

Assessment of Demographic-Socioeconomic Status and Food Habits among College Going Students of Asansol, West Bengal

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Abstract: *This study was evaluated demographic-socioeconomic status and food habits among the college going students of Asansol, West Bengal. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 190 students (rural and urban areas) and data were gathered. Frequency distribution of demographic and socioeconomic status and food habits was determined. The findings indicated the age groups of about 69.47% of ≥ 20 years and about 30.53% of <20 years. As per gender distribution maximum females (77.89%). For religion distribution, majority of participants (146, 76.84%) were Hindu. Regarding castes distribution, maximum were general castes (59.47%) and minimum (40.53%) were other castes. For family income/month (INR) distribution, majority of participants (65.79%) declared <50000 INR. Food habits revealed that majority of participants (78.95%) were non-vegetarian while about 21.05% were vegetarian. Majority of participants (92.11%) were taken home made food while only 7.89% were taken junk food. Maximum participants (65.79%) did not skip the breakfast while about 34.21% were reported to skip breakfast. In conclusion, the intension of junk food intake was observed lower but maximum students were taken non-vegetarian food. Still, in this study the prevalence of unhealthy food intake is negligible.*

Keywords: College going students, Demo-socio profiles, Food habit, Junk food, Unhealthy food, West Bengal

1. Introduction

College going age is a crucial period of human life span because it is a transitional period between puberty and adulthood where maximum physical and psychological changes are noted.^[1]

During this period food is very much important for proper growth and health, and it depends on daily food habits. In present days consumption of junk food is very popular among college going students. This kind of food habits become popular because of different demographic profiles, socioeconomic status, longer working hour, working mother, single parents' family, etc.^[2]

Daily meal planning along with nutritious food is a weapon to combat any kind of health disorder as well as it creates a positive impact on one's well-being. To know the nutritional type and meal pattern among college going students and educate them on the proper nutrition during college times is very much helpful tool because they spend most of the time in the college. Through this tool the college going students will be educated enough for their healthy lifestyle.^[3]

One's socioeconomic status (SES) is directly proportional to his/her better health. SES is basically the combination of social and economic status. The main three tools of SES are education, income and occupation among parents. SES promotes a good health through three dimensions: 1) It influences to carry good health promoting resources and treatment, 2) socialization of health habits is differed by SES, and 3) the relation between SES and health habits are parallel.^[4]

Generally, diet is formed with the types of foods and beverages as per the choice of a person and these may be vegetarian diet and/or non-vegetarian diet.^[5] Moreover, dietary patterns are defined as the quantities, ratios, varieties, or combination of different foods, beverages, and nutrients in the diet, and the frequency with which people are commonly used as palatable foods.

The present study investigated demographic-socioeconomic status and food habits among the college going students of Asansol, West Bengal.

2. Materials and methods

In this study, the study sites were selected in two colleges designated as Asansol Girls college as site A (Latitude: 23° 41' E and Longitude: 86° 56' N) and Bidhan Chandra College as site B (Latitude: 23° 40' E and Longitude: 86° 57' N). A questionnaire survey was conducted among 190 students (rural and urban areas) related to demographic and socioeconomic status as well as food habits data were also gathered. The questionnaire for survey among students as per the protocol study. Frequency distribution of demographic and socioeconomic status viz. age groups, gender, religion, castes, family income/month (INR) and food habits viz. type of foods as veg or non-veg, food intake as homemade food or junk food and breakfast skipping or not were evaluated. All categorical variable were expressed as number and frequency. Pearson's correlation matrix was performed to determine the association between food habit parameters. $P < 0.05$ was considered as significant.

3. Results

In Table 1, the findings indicated the age groups of about 69.47% of ≥20 years and about 30.53% of <20 years. As per gender distribution maximum females (77.89%). For

religion distribution, majority of participants (146, 76.84%) were Hindu. Regarding castes distribution, maximum were general castes (59.47%) and minimum (40.53%) were other castes. For family income/month (INR) distribution, majority of participants (65.79%) declared <50000 INR.

Table 1: Demographic and socioeconomic status of participants

Demographic and socioeconomic status	N	Frequency (%)
Age groups (Years)		
<20	58	30.53
≥20	132	69.47
Gender		
Male	42	22.11
Female	148	77.89
Religion		
Hindu	146	76.84
Muslim	37	19.47
Others	7	3.68
Castes		
General	113	59.47
Others	77	40.53
Family income/month (INR)		
<50000	125	65.79
≥50000	65	34.21

In Table 2, food habits revealed that majority of participants (78.95%) were non-vegetarian while about 21.05% were vegetarian. Majority of participants (92.11%) were taken home made food while only 7.89% were taken junk food. Maximum participants (65.79%) did not skip the breakfast

while about 34.21% were reported to skip breakfast. In conclusion, the intension of junk food intake was observed lower but maximum students were taken non-vegetarian food.

Table 2: Food habits of participants

Food habits	N	Frequency (%)
Type of foods		
Veg	40	21.05
Non-veg	150	78.95
Food intake		
Home made	175	92.11
Junk food	15	7.89
Skipping of breakfast		
Yes	65	34.21
No	125	65.79

In the present study, the associations between different parameters of food habits by analysing Pearson’s correlation coefficient among college going students was performed (Table 3). Type of food significantly (P<0.05)

negatively correlated with habit of skipping breakfast (-0.23355) was obtained but rest parameters did not observe significant correlations.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of food habits parameters among college going students

	Food habit	Type of Food	Skipping breakfast
Food habit	1		
Type of Food	-0.11765	1	
Skipping breakfast	-0.11129	-0.23355*	1

*P<0.05

4. Discussion

For healthy lifestyle among college going students, it is necessary to determine the demographic and socioeconomic status as well as the food habits. Because junk food consumption may pose health disorder. To know the nutritional type and meal pattern among college going students and educate them on the proper nutrition during

college times is very much helpful tool because they spend most of the time in the college. Through this tool the college going students will be educated enough for their healthy lifestyle.^[3]

In the present study, it was observed that the prevalence of junk food consumption among college going students of about 7.89%, which is negligible from other studies. The value was comparatively lower from the earlier studies

reported about 25.9% and 21% of the college students and also found least concern regarding junk food consumption.^[6,7]

In earlier study, about 63% students reported to be skipping breakfast, which is higher as per present study. According to Gupta and Chhabra.,^[3] several factors such as age, average family income (monthly), parental education, time spent in commutation to college, contribution to house hold work was significantly associated with breakfast skipping.

5. Conclusion

It is concluded that the intension of junk food intake was observed lower but maximum students were taken non-vegetarian food. Still, in this study the prevalence of unhealthy food intake is negligible.

Conflict of interest

None

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