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An Analysis of Millets Consumption Trends in Mysuru City

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses millet consumption patterns, awareness, and attitudes among urban households in Mysore City, Karnataka, based on primary data collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The findings indicate that young and educated individuals dominate millet consumption, with 60% of respondents aged 18–25 and 55% identified as students. Health consciousness is the primary driver, as 70% of respondents consume millets for their health benefits, and 72% report noticeable improvements in well-being. However, despite high awareness, regular consumption remains constrained by affordability and market factors. Nearly 48% of respondents consider ₹50–₹80 per kg as an acceptable price range, highlighting price sensitivity as a key determinant. Taste preferences and convenience also influence consumption behaviour, while only 25% of respondents regularly consume ready-to-eat millet products, indicating limited product innovation and accessibility. The study emphasises the need for policy interventions to improve affordability, strengthen supply chains, and promote awareness. Enhancing value-added product development and urban market integration can support the mainstream adoption of millets, contributing to sustainable nutrition and food security in urban India.

Keywords: Consumer Awareness, Sustainable Nutrition, Mysuru, Food Security

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Introduction

Millets, commonly referred to as "nutri-cereals," have been an integral part of traditional Indian diets for centuries, particularly in semi-arid and rain-fed regions. These grains are rich in dietary fibre, protein, essential minerals, and antioxidants, making them highly beneficial for human health. In recent years, millets have gained renewed attention due to their nutritional advantages and environmental sustainability. Global and national initiatives,

including the declaration of 2023 as the International Year of Millets by the United Nations, have further accelerated awareness and promotion efforts.

In urban centres such as Mysuru City, changing lifestyles, increasing incidence of lifestyle-related diseases, and growing awareness of health and fitness have influenced dietary behaviour. As a result, urban households are gradually shifting toward nutritious and traditional food alternatives like millets. However, despite this increasing awareness, the regular consumption of millets remains relatively low. Factors such as higher prices, taste preferences, limited availability, and lack of convenient product options continue to restrict their widespread adoption in urban markets.

While existing studies have highlighted the nutritional benefits of millets and general consumer perceptions, there is limited empirical research focusing on the gap between awareness and actual consumption behaviour at the city level. In particular, micro-level studies examining how socio-economic characteristics, affordability, and consumer preferences interact to influence millet consumption in emerging urban centres like Mysuru are scarce.

Against this background, the present study aims to analyse millet consumption trends among residents of Mysuru City, with a focus on demographic characteristics, awareness levels, preferences, and the key factors influencing consumer behaviour. The study also seeks to provide policy-relevant insights to promote millets as a sustainable and accessible component of urban diets.

Review of Literature

Reddy et al. conducted a survey-based study on urban consumer perception and demand for millets in India. Their findings revealed that education level, income, and health consciousness significantly influenced millet adoption. The study also identified limited market access, lack of product innovation, and higher prices as barriers to regular consumption. The authors recommended strengthening urban millet supply chains and introducing value-added millet products to attract educated, health-conscious consumers. This study provides a direct empirical foundation for understanding consumer preferences in Mysuru's urban settings.

The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN, 2018) published a comprehensive report on the nutritional and health benefits of millets. The report demonstrated that millets are rich in iron, calcium, and fiber, making them ideal for combating malnutrition and non-communicable diseases. It emphasized that incorporating millets into regular diets could improve national nutritional security. The findings underline the importance of awareness among urban consumers regarding millets' health advantages, which aligns with one of the key objectives of the present study.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023)Report provided a global overview of millet promotion and consumption initiatives. The report documented awareness campaigns, policy frameworks, and innovations that led to renewed global interest in millets as sustainable and healthy grains. It highlighted India's leadership in promoting millets through international branding and government programs. FAO concluded that urban consumers play a crucial role in expanding millet markets, supporting the relevance of analyzing urban centers like Mysuru.

The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics ICRISAT(2020) emphasized the role of millets in the "Smart Food" initiative. The report described millets as foods that are good for consumers, the planet, and farmers. It discussed the need to integrate millets into modern diets through food innovation and public-private partnerships. The findings stressed that awareness and accessibility are critical for sustaining millet consumption among urban populations. This supports the hypothesis that consumer perception strongly influences purchasing decisions.

Singh et al. (2021) studied the nutritional and market potential of millets in India from a consumer perspective. Their analysis revealed that urban consumers perceive millets as "super foods," and the primary motivations for consumption are health and wellness. However, they also identified constraints such as lack of knowledge on preparation methods and higher market prices. The study concluded that targeted marketing and education campaigns are needed to translate awareness into regular consumption. This research provides practical insights for developing awareness strategies in Mysuru city.

Jain and Choudhary (2022) conducted a comparative analysis of consumer preferences for millet and non-millet cereals in southern India. Using survey data from urban households, they found that while awareness of millets' nutritional value was high, actual consumption frequency remained low. The study attributed this gap to taste preferences, limited ready-to-cook options, and inconsistent retail supply. Their findings reinforce the importance of product innovation and accessibility, key considerations in urban markets like Mysuru.

NABARD (2021) A policy brief by NABARD titled "Millets for Health and Wealth" explored the economic and market potential of millets in India. It noted that despite growing awareness, market linkages between farmers and urban consumers remain weak. The report suggested developing value chains, millet-based processing industries, and urban retail networks. It also emphasized government support through subsidies and millet festivals to boost awareness. These policy insights are crucial for framing recommendations for promoting millets in Mysuru.

FAO and ICRISAT (2023) in their joint evaluation of the International Year of Millets, reported that awareness programs significantly improved consumer perception but did not lead to proportional increases in regular consumption. They observed that urban consumers purchase millets mainly for occasional health use rather than as a staple food. The report recommended integrating millets into public distribution and school meal programs to create habitual consumption. This observation supports the need for long-term awareness and accessibility strategies in cities like Mysuru.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the demographic profile of millet consumers in Mysuru City.
2. To examine awareness levels, consumption frequency, and preferences.
3. To identify key factors influencing consumer attitudes toward millets.
4. To provide policy suggestions for enhancing millet consumption in urban areas.

Research Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected from 100 respondents in Mysuru City using a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic characteristics, dietary habits, awareness levels, affordability perceptions, and attitudes toward millet consumption. A descriptive and cross-sectional research design was adopted to analyse consumption patterns at a specific point in time.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across key socio-economic groups, including students, private employees, homemakers, and others. This approach was considered appropriate given the study's objective of capturing diverse consumption behaviour within urban settings where millet awareness varies across population segments. The sample size of 100 respondents was deemed sufficient for conducting meaningful descriptive and inferential statistical analysis within the scope of the study.

The study defines millet consumption behaviour as the dependent variable, while independent variables include age, gender, occupation, income, awareness level, price perception, and health motivation. To examine the relationship between these variables, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant association between socio-economic factors and millet consumption behaviour.
H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant association between socio-economic factors and millet consumption behaviour.

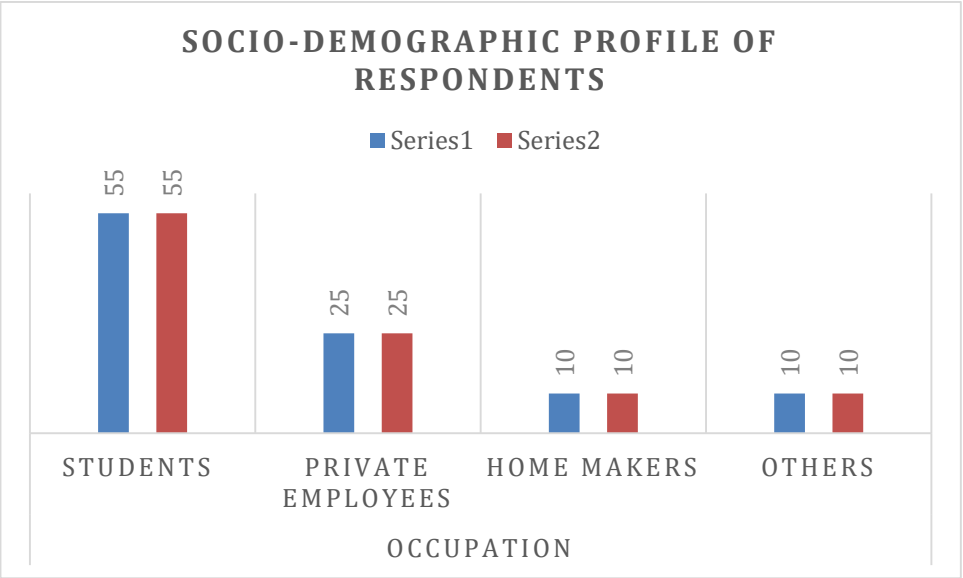
Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation, and chi-square tests to examine associations between variables. Statistical analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS software, and results were presented through tables and graphical representations for better interpretation.

Demographic Profile

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 100)

Category	Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-25	60	60
	26-35	20	20
	36-45	12	12
	Above 45	08	08
Gender	Male	52	52
	Female	48	48
Occupation	Students	55	55
	Private Employees	25	25
	Home Makers	10	10
	Others	10	10

Source: Primary survey, 2025



Source: Primary Survey, 2025

Table 1 reveals that younger individuals (18–25 years) constitute the largest share (60%) of millet consumers. This trend shows that youth are increasingly adopting millets due to their exposure to health-related information and changing dietary patterns. Gender distribution is nearly balanced (52% male and 48% female), suggesting no major gender difference in millet adoption.In terms of occupation, students (55%) represent the largest group, followed by private employees (25%) and homemakers (10%). This shows that awareness and adoption are stronger among the educated and working population. The findings highlight a clear trend of millets becoming popular among health-conscious urban youth and professionals.

Table .2 Association between Age Group and Awareness of Millets

Age group	High awareness	Moderate Awareness	Low Awareness	Total
18-25	45	10	5	60
26-35	12	5	3	20
36-45	6	4	2	12
Above 45	4	2	2	8
Total	67	21	12	100

Chi-square Test Result:
$\chi^2 = 8.52$, df = 6, p = 0.036

Interpretation: Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a statistically significant association between age group and awareness levels.

Younger respondents demonstrate higher awareness, likely due to greater exposure to education, social media, and health-related information.

Table.3 Association between Income and Price Perception

Income level	Affordable	Not Affordable	Not sure	Total
Below 30000	10	15	5	30
30000-60000	25	10	5	40
Above 60000	13	5	12	30
Total	48	30	22	100

Chi-square Test Result:
$\chi^2 = 9.14$, df = 4, p = 0.028
Interpretation: Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms a significant association between income level and price perception, indicating that lower-income groups are more price-sensitive, which affects their consumption behaviour.

Table.4 Association between Awareness and Health Benefits Perception

Awareness level	Perceived Improvement	No Improvement	Not Sure	Total
High	50	10	7	67
Moderate	15	4	2	21
Low	7	3	2	12
Total	72	17	11	100

Chi-square Test Result:
$\chi^2 = 7.63$, df = 4, p = 0.045

Interpretation: As the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a significant relationship between awareness level and perceived health benefits, suggesting that higher awareness leads to stronger recognition of health outcomes.

Table.5 Reasons for Millet Consumption

Reason for Consumption	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Health benefits	70	70
Traditional/Culture	15	15
Taste and Preference	10	10
Others	05	05

Source:PrimarySurvey,2025

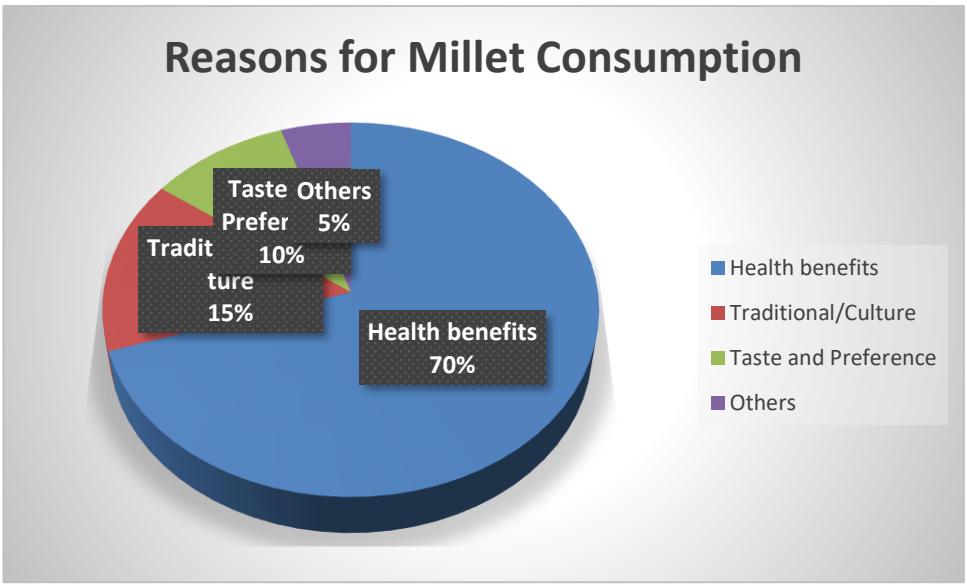


Table 5 reveals the primary motivations behind millet consumption among the respondents in Mysuru City. A majority of respondents (70%) reported that they consume millets mainly for health benefits, such as improved digestion, weight management, and energy balance. This indicates that health consciousness has become a major driver of food choice in urban areas. Around 15% of the respondents consume millets due to traditional or cultural habits, showing that traditional food practices still hold some influence. About 10% mentioned taste preference, and a smaller portion (5%) were influenced by media or social recommendations. These findings imply that health awareness campaigns have successfully positioned millets as nutritious and modern alternatives to refined grains.

Findings and Suggestions

- Awareness of millets is high among youth and educated consumers.
- Health consciousness is the leading factor driving millet consumption.
- Price remains a critical barrier, particularly for lower and middle-income families.
- Consumers prefer traditional cooking methods over packaged ready-to-eat forms.
- Awareness programmes through schools, colleges, and health institutions can promote millets.
- Government incentives—such as price support schemes, millet fairs, and awareness campaigns—can enhance affordability and availability.
- Strengthening local supply chains and retail networks will increase accessibility.
- Collaboration with food entrepreneurs can help create value-added millet products for urban markets.

Conclusion

The study clearly reveals that awareness and health consciousness are the major drivers of millet consumption among urban households in Mysuru City. Young, educated consumers—particularly students and professionals—form the most responsive group, linking millet consumption with healthy and sustainable lifestyles. Although awareness levels are high, regular consumption is limited by factors such as higher prices, lack of product variety, and limited availability in urban markets. The findings underline the importance of strengthening the local millet value chain through improved marketing, price regulation, and consumer education initiatives. Government support in the form of subsidies, millet fairs, and public awareness campaigns can further enhance accessibility and affordability. In addition, partnerships between policymakers, retailers, and food entrepreneurs can promote the development of innovative, ready-to-cook millet products that appeal to urban consumers. Overall, the research demonstrates that increasing awareness, improving affordability, and supporting supply chain linkages can transform millets from a niche health food into a mainstream component of sustainable urban diets, contributing meaningfully to India's goals of nutritional security and climate-resilient agriculture.

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