

## Analyzing the Attitude of Millennials towards their Food Habits

Ranjeeta Tripathi<sup>1</sup>, Priyadarshini Seth<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Amity University, Lucknow.

<sup>2</sup>Senior Lecturer, Institute of Hotel Management, Lucknow.

### Abstract

This paper aims at analyzing the attitudes and beliefs of the millennials towards their food habits. Dietary habits are decisions of people, influenced by their culture and society, to decide what to eat and when. Balanced diet is a healthy diet. Millennials, are the people born between 80's and 2000's. The objectives of the paper were to study the attitude of millennials towards their food habits and to explore their awareness on consumption of balanced diet. To conduct the study a self-administered questionnaire was prepared and distributed among the millennials of India using convenience sampling method using google forms. A total of 135 responses were collected. Descriptive analysis was done based on the responses collected. The study found that millennials are aware about the right temperature of food to be consumed, food combinations to be preferred and the importance of balanced diet for healthy lifestyle. However, millennials have partial knowledge about the cooking patterns of different ingredients in accordance to nutritional benefits of the same. Future studies could be conducted for analyzing the food habits of specific age group in context to their local culture, type of work, under medication population.

**Keywords:** Millennials, food habits, balanced diet, attitude.

### Introduction

India is a land of varied cuisines and several cultures and so are the behaviors and attitudes of the people residing here. This paper aims at analyzing the attitudes and beliefs of the millennials towards their food habits. Dietary habits are decisions of people, influenced by their culture and society, to decide what to eat and when. A disciplined food habit helps people to stay fit and healthy throughout the life. Healthy diet is a balance diet. Balanced diet consists of different foods in prescribed quantities and proportions to balance the body requirements of vitamins, minerals, proteins and carbohydrates.

Millennials, also termed as Gen Y, are the people born between 80's and 2000's, prominently show over usage of internet and digital devices. According to a survey by Franchise India, 34% of the people eat out two to three times a week, while 27% eat once a week, about 11% eat three

or more times a week, 12% eat once a month, 3% eat on special occasions, while 12% love to eat daily at a restaurant (source: The Restaurant Times). Indian millennials are highly influenced by the eating habits of other countries because of cross cultural interaction. Earlier researches have already proved that change in dietary habits is the main cause of many diseases such as cancer, heart diseases, obesity, hypertension etc. (Dekker et al., 2011; Hyman et al., 2002) Therefore, many health professionals and social science experts are centering around the topic of food.

As the millennials are convinced by people of all cultures and social classes, they think that's their own set of beliefs and attitudes are the perfect way of living a healthier life. Young generation believes in the theory of eating out and eating right. Millennials are changing the trend of food for example they prefer convenient yet healthy foods, high protein and low calorie snack, high quality frozen foods and food products with low environmental footprint (Source: what-millennials-eat-report). In recent years, the importance of adequate nutrition as one of the most essential components of lifestyle has been recognized, and the inclination toward healthier diets has increased (Margetts, 1998; Stampfer et. al, 2000)

Studies have found that the most influential source of nutrition information is the family (Hertzler & Frary, 1995; Hertzler & Grün, 1990; Ankeny et al., 1991; Lieux & Manning, 1992). Time constraints is also one of the factors that affects the dietary habits of individuals (Biloukha & Utermohlen, 2001; Holgado et al., 2000).

Food plays the role of a health potion. It has been attributed with preserving health, ensuring wellness, and even protecting against ageing and sustaining youth.

Food, on the other hand, remains a personal choice rather than a prescription, as it fulfils psychological desires of food consumption rather than medicinal demands. This is the fundamental distinction between the concepts of food and medicine. Like other facets of life, food follows a less common pattern; most of the meals are based on a personal routine, and respond to individual needs of time and consumption styles. Consumption-related needs are mixed with personal requirements and form an individuals' food habit.

## Literature Review

Food habits are influenced by cognitive and emotional factors such as past experiences, current needs, attitudes, and values. As a result, food selection might be viewed as the result of a complicated social structure. The basis of behaviour are real scripts that individuals develop (Blake et al. 2008; Blake et al. 2011), processing the information received (Cardello 1994; Corney et al. 1994) and particularly interpreting what is healthy and appropriate and what is not (Povey et al. 1998)

Asp (1999) stressed in his study that consumption is considerably more than just a means for people to meet their necessities of life. Author stated that taste perception is the result of variety of elements that include not only food composition but also a set of related expectations,

according to a vast number of scientific research and feelings, individual motivations, culture, and beliefs are all intertwined in these expectations.

Bhugra (2004) said in his research that individual represent their culture through their attitude towards food and food preferences. Hence, food habits play an important symbolic, religious and social role in their everyday lives.

Beaver et al. (2006) mentions in their study that for forming food habits, images of food play a crucial role. Studies have shown that food habits are also affected by rising interest in non-sensory characteristics of food, for example, the absence of additives and preservatives (Wandel 1994; Wilkins and Hillers 1994), nutritional values (Jolly 1991; Wandel 1994; Schifferstein and Onde Ouphis 1998; Tourjusen et al. 2001) and the ease of use (Land 1998).

Parker et al. (2001); Gordon et al. (2003) and Himmelgreen et al. (2004) described in their studies that in western countries, dietary acculturation is linked to poor dietary choices, such as high-fat and high-sugar diets, low consumption of fruits and vegetables, decreased physical activity, higher BMI, and an increase in portion size, restaurant visits, and other habits.

Köster & Mojet (2007) describes in their research that understanding the complexity of decision determinants is critical for businesses that seek to offer new meals, as evidenced by the high failure rate of new products introduced to the market.

Franchi (2012) stated in his research that the amount of time spent selecting and preparing foods has decreased dramatically, indicating a preference for items that require less time to prepare. The growth in consumption of outdoor meals coincides with the deconstruction of meals. Author also stated that modern consumers' eating habits are divided into two categories: traditional eating, which includes the rediscovery of ancient tastes and the search for nutritious foods, and multi-style eating. Franchi (2009) also described that eating out has evolved into a habit that extends beyond functional reasons to include sensual exploration, status, and social values.

Guidetti & Cavazza (2010) mentioned in their study that parents impact their children's food choices; children influence their parents; and friends influence each other in the food domain.

Küster & Vidal (2017) proved in their study that a healthy lifestyle negatively influences the willingness to consume functional foods and does not influence significantly to attitudes toward functional food. Hoek et. al (2017) described that even among the most engaged customers, the environmental aspect is regarded as a reward and is definitely not a decisive factor in food habits and behavior. The objective of healthy and sustainable food behavior is to ensure that consumers do not have to make extra effort or compromise on important features such as taste and price and convenience.

Oyedele (2018) stated that millennials are known to spend more in restaurants than any other generation.

Reilly (2019) studied that millennials are known to have unique food habits, such as viewing food as medicine and being committed to organic foods, purposefully integrating food into their lives (Turrow, 2015) and exhibiting higher demand for certain foods such as cereal, beef, pork, poultry, eggs, and fruit as compared to other generations (Conley & Lusk, 2019). Bilgihan et al. (2014) & Vogels (2019) stressed on the fact that millennials leads in new technology adoption and includes the heaviest users of social media for seeking information and sharing consumption behaviours, therefore their consumer behaviour is important to be studied.

Okumus & Ozturk (2020). Stated in their study that millennials tend to overeat, eat outside, when they are in stress and find difficulty in changing their eating habits because of daily stressors and mood. Consumer research by Accenture (2020) indicates that habits formed during the crisis will endure well beyond it, permanently changing values, attitudes and behaviour.

Although, in our country research in field of medicine and Ayurveda has been done in abundance but the attitude and beliefs of the people keep on changing from generation to generation, and is also affected by the changing environment. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze the attitude and beliefs of millennials towards their food habits and balanced diet.

## Objectives

1. To study the attitude of millennials towards their food habits.
2. To explore the awareness on consumption of balanced diet.

## Methodology

To conduct the study on the topic Analyzing the attitude of millennials towards their food habits a self-administered questionnaire was prepared and an online web-based survey was developed for data collection. The paradigms of the study were adapted from previous research studies and for the current research, about 13 items were used to measure the eating habits of millennials, while respondents were asked to give their review and their reviews were used to measure external eating habits among the millennials. Convenience sampling method was used using google forms. A total of 135 responses were collected. Descriptive analysis was done based on the responses collected and result was concluded through the same method.

## Data Analysis

Data was collected on line mode and the demographic profile included age, gender, weight and marital status. The age group is between 18-40 years of generation. Majority of the respondents were females which is like 64 % who are majorly participating in the food processing of the house. Weight is also on an average which is between 65 to 85 kg which also indicates the average wright of the population. 74% of the respondents are married and 25 % of the respondents are unmarried.65% of the respondents are in working profession and 35% are house

maker or not specified weather students of other criteria. Majority of the respondents are Graduate or post graduate and the percentage of the same is 85% and above.

**Table 1. Demographic profile**

Demographic Variables	Value	Percentage
Weight	Below 50	12.6
	51 to 65	31.1
	66 to 85	38.8
	86 and above	17.5
Age	Below 18	1.9
	18 to 25	16.5
	25 to 40	46.6
	41 and above	35
Gender	Male	35.9
	Female	64.1
Marital Status	Single	21
	Married	74
	Prefer not to say	5
Profession	Working	65
	Non-working	35
Level of Education	Graduate	22
	Post graduate	68
	Other	10

### Attitude of millennials towards their food habits

**Table 2. Attitude of millennials towards their food habits**

Particulars	Criteria	Values in %
Eating Preferences	Vegetarian	55.3
	Non-Vegetarian	4.9
	Satvik	2.9
	Category 1 & 2 Both	36.9
Awareness of proper food combination	Yes	13.6
	No	39.8
	Partially Aware	46.6
Number of meals consumed in a day	BF/ Lunch/ Dinner	72.3
	BF/ Lunch/ Dinner/ Midnight Meal	5
	BF/ Brunch/ Lunch/ Dinner	9.9
	BF/ Lunch/ Supper/ Dinner	12.9
Eating preference of fruits	After meal	19.6

	Before meal	36.3
	Along with the meal	6
	As a filler	38.2
Water consumption in a day	2 liters	29.1
	3 Liter	32
	4 Liter	20.4
	In between the meal	18.4
Time taken while food consuming	Quietly	42.2
	While watching TV	32.4
	While using mobile	8.8
	While talking	16.7
Water intake while meal consumption	Before meal	16.7
	After meal	6.9
	During meal	16.7
	30 min after meal	49
Selection of ingredients	Fresh and seasonal	100
	Imported and packed	00
Sleeping habits	Before 10 PM	10.8
	10 PM	14.7
	After 10 PM	56.9
	After Midnight	17.6
Cooking preferences	Pressure cooked	65.7
	Traditionally cooked	33.7
	Other cooking methods	01
Consumption of food according to hunger	75%	36.3
	85%	30.4
	95%	25.5
	Over eating	7.8
Preferred Temperature for food consumption	Room temperature	36.3
	Moderate hot	54.9
	Very Hot	7.8
	Chilled	01
Balance diet can help in preventing and curing diseases	Yes	62
	No	2
	May be	36

The respondents were asked several questions based on the food habits, when they were asked about the eating preferences in context to vegetarian and non-vegetarian, more than 55% population agreed to consume the vegetarian meals sue to the health benefits and asked about the

awareness of food combination that what is to go with which food, 46.6% population agreed about the partial knowledge about the same where as 39.8% agreed that that do not know anything about the food combination. Respondents were also asked about the number of meals consumed in a day, majority of the responses which is 72.3 % agreed that they consume only 3 meals a day whereas approximate 25 % agreed eating more than 3 times a day. When asked about the eating of fruits during a day, almost everyone agreed about the consumption of fruits as it provides fiber in the diet which helps in digestion where the ration of fruit consumption before meal is 37% and after meal is almost 20 % and almost 39 % respondents are consuming fruits as a filler in a day. The drinking habit of water in a day and also asked about the consumption of water during the meal, ratio was almost equal for consuming the water after, before or during the meal which is around 50% and the people who are drinking water 30 minutes after the meal is 50 % and same is for the water consumption, it is found that 30% crowd consumes 3 liter ,30% crowd consumes 2 liters and the ratio is almost same which is 30% for consuming the water 4 liters a day. Majority of the crowd is consuming the food quietly which is around 49% whereas almost equal amount of crowd is consuming the water while doing multiple tasks like watching TV or Mobile or anything related to the same. When asked about the selection of ingredients weather fresh or canned, 100% responded about the fresh item to be selected for food. When they asked about the sleeping habits after the meal consumption, more than 57 % population agreed that they are sleeping after 10 PM which whereas 15% respondents are even sleeping after midnight as well. When the respondents were asked about the consumption of food according to hunger many agreed that they do not do over eating and the ration of the same is approximately 92% and only 7.8 % are also doing over eating. When they were asked about the preferred temperature while consuming the food, it was responded as 52% preferred to eat moderate heat food where as various other temperature like very hot, cold or chilled is also consumed by 48% of crowd. And lastly they were asked about the concept of balanced diet may help in curing the diseases, 62 % agreed that they are aware where as 38 % of the respondents were not aware about the same.

### Awareness on balanced diet

**Table 3.Reviews of Millennials on balanced diet**

Respondents	Review
1	All essential need of the body is to be fulfilled with the proper nutrition
2	Increased water intake along with all vitamins and minerals
3	Heavy breakfast, light lunch and very light dinner
4	Not agreed to eat packed or convenience food
5	Not aware about the body tendency
6	Millennials have partial knowledge about the cooking patterns of different ingredients in accordance to nutritional benefits of the same
7	Lack of awareness of food according to physical work

When the respondents were asked about the concept of balanced diet, many of them responded in a positive manner. Respondents were also about the awareness of balanced diet consumed in daily meal, majority of respondents didn't know that whatever they are consuming in a day is a proper diet or not, weather it is fulfilling the body requirements and nutritional needs. 85.1 % respondents said that they are not sure about their daily food includes sufficient nutrition required by the physical need where as 14.9 % of respondents agreed that they are consuming the balanced diet according to their body need. They also gave their reviews which are stated in table-3 and some of them are also aware about the concept of proper food combination and proper food habits.

## Conclusion

The study was conducted though the online mode and the population is not generalized any specific area of the country. Many of the millennials who responded are aware of the fact that consuming hot food is not good for body system so majority of the respondents are preferring to eat moderate hot food. There is also an awareness of food combination which clearly indicates the knowledge regarding the awareness of health as well. Food must combine all the nutrients like protein, fiber, minerals, vitamins and carbohydrates according to the requirement of the body. Few also stated in their reviews that they do consult the dietitian to know what is to consume and prepare a balanced diet chart. There is also the awareness of water consumption in a day and the same must not be consumed while eating food. There is also an awareness of food and health which are directly or in-directly related to the disease cause, many agreed upon the same that proper food habits can prevent and sure from illness.

## Limitations

Since the current study was conducted on millennials in general, the entire world is going through the pandemic and food habits have drastically drifted from pre to post pandemic. Future studies could be conducted for analyzing the food habits of specific age group in context to their local culture, type of work, under medication population. Eventually, similar studies can be conducted on the basis of specific states and city covering the entire nation.

## References

1. Accenture (2020). COVID-19: New habits are here to stay for retail consumers. Retrieved on July 1st 2021 from <https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/retail/coronavirus-consumer-habits>.
2. Ankeny, K., Oakland, M. J., & Terry, R. D. (1991). Dietary fat: sources of information used by men. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association (USA)*.
3. Asp, E. H. (1999). Factors affecting food decisions made by individual consumers. *Food policy*, 24(2-3), 287-294.



4. Beaver, J. D., Lawrence, A. D., Van Ditzhuijzen, J., Davis, M. H., Woods, A., & Calder, A. J. (2006). Individual differences in reward drive predict neural responses to images of food. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 26(19), 5160-5166.
5. Bhugra, D. (2004). Migration, distress and cultural identity. *British medical bulletin*, 69(1), 129-141.
6. Bilgihan, A., Peng, C., & Kandampully, J. (2014). Generation Y's dining information seeking and sharing behavior on social networking sites: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(3), 349-366. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM11-2012-0220>
7. Biloukha, O. O., & Utermohlen, V. (2001). Healthy eating in Ukraine: attitudes, barriers and information sources. *Public health nutrition*, 4(2), 207-215.
8. Birch, L. L. (1999). Development of food preferences. *Annual review of nutrition*, 19(1), 41-62.
9. Blake, C. E., Bisogni, C. A., Sobal, J., Jastran, M., & Devine, C. M. (2008). How adults construct evening meals. Scripts for food choice. *Appetite*, 51(3), 654-662.
10. Blake, C. E., Wethington, E., Farrell, T. J., Bisogni, C. A., & Devine, C. M. (2011). Behavioral contexts, food choice coping strategies, and dietary quality of a multiethnic sample of employed parents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 111(3), 401-407.
11. Cardello, A. V. (1994). Consumer expectations and their role in food acceptance. In *Measurement of food preferences* (pp. 253-297). Springer, Boston, MA.
12. Conley, K. L., & Lusk, J. L. (2019). What to eat when having a millennial over for dinner. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*, 41(1), 56-70.
13. Dekker, L. H., Snijder, M. B., Beukers, M. H., de Vries, J. H., Brants, H. A., de Boer, E. J., & Nicolaou, M. (2011). A prospective cohort study of dietary patterns of non-western migrants in the Netherlands in relation to risk factors for cardiovascular diseases: HELIUS-Dietary Patterns. *BMC Public Health*, 11(1), 1-9.
14. Franchi, M. (2009). *Il ciboflessibile: nuovicomportamenti di consumo*. Carocci.
15. Franchi, M. (2012). Food choice: beyond the chemical content. *International journal of food sciences and nutrition*, 63(sup1), 17-28.
16. Gordon-Larsen, P., Harris, K. M., Ward, D. S., & Popkin, B. M. (2003). Acculturation and overweight-related behaviors among Hispanic immigrants to the US: the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. *Social science & medicine*, 57(11), 2023-2034.
17. Guidetti, M., & Cavazza, N. (2010). De gustibus: l'influenza sociale nella costruzione dei repertori alimentari. *Psicologia sociale*, (3), 359-386.
18. Hertzler, A. A., & Grün, I. (1990). Potential nutrition messages in magazines read by college students. *Adolescence*, 25(99), 717.
19. Himmelgreen, D. A., Pérez Escamilla, R., Martinez, D., Bretnall, A., Eells, B., Peng, Y., & Bermúdez, A. (2004). The longer you stay, the bigger you get: length of time and language use in the US are associated with obesity in Puerto Rican women. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology: The Official Publication of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists*, 125(1), 90-96.

20. Hoek, A. C., Pearson, D., James, S. W., Lawrence, M. A., & Friel, S. (2017). Shrinking the food-print: A qualitative study into consumer perceptions, experiences and attitudes towards healthy and environmentally friendly food behaviours. *Appetite*, 108, 117-131.
21. Holgado, B., de Irala-Estevéz, J., Martínez-González, M. A., Gibney, M., Kearney, J., & Martínez, J. A. (2000). Barriers and benefits of a healthy diet in Spain: comparison with other European member states. *European journal of clinical nutrition*, 54(6), 453-459.
22. Hyman, I., Guruge, S., Makarchuk, M. J., Cameron, J., & Micevski, V. (2002). Promotion of healthy eating: Among new immigrant women in Ontario. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, 63(3), 125-129.
23. Jolly, D. A. (1991). Differences between buyers and nonbuyers of organic produce and willingness to pay organic price premiums. *Journal of Agribusiness*, 9(345-2016-15413), 97-111.
24. Köster, E. P., & Mojet, J. (2007). Boredom and the reasons why some new food products fail. *Consumer-led food product development*, 262-280.
25. Küster-Boluda, I., & Vidal-Capilla, I. (2017). Consumer attitudes in the election of functional foods. *Spanish Journal of Marketing-ESIC*, 21, 65-79.
26. Land, B. (1998). *Consumers' dietary patterns and desires for change*. MAPP.
27. Lieux, E. M., & Manning, C. K. (1992). Evening meals selected by college students: impact of the foodservice system. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 92(5), 560-566.
28. Margetts, B. M., Thompson, R. L., Speller, V., & McVey, D. (1998). Factors which influence 'healthy' eating patterns: results from the 1993 Health Education Authority health and lifestyle survey in England. *Public Health Nutrition*, 1(3), 193-198.
29. Millennial's food trends: what do millennials eat? Retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 from <https://www.linkfluence.com/blog/millennial-food-trends-what-do-millennials-eat>.
30. Okumus, B., & Ozturk, A. B. (2020). The impact of perceived stress on US millennials' external and emotional eating behavior. *British Food Journal*.
31. Parker Frisbie, W., Cho, Y., & Hummer, R. A. (2001). Immigration and the health of Asian and Pacific Islander adults in the United States. *American journal of epidemiology*, 153(4), 372-380.
32. Povey, R., Conner, M., Sparks, P., James, R., & Shepherd, R. (1998). Interpretations of healthy and unhealthy eating, and implications for dietary change. *Health Education Research*, 13(2), 171-183.
33. Hertzler, A. A., & Frary, R. B. (1995). College students' nutrition information networks. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 24(2), 191-202.
34. Reilly, M. K. (2019). What matters to millennials: As millennials show preferences for whole-food diets, how can supplements fit in? *Natural Foods Merchandiser*, 40(1), 58.
35. Schifferstein, H. N., & Ophuis, P. A. O. (1998). Health-related determinants of organic food consumption in the Netherlands. *Food quality and Preference*, 9(3), 119-133.
36. Stampfer, M. J., Hu, F. B., Manson, J. E., Rimm, E. B., & Willett, W. C. (2000). Primary prevention of coronary heart disease in women through diet and lifestyle. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 343(1), 16-22.

37. The Restaurant Times. How The Changing Food Habits Of, Millennials Are Impacting The Restaurant Business. Retrieved on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 from <https://www.posist.com/restaurant-times/resources/millennialschanging-food-habits-and-impact-on-restaurant-business>.
38. Torjusen, H., Lieblein, G., Wandel, M., & Francis, C. A. (2001). Food system orientation and quality perception among consumers and producers of organic food in Hedmark County, Norway. *Food quality and preference*, 12(3), 207-216.
39. Turrow, E. (2015). A taste of generation yum: How the millennial generation's love for organic fare, celebrity chefs and microbrew will make or break the future of food. Pronoun
40. Vogels, E. (2019). Millennials stand out for their technology use, but older generations also embrace digital live. Pew Research. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/09/09/us-generations-technology-use>.
41. Wandel, M. (1994). Consumer concern and behaviour regarding food and health in Norway. *Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics*, 18(3), 203-215.
42. Wilkins, J. L., & Hillers, V. N. (1994). Influences of pesticide residue and environmental concerns on organic food preference among food cooperative members and non-members in Washington State. *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 26(1), 26-33.