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Impact of Television on Eating Habits of School Going Children

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Abstract: *Television has both positive and negative effects particularly on school going children. The present study was undertaken in order to fulfill the objectives of showing the impact of TV on school going children, to find out whether watching TV effects child's food preferences and also the influence of TV Ads on child's purchasing request. The study was conducted on 500 school children (10-15 years). The schools were divided into four zones, one government and one private school was selected from each zone. The questionnaire was used as a tool to get necessary information. From the survey it was recorded that out of 500 children, 73.2% children watch TV after coming from school and 26.8% children do not watch TV. Out of 500 samples, 63.2% student's feels sleepy while watching television and 36.8% students do not feel sleepy. 43% students feels lazy while watching television, 57% students do not feel lazy. Their food choices to a little extent are influenced by TV Ads. They mostly prefer carbonated beverages and fried foods while watching TV. Awareness was created by showing a power point presentation to children to choose fruits over fried items, health beverages over carbonated beverages, etc. The benefit and importance of choosing healthy food was also explained. Chi-square and anova was used to get statistical analysis. From chi-square it was concluded that there is a difference in the eating habits of 2 age groups i.e. 10-12 years and 13-15 years. From anova test it was concluded that there is a little impact of advertisements on children's buying behavior.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Television has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects on school going children. An individual child's developmental level is a critical factor in determining whether the medium will have positive or negative effects. Not all television programs are bad, but data showing the negative effects of exposure to violence, inappropriate sexuality and offensive language are convincing. Children who received the television-reduction intervention reduced the number of meals consumed during television viewing, and a trend toward lower intakes of high-fat foods was observed. Because television takes time away from play and exercise activities, children who watch a lot of television are less physically fit and more likely to eat high fat and high energy snack foods. Television viewing makes a substantial contribution to obesity because prime time commercials promote unhealthy dietary practices. Television can also contribute to eating disorders in teenage girls, who may emulate the thin role models seen on television. Eating meals while watching television should be discouraged because it may lead to less meaningful communication and, arguably, poorer eating habits. Increased television viewing has been associated with increased energy intake. Adolescents who reported watching more television so reported eating more high-fat foods and fast food, drinking more soft drinks, and consuming fewer fruits and vegetables. Likewise, in households in which the television is on during meals, children consume more red meat, pizza, snack foods, and soda and fewer fruits and vegetables. Second, several content analyses of children's television programs showed that foods, especially high-fat or high-sugar foods, are frequently advertised on children's television programs. Advertising can have positive effects on children's behavior. The developmental stage of a child plays a role in the effect of commercials. Young children do not understand the concept of a sales pitch. They tend to believe what they are told and may even assume that they are deprived if they do not have advertised products. Most preschool children do not understand the difference between a program designed to entertain and a commercial designed to sell. Children also purchase product through the school advertisement and internet advertisement children purchase products by watching advertisement on internet and school exhibitions. Age of children also influence the purchasing of the children because less aged children less influence by the advertising and more aged children purchase more advertising products for example 10 year children less understand the product advertisement as compare to the 15 year children who understand fully advertisement and he purchase more advertisement product. In this research we also discuss the relationship between food advertisement and children buying behavior because children purchase more food products as compare to other products.

The present study was aimed to know the impact of television on dietary habits of school going children (10-15 years) and the impact of advertisement on buying behavior.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional, multicenter and correlational study was performed with a sample of 500 subjects, which includes 278 students of 10-12 years, 222 students of 13-15 years. Data was collected from schools which were divided into four zones, one government school and one private school was selected from each zone. The purpose of selecting two group of students was to know whether there is a difference in the eating habits while watching television. The questionnaire method was used to collect data from students, who were questioned about their anthropometry measurements, personal hygiene, watching television time, food choices while watching television. Statistical analysis using chi-square test was applied to know whether there is difference in the eating habits of two age groups i.e. 10-12 years and 13-15 years. Anova was applied to know whether there is impact of advertisements in purchasing the food products.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fig. 1 shows that out of 500 samples, 73.2% children watch television after coming from school while 26.8% children do not watch television after coming from school. Many of them watch for ½ hour and many of them watch television for 1 hour. Some children do not had television at their homes.

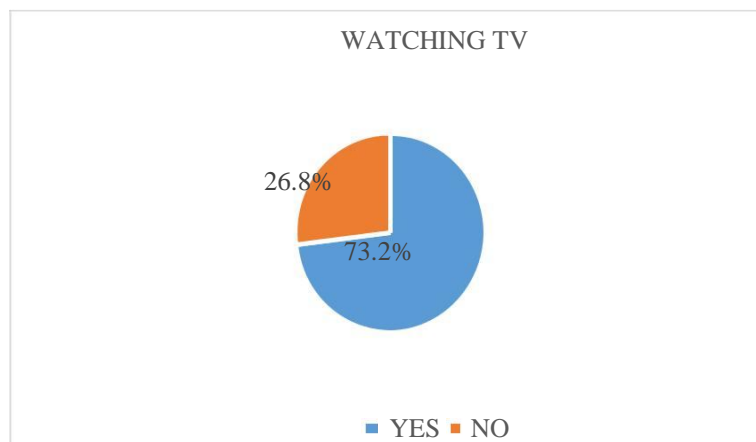


Fig. 1 shows whether children watch television

Fig. 2 shows that out of 500 samples 84.6% children watch television while eating and 15.4% children do not watch television while watching television. Eating while watching is must in the school period and the below data proves as many of the students eat while watching television.

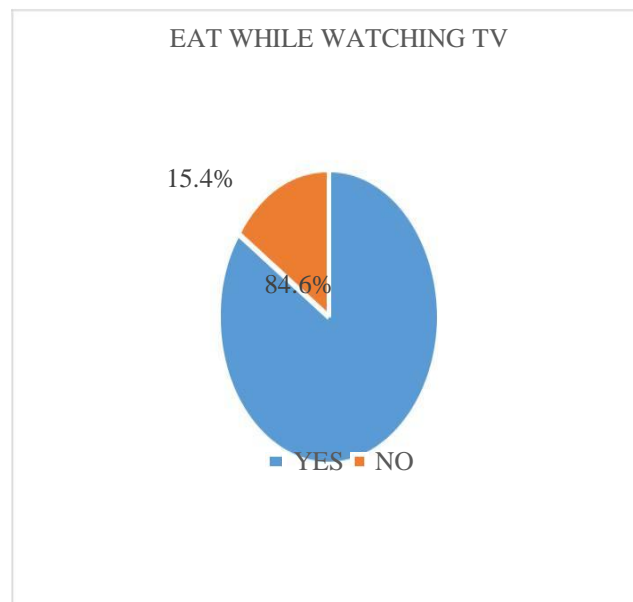


Fig. 2 shows the percentages of children eating while watching television

Fig. 3 shows that out of 500 samples 62.8% children do not eat too much while watching television and 37.2% children eat too much while watch television. Out of 500 samples, 278 children belongs to 10-12 years from which 90 said yes they too much while watching television and 188 said no. 222 children belongs to 13-15 years from which 96 said yes and 126 said no. Chi-square was applied and the value was found to be 0.0124 significant $p < 0.5$. It was concluded that there is a difference in the eating habits of two age groups i.e. 10-12 years and 13-15 years.

EATING WHILE WATCHING TV

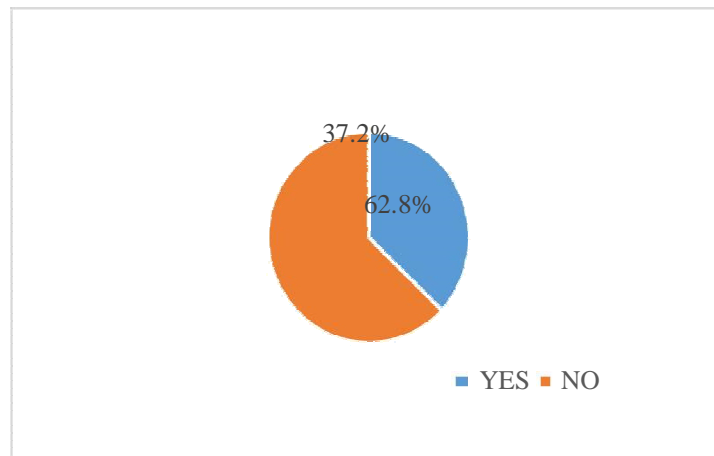


Fig. 3 shows the percentage of children eating too much while watching television

Fig.4 shows that out of 500 samples, 38% children buy the products by seeing television advertisement, 36% buy products for real needs, 22% buy products because of attractive display and 4% for other purpose. Anova was applied to whether there is an impact of advertisement on purchasing request, since the result is not significant at $p < 0.5$, hence it is concluded that there is no specific impact of advertisement on purchasing request.

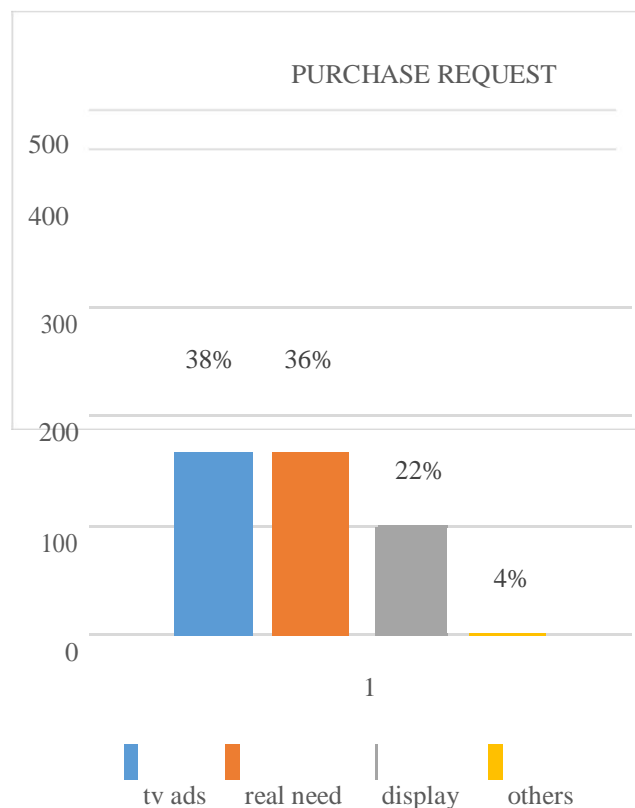


Fig. 4 shows the percentage of purchase request

Fig.5 shows that out of 500 samples 55.8% children feel tired after eating while watching television and 44.2% children feel tired after eating while watching television. Out of 55.8% children who do not feel tired after eating while watching television, 48.7% children study, 44.4% children play and 6.8% children perform other activities.

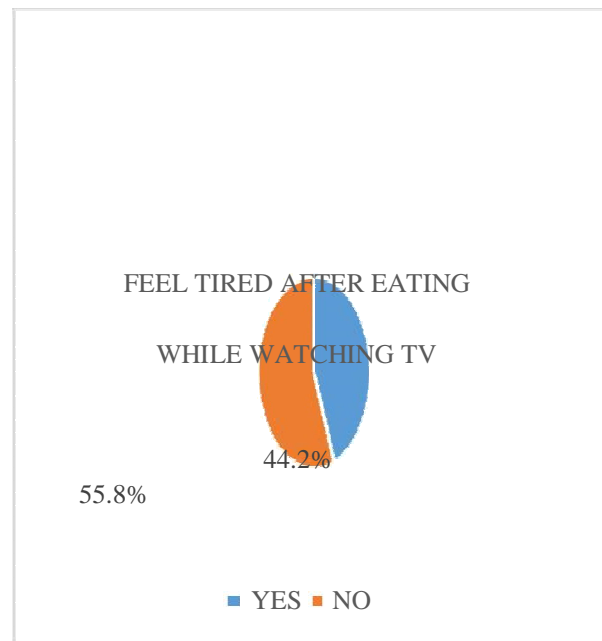


Fig.5 shows the percentage of children feeling tired after eating while watching television

IV. CONCLUSION

From the above graphical and statistical analysis, our study concluded that there is association between watching and food choices and also the impact of advertisement in purchasing food products on school going children. Hence there is difference in the eating pattern while watching TV in 2 age groups i.e. 10-12 years and 13-15 year. There is no association of TV ads in purchasing of food products among school going children. Children watch television mostly for entertainment, for relaxation.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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