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## Dietary pattern of food consumption and preference for junk food by college students in Panipat district

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### Abstract

The present study was conducted on 180 respondents (18-23 yrs.) to study the “Dietary pattern of food consumption & preference for junk food by college students in Panipat district.” Majority of the respondents were in the age group of 19-21 years. Majority (56.66%) of the respondents were vegetarian. 70% of the respondents skipped meals. 73.33% of the respondents nibbled to satisfy hunger & majority (70%) of the respondents eating habits were influenced by their own personal likings. 16.66% of the respondents rated themselves as fussy eaters while 53.33% ate whatever available. 56.66% of the respondents balanced diet meant the diet meeting daily nutrients requirement and the source of this information for 43.33% was teachers/ friends/family. Snack preference data suggest that among sweet items ice – cream was relished by majority (73.33%) and daily frequency of sweet biscuits was found to be maximum (96.66%). Among salty snacks golgappa was the favourite of 93.33% and frequency wise samosa ranked first (86.66%).

**Keywords:** Dietary pattern, food consumption, college students, Panipat district

### 1. Introduction

Junk food is associated with snacks, friends being away from home, independence and having fun. The term “Junk Food” usually refers to foods like chocolate, soft drinks, cordials, cakes, ice –creams, potato chips, burgers, hot-dogs or hot chips etc. Such foods are described high in calories, sugar, fat, cholesterol, salt, additives, preservatives and artificial ingredients.

Junk food allows you to eat without planning, without making a lot of decision, sometimes without even getting out of your car. Television commercials and supermarkets are propagating a wide variety of enticing junk food, attractively packaged and often tagged with a tempting sob. The dazzling spread of both fast food outlets and snackproducts keeps them constantly “in your face”. Fast food outlets have become an international symbol of the world’s culture, and the industry is growing at an overwhelming rate both abroad and at home. Today pizza hut has more than 12,000 outlets in 99 countries; subway, the submarine sandwich specialty shop, has nearly 16,000 stores in 87 countries; and the granddaddy of them all, Mc Donald’s has over 30,000 restaurants in 124 countries. The industry is also invading new territories such as hospitals, college, schools, and mass merchandise stores like Wal-Mart. With the increased popularity of takeout meals, fast food has invaded the home, as well as turned our cars & desks into the dining rooms.

Although fast foods are dense in calories high saturated trans-fat, sugar and lacking of fibers, but still contain nutrients and can be considered a small part of a healthy diet. Not surprisingly eating junk food leads to a sense of starvation both physically & mentally, as the feeling of satiation & contentment that comes after a wholesome meal is absent. And satisfying appetite with this kind of food may lead to nutritional deficiencies, high cholesterol levels, and eventually heart problems. Therefore to overcome nutritional deficiencies among college going students thrust was felt to study the dietary pattern of food consumption so that health problems could be reduced.

### 2. Methodology

The present study was conducted with the aim to study the “Consumption of junk food among students pursuing their bachelor’s degree in I.B. (P.G.) College, Panipat to save time, money and energy. The sample consisted of 180 youngsters studying in Panipat. They were selected keeping in view the easy availability & accessibility. Observation and interview schedule was prepared for the information on dietary pattern and nutritional knowledge.

The questionnaire was framed by the investigator and pre tested on 20 respondents, pre testing is a kind of miniature study in itself conducted to find out its drawbacks. Dietary habits included the information regarding their food habits, pattern of consumption and skipping of meal and fasting pattern. Nutritional knowledge revealed their knowledge about nutrition as it included information about the quality of food and balanced diet.

### 3. Result and Discussion

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents according to Dietary pattern

S. No.	Dietary Pattern	n	Percent
<b>Food Habits</b>			
1	Vegetarian	102	56.66
2	Non vegetarian	42	23.33
3	Ova vegetarian	36	20
<b>Frequency of Non-Veg.</b>			
1	Once a week	12	28.57
2	Once a fortnight	30	71.42
<b>Meals per day</b>			
1	3 meals	18	10
2	4 meals	60	33.33
3	5 meals	90	50
4	6 meals	12	6.66
<b>Skipping Meals</b>			
1	Yes	126	70
2	No	54	30
<b>How Often</b>			
1	Once a day	18	14.28
2	2-3 times a week	48	38.09
3	Once a week	48	38.09
4	Once a fortnight	12	9.52
<b>Which Meal</b>			
1	Breakfast	48	38.09
2	Lunch	36	28.57
3	Evening Tea	30	23.80
4	Dinner	12	9.52
<b>Eating in between meals</b>			
1	Yes	132	73.33
2	No	48	26.66
<b>Reason for eating in between meals</b>			
1	To satisfy hunger	126	70
2	To be sociable	42	23.33
3	From habit	12	6.66

Table 1 illustrates that majority (56.66 %) of the respondents were pure vegetarians while 73.33% non-vegetarians and 20 % were Ova vegetarians. Out of non-vegetarian respondents 71.42% consumed non-veg. once a fortnight while 28.57 % once a week. Majority (50%) of the respondents head five meal pattern, 33.33% restricted themselves to four meal pattern while 10% to three meal pattern and only 6.66% to six meal pattern a day. 70% of the respondents skipped meal, 38.09% skipped meal 2-3 times a week while 14.28% once a day and 9.52 % skipped once a fortnight. 38.09% skipped breakfast, 28.57% lunch while 23.08% evening tea and only 9.52 % of the respondents sipped dinner. Majority (73.33%) of the respondents nibbled definitely and 26.66% did not nibble at all. Among 73.33% of those respondents who nibbled, majority (70%) did to satisfy hunger while 23.33% to be sociable and 6.6% from habit.

**Table 2:** Factors affecting dietary pattern of respondents

Sr. No.	Dietary Pattern	n	Percent
1	Economic Factors	12	6.66
2	Availability	24	13.33
3	Peer group	12	6.66
4	Personal liking	126	70
5	Belief/ Religion	6	3.33
<b>Rate Yourself</b>			
1	Fussy eater	30	16.66
2	Restricted Eater	54	30
3	Eat whatever available	96	53.33
<b>Keeping Fast</b>			
1	Yes	39	43.33
2	No	18	20
	Occasionally	23	36.66
<b>Purpose of Keeping Fast</b>			
1	Religious	144	100
2	Health Reasons	-----	-----

Table 2 revealed about factors affecting their dietary pattern personal liking was found to be maximum (70%) followed by availability (13.33%) Peer groups and availability (16.66%) each & belief (3.33%) respectively. Majority (53.33%) of the respondents ate whatever available while 30.0 % considered themselves as restricted eaters and 16.66% of respondents as fussy eaters. Majority (43.33%) of the respondents regularly kept fast while 36.66% occasionally and 20% never fasted. All of them kept fast for religious reasons and no one is interested to keep fast for health reason.

**Table 3:** Distribution of Subjects according to nutritional knowledge

S.No.	Quality of food refers to	n	Percent
<b>1</b>	<b>Appearance of foods</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>
2	Flavour of Food	30	16.66
3	Nutrients ( CHO, Protein, Fats, Minerals)	114	63.66
<b>Quality of food as important as quality</b>			
1	Yes	132	73.33
2	No	48	26.66
<b>Balanced diet is</b>			
1	Consuming food from all basic food groups	6	3.33
2	Meeting daily nutritional requirements	72	40
3	Consuming four meals a day	102	56.66
<b>Source of Information</b>			
1	Magazine or Pamphlets	72	40
2	Teacher/Friend/ Family	78	43.33
3	Television	30	16.66
<b>Snack food causes obesity</b>			
1	Yes	120	66.66
2	No	60	33.33
<b>Ready to eat snacks</b>			
1	Yes	6	3.33
2	No	174	96.33
<b>Eating snacks add to</b>			
1	Nutrients	138	76.66
2	Calorie	42	23.33
<b>Snacks provide only energy &amp; no nutrition to the diet</b>			
1	Yes	66	36.66
2	No	114	63.66

Table 3 indicates that majority (63.33%) of the respondents believed that the quality of food refers to the nutrients while 20% attributed it to the appearance of food and to only (16.66%) quality means the flavor of food. The concept that quality is as important as quantity was approved by majority (73.33%) of the respondents, while knowledge about balanced diet majority (56.66%) felt that balanced diet is the diet meeting daily nutritional requirements followed by 40% taking food from all basic food groups and 3.33% meant consuming four meals a day respectively source of information for 43.33% respondents was teacher/ friends/ family while 40% from magazine / pamphlets and for remaining 16.66% was television. Majority (66.66%) of the respondents believed that snack food caused obesity. Majority (96.66%) of the respondents refused that ready to eat snacks or more nutrients than freshly prepared. 76.66% of the respondents admitted that snacks only contribute to calories. Majority (63.33%) of the respondents believed that snacks provide nutrients along with energy while 36.66% felt that snacks only provide energy.

### 4. Summary & Conclusion

The present study was undertaken to study the "Dietary pattern of food consumption & Preference for junk food by college students in Panipat District."

A sample consisting of 180 respondents and belonging to age group of 18-23 years was selected. Interview schedule was used for collecting the pertinent information of dietary pattern & nutritional knowledge. The study revealed that majority (60%) of the respondents was in the age group of 19-21 years. Majority (56.66%) of the respondents were vegetarian and 50% of the restricted themselves to 5 meals per day. Skipping meal pattern explained that majority (70%) of the respondents skipped meals. 38.09% skipped

meals once a week and 2-3 times a week respectively. 38.09% of the respondents skipped breakfast. Nibbling study suggest that majority (73.33%) of the respondents nibbled and personal liking was the factor affecting the dietary pattern of 70% of the respondents. Majority (53.33%) of the respondents ate whatever was available. 43.33% of the respondents kept fast regularly and all the respondents fasted for religious reason. Nutritional knowledge means for the students that to 63.33% quality of food refers to nutrients 73.33% of the respondents have knowledge about the importance of quality as well as the quantity of food. To 56.66% students have knowledge of balanced diet means consuming for meals a day. 43.33% received this information from teachers/ friends/ family. 66% of the respondents believed that snack food causes obesity and 96.66% of the respondents refused that ready to eat snacks or more nutrients than freshly prepared. 76.66% of the respondents admitted that eating snacks add to nutrients while 23.33% stated that snacks only contribute to calories. Majority (63.33%) of the respondents believed that snacks provide nutrients along with energy while 36.66% felt that snacks only provide energy.

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