

Food choices and meal patterns in india media essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The chapter will present the findings, in the form of themes and categories, which was seen from the analysis of the interviews with the participants. The themes are recurring instances of responses occurring across all the interviews and which are important and relevant to the research. The themes were carefully organized into over-arching relevant categories. The themes have also been separately discussed as sub-themes, which were based on the responses of the participants and listed in their own voice, so as to enable a better understanding of their thoughts, knowledge and responsiveness.

Category I: Changes in Food choices and Meal patterns

The themes and sub-themes talk about the changes in food choices and meal patterns that took place amongst the Indian students in Leeds Metropolitan University and understanding what it meant to them.

Theme 1: Food choices and Meal patterns in India

Sub-theme A: “ I had more different a type of Indian food earlier at home than it is here.”

“ Yes, there is quite a bit of difference in the type of food that I have here and that I am used to having in India. I donot get the traditional foods that I liked a lot but once in a while I do get Indian food here as well, which is as close to home that I can get.”

The consumption of food showed a great degree of variation from different regions of the country. They were also dependent on the types of sides that were eaten with the meals. Also, the fact that most of the students reported

that, irrespective of where they came from in India, the choices available for them regarding traditional food, were more than they get here.

“ I had rice for all the meals. That’s what people do there. Bread is not that common, may be occasionally, however the most common was rice, which we could have with any side.”

It was seen that rice was considered as not only the staple ingredient but also something that they could have with most of the side dishes. Due to certain religious beliefs that they grew up in, there was apparent absence of meat and meat products in the responses of some participants.

“ My family had always eaten wheat for atleast one meal of the day. I guess it may be because of the fact that we lived in the North of the country and also that it was cheaper and easily available.”

The consumption of wheat by these participants was because it was less costly and also that it was easily available in the region. Also, wheat formed the dietary resemblance to the cultural associations of that region. Also, amongst the meat and meat products, chicken was seen as the acceptable option, even during the religious and cultural gatherings. The Indian diet consisted of heavily spiced dishes ranging from vegetables, meat or fish.

Sub-theme B: “ We ate more regular meals and had a balanced diet”

All the participants said that they had a more regular meal pattern with 2-3 meals in a day and most of it was home cooked. They also brought up the idea of a ‘ proper meal’, wherein they had food that was specific with that meal of the day.

<https://assignbuster.com/food-choices-and-meal-patterns-in-india-media-essay/>

“ Before I came here, I used to have proper three meals in a day, but here I may only end up having two meals in a day. Also, here the meals are not balanced and quite irregular.”

The participants felt that the meals they have here were not similar to the ones they were used to having back home. The participants said they were used to having lavish and complete meals, which consisted of variety of dishes.

“ I had a very good eating habit at home. I had a set meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner, with occasional snacks in between them. Eating regularly, as I used to before is the key to keeping healthy.”

All the participants talked about the importance of having traditional meals atleast twice or thrice a day. They felt that the breakfast was one of the important meals of the day and that it results in healthy eating habit. It was also seen that they found proper afternoon snack and a filling dinner was healthy, with long term health benefits.

Sub-theme C: “ When we were back home, we never used to eat out often, even though it was fun to eat out.”

“ I used to eat at home for most of the times in a week. May be once or twice, I would go out with my friends for dinner bit then that was also not that frequent.”

The participants talked about the fact that most of the times they preferred to eat at home and did not want to spend money or get worried about the quality and hygiene related with the food. Also, they felt that eating away <https://assignbuster.com/food-choices-and-meal-patterns-in-india-media-essay/>

from would mean going against the normal home cooked food. Also, they perceived 'junk' food as something that was not a part of the meal and not to be healthy, even though it presents itself as an important aspect of the Indian culture and religious festivities.

Theme 2: Food choices and Meal patterns in United Kingdom

Sub-theme A: "Foods that I eat here are very different from what I am used to."

The participants showed signs of change in their eating habits after moving to Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. The participants said that they found it difficult to have breakfast, as they were used to back home and even if they did, it was more of ready to eat foods like cereals. There were less consumption of traditional Indian food items and more consumption of canned food items, fruit juice, cheese, snacks like sweets and chips. The meals usually consisted of food from other ethnic origins as well like Mexican, Continental, Italian, which were eaten at local restaurants in Leeds.

The participants said that they had to plan towards their meals here and they felt that it was difficult to retain their traditional food habits because of the time constraints faced by the students.

"I have to plan my own meals here. But at home, it was my mom. My meals here are not consistent. I don't have time to cook the things that I am used to eat back home, as most of the traditional dishes require planning, energy

and time, which is difficult here. So I eat whatever is easy to cook and less time consuming.”

The participants also said that, though most of the time they have non-traditional food, however during the weekend or holidays, they try to stick to traditional Indian food. They felt that for them ‘ Indian’ food enabled them to maintain their cultural associations.

Sub-theme B: “ My eating habit is very irregular here.”

Most of the participants said that their eating patterns were irregular after they came to the United Kingdom. Most of them said that they never or rarely had time to have breakfast. They could only have a proper meal for dinner, wherein they could cook traditional Indian food for themselves.

“ My food habits have changed after coming here. I skip meals as I donot get the time and energy to cook for me. Most of the times I am at the university and I eat whatever I get at that point of time. However, for dinner, I try to cook some traditional Indian food. It makes a difference to have dinner as a complete meal.”

The analysis of the responses shows that the participants had an irregular food pattern, which was mainly due to the pressures of the new life here and the lack of time to plan and prepare a complete meal. Also, it was reported that they found the local food not to their liking all the time and hence it resulted in skipping entire meals.

Sub-theme C: “ I eat out a lot here, more than I used to in India.”

“ Here, I tend to eat out with my friends most of the times. Even when I am in the university, I would go to the vending machine and pick up something to eat. I also eat many snacks here like sweets, chips. It is even more than I used to at home.”

The participants talked about their habit of snacking of food items like sweets, chips etc as it was easily available to them and also that they cost-low. The inability by them to invest time towards cooking for themselves and at times resulting in them completely skipping or replacing their meals with snacks or fast-food options. The participants also perceived that the snacks they had in India were low in fat content and hence better than the ones here.

“ I donot have time to go home and cook an Indian meal for myself. I usually gout to eat or do some takeaway. It is all about convenience for me and usually I donot have an alternative.”

The participants said that for them eating out or at restaurants in India were considered a luxury, however here they feel it as ‘ imperative’ because of its convenience and easy availability as compared to the traditional meals. They felt that a healthy Indian meal is one that would have less cream, oil and cooked at home.

However, even though the participants were not extremely interested in eating non-traditional food, but also felt that there were wide range of options available here, something that they did not find easily in India.

Category II: Factors affecting Food habits

Theme 3: Food habits and perceptions regarding Food habits

Sub-theme A: " I wish I cooked at home so that I knew how to cook."

There were interesting perceptions that were reported by the participants towards knowledge and cooking skills. Most of the women participants said that they did most of the cooking at home however; they found the same difficult here as they had busy schedules with lectures, university. Whereas, the men were unanimous in their response; they found cooking a meal difficult without any previous knowledge.

" I never took interest in cooking. I did not have to worry about how much to make and if it is healthy or not. After coming here, I tried to cook but it was not easy. Most of the times I would make something that is easy like ready to eat or frozen food."

The differences in responses could be due to the traditional beliefs that are related to the role that a man and a women play in the Indian society. In most cases, the Indian meals were mostly enjoyed in the local Indian restaurant. The male participants talk about their lack of skills to prepare Indian meals that makes it difficult for them to have a traditional diet. Also, the female participants, even though most of them said that they had the required skills to cook, showed preference to non-traditional food habits, due to the lack of time needed to cook Indian meals as well as the limited availability of ingredients required to make a traditional meal.

“ My eating habits have changed a lot here. I donot eat traditional Indian food anymore and at times I donot even cook. However, I feel if I knew how to cook, it would have helped.”

Sub-theme B: “ I find the food here very different from what I am used to.”

All the participants said that they found the food here as ‘ convenient food’ due to its easy availability and ease to prepare. However, they thought that these food were not important to be considered as a complete meal, as most of them were artificially prepared with preservatives in them. Some of the participants said, contrary to the general opinion, that they found the non-traditional food healthier than the ones they used to have at home in India.

“ Even though I have eaten Indian food throughout my life, I find the options here like the sandwiches, soups, salads as healthier than the Indian counterparts. I find them to be light and fresh.”

“ I cook Indian food at times, but they are time consuming and tend to be oily and greasy, especially if I am going to a restaurant. But the non-traditional foods tend to be more nutritious because they are prepared in ways to preserve their nutritive value, with less oil and cream.”

The participants also described the opportunity staying away from home as a way to be more experimental in their food habits, breaking away from the traditional diet to try something new.

“ I have always had Indian food. The fact that now I can actually try new things and to be adventurous with my food habits is a nice feeling. At times, I will make pasta, sandwich or Mexican and they taste good too.”

<https://assignbuster.com/food-choices-and-meal-patterns-in-india-media-essay/>

Sub-theme C: " I find it difficult to always have a traditional diet here."

Many students talked about factors that affected their traditional way of eating. One such was that of financial considerations, which greatly influenced food and eating habits during their stay in the United Kingdom. They found that the local food to be more reasonable as compared to the traditional Indian food.

" I donot spend much on food, tend to eat whatever is cheaper. I never ate beef in India, would never think about it, however after coming here, I got to know that it is difficult to always live by traditions. I decided to accept the change rather making it a problem."

The participants described their accepting the change in their food habits as a way to be accustomed and accepted by the new culture here. Also, some of the participants talked about their exposure to the Western diet in India, which had played an important role towards them accepting the change in food habits that happened here.

Sub-theme D: " My diet has changed considerably with time that I am here."

Certain participants said that the duration that they have been in the United Kingdom have resulted in changes to their dietary habits. For them, they felt that a reason to come here was the freedom of making choices regarding their eating habits, wherein they ate out often, which they felt as an enjoyable experience.

“ I think my diet is more or less the same here but then it is not definitely the way it was in India. I live alone and hence to eat what is easier and faster to cook.”