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Influence of socio-economic and communication determinants on millet consumption among youngsters

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Abstract
This study was conducted in Parbhani district of Maharashtra with the aim to study the attitude of youngsters (15-29 years) towards millet consumption. Three tehsils, Parbhani, Manwat, and Gangakhed, were chosen randomly. A total of twelve villages were chosen, and from each village, ten participants were purposively chosen, constituting a sample size of 120 participants. The research design adopted was ex post facto. Statistical tools like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation were used for data analysis.

Most of the participants (57.50%) belonged to the young teenage group (21-25 years), followed by 25% in the young adult group (26 and above), and (17.50%) were aged upto 20 years. Most of the participants (59.16%) were graduates, followed by 33.33% with high school education and (7.5%) with middle-level education. A larger proportion of participants were male (70.83%), while 29.16% were female. 55.83% of participants belonged to nuclear families, while (21.66%) with large families. Most of the participants (59.16%) had medium annual income (Rs1,53,043-4,82,957), followed by (22.50%) in the high-income category and (18.33%) in the low-income group. In terms of media exposure, (58.33%) had medium exposure, (40.83%) had high exposure, and only (1.2%) had low exposure. 28.33% of participants' parents were engaged in farming, followed by farming + business (21.66%) and private jobs (18.33%). About social participation, 25% were members of single organisation, 30% were members of more than one organisation, and 45% were office holders.

As for their attitude towards millet consumption, the majority (57.50%) of the participants showed a moderately favourable attitude, (25.83%) had a less favourable attitude, and (16.66%) had a highly favourable attitude. A positive and significant relationship was found between age, mass media exposure, and social participation with the attitude of youngsters. Other variables such as education, gender, family type, family size, parental occupation, and annual income exhibited a positive but non-significant relationship.

The major constraints reported in millet consumption were the high cost of millets compared to cereals (100%), cultural preferences (95.83%), unappealing taste and texture (81.66%), limited recipes and cooking methods (80.83%), lack of marketing (30.83%), and poor availability in local markets (13.33%).

Keywords: Influence, socio-economic, determinants, millet, youngsters

1. Introduction

In the context of the pandemic and the rising prevalence of junk food, maintaining a healthy diet has become increasingly important. Millets are gaining popularity as dietary options. In central and southern India, millet was once a staple food that was regularly consumed until the Green Revolution shifted preferences towards more accessible grains like rice and wheat. For over 5,000 years, millets have been significant crops in the Indian subcontinent. Historically dubbed as the poor man's food grain due to their affordability, millets are now being recognized by health-conscious youth who are discovering their nutritional benefits. Key varieties of millets cultivated and consumed in India include sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet, foxtail millet, kodo millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, and little millet. Millets are esteemed for their high nutritional value. They are rich in proteins, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants, and are known for being non-glutinous and less acid-forming compared to other grains, earning them the classification of nutritious millets or nutri-cereals.

Specifically, pearl millet and finger millet provide substantial protein content, approximately 11.8 grams and 7.4 grams per 100 grams of grain, respectively, with a low fat content of around 1.3 grams.

These grains boast a wealth of essential amino acids, niacin, and beta-carotene, along with various health benefits including anti-diabetic, anti-tumorigenic, and cardiovascular protection properties. Millets are categorized as dry crops, requiring minimal water for cultivation. They are low in simple carbohydrates while being high in complex carbohydrates, making them low-glycemic index foods. Rich in dietary fiber, both soluble and insoluble, millets serve as effective prebiotics. A typical serving of raw millet, 100 grams, provides approximately 1,580 kilojoules of energy and is a rich source of protein, fiber, B vitamins, and essential dietary minerals, particularly manganese, which constitutes 76% of their composition. Raw millet consists of around 9% water, 73% carbohydrates, 4% fat, and 11% protein. In South India, commonly consumed millets include ragi, bajra, green millet, foxtail millet, sorghum, kodo millet, and barnyard millet. The decline in millet consumption can be attributed to an increased dependency on rice and wheat, which can account for over 50% of the average caloric intake for Indian households.

Recently, notable shifts have been observed in dietary patterns, with households moving away from traditional cereals to higher-value food products such as livestock products, fruits, vegetables, and beverages. Millets play a crucial role in the rainfed regions of the country, which cover 60% of the total agricultural area. In particular, minor millets are extremely nutrient-dense and exhibit resilience to drought and stress in rainfed farming systems.

Table 1: Millet Nutrition, Protein, Fibre, and Minerals. (per 100 g)

Millet	Protein (g)	Fibre (g)	Calcium (g)	Iron (g)	Phosphorous (mg)	Magnesium (mg)	Zinc (mg)	Potassium (mg0)
Finger Millet (Ragi)	7.3	18.3	344	3.9	283	137	2.3	408
Pearl millet (Bajra)	10.6	11.5	42	8.0	296	137	3.1	307
Sorghum (jowar)	10.4	9.7	25	4.1	222	133	1.6	363
Foxtail millet	12.3	8.0	31	2.8	290	81	2.4	250
Little millet	9.7	7.6	17	9.3	220	114	1.7	210
Kodo millet	8.3	9.0	27	0.5	188	114	1.5	188
Barnyard millet	11.2	10.1	11	5.0	280	80	1.5	168
Proso millet	12.5	2.2	14	0.8	206	110	1.1	195

1.2 Promotion of millets by the Government

The Government of India is actively promoting millets (Shree Anna) through a multi-stakeholder approach under the International Year of Millets 2023. Key initiatives include the Sub-Mission on Nutri-Cereals under NFSM across 28 States and 2 UTs, with support for production technologies, certified seeds, demonstrations, and farmer trainings. States like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Odisha have launched Millet Missions. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), seed hubs, and Centres of Excellence like IIMR Hyderabad are being developed. Millets are integrated into schemes like Poshan Abhiyan, ICDS, Mid-Day Meal, and TPDS. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing PLISMBP and PMFME to support millet-based startups. Millets are promoted through events like the Global Millets Conference and India's G20 presidency. Vending machines for millet products are installed via NAFED in government offices, and all departments are advised to serve millet-based foods. Millets have been identified as One District One Product (ODOP) in 19 districts, and an Export Promotion Forum is established to boost global trade.

1.3 Youngsters of India

Youth represents the most invaluable segment of the population, as the human resource potential of individuals reaches its zenith during this critical period. They are not merely the future; they are the present of our nation, integral to driving and advancing socio-economic development. The pressing challenge lies in unleashing their inherent capabilities to break free from poverty and create sustainable development and livelihood opportunities that empower them to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. There is vast potential to significantly elevate the contributions of this demographic by boosting their labor force participation and enhancing productivity. In this study, youth is defined, following the "National Youth Policy, 2014" of the Government of India, as individuals aged 15 to 29 years. This age cohort constitutes approximately 27.5% of the population and accounts for an impressive 34% of India's Gross National Income (GNI). These statistics not only highlight the critical importance of investing in our youth but also underscore the necessity of leveraging their talents and energy to propel our nation towards a prosperous future. The journey ahead is one of tremendous opportunity, and it is imperative that we recognize the vital role our youth play in shaping the trajectory of our society.

1.4 Millet consumption in India

The analysis conducted by ICAR-IIMR demonstrates that approximately 75% of sorghum output is directly consumed by humans, highlighting its significance in human diets. Furthermore, 12% of sorghum serves as animal feed, while 8% is transformed into value-added products. Notably, 5% is utilized for alcohol production, with the remaining portion exported in various forms. Similarly, in the case of bajra (pearl millet), around 70% is designated for direct human consumption, affirming its vital role in nutrition. Additionally, 15% is allocated for animal feed, and 10% is used in breweries, with 5% processed for value addition and 1% for seed production. Ragi mirrors this trend, with about 75% of its production consumed directly by humans, 13% used as animal feed, and a modest 1% allocated for exports. These findings underscore the crucial role of these millets in both human consumption and economic utilisation.

2. Materials and Methods

This study was conducted in the Parbhani district of Maharashtra, selecting three talukas: Parbhani, Manwat, and Gangakhed at random. From each taluka, four villages were also randomly selected, resulting in a total of twelve villages. Within each village, ten participants were

purposefully chosen, leading to a total sample size of 120 individuals. An ex-post facto research design was employed to examine the attitudes of youngsters towards millet consumption. A structured interview schedule, aligned with the study's objectives, was developed and utilized for data collection via personal interviews. The independent variables analyzed included age, education, gender, family type, family size, annual income, parental occupation, mass media exposure, and social participation. The dependent variable was the attitude of youngsters towards millet consumption. The data collected were processed and analyzed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Determinants and their Imperical measures

Sr. No.	Determinants	Empirical measurements
1	Age	Chronological age of respondents at the time of interview
2	Education	Scale developed by Supe (2007) was used
3	Gender	Schedule was developed
4	Family type	As per the Maharashtra state government classification
5	Family size	Number of family members
6	Annual income	Income in rupees of person's family derived from all sources in a year
7	Mass media exposure	Schedule was developed
8	Parental occupation	Profession of respondent's parents for earning
9	Social participation	Scale developed by Supe (2007) was used

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their respective determinants

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
A	**Age**		
1	Young Children (upto 20)	21	17.50
2	Young Teenagers (21 to 25 yrs)	69	57.50
3	Young Adults (26 and above)	30	25.00
B	**Education**		
1	Middle	9	07.50
2	High School	40	33.33
3	Graduate	71	59.16
C	**Gender**		
1	Male	85	70.83
2	Female	35	29.16
D	**Family type**		
1	Nuclear	53	44.16
2	Joint	67	55.83
E	**Family size**		
1	Small	41	34.16
2	Medium	53	44.16
3	Large	26	21.66
F	**Annual income**		
1	Low (upto Rs.1,53,043)	22	18.33
2	Medium (Rs.1,53,044to 4,82,957)	71	59.16
3	High (Rs.4,82,958 and above)	27	22.50
G	**Mass media exposure**		
1	Low	1	01.2
2	medium	70	58.33
3	high	49	40.83
H	**Parental occupation**		
1	Farming	34	28.33
2	Business	9	10.83
3	Gov. job	9	05.00
4	Private job	23	18.33
5	Farming+ business	24	21.66
6	Farming+ job	10	10.00
7	Labour	11	05.85
I	**Social participation**		
1	Member of one organisation	30	25
2	Member of more than one organisation	36	30
3	Office holders	54	45

Table 4: influence of socio-economic and communication determinants on millet consumption among youngsters

Sr. No.	Determinants	Correlation coefficient 'r' value
1	Age	0.2360*
2	Education	0.08591 NS
3	Gender	0.1162 NS
4	Family type	0.02180 NS
5	Family size	0.1468 NS
6	Annual income	0.1659 NS
7	Mass media exposure	0.2463*
8	Parent's occupation	0.09156 NS
9	Social participation	0.20101*

= Significant at 0.05 level of Probability. NS= Non-Significant
** = Significant at 0.01 level of Probability

The Influence of socio-economic and communation determinants like Age, education, gender, family type, family size, annual income, mass media exposure, parental occupation and social participation on millet consumption among youngsters was studied using the correlation coefficient (r).

It was evident from Table 4 that out of the nine determinants three namely age, mass media exposure and social participation had a positive and significant influence on millet consumption and other remaining determinants namely education, gender, family type, family size, annual income and parental occupation had positive and non-significant influence on millet consumption among youngsters.

4. Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic and communication profile of youngsters.
2. To analyze the influence of socio-economic and communication determinants on millet consumption among youngsters.

5. Conclusion

The study found that the majority of youngsters (57.50%) had a moderately favourable attitude toward millet consumption. Age, mass media exposure, and social participation showed a significant positive relationship with this attitude. However, major constraints were reported, including the high cost of millets (100%), cultural preferences (95.83%), and unappealing taste/texture (81.66%). Therefore, promoting millets requires addressing both informational needs through media and practical challenges like cost and recipe innovation.

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