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Education

# **ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

# ROLE OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS IN HEALTH OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

**KEY WORDS:** Socioeconomic status, Adolescent Girls, Diet & Nutrient Intake and secondary schools

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The purpose of the research was to study the socioeconomic status, dietary pattern, diet and nutrient intake of adolescent girls. The sample of the study of 100 girls from the low economic group between age group 10-18years was selected purposively from secondary schools of Mathura city. Self-developed schedule was used to collect information regarding adolescent girls of secondary schools. The results of the study inferred that the diet of adolescent girls is found comparatively low in many nutrients especially energy, protein, calcium, iron, vit-B and vit-A and various factors were found responsible for it like low socioeconomic group, parents' education and occupation, family size, birth order etc. Lack of nutrition leads to poor health and even morality. Therefore, proper education can develop healthy practices, and knowledge of proper sources of protein, energy, fat vitamins and minerals in their diet.

## INTRODUCTION

ABSTRACT

Nutrition is a major component of human health and it is from satisfactory nutritional status that many desirable objectives in quality of living are achieved. Lack of nutrition leads to poor health and even morality. In a country like India with a multitude of social customs and believes cited against women, it is no wonder that the prevalence of malnutrition among girls remains quite high due to lack of education. UNICEF had declared 1990 as the year of girl child group. Therefore this age (10-18 years) must receive considerable attention, as they are the crucial segment of our population. The growing girls' need of various nutrients increases as this is the beginning of child bearing age. The foundation of further growth is laid at this period. Growth is influenced by certain factors environment and socioeconomic level. Because of puberty spurt, rapid physical growth does take place during this period and therefore nutritional requirement are quite different. In this age psychological problems are of considerable magnitude and they may exert significant influence on their nutritional status. Therefore the present work was conducted in Mathura city to know about the socioeconomic information, dietary pattern, and diet and nutrient intake of adolescent girls of secondary schools.

# **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

### The study was conducted with the following objectives:

- To study the socioeconomic status of the adolescent girls of secondary schools.
- To study the dietary pattern of adolescent girls of secondary schools.
- To study the diet and nutrient intake of adolescent girls of secondary schools.

#### METHODOLOGY

#### Sample

The sample of the present study of 100 girls from the low income group between the age group 10-18 years was drawn from secondary schools of Mathura city. The purposive method of sampling was used for selection of the sample.

#### Variables

# Following were the variables involved in the study:

#### Independent Variables

The independent variables selected in the present study were age, birth order, and religion, composition of family members, education, occupation and income status of parents of the adolescent girls of secondary schools.

#### Dependent Variables

The major and dependent variables under the investigation were dietary pattern, diet and nutrient intake of adolescent girls of secondary schools.

#### Tool

A schedule was constructed to collect information regarding

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socioeconomic information, dietary pattern, and diet and nutrient intake of adolescent girls of secondary schools.

#### **Result and Discussion**

The data collected is tabulated and the results obtained are presented under the following headings:

Majority of the respondents were form age group 13-15 years (34%) followed by the age group 10-12 years (33%) and 16-18 years (33%). Regarding birth order majority of the respondent were from first to third birth order (58%), followed by fourth to six and seventh to above birth order (25%) and (17%) respectively.

The result shows that majority of the respondents were from 7above members 52%, followed by 5-6 and 3-4 family members 35% and 13% respectively.

Respondents from education of father comprised out of 100 sample, the majority 85% of father were literate and rest 15% were illiterate. Out of 85 samples, the majority 35% fathers were up to high school, followed by >high school, primary and <primary 26%, 21% and 18% respectively.

Regarding the mother's education, out of 100 samples, the majority 80% of the mothers were literate and rest 20% were illiterate. Out of 80 literate samples, the majority 38% of mother were up to high school, followed by primary,>high school and <primary 29%, 25% and 8% respectively.

Respondents from occupation of father comprised out of 100 samples, the majority 41% of father were laborers, followed by private job, government job and business 31% 16% and 12% respectively.

Regarding the occupation of mother, out of 100 samples, the majority 40% of mother were laborers, followed by housewives, private job and government job 31%, 20% and 9% respectively. It is found that majority 61% of the respondents were belonged to family income up to Rs. 2001-4000 and above Rs.4001 34% and 5% respectively.

It is found in the present study that the majority 75% of the respondent were consuming meals twice a day while 15% and 10% were consuming meals thrice a day and more than thrice.

In the present study, the majority 60% of the respondents were irregular in taking meals while only 40% were regular.

The mean nutrient intake and its comparison with standard value of ICMR. It shows that low mean nutrient intake was found in the adolescent girls of secondary schools aged 10-18 years. The majority of the nutrients were found deficit in the diet of adolescent girls of secondary schools. It further reveals that as age advances, the decreasing trend has been observed in regard to

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energy (37.91% in 10-12 years, 24.85% in 13-15 years and 16.89% in 16-18 years), similarly Quarma et.al. (1990) reported that a higher percentage of girls (91.2%) belonging to lower socioeconomic status consumed inadequate energy than those of upper socio-economic status girls (38.2%), protein (37.24% in 10-12 years and 29.10% in 13-15 years) and vitamin B1 (72% in 10-12 years, 40% in 13-15 years and 25% in 16-18 years). While, a different trend have been observed in regard to protein deficit in the age group of 16-18 years (30.87%). Regarding fat deficit, it shows lower values in the age group of 10-12 and 13-15 years (15.31% and 18.59%). While, higher deficit value was observed in the age group of 16-18 years (23.90).

It is further reveals that calcium and vitamin C deficit were higher in 10-12 years and 13-15 years and lower deficit value was observed fin 16-18 years age. Vitamin A was higher in 10-12 years and 16-18 years age group and lower deficit value was observed in 13-15 years age. Iron deficit was found common in all age groups.

It is found that mean intake of all nutrients like energy, protein, fat, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin B1 which are below to the standard value of ICMR. Thus, adolescent girls' diet was found deficit in all nutrients in comparison to RDA.

The result shows that the comparison nutrient intake of adolescent girls aged 10-18 years with RDA (ICMR). All the nutrients is found comparatively low and showing deficit from the RDA (ICMR).

#### Conclusion

The diet of the adolescent girls is found comparatively low in many nutrients especially energy, protein, calcium, iron, vit-B, and vit-A. It is found that 75% of the total adolsecent girls were not consuming meals twice a day and 25% consuming meals thrice a day. The mean intake was found deficit in all three groups (10-18 years) as compared to the balanced diet. The mean intake was found to be lower than recommended dietary allowances (ICMR, 1990). The factors responsible for deficit diet in adolescent girls may be due to lack of inadequate meals, large family size, low socio economic status, unavailability of the energy, protein rich foods and lack of time for food preparation as majority of mothers were working. The inadequate diet may be responsible for their improper growth and development, fatal health and especially for girls because they would be mothers in future.

#### Recommendations

- The teacher should teach about the importance of diet and nutrient intake, dietary pattern, and its relation to health to all especially to the adolescent girls because it is this period which shows the peak rate of growth and development.
- Various nutrition programs were conducted by government since independence in India but, benefits of various nutrition programs have not been so profound particularly in case of girl child.
- Government should introduce some campus and awareness program so that adolescent and their parents could be made aware about the importance of a healthy diet by proper education during growing age and also about the adverse effects of nutritional deficiencies on their health.

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