

CHANGES OCCURED IN THE FOOD CONSUMPTION HABIT OF CONSUMERS DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the food consumption habit among the consumers during COVID-19. Consumers eating habit has affected or changed a lot after the existence of corona virus. COVID-19 has a significant impact on the food consumption behaviour of the consumers. It has changed food consumption behavior of the consumers both positively and negatively. The primary data are collected through structured questionnaire and it was distributed to 120 respondents and the process were resulted in the collection of 100 respondents completes on all parameters for data analysis and interpretation using Garrett ranking and weighted average method. The findings of the study states that many of the respondents have started cooking foods at home. They have also found a space to eat their food with their family during this lockdown and many of the respondents have stated that they have spent most of their time to cook food during this lockdown period. The findings also shows that the respondents have purchased more fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and fishes due to health conscious during COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, Consumer behaviour, Food consumption, Food habit, Changes, Pandemic, Consumers, Restaurants, Food delivery.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Food consumption of consumers have changed a lot after the outbreak of novel Corona virus. People are tending to remain in their home during lockdown, this led the consumers to adopt many changes in their food habit such as Eating with their family, cooking foods at home, tried new snacks at home to fulfill their lockdown cravings, and it has also affected the diet plan of some respondents in many ways. On the other hand, COVID has also changed people's food habit in a positive way such as peoples take more water, fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, dry fruits and nuts to avoid the risk of getting infected by corona virus. Many consumers have also adopted using online food delivery applications during COVID-19, since they afraid of getting infected by the virus. COVID-19 has changed consumers' buying behaviour, attitude and purchasing power all over the world. Peoples have faced many physical and psychological health issues during this pandemic period.

2. COVID-19 and foodbehaviour

If the COVID-19 pandemic has had big impacts on how you are eating, shopping for food and thinking about food you're far from alone. According to the International Food Information Council's (IFIC) 2020 Food & Health Survey, 85% of Americans have made at least some change in the food they eat or how they prepare it because of the coronavirus pandemic¹. In the early stages of the epidemic, people's food consumption may have declined due to factors such as being unable to work or reduced incomes, using more savings for medical care, and being impacted by fear. These changes are not only reflected in the quantity but also in the quality and type of food consumed—consuming cheaper alternatives, reducing the consumption of fruits, reducing animal-derived foods such as meat and poultry, and using more shelf-stable packaged foods. Similarly, during a pandemic, consumers' dietary patterns and food sources may also change. Consumers may prefer food purchasing channels that provide online ordering and door-to-door delivery, and choose channels that they think are safer and can maintain a higher household inventory to reduce the number of times they go to the market².

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Brenna Ellison, et al. (2020, october 19)³. Their research entitled "Examining Food Purchase Behavior and Food Values During the COVID-19 Pandemic". They

surveyed a panel of 1,370 U.S. households four times during the COVID-19 pandemic from mid-March to late April 2020. The findings observed a change in food expenditures, shopping behaviors, and increase in food values as the pandemic evolved. The results show a reduction in food-away-from-home expenditures and increases in online grocery shopping. Food values appear to be fairly stable in the early stages of the pandemic; however, decreases in the importance of price and nutrition reveal tradeoffs households make during the pandemic.

Tarek Ben Hassen, et al. (2020)⁴.conducted a study on "Impact of COVID-19 on Food Behavior and Consumption in Qatar". This paper investigates the immediate impacts of COVID-19 on Qatarconsumer awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to food consumption. The findings shows that most of the consumers purchase Groceries online. Meanwhile they reduced the purchase of cooked foods from online.Regarding the behavior changes related to food shows that the consumers prefer to take more fruits and vegetables and also, they take more water to keep them healthier during this pandemic.The results indicate a shift toward a healthier diet during the COVID-19 pandemic.The researcher observed an absence of panic buying in Qatar, since the majority of the participants didnot stockpile food. This could be explicated by the numerous policies and strategies implemented bythe Qatargovernment to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food supply.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As we all know that consumersfood consumption behavior has changed after the outbreak of the deadliest disease COVID-19. Before pandemic, people go out to restaurants to get food but after pandemic people are feared to go out and they also avoided restaurants foods due to the fear of getting infected by virus. Many of the researchers have focused on the transformation in retail shopping or online shopping behaviour of consumers during COVID-19. This gap has insisted the researcher to conduct a study to analyse the changes occurred in the food consumption of consumers during COVID-19.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ♥ To analyse the changes occurred in the food consumption habit of consumers during COVID-19.
- ♥ To know the kind of food purchased more from outside during pandemic.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- The research study includes both primary and secondary data.
- The primary data was collected from the consumers in kanniyakumari district. The data was collected through structured questionnaire.
- The secondary data was collected from available e-journals, websites, e-books, articles and research reports pertaining to changes in food consumption habit during COVID-19 and consumer behavior.

7. SAMPLE DESIGN

The area of the study is at Kanniyakumari District. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample size of 120 respondents and the process resulted in the collection of 100 respondents completes on all parameters for data analysis and interpretation using random sampling method. Information's were collected from family, friends, relatives and other consumers located in Kanniyakumari District.

7.1 Tools for analysis

Statistical aids used for the study are percentage method, Garrett ranking and Likert's 5point scaling method.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

8.1 Demographic profile

Demographic profile is the study of a population-based factors such as age, gender, occupation, education, income, marriage and more. It provides data regarding research participants. Following are the demographic variables of the consumers in percentage analysis

Table 1. Demographic factors

SL. No	Demographic factor	No. of. Respondents	Percentage

Age			
1.	Below 20	18	18
	21-40	45	45
	41-60	25	25
	Above 60	12	12
	Total	100	100
Gender			
2.	Male	43	43
	Female	57	57
	Total	100	100
Education			
3.	Up to +2	13	13
	Under graduate	42	42
	Post graduate	36	36
	Illiterate	09	09
	Total	100	100
Occupation			
4.	Salaried person	35	35
	Business	22	22
	Worker	29	29
	Unemployed	14	14
	Total	100	100
Monthly family income			
5.	Below ₹ 30,000	11	11
	₹ 30,000- ₹ 60,000	32	32
	₹ 60,000- ₹ 90,000	31	31
	Above ₹ 90,000	26	26
	Total	100	100
Marital status			

6.	Married	68	68
	Unmarried	32	32
	Total	100	100
Area of residence			
7.	Rural	25	25
	Urban	57	57
	Semi-Urban	18	18
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that 45 percentage respondents are between the age group of 21-40 years, 57 percentage of the respondents are female and 68 percentage of the respondents are married. It also shows that 42 percentage of the respondents are under graduates and 35 percentage of the respondents were salaried persons. 32 percentage of the respondents earns a monthly family income of Rs. 30,000 – Rs. 60,000. Most of the respondents (57 %) are from Urban locality.

8.2 Changes in food consumption habit of consumers

After the existence of COVID-19 the food consumption habit or behavior of consumers have changed in many ways. Thus, the researcher has intended to know the changes in food consumption behavior of the consumers during COVID-19. Following table shows the changes in food consumption habit of consumers during COVID-19.

Table 2. Changes in food consumption habit

SL.NO	Reasons	Mean Score	Scale Rank
1.	Cook foods at home	2.92	I
2.	Eating with family members	2.70	II
3.	Spending much time on cooking during COVID-19	2.54	III
4.	Tried making snacks & cakes at home	2.48	IV
5.	Limited wastage of food during COVID-19	2.33	V

6.	Ordering online using delivery applications	2.21	VI
7.	Made changes in amount of food consumed during COVID-19	2.6	VII
8.	Having meals delivered directly from restaurants / hotels	1.98	VIII
9.	Buying food from local vendors	1.78	IX
10.	Maintenance of diet during COVID-19	1.44	X

Source: Primary data

From the above table 2, it is evident that “Cook foods at home” ranked first with a mean score of (2.92), “Eating with family members” ranked second with a mean score of (2.70), “Spending much time on cooking during COVID-19” ranked third (2.54), “Tried making snacks & cakes at home” gets the fourth rank (2.48), “Limited wastage of food during COVID-19” gets the fifth rank with a mean score of (2.33), “Ordering online using delivery applications” ranked sixth with a mean score of (2.21), “Made changes in amount of food consumption during COVID-19” holds the seventh rank (2.6), followed by “Having meals delivered directly from restaurants / hotels” ranked eighth, “Buying food from local vendors” ranked ninth (1.78) and the least rank hold by ”Maintenance of diet during COVID-19” with a mean score of (1.44)

8.3 Most purchased food during COVID-19

COVID-19 has changed consumer food shopping behavior to an extent. This makes the researcher to conduct a study to know the foods which are purchased more during COVID-19. Following table shows the most purchased food during COVID-19.

Table.3 Most purchased food during COVID-19

S.NO	Particulars	Garrett Score	Rank
1.	Fresh food (fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, bread)	68.54	I
2.	Non-perishable foods (Frozen foods & canned foods)	62.85	II

3.	Sweets & Snacks	58.23	III
4.	Readymade meals	60.24	IV
5.	Beverages	50.86	V

Source: Primary data

The above table 3 depicts that the most purchased food during COVID-19 is fresh food, thus it secured the first rank, Non-perishable food secured second rank, Sweets and snacks holds the third rank, fourth rank is for readymade meals and finally beverages hold the fifth rank.

9.SUGGESTION

COVID-19 has changed peoples consumption habit both in positive and negative way. The researcher has observed two positive changes in this study viz., limited the wastage of food and most of the respondents started cooking foods and snacks at home. It is suggested that the consumer should continue this habit even after pandemic to lead a healthy life.

10. CONCLUSION

Due to the world-wide impact of the COVID-19 and lockdowns the food behaviour of consumers has changed a lot. The consumer has started to cook foods at home, they have found a space to eat their food with their family during this lockdown and many of the respondents have stated that they have spent most of their time to cook food during this lockdown period. Most of the respondents stated that they have limited their food wastage during COVID-19 and only a few respondents stated that they have ordered food from outside. The findings also shows that the respondents have purchased more fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and fishes due to health conscious during COVID-19. Thus the researcher has concluded that COVID-19 has made a positive change in the food consumption habit of consumers.

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