

# Fast Food Addiction and Its Impact among the Villagers at Kallakurichi District, Tamil Nadu

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**Abstract:** Fast food refers to meals that are prepared and served quickly, often requiring minimal preparation time. It is widely available through various sources such as restaurants, roadside stalls, and small eateries. Fast food has gained popularity due to its convenience, taste, and easy accessibility. However, not all fast foods are healthy, as they may contain high levels of saturated fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and preservatives. Previous studies have shown a significant rise in fast food consumption among rural populations. In light of this trend, the researcher conducted a study involving a sample of 550 individuals from villages in the Kallakurichi District to assess fast food addiction and its impact on the local population.

**Keywords:** Fast Food – Fast Food Addiction – Influence – Fast Food Impact – Behaviour – Health Issues – Awareness – Recommendation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of fast food originated in the West, designed to serve a large number of people in a short amount of time. It has proven to be a highly successful and rapidly growing industry. Typically, Western fast food consists of pre-cooked or pre-prepared meals that can be quickly assembled and served. Well-known international fast food chains like McDonald's, Burger King, and KFC have become symbols of this culture, often offering food that is high in salt, fat, and calories, making them less healthy options.

In contrast, Indian fast food presents a different picture. Although the Western fast food model has gained a presence in India — even appearing in upscale restaurants and nightclubs — India has long had its own version of fast food deeply rooted in its culinary traditions. Indian fast food is widely available in vegetarian restaurants and on the streets, where dishes are often freshly prepared and reflect regional tastes. While the idea of quick, affordable meals might have originated in the West, the Indian version of fast food is uniquely its own and has been an integral part of Indian culture for generations.

### ➤ Fast Food

The fast food is a kind of food that is cooked and served very quickly in special restaurants, hotels and decorated

roadside shops. Fast food is a type like fried chicken, burger, noodles and pizza which can be taken away to eat as the customers wish.

### ➤ Fast Food Addiction

Food addiction is characterized by a dependency on the pleasurable sensations derived from eating certain types of food. This reliance can lead individuals to eat even in the absence of hunger, creating a self-perpetuating and harmful cycle. As the addict continues to seek out foods that provide temporary emotional gratification, they often consume far more than what is necessary for proper nutrition.

Over time, this pattern of overindulgence can result in a range of physical, emotional, and social consequences. Common outcomes include digestive problems, heart disease, obesity, low self-esteem, depression, and social withdrawal. Despite facing these negative effects, individuals struggling with food addiction may repeatedly return to these eating behaviors in pursuit of the same fleeting feelings of pleasure.

### ➤ Table – 1 : Impact Of Fast Food

Fast food consumption can lead to two types of impacts:

#### • Short-Term Impact:

In the short term, fast food may lead to immediate effects such as indigestion, fatigue, bloating, and a spike in

blood sugar levels. It may also provide temporary satisfaction and convenience, which encourages frequent consumption.

- *Long-Term Impact:*

Over time, regular consumption of fast food can contribute to serious health issues such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension. It may also lead to emotional and social problems, including low self-esteem, depression, and social isolation.

➤ *Short-Term Impacts of Fast Food Consumption:*

- *Spike in Blood Sugar:*

Fast food is often high in refined carbohydrates and sugars, leading to sudden spikes in blood glucose levels, which can cause energy crashes and mood swings.

- *Increased Blood Pressure:*

High sodium content in fast food can lead to an immediate rise in blood pressure, especially in individuals sensitive to salt.

- *Increased Inflammation:*

Ingredients high in trans fats and sugar can trigger inflammation in the body, potentially affecting immunity and overall health.

- *Poor Nutrient Intake:*

Frequent consumption of fast food can displace more nutrient-dense meals, leading to deficiencies in essential vitamins and minerals.

- *Binge Eating:*

The highly palatable nature of fast food can encourage overeating or binge eating, driven more by craving than actual hunger.

➤ *Long-Term Impacts of Fast Food Consumption:*

- *Digestive System:*

Regular intake of greasy and processed foods can lead to chronic digestive issues such as constipation, acid reflux, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

- *Immunity and Inflammation:*

A diet high in unhealthy fats and sugars can weaken the immune system and cause chronic inflammation, increasing the risk of various illnesses.

- *Memory and Learning:*

Studies suggest that diets high in trans fats and sugar can negatively affect brain function, impairing memory, learning, and cognitive performance.

- *Allergies:*

Preservatives, additives, and artificial coloring in fast foods may trigger or worsen allergic reactions and sensitivities, especially in children.

- *Heart Disease:*

Long-term consumption of foods high in saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol increases the risk of heart conditions, including hypertension and coronary artery disease.

- *Obesity:*

Fast food is energy-dense and nutrient-poor, contributing significantly to unhealthy weight gain and obesity, particularly in children and adolescents.

- *Education:*

Poor nutrition from frequent fast food intake can lead to reduced concentration, lower academic performance, and fatigue in students.

- *Mental Health Impact:*

Diets rich in processed foods have been linked to a higher risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental health disorders due to poor nutrient balance and gut-brain interaction.

➤ *Statement of the Research Problems*

There were 550 respondents chosen for the research from the villages Kallakurichi District. Out of the total numbers, 500 are consuming fast food and 50 are not consuming fast food. From the list of fast food consumption, 400 respondents have affected with health issues and remaining 100 are not. It seems, the rural people are addicted to fast food and affected by health issues. At the end, the researchers had identified that the fast food addiction leads to health issues. So the researcher had undertaken this research to examine the fast food addiction and its impact among the villagers.

➤ *Objectives*

- To critically examine the patterns of fast food consumption among rural populations.
- To assess the extent to which fast food culture has proliferated in village settings.
- To investigate the health-related consequences associated with fast food intake in rural areas.
- To evaluate rural communities' awareness of the potential health risks linked to fast food consumption.
- To analyze the broader socio-economic and health impacts of fast food consumption in rural regions

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted by the researcher in Kallakurichi District, Tamil Nadu. The sample size of this research was 550 by applying simple random sampling method. The researcher used the questionnaire to collect the primary data from the public and also collected necessary data from the text books, magazines, websites and previous research work that were used as the secondary data. The researcher also applied the simple percentage method to analyse the data.

### III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **Khurshid Anwar Warsi and Syeedun Nisa (2005)**, various socio-economic shifts have contributed to changes in dietary habits. The rise in dual-income households, an increase in single-parent families, and the prevalence of long commutes to work and school have significantly impacted daily routines. These factors, coupled with limited lunch breaks and time constraints, often reduce the opportunity for individuals to shop thoughtfully for groceries or prepare home-cooked meals. Consequently, fast food has become a convenient and necessary choice for many during the weekdays.

**Ashakiran (S.) and Deepthi R. (2012)**, argue that globalization has significantly contributed to the widespread penetration of junk food into developing nations. Junk food has become a common part of daily life in both developed and developing countries, accompanied by a notable rise in obesity and related health issues. The authors emphasize that moderation is crucial—junk food should be consumed occasionally and in small quantities. They maintain that it is not impossible to shift dietary preferences away from junk food and toward healthier alternatives, suggesting that public awareness and conscious choices can help combat this growing nutritional concern.

According to **Yuchu Song (2016)**, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has remained consistently high and has continued to increase over recent decades. Among the various contributing factors, the excessive consumption of fast food is identified as a significant driver of this epidemic. The literature review conducted by Song highlights the negative health consequences associated with fast food consumption and presents data on the average intake among the general population. Building on this foundation, the study seeks to investigate the underlying factors that influence

individuals' decisions to either consume or avoid fast food. Furthermore, it offers a summary of evidence-based recommendations aimed at reducing fast food consumption, drawn from existing research.

According to **Heather McNeill (2017)**, students across various grade levels often lead busy and fast-paced lives, which contributes to their frequent reliance on fast food. The widespread availability and accessibility of fast food outlets make it a convenient and time-efficient option for students seeking quick meals amidst their demanding schedules.

A study conducted by **N. R. R. Masthi & A. Jahan the Department of Community Medicine, Kempegowda Institute of Medical Sciences, Bengaluru (2020)** reported that junk food addiction was observed in over one-tenth of the subjects, with the majority exhibiting mild addiction. Diarrhea was identified as the most common acute health issue, while overweight and obesity were the predominant chronic health problems among the participants. The study found that obesity, lifestyle habits, and the use of electronic gadgets independently influenced the prevalence of junk food addiction. Additionally, more than one-quarter of the subjects adhered to fad diets. The authors emphasized the need for larger-scale studies employing the novel junk food addiction scale, encompassing a broader geographic region and diverse social groups, to better understand evolving dietary patterns across generations and to generalize the findings.

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation refers to the process of organizing, examining, and drawing meaningful conclusions from collected data. It helps transform raw numbers or observations into insights that support decisions and solve problems.

Table 1 Gender & Age

Categories	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Gender	Male	400	72.73
	Female	150	27.27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	3-17	200	36.36
	18-30	300	54.55
	31-45	50	09.09
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Primary Data

#### ➤ Interpretation

The above table shows about the gender and the age group of the respondents of the respondent. Accordingly 72.73% of the respondents are male and 27.27% of the

respondents are female. Likewise, 36.36% of the respondents are in the age group of 3-17, 54.55% of the respondents are in the age group of 18-30 and 9.09% of the respondents are in the age group of 31-45.

Table 2 Fast Food Available In Villages, Consumption of Fast Food and Consume Period

Categories	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Fast Food Available In Villages	Yes	495	90
	No	55	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>
Consume Fast Food	Yes	500	90.91

Consume Period	No	50	9.09
	<b>Total</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>100</b>
	Everyday	100	20
	Weekly Once	200	40
	Monthly Once	150	30
	Occasionally	50	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Primary Data

➤ *Interpretation*

The above table shows about the availability of Fast Food in the Villages, Consumption of Fast Food by the respondents. According to the above classification, Fast Food is available in the Villages of 90% respondents and the fast food is not available in the Villages of 10% Respondents. Out of the total respondents, 90.91% of the respondents are consuming fast food and 9.09% of the respondents are not

consuming respondents.

Out of the total respondents, 20% of respondents consume fast food everyday, 40% of the respondents consume Fast Food Weekly once, 30% of the respondents consume Fast Food Monthly once and 10% of the respondents consume Fast Food Occasionally.

Table 3 Influences To Consume Fast Food and Favourite Fast Food

Categories	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Influences to Consume Fast Food	Friends	250	50
	Social Media	150	30
	Advertisement	100	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
Favourite Fast Food	Pizza	20	4
	Burger	40	8
	Sandwich	65	13
	Noodles	115	23
	Chips	30	6
	Fried meat	85	17
	Popcorn	30	6
	Biscuit	20	4
	Ice cream	95	19
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources Primary Data

➤ *Interpretation*

The table above illustrates the factors influencing respondents' fast food consumption and their preferred fast food choices. Among the respondents, 50% are influenced by their friends to eat fast food, 30% are swayed by social media, and 20% are influenced by advertisements.

When it comes to favorite fast foods, 4% of respondents prefer pizza, 8% favor burgers, 13% opt for sandwiches, and 23% enjoy noodles. Six percent of respondents prefer chips, while 17% enjoy fried meat. Popcorn is the favorite of 6% of respondents, biscuits are favored by 4%, and 19% of respondents choose ice cream as their top fast food.

Table 4 Addicted To Fast Food

Categories	Particulars	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Addicted to Fast Food	Yes	400	80
	Some Times	100	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
Affected With Health Issues	Yes	450	90
	No	50	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
Types of health Issues	Obesity	125	27.78
	Diabetes	150	33.33
	Heart disease	25	05.56
	Diarrhea	100	22.22
	Depression, Eating Disorder, etc.	50	11.11
	<b>Total</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Sources Primary Data

### ➤ Interpretation

The above table shows about the Fast Food Addiction, Health Issues and Types of health Issues by Fast Food. Out of the total respondents, 80% of the respondents are addicted to fast food and 20% of the respondents are sometimes addicted to fast food.

Out of the total respondents, 90% of the respondents have affected with the health issues because of the fast food and 10% of the respondents have not affected with the health issues because of the fast food.

Out of the total respondents, 27.78% of the respondents are affected by obesity, 33.33% of the respondents are affected by diabetes, 5.56% of the respondents are affected by heart disease, 22.22% of the respondents are affected by diarrhea and 11.11% of the respondents are affected by Depression, Eating Disorder, like health issues.

### ➤ Findings

- The Male gender is the majority (72,73%) among the respondents
- The 18 to 30 age group represents the majority of fast food consumers, accounting for 54.5% of the respondents.
- Fast food is available in the Villages of 90% respondents
- 90.91% of the respondents are consuming fast food
- 40% of the respondents consume Fast Food Weekly once
- 50% of the respondents are Influenced by friends to Consume Fast Food
- Noodles are the favorite fast food for 23% of the respondents.
- Fried meat is the favourite fast food of the 17% respondents
- A significant 80% of the respondents are addicted to fast food.
- 90% of the respondents have affected with the health issues because of the fast food
- 33.33% of the respondents are affected by diabetes and
- 27.78% of the respondents are affected by obesity

### ➤ Suggestions

- The villagers are to be educated about the harm of the fast food and to be motivated to consume the traditional food only.
- Generally any food is to be consumed only for good health and not for taste and so the fast food habits or attitudes are to be replaced with the traditional food.
- The awareness events in the regional language may be given with the Case studies, Videos, Audio, Posters, etc.
- When the fast food is consumed at night, the people may feel or face the problems like Sleepless, Vomit sensation, Stomach pain and Intestine Cancer etc. So the Fast food may be avoided in day-today life or at-least in the night time.
- Depression and obesity are the major health issues faced by the villagers. So, the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India may inspect, investigate, find the

fraudulent business and to take necessary actions especially on the street or Road Side Fast Food Sellers.

- The villagers are to be motivated to take regular (Traditional) food, home-made snacks like Cereals, Millets, Fresh Vegetables, Green Leaves, sufficient Water, etc.

## V. CONCLUSION

The researcher of this study has identified that the respondents want to adapt to the new trends and transformations of all activities in all aspects which includes the changes in the food habits. The food habits of the modern world have influenced among the villagers and it caused to move slowly towards the fast food culture. Various research report related to the fast food speaks that the villagers instead of cooking at home, prefer to consume fast food either from the shops or from the street/road sellers.

As this is the competitive world, the fast food market carries business by targeting the rural & urban living society and supplies two different qualities of fast food for rural people and urban people. As the rural society is not aware of the different fast food culture, they believe and consume from the local market and slowly they are affected with the health issues like Sleepless, Vomit sensation, Stomach pain, Intestine Cancer etc.

Finally the researcher concluded that the food habits are for the health only and not for the taste. It is a fact that the food is to be consumed for maintaining good health to live long life and not to end our life within a short span of life. So, the awareness on impact of fast is the emerging need to the society to prevent the fast food addicted people from falling in ill.

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