



# A STUDY ON THE DIETARY HABITS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** To lead a successful life, we have to be smart and for becoming smart, we have to do our work intelligently and efficiently. The busy life style of people has made them not have enough time to talk, relax, cook or eat with others. Today people have begun to take more western type foods than our traditional foods. They have started consuming the fast foods like pizza, burger, sandwich, noodles etc. These foods do not contain enough nutritive value and they are not suitable to our body health as well. India is the only country which has more human resources than any other country. The focus of this paper will be highlight on the dietary habits of college students.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There is a well-known saying that 'Health is wealth'. In the olden days, people worked hard for living and had balanced nutritional and traditional food. This helped them to lead a healthy life and they lived for more than 100 years. Now, we are living in the digital era, and everything is moving on very fast. Due to globalization and urbanization, our life style has also changed. Due to faulty dietary habits, our younger generation particularly adolescents are affected by obesity and they are vulnerable to many diseases.

## II. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Diet plays an important role in the nutritional status and henceforth the development of an individual. Children and adolescents form the backbone of prospect generation and many serious diseases in adulthood have their roots in adolescence. Unhealthy lifestyle factors like skipping meals and food choice leading to a poorer nutrient intake are common among this vulnerable later adolescent group. Later adolescents are giving preferences for bakery and confectioneries and carbonated drinks that are rich in carbohydrate and thus are at risk for diabetic and cardiovascular disease development.

With the known culture difference, our traditional Indian diet is different from a western diet. In recent decades with the western cultural influences on the urban sector especially in relation to diet, there goes the need to study the Indian urban scenario. The obesity and eating disorders are prevalent among college students. So they have to be oriented on developing good dietary habits and the benefits of it since they form the demographic dividend of our country. Considering the above factors, the investigator intended to study the dietary habits of college students.

## III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The investigator intended to find out what foods are eaten, how are they eaten, how much are they eaten and when are they eaten by the of college students and hence the study has been titled as "A study of Dietary Habits of College Students".

## IV. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### *DIETARY HABITS*

Dietary habits refers to the way a person or group eats, considered in terms of what types of food are eaten, in what quantities, and when.

### *COLLEGE STUDENTS*

College students refers to the students who are studying their under graduation courses at colleges.

## V. OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the dietary habits of college students
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the dietary habits of college students with respect to
  - a. Gender (Male/Female)
  - b. Locality of residence (Rural/Urban)
  - c. Nature of stay (Hosteller/Day-scholar)

## VI. HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference between male and female college students in their dietary habits.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban college students in their dietary habits.
3. There is no significant difference between hosteller and day scholar college students in their dietary habits.

## VII. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present investigation has the following limitations:

- a. The present study is confined only to the arts and Science College under graduate students.
- b. The sample is limited to 100 students only.
- c. The study has been limited to Thoothukudi district alone.

## VIII. METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used to find out the dietary habits of under graduate college students. The sample consisted of 100 under graduate college students in Thoothukudi district. Stratified random sampling was used to form the sample from arts and science colleges. A questionnaire was developed by the investigators to find out the dietary habits of college students. Percentage analysis and 't' test were used for analysis.

## IX. FINDINGS

1. There is a significant difference between male and female college students in their dietary habits.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban college students in their dietary habits.
3. There is a significant difference between hosteller and day-scholar college students in their dietary habits.

### 9.1 Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between male and female college students in their dietary habits.

**Table 9.1**

**Difference between male and female college students in their dietary habits**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	df	Calculated 't' value	Table value	Result
Male	58	30.69	2.61	85	2.302	1.96	Significant
Female	42	31.95	2.78				

Table 9.1 displayed mean, it is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (2.302) is greater than the table value (1.96) for 85 df at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference between male and female college students in their dietary habits.

### 9.2 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between rural and urban college students in their dietary habits.

**Table 9.2**

**Difference between rural and urban college students in their dietary habits**

Locality of residence	N	Mean	S.D	df	Calculated 't' value	Table value	Result
Rural	36	31.86	2.76	71	1.760	1.96	Not significant
Urban	64	30.86	2.68				

Table 9.2 displayed mean, it is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (1.760) is lesser than the table value (1.96) for 71 df at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between rural and urban college students in their dietary habits.

### 9.3 Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference between hosteller and day scholar college students in their dietary habits.

**Table 9.3**

**Difference between hosteller and day scholar college students in their dietary habits**

Nature of stay	N	Mean	S.D	Df	Calculated 't' value	Table value	Result
Hosteller	29	30.04	2.35	55	2.875	1.96	Significant
Day-scholar	71	31.65	2.80				

Table 9.3 displayed mean, it is inferred from the above table that the calculated 't' value (2.875) is greater than the table value (1.96) for 55 df at 5% level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference between hosteller and day-scholar college students in their dietary habits.

## X. INTERPRETATIONS

Significant difference exists between male and female college students in their dietary habits. The mean scores reveal that female students have more dietary habits than male college students. This may be due to that at this stage female students follow dieting to keep their weight in control and they wish to look like slim and beauty. So they concentrate more on what they are eating than male students. They are much aware about the nutrients present in their food than their counter parts. They used to take their own food with them wherever they go. But male students prefer to eat in hotels rather taking food with them.

Locality of student's residence did not play any role in the dietary habits. This may be due to that now a days all the people are aware of good dietary habits and wants to lead a healthy life. The government addressed the public on more about the ill effects of communicable and non-communicable diseases via mass media and the measures to be taken to safeguard them. The mass media also gives more information about good dietary habits and healthy living.

Significant difference exists between hosteller and day-scholar college students in their dietary habits. The mean scores reveal that day-scholar students have more dietary habits than their counter parts. This may be due to that they can have healthy, fresh and hot foods at their home. They can drink fresh juices prepared at home. Whereas hostellers will have fixed menu and they don't have any opportunity to choose and select foods as their wish. In hostels, the same menu will be repeated for all weeks. So they will get the same and fixed nutrients only from food. The food will be prepared in advance and will not be able to get fresh foods whenever they eat.

## XI. CONCLUSION

The present study was aimed at finding the dietary habits of college students. From this study we can conclude that female students show a higher level of dietary habits than male students. Colleges and dining halls on campuses should acknowledge their crucial role in guiding healthy dietary habits, and be the first subjects to be interested in creating a healthy environment for the students. Unless they start understanding the reasons behind unhealthy eating behaviours of young adults, effective policies and managerial strategies to fight malnutrition (obesity, anorexia, and micro-deficiency) cannot be developed. Inadequate nutrition affects students' health and academic success. Students may have proficient knowledge regarding nutritional requirements; however, the transition to college life gives them more freedom to choose the type and the amount of food they eat. Most college campuses have dining facilities that provide a variety of food options, which can lead to establishing either good or bad eating behaviours. So Students should be educated properly about healthy eating. A healthy dietary habit helps an individual to stay fit and well throughout his life.

## XII. BILIOGRAPHY

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**WEB RESOURCES**

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