



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695
ISSN (P): 2349-8242
NAAS Rating: 5.23
TPI 2021; SP-10(6): 416-419
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www.thepharmajournal.com
Received: 01-04-2021
Accepted: 03-05-2021

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Preferences for meats and socio-economic status of consumer in Madurai city of Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

A study was carried out in Madurai of Tamil Nadu to study the consumers' meat consumption preferences and socioeconomic status in Madurai city of Tamil Nadu. For the study multistage sampling procedure was adopted to select 120 households from the city. Relevant data were collected through personal interviews with the help of a pilot-tested interview schedule, and an *ex-post facto* research design was adopted to find out the meat consumption pattern of the people of Madurai. The respondents' socioeconomic background revealed that nearly 77.5 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 30-50 and 70 percent of the respondents were female. A Majority (52.5 percent) of the respondents fell in the income group of Rs. 30,000 -70,000/annum and around 60 percent of the sampled respondents lived in nuclear-type families. Respondents living in their own house (52.5 percent) were less than those living in rented homes (47.5 percent) and had a family size of less than five members (60 percent). Most of the respondents (35 percent) were in the primary school range, and none of the respondents were postgraduates. Most respondents attribute the reason for consumption of meat to its taste and prefer to buy fresh meat from roadside meat shops indicating that the consumers are not willing to pay extra for better quality products.

Keywords: Madurai, socio-economic, meat, preference, data

Introduction

The economic development is characterized by an increase in food supply and the gradual elimination of dietary deficiencies. Recent changes in food consumption patterns have had led to a near-total transformation of nutritional models. The transformed lifestyles and cultural models, altered time-organization of daily life, changed socio-demography, and modified market and labour processes are the major factors that keep changing people's food choices. The most significant changes in food consumption patterns have undoubtedly been seen in developing countries, mainly because of the rapidity of the above changes. The changes in consumption pattern were driven by sustained rise in per capita income, urbanization, changing lifestyles, increasing number of women in workforce, nuclearisation of families, improvements in transport infrastructure, rise of supermarkets and increasing use of credit cards (Pingali and Khwaja, 2004) [6]. Between 1990-91 and 2004-05, the per capita income in India grew at 4.0 per cent and urban population at 2.6 per cent a year. These trends are pretty robust and are expected to continue in the near future, implying a vigorous growth in demand for meat and meat products (Ravi and Roy, 2006; Kumar *et al.*, 2007) [8, 3].

The knowledge of food demand structure and consumer behavior is essential for finding answers to various policy development issues like improvement in nutritional status, food subsidy, sectoral and macroeconomic policy analysis, etc. Therefore, an analysis of food consumption patterns and how these patterns are likely to shift due to changes in income and relative prices are required to assess the food security-related policy issues (Mittal, 2006) [4]. The demand for meat and meat products in Tamil Nadu has also undergone a perceptible change in the recent past, reflecting the growth in per capita income, urbanization, and repercussions. Citizens living in these cities had the combined advantage of having access to different consumer goods and access to fresh meat and meat products. There were ample meat and meat products produced in areas adjoining these cities.

Madurai is the second-largest city in Tamil Nadu surrounded by the Sirumalai hills in the north and the Nagamalai hills in the west. The river Vaigai flows through the Madurai city, segregating it into almost two halves. Madurai is the administrative headquarters of Madurai District and is well-known for its industries and educational institutes, including the Madurai Medical College, Homeopathic Medical College, Madurai Law College, Agricultural College

and Research Institute. Additionally, Madurai is an IT hub as a second-tier city for information technology (IT). With the rapid socioeconomic environment changes, it becomes essential to study the consumption pattern and preferences for meat and meat products in Madurai city. Further, there have not been comprehensive studies available on consumers' preferences for meat and meat products in Madurai city of Tamil Nadu, where the population is currently bulging due to increased industrial growth, urbanization and improved infrastructure in all spheres. In this light of the above background, the present study was undertaken

Materials and Methods

The pertinent data was gathered from the chosen household participants to ensure that the research objectives were fulfilled. A total of 120 samples were collected from ten wards (12 respondents from each ward) from Madurai city by employing the simple random sampling method. The researcher personally interviewed the respondents to gather the data by employing a structured and interview format that had been pilot-tested prior to beginning the data collection. The data gathered for the current study included collecting the demographic and socioeconomic particulars of the consumers in addition to the expenses they incurred on meat and meat

products. The researcher gathered the pertinent secondary data for the research from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Tamil Nadu apart from gathering data from offices based in Madurai.

Results and Discussions

Socioeconomic statuses of Respondents of Madurai City

Table 1 indicated that nearly 77.5 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 30-50 and 70 per cent of the respondents were female, which may be because the interview was conducted during the daytime and most of the male members of the families were out of home at that time. Majority (52.5 percent) of the respondents fell in the income group of Rs. 30,000 -70,000/annum and only 12.5 per cent of the respondents earned more than Rs.70000 per annum. Around 60 per cent of the sampled respondents were living in the nuclear type families. Respondents living in the own house (52.5 per cent) was higher than those living in rented homes (47.5 per cent). Majority of the families had a family size of less than 5 members (60 per cent). Educational qualification of the highest numbers of respondents (35 per cent) was in the range up to primary school and none of the respondents were post graduates.

Table 1: Socioeconomic statuses of Respondents of Madurai City

Particulars	Frequency n=120	Percentage
Age		
Young <30 years	15	12.5%
Middle 30-50 yrs	93	77.5%
Old >50 yrs	12	10.0%
Sex		
Male	36	30.0%
Female	84	70.0%
Income		
Low (Rs.<30,000/annum)	42	35.0%
Medium(Rs. 30,000 -70,000/annum)	63	52.5%
High (>70,000/annum)	15	12.5%
Type of Family		
Nuclear	72	60.0%
Joint	48	40.0%
Type of Residence		
Own house	63	52.5%
Rented house	57	47.5%
Family size		
<5 members	72	60.0%
>5 members	36	30.0%
5 members	12	10.0%
Education		
Illiterate	09	7.5%
Upto Primary education	42	35.0%
Less than High school	27	22.5%
Equivalent to High school	27	22.5%
Degree holder	15	12.5%
Post-graduate	--	--

Consumer Preferences for Meats in Madurai City

Table 2 indicated that most of the respondents prefer chicken (50 per cent) followed by chevon (40 per cent) and least preference was given to mutton and seafoods (5 per cent each). This trend was in line with Priyadharsini and Kathiravan (2008)^[7], De Silva *et al.* (2010)^[2] and Teklebrhan (2013)^[9]. None of the respondents ate pork and beef. Most respondents attribute the reason for consumption of meat to its taste (55 per cent). About 12.5 per cent of the people said

the reason as habit and another 5 per cent said that it is a special dish for guests. About 27.5 per cent of respondents said that it is a preferred food of the children. About 70 per cent of the respondents prefer to consume meat once in a week and 5 per cent of the respondents consumed meat twice in a week. Around 20 per cent of the respondents took meat once a month. None of the respondents consumed meat daily. Reasons for low consumption of beef or pork were religious sentiment (67.5 per cent) and dislike (32.5 per cent). Similar

findings were recorded by Priyadharsini and Kathiravan (2008) [7]. Odo *et al.* (2004) [5] and Telkebrhan (2013) [9] also found similar results, except for pork, where most consumers were Muslims in their study.

Common reasons for not consuming meat daily were health problems (55 percent) and cost (35 percent). Although, most of the respondents do not know about the nutritional value of the meat (87.5 per cent) only 12.5 per cent of the respondents are aware of the nutritional value of meat. Around (42.5 per cent) of the respondents know about the health risk associated with meat consumption. This means 57.5 percent of the respondents were unaware of the health risks of meat consumption. All the respondents prefer to buy fresh meat (100 per cent) and none liked frozen meat. Higher percent of the people chose to purchase meat from roadside meat shops (72.5 percent) than branded retail outlets (27.5 percent) and

none preferred meat from modern meat shops. Most respondents prefer young meat animals (97.5 per cent) than adults (2.5 per cent). The finding of the highest preference for meat from young animals contradicts Teklebrhan (2013) [9], who found more preference for meat from middle-aged animals. Higher number of respondents were not willing to pay (90 per cent) more money for the lean meat. Akinwumi *et al.* (2011) [1] indicated that cost, availability, and income as the most limiting factors of meat preference. About 62.5 per cent of the respondents felt that the meat in the diet is healthy and 12.5 per cent respondents felt that it is not beneficial to have meat in the diet.

The study has made it clear that most consumers were not willing to pay extra for better quality products and consumer preferences to purchase meat are significantly impacted by its taste, flavour, and freshness.

Table 2: Consumer Preferences for Meats in Madurai City

Particulars	Frequency n=120	Percentage
Meat of Choice		
Chicken	60	50.0%
Mutton	06	5.0%
Chevon	48	40.0%
Pork	--	--
Beef	--	--
Sea foods	06	5.0%
Reasons for Consumption of Meat		
Taste	66	55.0%
Habituated	15	12.5%
Due to guests	06	5.0%
For Children	33	27.5%
Frequency of Meat Consumption		
Daily	--	--
Twice in a week	06	5.0%
Once in a week	84	70.0%
Fortnightly	03	2.5%
Once in a month	24	20.0%
Others	03	2.5%
Reason for less or no consumption of Beef and Pork		
Religious sentiments	81	67.5%
Do not like	39	32.5%
Less availability	--	--
Reason for not consuming meat daily		
Religious sentiments	12	10.0%
Health Problems	66	55.0%
Cost of meat	42	35.0%
No specific reason	--	--
Awareness on Nutritive value of meat		
Known	15	12.5%
Not known	105	87.5%
Awareness on health risks associated with meat		
Known	51	42.5%
Not known	69	57.5%
Preference for Fresh/Frozen meat		
Fresh	120	100%
Frozen	--	--
Place preferred to buy meat		
Roadside meat shop	87	72.5%
Branded retail outlets	33	27.5%
Modern meat shop	--	--
Kind of Meat animal preferred for Meat production		
Young	117	97.5%
Adult	03	2.5%
Spent	--	--
Willingness to pay more for lean meat		
Yes	12	10.0%
No	108	90.0%

Health aspect of meat consumption		
Yes	75	62.5%
No	15	12.5%
Others	30	25.0%

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