

Fast Food Consumption Pattern among University Hostel Girls

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Abstract – Fast food is very popular among adolescents but its consumption has been associated with negative impact on health. This study was conducted to assess the fast food consumption pattern and eating behavior of adolescent girls and also the amount of money they spent on consumption of fast food from hostel canteen as well as outside places. The change in lifestyle has led to change in the consumption pattern in the recent years which has created a high demand for food products in processed and preserved form. Many of the adolescents exhibit peculiar food habits. Peer influence is one of the main reasons for faulty eating habits among the adolescents. Generally this becomes a habit resulting in a host of malnutrition related problem. Adolescents are at risk of many non communicable disease like obesity, diabetes, hypertension etc due to irregular eating habits. These eating habits of adolescents may even go into their adulthood. The study on fast food and snacks usage among adolescent girls was conducted among 50 adolescent girls in Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak in Haryana.

Key Words: Adolescents, Pocket money, Fast food, Meal Skipping

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INTRODUCTION

Fast food culture is becoming very popular these days especially among young people. The low price, easy availability, taste and attractive advertisement and special offers makes them popular among young people. Fast-food industry in India is increasing rapidly at the rate of 40% every year. India ranks 10th in the fast food per capita spending (Ashakiran, 2012). The current world's adaptation to a system of consumption of fast foods has resulted in several adverse effects on health. The energy density in fast foods is very high and it accounts more than twice the recommended daily allowance for children (Printice, 2003)

World Health Organization has defined adolescence as a period between 10-19 years (Bashour 2004) The current population of adolescents in India is 253.2 million, which comprises of 21 % of world's total population (Chin and Mohammad 2009).

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood in which physical, psychological and behavioral changes take place. These rapid changes in young children demands high quality diet for development of physical growth. But due to poor eating habits these demands are often not met and it puts them under nutritionally vulnerable group. (Chandramouli .2013) Many college students fall under the adolescent age group and shows some common unhealthy eating habits like meal skipping,

eating out, and fast food consumption etc. (Galore et al.1993).

Due to increased urbanization and increased income, there has been a drastic change in the eating pattern of college students in India. When students experience college life they are exposed to lack of time and stress which leads to poor eating habits among them. (Ganasegeran et al. 2013). They adopt unhealthy dietary practices due to easy availability of fast food and also they are quite affordable(Story et al.2002). Eating habits picked up during adolescent may continue in adult life as well and these dietary patterns may contribute to many non communicable disease later in life like obesity and eating disorders (Moy et al.2009. Good taste, affordability, convenience and advertisements have played major role in increasing sales of fast foods among adolescents. (Fister, 2005).

What is a Junk food?

Junk food is referred to an empty calorie food, which has high calories but it lacks in micronutrients like fiber, vitamins and minerals but it has high energy. This foods also contains ingredients which are considered unhealthy if eaten on a regular basis. Apart from great taste, easy availability, and attractive presentation of the food are the appealing nature of these foods. Advertisement plays an important role in promoting

junk foods among children and adolescents. (Fister,2005).

In the view of the above facts, the present study was conducted to find out eating habits of fast foods among adolescent girls living in hostel.

METHODS OF STUDY:

The study was conducted out in the Maharshi Dayanand University in Rohtak , Haryana. 50 girl students aged 16-19 residing in Maharshi Dayanand University Hostel were selected who were willing to participate in the study. For the collection of data questionnaire method was used. The tool was formulated to find out the consumption pattern of fast foods, soft drinks and snacks of adolescents. In all fifty girls responded and they became our respondents.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In recent times the eating habits of college students has changed rapidly. The change in the consumption pattern in the recent years has created a high demand for food products in processed and preserved form to suit the changing life style. Eating out has evolved from an occasional thing to a regular outing with friends and fast-food has become a significant symbol as it tries to satisfy the customer in a short time. The fast food industry has been growing at fast speed in India. Adolescents and young adults are more open to new concepts and ideas, they are more curious and interested in trying something new every time. Today they are consuming more beverages and grain-based snack foods and combination foods, such as pizzas, pasta ,noodles and burgers. Soft drinks consumption had a dramatic increase among all groups, especially among the adolescents.

Table 1

Pocket Money Received Per Month

Pocket money (In Rs)	Frequency	Percentage
2001-3000	8	16.0
3001-4000	21	42.0
4001-5000	13	26.0
5001 Or above	8	16.0
Total	50	100

Table 1 shows money received per month from their homes. Most of the students i.e. 42% were receiving money Rs. 3000-4000 from their homes. Moreover 26% students were receiving about Rs. 4000-5000 money from their homes. Around 16 % of the students were receiving only Rs. 2000-3000. And 16% students were receiving more than Rs. 5000 per month.

Table 2

Money Spent On Fast Food per Month

Expenditure on Fast food (In Rs)	Frequency	Percentage
200 or less	5	10.0
201-500	12	24.0
501-800	6	12.0
801-1000	19	38.0
1001-2000	7	14.0
More than 2000	1	2.0
Total	50	100

Table 2 shows how much money the girls are spending on fast food. It shows that 38% respondents spends Rs. 800-1000 money per month on fast food. Around 24% girl students spend Rs.200-500 money per month on food/snacks.14% girls spend Rs.1000 -2000 money every month on fast food. 12% spend between 501-800 on fast food per month . 10% girls spent 200 or less on fast food and only 2% spend Rs 2000 or more money per month on fast food and snacks. In a similar study conducted in Karachi, Pakistan shows that majority of respondents (38%)spend Rs 1000-2000 per month on fast food (Shami and Fatima 2017). This is higher than our study which shows majority of girls (38%) spent between 801-1000 and 14% spend between 1001-2000.

Table -3

Skipping of Meals by Respondents

Skipping of meals	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Everyday	3 (6.0%)	4 (8.0%)	00
1-2 days	11 (22.0%)	3 (6.0%)	4 (8.0%)
3-4 days	13 (26.0%)	1 (2.0%)	7 (14.0%)
once a week	15 (30.0%)	11 (22.0%)	19 (38.0%)
Never	8 (16.0%)	31 (62.0%)	20 (40.0%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Table 3 shows that 30 % respondent skip their breakfast once a week and 26% respondent skip their breakfast 3-4 days in a week. 22% skip their breakfast 1-2 days in a week 16% respondent said they never skip their breakfast and 6% respondent said they skip their breakfast every day. Skipping breakfast often leads to increased consumption of outside food which has low nutritional value. Breakfast is a very important meal of the day and adolescents should be educated to not skip it.

62% respondent said they never skip their lunch and 22% said they skip lunch only once in a week. 8% respondent skip their lunch every day and 6% skip their lunch 3-4 days in a week. 2% respondent skip their lunch 1-2 days in a week. 40% respondent said they never skip their dinner and 38% respondent said they skip their dinner only

once in week. 14% respondent skip their dinner 1-2 days a week and 8% said they skip their dinner 3-4 days in a week.

Study done by Bipasha and Goon in bangladesh shows 47% students had two meals per day and half of the students skipped their breakfast. This result is much higher than our result which shows that only 6% students skip their breakfast everyday, 2% skip their lunch every day.

Table 4

Frequency of Eating Fast Food in Hostel/ University Canteen

	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	11	22.0
3-4 times a week	14	28.0
Twice a week	17	34.0
Once a week	6	12.0
Once a month	2	4.0
Total	50	100

Table 4 shows that 34% respondent eat twice in a week in hostel canteen. 28% respondent eat 3-4 times a week and 22% respondent eat in hostel canteen every day. 12% respondent eat once in week in hostel canteen and 4% respondent eat only once in a month in hostel canteen. In an another study of Bangladesh students 22% of the respondents consumed fast food for 4 days per week where 21.3 % reported to eat fast food for everyday (Goon 2013) .

Table 5

Reasons for Eating Fast Food

Reasons for eating fast food	Frequency	Percentage
To celebrate an occasion	3	6.0
Just for enjoyment	14	28.0
Eat it as snack when feel hungry	17	34.0
For Taste	16	32.0
Total	50	100.0

Many of them have different reasons for eating snacks. Tastes and interest of the individual is totally different from others. Table 5 shows that 34 % respondents eat fast food as a snack when they feel hungry. About 32% eat it for taste and 28% % eat it for enjoyment and 6% respondents eat fast food to celebrate an occasion. The respondents said at the evening time they feel hungry and they wish to eat something so they eat whatever is available in the hostel canteen. Some of them said they would love to eat healthy snacks if it is available in the canteen.

Some girls reported that they eat fast food to socialize with their friends "when I am with my friends, if they invite me to go out to eat fast food, I won't decline the offer" (Female student , 19 years old).

Table 6

Preferred Beverages By Respondents

Beverages	Frequency	Percent
Milk	6	12.0
Tea	7	14.0
Coffee	8	16.0
Milkshake	4	8.0
Cold drinks	25	50.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 6 shows that the consumption of cold drink is very high among respondent 50% respondent prefer cold drink as beverages. 16% respondent prefer coffee and 14% prefer tea. about 12% respondent prefer milk and 3% prefer milkshake. Cold drinks are very popular among students as they give them instant energy and goes very well with the fast food items like chips, burger, pizza etc. In a similar study conducted in Bangladesh almost 96% students reported to drink soft drinks while eating fast food (Bipasha and Goon, 2013)

Table 7

Food Eaten In Canteen

Food Items	Frequency*	Percentage
Ice cream	24	48.0
Sandwich	20	40.0
Chowmin	18	12.9
Burger	16	32.0
Chips	37	74.0
Biscuit	11	22.0
Patties	17	34.0

**Multiple Response Table*

Table 7 shows that 74% respondent eat chips from hostel canteen. 48% prefer ice cream and 40% respondent eat sandwich in hostel canteen, about 34% prefer patties 32% prefer burger. 22% respondents eat biscuit and 13% respondents prefer chowmin in hostel canteen. Seo et al.(2011) in his study found that comparatively fried chicken and hamburgers were consumed more frequently than , pizza, doughnuts or French fries.

Table 8**Frequency of Occasional party celebration**

	Frequency	Percentage
More than three times a month	3	6.0
2-3 times a month	16	32.0
Once a month	25	50.0
Once in two months	6	12.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 8 shows that 50% of respondent celebrate birthday party or any other occasional party once in a month. 32% respondent celebrate parties 2-3 times in a month and 12% celebrate a party once in two months. 6% respondent celebrate parties more than three times in a month.

Table 9**Fast Food Eaten In Occasional Parties**

	Frequency*	Percentage
Maggie	11	22.0
Chips	12	24.0
Pizza	35	70.0
Burger	30	60.0
Sandwich	13	26.0
Pasta	8	16.0
Ice cream	24	48.0

**Multiple Response Table*

Table 9 shows that 70% respondent eat pizza in a birthday party and 60% respondent eat burger in a party, 48% eat ice-cream and 26% eat sandwiches, 24% prefer to eat chips 22% respondent eat Maggie and another 16% eat pasta in a party. This result is similar to the results of another study conducted in Pakistan which also shows pizza as the most preferred fast-food (Yardimci et al. 2012). In another study carried out in Saudi Arabia shows burger as the most popular fast food item among young adults. (Faris, et al, 2015).

Table 10**Having Regular Meals after Eating Fast Food**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	10.0
No	35	70.0
Sometimes	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 10 shows that 70% respondent don't eat their lunch or dinner after eating in a party. 20% respondent said they eat their meals sometimes and only 10% said they eat their meals after a party. Therefore, consumption of fast food also leads to the meal skipping among adolescents.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, the data analyzed showed the snacks and soft drinks was now an inseparable component in the dietary pattern of adolescent girls. Many of them eat it as a part of their daily snacking specially at the evening time. India is the youngest country in the World right now. Thus it should focus on the health of its young generation. The young adults should made educated about making healthy food choices and they should also be taught about the harmful effects of fast food. The girls in reproductive age needs special nutrition and lack of these nutrition may lead to anemia in them. Thus making healthy food choices and how to take care of one's nutritional requirement should be part of their school and college curriculum. The studied of this type will in understanding of eating pattern and behavior of college going students and also in understanding the need of health education of young people.

After understanding the dietary pattern of college students I suggest that nutritional education should be made compulsory for all college going students. And it the responsibility of government to eliminate or limit the fast food vendors near schools and colleges and offer healthy and nutritional food choices to children and teenagers. They should also limit the attractive advertisement of fast food especially targeted at the young children.

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