

Dietary Issues In Pakistan And Its Effects On Human Health: A Literary Debate

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ABSTRACT

This review study was conducted to scrutinize the available empirical literature on dietary issues in Pakistan. The basic objectives of this particular review research were to explore the various methodologies used in existing research studies, and to assess issues related to diet and its effects on human health, and to pointing¹ out those areas which have not been studied yet. This review was published to collect and produce the relevant literature from existing research work by using different search engines likewise PubMed and google Scholar. The most appropriate and relevant articles in between 2000–2024 were included. Only those research papers, which comprise the data related to dietary issues in Pakistan were considered and assessed. Almost 158 research papers were examined, in which majority were found by using same methodological procedure. The results provide significant information in reaching the conclusion and making decisions. The most of scholars interpret their findings and draw the conclusion on the basis of literature except some quantitative researches.

Keywords: *Dietary Issues, Effects, Human Health, Literary Debate, Pakistan.*

INTRODUCTION

Eating a varied food in appropriate proportions, also consuming appropriate amount of food, and drink in order to maintain the health and proper functioning of the body systems in known to be Diet. The diet has great effect on human health both positively and negatively. Unhealthy diet has broadly exhilarated many diseases which has damaging effects on human health it has consequences for weight preservation and control blood pressure. Some of experts underrate the significance of diet. [1]. The food provides heat and energy, protein, carbohydrates essential fats, minerals and vitamins to live, repair our tissues and enable to grow and function properly. We need an extensive variety of foods to maintain the suitable nutrients for our sound health [2]. Now a days, all of the individuals in a family are striving and working for livelihood, every one prefers fast foods and junk foods due to easily accessibility factor but at the same time this trend is affecting destructively to the health of individuals [3]. In a healthy living society where people have good dietary habits and follows the principles of Balance diet has lower possibility of fatal disease [4].

It is very crucial for both preventing diseases and keeping a healthy lifestyle and in improving the general health. Despite this, most of the Youngers don't have the enough knowledge about this and they considered it adversely [5]. Now a day's Junk food ingestion

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became the root cause for several diseases. It can lead to illnesses and also some other health problems likewise nutritional lacks, high cholesterol problems, diabetes, weight loss, cardiac disfunctions, sexual dysfunction, skin problems hypertension, unhappiness and obesity problems [6]. There is very close association between dietary intake and behaviour of an individual. The diet of a person effects his physical and mental capabilities. How one's feel, think, look, and act depends upon his dietary practices. People with bad dietary habits can have poorer core strength, have no quick response to any stimuli, low rate of decision power and problem-solving abilities, and also have less attentiveness [7]. On the other hand, people having practices of balance diet or good dietary habits spends their lives healthier, joyful and passes over proper growth and growth especially in adults. It includes varied nutritional food and combining needed gears like vegies, fruits, lean protein, whole grains, each of them playing significant role in promoting optimal health [8].

In the view of various experts, diet is sturdiest determinants of nutritious status sound health. Through imbalance diet and unhealthy food intake can cause severe deficiency of nutrition and may lead to several infectious diseases, non-transmitted diseases such as osteoporosis, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, heart diseases, and other long-lasting diseases [9]. For proper functioning of the various body systems a well balance and appropriate required diet is very essential. In the absence of vital food nutrients your body will not response accurately to work or routine activity. On other hand bad nutritional practices has very dreadful effects on human health and cause difficulty in performing the routine tasks. Proper diet is one of the basic requirements of all living beings on the earth. Proper diet is responsible for the provision of heat and energy to the body to meet with all the challenges and also in performing daily routine tasks. Because unhealthy and insufficient dietary practices have harmful consequences, which cause weakness, diseases and disabilities. [2]. Also, well-balanced diet and good nutritional intake combined with exercise and physical activity provide shield to occurrence of various chronic diseases and responsible to maintain the overall development and well-being of an individual [9].

In developing country like Pakistan due to the poverty, unemployment and ignorance, dietary habits of the people are very ordinary. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) Islamabad 2010 published a survey report known as PPHS (Pakistan Panel Household Survey), in which the data has been collected on the basis of height and weight. In the light of findings of the survey the consumption of junk food improved drastically in Pakistan. Elaborated some facets which have significant effect on choices and selection of food like attraction for eating, maintaining status, globalisation and urbanization, taste developed in younger particularly in culture of college and university students, feasibility for those families where husband and wife both are working in Pakistan [10]. Adolescents spend additional money on fast or junk food. Some of the restaurants and food companies are targeting students, and young generation of the society through various advertising and promoting strategies through electronic, print and social media by presenting charming recipes in different settings for the desired outcomes. In Pakistan people have less awareness about the harmful effects of these junk foods. As they produce most of the fatal diseases. In Pakistan, eating of junk food is more trending in between 6 pm to 9 pm [11].

In Pakistan most of the families practices unhealthy and junk food due to its feasibility of easily availability and attractive taste. Moreover, people prefer to eat out side of their homes except homemade food. The researchers highlighted the many factors of poor dietary habits in Pakistan which includes the unemployment, poverty, ignorance, joint and large family system. The findings of a research expressed that it is significantly related to large family size, poverty and due to illiterate mothers [12, 13]. The size of family in Pakistan is typically between 7 to 10 persons and among them only one person responsible for satisfying the basic physical, social, moral and economical necessities of the whole family. Nearly forty percent of the population in Pakistan survives under poverty line. Research expressed that large size of family, illiteracy, poverty and unawareness about nutritional

importance can have negative effects on health in Pakistan [14]. In Pakistan, literature and findings of various research studies prove that in all four provinces i.e., KP, Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab effected from diseases due to unhealthy food practice [15]. The researcher wants investigates dietary issues in Pakistan through the review of literature.

Objectives of Study

1. To assess the Dietary issues in Pakistan
2. To investigate the effects of Dietary issues on human health.
3. To assess the relationship between dietary issues and human health.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the later past there is a trend among the society to prepare the fresh and local recipes for their guests and relatives at their own kitchen. But in today's fast age the people have very less time they used to go outside of their homes and prefer to eat the junk food which is less time consuming such as roasted chicken, rolls, zinger Shawarma and burger, or pasta and pizza [11]. Today in era of globalisation and urbanisation, besides world, Pakistan fast-food industry/ manufacturing is shifting abnormally. The dietary practices, attitude, life style, dietary habits and food preference of the people has also changed. People used to follow the western style of food due to certain reasons i.e., popularity of fast-food restaurants, advertising on electronic and social media mainly in young generation of Pakistan. The delicious taste and availability at door and affordability are few aspects that have much contribution to prevalent of fast-food intake practices [16]. The chain of reputed national and international restaurants like pizza Hut, KFC, Hardees, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, Italic Pizza, Tehzeeb, Subway, Hardees and TKR are functioning in Pakistan. They are playing their part in consumption & growth of junk/fast-food industry in Pakistan.

Fast food can be defined as "ready to eat" food which is available in all public spaces like parks, streets and food corners in Pakistan. Fast food may include chicken fried, Pizza, Shawarma, Cutlets, Kababs, fried rice, samosas, potato fries, sandwiches, chat and different beans etc. As for as their classification is concerned, they are known to be energy dense food rich with large amount of sugar, cholesterol, fats and sodium but low number of certain vitamins, fibres and minerals. Fast food become figure of contemporary culture and attract more to youth and kids [9]. It is suitable and considered delicious nevertheless it arranged with unhealthy and under nutritional constituents. These are utilized for the sake of pleasure and entertaining. Because of its appealing taste easy obtainability, individuals choose fast food over home-made prepared food. It becomes the foremost cause of evading appropriate nutrition [11]. The harmful effects of fast food are Chubbiness, dietary lacks, increase in level of cholesterol, cardiac disorders, muscle atrophy, depression, asthma, sexual dysfunction as well as strokes can be caused by its regular usage [11].

Globally western world especially US playing tremendous role in promoting its food related culture and exporting the culture of fast-food consumption and habits of eating among the individuals through the advertisement of their food culture. There is significant association in amid exporting of food culture and advertisement of food culture. As individual are adopting the eating habits of western countries. It is clear from findings that western world particularly US is responsible for changing of habits related to food in many countries around the world [17]. As for as the Pakistan is concerned the fast-food industry is one of the foremost industries. The fast-food industry is responsible for 27% of its value-added manufacturing and sixteen percent of the whole employment in the industrial sector, this production engages the large portion of population in Pakistan, nearly 180 million customers. The trend of fast food is rising this industry is considered to be world eighth-largest market in Pakistan [18, 19]. A prediction was made by UNESC (United Nations Economic & Social Commission) for Asia that till 2020, out of the total world's population fifty percent would be urban in which mostly would belong from Asian countries.

Among the so many other reasons we can say that reputed business men and capitalists have been focusing on the fast-food industry in emergent markets having potential in the Asian countries like Pakistan [10, 20]. The globalization is prominent factor that has impact on the manufacturing of food and its sales, preparations as well as consumption and with rising comparative consequence of various snacks, like cold drinks, burgers, French Fries, pizzas and soft drinks. Secondly Urbanization can be said as one of the problems leading to modified eating habits and increase in revenue and dominance of young generation, as we can say that constraint for food is linked with the dietary habits of urban regions. Application of western food style amplified as revenue of developing countries like Pakistan is increased [21]. Globally another very important dietary issue was malnutrition that directly effects growth of and individual and has negative consequences on health. The high rate of mortality and morbidity particularly among kids is due to malnutrition [22]. Thus, it is exposed in research that around the globe majority of the mortality particular in the children around the globe is ascribed to undernutrition [4].

Malnutrition effects on chronological and psychological development and growth of children, consequently they appear very poor in academic attainment [23]. In young age-appropriate diet is essential to ensure the good physical and mental growth and development and also responsible improve the immune system [24, 25]. A survey finds that in the whole world there are almost 1.5 billion plus children aged up to five year remains under nourished [26]. As result of malnutrition at least half of all infant deaths occurred in worldwide [27]. Malnutrition is the principal cause of kid morbidity or death in Pakistan. It was general consensus among the people that particular issue was not been managed by authorities or government of Pakistan. Our country, Pakistan is allocated into four executive provinces: KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh. Majority of the population in Pakistan living in the rural areas, and pervasiveness of poverty is very common in areas. The residents of areas are depending upon agriculture and labour of the agriculture, looking after of livestock, doing some informal businesses and having high rank occurrence of malnutrition amongst their families especially in their kids [28].

According to (NNS) National Nutrition Survey (2011), thirty three percent kids in Pakistan were malnourished, underweight approximately 50% were undersized, 16% are unexploited, 51% were found anaemic, and 43% were found iron deficiency [29]. It is also observed in the study that from the last 20 years, there has been slight decrease in the occurrence of youngster malnutrition in Pakistan as compare to other developing countries of the world. Pakistan is declared as highest child malnutrition suffered country as compared to other developing countries [28]. Another dietary issue in Pakistan is related to the economic factor. It is well recognised that financial or economic issues related to diet, especially income and ingestion, in the health and well-being of a people is understood. However, the health and well-being does not depend merely on only these factors, some other social indicators like education, life expectancy, and diet play vital role [30]. The most substantial societal complications in the various developing countries including Pakistan having extensive malnutrition issues, and facing the high mortality rate and low literacy rate. Malnutrition is known to be as the main risk element for sickness and demise, causes more than half of the demises of teen-agers universally [30].

According to WHO, Economic and dietary evolution in the both developed and fewer developed countries have triggered considerable changes in dietary habits and practices of the individuals from multifaceted unprocessed foods to additional sophisticated and processed foods, the physical exertion has been substituted by automated work and outdoor sports is also changed with indoor inactive computer games. All these drastic deviations have been responsible for the epidemic of long-lasting fatal diseases distressing most of the individuals round the globe with damaged physical and intellectual operations i.e., improved death rate, extra load on health maintenance systems and untimely deaths [32]. Another big dietary issue in Pakistan is Smoking. It has been a very negative on long lasting

and long implicated risk agent for most of the chronic diseases i.e., Malignancy, causing heart diseases, respiratory track and elementary canal related diseases and so many other diseases. Particularly in Pakistan smoke of tobacco has very high ratio which encloses several oxidants and invites various organelle that may become root for damage the DNA, lipids, Carbohydrates and proteins and vital nutrients.

The direct tobacco use is responsible for 06 million death toll and passive smoking can cause over 600,000 demises every year [33]. Research finds that in Pakistan almost 45% of male and 6% of female are involved in any sort of smoking tobacco [34]. Poverty is also one of the most important factor as dietary issues of Pakistan is concerned. The many people of Pakistan live below the line of poverty. They even unable to accomplish their daily household necessities and food for survival. The malnutrition or undernutrition is directly associated with poverty in Pakistan. Several research studies expressed in the literature concerning the role of poverty in undernutrition and also shows that it is the reflection of poverty [35]. On the bases of (PSES, 2001) in Pakistan, a study found there is significant effect of income and expenditure on weight of an individual, at the same time it has no significant association with wasting [36]. Dietary status is an altered element of well-being from income and eating [37]. The results of this research expressed that in Pakistan, poverty position of family or its subtleties be significant factor of under nutrition for many causes. From almost fifty years, poverty ratio is increasing drastically day by day.

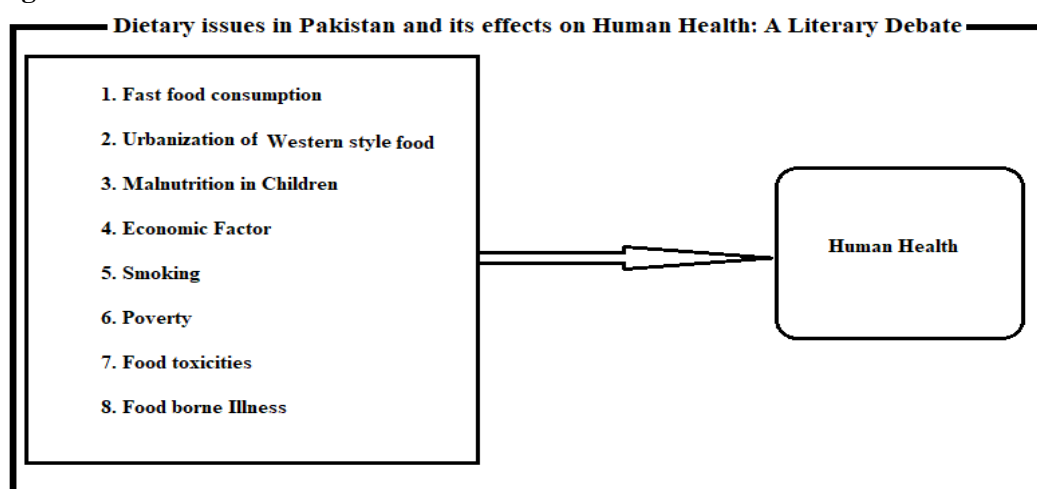
Especially in the earliest of 1990s, poverty increased more than before which causes the child under nutrition and underweight [37]. Due to the low knowledge about balance diet, unethical attitude related to diet and dietary practices in Pakistan, it has been noted that huge rise occurs in food toxicities country wide, which is considered causative agent to the spread of many foodborne sicknesses i.e., Cholera, tuberculosis, hepatitis, dysentery, typhoid, gastro problems, contact diseases, and sometimes influenza [15]. Food toxicity is also named as foodborne diseases (contamination or frustration of the gastrointestinal tract, occurs due to the ingesting of dirtied or food having toxicity [38]. Microorganisms like *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella typhi*, *E. coli* (Enter haemorrhagic *Escherichia coli*) and *Listeria* are chief reasons of foodborne diseases [39]. Foodborne diseases have been radically rising in Pakistan like another world [40]. In a report of WHO (The World Health Organization) it is estimated that over 600 million people which are nearly one person in every ten persons globally become victim of disease after eating dirtied food, whereas more than four lac people annually died of it [41].

Moreover, the occurrence of foodborne infection appears greater in the countries of Southeast Asia like Pakistan, because of having poor sanitation, non-availability of clean drinking water and unsuitable management of food are the main issues subsidising to food toxicity. The study further elaborated that some other factors, such as un standardize food, unhealthy living environment, substandard sanitation condition, and detoxification with inanimate and industrial toxins, illiteracy and poverty originate the blowout of foodborne diseases in Pakistan [42]. Physical activity and exercise also play a vital role in growth and development of the body. Besides the healthy and hygienic food and good dietary habits, exercise is very essential to get fruitful results from that very diet. Exercise is one of the main principles of the balance diet. Research explored that lack of regular physical activity, and its health-related concerns, follow with variable amount depending on knowledge of balance diet, age and gender of an individual, vulnerability to dietary tendencies, lifestyles of parents, family features, parents' occupation, policy of school food, social relations and living environments [43]. Physical activity is necessary for management of weight control, increase strength in muscle and bone, proper functioning of the body systems, emotional wellbeing and overall sound health.

Inactive lifestyles encourage obesity and overweight, weaken the metabolic functions, and also increase risk of long-lasting illnesses. Worldwide, physical inactivity and sedentary

lifestyle are responsible for increased mortality rate and has been related with the occurrence of non-communicable diseases [44]. Findings of research showed that active lifestyle, engagement in regular physical activities will improves cardiorespiratory endurance and physical fitness, produce healthy bones, and improve metabolic functions. It is noted that controlled weight decreases health risks and aids in healthier management of fatal diseases [45]. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (2014) appropriate diet regular exercise together are essential for managing the body weight [46]. For weight management one should eat according to requirements. One should keep in mind some points like age, gender, nature of occupation, body structure and weather condition to remain fit. On the daily bases our bodies require to utilize adequate eating of food. Most of people suffers from weakness having overweight or obesity due to lack of knowledge regarding daily consumption of diet. Thus, it is indispensable to have knowledge about the balance diet and physical activity to maintain and promote the standard of health [47].

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework



RESEARCH METHODS

For the purpose of data collection in this narrative review article, Google Scholar and PubMed data base search engine have been used with the keywords “Dietary issues”, “effects on human health,” and “in Pakistan”. Further searches were made for “junk food consumption” and “nutritional deficiency diseases”. Only those publications, which were based on review, observation studies and editorial have been included. The literature that does not resemble to circumstances of dietary issues in Pakistan or distracts away from the keywords is excluded, as well as any duplicates. The publications having data base of PubMed and Google scholar were included in the study. The current and the most relevant research papers in between 2000–2024 were included in this review article. The publications which only comprise the data associated to Pakistan were considered.

In this review article, letter to the editors, experimental studies, and case studies were not entertained. With the help of different keywords, 164 papers were explored at the first stage, and at secondly, title of various studies and their abstracts were read thoroughly for insertion in this particular publication. The replica and irrelevant articles and opinion were excluded. Thirdly, 98 papers were shortlisted to evaluate the topic of the articles. Then the entire abstracts of the chosen research articles were studied and reviewed, and at the fifth stage, it was decided, either include or exclude in order to review the complete text of entire paper. At the final stage, 47 research articles were confirmed relevant and incorporated for completing this study.

DISCUSSION

WHO (World Health Organization) emphasis that Diet is a foremost need of human life, the growth, and development and health of humans all depends upon quality and appropriateness of diet. The diet may prove helpful in throughout the life, earlier stage of fetus development, at birth time, during infancy, through childhood, puberty and with the passage of time in old age. Appropriate and balance diet is indispensable for life existence, physical growth and mental development, for the proper functioning of the organic systems, for fruitful productivity, and overall fitness and well-being. Diet serves as necessary foundation for all living being that is necessary for growth and development. In young age healthy dietary habits have significant role for maintenance and promotion of health and also provide safeguard to different health threats [48]. According to UNICEF poor dietary practices may provide foundation to health complications like deteriorates the immune system, rigorosity of infection and delaying the recovery. We can say that any excess or deficiency in components of food may affect adversely on body systems. It affects all individuals in society, Kids, Youngers, and particular pregnant women, because they are at high risk while giving birth to infant. Newly born baby is at bigger risk of illness and morbidity.

Pakistan is under developed country and facing the problems like unemployment, poverty, lack of education, ignorance, bad governance. Consequently, besides other complication awareness and practices of diet is burning issue and causes many diseases which may affect the human health. There is rapid growth in fast-food industry all over the world. Oxford dictionary define fast food as “Food served in restaurants or other outlets with limited and standardized menus” [49]. It is the type of food which is famous as “junk food”. It is known to be rich in Trans and saturated fats, cholesterol and sodium [6]. The industry of fast-food principally started from California in late 1940s varying the eating practices of people. In USA, this is one of the big revenue generated industries and considered as richest industry that has charm for entities of world [10]. From California it spread to other several states in the world including the Asian countries like Pakistan [50]. Fast food producing corporations are targeting teenagers and adolescent with many advertising techniques, offering wonderful tasty food. Public is unaware of the negative consequences of fast food like increase in cholesterol levels, cardiac disorders, dietary deficiencies, sexual dysfunction, strokes, liver disease and many types of cancer caused by eating fast food [11].

The individuals who have habits of eating fast food were more at risk of suffering with obesity [51]. Findings of a research expressed that fast food eating practices can cost more than normal food. Pakistan is a developing country and most of the people depends upon farming and agriculture for their livelihood. Unfortunately, above mentioned situation correlated with our country situation, where several lavish fast food items deals were offered by restaurants by focusing on youth and first-class businessmen. [15]. The education related to personal hygiene and balance diet in colleges and universities can prove helpful to aware new generation about harmful consequences of fast food and can also affect the overall health status. Now a days where development of technology and innovations of science brought drastic modification and upgrading in every field of life. Findings of study in Japan expressed that Artificial intelligence based diagnostic system, treatment of diseases and diet plan for patient makes revolutionary development [52].

A study shown the correctness of AI in forecasting about several diseases [53]. Similarly, another study results also explained the capability of Artificial intelligence to evaluate the type of cancer which may occur due to poor diet [54]. In Pakistan, the ratio of doctor per one thousand patient is about 0.83. the AI use will make improvement to create awareness among the people about the diet and its related diseases and also prove helpful in its management [55]. There is devastating affliction of malnutrition in Pakistan and food insecurity ratio is very high, which can be observed during Covid-19 pandemic. In Pakistan the micronutrient deficiencies remain very high including iron, Vit-A & Vit-D. Women in age of reproductively (15–49 years) may face severe under nutrition condition. It is shown

in the result that 41.7% women are anaemic, (79.7%) are facing vitamin D deficiency. Pakistan is facing a situation termed as GAM (global acute malnutrition) with rate of 17.7%. Miserable situations distressing 05 million individuals in Sindh and Baluchistan provinces and household food insecurity is already at peak (71%) and dietary issues like under nutrition and malnutrition are the factors which effects the health and well-being of individual [56].

CONCLUSION

This study may contribute to identify and define the predictors related to dietary issues i.e., fast food consumption, malnutrition, urbanization of western style food, economic factor, poverty, food toxicities and physical activity which may have effect on human health. It will allow us to identify scale of these problems, including fast food, food toxicities consumptions, malnutrition, food borne diseases, use of junk food, children's inadequate eating behaviours and insufficient nutrition knowledge among children, their parents/caregivers, and teachers. This study results provide assistance in developing a multidimensional educational database, is based on trustworthy knowledge. This review will cover the gap and develop empirical methodology for educational activities related to the knowledge of diet in Pakistan. Through this review study the authorities will enable to identify the dietary issues in Pakistan and can address them promptly. Furthermore, the effect of prevailing dietary issues on human health in Pakistan is highlighted. This empirical research study will furthermore offer support based on literary evidence for disease precaution to uphold the suitable development health young generation in Pakistan.

Recommendations for future researchers

Future longitudinal or qualitative studies, including large and diverse samples, are recommended to help us better understand how dietary behaviours are influenced by knowledge of balance diet. Our findings suggest that the Pakistan government and other related departments should develop priority-based comprehensive educational and health interventions, including regarding healthy diet, lifestyle, and social media use, to improve healthy eating habits.

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