



Nutrition Society Congress 2024, 2–5 July 2024

# Comparison of Food Accessibility and Acculturation among South Asians in the United Kingdom and India: A Photovoice Study

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South Asian diaspora is one of the largest in the world, with India having the largest diaspora in the world at over 17.7 million<sup>(1)</sup>. In the United Kingdom, South Asian population increased from 56.1 million to 59.6 million between 2011 and 2022<sup>(2)</sup>. Presently, there is a rise of non-communicable diseases among the South Asians, both residing in the United Kingdom and India. Could migration have impact on the eating habit and level of participation in physical activity and subsequent influence on health and wellbeing of the South Asian was the main research question. Therefore, young South Asians in two different countries were recruited to explore their eating behaviour to promote and support better health and wellbeing practices.

This is qualitative research whereby photovoice was used with thematic analysis for the interview. For photovoice, after, the pre-trial photos were checked, participants were requested to take at least five pictures with captions to express their eating behaviour and related aspects such as that can best describe (i) the type of food they eat (ii) the place they eat their food or drink (iii) what influence what they eat.

Interviews were conducted among 7 South Asians (3 from UK and 4 from India, all female and aged between 24-35 years old) was conducted. Photovoice was followed up with interviews, discussing the photographs and taken by the participants. NVivo was used to manage and thematically analysed.

Four main themes emerged: *changes to eating behaviour, impact of culture on food habits, impact of eating behaviour on wellbeing and impact of eating behaviour on physical activity*. It was evident that their eating behaviour was deeply rooted in culture and shaped by their family habits. The impact of eating behaviour among the young adults were huge especially among the UK participants and many had to resolve to different means of coping with the changes. Some of the changes were evident in some students almost completely changing their food preference to foods that are available, affordable, acceptable and time-friendly. These factors were reported as negatively impacting on their health, mental health and wellbeing. They engaged in physical activity only when they have health challenges. Generally, they follow their family routine, which explains the reason the young adults were less interested in physical activity due to family influences and habits.

Moving away from the family home among participants in the UK and India impacts healthy food consumption, wellbeing, and physical activity. Food accessibility and acculturation was evidently an issue, which was emphasized through photovoice. Food insecurity remains to be explored, especially among those who move to the UK, as they prefer to consume food that they are familiar with and culturally based.

## Acknowledgments

Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education & Research

## References

1. Rajan SI, (2023) *Cham: Springer International Publishing* (pp. 3–15).
2. Office for National Statistics (ONS) (2023) *Population of England and Wales*. [Available at: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-andregional-populations/population-of-england-and-wales/2.1/>].