

Change in Food Choice Behavior: Trend and Challenges

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Abstract : Food choice behavior is complex and determined by biological, psychological, socio-cultural, and economic factors. The past two decades, have seen dramatic changes in food consumption patterns among urban Indian consumers. The objective of the current study was to evaluate perceptions about changes with respect to food choice behavior. Ten participants [urban men and women] ranging in age from 40 to 65 were selected and in-depth interviews were conducted with a set of open ended questions. The recorded interviews were transcribed and thematically analyzed using inductive, open and axial coding. The results identified themes that act as drivers and consequences of change in food choice behavior. Drivers such as globalization [sub themes of urbanization, education, income, and work environment], media and advertising, changing gender roles, women in the workforce, and change in family structure have influenced food choice, both at an individual and national level. The consequences of changes in food choice were health implications, processed food consumption, food decisions driven by children and eating out among others. The study reveals that, over time, food choices change and evolve. However it is interesting to note how market forces and culture interact to influence individual behavior and the overall food environment which subsequently affects food choice and the health of the people.

Keywords : change, consequences, drivers, food choice, globalization

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