
An Influence of social media on cooking and preparing ready food items during Covid-19 pandemic situations

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ABSTRACT

About two decades ago, individuals were not connected with social media so prominently. The revolutionary changes in the world of technology has brought the people around the globe closer with the introduction of social media like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google plus, Pinterest etc.

Individuals got a platform to share their ideas, thoughts, events and activities, current happening situations and incidences for sharing of creativity in various fields, etc. that would give them worldwide recognition. Social media has also enabled the boom of business related to food delivery channels like swiggy, Uber eats, Zomato etc. In the present scenario of quarantine for COVID 19, people being at home are working on their lost hobbies and passion apart from work from home. Individuals are making use of varied networking sites to bake and cook.

This research being **Exploratory Research**, aims to study the influence of social media on cooking and purchasing of food items during the COVID 19 pandemic situation. The **methodology** used for the study is based on primary method using the instrument of a structured questionnaire for data collection. The study is also supported by the use of secondary data. It **concludes** by highlighting the extensive use of social media like you tube for cooking and preparation of varied food items during the pandemic situation which was otherwise very rarely used during the normal course of life. Social media was extensive used then for purchasing or ordering of food items.

KEYWORDS: Social Media, Cooking Food Items, Food Delivery Channels

I. INTRODUCTION

Twenty years back people were less connected to socialize with limited options to have a get-together. However, in the present scenario, people get varied information from news to promotional videos at the click of a finger. People come virtually closer and are well informed about each-others activities and updates via websites and mobile.

There are different kinds of social networking site such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. Each has its own features to enhance the communication among users. The individuals are delighted to participate in the social network since it keeps them engaged. It gives the user a feeling of closeness. Social media can be very influential on society in both positive and negative ways. It gives people a way to stay in touch with people who live far away.

It lets people share fun, interesting and informative content. It gives businesses a way to engage with customers. One of the problems, however, is that anybody can share anything, including material that may not be accurate. In some cases, real harm is done when people spread false and fake information, non-verified information. It can also have a harmful impact on society as a whole; real time example is messages about COVID 19, circulated in groups by not checking its authenticity.

Social media influence is a marketing term which describes an individual's ability to affect others' thinking in a social media community. The more a person is influenced, it affects his/her group activity, thinking capacity, decision making power and so. Social media platforms have become established in the lives of every individual, from teenager to adults, a graduate apprentice to a retired person, an entrepreneur to florist and so on. Grocery store shoppers use social media to get recipes, compare lead brands, or uses a supermarket website to check changed prices, competitors strategy analysis, sales turnover etc. These days, customers use more than one food delivery apps on their device, swapping between each to get the best local deals. The world has moved a long way since the first online delivery order was placed at Pizza Hut in 1994.

Currently, in the pandemic situation social media is being extensively used. As societies and communities are self – quarantined and are not allowed to move out of their homes, people from all age-groups and varied occupations are observed to make use of social media. Along with work from home and home assignments, watching movies or web-series, excavating old photographs to refresh old memories, people are also observed to keep themselves busy with cooking varied food items which otherwise were sought for by hoteling on week-ends. Social media plays a very important role here, in enabling the food lovers for easy cooking and try a hand of varied delicacies. The influence of social media on cooking and purchasing of food items during the Covid 19 pandemic situation can thus be explored from this research paper. We've come a long way since the first online delivery order was placed at Pizza Hut in 1994. These days, customers are likely to have multiple food delivery apps on their device, alternating between each to get the best local deals.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the use of social media for cooking and preparing food items before the pandemic Covid-19 situation
2. To identify the sources and use of social media for cooking and preparing food items
3. To analyze the influence of social media used for cooking and preparing food items at home during the pandemic Covid-19 situation
4. To explore the opportunity of start-up in food industry after the pandemic Covid-19 situation

III. METHODOLOGY

During the Covid-19 pandemic situation, as lockdown was declared at various parts of the country, people were observed to stay at home and work from home. With extensive working hours prior to the pandemic situation social media was used extensively for ordering food with the help of online food delivery channels. However, with the lockdown situation hoteling industry had to shut down their outlets depriving people of ordering food items online. Also, with the scarcity of available ingredients of food items in the market, individuals had to cook and prepare food items from the available resources only. Males along with females try their hands on preparing delicacies at home. With this observation, the researcher aims to explore the influence of social media on cooking and preparing the food items with the help of primary method of data collection. The Exploratory research has been studied with the help of data collected using the instrument of a structured questionnaire which has been analyzed to fulfill the objectives. The study is also supported by the secondary data collected from various references.

IV. THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIA

The use of social media has increased tremendously over the last few years and it still continues to increase. According to the secondary data statistics age group of 13 years to 17years are found to be using Facebook 71% (approx.),and 52% (approx.) use Instagram, while 41% use Snap chat. Among the same age group girls use social media platforms more frequently than boys.

Other than the common use of social media, other benefits were identified. These are as follows;

- (1) Increased interactions with others
- (2) More available, shared, and tailored information
- (3) Increased accessibility and widening access
- (4) Peer, social and emotional support
- (5) Public health surveillance
- (6) Building one's own brand
- (7) Access to paid advertising services
- (8) Evaluating one's own performance

Along with the benefits of social media, following are some of the disadvantages;

- (i) Too much transparent
- (ii) Social stress
- (iii) Embarrassment and agony through personal feedback
- (iv) Time consumption on campaigning

V. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FOOD

The importance and value given to the preparation of tasty food is something remarkable and needful. Since the introduction of social media till today, it was not surprising to see individuals ordering food online, posting good gestures to new restaurant or showcase the magnificent dishes made for breakfast on Instagram.

The food which plays a different role in different corners of the country and yet is so widely visible across social networks that connect all the layers, groups, classes of society, and the young and the old too. Food preparation showcased through social media platforms is a blessing for newly married, fresh graduates posted at distant places for work, and a bachelor apprentice. However, few factors of social media that influence food are enlisted below;

- (a) Misleading facts about food: -Fake, false and misleading health news on social media is the potential threat for public health.
- (b) Platform to express: -Social media intensifies the voice of people from their expressions like anger, frustration, happiness, which have the potential to connect with a wide audience very quickly.
- (c) Eat and tweet: -An expert in kitchen shares the preparation tips on social media which provides a platform for delicious recipes.
- (d) Expectation and truth: -After preparing delicious dishes, an individual expects opinion and views about food, the true and transparent view will motivate for further preparation.
- (e) Food safety education: -Amateur cooks are educated about the appliances and other machineries to be used in the kitchen by the health experts online. Food safety practices like avoiding the reheating of leftover food, safety measures for using microwaves, practice of irregular hand washing etc. are addressed by the health experts.

Digital Marketing for online food delivery

With a continuous addition of new trends and different technologies, digital marketing is being used as a tool to remain in the competition. Market is now known due to the importance of digital marketing and its benefits. Digital marketing is extensively used for ordering food online and promoting food delivery business. It is also observed that presently people from divergent age group are engaged extensively with different online portals and channels for searching, surfing, purchasing, selling and paying too. The advantage of digital marketing services is that, food industries connect individuals and customers with their service offering. Every business is now portraying own services and products differently on social media for catching attention of customers like beautiful decoration, salad dish patterns, etc. The uniqueness with each of them is

being different. Social media marketers are well a versed with campaigns about how to run them, the frequency of updates and technicalities.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

To study the influence of social media on cooking and purchasing of food items during the pandemic situation a survey was conducted to collect the data. The data was collected from 85 individuals and was analyzed. The analysis is as below;

1. Number of times food items ordered before the pandemic situation

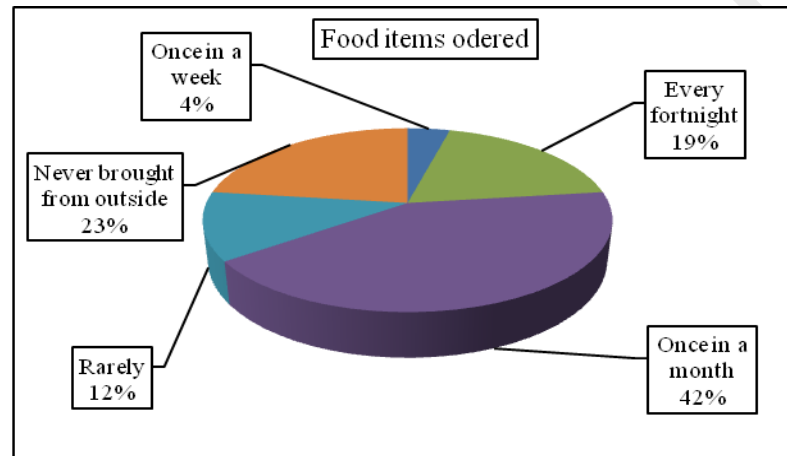


Fig.1. Food items ordered

Before the pandemic situation, irrespective of whether people were working or not, it is observed that 4% of the respondents ordered food items once a week, while 42% respondents ordered once in a month. It was also observed that 23% of the respondents never ordered food from outside.

2. Use of Social Media to prepare food items at home

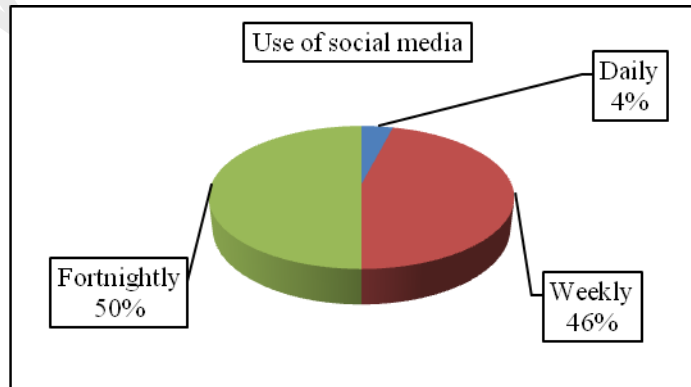


Fig.2. Use of social media

During the pandemic situation, when lock down was declared and people were self-quarantined, individuals could not order food items. During this period use of social media certainly increased. It was observed that 50% of the respondents used social media fortnightly to prepare different food items at home, while 46% used it weekly to prepare food items at home.

3. Sources preferred for preparation of food items.

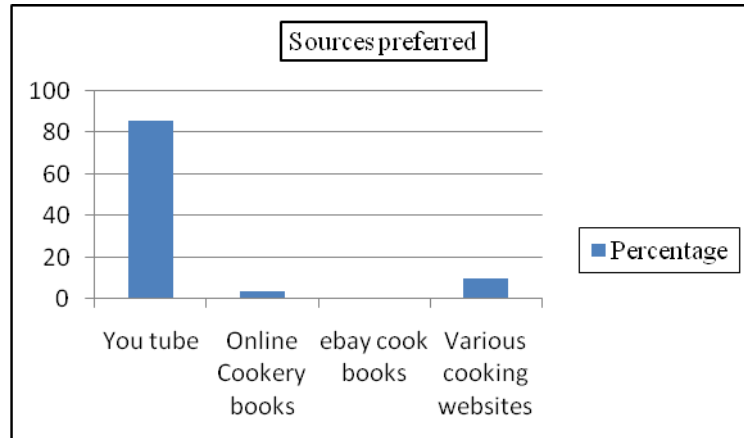


Fig.3. Sources preferred

Varied sources on social media are available to seek information for the preparation of different food items. It is observed that 86% of the respondents make use of you tube, 4% refer to online cookery books and 10% refer to various cooking websites. Thus, it is inferred that you-tube is used more prominently as an important source for cooking and preparation of food items.

4. Satisfaction of Family Members with the cooking preparation.

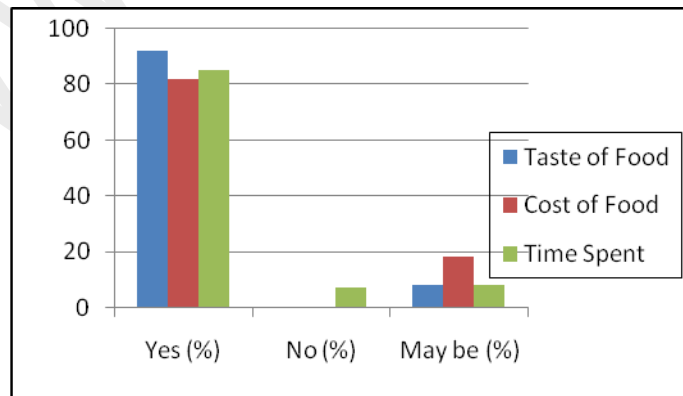


Fig.4. Family Member's satisfaction

The cooking preparation is considered to be successful only if the family members are satisfied with the cooking preparation. 92% of the respondents are considered to be satisfied with the taste of different items prepares using social media, 82% of the respondents agree that the family members are satisfied with the cost of ingredients involved in the preparation of food and 85% are satisfied with the time spent in the preparation of food. It is thus inferred that the food items prepared with the reference of sources from social media is worth with respect to the taste of food, the cost of food and also the time used for preparation.

5. Number of food items prepared during pandemic situation.

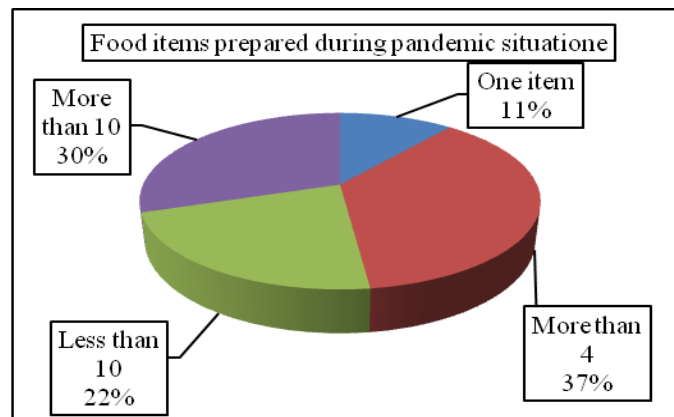


Fig.5. Preparation of food items

The lockdown period is effectively used by the individuals. It is observed that 30% of the respondents have prepared more than 10 food items during the period, while 37% of the respondents have prepared more than 4 items during this period. The inclination to prepare more and more food items is the result of the effective sources of social media. The food items that were prepared had good taste and involved less cost and time. It attracted high satisfaction levels by the respondents as well as their family members. This indicates that the sources on social media are certainly effective and more reliable.

6. Willingness to start hoteling business after the pandemic situation.

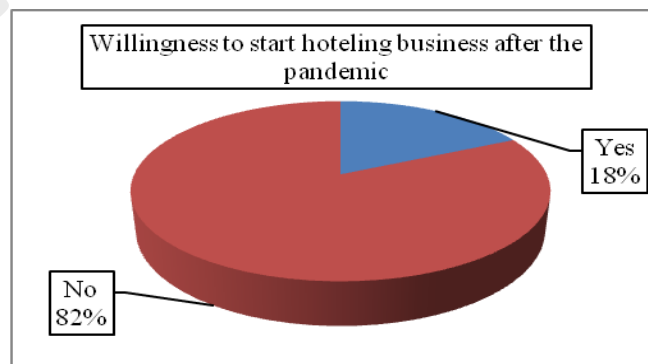


Fig.6. Willingness to start business

Though respondents and their family members are satisfied with the preparation of food with the help of the cooking sources on social media, 82% of the respondents are unwilling to start the hoteling business after the pandemic situation if given a choice.

7. Willingness to continue cooking food items at home after the pandemic situation.

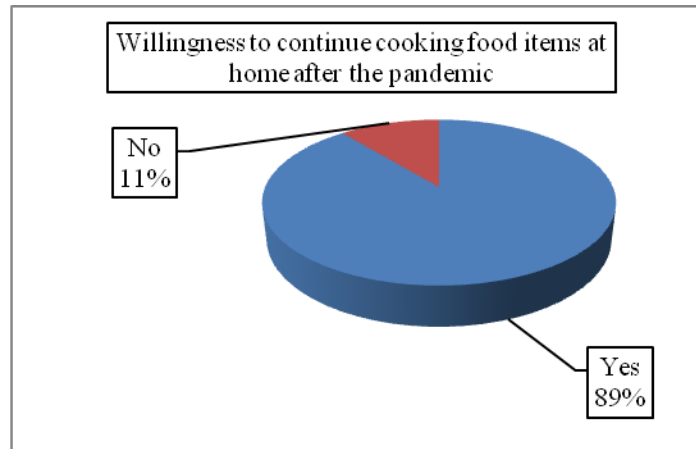


Fig.7. Willingness to continue cooking food

Now that people have learnt and understood the effectiveness of the cooking sources on social media, 89% of the respondents are willing to continue to cook and prepare varied food items at home even after the pandemic situation.

VII. CONCLUSION

People in India come from diversified culture and background. Hence they have varied eating habits and foods tastes. However, with growth in the IT sector and E-commerce business, opportunities for employment in the urban and metropolitan cities have increased. This attracts qualified people from distant places to migrate and settle in the cities that provide massive job opportunities. With this food culture and eating habits are diversified. Eat – outs and hotel industry also boomed catering to the required need of the people. But, regular eating in hotels is hazardous for health. Also, education hubs in the prominent cities attract students who prefer cooking themselves at their own ends.

It is with this urge that social media have very prominently come up with varied sources that makes cooking easy for the people. In case of busy schedules social media also enables ordering food items at home. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic situation, when food could not be ordered from outside during the lockdown period, social media is observed to be of utmost effective. It not only enables individuals to connect themselves with everybody by maintaining social distancing but also enables them to remain busy by following varied entertainment sites. Also when it comes to preparation and cooking food items with the limited available resources i.e. ingredients, social media is observed to have an effective influence on the cooking and preparing food items during this pandemic situation.

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