional food practices. Food delivery companies leverage this regional identity by promoting local dishes, regional restaurants, and content in local languages to strengthen consumer engagement.

1.5 Influence of Festivals on Consumer Engagement

Festivals significantly influence consumer purchasing patterns in India. Food delivery platforms launch festive campaigns, discount offers, and special menus during occasions such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Navratri, Onam, and Christmas. These campaigns help brands create emotional connections and encourage higher engagement and order frequency.

1.6 Need and Significance of the Study

Although previous studies have examined consumer behaviour and social media marketing, limited research has focused specifically on the influence of India-specific cultural and regional factors on consumer engagement with food delivery apps. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with diverse consumer groups. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap and contribute to the growing literature on digital consumer engagement in India.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) “Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media” examined the emergence and growth of social media as a communication platform. The study highlighted that social media enables interactive communication between brands and consumers, thereby enhancing customer engagement and relationship building. The authors argued that firms must create content that aligns with users’ social and cultural preferences to achieve greater engagement. The study provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how social media strategies influence consumer behaviour in digital markets [6]. Complementing this view, Kietzmann et al. (2011) proposed the honeycomb framework of seven functional building blocks of social media, offering firms a structured lens for designing engagement-oriented social media strategies [7].

2.2 Ashley and Tuten (2015) “Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement” analysed the effectiveness of creative social media strategies used by brands. The study found that entertaining, interactive, and culturally relevant content generates higher levels of consumer engagement. The authors emphasised that humour, contests, and emotionally appealing content encourage consumers to interact more actively with brands. Their findings are particularly relevant for food delivery companies that rely heavily on social media campaigns [8]. In a related service context, Hudson and Thal (2013) demonstrated that social media fundamentally reshapes consumer–brand relationships in experience-driven sectors such as tourism and hospitality, underscoring its relevance for service businesses like online food delivery [9].

2.3 Alalwan et al. (2017) “Social Media in Marketing: A Review and Analysis of the Existing Literature” reviewed the growing role of social media in marketing and consumer decision-making. The study concluded that social media platforms significantly influence consumer attitudes, trust, and purchase intentions. The authors also noted that cultural and social contexts shape the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns. The study highlights the importance of adapting marketing strategies according to local cultural characteristics [10].

2.4 Dwivedi et al. (2021) “Setting the Future of Digital and Social Media Marketing Research: Perspectives and Research Propositions” explored emerging trends in digital and social media marketing. The study emphasised that brands increasingly use personalised and culturally relevant content to engage consumers. The authors argued that future research should investigate how regional cultures and social values affect digital consumer behaviour. Their work supports the need to study India-specific cultural factors in food delivery marketing [11].

2.5 Statista Research Department “Food Delivery Market in India” report highlighted the rapid growth of the Indian online food delivery market. The report showed that increasing smartphone usage, urbanisation, and digital payments have accelerated the adoption of food delivery applications. The report also indicated that companies increasingly utilise festivals, celebrity endorsements, and regional campaigns to enhance customer engagement and brand loyalty [2].

2.6 Kumar and Shah (2021) “Consumer Engagement in Online Food Delivery Services: Role of Social Media Marketing” examined the influence of social media marketing on consumer engagement in online food delivery services in India. The study found that promotional offers, influencer marketing, and entertaining content significantly improve customer interaction and brand loyalty. The authors concluded that engagement strategies become more effective when they reflect consumers’ cultural preferences and lifestyle choices.

2.7 Research Gap

The review of literature indicates that previous studies have extensively examined social media marketing, consumer engagement, and online food delivery services. The broader engagement literature has further established the conceptual domain, antecedents, and measurement of customer engagement in digital environments [12,13,14,15]. Several studies have also explored the impact of festive campaigns, influencer marketing, and regional identity on consumer behaviour [16]. However, limited research has comprehensively analysed the combined effect of India-specific cultural factors such as festive consumption, regional food identity, cricket, cinema, and social-cause campaigns on consumer engagement with food delivery apps. Therefore, the present study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating how these cultural and regional dimensions shape consumer engagement in the Indian food delivery market.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the role of cultural and regional factors in shaping consumer engagement with food delivery applications in India. The study focuses on understanding how festive campaigns, regional food identity, cricket and entertainment-related promotions influence consumers’ engagement behaviour on social media platforms.

3.2 Sources of Data

- **Primary Data:** Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire designed to measure consumer perceptions regarding cultural and regional social media strategies used by food delivery platforms.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data were collected from research articles, books, journals, conference proceedings, websites, industry reports, and published reports related to social media marketing, consumer engagement, and food delivery services in India.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises consumers who actively use food delivery applications such as Zomato, Swiggy, EatSure, and other online food delivery platforms in India. Consumers from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupations were considered for the study.

3.4 Sample Size

A total of **100 respondents** were selected as the sample for the study. The respondents were chosen from consumers who regularly use food delivery applications and engage with their social media content.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed a **Convenience Sampling Technique** for selecting respondents. This non-probability sampling method was adopted because of its ease of access, time efficiency, and suitability for exploratory consumer behaviour studies.

3.6 Statistical Tools Used

The collected data were coded and analysed using **SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences)**. The following statistical techniques were used:

- Frequency and Percentage Analysis
- Mean and Standard Deviation
- Descriptive Statistics

3.7 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to consumers of food delivery applications in India. It specifically examines the influence of India-specific cultural and regional factors on consumer engagement through social media marketing strategies. The findings of the study may help food delivery companies formulate culturally relevant and regionally customised marketing campaigns to improve consumer engagement and brand loyalty.

3.8 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of festive and occasion-based campaigns on consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.
2. To analyse the impact of cricket, IPL, and sports-related promotions on consumer engagement with food delivery platforms.
3. To study the role of Bollywood, OTT, and entertainment-linked content in shaping consumer engagement.
4. To investigate the influence of regional food identity and local-language content on consumer engagement with food delivery apps.

3.9 Hypotheses of the Study

Null Hypotheses (H0)

H01: Festive and occasion-based campaigns do not significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H02: Cricket, IPL, and sports-related promotions do not significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H03: Bollywood, OTT, and entertainment-linked content do not significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H04: Regional food identity and local-language content do not significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

Alternative Hypotheses (H1)

H1: Festive and occasion-based campaigns significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H2: Cricket, IPL, and sports-related promotions significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H3: Bollywood, OTT, and entertainment-linked content significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

H4: Regional food identity and local-language content significantly influence consumer engagement with food delivery apps in India.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1. Age-wise distribution of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 18 years	5	5

18–25 years	38	38
26–35 years	32	32
36–45 years	18	18
Above 45 years	7	7
Total	100	100

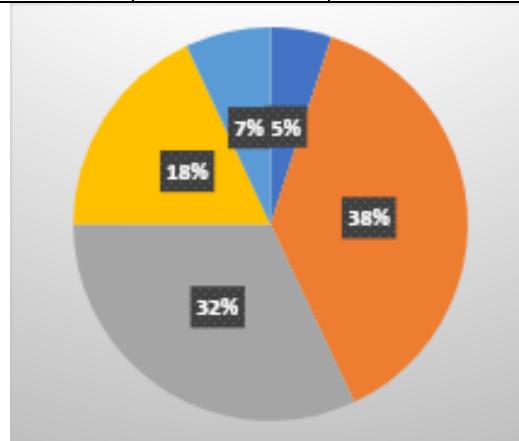


Fig 1 Age-wise distribution of respondents

Interpretation

Table 1 presents the age-wise distribution of respondents participating in the study. It is observed that the majority of respondents belong to the 18–25 years age group, accounting for 38% of the total sample. This is followed by respondents in the 26–35 years age group, representing 32% of the sample. The 36–45 years category comprises 18% of the respondents, while 7% belong to the Above 45 years category. Only 5% of the respondents are below 18 years of age.

Table 2. Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	58	58
Female	39	39
Prefer not to say	3	3
Total	100	100

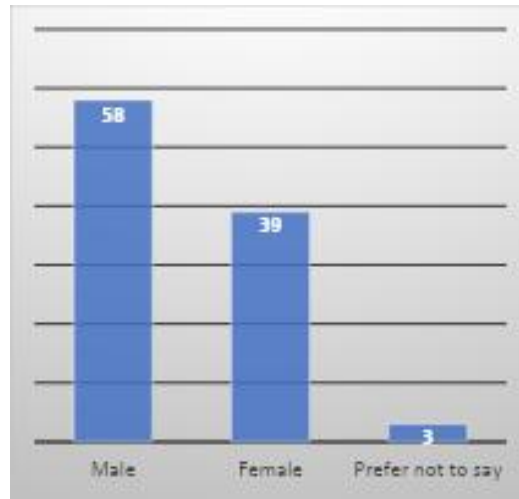


Fig 2 Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Interpretation

Table 2 presents the gender-wise distribution of respondents included in the study. The data reveal that a majority of the respondents are male, accounting for 58% of the total sample. Female respondents constitute 39% of the sample, while 3% of the respondents preferred not to disclose their gender.

Table 3. Food delivery app used most frequently

Food Delivery App	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Zomato	46	46
Swiggy	38	38
Uber Eats (legacy usage)	4	4
EatSure	7	7
Other	5	5
Total	100	100

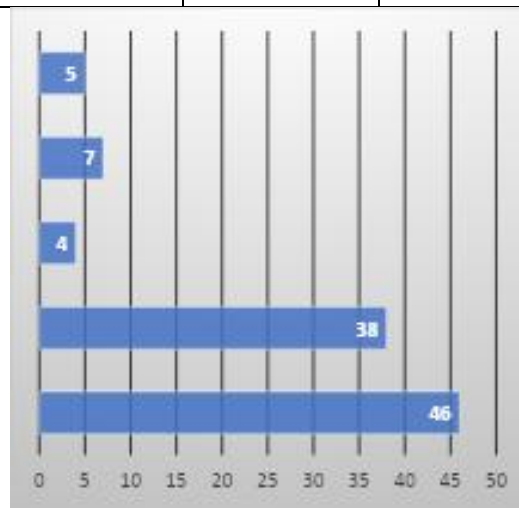


Fig 3 Most frequently used food delivery app

Interpretation

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents based on the food delivery app they use most frequently. The findings reveal that Zomato is the most preferred food delivery application, with 46% of the respondents indicating it as their primary platform. Swiggy ranks second, accounting for 38% of the respondents. A comparatively smaller proportion of respondents use EatSure (7%), while Uber Eats and other applications account for 4% and 5%, respectively. The study therefore primarily reflects consumer engagement patterns associated with the leading food delivery platforms in India.

Table 4. Frequency of placing orders on food delivery apps

Order Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Daily	12	12
Several times a week	28	28
Once a week	24	24
Few times a month	26	26
Rarely	10	10
Total	100	100

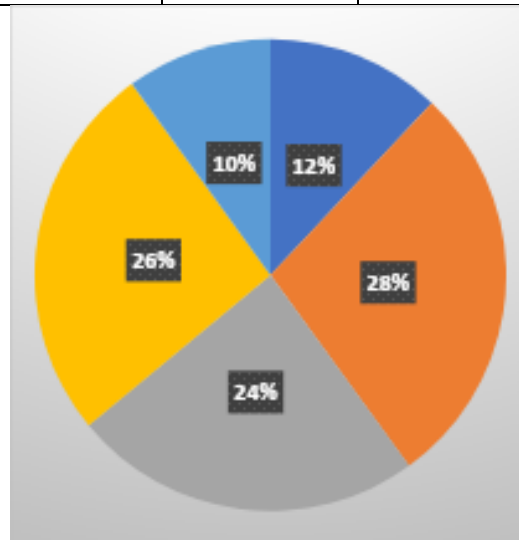


Fig 4 Frequency of ordering on food delivery apps

Interpretation

Table 4 presents the frequency with which respondents place orders through food delivery applications. The findings indicate that 28% of the respondents place orders several times a week, making it the most common ordering pattern among the sample. This is followed by 26% of respondents who order food a few times a month and 24% who place orders once a week. A smaller proportion of respondents order food daily (12%), while 10% reported using food delivery apps rarely.

Table 5. Average monthly expenditure on food delivery apps

Monthly Expenditure	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than ₹500	14	14
₹500 – ₹1,000	31	31

₹1,001 – ₹2,000	29	29
₹2,001 – ₹5,000	18	18
Above ₹5,000	8	8
Total	100	100

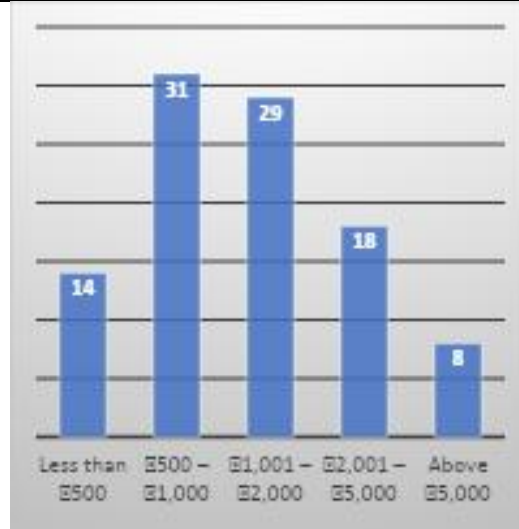


Fig 5 Average monthly expenditure on food delivery apps

Interpretation

Table 5 presents the average monthly expenditure of respondents on food delivery applications. The findings reveal that the largest proportion of respondents (31%) spend between ₹500 and ₹1,000 per month on food delivery services. This is closely followed by 29% of respondents who spend between ₹1,001 and ₹2,000 monthly. About 18% of the respondents spend between ₹2,001 and ₹5,000, while 8% spend above ₹5,000 and 14% spend less than ₹500 per month. These findings indicate that food delivery services form a regular component of respondents' monthly consumption patterns.

Table 6. Awareness of festive campaigns by food delivery apps on social media

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	4	4
Disagree	9	9
Neutral	18	18
Agree	42	42
Strongly Agree	27	27
Total	100	100

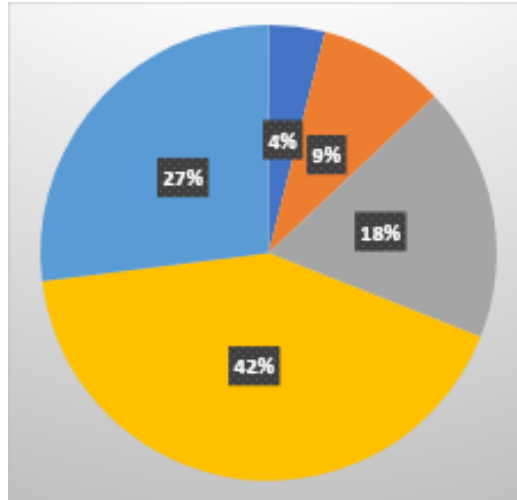


Fig 6 Awareness of festive campaigns on social media

Interpretation

Table 6 presents respondents' opinions regarding their awareness of festive campaigns conducted by food delivery apps on social media platforms. The results show that 42% of the respondents agree and 27% strongly agree that they frequently notice festive campaigns such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas, and other celebrations promoted by food delivery brands. Together, these categories account for 69% of the total respondents, indicating a high level of visibility and awareness of festive marketing campaigns.

On the other hand, 18% of the respondents remain neutral, while only 9% disagree and 4% strongly disagree with the statement. The findings suggest that festive campaigns are highly effective in capturing consumer attention and creating brand visibility on social media platforms. The strong positive response also indicates that food delivery companies strategically leverage cultural and festive occasions to strengthen consumer engagement and enhance emotional connections with their audience.

Table 7. Attention attracted by cricket and IPL-related promotions

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	5	5
Disagree	10	10
Neutral	20	20
Agree	40	40
Strongly Agree	25	25
Total	100	100

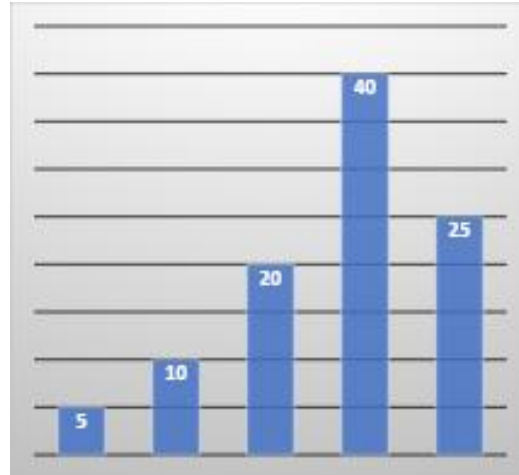


Fig 7 Attention attracted by cricket and IPL promotions

Interpretation

Table 7 presents respondents' opinions regarding whether cricket and IPL-related promotions attract their attention on food delivery applications. The results indicate that 40% of the respondents agree and 25% strongly agree with the statement, together accounting for 65% of the total sample. This suggests that cricket and IPL promotions are highly effective in attracting consumer attention and enhancing engagement with food delivery brands.

Further, 20% of the respondents remain neutral, while only 10% disagree and 5% strongly disagree with the statement. The findings reveal that cricket, especially the IPL season, serves as a powerful cultural and entertainment platform for food delivery companies to promote their products and services. The popularity of sports-related campaigns indicates that consumers are more likely to interact with brands when marketing messages are aligned with widely followed national events. Therefore, cricket and IPL-based promotions play a significant role in strengthening consumer engagement and increasing brand visibility in the Indian food delivery market.

Table 8. Influence of Bollywood and OTT-related promotions on brand interest

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	8	8
Disagree	14	14
Neutral	24	24
Agree	36	36
Strongly Agree	18	18
Total	100	100

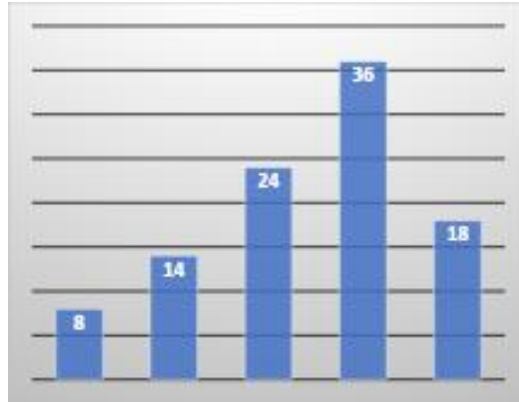


Fig 8 Influence of Bollywood and OTT promotions

Interpretation

Table 8 presents respondents' opinions regarding the statement that Bollywood and OTT-related promotions increase their interest in food delivery brands. Out of 100 respondents, 36% agreed and 18% strongly agreed with the statement, indicating that more than half of the respondents (54%) perceive entertainment-related promotional content as an influential factor in increasing their interest in food delivery applications. Bollywood celebrities, movie collaborations, and OTT platform tie-ups appear to create a stronger emotional connection and enhance brand visibility among consumers.

On the other hand, 24% of respondents remained neutral, while 14% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed with the statement. This suggests that although entertainment-based promotions are not equally effective for all users, they still play an important role in attracting and engaging a significant segment of consumers. Overall, the findings indicate that Bollywood and OTT-related content positively contributes to consumer engagement and can be considered an effective cultural marketing strategy for food delivery apps in India.

Table 9. Relatability of regional and local-language content

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	4	4
Disagree	11	11
Neutral	19	19
Agree	43	43
Strongly Agree	23	23
Total	100	100

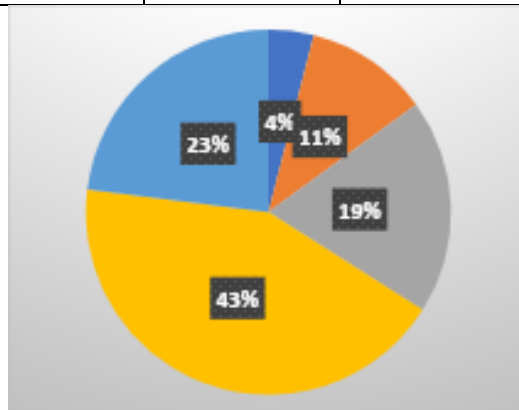


Fig 9 Relatability of regional and local-language content

Interpretation

Table 9 presents respondents' opinions regarding whether regional and local-language content makes food delivery brands more relatable. The findings reveal that 43% of the respondents agree and 23% strongly agree with the statement. Together, these categories account for 66% of the total respondents, indicating that a majority of consumers feel more connected to food delivery brands when marketing content is presented in regional languages and reflects local culture.

Further, 19% of the respondents expressed a neutral opinion, while 11% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed with the statement. The results suggest that the use of regional languages and locally relevant content helps brands establish emotional closeness and cultural relevance among consumers. Such strategies enable food delivery companies to communicate more effectively with diverse consumer groups across different regions of India. Overall, the findings indicate that regional and local-language content is an important cultural marketing tool that enhances brand relatability and strengthens consumer engagement with food delivery applications.

Table 10. Influence of social-cause campaigns on brand perception

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	3	3
Disagree	9	9
Neutral	21	21
Agree	44	44
Strongly Agree	23	23
Total	100	100

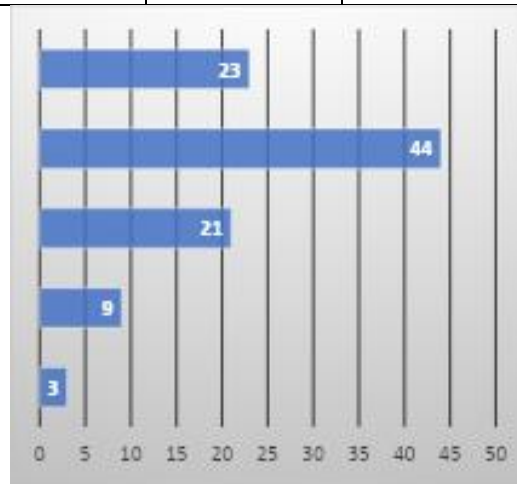


Fig 10 Influence of social-cause campaigns on brand perception

Interpretation

Table 10 presents respondents' opinions regarding whether social-cause campaigns such as #SupportLocal, delivery partner welfare initiatives, and community-support activities positively influence their perception of food delivery brands. The results reveal that 44% of the respondents agree and 23% strongly agree with the statement. Collectively, 67% of the respondents hold a positive view, indicating that socially responsible initiatives significantly contribute to enhancing brand image and consumer trust.

Furthermore, 21% of the respondents expressed a neutral opinion, while only 9% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed. The findings suggest that consumers increasingly value brands that demonstrate social responsibility and

contribute positively to society. Campaigns focused on supporting local businesses, ensuring delivery partner welfare, and promoting community well-being create a favourable brand perception and strengthen emotional connections with consumers. Overall, the results indicate that social-cause campaigns are an effective cultural and ethical marketing strategy that enhances consumer engagement and improves the overall perception of food delivery brands in India.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings of the study titled “Role of Cultural and Regional Factors in Shaping Consumer Engagement with Food Delivery Apps in India” are summarised as follows:

1. The study found that the majority of respondents belonged to the 18–25 years age group, indicating that young consumers are the most active users of food delivery applications and social media platforms.
2. Male respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the sample compared to female respondents, suggesting comparatively greater participation of males in food delivery app usage.
3. Most respondents were single and graduates, reflecting that educated young adults form the primary customer base of food delivery platforms.
4. The analysis revealed that Zomato and Swiggy are the most frequently used food delivery applications among respondents, highlighting their dominant position in the Indian market.
5. A large proportion of respondents place food orders several times a week or a few times a month, indicating the regular integration of food delivery services into consumers’ lifestyles.
6. The majority of consumers spend between ₹500 and ₹2,000 per month on food delivery services, demonstrating moderate but consistent expenditure on online food ordering.
7. Festive campaigns such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas, and other regional festivals are highly visible on social media, with most respondents agreeing that they frequently notice such campaigns.
8. The findings indicate that festive and occasion-based promotions positively influence consumers’ emotional connection with food delivery brands and encourage greater engagement during festival periods.
9. Cricket and IPL-related promotions attract considerable consumer attention, as sports events create excitement and increase the effectiveness of promotional campaigns.
10. The study found that sports-based marketing strategies help food delivery brands strengthen engagement and increase brand recall among consumers.
11. Bollywood and OTT-related promotional content positively influences consumer interest, although its impact is relatively lower compared to festive and sports-related campaigns.
12. Regional and local-language content makes food delivery brands more relatable and culturally relevant, helping brands connect effectively with diverse consumer groups across India.
13. Overall, the research concludes that cultural and regional factors significantly contribute to consumer engagement and should be considered essential components of social media marketing strategies adopted by food delivery applications in India.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study, “Role of Cultural and Regional Factors in Shaping Consumer Engagement with Food Delivery Apps in India,” examined how India-specific cultural dimensions influence consumer engagement with food delivery brands on social media platforms. The study demonstrates that consumer engagement in India is not driven solely by technological convenience or promotional offers; rather, it is strongly shaped by cultural values, regional identities, entertainment preferences, and social consciousness.

The findings reveal that festive campaigns are among the most influential strategies for enhancing engagement. Consumers actively respond to campaigns associated with major festivals such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas, and regional celebrations because these occasions evoke emotions, traditions, and social interactions. Similarly, cricket and IPL-related promotions have emerged as highly effective engagement tools, reflecting the deep-rooted popularity of sports in Indian society. These campaigns successfully capture consumer attention and create excitement around food ordering activities.

The study further highlights that Bollywood and OTT-related promotions contribute positively to brand interest and engagement. Entertainment-based content helps brands remain culturally relevant and appealing, especially among younger consumers. In addition, regional and local-language content was found to significantly improve brand relatability. Consumers feel more connected to brands that communicate in their native languages and celebrate regional cuisines and cultural identities. This finding emphasises the importance of localisation in social media marketing strategies.

Another important conclusion of the study is that social-cause campaigns positively influence consumers' perceptions of food delivery brands. Initiatives such as supporting local businesses, promoting delivery partner welfare, and engaging in community-oriented activities enhance brand trust and strengthen emotional bonds with consumers. Modern consumers increasingly prefer brands that demonstrate social responsibility and ethical values.

Overall, the study concludes that cultural and regional factors play a significant role in shaping consumer engagement with food delivery applications in India. Social media strategies that align with festivals, sports, entertainment, regional culture, and social values are more likely to create meaningful engagement and long-term customer relationships. Therefore, food delivery companies should adopt culturally sensitive and region-specific marketing approaches to strengthen their competitive position and sustain consumer engagement in the dynamic Indian digital marketplace.

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