



The Changing Food Habits in India

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Abstract: *India has been a witness to the transition from the traditional to the contemporary age, as well as to the changing patterns of food consumption. People have abandoned their long-held customs and norms about food consumption in favour of more modern and convenient options, such as junk food, fast food, and processed meals. Because of their faster-paced lives and increased disposable means, members of the millennial generation are shifting their changing eating habits away from eating at home and towards eating in fine dining establishments, restaurants, cafés, pubs, bars, clubs, and lounges. The outcome of urbanisation and different social changes, such as working women and a drop in the average size of families owing to the rise of nuclear families, has been found to be the cause of changes in the patterns of food consumption. The consumption of ready-made and convenience junk meals, which are distinguished by their distinctive taste and flavour, is a feature of the modern way of life. The high levels of flavour enhancers and food chemicals found in ready-made foods and junk food are a primary factor in the development of an addiction to particular foods. The ability to perceive flavours is an important factor in the formation of new eating habits and preferences across the United States.*

Key words: *Fast foods, food consumption pattern, food habits, health*

The eating practises of the people in India used to be quite traditional and genuine, but in modern times there has been a significant shift away from such kinds of practises across the country. Along with having one of the youngest populations in the world, India has one of the largest urban masses in the world, which comprises both graduates and blue-collar employees. This enormous urban mass dominates the Indian consumer market of today. This younger generation typically chooses to spend their money rather than save it, despite the fact that a growing percentage of members of this generation have larger discretionary incomes than their older counterparts. They have very little time to prepare their meals and do the tasks that go along with the kitchen since their life moves at such a breakneck speed. As a consequence of these factors, the vast majority of them rely on "ready-made foods" or "junk foods" obtained either from the canteen, adjacent cafeterias, or street-side local eateries or Dhaba. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the demand for ready-to-eat foods. This category of foods includes frozen food, packaged food, and quick meals from fast food restaurants. According to Madhavapaty and Dasgupta (2015), the number of eateries such as restaurants, cafeterias, and fast-food chains is quickly growing in our nation.

Food prepared at home using the same cooking process each and every time may not be to everyone's taste. People require a shift in the flavour, texture, and look of their food. Everyone wants to select meals from a diverse range of categories in order to maintain a healthy diet. The idea that certain types of foods are only accessible during certain times of the year is becoming less relevant as new technologies and transportation methods make it possible to import food year-round. In the event that fresh produce, such as peas and vegetables, cannot be obtained, an excellent substitute is fresh food that has been frozen. In addition, because of advances in technology, the modern food business places a greater emphasis on processing, and the use of additives in food is only growing. Processed foods originated from this method of production. In India, the frequent use of foods that have been chemically treated and include food additives has seen a significant growth over the past several years. This sort of food was the catalyst for developing an addiction to particular foods.

The increased consumption of fast food is mostly attributable to the industrial processing of foods. (2012) According to Bhaskar and Ola. The addition of food additives and synthetic food colouring to fast food helps maintain its flavour and texture while also extending its shelf life, both of which contribute to the product's increased desirability. Because food additives, saturated fatty acids, and hydrogenated fats prevent rancidity, products containing these ingredients have a longer shelf life than those without them. Foods are changed from their original condition, typically with the purpose of improving their safety or increasing their accessibility. These meals have the potential to activate taste and appetite centres, each of which can have separate harmful consequences that ultimately contribute to obesity in humans. (Alkerwi and colleagues 2015)



Taste perception is an extremely important factor in the regulation of dietary preferences, eating routines, and the homeostatic management of energy balance. According to Bhoge (2015), the majority of the "ready-made foods" and junk foods include significant levels of flavour enhancers to make them more palatable. People in today's society have very limited time to spend to the preparation of their own meals, and as a result, they rely heavily on ready-made foods, the majority of which have low dietary qualities and are bad for human beings. A diet that is heavy in foods that have been subjected to high heat, such as pizza and cake, among other things, increases the risk factors for diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular illnesses. The consumption of junk foods that have been subjected to high heat treatment because of their distinctive flavour and flavour is indicative of the modern lifestyle. On the other hand, it has been demonstrated that subjecting diabetics to high temperatures during the processing of food might result in the generation of potentially hazardous chemicals that encourage inflammation and cardiovascular disease. (Birlouez et al. 2010, to be precise)

Our civilization has undergone a radical transformation. When a society's social structure or function undergoes a change, it is said to be undergoing social transformation. It's possible for technological advancements, Beurocritization, competitiveness, wars, urbanisation, a scarcity of resources, a shift in cultural norms, industrialisation, etc. to have an impact on society.

Home meals were traditionally eaten on the floor, although dining tables have now replaced this practise. Indian eating customs have evolved greatly in recent times. It's becoming increasingly common for families to hold their gatherings elsewhere, such as at cafes, restaurants, hotels, etc. This development is mostly due to the millennial generation's shifting eating habits. Sixty-five percent of India's population is comprised of millennials or members of Generation Y (those between the ages of 18 and 35). They have a lot of disposable income, are well-read, have travelled widely, and are continuously exposed to international fashion and culture. They help boost the restaurant sector's overall expansion rate. Going Dutch, the practise of dividing up the bill evenly among those present, is also popular among today's youth. The restaurant industry is profoundly impacted by the eating habits of millennials. In recent years, India has seen a rise in the number of high-end eateries, cafés, pubs, bars, clubs, lounges, and foreign fast food restaurants that serve the region's burgeoning millennial population.

Working women have altered our culture's eating habits. There has been a rise in the number of women in the labour force, making it more difficult for them to juggle all of their responsibilities at home and in the workplace. As a result, consumers have put a premium on convenience, which has led to the rapid development of fast food restaurants and the widespread adoption of ready-to-eat meals.

Household sizes in India have decreased, leading to the rise of the nuclear family. As a result of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, the Indian family system has experienced profound transformations in recent decades. The result is a faster rural-urban movement rate, a wider variety of profitable economic pursuits, and property rules that favour the individual. Consequences include a dramatic drop in the average family size across the nation. This trend may reflect the urbanisation of society and the increasing prevalence of nuclear households.

As a result of this cultural shift, people's dietary habits have shifted. When people's incomes rise, they tend to eat less of the traditional, nutritious meals that they are accustomed to and more of the higher-fat, ready-to-eat processed foods and animal source foods that are more expensive. As a result of urbanisation, people's eating habits are changing to prioritise higher-calorie foods like fast food and convenience stores. Due to the pervasive effect of social networks, including family, friends, and peers, modern families rarely eat healthily balanced meals together. Because of the characteristic tastes, quality, enjoyment, and artistic presentation, they are influenced to try new meals that are rich in fat and low in nutrients. Consumption patterns are changing as people choose ease of preparation over health and nutrition, thanks to the rise of the working woman and the popularity of nuclear families.

Eating well makes it feel less natural to snack on cookies when hunger strikes. There is no need for coercion; rather, we need only make a conscientious effort to do what we know is good for our health in the long run. It's easy to fall into a rut when it comes to eating since it becomes second nature. There is much opportunity for growth in consumers' levels of knowledge. A person's health benefits greatly from adopting healthy eating practises. Last but not least, a person's own tradition, culture, and peer group all have a role in shaping the person's decision as to what they consume. This is a crucial factor that can have an impact on someone's health. Every new generation should remember the rich culinary history of India, which reflects the uniqueness of a cuisine rich in healthful ingredients. Indian food uses a wide variety of ingredients that have deep historical roots in India. The religion, customs, and people of India all had significant impacts on the cuisine of that country.



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