

## “Knowledge, Practice, and Attitude of Healthy Eating Habits Among Adolescent Girls in Vijayapura, Karnataka”.

Shilpa Savadatti

*Department of Social Work Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura.*

**ABSTRACT:** *The significant growth that occurs in adolescents. It originates growth and demands for nutrition, adolescents need complete nutrition for achieving proper growth potential. Healthy intake and physical growth are integral related; ideal intake with nutrition is essential for a healthy life. Failure to intake an adequate diet at this time can result in slow growth and sexual malnutrition. Healthy eating habits are also crucial during this phase promote to prevent adolescent diet. Connected health problems such as malnutrition, osteoporosis (A condition in which bones become weak and brittle), and anemia. This study attempts to examine the knowledge, practice, and attitude about healthy eating habits among adolescent girls age group of 18 years. The study data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire. The result of the study revealed that the majority of adolescent girls had poor and lack knowledge regarding nutrition and healthy intake. Educating the adolescent girls through intervention-based activities and counseling on healthy eating practices will help to strengthen themselves to lead a healthy life.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Adolescent girls, nutrition, healthy eating habits, puberty, nutritional status.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The term adolescence is the period of transition from dependence to self-dependence. (Crow1956). Understanding the characteristics, needs, interests, problems, and growth potentialities of maturing adolescents can help them experience a gradual and relatively peaceful development from early childhood to adulthood. Adolescent girls who attain the age of 13-16 years need more nutrients for proper growth and development. They attain their adult height and weight between the age of 18-20 years and the body mass continues to grow up to the age of 25 years. Adolescence is generally considered to include the years between the onsets of puberty or approximately from age 11 through age 19 years this is the age when sexual and mental maturity is reached, this phase is a crucial stage of growth and development. The role of snacking as a causative factor in the increased prevalence of overweight in children is not clear. The most significant change in snacking behavior for children over the past two to three decades has been the greater number of snacking occasions per day, not the amount of energy consumed per snack (Johns, et al., 2001). A study to identify correlates of fruits and vegetables from within the domains of personal factors (taste preferences, health/nutrition attitudes, weight/body concerns, and self-efficacy), behavioral factors (meal frequency, fast food intake, and weight control behaviors), and socio-environmental factors (social support for healthy eating, family meal patterns, food security, socio-economic status, and home availability of fruits/vegetables). This study further aimed to identify correlates of home availability and taste preferences for fruits/vegetables and to explore patterns of interaction between availability and taste preferences (Wall M, Perry C, Story, M. *et al.*, (2003). in an examination of dietary intakes and patterns among U.S. families found that the resemblance between children

and their parents' eating habits is weak and that factors other than family and parental eating behaviors may play an important role in affecting children's dietary intakes (Wood-Wright, *et al.*, 2009). According to Adolescent Census of India (2011) and UNICEF (2011) the population of the adolescent was more than 243 million (19.6%), (ratio for 1000 male Urban- 892, Rural-901), adolescent population place of residence; Urban- 72 million (28.5%), and Rural 181 million (71.5%). The WHO has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". UNICEF (2011) reported in India the Anemia among adolescent girls; 56% (mild anemia - 39%, moderate -15%, severe -2%) young girls facing malnutrition and anemia is the very high practice of unhealthy eating habits with peer and influence of social media was motivated to maintain proper body shape this will affect and cause of severe malnutrition, anemia, and other nutrition health problems. (Kehily, 2008: 52) argues the current generation of teenage girl's lives in different socio-cultural aspects; adolescence is considered to be a very critical transitional stage of a girl's life with acute crises in which her future is at stake. The overall growth and development lead adolescents to experience anxieties and uncertainties, which adds to the adjustment problems of the youth. According to the studies, the most common cause for all the problems in adolescents is a mental illness, poor ability in resolving conflicts, and handling emotions (Goleman 1995). The nutritional status or healthy eating knowledge, attitude, and practice of adolescent girls are essential for adolescent growth and development. The improvement of science and media also influence young girls eating habits. The self-comparison and estimation of health standards is a new dimension for present evaluation on nutritional health status and healthy eating of adolescent girls. Many nutritional surveys have declared that the adolescence faces the highest frequency of nutritional health problems. Healthy eating habits among teenage girls play a role in the prevention of nutrition disease particularly type of cancer, malnutrition, stroke, and anemia. Against this reason for a healthy life the nutrition was the right way for the practice of healthy intake. Most studies frequently found that adolescents have poor dietary habits and poor awareness programmes. Programmes encourage young girls to adopt healthy eating behaviours. Over the past decades, a growing body of scientific literature was focused on finding the association between nutrition knowledge and practice, leading to inconclusive results. Indeed, the strength of such associations has been found to vary among the studies and is generally weak.

The knowledge is the one of determinative for intake choice might seem perceptive, many environmental, social and psychological factors may play a role for practice such habits lead to diverse attitude on changing behavior for health reasons and other influences. The main objective of this study was to study the knowledge, practice, and attitude of healthy eating habits among adolescent girls in Vijayapura taluk of Karnataka.

## II. METHODS

The descriptive study was adopted, the Vijayapura taluk of Karnataka was purposively selected based on the Health and Education Indicators of the Vijayapura district comes under the bottom of the 5<sup>th</sup> most backward district in Karnataka state. (Economic Survey of Karnataka report 2015). The sample was selected six rural and urban government Pre-University colleges of Vijayapura taluk, due to the spread of the COVID-19 for the convenes of the researcher was purposively selected 50 adolescent girls from the total adolescent girls students. The researcher was prepared a self-structured questionnaire with the help of experts by conducting this study, questionnaire which was prepared to measure adolescent girls knowledge, practice, and attitude (KPA) knowledge was evaluated using 12 statements, 15 statements to evaluate the practice, and 19 statements for attitude, for each statement of the questionnaire has been rated on the five-point as Agree, Strongly Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree, the stratified sampling method was used for collect the data. Approval from the Deputy Director of Pre-Universities (DDPU) was obtained before data collection. The participants were provided the data collection tool, which contained the study information for participation. All answers were kept confidential and for the current study.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study revealed that adolescent girls did not have adequate knowledge regarding nutrition and healthy eating habits.

Table 1: Shows the Knowledge of Healthy Eating Habits among adolescent girls

Items	Agree & Strongly Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree & Strongly Disagree %
All types of food intake will call a well-balanced diet	20.0	10.0	70.0
The motives are the most influence for food choices on the desire to attain a certain body shape	18.0	14.0	68.0
Malnutrition leads to Anemia	10.0	8.0	82.0
Orange, yellow, and green color vegetables and fruits are a rich source of vitamin A	14.0	8.0	78.0
Calcium is very much required for adolescents growth and development	20.0	6.0	74.0
Iodine deficiency leads to goiter	16.0	20.0	64.0
Height and weight measurements are the indicators of the nutrition	15.0	14.0	71.0
Vitamin K is the most requirement for blood coagulation	24.0	16.0	60.0
Intake extra quantity of food during menstruation will balance proper diet	24.0	14.0	62.0
Dry fruits are not nutritious items	64.0	8.0	28.0
Fiber is required for promoting digestion	2.0	16.0	82.0
Practicing exercise every day is a healthy practice	22.0	10.0	68.0

It is clear from Table- 1 shows the majority of adolescent girls (70.0%) were not aware that all types of food intake will call balanced diet, (68.0%) of respondents did not know the most of the times motives are the most influence for food choices on a desire to attain certain body shape. The majority (82.0%) of the respondents were not aware that malnutrition leads to the anemia health problem, (78.0%) of them did not know the orange, yellow and green color vegetables and fruits are a rich source of vitamin A and (74.0%) were not aware of the benefit of calcium which helps for growth and development. (64.0%) of adolescent girls did not know that Iodine deficiency leads to goiter. The majority (71.0%) of respondents not known about height and weight are nutritional indicators, (68.0%) of them were not aware the dry fruits are nutritious intake. The majority of (82.0%) respondents did not know the fiber is required for promoting digestion, (68.0%) of respondents were not aware the regular exercise is a healthy practice. and (68.0%).

Table 2: Shows the Practices and Attitude of healthy eating habits among adolescent girls

Items	Agree & Strongly Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree & Strongly Disagree %
Washing hands with water + soap every meal	44.0	10.0	46.0
Consumption of vegetables 4-6 times per week	14.0	6.0	80.0
Consumption of fruits 3-4 times per week	10.0	16.0	74.0
Minimum 10-12 glasses or 2 liters of drinking water in a day	12.0	18.0	70.0

Doing exercise regularly is necessary for maintaining good health	38.0	14.0	48.0
Skipping breakfast daily is a healthy habit	66.0	10.0	24.0
Regular intake of snacks is needed for balancing diet	66.0	10.0	24.0
Fast-food is healthier than homemade food	26.0	22.0	52.0
Weakness, low level of blood leads to malnutrition or anemia	26.0	10.0	64.0
Must consult a doctor while facing malnutrition or anemia	15.0	12.0	73.0
Skipping meals during menses is a healthy practice	38.0	12.0	50.0
Taking excess coffee and cold drinks during menstruation helps to keep the balance of proper diet	38.0	12.0	50.0
Family members should take food together	40.0	8.0	52.0
Consuming daily food is a healthy practice	46.0	4.0	50.0
Salads should be included in a daily diet	28.0	6.0	66.0
Attitude of adolescent girls			
Need to intake healthy foods so that the body gets all the nutrients and prevent anemia	6.0	12.0	82.0
Consumption of 2-3 servings of fruit per week is a healthy habit	4.0	4.0	92.0
Consumption of 4-6 servings of vegetables per week is a healthy habit	2.0	12.0	86.0
Snacks can supply a significant amount of essential nutrients	66.0	10.0	24.0
Eating regularly breakfast is a more adequate diet than missing breakfast one or more times a week	10.0	4.0	86.0
Exercise is a healthy practice for a better life	2.0	6.0	86.0
The Mass media affects the food choices of adolescents	2.0	6.0	92.0
Sports are preventing obesity and improving health	2.0	2.0	96.0
Balanced diet is not affordable for rural adolescents	4.0	14.0	82.0
Intake of fruit every day is not practical	48.0	12.0	40.0
Food supplement is necessary for adolescent girls	2.0	2.0	96.0
Generally, Adolescents have the habits of having poor food	38.0	12.0	50.0
Fast food harms the health	38.0	12.0	50.0
Education of nutrition an ease requirement for adolescents	92.0	2.0	6.0
Iodized salt consumption is not safe	38.0	12.0	50.0
Having Green leafy vegetables for adolescents diet is not a must	2.0	2.0	96.0
Vitamin supplements should be routinely taken by the adolescents	2.0	4.0	94.0
Care should be taken to have safe drinking water	38.0	12.0	50.0
Baked foods are more nutritious	38.0	12.0	50.0

Table-2 shows the adolescent girls' practice and attitude of healthy eating habits. This study found that many adolescent girls have poor practices and attitude about healthy eating habits. (46.0%) of respondents were not practicing washing hands with water + soap after and before every meal. The majority (80.0%) of respondents were not practicing consumption of vegetables 4-6 times per week, and (74.0%) of them were not practicing consumption of fruits 3-4 times per week. The majority (70.0%) of adolescent girls were not practicing the

intake of 2 liters of drinking water in a day, (48.0%) of respondents were not practicing regular exercise and it is needed for good health. (50.0%) of them were skipping the daily meal. Regular intake of food is a must and healthy practice. (73.0%) of adolescent girls were not aware that while facing malnutrition or anemia is important to consult the doctor. Most of the adolescent girls responded “agree and strongly agree” on some negative questions such as skipping breakfast daily is a healthy habit (66.0%), regular intake of snacks is needed for balancing diet (66.0%), skipping meals during menses is a healthy practice (38.0%), taking excess coffee and cold drinks during menses helps to balance diet (38.0%).

Concerning the attitude about healthy eating habits, the majority (82.0%) of adolescent girls did not have a positive attitude about intake healthy foods and it is very essential for physical growth and it helps to prevent anemia, (96.0%) of respondents were not aware that food supplement is needed for adolescent girls, and (96.0%) of them did not know the sports are preventing obesity and improving health. The majority of respondents (92.0%) of adolescent girls were not aware that mass media affects food choices for adolescents. Most of the adolescent girls responded “agree and strongly agree” some number of negative questions such as snacks can supply a significant amount of nutrients (66.0%), adolescents have the habits of having poor food (38.0%), (82.0%) of respondents were stated agree and strongly agreed the balanced diet is not affordable for rural adolescents, daily intake of fruits is a healthy practice for a balanced diet but practically it not that easy for lower family income and rural adolescent girls. (48.0%) of girls positively strongly agreed that intake of fruit every day is not practical.

Nutritional educational programmes especially related to healthy eating habits have to be conducted at college institutions to sensitize, create awareness among adolescent girls to adopt healthy lifestyle habits to attain optimal health and wellbeing. The concept of positive body image, its health benefits, and the importance of not yielding to harmful practices or using unscientific methods to attain perceived ideal body weight has to be emphasized through regular health educational programmes at colleges. Mass media programmes focussing on healthy nutrition, hazards of unhealthy practices to reduce or gain weight need to be designed and telecasted aiming at young adults.

- There is a need for intervention-based on nutrition programmes at the college level.
- Youth-friendly services provide a good environment for adolescent girls to interact and learn more about healthy eating habits. The government and non-government organizations facilitate access to these services for adolescent girls at the college level and homes.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Regular nutritional-based healthy intake needs all over the life. Sound healthy eating habits can enhance the essence and better life; can expedite healing from illness and long life. Adolescent girls are a stage of different ideas and an aim that way of life choices is control an individual’s life. Even adolescent girls are well informed about nutrition and healthy eating practices, this knowledge is generally not practiced in their day-to-day life.

The present study evaluates that the target group has poor knowledge about nutrition and also they are not practicing for supporting sound health. They are lack knowledge of nutrition diseases, practices, and attitude of intake are affecting unhealthy eating practices. As a result, there is a need for intervention-based nutrition programmes and counselling based activities at the college level. Educating the adolescent girls through intervention-based activities and counseling on healthy eating practices will help to strengthen themselves to lead a healthy life.

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