



Food Safety: A Study on Knowledge and Practices of Street Vendors of Vadodara City

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Abstract: Street foods are one of the most saleable food items which are relatively cheap and readily available to a larger part of the community. These foods are appreciated for their flavor, easy availability and reasonable price. However, street foods are also a potential source of food borne illness, thus they pose a major health problem. It is often recognized that lack of food hygiene among street food vendors lead to food borne illness. The street vendors being poor and uneducated lack proper understanding of food safety and hygiene. Their poor knowledge and poor safety practices make street food perceived as a public health risk. Thus, ensuring proper food safety among them is of utmost importance. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the level of knowledge and practices among street food vendors in the city of Vadodara. The data was collected from a sample of 60 street vendors using an interview schedule. The outcome of the study can facilitate the government with more information about knowledge and practices of Street Food Vendors to increase their current efforts at improving the safety of street foods and food safety awareness of the community. In conclusion, there is a need to increase the food safety knowledge and practices of the food handlers, handling different kind of street food.

Keywords: Street Vendors, Food Safety, Knowledge, Practices.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Street food is the most appreciated form of ready to eat food in present times. According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), street food is defined as “ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in streets and other similar public places” (Draper, 1996). It is ready-to-eat, inexpensive and flavourful in taste which makes it the most accessible food. As street food is generally served in open spaces to public at large, it is vulnerable in terms of hygiene and safety. The major goal of a Street Food Vendor is earning a living thus, Food Safety takes up a secondary role. Food safety and hygiene are crucial to reducing the risk of food-borne illnesses that may be caused through biological hazards such as pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and parasites, or chemical hazards or natural toxins. If the food safety guidelines are not followed precisely, people can fall sick and may even lead to eventual death. The food is improperly prepared, stored, handled, cooked, or refrigerated, which leads bacteria can grow leading to food contamination. A review of research showed focus on adopted food safety practices, assessment of these practices, risk factors involved, food safety challenges, food culture in India, assessment of knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding street food and street food vendors (Alimi, 2016; Andy et al., 2015; Asyikin et al., n.d.; Chukuezi, 2010; Cortese et al., 2016; Monney et al., 2013; Pengetahuan et al., 2011). There is a need to ensure food safety at the street food outlets. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the aim to assess the level of knowledge and investigate practices of food safety of the street food vendors of Vadodara city.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of knowledge with regards to Food Safety amongst Street Food Vendors of Vadodara city.
2. To study the Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors of Vadodara city.

2. METHODOLOGY:

The research design of the present study was descriptive in nature. The study was limited to 60 street vendors. The locale of the study was Vadodara city. The sample was selected purposively. The tool used for collection of data was an Interview Schedule. The Interview Scheduled comprised of three sections i.e. Section I – Background Information of the selected street vendors, Section II - Knowledge of Street Vendors regarding Food Safety and Section



III - Practices of Street Vendors regarding Food Safety. The response structure for Section II and Section III was “Yes” and “No”.

3. FINDINGS :

1) Background Information of the selected Street Vendors of Vadodara city

In this section the Background Information of the selected Street Vendors of Vadodara city is presented. It provides information with regards to age, gender, level of education and the marital status of the street food vendor. It also contains information regarding years of working as a street food vendor and type of food sold by the street vendor.

a) **Age of the respondents:** The findings revealed that half of respondents were in the age group of 21-30 years. A very few i.e. 5 percent were less than 20 years in age. (Fig:1)

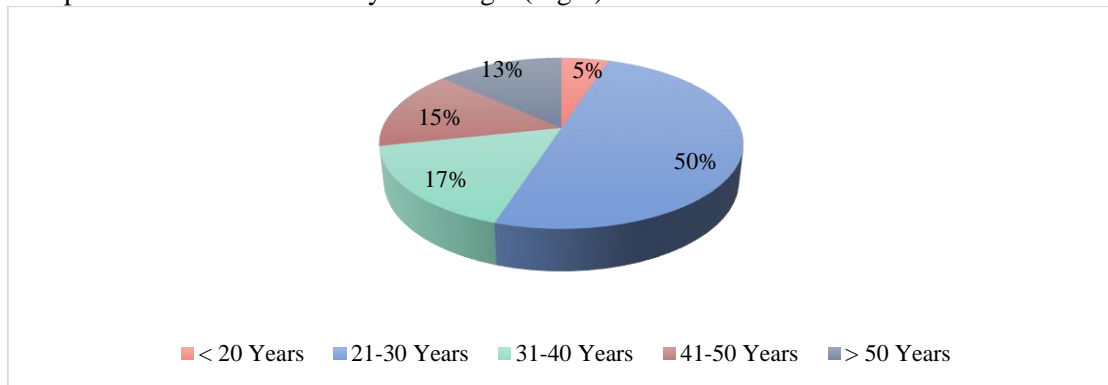


Fig:1 Distribution of Respondents as per their Age

b) **Gender of the respondents:** The findings showed that majority of the street food vendors were male i.e. 82 percent and remainder i.e. 18 percent were female street food vendors. (Fig.: 2)

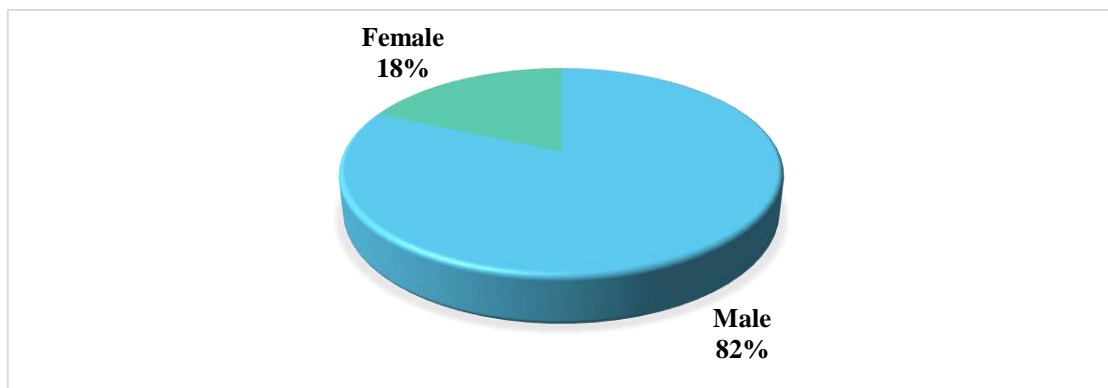


Fig:2 Distribution of Respondents as per their Gender

c) **Level of education of the respondent:** The data collected regarding level of education of the respondent showed that more than half had studied till Secondary School (63%). There were 8 percent respondents with No Formal Education and 6 percent with Higher Secondary Education and/ or above level of education. (Fig.:3)

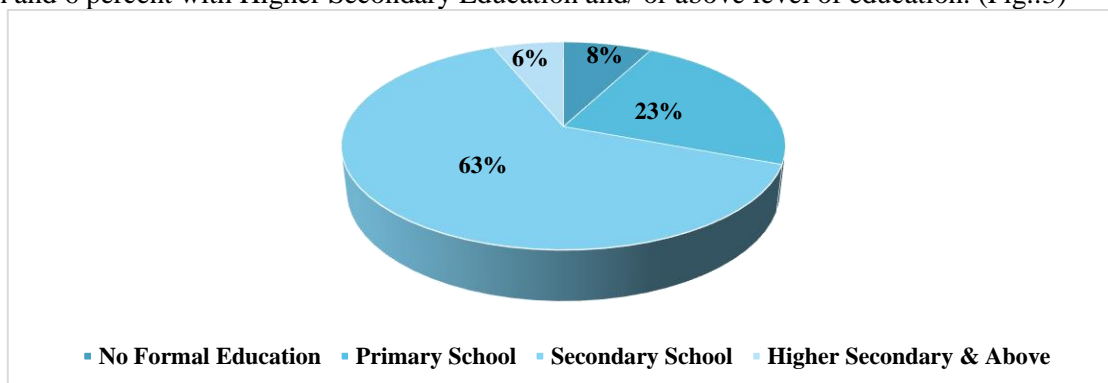


Fig:3 Distribution of Respondents as per their Education



d) **Marital status of the respondents:** It was found that 75 percent of the respondents were married. (Fig.: 4)

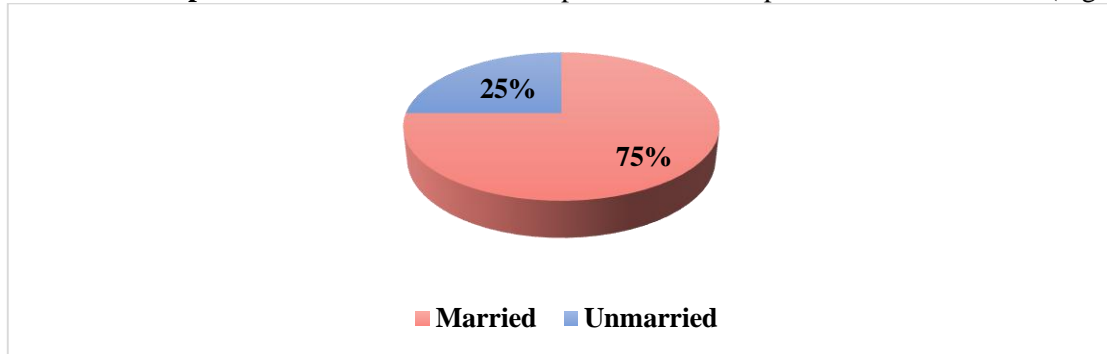


Fig:4 Distribution of Respondents as per their Marital Status

e) **Years of working as a street food vendor:** The findings of the study show that more than half of the respondents had worked as a street food vendor between 1-5 years. A very few respondents were working since more than 10 years i.e. 7 percent and few of the respondents had just started working as street food vendors with less than 1 year i.e. 14 percent. (Fig.: 5)

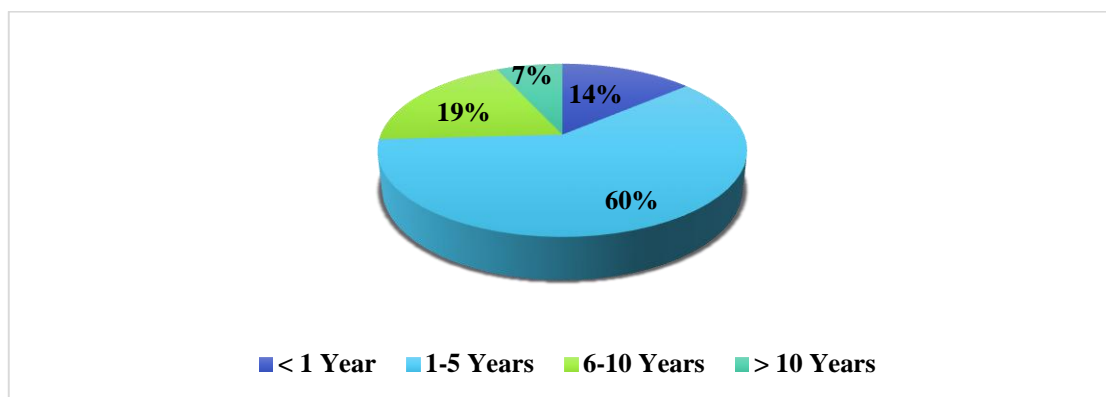


Fig:5 Distribution of Respondents as per their Work Experience

f) **Type of food sold by the street vendor:** The findings revealed that less than half of the respondents sold hot beverages i.e. tea or coffee. Slightly less than one-fourth (22%) were selling either fast food or cooked meals. Very few street food vendors were selling juices (14%). (Fig.: 6)

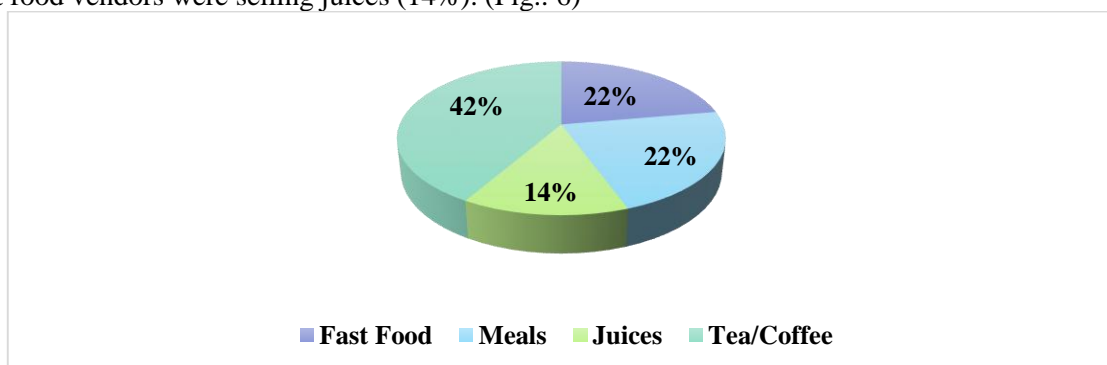


Fig:6 Distribution as per Type of Food sold by Street Vendor

2) **Knowledge of Street Vendors of Vadodara city regarding Food Safety**

The findings of the study revealed that slightly less than three-fourth of the respondents had good knowledge of Food Borne Illnesses namely diarrhea, food poisoning and cholera. It was found that more than half of the respondents exhibited good knowledge with regards to General Food Safety measures. It was seen that slightly more than three-fourth of the respondents were knowledgeable about Personal Hygiene like hand washing, wearing hand gloves and wearing clean clothes. (Fig.: 7)

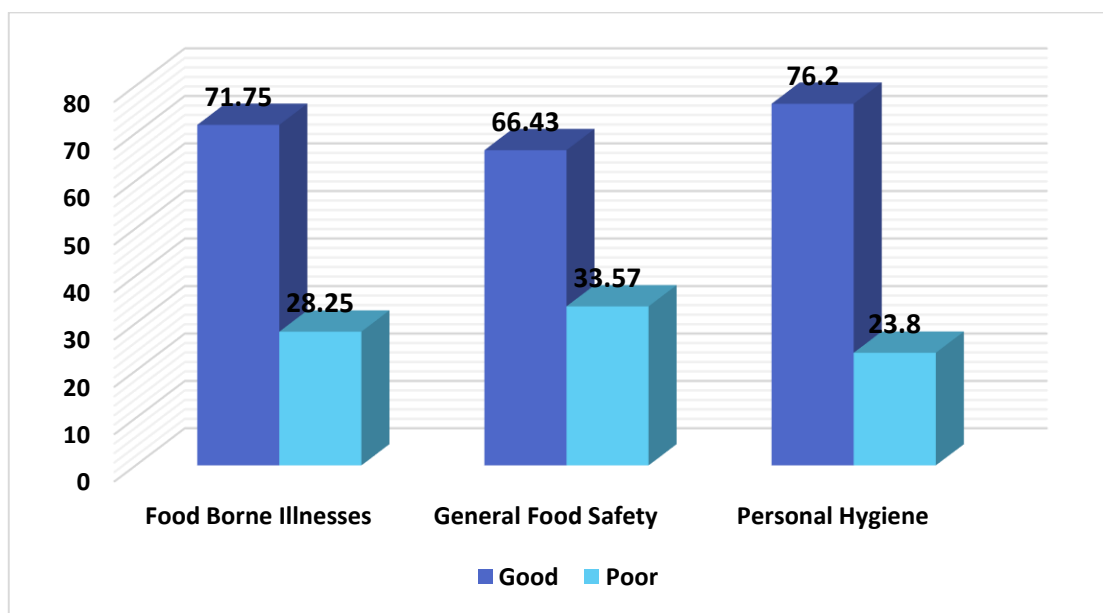


Fig.: 7 Knowledge of Street Vendors of Vadodara city regarding Food Safety

3) Practices of Street Vendors of Vadodara city regarding Food Safety

The data regarding practices of street vendors of Vadodara city regarding food safety revealed that more than half of the respondents had good practice with regards to personal hygiene. It was found the majority i.e. 82.67 percent of the respondents practiced general food safety habits. Slightly less than three-fourth of the respondents were following environmentally hygienic practices. (Fig.: 8)

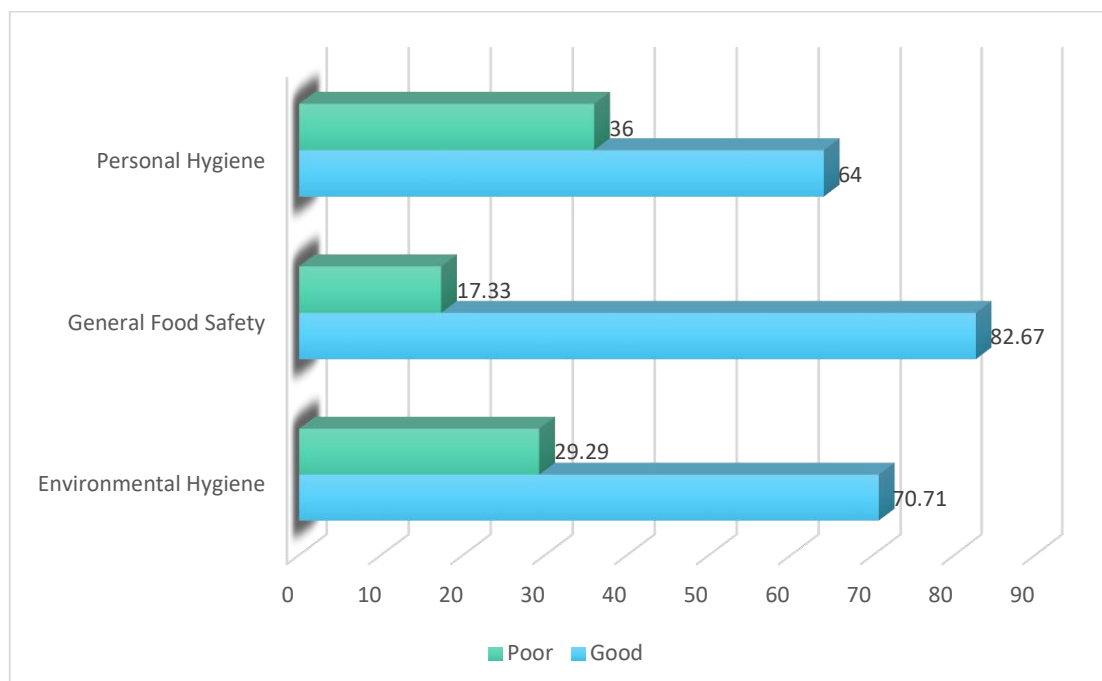


Fig.: 8 Practices of Street Vendors of Vadodara city regarding Food Safety

4. RECOMMENDATIONS :

The present study focused on assessing the level of knowledge and investigate practices of food safety of the street food vendors of Vadodara city. According to the findings of the study, it is recommended to conduct a deeper investigation into the practices of street food vendors and conduct intervention for improved food safety measures. More guidance is required to be disseminated to ensure safe and hygienic infrastructure. Furthermore, better conclusions can be drawn with a larger sample size. Case study on utilization and design of street food carts can help in improving the



infrastructure and overall food safety practices. A similar study can be conducted in other cities where street food is consumed, and the findings can be compared for better understanding of practices of the street food vendors.

5. CONCLUSION :

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the respondents had good knowledge of Food Safety with regards to various Food Borne Illnesses namely diarrhea, food poisoning, cholera etc. Moreover, it was found that the respondents exhibited good knowledge in various aspects which included hand washing, wearing hand gloves, using cleaned vessel, awareness regarding seriousness of food contamination, etc. Furthermore, it was found that the respondents exhibited good Food Safety practices in relation to Personal Hygiene, Environmental Hygiene as well as General Food Safety measures. Although Knowledge Level & Practices of Street Food Vendors were found to be good, attention needs to be focused on certain practices such as keeping the cooking surface dirt-free, protection against insects, provision of hand washing facilities, etc. which related to lack of proper infrastructure and services. Thus, further inquiry into the same should be made and necessary actions can be taken by the concerned authorities and stakeholders.

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