



Exotic Food And Its Impact On Indian Youth

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ABSTRACT

India is a country known for tradition, values and customs, but in the present scenario due to western influence our youths are westernized to that extent that majority of the youths are opting exotic food instead of Indian traditional foods. This article explores the impact of exotic food on Indian youth. Exotic food is that a person finds strange and unfamiliar. Exotic food can be unusual types of meats, fruits, vegetables or spices or it can also be the way that the food is prepared.

According to Collins dictionary the exotic food is defined as Something that is exotic is unusual and interesting, usually because it comes from or is related to a distant country. Food is what people and animals eat.

Indian food is renowned for its rich diversity and flavors. However, in the present scenario, there has been a noticeable trend throughout the country. This food habit is changing the way of young Indians experience and interacts with food. In this article, I like to explore the impact of exotic food on the Indian youth.

This article focus on the impact of exotic food on Indian youth, shedding light on the profound changes it has brought to their culinary preferences, cultural perspectives, and social lives. Exotic food has introduced diverse flavors and ingredients to Indian palates, encouraging a greater appreciation for exotic food instead of preserving the Indian food culture. This cultural exchange through food has fostered a sense of openness and acceptance towards different food cultures, strengthening social connections and promoting empathy. The article also highlights the health and wellness benefits as well as adverse effects on youths and the need for balance in dietary choices.

Exotic food, often originating from countries around the world, introduces Indian youth to a variety of flavors and ingredients they may not have encountered in their daily meals. This exposure to diverse cuisines expands their palates and encourages them to appreciate different taste profiles. Young Indians have become more adventurous, with sushi, Thai curries, Mexican tacos, pizza, burger, fries, noodles, candy, process ed meat and Mediterranean dishes are the major food choice of youths.

Keywords: *Culture, Cuisine, Exotic Food, Habits, Impact, Youth.*

EXOTIC FOOD AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIAN YOUTH

Introduction:

The exotic food has a profound impact on the youth in India, offering them a gateway to cultural exploration, culinary creativity, and a broader global perspective. These unique and unfamiliar flavors, ingredients, and culinary traditions not only allow the youth to connect with their own cultural heritage but also encourage them to explore the diverse cuisines from around the world, fostering a deeper appreciation for global diversity and cross-cultural understanding. Exotic foods become a catalyst for social bonding, as young people in India come together to savor and discover novel tastes, creating lasting memories and strengthening social connections. This culinary creativity inspires innovation and a deeper understanding of the culinary arts. It also presents economic opportunities as youths develop interests in the culinary industry,

contributing to the local economy. Moreover, exotic foods can introduce the youth to unique nutritional benefits, promoting better health and a diversified diet. However, they may also pose challenges as the youth navigate the balance between their traditional cuisine and the allure of exotic flavors, fostering a sense of identity and adaptation. In summary, exotic foods enrich the lives of the youth in India, shaping their cultural experiences, social interactions, culinary creativity, and global perspectives, offering a taste of the world and all it has to offer.¹

Indian food always marks a distinction from other cuisines coming from the rest of the world, not just in the taste but also in the cooking methods. Over the years, several civilizations have influenced the food cultures of India and that's the reason you'd see an enormous amount of cuisines available at hand that has captured the whole of the country and abroad. AE



Methodology:

In the light of the above mentioned problems along with the determinants of food culture, Food Habits, fast food and exotic food factors affecting Youth in India, this paper is an attempt to analyze and determine the knowledge about exotic food and its impact on youth in India. The paper is based on theoretical research; it analyzes the functional perspectives of exotic food. Both Primary and secondary data is collected from various sources like books, gazetteers, journals, newspapers, published articles and through various websites. The sources are constantly enriched.

Exotic foods of India:

India's culinary landscape is a vibrant tapestry of flavors, and it offers a plethora of exotic foods that entice adventurous palates. Among the myriad options, some stand out for their distinctiveness. For instance, in the northeastern states, dishes like Thukpa, a soul-warming noodle soup, and Bamboo Shoot Curry introduce unique flavors. In the southern state of Kerala, Karimeen Pollichathu, a spicy and flavorful fish preparation, captures the essence of coastal cuisine. The tribal communities across India incorporate wild edibles like stinging nettle, water lily roots, and bamboo shoots into their exotic dishes, offering a taste of nature's bounty. In the desert state of Rajasthan, dal baati churma, a combination of lentils, hard wheat rolls, and coarsely ground wheat, is a unique culinary experience. Goan cuisine serves up fiery delights like Vindaloo and Balchão, known for their tangy and pungent flavors. These are just a few examples of the exotic foods that India has to offer, each with its own story, culture, and flavors, contributing to the rich tapestry of the country's culinary diversity.²

Importance of exotic food:

The importance of exotic food can be understood from various perspectives, and it has both positive and negative aspects. Here are some key points to consider:

1. Cultural Exploration³: Exotic foods offer an opportunity to explore and appreciate the culinary traditions of different cultures. Trying exotic dishes can be a way to learn about the history, heritage, and customs of various societies. It promotes cultural exchange and understanding.

¹ Tulasi, Srinivas, 2011, Exploring Indian Culture through Food, EDUCATION ABOUT ASIA, Association for Asian.

² Gour, Dr. Anjana Singh, TYPES OF RESTARURANTS

³ National Seminar On Food Culture of India 2016, Department of Cultural Studies, tezpur University

2. Gastronomic Adventure: Exotic foods can provide a unique and exciting culinary adventure. Trying new flavors and ingredients can be a thrilling experience, and it can expand one's palate and appreciation for diverse tastes and textures.

3. Biodiversity and Sustainability: Many exotic foods come from diverse ecosystems and highlight the importance of preserving biodiversity. By consuming these foods, we can support sustainable farming and harvesting practices and contribute to the conservation of rare and endangered species.

4. Economic Benefits: The production and trade of exotic foods can be economically beneficial for regions and communities that rely on these resources. It can create income opportunities and promote economic development.

5. Global Food Security: The exchange of exotic foods can help mitigate issues related to food scarcity and insecurity. It diversifies the global food supply and reduces dependency on a limited set of staple crops.

6. Culinary Creativity: Exotic ingredients and flavors can inspire culinary innovation. Chefs and food enthusiasts often experiment with exotic ingredients to create new and exciting dishes that influence mainstream cuisine.

7. Health and Nutrition: Some exotic foods are rich in nutrients and offer health benefits. For example, exotic fruits like acai berries or dragon fruit are known for their antioxidant properties and nutritional value. However, it's important to approach exotic foods with sensitivity and responsibility. There are potential downsides to the pursuit of exotic foods, including:

1. Environmental Impact: The demand for exotic foods can lead to overharvesting, habitat destruction, and environmental degradation. It's crucial to support sustainable practices and reduce the negative impact on ecosystems.

2. Cultural Appropriation: While trying exotic foods is an opportunity for cultural exploration, it's important to do so with respect and without appropriating or disrespecting the cultures from which these foods originate.

3. Health and Safety: Some exotic foods may pose health risks if not prepared and handled properly. It's important to be aware of food safety guidelines and regulations when consuming these items.

4. Ethical Concerns: Exotic foods can sometimes involve the exploitation of animals or unethical practices. Awareness of ethical concerns is essential when choosing what exotic foods to consume.

In summary, the importance of exotic food lies in its potential to enrich our culinary experiences, promote cultural understanding, and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and economic development. However, it should be approached with mindfulness, respect for the environment, and a commitment to responsible and ethical consumption⁵.

Functional perspective food culture:

A functional perspective on food culture explores the various ways in which food serves not only as a source of sustenance but also as a fundamental element of human society and identity. Food culture is a complex and dynamic aspect of our lives, deeply intertwined with history, geography, social norms, and personal experiences. From this perspective, we can examine how food influences and is influenced by our daily lives, relationships, and broader cultural contexts. Here's an introduction to understanding food culture from a functional standpoint:⁶

1. Nutrition and Sustenance: At its core, food is essential for our survival. It provides the necessary nutrients, vitamins, and energy to keep our bodies functioning. A functional perspective on food culture acknowledges the primary role of food in sustaining human life.

2. Cultural Identity: Food is a powerful medium through which cultures express and define themselves. Different regions and communities develop unique culinary traditions that reflect their history, values, and identity. The foods we eat often serve as a symbol of who we are and where we come from.

3. Social Connection: Food plays a vital role in fostering social connections. Sharing meals with family and friends is a universal way of building and maintaining relationships. The act of eating together often extends beyond simple sustenance; it creates bonds, fosters communication, and strengthens social cohesion.

4. Globalization and Fusion: In our interconnected world, food culture is increasingly globalized. Different cuisines and ingredients are shared across borders, leading to fusion cuisines and a rich tapestry of global food culture. This globalization has transformed the way we perceive and consume food.

5. Economic Impact: Food culture has significant economic implications. The production, distribution, and consumption of food are critical components of a nation's economy. Agriculture, food processing, restaurants, and food-related businesses contribute to the livelihood of millions of people worldwide.

⁴ Cattini, Chris 2017, Food trends in India, ifis

⁵ McKinney, Katheen and Barbara S Heys (Eds), 2015, Sociologists in Action on Inequalities, Sage New Delhi

⁶ Beck, Ulrich, 1992, Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity, Sage Publication

⁷ Prashant Hulakunda, 2023: Sociology of Food Culture, Vaibhav Publications, pg. no 38

6. Health and Well-being: Our food choices impact our health and well-being. A functional perspective on food culture recognizes the importance of understanding how dietary choices can affect our physical and mental health. It emphasizes the role of food in preventing and managing health conditions.

7. Rituals and Traditions: Food is an integral part of many rituals and traditions. Celebrations, holidays, and religious ceremonies often center around specific foods. These traditions provide a sense of continuity, stability, and meaning in our lives.

8. Environmental Impact: The choices we make about the food we consume have a profound impact on the environment. Food production, transportation, and waste contribute to climate change and other ecological challenges. Understanding these connections is essential in addressing environmental issues.

9. Innovation and Creativity: Food culture is dynamic and constantly evolving. People experiment with new ingredients, cooking techniques, and flavors. Innovation in the culinary world drives the creation of new dishes and culinary traditions. As a awareness about healthy eating continues to grow, the internet is abuzz with plethora of new recipes that showcase modifications and spices. The culinary world is witnessing a fusion of flavors and ingredients, where even a beloved paratha is making way for innovative creations like avocado roti infused with traditional spices.⁸

10. Food Security: A functional perspective also includes examining food culture in the context of food security and accessibility. It's essential to consider how different communities and individuals access and afford the food they need.

In summary, a functional perspective on food culture recognizes that food is more than just sustenance. It is a multifaceted aspect of human life that plays a vital role in shaping our cultural, social, economic, and environmental interactions. Exploring food culture from this perspective can provide valuable insights into the complexities of our relationship with what we eat and its profound impact on society and individuals.

Need for exotic food:

The need for exotic food can be understood from various perspectives, each with its own importance:

1. Nutritional Diversity: Exotic foods often bring unique nutritional profiles to our diets. They can introduce a wide array of vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial compounds that may not be readily available in local or common foods. This nutritional diversity can help address deficiencies and contribute to overall health and well-being.

2. Culinary Enrichment: Exotic foods enhance our culinary experiences by introducing novel flavors, textures, and ingredients. They stimulate creativity in cooking and expand our culinary horizons, making meals more exciting and diverse.

3. Global Trade and Economy: The production and trade of exotic foods can play a crucial role in the global economy. Many countries rely on the export of exotic products as a significant source of income and economic development. This trade supports local communities and fosters international cooperation.

4. Biodiversity Conservation⁹: The cultivation and consumption of exotic foods can help conserve biodiversity. By promoting the cultivation of unique and often endangered species, it encourages the preservation of ecosystems and the protection of rare plant and animal varieties.

5. Cultural Exchange: Exotic foods enable cultural exploration and understanding. They provide an opportunity to learn about the culinary traditions, customs, and history of different cultures. This promotes cross-cultural appreciation and intercultural dialogue.

6. Environmental Sustainability: Responsible production and sourcing of exotic foods can contribute to sustainable agricultural and harvesting practices. Encouraging sustainable methods helps reduce the environmental impact and promote conservation.

7. Dietary Diversity: Exotic foods can offer alternative dietary options for people with specific dietary requirements or restrictions, such as vegetarians, vegans, or those with food allergies. They provide additional choices for individuals seeking diverse and unique dietary options.

8. Food Security: The introduction of exotic foods into the global food supply can help diversify the sources of nutrition, reducing dependence on a limited set of staple crops. This diversity contributes to food security by lessening the risk of food shortages or crop failures in various regions.

9. Promoting Sustainable Agriculture: Exotic foods can encourage the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices in different regions, contributing to long-term food security and environmental preservation.

10. Economic Opportunities for Producers: The cultivation and export of exotic foods provide income opportunities for farmers and producers in various regions, potentially improving their livelihoods.

In summary, the need for exotic food arises from the potential benefits it brings to nutrition, culinary enjoyment, economic development, biodiversity conservation, cultural exchange, and environmental sustainability. However, it is essential to approach the consumption of exotic foods responsibly, considering

⁸ The Indian express, dated October 2023, how useful is it to experiment traditional spices with exotic food ingredients.

⁹ Cuisines of Karnataka, 2020, Department of Tourism, Government of Karnataka

ethical and environmental factors and respecting the cultures and ecosystems from which these foods originate.

Effects for exotic food on Indian youth:

The increasing consumption of exotic food by Indian youth has several notable effects:

1. Diverse Palates: Exotic food introduces Indian youth to a wide range of flavors and ingredients from around the world. This exposure expands their palates and encourages them to appreciate different taste profiles. It also makes them more open to experimenting with new and unique dishes.

2. Fusion of Culinary Styles: Indian youth often blend exotic and traditional elements in their cooking, creating innovative dishes that combine the best of both worlds. This fusion of culinary styles results in exciting and unique flavors, adding a modern twist to traditional Indian cuisine.

3. Cultural Awareness: Trying exotic food is not just about taste; it's also a window into different cultures. Indian youth have become increasingly aware of the cultural context in which these dishes originate, promoting a sense of openness and acceptance toward people from diverse backgrounds.

4. Social Connections: Dining out at international restaurants and sharing food experiences on social media have become common trends among Indian youth. Food has become a significant part of their social lives, and it often serves as a means to bond with friends and family.

5. Health and Wellness: Many exotic cuisines, such as Japanese or Mediterranean, are often considered healthier options due to their emphasis on fresh ingredients, lean proteins, and balanced nutrition. This has encouraged Indian youth to make healthier food choices, promoting better overall well-being.

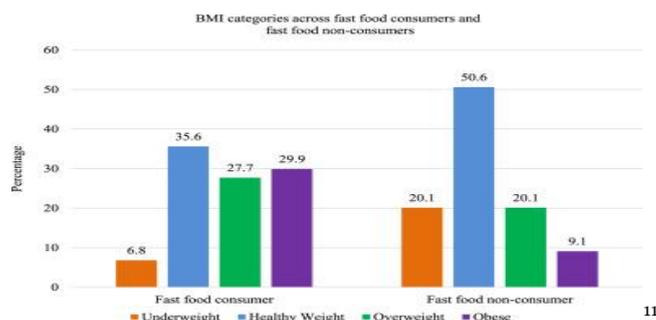
6. Culinary Exploration: The trend of trying exotic food encourages a sense of adventure and curiosity among Indian youth. They are more willing to explore new cuisines, experiment with different cooking techniques, and seek out unique dining experiences.

7. Economic Impact: The growing popularity of exotic food has led to an increase in international restaurants and food businesses in India. This has not only created job opportunities but also contributed to the economic growth of the food industry.

8. Food Tourism: Exotic food has inspired Indian youth to engage in food tourism, where they travel to different regions or countries to explore new culinary experiences. This trend has boosted the tourism industry in various destinations.

9. Preservation of Traditional Cuisine: While exotic food is on the rise, traditional Indian cuisine still holds a special place in the hearts of Indian youth. The desire to explore exotic flavors has not replaced their love for local dishes but has encouraged a deeper appreciation for traditional recipes.¹⁰

In conclusion, the impact of exotic food on Indian youth is multifaceted, ranging from expanded palates and cultural awareness to changes in social dynamics and dietary preferences. This culinary exploration has added a new dimension to the Indian food scene, making it more diverse and vibrant while also fostering a deeper connection with global cultures.



Determinants of Food Consumption:

- Cultural and religious Factors
- Ability and skills
- Individual Capacity and Special Need
- Age and Gender
- Medical reasons, Health Care and Allergy
- Biological Determinants
- Motivational and Preferential factor
- Economic Determinants
- Physical Determinants

¹⁰ DAE Young Kwon-What is Ethnic Food? , March 2015,journal of ethnic foods 2(1)

¹¹ Obesity medicine, March 2020: Rajon Banik

- Time Constraints
- Social Determinants
- Imitation and different Circumstances
- Psychological Determinants
- Parents, Friends and Media

Exotic food: Indian society and culture:

Exotic foods have had a significant influence on Indian society and culture, adding diversity and new dimensions to the already vibrant culinary tapestry. Here's how exotic foods have impacted Indian society and culture:

1. Cultural Fusion: India's rich history of trade and cultural exchange with various regions and civilizations has introduced exotic ingredients, spices, and culinary techniques into Indian cuisine. This fusion has led to a diverse array of regional and hybrid dishes, reflecting the multicultural fabric of the country.

2. Spices and Ingredients: Exotic spices and ingredients like black pepper, cloves, cardamom, and cinnamon were introduced to India through trade routes and colonial interactions. They have since become integral to Indian cuisine, enhancing the flavors of countless dishes.

3. Fusion Cuisine: Exotic foods have inspired fusion cuisine in India. The blending of foreign and local culinary elements has given rise to popular dishes like "Indo-Chinese" cuisine, which combines Chinese flavors with Indian ingredients and techniques.

4. Regional Adaptation: Different regions in India have adapted exotic ingredients to their local cuisines. For example, coconut-based dishes are prevalent in South Indian cuisine, while the use of mustard oil is a characteristic of East Indian cooking.

5. Street Food and Snacks: Exotic street foods and snacks have become an integral part of Indian culinary culture. Street food vendors often incorporate exotic spices and flavors into their offerings, creating unique and delicious treats.

6. Health and Wellness: Exotic ingredients known for their health benefits, such as quinoa, chia seeds, and acai berries, have been embraced by health-conscious Indians seeking nutritional diversity and wellness.

7. Cultural Celebrations: Exotic sweets and delicacies have found their way into Indian cultural celebrations and festivals. For example, sweets like "Baklava" are enjoyed during special occasions, reflecting the influence of foreign cultures.

8. Global Cuisine Exposure: The availability of exotic foods in India has exposed people to a wide range of global cuisines. This has led to the proliferation of international restaurants serving dishes from around the world.

9. Food Tourism: India's diverse and exotic culinary offerings attract food tourists, both from within the country and abroad. Food tourism has become a popular way to explore India's rich and varied food culture.

10. Export of Indian Flavors: Indian spices, such as saffron, cardamom, and turmeric, are exported and appreciated worldwide, making them an essential part of many global cuisines.

11. Environmental and Sustainability Awareness: As Indians become more aware of environmental issues and sustainable food practices, the sourcing of exotic foods is increasingly scrutinized to ensure ethical and eco-friendly production and trade.

In summary, exotic foods have significantly shaped Indian society and culture by contributing to the richness of Indian cuisine, promoting cultural fusion, and fostering culinary diversity while preserving traditional culinary practices. They reflect India's openness to global flavors and culinary innovation while celebrating its rich food heritage.¹²

Ethnic food and cultural differences: ethnic food defined as foods originating from the heritage and culture of an ethnic group who use their knowledge of local ingredients of plants and or animal sources the diversity of ethnic food reflects the local community culture using resources in their environment. Traditional foods are simply prepared and basic from vegetables and fruits, to meat, poultry and fish, to dairy, eggs legumes, nuts and seeds. Ethnic foods are defined as those edibles that are eaten and prepared by groups of people who share a common religion, language culture or heritage.

The role of traditional and ethnic food will increase in consumption pattern with increasing demand from youths. The global merging of many traditional and ethnic foods has brought many combinatorial foods. While there are some exotic meals on a typical Indian menu. Indian food is much more than simply a plate of extra hot curry. Indian food is as colorful as Indian culture it originated from getting to know this wonderfully diverse cosine is as exciting as it is intimidating because of its variety.

Conclusion:

Exotic foods have had a profound impact on Indian youth, significantly influencing their culinary preferences, cultural awareness, and global outlook. This influence is particularly evident in the way young

¹² The Hindu Newspaper, april 26,2019 06:52pm-IST

Indians have broadened their palates and embraced a world of diverse flavors and ingredients. Exotic foods have introduced them to international cuisines and exotic ingredients, instilling a sense of culinary adventure and expanding their gastronomic horizons. Indian youth are increasingly open to exploring global flavors, marking a notable shift in their culinary sensibilities. One of the most significant impacts of exotic foods on Indian youth is the way it has fostered cultural exchange and cross-cultural appreciation. Exotic dishes provide a direct connection to the customs and traditions of various global regions, creating a sense of curiosity and respect for diverse culinary heritages. This exposure to global cultures through food has encouraged a more inclusive and cosmopolitan worldview among Indian youth, promoting a deeper understanding of the world's cultural diversity.

Moreover, the embrace of exotic foods reflects the evolving nature of Indian society, particularly among urban youth. These young individuals readily incorporate international flavors into their diets, creating a harmonious fusion of culinary traditions. This blend of exotic and traditional elements in Indian cuisine is a testament to the dynamic and adaptive nature of Indian culture, showcasing the ability to integrate global influences while preserving deep-rooted traditions.

Additionally, the impact of exotic foods on Indian youth represents a broader trend of globalization and the interconnectedness of the modern world. As the youth explore and appreciate global flavors, they are also becoming more attuned to international issues and the importance of a global perspective. Food, in this context, serves as a universal language that transcends borders, fostering a sense of unity and shared humanity.

However, while the influence of exotic foods on Indian youth is undeniable, it is crucial to strike a balance and maintain respect for traditional Indian cuisine, which remains an integral part of the country's cultural fabric. The coexistence of exotic and traditional culinary elements in India's culinary landscape highlights the dynamic and diverse nature of the country's food culture, reflecting a harmonious blend of the past, present, and the world's culinary rich.

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