

## Changing Trend in Food Processing in Transforming Society

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### Editorial

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### Editorial

The social structure has got drastically transformed due to which the consumption of pre-cooked food is increasing day by day. In the modern days, where the life is at fast the time is very valuable to every person, "Ready to eat food product" (RTE) play an important role in day to day life. The term "Ready to eat food Product" means simple, fast and convenient food, which are easy and fast to eat and do not need to cook food that has been cooked. The famous McDonalds Company defined the ready-to eat food products as food being ready for immediate consumption at the point of sale. It could be raw or cooked, hot or chilled, and can be consumed without further heat-treatment including re-heating. According to freedictionary.com ready to eat food products that are prepared in advance and can be eaten as sold.

### Advantages

- I. RTE foods are suitable to all segments of population including army, airways, railways and even patients with suitable supplements.
- II. These are quickly and easily available products and save time.
- III. RTE products are always available in ready to use forms.
- IV. The consumer may get a variety of foods such as; fruits, vegetables based products all-round the year for reasonable prices.
- V. Modern production techniques and preservation methods minimized nutritional loss of pre-cooked products, no more vitamins or minerals are lost than in home kitchen.

- VI. Nutrients and vitamins of food sensory stimulating property (taste, smell, mouth feel) are in most cases preserved.
- VII. They are useful to elderly, handicapped persons who cannot devote much time for cooking.

### Disadvantages

- I. Ready to eat food is sold either open or packed. Open foods are most exposed to environmental pollution and handling, packed foods may not have labels and reports are not available in literature on the quality of foods. So, these foods are not advisable in terms of microbiological safety for human consumption.
- II. RTE foods may not have proper labels regarding quality, nutrient content and date of manufacture. Therefore these foods are suitable in terms of nutrition and microbial safety for human consumption.
- III. RTE foods often contain more fats, so that, its energy content is also very high and these products may not be suitable for obese and cardiovascular patients. These sources of fat may be vegetable or animal.
- IV. The salt content is also high and sometimes iodized salt may not use.
- V. Most of prepared dishes may not provide full meal. The content of minerals, vitamins, bulk fibers may be inadequate.
- VI. Some people are sensitive to certain substances or additives, such as: artificial preservatives, coloring materials, flavored compounds. So we must study label before use.

### Reason for Use of Ready to Eat Food Products

Generally, food products are prepared depending on the habits, tastes, social status economic factor, availability, traditions, habitats, etc. of the people of that region. The most sought after in the present age are the ready to eat foods. Main reasons for popularity of these products are

- I. Emergence of industrial society: Development of the metropolitan cities due to increase in population, emergence of industries and evolution of various new factors, time factor etc., created the needs of ready to eat food in the India.
- II. Women taking to job: As the literacy rate is increasing among the women a large number of them in our country are taking up jobs to setup their own status in the society and to use the extra income to generate. These are creating the need for ready to eat foods.
- III. Media: In the modern era, the media, particularly electronic and print media, are playing an important role in creating awareness of the products manufactured and released in the market.
- IV. Emergence of nuclear families: Earlier times, a group of nuclear families were living in a single place. Hence larger quantities of the food were used to be prepared. But as the joint families started disappearing due to various reasons, each single family started using these ready to eat food products in order to save time and energy.
- V. Increase price of raw material: As the prices of some of the raw materials are continuously increasing, the purchase of these food products formed more economical.
- VI. Variety in product: As there are different new products coming up in the market daily that are very cheap and easy for using and preparing, the popularity of these products is increasing.
- VII. Convenience: Ready to eat food products are convenient to prepare and are economical. This increased its usage by the people as it saves time, energy and money.
- VIII. Standard of living: The standard of living is changing due to rise in income level, influence of western countries, more global trade, traveling etc. Hence people are changing their taste to words ready to eat food products more compared to the old traditionally prepared food.
- IX. In this situation one of the major concerns of food industry is the contamination by pathogen which is frequent cause of food borne diseases. To overcome this problem chemical preservatives or physical treatments are used, which results in chemical toxicity, alteration of organoleptic and nutritional properties of food and pose a threat to food safety. The demand for safe food has diverted the attention of researchers towards food biopreservation, which refers to the use of antagonistic microorganisms or their metabolic products to inhibit or destroy undesired microorganisms in food to enhance food safety and extend shelf life. Some compounds such as organic acids, bacteriocins, diacetyl and acetaldehyde, enzymes, CO<sub>2</sub>, hydrogen peroxide etc. are used for antimicrobial activity of microbiota. Biopreservation may be effectively used in combination with other preservative factors to inhibit microbial growth and achieve food safety. The main objectives of new techniques are to retain the nutrients, sensory properties and the shelf life without adverse effect of its quality. So, there is a need to highlight research topics and to be addressed in future in order to reduce food borne illnesses.

