

## **Is cooking important to you? Indian household food gatekeepers' perceptions of domestic cooking**

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**Background:** The high consumption of energy dense, nutrient poor meals from out of home sources has been identified as a potential risk factor for the growing burden of diet-related non-communicable diseases among urban Indians. Consumption of home cooked meals is linked with positive nutritional and health outcomes. However, little is known about the views of Indians regarding domestic cooking.

**Objectives:** The objective of this research was to describe the urban Indian food gatekeepers' perceptions of domestic cooking.

**Methods:** Using the social constructivism lens, this qualitative research was conducted in Kolkata, India with a purposive sample of 34 household food gatekeepers (6 Males; 28 Females). Open-ended questions were used to conduct in-depth, face-to-face/telephonic interviews in Hindi/English/Bengali as per the preference of the participants. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated to English for inductive thematic analysis.

**Results:** Seven primary themes, along with secondary themes, were identified: (1) Domestic cooking is a responsibility; (2) Facilitators of domestic cooking (Health, Economical, Maintenance of dietary culture, Pleasure); (3) Barriers to domestic cooking (Paid employment; ageing related health problems, limited culinary skills); (4) Transformation in domestic cooking; (5) Decline in domestic cooking; (6) Acquisition of culinary skills from various sources; (7) Culinary skills are a necessity.

**Conclusions:** Public health initiatives should encourage more frequent domestic cooking by highlighting the potential mental and physical health benefits of domestic cooking.