

## **A comparative study on dietary practices of rural and urban adolescent girls**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Healthy eating during Adolescence is important, as important body changes during this time affect an individual's nutritional and dietary needs. Many adolescents experience a growth spurt and an increase in appetite and need healthy foods to meet their growth needs. Adequate nutrition is vital for ensuring overall emotional and physical health. Some of the dietary problems of adolescent girls are skipping meals, snacking, Crave for fast foods, Dieting etc. With these problems in mind an attempt has been made to find the dietary practices of Urban and Rural adolescent girls of Kapali village and Jamshedpur town of Jharkhand. A self-constructed questionnaire has been given to 50 rural and 50 Urban girls. The results of the study reveal many facts regarding the dietary habits of adolescents. There are many problems with regard to dietary habits of adolescents in general. Rural girls and Urban girls differed in some aspects but in many aspects some similarities were found in their dietary practices which could be due to some specific factors.

**Key Words :** Adolescence, Dietary practices, Snacking

### **INTRODUCTION**

Healthy eating is vital for adolescents, as important body changes during this time effect on individual's nutritional and dietary needs. Adolescents are becoming more independent and making many food decisions on their own. The nutritional needs of teens vary tremendously, but generally increase due to rapid growth and changes in body composition that occur during puberty. Adequate nutrition is vital for ensuring overall emotional and physical health. Good eating habits help prevent chronic illness in the future, including obesity heart disease and Diabetes. Most adolescents fail to meet recommended dietary allowances for caloric and nutrient intake. A low intake of essential nutrients including Vitamin A, Folic acid fibre, iron and calcium is prevalent among adolescents. A low intake of iron and calcium in particular is common among female adolescent, which can impair cognitive and physical performance as well as increase a female risk of Osteoporosis later in life.

### **Review of literature :**

Diets of Indian adolescent girls especially in rural area are inadequate both in terms of quality and quantity. They mainly consume cereal based food but grossly deficient in legumes, animal food and green leafy vegetables (Associate Professor).

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Some studies represent that dietary deficiency are alarming among rural adolescent girls but unfortunately precise estimates of their dietary intake, dietary practices as well as nutrition related knowledge have been the least explored area (Gordon–harsen and Adnair, 2004).

A study conducted on Rural and Urban black South African Adolescent reported that irregular consumption of breakfast on week days was associated with the increased risk of being overweight and obesity among adolescents (Gopalan *et al.*, 1971).

Studies report that dietary habits and practices developed in childhood are usually maintained into adulthood, and this predisposes individual to obesity and increased metabolic disease risk (Aykroyd *et al.*, 1963):

Many life style factors and poor eating habits acquired during adolescence can lead to serious disease in later life. Healthy eating behaviour during adolescence is a fundamental prerequisite for physical growth, psychosocial development and cognitive performance, as well as for the prevention of diet related chronic diseases in adulthood (Sinclair *et al.*, 1969).

## METHODOLOGY

To study the dietary behaviour of Rural and Urban adolescent girl. 50 girls from Kapali village and 50 girls from Jamshedpur town of Jharkhand were selected by random sampling method. A self-constructed questionnaire has been given to them. The data has been tabulated and analysed as follows.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

90% Rural girls takes 3 times a meal, while 10% of them take meals only twice a day. 92% of Urban girls takes meals thrice a day, 8% takes meals twice a day. All girls take Lunch and Dinner. 46% of Rural girls and 40% of Urban girls takes evening snacks. 20% of rural and 40% of Urban girls takes bed time milk. Among rural 80% girls are non-vegetarian and 20% were vegetarians whereas among Urban girls 90% were non vegetarian. In both the groups 30% are in the habit of skipping meals. 70% of rural girls are in habit of drinking tea and among Urban girls 50 % had the habit of drinking tea (Table 1).

Table 1 : General eating habits					
Sr. No.		Rural girls No-50		Urban girls No-50	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Early morning milk / Tea	22	44	40	80
2.	Break fast	40	80	35	70
3.	Lunch	50	100	50	100
4.	Evening snacks	23	46	20	40
5.	Dinner	50	100	50	100
6.	Bed time milk	10	20	20	40

20% of rural girls had raw vegetable always and 6% of them had raw vegetables sometimes. 40% of Urban girls always had raw vegetable. 12% of rural girls had fried food always and non of them avoided fried food. 36% of Urban girls had fried foods always and 40% of them had sometimes. Non of them avoided fried food. Non of the students from both the groups avoided raw vegetable.

Fried food and liquid foods. 14% of rural girls always had aerated beverages where as 56% of Urban girls had aerated beverages always. 66 % of rural girls had fruits sometimes and 24% of them had always. 34% of Urban girls had fruits always. 18% of rural girls had fast food and 4% of rural girls never had fast food. 20% of rural girls had food always out side and 56% of Urban girls always had food outside. 44% of rural girls had balance diet always and 6% of them never had balance diet. 40% of Urban girls had balance diet where as 16% never had balance diet (Table 2).

<b>Table 2 : Frequency of consumption of selected foods</b>									
Sr. No.	Food	Frequency Rural Girls (N=50)				Frequency Urban girls (N=50)			
		Always	Often	Some times	Never	Always	Often	Some times	Never
1.	Raw vegetable	10	3	3	0	20	8	22	0
2.	Fried food	6	8	36	0	18	12	20	0
3.	Liquid food	12	9	29	0	24	10	16	0
4.	Aerated beverages	7	6	34	3	28	10	7	5
5.	Fruits	12	5	33	0	17	9	21	3
6.	Fast food	9	3	36	2	25	20	5	0
7.	Eating out side	10	14	33	3	28	10	12	0
8.	Balanced diet	22	5	20	3	20	7	15	8

30% of rural girls were influenced by food, 20% habit 26% by convenience, 20% by media, 30% by benefit of food, 24% by mood and 16% by body fitness where 44% of Urban girls were influenced by media and 40% were influenced by both appeal of food and benefits of food. 36% Urban girls were influenced by convenience and mood (Table 3).

<b>Table 3 : Factors influencing choice of food</b>					
Sr. No.	Item	Rural girls( N= 50)		Urban girls(N= 50)	
		f	%	f	%
1.	Appeal of food	15	30	20	40
2.	Habit	10	20	15	30
3.	Convenience	13	26	18	36
4.	Influence of media	10	20	22	44
5.	Benefits of food	15	30	20	40
6.	Mood	12	24	18	36
7.	Body fitness	8	16	10	20

Family always influence choice of food of 80% of rural and urban girls. Friends, Peer groups and college canteen sometimes influenced the rural girls whereas urban girls were influenced always by these factors. 60% of urban girls were influenced by TV and newspaper. Advertisement influenced the urban girls more than the rural girls. 50% of rural girls were influenced always by social norms and cultural factors whereas only 40% urban girls were influenced by these factors (Table 4).

**Table 4 : Frequency of influence of selected factors**

Sr. No.		Frequency Rural Girls (N=50)				Frequency Urban girls (N=50)			
		Always	Often	Some time	Never	Always	Often	Some time	Never
1.	Family	40	4	6	0	32	8	5	5
2.	Friends	20	5	21	4	25	3	14	8
3.	Pees	10	8	26	6	12	10	22	6
4.	College Canteen	12	6	22	10	20	15	10	5
5.	Fast food out side	5	3	22	20	22	13	11	4
6.	TV/News paper	15	6	24	5	30	8	9	3
7.	Advertisement	18	10	18	4	28	10	7	5
8.	Social Norms	25	5	15	5	22	12	4	10
9.	Cultural factors	32	10	5	3	20	10	15	5

**Summary and Conclusion :**

Both rural and urban girls take three times a meal and equal number of girls in both the group had evening snacks. Majority of urban girls consumed night milk but half of rural girls did not get bed time milk. In both the groups none of the girls avoided raw vegetable, fried food and liquid food.

Both the groups showed almost equal consumption pattern of balance diet. Family is the most influencing factors in choice of food. There is difference between both the groups with respect to mass media as an influencing factor.

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