

Consumption of Comfortable Foods by Urban Adolescents in Different Socio-Economic Categories

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author IC designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors HK and SJ managed the analyses of the study. Author SJ managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Comfortable foods are chemically processed and made from heavily refined ingredients and artificial additives. These foods are manufactured and distributed in ways that encourage consumption. This study focused on adolescents since they have greater access to comfortable foods, are more free and lesser concerned for their health. Fewer studies have been conducted on adolescents but in present scenario they are more inclined towards unhealthy eating behaviors. Therefore, the present study after careful considerations was attempted to assess the consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories. Two hundred subjects in the age group of 16 to 18 years were purposely selected in equal number in the ratio of 1:1 of boys and girls. Findings revealed that majority belonged to high socioeconomic status whereas 52% boys and 44% girls belonged to low socioeconomic status. Respondents from the entire income category mostly consumed comfortable foods because it was either liked by them or they found it good in taste. Consumption of all the comfortable foods was found to be significantly ($p \leq 0.05$, $p \leq 0.01$) higher in adolescents who had high income and greater access of these food products. Significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of comfortable foods by all the adolescents in different socioeconomic categories.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Comfortable foods have become part of modern day living for people with demanding and hectic lifestyles. An increasing number of technological advances have changed the way food is produced, manufactured and distributed. The United States Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, Section 201 defined processed food as “Any food other than a raw agricultural commodity and included any raw agricultural commodity that has been subject to processing, such as canning, cooking, freezing, dehydration or milling” [1]. For many families with both parents in employment, modern day life is characterized by more working hours and spending less time preparing food. Meal times are commonly fragmented; people often eat at different times and in different places frequently outside the home, with a heavy reliance on snack and comfortable foods [2]. Comfortable foods are designed to be consumed anywhere in fast food establishments, at home in place of dishes and meals prepared from scratch, while watching television, at desks or elsewhere at work, in the street, and while driving [3].

According to UNICEF, there are 1.2 billion adolescents living in the world today. More than half of all adolescents live in Asia. India is home to more adolescents, around 243 million adolescents live here [4]. This study focused on adolescents since they have greater access to comfortable food, are free and lesser concerned for their health. Food availability has also increased as a consequence of rising income levels and falling food prices. This has resulted in considerable changes in food consumption over the past 50 years [5]. To prevent diet related chronic diseases, healthy eating behaviors should be established in childhood and maintained during adolescence [6].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out on two hundred subjects in the age group of 16 to 18 years which were purposely selected in equal number from government (Group I) and private schools (Group II) in the ratio of 1:1 of boys and girls. A questionnaire was developed to assess the general information regarding age, family size and type, income, dietary pattern, of the respondents. Data was collected through personal interview technique using the especially

structured schedule. A list of most frequently consumed food items by adolescents was prepared by interviewing with adolescents (not the subjects), parents, teachers, dietitians and vendors and a food frequency questionnaire (FFQ) was used to assess the food pattern (general as well as fast food) over recent months. The frequencies in the questionnaire were scored from 1-7 (Table 1). Thereafter, mean frequency was calculated for each food item consumed by each subject. Socio economic status was assessed using standardized scale [7]. Further, the Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFQ) was used to assess the food pattern.

Table 1. Food frequency scores

Frequency	Scores
Daily	7
Thrice a week	6
Twice a week	5
Weekly	4
Fortnightly	3
Rarely	2
Never	1

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-Economic Status

Socio economic status includes different items related to family occupation of adolescents and their surrounding locality. Scores obtained from different items were summed up and categorized (Table 2). The data indicates that majority of the boys and girls fall in high socioeconomic status i.e. 96 and 92 percent. About half of the adolescents (52% boys and 44% girls) belong to below average socioeconomic status. About one third of the adolescents (28% boys and 32% girls) belong to average socioeconomic status. Only 8 per cent of boys and 24 per cent of girls belong to above average socioeconomic status whereas (16% boys and 8% girls) belong to poor socioeconomic status.

3.2 Consumption of Comfortable Foods by the Subjects

3.2.1 Factors associated with consumption of comfortable foods

Table 3 highlighted that more than half (118% boys and 126% girls) of the respondents consumed comfortable food because they liked it. Whereas (94%) boys and girls (106%) give reason that they are good in taste. Very small

number of respondents stated that they consumed comfortable food because they are liked by their friends, easily available, different or unusual, nice to look at, not fattening and due to prestige point.

Table 2. Socio economic status of adolescents (n=200)

Socio economic status		
Categories	Boys	Girls
High (Below or 16)	48(96)	46(92)
Above Average (17-25)	4(8)	12(24)
Average (26-32)	14(28)	16(32)
Below Average (33-43)	26(52)	22(44)
Poor (43 or above)	8(16)	4(8)

Figures in parentheses represent the percentages

Table 4 indicates that respondents from high socioeconomic status (52% boys and 52% girls) and above average socioeconomic status (6% boys and 36% girls) consumed comfortable food, as they liked it and found it good in taste. While adolescents from average socioeconomic status (16% boys and 18% girls), below average socioeconomic status (40% boys and 30% girls) and poor socioeconomic status (6% boys and 4% girls) consumed comfortable food because it was liked by them. In another study it was observed that higher socioeconomic class adolescents were more prone to overweight and at risk of overweight. This can be accounted because of availability of easy money for eating junk food more frequently ultimately this may lead to overweight and obesity [8].

3.2.2 Average consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

All the respondents were categorized on the basis of gender. A significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of all refined wheat products in both the genders of

different socioeconomic categories. Among the refined wheat products consumption of biscuits was found to be the highest in high socioeconomic category as compared to other socioeconomic groups. Similarly a study revealed that consumption of processed foods had increased most rapidly in upper middle income group in China and Thailand [9].

The data revealed that among all the food items, consumption was higher in above average and high income group in both the genders. A significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of all fried food items in both the genders of different socioeconomic categories. The results were supported with the findings of a study which reported that better socioeconomic leads to increase availability of food, change in food composition, pattern of food intake and change in cultural and social attitudes [10]. Whereas another study revealed that high household socioeconomic status was associated with the increased number of meals and the increased intakes of many nutritious foods such as animal food items, fruits and vegetables and dairy foods [11].

Among the sweet food items, consumption of all the sweet food items was higher in adolescents who were having above average and high income status. A significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of all sweet food items in both the genders of different socioeconomic categories. Similarly, in both the genders the consumption of ready to drink food items were minimum in poor, below average and average socioeconomic categories as compared to above average and high income groups. A significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of all ready to drink items in both the genders of different socioeconomic categories.

Table 3. Factors associated with consumption of comfortable foods by the subjects

	Poor		Below average		Average		Above average		High	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Liked by self	3(6)	2(4)	20(40)	15(30)	8(16)	9(18)	3(6)	9(18)	25(50)	26(52)
Liked by friends	2(4)	-	7(14)	-	5(25)	-	-	-	1(2)	-
Good in taste	1(2)	3(6)	11(22)	9(18)	8(16)	6(36)	1(2)	6(36)	26(52)	25(50)
Easily available	-	1(2)	5(10)	2(4)	1(2)	1(2)	-	-	7(14)	11(22)
Different or unusual	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2(4)	-
Nice to look at	-	-	2(4)	2(4)	1(2)	-	-	-	3(6)	4(8)
Nutritious	-	-	4(8)	3(6)	4(8)	-	-	-	9(18)	8(16)
Not fattening	-	-	-	1(2)	2(4)	-	-	-	1(2)	1(2)
Prestige point	-	-	2(4)	-	-	-	-	-	3(6)	-

*Multiple responses (Figures in parentheses represent the percentages)

Table 4. Average Consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

Refined wheat products	Poor		Below Average		Average		Above Average		High		f-value (boys)	f-value (girls)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		
	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE		
Biscuits	2.25±0.45	4.75±0.48	3.92±0.37	4.41±0.36	4.64±0.55	4.94±0.47	5.25±1.44	4.75±0.46	5.79±0.21	5.20±0.28	24.19*	8.79*
Bread	2.13±0.44	2.00±0.71	3.08±0.32	2.82±0.31	3.71±0.53	3.50±0.34	5.50±0.65	3.75±0.33	5.04±0.19	4.74±0.29		
Cold sandwiches	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.07±0.07	1.38±0.26	2.25±0.95	2.33±0.61	3.17±0.24	3.43±0.32		

*significant at 5% level

Table 5. Average consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

Fried food items	Poor		Below average		Average		Above average		High		f-value (boys)	f-value (girls)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		
	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE		
Garlic potato bites	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.06±0.06	1.25±0.25	1.25±0.25	2.06±0.14	2.22±0.19	36.07*	22.88*
Cheese munchies	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	1.17±0.17	2.04±0.19	2.11±0.20		
Cheese shots	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.50	1.25±0.13	2.19±0.20	2.15±0.21		
French fries	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.07±0.07	1.25±0.11	1.75±0.48	2.08±0.42	2.73±0.20	2.70±0.17		
Crispy wedges	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	2.00±0.58	1.42±0.26	2.56±0.21	2.63±0.24		
Cheese balls	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.07±0.07	1.06±0.06	1.25±0.25	2.25±0.49	2.35±0.18	2.39±0.15		
Masala fries	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.33±0.33	1.85±0.16	2.15±0.22		
Nuggets	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.21±0.21	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.50±0.42	2.54±0.25	2.39±0.23		
Smiles	1.13±0.13	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.07±0.07	1.00±0.00	2.25±0.48	1.50±0.26	2.71±0.19	2.67±0.22		
Spicy aloo tikki	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.00±0.00	1.06±0.06	1.50±0.50	1.50±0.42	2.31±0.16	2.59±0.21		
Ready to make samosa	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.58±0.34	2.04±0.20	2.11±0.20		

*significant at 5% level

Table 6. Average Consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	f-value (boys)	f-value (girls)
	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE		
Canned/tinned gulabjamun	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.13±0.09	1.50±0.29	1.25±0.13	1.77±0.13	1.59±0.15	43.06*	32.56*
Custard	1.13±0.13	1.25±0.25	1.12±0.06	1.18±0.11	1.21±0.11	1.94±0.44	2.75±0.48	2.33±0.51	2.98±0.26	2.72±0.23		
Fruit cake mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.67±0.36	2.54±0.24	2.57±0.22		
Jam	1.13±0.13	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.68±0.30	1.29±0.29	1.88±0.43	2.75±0.63	2.00±0.30	3.21±0.21	2.93±0.22		
Khoyakaju mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.13	2.08±0.20	2.15±0.23		
Instant desserts	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	2.00±0.49	2.52±0.22	3.04±0.27		
Pudding	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.17±0.11	1.98±0.18	2.37±0.18		
Ready to make rasgulla	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.06±0.06	1.25±0.25	1.50±0.29	2.79±0.24	2.46±0.21		
Shrikhand	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.50	1.17±0.11	1.65±0.15	2.00±0.21		
Sweetened condensed milk	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.07±0.07	1.25±0.25	1.50±0.29	1.67±0.50	2.85±0.26	2.00±0.21		
Milk pudding	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.06±0.06	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	2.21±0.18	2.28±0.20		
Mithai mate	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	1.17±0.17	2.31±0.24	1.76±0.17		
Frozen ice cream	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.04±0.04	1.05±0.05	1.07±0.07	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	1.33±0.19	3.13±0.24	3.09±0.23		

*significant at 5% level

Table 7. Average Consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

Ready to Drink	Poor		Below Average		Average		Above Average		High		f-value (boys)	f-value (girls)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		
	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE		
Coffee/tea	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.13±0.09	3.25±1.44	3.33±0.74	4.60±0.27	515±0.27	55.43*	62.35*
Commercialized fruit juices	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.09±0.09	1.07±0.07	1.25±0.19	2.00±0.41	2.42±0.61	3.83±0.26	3.54±0.22		
Squashes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.13±0.13	1.50±0.29	1.50±0.29	2.88±0.25	2.83±0.30		
Sweetened drinks	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.88±0.19	1.45±0.23	1.36±0.20	2.13±0.41	3.25±1.25	2.17±0.49	3.58±0.31	3.11±0.29		
Soft drinks	1.38±0.18	2.25±0.63	1.69±0.09	2.05±0.17	1.86±0.21	2.50±0.30	4.00±0.71	2.42±0.38	4.44±0.26	3.91±0.26		

*significant at 5% level

Table 8. Average consumption of comfortable foods by urban adolescents in different socio-economic categories

Ready to eat / Make	Poor		Below average		Average		Above average		High		f-value (boys)	f-value (girls)
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		
	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE	Mean±SE		
Ready to make sausages	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	1.33±0.26	2.06±0.21	1.98±0.20	162.55*	102.64*
Ready to make noodles	1.63±0.18	2.00±0.41	1.73±0.10	2.27±0.26	1.93±0.29	2.63±0.46	3.75±0.85	2.42±0.31	3.31±0.20	3.61±0.21		
Ready to make veg.	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.06±0.06	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.49	2.13±0.23	2.28±0.22		
Ready to eat breakfast meals	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.33±0.14	2.50±0.30	2.74±0.29		
Roasted garlic bread spreads	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	2.00±0.71	1.67±0.41	2.08±0.19	2.24±0.24		
Sandwich spreads	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	2.00±0.48	2.88±0.22	3.13±0.28		
Shredded pizza cheese	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.33±0.14	2.23±0.19	2.35±0.24		
Soups	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.04±0.04	1.50±0.19	1.21±0.11	1.56±0.32	1.75±0.48	1.50±0.23	2.58±0.17	2.78±0.25		
Upma	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.07±0.07	1.31±0.22	1.75±0.75	1.25±0.13	1.98±0.19	2.04±0.19		
Vegetable Kadhai mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	1.92±0.62	2.08±0.25	2.30±0.19		
Corn	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.19±0.14	1.00±0.00	1.14±0.10	1.31±0.18	2.00±0.71	2.00±0.48	2.31±0.23	2.33±0.20		
Cake mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	1.25±0.13	2.60±0.23	2.28±0.17		
Canned /Frozen meat	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.00±0.00	1.94±0.23	1.59±0.18		
Canned Vegetables	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.17±0.11	1.44±0.11	1.76±0.25		
Methi mutter mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.42±0.26	1.92±0.18	2.09±0.19		
Mozzarella cheese	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.14±0.10	1.06±0.06	1.50±0.29	1.58±0.29	2.52±0.20	2.46±0.23		
Packed chips	1.38±0.18	2.00±0.41	1.73±0.13	2.68±0.30	1.79±0.30	2.88±0.46	3.75±1.11	3.33±0.57	4.54±0.24	4.22±0.23		
Instant panipuri	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.50	2.25±0.66	3.19±0.28	3.80±0.33		
Ready to cook parantha	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	2.00±0.71	1.17±0.11	1.71±0.18	2.26±0.23		
Pasta	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.32±0.17	1.07±0.07	1.63±0.26	2.25±0.75	1.83±0.44	3.52±0.23	2.96±0.18		
Pavbhaji mixes	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	1.58±0.34	2.98±0.24	2.76±0.21		
Instant pinni	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.04±0.04	1.00±0.00	1.21±0.21	1.06±0.06	3.00±1.35	1.25±0.18	2.06±0.20	2.22±0.19		
Popcorn-salted	1.13±0.13	1.25±0.25	1.42±0.10	1.50±0.23	1.43±0.23	1.44±0.26	1.75±0.48	1.83±0.27	2.75±0.20	2.57±0.19		
Popcorn-butter	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.3±60.29	1.75±0.39	2.75±1.11	1.42±0.19	2.52±0.22	2.59±0.23		
Popcorn-plain	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.04±0.04	1.09±0.09	1.2±10.21	1.25±0.19	1.75±0.48	1.50±0.26	2.35±0.19	2.33±0.20		
Potato bites	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.0±00.00	1.06±0.06	1.25±0.25	1.67±0.40	2.15±0.18	2.67±0.22		
Processed cheddar cheese	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.0±00.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.17±0.11	1.63±0.15	1.59±0.13		
Processed cheese spread	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.0±00.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.18	1.71±0.18	2.26±0.22		
Cheese slices	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	1.33±0.26	2.98±0.27	2.54±0.24		
Chewing gum	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.58±0.15	1.55±0.23	1.79±0.28	1.75±0.21	3.25±0.63	2.33±0.40	3.88±0.29	3.43±0.28		
Chutney spreads	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	2.00±1.00	2.42±0.62	3.17±0.30	3.57±0.32		
Dips	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.50±0.29	1.08±0.08	2.65±0.22	2.26±0.22		
Flavored yoghurt	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.05±0.05	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.25±0.25	1.17±0.11	2.31±0.26	2.28±0.23		
Frozen ice cream	1.00±0.00	1.00±0.00	1.04±0.04	1.05±0.05	1.07±0.07	1.00±0.00	1.75±0.75	1.33±0.19	3.13±0.24	3.09±0.23		

*significant at 5% level

The results indicated that among the variety of ready to eat/ make food items the consumption was higher in high income group followed by above average, average, below average and poor income group in both the girls and boys. A significant difference was observed in the mean values of consumption of all ready to eat/make items in both the genders of different socioeconomic categories. Poor diet quality in adolescence can increase the risk of the development of non communicable diseases (NCDs) in adulthood, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension and type 2 diabetes [12].

4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that majority of adolescents who had higher income status had greater access to comfortable foods because they had higher pocket money as compared to adolescents from poor or below average socioeconomic status. Moreover, it was found that adolescents from higher income groups prefer comfortable foods because they found them good in taste whereas adolescents from other socioeconomic groups preferred convenience foods because these were liked by them. It was found that the consumption pattern of comfortable foods differed significantly in both the genders of different socioeconomic categories. Thus, it can be concluded that socioeconomic status significantly affects the consumption pattern of comfortable foods. Efforts should be made to conduct educational programmes for guiding adolescents in selecting the comfortable foods so that incidence of obesity especially in higher income group can be lowered. More attention needs to be given to the regular consumption of meals. School and community based intervention measures are necessary to develop a healthy lifestyle in adolescents.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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