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**T Manasa**  
M.Sc. II Year, Department of  
RMCS, C.C.Sc., PJTSAU,  
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

**V Vijaya Lakshmi**  
Professor, Department of RMCS,  
C.C.Sc., PJTSAU, Hyderabad,  
Telangana, India

**Corresponding Author:**  
**T Manasa**  
M.Sc. II Year, Department of  
RMCS, C.C.Sc., PJTSAU,  
Hyderabad, Telangana, India

## Review on consumer awareness and preferences about fast foods and beverages

**T Manasa and V Vijaya Lakshmi**

### Abstract

Excessive expenditure towards purchasing of fast foods and beverages is being observed currently across the globe. Spending on Convenience food and liquid refreshments is at very high rate in both economically developing and developed nations. The foremost aim of this study is to recognize the responsiveness of clients about fast foods and beverages, evaluate the buying attitude of clients concerning fast-food and beverages, observe the expenditure incurred on fast food and drinks by clients and to be acquainted with the consumer preferences and satisfaction about junk food and liquid refreshments. Secondary sources were used in data collection. Easy accessibility of beverages in close proximity neighbourhood outlets as the driving force leading to the frequent intake of the fast foods and beverages by majority of the college students was concluded by the findings of the study. Soft drinks were mainly consumed universally next to Chocolates. These foods and drinks consumed by individuals were predetermined by advertisements and promotions made by celebs. To curtail the excessive fast-food intake in future, awareness programmes and suitable policy measures should be implemented.

**Keywords:** junk and convenience foods, liquid refreshments, consumer awareness, fondness, enjoyment and pleasure, convenience, well-being

### Introduction

A variety of high-street foods intended for profit-making is mostly defined as fast foods. In case of fast foods, quickness in providing the dish and appropriate cooking science components were given a prominent importance. A variety of foods that the restaurants provide with a possible high speed are referred to as fast foods. Junk foods are also named as food loaded with 'empty carbohydrates' as they are enormously low in nutritive value.

Merriam-Webster from a dictionary acknowledged the word "fast food" in 1951. In 1921 United States started fast food restaurants for the first time named as Catering trucks or food trucks which were placed in the outdoors of workstations and also founded White Castle that serves simple small square burger which were well liked by factory employees.

For persons who normally do not have time to stay waiting for the meals to be served at canteen or eatery, fast food outlets were initially formed to make profit by serving food to these individuals. E.g.: busy city worker, wage earners and travellers.

Customers waiting time was greatly reduced as pre-cooked meals are readily available to quickly serve the customers in few seconds of their visit at the outlet. E.g. Boston Market rotisserie chicken, Little Caesars pizza. Items such as bagged buns & condiments, frozen beef patties, prewashed and sliced vegetables were made before hand and arranged at ease for quick utilization at times of need in various types of burger providing outlets like McDonald's, Burger King etc. These outlets however, make a point of emphasising to the customers that the hamburgers and fries are still baked fresh or at the very least recently and produced to order.

Any drink other than water which is prepared for consumption by the individuals is commonly called as a Beverage. It comprises of milk, juice, tea, coffee, alcohol, beer or soft drinks and is mostly served as an energizing and refreshing drinks.

The word beverage was imitative of Latin words beivre or boivre which means to "to drink". A drink is the name given for a liquid consumed by humans. In addition to satisfying the fluid need in the body, drinks are also concerned as a part of social customs such as drinking alcohol or tea in some human folklore. Plain drinking water, hot chocolate, milk, coffee, tea, juice and soft drinks constitute the repeatedly consumed drinks by most of the people. Although several beverages were utilized as ingredients in making other commodities, a beverage when provided in its original form will have a better taste.

'Alcoholic and 'Non-alcoholic' drinkables are the two categories of liquid refreshments. Non provocative aerated liquid refreshments are included under non-alcoholic drinkables as they do not contain intoxicant producing fermenting agent which produces alcohol from sugars present in food introduced into it.

Bottled, canned or open liquids are the different forms in which drinkables are being manufactured. These drinkables are also being produced and served as cold and hot liquid refreshments. Some of such drinks include aerated waters, mineral added oxygenated water, juices, squashes, syrups, smoothies, shakes etc. Addition of yeast into Grapes, Grains, Barley, Fruits, Sugarcane and Rice initiates fermentation process resulting in production of alcoholic drink containing 1% to 75% of liquor. Wine, Champagne, Beer, Whiskey, Brandy, Aperitif, Digestive, Liqueur, Spirits, Sake, Rice Wine and Cocktails are some of the examples of alcoholic beverages.

Babylonians in 2700 B.C. used to worship wine goddess. Mead, a fermented product prepared from honey and water was one of the first alcoholic beverages to achieve fame in Greece. High dis encouragement towards extreme drinking is mentioned in Greek literature. Evolution of liquid refreshments and drinkables through the ancient years constitutes the historical framework of development of drinkables. In starting period of 1800s fermented grapes and apples were regularly used as a liquid refreshments along with morning meal but juices of fruits were not considered as morning meal drinkables, therefore much recognition was not acquired.

The following characteristics are observed in well-liked fast food centres in India:

- Extensive opening on the land adjacent to road
- Simple to look after with strong and sturdy furnishings
- Food tokens being sold at cash counter
- A granite finished food distributing surface
- Supplementary sideboard for Ice Creams, Chaats, Beverages etc.
- A most compatible kitchen mostly seen by the clients
- Stainless steel tall tables for Placing food at the time of standing and eating
- Drinking water supply to the clients
- Indestructible and rust proof cutlery
- In India the majority of the fast food centres are isolated and free standing ventures

Greater than one fast and convenience food franchise is seen in some of the outlets while most of the junk food centres are noticed as single openings only at a particular place in an area. A greater possibility of obesity and chronic diseases is seen in persons consuming Junk foods repeatedly on a regular basis while at the same time the unusual eating of junk showed no or very minimal harm. Extreme eating of junk food is recognized as a reason for occurrence of Circulatory and heart malfunctioning, insulin resistance leading to diabetes in adults, malignancy tumours, hepatic steatosis and other related liver disorders. Additional, depressing side effects seen by consumption of several fast foods are as follows

- Frequency of occurrence of headaches and migraine will be more due to presence of large amounts of sodium in junk food.
- Acne production is stimulated with increased intake of carbohydrate rich junk food.

- There is a possibility of development of high degree of depression with intake of large amounts of junk food regularly.
- Dental caries can also occur because of carbohydrates and sugar present in fast food.
- LDL cholesterol levels will be elevated in the body because of the Trans fats developed in fried foods.
- Rise in blood glucose levels and high insulin resistance can also be seen as fast food is just packed with empty carbohydrates.
- Bloating, a condition in which too much water is held reserved in the body may occur due to high amounts of sodium.

### Objectives

1. To analyse the consumer awareness towards liquid refreshments, fast foods and convenience foods.
2. To evaluate the consumer's drinkables and junk food purchasing attitude.
3. To investigate the consumer fondness and satisfaction in relation to liquid refreshments and fast food.

### Methodology

Starting with 2004 to present 2020 the published term papers, review papers and write-ups from internet which are in English concerning to fast foods and beverages were reviewed. A number of data collection sources and web browsers, together with Research Gate, Academia, Shodganga, Krishikosh, Google scholar were used to search the articles related to the study. To explore the most appropriate research papers, the references listed in printed article were also reviewed thoroughly. Most commonly using words such as convenience foods, junk foods, liquid refreshments, consumer awareness, fondness, enjoyment and pleasure, convenience, well-being, amount spent were used as search terms while searching for appropriate research papers.

### Discussion

The reviews concerned to the present topic were explored and presented under the below mentioned subtitles.

### Consumer behaviour and awareness

The preference, procuring and utilization of commodities and services for the fulfilment of the individual's needs and wants are defined as consumer behaviour. The consumer calculates approximately the money to be needed to procure the commodities. The consumer takes the final decision regarding the commodities he should use after looking over the existing price of commodities. Social, cultural, personal and psychological aspects also control the buying behaviour of an individual (Agarwal, 2017)<sup>[1]</sup>.

Jyothi *et al.* (2020)<sup>[13]</sup> conducted a detailed study on behaviour of Tinsukia college students towards fast food consumption. After analysing the information collected, the study established that consumption fondness towards fast food is because of its immense taste and low cost, while age or gender do not determine the consumption pattern of an individual. Rapid increase in consumption of fast food among individuals is being recorded, without considering the adverse long term health consequences it causes in the body. To curtail the excessive fast food intake, awareness programmes and suitable policy measures should be implemented.

Nayak (2020)<sup>[17]</sup> conducted an exploratory study on behaviour of medical students in relation to fast food intake

among undergraduates in medicine of north Karnataka. A total of 84 boys and 94 girls of 21 years old were chosen for the study. The results of the study revealed the most obsessive foodstuff was fruit liquid refreshments next to chocolates. The leading reason contributed to the enlarged consumption of fast or junk food was recorded as tasty by 46.7% of students. The study concluded that among medical students, fondness towards fast foods and their consumption of fast foods were at very great level.

Younis and Eljamay (2019) <sup>[22]</sup> conducted this study in Derna city with 100 youngsters of 13-25 years old to determine the adolescent's fast food consumption pattern and their health consequences. After analysing the data, greater consumption of fast food was greater in girls with 67% was disclosed compared to boys. As a substitute to main meal, fast food was consumed by nearly 49% of the subjects. Almost every day consumption of soft drinks was noted in above 63% of subject. High consumption soft drinks and chips led to urinary tract infection in more than 42% of the subjects. Soft drinks and chips were considered as the most attractive food items by the subjects. Negative consequences on a long run were reported in more fast food consumed adolescents. So, there is a need to plan and conduct awareness programmers on fast food consumption and its harmful implications to communities and schools.

**Khongrangiem et al. (2018)** carried out a study on Pre-university college students to estimate their knowledge and application in relation to consumption of fast food. The total number of participants who had shown to have plenty of awareness in relation to the consequences of fast-food intake was reported as 26.25% while moderate awareness is seen in 41.88% and very little awareness was detected in remaining 31.87%. Mouth-watering flavour of fast food was recognized as the key factor contributing to intake of fast food in almost 72.5% of participants. Dietary counselling on the subject of the importance of a healthy foods and balanced nutrition is becoming necessary as fast foods are low in nutritive value and high in calories. Besides however they are tasty, fast-food consumption can be suppressed by creating awareness about destructive consequences that might arise due to addiction to fast foods.

Mahajan (2018) <sup>[14]</sup> formulated an investigative study in Delhi to explore the influence of fast-food intake on adolescents' dietary habits. Excessive intake of fast food intake in students was exposed by the study. The study concluded that individuals with greater earnings and youngsters were the two categories of people regularly consuming fast food.

Harsh Kumar et al. (2010) <sup>[8]</sup> carried out a study in October-November months of 2011 to understand the fast food knowledge and eating habits of Lovely Professional University students who are residing in hostels. In university hostel 18000 students were residing from which 10.06% was taken as the total sample i.e. 1811 hostel students were selected for participation in the study. Understanding hostlers' eating attitude and behaviour is important in terms of their health which clearly demarkated that the adoption of fast food culture among university hostlers in LPU is common. A straight association between university hostlers in relation to the information, understanding and sensible consumption attitude towards convenience foods was revealed in the survey.

### Consumer behaviour

**Abhay et al. (2019)** performed a study to investigate the

present attitude and buying habits among Indian customers in relation to drinkables produced from fruits. Approximately 5.9 billion litres of aerated liquid refreshments was utilized by Indian customers in a year was concluded in the study. The study also stated that in the year 2016 the aerated drinks showed 71% of compounded annual growth rate (CAGR). Nearly 40% tax was levied by government on all aerated drinks and 12% on fruit or fruit pulp grounded liquid refreshments under Goods and services tax. The study accomplished that the less tax was levied on fruit based drinkables with an intention to create a motivation to formulate and produce fruit grounded drinks, to develop consciousness among individuals in relation to the beneficial use of drinkables made from fruits and to help in farming efficiency by increased use of fruits.

Hemant (2018) <sup>[10]</sup> performed an exploratory study to analyze the trend of life styles, mind-set and socio-demographic attributes with regard to fast food. It discovered that a great amount of youngsters consumed fast food about 2-3 times in a week and the consumption is mostly on weekends. Expenses on fast food increases with increase in frequency of fast food eating. The study found that as age of the person increases fondness towards junk food decreases, therefore making the age a considerable element in case of intake of junk food.

Vijay et al. (2018) <sup>[20]</sup> carried out a study to recognize the fast food consumption pattern among medical students of IGIMS, Patna. A total of 120 undergraduates were selected for the study for 6 months. Pre-tested structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The study accomplished that the effortless easy availability of soft drinks in close proximity to consumers was a significant factor in deciding consumer's degree of consumption of soft drinks. The regularity of intake of soft drinks and soft drinks utility mind set of consumers were directly related to each other.

Mohan and Initha (2015) <sup>[16]</sup> made an attempt to identify the children's attitude towards leading MNC fast food restaurants. A total of 755 participants from Coimbatore of Tamil Nadu were selected for the study. Well-structured questionnaire was used to collect the required data from the participants and the collected data was also scrutinized to produce the results. The study theoretically concluded that appropriate amount of food at sensible cost is being provided by MNC's including various options in menu along with nutritional choices. For children, customization of their preferred dish as per their interest was provided at MNC's thereby attracting the customers.

Fast foods and drinkables intake was high among women as per the results of preceding research studies. The key elements contributing to excess intake by youngsters is because of their taste and amount provided while the quality attribute is not given much consideration in case of junk foods. Eating of convenience food was most regular and excessive intake is reported in youngsters and teenagers, while the fast food is being consumed universally and consumption is increasing day by day. Fast food was chosen as a substitute meal majorly by school girls and young woman. As a means for relaxation purpose, liquid refreshments were consumed by majority of teenagers and considered as a key element in determining individuals' degree of consumption due to effortless easy availability of soft drinks in close proximity to consumers. Large number of the youngsters who are consuming liquid refreshments on a daily basis had urinary tract infections. Cityscape and sociability components are repeatedly connected to intake of liquid refreshments and convenience foods. Instead of

producing aerated refreshments, brew and drink factories were instructed to formulate and produce balanced dietary and nourishing liquid refreshments.

**Consumer preferences and satisfaction**

Excessive junk food eating is more or less flattering a worldwide event. Each and every year fast food business in India is showing a growth of about 40%. Through 2.1% of expenses in annual total expenditure, India stands in 10<sup>th</sup> position in the fast-food per capita expenditure statistics (Ashakiran and Deepth 2012) [2].

In these present times, where cities grow and societies becoming urban, fast foods have been recognized to provide ease in preparing a meal quickly in few minutes thereby increasing attractiveness towards this junk and fast food. Immense taste with attractive look has played a key part in captivating individuals mainly adolescents to the fast foods (Fister, 2005.) [5].

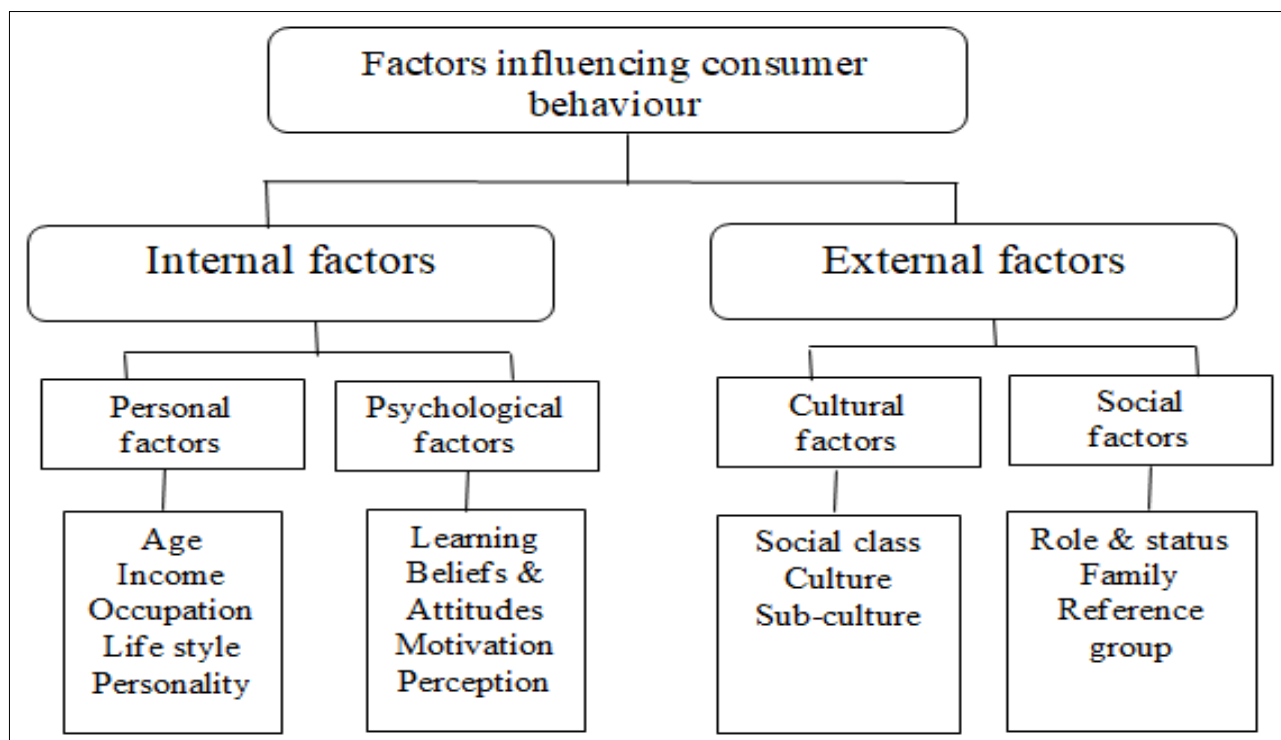
Himanshu (2020) [11] formulated a study to observe the demographic factors’ influence on the fast food eating habits. The results achieved after scrutinizing the information obtained in the study stated that instead of quality the main reason behind the greater consumption of fast food is because of the ease of availability, enhanced taste and quantity provided. The study further revealed that fast food consumption is high among less than 25 years individuals and graduates. Women exhibited more enthusiasm in fast food intake compared to men. Importance towards fast food intake is detected to be high in married individuals having a family

of 2-4 members. It was also concluded that there was a noteworthy impact of demography on the fast food eating habits in India.

Numerous elements like household environment, learning environment, convenience and closeness to fast food sources and community upbringing in their environment setting predisposes the food routine of young adults (Hattersley *et al.* 2009) [9].

In most of the studies, students reported an excessive intake of fast food. Youngsters and higher income category people were directly connected to frequent utilization of fast food. A few studies exposed that there was a remarkable difference in knowledge and implementation between city and countryside school children concerning the convenience and fast food (Trinath 2017 and Mahajan 2018) [14, 19].

Nida Malik *et al.* (2017) [15] organized a study on worldwide and Indian Food Service Retail centres to observe the importance given to Quality element by customers. A total of 500 worldwide and Indian food manufacturing factories customers were selected for the study from KAVAL region of Uttar Pradesh of India. To classify the major components and causes behind the preference of customers, in relation to worldwide and Indian food producing centres was the main approach of this present study. The elements that pull the customers towards worldwide or Indian food centres included good atmosphere and interior decors, well organized purchasing action, improved strategies to increase marketing of products and broad mindedness and tolerance of workforce was exposed in the study.



**Fig 1:** Factors influencing consumer behaviour

The major significant element leading to excessive soft drinks consumption by consumers was their easy accessibility to soft drinks in their location and nearby places. Regularity in soft drinks intake was directly related to the mind-set of consumers. Place of residence, surrounding atmosphere, attitude of seller, awareness and familiarity, cost, quality, brand impression, friends circle, promotion were interpreted as the major components determining the buying behaviour of

individuals in few studies. Need for being conscious towards fast food and beverage intake was reported in several studies (Niraj and Subhajyoti *et al.* 2018) [18].

The set of laws were being executed to prohibit junk food intake in several nations because in all over the world, the increasing intake of junk food and liquid refreshments is seen on day to day basis.

### Regulations on junk food/fast food

**WHO:** To manage obesity and to encourage balanced diet intake in children, prohibition of junk food in educational institutions and recreational areas was suggested by WHO officially on 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2011. WHO recommended that saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars or salt rich foods should be excluded from selling in children assembling spaces like for example kindergartens, play grounds and preschool stations, recreational areas, family and child clinics and at the times of cultural and sporting activities that are conducted in these location.

**Britain:** Starting from 2005 to 2013, Britain nation prohibited the junk food marketing in schools as an initiative to lower the overweight and obesity rate in nation which reached a high level approximately to 26%. In 2008 august, keeping in view of less than 16 years children promotion of junk food through advertisements in the midst of television programmes was prohibited.

**UK:** On each and every food item 'traffic light labeling' is made mandatory in the new EU food information regulations. The consumer advocates are requesting the government to examine whether all the food items produced are following traffic light labeling to confirm that everyone follows the new EU governance related to food.

**Scotland:** In prior to 9 pm telecasted shows in television, exclusion of commercial promotion of junk food and drinkables was suggested.

**US:** Prohibition of selling of junk food in schools was proposed by US government in 2010 but yet not implemented. Whereas selling of junk food was banned in elementary schools of Arizona, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York and West Virginias far as possible until and after lunch.

**Mexico:** From May 2010 as a component anti-obesity movement all public, private and elementary school in Mexico prohibited junk food.

**United Arab Emirates:** In 2010 every school in Abu Dhabi closed down selling of junk food and soft drinks.

**Canada:** In September 2010 candies, chocolates, fries and energy drinks were prohibited from selling in school campuses by Ontario State Government.

**Denmark:** In October 2011 tax on was introduced on junk food rich in fat. If saturated fat of above 82.3% is seen in processed eatables like milk and all milk products, meat, bacon, an additional charge was laid on these food products. For purchasing butter the consumer will have to spend 20% additionally and for a pack of chips the additional charges are slight above half a Krone (1 Krone = 01.7 US \$) as introduced in new tax regulations. The government hopes that the obese individual's health treatment costs can be funded from the money collected through taxes on junk food. Saturated fat rich foods intake will be discouraged by increasing their cost.

**Hungary:** In Hungary, for the foods that are rich in sugar, fat, carbohydrates and salt, tax was introduced from September 2011. Introduction of tax on carbonated beverages, alcohol

and high caffeine containing drinks was also done. Tax method from Hungary was also introduced in countries like Europe. Trans-fats containing foods were closed down in Switzerland, Denmark and Austria. Taxes were levied on high fat foods in Finland and Romania. Plans to introduce taxes on fat rich foods are on-going in countries like Brazil, Mexico and Taiwan.

**Australia:** Two self- operating codes related to retailing of poor nutritious and harmful food to children were advanced by Food and Grocery Council in 2009.

**India:** In the Delhi High Court a public interest lawsuit was filed regarding the school children's easy accessibility to junk food in 2010. To provide wholesome, nutritious, safe and hygienic food to kids attending school, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) was appointed by court to prepare protocol and instructions for providing well balanced nourishing food to the kids attending school. FSSAI established a special group that developed the required guidelines and programme of work.

Research gap was discovered on studies related to the consumption of fast foods and beverages and expenditure incurred as only a small number of studies were published on this concerned topic.

### Conclusion

To recognize the consumer's knowledge, purchasing attitude, the amount being spent, extent of liking and impression related to the junk, convenience foods and liquid refreshments is the present study's leading purpose. On the topic of frequency of using up of junk, convenience foods and liquid refreshments and expenditure incurred only a small number of studies were published till now. Through review of literature it was discovered that the unhealthy consequences and harmful health implications that the fast foods causes in a long run are recognized by only few individuals and majority of people are not aware of the health problems related to frequent fast food intake. As the consumption of fast foods and beverages among youngsters is excessive and regular, a large number of fast food outlets are appearing in India day by day. Soft drinks were mainly consumed universally next to Chocolates. Intake of foods and drinks is also motivated by advertisements and promotions made by Celebs. Junk food is most purchased by all individuals. As junk food is available at low and cheap cost, quality aspect and due to the good mood feeling it is most purchased by all individuals. Currently extra money is being wasted on KFC, Burger king and other junk food outlets by adolescents as they are obsessed to junk food and drinkables. Place of residence, surrounding atmosphere, attitude of seller, awareness and familiarity, cost, quality, brand impression, friends circle, promotion were interpreted as the major components determining the buying behaviour of individuals in few studies. Need to plan and conduct awareness programmers on fast food consumption and its harmful implications by communities and schools are mandatory to curtail the excessive fast food consumption.

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