



ARE HEALTHY FOODS EXPENSIVE – PERCEPTION OF WOMEN LIVING IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF DELHI



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INTRODUCTION

- The cost of a healthy diet has increased globally by 6.7 percent between 2019 and 2021 (FAO, 2023).
- In 2020, 70.5% of Indian population (973 million) was unable to afford a healthy diet (CSE, 2023).
- Women are the nutritional guardians of the Indian family and therefore it is imperative to understand their perception of food affordability.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to understand the perception of affordability of healthy foods among women of different socioeconomic strata in Delhi.

METHODS

- **Study Design:** The present study is a part of an ongoing analytical cross-sectional study. This study is mixed-method research.
- **Sample Size:** Data from a subsample of (n=132) women aged 25 to 50 years, in areas predominantly with high- and low-socioeconomic strata inhabitants (HSES and LSES) is being presented here.
- **Tools and techniques:** A questionnaire-cum-interview schedule was used to collect information about the socio-demographic profile and perception of the women regarding affordability of healthy foods.
- **Statistical analysis:** MS Excel (2019) was used to calculate the frequencies and percentages. To assess the difference in perception of the women across SES, Chi-square test was used.

RESULTS

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

EDUCATION

Only 7.5% LSES women were graduates compared to 45% in HSES.

OCCUPATION

In both socioeconomic settings, most women were homemakers.

INCOME

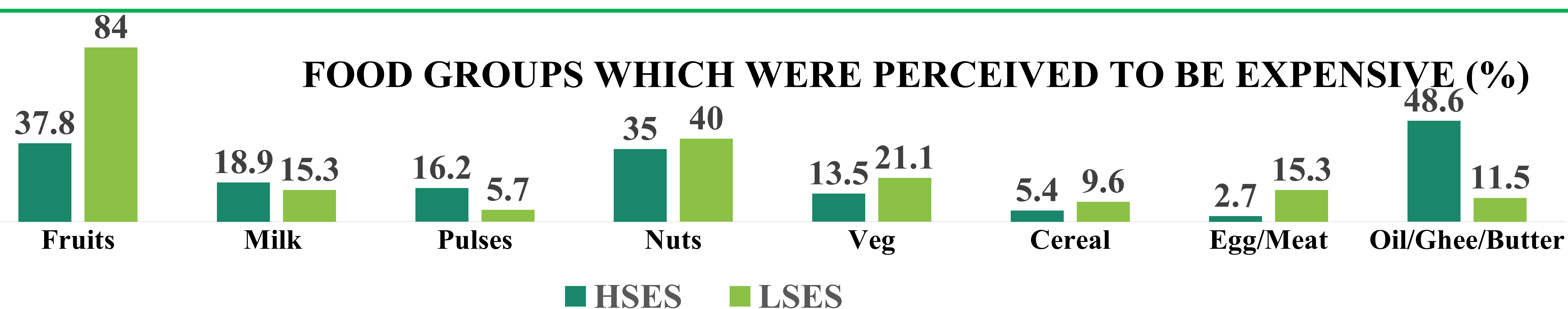
The monthly household income of 82% women of LSES was < 20,000 INR while 73% HSES households had income >60,000 INR/month.

DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS BASED ON PERCEPTION OF HEALTHY FOOD AS EXPENSIVE (%)



- In spite of high income, 56% HSES women perceived healthy food as expensive versus 79% women of LSES (p= 0.005).
- Significantly high number (84%) of LSES women perceived fruits as expensive while, oil/ghee/butter was reported as the most expensive food group by HSES women (p=.0001).
- Willingness to pay more for healthy food was significantly higher among HSES (75%) compared to just 23% in LSES women (p=0.000)

FOOD GROUPS WHICH WERE PERCEIVED TO BE EXPENSIVE (%)



IMPLICATIONS

- Food cost could be a barrier to adopt a healthy diet.
- Multifaceted approaches that can be used as basis for planning food policies include:
 - a) Subsidies for fresh produce like fruits
 - b) Empowerment of women through education, enhancement of their skills like cooking and meal planning
 - c) Promotion of kitchen/community gardens and consumption of seasonal and locally available foods

REFERENCES

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