

## **Impact of Mass Media on Changes in Food Habits and Food Preferences among Adolescence during Covid – 19 pandemic**

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### **Abstract:**

*The emergence of COVID 19 pandemic has severely impacted individuals from all walks of life. The present aims to evaluate the mass media impact on food habits, food preference and quality of life during the COVID 19 among adolescence. An questionnaire was framed and converted as Google form. The developed Google form was sent to 200 adolescents belonging to AC & RI and CSC & RI, Madurai and the received 200 responses from the students. The data obtained was consolidated. From the results it was found that the consumption of cereals and millets reminded the same among 46 % of the participants. Around 55 % of the respondents increased their fruits and vegetable and green leafy vegetables intake during COVID 19. 38 % of the respondents have significantly decreased their consumption of unhealthy foods such as fast foods / junk foods. 36 % of the respondents falls under the category of significantly decreased of their consumption of sugar sweetened beverages during COVID 19. 32 % of the respondents have slightly increased their consumption of non vegetarian foods during COVID 19. 42.3 % of the respondents have slightly increased their immunity boosting foods followed by 30.8 % of the respondents have significantly increased their immunity boosting foods. 46.3 % of the respondents used television is a major source of information to get information regarding COVID 19. The platforms such as twitter, facebook, radio and local news station were some of the mass media lowest used for COVID 19 information.*

### **Key words:**

*COVID 19, Mass media, Social media, Food habits, Food preference, WhatsApp, Television, YouTube.*

## Introduction

The Coronavirus disease (COVID 19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. World Health Organization declared a pandemic On March – 11. The cause of the disease was soon confirmed as a novel coronavirus, and the infection has since spread to many countries Worldwide and has become a pandemic disease. This disease is mainly transmitted through direct human – to – human contact but there are piece of evidence and work which claim that it can also be transmitted indirectly through fomites in the immediate environment around the infected person. Human behavior plays an important role in spreading epidemics. Due to fear, people are always scared to come into an open area and they are refraining from their daily activities in free environment. WHO recognize the value of lifestyle behavior changes to manage the pandemic situation and suggested that their behavior changes can reduce the spread by as much as 80%. (Lin et al, 2020).

The information related with COVID – 19 was also spread rapidly. One of the most accessible and fastest platforms for broadcasting information is mass media. Mass media played a very important role in creating awareness among the general public and in the dissemination of the Government orders / guidelines to the health workers, sanitation workers, including the police at grassroots levels. (Sharma P et.al) It enabled rapid and widespread reach of public health communications to help individuals take timely self – protection interventions. The COVID – 19 pandemic has affected the usage of social media by the world’s general population, world leaders, celebrities, and professionals alike.

Mass media platforms are meant to connect people and helped the world remain connected, largely increasing usage during the pandemic. Since, many people cannot connect with their friends and family in person, for the time being, social media has become the main forms of communication to maintain valuable connections. Social media has become a pivotal communication tool for government, organizations and universities to disseminate crucial information to the public. Social media particularly Twitter, can be used to explore multiple facets of public health research. Moreover, almost 60% of social media users admitted that internet – based health information impacted their health management strategy. Media also promoted hand washing, personal hygiene, social distancing norms, and reporting the COVID cases around the world. (Yan Q *et.al*, 2020)

During pandemic mass media plays a foremost role by providing the diverse feature of information on a mass level and those may impact on individual’s food habits, preferences, physical, social, psychological and environmental domains of quality of life. (Gonzalez Blanch C et al, 2018). Hence the present study aims to determine the association of mass media **on Changes in Food Habits, Food Preference among Adolescence during Covid – 19 pandemic with the following objectives**

1. To study the impact of mass media on changes in food habits, food preferences among adolescence during Covid- 19 pandemic by questionnaire.

## Materials and Methods

Considering the objectives and the variables selected for this study, a comprehensively structured Google form method was used for structured questions which were suitable to respondents. The most relevant and practical questions were included in the

forms, duly avoiding irrelevant items. The Google form survey was designed into 2 parts comprising Part 1 – contains information related to profile characteristics of the respondents and Part 2 – contains information about impact of mass media on changes in food preference during COVID – 19. Totally 200 adolescent (both male and female) of Agricultural College and Research Institute and Community Science College and Research Institute Madurai students was personally contacted and Online Google form was circulated to all the respondents. The data collected was consolidated.

### Statistical analysis used:

The data was analyzed using the statistical tools Percentage analysis.

## Results and Discussions

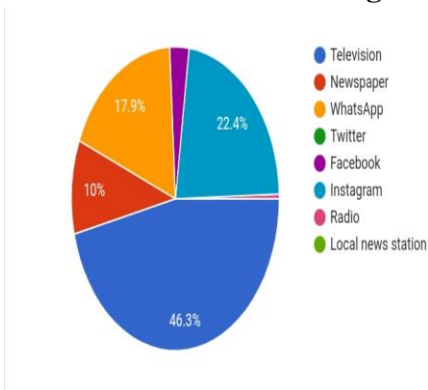
**Table 1: Demographic variables of participants:**

Variables	Number and percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	46 (22.9)
Female	154 (77.1)
<b>Age</b>	
18	16 (8)
19	25 (12.6)
20	44 (22.1)
21	89 (44.7)
22	26 (13)
<b>Qualification (studying UG)</b>	200 (100)
<b>Marital status</b>	
Un married	99.5 (199)
Married	1 (0.5)
<b>Family type</b>	
Joint	33 (16.4)
Nuclear	167 (83.6)

- Values in paranthesis indicates the percentage

A total number of 200 individuals of 18 – 22 age groups respondent. Out of 200 respondents, 46 were males and 154 were females. The majority of respondents were females. All the respondents were using mass media / social media for COVID – 19 news. 99.5 % of participants were Un married. Of all participants, 16.4 % belongs to joint family and 83.6 % belongs to nuclear family. From this status, it can be inferred that now a days majority of people migrated to nuclear family for various reasons.

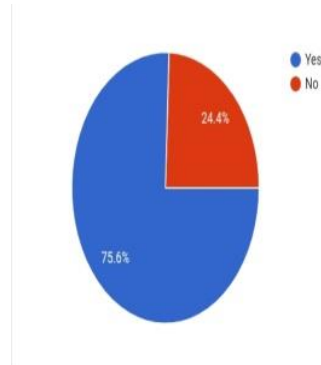
**Table 2: Major source of mass media in obtaining information during COVID 19**



Sources	Number and Percentage (%)
<b>Television</b>	<b>92 (46.3)</b>
News paper	20 (10)
WhatsApp	36 (17.9)
Twitter	-
Facebook	6 (3)
Instagram	45 (22.4)
Radio	1 (0.5)
Local news station	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

The majority of them used television about COVID 19 information and food preference. Television is a widely used mass media among all categories of respondents. 46.3 % of the respondents used television is a major source of information to get information regarding COVID 19. The platforms such as twitter, facebook, radio and local news station were some of the mass media lowest used for COVID 19 information. Survey conducted impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 outbreak lifestyle changes and public health concerns in India reviewed television was watched frequently by 51 % participants during COVID 19. (Subhra Basu *et.al*, 2021).

**Table 3: Changes in eating habits during COVID – 19 lockdown**

Changes in eating habits	Number and Percentage (%)
Yes	<b>151 (75.6)</b>
No	49 (24.4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>

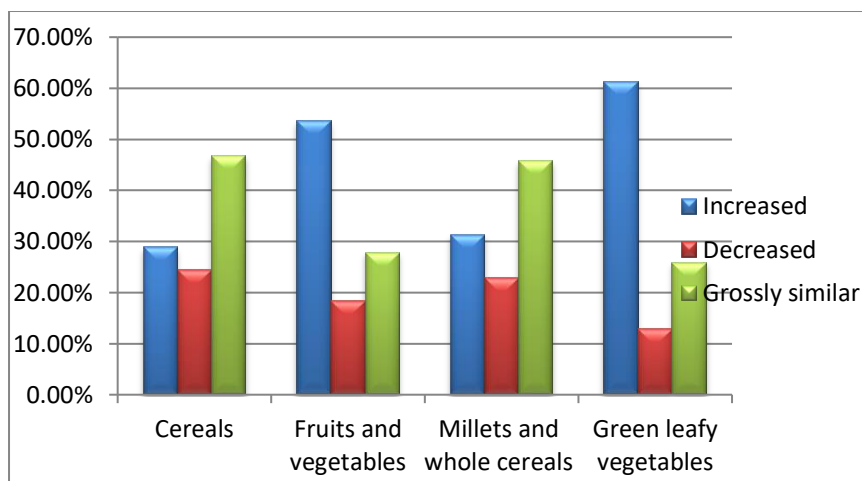
Table 3 gives the data on Changes in eating habits during COVID – 19 lockdown. Among 200 respondents surveyed, 75.6 % of the respondents changed their eating habits during COVID 19 whereas 24.4 % of the respondents did not changed their eating habits during COVID 19. Whether it is a healthier balanced diet. Survey conducted on impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 outbreak lifestyle changes and public health concerns in India reviewed that 24 % of the participants changed their eating habits during COVID 19. (Subhra Basu *et.al*, 2021)

**Table 4: Consumption pattern of food stuffs during Covid 19**

	Consumption pattern of food stuffs during Covid 19			
	Cereals	Fruit and vegetables	Milletts and whole cereals	Green leafy vegetables
Decreased	49 (24.4)	37 (18.4)	46 (22.9)	26 (12.9)
Increased	58 (28.9)	<b>107 (53.7)</b>	63 (31.3)	<b>122 (61.2)</b>
Grossly similar	<b>93 (46.7)</b>	56 (27.9)	<b>91 (45.8)</b>	52 (25.9)
<b>Total</b>	200 (100)	200 (100)	<b>200 (100)</b>	200 (100)

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

**Consumption pattern of cereals / fruits and vegetables/ millets and whole cereals/gly during covid 19**



The consumption of cereals majorly reminded the same among 46.8 % of the participants followed 28.9 % of the respondents mentioned their increase in cereal consumption pattern. 24.4 % participants reported that the consumption of cereals decreased during lockdown. Survey conducted on impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 outbreak lifestyle changes and public health concerns in India reviewed that 60 % of the participants increased their consumption of cereals and millets during COVID 19. (Subhra Basu *et.al*, 20210)

From the survey it was found that 53.7 % of the respondents increased their fruits and vegetable intake during COVID 19 whereas 27.9 % and 18.4 % of the respondents similar and decreased their fruits and vegetables consumption respectively. Suvey conducted on impact of COVID 19 on food behavior and consumption in Quarter reviewed 32.4 % of the respondents increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables during COVID 19. (Tarek Ben Hassen *et.al*, 2020) The consumption of millets and whole cereals majorly reminded the same for 45.8 % participants but increased for 31.3 % of them. 22.9 % participants reported that the consumption of millets and whole cereals decreased during lockdown.

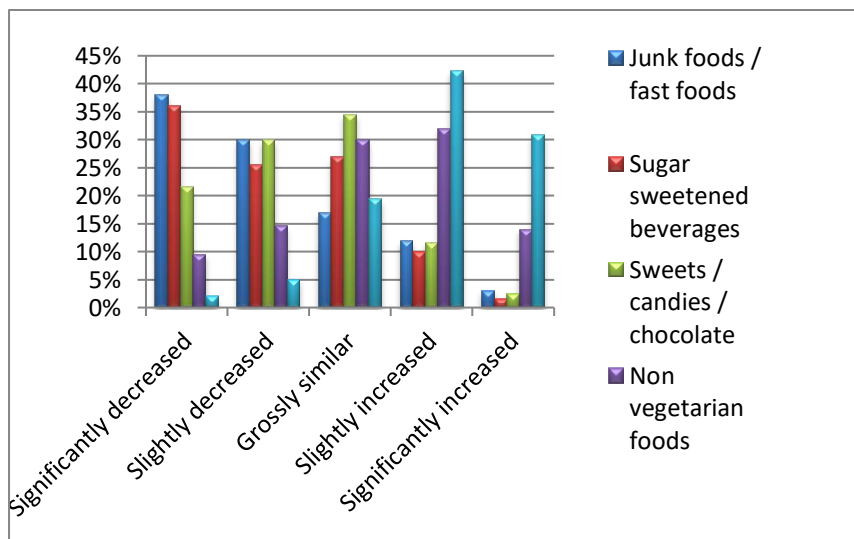
**Table 5: Consumption pattern of tea / coffee during COVID – 19**

Consumption of Tea /coffee	Number and Percentage (%)
Yes	91 (45.5)
No	109 (54.5)
Total	200 (100)

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

54.5 % of the respondents indicated that they did not consume tea / coffee during COVID 19 whereas 45.5 % % of the respondents had tea / coffee during COVID 19. Survey conducted on Does COVID 19 change dietary habits and lifestyle behaviors in Kuwait reviewed that, there is no significant difference in the number of coffee and tea consumed per day. (Wafaa Husain *et.al*, 2020).

**Table 6: Consumption pattern of Junk foods / Sugar sweetened Beverages/ Sweets / candies /Chocolate/ Non veg foods during COVID – 19**



	Consumption pattern unhealthy food choices Number and Percentage (%)			
	Junk foods / fast foods	Sugar sweetened Beverages	Sweets / candies / Chocolate	Non veg foods
<b>Significantly decreased</b>	<b>76 (38)</b>	<b>72 (36)</b>	43 (21.5)	<b>19 (9.5)</b>
Slightly decreased	60 (30)	51 (25.5)	60 (30)	29 (14.5)
Grossly similar	34 (17)	54 (27)	69 (34.5)	60 (30)
Slightly increased	24 (12)	20 (10)	23 (11.5)	<b>64 (32)</b>
<b>Significantly increased</b>	<b>6 (3)</b>	<b>3 (1.5)</b>	5 (2.5)	28 (14)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>	200 (100)

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

38 % of the respondents have significantly decreased their consumption of unhealthy foods such as fast foods / junk foods. The consumption of junk foods and fast foods reminded the same for 17 % participants but for 3 % of them significantly increased their consumption during covid -19. Survey conducted on impact of COVID 19 on food behavior and consumption in Quarter reviewed that 44.5 % of the respondents decreased their consumption of fast foods during COVID 19. (Tarek Ben Hassen *et.al*, 2020)

36 % of the respondents falls under the category of significantly decreased of their consumption of sugar sweetened beverages during COVID 19. The consumption of sugar sweetened beverages reminded the same for 27 % participants but 1.5 % of the respondents increased their consumption.

34.5 % of the respondents have same their consumption of sweets / candies / chocolate during COVID 19. The consumption of sweets / candies / chocolate decreased for 21.5 % participants but increased for 2.5 % of them. Survey conducted on impact of COVID 19 on food behavior and consumption in Quarter reviewed that 28.7 % of the respondents decreased their consumption of candies and chocolate during COVID 19. (Tarek Ben Hassen *et.al*, 2020).

32 % of the respondents have slightly increased their consumption of non vegetarian foods during COVID 19. The consumption of non veg foods reminded the same for 30 % participants but decreased for 9.5 % of the respondents decreased their non vegetarian foods during covid -19. Survey conducted on impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 outbreak lifestyle changes and public health concerns in India reviewed that 34 % of the participants decreased their consumption of non veg foods during COVID 19. (Subhro Basu *et.al*, 2020)

**Table 7: Consumption of immunity boosting foods) during COVID 19**

Consumption of Immunity boosting Foods	Number and Percentage (%)
<b>Significantly decreased</b>	<b>4 (2)</b>
Slightly decreased	10 (5)
Grossly similar	39 (19.4)
<b>Slightly increased</b>	<b>85 (42.3)</b>
Significantly increased	62 (30.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

42.3 % of the respondents have slightly increased their immunity boosting foods followed by 30.8 % of the respondents have significantly increased their immunity boosting foods. 2 % of the respondents surveyed did not consume immnity boosting foods. Survey conducted on impact of lockdown due to COVID 19 outbreak lifestyle changes and public health concerns in India reviewed that 43 % of the population surveyed did not consume any immunity booster foods during COVID 19. (Subhro Basu *et.al*, 2020)

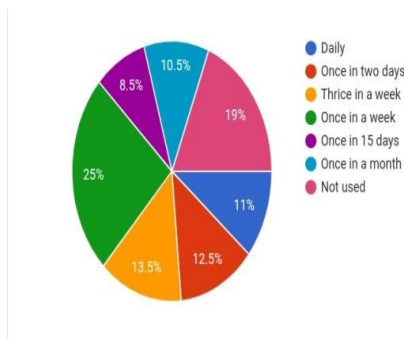
**Table 8: Consumption of herbs such as tulsi / karpooravalli during COVID – 19**

Consumption of herbs	Number and Percentage (%)
Daily	22 (11)
Once in 2 days	25 (12.5)
<b>Twice in week</b>	<b>27 (13.5)</b>
Once in a week	50 (25)



Once in 15 days	17 (8.5)
Once in month	21 (10.5)
<b>Not used</b>	<b>38 (19)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

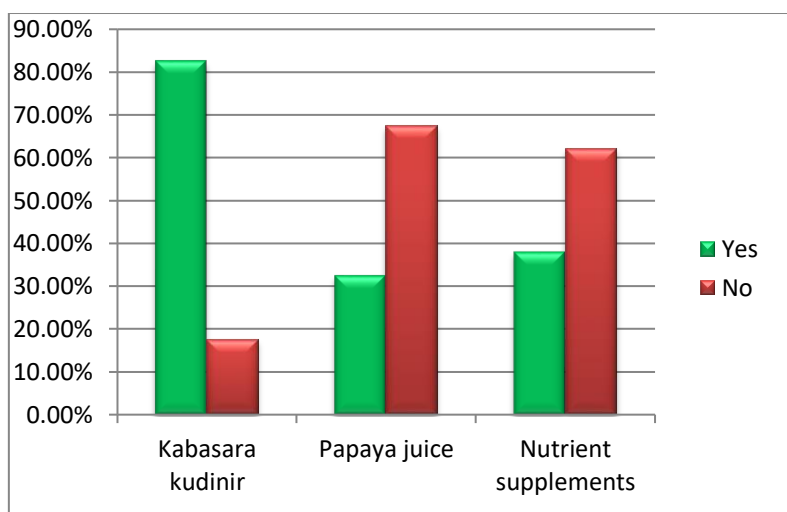


13.5 % of the respondents consumed herbs such as tulsi / karpooravalli twice a times per week. 11 % of the respondents prefer consumption of tulsi / karpooravalli daily while 19 % do not prefer tulsi / karpooravalli during COVID 19.

**Table 9: Consumption pattern of kabasara kudinir/papaya juice/nutrient supplements\* during covid 19**

\* Values in paranthesis indicates percentage.

<b>Consumption pattern of Kabasara kudinir, Papaya juice and Nutrient supplements (Adathoda manapagu, tripala, calcium, zinc vitamin C supplements )</b>			
	Kabasara kudinir	Papaya juice	Nutrient supplements (Adathoda manapagu, tripala, calcium, zinc vitamin C supplements )
Yes	165 (82.5)	65 (32.5)	76 (38)
No	35 (17.5)	135 (67.5)	<b>124 (62)</b>
<b>Total</b>	200 (100)	200 (100)	200 (100)



82.5% of the respondents consumed kabasara kudinir during COVID 19 whereas 17.5 % of the respondents did not consumed kabasara kudinir during COVID 19. 32.5 % of the respondents consumed papaya juice during COVID 19 whereas 67.5 % of the respondents did not consumed papaya juice during COVID 19. 38 % of the respondents used nutrient supplements during COVID 19 whereas 62 % of the respondents did not used nutrient supplements during COVID 19.

### Conclusion:

A brief summary of the results of the study on impact of mass media on changes in food habits, food preference and life style pattern during COVID 19 among adolescence are discussed in this chapter. Survey on the impact of mass media on changes in food preference during COVID 19. With the advent of the pandemic crisis, a higher percentage of people have turned to social media platforms. Due to lockdown conditions, majority had shifted to online sources for COVID 19 news and food habits. The consumption of cereals and millets reminded the same among 46 % of the participants. Around 55 % of the respondents increased their fruits and vegetable and green leafy vegetables intake during COVID 19. Kabasara kudinir was the most popular choice as immunity booster. 82.5 % respondents consumed kabasara kudinir. The consumption of fast food, chocolates, sweets, sugar sweetened beverages were decreased during COVID 19.

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