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Eating Disorders Among Young Children of Ara Town

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Abstract : *Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. Good health of children is an essential element for building a healthy society and nation. Food is one of the most important factors which affect the children's health. But in the era of modernization and globalization, various changes are being seen in the food habits of children. The consumption of fast food and junk food among children is increasing day by day. Nuclear family, working parents, easy accessibility of fast food, attractive packaging, advertisement and appealing taste are the main reasons of promoting fast food. But these type of food cannot fulfill our nutritional requirements. These food items contain excessive amount of salt, sugar, palm oil, harmful food additives and preservatives. Now a days working parents don't have sufficient time to prepare nutritious homemade food resulting they serve or provide packed food and fast food as children easily accept it. Along with consumption of fast food and junk food, nowadays children are staying awake till late night, eating in front of television/mobile phones and not maintaining proper gap between two meals. These habits create obstacle in their growth and development and put adverse effect on their health. Researches show that in present time obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, growth retardation, vitamin deficiency diseases, hormonal disorder and various health issues are very common even in such young age.*

Key words – Divorce, legal dissolution, marriage, marital union, no-fault, parental divorce.

Objectives -1. To know about the orientation of children towards fast food.

2. To find out the causes of changes in children's dietary pattern.

3. Assessment of physical and mental development of children.

Methodology - For the present research a total number of 75 children of Ara town were selected on the basis of stratified random sampling method. Both questionnaire and Interview method were used to find the data. Then the collected data were analyzed.

Results and Discussion - In the present study, it was found that the dietary pattern of school going children has changed in various ways, such as-

- children in present times consume less seasonal fruits and vegetables in comparison to earlier times. They are dependent more on frozen fruits and vegetables like strawberry, kiwi, frozen peas etc.

- At present, children consume relatively less milk and are more dependent on packed milk. Maximum health drinks mixed in milk contain large amount of sugar which is harmful for children's health.

- The amount of roughage in children's diet is very low as they are consuming refined flour, fried and sticky snacks and less salad.

- consumption of bread among school going children is increasing day by day. Many school going children take bread and milk in their breakfast before going to school.

- Nowadays children are eating in front of television/mobile phones which affect their food intake because their concentration is more on the screen than food or hunger.

Factors affecting eating habits of children - Research shows that there are several factors which are responsible for the changes in dietary patterns of young children, such as:

- **Television and mobile phones:** Nowadays most of the children become addicted to television and mobile phones from a very early age. When children eat in front of the phone or television, they are not aware of their hunger and also their attention is more on the television or mobile phone than on their hunger.

- **Nuclear Family:** In modern society number of nuclear families are increasing day by day resulting children are deprived from their grandparents love and affection. When parents in nuclear family don't have sufficient time to cook food, they are dependent on fast food or packed food or market food items.



• **Working Mothers** : In 21st century, almost 80% women are working in urban area. Even in rural area, number of working women are gradually increasing they don't have sufficient time to look after their children resulting children are taking fast food which need the least time to cook.

• **Attractive Packaging and availability**: Almost all type of Fast Food and junk food are available in very attractive labeling and packaging and because of attractive packaging children become very anxious to buy these items.

• **Appealing Taste**: Because of chemicals and different flavoring agents these type of food looks very attractive and children complete their food very fast as it seems good in taste.

• **Advertisements**: Children are generally fond of televisions, mobile phones and other mass media. In this situation, advertisements play a great role to influence children towards fast food and junk food.

Health issues due to changing eating habits - As we know that fast food does not meet our nutritional requirements and it contains various harmful substances which are hazardous to our health. These harmful substances put adverse effect the health of our children, such as:

• When children consume fast food on regular basis, it may cause diabetes, obesity, fatigue, high blood pressure, hormonal imbalance, early puberty, growth retardation, cardiovascular disease, digestive disorder, gastrointestinal diseases and kidney disorder among them.

• Research shows that junk food also lead to behavioral change among growing children.

• Fast food and junk food are sticky so it may cause dental problems among children.

Fast food do not take so much time to cook so children eat it while watching television or at late night which creates sleeping disorder.

Conclusion - The present study suggests that in spite of 'say no to fast food', we should encourage the children to eat balanced and nutritious diet. This change is not possible drastically, but yes it is possible to inspire them about healthy diet pattern. Parents are the first role model of children. When we follow healthy food habits, our children will automatically eat healthy food. Children first get influenced by the appearance of food and then the taste. If we serve variety of healthy food items in very attractive manner, they complete their food very easily and also get proper nutrition. The findings of the study also shows that if we include our children in food preparation, they take interest in homemade food items.

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