

Convenience Food : An Emerging Trend in India

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Abstract

Convenience food industry has shown a rapid growth in India in the last few years. Now a days they are very much in demand and is growing at a rapid rate. These foods are saviour for busy and working people. They have been widely accepted by the non-working people as well. Due to fast and busy life, consumption pattern of people is drifting from raw food to convenience foods. Convenience foods are overly processed food which saves the preparation and cooking time of food in the kitchen.. Young generation children are more likely to consume packaged food as they give great aroma, texture and taste. These foods determine the food choices and consumption pattern of the consumers. Urbanisation and the changing lifestyle has a huge role in increasing the demand of such food items. They are gaining immense popularity in the food industry, global food market and among the food scientists. In the past few years convenience food has shown a remarkable growth in the food market . This present study aims at studying the consumption pattern of convenience food in India.

Keywords: Food choice, Packaged food , Saviour, Lifestyle, Growth, Consumption pattern, India.

Introduction

India has a huge food diversity. It has both traditional and modern food items. With time, consumption pattern has also changed due to the influence of the modern culture. Now a days convenience foods has changed the whole scenario.

Convenience foods are overly processed food, also known as tertiary foods ,are made in such a way that saves the preparation and cooking time in the kitchen. They are a class of foods that are convenient to use and requires no or little preparation before consumption. The rising urban population has made a huge impact on the demand of the packaged food items in the market. Due to their fast and busy life they try to purchase food items that are convenient to use and saves their time. They play a huge role in determining the food choices of today's generation. These processed foods are highly in demand and in addition, retail food outlets and restaurants, serves fast food and convenient food to meet the consumers need and demand. In today's scenario, convenience food supply daily food needs and requirements to most of the countries in the world. Food items which are

convenient to use are consumer's first preference while those which are less convenient will not be chosen by the consumers. Modernisation and urbanisation resulted in the elevation of these items in the modern diet. These foods are growing at a rapid rate globally. They have changed the daily food consumption pattern of most of the people. They have smartly replaced the traditional cooking pattern of food with fast, easy and hassle free convenience food. Convenience foods saves a lot of cooking time and intense labour in the kitchen. To make it more convenient they should have long shelf life, less weight, easily available, variety and good quality. These all are of prime concern (Arya,1992).

Processed food meets the food demands of the global world. They have been widely consumed in the daily modern diet in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively. This food market has also given rise to the financial group , since most of the urban people tend to consume convenience food items rather than preparing them at home^[1]. At present, around thousands of variety are available in the market for the sale at global level. This emerging market has positively enhanced the

growth of the food industry. All of these items offer various advantages to the consumers like they are easily available, consistent taste and nature, less spoilage, readily cooked and has a lot of varieties. Convenience foods production has been possible only due to the innovation, technology and their craze among the young generation. Along with these factors, transportation, handling and their storage has played a significant role in increasing the growth of such foods. Beyond the technical help, politics, social society and the economical forces also helped in improving these foods and motivated to be a part of our daily modern diet. It has been noticed that, sometimes convenience food directs our food choices, preferences, behaviour and attitude towards the situation. With the packaged foods, mental and physical efforts required while purchasing, handling, storage and preparation of food has been reduced to a much extent. Socio-economic factors along with demographics are also responsible in determining food preferences of a person. A working person will always tend to lean on convenience food rather than preparing at home. Household income is another major factor. People with higher income status consumes more processed food item rather than low income group person due to unavailability of resources. Another determinants such as household size and children also affects the choices and buying pattern. It was noticed that single living person preferred more convenience foods rather than too many people living in the same house. Children loves to eat processed food item as they enhance their taste and mood. Families with children purchases more such food items. Convenience foods became popular in the retail market due to the increased consumption of such items in every age groups whether they are children, adolescents, employed or not and older age ones.^[2]

The foods that are prepared through partial processing, foods that are not cooked properly and foods that requires no preparation are increasing rapidly with a growth rate of 20%. Ready-to-eat foods has shown a noticeable growth in the recent years and they are very much in trend. With the changing lifestyle pattern of middle class people and their busy working schedules, the demand for these type of foods is rising tremendously. There are many food brands that manufacture these types of food such as HLL, MTR, Haldirams, Kohinoor, ITC, heritage foods, Amul etc. These brands have different varieties of such foods and are gaining huge popularity

in the food market. On the other hand, culinary products and snack food products has a growth rate of 8%. Indian snack market is one of the largest and biggest snacks market globally. Few such items are potato chips which is by far largest product snack category, savoury snacks, snack nuts etc. At present, popcorn has become one of the most demanding snack item into the Indian market. The culinary products includes noodles, macaroni etc.. HLL (Kissan), Heinz, Top ramen and Nestle (maggi).

It was noticed that people living in cities played a huge role in increasing demand of convenience foods in the global market. The change in urbanisation and their lifestyle pattern has boost up the processed food consumption. This has also lead to increase in manufacturing of convenience food. The rapid trend of processed food has changed consumers behaviour, desire, choice and ability to prepare food. People spent good amount of money in purchasing convenience foods to save their time, to have less spoilage and to have more varieties rather than preparing home cooked food items which requires a lot of cooking and preparation time^[3]. It was noticed that money usually spent on these foods has increased twice. With the changing global scenario, socio economic factors has also been changed and it has led to huge demand of convenience foods. India is going to become a worldwide centre for yield and manufacturer of processed and packaged food and soon it will be recognised as 'sun-rise industry'.

Review of Literature

Below is a review work done with regards which are identified by different researchers is presented here.

Alan Warde (1999) "Convenience food: space and timing". Researcher noticed there is a distinction which is drawn between modern (which is directed towards the time compression or the labour saving) and hypo modern (which is directed towards the time shifting) convenience forms. Due to the hectic lifestyle and complex time space, people are directed towards more convenience food consumption^[4]. **Mintel (2000)** stated that a lot of time is utilised while preparing food especially during weekdays when one has to manage workplace and house. To their rescue, convenience food is the solution to get over by the time constraint^[5]. **Capps et al (1983)** and **de Boer et al (2004)** described convenience foods as the food items that are fully prepared or partially prepared.

In these food items, culinary skills, preparation time required for the food and energy inputs needed has already been done by the food processor distributors and not by the home makers^[6]. **Jabir A, Sanjeev K and Janakiraman M (2010)** “Buying behaviour of consumers for food products in an emerging economy” stated, consumers choices play a major role in opting the best food product. Their priority is based on freshness, packaging, cleanliness, price, quality, variety, availability of the product^[7]. **Ritu Anand (2011)** “A study of determinants impacting consumers food choice with reference to the fast food consumption in India” showed that ambience, social life, love for eating food, dual income convenience for urban people influences and impact their food choices^[8]. **Joglekar A and Kundle S (2013)** “Consumer awareness about convenience food among working and non-working women” showed that along with the advancement in the technologies of food processing, convenience foods has emerged rapidly. They have minimise the preparation and working time. During the food processing of these food items, new food additives has been added. Different food preservation techniques has also been invented^[9]. **Sunder S and Kiran S (2015)** “Benefits of convenience foods to working women” noticed that working women started using convenience foods as they saves the preparation time and adds variety to the food and also helps in the emergency situations^[10]. **Mc Kenzle (1986)** stated that working women plays a crucial role in financial growth of the household. Due to some situations ‘time poverty’ can develop. This can leads to no time or very little time available for managing daily household works and food preparation^[11]. **Kara, Kayank and Kucukemiroglu (1997)** “Marketing strategies for fast food restaurants and convenience foods : a customer view” noticed that according to past few years, utilization of fast foods and convenience foods has been increased tremendously. As a result of this, food markets will accelerate and rise in future offering new opportunities and better growth options for the marketers^[12]. **Keng and Lin (2005)** studied the relation of time and expenditures on prepared meals on wives in Taiwan. It was noticed that wives value the importance of time, presence of older aged people in house, younger children, household income. Their education plays a crucial role in determining the amount of money they spent on prepared meals^[13]. **Jabs and Devine (2006)** focus on the different factors

affecting consumption of convenience foods such as time scarcity impact, food consumption patterns like an increase consumption of junk foods, decrease consumption of home cooked food, and a rapid increase in consumption of processed foods. It was noticed that socio-cultural trends has a huge contribution in these factors^[14]. **Amarnath and Vijayudu (2011)** stated the factors that change the attitude and behaviour of rural people towards convenience food products. **Stephoe et al (1995)** developed a food questionnaire which include various factors such as mood, variety, sensory appeal of item, convenience, price, brand image, control and safety of the item. This questionnaire was used to collect the data from 100 respondents. The results showed that men are less concerned than women towards variety, convenience and price of the food product^[15]. **Rasanthika and Gunawardana (2013)** studied the working women’s attitude and behaviour regarding fast food consumption. The results revealed that convenience of fast food has positive and better effect rather than these fast food usage^[16]. **Srinivasan and Shende (2015)** stated the use of convenience food by working women, what benefits they derived, type of convenience food they buy. The results showed that variety, off seasonal food availability and for emergency situations are some of the factors which are beneficial for working women^[17].

Conclusion

The review study has shown that customers are becoming more advanced and smarter with the modern technology. A rapid growth of convenience foods has been noticed in India. Financial investment has being done by various manufacturing companies to advertise their products. These advertisement will attract the consumers sand they will purchase more such food items. People are opting for convenience foods. Individual determinants like household size, income, children, meal preparation are some of the factors that affects the convenience orientation. Sometimes external factors like social responsibilities also played a major role in increasing package food orientation. A lot of branded food companies has invested into the Indian food company and they are successful in entering urban and rural kitchens to a great extent.. Convenience foods are saviour for working people as they saves their a lot of time. They are designed in such a way that provide ease

to the consumers. ‘Convenience’ is the main factor that drive people towards the consumption of convenience food. It has reduced a lot of pressure, stress and time problem faced by working sector people. Overall, the need of convenience foods, demand, consumption and their advancement in the food production technology is increasing day by day. These foods are currently at a very emerging state. Now the future researchers has to focus on the consumers’ demands and needs regarding convenience foods and to understand their consumption pattern, attitude and buying behaviour and work upon it.

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