

The Behaviour of Consuming Food in Local-level Sportsman

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to find out the food-consuming practice of local-level sportsmen in Butwal-12, Rupandehi, Nepal. A descriptive and quantitative research design was used in this research. The respondents who lived in Butwal 12 were the population of this study. The interview schedule was the data collection tool. From the total population, 50 local level sportsmen were selected as the sample size for the study. All the local level sportsmen were included using the census sampling technique. After collecting the data, SPSS version 20 was used for tabulation as well as statistical analysis of the raw data, obtaining tables and percentages of related information. The overall study found that local-level sportsmen had poor knowledge of food-consuming practices and the right consumer behaviour for consumer health, which is also regrettable in Butwal Sub-metropolitan City, Rupandehi.

Keyword: Behavior, Consume, Food, Local level, Sportsman

Introduction

Local-level eating habits refer to why and how people eat, which foods they eat, and with whom they eat, as well as the ways they obtain, store, use, and discard food (Albala, 2015). This study was conducted in Butwal 12 only. The total population of the study area was 24,361 (CBS, 2021). Among this population, the number of local level sports players was found to be 50. Researchers studying the dietary habits of the athletes' found that they consumed market available food more than local food. The researcher, during the course of the study, conducted surveys and considered individuals who participated in sports and were knowledgeable about sports rules, as the primary sources of the study. The information or insights obtained from these sportsmen were regarded as the basis for dietary practices followed during sports events as well as in other times (Chaudhary, n.d.). Researchers tried to find out food consumption habits and their impact on the health of the sportsman. Food is any nutrient-rich material consumed or absorbed by humans, animals, or plants to sustain life and growth (Malden, Nesheim, Maria, and Peggy, 2015). Food is the basic requirement for all living beings' growth. The sportsman and others' health and productivity depend upon the nature of the food they consume and its wholesomeness in terms of its nutritive value (WHO, 2019). One works hard and earns to satisfy his or her hunger, but at the end of the day, many of us are not sure of what we consume. One may be consuming a dangerous colour, wood dust, sand, stone, industrial starch,

and aluminium foil so on. Contaminated foods and drinks are common sources of infection. This often invites disease rather than a strong personality (WHO, 2024).

It has become very hard for local sports man [consumers] to select food items because of misleading advertisements, improper media emphasis, and food adulteration. As the ultimate victim is a consumer, those who innocently take adulterated food suffer (Jesse, 2017). 'Food-consuming persons were the largest economic group and the focal point of all the marketing activities. Yet, they were being cheated on economic as well as safety grounds due to business malpractices like creating artificial scarcity, syndicating, cheating in weight and measurement, and mixing unnecessary things with good things. Consumers must assure themselves against all these problems since they are not automatically protected by the workings of the market' (Gupta and Panchal, 2009). A regular person needs to consume 2000 to 3000 calorie daily. Athletes on the other hand need to consume 3000 to 6000 calorie daily. The eating habits of athletes are depending on the nature sports. Similarly the eating habits of people who remain inactive and those who engage in daily in differ (Williams, Garrett and Donald, 2000). Consumers expect protection from hazards occurring along the entire food chain, from the primary process to consuming goods. Protection only occurs if all sectors in the chain operate in an integrated way and the food control system addresses all states of the chain (FAO/WHO, 2014). The overall phenomenon needs protection of the nutritional value of food as well as prevention of potential health hazards' (Laura, et. al., 2015). Adulteration is the process by which the nature or quality of a given food is reduced through the addition of a foreign or inferior substance or the removal of vital vitamins ("removal of fats from milk"). It may be intentional or unintentional (Tariq and Khalid, 2021). On the other hand, adulteration may be incidental contamination due to ignorance, negligence, or a lack of proper facilities. Intentional adulteration includes adding non-edible things like sand, stone, marble chips, chalk power, mineral oil, coal, or non-edible colours with edible ones, using substandard edibles, and mixing additives and preservatives in excess (Mysha, Saniya and Mohidus, 2023).

Unintentional adulteration includes pesticides and fertilizer residues. Whatever the type of adulteration, it causes health hazards ranging from common to severe or even fatal. The major activities of the food safety program in Nepal are consumer education and awareness of food hygiene and marketing aspects, such as labeling. Consumer protection laws are designed to ensure fair trade competition and the free flow of truthful information in the marketplace (Mysha, Saniya, and Mohidus, 2023). The laws are designed to prevent businesses that engage in fraud or specified unfair practices from gaining an advantage over competitors and may provide additional protection for the weak (Harvey and Wiley, 2022). The government may require businessmen to disclose detailed information about products, particularly in areas where safety or public health is an issue, such as food (Adhikari, et.al. 2023). Consumer protections are linked to the idea of consumer rights and the formation of consumer organizations that help consumers make better choices in the marketplace. Food is essential for everyone on a daily basis. Athletes should be provided with food

according to their specific sports. The food protection act 2054 BS, implemented by the Government of Nepal, ensure consumer rights including protection from the sale of harmful goods and services. It provides the right to be informed about the price, quality, and quantity of the manufactured goods, the right to choose the best alternatives at a competitive price, the right to appeal and seek compensation for the exploitation and losses caused by inappropriate activities, and the right to receive consumer education.

The safeguard public health and consumer rights, the government introduced the inspection officer's guideline in 2058 BS. However, the consumption of low-quality food at the local level negative impacts the health of sportsman causing them to fall sick and become very weak (Mandira, 2022). This study is to explore various aspects of local level sportsman, including the emergence of sports talent, knowledge related to sports, food selection habits, eating practices, awareness of the manufacturing and expiration dates of food products, knowledge of ingredient consumption, company logos, pricing, reaction against cheating and consumer education.

The food consumption behaviour of local level sportspeople also plays a significant role in determining the performance of national level athletes. The study addresses questions such as: Does the food consumption behaviour of sportsman allow them to perform at their desire level? and Are local level sportspeople adequately informed about food consumption?

Methodology

This study explore various aspects of local level sportsman, including the emergence of sports talent, knowledge related to sports, food selection habits, eating practices, awareness of the manufacturing and expiration dates of food products, knowledge of ingredient consumption, company logos, pricing, reaction against cheating and consumer education. It is based on descriptive types of quantitative design. The study area was Butwal 12. Based on the CBS data, the total population of the study was 24,381. Among this population, the sportsman group at the local level was included in the study. This group consisted of 50 individuals with knowledge and awareness related to sports, as recorded by the researcher through field surveys. All of them were selected as the sample size using the census sampling technique. An interview schedule was used for data collection. That schedule was developed by researcher themselves. During the identified weaknesses were revised and finalised after further editing. After the collection the data, the Statistical Package for social science (SPSS) version 20 was used for tabulation as well as analysis of raw data to obtain the frequency and percent of information. The data and descriptive information were analysed and interpreted based on percentages to conclude.

Results and Discussion

The interpretation, analysis, and presentation of results have been carried out based on the information, facts, and evidence collected through data collection. The presentation is based on the food consumption behaviour of local level sportsman which has been explained as follows.

Sex-wise respondents and the purchase of food

The researcher asked local level sportsman whether they consume packaged food available in the local market. The responses received were either "yes" or "no" and the results were as follows.

Table 1. *Distribution of respondents by sex and purchase of packed food*

Sex	You purchase packaged food.				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Male	25	50.00	15	30.00	40	80.00
Female	07	14.00	03	06.00	10	20.00
Total	32	64.00	18	36.00	50	100.00

The Above table 1, shows that 50 percent of the total male respondents purchase packed food, while 14 percent of the total female respondents purchase packed food. Purchasing packed and well-labelled food is a sign of proper consumer behavior. The respondent's behavior in this regard can be said to be satisfactory. A similar study (Abid Faheem, Baby, and Maxie, 2013) found that 14 percent of respondents used to purchase packed food, while 30 percent purchased food in loose form, and 31 percent purchased both types of food. Comparatively, the study population's food habits were better than the research data.

Educational status and practice of reading labels, manufacturing, and expiration dates

Education plays a vital role in changing individual behavior, and it helps to know about the consumer's rights to maintain local level sportsman [consumer] health. The table shows the relationship between education status and the practice of reading labels.

Table 2 *Relationship between the respondent's education and practice of inquiring labels*

Education	Reading the labels on packs				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Illiterate	0	0.00	3	6.00	3	6.00
Literate	5	10.00	6	12.00	11	22.00
SEE	4	8.00	5	10.00	9	18.00
NEB	8	16.00	9	18.00	17	34.00
Higher Education	6	12.00	4	8.00	10	20.00
Total	23	46.00	27	54.00	50	100.00

The above data focused on 10 percent of the literate respondents who read the labels in the pack. 8 percentage points of the respondents with SEE, 16 percentage points of the respondents with NEB, and 12 percentage points of the respondents with higher education were the ones who read the labels in the pack. In this study, it was found that comparatively 8 percent more people purchase items without checking the

packaging seal. Not checking the label and using the product can lead to athletes and consumers being deceived and unnecessary expenses increasing.

Educational status, care for manufacture date, and expiration date

The additives and preservatives are safe to consume for a limited period of time. It illiterates the importance of manufacturing and expiration dates.

Table 3. Educational status, care for manufacture date, and expiration date

Education	Care for the manufacture and expiration dates				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Illiterate	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Literate	2	4.00	6	12.00	8	16.00
SEE	5	10.00	8	16.00	13	26.00
NEB	6	12.00	10	20.00	16	32.00
Higher Education	4	8.00	9	18.00	13	26.00
Total	17	34.00	33	66.00	50	100.00

Regarding the sports man [consumers] care for the manufacturing and expiration dates on the labels, it has been found that 4 percent of literate respondents, 10 percent of respondents with SEE, 12 percent of respondents with NEB, and 8 percent of respondents with higher education care for it. Another study (Bhattacharya, Bera and Shah, 2022) found that 55.4 percent of respondents read the manufacture and expiration dates. It concluded that the research data was poorer than the study data.

Checking the NS-Marks and ISO-Certification of the respondent

NS-Marks are the quality certification marks of the industrial products produced in Nepal. ISO is an international organization for standardization at the international level. NS-Marks and ISO-Certified products are supposed to guarantee quality. The educational status of the respondents and their habit of checking standard certificates on food commodities are given in the table.

Table 4. Distribution of the respondent by checking NS-Marks and ISO-Certification

Education	NS-Marks and ISO-Certificate				Total	
	Yes		No		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Illiterate	0	0.00	3	6.00	3	6.00
Literate	4	8.00	10	20.00	14	28.00
SEE	5	10.00	11	22.00	16	32.00
NEB	4	8.00	6	12.00	10	20.00
Higher Education	3	6.00	4	8.00	7	14.00
Total	16	32.00	34	68.00	50	100.00

According to the table 4, illiterate respondents were unaware of the NS-Mark and ISO-Certificate. While 8 percent of the responders who could read and write checked them. Six percent of respondents with higher education were found to verify the NS-Mark and ISO-Certificate, compared to 10 percent of respondents with S.E.E., 8percent of respondents with N.E.B., and 8 percent of respondents with S.E.E. From the analysis and interpretation, it is evident that the respondent was not very curious about checking for such a standardization certificate in the product. Educational status

has a direct relationship with checking them, but a greater percentage of the respondents were found to be unaware of them. So, consumer knowledge in this area can be said to be lacking. To provide enough knowledge on consumer health, consumer rights, food safety, and consumer health practices, the school-level curriculum should include detailed information about these topics, which can help consumers adopt the right consumer behavior for consumer as well as local level sportsman health.

Respondent's practice of reaction to cheating, quality, quantity, and price of goods

To actively combat this exploitation and exercise their consumer rights. The table displays information about respondents' propensity to react to cheating.

Table 5. Distribution of respondent by their practice to react against cheating

Reaction against cheating	Frequency	%
Suggestions/ complaints to sellers	15	30.00
Report to police	6	12.00
Complaint in district court	7	14.00
Publicity	10	20.00
Nothing	12	24.00
Total	50	100.00

The above table 5 shows that most of the sportsman 30 percent used to suggest or complain to the sellers and 12 percent reported to the police. 14 percent of the respondents complained in the district court, 20 percent did publicity, and 24 percent did nothing about being cheated. Among the various responsibilities of the consumer, one is action, to assert oneself by acting to ensure that he or she gets a fair deal and is not cheated. So with 24 percent of the respondents doing nothing, it indicates that they are not fulfilling their responsibility as consumers, which is not good consumer behavior. In a similar study (Uppar and Sumangala, 2009), it was found that on being cheated, 10 percent of the respondents' approached the consumers' forum, 25 percent complained to the concerned authority, 15.5 percent sought the help of an NGO or local leader, and 34 percent gave a warning to the shopkeeper. While comparing the research data with the reviewed data, the research data was found to be slightly better than the reviewed data. The reason behind this is probably that the study population was guided by their children's education.

Respondent sources of consumer education

Knowledge and practice greatly depend on demographic factors. Different chances exist for exposure to sources of knowledge. The table below gives the factors that influence respondents' knowledge and practice of consumer education.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents by consumer education

Sources of consumer education	Frequency	%
School education	9	18.00
Government organization/mass media	24	48.00
Consumer awareness program by NGOs	2	4.00

School education and Mass media	7	14.00
All of the above statement	8	16.00
Total	50	100.00

The table 6 indicates that for a higher percentage of the respondents (48 percent), the sources of consumer education were government organizations and mass media efforts. For 18 percent of the respondents, the source of consumer education was school education; for 4 percent of the respondents, consumers' awareness was programmed by NGOs; for 14 percent of the respondents, school education and mass media were responsible for their consumer education; and for 16 percent of the respondents, all the given sources of education were responsible for their consumer education. Consumer education is necessary to create consumer awareness, which in turn helps consumers adopt the right food consuming behaviour and food habits.

Conclusion

After analyzing the data, the study concluded that a higher number of local level sportsman use packaged food based on gender. The number of people who do not check the label seal when using products is relatively high. This has lead to an increased in local level sportsman and people's vulnerability to fraud. There has been notable increase in the number of individuals who do not pay attention to the manufacturing date or expiratory date on the product label. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness among all sportsmen and the general public immediately. The numbers of people who do not check for NS-Marks and ISO-Certification from food manufacturing companies is more than double. To improve consumers' food consumption behaviour, it is important to check whether the company is ISO Certified and has the NS Mark. Consumers should be encouraged to identify the quality of consumable goods to change their food consumption behaviour. To discourage food adulteration, consumers' education should be provided to students, Villagers, towns and businesses. In order to change the food consumption behaviour of local level sportsman, periodic awareness campaign about food related knowledge, behaviour and usage methods must be conducted by NGOs, INGOs, and local Governments. *The overall study found that local-level sportsmen had poor knowledge of food-consuming practices and the right consumer behaviour for consumer health, which is also regrettable in Butwal Sub-metropolitan City, Rupandehi.*

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