

METHODOLOGY

III METHODOLOGY

Convenience foods have an important role to play in the present era. No longer have we had to depend solely on seasonal food items. A vast variety of frozen, dried and canned convenience foods are available at affordable and modest budget in any season. The variety of convenience foods on the market today is a miracle of the era. Convenience foods support change for women, such as fewer hours in kitchen. The convenience foods suggest that the whole social system based on females doing the cooking should change dramatically. Ultimately, however, convenience foods lead a dramatic change, (Inness, 2008).

Howell (2013) expresses that methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. The methodology followed for the study entitled “**Acceptability and Impact of Convenience Foods in the Selected Households in Coimbatore City**” consisted of two phases.

Phase I: Survey

In order to get information regarding the convenience foods, the following survey was necessary:

- A) Market survey
- B) Household survey.

Phase II: Conduct of cooking experiments using selected convenience foods

- A) Conducting cooking experiment
- B) Evaluation of the cooked items

Phase I: Survey

Survey is gathering of information from the samples so as to learn about the existence of the samples. Survey is used as a technique of investigation by direct observation of a phenomenon or systematic gathering of data from population by applying personal contact and interview when an adequate information about a certain problem is not available in records, files and other sources. The survey is an important tool to gather evidence relating to selected certain social issues. It is one of the most widely used methods for social research by which quantitative facts about a social

phenomena are collected to contribute to the solution of immediate problem (Verma, 2000).

A survey consists of a predetermined set of questions that is given to a sample. With a representative sample, that is, one that is representative of the larger population of interest, one can describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>.

Sarah (2013) reports that the experiment survey is a high level of general capability in representing a large population. Due to the usual huge number of people who answer the survey, the data gathered provides better description of the relative characteristics of the general population involved in the study. As compared to other methods of data gathering, surveys help to extract data that are near to the exact attributes of the larger population.

The study required two surveys namely market survey and household survey.

A. Market Survey

Richard (2006) says that the market survey is the systematic gathering, recording and analyzing of data about problems relating to the marketing of goods and services .A market survey is an important requirement for initiating any successful business and related items. The objective of a market survey is to collect information on various aspects of the business. The purpose of a market survey is to gather information with the target group. Hence, in order to obtain information on availability of convenience foods in the market, a survey was necessary which includes the following the steps:

1. Selection of area
2. Selection of sample
3. Selection of tools
4. Collection of data
5. Identification of convenience foods
6. Interpretation of data

1. Selection of area

Coimbatore city is the second largest city and urban agglomeration in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, after Chennai and the sixteenth largest urban agglomeration of India. It is one of the fastest growing tier-II cities in India and a major textile, industrial, commercial, educational, information technology, healthcare and manufacturing hub of Tamil Nadu. Coimbatore District is one of the districts of the state of Tamil Nadu in India. It is located in the western part of the state in the Kongu Nadu region. Coimbatore is known as the "Manchester of South India" and is one of the industrialized towns of Tamil Nadu. The region is bounded by Palghat district of Kerala on the west and by Idukki district of Kerala in the South. High standard of education facilities, blossoming of numerous industries and large number of career opportunities are some main reasons for people to migrate to Coimbatore.

Coimbatore cuisine is predominantly South Indian with rice as its base. However, the population of Coimbatore is multi-cultural due to the influx of migrant population from various regions of the country. Most locals still retain their rural flavour, with many restaurants serving food over a banana leaf. North Indian, Chinese and continental cuisines are also available. Mysorepa (a sweet made from lentil flour and ghee), idly, dosa, Ralwa (a sweet made of different ingredients like milk, wheat, rice and vada-sambar) and biryani are popular among the locals. However, to cater to the heterogeneous group a number of Large stores, Chain stores and Departmental stores which are popular in Coimbatore City which caters to the needs of the group. Hence, Coimbatore was selected for the study and to undertake market survey.

2. Selection of sample

Sample describes the process of selecting elements, characteristics of a larger population from a target population in order to conduct a survey. Samples are used in statistical testing when population sizes are too large for the test to include all possible members or observations. A sample should represent the whole population and not reflect bias toward a specific attribute, http expresses that purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable to answer the

research questions. The sample being studied is the representative of the population, for researchers pursuing qualitative or mixed methods of research designs, and is considered to be a strong method. The investigator selected a total of 50 outlets from West, East, North, South and Central Zone of Coimbatore by purposive sampling method.

3. Selection of tool

Goode (2013) expresses that interview schedule is a set of questions which are asked by an interviewer and filled in on the spot in a face to a face interaction with other person. The investigator collected information which includes details about the year of establishment, ownership, type of food, brands preferred, cost, new products available in the market and type of people who purchase convenience foods and other related facts. The prepared schedule is presented in Appendix I.

4. Collection of data

The investigator approached the shop owners to get information for the study with regard to convenience foods available in the shops and related details. The investigator visited the selected outlets and interviewed the section personal with the help of an interview schedule. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, and evaluate the outcomes, says Ainley (2014). To find out the availability of convenience foods and to collect the required information, the investigator established rapport by meeting them at their convenient time with the prepared interview schedule. The data thus collected was recorded carefully (Plate I).

5. Identification of convenience foods

The objective of the market survey was to identify the various types of convenience food products available in the market. A simple interview schedule was developed to ascertain the general information of the shop on the type of convenience foods sold, brand, cost of the product, type of customers, percentage of profit etc.



CONDUCT OF MARKET SURVEY BY THE INVESTIGATOR

PLATE - I

6. Interpretation of data

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making. Data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains, reports Ader (2008). The data collected were analyzed and interpreted statistically, and presented in the chapter results and discussions.

B. Households Survey

Household survey was conducted to identify the consumption of commonly consumed convenience foods among the selected homemakers and to obtain information on the consumption of the convenience foods. The investigator visited the subjects personally and collected the information using an interview schedule. The research study was carried out following steps given below:

1. Selection of area
2. Selection of sample
3. Selection of tools
4. Collection of data
5. Interpretation of the collected data.

1. Selection of area for the study

The study was conducted in Coimbatore city. The investigator was familiar with the area and had well established good rapport, with the homemakers.

2. Selection of sample

The investigator selected 300 samples which comprised mainly of working women (age group 25-50 years above) to find out the consumption and use of convenience foods in their menu. All the samples were selected using purposive sampling. Coimbatore city is categorized into 5 zones i.e. East, West, North, South and Central zone. Care was taken while selecting

the samples and ensures that samples selected representing each zone. Sample is the reflection of universe and bears all the characteristic of the universe, opines Wilkinson et al (2001).

3. Selection of tools

Interview schedule was framed to collect necessary information from women on family background and general information, which includes age, education, occupation, food habits, family income, and monthly expenditure on convenience foods in general and extent of use of convenience food products in particular and specific information regarding the purchasing behavior, brand awareness, time and energy saved, place of purchase, preparation and awareness of convenience foods were obtained. The interview schedule was pretested among 15 working women correction incorporated. The prepared schedule is presented in Appendix II.

4. Collection of data

Data are the basic input to any decision making process. The processing of data gives statistical importance to the study and it can be classified into primary and secondary data (Reddy 2000).The data were heterogeneous representing various occupations such as teachers, manager, bank officers, doctors, nurse etc. The criteria for selecting samples were willing to share their own experiences and particulars, frequent use of convenience foods and related information. The investigator visited the samples and explained the study to the homemakers by establishing a good rapport. Answers were collected by the investigator in a systematic manner and recorded carefully (Plate II).

5. Interpretation of data

The data collected using the interview schedule were checked for its reliability and then it was consolidated, tabulated and analyzed. Data interpretation refers to the process of determining the significance of the important information's, such as survey results, experimental findings, observations or narrative reports. Interpreting data is an important critical thinking skill that helps one to comprehend, graphs and tables, <http://www.ehow.com/facts>.



CONDUCT OF HOUSEHOLD SURVEY BY THE INVESTIGATOR

PLATE - II

Phase II: Conduct of cooking experiments using selected convenience foods

- A) Conducting cooking experiment
- B) Evaluation of the cooked items

A. Conducting Cooking Experiment

This phase of the study emphasis on cooking of convenience foods selected for the cooking experiment as against traditional method of cooking.

Cooking experiment was conducted to find out the time and money involved in preparing selected convenience foods and methods adopted to prepare the items. The experiment was based on the following steps:

1. Selection of items
2. Selection of area
3. Conducting cooking experiments

1. Selection of Items

Based on the market survey the investigator selected the convenience food which were recently introduced in the market and commonly used in the households. The items were selected from popular outlets such as Departmental stores, supermarkets, Provision shops, Chain stores in Coimbatore City. Breakfast, lunch and dinner items were exclusively selected. The items selected were of popular brands. The convenience foods items were paratha, noodles, chicken nuggets, vegetable nuggets, and soup. The household survey carried out also enabled the investigator to decide and select the food items to conduct cooking experiment using the traditional foods. The comparison was done between the convenience foods and the traditional foods on the basis of time spent in preparing the foods, and observing the work simplification technique adopted. The cost of the convenience foods in composition, with traditional method were compared and presented under results and discussion.

2. Selection of area

The cooking experiments were conducted in the selected households where the investigator felt comfortable and was extended by maximum co-operation from the homemaker. The reason of executing the experiments were explained.

3. Conducting cooking experiment

The cooking experiments were conducted in a systematic manner using the selected convenience foods as per the instructions mentioned on the packet. The traditional method of preparation of the same item was carried out. The preparations were repeated thrice and evaluated by a panel of judges, (the homemakers).

B. Evaluation of the Cooked Items

In order to evaluate the selected prepared food items prepared using convenience food and Traditional method, the following were followed

1. Selection of panel members for evaluating the prepared items
2. Sensory analysis
3. Evaluation of prepared items

1. Selection of panel members for evaluating the prepared items

The panel selected for evaluation was from the same sex with adequate knowledge in cooking. This is essential for an appropriate evaluation of items, says Franklin (2010). Panels of fifteen (15) homemakers competent in cooking were selected to evaluate the prepared items. All were experienced cooks and also had more or less same taste and an inclination for cooking.

2. Sensory analysis

The sensory evaluation are characteristic related to the food itself such as color, flavor, texture temperature, aroma taste and quality as well as the preparation involved as dictated by consumers. Each item was prepared thrice. Sensory properties that corresponded to the characteristic of a specific food item, was taken into consideration (Blades 2001). Appearance include basic sensory attributes of the food such as its colour, shape and size as well

as complex attributes such as translucency, gloss or surface texture. Experiences from the taste of food, such as sweet, sour, bitter and salty, are stored in a person's memory and when one sees a food product that tasted good and either pleasant or unpleasant memory whether to select that particular food or not is made based on the retrieved memory. The flavor of the food is important in both food choices as well as in its consumption. The smell of the food, its aroma come through deliberate inhaling to ascertain whether it is unpleasant or pleasant. In the light of this description, it is clear that food texture has an important effect on a consumer's perception of food (Cardello, 2009).

3. Evaluation of the prepared items

The prepared items were displayed and using a score card the acceptability of the items were found. Score card is a statistical record used to measure achievement or progress towards a particular goal, www.investopedia.com. The items were evaluated by the selected panel of members. The recipes were evaluated for flavor, texture, taste, appearance, color and overall acceptability. Quality characteristic of each items were recorded on (5) point rating scale. The scale represented a maximum score of 5 for excellent, 4 for very good, 3 for good, 2 for fair and a minimum score of 1 for poor, for all sensory attributes. The prepared scale is presented in Appendix III.