CHAPTER-8

Soundscape through the lens of FGD

This chapter presents the outcomes and findings of two focus group discussions, which was conducted to get a thorough understanding of soundscape from persons having expertise in the field of restaurants.

This chapter deals with the narratives and connotations put forward by the participants of the focus group discussion. The audio-visual portion of each interview was transcribed, stored as a PDF file, and exported into the qualitative data analysis programme NViVo. Due of its iterative structure and ability to reveal implicit meanings in participant activities and responses to the restaurant's auditory environment, qualitative data analysis was selected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The study involved close engagement with people's stories regarding the effect of soundscapes at restaurants, particularly with reference to Assam. It involved meticulous data preparation, coding, categorization, and theme analysis. The results clearly show that this method of conceptualizing the phenomenon abstracted themes without reducing the voices of the participants.

8.1. Profile of the Participants of FGDs

In-depth interview data from 21 participants who took part in two focus group discussion, based on their responses to the filter questions (which included recent restaurant visit and leisure time utility etc. *Refer to Section 4.3.4*) and their availability at that time. The demographic information of the participants of FGDs is presented in Table 8.1. FGD 1 consists of 12 participants

Table 8.1: Demographic Profile of the participants in the Study		FGD 1	FGD 2
Variables	Participants	12	9
Types	Restaurateur	3	1
	Chef	1	-
	Food Blogger	5	2
	Frequent Diner	2	3
	Rare Diner	1	1
	Restaurant Manager	-	2
Age	Upto 25 Years	3	3
	26-40 Years	4	4
	40 Years &Above	5	2
Gender	Male	7	8

from Guwahati and FGD 2 comprises 9 participants from Tezpur. The commonality among the participant is that they are either Chef, diners, food bloggers, restaurateurs, managers etc., having a connection with and expertise in restaurants. Out of the 12 participants in FGD 1- 7 are male and 5 are female; 3 participants are in the age group of Upto 25 years, 4 from 26-40 years, and 5 were under 40 years and above age category. In case of FGD 2- 8 are male participants and 1 is female participant; 3 participants belong to Upto 25 years category, 4 are in the age bracket of 26-40 years and 2 are under above 40 years.

8.2 Analyzing FGD

The data analysis procedure for this study adhered to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps of thematic data analysis. Reading interview transcripts allowed one to become acquainted with and immersed in the data during this procedure. The creation of themes (child nodes) highlighting the difficulties and possibilities that surfaced from the transcripts of the participants and from firsthand observations came after this phase. After that, these child nodes were assessed and combined to create parent nodes. For the parent nodes, a deductive theme analysis approach was used. The analysis resulted in a thematic table with 70 sub-themes (thematic analysis) and twelve main themes, as shown in Table 8.2. Special care has been taken regarding the sub-themes and their optimal alignment with the key themes.

Table 8.2: Thematic presentation of soundscape in Diners' Experience

Reference Number	Main Categories	Sub-categories	Descriptions
1	Sound	Natural	River, birds, breeze
		Co-diner	Talk, baby crying, sound of table
		Food sound	crunch of a crispy dish, the sizzle of a steak on a grill.
		Mechanical and gadget sound	Back Music and music system, Air conditioner, fan
		Staff sound	Staff conversation, handling cutlery
2	Basis of diners	Age	Age is not a bar, young, old
		Co-diners	Family, idle crowd, loud crowd
		Expectation	Comfortable with loud, uncomfortable with loud music
		Follower	Visit as others are visiting
		Interaction Intention	Audible to interact, disturbance to interact
		Personality	Music depends upon personality type, vibes
3	Eatery Type	Bar	Live music, loud music, forget about what is going on in my mind
		Cafe	Retro rock music plays, live music, interaction with guest for song, people not only go for food but want experience

		Sub-categories	Descriptions
		Dhaba	Songs in loud volume, disturbing
		Ethnic Restaurant	Sometimes bihu, tokari geet, borgeet, traditional songs, relationship between food and songs
		Fine Dining	Space for people to interact, romantic song, ambience is romantic or cozy
		Resort	Play songs, serve food
		River Cruise	Live music, live band, food not only matters, but a kind of experience people seek for, Assamese or Hindi slow songs, State wise customers demand varies, musicians change their music
		Restaurant	Vibes is good, and they play just a piano or a very mild music
		Quick Service Restaurant	Sell food without music
4	Ethnic Food	Uncomfortable Loud Music	Did not find pleasure
		Bollywood Music	Not appropriate
5	Experience	Bad	Too loud music turned experience bad
		Family Time	Go to restaurant for leisure with family, friends,
		Pleasant	Music creates pleasant experience
		Pleasure	Positive vibes
6	Presentation	Ambience	Nice look
		Cozy	Pleasant environment
		Customer Preference	Customer choices vary
		Customize	Adopted according to need of customer
		Flavour	Not only food flavour
		Graffiti	Total environment, small to big
		Music	Bad music, genres, speaker, volume
		Noise	Loud, negative, annoying
		Romantic	Soft music
		Visual	Match with restaurant, match with what we hear
7	Psychological	Presentation	Hold the psychology of customer

Reference Number	Main Categories	Sub-categories	Descriptions
8	Relationship	Connection	Music relation with customer and genre, time, companion
9	Service	Blogging	Prepare food and background music played, example of experience with music
10	Songs	Bhupen Hazarika	Legends song
		Bihu Songs	Folk songs but not all time
		Bob Marley	Cafe
		Bor-Geet	Morning, breakfast
		Classical Rock	River cruise
		Instrumental Music	Fine dining
		Jayanta Hazarika	Ethnic restaurants
		Jimmy Hendrix	Cafe, young crowd
		Kishore Kumar	Romantic, old is gold
		Live Bands	Karaoke
		Loud Music	Bar, not preferred during lunch
		Melodious	Sudden music not good, melody of song and environment
		Mild Music	Soothing sound, positive
		On Request	Customized
		Retro Rock	Young crowd
		Romantic Songs	Cozy environment for couples
		Tokari Geet	Making culture popular
		Khogen Mahanta	Ethnic restaurants
		Zubeen Garg	Not every time, selective songs
		Angarag Papon Mahanta	Slow, ethnic song. Offbeat music
11	Time	Calendar Year	Not same genre
		Evening	Mild, instrumental
		Sunset	Romantic, cozy
12	Concept	Unknown	Concept of soundscape not known
		Adoption Cycle	Restaurant can adopt from similar restaurants, influenced by friend circle
		Assam	New concept
		Experiential Marketing	Customers want to experience
		Interaction Process	While delivering the service
		Marketing Process	Understanding customers
		Psychological Study	Customer behavior and preference, attitude, pleasant experience

Analysis of the results is consistent with the thematic analysis presented in the previous section (as listed under Table8.2 of this chapter), which sought to understand the concept of soundscape in determining the diners' experience. These themes are then discussed and supported by pertinent quotes from the participant responses to the interviewed questions.

8.2.1. Various Sounds in the Restaurant

The participants (n=21) are very interested to discuss the topic. Participants recognized the importance of the topic and adverse impact of noise to the listeners be it diners or staff. The participants realize and say that music has a special space in every one's life.

Participants shared their experiences of different sound that they encounter during their visit and stay in the restaurant.

   "When I visit a restaurant I prominently hear few of the sounds like, sizzler ordered by other guests, which make me to buy one for me, music, conversations of others."- Female, Food Blogger (FGD 1)

One of the participants, River *Cruise owner, FGD 1* said- *"guests like to hear the breeze, nature while I taking food in the cruise restaurant."*

Some of the participants had a strong opinion about the appealing sound environment of the restaurant and one said, *"The restaurant I visited last night had a loud music system, strong sound which made me could not properly talk with the waiter to place order"- Male, Frequent visitor, FGD 2*

Another participant added that- "sometimes the noise created by the fan, AC and other mechanical gadgets hampers the total environment. And of course, the loud music." Male, Owner, FGD 1

"When I visit resort and take cruise ride I love the natural sound, I like retro rock when I visit Café and I often get annoyed by the cutlery sound made by the restaurant staff while fixing the things."- Male, Food Blogger, FGD1

When people visit different eateries, they encounter different types of sound that's present in the environment. The type of sound depends upon the nature of the eatery. Sources of sound figured out by the participants are sizzler ordered by other guests,

music, conversations of others, fan, AC and other mechanical gadgets, natural sound like breeze etc. these sound influences them and their behavior.

8.2.2. Role of Music in Diners' Experience

Participants are aware that restaurants play music. But it is seen that restaurateurs/ managers/operators play music of their choice. The presentation may or may not be favorable. Participants provided their opinions in a similar line.

One participant shared her experience:

"50% restaurants or places doesn't know the concept of what music to play, what an ambience they are providing to customers, whether the ambience matches with the cuisine that they are providing to the customers or not."- Female, Food Blogger & Jury Member, Guwahati Food Awards, FGD 1

Another participant (*Female, Customer, FGD 2*) reiterated this point

"Music and ambience of the restaurant falls under the psychological presentation. It's all about how you are presenting it. Not only is the food, providing a nice ambience along with the music and musical ambience a psychological study and a marketing of the whole process."

"Guests make a request for a song and they play that song. It's a kind of interaction process. People do not go to such type of restaurants just to eat but for experience in such type of restaurants. There are restaurants which I have visited the surrounding is good, the vibes is good, and they play just a piano or a very mild music."- Male, Customer who frequently visits restaurant, FGD 1

Another interesting comment by a *Food Blogger, Male, FGD 1- "Sometimes with me what happens? I walk out of a restaurant because a very bad music is played there."*

"As we entered into the restaurant the music was so, so loud. That it's a kind of noise. We were unable to talk with each other. My friend was saying something, I was saying something. We were like the interaction with my friends was not so good. Doesn't matter the song choice that is played in the restaurant was good but the volume was very loud."- Female, Customer, FGD 2.

It is evident from the above expressions of the participants that definitely music plays a crucial role as it can positively affect the customer as well as negatively too.

8.2.3. Genres of music liked by the customers (across Gender and Age) of Assam

When participants were exposed to question of liking towards different genres with respect to gender and age. It was revealed by most of the participants that the liking of genre and music does not necessarily depends upon gender and age. This not only happens in Assam but across India also. Reflecting on this, a participant said:

"The older generation like the songs of Bhupen Hazarika and Jayanta Hazarika and it doesn't mean that our new generation does not like this type of songs while dining."- Male, Food Blogger, FGD 2

"It is not the age of the crowd, but the vibes of the crowd."- *Male, Restaurateur, FGD 1*

"There is an important thing to say that there is a difference in choices between girls and boys. -Male, FGD 2

In case of music is concerned if I say that the crowd is a mixed one, then I generally play Bollywood music."- Female, Restaurateur, FGD 1

Another participant who himself is a renowned chef of Assam, Restaurateur and writer said- *"That is why when a person starts to open a restaurant, one should think of what food you are presenting, what type of ambience you are presenting? Type of crowd you want in your restaurant such type of things is very important to study in because in Assam this type of things is not seen."- FGD 1*

It is clear from the above descriptions that the choice of music does not depend upon someone being male or female or of what age. It depends upon the liking and interest.

8.2.4. Live Music and Pre-Recorded Music in Customer Satisfaction

Furthermore, the analysis tried to find our significant impact between live music and pre-recorded music in customer satisfaction. Participants opined in this way:

"When the crowd increases, restaurant use live bands from 9:00 pm to 10:00 pm in the evening. Everything depends upon the guests, they make a request for a song and band plays that song……..."- Customer who rarely visits restaurant, Male, FGD 2

"In case of live music when a person goes to a restaurant where live music is played, there may be two kinds of crowd. One is very much enjoying in the crowd and they are in a loud mood. But one part of the crowd is just sitting idle, so people must themselves determine where they want to go, how my friends are, how is the gathering? What about

my family and think considering this people should determine where they want to go. If they go by this choice, then they do not become the odd one out there."- Female, Customer, FGD 1

"After a year of our establishment and suddenly we saw another government river cruise started operation. They provided live music, live band. So, what we realize that for a cruise, the food not only matters, but a kind of experience people seek for. In case of our business, we maintain the quality of the food, but what we realized is that people in a cruise, people does not expect a lot about the food when they go in a cruise. They go for the ambience and they wanted a music. Again, we resumed our business with a live band, but personally we do not like loud music, so we kept the choice of the music to be a very mild one. We restricted our choice to either Assamese or Hindi slow songs."- Restaurateur, Female, FGD 1

".... and suddenly the musicians change their music from Rock to a very slow kind of song and sang yeh sham kuch aajeeb thi and the crowd turn so romantic with the song that this is the thing how the live musicians connect with the crowd and it's a kind of treat not just song it's a kind of treat connecting the crowd connecting your guests really understanding the vibes of the crowd is a treat."- Customer, Male, FGD 2

"Sometimes it is seen that at some point of time in case of live music setting, the guest also wants to sing a song in the karaoke which needs to be controlled."- Manager, Male, FGD 2

"There should be sync between the food and music. But to a large extent, I would relate mood to mean experience that I want to consider. I mean if I have to go to a restaurant, I know my mood and I have my choice of restaurants that I will decide according to that. If I am really stressed out, maybe I would like to chill out a bit. I would choose a pub rather, I would prefer a more interactive music like live music, where on I can talk about the music, forgetting about what was going on at my background at back of my head. But if I want to spend some time with you, with my loved ones or my baby, my peer and I want to talk. Then I would prefer foreground music. This live music is something I would not appreciate because that would take away a lot of conversational time."- Food Blogger, Male, FGD 2

The above discussion has opened a way to choose between live music and pre-recorded music according to the choice of customer, companion, conversation intention etc. of the diners in determining customer satisfaction.

8.2.5. Sources of Noise in the Restaurant

Participants were very conscious about the noise prevailed in the restaurant. They stated in this way:

"Loud Bollywood music is played. In that case, people would not prefer."- Manager, *Male, FGD 2*

"Soothing sounds are always positive, but annoying sounds should also be taken care of in the restaurants. Sometimes what happened that we forget the soothing sound, but we cannot forget and always remember the unpleasant or the annoying sound."- Food *Blogger, Male, FGD 1*

"I visited one restaurant in Guwahati for business talk with my client, there my co-diners were talking so loud along with that another family joined in , the baby was crying so hard that we had to leave the restaurant early. I did not like the surrounding."- Male, *Customer, FGD 2*

One participant added that, "*In case, if a guest wants to order, say a glass of warm water to the waiter. And the waiter in that circumstance because of the loud music, is unable to hear what the guest is saying and the guests try to make understand what he is asking for and his decibel increases, the guest's decibel increases. Voice becomes loud, disturbs others. Sometimes the restaurant has that sound control in their hand" – Customer, Male, FGD 1*

The sources of noise are different for everyone. Some may feel the surrounding very annoying early and some may have more resistance towards noise sensitivity. However, it is true that noise makes the experience unpleasant one.

8.2.6. Role of Music as Noise Avoider

Participants revealed that the acoustic of the restaurant can be improved by structural improvements. But another way is to use music to work as noise avoider.

One of the participants said, *"Music to remain enjoyable and pleasant has to be medium, loud with strong bass may not be liked by all customers."- Female, Food Blogger, FGD 1*

"I visited a restaurant once, where the music that they were playing was so exciting and eventful that I did not noticed co-diners, kitchen sound etc." – Female, Customer, FGD 2

It is clear from the above discussion that sometimes music becomes a noise if the volume is raised up. However, to avoid the noise made up other sources can be covered or masked by music. In that way music can be called as a noise avoider.

8.2.7. Music Transform a Bad Experience of Food to a Positive one

There are mixed opinions and expressions of participants regarding how music transforms a bad experience of food to a positive one.

One Participant said, *"music is essential in creating a good experience but music alone will not work if the food is not good. I am not willing to come to such type of restaurants next time."-Male, Customer, FGD 2*

"Actually, music creates a mood. At one point of time I forget about the taste and gets involved in the ambience."-Female, Restaurateur, FGD 1

"Music has a positive relation with food. Music has a vital role in the field of eatery and the even in the field of serving food. But it depends on how the owner controls, how the musician control. how the DJ plays his number. Maximum DJs take decision on the basis of their own choice"- Male, Chef, FGD 1

Another participant added that it's not like that music transforms a bad food experience to positive one but also good food experience to a negative experience because of the music. She stated, "I *did not like the crowd, the music was so noisy. As a result, I couldn't enjoy the food. But my experience there was not something that I will be looking*

forward to. So sometimes what happened that food become secondary and the experience become primary."- Female, Customer, FGD 1

"Sometimes what happened that we forget the soothing sound, but we cannot forget and always remember the unpleasant or the annoying sound. Yes, food is important in a restaurant, but experience is more important than that because the time that I spend there is important for me. I'm ready to pay more if the experience is good. In one of my experience in a very popular restaurant in Guwahati is that I do not remember the food actually, but I remember the quality time that I spent there because of the ambience in that restaurant."-Female, Food Blogger, FGD 2

It can be said that good music simply will not lead to positive experience if the food served in the restaurant is not good. However, only food alone cannot create a positive experience. It is something like satisfaction and dissatisfaction continuum of hygiene theory of motivation. Presence of music may not alone lead to pleasant experience. But of course, absence of music will lead to dissatisfaction and unpleasant experience.

8.2.8. Role of Music in Ethnic Restaurants

When participants were prompted to reflect on the role of music in ethnic restaurants, their responses were overwhelmingly positive, conveying an optimistic view on use of ethnic or traditional music with ethnic food. One of the participants revealed that:

"When I'm going to a restaurant to eat aloo petika, Maas 'or tenga, Gahori Managxo i.e, all ethnic cuisine of Assam then I am not comfortable if a loud Bollywood Song is being played there. It's a kind of psychology. When food is served in the restaurant, food is not only the taste, not only flavours it is a total visual presentation of psychological presentation. Music and ambience of the restaurant falls under the psychological presentation."- Female, Food Blogger & Jury Member, Guwahati Food Awards, FGD 1

One of the participants added that*," I am sharing a personal experience again so I have visited an ethnic restaurant and there I did not find them playing any music but I have seen in the roadside dhaba that all throughout the season throughout the calendar year people are playing Bihu songs. It is not necessary to play Bihu songs entire 12 months instead they can play some tokari geet or Borgeet even at the backdrop. Also if they play*

such type of songs then it gives a very pleasant kind of experience."-Male, Manager,FGD 2

"If you're going to ethnic restaurant and a Bollywood song is played there, then we might not like that. Restaurants should keep in mind the time, when and which type of genre to be played? It's not that we will be able to satisfy all the customers, but at least if in our ethnic restaurant if the songs of Khogen Mahanta is played then that might create a good experience."- Female, Food Blogger, FGD 1

The opinions of the participants revealed that traditional or ethnic music is a very important aspect in ethnic restaurants to keep intact the authenticity and association of food with the overall ambience and for creating a positive experience.

8.2.9. Pictorial Presentation of Narrations on Soundscape and Dining Experience

Figure 8.1.: Word Cloud of the Narrations on Soundscape and Dining Experience in Restaurants

Word cloud presentation has been done as it can quickly and easily produces graphical depictions of text representing the narrations given by the participants of the FGD on soundscape and dining experiences. While creating a word cloud, the basic idea is that the more frequently a word appears in the text, the bigger it is displayed in the figure making it more prominent in the visual presentation (Cooshna-Naik, 2022). By examining the patterns of words or phrases, it was found that words shown in red colour like restaurant, experience, music, songs are the most frequently used words by the

participants in the discussion. After that, the words in black like choice, live, crowd, good, time etc. are comparatively less used than red coloured one. The words with low frequency of occurrence in the discussion are presented in grey colour like ambiance, disturbing, guest, volume, environment etc. However, the word with less than 5 counts in frequency of occurrence have not been considered for this presentation. It can be said that the two words i.e.; "restaurant" and "experience" which appeared in the objective statement of the discussion used more often in their narrations. Key words like music, song, people, disturbing, ambiance, loud and crowd are prominent. These words can be used for further investigations and converted to broad themes for future analysis. For example the word music was associated with music played in the restaurants. Like wise crowd and disturbing is negative words and can be linked to noise.

8.3. Sentiment Analysis

With the recent developments in the field of marketing and e-commerce, the sentiment analysis is a key qualitative tool for understanding consumer choices (Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2016; Wankhade et al., 2022). A form of natural language processing (NLP) called sentiment analysis, often known as opinion mining, aids in identifying the emotional tone or summarized view of a document (Altrabsheh et al., 2013; Karim & Das, 2018). A sentiment analysis with the contents of the FGD is carried out.

i)   **Positive Sentiment-**

It includes 24.15% of the total sentiment percentage. Positive comments are related to the presentation of the ambiance. The presence of music, the vibes of the crowd, presenting a pleasant experience etc. Positive toned sentiments are reflected in the statements like *"And those who are regular customers, they say that please change the playlist. We are getting bored by listening to this music only".*
"It's not that we will be able to satisfy all the customers, but at least if in our ethnic restaurant if the songs of Khogen Mahanta is played then that might create a good experience."

"I have seen in various blogs of foreign countries or outside Assam while presenting a recipe, the Blogger used to play a very mild music and they do not speak a single word and just Write the recipe on the screen.It is very

important to create such type of experience and when. Similarly, when a person goes to a restaurant, their intention is not just to eat in the restaurant but to get some kind of pleasure in the restaurant"

So, these are few examples of statements reflecting positive emotion.

ii)   **Negative Sentiment-**

The excerpts counting negative sentiments are 6.73%. Examples of statements on negative sentiments are like, *"We have seen a very few people who doesn't like music. We have in our restaurant to keep the people in liberty that we can place people according to their choices"*

Figure 8.2.: Sentiment Analysis
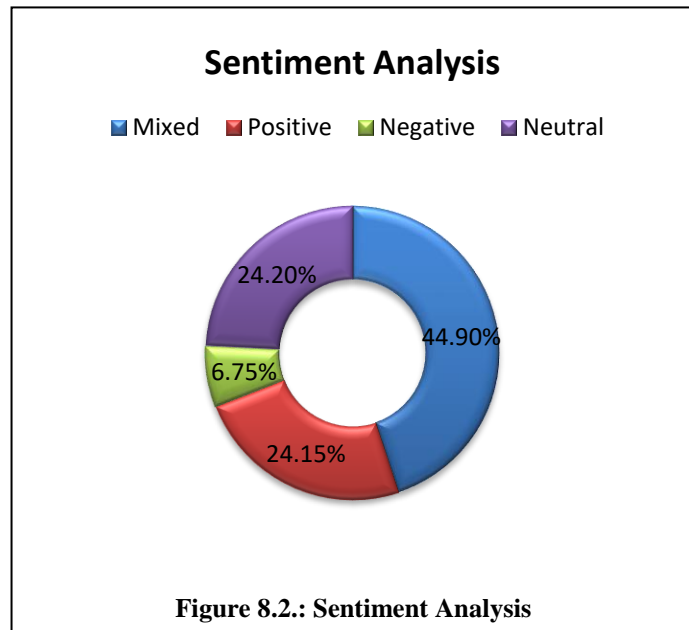
"What we do in our Cruise is that before serving the dinner we play music like Bihu but we maintain silence while the dinner is served no music is played".

"If a baby is crying then even if the song is a good one we may have to lower down the volume so that the child does not feel the environment to be annoying, so we have to adjust with the environment".

These instances are reflecting a negative sentiment where people do not like an environment without music and annoying environment created by different sound other than music.

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iii)   Mixed Sentiment-

Mixed sentiment (44.90%) expresses both positive and negative sentiments. Examples showing mixed sentiments are:

"Sometimes with me what happens? I walk out of a restaurant because of a very bad music is played there……. As we entered into the restaurant the music was so, so loud. That it's a kind of noise. We were unable to talk with each other. My friend was saying something, I was saying something. We were like the interaction with my friends was not so good. Doesn't matter the song choice that is played in the restaurant was good but the volume was very loud."

"So, I have a little different opinion, generally talking about our peer and our generation people at a lot of time they believe there is a concept called adoption cycle. I mean we go through that place because a lot of people go. So, I completely agree to your point that it is not possible to customize music or maybe the experience as for everybody. But there is a bunch of people who are your core customer".

"After a year and suddenly we saw another government River Cruise started operation. They provided live music, live band. So, what we realize that for a cruise, the food not only matters, but a kind of experience people seek for. In case of our business, we maintain the quality of the food, but what we realized is that people in a cruise, people does not expect a lot about the food when they go in a cruise. They go for the ambience and they wanted a music. Again, we resumed our business with a live band, but personally we do not like loud music, so we kept the choice of the music to be a very mild one. We restricted our choice to either Assamese or Hindi slow songs".

"Went to a cafe from outside it looked very cozy but when I enter and I ordered one sandwich and a cup of coffee there I couldn't enjoy the coffee as well as the sandwich because of the loud music and which is for me it was a kind of noise".

"Crowd that is there in the restaurant does not match with my personality. As a result, I couldn't enjoy the food. But my experience there was not something that I will be looking forward to. So sometimes what happened that food become secondary in the experience become primary".

The above examples show that participants having mixed sentiments but clear about their thoughts. It can be said that sometimes only food does not matter, people seek experiences. So, they are constant that even if they are going for dine out, they seek experience but will not compromise with the ambiance.

iv)   **Neutral Sentiment-**

Neutral sentiments are statements and text that does not express either positive or negative. It accounts for 24.20% of the total sentiment percentage. Excerpts showing neutral sentiments are like *"It's a kind of psychology. When food is served in the restaurant, food is not only the taste, not only flavours it is a total visual presentation of psychological presentation. Music and ambience of the restaurant falls under the psychological presentation".*

"Not only the food, providing a nice ambience along with the music and musical ambience. Ii is a psychological study and a marketing of the whole process".

"What I feel is that according to the people or the diners, expectation or choice of the music will depend on them and then they will prepare themselves where they want to go, in which type of restaurant they will go. An important thing is that in service setup what the service provider wants to provide matters least rather, what the customer wants matters a lot".

"I play according to the crowd, I try to generalize I can tell you that I have prepared a playlist of 100 to 200 songs of different genre and likewise I play".

The above neutral sentiment excerpts show that there are neither strong opposition nor strong support for music or noise or the ambiance.

The focus group discussions basically reveal that both positive and negative emotions and reactions can be evoked by sound. This is in line with the findings of Cerwén (2017). There is a definite influence of music and ambiance in dining establishments. The participants point out that more than half of the restaurants are unsure about the appropriate music to be played. To enhance the dining experience, music selections should complement the meal and the entire ambiance. The discussion leads to another finding that everybody experiences noise from different sources and at different intensities. This is in tune with the literature available on noise and sensitivity (Spence et al., 2019; Song et al., 2022). Some people may become irritated with their surroundings quickly, while others may be more resilient to noise. It is true, though, that noise distracts individual from their respective work, and dining experience is not an exception.

People spend a significant portion of their lives in social settings without consciously noticing the sound quality. In case of dining out, many people occupy a dining area, the noise levels automatically tend to rise up because of the eating ware/ cutlery, co-diner's conversation etc. This also matches the findings of Chen and Kang (2017) and Wilczek & Weinzierl (2019). Therefore, the acoustic comfort of the diners should be given careful consideration.

8.4. Similarity in Findings of FGD & Experiment

It is worth mentioning here that the findings of the *Experiment* done with the two groups and the participants of *FGDs* provided similar outcomes regarding the soundscape and the dining experience they get in the restaurants. Outcomes of both methods revealed that musical fit is essential in formulating strategies for enhancing diners' experience in restaurants. A detailed description is provided in Chapter 9, Section 9.5.1 (II).