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Re-emergence of Traditionally Prepared Cold Pressed Edible Oil in Southern India – An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT Oil has been an integral part of Indian cooking for centuries. Cold pressed oils were used to prepare traditional food until refined oil started gaining acceptance less than a hundred years ago. Due to several advantages such as higher extraction efficiency, lower production cost, more neutral flavour and the ability to be used in deep frying, refined oils replaced cold pressed oils in several Indian kitchens. This study is an attempt to understand urban public perceptions about the physical, chemical, nutritional, socio-cultural and marketing aspects of cold pressed oil in southern India. As this was an exploratory empirical study, judgemental sampling was used to identify respondents for the administration of the survey instrument. Findings suggest that while the urban public believes that cold pressed oils smell, taste and have high nutritional value compared to refined oils and are also increasingly available through local production, their popular use is impacted by their high prices and unsuitability for deep frying.