



**International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai**

**Field Work Report**

**The Salient influence on Dietary Patterns among Young  
adults of Kerala residing in Mumbai**

By

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## **Introduction**

This was a qualitative research study conducted as part of the field work assigned to a group of five students. The main objectives of the study were to evaluate the perception of 'good food' among the young adults from Kerala residing in Mumbai and to see how their food habits have evolved over time. We were interested in knowing the changes in diet they have gone through and the reasons associated with the same. It delves into how factors such as health perceptions, cultural influences, and convenience impact their food choices.

## **Objectives**

1. Evaluate perceptions of 'good food' among young adults from Kerala.
2. Identify how factors like health perceptions, taste preferences, affordability, and traditional values shape their dietary habits.
3. Explore how their food choices have evolved over time after moving to Mumbai

## **Research Design and Methodology**

The study follows a qualitative design, utilizing free-listing exercises and in-depth interviews to gather detailed insights from participants.

Non probability sampling was used, particularly convenient sampling, to select the respondents of the study. We also made a classification while choosing the sample based on consumption of homemade food or mess food. The method of collecting data was by free listing method followed by an in-depth interview.

A total of 10 respondents were interviewed. Interviews lasted for around 50 minutes including the free listing.

## **Target Population**

The participants were adults aged 20-30 who migrated from Kerala to Mumbai and are associated with International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)

Sampling Criteria : Equal representation of consumers preferring home-cooked food versus mess food.

## **Data Collection**

The data was collected through:

1. **Free-Listing:** Participants listed food items that are significant to their diet.
2. **In-depth Interviews:** To gather personal perspectives on changes in dietary preferences after Migration.

All responses were recorded with the participants' consent. Voice recorders were used, providing accurate data for later transcription.

### **Data Analysis**

- a) **Transcription:** The interviews were transcribed to capture all verbal responses, which formed the basis for thematic analysis
- b) **Softwares used : Anthropac and Atlas.ti**

The free lists collected was analyzed using the software Anthropac which shows the salience or prominence of food items among the group studied. The regional homogeneity maintained in the sample and the classification between 'home food' or 'mess food' complemented our analysis of free lists. A total of 133 food items were analyzed and the most salient foods were found to be Chicken, Rice and Fish.

### **Ethical Considerations:**

Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Anonymity of respondents was ensured to protect personal information.

### **Result and Findings:**

Rice and fish are staple food items of Kerala and the result pointed to it accurately. The most ranked foods, that is, the foods that first came to the mind or topped the list according to the order was, Non-Veg, Cereals and Meat.

According to the result, a preference towards non-veg food items and rice can be seen overall, among the people of Kerala. A comparison between the two groups involved was also done, that is to see the salience and ranking among home-food consumers and mess-food consumers. Interestingly, meat, non-veg and sambhar was the three highly ranked food items for home-food consumers.

The follow-up interview gave us the reasons to this. It was found that non-veg and meat is highly consumed by respondents cooking their own food due to the price hike of vegetables and the ease in storage of meat items in fridge. Vegetables tend to be destroyed fast while non-veg curries could be heated and used again for up to 3 days. It saved their time in cooking. These reasons came up in the interview, while free listing gave the results accurately.

Hence, free listing was done effectively in this study. No comparison between the group sex was done because the female-male ratio was not appropriate for comparison.

Some key findings for:

**a) Understanding of 'Good Food':**

- Nutritious and healthy
- Tasty and mood-enhancing and satisfying food
- Less sugar, less salt, and organic ingredients
- Self-cooked, non-oily, mild foods, easy to cook
- Curd Based Food and Rice

**b) Changes in Diet after Moving to Mumbai:**

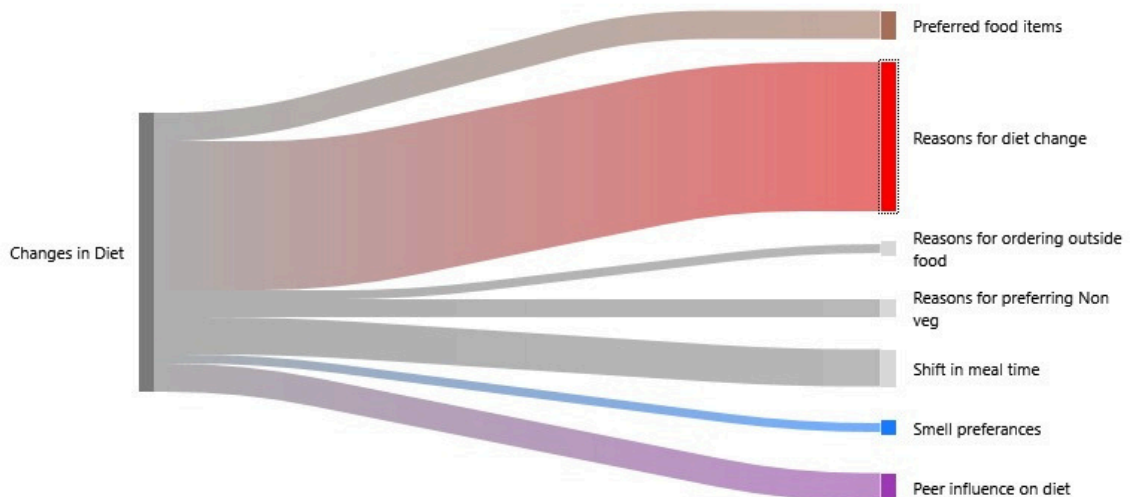
- Increased consumption of outside food, new vegetables, chapati, and coffee.
- Decreased consumption of fish and traditional coconut oil-based dishes.
- Adaptations included using mustard/sunflower oil, eating more rice, and skipping breakfast.
- Shift from bakery snacks to fruits, reflecting health concerns.

**c) Influences on Food Preferences:**

**1. Peer Influence:** Preferences adapted based on roommate habits and shared resources.

**2. Societal Influence:** Cultural taboos around certain foods like alcohol and attitudes toward Maggi, noodles influenced eating habits.

**3. Other Influences:** Personal research, social media, and exposure to Mumbai's diverse food culture introduced new eating practices.



- 1. Sample Limitation:** Participants were limited to residents of the institute, which may restrict broader generalization.
- 2. Gender Imbalance:** Difficulty in achieving a balanced male-to-female ratio.
- 3. Time Constraints:** Respondents had busy schedules, leading to brief interview responses.

This qualitative survey on the salient influences on dietary patterns among young adults from Kerala residing in Mumbai has revealed that health, cultural, societal, and convenience factors are shaping their food choices.

**2. Cultural Identity:** The strong attachment to traditional Kerala cuisine was evident among respondents. Many young adults expressed a desire to maintain their cultural food practices despite living away from home. However, the availability of traditional ingredients and cooking

methods varied, leading to adaptations in their dietary patterns. This reflects the ongoing negotiation between cultural identity and urban lifestyle.

**3. Societal Influences:** Participants noted that societal norms and peer influences play a critical role in their dietary choices. The social dynamics in Mumbai, characterized by diverse food options and trends, prompted many to explore new cuisines while still gravitating towards familiar foods from Kerala. This suggests that societal factors are pivotal in shaping dietary patterns, offering both challenges and opportunities for maintaining cultural ties.


**4. Convenience and Time Constraints:** The busy lifestyle of urban living emerged as a dominant factor affecting food choices. Many young adults reported opting for quick, convenient meal options due to time constraints associated with work or study. This reliance on convenience often led to a compromise in nutritional quality, with processed foods frequently replacing home-cooked meals.

**5. Need for Further Research:** The findings indicate a significant gap in understanding the seasonal and geographical influences on dietary habits among this demographic. Further research could explore how local availability of food, seasonal changes, and the specific challenges faced by young adults from Kerala in Mumbai impact their dietary choices.

In summary, the dietary patterns of young adults from Kerala living in Mumbai are shaped by a blend of health considerations, cultural heritage, societal influences, and the practicalities of urban life. Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted nutritional interventions and supporting the maintenance of cultural dietary practices in a rapidly changing environment. This report underscores the need for continued exploration of these influences to promote healthier eating habits while respecting cultural identities.

## **Appendix**

## Permission Letter and Consent Form

<p>अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या विज्ञान संस्थान (विश्वविद्यालय समतुल्य)</p> <p><small>स्वायत्त एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का स्वायत्त संस्थान मैथिली स्टेशन रोड, देवनागर, मुंबई - 400 088, भारत</small></p>	 <p><small>(University Established in 1986) Bigger culture in this smaller building Capacity Building for a Better Future</small></p>	<p>Sr. No.</p> <p><b>International Institute for Population Sciences</b> (Deemed to be University)</p> <p><small>An Autonomous Organisation of Ministry of Health &amp; Family Welfare, Govt. of India Goverdhan Station Road, Deonar, Mumbai - 400 088, INDIA</small></p>
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October 17, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Subject: SEEKING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FIELD WORK**

**Topic: "The Salient Influence on Dietary Patterns Among the Adults in Mumbai's ~~Slums~~."**

Sir,

I am hereby requesting you to allow the following students of **MSD Ist Year 2024-25** to conduct a survey in your locality as a part of their curriculum.

Name of the students:


1. Ms. Lilly Rose Jose
2. Ms. Sana Fatima
3. Ms. Omisha Viash
4. Mr. Ram Naresh
5. Mr. Bipul Kumar Roy

Thanking you.

Regards

*L.K. Dwivedi*

**Dr. Laxmi Kant Dwivedi.**  
Professor & Head,  
Department of Survey Research & Data Analytics,  
IIPS, MUMBAI -88.



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* [An University Established under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956, vide Ministry of Education GOI, Notification No. F.9-14/B1-U-3 dtd 14 August, 1985]		

### Consent Form:

**International institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)**  
**Consent Form (English Version)**

**Research Study Title: The Salient Influence on Dietary Patterns among Adults in Mumbai's Slums**

We, Lilly Rose, Omisha Vaish, Sana Fathima, RamNaresh and Bipul Roy, students of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, pursuing M.Sc. in Survey Research and Data Analytics (MSD) is conducting research to study and understand the dietary patterns among adults living in slum areas of Mumbai.

We are conducting this research as a part of our academic work and aimed at exploring the factors influencing the diet of the adults in Mumbai Slums. The study will employ qualitative research methods, including free listing, followed by a short interview to gather rich and nuanced participant data.

We would like to include your household as part of our interview and If you choose to participate, you will be asked some questions based on your diet. The interview will take around 30-35 minutes. Your thoughts and opinions are essential and will help complete our study successfully and all information you provide will remain strictly confidential. Your name or any identifying details will not be included in any reports or publications. With your permission, we would like to **audio-record** the interview to ensure that we accurately capture your responses. The recordings will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. You may decline the recording or request to stop the recording at any point during the interview without any consequences.

Your participation is strictly **\*\*voluntary\*\***, and you are free to skip any question or stop the interview at any point of time without providing a reason. If needed, the survey team may re-contact you to clarify or complete the information provided during this interview.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact any of the researchers listed above. By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided, and you agree to participate voluntarily in this study, including the audio recording of the interview. Please give your full signature on agreeing to participate in this interview. Thank you.

Signature / thumb impression: \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle the answer:**

1. Consent given along with signature/ thumb impression
2. Consent given but without signature/thumb impression
3. Consent Refused Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

(If the answer is 1 or 2, start the interview.)



## स्वीकृति पत्र (हिंदी संस्करण)

**शोध अध्ययन का शीर्षक:** मुंबई की झुगियों में वयस्कों के आहार पैटर्न पर मुख्य प्रभाव।

हम, लिली रोज़, ओमिशा वैष्, सना फातिमा, रामनरेश और बिप्ल रॉय, आईआईपीएस के छात्र, मुंबई की झुगियों में रहने वाले वयस्कों के खाने-पीने की आदतों को समझने के लिए एक शोध कर रहे हैं। यह शोध हमारे पढ़ाई का हिस्सा है और इस का मकसद यह जानना है कि झुगियों में रहने वाले लोगों के खाने-पीने पर कौन-कौन से बातें असर डालती हैं।

हम इस अध्ययन में आपसे कुछ सवाल पूछेंगे, जो लगभग 30-35 मिनट का समय लेगा। आपकी जानकारी पूरी तरह गोपनीय रहेगी। आपकी अनुमति से हम साक्षात्कार को रिकॉर्ड करेंगे ताकि आपकी बातें ठीक से समझ सकें। रिकॉर्डिंग सिर्फ इस शोध के लिए ही इस्तेमाल की जाएगी। आप किसी भी समय रिकॉर्डिंग को मना कर सकते हैं।

आपकी भागीदारी पूरी तरह से स्वैच्छिक है, और आप किसी भी समय साक्षात्कार को रोक सकते हैं या कोई सवाल छोड़ सकते हैं।

किसी भी रिपोर्ट में आपका नाम या पहचान शामिल नहीं होगी। अगर आपको इस अध्ययन के बारे में कोई भी सवाल हो, तो उपरोक्त किसी भी शोधकर्ता से संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

कृपया नीचे हस्ताक्षर करके अपने सहमति को दर्ज करें।

धन्यवाद।

हस्ताक्षर / अंगूठे का निशान: \_\_\_\_\_

उत्तर को चिह्नित करें:

1. हस्ताक्षर/अंगूठे के निशान के साथ सहमति दी गई
2. हस्ताक्षर/अंगूठे के निशान के बिना सहमति दी गई
3. सहमति अस्वीकार कर दी गई साक्षात्कारकर्ता का नाम: \_\_\_\_\_
4. तारीख: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

(यदि उत्तर 1 या 2 है, तो साक्षात्कार शुरू करें।)