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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SURVEYING INDIAN FOOD HISTORIOGRAPHY ON SPECIFIC CULINARY

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Abstract

This study examines the surveying Indian food historiography on specific culinary. Food is considered distinct from the more traditional field of culinary history, which focuses on the origin and recreation of specific recipes. Early human nutrition was largely determined by the availability and palatability (tastiness) of foods. In India today, with a growing economy due to liberalization and more consumption than ever in middle class life, food as something to be enjoyed and as part of Indian culture is a popular topic. From a 1960s food economy verging on famine, India is now a society where food appears plentiful, and the aesthetic possibilities are staggering. The Indian meal is a complex and little-understood phenomenon. "Typical" meals often include a main starch such as rice, sorghum, or wheat; vegetable or meat curries that are dry roasted or shallow wok fried; cured and dried vegetable dishes in sauces; and thick lentil soups, with different ingredients. Condiments might include masalas (a dry or wet powder of fine ground spices and herbs) plain yogurt, or a vegetable raita (yogurt dip, also called pachchadi in south India), salted pickles, fresh herbal and cooked chutneys, dried and fried wafers and salted papadums (fried lentil crisps), and occasionally dessert (called "sweetmeats"). Indian meals can have huge variations across the subcontinent, and any of these components in different orders and with different ingredients might constitute an Indian meal. The cultures of contemporary Indian cuisine, including the politics, food processes, production, and consumption, are simultaneously changing and exhilarating. Further innovation and increased attention to Indian cuisine will almost certainly occur and promises to be an exciting area of innovation and critical research in the future.

Keywords: Identity, Rituals, Seasonality, Religious traditions, Indian meal

Introduction

This study examines the surveying Indian food historiography on specific culinary. The study of food history involves exploring the cultural, economic, environmental, and sociological influences of food and human nutrition. It differs from culinary history, which concentrates on the origins and reproduction of particular dishes. In the past, human diets were mainly influenced by the accessibility and taste of foods. Our ancestors were omnivorous hunter-gatherers, but the composition of their diet differed based on their surroundings and the climate. Throughout history, plant-based foods were a significant part of diets in tropical regions, while animal products played a more crucial role in diets at higher latitudes. Studies involving the examination of human and animal remains from the Neolithic period, as well as detailed analysis of bone modifications, have revealed evidence of cannibalism among ancient humans. Agriculture emerged at varying times and locations, beginning approximately 11,500 years ago, leading to some societies having increased access to grains like wheat, rice, maize, and potatoes. This development enabled the creation of staples such as bread, pasta, and tortillas from dough.

Some cultures obtained milk and dairy products through the domestication of animals. A frescoed thermopolium, which is a fast-food counter, was discovered in an exceptional state of preservation from 79 CE/AD in Pompeii through archaeological research in 2020. The discovery included 2,000-year-old foods found in deep terra cotta jars. The review and presentation of South Indian vegetarian traditional preparations, including their names across all South Indian states, brief preparation procedures, and health benefits are currently underway, especially those served during a typical meal. Additionally, the food related ideologies (either in the form of sayings, precepts and prescriptions) mentioned in some

predominant Indian traditional texts with a particular interest on ideologies presented by South Indian philosophers and theologians is also being discussed to establish the envisaged connect between traditions and practices.³

Food and Identity

Food (Sanskrit: bhojana, "that which is to be enjoyed" Hindi - Khana, Tamil - Shapad) provides a method to grasp Indian culture, as well as the complexity of identity and relationship with other parts of the world, which are both hidden and evident. Food is a prominent issue in India nowadays, with a growing economy as a result of liberalization and more consumption than ever in middle-class living. From a food economy on the verge of famine in the 1960s, India has evolved into a nation where food appears abundant, and the aesthetic possibilities are astounding. Cooking shows that showcase culinary abilities on television, frequently featuring famous chefs or unknown local housewives who may have won a competition, dominate daytime ratings. Domestic and international tourism brochures feature local indigenous specialties and culinary traditions.

Customers go to metropolitan restaurants that serve international food. Packaged Indian and international meals sell well in supermarkets, while local street food and hole-in-the-wall cafés have never been more popular. However, lifestyle publications promote healthy eating, nutritional diets, locally sourced ingredients, and sustainable and green alternatives. India's understanding of its own cultures, as well as its complicated historical and contemporary relationships with other cultures, are clearly seen in public food conceptualizations, culinary and gastronomic choices, and lifestyles. As Harvard anthropologist Theodore Bestor points out, the culinary imagination is how a culture conceptualizes and imagines food. In general, there is no such thing

as "Indian" food, but rather a vast array of local, regional, and caste-based ingredients and cooking methods. These dishes and their preparations have only been designated as "regional" and "local" cuisines since India's independence in 1947, despite enjoying domestic and foreign favor for the majority of its history. Because of this diversity and celebration, most Indians enjoy a variety of flavors and textures and are typically discriminating consumers who eat seasonally, locally, and, to a significant part, sustainably.

However, despite some opposition in recent years, the entry of multinational food corporations and their imitation by Indian food giants, agricultural industrialization, the prevalence of standardized food crops, and the standardization of food and tastes in cities have all contributed to a flattening of the food landscape.

The Indian meal

The Indian lunch is a complex and poorly understood phenomena. "Typical" meals frequently feature a major starch such as rice, sorghum, or wheat; vegetable or meat curries that are dry roasted or shallow wok fried; cured and dried vegetable dishes in sauces; and thick lentil soups made with various components. *Masalas* (a dry or wet powder of fine ground spices and herbs), plain yogurt, or a vegetable *raita* (yogurt dip, also known as *pachchadi* in south India), salted pickles, fresh herbal and cooked chutneys, dried and fried wafers, salted *papadums* (fried lentil crisps), and occasionally dessert (called "sweetmeats") are examples of condiments. Indian dinners can vary greatly across the subcontinent, and any of these components, in different orders and with different ingredients, may comprise an Indian meal.

Gastronomic Calendars, Rituals and Seasonality

Climate, geography, and availability to natural resources all influence food culture, both in India and globally. Eating agricultural and natural produce "in season," such as mangoes and summertime greens, pumpkins during the wet monsoon months, and wintertime root vegetables, is highly valued in the food system. This emphasis stems from the idea that foods that are in season have more flavor, potency, and nutritional worth; however, the year-round availability of many goods due to technological advancements is starting to alter eating habits.

Indian chefs are familiar with the seasonal fruits and vegetables that can be used in a variety of dishes, some of which are considered "favorites" in caste groups and households. For instance, small unripe mangoes are picked and pickled in brine before the ripened mango harvest in May and June. Though they belong to the same species, ripe and pickled mangos are unmistakably distinct culinary elements with unique qualities that, depending on their combination, flavor, and color, are sometimes associated with medicinal, strengthening, auspicious, and celebratory purposes.

Food connoisseurs know what foods are in season and occasionally they may go far to get the greatest or first item of the season. Domestic feasts, funeral ceremonies, and wedding celebrations all incorporate seasonality and regionality. *Sarson ka saag*, a Punjabi stew of spicy mustard greens that is supposed to "heat" the body, and *makki ki roti*, which are griddled maize flatbreads, are staples of the winter peasant cuisine that are brought to haute tables in Delhi restaurants as "rustic" fare.

Religious holidays also coincide with food cycles, celebrations, or holy times of the year that are frequently connected to giving gifts to the gods and indulging in certain cuisines. A feast of harvested rice cooked with lentils in three different dishes—*shakkarai pongal* (Tamil: sweet), *ven pongal* (Tamil: savory), and *akkara vadashal* (Tamil: milk)—

accompanies the south Indian Harvest festival of Pongal in February. Additionally, a stew of nine different winter vegetables and beans is served, first to tutelary deities and then consumed as consecrated food. Temples have a long history of developing culinary traditions and food-offering aesthetics, particularly those devoted to the Hindu God Vishnu.

The Globalization of Indian Food

India has never followed a set diet, but it has always "imagined" its food in terms of incorporating and domesticating "foreign" influences. Over the last twenty years, as India has emerged as a major global economic force, numerous international fast-food chains have made their way into the formerly untapped Indian food market. Pizza Hut, McDonald's, KFC, Pepsico, and, most recently, Taco Bell are among them. These businesses had to "Indianize" and "domesticate" in order to win over the notoriously finicky Indian taste. In India nowadays, metropolitan fast-food franchises are widespread and changing the dietary habits of the middle class.

India has had a pack-aged food boom as a result of local food vendors simplifying intricate native recipes for industrial production. Before, the emphasis was on natural, fresh, farm-to-table cuisine that was cooked on-site. The focus has now shifted to processed, manufactured food. These changes are reshaping old ideas of what is prized or traditional in part by reengineering local and caste-based specialties for mass production, distribution, and consumption.

The phenomena of branding Indian cuisine, which is mostly the result of curry establishments in the United Kingdom, is another facet of globalization. Curry is not a dish per se; rather, it is a category that includes a variety of dry and gravy vegetable dishes that are spiced to perfection using particular *masalas* (mixtures of spices and herbs). The word "curry" is believed to originate from the use of "curry leaves," which are citrus leaves from South India that are used

as flavorings. Indian food, as it is marketed outside of India, is a reworking of the second-class meal seen in north Indian restaurants; it is a fusion of Punjabi and Mughlai dishes that have been tailored to the local palate.

Indian restaurant menus in the US are largely uniform, and the variety of the dish is noticeably lacking. Some observers have interpreted the growth of Indian restaurants in the UK as a political reaction by the Indian diaspora to centuries of colonization and the introduction of British cuisine into India, as demonstrated by Lizzie Collingham's poignant history of curry. Regardless of the underlying reasons and interpretations, it is evident that the proliferation of South Asian eateries and curry houses in the UK has resulted in positive alterations to the British diet.

While diasporic Indian communities have also contributed, some academics have proposed that Indian cuisine is filtered through Great Britain and then distributed throughout the world. Indian restaurants in North America offer curries and rice, *tandoori chicken, naan, and chicken tikka masala* (which is rumored to have originated in Glasgow). In contrast, Japanese restaurants serve karai and rice, highlighting the allure of India's "exotic" cuisine.

The cultures of contemporary Indian cuisine, including the politics, food processes, production, and consumption, are simultaneously changing and exhilarating. Further innovation and increased attention to Indian cuisine will almost certainly occur and promises to be an exciting area of innovation and critical research in the future.³

Religious Traditions

Based on the empirical data about the respondents' religious traditions, it appears that the respondents belong to one of the following ethnic groups: Arya Vysya, Lingayath, Nambudiri (Nair), or Brahmin (Vaishnava, Smartha, Niyogi, Badaganadu, Madhwa, and Havyak communities) across the five

states. The results of the dishes across the states with colloquial names and their general preparation methods are shown below.

1. Rice based foods: The main component of every South Indian plate is rice, which is often boiled and utilized as a foundation for combining and consuming a variety of other foods with flavors ranging from mild to hot and spicy. In addition, rice-based desserts are made, particularly for festivals. In addition to being a staple grain, rice is also associated with a low-fat diet that is high in proteins, carbs, vitamins, and minerals. In addition, there is some flexibility regarding the other types of rice (pigmented rice), which have significantly more health benefits than regular white rice and are typically used in South Indian cuisine. The following are some common rice improvisations and the resulting South Indian vegetarian dishes:

1a. Plain rice and variants

- *Nei sadam:* The staple of any South Indian meal is nei sadam. To create a fragrant and flowery white meal, rice grains are cleaned and then steam-cooked. Typically, ghee is used to top the meal, which can be eaten on its own or with other foods.
- *Puliyodharai:* One of the foods that is regularly eaten on a regular basis as well as at festivals is puliyodharai. The thick seasoning of lentils, chilies, groundnuts, curry leaves, asafoetida, thick tamarind juice, jaggery, and dried shredded coconut is combined with cooked rice to create a sauce.
- *Pongal:* The most commonly made breakfast is pongal, which is typically eaten very hot. Rice and green lentils are cooked together, and then a generous amount of cumin seeds, peppercorns, and cashew nuts sautéed in ghee are added to season the dish.
- *Dadhyodanam:* Special curd rice called dadhyodanam is cooked on a daily basis and eaten as a last course with a lavish meal. To

produce the meal, thick curds are combined with cooked and slightly cooled rice until it takes on a semisolid consistency, and the mixture is seasoned.

1b. Rice based sweets

- *Tirukannamadai:* A dessert called tirukannamadai is made by first sautéing red rice in ghee and then combining it with molasses. Generally speaking, the dish is best served as an accompaniment to a meal, particularly during festivals.
- *Appam:* A typical preparation for festivals is appam, which can also be consumed as an evening snack. A batter is made by kneading rice flour and jaggery syrup together. The batter is then put onto a pan in the shape of little cakes, and fried in ghee.
- *Atirasam:* Richer in flavor than the previously described Appam, atirasam is a very traditional sweet that is typically made during festivals. In order to make the homogenous dough needed for Atirasam, rice flour and jaggery are combined. The resulting dough is then rolled into round cakes, dusted with sesame seeds, and deep-fried in ghee.
- *Sidai:* Fried rice flour is used to make sidai, which can be eaten sweet or savory and combined with cumin seeds or jaggery syrup, respectively. The mixture is formed into balls and deep-fried in oil or ghee after being gently sautéed sesame seeds are added.
- *Tirukannamudu:* Tirukannamudu is a dessert that can be frequently consumed as a stand-alone snack or given with meals during festivals. Rice, ghee, and jaggery are boiled in milk to produce the dish. Finally, layers of raisins, fried cashew nuts, and ghee are added to the dish as garnish.
- *Sukhiyan:* Another traditional dessert made at celebrations is sukhiyan. Green Gram is soaked for the entire night and then ground into a semi-smooth, viscous paste. Ground jaggery is then combined with the paste to form it into a ball

shape, which is then dipped in rice batter and deep-fried in ghee.

1c. Rice based savouries:

- *Varuval*: Rice blended with spicy ingredients is served with varuval, a dried side dish. They have a rather excellent shelf life, thus they are usually prepared and kept. Finely sliced raw bananas, yams, or jackfruit are sun-dried before being deep-fried in oil and finished with salt and dry chili pepper.
- *Vadam and Vatal*: As previously noted, Vadam and Vatal are other commonly utilized snacks. After being boiled until they form a thick paste, rice flour or sago grains are poured into little circles and dried in the sun. The desiccated wafers are deep-fried in oil right before being eaten.

2. Vegetable based foods

2a. Vegetable based gravies and soups:

- *Aviyal*: Traditionally made for all kinds of special celebrations, avial is a south Indian meal that is typically consumed with rice. The recipe calls for boiling veggies and combining them with grated coconut and thick curd to create a unique flavor.
- *Pulippu koottu*: Rice is typically served with the often prepared side dish known as pilippu kutu. The recipe calls for cooking gourd veggies (such as bottle, ridge, snake, or bitter gourd) with soaked tamarind concentrate. Lentils and red chilies are then added to the mixture to create a sauce.
- *Poritta koottu*: As previously indicated, poritta koottu is a quite dry form of a side dish that is typically eaten with rice. To produce this dish, green legumes or veggies made from gourds are combined with lentils and grated coconut, then cooked or sautéed.
- *Puli kariamudu*: Additionally, puli kariamudu is frequently eaten as a side dish with meals. To make the dish, vegetables like okra, raw brinjal, or raw banana are combined with seasonings,

boiled in tamarind concentrate, and then seasoned.

- *Kariamudu*: Another often made side dish that is usually eaten with rice is kariamudu. Here, simple steamed veggies are combined with seasoning, fresh coconut, and spices.
- *Paruppu usili*: The preparation of paaruppu usili, a very soft side dish, involves cooking lentils until they form a paste, which is then combined with cooked vegetables and seasoned. It is best to eat the dish with rice when having a meal. To make Paruppu usili, traditional South Indian culinary recipes typically call for green, black, or horse grams among other lentil varieties.
- *Kulumbu*: A verified semi-solid meal called kulumbu is eaten with rice. Cooked like a thick sauce, yellow split pigeon peas are combined with boiled or fried vegetables and then cooked some more with a powder (red chilies, fried and crushed lentils, coriander seeds, and dried coconut). Asafoetida is used as a last seasoning to the substance. This dish is a must-have for any vegetarian lunch in South India, and it is usually best enjoyed hot.

2b. Vegetable based fermented pickles:

- *Oorugaai*: Premade fermented pickles called oorugaai are eaten in very small amounts as a side dish with any rice-mixture cuisine. The pickling process that the components go through over time is what gives the meal its tingling quality. Mango, lime slices, fresh ginger, dried red chili powder, fenugreek powder, mustard powder, turmeric, and salt are combined with the fresh ingredients. After being kept in airtight porcelain jars for a minimum of one to two weeks, the combination is eaten.

3. Other Cereal and Pulses based foods:

3a. Cereal and Pulses based starters:

- *Paruppu Avial*: A meal called Paruppu Avial is made using pulses that have been pre-soaked, cooked, and seasoned. For the preparation, you

can use either chickpeas or green grams as the pulse kind. Generally speaking, the dish is best served as a side dish or as a snack during meals, particularly during festivals.

3b. Cereal and Pulses based appetizer:

- *Satramudu*: Satramudu is regarded as a nutritious, tasty dish that may be slurped like any regular soup or eaten with rice. Once the yellow split pigeon peas are cooked, the thin and delicate supernatant is collected and simmered with a spicy powdered mixture of cumin, fenugreek, and pepper corn. Finally, asafoetida is added to the mixture to season it. One of the most well-liked traditional dishes from South India is raita, which is regarded as an excellent recipe that adheres to the principles of Ayurveda, an Indian medical system.

3c. Cereal and Pulses based savoury:

- *Appalam*: As previously noted, appalam is also a commonly consumed snack. Lentil flour dough is formed into thin wafers and then allowed to dry. The wafers are deep-fried in oil just before they are consumed.
- *Vadai*: Vadai is a popular and frequently eaten breakfast/lunch dish that is typically served with Idali, or dish 8. Ground black gram that has been pre-soaked is mixed into a batter and deep-fried like doughnuts, either plain or with grated coconut and chilies.
- *Tayir vadai*: Another popular breakfast/lunch dish is Tayir Vadai, which is a vadai that has been dipped in curd and topped with coriander and curry leaves.

3d. Cereal and Pulses based sweets:

- *Laddu*: A traditional sweet made in the shape of a ball, laddu is made on auspicious Hindu festivals. To make tiny droplets that are then dipped into customs globally, as culture is seen as a crucial determinant of human existence. Thus, learning about and conducting research on ethnic

boiling oil and deep-fried, gram flour is combined with water to a semi-liquid state and then poured over a porous filter. Dried and fried droplets the size of a handful are combined with a viscous sugar syrup and formed into tiny balls. Cashew nuts, raisins, and cloves are added as garnish to the balls to enhance their flavor. Asia is a region where chickpeas, the main ingredient used to make gram flour, are widely cultivated and consumed.

4. Fruit based foods

- *Thaen palankal*: Fruit salad with sugar or honey on top is called thaen palankal. The dish is sometimes eaten as a supplement or with a meal during rituals where fasting is practiced.

5. Milk/milk product-based foods

- *Tirattupal*: Tiruttupal is a condensed milk candy that is sometimes eaten. Cream milk is cooked for an extended length of time until it reduces to a thick, uniform gel, and sugar is added halfway through. The gel is poured into the required shape while hot and seasoned with a sprinkle of cardamom and slices of pistachios.³

Conclusion

Food preferences are undoubtedly personal, but there is evidence that a variety of factors influence food choices, including biological (hunger, appetite, and taste), economical (cost, income, and availability), physical (access, cooking ability, and time), social (culture, tradition, and meal pattern), and psychological (mood, stress, and guilt). However, when examining the phenomena of food choices, ethnic origin of a community appears to be a very strong influencing element, and study on food consumption traditions has been steadily increasing globally. Food intake is closely linked to cultures and foods is both a pressing need and an essential area of convergence. It is imperative that we comprehend the origins of ethnic foods and the cultural backgrounds

that surround them in order to advance our knowledge of these delicacies and help make them a phenomenon that is accepted worldwide. To make the obtained knowledge more feasible and palatable, it must also be incorporated with scientific philosophies. Not all traditional traditions may be disregarded, even though most people believe them to be orthodox. Given their strong scientific relevance, traditional techniques have actually been shown to be the best choices. This convergence of mental processes is critically needed in light of the unclear health threats that the modern world faces, as eating the correct diet can undoubtedly improve one's health.

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