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Socio-demographic profile and pattern of meat consumption of the consumers of Thrissur corporation[#]

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Abstract

The present study analysed the socio-demographic profile and the pattern of consumption of meat among consumers in the Thrissur Corporation area of Kerala state, India. A survey research design using a pretested structured schedule was employed among a sample of 150 meat consumers. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were female (65.30 per cent) and belonged to middle age group of 30-50 years (51.3 per cent). More than three-fourth of the consumers had a family size of up to four members (78 per cent). The annual income of majority of the respondents was within the range of one to ten lakh (66.70 per cent) and nearly 40.70 per cent of consumers were graduates. The results of this study indicated that all the respondents preferred to consume chicken when compared to chevon (39.3 per cent), beef (72.6 per cent), pork (37.3 per cent), or rabbit meat (4.7 per cent). Majority of the consumers consumed meat once or twice a week (73.3 per cent) and all the respondents assessed the quality of meat based on its colour. Most of them preferred to purchase meat from the local meat stalls (97.3per cent). Consumers reported that the reason for their preferred place of purchase was the availability of quality and fresh meat.

Keywords: *Meat preference, meat type, meat quality, sensory quality*

Traditionally meat consumption has been an integral part of the human diet because of it being a rich source of valuable proteins, vitamins, minerals, micronutrients and lipids. The rate

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of consumption of meat is increasing every year in India due to the effects of globalization, improved quality of life and changing lifestyles. According to Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics in 2022 (DAHD, 2022) there has been a steady, continuous increase in the per capita availability of meat from 6.52 kg/ annum in the year 2020-2021 to 6.82 kg/ annum in the year 2021-2022 in India and Kerala has produced 4.99 per cent of the total meat produced in the country. According to the National Family Health Survey in 2021(NFHS-5, 2021) almost 96.05 per cent of the population consumed meat in Kerala and per capita availability of meat during the year 2021-22 was 13.06 kg/annum. Kerala had the highest per-capita meat intake among the Indian states (George *et al*., 2016) and Kerala is ideal for the development of meat industries when compared to the other Indian states, as there exists no taboos or intense emotions against any particular type of meat in the state. The factors for increased consumption of meat and meat products in Kerala include the high literacy rate, rising socio-economic position and high health consciousness (Abraham and Kumar, 2021).

A variety of interconnected factors are involved when a consumer makes choices about meat products for familial consumption. Both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of meat and sensory properties also affect the acceptability of meat. Price, product presentation, origin and brand are examples of extrinsic quality cues (Olson, 1977). The physiological characteristics of the product, such as colour, visible fat, and tenderness are intrinsic quality indicators for meat (Grunert *et al*., 1996). Details such as date of packing and expiry in terms of use by date are indicators of keeping quality (Hall-Phillips and Shah, 2017). Other factors that influence the purchase behaviour are socio-economic, ethnic or religious beliefs, local norms on food choices, cultural and traditional aspects of the buyer (Kotler *et al*., 2017)

This study will help to understand the consumers' meat consumption patterns and preferences and thereby would assist in the development of effective steps for promoting public awareness of meat hygiene and health risks.

Materials and methods

Multi-stage sampling design was adopted for the study. In the first stage, Thrissur Corporation was selected purposively due to its diverse demographic composition, significant meat consumption patterns and cultural influences on dietary choices, provided a rich context for understanding varied perspectives on meat consumption. There are 55 divisions or wards in Thrissur Corporation. For the purpose of this study, the divisions in Thrissur Corporation were arbitrarily grouped into three contiguous zones based on physical proximity, *viz*. the eastern zone consisting 18 divisions, central zone of 18 divisions and the western zone containing 19 divisions. In the second stage of sampling, zones were considered as the sampling units and the list of divisions in each zone was prepared. Five divisions were selected at random from each zone so that a total of 15 divisions were selected for the study. In the last stage of sampling, the household was considered as the sampling unit. The lists of households in the selected divisions formed the sampling frame from which 10 households each that reportedly consumed meat and meat products were selected by simple random sampling by replacement. An adult member of the selected household was approached for collecting data. Thus, a total of 150 consumers spread over 15 divisions of Thrissur Corporation formed the final sample of the study.

Results and discussion

Age

The findings of this study (Table 1) indicated that majority of the respondents were middle-aged (51.30 per cent) followed by older (41.30 per cent) and younger (7.40 per cent) age group, respectively. The findings were quite similar to those of Kiran *et al.* (2018) where 55 per cent of the meat consumers in South India were middle-aged with age between 30 to 44 years. Sreeshma *et al.* (2018) reported that more than 30 per cent of the respondents were in the age group of 31 to 40 years.

Education

The results of this study revealed

that 40.70 per cent of the respondents were graduates and above and 37.30 per cent of consumers had higher secondary education and the rest 22 per cent had primary or secondary education. None of the respondents were found to be illiterate. According to Abraham and Kumar (2021) this could be due to the greater extent of urbanization and improved living standards in the state of Kerala. These findings were in concurrence with those of Madhav (2010). The above findings contrast with Sunitha (2019) who found that most of the consumers had a secondary level of education in the rural area of Vilavancode taluk in Tamil Nadu state.

Gender

Majority of the respondents (65.3 per cent) were females and 34.7 per cent were males. This may be because, according to the prevailing social system, in most of households, handling and cooking of meat were done by females and hence, it would stand to reason that females voluntarily responded more than males to the present study. These findings

Table 1. Distribution of respondents based on socio-demographic status in Thrissur corporation area

Category	Frequency n=150	Percentage
Age		
Young (less than 30 years)	11	7.40
Middle-age (30-50 years)	77	51.30
Old (Above 50 years)	62	41.30
Education		
Illiterate	0	0
Primary and Secondary	33	22.00
Higher Secondary	56	37.30
Graduate and above	61	40.70
Gender		
Male	52	34.70
Female	98	65.30
Household size		
Up to 4	118	78.70
5 - 7	29	19.30
More than 7	3	2.00
Annual income		
Up to one lakh	50	33.30
1 – 10 lakhs	100	66.70
More than 10 lakhs	0	0
Occupation		
Government job	13	8.70
Private job	49	32.70
Business	45	30.00
Others	43	28.60

Table 2. Distribution of respondents based on frequency of consumption of meat

Consumption days	Frequency (n=150)	Per cent (%)
Daily	0	0
1 – 2 times/week	110	73.30
3 – 4 times/week	40	26.70
Monthly once	0	0
Total	150	100.0

agreed with those of Arun and Bhuvaneswari (2019), Chandirasekaran *et al*. (2021) and Ayman (2020).

Household size

With respect to household size majority of the respondents had a family size of up to four members (78.70 per cent) followed by 19.30 per cent of consumers who had a family size between five to seven members and a mere two per cent came from large families of more than seven members. These findings reflect the general pattern of urban households in Kerala. People moving to cities in pursuit of occupations, higher education and financial stability is the present-day trend. This result was in conformity with Joseph *et al*. (2021), Sunitha (2019) and Savale (2018).

Annual income

Majority of the consumers (66.70 per cent) had an annual income from Rs. One to ten lakhs while the remaining 33.30 per cent had an income of up to Rs. One lakh and none had an income of more than Rs. Ten lakhs per annum. It could be due the fact that this study was conducted in the Corporation area which is fast moving towards urbanization. However, these findings were in contrary to the result of Sunitha (2019) who reported that among the rural consumers in Vilayancode taluk, majority of the consumers had an annual income of between Rs. 50,000 to 2,00,000.

Occupation

It could be inferred from the study (Table 1) that private jobs (32.70 per cent) and businesses (30 per cent) were the major occupations of consumers followed by other jobs (28.70 per cent) and government jobs (8.70 per cent). It might be due to the abundance of private firms cropping up in urban areas. The results were in agreement with Ayman (2020), who reported that major occupation of majority of the consumers in Srinagar city was doing business due to extensive urbanisation of the city.

Frequency of consumption of meat

It was observed from the Table 2, that majority (73.30 per cent) of the consumers consumed meat one to two times a week while the remaining 26.60 per cent preferred to consume three to four times a week and none of the respondents were in the category of consuming meat once a month. This might be because of the ready access to meat stalls within the locality of the corporation area. These findings were similar to those of Arun and Bhuvaneswari (2019) and Waghmare *et al*. (2021) who reported in their studies that majority of the respondents consumed meat weekly once or twice.

Attributes used by consumers for assessing meat quality

It could be observed from Table 3, that all the consumers relied to a greater extent on colour to assess the quality of meat, followed by tenderness (77.30 per cent), flavour (67.30 per cent), juiciness (59.30 per cent) and smell (44.70 per cent), respectively. Consumers used to predict the freshness of meat based on its colour variation as they assumed bright red colour with small streaks of fat in red meat and light pink colour in white meat indicated freshness and good quality. These findings were consistent with the results of Kiran *et al.* (2018), Bafanda *et al.* (2017), Suresh (2016), Testa *et al*. (2021), and Ayman (2020) who stated that most consumers assessed the freshness of meat based on meat colour.

Preferred place of purchase of meat

Most of the consumers (97.30 per cent) preferred to purchase the meat from the local meat stall (Table 3) followed by KVASU sales outlets (15.30 per cent), supermarkets (14.70 per cent), online purchases (14 per cent) and branded retail outlets (7.30 per cent). Probably the consumers were satisfied with the cleaning and cutting of meat that were being done in front of their eyes while purchasing directly from the meat stall. This was in accordance with the reports of Sunitha (2019) and Ayman (2020) who in their studies regarded that all the consumers preferred retail shops and no one preferred supermarkets. Chandirasekaran *et al*. (2021) observed that most of the respondents preferred roadside meat shops than branded retail outlets.

All the consumers reported that as the reason for the preferred place of purchase was the availability of quality meat and the freshness of meat (Table 3) followed by cleanliness of the meat shop (91.30 per cent), storage facilities (88 per cent), nearness of the meat shop (50 per cent), packaging of meat (38.70 per cent), aavailability of desired meat (34.70 per cent), price discount (34 per cent) and trustworthiness of previously known shop (32.70 per cent). Also, it could be observed from Table 3, that the respondents reported quality and freshness of

Table 3. Distribution of respondents based on factors pertaining to consumption of meat

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Attributes used by consumers for assessing meat quality (n = 150 for each attribute)			
Colour	Yes	150	100
	No	0	0
Juiciness	Yes	89	59.30
	No	61	40.70
Tenderness	Yes	116	77.30
	No	34	22.70
Flavour	Yes	101	67.30
	No	49	32.70
Smell	Yes	67	44.70
	No	83	55.30
Preferred place of purchase of meat (n = 150 for each **p**referred place)			
Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU) sales outlets	Yes	23	15.30
	No	127	84.70
Supermarkets	Yes	22	14.70
	No	128	85.30
Local meat stall	Yes	146	97.30
	No	4	2.70
Online purchase	Yes	21	14.00
	No	129	86.00
Branded retail outlets	Yes	11	7.30
	No	139	92.70
Reason for preference of place of purchase (n = 150 for each reason)			
Price discount	Yes	51	34.00
	No	99	66.00
Availability of meat desired	Yes	52	34.70
	No	98	65.30
Storage facilities	Yes	132	88.00
	No	18	12.00
Quality and freshness of meat available	Yes	150	100
	No	0	0
Cleanliness of meat shop	Yes	137	91.30
	No	13	8.70
Packaging	Yes	58	38.70
	No	92	61.30
Nearest shops	Yes	75	50.00
	No	75	50.00
Previously known shop	Yes	49	32.70
	No	101	67.30

Table 4. Distribution of respondents based on preferred meat type (n = 150 for each preferred form of meat)

Meat Variety	Preferred form	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Poultry	Fresh	84	56.00
	Frozen	45	30.00
	Chilled	21	14.00
Chevon	Fresh	47	31.30
	Frozen	8	5.30
	Chilled	4	2.70
Beef	Fresh	89	59.30
	Frozen	12	8.00
	Chilled	8	5.30
Pork	Fresh	39	26.00
	Frozen	12	8.00
	Chilled	5	3.30
Rabbit	Fresh	0	0
	Frozen	7	4.70
	Chilled	0	0

meat along with cleanliness of meat shop as important criteria for selection of meat shops. These findings are in line with those of Bafanda *et al*. (2017), who had reported that less than half of the consumers frequently enquired about the quality and more than half enquired about the freshness of meat at the time of purchase.

Type of meat preferred

It was also evident from the Table 4,that all the consumers preferred to consume poultry meat followed by beef (72.60 per cent), chevon (39.30 per cent), pork (37.30 per cent) and rabbit meat (4.70 per cent). A higher preference for chicken meat might be due to its affordable price, availability and ease of cooking compared to others. These research findings were in agreement with Suresh (2016), Sunitha (2019), Chandirasekaran *et al*. (2021) and Waghamare *et al.* (2021).

The results of this study (Table 4) further pointed out that majority of poultry meat consumers (56 per cent) preferred fresh meat and 30 per cent preferred frozen meat and only 14 per cent of them preferred chilled meat. In the case of beef, 59.30 per cent preferred to buy fresh meat, 8 per cent as frozen and 5.30 per cent as chilled meat. Whereas, 31.30 per cent of chevon consumers preferred to buy fresh meat followed by 5.30 per cent as frozen meat and 2.70 per cent preferred chilled meat. It was also observed that 26 per cent of pork consumers preferred fresh meat and 8 per cent preferred frozen whereas 3.30 per cent preferred chilled meat, while 4.70 per cent of rabbit consumers preferred frozen meat. The reason for preference of fresh meat from the local meat stalls might be due to their assumption that the meat could be fresh due to daily slaughter of animals / birds at local meat stalls. This result was in conformity with Chandirasekaran *et al*. (2021) who reported that the majority of the respondents preferred to buy fresh meat and no one preferred frozen meat and Waghmare *et al.* (2021) who stated that majority of the consumers favoured hot and fresh meat and few only preferred chilled and frozen meat.

Conclusion

Meeting the expectations of consumers, the last link in the production chain, is a vital step in ensuring their satisfaction as well as purchase behaviour. An understanding of consumer preferences would provide valuable information to the marketer, based on which marketing mix strategies can be designed or modified. The results of this study would help the meat industry to analyse scope and market trends by understanding consumer preference towards meat and meat products.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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