



A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS OF BALANCED DIET AMONG THE PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS STUDYING IN THE COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT :

The present study focuses its attention on the awareness of prospective teachers on balanced diet. To achieve this, the researcher used survey method. By using a self-constructed questionnaire on awareness of balanced diet, the data were collected from 244 prospective teachers using simple random sampling technique. Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' Test were used to analyze the data. From the present study, it is found that majority of the prospective teachers have average level awareness on balanced diet. Moreover, the urban prospective teachers and those who have graduate parents may have better awareness on balanced diet.



KEYWORDS : Awareness, Balanced Diet, Prospective Teachers.

INTRODUCTION:

A balanced diet is the nutrients needed for the functioning of the human body properly. To get the proper nutrition from the diet, the human being should consume the majority of his or her daily calories from fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and lean proteins.

A balanced diet should provide around 50-60% of total calories from carbohydrates, preferably from complex carbohydrates, about 10-15% from proteins and 20-30% from both visible and invisible fat. In addition, a balanced diet should provide other non-nutrients such as dietary fibre, antioxidants and phytochemicals which bestow positive health benefits. Antioxidants such as vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, riboflavin and selenium protect the human body from free radical damage. Other phytochemicals such as polyphenols, flavones, etc., also afford protection against oxidant damage. Spices like turmeric, ginger, garlic, cumin and cloves are rich in antioxidants.

IMPORTANCE OF BALANCED DIET

A balanced diet is important because the human organs and tissues need proper nutrition to work effectively. Without good nutrition, the human body is more prone to disease, infection, fatigue, and poor performance. Children with a poor diet run the risk of growth and developmental problems and poor performance not only in their day-to-day activities but also in their educational oriented activities. Improper food habits can persist for the rest of their lives. Rising levels of obesity and diabetes are some of the major examples of the effects of a poor diet and a lack of exercise.

A well-balanced diet prevents diseases and infections. When the person eat the complete vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, he or she improves the immune system and may even help to prevent diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and stroke. It helps to control the body weight. By taking a balanced diet, the person can control his or her weight and maintain it over a long period of time.

The balanced diet improves the mental health of the individuals. Getting the right mix of nutrients can help to ease symptoms of depression and anxiety. A balanced diet is very important for children and adolescents. As the body grows it is important to receive the right nutrients so that the cells are built and maintained and the body grows at the right pace. A healthy balanced diet also improves the skin and hair of the people.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Purnima, K. (2006) A Study on the Health, Personal Hygiene and Nutritional Status of Rural Teenage Girls in Dharwar Taluk. The study revealed: (1) Most of the respondents were aware that consuming a nutritious, balanced diet kept good health. (2) A clear relation was found between nutrient consumption and the heights and weights of the girls. (3) The overall averages of calories, proteins, iron and calcium, except fats were much below the recommended allowances. Thus, the food habits of the respondents were generally poor. (4) The respondents have a balanced diet, according to their locality.

Ainuki, Tomomi et. al., (2013) Association of Enjoyable Childhood Mealtimes with Adult Eating Behaviors and Subjective Diet-Related Quality of Life. This study revealed that enjoyable eating experiences in childhood were positively associated with a balanced diet, eating vegetable dishes, and subjective diet-related quality of life scores in adulthood.

Bouhika, Eddie Janvier et. al., (2016) Food Ration and Mental Training for the Improvement of the Free Throw Performance in Congolese Beginners Basketball Players. The study indicated that the best progress was made by the players in Group I: +67.7% for the squat, +38% for the orientation of the body, +45.7% for the extension of arm, and 83.7% for successful shots. In summary, mental rehearsal combined with a balanced diet facilitates the practice of physical and sporting activity and significantly improves learning and performance of athletes.

Sasikala, P. (2016) Assessment of Nutritional Status of Boys and Girls in Government School Children in Rompicherla Mandal Andhra Pradesh, India. In the study, nutritional status was found highly related to the personal hygiene and parental educational status. Schools need to provide knowledge and awareness about personnel hygiene, and nutrition.

Marks, Beth; Sisirak, Jasmina; Heller, Tamar (2017) Health Matters: The Exercise and Nutrition Health Education Curriculum for People with Developmental Disabilities. A research-based, field-tested program that's already made a dramatic difference in the lives of participants with disabilities, this proven curriculum shows professionals how to conduct up to 59 one-hour sessions that help people make the best choices about health, exercise, and nutrition. Through lively discussions and activities, adults with a wide range of disabilities will: (1) increase their commitment to exercise and good nutrition by learning the benefits of physical activity, exercise, and healthy food choices; (2) develop clear exercise and nutrition goals and stick to them; (3) master the practical aspects of an exercise routine, including dressing appropriately, using proper breathing techniques, and doing cool-down exercises; (4) learn how their medications may affect their body, physical activity, and eating habits; (5) monitor their heart rate and blood pressure during exercise; (6) identify foods that make up a well-balanced diet.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the question of the population explosion in India, the people have to face so many problems such as unemployment, food scarcity, lack of shelter and clothing, improper food habits, over work pressure, etc. Among these problems, shortage of food grains and increasing cost of food commodities are the major problems among the general public. Due to these problems, the people may suffer a lot. Considering the students, they found very difficult to make them a good physique as well as mental strata. If they have

improper food habits and imbalanced diet, it results in the deterioration of academic performance of the students. Due to the imbalanced diet, the students may face so many physical as well as mental problems. They loose their temperament, self-concept, decrease in physical condition, mental illness, fear of failure, etc.

As far as the prospective teachers are concerned, they have several academic activities like lesson plan preparation, preparation of working models and non working models, charts, power point presentations, assignments, seminar preparation, teaching practices, etc. By engaging themselves in these academic activities, they may skip their regular food schedule even their bedtime too. These things may also make themselves restless and tired. Even their mental health also deteriorated due to the imbalanced diet. The reason behind this is the lack of awareness of nutritious food intake and balanced diet.

In the present study, the investigator would like to check whether the prospective teachers are aware of balanced diet or not. If they do not know, awareness should be given which can make them aware of balanced diet. Hence, the present study is significant one and need of the hour.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find the level of awareness on balanced diet among the prospective teachers studying in the colleges of education in Tirunelveli district.
2. To find the significant difference between male and female prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet.
3. To find the significant difference between rural and urban prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet.
4. To find the significant difference between prospective teachers whose parents are school educated and graduates in their awareness on balanced diet.

METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The researcher adopted survey method of research. By using a self-constructed questionnaire on awareness of balanced diet, the data were collected. The population of the present study is all the prospective teachers studying in the colleges of education in Tirunelveli district. From the population, the researcher randomly selected 244 prospective teachers using simple random sampling technique. Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' Test were used to analyze the data.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Percentage Analysis

1. To find the level of awareness on balanced diet among the prospective teachers studying in the colleges of education in Tirunelveli district.

Table - 1.
Level of Awareness on Balanced Diet among the Prospective Teachers

Variable	Low		Average		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Awareness on Balanced Diet	41	16.80	159	65.16	44	18.03

From the above table, it is found that 16.80% of prospective teachers have low, 65.16% of them have average and 18.03% of them high awareness on balanced diet.

Differential Analysis**Null Hypothesis - 1**

There is no significant difference between male and female prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet.

Table - 2.
Difference in Awareness on Balanced Diet of the Prospective teachers
with regard to Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
Male	91	55.20	5.88	1.86	1.96	NS
Female	153	56.49	3.99			

From the above table, it is found that the calculated 't' value is less than the table value for 242 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between male and female prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet.

Null Hypothesis - 2

There is no significant difference between rural and urban prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet.

Table - 3.
Difference in Awareness on Balanced Diet of the Prospective Teachers
with regard to Locality of Residence

Locality of Residence	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
Rural	177	55.36	5.29	4.72	1.96	S
Urban	67	57.73	2.53			

From the above table, it is found that the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value for 242 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference between rural and urban prospective teachers in their awareness on balanced diet. The urban area prospective teachers have better awareness on balanced diet.

Null Hypothesis - 3

There is no significant difference between prospective teachers whose parents are school educated and graduates in their awareness on balanced diet.

Table - 4.
Difference in Awareness on Balanced Diet of the Prospective Teachers
with regard to Parental Education

Parental Education	N	Mean	SD	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value	Remark
School	158	46.01	2.37	2.71	1.96	S
College	86	76.00	4.86			

From the above table, it is found that the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value for 242 degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference between prospective teachers whose parents are school educated and graduates in their

awareness on balanced diet. The prospective teachers whose parents are having collegiate education are found better in their awareness on balanced diet.

INTERPRETATIONS

From the findings of the present study, it is observed that 65.16% of prospective teachers have average awareness on balanced diet. This is because, the prospective teachers do not show their concentration on their food habits. They may not know what type of food they have to take for the effective functioning of their body. Hence, they may not have enough awareness on balanced diet and hence, they are found to fall under the average category.

The findings of the differential analysis showed that the male and female prospective teachers do not differ significantly in their awareness on balanced diet. The reason behind this finding is that both male and female prospective teachers might have the same poor or low level awareness on balanced diet and they may concentrate only on their academic activities to cater their day-today college activities. Hence, they do not differ significantly in this regard.

The rural and urban prospective teachers differed significantly in their awareness on balanced diet. The urban prospective teachers have better awareness on balanced diet. This may be due to the reason that the urban prospective teachers may have wide range of knowledge on the balanced diet, food habits, proper schedule of meal time, etc. The influence of mass media may also provide adequate knowledge on balanced diet to the urban area people. Hence, they differed significantly in this regard. The findings of Purnima (2006) are in line with the findings of the present study, i.e., the respondents have a well-balanced diet in terms of their locality.

There is significant difference between prospective teachers whose parents are school educated and graduates in their awareness on balanced diet. The prospective teachers whose parents are graduates have better awareness on balanced diet. This may be due to the graduate parents may have knowledge on the balanced diet, healthy food habits and affordability of providing healthy foods to their wards, which may result in the development of better awareness on balanced diet among this category of prospective teachers. Hence, they differed significantly in this regard. The findings of Sasikala, P. (2016) are in line with the findings of the present study, i.e., the nutritional status was found highly related to the parental educational status.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The prospective teachers should not skip their breakfast. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.
2. The prospective teachers should consume proper protein rich foods, because protein keeps the body metabolism neutral.
3. The prospective teachers could also include beans or chicken sandwich with plenty of vegetables.
4. The supper of the day should be a combination of protein and carbohydrates.
5. The teacher educators should provide awareness on balanced diet to the prospective teachers by giving adequate tips on food habits and other advices that are needed for maintenance of physical fitness.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the present study, it is concluded that the urban prospective teachers and the prospective teachers with graduate parents have better awareness on balanced diet. At the same time, the prospective teachers of rural areas, prospective teachers whose parents are school educated have poor awareness on balanced diet. These categories may be provided a good awareness programme for improving their knowledge on balanced diet. Then only, they can maintain their physical condition in an effective manner, which may result in improving their academic performance.

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