

CHANGING FAST FOOD TRENDS OF PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

Background: *The concept of ready-cooked food for sale is closely connected with urban development. Fast food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly. Fast food industry is one of the world's fastest growing sectors in food industry. Fast food is the food item that can be prepared and served very quickly. Food served in fast food restaurants is offered from a limited menu; it is cooked in bulk in advance and kept hot, as there is an order for the dish it is finished and packaged accordingly or available for ready to take away, or even can be served in the restaurant.* **Objective:** *To determine the reasons for emergence of fast food, To find out the changes in eating trends of people in the age group of 20-30 years, To evaluate the health effects of fast food.* **Methodology:** *A Questionnaire was made and filled up by people in the age group of 20-30 years randomly to check the likes, dislikes and some more questions were asked related to the fast food and health hazards.* **Results:** *More fascinated to western culture and increase in the offers made by the fast food outlets the frequency of the young people visiting the fast food outlets has increase over the years. The frequency of their visits also depends on the dispensable income available with them. Some of them are aware of the long term health hazards of the fast food.* **Conclusion:** *From the whole study, we can conclude that fast food has really evolved and it's here to stay. Factors such as globalization and busy life schedules have largely contributed towards their growth.*

Key Words: *Fast food, Restaurant, Dispensable income, Globalization, Western Culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Fast food is the term given to food that can be prepared and served very quickly. Fast food industry is one of the world's fastest growing sectors in food industry. Fast food is the food item that can be prepared and served very quickly (Webster Dictionary, 1951). Because of commercial emphasis on speed, uniformity and low cost, fast food products are often made with ingredients formulated to achieve a certain flavour or consistency and to preserve freshness.

A Fast Food Restaurant, also known as a Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) within the industry, is a specific type of restaurant characterized both by its fast food cuisine and by minimal table service.

Fast food is one which gained acceptance of Indian palate after the multinational fast food players adapted the basic Indian food requirements viz. vegetarian meals and selected non-vegetarian options excluding beef and pork totally from their menu. The fast food industry in India has evolved with the changing lifestyles of the young Indian population. Multinational fast food outlets initially faced protests and non-acceptance from Indian consumers. This was due to primary perception that these fast food players serve only chicken and do not serve vegetarian meals. In addition, fast food is perceived expensive besides being out-of-way meals in Indian culture. Today, fast food industry is getting adapted to Indian food requirements and is growing in India. It is gaining acceptance primarily from Indian youth and younger generations and is becoming part of life. Keeping in view the Indian habits and changing preferences towards food consumption, this study has its focus to understand the factors affecting the perception of Indian youth, in the age group of 20-30 years, towards consumption of fast food as well as towards making choice of fast food outlets.

The Indian Fast Food Industry has witnessed high growth strides in the past years, with increasing disposable income; exposure to a number of cuisines; and consumers' willingness to experiment a mix of both Western and local menu. It has not only provided convenience to people who shuttle between home and work for a bigger part of the day but also eliminated the requirement of conventional cutlery. Various factors contributing for the increase of fast food in Indian society is: Gender Roles: Gender roles are now changing. Females have started working outside. So, they have no time for their home and cooking food. Pre cooked or the option of semi cooked food is an easy way out because these can be prepared easily working women have no time for cooking. They do not want to confine themselves to household work and upbringing of children instead.

Paucity of Time: Now-a-days the cities have nuclear families with both the working partners. They have all the responsibilities of rearing the kids and other household works, making their lifestyle hectic, hence the families prefer eating out more often.

Double Income Group: Emergence of double income group leads to increase in disposable income.

Now people have more disposable income so they can spend easily in fast food and other activities.

Relaxation in rules and regulations: With the economic liberalization of 1991, most of the tariff and non tariff barriers from the Indian boundaries were either removed or minimized. This helped the MNC's significantly to enter in the country.

Global Influence: With the influx of global cultures and traditions due to sources such as television as well as Internet a large section of the population is able to know about global cuisines and foods (Chinnudivakar, 2009).

The Indian fast food scene was initially clouded by roadside vendors and stalls that offered traditional Indian delicacies on the go. Eating at home used to be a significant aspect of Indian culture. With the liberalization of the economy in 1992, new multinational fast food giants targeted India as a huge potential market with their outlets. Burger King, Pizza Hut, Domino's Pizza, McDonald's and KFC outlets are functioning in shopping malls and other public areas.

According to a report published by Crisis, the Indian unit of Standard & Poor's rating agency published that, the fast-food segment will be worth 70 billion rupees (\$1.1 billion) in three years, largely driven by a surge in growth in the market share in smaller cities across the country. Western-style fast-food chains are now penetrating at a faster pace into smaller cities, the report said. Annual spending on fast-foods, such as burgers and pizzas, by middle-class households in these smaller cities is expected to surge by 150 to 3,750 rupees a family over the next three years, compared to 60% growth in metros and other big cities, the report said global brands currently have an aggregate market share of about 63% of the fast-food restaurants segment. With the U.S. fast-food market becoming increasingly crowded, many chains are looking to emerging economies for long-term expansion. Pizza company Dominos' fastest-growing market is India, where it has several hundred outlets. The chain has one fifth of the market share in the Indian fast-food segment, while Sandwich Company Subway and McDonald's have just over 10% each. Over the next three years, new store additions by fast-food companies selling Western-style food will increase by 16%-18% annually nearly half of those will be in smaller cities (Chinnudivakar, 2009).

"Model of consumer behavior" stated that customer interests, perception, awareness and experience drive the growth of fast food companies in India. He stated that the core purpose of any fast food retailer must be related to providing value for money to its customers and must employ advanced marketing programs and communication channels to strengthen the overall marketing campaign Kotler (2009).

Sengupta (2008) under the research "Exploring customers and fast food" stated that international stores mainly focused on major cities and metro areas in the country where the population have higher disposable income.

“Principles of fast food marketing” said that the unstructured fast food market developed along whilst international retailers were entering the market. It is argued that domestic players had the competitive edge as they pay less tax than the international players. It was found that corporate tax for international companies was 48% whereas for domestic companies, it was 35%. They found that company offered broadband related services such as Wi-Fi connectivity in its bars to make them more attractive to customers in the cities” (Dholakia and Talukdar, 2004).

“A Study of Growth of Fast Food Industry with Reference to Shift in Consumer’s Buying Habits” cites westernization as one of the main reasons for the increase in fast food market. The second side of the coin is been surveyed and found out that fast food items damaging human health and may lead to obesity, excess fat and serious diseases (Sarda et al, 2013).

“Consumer Preference and Spending Pattern in Indian Fast Food industry” found out that young, unmarried, working professionals having own lifestyle and well educated persons form major consumer segment in fast food sector. Male and female gender has equal lifestyle behaviour with regard to consumption of fast food. Taste, convenience and alternate to home food were found to be major reasons for consuming fast food by the young consumers. Young consumers are spending considerable amount of their income for eating outside due to convenient lifestyle as it saves on their cooking time. Consumers preferred major fast food types such as sandwiches, pizzas and burgers with spicy flavours. Fast food restaurants provide satisfaction to the young consumers in the form of matching their taste needs and relaxation with friends. Prabhavathi et al. (2014). “Fast Foods and their Impact on Health” talk about the health hazards pertaining to fast food. Dense sugar content can cause dental cavities and type 2 diabetes mellitus. A short-term adverse effect as a result of eating junk food is lack of energy which occurs because junk foods don’t provide essential nutrients, even though they can be very much sufficing, due to which one feels weakened. Junk foods have certainly carved up the Third World due to globalisation. It is an integral part of life in the developed and also the developing world, and coming with it is a massive increase in obesity and associated problems. The key to eating these junk foods is moderation, occasional consumption and preferably in small portions (Ashakiran and Deepthi, 2012).

After the above study, it encourages to search for the changes in trends in fast foods and leads us to following objectives.

- To determine the reasons for emergence of fast food.
- To find out the changes in eating trends of people in the age group of 20-30 years
- To evaluate the health effects of fast food.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is descriptive research where an attempt has been made to find out the changing fast food trends amongst the age group of 20-30 years. This was based on a simple survey and qualitative research as respondent students are studying in the institute ,some are staying with their families and majority are staying in shared accommodation.

The locale of the study was Institute of Hotel Management,Catering & Nutrition Pusa,New Delhi.

A sample size of 100 students in the age group of 20-30 years.

Tools and Technique : A questionnaire with 10 multiple choice questions was prepared to study the changes in eating trends of people in the age group of 20-30 years. Statistical Analysis was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the respondents has been tabulated. Each question has been presented one by one in sequence.

The Figure 1 shows that the people prefer to choose fast food because it offers quick service compared to other types of restaurants and food joints.

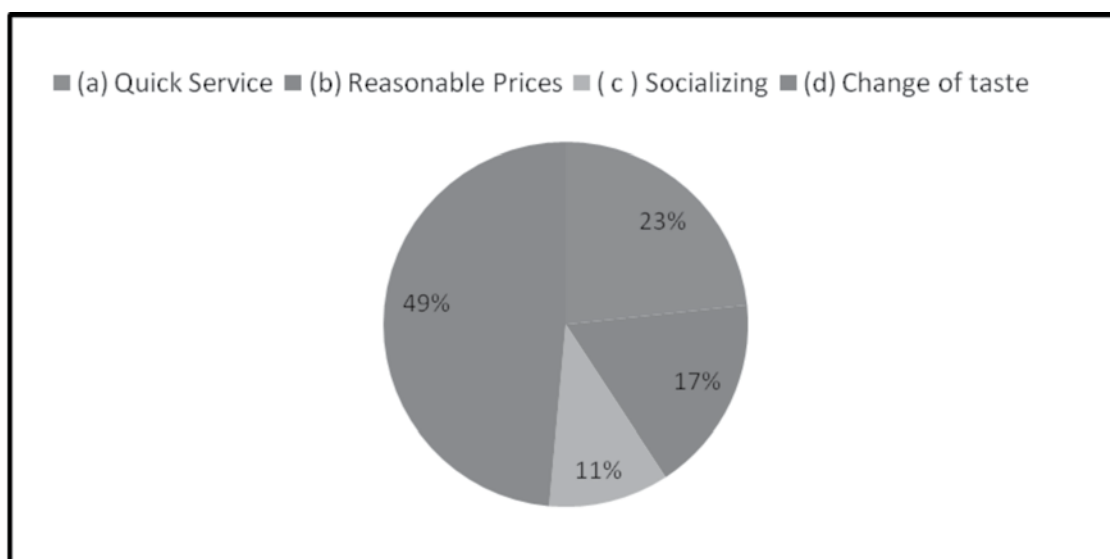


Figure 1: Reasons for consumption of fast foods.

49% students consider change of taste as the major reason for fast food consumption followed by quick service, reasonable pricing and socializing respectively at 23%, 17% and 11%. With changing times and changing exposure to different cuisines people have started experimenting and

as a result, changing their taste once in a while proves a driving force in the growth of fast food. Along with this the prices and quick service of the outlets also contribute to the growth of fast food. “Consumer perception about fast food in India” An exploratory study apply multivariate statistical tools to estimate importance of various factors affecting the choice of fast food outlets by Indian young consumers. In addition, the authors analyzed that the young Indian consumer has passion for visiting fast food outlets for fun and change but home food is their first choice. They feel homemade food is much better than food served at fast food outlets. They have the highest value for taste and quality (nutritional values) followed by ambience and hygiene. Further, consumers feel that fast food outlets must provide additional information on nutritional values and hygiene conditions inside kitchen Goyal et al. (2007).

The Figure 2 show that majority of the students visit the fast food outlets on weekly basis as the home food seems boring to them and also by this way they prefer to spend time with friends and family without much tension.

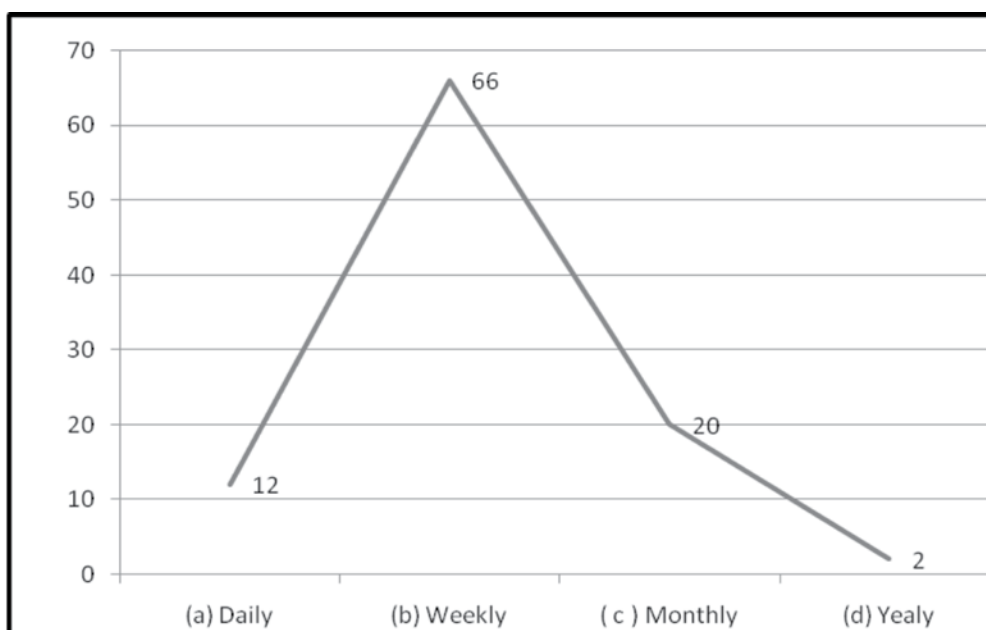


Figure 2: Frequency of visits to fast food outlets

66% consume fast food at least once a week which suggests the increase in the fast food consumption among the youth. The spending and frequency of visits clearly suggest the overwhelming popularity of fast food outlets in India. A study of school children conducted by the foundation in Delhi in 2011, found that between a quarter and a third of them were eating fast food, such as pizzas and burgers, more than two to three times a week.

The Figure 3 shows that the students prefer to eat American food over Indian or European food when asked for the type of fast food they prefer.

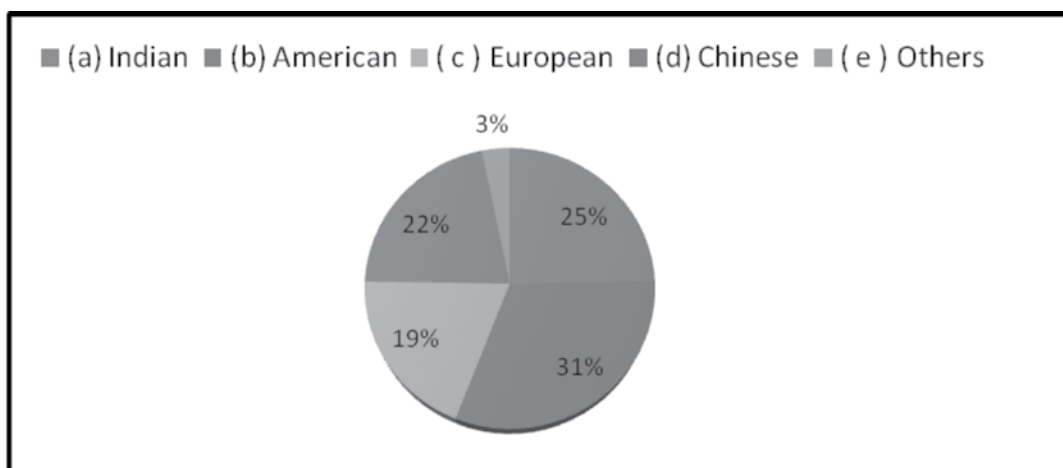


Figure 3: Type of fast food preference

31% of sample size prefer American while 25% of sample size prefer Indian fast food. European and Chinese cuisines are also highly preferred. With changing times the eating patterns have evolved too, with a large chunk of people opting for cuisines that are not Indian.

The table 1 shows that the majority of the students spend between Rs.100 to Rs. 200 on fast food consumption on each visit.

Table 1: Average expenditure on one fast food meal

S.No.	Average expenditure	No. of students	Percentage
1	100-300	52	52
2	300-500	38	38
3	> 500	10	10
	Total	100	100

More than 50% students spend around ₹100-300 on one meal at a fast food joint which suggests the economic feasibility of the fast food.

The Figure 4 pie chart shows that majority of the customers get attracted by the brand value of the outlet it become the prestige issue for them.

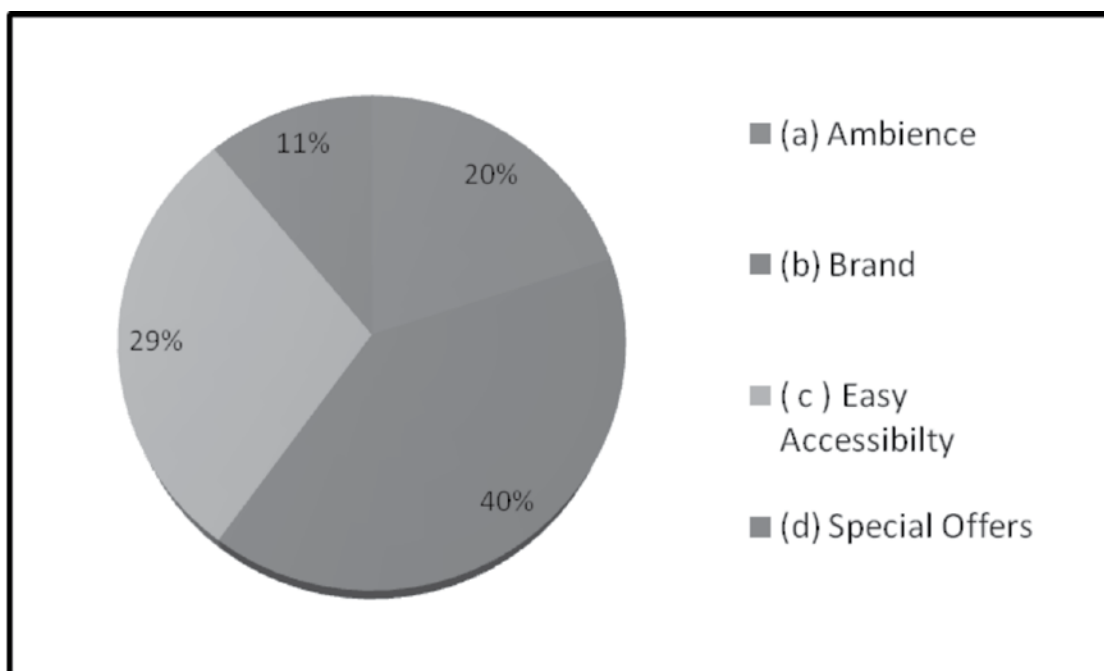


Figure 4: Choosing outlets on different factors.

40% students consider brand to be the most important factor while choosing an outlet, 29% are interested in easy accessibility from their institution, 20% of the students go in for the Ambience as their first choice (generally the young couple) and about 11% look out for the different promotional offers given by the different fast food outlets. The young generation is more towards showing off the wealth of their parents so they choose the good brand name for eating out. A major chunk of the students consider brand to be the most effective factor while choosing a fast food outlet which clearly suggests the power of foreign multinationals and their influx in India.

The table 2 shows that in majority of cases fast food is responsible for weight gain due to fried food that are rich in calories.

Table.2 Health effects of fast food

S.No.	Health effect	No. of students	Percentage
1	Weight gain	42	42
2	High BP	18	18
3	High cholesterol	18	18
4	High sugar	15	15
5	None	7	7
Total		100	100

Obesity is the most common problem among the youth as more than 42% cites weight gain as a major effect of fast food consumption, about 18% are aware that it can lead to high Blood Pressure and high cholesterol, 15% students agree that it can also cause the problem of high sugar level. The health aspect of such foods cannot be ignored as a large number were found to be aware of the health hazards of the fast food and some also experience a variety of health related issues.

The figure 5 shows that almost 60% of the customers prefer fast food outlet over high end restaurant as they offer more economical food, easy bites, take away options etc.

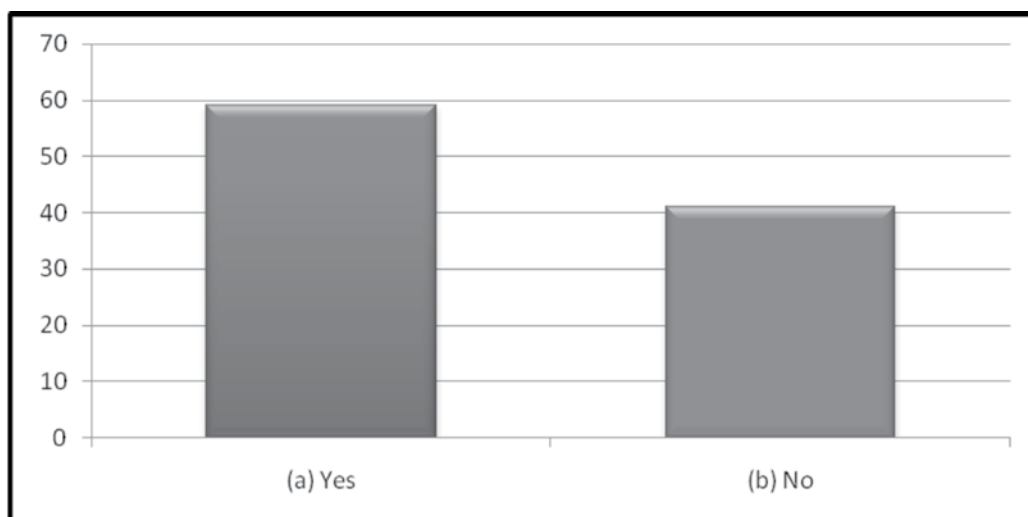


Figure 5: Fast food outlets vs. High end restaurants

The figure 6 shows that almost every customer is aware of the health hazards by fast food consumption and is still reluctant to change their habits.

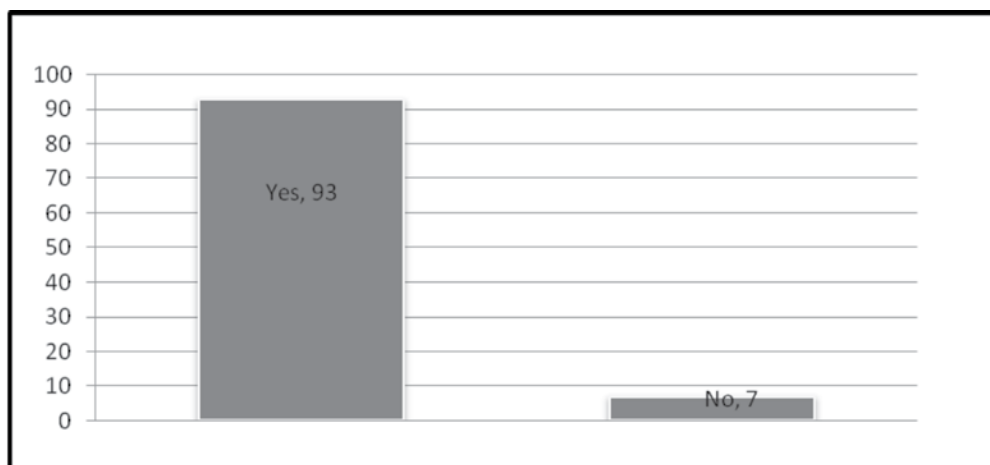


Figure 6: Awareness of health hazards

93% students are fully aware of all the health hazards on consuming fast food. Only 7% of the students are unaware of the ill effects of the fast foods. Consumption of diet high in sugar, saturated

fat, salt and calorie content in children can lead to early development of obesity, hypertension, and impaired glucose tolerance. High content of trans fat in commercially available fast food predisposes children to risk of future heart diseases. Energy density of fast food is more than twice the recommended daily allowance for children. Moreover, the micronutrient content (carotene, vitamin A, vitamin C) of the fast food is also low.

The figure 7 below shows that most of the customers do not check for the nutritional value of the meal they prefer to go by taste rather than the nutritional value of the food.

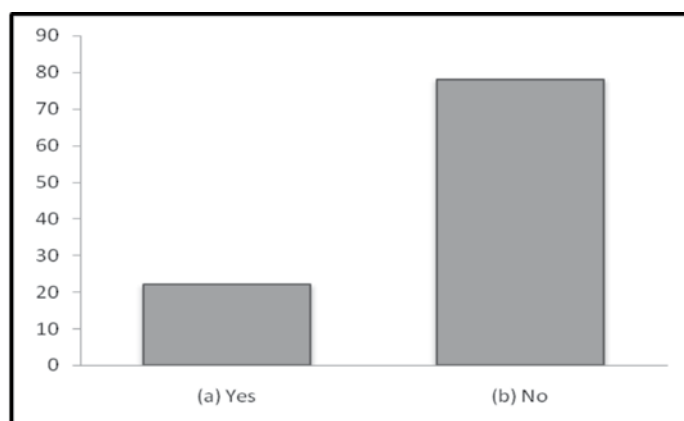


Figure 7: Nutrient factors

78% of the people surveyed do not check any nutrient factors before eating any food. With the change in the eating habits of the people they have ignored the nutritional value of the food they are consuming. They prefer taste, economic factor, discounts or offers made by the brands.

The figure 8 below shows that majority of the consumers do not think that fast food is replaceable with one meal of the day.

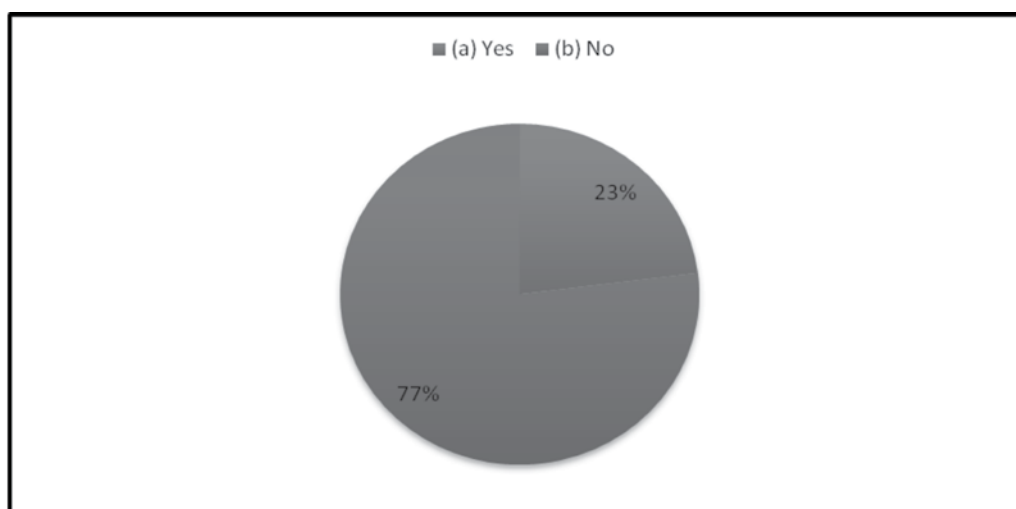


Figure 8: Fast food as an alternative

23% students replace one meal of their day with fast food meal and about 77% do not think so or do so.

CONCLUSION

The whole research has been conducted to find out the increase in the fast food consumption as well as the changing trends and their health hazards. From the whole study, we can conclude that fast food has really evolved and it's here to stay. Consumers in the today's market are more fascinated to western culture and increase in the facilities offered by fast food services. The frequency of visiting the fast food outlets relates with the ages of the consumers as well as the income affects the spending habits of an individual. Factors such as globalization and busy life schedules have largely contributed towards their growth. The emergence of various cuisines helps the Indian consumers to try different cuisines. The industry will grow multifold with new entrants in the market. However, the second side of the coin is that fast food items are damaging human health and may lead to obesity, excess fat and serious diseases. The health hazards of fast food cannot be ignored and proper awareness regarding these foods is necessary. Globalisation and urbanisation have greatly affected one's eating habits and forced many people to consume fancy and high calorie fast foods, popularly known as Junk foods. Research into the possible health hazards on consumption of such high calorie foods has given an insight to avoid them, but unfortunately measures taken are not as effective as they need to be. Diseases like coronary artery disease and diabetes mellitus have seen a profound rise in developing countries and such unhealthy junk food consumption is one of the notable factors to its contribution. This global problem of consuming junk food on a large scale and its impact on health needs emphasis and health education which can greatly contribute to its limited consumption and switching over to healthy eating habits for the better living.

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