

Research Paper :

## Awareness of women consumers regarding food safety

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### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted by selecting 120 women consumers of Jorhat to find out the awareness of women consumers regarding food safety. It was found that 46% of women consumers had low level of awareness, 42% had high level of awareness and only 12% had medium level of awareness.

**Key words :** Women consumers, Food safety, Adulteration, Standards marks, Brand name

Good health is of paramount importance for every individual. The intake of appropriate and adequate food and their effective utilization by human body is seen as the cornerstone of human growth and development. But it is estimated that seven million people a year are affected with food borne illness of which almost 700 have proved to be fatal. Thus, safety of food quality must be given special attention. The aspects are many and various, including but not limited to additives, residues, contaminants, product tampering, nutritional properties and microbial contaminations.

Safety is a judgment of the acceptability of a risk, which itself is a measure of the probability and severity of harm to human health. A food or a substance in a food can be considered safe if its risk are judged to be acceptable (Bajaj and Anand, 2002). Thus, safety of food is an assurance that food will not cause any harm to the consumers when it is prepared or consumed according to its intended use (Prakash and Bajaj, 2000).

The problem of food safety is increasing with development and modernization. Each year, the world's population grows by about 90 million people. Industrialization is the only solution to it. Food production and processing are among the industries that are growing, as a result of which small scale food producers and cottage industries usually out in large scale, commercial producers and processors. At times, they are identified to be the sources of environmental pollution and unsafe food, since they lack adequate facilities and knowledge to produce foods that are safe and of acceptable quality. Traditional practices passed down through generations are the only guidelines for food preparation.

With modernization, the demand for street or rather fast food stalls is mushrooming at such a rate that water

supplies and waste disposal are not sufficient. Moreover, there has been a rapid development in food production, processing and distribution system and techniques. Initially the processing of food was done at cottage or community level. However, with changing socio, cultural and economic scenario, there has been an apparent shift in the food habits, resulting in demand for highly processed foods involving sophisticated technology. A wide range of products such as canned products, both vegetative and animal origin, nutritious foods, fast foods, beverages and organic foods are being produced in the country and the industry has diversified tremendously in the past few decades.

Because of complex, present day food production and distribution system, it is impossible for the consumer to rely on self protection. Consumer protection is necessary to prevent injury to health and to prevent the consumer from being deceived as to the nature, quality or value of the food. There exists a host of food safety and fraud matters, such as natural and man made toxic substances in food, nutritional components of food adulteration, microbiological and chemical contamination causing human illness, misleading presentation and advertising and so on. Keeping these points in view, the investigator was interested to know the awareness of women consumers of Jorhat regarding food safety.

### METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted upon 120 women consumers of Jorhat town of Assam. A two stage stratified random sampling method was adopted in order to select representatives samples of the study. The municipality area of Jorhat was divided into four parts North East, North West, South East and South West. For