

FUTURE OF STREET FOOD IN CHANDIGARH: FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF STREET FOOD VENDORS AND THE CHALLENGES FACED BY THEM

***Gitanshu Kumar¹ and Manoranjan Kumar²**

¹Assistant Lecturer, Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition, Chandigarh

²Assistant Lecturer, Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Kolkata
gitanshu_ihm@ymail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: Chandigarh is a tri-city and there are many communities that are coming here for various purposes that can be good education and other economical aspects. Accordingly the demands are diverse. The city was made by joining few villages from surrounding areas, which resulted in urbanisation and with increase in urban population and culture the demand of street food has increased. Street foods are so diverse that they can never be covered in one single article. Street food is the real replica of authentic food practices in the country or specific part of the country. The street food of North India is somewhat like its people, loud, big and warming. The one food that every North Indian love to eat is “Chaat” one of some mouth-watering dishes like TikkiChaat, Gol-Gappa and Pav Bhaji! And like the rest of India, Chandigarh too has its fair share of street food places that one can explore. The best part about the street food is the way it’s made by experimenting with authentic dishes. By keeping a few things in mind such as hygiene and safety, anyone can enjoy the authentic Indian street food without suffering from any food related diseases later. Street Vendors in Chandigarh face many problems as they are vulnerable population. **Objective:** The present study is aimed to observe the personal and environmental hygiene of the vendors and its surrounding that leads to sustainability of Street food in Chandigarh for its growth. **Methodology:** A quantitative research was done on the basis of random sampling of the street vendors of Chandigarh. The research was conducted through questionnaire in the street food hubs of Chandigarh which was later analysed through a three-point scale. **Results:** This study was undertaken in a mega city; finding of the study could be used in other big cities though the results might vary depending on time and place. Though there were several challenges identified for the street food vendors to ensure food hygiene but it is anticipated that proper education about maintaining food safety. **Conclusion:** We can impart Training through qualified chefs and hygiene instructors that can instil these vendors with right knowledge of food to handle it carefully so that it increases the nutritional value of food and reduce the health hazards because of which people are trying to avoid going out to street vendors.

Key Words: Street Food, Challenges, Hygiene and Health, Vendors, Chandigarh

INTRODUCTION

In past few decades, Street Food has been on a rise because of the increase in number of people who are in Chandigarh for studies and work. Rapid urbanization and modernization open the doors for people to work away from home and manages their life style accordingly. In last two decades, the family structure has been changed as most of the woman came out for work to share financial burden which resulted as rapid inclination towards street foods. This inclination increases the popularity of convenient type of foods among family.

Chandigarh city is one of the largest numbers of students and out stationed bachelors who are working here and putting up as Paying Guests (PG). They (PG) mainly survive on tiffin's, food served in their college or office canteen or the junk food that are readily available across the city. Sector 11 is one of the posh areas of Chandigarh that is in closer proximity to all the major colleges of the city. This is the reason why there are so many students staying in PGs or in a rented accommodation. For all those students

who don't know how to cook themselves and suffers through late night hunger pangs frequently then go to the inner market of Chandigarh's sector 11 and binge on piping hot stuffed parathas, soupy Maggi, bread & omelette and tea.

Similarly, Night Food Street is the official eatery or a street style food court where tikkas, pakoras, parathas, north Indian and Chinese food is available throughout the night in Chandigarh. This eating joint is close to many colleges, Government Hospital of Sector 16 and sector 15 that has the main rush of students, working men and women, patients and their attendants who come from far off places for the treatment. Other than mobiles and electronic market, sector 22 is a hub of PG dwellers. The students of various colleges and single working people love this sector because of proximity to sector 17 Plaza market, ISBT, the market of sector 22, 24 hours operational Aroma Eating House, and the street food that is available during the night in Chandigarh.

Earlier there were only few areas in Chandigarh which were prominent for Street Food, the food was not organised and had low levels of hygiene. The quality of food was low and therefore many health hazards were associated. Vendors were trained by NASVI to use clean and good quality ingredients, which is increasing the quality of food therefore the hubs of street food are raising. As a part of global strategy to decrease the burden of food and waterborne diseases; WHO (World Health Organisation) in 2006 came up with five key points to ensure food hygiene: keeping clean, separating raw and cooked food, cooking thoroughly, keeping food at safe temperatures and using safe water and raw materials. These five messages are developed in 87 languages based on scientific evidences to train up all types of food handlers starting from street food vendors to consumers. These key messages explain basic principles everyone should practice all over the world to prevent

food and waterborne diseases. That is why it is highly important for the street food vendors to know about WHO's five keys to safer food and comply with these messages as they provide food for a large number of populations in their community.

Street Vendors faces many problems as they are vulnerable population, who are neither protected by government, NGOs, labour union nor by any labour law. They are deprived by laws made by government in respect of labour union. The street vendors always suffer competition with other street vendors because of fluctuation in market prices, insecure and irregular employment. Their incomes are often minimal and their sales fluctuate. Another reason for decrease in income of street vendors is that they are forced to pay 15 to 20 percent of their daily income as bribes to local police. Street vendors are usually associated with encroachment of public spaces, causes traffic congestion, inadequate hygiene, and poor waste disposal. Safety of food has been increasingly become a concern in regard to street vendors. No Government agency is authorized to verify the content of food as they are not regulated by any government agency. The government does not recognize the contribution of street hawkers towards economic and social well-being of urban population. They survive without government support. But lately, government has passed "Street Vendors Bill 2013", which protects the rights of street vendors. Negative impact of online food ordering on retailers and street vendors; Ordering Food Online has become the trend and the new mode of eating at comfort of home. There are around 6-7 of online enterprises delivering food to door steps. The trend is very clear; retail shop demand will fall and even shrunk. Online ordering is indeed having an adverse impact on the retail sector.

Hindustan Times September 27th, 2018 edition states that the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation has completed the legal process to rehabilitate and regulate city's street vendors. After this exercise is over, all illegal or unregistered vendors, considerable in number as per the enforcement staff, will be shunted out with heavy penalty and seizure of goods.

Business Today, October 8th, 2018 edition states that FSSAI is implementing a "clean street food hub programme" so that one can enjoy their *chaats* and *golgappas* without bothering about hygiene. The autonomous body has identified 144 clusters across the country that would be audited by FSSAI along with state authorities for cleanliness and hygiene.

The street food is prepared on the streets and ready-to-eat, or prepared at home and consumed on the streets without further preparation. Street vended food not only appreciated for their unique flavours, convenience and the role which they play in the cultural and social heritage of societies,

it also become important and essential for maintaining nutritional status of populations (Jain, 2013). Lok men Hakin University stated that “Street food consumption in terms of the food safety and health” states that the areas where the street food are mostly criticised and seen as a threat for health are that the places where they are produced and sold are open to dirt and contamination and that hygiene, attitude, and applications adopted by the sellers during the preparation and storage of the food are insufficient (Sanlier, 2016).

Street Food vending is a prevailing and distinctive part of a large informal sector in both developed and developing countries. Food safety is a key public health concern, because a large number of people take their meals outside the home and are exposed to food borne illness. Food handlers play an important role in ensuring food safety throughout the chain of storage, processing, production, preparation, and retailing (Rahman et al, 2012).

Observing the current scenario, it becomes important to create awareness among street food & vendors in order to reduce their challenges. Thus, the current study objectives were to observe the personal & environmental hygiene of the vendors to improve the sustainability of street food.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted on the basis of sample survey in various parts of Chandigarh. The major areas were sector 11 sector 22, ISBT sector 17, ISBT sector 43, were discovered majorly.

Random sampling was done for the street food vendors. The respondents (n=50) were between age 20 to 50 years, out of which females(n=14) and males (n=36).

Tools and Techniques: A self-designed questionnaire was framed related to respondent’s challenges faced by the vendors in Chandigarh. The questionnaire was formed on the basis of Likert’s scale. Likert’s scale is used to represent people’s attitudes to a topic. The respondents were asked to think about the challenges and problems faced by them and rate it on the scale.

The study adopted three-point rating scale method of questionnaire to obtain information about the respondents.

Statistical analysis: The results were computed as frequency and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Future of street food in Chandigarh

Question	Yes		Maybe		No	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Do you feel the demand for street food is changing amongst the people in Chandigarh?	48%	24	16%	8	36%	18
Do you feel the demand of street foods is decreasing these days due to hygiene and health reasons?	50%	25	10%	5	40%	20
Do you think public prefers street food because of cheap rates?	46%	23	26%	13	28%	14
Is traditional street food is influenced by modern trends?	46%	23	36%	18	18%	9
Are you willing to register yourself on the online apps?	24%	12	12%	6	64%	32
According to you is the trend of ordering food online is rising?	56%	28	14%	7	30%	15
Do you feel that people hesitate to buy food from new vendors in an area?	24%	12	58%	29	18%	9
Do you think street food is healthy for public?	30%	15	24%	12	46%	23
Are you satisfied by the measures taken by the government for the street food vendors?	15%	7	12%	6	73%	36
Is the street food served by you is clean and prepared in hygienic conditions?	56%	28	22%	11	22%	11

The above table was analysed 48% of the respondents felt that the demand for street food is changing amongst the people of Chandigarh and about 50% of them agreed that there is a decrease in the demand for street food due to hygiene reasons, similar results were quoted by *Sanlier, (2016)* as health issues are a matter of threat these days to public whereas 40% still did not agree with it. The results show that training programme on food safety and hygiene need to be designed which will help change the mindset of general public.

When asked about the public prefers street food because of cheap rates, 46% of the respondents agreed to it, as people always want value for money and economical food whereas 28% said no. Also, the study showed about the influence of the modern trends on traditional street food in Chandigarh only 46% of the respondents said yes, since they felt that traditional dishes are replaced by fusion food and modern techniques in food and rest 18% said no. There were 24% respondents

who agreed on registering themselves on online food apps majorly 64% did not agree to it & said no because they still believed that demand of street food is high. These results emphasise the training programme for street vendors.

A major portion of 56% respondents think that there is a rise in the trend of ordering food online which apparently is also a matter of concern for upcoming competition in Chandigarh whereas 30% do not agree to this. When asked that do you feel that people hesitate to buy food from new vendors in an area, only 24% of the respondents agreed to it as they felt new vendors take time to develop goodwill in the market rest 18% still felt that they are okay with how vendors in the area ignore the safe food to consume.

46% of the sample felt that the food they sell is unhealthy to the public and accepted the fact they prepare in unhygienic conditions and only 30% agreed that street food is healthy. A major portion 73% felt that government measures taken for the street food vendors are not satisfactory and contrasting to this 15% of the sample showed satisfaction with the measures taken for them. Out of the sample population 56% of the respondents agreed that the street food served and prepared by them is in clean and hygienic conditions whereas 22% believe that they do not work in hygienic conditions. The state government should have separate budget allocated for training and provision of essentials for street vendors.

CONCLUSION

The study identified several challenges for the street food vendors in Chandigarh city to ensure food safety. Some of the findings of the study might vary considering the place and time. Yet considering it all this is undeniable that street food plays an important role by providing food for impoverished citizens at a low cost but also provides employment for a large number of populations. Due to increased competition and upcoming modern trends such as online food apps, health and hygiene issues the vendors seemed to upgrade themselves according to the trends. They seemed to be very well acquainted with the future upcoming demands for the street foods.

Though there are several challenges identified for the street food vendors to ensure food hygiene but it is anticipated that proper education about maintaining food safety, proper infrastructure and proper monitoring will help the street food vendors to ensure hygiene of the food sold by them.

We can impart On-Job-Training through qualified chefs and hygiene instructors that can instil these vendors with right knowledge of food to handle it carefully so that it increases the nutritional value of food and reduce the health hazards because of which people are trying to avoid going out to street vendors. The government can also take initiatives by educating the vendors and making them aware about the safety and maintaining hygiene conditions of food. Also, they can provide infrastructural support to them along with training programmes for them.

REFERENCES

1. Business Today, (October 8th, 2018). Clean street food hub programme.
2. Gupta, V. (2018, September). Chandigarh MC drags feet on policy for regulating street vendors. Hindustan Times.
3. HTCG Team, (30 September 2015), In Indian Traditional Food- History of Indian street food.
4. Jain, J. (January 2013). Socio-economic Profile of Street Food Vendors and Quality Evaluation of Samosa and Panipuri in Allahabad City. Allahabad : (UP) India. International Journal of Agriculture and Food Science Technology, 4, 275-280.
5. Rahman, M.T. (2012). Food safety Knowledge, attitude and Hygiene Practices among the street Food Vendors. Borneo Science, 31,107-115.
6. Sanlier, A.S. (2016). Street Food consumption in terms of the food safety and health. Hakin University.
7. World Health Organization. (February 2015). The Five Keys to Safer Food Program. <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/consumer/5keys/en/>