

IMPACT OF WESTERN FOOD CULTURE IN INDIA: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Introduction

India has a rich culinary heritage that has evolved over centuries. Traditional foods give an exquisite vision of India's rich cultural heritage. Traditional food habits across the country are primarily based on a holistic approach to nutrition. However, with rapid urbanization, our eating habits are also rapidly changing, and we run the real danger of losing our rich food heritage, built with the wisdom of centuries.

The cooking style varies from region to region and is largely divided into South Indian & North Indian cuisine. The staple food in India includes wheat, rice and pulses with chana (Bengal Gram) being the most important one. Indian food is different from rest of the world not only in taste but also in cooking methods. It reflects a perfect blend of various cultures and ages. Just like Indian culture, food in India has also been influenced by various civilizations, which have contributed their share in its overall development and the present form.

Foods of India are better known for its spiciness. Throughout India, be it North India or South India, spices are used generously in food. But one must not forget that every single spice used in Indian dishes carries some or the other nutritional as well as medicinal properties. According to our ancient Indian science, Ayurveda, Indian food is complete and enough for our bodies. The dependence on foreign foods is not required as our legumes, beans, grains, fruits and

vegetables provide us with ample amount of fiber, fat, carbohydrates, proteins and vitamins and minerals.

The Indian plate has welcomed many western foods (e.g. pizza, burgers, steak tacos etc.), and Indian foods like Golgapa, curry etc., are being less popular in India, however are becoming common in Europe while the western foods are growing stronger and are becoming more popular in India. Western foods contain too much fat and this causing the obesity rate in India to increase. In the Indian religion, you are not allowed to eat pork or meat however, since the western foods have kicked in, many Indians are no longer respecting their religion and are eating things against their religion. This is causing the value of the Indian religion to decrease and is changing many people's lifestyles. Today in India, there are more western restaurants like KFC, or Mac Donald's compared to the Indian restaurants there are. In modern times Indian palate has undergone a lot of change. In the last decade, as a result of globalization, a lot of Indians have travelled to different parts of the world and vice versa there has been a massive influx of people of different nationalities in India. This has resulted in Indianization of various international cuisines. Nowadays, in big metro cities one can find specialized food joints of international cuisines.

What has changed?

Do you remember when did you eat food last time with bare hands? No? Well, then you have already become fan of Uncle Sam's cuisine. American love a loaded thanksgiving table, Chinese can't eat without chopsticks. The tradition of eating with hands has its roots in Ayurveda. Eating in Indian food culture is seen as a sensory experience. While eating with your hands you become more conscious of the taste, texture and aromas says our ancient texts. But intrusion of spoons and other utensils just made eating food as 'dry' routine job.

Where are the Indian Thalīs?

Indian Thalies are full of nutrition. Thalies represent a food pyramid containing all the things our body needs from carbohydrates, proteins to amino acids. Thalies are a complete package. Since our life has become as fast as the metro we have shifted from Thalies to fast food like burgers, sandwiches, rolls and shakes.

A study by the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that 8.7% of the world's diabetes sufferers (or 69.2 million people) live in India. Yes, the nation's people might be living longer, but they aren't necessarily enjoying good health in their later years. There is no doubt that authentic Indian food is healthy. It is full of 'superfoods' that Western countries are only just starting to catch on to.

Though the western food has rich protein source and saves money and time it affects immunity and increases the risk of having diseases like high blood pressure, diabetes and heart attack.

Literature Review:

Ling et al., (2004) studied Adopters of new food products in India. The purpose of their research was to compare the attitudes about new food purchases between innovators and non-innovators and to determine their characteristics. The findings revealed some characteristics like they tend to be opinion leaders, seek variety in food types and brands and responsive to advertisements. These techniques are mostly applicable on the children below 14. They can be easily influenced by colorful pictures. Although Indian traditional food cultures present challenges to foreign traders. Unlike other countries 40 percentage of Indians are vegetarians. This becomes a great barrier to the foreign industries to adapt Indian food culture as most of the foreigners are likely to eat non-veg in large quantity. Several demographic characteristics have been identified as having an impact on innovativeness: age, education, income, occupation, and social class. They will have different methods for various group of people. For instance teenagers need change of trends in the intervals. They wish to showcase them different from the elderly people. Whereas the elderly people now a days like to use products that keeps them young. Similarly, North

Indians are great adapters of wheat products and south Indians are rice adapters. They need very different advertising methods for both.

Kumar et al., (2018) studied Long term changes in Indian food basket and nutrition. The purpose of their research was to provide empirical evidence on the nature and extent of long term changes in consumption patterns. The finding revealed that the economic status, urbanization, food quality, safety, consumer perception, food-consumption pattern have a great impact in the changing food culture. Nutritional status of various socio-economic groups at the household level in rural and urban India as well as in some of the poorer states. It also takes stock of the changing consumption patterns of the poorest strata of population in rural and urban India. It is hypothesized that the dietary changes during the last few years have improved the food and nutritional status at the household level in both rural and urban areas for all the socio-economic classes and states of India. Among the food items, the budgetary share of cereals dominated the food expenditure in both rural and urban areas. The share of cereals decreased with increase in the income level and was higher in rural than urban area.

Nandy (2004) studied THE CHANGING POPULAR CULTURE OF INDIAN FOOD. In this paper he wrote about Culinary changes and modes of public dining are undergoing rapid changes in India and have begun to reflect some of the new strands in the culture of Indian politics. A national cuisine may not have emerged but some pan-Indian trends are visible. Even a rudimentary fast food culture is crystallizing out of familiar regional preparations. Simultaneously, new concepts of what kind of food can be served on formal occasions and of cuisines that can or cannot provide effective restaurant fare are changing the relationships between different regional cuisines. The Indian fast food industry is not new. What could be called its primitive version developed in the latter half of the 19th century in the presidency towns as Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were called during the colonial period. The second major development is the way in which, during the last five decades, formal or ceremonial food in metropolitan India has increasingly come to be dominated by two cuisines, the Mughal and the

Punjabi. Indeed, outside rural Punjab and a few alert capitals of Mughal cuisine like Lucknow and Hyderabad the two are no longer clearly separable.

H. White and K. Kokotsaki studied Indian food in the UK: personal values and changing patterns of consumption. This qualitative study examined the consumption of Indian foods among groups of English and Indian people living in the UK. Both convenience and freshly made Indian foods were included in the research. The aim was to explore attitudes (based on ethnicity) towards, and the consumption of, Indian foods. The means–end model and laddering methodology were used in interviews with 24 respondents, 12 from each group (English and Indians). The personal values ‘social life’, ‘health’, ‘adventure’, ‘enjoyment’ and ‘savings’ were found to be the most important for English respondents whereas ‘enjoyment’, ‘good life’, ‘health’, ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ were the most desirable value ends for Indians. The results provide an insight into English and Indian peoples’ perceptions of Indian food that can be used in promotion and marketing positioning of branded Indian foods, sauces and accompaniments.

Narayan, U. (2018) studied Eating Cultures: Incorporation, Identity and Indian Food. This study tells about the linking the colonial British 'fabrication' of curry powder to the colonial fabrication of India, this paper explores the connections between colonial attitudes to India and to Indian food. The paper then looks at the links between food norms, and religious and political animosities in contemporary India. It then proceeds to use food to think about the place of the Indian community in contemporary England, and about the problematic roles assigned to women in immigrant Indian communities. The paper goes on to reflect on the notions of 'food colonialism' and 'culinary imperialism', arguing that the social meanings of 'ethnic food' in western contexts must also be considered from the point of view of immigrants to western contexts. The paper ends by arguing that concerns about multi-culturalism and respect for other cultures must focus not only on relationships between 'mainstream citizens' and 'ethnic Others', but on the relationships between various 'ethnic' groups.

Slocum, R (2010) studied Race in the study of food. The paper studies about the recent reviews of food scholarship in Progress in Human Geography have begun to engage with racial identity but have not considered the breadth of work on the subject. Once we look outside what is known as agri-food studies to research in international development, environmental history, feminist theory, cultural studies and anthropology, it is evident that a large body of research exists relating race to the production, distribution and consumption of food. However, to see how this work refers to race often requires reading between the lines. Authors may refer to ‘difference’, ‘alterity’ or ‘Otherness’ instead of race and some are not explicit about the theory of race upon which they draw. Consequently, it is not always evident how race matters to the study of food. This paper’s contribution is to propose how theories of race are being used in this literature. It does so by drawing on the work of geographers, but the paper seeks to engage with research outside the discipline as well. Most literature implicitly relies on the social construction of race to consider representations and performances of race in contexts of eating or producing food. A smaller body of work theorizes racial embodiment as a material process. Explicit engagement with the concept of race and its diverse theoretical foundations is important because it allows scholars to make arguments about how racism shapes food systems, to understand how race changes through food, and to consider how food might enable different theorizations of race.

Zhong et al., (2010) studied You are how you eat. The paper is Based on recent advancements in the behavioral priming literature, three experiments investigated how incidental exposure to fast food can induce impatient behaviors and choices outside of the eating domain. We found that even an unconscious exposure to fast-food symbols can automatically increase participants’ reading speed when they are under no time pressure and that thinking about fast food increases preferences for time-saving products while there are potentially many other product dimensions to consider. More strikingly, we found that mere exposure to fast-food symbols reduced people’s willingness to save and led them to prefer immediate gain over greater future return, ultimately harming their economic interest. Thus, the way people eat has far-reaching (often unconscious) influences on behaviors and choices unrelated to eating.

Discussion

A common and genuine fear among conservative Indians (specially the elders) is that the rampant westernization amongst Indians is leading to the gradual decline and eventual ruins of Indian culture and tradition. They suspect that Western goods, clothes, foods, festivals, style, language, and moreover Western thought is spreading across the populace. *The purpose of this article is to look at the many reasons that cause such fears and analyze them by comparing with reality. This analysis is mainly from the Hindu perspective since that is where my experience lies. The analysis however, would probably apply in equal measure to those Indians of other religious persuasions as well.* Broadly, **culture** and **tradition** can be thought to be made up of the following: celebration of festivals and religious practices, clothing, foods, arts, traditional sciences, language, and lifestyle. An analysis on these lines may give us a good handle on the topic and provide a reasonably complete picture.

Conclusion

The Indian palate has welcomed Western (and Eastern) cuisine. Pizzas, burgers, ice-cream, and noodles are commonplace in Indian cities and towns. Of late, barbecues, steaks, pasta, lasagna, spaghetti, tacos, and other foods are also making their presence felt.

When the major Western food joints started operations in India, there were widespread fears that it was the end of Indian foods like *dosa* and *idli*. No such thing has happened. The Indian foods, with all their regional traditional identities, have in fact grown stronger. There is enough demand for the *appam* as there is for the *roomali rotis*. The *rasgullas* and the *Mysore paks* are both relished with equal fervor. Some special dishes that were getting quite rare a decade ago are now reappearing and are even being marketed commercially. For instance, in Karnataka, dishes such as *manohara*, *kunda*, *kardant*, and *todedev* are spreading from their earlier regional silos and are addressing larger markets. There may not be many Indian dishes of value that have been sacrificed at the altar of Western / foreign foods.

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