

ADHERENCE TO CODEX GUIDELINES BY STREET FOODS VENDORS OF URBAN VADODARA IN GUJARAT

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Accepted : April, 2008

ABSTRACT

In the present study street food vendors were surveyed to assess the extent of adherence to Codex Guidelines for street foods. Using purposive sampling 40 street food vendors selling different foods namely *Pavbhaji*, *Chinese noodles*, *Panipuri*, *Orange juice*, *Dahi puri*, *Kaju draksh ice cream*, *Cold cocoa* and *Fruit salad* were surveyed. Results indicated that all the vendors followed 39.64% of practices laid by Codex India. Of all the practices, vendors violated the more than 95% of the practices of proper waste disposal and maintaining good environmental sanitation. Vendors violated more than 60% of the practices for unit hygiene, food hygiene, transportation of prepared food and hygienic practices and more than 40% of the practices for transportation of raw ingredients, indoor area, outdoor area, hygiene at the vending site, preliminary food preparation and serving utensil hygiene. In conclusion the studied foods pose a health risk to the consumers eating at these sites.

Key words : Street foods, Codex India, Vendors, Personal hygiene, Food handling Practices

In the Indian context, the liberalization of the economy and its resulting effects on consumer habits have led to a majority of people eating out of homes. This emerging trend is especially prevalent among the middle class Indians, as dining out is increasingly perceived as a form of entertainment and a source of convenient foods. Street kiosks constitute nearly 50% of all consumer food service units in the Indian market, which cater mainly to the lower income bracket ([www.euromonitor.com/consumer food service in India](http://www.euromonitor.com/consumer-food-service-in-india)).

Street-vended foods or its equivalent Street Foods are defined as foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later time without further processing or preparation (WHO, 1996). Street food vendors are mostly uninformed of Good Handling Practices (GHP) and causes of diarrheal diseases (Mensah *et al.*, 2002), which can increase the risk of street food contamination (Bhaskar *et al.*, 2004, Bryan *et al.*, 1988a). Street foods are frequently associated with diarrhoeal diseases due to their mishandlings (Akinyele, 1998; Bryan, 1988; King *et al.*, 2000). Chakraborty and Canet (1996), Chandrasekhar *et al.* (2001, 2003) and Sheth *et al.* (2005a, 2005b) conducted studies on microbial contamination of street foods. Presence of pathogens such as coliforms, fungid, *E. coli*, *S. aureus*, *Salmonella* and

Shigella has been correlated to the poor sanitary practices in the preparation and sale of street foods. There are reports of foodborne illness associated with the consumption of fruit juices at several places in India and elsewhere (Parish, 1997; Sandeep *et al.*, 2001).

Street food industry is mostly in unorganized sector and there is a need to keep more vigil on the quality and safety of such foods in the interest of the protection of the health of the population consuming it. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) has done commendable work for ensuring the safety of street foods and has brought out a Code of Hygienic Practice for the preparation and sale of street foods (The User Manual on Codex). This code contains a series of requirements and practices to be observed in the preparation and sale, in the street, of food beverages for direct consumption. The code applies to the places, where these are prepared, to the points of sale and to the means of transport used. Street food vending wherein preparation, partly or completely, may be carried out elsewhere and/or in different stages, offers great challenges in the observance of hygienic practices. This study was conducted with the broad objective of assessing the adherence to Codex guidelines by the street food vendors of urban Vadodara of Gujarat State.

METHODOLOGY

Interview schedule and on-the-spot observations were used to fill the semi-structured questionnaire for