



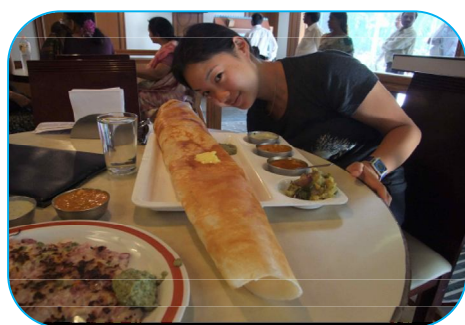
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## A STUDY OF CULTURAL SHOCK AMONG IRANIAN STUDENTS IN MYSORE CITY (WITH EMPHASIS ON FOOD SHOCK)

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### ABSTRACT:

*In this study, an attempt has been made to understand Cultural shock among Iranian students in MYSORE CITY India with emphasis on Food shock. Qualitative and quantitative methods have been used in combination for data collection. Research of methodology in this paper is Systematic sampling. Systematic sampling is another design that gives each unit an equal selection probability. This research was undertaken in the city of Mysore, in India. The results show that the majority of Iranian students who have been studying in the*

*city of Mysore have been experiencing food shock.*

**KEYWORDS:** various dimensions of 'culture shock', students, Iranian students.

### INTRODUCTION

Culture shock is an experience a person may have when one moves to a cultural environment which is different from one's own; it is also the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply transition to another type of life. One of the most common causes of culture shock involves individuals in a foreign environment. Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four distinct phases: honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and adaptation. Common problems

include: information overload, language barrier, generation gap, technology gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, homesickness (cultural), boredom (job dependency), response ability (cultural skill set). There is no true way to entirely prevent culture shock, as individuals in any society are personally affected by cultural contrasts differently. In societies where cultural diversity is truly valued, it is clearly adaptive to develop and maintain a bicultural, mediating identity. This will give such persons greater social access to the various subgroups that build up these societies, as well as providing increased employment opportunities in those industries wherein the environment is culturally heterogeneous. In

addition to these social benefits, a bicultural identity has many positive psychological outcomes. Foreign students confront many difficulties and problems in a foreign country where different culture(s) does (do) exist. Some of such problems include language problems, accommodation difficulties, misunderstandings and loneliness due to their inability to master the social conventions of the society and are unaware of the rules of social behaviour that underline interpersonal conduct, which eventually give rise to 'culture shock' (Furnham and Bochner, 1986). For most people, culture shock is a strange event, which is not only undefined,

but also little understood as well as unpredictable. It is a time of psychological upset, readjustment and stress and demands that people process many powerful emotions, both positive and negative, perhaps for the first time in their lives. The transition from one culture to another not only presents an unfamiliar set of variables and experiences, but also has the potentiality to result in significant psychological stress and produce feelings of depression, anxiety and helplessness. Therefore, the new culture should be studied in as many aspects as possible prior to the actual physical acculturation process. Prior to choosing to experience a new cultural setting in a foreign place, it is significant for the sojourner to get prepared as much as possible. As Ferraro so clearly explains, it is impossible to eliminate the stress of culture shock completely (Ferraro, 2006). For those people in a leadership, teaching or a helping profession, it is critical that they be sensitive to and aware of individuals who are in this process. They also need not to make the assumption that all sojourns will undergo the process in an identical manner or within the same time frame. Even vague and indistinct events may cause additional stress. The understanding of these events where possible may decrease stress and help resolve negative emotions.

Prediction plays an important part in the reduction of possible stresses and psychological disorientation. Thus, wherever possible, structure, definition, routines and clarity of purpose and responsibilities should be utilized as positive aids in supporting the acculturation process (Lafreniere&Cramer, 2005). Therefore, facing stress with the right attitude and transforming negative emotion into positive motivation may help people remain psychologically healthy and help them minimize culture shock.

If depression, anxiety and feelings of helplessness accumulate, the degree and extent of psychological disorientation can be so deep that people may have difficulty in focusing on learning and understanding the new cultures. When people fail to positively deal with the symptoms of culture shock, they are likely to become hostile to host nationals, preventing the development of new interpersonal relationships and denying themselves the very kind of support they so urgently need. Studies have shown that thorough, detailed preparation can improve a person's ability to adjust to new environment and make them become more self-confident (Cushner, 1994). Being familiar with a new culture may be considered as another solution in reducing the negative impact of culture shock on an individual. Through the familiarity with the new culture, people can imagine many possible obstacles they will encounter and at least psychologically, become better mentally prepared for the acculturation process (Ferraro, 2006).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In contrast to the culture learning perspective, the stress and coping approach conceptualises cross-cultural transition as a series of stress-provoking life changes that draw on adjustive resources and require coping responses. This approach has been strongly influenced by Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) work on stress, appraisal and coping, as well as earlier theory and research on life events (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). The analytical framework is broad and incorporates both characteristics of the individual and characteristics of the situation that may facilitate or impede adjustment to a new cultural milieu. Accordingly, researchers seeking to identify the factors that affect cross-cultural adjustment have examined many of the same variables as those who investigate stress and coping in other domains. These include life changes (Lin, Tazuma and Masuda, 1979), personality factors, such as locus of control, extraversion and tolerance of ambiguity (Cort and King, 1979; Ward and Chang, 1997; Ward and Kennedy, 1992), cognitive appraisals of change (Chataway and Berry, 1989), coping styles (Shisana and Celentano, 1987; Ward, Leong and Kennedy, 1998), and social support (Adelman, 1988) along with related constructs such as loneliness (Neto, 1995; Stone Feinstein and Ward, 1990), homesickness (Pruitt, 1978), marital satisfaction (Naidoo, 1985) and quality of relationships with both home and host nationals (Furnham and Alibhai, 1985). Premigration stressors (Tran, 1993) and personal and demographic characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and employment status (Chung and Kagawa-Singer, 1993; MacCarthy and Craissati, 1989; Nwadiora and McAdoo, 1996) have also been studied. With respect to more culture-specific variables, cultural distance and acculturation status have

been considered in sojourner, immigrant and refugee populations (Babiker, Cox and Miller, 1980; Berry and Kim, 1988). There have also been attempts, inspired by the Social readjustment rating scale (Holmes and Rahe, 1967), to quantify the amount of stress experienced and the readjustment required during crosscultural transitions (Spradley and Phillips, 1972).

At first glance the stress and coping approach may appear to resemble the medical models, however, some major differences exist between these perspectives. First, unlike the medical model which assumes an inevitable pathological reaction to intercultural contact, the stress and coping approach, though acknowledging that transition and change are stressful events, places a greater emphasis on the coping process and successful adaptation to a new environment. Second, stress and coping approaches are broader than clinical perspectives, as they incorporate the social aspects of the adjustment experience. Attention is directed beyond the individuals in transition to their wider sociocultural environment. Successful adaptation may be achieved in a variety of ways; it is not confined to the one way flow of 'adjusting' an individual to a difficult or stressful situation.

Similarly, failures of adaptation may be dependent on a range of factors and are not solely contingent upon person-related variables, as implied by the clinical approaches to 'culture shock'. The more comprehensive view of cross-cultural transition is exemplified in John Berry's influential work on acculturation and acculturative stress (Berry, 1997; Berry and Annis, 1974).

Although the culture learning and stress and coping approaches have dominated contemporary work on 'culture shock', particularly with reference to cross-cultural adjustment, social identification theories have also exerted some influence over the field. Two major conceptual frameworks have emerged from the broader literature on self and identity, and these have been applied to the study of intercultural contact and change. One line of investigation, broadly consistent with personality theory and research, has highlighted aspects of ethnic or cultural identity, and, as such, is linked to studies concerning the definition and measurement of acculturation (e.g. Cuéllar, Harris and Jasso, 1980; Hocooy, 1996). This approach has generally viewed acculturation as a state, rather than a process, and is concerned with measuring the construct at a single point in time and identifying its relevant predictors, correlates and consequences in cross-sectional studies. The second major line of inquiry reflects stronger influences from social psychology and has highlighted the significance of intergroup perceptions and relations. This line of research frequently examines social interactions between members of the host community and various sojourner or immigrant groups and interprets intergroup relations within the context of Social Identity Theory (e.g. Kosmitzki, 1996; Moghaddam, Taylor and Lalonde, 1987; Ostrowska and Bochenska, 1996).

The social identification theories are largely cognitive in flavour and share some common features with scattered pieces of cognitive-based research that have pointed to the significance of attitudes, values (Chang, 1973; Furnham and Li, 1993), expectations (Bochner, Lin and McLeod, 1980; Weissman and Furnham, 1987) and attributions (Brislin, 1981) during cross-cultural transitions and intercultural encounters.

There is also related work that has emerged from communication theory and research. Gudykunst and Hammer's (1988) theorizing on uncertainty avoidance, for example, similarly reflects a cognitive perspective but also incorporates salient themes found in both the stress and coping and culture learning approaches. Highlighting change, strangeness and unfamiliarity as significant features of the intercultural experience, the researchers have argued that the major task facing acculturating individuals is the reduction of uncertainty which includes the ability 'to predict and explain their own behaviour and that of others during interactions' (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1988:112). Consequently, Gudykunst and colleagues have considered the role of cognitive variables such as knowledge of the host culture (Gudykunst and Kim, 1984), attitudes toward hosts and hosts' attitudes towards sojourners (Gudykunst, 1983a), cultural similarity (Gudykunst, 1983b), cultural identity (Gudykunst, Sodehani and Sonoda, 1987) and language competence (Gudykunst, 1985) in the prediction of uncertainty reduction and intercultural adaptation.

How do the contemporary approaches to intercultural contact differ from their predecessors? First, theories are more comprehensive—they consider Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive components

of the acculturation process and highlight the shift from the negative and reactive features of culture contact towards its adaptive, active coping aspects. Second, there is the explicit recognition that the ABCs of acculturation represent a process that occurs over time. Third, flowing from the preceding point, there is an awareness that the process shares many of the conceptual features of the Holmes and Rahe (1967) life events construct, the idea that any change is intrinsically stressful, even if the event is a positive or desired one.

More significantly, the contemporary literature has concerned itself explicitly with the skills and strategies that sojourners, immigrants and refugees use in adapting to changes in new cultural milieux. The 'shock' part of culture shock is now being discussed in terms of skills deficits (Bochner, 1986) and acculturative stress (Berry, 1994a, 1997). This, in turn, draws attention to the range of mediating and moderating variables that can either accentuate the effects of behavioural deficits and psychosocial stressors that sojourners, immigrants and refugees may face. These influential variables can be related to characteristics of the person or the setting in which the cross-cultural transition takes place and can range from personal resources, such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) and cultural knowledge (Ward and Searle, 1991), to situational variables, such as host culture relations (Bochner, 1982) and social support (Harari, Jones and Sek, 1988).

Recent theories and models have also been expanded to consider the broader relationships between migratory and sedentary groups. Studies are now beginning to appear which try to trace the interaction between the acculturation styles of migrants with the acculturation orientation of the host community. A recent example of this may be found in Bourhis and colleagues' (1997) attempt to develop what they call the Interactive Acculturation Model (or IAM) of culture contact

In addition to these developments, explicit distinctions are now being made between the affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects of adaptation; between physical and social/psychological well-being; and more generally between psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Kealey, 1989; Ward, 1996). These distinctions are reflected in the measures being developed to quantify 'culture shock', leading to a much more rigorous metric than that which was deployed in the past.

Despite these merits, a note of caution is in order. There is a tendency for the models to become exceedingly complex with every conceivable component included. When they are drawn with arrows that depict all of the possible interconnections, it becomes clear that such models are unlikely to be capable of being put to the empirical test. A good example of this theoretical excess is Gudykunst's (1995) Anxiety Uncertainty Management (AUM) model of cross-cultural communication, which contains 94 axioms.

### **Aims and Objectives of the Research**

Every research has a/some definite purpose(s) to fulfil. Such particular purpose(s) guides the researcher as he or she undertakes the study. The underlying objectives of present research are as follow:

- To investigate the various dimensions of 'culture shock' with relation to Iranian students in Indian context;
- To recognize the feelings associated with 'culture shock' among Iranian students in its different phases;
- To present the ways of dealing effectively with the emotional effects of 'culture shock' to Iranian students;
- And, to investigate about the food shock the Iranian students have been through

### **Place and Population of the Research**

The place where the present research will be conducted is 'Mysore' city of the India. The number of students from Iran who pursue their education in India, and who will be the subjects of our case study is estimated to be around 200/. But in no way at all does the researcher restrict herself to the supposed numbers and figures as in Anthropological studies unexpected turns may be required to fulfil the research formalities.

## Research Methodology

Research in a sense means a new interpretation. And to do so, it must cut through arguments, sift through debates and look deep for real insights.

My endeavour therefore is to set the readers mind free and take them with myself to the exploration trip. In this study, I will also make use of an emergent, exploratory, inductive qualitative approach. Because the basis of such an approach is that one does not predetermine or delimit the directions the investigation might take, it is especially important to detail the specific stages that this research will follow in addressing the research questions. Firstly I will collect the needed data for fulfilling my objectives, then I will go for coding (both categorizing qualitative data and describing the implications and details of these categories) of collected data and then will move on towards analysis of the data. Because of the complexities involved in this type of research, the proposal is divided into some different chapters, which are presented in coming pages.

Qualitative research is a vast and complex area of methodology that can easily take up whole textbooks on its own and rather than skating on the surface of everyday life, its close contact and detailed recording allows the research to glimpse beneath the polished rhetoric, or the plausible deceptions; it is able to take more time to focus upon the smaller yet powerful processes which other methods gloss over or ignore. Quantitative data was obtained with the help of the structured interview schedule that was administered for conducting structured / formal interviews of respondents from selected 200 out of 1000 students in the city of Mysore.

## Major Finding

### Distribution of the respondents based on gender

Keeping in the view that the socio cultural importance of the gender in the Culture Shock and also their representation in the university. Following the table Number 1 and figure number 1 provides gender wise information about respondent Iranian students in the University of Mysore.

**Table1: Frequency distribution of population based on gender respondents**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	108	54.0	54.0
Female	92	46.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

Table 1 shows that out of 200 selected sample size, the above table and figure also indicate that 54% of the respondents were male and 46% of the respondents were female.

### Age group of respondents

**Table2: Frequency distribution of population based on age respondents**

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-32	118	59.0	59.0
33-50	79	39.5	98.5
51-61	3	1.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table 2 respondents are classified into three different age groups in which percentages of participants are as follows.59% of student participants were at the age group of 18-32, 39.5% were at 33-50 and 1.5% were at the age group of 51-61.

**Education wise distribution of the respondent****Table3: Frequency distribution of population based on Education respondents**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelor's	47	23.5	23.5
Master's	43	21.5	45.0
PhD	110	55.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table 3 respondents are classified into three different Education groups in which percentages of participants are as follows.23.5% of student participants were at Bachelor's groups,21.5% were at Master's and 55% were at PhD student groups.

**Arrival in India wise distribution of the respondent****Table 4: When did you arrive in India?**

Years	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1-5	119	59.5	59.5
6-10	75	37.5	97.0
11-14	6	3.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table 4 respondents are classified into three different arrival in India groups in which percentages of participants are as follows 59.5% of student participants were at 1-5 groups, 37.5% were at 6-10 and 3.0% were 11-14 student groups.

**Distribution of the respondents based on religion****Table 5: Frequency distribution of Religion based on age respondents**

Religion	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Islam	194	97.0	97.0
Zoroastrianism	6	3.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

This question was about religion of respondent's in Mysore University. The Frequency distribution of population based on data of religion is different groups. According to table 5 and most students 97% were Islam, 3% were Zoroastrianism.

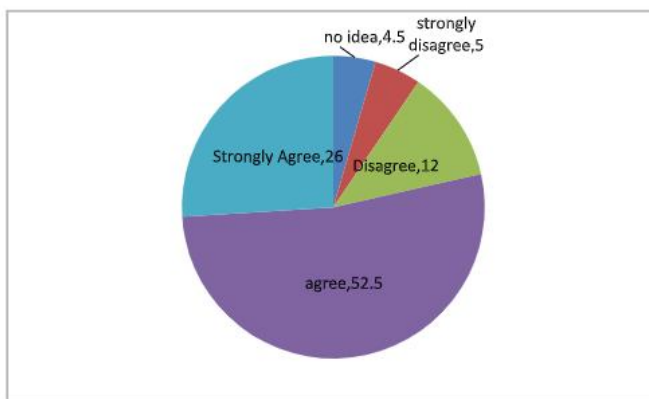
**Food shock wise distribution of the respondent**

The purpose of this category is to get information from the readers to determine if the students were shocked when they arrived in India. This category contains 12 questions. First, the table came into existence, later the explanation and analysis of the table was brought, and then the amount of psychic shock is represented in a schematic form.

**Table 6: Frequency distribution respect to question" I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice with fruits early at the time of my arrival in India?"**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	9	4.5	4.5
strongly disagree	10	5.0	9.5
Disagree	24	12.0	21.5
agree	105	52.5	74.0
Strongly Agree	52	26.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to " I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice with fruits early at the time of my arrival in India? " about 4.5% chose no idea , 5% strongly disagree, 12% Disagree, 52.5% agree, and 26% Strongly Agree, respectively.

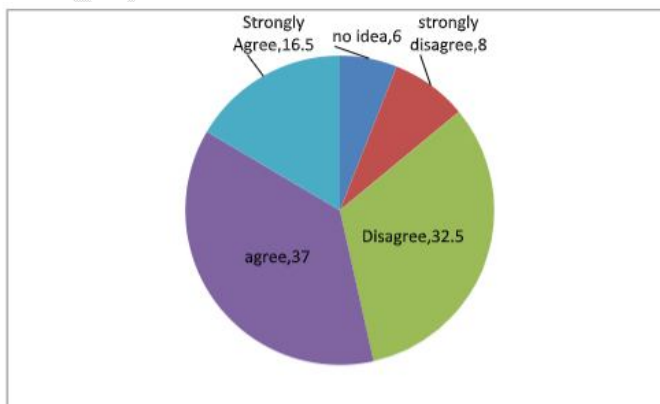


**Fig 1: I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice with fruits early at the time of my arrival in India?**

**Table 7: Frequency distribution respect to question I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice in all their foods early at the time of my arrival in India?"**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	12	6.0	6.0
strongly disagree	16	8.0	14.0
Disagree	65	32.5	46.5
agree	74	37.5	83.5
Strongly Agree	33	16.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to " I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice in all their foods early at the time of my arrival in India?" about %6 chose no idea %8 , strongly disagree %32.5 ,Disagree % 37.5 ,agree ,and 16.5 % strongly agree ,respectively.

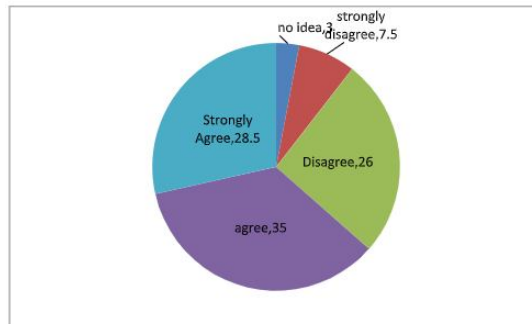


**Fig 2: I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice in all their foods early at the time of my arrival in India?**

**Table 8: Frequency distribution respect to question" I used to get bothered by the smell of the Indian spice early at the time of my arrival in India?"**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	6	3.0	3.0
strongly disagree	15	7.5	10.5
Disagree	52	26.5	36.5
agree	70	35.0	71.5
Strongly Agree	57	28.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to " I used to get bothered by the smell of the Indian spice early at the time of my arrival in India? " about 3 % chose no idea , 7.5 % strongly disagree, 26.5 % Disagree, 35%agree, and 28.5 % Strongly Agree, respectively.

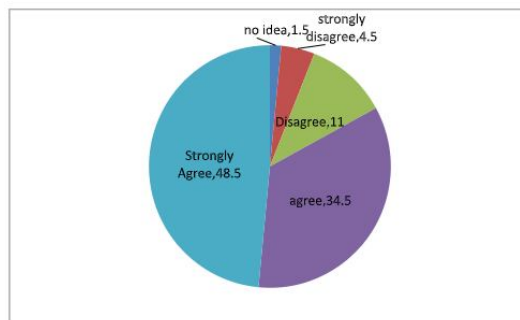


**Fig 3: I used to get bothered by the smell of the Indian spice early at the time of my arrival in India?**

**Table 9: Frequency distribution respect to question" I used to avoid Indian foods owing to my fear of food poisoning early at the time of my arrival in India?"**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	3	1.5	1.5
strongly disagree	9	4.5	6.0
Disagree	22	11.0	17.0
agree	69	34.5	51.50
Strongly Agree	97	48.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to " I used to avoid Indian foods owing to my fear of food poisoning early at the time of my arrival in India? " about 1.5 % chose no idea , 4.5 % strongly disagree, 11 % Disagree, 34.5%agree, and 48.5% Strongly Agree, respectively.



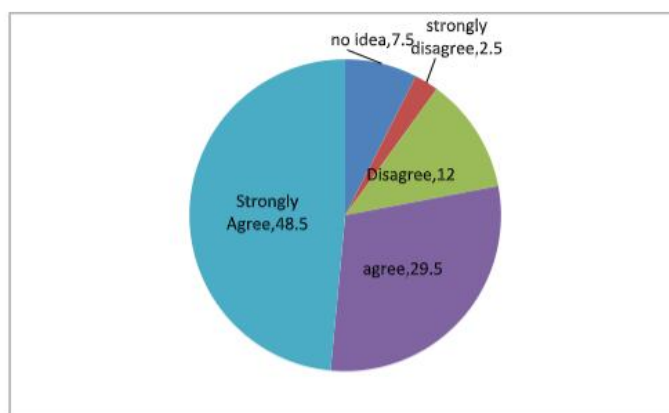
**Fig 4: I used to avoid Indian foods owing to my fear of food poisoning early at the time of my arrival in India?**



**Table 10: Frequency distribution respect to question" I used to get bothered when I saw people eating food using their hands early at the time of my arrival in India?"**

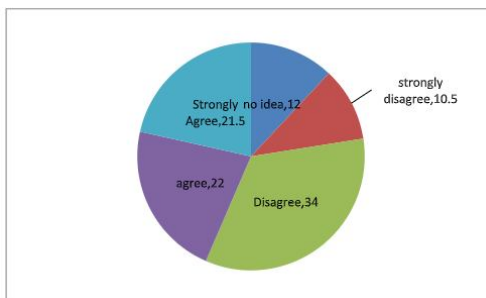
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	15	7.5	7.5
strongly disagree	5	2.5	10.0
Disagree	24	12.0	22.0
agree	59	29.5	51.5
Strongly Agree	97	48.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to " I used to get bothered when I saw people eating food using their hands early at the time of my arrival in India ? " about 7.5 % chose no idea , 2.5 % strongly disagree, 12 % Disagree, 29.5 %agree, and 48.5 % Strongly Agree, respectively.

**Fig 5: I used to get bothered when I saw people eating food using their hands early at the time of my arrival in India?****Table 11: Frequency distribution respect to question "I used to be afraid of the colors of Indian foods and did not dare eating them?"**

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
no idea	24	12.0	12.0
strongly disagree	21	10.5	22.5
Disagree	68	34.0	56.5
agree	44	22.0	78.5
Strongly Agree	43	21.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	

According to the table and figure The response of the respondents to "I used to be afraid of the colors of Indian foods and did not dare eating them" about 12 % chose no idea, % 10.5strongly disagree % 34 ,Disagree% 22 ,agree, and 21 % strongly agree, respectively.



**Fig 6: I used to be afraid of the colors of Indian foods and did not dare eating them?**

## CONCLUSION

The main objective of this research was to study about the cultural shock, specifically food shock among Iranian students studying in Mysore, India. Due to the historical and cultural similarities between Iran and India, thousands of students travel to India for continuation of their education. One of the preferred cities by them is Mysore. In this research different dimensions of food shock faced by the Iranian students has been studied in detail. There are two main methods used in this research, Qualitative method which consists of observation technique, interview, focus group and photography. Similarly we used Quantitative method which helped us collect data through interview schedule. 54% of the respondents of this research were males. 95% of the respondents were between the age group of 18 to 32 years old. 110 respondents which give 55% of this research are Ph.D. researchers, 59% of the respondents had an experience of living in India between 1 to 5 years and finally 97% of them were Muslims. The results showed respondents in response to question 'I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice with fruits early at the time of my arrival in India?' 78.5% in response to this question told that they have faced shock. Similarly in response to this question 'I felt shocked seeing Indians use spice in all their foods early at the time of my arrival in India?' 54% of the respondents have faced shock similarly in response to this question 'I used to get bothered by the smell of the Indian spice early at the time of my arrival in India?' 63.5% of the respondents have faced shock similarly in response to this question 'I used to avoid Indian foods owing to my fear of food poisoning early at the time of my arrival in India?' 85.3% of the respondents were afraid of eating Indian food I used to get bothered when I saw people eating food using their hands early at the time of my arrival in India? 68% of the respondents had faced shock when they saw people eating with hand I used to be afraid of the colours of Indian foods and did not dare eating them? 43.5% of the respondents had faced shock seeing the different colours of Indian food.

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