

Introduction: 00:05

Covid's Effect on Business: 06:00

Name of Restaurant: 06:40

Target Customers: 06:55

How has restaurant changed over time: 07:30

Have ingredients changed: 08:20

Where are ingredients sourced: 08:47

Stereotypes about South Asian food: 09:34

What time of day is the restaurant busiest: 10:20

What time of year is the restaurant busiest: 10:50

Dominance of Indian cuisine in South Asian restaurants: 12:30

Talha: Assalam-u-Alaikum Uncle, thank you, thank you for taking the time to meet with us, and talk with us, **can you start with introducing yourself? (00:05)**

Javaid Khan: My name is Javaid Khan, I opened a restaurant in '89, on Piedmont Avenue, Heer of India, before I worked there. In '92, I opened the Koh-I-Noor Indian restaurant, Koh-I-Noor is diamond, restaurant. A lot of people, they like me, first I opened on Chamblee-Tucker Road, but people say this is small place, you can open the big one, after I can go this one, umm. [In Urdu] What is called?

Talha: Heer?

Javaid [Urdu]: No no, it was right here, I was just telling you...

Talha: Koh-I-Noor?

Javaid [Urdu]: No no.

Talha: The one on Piedmont? Or Chamblee?

Javaid [Urdu]: No, from Chamblee, I moved and went there, and then from there, '96, in '96 I moved from there

Talha: Ok

Javaid [Urdu]: Until '96 I stayed there

Talha: In Chamblee

Javaid [Urdu]: In Chamblee

Talha: Ok

Javaid [Urdu]: And then from '96, Hinson Mill Road, Hinson Mill Road, I opened one in a shopping center there,[English] in '96 I can move this [to] Rockbridge Road. I buy property, and big restaurant, banquet hall, fast food, everything. I start this maybe 10 years, make it work. After my wife died, she died, and I closed it. After 15 years, I have a heart attack, I go to hospital, this and that. After I can open this one, this open 1 year.

Talha: Ok

Javaid: Koh-I-Noor. Same name, but this is Koh-I-Noor Express.

Talha: Oh ok.

Javaid: People like me, see, this 40 years i am here, a lot of families, lots of parties there, lots of people get married in my banquet hall. And people know me, Mr. Khan. Now I can open this one. This mall, they have \$52,000 rent. I know about this one, I can move [to] this city, I can open, same name, Koh-I-Noor Express.

Talha: Ok, Mashallah. Can you tell us about your background? Where are you and your family from?

Javaid: Actually, I am [from] Frontier [referring to Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in 2010], Abbottabad. And Lahore, I can go school, and college in Lahore, finish. After I can come this Karachi. After I can come here, Atlanta, Georgia.

Talha [Urdu]: Ok, ok

Javaid [Urdu]: And I've been here for 40 years. I came in '81, first I was in Houston, then from Houston I moved here to Atlanta. In Atlanta-I came here in '89, and since '89 I've been here.

Talha: And, so, you're saying your first restaurant was opened in '89?

Javaid: '89, Heer of India.

Talha: Ok, but when did you open this restaurant first? The first Koh-I-Noor?

Javaid: In '92 I can open this Koh-I-Noor

Talha: Ok, alright. What inspired you to open the restaurant?

Javaid: Actually, I work this before, [in] Houston. I worked [as] this chef, and before I worked [on] this ship, you know passenger ship. There's a lot of make food this, Italian, American, Indian, Pakistani, I have chef there. After I can come there, Atlanta Georgia, I can open the Koh-I-Noor.

Talha: Ok, so how has location impacted your business? For example, your first 2 restaurants like the Piedmont Avenue one, how did its location impact your business, was it good or bad?

Javaid: Business at every location was good, but people's requirements were that I open a bigger restaurant. So I opened one with banquet hall, Rockbridge, I can open in Rockbridge.

Talha: With a banquet hall

Javaid: Banquet hall, and fast food, and restaurant seats, and I bring this lots of stuff [from] my country, Pakistan, table, chair, everything, you know? People loved this

Talha: And then so when you opened the Koh-I-Noor restaurant here, the express, do you think this has been better or worse for your business, being in Global Mall.

Javaid: Actually, business, before [was] better. Now this, you know, business, not too much. But it's ok, not bad, it's ok.

Talha: What were some of the, like, initial barriers you had to overcome in order to open this restaurant? Specifically here, what difficulties did you face in coming to this country and opening a restaurant here?

Javaid: Actually, I didn't face many difficulties. I had a friend, Aziz Dhanani, he's very famous. He helped me very much. With everything, money, with everything he has helped me. Because of this...(he appears struck by either a fit of sadness or illness)

Talha[Urdu]: Should I bring water?

Javaid[Urdu]: No

Talha[Urdu]: **Can you tell us how COVID affected your business? (06:00)**

Javaid[Urdu]: What do you mean?

Talha[Urdu]: Like, how has the pandemic affected your business, have you noticed any changes, compared to before the pandemic?

Javaid[Urdu]: Actually, this sickness, what's it called

Talha: COVID

Javaid: Because of it I wasn't able to open a fine-dining restaurant, that's why I opened this restaurant in the mall.

Talha[Urdu]: **Now let's talk about food. Can you explain to us the story behind the restaurant's name? It's named Koh-I-Noor, like our [south asians'](06:40)**

Javaid: Diamond

Talha[Urdu]: Yeah, the diamond that was taken. **Can you also tell us who your target customers are, mainly? (06:55)**

Javaid: Actually, all people they have, lot of people, they support, they have Memon, Memon people, lot of they coming, Agakhani people, you know, they give me support. And...

Talha[Urdu]: Nice, mashallah. **How have you changed the restaurant over time? Mashallah, you've been here for 40 years, so how have you changed the restaurant over time? How have changed your restaurant in order to attract more customers, in order to make like, you told us that first you moved from Piedmont to Rockbridge, and then you had to move here because of business, and you weren't able to get the larger restaurant, right? Is there any other changes that you've made? Have you changed the menu, did you think some of the items weren't selling as well?(07:30)**

Javaid[Urdu]: Lots of items on the menu have been changed, but a lot of people, they tell me, change the menu, this one made, like, good, good way. I can make this everything, customer request.

Talha[Urdu]: Ok. **Can you tell us, have you had to change any ingredients due to, for example, people here can't tolerate as much spice, or any other reason, or specific dishes? (08:20)**

Javaid: No, I can make special. American people, they like mild, and the Indian people, they says spicy. I can make this, medium spicy, mild. The people like this, my food.

Talha[Urdu]: **Can you also tell us where your ingredients come from? Where do you get your ingredients from?(08:47)**

Javaid: You know this, name is, Indian store, they have big store..

Talha: Patel Brothers?

Javaid[Urdu]: Patel Brothers, and, what's it called, Cherians, from there. And meat section, the Muslim people, they have halal, the meat, everything, goat, everything I can bring [from] there.

Talha[Urdu]: **Can you tell me that, are there any stereotypes, as in, about South Asian food that you don't like? As in, people have preconceived notions that Desi food is smelly and sticks to clothes, is very spicy, so are there any stereotypes like this that you wish to end? (09:34)**

Javaid[Urdu]: Many items have changed, Malai Boti, and such. Actually the people like this barbecue, Seekh Kabab, Tandoori Chicken, they like this. (Interviewer's Note: I don't think I translated the concept of stereotype adequately into Urdu, and, as a result, we weren't able to get an answer for this question)

Talha[Urdu]: **Can you also tell us, at what time is the restaurant the most busy? (10:20)**

Javaid: Actually, they have, lunch time, after dinner time, dinner time they come family, all the families they coming. After I can close this 11:00, but now this they have shopping center, then 9 o'clock close.

Talha: **OK, can you also tell us what times of the year is the restaurant the most busy? Meaning, during Eid, during Diwali, when is it more busy than usual? (10:50)**

Javaid: At every festival, Diwali, Eid, on holidays, the people come, and most this school kids, they have 2 months, they close the school, the people lot of people they coming, the families coming.

Talha[Urdu]: Ok mashallah, it looks like that's it. (To group lead, offscreen) Abhik, do you have any more questions? **Our last question is that, mashallah you're a restaurant proprietor. Why do you think that, in our experience, most Desi restaurants in Atlanta, be they South Indian, North Indian, Pakistani, Nepali, Bengali, why do you think that North Indian/Pakistani food, despite the restaurant owner's ethnicity, be they South Indian, North Indian, Bengali, most of the time the food is North Indian/Pakistani. Why do you think that is? (12:30)**

Javaid: A lot of people you know, they like Malai Kofta, {indistinct}, Indian people coming, Punjabi people coming, Daal Makhni, a lot of the people this...

Talha[Urdu]: So you're saying that the majority of the customers are from North Indian/Pakistan

Javaid: Yeah, North India/Pakistan

Talha[Urdu]: OK Uncle, thank you very much.

Javaid[Urdu]: Thank you son, God bless you, thank you very much