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A Study on Consumer Awareness and Perception towards Food Adulteration in Daily Consumable Products

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Abstract-- Food adulteration has become a major problem that affects public health, the economy, and consumer protection, especially in developing countries where everyday food items are a big part of what people eat. Adulteration happens when people add poor-quality, harmful, or forbidden substances to food, either on purpose or by mistake. This leads to lower food quality, unsafe food, and can even cause health problems for people who eat it. Even though there are rules and laws in place to make sure food is safe, many people still get fake or unsafe food.

This study looks at how much consumers know and think about food adulteration, especially in commonly used items like milk, cooking oils, spices, grains, lentils, fruits, vegetables, and packaged foods.

The research tries to understand what people know about common harmful substances in food, the health risks of fake food, and whether they know about food safety standards, labelling rules, and the organizations that help keep food safe. It also looks at what people think and feel about food adulteration, including how they choose what to buy, whether they trust certain brands, how much they are willing to pay for certified products, and how much they rely on quality marks like FSSAI, AGMARK, and ISI.

The study uses a descriptive and analytical approach.

To collect information, a structured questionnaire was given to people from different age groups, genders, education levels, income statuses, and jobs. Additional information was gathered from research papers, government reports, food safety documents, and trustworthy websites to help explain the topic and give more background.

The results show that most people know that food adulteration exists, but they don't know much about the specific substances used, how to detect them, or the laws that deal with it.

People are worried about the health effects of fake food, but they don't know much about how to report problems or protect their rights as consumers.

Keywords-- Food Adulteration, consumer awareness, consumer perception, Food safety, Health risk, purchasing behaviour, Food quality standards, consumer protection, Regulatory authorities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Food adulteration has become a big problem in today's food system, especially in developing countries.

These countries are facing challenges due to fast-growing populations and rising food demand, which are putting pressure on food production and how food is distributed. Food adulteration is when harmful or unapproved substances are added to food, or when important parts are removed.

Items that people eat every day, like milk, cooking oils, spices, grains, lentils, fruits, vegetables, and packaged foods, are especially at risk for adulteration.

This is because these products are used a lot, are in high demand, and are not very expensive. Common ways food gets adulterated include adding water to dilute, using fake ingredients, using artificial colours and preservatives, and mixing in non-food materials. Eating adulterated food can cause health issues, from short-term sickness to long-term diseases, making food safety an important concern for everyone.

Even though there are laws to protect food safety and regulatory bodies that check food, adulteration still happens.

This is because there is not enough monitoring, weak rules for enforcement, and lack of transparency in the food system. In this situation, how much consumers know about food adulteration and what they think about it is very important in controlling this problem. Consumer awareness means how much people know about adulteration, health risks, quality marks, product labels, and their rights as consumers. Consumer perception is what people believe, feel, and trust about food products, brands, and the government agencies that regulate food safety.

Things like education, income, and how much information people have access to play a big role in how much they know and what they think about food safety. Also, people's reliance on packaged and branded food has shaped their views on food safety, often making them believe that branded products are safer.

This study looks at how much people know and what they think about food adulteration in everyday food products.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researchers have studied food adulteration, looking at why it happens, how it affects health, and how people think about it.



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Their findings show that adulteration is usually done for money, because rules aren't followed closely, and people don't always watch what's happening. Everyday items like milk, cooking oils, spices, grains, fruits, vegetables, and packaged foods are often tampered with.

Adulteration means adding bad or harmful things to food, or taking out important parts, which makes the food less healthy and lower quality.

Some common fake ingredients found in food are water and chemicals in milk, artificial colours in spices, bad oils in cooking oils, and harmful chemicals in fruits and vegetables. Eating this kind of food can make people sick, cause allergies, digestive issues, and even long-term health problems like liver or kidney disease. Kids and older people are especially at risk.

But studies show that even though most people know that food can be tampered with, they don't know much about the specific things that are added, how to spot them, the rules that protect food quality, or what the labels mean. People also don't know much about quality marks or how to report bad food.

How people feel about food adulteration also affects what they buy.

Many people think that food adulteration is a common problem and so they go for well known brands or packaged food, believing that these are safer. However, many can't afford to always buy the best or certified products because of cost. Age, gender, education, and income also shape people's awareness and views, with women and more educated people usually being more worried about food safety.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses a descriptive and logical approach to examine how apprehensive consumers are and what they suppose about food contamination in everyday products. This system is applicable because it helps understand current mindfulness situations and explore consumers' opinions, passions, and coping actions related to food contamination. Both primary and secondary data were used in the exploration. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire that gathered information about consumers' age, gender, education, income, mindfulness of food contamination, knowledge about common complements, views on health pitfalls, understanding of food safety norms, and buying habits.

The questionnaire included close- concluded questions with multiple- choice options and Likert scales to make it easier for people to respond.

Secondary data was attained from exploration papers, books, government reports, food safety authority reports, and other secure online sources to support the study's proposition.

The actors were people who regularly buy and consume diurnal food particulars similar as milk, cooking oil painting, spices, grains, fruits, vegetables, and packaged foods. The sample size was determined using a accessible slice system due to time and access limitations. sweats were made to include individualities from different age groups, genders, education situations, and income backgrounds to get a broad range of responses. Descriptive statistics similar as probabilities, frequence counts, and average scores were used to assess mindfulness and comprehensions. deducible statistics were used to determine how factors like age, gender, and income are related to mindfulness and comprehensions. The results were presented in tables and maps to make them easier to understand.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The current study looks at how aware and what people think about food adulteration, based on answers given through a set of questions. Around 60 people took part in the survey. The information collected was studied using simple analysis to understand things like age, awareness, what people think, and how they act when it comes to food adulteration. The analysis shows that 60 of repliers are veritably concerned about food contamination, pressing strong fear regarding health hazards and long- term goods. Another 30 are concerned, indicating that a large maturity of consumers take contamination seriously. still, 15 remain neutral, and 5 are n't concerned at each, which may be due to lack of knowledge, ignorance, or trust in food merchandisers. Overall, the data easily indicates that 80 of consumers are concerned or largely concerned, reflecting growing public perceptivity towards food safety issues.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Looking at the age groups, most people who took part were between 18 and 25 years old, followed by those between 26 and 35. Fewer people were in the 36 to 45 age group and even fewer were older than 45. Both men and women were included in the study, with slightly more women than men. This shows that younger people and women are more interested in and concerned about food issues.



Awareness of Food Adulteration

The data shows that most people are aware of food adulteration. When asked if they knew about it, most said yes. This means that many people understand that this is a big problem. However, a small number said they didn't know, showing that some groups may need more information.

Commonly Adulterated Food Products

People pointed out that milk is the most commonly adulterated food, followed by spices, oils, fruits and vegetables, and packaged foods. Many people picked more than one item, meaning they think adulteration is a common problem across various foods. This shows how worried people are about everyday food items.

Sources of Information on Food Adulteration

Social media was the main source of information on food adulteration, followed by TV, friends and family, and newspapers. The fact that social media is the leading source suggests that digital platforms are important in spreading awareness, especially for younger people.

Frequency of Concern While Purchasing Food Products

Most people say they always or sometimes think about food adulteration when they are buying food. Very few say they hardly ever think about it. This shows that people are cautious and that adulteration affects their buying choices.

Consumer Perception towards Health Risks

Most people either agree or strongly agree that food adulteration can be very harmful to health. This means that people believe that bad food can cause serious problems. Only a few people are neutral or disagree, showing that most people accept that adulterated food is dangerous.

Awareness of Food Safety Standards and Regulations

Most people say they know about food safety rules. However, when we look at how they act, it seems that not everyone really knows how to use this knowledge or knows the legal steps they can take. Few people actually take action against adulteration.

Consumer Reaction to Adulterated Food

When people find out about adulterated food, the most common thing they do is stop buying it. Many also tell the shopkeeper, while very few report it to the authorities. A few just ignore the problem. This shows that people prefer to handle the issue themselves rather than going through official channels.

Reporting Behaviour and Complaint Frequency

Most people say they sometimes or often report food adulteration, but not always. Many have never reported it to the authorities. This may be due to a lack of trust in the system or not knowing how to file a complaint.

Willingness to Support Food Safety Initiatives

Most people are willing to help with food safety efforts. This shows that people are supportive of actions that can prevent food adulteration. However, a few are unsure or not interested, so there is a need for more awareness and support programs.

V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study shows that most consumers know about food adulteration, but their knowledge is mostly about items people often talk about, like milk, spices, and oils.

Media like TV, newspapers, and social media are important in making people aware of food adulteration. The study found that people with more education have better knowledge about what makes food unsafe and about food safety rules.

Most people think food adulteration is a big risk to health. They believe it can cause problems like stomach issues, food poisoning, and long-term diseases. Even though they know about adulteration, many still buy products that are likely to be adulterated because they are cheaper, they trust the brand, they find them convenient, or they don't have other choices.

The study found that people don't know much about the rules and authorities that protect food safety. Many are not aware of how to report issues related to adulterated food. Consumers trust branded and packaged food more than loose or unpackaged items, thinking they are safer.

The study shows a gap between what people know and what they do. Very few check food labels, certifications, or quality marks before buying. Income plays a role in how people view food safety. People with higher incomes care more about the quality and safety of their food than those with less income.

Overall, the study suggests that there is a need for better education and awareness efforts to help people act safely when they buy food.

VI. SUGGESTION

Suggestions There is a big need to improve education and awareness about food adulteration through workshops, seminars, and online campaigns.



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These efforts should teach people how to spot fake food products and understand the health risks they can cause. The government and food safety organizations should spread information about food safety rules, quality labels, and ways to report problems.

This information should reach people through TV, radio, newspapers, and local community activities. Everyone should get into the habit of checking food labels, the dates of manufacturing and expiry, and quality marks like seals before buying food. This helps ensure they are getting safe and genuine products.

Food producers and sellers should be open and honest with the information they provide on labels. They must follow food safety rules strictly to build trust with customers and stop harmful practices. Regulatory bodies should check food places, markets, and suppliers more often. This will help catch and stop the sale of unsafe food.

These tools can help detect harmful substances in food. Schools should teach students about food safety and their rights as consumers. This will help create a more informed and responsible generation. People should choose food from trusted and certified brands, even if it costs a little more. This helps support safe and reliable food sources. Governments, nonprofit groups, and consumer groups should work together to solve the problem of food adulteration.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based on a small number of people who responded, which might not show the full picture of how all consumers in different areas behave.

The research looked at certain age groups and types of people, mostly young adults and middle-aged customers, which means the findings might not apply to others.

The study used questionnaires where people answered about their own experiences, which could be affected by things like what they think others want or misunderstandings about the questions. The survey only covered specific kinds of food items, like milk, spices, oils, fruits, vegetables, and packaged goods, and didn't include other products that might be affected, such as drinks or baked goods.

The study focused on what people think and know about food, not on actual testing or checking if food has been tampered with, which means it can't prove if food is unsafe. The study was done in a short time, so it might not show how people buy food or if food is tampered with during different seasons.

Most of the people surveyed lived in towns or nearby areas, so it might not include what people in more remote areas think or do. The study didn't investigate how culture or lifestyle choices might influence what people buy or how much they know about food safety. It was hard to get official documents from the government or companies, which made it harder to check the study's results with other information.

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