

# AWARENESS ABOUT BALANCED FOOD AMONG UNSKILLED HUMAN RESOURCE

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**Background:** This study was carried out at Peshawar about the food habits of daily wages labourers working in the urban area. **Methods:** One to one interview was conducted with 50 randomly selected daily wages labourers, using structured questionnaire. At the same time specimen of capillary blood was obtained from their fingers tips for haemoglobin measurement. **Results:** The study revealed that due to lack of awareness and poor socio economic status the daily wages labourers are more prone to malnutrition and iron deficiency anaemia. **Conclusion:** There is a need of comprehensive health education and a strategy should be designed to provide a food locally available that could fulfill the requirement that occurs due to the deficiency of animal protein in the food of daily wages labourers.

## INTRODUCTION

A balance diet is defined<sup>1</sup> as one which contain a variety of food in such quantities and proportion that the need for energy, Amino Acid, Vitamins, minerals, Fats, carbohydrates and other nutrients are adequately met for maintaining health vitality and general well being. In other words to safeguard the population from nutritional deficiencies there is a need for balanced diet.

When a child food intake falls below a standard reference<sup>2</sup> growth slows. Similarly if adults fail to meet their food requirements they loose weight. This may lead to reduced ability to work, to resist infection and to enjoy the normal status of life. This underlies the need for an adequate intake of food that is the source of all energy.

Food habits<sup>3</sup> of people are deeply influenced by their culture and occupation. Some of the food habits responsible for specific types of nutritional disorders may be seen in such group of people. Daily wages labourers are generally poor people who spend most of their time away from their homes hence they are highly prone to food born illnesses/ malnutrition. As most of the food prepared on commercial basis in Pakistan does not match the declared hygienic standards.

Rehman<sup>4</sup> A and Ghafraan S. et al. conducted a survey on labourer class Bangladeshi people in 1986 and they found out that the diet of Bangladeshi labourer class mostly consisted of seafood and rice while deficient in animal meat and cereals. They found out that mostly, they were suffering from iron deficiency Anemia and multiple logistic regression.

A study was conducted on 50 randomly selected labours from urban labourers to study their food habits, food contents they consume and the level of haemoglobin from their capillaries blood.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was cross-sectional descriptive study based on 24 hours dietary recall. A random sample of 50 urban-based labourers working in the surrounding area of Peshawar was selected. The labourers were interviewed about their food habits and contents of food. All of them were illiterate therefore, the questions were explained to them from the structured questionnaire and then the responses were recorded accordingly. The data obtained from this study was analyzed through Epi-Info.

## RESULTS

The study found that the labourers are taking a mean diet of one bread (Roti/Chapati) and a cup of tea in breakfast.

The lunch-time diet was mostly roti along with Yogurt, Potatoes or Gram Pea. 92% of the labourers were in a habit of drinking tea immediately after food.

The dinner of the labourers was different. Reason, being the dinner was arranged at home. 47% of the labourers reported that they took rotti with cooked vegetables for dinner. 8% took rotti with cooked meat, 10% took rice for dinner. 5% responded that they just take dinner twice or thrice a week, otherwise they don't take dinner reason being the poverty.

The results are summarized in tables 1-3.

Table-1: Food habits for breakfast

Food habits	% of respondents
Chapatti + Tea	98 %
Chapatti + Tea + Egg	2 %
Total	100 %

Table-2: Food habits for lunch

Food habits	% of respondents
Chapatti + Grams (Pulse)	70 %
Chapatti + Yogurt	13 %
Chapatti + Vegetables	13.5 %
Chapatti + Yogurt + Vegetable	2 %
Others	1.5%
Total	100%

Table 3: Food habits for dinner

Food habits	% of respondents
Chapatti+Cooked vegetables	77 %
Chapatti + Cooked meat	8 %
Rice + Salad	10 %
No Dinner	5 %
Total	100%

## DISCUSSION

The study leads to different prospects addressing the type of malnourishment in the said group, and, also the factors triggering solutions to safeguard the affected thus decreasing<sup>8</sup> burden of disease and increasing in socio-economically productive life. The dimension(s) should be circumstances oriented. As it is evident that the daily wagers labourers cannot purchase expensive iron supplementation and the foods rich in proteins like chicken, beef meat or dairy products. The most appropriate method under such circumstances may be two folds; long-term intervention may be through one of the PHC principle i.e. strategy should be based on easy acceptability, accessibility, affordability and appropriateness. On the other hand short term intervention may be provision of iron tablets/preparations as these are prompt in action, effective, inexpensive as well as easy available.

The diet of urban-based labourer class was deficient in protein and iron sources. Anemia occurs due to non-availability of iron rich food<sup>5</sup>.

In more deprived population overt deficiencies are more widespread and deficiencies of mineral iron gives rise to anemia<sup>6</sup>.

The results were different in terms of diet from the Bangladeshi study which can be explained on the basis of difference in environment and culture as well as sea food is cheaper and in abundance in Bangladesh.

While the food rich in proteins like Beef, Chicken and fish is very expensive in our country and due to low income the daily wages labourers in Pakistan are unable to purchase it.

## CONCLUSION

The study reveals that animal proteins, leafy un-cooked vegetable and yellow fruits are not present in their food that are the essential components of a balanced diet. Therefore the daily wages labourers are prone to malnutrition and iron deficiency anemia that can lead to reduction in their performance.

## RECOMMENDATION

There is a need to develop a strategy to prepare a food mixture that can provide proteins and iron in appropriate amount to fulfill the requirement which is locally available, traditionally acceptable and cheap.

Nutritional education is must to change the dietary habits but as we know that there are long term measures and beside this another strategy should be adopted to achieve the quick and need oriented desired results.

Iron<sup>5,6</sup> fortification has many advantages over iron supplementation. As we know that salt is consumed by every one and no special delivery system is required. Fortification of salt with iron has been accepted by the govt. of India as a public health approach to reduce prevalence of anemia.

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