CHAPTER: 6:
CONCLUSION
AND
SUGGESTION:
In the analyses of the previous chapter various underlying social phenomenon associated with food and the emergent eating out culture among Kolkata residents have been attempted to highlight. A high frequency of eating out has been located in the urban, cosmopolitan setting of Kolkata. The rapidity, intensity and a compulsive attitude towards eating out has been found in the research, which can make it point out towards an increasing endemicity involved in the practice of eating out. The urban population has developed an escalating acceptance of the practice of eating out.

Food itself has been liquidated from the domestic kitchen to the public space, whereby the previous concerns are bound to disperse given the face of the cosmopolitan orientations of the middle class. The middle class or the new middle class in the post-liberalization period are the ones who engage in the most of the eating out practices as they are the ones who are majorly uprooted from their traditional orientations and also have access to resources that facilitate in the provocation of such practices. As found out in the research the ‘push’ (out of the domestic kitchen) and ‘pull’ (towards the outside kitchen) factors operate simultaneously that the middle class imbibe in the context of the food. The increasing practice of ‘eating out’ is inversely proportional to the practice of ‘eating in’. The ‘eating out’ and the ‘eating in’ dichotomy can be resolved by explaining it in terms of the Push and the Pull factors. Globalization has created at the overarching economic setting a social milieu in which the simultaneous processes of the push and the pull factors operate. Powered by the availability, necessity through the sake of convenience pushes everyone from the endogenous kitchen and that ‘push’ immediately succumbs to the ‘pull’ of the exogenous kitchen, to which those who have access to the resources necessary immediately respond. Whether the push factor is the one which comes first and is stronger than the pull factor or vice-versa is very difficult to gauge at the interplay of both the dimensions. The relative strength of these two factors is also quite complicated to infer. Both these processes are at operation is what is evident from the food culture as is manifested from the findings of the research. Cooking is no longer considered compulsory as food sources can be easily located at the exogenous kitchen; monetary resources are enough to get access to the same. Thus compulsion in the private is easily substituted by the options that galore in the public. A call so strong that can be hardly resisted as found in the research. The ‘pull’ towards the outside food is so intense that people fail to make choices of proper nutrition, hygiene, quality etc, and thereby compromise with their wellbeing directly. The irony is that the food
which is supposed to be directly linked with one’s wellbeing has these days turned to be the cause of compromise with the physical well-being of the individuals. The consumers fall prey to the advertisement gimmicks and subscribe to terms which actually benefit others. This ‘false consciousness’ (Karl Marx) wraps the minds of the middle class consumers and the capitalists benefit from the indulgence in unnecessary consumption behaviours. So is the case with the food, the roadside food stalls compromise with the quality, hygiene but as they are cheaper and provide variety so they are the visited destinations. The more emphasis on the public eating obviously marks a corrosion of the basic building block of the society, the family, as it indicates a decline in the number of meals a family consumes together. The eating out is more frequent in the company of the friends and so also marks a decline in the primary kinship ties.

Globalization with its over-arching grasp has redefined people’s necessities and are blind-folded to such an extent that people often fail to properly respond to their primary needs. It is through consumption that people are just seen to respond to ways that are actually benefiting others and they are compromising with their well-being by engaging in ‘conspicuous consumption’ (Thornstein Bunde Veblen) in the sake of simulating the lifestyles that capitalism through advertisements, brands epitomize. A number of forces operate here. On one hand, it is the desire for acquaintance and experiment and on the other it is for consumption per se. Perhaps, more binding is the desire to match the globally projected superior consumerist lifestyles which serves as a status marker among the others and this is especially true in the Indian context, i.e. in the context of the developing countries where the underlying processes of ‘catching up with the West’ cuts deeply the mindsets of the people. The paradox that lies here is that the more one tries to ‘catch up with the West’ the more one identify and re-inforce the Western superiority and hegemony. By engaging in consumerist behaviour as defined by the West, the more, perhaps, one acknowledges their superiority and the more perhaps is the gap widening in a disguising mould. Experience has itself taken such a central core that no longer is the ambience of the restaurant solely satisfies the clientele. They now want something more, more itself remains undefined as people are engrossed in more and more running after the oasis of never ending desires and aspirations. The theme restaurants are a hit in the Kolkata food regime, so are the international fast food chains which are frequently visited by the so-called ‘targets’ of the same.
The state has been a major mediator which through liberalization and consequent privatization had made it a lucrative ground for investment by both foreign and private investors. The same has also been the case with the food and so the commodification of food has emerged in such a way that people tend to undermine the vital notions of nutrition, hygiene and subsistence for the mere sake of consumption. Family and kinship bonds are ushered with forces of corrosion that might be difficult to endure at the face of the current forces. Multi-culturalism has given way to the idea of the world in our platter, the new world cuisines etc. whereby globalization gives us facilities to indulge in the unknown and the unseen. Discourses encouraging such indulgences are found to be operative in full forces that act to justify such consumptions. For the respondents indulgence itself seemed to be emancipatory, a source of potential happiness, however transitory it may be. The Western hegemony is so engrossing that it tends to wash away the cultural particularities or distinctiveness. The global emerges in such an empowering way that people do not mind to do away with their own cultural traditions. Culture being a way of life is definitely a source of identity formation for all those who share the same. The standardization, liberation and privatization injected consumptions are just a way of increasing the ever-expanding grasp of the trans-national and the multi-national corporations across the global. The non-material culture in order to match the needs and demands of the material culture are constantly exposed to patterning. The global culture, that people run after is nothing but the Western culture and the lifestyle that people engage in is nothing more than the one that facilitates the Western industrialism. Western hegemony is what that dictates the global culture. An increasing inclination towards consumption of global brands makes people fail to realize that they are uprooted from their immediate social contexts and placed in the Peter Pan world whereby after the simmering of the immediate obsession they will find themselves on hollow ground as the culture to which people enculture or re-socialize themselves is alien. Culture through its various dimensions functions to act as a dynamic link between the individual and the society. So what happens as a consequence of globalization is cultural homogenization and that occurs in case of food also. Globalization not only enables people to have the taste of the continental cuisines, but also end up in supplementing their cuisines with those of the Western ones. The complementary preferences of both Indigenous cuisines coupled with the others is taken over as a strong inclination of the respondents towards the continental cuisines makes signs of cultural homogenizing apparent. The resultant cultural identity-crisis is what these
developing countries will face in the future as a result of the homogenizing endeavors of the Western countries.

‘Class’, being directly linked to economic achievements is universal whereas culture is particular to societies. However the economy induced consumption patterns drastically act to rob the particularities involved in culture by defining (however loosely or strongly) the global link across the emergent global consumerist class who over and above their traditional cultural bindings always are interested in being defined in terms of global collectivity.

The way the new middle class engages in the ‘conspicuous consumption’ among many things in food indicates the underlying phenomenon of catching up with the West. The Western superiority engrosses the mind of the consumers so much so that it projects itself to discard the traditional ethics as related to the food habits to follow what goes on in the West. The superiority is worn just by imitating the life-styles of the West, often in the name of convenience. The position of the middle class increases its propensities to catch up with the West. The middle class is ever expanding and is going on including more and more people in its fold, so the nature of consumer culture, whereby engaging in profuse consumer lifestyles is becoming a way of life, what goes on mostly in the name of consuming goods which attach high reference in the global culture, the result is the underlying catching up with the West, which takes over the mindset of the developing countries. As they are in the paths of development following the West so a strong sense of imitation in the name of consumption goes on in these countries by the middle class as they have stronger desires to not only move up the social ladder, but also to move up to the global standards. The culture generated by consumerism thrives on a hollow foundation that generates necessity to consume a particular product immediately. Globalization offers multifarious choices and individual freedom to choose appears as a guise to actually hide the response to pre-determined choices of the operative market forces. It is the momentary likeness or desire to possess or consume a product even though the ‘commodity’ might not be an ‘actual’ or ‘real’ necessity. Consumerism blurs the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘imagined’ necessity. The former even though is a necessity for sustenance but the later falls within the domain of luxury that is those ‘commodities’ which can be done without but it is imposed and consumed as necessity. Products specially consumer products which now-a-days also includes food are consumed often excessively as the needs of
those items are not felt from ‘within’ but the desire to consume from ‘within’ are generated by
the massive influence from ‘without’. The global brands are considered as symbolic and
representative of the consumer products that are Global and have an important brand value,
which is considered as elite and such consumptions as necessary elevators to elitism. The high
percentage of respondents admitting of often spending excessive amounts of money while
eating out and the constant preference of respondents for buffet meals are indicative of the
levels of excessive consumption while eating out. A high preference and a strong desire for
consumption (for those who have not consumed these items) of items of the global brands like
Baskin and Robins, McDonalds, KFC as found in the research are indicative of the notions of
emulation (Veblen) and distinction (Bourdieu) that lies in mere consumption of such items that
takes food beyond its intrinsic value and existential notion among urban, cosmopolitan,
respondents, a trend more strongly visible among youths. The indulgence in buffet spreads at
restaurants offering global cuisines by the respondents and the way the buffet prices are
controlled, i.e. on weekdays the same buffet costs much less than the weekend and holidays as
observed in this research are all indicative of luring consumers to excessive consumption.

Consumption can be majorly of two types, one is real consumption that is the quantity that is
required and hence consumed, and the second type is consumption which is engaged in for the
mere cause of excessive production. Food as has moved on from the levels of subsistence to
experience and moved on further from the levels of real consumption to the cause of
consumption for the mere reflex of production. Food items are produced globally, technological
advancement has enabled mass production and to sell these products new markets are needed
beyond the home countries, so the developing countries are loaded with these products in the
super-markets which decrease their shelf-lives and the consumers who buy them do not do so
for mere necessity, but to flaunt the luxury that the international brands bear themselves with.
These consumption habits are re-inforced as real through the media and many other channels
which justifies such consumptions.

Food has not only moved from the traditional to the modern domain in the modern society but it
has also moved further from the ‘urbane’ to the ‘cosmopolitan’ status. The whole world is
bound by the status of what is cosmopolitan and there is an increasing desire for the upwardly
mobile middle middle classes to consume food and services that bear the cosmopolitan tag. This tag is
more important than sheerly what is consumed. The cosmopolitan, urban, youth alienates himself from the broader and fundamental community of religion and family in this process of consuming for the mere sake of consumption. The socialpractice of eating out is considered as emblematic of modernity. So through eating out the tradition-modernity debate is considered to be resolved. It is that practice that in which one engages immediately gives one the chance to wear ‘modernity’. Indulgence in eating out practices are considered lavish, is a status marker and is considered as a practice which was previously absent and hence one of the vital markers of the modern era. Time period is not a factor, the practice as engaged in by the people is important. Isolation and social exclusion is experienced by those who do not engage in such practices.

Globally defined lifestyle is the ‘ever-shifting yardstick’ that keeps the middle-class’ cash flowing out to reach the never-ending oasis of ultimate gratification. As the lifestyle of the middle-class is constantly getting lavish and is being defined and redefined every moment, they are more engrossed in the happiness involved in affording such expenditures every moment as consumption of a specific item can provide momentary gratification as happiness does not lie in the consumption itself but in the consumption of the signs, symbols, etc. that the product is emblematic of. Those who have resources to shed engage in the practice of eating out without employing any discretion. They engage mindlessly in the act of eating out. Majority of the respondents admitting of exceeding their budget while eating out on a number of instances reiterate such stands.

The task of loading a food items with socially desirable signs and symbols are done by the business houses both global and local with the assistance of the mass media to reach the specified targets. The advertisements as has been analyzed in the research in all forms are wrapping the vision of the middle class consumers and making them wear a constant blinker that drives a vision towards consumption. The choices that the consumers apparently make are in no terms real choices as these are largely manipulated by the global and the local giants. They are initiated from without and not from within, the paradox lies in the fact that the later being the site of consumption. The Homo sapiens, whereby the individual being endowed with the ‘sapiens’ or ‘intelligence’ is superior among all other animals, the later being devoid of that vital attribute. The individual is supposed to weigh the pros and cons of any action undertaken...
by him and thereby measure the consequences of the practice that the individual engages in. Being ‘social’ the choices of man must be free and rational so that it positively accounts for the collectivity.

Food no longer is associated with mere means of subsistence it has moved on to the domain of a wholesome experience. Convenience has taken a front-seat, time and energy are the resources which are scarce with the vital resource of money being made abundant to engage in a conspicuous consumption and compensate for the scarcer resources. Cooking is the medium that requires time, money and energy, but with dual career families and nuclear households the responsibility of cooking on a single person often creates a situation which clashes with the convenience, so thereby food sources are located in the civil society. So energy and time required in cooking is substituted by more expenditure of the economic resources and so as more resources are being drained so the desire for something more than just food calls for the add-ons that the restaurants provide. Thus the behaviour that guides the expectation of the add-ons is so overarching that these have become more valued than the food itself. So the middle-class satiates itself from the mere luxury consumption and not from consumption proper.

Liquid modern attitude as expressed through a number of parameters following Zygmunt Bauman and as assessed through various dimensions provide important insights in this research. The kinship ties, while eating out that are engaged in is more of secondary kinship ties, as respondents ate out more with friends, colleagues, associates etc. It is coupled with the decline in the number of meals shared with the family members by the respondents. It is indicative of not only the decline in the notion of household by sharing meals with the family members but also reveals a situation whereby the respondents engage in a kinship that is more corporeal vis-à-vis virtual whereby individuals are always engaging in provisional bonds while eating out. The bond that unites the population in the present era is the secondary kinship. The quantities of such associations are plenty as people find it easier to slide over from one kind of secondary kins to another set of them. The amount of time spent at home together with the family members are so less that the fundamentality involved in identifying, restoring, nurturing of the primary kinship has decreased extensively. The family has liquidified to the extreme degree of nuclearization often pushing it close to an individual unit. The ideal situation of complementation of the primary kinship group in along with the secondary kinship group has
been compromised noticeably as expressed through eating out behaviour among the urban, cosmopolitan, youths. The bonding of kinship is loose, as found in liquids and can be rescheduled or re-molded with changes in physical proximity. The kinship that ties the respondents are loose enough as found in case of liquids that they can untie themselves as loosely and as effortlessly when needed. ‘Community’ in real time and space is found to take a backseat to bind individuals to their roots. A tendency of replacing the quality of relationships by quantity (bonding with group of friends), impatience (constant indecision and the desire of taking away the waiting from the wanting) was noticed among the respondents. The tendency to suffer from the constant agony of indecision as expressed through feelings of confusion while eating out, in the choice of restaurants are indeed indicators of the emergent liquid modern attitude. The formation of community on the basis of class, i.e. those who can afford similar expenditures while eating out, binds people together. Thus the community-building is short-lived and also freer from the archaic parameters of religion, caste etc. as revealed in the research. The involvement and engagement in consuming global products, strong preference towards theme restaurants (that acts to provide transportation in space and time) are all markers of individuals freeing themselves from the bondages of space and time. The constant pressures of being left behind motivate individuals to remain up-to date with the latest restaurants and are guided by the constant urge of experimentation towards the choice of restaurants and cuisines. Home-delivering of meals, partying at hotels are all indicative of the strong preference over commercialization of hospitality. The involvement of cooks in the household, for families with housewives also highlights such traits of commercialization. Thus household or the family being which is a very crucial component or building block of the social fabric of the society is under an emergent threat. But the food which cuts across all the family members and unites them and what goes on in the dining table is crucial for enhancing the family bonding is of course, as found is at a decline and the connections which are established through the cooking, serving, eating and cleaning the place is missing. But awareness towards this end might be is not realized, or the process of silent approval of the immediate convenience or necessities take over the foresight. Unlike that of the previous times, these days there have been a silent approval that having a meal at home is not compulsory and a family at least as it seems apparently, can share a household without sharing a meal with all the component members. On the other hand, many people not related by kinship share a single household, at least in
definitional sense, by having meals together, as is found in urban areas, where the migrants from rural or other small areas share accommodation together as affordability is easier. Thus the erosion on one hand is supplemented by accumulation on the other. The respondents were found to be guided by an addiction to consumption, at the backdrop of free market and free choices and a vicious cycle of never-ending desire of gratification is evident. The soul of the eating out business is economic in nature as found through the spread of discourses and emergence of eat outs and the constant provocation to eat out through advertisements, offers, discounts, happy hours etc. imbibe within respondents an urge to eat out to escape social isolation and fear of being obsolete. The restaurants emerge as the public sphere, providing a basis for expression of the private and thereby a decline in the public issues as guided by the discourses set out by these public spheres. The belief in instantaneity, the standards of wellness is being judged by the capacity and capability of engagement in the constant definition and redefinition of happiness that lies in such consumptions. Health has become a burden and has been steadily replaced by fitness as revealed by the constant desire among the respondents to hit gymnasiums or consumption of food supplements and pills.

Religion has reshaped its traditional boundaries to incorporate the essences and elements of globalization as expressed through the eating out habits among people. Religion’s fixed, orthodox, defined prescriptions and proscriptions regarding food intake has been redefined and has taken a new vista under the post-modernist discourse, whereby what to eat? when to eat? where to eat? with whom to eat? and also why? are all getting endlessly constructed at the wake of this “fluid” era. Coming to the context of religion at the backdrop of cosmopolitan, urban, metropolitan, Kolkata, on the contrary to the popular assertion it has been found that majority of the respondents studied do have belief in God and considered themselves as religious. However performance of religious rituals through performance of fasting, visiting places of religious significance have all got moulded from the realm of compulsion to the realm of convenience. A decline in the rituals is indicative of the loss in collective history. There is a considerable decline in the role of family in terms of dictating food consumption of the youngsters while eating out. Thus a decline in the role of family in maintenance of religious solidarity through prescriptions and proscriptions of food intake are noticed. The Hindus and Christians are the two religious communities who have shown the maximum signs of religious diffusion through food intake. However the Muslims have shown greater allegiance to the Allah but resorts to
escape roots like before consumption of *haram*, the chanting of *bismillah* to ward off the *sins* incurred through such unlawful consumptions. India’s long legacy of caste and the rules of pollution and purity marking an individual’s social status in the hierarchy being largely defined by the food intake. The dichotomies of the sacred and profane were resolved by the restrictions imposed on food intake. As food has now moved on to the public, so result is the diffusion of the religious connotations of food as associated by different religions. Eating of pork, lamb, chicken, previously which had a pungent smell and so those people who consumed it were those who were at the lowest rank in the social hierarchy or were the untouchables, according to the Hindus. Such restrictions have diluted and the resultant secularization in food is visible. Momentary desires of indulgence urge individuals to explore beyond their traditional dietary prohibitions and restraints. Rules that define the private sphere can never be expected to be reiterated in the public in the urban, cosmopolitan settings. The hired helps who are given the task of everyday cooking are no longer judged by their caste, as having food from a person of lower caste but by their efficiency implies imbibing pollution and compromising with purity. So it has in a way diffused the religious restrictions as associated with food. But a paradox can be located here that even though food has secularized to a great extent but it has washed away the do nots absolutely cannot be said, as strong sentiments are still attached to cows among the Hindus and the number of restaurants offering beef are very few in number and those who do not offer beef, generally, clearly spell out that beef is not available to draw people who are strict non-beef eaters. Restaurants or fast-food joints who offer beef at the international level refrain so in the Indian context to gain consumer confidence and trust, like that of the McDonalds who offer beef in all other restaurants launched its first restaurant in India and announced that it was first of its kind to launch a no-beef outlet. Also some restaurants in Kolkata located in Muslim localities often showcase a tag of ‘No Beef’ to assure the Hindu clientele. So this shows that a majority of people share strong reservations based on religion even though inhibitions are much more restricted, but have not diluted altogether. The Christians are least guided by religious prescriptions and proscriptions through food intake. They only have to abide by the fasting during the lent period, which the study revealed is almost non-existent among the young people. Abstinence for religious sanctity has been replaced by refrainment for the notions of embodiment as the research revealed. The commonality involved across religions prescribing restraint in this era has faced a reorientation at almost entirety. Thus sacralizing the body
through indulgence and abstinence as per food intake is on a decline in urban, cosmopolitan setting. The incorporation of intoxicants in food recipes also is a major mark of secularization of food practices especially for the Muslims and also for the Hindus as intoxicants are prohibited for consumption in these religions. There is a steady decline in the number of vegetarians coupled with the fact that vegetarianism is followed on grounds of healthy living and for the benefit of the eco-system than on grounds of religion. Among all religious communities free and inhibition admixture has been revealed in the research. Secularization has taken place as experienced through eating out habits because of the primacy of the economic institutions in the modern era. The increasing distance of the individual with the expert systems as related to religion in the current era. The public sphere, specially the public kitchen is seen as the site which serves as the melting pot that secularizes religious dos and don’ts, whereas the private kitchen as the research revealed in comparatively stringent in terms of random and massive experimentation with religiously prohibited foods. Another noticeable observation regarding consumption is that the respondents across all religious communities surveyed at the mall in comparison to the other research settings were seen to be more engrossed in mindless consumption and are lesser tied by religious values and prohibitions and thus the congeniality involved in the mall structure and operation makes them the enormous ‘melting pot’ of different religious communities. The excessive consumption that malls encourage act to diffuse traditional religious solidarity as expressed through reinforcement of religious identities by delineating religious indoctrinations of food. The sharp upward trend of ‘eating out’ not only occasionally but a number of times in a single day establishes that trends of secularization as related to habits are prominently evident but again that does not however prove that people have totally become secularized but in lines with Thomas Luckmann as revealed in the research it can be said that religion has evolved indeed as a system of patchwork which has been formed by the collage of an individualized system formed by the ‘picking’ and ‘choosing’ of the believers what to follow and what not based on individual conveniences to create a religious ‘bricolage’ of rituals and beliefs. However to conclude it can be said that blurring of borders, co-existence, tolerance all these factors however does not indicate a state of merging of different religious boundaries but food as a marker of traditional religious boundaries has been diffused and diluted and thus has been secularized to a major extent. The instrumentality of food acting to delineate different religious boundaries can be doubted as found in the research. The traditional
priority of maintaining the sanctity of the body has been majorly relocated at sights which exhibit indications of social classes, signs and symbols largely when food through eating out has majorly become a public affair. The categorizations and consumption of food no longer serve to delineate one religion from another essentially ‘from without’ but it has become nominal as preferences of food stem ‘from within’. The underlying ‘essentialism’ which acts to qualify ‘things’ to be tagged as ‘categories’ seem to blur in this fluid era. Religion no longer serves as a heuristic tool to guide food choices as the logocentrism associated with the prescriptions and proscriptions aimed at creating an ‘otherness’ and in turn a ‘religious identity’ is taken over strongly by ‘other’ distinctiveness considered more crucial for the liquid modern individual. Food thus acts as an indicator of social change as perceptions towards food is essentially changing. The liquid modern individual, more precisely the educationally elite, those socialized under liberal educational atmosphere and not always economically elite as the later may be more fundamental under certain circumstances has embarked on a journey for de-magification or de-mysterization of exploring the never experienced. Religious fidelity in the current era as expressed through and eating is under question in the contemporary era.

Nutrition is the vital most attribute as related to food. Malnutrition is a condition of over or under nutrition. The research revealed that the majority of the respondents suffered from malnutrition. The seriousness of the situation as found out from studying the daily dietary details of the respondents it has been found that the majority of the respondents engage in erratic meal habits. Not only is there a more or less regularity of food habit found absent but also a tendency of consuming high caloried food at unconventional hours of the day seen. The respondents more or less consumed high calorie food and starved for other major hours of the day to make up for the calorie consumption. The traditional habits of consumption of breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner has been replaced by the trend of consuming food at any time a day and in inconsistent quantities is observed. The shift is observed from regular, scheduled meals to random snacking. The resultant effects on the health are also found in the research. The Body Mass Index (BMI) of most of the respondents was not normal, they were found to be underweight, overweight and obese. The majority of the respondents also revealed to suffer from lifestyle instigated health disorders and psychological disorders like fatigue, depression, gastritis problems, fatigue, restlessness etc. Even though the symptoms as found among the
respondents are not serious enough at the moment to call for severe medical intervention as the endemicity of the engagement in eating out is a recent phenomenon. Overweight and obesity may call for a number of non-communicable diseases like cardio-vascular disease (heart disease and stroke), diabetes; musculoskeletal disorders (especially osteoarthritis); some cancers (endometrial, breast, and colon). It also increases risk of increased fractures, premature death, breathing difficulties and also certain psychological effects. From the research it has been revealed that the signs of such long-term health are already visible. Out of the 210 respondents nineteen respondents were detected with a BMI of less than 17. A condition of health which is labeled as Anorexia Nervosa, a disorder in which people suffer from distorted self-image. A case of such indications in terms of BMI were seen higher among Muslims and Christians over Hindus. However lower BMI as found among the respondents might be result of their own eating habits or might crop up because of other intervening factors like genetic make-up, predisposition to gendered nutritional deficiencies etc. A habit of skipping meals to make up for the calorie intake has been observed from the seven day food intake patterns. The absence of the vital nutrients in the diet coupled with the absence of balanced diet has been observed among respondents. A decline in the intake of calcium, fresh fruits, vegetables, minerals, fibres are also observed. But the paradox that lies here is that malnutrition is no longer associated with economic condition but even among the economically affluents malnutrition has been detected.

The emergence of the problem of malnutrition even though might not appear as grave as it actually is as even though the problem is perceived as individual but the connotations that are linked with it makes it a cause of concern for the nation. As the survey revealed that there is a rise in the number of people suffering from malnutrition. It is a state when people do not consume food either because they do not have access to it or voluntarily withdraw from food intake owing to the overpowering of attainment of socially desired values like attaining ‘the’ perfect figure. Thus it is a case of undernutrition and thus falls within the purview of malnutrition. Similarly people consuming high caloried food multiple times a day also leads to the state of malnutrition as these kinds of practice expose individuals to overnutrition. Thus continuous exposure to this state of malnutrition makes the body vulnerable to diseases which might range from immunity disorders to lifestyle related diseases like depression, fatigue,
weakness overall leading to a state that compromises with the well-being of an individual. Long term suffering from any kind of diseases or disorders acts upon the normal potentialities of an adult by robbing of the potentialities of proper performance from the individual. If the situation goes unarrested then in the long run it might have an adverse effect on the country’s economic productivity being manifested through the low Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The normal vicious cycle of low income leading to low savings culminating to low capital formation resulting in low productivity and again a situation generating low income of the country. The only way to break free from this cycle is through the injection of foreign investments.

The low productivity leads to low income, which will eventually lead to poverty as it might become difficult to break free from the vicious cycle of lower profit of capital leading to low income for the individual and less economic production for the county as a whole. Thus strains of weakness of economy might be generated if this cycle cannot be set free. Thus the policies intended to accelerate economic development of India or for that matter any country for being operational has to be laid on a strong foundation at the back of the ‘nourished’, ‘healthy’ citizens. Thus for a developing country like India not only is the above stance of development of the economy indicative of foreign dependence but then also excesses of consumption intervenes to make this vicious cycle operative all over again as for a labour intensive economy like India low human capital formation will deter other possibilities of the development of the economy. Thus emergence of the epidemicity of the state of malnutrition leads to a state of dependent development of a country from ‘without’ and is a major deterrent in the way of self-dependent development of a country from ‘within’.

To gauge the cruciality of the emergence of the state of malnutrition two things must be mentioned in this context. Firstly, as this study has been conducted among respondents who belong to middle class, so being in a state of undernutrition is not because of economic handicap but it is a case of withdrawal from food intake owing to the influence of social and cultural motivators. Secondly, if among the more or less affluent malnutrition might emerge

\(^{142}\) GDP is measured in terms of material goods and services produced within the domestic territory in a year. India has a relatively low GDP compared by the international standards.
as an epidemic then among the people who are devoid of vital and appropriate means of sustenance, that is to be specific among people belonging from the Below Poverty Level (BPL) then it can be assumed that the country would be devastatedly affected by malnutrition.

It is people who cannot break free from this ‘glossy’ illusion of psycho-social consumptions and thus when it comes to food these cases of excessive consumption and refrainment to comply to ‘socially valued standards of body image’ as the research revealed result in maximum cases of malnutrition. Thus the liquidification of access to everything which was previously owned by a few propels the masses towards a state whereby the body suffers resulting from the malabsorption of the required bodily nutrients. Thus the trend is indicative of the fact that the exposure to risk of malnutrition emerges as the *sine qua non* in the modern consumer society. Another very vital factor that comes out as an observation for this paper is that even in a developing nation like India contrary to the common belief whereby malnutrition has been always associated with economic potentialities but as this study revealed malnutrition has a social dimension also. The economically affluents getting trapped in the vicious cycle of needs and luxury mostly fail to make informed choices about diet and thereby suffer from malabsorption of required bodily nutrients. Thus the social circumstances that affect dietary choices at the wake of the current era also are a cause of concern. Thus not only denial of access to adequate resources is the determinant cause of malnutrition but excessive entrée to consumer markets is also predisposing ‘individuals’ to the threats of malnutrition.

Food choices, eating out behaviour and the other related phenomenon have become highly individualistic these days. So it becomes very apparent that the human agency is highly functional in moulding these changes and engraving the directions of the same for the sake of a vision that individuals bear in mind. But this action of the individuals, even though what might appear to be highly individualistic is more global in its orientation. The human agency is merely nothing more than responding to the needs that suffice the ends of the global giants and this increasing dependence is a mere way of acknowledging and thereby ensuring the inevitability of the survival and increasing dominance of capitalism. So the choices the middle class make are no longer free choices as we are guided by other agencies, so the capability to make free choices which marks the human agency is compromised.
Food has not only elevated itself from the mere category of existential level but it is intertwined with a wide range of symbolic properties. Social judgments are indicative of the human agencies potentiality to make free choices and make judgments towards the socially desirable end. But as the free choices of the individuals are wrapped by the consumerist tendencies, then individual choices are no longer individual but are shaped and re-shaped by the global ‘others’ and this becomes evident in the form of consumerism as engaged through food consumption, it appears that individuals are losing their potentialities to make proper nutritional and social judgments as they fail to understand what is beneficial or good for them as people are engaged in the mindless act of eating out. Eating out, as the research revealed has turned as a compulsive, addictive behaviour in terms of the constant drive towards engagement in eating out as is considered as something so very enjoyable, pleasurable and a source of happiness, a trend more noticeable among youngsters.

Every ‘social’ act involves a collectivity; this collectivity (atleast collective in terms of more than one) must be that of the individuals and ‘real’ in both time and space. The eating out practice is ‘social’ as it involves a collectivity who engages in similar practices and thus also are all part of underlying social phenomenon involved in the act of ‘eating out’. But that collectivity is ‘not real’ as all are perhaps blindfolded by similar changes engaging in seeking solace from the indulgence in the act itself. The eating out practice is one example of the various lifestyle changes that middle-class people make in the current faces of globalization and liberalization. Food has been ‘commodified’ or ‘thingified’ and is considered to have symbolic value, if not solely but majorly. The prior orientations of food, in this fashion, have been secularized to a great extent. Through food consumption the individuals boaster a superficial status which can be gained just by visiting socially desirable restaurants. They are also socially evaluated as the status markers, but this social evaluation and acceptance is largely shaped and re-shaped by the ‘others’ who are more concerned with satiating their own needs of generating profit. Thus the individuals land up in the never ending vicious cycle of attaining the ‘socially’ defined lifestyle and the peak is never reached as at the other end the game of constant definition and redefinition of what is to be attained next is carefully played incessantly. The changes that have occurred in the eating out and food sector are unparalleled in the last few years. Not only have a number of restaurants come up, but many abstractions have been employed by the restaurateurs to be at the cutting edge and thereby ahead of the others or provide with a specialty that will assure
adequate footfall at least for the mere purpose of exploration and that might itself provide sufficient lucrative business till a saturation point is reached. From the research it can be analyzed that restaurants have emerged as institutions whereby through a make-shift arrangement a surreal experience is created or re-created whereby the ideas, images and objects are so used in such a way as to create transportation to a different world, however momentary be it. The phenomenon of institutionalization of restaurants is found in Kolkata as the endemicity of the phenomenon has made it establish as a part of the cosmopolitan culture. Food permeates through the ‘collective unconscious’ (Jung, 1969) of the people and creates ‘archetypes’ across those of a society who share the common psyche which brings out through the strings of culture-mediated shared association. ‘Simulations’ are created through names, themes and properties used in restaurants making it emblematic and parallels the desire of expecting similar services from the restaurant concerned. ‘Nutritional Socialization’ also has been moulded, rather secularized atleast to a considerable extent in the face of globalization whereby edibility and inedibility of food is largely determined by one’s choice and less by culture or religion. Food as has been found out in the research has emerged as a weapon of ‘social snobbery’ (Giddens, 2003), as the number and name of the restaurants visited are the basis of boasting the respondents’ social status. With the development in processing and preserving techniques a space-time crunch is seen as an increasingly emergent feature of food as the supermarkets are loaded with seasonal and foreign fruits and vegetables all round the year, just being ready to shed some cash is the only criterion for the ‘gastronomic’ dislocation in time and space. Physical dislocation no longer stands as a necessary pre-condition for indulging in the remote cuisines of the world. The dual processes of ‘social exclusion’ and ‘social inclusion’ also invariably underlie the process of ‘eating out’. Those who visit similar kinds of restaurants and share similar consumption patterns are included in a group which necessarily excludes others. The vicious cycle of food, eating out and stress can be established as having food and unwinding from excessive work pressures by hanging out at the food joints serve as a stress reliever but again that calls for ample money and thus compels one to subscribe to such highly demanding jobs or calls for some additional income source. The ambience of the restaurants provides a temporal transcendence to the world of one’s own choice within the ambits of the four walls of the same.
Following Bourdieu, it can Food has now moved on to the realm of pleasure or experience and ‘distinctiveness’ (Bourdieu, 1984) and is essentially intertwined with it are elements of ‘status marker’ (largely determined by ‘where’ one eat more than ‘what’ one eats) and the ones which are essential indicators of ‘social mobility’, whereby having the food itself ignites a lot more than the food itself. Thus food, especially through eating out habit has moved from the level of sustenance to experience by acquiring ‘distinctiveness’.

Self-actualization is the realization of one’s social potential, and when this happens through the food and the associated life-styles that are acquired through the food then self-actualization occurs not on a primary but on a secondary or superficial basis. Thus the extent of self-actualization can be questioned as it is remote from the real self-actualization that is a crucial determinant of the individual’s real capabilities as a social being.

Through access to convenient foods and beverages, intensity and propensity to the eating out venues a new form of social stratification operates in modern industrial societies. No longer is an ascribed status necessary for marking one’s social position in the social hierarchy. It has moved on to the achieved status as it determines one’s class position and thereby access to lifestyles and consumer behavior that itself is the marker of social rank and thereby social stratification operates as those who cannot achieve the same share a class position devoid of this accessibility to the global lifestyles and behaviour.

Eating out and food solves as well as crested the dichotomy of identity formation and identity crisis. For the middle class by consuming the global food items, visiting global restaurants give them a standard that is the milieu of their global identity creation. But as this identity displaces an individual from the local cultural particularities, so it after a time lands the individual in the state of identity-crisis as the global identity do not compliment but is built by supplementing the local identities. So the lifestyles as it forms a basis for the new identity are the one which when after its creation acts to contribute towards the contradictory processes of the creation identity crisis and hence the dialectical relationship between the two can be identified.

Social mobility chances through engaging in food consumption are a vital weapon that pierces across the middle class, as the mobility chances and aspirations are maximum among the middle class. Food and eating out venues immediately associates the middle class with certain lifestyles
which are markers of social mobility. The middle class has also liberalized to a great extent post liberalization and privatization as they have got access to greater amount of money which enables them to engage in a desired lifestyle. The greater number of restaurants visited, as respondents replied were immediate symbols that were resorted to by the middle class as symbols to show off their upward social mobility graph.

Food through eating out has now become the agency through which the social closure is maintained. Access to a variety of ‘culture’s cuisine’ is no longer the sole marker of social desirability; it is through the access to the varied number of eateries, which attach high social importance. Food no longer treated as the means of sustenance ‘only’. It is seen to be something more than a medium providing ‘mere’ subsistence. Each new eatery which comes up is always accompanied by a specialty which necessarily is penetrated through various discourses across the mindset of the people and it becomes the new thing to be explored not only for the sake of exploration but to identify with the status symbols that these restaurants offer. Convenience overtakes caste as the supreme guiding position and the rules of commensalism concerning food are diluted. The fluidity of food has become so pervasive that commensalism has moved on to class as the background of social differentiation through the food intake. The consumption practices that one engages in provides a shared platform for those who can have access to such lifestyles by engaging in the consumption of services as projected as elite and superior by not only those members of the class but also the accompanying social approval about the same. Irrespective of other consequences both long-term and short-term what becomes important in case of food is the immediate consumption and that relegates a status of superiority as is attached to those products. The ready foods, sausages, mayonnaise, cheese, broccoli, condensed milk, tinned or canned food, Swiss chocolates, puddings, pastries etc. which were previously considered as an item that were only in access of the affluent in the society have now broken the barrier to enter the middle-class households. The liberalization of the economy have provided ample opportunities being made open for the middle-class and as they are apparently gaining so they are the potential targets of the manufacturers as there have been a substantial increase in the amount of money allocated for food and food products. Superiority is still patent through the food one consumes, but the superiority in one’s social hierarchy has moved on to the superiority in the class positions, courtesy globalization. The high favourable social evaluation these status symbols bring from others is also important in determining the values
attached to these. For those who can have access to ample resources to visit the socially desirable eateries, which are mostly high priced, it bears the status symbols and forms the social closure for those who visits them as against those who cannot. The convenience and ready foods are also used by people to mark their social status. The fact that on a easily available, mundane activity so much amount of money can be spent just to get the experience of something special or new is used as a status symbol by those who engage in it and is strengthened by the accompanying social approval from others in the social structure.

Through eating out a new form of ‘alienation’ (Karl Marx) is sustained. Food not only isolates individuals from one’s own ‘culture’, who does not share similar food habits and thus result in ‘alienation from the community’, but also ‘alienates an individual’ from oneself as the individual also does not become aware of the real, likings and disliking and subscribes to anything and everything that is presented in front of the people from ‘without’. But as Karl Marx used this concept of alienation in the realm of ‘production’, in this modern, industrial world this concept is used in the realm of ‘consumption’.

The Social control is based on the internalization of norms and values that are particular to one’s culture. Food is an exclusive, private activity, engaged in for the sake of filling the appetite. With the food moving on to the public, increased social control or surveillance about how people eat, what people eat tends to be dictating the individual’s, private activity. The public gaze follows individuals in the panopticon structure whereby even while people are eating they are under the control of an unknown authority, which guides them in whatever while people eat out; the quantity is also being controlled by the gaze as that makes people conscious about their eating behaviour. The process of hunger suppression goes on as the pressures of the perfect body emphasize more on restricted amount of servings per meal, per individual. Thus the biological hunger is socially controlled. Thus food as more and more becomes exposed to the public sphere it increasingly comes under the social surveillance and the individual freedom is always curbed in the process.

The food consumerism in the context of the developing countries like India, responds to a market created by the developed countries and this is mainly to cater to the urban people. The gap in terms of major items of food products are available in the supermarkets are largely at the cost of the rural poor who experience further pauperization. The local elites transform to the
international standards by adopting the food items or the food habits that are international and thereby considered, as projected by the developed countries as superior and this leads to the superficial, lavish expenses in the name of lifestyles that the urban people try to enjoy. The people buy groceries, vegetables from the ‘global’ or ‘local’ supermarkets mostly as that is considered as hassle-free and often are clubbed with offers that promise to be wiser on the pockets. The products come to the supermarkets from the local farmers but through the middle-men and at the wholesale prices. The small farmers however by remaining out of this ambit often resorts to certain other alternatives and suffer. Shifting to the lifestyle practices by consuming global brands and cultures of the Western countries were seen as to emerge mostly to dominate the mindset of the respondents. This is perhaps indicative of the more dominating grasp of the Occidental baggage that stimulates ideas of superiority through such indulgences among the Orientals. It not only provides business to the ‘global’ business houses but also has many adverse effects as these needs are stipulated from ‘without’. Thus the economic polarization widens not only between the rich and the poor, but also between those of the developed and developing countries with respect to food consumption.

The findings from the Hypotheses are enumerated to provide a complete picture of the eating out behaviour among the urban, cosmopolitan, people of Kolkata.

**Table No. 6.a)**

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables—Measures of Eating out and corrosion of primary kinship ties is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and the corrosion of primary kinship ties are related.

**Table No. 6.b)**

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables—Measures of Eating out and the daily number of meals shared with the family is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 12 which is 21.026, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and the daily number of meals shared with the family are related.
Table No. 6.c)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and the agony of indecision is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 8 which is 15.507, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and the agony of indecision are related.

Table No. 7)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and unending gratification of desires is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and unending gratification of desires are related.

Table No. 8)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and excessive consumption is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 12 which is 21.026, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and excessive consumption are related.

Table No. 9. a)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and experiences of religiosity is less than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and experiences of religiosity are not related.

Table No. 9.b)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and observance of religious rituals is less than the upper 5% point of
Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 8 which is 15.507, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and observance of religious rituals are not related.

Table No. 10. a)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and observance of fasts on days of religious significance is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and observance of fasts on days of religious significance are related.

Table No. 10.b)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and consumption of prohibited foods as per religious prescriptions is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and consumption of prohibited foods as per religious prescriptions are related.

Table No. 10.c)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and sharing/eating out with people from other religious backgrounds is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and sharing/eating out with people from other religious backgrounds are related.

Table No. 11)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and Body Mass Index (BMI) is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 12 which is 21.026, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and Body Mass Index (BMI) are related.
Table No. 12)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and suffering from diseases related to lifestyle disorder is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 4 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and suffering from diseases related to lifestyle disorder are related.

Table No. 13. a)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and erratic meal habits is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 8 which is 9.488, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and the erratic meal habits are related.

Table No. 13. b)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and notions of embodiment is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 8 which is 15.507, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and notions of embodiment are related.

Table No. 14)

As the observed $X^2$ value corresponding to the contingency table which includes two variables-Measures of Eating out and distinction is greater than the upper 5% point of Chi-square distribution with degrees of freedom: 8 which is 15.507, then the test is significant at the level of significance 5%, that is measures of eating out and distinction are related.

CONCLUSION:

The endemicity of the eating out practices is a recent phenomenon and enjoyed by a major chunk of the population in their own ways and much different from that of the traditional times, it still is left yet to be explored in totality and also make future assumptions. The reasons
behind it is that the phenomenon is not only relatively new but is in a dynamic state as new forms of practices are developed and sustained till another one comes to take its place, the pace of this change being very fast. The rapidity, frequency involved in the eating out practices and its consequent reflections in health calls concern for if the present situation is not arrested and redirected by the intervention of the state as food no longer remains a private activity, then researching the current consumption patterns it can be concluded that malnutrition will emerge as an epidemic in the coming decades. The emergence of the problem of malnutrition even though might not appear as grave as it actually is as even though the problem is perceived as individual but the connotations that are linked with it makes it a cause of concern for the nation. To gauge the cruciality of the emergence of the state of malnutrition two things must be mentioned in this context. Firstly, as this study has been conducted among respondents who belong to middle class, so being in a state of undernutrition is not because of economic handicap but it is a case of withdrawal from food intake owing to the influence of social and cultural motivators. Secondly, if among the more or less affluents malnutrition might emerge as an epidemic then among the people who are devoid of vital and appropriate means of sustenance, that is to be specific among people belonging from the Below Poverty Level (BPL) then it can be assumed that the country would be devastatedly affected by malnutrition.

The culture generated by consumerism thrives on a hollow foundation that generates necessity to consume a particular product immediately. Globalization offers multifarious choices and individual freedom to choose appears as a guise to actually hide the response to pre-determined choices of the operative market forces. It is people who cannot break free from this ‘glossy’ illusion of psycho-social consumptions and thus when it comes to food these cases of excessive consumption and refrainment to comply to ‘socially valued standards of body image’ as the research revealed result in maximum cases of malnutrition. Thus the liquidification of access to everything which was previously owned by a few propels the masses towards a state whereby the body suffers resulting from the malabsorption of the required bodily nutrients. Thus the trend is indicative of the fact that the exposure to risk of malnutrition emerges as the *sine qua non* in the modern consumer society. Another very vital factor that can be concluded is that even in a developing nation like India malnutrition has always been associated with economic dimensions but malnutrition’s wider social dimensions also needs to be examined. The economically affluents getting trapped in the vicious cycle of needs and luxury mostly fail to
make informed choices about diet and thereby suffer from malabsorption of required bodily nutrients. Thus the social circumstances that affect dietary choices at the wake of the current era also are a cause of concern. Thus not only denial of access to adequate resources is the determinant cause of malnutrition but excessive entrée to consumer markets is also predisposing ‘individuals’ to the threats of malnutrition.

Eating out in particular and food culture in general is constantly constructed and reconstructed by an elaborate body of discourse through various media channels. The emergence of restaurants as an institution that guide behaviour within the ambits of its four walls and also as a medium that provides transcendence to a different world of happiness and excitement. So, food through eating out in the era which epitomizes consumption has turned up as a form of entertainment like movies whereby the consumer immediately dislocates in time and space and is temporarily but immediately transported to a different world. The business giants are always adept with strategies aimed at dislocating consumer’s attention from examining basic nutritional requirements, food now comes as an entire package whereby food is just treated as a means of embarking in the journey of entertainment. The ‘package’ that comes with food is more enticing and excites the consumer more than the basic nutritional properties. Food is no longer a sole mean of satiating bodily sustenance but is a lot ‘more’ than that. ‘More’ in terms of variety, taste, fun, entertainment, excitement etc. In this era the ‘more’ comes with such a glittery wrap to catch consumer’s attention that the core purpose of maintenance of a healthy body through balanced diet subsidies mostly. Loss of community as marked by more involvement in secondary kinship and diffusion and dilution of religious identities as manifested through eating out habits are all a cause of concern as the task of immediate cushioning of the individual is taken up by these vital institutions. A rise in the levels of stress, depression, fatigue etc. indicates that there is a gap between the individuals and the primary kinship group and a sense of solidarity imparted by real-time communities as religion. Excessive individuality and too much pre-disposition to the public sphere adversely corrode the private and thereby create vacuum and restlessness among individuals. Eating out emerges as the instance which gives the ‘local’ individual a chance of interface with the ‘global’ (be it cuisine, ambience, brand, manners, etiquettes etc.). Thus to seek enjoyment and satisfaction in momentary pleasures that lies in the consumption turns eating out behaviour as an addiction. The addictive and compulsive nature of eating out is because it ensures an illusion of
happiness, pleasure, fulfillment etc. however momentary it may be. So the increasing trend of people being dislocated from the foundational and fundamental bases of happiness eating out emerges as a drug that transports the addict to an enjoyable state of satisfaction. But the process is a vicious cycle as the happiness that lies in consumption is momentary and transient. The loose bonds that the people nurture is ephemeral helping them to untie easily and thus the liabilities and burdens are much less but the satisfaction and support that root an individual even in times of crisis makes the liquid-modern man more precarious in this ‘fluid era’. Eating out at particular restaurants serve as codes of consumer values-they signify social distinction. Social distinction stems up from the symbolic value that signals such consumptions as discriminating and distinguishing the consumer from the rest of the masses. Here also food is taken beyond its use value and exchange value. Eating out at socially desirable settings has a symbolic value-its caché, it makes it irresistible for others.

Kolkata, being on one of the cosmopolitan, urban, coastal areas it can be seen as the one where Western/other influences comes first and can be said to be the melting pot where a unique ‘hybridization’ of the archaic and the modern are created. People in these areas have multiple faces, they do not always behave in the same manner, as revealed in this research it is found that indeed a nip in the air of liquid modernity is found emergent as expressed through eating out habits in the cosmopolitan environment of Kolkata, however the changes that are noted are more of parametric ones over the paradigmatic ones. Coming to the context of religion it can be concluded that as the spectre of cosmopolitanism slowly inches or spreads into the urbane sky of Kolkata, it is seen to bring about sea changes into the major institutions of religion and family as expressed through eating out. The ‘push’ effect makes the domestic kitchen’s sanctity vulnerable in the wake of the current era. The allocation of food to the private was done as it was considered as the one which is the closest, thereby accessible and so can be manipulated at ease. So, the differentia that led to keep certain foods out of bounds of certain people enabled to outline the religious boundary and uniqueness of a group has blurred majorly in the urban, cosmopolitan setting, which encourages free admixture among different communities. The channels through which religious prescriptions and prohibitions are passed on are no longer direct and are majorly dislocated in time and space and thus certain amount of diffusion in terms of religious values; guidelines reshape the traditional edges of religion in the wake of globalization. Not only globalization but a number of factors are associated with the
dilution of rigid rules of food and eating. These include inter-caste interaction and intercourse, cultural admixture, physical proximity of different religious adherents in urban space, breakdown of the traditional joint family, modern education system, dual earning families, physical dislocation from the places of origin and community, the establishment of other ‘socially’ valued identities as found among students, intellectuals and professionals etc. coupled with the ‘this-worldly’ orientation of the adherents in which peace of mind, tranquillity etc. are deemed more important. This fluid era also experiences the interfusion of religious rules, beliefs and morality. The emergence of a number of parallel religions, religious preachers are more promising as that provide immediate solace of the mind. This ‘social’ distinction was essentially religious with its restricted codes which are now essentially economic in nature. ‘Culture’ is seen to emerge as the basis of shared experience that ‘ties’ individuals over the traditional ‘bonding’ provided by religion. The easy accessibility of food conditioning private ‘control’ over prescriptions and proscriptions stands incalculably diluted as food has immensely liquidated to the public sphere.

There is a slow erosion of the legitimate hold of religion in the life of its subscribers. Till the 1945s, there was a belief in various religious denominations that inter-alia; food is a necessary condition or component in building the highway through which the homo-sapiens will drive their life towards emancipation. The traditional religious percepts and accompanied normative prescriptions issued certain religious injunctions that avoiding certain food articles is a necessary condition towards emancipation has been diluted majorly. It has been found that ‘food’ and ‘ideas of emancipation’ has been ‘essentially’ delinked at the face of the current forces that are operative in the cosmopolitan environment of Kolkata. The linearity that was associated with food and religious indoctrination has been stolen in the current urban scenario. What can be concluded from the research that in the urban, cosmopolitan setting what people experience is a secular socialization over food whereby religious fidelity as expressed through food is on a decline. Existentialism is involved with food intake but religious essentialism has been drastically robbed off in the current era.
**SUGGESTIONS:**

The research revealed that not only is people engaging themselves in the mindless act of eating out but they are also lured by and responding to the traps of the economic institutes that are consequentially impacting on their health and long-term wellness. So as the symptoms are found visible in the research the state must immediately intervene in the situation to protect the long-term impact on health as a nation’s young population is an asset for the nation. The following suggestions are forwarded to arrest the endemicity involved in eating out and the consequent generation of malnutrition among the affluent. As this research concerns itself with policies needed to be made and aspires to recommend decision-making, it encompasses the parameters of *policy science*. This research also aims at developing a *citizen charter* which emanate from the stand-point of what can be called *healthy eating out*. The outreach and outcome of this research concerns with the policy implications that can encourage healthy eating out. As people (specially the liquid moderns) are spending so much on eating out so it might require the legislative intervention for maintaining a basic health standard for safer food dispensation and provide basic amenities concerning food and its related aspect.

1. **Licensing:**

Food and eating are both a cause of concern as it is immediately goes in to the body and thereby may have adverse and even fatal effects on the health of the consumer if the quality of the food is not up to the mark. To avoid both long-term and short term health hazards that outside food may create licensing may be initiated as a condition to seize the fatality that might be instigated through eating out mindlessly.

- Compulsory licensing may be introduced for both the small and big business houses engaged in food business that might culminate in gaining assurance of the people eating out.

- While people are eating out they are ushering their trust on the retailer something like a Food Mark may be introduced compulsorily by the government as a mark of authenticating in terms of quality assurance and control of the eatery.

- A number of inspection bodies in collaboration with non-governmental organizations may be formed to check such operations.
• Regular inspection by these bodies may be initiated to ensure that the quality is checked regularly to discard the use of stale, rotten foods.

• Strict and stringent criterion may be set up for obtaining the license and transparency in the licensing procedure, fair pricing etc. may be introduced so that all kinds of eateries may obtain license at affordable prices. Giving primacy to quality while obtaining license may also be initiated.

• Collaborative efforts with research agencies to chalk out guidelines for granting license might help in devising effective strategies.

• Regular inspection may be engaged in as part of quality control and defaulters might be penalized with consequences that might amount to immediate cancellation of the license.

2. State:
The state may have to intervene urgently in the process. Some measures undertaken by the state at the beginning even though might face some adverse consequences but in the long term it will be beneficial for the masses.

• The state might be adequately penetrative into the actions of these institutions for the welfare of its citizens.

• Quality control may be treated as the main motto of any action undertaken by the government in this sphere.

• More stringent measures may be instigated as part of legalizing the consumer’s rights might emerge as necessary, positive steps undertaken by the government.

• Even though there are attempts to set up safety measures and guidelines governing standards of food (like FSSAI) but also the government may initiate proper and more intensive channels to make people aware of these authorities.

• Federal and exclusive bodies like the food consumer’s forum might be set up district wise to immediately deal with consumer grievances.

• Fast-track courts might take up a very fast paced role to come up with judgements.

• Monetary compensation to the party is not the only solution and the state may formulate commensurate punishment to the defaulters as the adversity often takes a fatal and life ruining turn for the consumer.

• Following some countries certain welfare measures of making at least the dinner compulsory for all the members of the family may be initiated by the government as
family is the basic building block of the society and food is an essential element through which bonding among family members can be nurtured.

- May emphasize on practicing responsible marketing.
- Strict guidelines might be set up to map the expiry date and condition of the imported food products.
- Reduction in excessive salt and sugar contents in case of packaged and processed food might emerge as beneficial.
- To arrest the use of internationally banned pesticides, insecticides, harmful sprays, used in agricultural farming might produce beneficial consequences.
- Some sorts of physical exercise or activities at the workplace might be promoted.
- Subsidies may be provided to small business houses so that they do not compromise with quality.
- Through proper organization community meals at regular intervals might be organized and encouraged to reinforce community solidarity.

3. Public Sphere:
The eateries global, local, large, medium, small or even roadside ones must themselves act responsibly enough and should be concerned beyond their horizon of making money they must be accountable enough and must therefore cat responsibly. The public sphere incorporates all kinds of bodies that are directly and indirectly associated with food sources and items.

- Restaurants may provide actual information about nutritional contents of the products they offer.
- Nutritional environment mapping may be done compulsorily to make the consumer’s undertake informed choices of the food they consume.
- Promotion of balanced diets and fixed meal times might emerge as beneficial.
- The use of artificial tastemakers (like ajinamoto), additives, sweeteners etc. might be banned to increase longevity of the food product and enhance taste.
- Incorporation of fresh and seasonal fruits and vegetables in the diet might prove to be beneficial.
- Limited a la carte menu may be concentrated upon to ensure limited food leftovers and freshness.
• Restaurants and eateries might engage in promotion of healthy eating out by being the perfect amalgamation of health and taste.
• Quality control even in case of home delivered meals may be initiated.
• Chicken, meat and fishes must not be used and stored for more than a specified span as that might act to guarantee freshness and avoidance of stale flesh.
• Hygiene might be ensured by introducing compulsory, covered dress code of the worker at the restaurants.
• Proper washing and cleaning techniques may be supervised at the eateries.
• Kitchen may be open for public inspection.
• Eateries may resort to steps like providing feedback forms and the regulatory bodies may follow it with such inspections at regular intervals.
• Compulsory billing also might act to the accountability and responsibility of the eateries.

4. **Private Sphere:**
The private sphere mainly includes the family. The role of the family may also be modified at the current phase to gain beneficial consequences.
• The use of minimum processed, packaged and ready to cook products while preparing meals at home.
• Involvement and participation of all the family members in cooking activities might emerge as beneficial.
• Reduction in the number of home delivered meals may be resorted to as an option.
• Vital nutrients might be incorporated in the diet.
• Meals at home should include fresh vegetables and fruits.
• May not encourage storing of vegetables, fish and meat for too long in the refrigerators.
• Natural sources might be tapped as sources of vital nutrients and incorporating them in the diet.
• Compensation and not substitution of the eating out might be provided by the private kitchen.
• Involvement of the adults with the young ones might not be compensated by eating out or providing means to encourage eating out.
• Limited pocket money to the youngsters.
• Compulsory sharing of meals together with all the family members may be encouraged.
• It may be encouraged to carry home-made Tiffin to work places and schools or colleges.
• Erratic hours of meal consumption may be discouraged coupled with the promotion of regularized meals.

5. Individual Level:

The individual is the ultimate unit who is affected by the food intake so the individual must be the one who should be more concerned, aware and be responsible for the contents of the food.

• May try not to avoid skipping meals.
• May not engage into the habit of eating in between meals.
• Fruits and vegetables may be deliberately included in the diet daily.
• May engage in healthy eating in relation with one size, structure, climate, socio-economic condition and nutritional needs.
• Might disregard eating out as an essential channel of engagement in happiness.
• May be sensitized enough to be informed about the various governmental policies regarding food and eating.
• While eating out it may be consumed in moderation.
• May avoid getting into gymnasiums and engaging in rigorous exercises beyond permitted body limits to stay in shape.
• Incorporation some amount of light exercises like brisk walking, jogging etc.
• Food supplements, slimming pills or potions may be avoided.
• Compulsive and additive eating out behaviour may be supplemented by occasional eating out habits.
• May try to establish closeness with food sources by taking part in occasional trips and excursions.

Signature of the Candidate:

Date:
Annexures:

i. *Bibliography*

ii. *Questionnaire*