

SWITCH IN SNACKING HABIT, FROM UNHEALTHY SNACKING TO HEALTHY SNACKING: COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Indian consumers are habituated of having mid meal snack. It is estimated that Indian Snack market will be more than INR 1 Billion by 2024. India is the leading player in the snack market and also the 3rd ranker in obesity. Snacking is the part and parcel of the lives of the Indian consumers, it helps people to reduce stress caused due to work which included high fat, sugar and salt. Lockdown helped consumers to understand the right to choose the right snack. Snacking industry also developed according to the changing demand of consumers from unhealthy snacking to healthy snacking. The aim of the study is to show how consumer realised importance of healthy snacking.

Keywords: *Obesity, Snacking Habits, Work from Home, Consumption Habit.*

Introduction

Coronavirus firstly detected as an unknown virus in the city of Wuhan, China on 31st December 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020. On 11th February 2020 WHO announced name for the new coronavirus disease: Covid19. Recent study showcased that covid19 symptoms are very normal such cold, fever, due to which transmission of infection from people to people was very fast. Therefore, to prevent the infection government announced a complete lockdown and citizens to adapt a new lifestyle with mask, social distancing, and work from home. On 25th March 2020, Prime Minister of India announced complete lockdown all over India

With restriction over mass gathering, educational and public institution and private offices. Daily activity of all individual stood stand still. Organisation realised that this situation is going to persist for a long time, but like it is said the show must go on, offices started providing lap top and computers to their employees and work from home culture was started. As the daily routine changed the consumption habit too changed. People started consuming snacks more than the regular quantity and somewhere realised that they are putting weight on and obesity is surrounding around them because energy intake was high but energy output was zero because of lockdown. This made consumers to change their snacking choices. Snacking habit of consumers took a shift from comfort snacking to conscious snacking. Traditionally Indians made snack by themselves in their clean and healthy home environment where the ingredients were decided by them the quality was decided by them. With the entry of globalisation there

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was a boost in service industry which provided 12 to 14 hours job and also the culture of couple career was established. This forced consumers to buy readymade and instant food or packet food rather than making things from scratch. According to the Mondelez International "Annual state of snacking" report every 9 out of 10 people consumed snack the same quantity or more in lockdown, 54% of adults relied on snacking for nourishment during lockdown.

During lock down they realised the bad effects of those products and encouraged themselves to cook from scratch. The same Indian consumer used snack along with beverages in the morning and evening mostly but work from increased the consumption of snacks which made them realize what should be consumed and what not. Consumers realised how to look after themselves better.

When the snacking company realised that consumers are becoming aware or demanding healthier way of snacking, they too changed the products according to the demand of the consumer. For eg. – Asia Specific Savoury Snack Sector has gained a momentum during lockdown for their nuts and seeds containing savoury snack.

Objectives

The study was conducted with following objectives in view:

- To understand the change in the consumption habit.
- To observe increasing awareness regarding obesity.

Methodology

In the present study mostly, secondary data have been used. Secondary data have been collected from various journals, articles, e-newspapers etc. The research is also based on various referred sources published, unpublished and electronic.

Case Study

- According to Bernstein Research in April 2020, due to COVID-19, more US consumers look for foods with health benefits, but those benefits vary, and include: "real food with simple natural ingredients and fewer additives" (37.9%), "General wellbeing, including digestive benefits, strengthening immune system, etc." (34.5%), "weight loss" (33.3%) and "managing health conditions" (21%).
- This article has put light on how consumer shifted towards healthier snacking, as boosting immunity was the only way out to safeguard our self from Covid19. And healthier snacking has helped to achieve it along with that obesity was also controlled.
- Pepsi co-producer of snack and beverages found an increased sale during Covid19 pandemic as they come up with healthier snacking products such as lotus seeds. This is because of the awareness of consumers towards healthier snack choice.
- Research done by Cargill snacking company on four key snack categories such as Snack Bars, Salty Snacks, Candy and Sweet Baked Goods at a affordable price. Study resulted that when they were purchasing product for their kids they were opting only for healthier choices rather than sugary and salty products.

Conclusion

Lockdown provided people time to do research on what should be consumed and what not. This helped them to find out the best and suitable way of snacking which will save their resources without making hole in the pocket. Consumers also realised what they were consuming all this time and how it has affected their body. People started looking forward for tasty, affordable and nutritious product. Consumption of product with better ingredients helped consumers to maintain mental as well as physical health. This also somewhere brought an awareness among increasing obesity in our country.

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