

## The Significance of Nutrition Education

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### Abstract

Food and nutrition is considered to be an extremely significant and a comprehensive area of one's life. The physical growth and development of an individual, the development of mindset, capacity building, skill formation, understanding of educational concepts, capabilities, cognitive development, development of fine, gross and motor skills and so forth within an individual effectively takes place due to consumption of a healthy and a nutritious diet. There are numerous types of foods and drinks available throughout the world and with the impact of globalization; international food companies are establishing their businesses throughout the world, including India. Regarding food and nutrition, it is important for the individuals to classify the differences between healthy and unhealthy food items, one should consume healthy food items and unhealthy food items should not be completely avoided but should be consumed once in a while. This research paper; highlights the significance of nutrition education and the main areas that have been underscored are, the need for nutrition education, development of nutrition education, nutrition education in community areas, and recommendation of nutrition education programs. Within educational institutions and training centers, it has been observed that besides the other educational concepts and topics, nutrition education and concepts relating to diet and food are taken into consideration. The researcher found that in educational institutions, the educators even in an informal, oral conversation communicate this aspect to the students that they should consume a healthy, well balanced breakfast before coming to school, hence, the area of food and nutrition has become important in all community areas.

**Keywords:** Nutrition Education; Information; Knowledge; Skills; Essential; Significance

### Introduction

Nutrition is considered to be one of the most essential areas that are associated with one's living; it is stated that a person is what he eats and the mindset of an individual is made up of what he consumes as part of his nutritional requirements. There have been many advantages of diet and nutrition, whenever any social function or a gathering or a conference, seminar or a business meeting is arranged; food is regarded to be one of the most essential areas. Alcohol is regarded to have detrimental effects upon a person's health and mindset, but in social gatherings, it is publicly accepted. Therefore, when a person has to achieve or accomplish something, then what he consumes, his diet and nutrition are considered to be extremely vital aspects.

Well-formulated and efficiently recognized nutrition education can encourage those contributing to change in dietary behaviors and provide them with the information, facts and skillfulness to make healthy food choices in the perspective of their way of life and economic sources. Effective nutrition education and promotion comprises of numerous constituents: 1) skill building to make possible positive behavior change; 2) environmental and policy changes to make the healthy choice the easy choice, and 3) incorporated schemes and social marketing to fabricate society and collective support. It helps consumers choose and consume vigorous and pleasurable foods by improving understanding, proficiencies, and enthusiasm to take action at home, school, and work; it is continuing, multifaceted, and distributed through a variety of channels

or outlets. It will vary based on target population, and take into account awareness, knowledge and social, health, and environmental aspects; flourishing involvements will utilize various approaches for diverse groups and conditions [1].

### The need for nutrition education

As it has been stated above that diet and nutrition are considered to be vital aspects for the well being of an individual, the feelings of anger, frustration and depression can be minimized or curbed by consuming a healthy and a nourishing diet; when an individual is in a depressed condition or undergoes disturbance or frustration or anger, then the food that he consumes is termed as 'comfort food' that gives him a soothing experience, therefore, the need for nutrition education even in educational institutions is a vital aspect, students should be provided with information and knowledge about nutrition education so that they acquire the knowledge about how to maintain their health and well being.

The problems of over-nutrition, under-nutrition, vitamin, protein and mineral deficiencies, obesity and diet related chronic diseases progressively more are present side by side throughout the world. There are more than 900 million people who are undernourished and approximately 170 million children are underweight; these children who do not get enough energy or key nutrients, and cannot maintain healthy and dynamic lives. The outcome is, they achieve underprivileged physical and mental development, devastating illness and the ultimate outcome is death, as well as immeasurable loss of human potential and social and economic development. At the same time, hundreds of millions suffer from chronic diseases caused by unnecessary or unhealthy diets and many developing nations are now dealing with rigorous health problems at both ends of the nutritional spectrum. Countries still struggling to feed their people; face the costs of preventing obesity and treating diet-related non-communicable illnesses. In India and in other countries of the world, the problem of malnutrition is severe and people are undergoing rigorous health problems [2].

Effectiveness of nutrition education is considered to be important in the viewpoints of all individuals, it has been reported that nutrition education does develop balancing feeding behaviors and child growth. It has been researched that distributed effects of fifteen involvements and noted that the winning involvements were ethnically responsive, available, and amalgamated with local resources. There is sufficient published evidence of the effective-

ness of nutrition education on child growth and anemia, particularly through improving breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices such that the Lancet series on under-nutrition of mothers and children cited behavior change communication (BCC) on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) as one of the 15 facts based efficient involvements to diminish global under-nutrition. Nutrition education has also been found to be effective in bringing about transformation of the dietary observations that influence chronic diseases as was accounted in a review of published interventions implemented in North America [2].

### Development of nutrition education

The experience of ones life, educational program and training of the individuals is considered to be vital for the development of nutrition education. When a young child in a kindergarten school is taught about the benefits of drinking milk, then he develops this within his mindset that drinking milk is essential for ones growth and development, the development of ones physical body, mindset and bones takes place through consumption of milk. The development of nutrition education within educational institutions became vital when scholarly research indicated that children should consume a healthy breakfast before coming to school. Research has indicated in an educational institution in New Delhi, India, there were couple of students who used to come to school just after having a glass of milk and nothing to eat, and they fainted and required medical treatment; then their parents were called, as well as it was put in writing by the school authorities that they should consume a healthy breakfast before coming to school; therefore, it can be stated that if a child faints in school due to lack of proper and a well balanced diet then it causes hindrances during the course of his learning and education. The concept of nutrition education has become a vital area in play schools and it is normally put in writing by the school teachers that what they are required to consume before coming to school as well as after school.

There have been development of curriculum and instructional materials that impart information about a healthy and a well balanced diet; these materials have been health and science textbooks [3], books about ones dietary habits, differences between healthy and unhealthy food items and the effects of their consumption; mainly the textbooks regarding diet and nutrition provide the essential information about the required nutrients such as calcium, vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, potassium, zinc, iron and sugar. The deficiencies of the required minerals within a

human body can cause disadvantageous effects, for example, deficiency of iron in one's body can cause anemia, sugar has to be consumed in extreme moderation, especially those individuals should avoid sugar who are diabetic, high blood sugar levels can cause harmful effects upon the human body. In most of the educational institutions, individuals are provided with mid day meals, these meals should be healthy and provide the essential nutrients to the students. In nutrition education, one of the most vital areas that should be emphasized upon is that they should be prepared in a clean, hygienic and uncontaminated environment, vegetables and fruits should be washed before consumption and one should always wash his hands before preparation of meals or consumption of anything, if a food item is fallen upon the floor, it should not be consumed as it has acquired the dirt which has been upon the floor; these are vital aspects that need to be taken under consideration when acquiring knowledge about nutrition education.

### Nutrition education in community areas

Schools and educational institutions have been regarded to be primary aspects to impart nutrition education to the individuals. This viewpoint is regarded as extremely crucial that nutrition education is essential for the physical and mental development of the children. When the children will consume a healthy and a well balanced diet then they will be able to concentrate upon their studies and learn effectively. The significance of nutrition education in community areas have been classified as follows: [4].

- Making provision of information, knowledge and skills about the relationship between a good diet, physical activity and health.
- Preparation of food, involving oneself in learning how to prepare food, for example, taking cooking classes and the consumption of food is regarded to be one of the most pleasurable and enjoyable moments of life.
- One should learn to make the differences between healthy and unhealthy food choices; when a person is young, then he enjoys sweets and unhealthy foods, he does not bother about his weight, but when he grows up, if he has time he gets engaged in physical exercises and eats mostly healthy food and recognizes the differences between healthy and unhealthy food items.
- Education regarding nutrition should also involve the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the alcoholic as well as the non-alcoholic beverages; healthy and junk food items, consumption of fruits, green vegetables and other well nourished food items and unhealthy food items such as sweets etc.

- The communication of health messages to the public is important, whether it is through educational institutions, training centers, medical centers, healthcare facilities, media, communication channels and so forth. When an individual attends a counseling center in order to obtain counseling on some aspect such as anger management, then also diet and nutrition is considered to be one of the most crucial areas that a counselor advises about.
- Nutrition education is considered to be an important way of healthy eating, build good life long habits and struggle against the problems of obesity, under-nutrition, over-nutrition, and malnutrition; generation of knowledge and information in this area will help people in identifying the problems that are associated with diet and nutrition and the good effects of a healthy well balanced diet [5].
- In some cases, young children and other minority groups are not aware of different kinds of food items available, than it should be the part of the curriculum in nutrition education that these people be introduced to new food items that they are not aware of and particularly those that are good for their health conditions [5].

### Recommendation of nutrition education programs

The following factors have been identified that influence the recommendation of the nutrition education programs: [6].

- Assess the efficiency of, organization and management between nutrition education within the Child Nutrition Programs as well as courses executed through other organizations throughout the federal government that include nutrition education. Besides imparting knowledge and information regarding the food items; the individuals should be communicated about the benefits of consuming a healthy and a nutritious diet; when young children long for unhealthy food items, it should be taught to them that unhealthy food items can prove to have disadvantageous effects upon their health, such as weight gain.
- Not only amongst the children but also amongst the adults, in higher education or short term courses, the significance of nutrition education should be emphasized, for example, adult individuals may keep fast in most cases, once or twice a week due to religious beliefs, they may not eat due to weight gain and prefer to stay slim, then in these cases, medical practitioners advise them to consume tablets of calcium and vitamins so that they get the appropriate minerals that are required for their good health.

- Individuals of all age groups may abstain themselves from consuming certain food items, when they withdraw themselves from consuming certain foods, then the food items available to them becomes limited, then they are required to make choices between healthy and unhealthy food items. The unhealthy food items are not supposed to get avoided completely, they can be consumed once in a while, but nutrition education states that whether there are children, teenagers, or adults, they should consume a healthy and a nutritious diet in order to maintain their healthy living. Eating healthy keeps an individually mentally as well as physically alert and active and on the other hand, unhealthy diet causes not only weight gain but also makes an individual lethargic and physically inactive.
- Elderly individuals, who are above 60 years of age, mostly suffer from health problems, such as their word usage and vocabulary begins to decline, they suffer from various kinds of health problems such as pain in the joints, visual impairments, hearing impairments, tooth problems and so forth. They sometimes feel like craving and consuming unhealthy food items, on the other hand, some elderly people consume extremely less amount of food; therefore, it is important that elderly individuals seek advice and guidance from their doctors and medical practitioners regarding the diet that they should consume; research has indicated that consumption of fruits and vegetables would largely assist in the maintenance of good health of the elderly individuals.

### Discussion

The concept of food and nutrition is extremely important for the development and well being of an individual; it is believed that an individual's mindset is dependent upon his diet. In his life an individual undergoes and experiences different situations, beliefs, high and low points, successes and failures, moments of happiness and sadness, dissatisfaction and satisfaction and possess different feelings and attitudes. These feelings, attitudes and behavioral traits of an individual besides the circumstances and situations get influenced by the diet and nutrition that he consumes; there is a valid reason behind stating this point such as if an individual does not eat for a long period of time and keeps working sitting in front of his computer, he would certainly feel upset, because he has not received his balanced diet; on the other hand, the sugar of the brain of the individual begins to reduce if he stays without food for a long time and he begins to develop the feelings of irritation and anger. Therefore, these are some of the reasons that are taken into consideration when understanding the significance of nutrition education.

People in their lives focus upon their education, career, marriage and other aspects such as traveling, meeting people and so forth; as part of these events, social functions, religious ceremonies, celebration of festivals and gatherings are common within their day to day lives. In all these functions and ceremonies, besides getting engaged into social communications, food is considered to be extremely important, the researcher found out that people when they attend a marriage ceremony, they enjoy the delicious cuisine that is available in marriages. There are certain food items such as non-vegetarian dishes and alcoholic beverages that are avoided by certain group of people, especially elderly individuals who possess strong religious beliefs abstain themselves from alcohol and non-vegetarian food items, they are of the viewpoint that healthy, vegetarian diet is appropriate for generating a good health and mindset.

Individuals who possess health problems, women who are expecting, students, people engaged in full time employment, elderly individuals and young children need to take special care about their diet and nutrition aspects; for example, if a person is working for 12 hours, then he is expected to consume a healthy diet and avoid unhealthy food items, because healthy diet will keep him active for a long time. The diet and nutrition aspects of the individuals also vary with the change in the seasons, in summers people are advised to eat healthy, fruits and green vegetables and drink lots of water, whereas in winters, they normally prefer hot drinks, sweets, goodies and fried foods. Winters are normally considered to be the seasons for the gain of weight, but with the onset of summers, people who have put on extra kilos, shed their weight by getting engaged in physical exercises.

The development of nutritional education program within the educational institutions provide all the relevant information to the people regarding the essential nutrients of proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats, calcium, potassium, zinc, iron and so on. The differences are acknowledged between the healthy and the unhealthy food items, and the learners become aware of the significance of diet and nutrition in their lives. In medical centers and healthcare facilities also the significance of diet and nutrition has largely been acknowledged; the medical practitioners advise their patients what kind of food to consume when they are recovering from their illnesses. Diet and nutrition is an extremely vital aspect and should always be taken into consideration, no matter what kind of work an individual is engaged in.

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