

Research Note

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Vegetable Consumption Pattern and Health Consciousness of Urban Terrace Garden Farmers

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to analyse the vegetable consumption pattern and health consciousness of urban households practicing terrace gardening at their homes. The survey was conducted among randomly selected 90 households in Pune city i.e., Pune Municipal Corporation and Pimpri - Chinchwad Municipal Corporation. The study revealed that among the urban wellers doing terrace gardening, everyone showed either moderate or high level of health consciousness and no one showed low level. The amount of vegetables consumed per household per day was taken in to consideration while collecting details regarding general consumption pattern of vegetables. As per the study, it was found that, 70 per cent were consuming moderate amount of vegetables on daily basis.

Keywords: Terrace gardening; Health consciousness; Consumption pattern; Urban people; Pune

Terrace gardening is a boon to urban population. It provides a greener and healthy covering around the cement blocks in the cities. Nowadays as the world is getting urbanized, the idea of urban agriculture and the allied facilities have received substantial attention and acceptance in the foregone decade, and are growing to encounter the requirements of the ever-rising urban life. Urban people are likely to be more health conscious and have diversified vegetable consumption pattern if they are engaged in home gardening (Alaimo et al. 2008). In present era, particularly in the developing nations, the increasing gap between human population and food supply is a serious challenge.

As the people are well aware of the harmful effect of agrochemicals on human health, the urban society is presently moving towards safer food habits. They started to cultivate as much vegetables as possible on their premises. In India, since available land for cultivation is shrinking, mainly in urban areas, there is a need of some alternative measures like home gardening or roof top gardening (Udayan and Sreedaya, 2018). It is need of the hour to promote a healthy lifestyle among the urbanizing society. Therefore, the study aims to have a clear understanding about the vegetable consumption pattern and health consciousness of urban terrace garden farmers.

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METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at Pune city, Maharashtra which consists of Pune Municipal Corporation and Pimpri / Chinchwad Municipal Corporation. As housewives are actively involved in the practice of terrace gardening, the respondents selected for the study were women. The list of house wives practising terrace gardening was obtained from the Horticulture Department of Pune Municipal Corporation and Agharkar Research Institute which is situated at Pune. Through random sampling 90 respondents were selected; out of which 62 were from Pune Municipal Corporation and 28 were from Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation. The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical tests such as mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation and Pearson's correlation analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Health consciousness

It is operationally defined as awareness of the healthiness of diet and lifestyle among urban dwellers who cultivate vegetables on their terraces. The variable was measured with the help of a schedule developed for the study consisting of 11 statements, out of which 8 statements were positive and 3 statements were negative. A three-point continuum was used with agree, undecided and disagree options to record the responses. Positive statements were assigned with the scores of 2, 1 and 0 and negative statements were assigned with the scores 0, 1, 2 for agree, undecided and disagree respectively. The total score of each respondent was worked out by summing up scores for all statements. According to total score of the respondents, categories were made on the basis of mean \pm SD (mean = 21.5, S.D. = 0.5). Then the total respondents

Table 1.
Health Consciousness of Respondents

(n=90)

Sl.No.	Items to analyse health consciousness	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Importance of balanced diet	90	100.00
2.	Harmful effects of pesticide use	90	100.00
3.	Use of chemical fertilizers	90	100.00
4.	Terrace gardening and fresh air availability	90	100.00
5.	Nutritional quality of fresh fruits and vegetables	90	100.00
6.	Influence of terrace gardening on health	90	100.00
7.	Mental health and gardening	83	92.22
8.	Organic food and health	77	85.56
9.	Waste management at home	90	100.00
10.	Difference in quality of 'cultivated at home' vegetables and 'market' vegetables	65	72.22

were classified in to three categories such as low health consciousness (scores up to 20.9), moderate health consciousness (scores from 21 to 21.9) and highly health conscious (scores from 22 and above).

All the respondents were aware of the fact that balanced diet is needed to maintain healthy lifestyle. From Table. 1, it is also seen that all the respondents knew about the bad effect of pesticide residues in food items and the health issues associated with them.

All the housewives agreed to the fact that terrace gardening is a healthy practice and provides fresh air around the house. Every respondent housewife knew about the health benefits of planting flora around their house premises and majority (92.22 per cent) agrees that terrace gardening leads to mental satisfaction. All the respondents knew about the nutritional benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables.

From the responses given by the housewives, it is found that, most of the households are including vegetables and fruits in their daily diet in order to maintain health. All the respondents were belonging to either moderately health conscious category or highly health conscious category. From their responses it is noticed that all were aware of healthy lifestyle and practices through various mass media and different programmes conducted by various organizations in Pune city.

Vegetable Consumption Pattern

Vegetable consumption pattern is operationally defined as the process by which

respondents identify and consume vegetables according to their use. The amount of vegetables consumed per household per day was taken in to consideration while collecting details regarding general consumption pattern of vegetables. Three categories of consumption pattern were made. The categorization was done on the basis of mean \pm SD (mean = 592.78, S.D = 276.16), such as low (Up to 317 g), medium (318 g to 869 g), high (870 g and above).

Nearly three fourths (70.00 per cent) of the respondents were having vegetable consumption between 318 g to 869 g. Only very few (12.00 per cent) of the respondents were consuming more amount of vegetables (more than 870 g.). The probable reason for this pattern of consumption of vegetables, might be the hike in prices of vegetables in the market. It has been from the study that, majority of the households was trying to cut down their household expenses by reducing the consumption of vegetables. In urban scenario, people tend to take food from restaurants more often than in rural areas. The number of people consuming non-vegetarian foods is also more in urban areas.

It is concluded that most of the households settled in urban areas were much aware of their food styles and were involved in healthy consumption practices. They were conscious about the ill outcome of using inorganically grown vegetables and fruits which are commonly available in city markets. Hence, most of the house

wives avoid buying of vegetables from the market and cultivate vegetables on their premises, especially on their terraces. None of the urban dwellers were included in low health conscious category as they were well informed about bad health practices. The consumption pattern of vegetables is also positive with very few respondents in low vegetable consuming category.

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