

## **Impact of Nutrition Education Programme on Functional Foods Among Teaching Fraternity in Chennai City**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Food promotes optimization of good health. Healthy eating is regarded as the most important means of food promotion. Lifestyle changes, poor eating habit and lack of physical activity lead to a strong adverse effect on the development of degenerative diseases like diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and certain types of cancer like never before. Functional foods provide additional benefits that may significantly reduce health risk and promote optimal health through calorie free foods, low fat and reduced sodium foods. Bioactive compounds present in functional foods give numerous physiological benefits and promote health care by continuous preventive mechanism. These benefits also include antioxidants, anti-inflammatory and various preventive properties. However, the awareness and knowledge on the health benefits of functional food is inadequate and scare even among educated population. It is believed that awareness through the nutrition education plays an important role in having an impact on individual's knowledge on goodness of functional foods and thereby improves their nutritional status. In this study, the awareness level on the concept and importance of functional foods among teaching fraternity in Chennai was studied using survey and education was given through nutrition education programme. The study design used in the present study was a pre and post- test descriptive study and was carried out in five phases. Purposive Sampling Technique was used and the Sample size is 100 (N=100), Subjects were selected from the schools located in Chennai. A well-structured questionnaire with 40 questions on aspects of knowledge, usage and functional benefits of functional foods was framed. A pilot study was conducted with 20 teaching fraternity to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire and changes was made accordingly by the researcher. Nutrition education was given to the participants through non-machine operated aids - face to face counseling and pamphlet distribution. After the collection of the raw data, it was coded, classified, tabulated and analyzed statistically.*

*The overall impact of nutritional education on knowledge about functional foods among teaching fraternity was analyzed and a statistically significant result at  $p < 0.01$  was found. The results concluded that there was a drastic improvement in knowledge gained by the participants after imparting nutrition education. After the awareness programme, maximal improvement in the knowledge level was observed. It was so evident from the study that nutritional education is an effective gauge which can improve the dietary habits and food choices of the participants.*

**Keywords:** *Functional foods, Bioactive components, Nutrition education, Lifestyle management,*