

## FAST FOOD CONSUMPTION AMONG ADOLESCENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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### **Abstract**

*Fast food is rich in calories, salts and fats. Excess consumption of fast food would lead to rise in wide variety of health disorders. The aim of the present study was to know about fast food eating habits of students, their ingredients, nutritive value and impact on human health.*

*The main objective of this study was to examine the fast food consumption among adolescent (13--- 20 years) of public schools by determining the frequency of daily and weekly intake of pizza, burger, fried food etc. along with salty and sweet snacks.*

*The subject includes boys and girls of different schools of Haridwar district. A total of 50 students, 25 were girls and 25 were boys. Survey method was used for the present study.*

*The result indicated that 40% of the subjects ate pizza one time in a week, 16% ate salty snacks twice in a week, 56% subjects ate noodles one time in a week. The main reasons to prefer fast food were 84% liked having it, was easily available for 10%, while 6% depended upon it in absence of food.*

### **Keywords**

*Adolescent, fast food, public schools, consumption.*

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## Introduction

Fast food is a term describing food that is perceived to be unhealthy or having poor nutritional value, according to food standards agency. Fast food is very popular among adolescents but its consumption has been associated with a negative impact on health. Fast food culture is becoming very popular due to its low price, easy availability, taste and attractive advertisement. 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)

Popularity of these food stuffs in this age of urbanization has been attributed to quick preparation and convenience of finishing a meal within no time. Numerous studies have reported several negative effects attributed to fast food consumption, ranging from weight gain among the youth to increase risk of diabetes. Adolescents comprise approximately one fifth of the world population and most of them (84%) live in the developing countries. Psychosocial changes such as the adolescent's search for independence and identify, concern for appearance and active lifestyle can have a strong impact on nutrient intake and food choices. Fast food consumption and obesity in childhood has been described as a global epidemic not only in developed but also developing countries. There are numerous psychological, physical and economic consequences of childhood obesity. Conditions such as type II DM, hypertension and hypercholesterolemia, which were noted primarily in adults are becoming more common among children with an increase in prevalence in obesity.

In the view of the above facts, the present study was concluded to find out fast food consumption among adolescents of public schools

Method of Study: - The present study was conducted on public schools in Haridwar district. To achieve the objective of this study, 50 adolescents were enrolled in this study through a purposive sampling method and for the collection of data questionnaire method was used. The tool was formulated to find out the consumption pattern of fast food of adolescents.

Results and Discussion:- Information about the demographic characteristics of the participants is presented in table 1.

**Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of participants (n= 50)**

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	<b>Age</b>		
	Middle adolescent (14-16 years)	19	38%
	late adolescent (17-19 years)	31	62%
2	<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	15	30%

	Female	35	70%
3	<b>Family type</b>		
	Nuclear family	29	58%
	joint family	21	42%
4	<b>Father education</b>		
	Less than high school	12	24%
	10 <sup>th</sup> standard	20	40%
	12 <sup>th</sup> standard	12	24%
	Under graduation	2	4%
	Post graduation	4	8%
5	<b>Mother education</b>		
	Less than high school	10	20%
	10 <sup>th</sup> standard	21	42%
	12 <sup>th</sup> standard	10	20%
	Under graduate	5	10%
	Post graduate	4	8%

As shown in table 1, most of the subjects were late adolescent 31(62%) and 19 (38%) were middle adolescents. Most of the subjects were female 35 (70%) and 15( 30%) were male. Regarding the type of family 29(58% ) subjects belongs to nuclear family, 21 (42%) were in joint family. Father’s education revealed that 12 (24%) had less than high school, 20 (40%) had 10th standard education, 12 (24%) were 12th standard, 2(4%) were undergraduate and 4 (8%) were postgraduate. Mother’s education revealed that 10 (20%) had less than high school, 21( 42%) were 10th standard, 10 (20%) were 12th standard, 5 (10% ) were undergraduate and 4( 8%) were postgraduate.

**Table 2. Expenditure fast food per month (in rupees)**

Expenditure	Frequency	Percentage %
200 or less	15	30
201 – 500	28	56
501 – 800	5	10
801- 1000	2	4

As shown in Table 2, out of 50 participants, 15 (30%) spent 200 or less rupees, 28 (56%) spent 201-500 rupees, 5 (10%) spent 501 - 100 rupees and 2 (4%) spent 801 – 2000 rupees per month on fast food.

**Table 3. Reasons of fast-food preference**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage %
Like (taste)	42	84
Easily available	5	10
In absence of food	3	6

Table 3 shows that 84% participants prefer having fast food because they like it, 10% participants prefer fast food because it is easily available and 6% participants prefer in absence of food.

**Table 4 Place of consumption**

Place	Frequency	Percentage %
at home	20	40
at school	8	16
fast food stalls	22	44

Table 4 shows that 40% consumed fast food at home, 16% consumed at school and 44% consumed from fast food stalls.

**Table 5, knowledge on Harmful health effect**

Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	44	88
No	6	12

Table 5, shows that 88% respondents had knowledge about harmful health effect of fast food and 12% had poor knowledge. (gopal etal 2012 )

**Table 6, preferred Fast food consumption**

Fast food	Frequency	Percentage %
Pizza	3	6
Burger	23	46
Chowmein	10	20
Momos	14	28

Table 6, shows that 6% respondents prefer pizza, 46% prefer burger, 20% prefer chowmein and 28% prefer momos. Seo etal (2011 ) .

**Table 7, Frequency of fast food consumption**

No. of times (weekly)	Salty snacks	Pizza	Maggi/ noodle
0	13 (26%)	12 (24%)	9 (18%)
1	19 (38%)	20 (40%)	28 (56%)
2	8 (16%)	12 (24%)	8 (16%)
3	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	4 (8%)
4	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)

Table 7, shows that 26% of subjects never consumed salty snacks, 38% consumed once in a week, 16% consumed twice in a week, 10% consumed 3 times in a week and rest 10% consumed 4 times in a week. 24% subjects never consumed pizza, 40% consumed pizza once in a week, 24% consumed twice in a week, 4% consumed 3 times in a week and 8% consumed 4 times in a week. 18% subjects never consumed maggi or noodles, 56% consume once in a week, 16% consumed Maggi or noodles twice in a week, 8% consumed 3 times in a week and 2% consumed maggi/ noodles 4 times in a week.

Conclusion: The data analysed showed that salty snacks, pizza, burger and noodles had become an important part of adolescents dietary pattern. They consumed these fast food once or twice in a week. Mostly adolescents consumed fast food from stalls during evening. India is considered the youngest country in the world, thus it should focus on the health of its young generation. Consumption of fast food has become more often due to easy delivery options. Even after having the knowledge of its harmful effects, adolescents still consume it for their taste and appearance which results in obesity and health issues. Family and peer roles were also found to be more influencing fast food accompanying the participants increased consumption. Consumption of fast food among adolescents was remarkable high in public school. In my opinion it would be really helpful if our government takes the responsibilities to limit or eliminate fast food vendors around schools and college campuses, instead often healthy and nutritional options for adolescents.

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