

THE LOST FLAVORS OF INDIAN PALATE: A REVIEW

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Abstract

Spicy delights abound in Indian cuisine. Ingredients and processing techniques are the primary determinants of a food's ultimate profile. Authentic Indian cuisine requires a wide range of spices to get the right taste profile. Ethnic cuisine's quality is influenced by regional and ethnic customs as well as subjective variables like the chef's competence and cooking technique. Home-cooked meals were preferred by the vast majority of Indian customers. In contrast to that, contemporary eating out culture is quickly altering Indian society's attitude. Several fast-food chains already have a presence in India, thanks to the country's fast-paced culture, hectic schedules, competitive nature, rising numbers of working women, and the nuclear family idea, among other factors. India's fast-food industry is exploding due to favourable demographics, shifting customer preferences, and increasing disposable income. India, on the other hand, is losing its unique culinary tastes. Literature reviews have examined food choice factors. The paper's topic matter includes the growth and developments in the fast food industry, which provide the groundwork for rising consumption and the ensuing societal problem of health degradation due to rising global obesity.

Keywords: Indian Cuisine; Cuisines; Food; Westernization; Indian palate

1. Introduction

A diverse nation, India has a wide range of climatic conditions, geographic locations, religious beliefs and cultures as well as a wide range of ethnic cuisines. This is the only nation in the cosmos where you can eat food from every country in the world at the same time. Rice, wheat, and other lentils, including

* ISBN No. 978-81-953278-7-4

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masoor, toor, and others, are among the basic ingredients of Indian cuisine, and these lentils may be utilised whole or split. Indian food whether it's sweet, spicy, vegetarian, or not, has a heartfelt quality. Spices are mostly produced in India, which is also the world's biggest exporter. Many regional Indian cuisines are prepared using a variety of oils. Without spices, Indian cuisine would be incomplete. Every religion enjoys cooking with its own unique blend of spices. Indian cuisine is well-known for its creative use of herbs and spices. In the development of Indian food, religious beliefs and culture have played a significant influence. In Indian cooking, the six flavours are combined in a well-balanced way. These are: sweet, sour, salty, spicy, bitter, and astringent are all present. [1]

India's traditional cuisine has received a lot of praise for its creative use of herbs and spices. Traditionally, Indian cuisine has been characterised by a wide variety of small plates. The culinary style differs from region to region and may be categorised as either South Indian or North Indian depending on where you are. There are many and inn resorts in India that provide a wide range of different multi-food that is evocative of solidarity in varied variation. India is well known for this. There are three main grains in India's diet: wheat, rice, and chana (Bengal Gram), with the latter are being the most important. The Indian sense of taste has advanced significantly in recent years. [2]



Figure 1: We are leaving our culture behind, for no reason

1.1. Scoping Food Culture in India

In view of the above discussion the anthropological studies on food carried out on India as well as on South Asia can be described as moderately wide in scope, but not wide enough to take care of a

geographically vast and culturally varied country like India. It should also be noted that anthropological information on behaviour related to beverages, especially the alcoholic ones, is scantier than what is available on food. Hence any study on anthropology of food should involve beverage as well. For a wider as well as deeper coverage of culture of food and beverage, certain methodological issues need to be addressed, which would be done later in this article. It is necessary to identify the issues that require to be addressed by anthropological studies on food at this juncture. As anthropologists remained largely busy with study of small scale 'traditional' communities for many years, they feel more comfortable while dealing with issues like food taboos specific to any particular caste or tribe or the culture specific cognitive categories. Issues like changes in food habit in a developing country like India in terms of who eats what, when and how under the influence of different cultural, economic and political processes are rarely accorded central position in anthropological research agenda. [3]

1.2. History of food:

Generally a large part of the food and beverage consumed by a people was originally sourced in other countries or in other cultures, unless the people are as isolated as the inhabitants of the North Sentinel Island. Scholars knowledgeable in history of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry in India would testify that a large number of plants, animals and birds that are used by the Indians were introduced by different people at different points of time. Such information may be components of history of a macro scale, but a well-designed anthropological enquiry can dig out the consequences of such changes at the micro level. Any change in the major food crop of an area and subsequent change in the staple of the people might have caused relational changes among them. Introduction of new varieties of vegetables, fish or edible birds and animals might have resulted into similar consequences. [4]

Changes in items of food in time can be re-enlivened through a systematic study of food offered to god at temples and at home. Generally the temple kitchens shut their doors to items that are considered non-traditional; that came from a foreign land or an alien culture. One can observe what the people used to offer to their god seven or eight hundred years back in a given part of the country by studying the major temples of that region built seven or eight centuries back. The major temples of Puri, Varanasi and Kanchipuram would offer opportunity of such a study. It is highly probable that there would be a conspicuous difference between the temple food and the secular food at any of the above places at any given point of time. The difference may be more complex in case the people have embraced a new religious or sectarian faith more recently and that faith demands that the followers observe certain restrictions related to food. Under the influence of Shri Chaitanyadev in Bengal and Shrimanta Shankardev in Assam, members of several 'lowly placed' communities embraced Vaishnavism during last five hundred years. The disparity between temple food and food eaten at home remained specifically sharp for them. In case of Manipur the contradiction had an apparent political dimension. [5]

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1.3. Food as Identity Maker:

In recent years a lot has been discussed and written about the role of food and beverage as identity marker. While appreciating the cultural plurality in India, one cannot ignore how the notions of ethnicity or of regional identity get entwined with ethnic group specific or region specific cuisine. Such identities may make the people proud of their tradition. Goan food or dishes from Chettinad for example are mentioned prominently in tourism handouts as something that the visitors should rush for. Certain traditional practices may, on the other hand, be used by others to stigmatise a community. There was a time when the 'higher' castes used to ridicule the 'lower' ones for their dress, language, eating habits, for almost everything they did or stood for. But in more recent years the media, both print and electronic, are found to keep the notions alive. Repeated mention of the Mushahar caste of Bihar as rodent trappers or rat eaters is just one such example. [6]

Food has been used by members of certain communities to assert their distinctiveness with reference to other communities of the region or of the country in several cases. One example of such assertion has been offered by the Santals; in the 1960s in their quest for a 'great tradition' the leaders urged the people to use a distinctive script, to follow a discrete religious ideology and to consume beef and rice beer in contradistinction with the practices of the Hindu communities of the region.

The anthropological studies that have highlighted the role of food as identity marker have largely dealt with newfound identities that came into being as result of movement of people from one country to another or from one continent to another during last few centuries. The South Asian identity that was created in the Western countries is one example. [7]

2. TRADITIONAL FOODS – MODERN FUNCTIONS

Traditional foods enjoy immense popularity owing to certain distinct properties. And bolstering food security, they also provide jobs, enhance nutritional status, and offer more diversity in the diet. They are also endowed with several medicinal benefits.

Food Security: Drying, freezing, canning, as well as pickling are all methods of preserving food. Many of them, on the other hand, aren't suitable for usage in poor nations on a modest scale. It's not economically feasible to freeze food and canning at the small-scale level has significant safety concerns for the supply of food. Traditional food production methods have been used for centuries to store food for later consumption and to increase food security.

Income and Employment: Millions of people across the globe, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, rely on traditional food items as a source of income and employment.

Nutritional Status: Individuals' optimal health and nutrition are reliant on a steady supply of food and a well-balanced diet. When a person's diet isn't ideal, his or her ability to perform efficiently is significantly diminished. Women, children, and new-borns are the most at risk demographics. Lack of food, dietary restrictions and taboos, misunderstandings, and restricted feeding and eating time all

contribute to malnutrition in developing countries. Traditional foods being rich sources of almost all nutrients help in improving the nutritional status of people to a larger extent.

‘Spicy’ not ‘bland’: Traditional foods often have robust flavours that may liven up a boring, starchy diet. These condiments are used to make the food taste even better. Pickles are a major export from India among the country's traditional foods. It earns money for the country through exporting. In western style soups, the addition of ground Indian spices would improve the flavour.

Medicinal Benefits: Several traditional foods have been endowed with different kinds of medicinal benefits. Foods are believed to contain ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ properties. They are also classified as Tamasic, Sattivika and Rajasic foods. According to Bhagwad Gita, “tamasic” foods are cold, stale and highly spiced, rendering the consumer dull and slothful. Pork, beef, non-scaly fish and strong brews are some examples. “Sattivika” foods are savoury, nutritive and agreeable, conducive to serenity and spirituality. Examples of these foods are milk and milk products, jaggery, honey, fruits, goat and sheep meat, chicken, eggs and wine. Rajasic foods are bitter, sour, salty, pungent, dry and burning; they stimulate a person and make him restless. People believed that eating foods, which clashed with any ingrained temperament or seasonal contraindications, would result in imbalances and thereby ill health and disease.

3. Literature Review

(Nilesh et al., 2019) [1] There are many Indian cuisines to choose from, all using the same basic components. Traditional Indian food offers a broad range of choices because to the vast variety of spices, herbs, vegetables, and fruits that can be found nearby. In this article, we set out to develop a system that suggests Indian-cuisine dishes based on readily accessible components and personal preferences. This project included web scraping in order to gather a variety of recipes and then using a content-based machine learning method to suggest them. This algorithm recommends Indian dishes based on the kind of components they include.

(Krishnakumar, 2019) [2] India has a distinct identity of its own. A wide variety of cultures and languages coexist in this huge country, which is not home to just one single culture or one single language. It's a diverse group made up of individuals from many different social and ethnic origins. There is a wide range of cultural variation among Indian citizens, including how they dress, their preferred food, and their social and religious activities. The food of India differs greatly depending on where you go. Some Indian states have long had regional specialties they serve during religious and social events. The excellent use of spices and flavorings brings out the numerous commonalities across the cuisines of India. Indian food relies heavily on spice combinations, known as masalas. every day.

(Sugasini, D; Yalagala, Poorna CR; Kavitha, B; Kasthuri, T; Vijayalakshmi et al., 2018) [3] Spicy delights abound in Indian cuisine. Ingredients and processing techniques are the primary determinants of a food's ultimate profile. Authentic Indian cuisine requires a wide range of spices to get the right taste profile. Ethnic cuisine's quality is influenced by regional and ethnic customs as well as subjective variables like the chef's competence and cooking technique. For example, a well-defined ethnic product

profile, predetermined production process and consistent quality are all requirements for ethnic food. Preprocessed and shelf-stable spice mix formulation is needed for the preparation of a variety of plant-based and muscle-based ethnic cuisines food products to minimise the drudgeries of processing in the kitchen and the time required for food preparation in order to serve an increasing population of working couples and single people living, for example. Bioactives are covered as well as geographical origin and therapeutic advantages as well as multi-cuisine preferences for spices in this review.

(Sankar, 2017) [4] Based on the data from fieldwork in Mumbai's Dharavi neighbourhood as well as information gleaned from online restaurant reviews, food ordering websites, and blogs, this study examines two different elements of Chinese cuisine offered in India. To begin, it examines the many Indianizations seen in Chinese cuisine offered in India. The second section looks at how Chineseness is produced via exhibitions inside and outside of restaurants, and how 'Chinese' is communicated in the menu by using these symbols. Researchers noticed that most of the Indian Chinese restaurants I visited served Chinese cuisine with a strong emphasis on spicy and pungent tastes. It's common practise to serve cooked food in a bowl, with a spoon and fork to go with it. In Chinese restaurants, it's common to see decorations with symbolic meanings. Such depictions include the predominant use of red, random Chinese characters, pictures of Chinese temples, Buddha paintings or statues, wok symbolism, fat Chinese chef images, dragon pictures, bowl symbols, as well as chopsticks. There seem to be Indian preconceptions about what Chinese cuisine should be, and a Cheesiness is produced in Chinese restaurants to give diners a sense of being in China throughout their meal. This is the conclusion of the research. According to the author, Indian take on Chinese cuisine has resulted in a new culinary category called Indian-Chinese cuisine, which is neither Indian nor Chinese.

(Namrata, Divya Tiwari, 2016) [5] Enjoy delicious, nutritious, and flavorful Indian food because of the subcontinent's 8,000-year history of cultural interaction, which led to the wide range of tastes and regional cuisines present today. Many regional and traditional Indian dishes may be found in Indian cuisine. There is a wide variety of variation in these cuisines due to differences in local culture, geographic location and temperature, as well as the kind of soil on which the food is grown. Religious and cultural decisions and customs have a big impact on Indian cuisine's enormous diversity. A particular meal associated with every holiday has its own meaning and is associated with the country's most religious nation. The cuisine plays an significant part in the celebration and helps to complete it as a whole. Each of the 29 states in the world's largest democracy seems to have its unique festivals & cuisines that reflect the local beliefs and culture.

(Mukhopadhyay, 2011) [6] The history of mankind may be split into two periods: the time when people hunted and gathered their food, which grew naturally, and the time when they began cultivating and raising it. Controlling the food supply via domestication has been dubbed a revolution; it is without a doubt the most important transformation in human history. Cooking is an important component of the process of processing food for preservation or consumption, and it represents yet another important boundary between humans and non-humans. Every culture has its own set of beliefs and practises around food and drink, as well as the way people behave when they consume such things. When folklore, riddles, and tales are properly examined, they may provide significant information about cultural connections

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from the distant and recent past, shifts in the collective value system, and different cultural processes from more recent times. Only a small portion of this information has been written down or otherwise recorded until today, with oral transmission accounting for the vast majority of it.

(Indian Food Code Food Categorization System, 2006) [7] Food safety and consumer interests have been the primary goals of regulatory frameworks implemented throughout the world. As a result of these goals, regulators must examine information on different food safety and regulatory elements throughout the Food Chain, including estimates of dietary exposure for scientific risk assessments. The sheer variety of foods eaten, locations where they are consumed, demographic groupings engaged, and so on makes it almost difficult to monitor information on an individual product basis. Using various languages, dialects, and regional differences just adds to the complexity of dealing with such a large amount of data. Accurate food nomenclature and comprehensive food descriptions are required for the collection of valid food data. If the information is obtained from foods that are not precisely specified, even high-quality data may include errors. Without a consistent definition of foods in databases, it is impossible to share food data or to comprehend and compare numerous characteristics such as nutritional status, dietary patterns, risk analysis profiles, etc. for diverse areas, states, or people.

3.1. The reasons for arrival of fast-food industry in India

- Unlike in the past, men and women now go to work on equal terms these days. In addition, each member of the family must be busy because of the rising costs and the upgrading of the way of life. Fast food serves as a convenient, quick fix when life is hectic.
- Today's women don't want to be bound by conventional gender responsibilities such as cooking and childrearing. As a result of this modernisation, people are eating more fast food.
- There is a growing trend among customers to buy prepared foods. They are becoming more affluent because of their growing trust in the many fast-food brands available on the market.
- Both men and women are now equally career-oriented in the present situation. Due to the fact that there is a second source of income and therefore an increase in purchasing power, people are more likely to consume ready-to-eat foods.
- Today's scenario means that there aren't enough days in the week to get everything done. As a result, when individuals have spare time after a long day at work, they want to use it for recreation and amusement.
- Due to a lack of leisure activities and participation, many of them do not plan to cook and instead choose fast food.
- Due to India's huge population and status as the world's second-largest nation, several foreign companies have entered the Indian market.
- Because of 1991's liberalisation, numerous tariff and non-tariff obstacles from inside Indian borders have been eliminated or reduced for a number of multinational corporations (MNCs).

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3.2. Effects of Westernization on Indian Palate

It is a term used to describe the process through which Westernization is spreading across Asia, particularly in India. But now that western culture is coming in with things like products, celebrations and dressings, cuisines and beverages, it is having an influence on Indian culture in a lot of different ways. The western way of life is being replaced by Indian way of life. [8]

Many western dishes have found a home on the Indian plate, including pizza, burgers, beef tacos, and other favourites like Golgappa and curries, which are becoming less popular in India but more prevalent in Europe. Because of the high fat content in many Western meals, India's obesity prevalence is on the rise. [9] Indian religion forbids the consumption of pork and other animal products; nevertheless, with the introduction of western cuisine, many Indians are no longer adhering to their religious beliefs and are engaging in practises that are in violation of their religious beliefs. This has a negative impact on the Indian religion's worth and alters the way of life for many people. Compared to Indian restaurants, there are much more western-style eateries like KFC and Mac Donald's in India nowadays. [10]

4. CONCLUSION

Indians are known for their tolerance of religious and caste differences, but they also enjoy a wide variety of delectable food from all across the nation. The cuisines of India reflect its people's culture, and the availability of spices, staple foods, vegetables, fruits, and other ingredients in various parts of the nation is one cause for the variety in food. Each area has its own unique style of Indian cooking. For example, in eastern India, food is prepared with mustard oil, whereas in southern India, coconut oil is used. Each state has its own unique style of eating and cooking food. The social, cultural, and economic importance of traditional foods cannot be overstated. In terms of food security, traditional foods play a critical role, and they also offer enormous promise for treating hunger on a large scale. It's critical that the process of making them doesn't become extinct. Small-scale food processors may contribute their expertise on traditional goods, which should be made available to the public.

The cultures of India and the West are poles apart. Western civilization has both good and bad impacts, just as a coin always has a head and a tail. The fast-food sector will continue to grow in India as the country modernizes. The fast-food sector in India is expanding, which is good for the economy, but like with any currency, there are some disadvantages as well. As a consequence, people are suffering from severe health issues.

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