

Abstract

School canteens play a significant role in health and wellbeing of children. Identifying the consumer perception and practices of school students towards food offered by the school canteens may be helpful to develop appropriate strategic plan to ensure the well-being of the school children. A cross sectional study was conducted to identify the students' perception and practices regarding food and services offered by the school canteens and to identify the variety of foods available in selected school canteens. This study recruited 391 students from age 13 to 15 among schools in Jaffna district. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding consumer perception and practices of students on food and services offered by the canteens. Varieties of food items and facilities of canteens were observed. Face to face interviews were conducted with the teachers and canteen operators to collect the information related to canteen committee and school canteen facilities. Sixty one percentage of students visited to canteen occasionally. Fried short eats were selected by 298 students out of 391. Most of the students considered the nutritional value of foods, price, and taste when selecting foods from canteens. Forty six percentage of students were satisfied and twenty one percentage of students were very satisfied with overall foods and services offered by school canteens. Most commonly available food items were bakery and fried food items. Majority of students were satisfied with overall food and services offered by school canteen. Variety of foods available and availability of healthy food options in the school canteens were less.

Keywords: consumer perception; food varieties; food and services; school canteen; students