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Food adulteration and practices in urban area of Varanasi

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ABSTRACT

Currently food malpractices are increasing in various metro cities of India and all the measures taken by agencies are failed to detect rapidly and many times it becomes late when the adulteration is detected. Most bad scenario is the adulteration of the branded items of the children's and in the women such as milk cheese, ghee and oils. Therefore, Study for food practices and safety measures was done in selected are of Varanasi which was also validated by the wetlab methods. For this objective, questionnaire was prepared and distributed among the selected people depending on their age group, sex and educational background. Statistical tests were carried out on the basis of frequency of male and female respondents obtained in total respondents (N = 300). Chi square test was carried out and the calculated values were compared with value of t test (0.05) and on this basis, conclusions were drawn. Result showed that regardless of the age, income and religion, all of the groups were well aware of the food adulteration and educated people were less prone to the effect. In term of adulteration any how all the stores contained adulterated food, however branded items contained less %age of adulteration than local items. This may be caused due to inactive agencies or longer process of legal system. Studies show that there was lag in following the food practices by all the ages beside having good knowledge of food practices.

Key words : Food choice, Food adulteration, Food practices

INTRODUCTION

Now a days several reports were accounted in various food items such as milk, spices, ghee oil. Adulteration in food is normally present in its most crude form, prohibited substances are either added or partly or wholly substituted. In India normally the contamination/adulteration in food is done either for financial gain or due to carelessness and lack in proper hygienic condition of processing, storing, transportation and marketing. This ultimately results that the consumer is either cheated or often become victim of diseases. Such types of adulteration are quite common in developing countries or backward countries. However, adequate precautions taken by the consumer at the time of purchase of such produce can make him alert to avoid procurement of such food (Agmark, India). It is equally important for the consumer to know the common adulterants and their effect on health.

Adulteration most often includes artificial colours, sand, marble chips, stones, mud, other filthy material talc, chalk powder, water, mineral oil, vegetable oil, argemone

seeds etc. There are various techniques to detect the adulterants such as chemical method or with help of sensitive instruments such as lactometer.

Generally food security for the urban people is closely related to many factors like their age, religion, marital status, economical status (purchasing power, knowledge of food items brands, food items bought from retailer, stockiest, local market, or from supermarket. These and all other factors like scarcity of clean water for cooking, drinking, washing, lack of hygienic aspects, due to lack of awareness and improper sanitation in food preparation has great impact on health. Beside this, bad practices, poor hygiene environments and lack of awareness lead to spread of various communicable diseases via the food system.

According to Howes *et al.* (1996), attitude, is also an important factor besides knowledge in following good practices. Howes *et al.* (1996) and Powell *et al.* (1997) have indicated that although training may bring about an increased knowledge of food safety; this does not always