



Food Habit among Lower Secondary Levels Students in Public Schools of Kachanapur, Banke

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Abstract

The study entitled “Food Habits among Lower Secondary Level Students in Public Schools of Kachanapur VDC, Banke”. The objective of this study was undertaken to assess level of knowledge on food, identify the food practices and assess factors influencing food habits of respondents. This study was based on descriptive research design. Sample survey was applied for the study purpose. Since, this research was mainly quantitative, qualitative methods were also adopted in this study. The study was cross-sectional. It was based in primary data collected by the both of the pre-tested tools namely semi structure questionnaire and focus group discussion guidelines. The study sample size was 150 students selected from five schools. The study assessed that 99.3 percent respondents knew about food determines the health. Most of the respondents (85.3%) washed their hands before eating food. The study further showed that feast/festival, parents, teacher, peer and different types of means of media were the common influencing factors for the food habits of students. Food habits of the students selected for the study were not found so satisfactory which may ruin their health. So concerning parents and students should be aware about it. To improve the situation, school health program should be carried out in schools, Parents mainly mother and teacher should be oriented for the proper food habits.

Keywords: Diet; Food habit; Nutritious food; Public school

Introduction

Food is any substance or product, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be ingested by humans whether of nutritional value or not; water and other drinks, chewing gum, articles and substances used as an ingredient or component the preparation of food (Reza, 2004). Food habit is vital for teen's health and their well-being. The nutritional needs of teens vary tremendously, but generally increase due to the rapid growth and changes in body composition that occurs during this stage. Nepal does not have a distinct cooking style. However, food habits differ depending on the region. Nepali food has been influenced by Indian and Tibetan styles of cooking [1]. Regular everyday Nepali food is very healthy, nourishing, practical and surprisingly tasty. However, during many festivals foods can contain an elaborate assortment gourmet delights. The typical daily food for most people consists of "Dal-Bhat" which consists of Bhat, dal and vegetables in Tarkari and/or Masu and a

small amount of Achar. Students of the lower secondary level are the children ageing generally from 11 to 13 years. This means the students of the lower secondary is the raw man to whom anyone can turn wherever he/she likes. If they are told or taught for the good dietary habits, they may have appropriate dietary habits so that they may be free from more than 200 food and diet related diseases. As a result, their life may be very beautiful and successful in terms of health and healthier life. But many of students can be found following inappropriate dietary habits due to various causes. Thousands of children are still far behind of good health habits as they do not have any right information and counseling. Some of the children are found following the inappropriate dietary habits due to peer pressure and some of them are shaping inappropriate dietary habits due to their socio-cultural causes. If we look after children of urban they have different habits from the children of rural as they have influencing of media, advertisement and other phenomenon. In Nepal, public schools have become schools for the poor people because people who can afford the fee have been

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sending their children in private English medium schools. In the today's practice, it has been found that majority of the students who are from the families having poor economic status so that parents cannot give time for the development of appropriate food habits as well as they cannot also teach them about good food habits even if they want it. Students are also deprived from the right information from their parents. From this fact, it can be assumed that students from public school may have some of the problems regarding to food habits. So, the problem of the study can be summarized as the food habits among the lower secondary level students of Kachnapur VDC, Banke. The study addressed the following research questions:

- Are the food habits among public school children in Nepal unhygienic?
- Do these food habits affect the health and educational achievement of school children?
- What factors determine such food habits among school children?
- Is there lack of information regarding to this problem?
- What is your research problem and research question?

So, it needs to find out food habits among lower secondary level's students in public schools and to recommend their problems timely that is why this research topic has been selected as entitle "Food Habits among Lower Secondary Level's Students in Public Schools of Kachnapur VDC, Banke".

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to find out food habits among lower secondary level's students in public schools of Kachnapur VDC, Banke. However, the following are the specific objectives of the study.

1. To describe socio demographic characteristics of respondents
2. To assess the level of knowledge of respondents regarding food habit.
3. To identify food practices of respondents
4. To find out influencing factors for food practices of respondents

Review of related literature and research gap

According to the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1986), "Lack of the knowledge of the simplest facts of nutrition is at the root of a high proportion of the affluent societies of so called developed nation, many suffer from malnutrition in the midst of abundance, ignorance, indifference and superstitions seem to be greater enemies of nutrition than poverty." MOH (1997), International and National Nutritional Specialists have published the guideline to the young girls and reproductive age women must be taken ghee, curd, milk, fish, eggs, meat, fruits, green leafy vegetables daily and developing age young girls must take additional food at least two times a day along the daily food.

National Health Program (1991), Program to inform the people about personal hygiene through various media, to collecting and managing solid wastes, to inspect and examine hotel food, drinking water and other edible products, to manage construction of general latrines and urinals will be initiated in co-coordinated manners [1]. Reported that there was variation in the dietary habits of Riksha puller in Butwal Municipality. About 54 percent of respondents take breakfast, while 10 percentage of respondent take no breakfast and rest of other take it sometimes. Similarly, 34.4 percent take tiffin whereas 18.2 do not. The main food items for tiffin are rice, tea, curry, chiura and pakauda. According to the same study, it was found that the people with low economic status are found not taking the tiffin and breakfast. About 53.9 percent of respondent take rice dal and curry for the main meal followed by roti, dal and alcohol, meat and grams, rice and noon found that 64 percent of school children consumed milk products or derivatives once or less per day whereas 88.6 percent consumed raw vegetables less than once a day [2]. 86.9 percent consumed cooked vegetables less than once per day. 40 percent consumed fresh fruit less than once per day and 55.1 percent consumed animal proteins less than once per day. 34.6 percent consumed two or more units per day of cakes or buns and 21.6 percent consumed three or more units per day of sweets. 31 percent did not vary their breakfast and 12 percent took nothing solid for breakfast on at least one of the study's three days. 13.1 percent did not vary their evening meal and 17 percent took nothing solid for their evening meal on at least one of the three days concluded that adolescents aged 14-19 years old, are consumed dairy products daily by less than 50 percent of the sample. About 53 percent girls but only 33 percent boys consumed one fruit daily [3]. During the survey several consumption frequencies are found to be low Mentioned that 46 percent and 60 percent of the adolescents did not eat fruit and vegetables daily respectively [4, 5]. Most of the adolescents (72%) consumed at least one dairy product daily. The frequent consumption of chocolate and French fries indicated the strong cultural influence on dietary habits while imported foods (like hamburgers) had little success. One-third of the adolescents drank alcohol at least once a week and this proportion rose to 57 percent in the oldest age group. Boys and girls differed significantly in their diet, with girls choosing healthier foods. Dietary habits, in particular drinking habits, differed also significantly between education levels, assessed by the learning option of the participants Examined that adolescent consumed significantly more fruit than children (324.8 vs. 204.2 g/day) did [6]. Consumption of vegetables did not differ significantly (269.1 and 255.7 g/day in children and adolescents respectively). In more than 60 percent of children and adolescents, breakfast provided more than 30 percent of daily energy intake. Resulted Breakfasts containing at least one dairy food, one cereal food and fruit/fruit juice are consumed by 13.7 percent and 21.9 percent of children and adolescents respectively. A total of 33.3 percent and 47.6

percent of subjects respectively consumed milk every day while 15.9 percent and 10.4 percent did not consume milk for breakfast at all explained that daily intake of fruits among Mexican children on the Mexico-U.S. border was 1.5 by children from both grades, while daily mean intake of vegetables was 2.5 for fifth-grade students [7]. The percentage of children with intakes lower than the standard (Apple of Health) was 77 and 80 percent for fifth and ninth graders for fruits and 62 and 53 percent for vegetables, respectively. At least 92 percent of fifth graders reported consuming one soft drink, and 85 percent consumed one portion of high-fat-containing snacks daily explained the daily consumption of milk, dairy products, fruits, fresh vegetables and vegetable dishes was insufficient [8]. 80 percent students added extra salt to foods. More than 49 percent of students regularly consumed some forms of vitamin and/or mineral supplements. Thirty five percent of boys and 30 percent of girls smoked daily, 14.6 percent of boys and 5.9 percent of girls consumed alcohol at least once a week discussed that 51.7 percent students studying in class 9 and 10 followed appropriate dietary habits when 48.3 percent of the student of same classes had inappropriate [9]. He further found that 64.8 percent girls and 43.2 percent boys had appropriate dietary habits and 35.2 percent girls and 56.8 percent boys did not have appropriate dietary habits. In his findings, he also wrote that 27 percent respondents are found as vegetarian and 73 percent as non vegetarian out of which 29.5 percent boys and 23.1 percent girls are vegetarian and rest of other are non-vegetarian. From the review of the related literature, it was not found that there was any study on the same topic that was purposed. In summary of literature, it can be written that the food habits of students, teenagers and people are not appropriate in developing countries like ours in comparison to the developed country. The literature also suggests that the food habits of people are the main causes of ill health in some of the cases. So that it is necessary that each and every person should go with appropriate food habits. Hence, food practice and lower secondary level student have been explored in this study. [10-18].

Methods and Procedures of the Study

Design and method of the study

This study was based on descriptive research design. Sample survey was applied for the study purpose. Since, this research was mainly quantitative, qualitative methods were also adopted in this study.

Population, sample and sample strategy

This study was conducted in the lower secondary levels student's in public schools of Kachanapur VDC, Banke. In Kachanapur VDC, Out of 9 wards, only five wards were selected randomly by using lottery method. After selecting wards, a list of lower

secondary schools for each ward will be prepared and then a school was selected from each list by using lottery method. After selecting five schools, 150 students were selected randomly. While selecting the sample size, it was considered that 30 students from each school had to be selected randomly. For FGD, 8 female and 8 male parents of respondent were selected purposively.

Study areas/ field

The study area is Kachanapur of Banke district. The study was focused on five public school of Kachanapur, Banke district. Most of the respondents are literate and depended on the agriculture. Socio-cultural status of the people is conservative type. They believed in the traditional rites and rituals.

Data collection tools and techniques

The study utilized field survey method in order to collect data. Interview schedule is the main tool for the data collection. The tool includes open and close structure. The survey divided into different parts that are demographic, economic status and educational characteristics. The other parts consist of questions regarding food habit, nutrition, health and communicable disease. Structural and semi-structural questionnaire were constructed for the collection of essential data about practices on nutrition, food habit and health. For checking the validity and reliability of questionnaire and FGD format, questionnaire was pre-tested. For this, questionnaire was administered among 20 students consisting 10 girls and 10 boys of lower secondary level who will be taken from Bhawani Secondary School, Kachanapur VDC 8, Banke. After the feedback from the pre-test and suggestions from supervisor, the questionnaire will be modified and developed finally. For the FGD format, it was shown to supervisor and it was modified according to the suggestions and comments and made final.

Data collection procedures

For the data collection, the researcher was visited the selected secondary school and meet the headmasters of the school. After then, the investigator went to schools and completed documentation process and took permission from school authority for taking the students as the respondents after made them clear about study purpose. The investigator himself collected the oral consent from selected students and took an interview with the respondents to fill up questionnaire. FGD was conducted in male and female parents group separately.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The study was undertaken among the lower secondary level students to find out their socio demographic characteristics, knowledge on food and food habits and their influencing factors.

Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of the data has been made fewer than three broad headings.

Socio-demographic characteristics

Sex of respondents

Male and female are two wheels of a cart. The society cannot go forward with both male and female. Both of them should go side by side. This study was also made effect in the field covering both of male and female students studying in lower secondary level by which it was found that in total, male students were 66 percent, while 34 percent were female students. It is also given in the following (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Sex.

Sex	Number	Percent
Male	99	66.0
Female	51	34.0
Total	150	100.0

The data shows that majority of the students were male. This finding challenges to the policy of government about increasing the enrolment of female students in school. The government has given many efforts to it despite the number of female students been low.

Age composition of respondents

Age is on important demographic indicator. The study was undertaken among the students having specific age group so that the age of respondents was varied from 11 to 18 years that is also shown in the (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age.

Age (years)	Number	Percent
11	3	2.0
12	19	12.7
13	38	25.3
14	48	32.0
15	24	16.0
16	13	8.7
17	4	2.7
18	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

According to the table, the respondents aging least i.e. 18 years was less than one percent (0.7%) only whereas the respondents aging highest i.e. 14 years was 32 percent only followed by 13 years (25.3%) and 15 years (16%). The table further shows the respondents aging 11, 12, 16 and 17 were three, 8.7 and 2.7 percent. From the table, it is seen that the majority of the students were of pre adolescence and only 3.4 percent were under late adolescence.

It is given in the following (Table 2). The result from the table no 2 shows that very vast majority of the respondents were in the age group from 11-16 i.e. pre adolescence and vast minority were in late adolescence period. The situation is found so because the study was undertaken among students studying in lower secondary level.

Religion

In Nepal, Nepalese get enjoyed with different religions. Therefore there people following different religions was also found same among the study unit. In regard to this, the (Table 3) indicates that majority respondents reported to follow Hindu religion.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Religion.

Religion	Number	Percent
Hinduism	115	76.7
Buddhism	18	12.0
Islam	3	2.0
Christianity	9	6.0
Other	5	3.3
Total	150	100.0

The percent of respondents who followed Hindu religion was 76.7 percent. Likewise, 12 percent respondents were Buddhist. Six percent were Christian and only two percent were identified as Muslim. Remaining was found following other religion. From the finding, it has been proved that Nepal is a multi-religious country in the world where people following different religion have been living together.

Education of family head

Good education level of head of family may lead its family members towards good facility of education and it also helps to manage the family well. According to the (Table 4), about two out of ten head of the family (19.3%) were illiterate whereas 24 percent of the head of family were found getting primary education.

Table 4: Education of Family Head of Respondents.

Education of Family Head	Number	Percent
Illiterate	29	19.3
Primary	36	24.0
LSSL	63	42.0
Higher	22	14.7
Total	150	100.0

The data further shows that about half of the head of family (42%) were revealed with the lower secondary and secondary level education and the least percent of the head of family were found getting higher education degree. From the data given the (Table 4), level of illiteracy was found very low which could be positive for development of the nation as educated people can do more for the

nation knowingly. This study was undertaken among the students who studied in the schools located in the capital of the country and most of the respondents were from Kathmandu where there are high facilities of education and other needs due to which parents of respondents got facility to study. As a result the illiteracy rate was dramatically reduced.

Knowledge on food and its habits related information

Knowledge is the power to understand all the information, facts, truths, and principles learned throughout time. In this context, knowledge on food and food habits is related to the how to take food, when to take food, what is the best way to take food and what should be taken as the food? So that each and every can remain healthy. In order to measure the level of knowledge of respondents on food and food habits, different variables were selected and developed the questionnaire upon it. The result related variables are given in below.

Junk and other readymade food

As it is given in the (Table 5), too minority of the respondents told that junk and other ready-made food was good for health in one hand. On the other hand, about seven out of ten (74%) respondents reported that such food was not good for our health and only 24 percent told that such food may be good for health in some of the cases while there is scarcity of the food. As majority of the respondents gave report to not use junk and other readymade food in response to good health, it can be sure that students were highly aware to junk food as well as they had good knowledge about eating junk and other food. Some respondents (24%) told that junk and other food may be good for health while there was no chance to eat food at the time of scarcity of the food. This sensitizes that students were too aware to the food. According to the hand washing result, it can be interpreted that almost all students had knowledge to wash their hands before eating food otherwise they might be infected by any infection.

Table 5: Junk and Other Readymade Food for Health.

Junk and other readymade food for health	Number	Percent
Yes	3	2.0
No	111	74.0
Somehow	36	24.0
Total	150	100.0

Factors influencing to food and food habits

To choice the food and shape habits related to food, many factors play the important roles. The exposure of the person also determines the factors those influence him/her. In regard to the factors that influence the respondents food habits are given below in detail.

Feast and festival

Eating more in fest and festival may be common for the children because every kitchen of the family may be supplied with the testy and delicious foodstuffs. In response to the eating more than usual in feast and festival or not, majority of the respondents told that they used to eat more in the special occasion, while more than three out of ten (34.7%) did not do so as they used to eat as usual even if they had some special occasion (Table 6).

Table 6: Washing Hands before Eating Food.

Washing hands before and after eating food	Number	Percent
Yes	149	99.3
No	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

Influencing food habits

Out of 29 respondents who were identified having belief about food and food habits, 68.9 percent reported that had its influence to shape their food habits and selection of food, while 31.1 percent did not care to the belief as there was no influence over their food habits. From this it can be concluded that belief influence respondents' food habits directly (Table 7).

Table 7: Influencing Food Habits.

Influencing food habits	Number	Percent
Yes	20	68.9
No	9	31.1
Total	29	100.0

Learning about food from teacher and peer

(Table 8) shows that about cent percent (98%) respondents learned about food and food habits, while 1.3 percent did not learn and 0.7 percent learned somehow from them. The data clarifies that teacher and peer group of the person are also influencing factor as the influence of teacher and peer was found very high. Except teachers, peers and mass media, parents are also one factor influencing the food habits of their children which is shown below.

Table 8: Learning about Food from Teacher and Peer.

Learning from teacher about food	Number	Percent
Yes	147	98.0
No	2	1.3
Somehow	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

Findings of this Research

The food is essential for each and every living being for making itself alive. So every individual should eat food every day. Hundreds of diseases and illness are associated with the food and food habits make a person ill functioned and ill dynamic if their food and food habits are inappropriate. This is why each and every person should have good food habits. The study entitled “A Study of Food Habits among Lower Secondary Level Students Studying in Public Schools of Kathmandu Metropolitan City” was undertaken to find out the level of knowledge of respondents on food and food habits and their influencing factors. The study was carried out among the students who were studying in five selected lower secondary level schools of Kachanapur VDC. The sample size of the study was 150 who were selected randomly. The study was descriptive cross-sectional and this study was based on primary data only. The data was collected by using two types of tools namely questionnaire and focus group discussion format. Questionnaire was used for students whereas focus group discussion was used for the parents to draw out their opinion on different issues related to their children’s food habits. After collecting the data, they were checked and verified carefully. Data were tabulated under different headings and sub-heading using number and percent. Using SPSS statistical software carried out data entry processing and analysis. On the basis of findings a descriptive report has been prepared.

According to the result analysis and interpretation, following are the major findings of this study.

Socio-demographic factors

- The male students were 66 percent and female were 34 percent.
- The age composition of the students was from 11 to 18. The percent of students aged 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 was 2.0, 12.7, 25.3, 32.0, 16.0, 8.7 and 2.7 respectively.
- The students from class 6, 7 and 8 were 26, 40 and 34 percent respectively.
- About four fifth (76.7%) students were Hindu, while 12 percent were Buddhist, 6 percent were Christian, 2 percent was Muslim and 3.3 percent students followed other types of religion in their family.
- Majority of the students were from single family (68%) and minority from the joint family (32%).
- Most of the Nepalese family is male dominant. Therefore, most of the family in Nepalese society are found heading by male in practice. From the table no 5, it is obtained the result that vast majority of the respondents’ family was found heading by father (83.3%) whereas mother were found as head of family for 10 percent families of respondents. In the same way brother was head of family for 0.7 percent of family and other person of the family were found as the head of family for six percent families.
- In the families of the respondents, father, mother and brothers were found as the head of family. Father, mother, brother and others were head for 83.3, 10, 0.7 and 6 percent families.
- The main occupation for the majority of head of family was business (38%) followed by job (28%), agriculture (16%), other (12%) and daily wages (6%).
- About the types of building of house, the majority of the respondents were found living in pucca house (48%) followed by semi pucca (22.7%), kachcha (22%) and others (7.3%).
- The education level of the head of family was found both literate and illiterate. Illiterate was 19.3 percent and among the literate head of family majority of them were revealed with LSSL education followed by primary (24%) and higher education (14.7%).

Knowledge on food and food habits related information

- About cent percent respondents (99.3%) were found having knowledge that food determines the health.
- The vast majority of the students (96%) knew that they had healthy food habits, while 1.3 did not have and 2.7 percent did not know whether they had healthy food habits or not. And very few parents knew about the proper meaning of nutritious food.
- Very large majority of the respondents used to eat healthy food in order to be healthy and only 1.3 percent ate it to obey their parents.
- About seven out of ten (74%) respondents knew that junk and other readymade food was not good for health, while two percent opined it was good and 24 percent gave view for it was good sometimes.
- About cent percent of the parents opined that their food habits give direct influence to their children’s food habits.
- About cent percent respondents had the habits of washing hands before eating food and out of them the majority (85.3%) used soap and water to wash their hands followed by plane water (13.3%) and ash with water (1.3%).
- Only half of the parents were found knowing their children food habits.
- Nearly 8 out of ten respondents were non vegetarian.
- Approximately half of the respondents (53.3%) used to eat three times a day whereas 42.7 parent two times and four percent ate four times.
- The main food items for each lunch and dinner was bhat (100%), tarkari (96.7%) and dal (94.7%). Besides these, respondents used to eat achar (11.3%), meat (6%), roti (2.1%), eag (0.7%), milk (.07%) and papad (0.7%).

- Most of the respondents (68.7%) liked to eat fried food item followed by boiled (12.7%) and roasted (14.7%), raw (2.7%) and others (1.3%).
- To choose the food items at home, parents viewed the interest and need of their children should be respected highly because their age was to grow up.
- Nearly four out of ten (44%) respondents used to eat fruits weekly followed by daily (32.7%), monthly (12.7%), fortnightly (6.7%) and others (4%).
- The majority of the respondents did not have fixed days' interval to drink milk and take milk product but 34 percent used to take it daily. 20 percent used to take weekly, 8.7 percent took it monthly and 1.3 percent drunk fortnightly.
- Among the non-vegetarian respondents, the majority of them (63.6%) used to eat meat and fish weekly followed by monthly (16.9%), daily (9.3%), fortnightly (3.4%) and other (6.8%).
- In terms of balanced diet to be supplied, most of families head participated in discussion reported that they managed nutritious food.
- Near to ninety percent (89.3%) had habits of taking regularly. As the items eaten in breakfast, maximum respondents used to drink tea (70.3%), followed by bread (65.9%), milk (28.3%), biscuit (26.1%), noodles (8.7%), egg (3.6%) and gram (3.6%).
- Eight out of ten respondents used to take tiffin regularly, while 11.3 percent never took it and 8.7 percent used to take sometimes.

Factors influencing to food and food habits

- Feast and festival was one factor influencing food and food habits of the respondents as 65.3 percent used to eat more at the time of feast and festival.
- The large majority of respondents (80.7%) were found having belief and out of them, 68.9 percent were found telling that they had direct influence over their food habits.
- Cent percent of parents were also found having opinion that belief influence the food habits of their children.
- Out of 150 respondents, 144 (76%) were carried having influencing of mass media for shaping their food habits and selection of the food what they eat. For 87.7 percent respondents, television was the influencing media, while television and radio jointly influenced for 78 percent respondents and radio alone influenced for 64 percent as well as printed media gave influence to 25.4 percent respondents.
- About cent percent (98%) respondents learned about food and food habits from teacher and peer, while 1.3 percent did not learn and 0.7 percent learned somehow from them.

- Cent percent of parents had opinion that they can give high influence to their children's food habits.

Conclusions

Food is life of every living being. It is impossible to live without food. Food saves the life and grows the body and makes us able to fight against any diseases. But when food is unhealthy and improper, it becomes poison for us and it takes the life. Therefore, everyone should be very careful to the selection of food items and food habits.

Students studying in the lower secondary level are children. They are in the growing age and period so that they need more nutritious food and they habits to handle food and take food should be free from all sorts of germs and they should be safe. Otherwise that may harm their health. Parents and teachers as well as the society are most responsible for the food habits of children as children learn from them about food habits so that they should be very much sincere. The study has also found that most of the parents are aware towards their children's habits however some of them could not give their time for this due to their business. The study also showed that children are directly influenced by means of mass media to shape their food habits. The study had revealed that most of the students take varieties of food each day and they wash their hand before eating food. They used to take breakfast and tiffin. Most of the children took their meal for three times a day. Dal, bhat and tarkari were the main dishes for lunch and dinner. Meat, fish, milk, fruits and other nutritious food were taken by the respondent time to time however it was not satisfactory. More respondents were non-vegetarian.

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