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<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Komala's restaurant of Singapore</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Viswanathan, S.; Allampalli, D. G.</td>
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<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
<td>© 2002 Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.</td>
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Serving Thosai, the most popular south Indian snack, within three minutes after placing the order is a tough challenge for any restauranteur. But Sekar from Komala’s of Singapore achieved the feat with the successful adoption of the fast food and self-service concept. Studying the Little India outlet in Singapore, the case documents the service concept of Komala’s by describing the process enablers for service concept and presenting how the Sekar brothers used a well-designed, four-station operations system with clearly specified tasks for the crew involved in the workflow. This helped to accomplish the business goals of offering a large product range, providing a superior ambience to customers, attracting skilled manpower and competitive pricing. As a result, the volume of business operations soared. However, the seasonal peak demand created capacity constraints and this resulted in customers being lost to neighbouring restaurants. The case provides an opportunity to apply process analysis concepts to identify bottlenecks in a service operation.
**MCThomasai in Three Minutes...**

Thomasais are one of the most popular South Indian vegetarian snack foods with many varieties: plain thosai, rawa thosai and masala thosai. Preparing and serving these many varieties of thosai to customers take anywhere between ten to thirty minutes depending on the method of preparation and service style adopted by the restaurants.

Not anymore! Since 1995, one does not have to wait that long to collect a Thomasai at Komala's restaurant in Singapore. Komala's changed the way thosai were prepared and served, and a customer placing an order for a masala thosai could pick it up in three minutes. Narrating his experience of having a snack at Komala's restaurant at Singapore's Little India, Conal Wilmot, 23, a student from the United States, chewed on a chapatti roll in a McDonald's look-alike apple-pie pack, appeared bewildered and said:

“It's bizarre. Everything looks just like a burger joint but then the food is completely Indian.”

At Komala's, one could choose either a masala thosai or chapatti roll, or for that matter any food from its large vegetarian menu and still pick up your snack or meal within three minutes after placing your order. This was made possible by the founders of Komala's - the two Sekar brothers.

The origins of Komala's of Singapore date back to the 1950s. It started as a restaurant called Komala Vilas, which was set up in 1947 by Mr. M. Rajoo, serving traditional Indian vegetarian snacks and meals. Over the last 55 years, Komala Vilas has built a high reputation for quality, value-for-money, authenticity, hygiene and cleanliness. These business values made Komala Vilas a popular restaurant for not only Indians but also for other ethnic communities in Singapore.

**Little India Outlet**

The Sekar brothers decided to locate their new restaurant at 9A Upper Dickson Road in Singapore's Little India, a popular hub of the Indian community and the area known for the availability of Indian food. (See Exhibit 1.) Early establishments of both vegetarian restaurants as well as restaurants serving meat dishes found a niche market for South-Indian food served in traditional Indian style. Many of these restaurants had no focus on specific target segment. For Komala's, the decision to be located in Little India was not based on the desire to serve a niche market but to expand its market share. Therefore, for the Sekars, the location decision was more to retain the loyal customer base that Komala Vilas had developed over half a century as well as to attract customers from other races, tourists and the expatriate Indian community living in Singapore.

From 1991 to 1995, the period during which Komala's was conceived and developed, Singapore economy registered strong growth. In 1995, Singapore was one of the world's wealthiest countries with per capita GDP reaching US$22,300. The economic situation had a positive effect on food imports, demand for consumer-ready food products and ready-to-serve restaurants. The presence of expatriate professionals and high purchasing power of the Singaporeans attracted American franchises such as Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood. Observing their early success in 1995, other American franchises such as Tony Roma's, Chillies and TGI Fridays moved into Singapore.

Holiday travel, media and education abroad also made significant contributions to Singaporeans' eating habits that were changing with more exposure to the western world. It set the stage for further westernisation of their eating habits, which was more clearly evident among young Singaporeans. Although they were fond of traditional food, they also ventured out to seek new flavours. Western food remained somewhat

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1 Arguably, "Thosai" is originally from the South Indian state of Tamilnadu, and in Tamil it is pronounced as "Thosai". In most cities in India, it is spelled "Dosa" or "Dosa" and pronounced "Dhosa". Possibly because Singapore-Indians are predominantly Tamil speaking, most restaurants in Singapore pronounce and spell it as "Thosai".
2 McThomasai: A terminology used in the local press to refer to a traditional thosai that is prepared and delivered in a fast food setting like that of McDonald's.
expensive and lagged behind "hawker food" in price-competitiveness which remained the centre point for family and weekend lunches and dinners. As Singaporeans loved to eat out and with most spouses working, demand for fast-food steadily increased. Children normally extended a strong influence on the family's choice of restaurants and meals. Health education and lifestyle also helped to enhance the awareness of Singaporeans into 'healthy eating'.

Singapore food chains and fast-food restaurants mostly followed the western menu and usually did not cater to those who preferred Asian cuisine. When fast-food outlets came to Singapore in the late 1970s, worldwide attendance records were broken. Children and adults liked the fast-food restaurants and the concept found immediate acceptance. In 1995, there were about 200 fast-food restaurants in Singapore and the top five positions in terms of number of outlets were held by: McDonald's (75), KFC (61), DeliFrance (40), Burger King (28) and Pizza Hut (22). In the same year, Singaporeans consumed S$5.4 billion worth of foodstuffs and drinks; eating out contributed to about half of it. Following double-digit economic growth in the previous five years, employment in 1995 rose to 105,900, surpassing the labour force entering the market by 40 percent. It led to an increase in labour costs and shortage, which even threatened the competitiveness of Singapore.

SERVICE CONCEPT

Komala's service concept was a breakthrough in catering ethnic Indian food, an idea that Rajoo's elder son, R.T. Sekar, had toyed with as his dream project for over a decade and half. During this period, Sekar worked and supported his father's business by manning the cashier counter, held discussions with waiters and customers to learn about their needs and developed an understanding of the numerous problems faced by their business as well as the industry. First, restaurants in Singapore faced a severe manpower shortage. Second, the job of a waiter in a typical traditional South Indian restaurant was monotonous and it was hard to find replacements when one left due to Singapore's tight labour market. Third, Sekar realised that the founder's presence at the cashier counter had a profound effect on the restaurant's performance. Managing the cash counter and a host of waiters, the founder controlled the restaurant operations, service level and speed. Absence of modern cash management systems and lack of trust in employees had Sekar and his father tied down at the cashier's counter for long hours. Fourth, as the business grew and demand increased, a waiter who served four tables started serving eight, then twelve and then sixteen, which delayed service. Despite these problems, the family business survived and grew. Between 1950 to 1990, Komala Vilas' sales and employment grew seven and four-fold, respectively.

During the 1990s, the Sekar brothers started developing a new service concept for their business based on some existing ideas. Their new concept had to address some of the above problems that the restaurant business faced. First, food had to be served fast at all times. Second, the operations had to be carried out with a minimum number of employees. Third, it should free founders to attend to many other aspects of the business without letting service and performance suffer. To accomplish these changes, Sekar realised that a paradigm shift in business concept was needed for the future. According to him, "It (the concept) should be simple, but has to be system oriented." His new business model for restaurant comprised, among others, two key-business processes: self-service and fast delivery of food. What kindled the decision to adopt self-service was an event that Sekar will not forget. He recalled:

"What inspired me was the opening of McDonald's in Singapore in 1979. It was a real crowd puller. I said: Why can't we do it?"

To create the new business model for his dream restaurant, Sekar had to forgo his studies at the National University of Singapore.

Sekar realised that the traditional business model lacked a system to serve food quickly at all times. Therefore, he went on to develop one. It involved many process enablers: use of disposables for packaging, pre-cooking, information technology and deployment of systems approach to service operations.

Self-service

In 1991, Sekar’s family decided to start a new restaurant. When the idea was mooted, Sekar proposed the idea of self-service but it met with a lot of opposition from the family members. Their thinking was based on a deep-rooted business philosophy of the restaurant industry in South India. Sekar’s parents felt that the Indian community was not used to paying upfront and then collecting their own food. His family was concerned that the concept would fail. However, Sekar was committed to self-service. The new vegetarian restaurant “Komala’s” was proposed to be set up as an operating division of the Komala’s Group. According to Sekar:

As the new division of the Komala’s Group was going to be managed by me, I was firm on the introduction of self-service concept. I was impressed by the speed with which customers got their food if they collected it themselves.\(^8\)

Sekar’s determination to implement self-service in catering Indian food that had large variety in four categories with 79 items was a major deviation from the traditional business model. (See Exhibits 2 and 3.) However, according to Sekar, it had two major advantages. First, self-service reduced the manpower requirement as it eliminated the function of a waiter, a job that was not popular in Singapore. Second, it contributed to reduction in service turnaround time and resulted in cost savings to the business. More importantly, it raised the profile of labour employed in Singapore’s Indian restaurants.

Fast delivery of food

The concept of Komala’s was to serve ethnic Indian food with a large menu, and fast delivery of food as an important component in its service concept. Several activities that enabled it were identified and materials and human resources required to perform such activities were developed and organized. Development of this part of the service concept was a major challenge for the Sekars, as there was no existing business model in the traditional Indian restaurant industry. Some of the challenges that the Sekars faced were development of disposable plates, pre-cooking and designing an operating system for fast delivery of food at Komala’s.

Development of disposables

Although most traditional South Indian restaurants used stainless steel crockery, Sekar felt that stainless steel plates were not suitable for fast delivery of food as they were heavy, lost their sheen, required additional manpower to maintain and were not disposable. In order to reduce the dependence of business volume on fixed manpower cost, disposables became critical for the operations of Komala’s. They comprised of plates, spoons, cups, glasses and trays. While some were developed, others were adapted from existing ones used in other industries. However, the crockery had to be outsourced and custom-produced for Komala’s with their design and logos. As for the plates, Komala’s developed them jointly with vendors. Sekar narrated his experience:

After many years of searching, I finally found a metallic-finish plastic plate (polystyrene) and had it manufactured. It (the stainless steel look)\(^9\) was perfect because Indian food is eaten traditionally on a banana leaf or stainless steel.\(^10\)

Next came the packaging for the sauces and chutneys. Sekar himself worked closely with the manufacturers and vendors to develop a range of shallow gravy cups for curries and vegetables, and polystyrene twin-cup mini-plates for chutneys.

Pre-cooking

In order to deliver food fast, pre-cooking and packaging of side dishes were essential for Komala’s. Side dishes such as curries, chutneys and vegetables had to be pre-cooked and packaged in advance to speed up the setting up of food trays and the level of customer service. Although pre-cooking of the main dish was not common in the traditional South Indian restaurants, accompanying vegetables, chutneys and curry were usually pre-cooked to speed up service. In serving the side dishes, traditional South Indian restaurants used stainless plates with built-in cups or crockery but the side dishes were added at the time of serving and not pre-packed.

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\(^9\) Recently replaced by polystyrene based plates, which are eco-friendly.

Operations

The construction and project development activities for Komala's Little India outlet started in 1993. The development of operations included construction of a seating area, kitchen, store and other sections besides interior decoration. In addition, the Sekars' new business model involved the design and implementation of three major aspects of the Komala's restaurant: ambience, front-end operations and back-end operations.

Ambience

As the food served in Komala's was no different from what was offered elsewhere, the Sekars made considerable efforts to provide a different ambience, which bore some resemblance to that of outlets like McDonald's or KFC. Set up on the lower floor of a shop-house, Komala's occupied about five thousand square feet. It's ambience was made up of a décor that could be described as both modern and traditional. At the entrance, instead of Ronald McDonald, a "Thosai" mascot greeted customers. Traditional Indian music from the nearby jukebox assured Indian customers that they were in a familiar setting. Specially prepared oil paintings that depicted food and drink preparation in traditional South Indian restaurants were hung on many walls to provide a contrast between Komala's and the traditional South Indian restaurants.

There are four sections in Komala's, three of which are exclusively reserved for seating. Customers could have a good look at these sections from the passage on either side to find vacant seats. There are 130 seats that catered to groups of two to six customers to one table. As most customers were Indian, the Sekars made a thorough study of the characteristics of Indian food and eating habits before they designed the entire furniture. Sekar commented on the differences between ethnic Indian and western food and their influence on the design of tables and chairs:

All the tables and chairs that you see in Komala's are done by us. Tables in other fast food restaurants are about 500mm by 400mm, which are slightly smaller than ours. I told myself, 500mm by 400mm is too small as Komala's serving plate itself is 300mm by 350mm. So, what I did was to put two plates on the table there to find that it just allowed two trays. You go to a typical fast-food restaurant and put two trays, it will fill up the table. You have no room to put a cup of drink. Our (South Indian) food is very different. The western food is so small. It's not huge. Another thing is that you bring the entire food to [your] mouth. You lift it up totally. Our food needs working on the plate. You need more space to move. It's where I said the tables are small. So, I ordered the next size - 500mm by 600mm.

The seats were made of swivelling plastic chairs and the tables came with Formica tops. Chairs were screwed to a frame attached to the table. It preserved orderliness for the whole day and walking space was unblocked. The seating or dining areas measured up to 2,700 square feet and occupied about 54 percent of the total space. Other sections such as the kitchen (1,000 square feet), store (600 square feet), cashier-cum-order counter (150 square feet), servery, top-up and take-away counter (280 square feet), toilets (150 square feet), drinking water dispenser, wash basin, jukebox and others occupied the rest of the restaurant. (See Exhibit 4.) Despite space constraints, the Sekar brothers allocated 40 square feet (8 percent) as a play area for children. On the whole, bright lights, jukebox music, sleek yellow and pink furniture provided a snazzy ambience to customers - a stark contrast to an overall dull and less vibrant environment that prevailed in lower-end traditional South Indian restaurants.

Front-end operations

The Sekar brothers studied many restaurants before conceiving a system that would separate ordering food from its collection. A customer at Komala's had to join the queue twice as opposed to once in most fast-food restaurants. First, a customer queued at the order counter to select and order his food. Then he had to proceed to the servery counter to collect his food. Together, they made up Komala's front-end operations.

First counter - ordering food

At Komala's first counter, the cashier-cum-order-taking counter, the staff member greets the customers and upon customers' requests, helps them to select the food. For example, a customer might ask, "What is Onion Rava Masala Thosai?" At this juncture, personal touch and explanation are necessary for the customer to decide on the choice. Upon finalising the order, the Komala's staff would enter the order into the computer and repeat the order to the customer before payment receipt is printed. With the receipt, the customer would head
for the second counter, which is located opposite the first. (See Exhibit 4.) During this period, the customer’s companion(s) would have found available seats. Komala's operates two cashier counters on all days. During peak hours, additional staff are also deployed.

**Back-end operations**

Komala's back-end operations support and contribute to the efficiency of the front-end operations. Comprising part servery, house-keeping and kitchen operations, their smooth functioning is central to accomplishing service goals. Sekar worked hard to create documentation of tasks and operating procedures for all the job functions. For example, the top-up section where side dishes and beverages were pre-packed and kept in ready-to-serve form supports the servery counter. Komala's operations manual for job function at the top-up section comprises a few simple instructions that could enable students or less educated employees to perform efficiently with very little on-the-job training in the shortest possible time.

Back-end operations need the largest number of employees. During peak hours, seven people are required at the servery counter, and this includes staff manning the take-away counter and top-section. Ten people are required for the kitchen and three for the house-keeping. Therefore, back-end operations require 20 persons during peak hours and about 11 persons during non-peak hours. Most staff members are trained and required to perform multiple tasks depending on the needs of the operations and occasionally the staff members are rotated from one counter to another.

**Second counter - collecting food**

A customer queues up a second time to collect his order at the servery counter. When a customer presents the order receipt to the Komala's staff, preparation to serve the customer's order begins. As a first step, the computer transmits the order to the kitchen where the chef starts to prepare the main dish. At the same time, the servery counter staff prepare the service tray with side dishes such as vegetables, curries, chutneys, and drinks. As soon as the main dish arrives, the food tray is set. With the supply of crockery, the order processing is complete and trays are ready for customer's collection. Service was unusually fast as most items are in a ready-to-serve form. Customers pick up their trays and leave the queue. Sometimes, when the order comprises of different food-items, the duration of the service could be longer.

**Four-station system: Three-minute service goal**

Clearly defined tasks and well-organized operations are the driving factors of Komala's operations that comprise four stations: cashiers counter, servery counter, kitchen and house-keeping. A customer needs to visit only two stations at the front-end operations as other stations extend the required support for the smooth running of the Komala's restaurant operations. The average time required to complete the two tasks depend on the size of the order. Based on past experience, Sekar had an estimation of the average time required for the two groups of customers at each station. (See Table 1.)

According to Sekar, the reason for higher speed at Komala's was due to the differences in its operations. In a traditional restaurant, a waiter took a customer's order but did not process it immediately. Instead, he collected orders from another set of customers before going into the kitchen to place the orders. Therefore, service time increased. While the customer waited for his order to be served, the waiter performed other tasks such as cleaning the tables, collecting the food and re-filling drinks. On average, the process time went above three minutes, whereas at Komala's, one person took the order, another served and the third person prepared the food. The tasks were not performed sequentially and three to four people worked in parallel to fulfill an order.

### TABLE 1

**PROCESS COMPLETION TIMES AT IMPORTANT STATIONS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Station/Counter</th>
<th>Average time required – Order to food collection</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Single customer</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cashier/Order</td>
<td>45 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Severy</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2 minutes, 45 seconds</td>
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Breaking down the customer service into a number of small tasks with easy-to-read instructions is the hallmark of Komala’s operational success. This enabled Komala’s to tap new sources of manpower and alleviate its shortage, facilitate job-rotation and ensure smooth operations for 365 days, and drastically reduce the customer order servicing time by parallel execution of tasks.

Commenting on Komala’s better performance, Sekar shared the results of a study conducted by consultants who did the time study for Komala’s and Komala Vilas. The time elapsed from order to delivery in Komala Vilas, the traditional South Indian restaurant, was found to be well above five minutes. The transition from a traditional South Indian restaurant to an operationally efficient modern restaurant or café was achieved by aligning operations around customer service and introduction of several process enablers to achieve fast delivery of food.

Food - product range and preparation

Since inception, offering a large variety of Indian food at Komala’s was emphasized by the Sekars to cater to a diverse Indian community. Therefore, a large product range offering in the food menu became a necessity. Relating it to the vast Indian culture, Sekar explained why food variety was emphasised when Komala’s was opened:

> When Komala’s was opened, particularly in the first one or two months, people who visited us asked - what is new at Komala’s? Customers like to have new items and varieties. Believe me, you try to introduce ten new items; they will all be well received. Also, Komala’s had to offer every product that our competitors were offering.

Therefore, Komala’s started off with a 79-item menu. As the concept gained acceptance and the food became popular, new varieties in meals and snacks were introduced. Vegetarian burgers, fries and coke were introduced around mid-1995. The menu was further expanded by adding popular western and north Indian snacks, such as, paani puri, bhel puri, pav-bhaji and samosa. (See Exhibit 5.)

Pricing

In order to be consistent with its vision of making ethnic Indian food affordable, Komala’s had to adopt pricing that was close to that of nearby restaurants, coffee shops and moderately priced cafes. Prices of most main dishes were kept around S$2, similar to those of Komala Vilas and competitors. In the meals category, three special meals varieties were introduced and priced at S$4. A masala thosai at Komala’s was priced at S$1.80, which was quite competitive compared to most restaurants in Little India. Sekar felt that pricing had to be extremely competitive as customer sensitivity to it was very high. Despite providing a different ambience that was set in a property valued at S$2.2 million, the Komala’s secret of low pricing lay in the large volume of customers it was able to attract.

Human resources management

Komala’s human resources development efforts contributed significantly to the smooth running of operations and achievement of service goals. At a time when Singapore’s strong economic growth created problems of labour shortage and businesses in general experienced wage rise, restaurants in Singapore found it difficult to attract, motivate and retain employees at lower cost due to the tight labour market. In order to alleviate this problem, the Sekars used the innovation of the new concept restaurant to their advantage. First, they created an environment that would attract people to work for Komala’s. Second, they kept the tasks simple by breaking the business operations into simple processes, documenting the tasks and operating procedures (manuals for staff) at various stations in Komala’s. It enhanced the prospects of supporting these stations by employees who have no training or minimum training to begin working at Komala’s. For example, staff at the cashier counter had five simple steps to follow. Describing each task in simple English, Sekar targeted the educated youth and students to work at the restaurant and thereby widened the source of labour supply, which was previously limited to workers with lower education and skill levels. Third, the Sekar brothers took the monotony out of the job as most staff members were rotated at various stations. Fourth, apart from compensation that was on par with industry average, Sekar felt that full time employees were happy because of good promotion and career prospects. (See Exhibit 6.) In addition, as Komala’s expanded locally and overseas, some employees could get a chance to work at its other branches in Singapore or overseas franchisees. These initiatives helped Komala’s to draw the best from their employees who strived to deliver high performance.

Amidst the growing economic prosperity of Singapore and a thriving restaurant industry, Komala’s first restaurant started operations in July 1995. Covering the event, a newspaper reported:
Walk into the new branch of Komala Vilas Restaurant, near the old one at Serangoon Road, and you are likely to get a mild culture shock: The whole set-up is so generically a fast-food outlet, even the staff look like they strayed in from McDonald's.\(^{11}\)

The transformation of a traditional South Indian restaurant into a modern café was a result of deliberate changes made by the Sekars to its operations. These changes eliminated the age-old waiters in the traditional Indian restaurant, who normally served the customers; a change that many entrepreneurs would dread to implement.

FIRST-YEAR OPERATIONS

The early days of Komala’s Little India operations were somewhat testing for the Sekars, as the concept took some time to catch on with the Indian community.\(^{12}\) However, towards the late 1995 and early 1996, the restaurant began to show signs of promise. Soon, it became very popular because of its convenient location, ambience, predictable food and quick service. Most customers were families and young people with an increasing number of non-Indians.

For the Sekar brothers, the first year of operations revealed many bottlenecks. First, during the weekends such as Friday and Saturday nights, long queues used to build up at the two cashier counters. Also, some people were seen waiting outside Komala’s. It was mainly due to peak hour demand. Most customers shopped and headed to Komala’s for their family dinner. Although some customers placed their orders for take-away, it did not reduce the dine-in crowd on such occasions. Second, during peak-hour, customers were found waiting close to the occupied seats to get them when they became vacant. A study of peak-hour customer arrival and order profile by Sekar brothers revealed the results below. (See Table 2.)

The arrival rates reached new peaks towards the festive season. Starting from November till January, Komala’s was not able to cope with the festive crowd during peak periods. It lost customers to other restaurants including Komala Vilas. As most restaurants were experiencing increased demand, capacity to serve customers remained a constraint during these months. For Komala’s, it was not clear what caused the bottleneck. The kitchen was one possibility as variations in the order size, composition and cooking time for the main dish created a backlog. However, Sekar ruled that out. He deemed it could be due to the restaurant’s front-end operations, namely servery counter, cash counter and seating. He also observed that due to different delivery sequences, the time taken by the customers to complete their meals or snacks varied. As the family members waited for everybody to complete their meal or snack, the tables though cleared, were not available to other customers. As time passed by, the Sekar brothers found that the operational problems observed in 1996 continued. However, these problems remained bottlenecks but did not cause any serious problems in the following year as the Singapore economy entered a period of recession due to the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

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<thead>
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<th>Item</th>
<th>Type of Customer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average order size (number of major food item, such as, thosai etc.)</td>
<td>1 to 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average dollar value of the order ($ per order)</td>
<td>3.50 to 4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average daily customer arrival rates (8 am to 7 pm)</td>
<td>500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average daily customer arrival rates (7 to 10 pm)</td>
<td>700*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average eating time spent at Komala’s</td>
<td>15 to 20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnaround time (ordering, collection, eating and clearing)</td>
<td>22 min 45 sec</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(*) - Includes both individual and family

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LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE...

The Sekar brothers believed that there was a strong demand for authentic South Indian vegetarian food in local and international markets. However, the demand had to be satisfied with innovative food preparation, service and fast delivery. Establishing more branches of Komala's restaurants was one way to cater to this demand.

To realise further business growth, Komala's management conducted a formal strategic business planning exercise in June 1997 that led to the identification of a three-pronged approach for expansion:

1. Establish the Little India outlet as the pilot by 1998,
2. Set up a restaurant-cum-training school in Chennai, South India, and
3. Establish a chain of restaurants in Singapore and the Asian region.

Following the popularity of the Little India outlet of Komala's, the Sekar brothers received enquiries for franchising from all over the world. In 1998, there were three Singapore outlets at Scotts Road, Peninsula Plaza and Upper Dickson Road (Little India). Looking into the future, franchising could see the Sekar brothers earning licensing fees and royalty on the turnover. But, how could the pilot at Little India circumvent the current bottleneck that could worsen in the future? As more Indians continue to flock into Little India, what could the Sekar Brothers do to smoothen Komala's operations at the Little India outlet?
EXHIBIT 1
LOCATION DETAILS OF LITTLE INDIA AND KOMALA’S

LITTLE INDIA

KOMALA’S

Location of some of the restaurants that serve south Indian food in traditional style in Little India area:
Udupi, Madras Woodlands, Komala Vilas, Kamat, Banana Leaf, Muthu’s Curry, Andhra Curry, etc.
(schematic)

Source: http://singapore-travel.org/listings/littleindia/
EXHIBIT 2

FOUR CATEGORIES OF INDIAN FOOD AT KOMALA’S

Meal: Vegetable Biriyani Meal
Snack: Bhattura

Tiffin: Plain Thosai
Drink: Rosemilk

Source: http://www.komalasweb.com
# EXHIBIT 3

## DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME SOUTH INDIAN FOOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Picture</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1      | Idly                  | ![Idly](image) | Idly is a steamed food that looks like a soft and fluffy rice cake. Its batter is made out of rice and lentil flour. Usually served in double alongside with three standard condiments: coconut chutney, onion chutney and sambhar (gravy made from pulse).
How to enjoy: By tearing a portion and mixing with the condiments. |
| 2      | Vadai                 | ![Vadai](image) | Vadai is a rice flour and lentils spicy doughnut. The specially prepared dough is shaped by hand into donut-shape and deep-fried in oil till it is brown. Crisp and spicy in taste. Served with chutney and sambhar. Another popular variant is sambhar Vadai, where Vadai is immersed in sambar, which is a form of gravy, made from pulses and garnished with cut onion.
How to enjoy: By tearing a portion and mixing with the condiments. |
| 3      | Thosai                | ![Thosai](image) | Thosai is a traditional Indian snack and an all time favourite meal, which is eaten at any time of the day. It is made out of rice and lentil flour. The batter prepared out of these flours are spread onto a hot plate, which results in the form of pancakes. It is eaten with the three condiments: coconut chutney, onion chutney that is in the form of paste and the sambar, a gravy made from pulses. Thosai is basically not spicy but the condiments that are served together makes it spicy.
How to enjoy: By tearing a portion and mixing it with different condiments separately or together to suit one's taste. |
| 4      | Onion Rawa Thosai     | ![Onion Rawa Thosai](image) | Same as thosai but has a different mix of rice and lentil flour. The batter is spread on a hot plate. Minced onion, green coconut and sliced green pepper are spread before the thosai is served. This is normally a little crisp and again served with the standard 3 condiments. |
| 5      | Uttappam              | ![Uttappam](image) | Uttappam is a thick pancake made out of a batter that is specially prepared with rice flour and lentil. It is a little fluffy and smaller in size than a thosai and served with the standard 3 condiments. Variants with onion and coconut toppings are most common. |
| 6      | Bhattura              | ![Bhattura](image) | Bhattura is made of wheat flour dough that is flattened and fried. Upon frying it gets filled with hot air and looks more like a spaceship. It is served with a spicy side dish chana masala: gravy made of chickpeas. Served with a piece of cut lemon, onion and green chilli (pepper).
How to enjoy: The lime is squeezed onto the chickpeas and the Bhattura is eaten with the chickpea curry. To fire spice buds, bite green chilli and onion. Though the origin is North Indian, everyone relishes it today. |
| 7      | Chapatti              | ![Chapatti](image) | Chapatti is pancake made of wheat flour. The dough prepared from wheat flour is rolled and flattened into a round shaped pancake that is spread on to a hotplate. Served with 2 types of vegetable curries, chapatti is enjoyed by most Indians. |

Source: Adapted from several websites including the Komala’s – http://www.komalasweb.com
EXHIBIT 4

KOMALA’S - LAYOUT AND SEATING CAPACITY (SCHEMATIC)

KOMALA’S - AREA DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Capacity (sq-ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DINING</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KITCHEN</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STORE</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASHIER COUNTER</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVERY COUNTER</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOILETS</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAY</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHERS (Wash, Jukebox, refill etc.,)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 5,000 sq-ft

- Indicative seating arrangement. Real capacity is mentioned in the case.
EXHIBIT 5

NEW SNACKS OF KOMALA'S

Komala's Vegetable Samosa

Komala's Burger

Komala's Kids Meal

Source: http://www.komalasweb.com
EXHIBIT 6
KOMALA’S ORGANISATION STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Levels at Komala’s</th>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARM – Asst. Restaurant Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM – Floor Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainee Floor Manager</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crew/Staff (Cashier, servery, kitchen, house keeping)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>