A Study Of Consumer's Perception Towards Mithila Cuisine In Darbhanga District

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Any nation's cuisine is the culmination of its many regional cuisines, which serve as the cultural & historical markers of each region. There are many regional cuisines in India that represent the country's culinary variety (Jain et al., 2015). Mithila cuisine is the typical way of cooking for Maithils who live in Nepal and India's Mithila region. Mithila Khenai (cuisine) features a wide variety of rice, wheat, fish, and meat meals as well as the expert use of numerous spices, herbs, and organic foods. While certain Mithila khenai resembles Bengali and North Indian cuisine, its preparation and flavour are very different. The food culture of the Maithil people is highly unique, and the majority of their dishes are not well-known outside of Bihar/Jhakhand in India and the Mithila Region of Nepal. There are many food items which form part of Mithila cuisine and are preferred by consumers for breakfast, lunch, evening snacks, dinner and special delicacies. This study aims to identify the popularity of Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district and identify the choice of consumer (preference) among various cuisines available in Darbhanga district. T-test and ANOVA have been applied for testing of Hypothesis. As a result of the hypothesis testing, it was found that no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender and age group, though there is a difference based on their employment status. **Keywords:** Mithila cuisine, preference, Darbhanga district

1. INTRODUCTION

Food is considered to be the epitome of any region. Any culture is identified by its food which is preferred by the consumer belonging to that culture. In this study, the cuisine being focused is the Mithila cuisine. It would be injustice; in case this study moves ahead without adding some flavours of food in the plate. There are certain similarities in the Mithila cuisine with North Indian and Bengali food. The food being prepared as a part of Mithila cuisine is different in preparation and the taste is also quite different. In general discussion about Mithila cuisine, the plate includes fish, wheat, rice and a few sweet dishes, here the use of herbs, spices, and various natural edibles play a very important role, and they seek attention of consumer. For many consumers, breakfast starts with Dahi Chura. It is basically flattened rice with sugar, salt is also added to give additional flavor. There are some consumers who prefer to eat mango pickle and green chilly with this breakfast. In the festive season of Makar Sankranti, consumer eat Dahi – Chura as a must each food. It is considered as symbol of celebration in their culture. There are many other food items which are a part of Mithila cuisine and are preferred by consumers for breakfast, lunch, evening snacks, dinner and special delicacies. The cuisine offers certain food items which could even be carried while travelling.

During lunch time, consumers prefer to eat rice, vegetables, pulses, and other such variety which is available locally. Different types of pulses are available and the same is the condition for local vegetables, these are cooked and served in a unique way by the consumer. In the lunch time, consumer have different options to choose from like rice, dal, roti, tarkari, chokha, raita, chutney and many other items which form a part of the Mithila cuisine. The combination of these items is liked by different consumers in their own unique ways. During the evening time, there is a different and unique variety of food items which are a part of the Mithila cuisine like Makai ka lawa (popcorn), aloo chops, sigharas, vegetable cutlets etc. These snacks are made up of ingredients which are nutritious, and their taste is good. During dinner time, there is a different variety of vegetables which are preferred as a part of Mithila cuisine along with roti and rice, curd, butter milk, sweet

dishes etc. Beyond these, there are certain special delicacies which are preferred as a part of this cuisine which includes pua, Khajja, Kheer, Seviyan, Rasgulla etc.

There are different types of food items which are a part of the Mithila cuisine and consumer prefer to have them during breakfast, lunch, dinner, evening snacks and also other special delicacies. This study is based on understanding the preference of consumer towards Mithila cuisine based on the food items which they prefer during different time period and also aims to evaluate the famous cuisine among consumers in Darbhanga district.

2.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Food tourism can be outlined to an expertise about the style of food which actually represents a region, and the tourists visit such places to enjoy the delicacies of those places and other items which belong to that region. Food tourism is said to be supportive in the development of the region, it strengthens the local production through the backward linkage in the tourism supply chain partnership and is also considered to be an important vehicle to deliver property tourism. **(Everett & Slocum, 2013)**.

Jain et al., (2015) Examine recipes from 8 different Indian regional cuisines that are representative of varied climatic and geographic regions. We look at the idea of food pairing, which compares the compatibility of two items in a meal based on the flavor compounds they share. By measuring the flavor sharing between ingredient pairs, the relationship between foods has been identified at the level of cuisine, recipes, and ingredient pairs. Our findings show that every regional cuisine has a negative pattern of food pairings; the more closely two foods share flavors, the less frequently they appear together in that cuisine. We discovered that the regularity of ingredient use plays a key role in defining the distinctive meal pairing across all these cuisines. The most important ingredient groups found to be contributing to the biassed pattern of food matching were dairy and spices.

Singh (2014) has carried out an investigation in Punjab to understand role of the Punjabi cuisine. This study has concluded that Punjabi cuisine is famous due to its richness, unlimited diversity and authenticity is considered to be culinary paradise among the foodies every-were.

It could be accomplished when local produce is bought, and local food is promoted by restaurants and hoteliers. Emphasis on relation between culture and food related to globalization has been considered by **Henderson (2014),** who orchestrated study in Singapore for determining different ways wherein food could represent the consumer and place and even their food heritage.

Pamukçu et al. (2021) has organized a study that concluded about the local food experience which acts as tool for many tourists for knowing culture of region. Hence providers of food service and restaurant operators use food products which are available locally. The food products which are available locally and various other products with have geographical indications for marketing and branding their cuisine eventually helped in the development of gastronomic tourism in particular region.

Sormaz at el. (2015) for examining role and the importance of gastronomy in the tourism industry has confirmed creation of close connection between tourism and food activities, region's gastronomy aid in growth of particular region. This would help in preserving cultural heritage and also strengthen the regional identity. To strengthen gastronomy of region and increase their credibility as culinary tourisms destination.

(Hoque, 2019) identified the numerous cuisines that are offered by state in India and determine the primary causes of genuine diversity in Indian food. The study's whole foundation is secondary data sources. According to the study, various factors such as the availability of regional spices, climate and soil variances, tradition, eating customs, and culture all have a significant impact on Indian cuisine. The study's findings indicate that, in terms of preparation manner and flavour, the cuisines of North and South India are very dissimilar.

Jain & bagler, (2018) In their research, authors rigorously analyse eight different Indian regional cuisines while also highlighting their individuality. They also compare the models on the basis of flavour compounds, opening the door to molecular level studies linking them, in particular, with non-communicable diseases like diabetes.

Rinaldi (2017) has confirmed consumer and place being two actors which consolidate sustainable development of a particular place regarding food and gastronomy. Place would provide food product having unique features which help to incorporate gastronomic heritage and traditions which provide recognition and identity.

SENGUPTA (2009) makes the case that food and cuisine served as a dynamic stage for the complex rhetorical conflict between colonialism and nationalism in Bengal between the late 19th and early 20th centuries by examining themes related to cooking, food, nutrition, and the connection between dietary practises and health.

Mohanty (2019) has made an effort to investigate the possibilities and prospects of Odisha food and has developed a strategic plan for the growth of the state's culinary tourism industry. The terms "culinary tourism," "food tourism," and "gastronomy tourism" are frequently used interchangeably among travellers, but in context of Odisha in particular, the cuisine tourism must be emphasised and investigated to a greater extent because it has the potential to be developed into a tourism product similar to other tourism resources.

Shah & Shende (2017) have indicated that India has played a very important role in employment generation in particular regions. The consumers who are engaged in street food, restaurants, food kiosks, and specialty

restaurants grow when the tourists enter a particular region. The local food dishes also become popular and consumer visit for enjoying certain special deishes of a particular region.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

• To identify the popularity of Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district
• To identify the choice of consumer (preference) among various cuisines available in Darbhanga district

4. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

• H_{01} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender.
  H_{11} – There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender.
• H_{02} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age.
  H_{12} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age.
• H_{03} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status.
  H_{13} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status.

5. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify the popularity of Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district and identify the choice of consumer (preference) among various cuisines available in Darbhanga district. T-test and ANOVA has been applied for testing of Hypothesis. As a result of the hypothesis testing, it was found that no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender and age group, though there is a difference based on their employment status. A sample of 175 consumers have been considered in this study. The area of study is Darbhanga district.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Demographic Profile of the Consumers

(a) Gender of the Consumers

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	125	71.4	71.4	71.4
	Female	50	28.6	28.6	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates the consumer who have participated in the study based on their gender. Majority consumer are Males i.e. 71.4% and remaining 28.6% are females. The view about popularity of Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district is the main focus in this study and this forms the base. The males and females have a different view towards food culture and hence both males as well as females were considered for understanding about their preference towards Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district.

(b) Age of the Consumers

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 25 years	105	60.0	60.0	60.0
	26 - 40 years	53	30.3	30.3	90.3
	41 - 55 years	12	6.9	6.9	97.1
	Above 55 years	5	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

The majority of consumer in the study are in the age group of 18 – 25 years i.e. 60%, followed by 26 – 40 years i.e. 30.3%, then 41 – 55 years i.e. 6.9% and remaining 2.9% are above 55 years. The tastes and preferences of consumers vary with the age, as the younger generation likes a few of the food items during breakfast, lunch, evening snacks, dinner and special delicacies. The preference of food varies among consumers of different ages, hence this study is not focused on a particular age group, rather it has considered consumer of all ages.

(c) Highest Level of Education of the Consumers

Highest level of education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	High School	28	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Graduate	69	39.4	39.4	55.4
	Professional	33	18.9	18.9	74.3
	Post Graduate	45	25.7	25.7	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Majority consumer in the study have completed their graduation i.e. 39.4%, followed by Post Graduate i.e. 25.7%, then Professional i.e. 18.9% and remaining have completed their high school i.e. 16%. With the increase in the education of consumer, they come to know more about the process, ingredients and other details about the food items. This makes them easy to differentiate between the food items and with knowledge at times, consumer do not only focus on the taste but also refer to the other details about the dishes which come under Mithila cuisine.

(d) Employment Status of the Consumers

Employment status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Employed Full time	148	84.6	84.6	84.6
	Employed Part time	7	4.0	4.0	88.6
	Student	11	6.3	6.3	94.9
	Homemaker	7	4.0	4.0	98.9
	Unemployed	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

The majority of consumers in the study are employed full-time i.e. 84.6%, followed by students i.e. 6.3%, employed part-time and homemakers are 4% each and unemployed are 1.1%. The awareness about the cuisines varies among consumers with different employment status. Those who are employed full-time would be able to have more information about the cuisines as they will be able to understand more about the options available in Darbhanga district. Those who are homemakers or students may not be exposed much towards the various cuisines and tastes of different food items.

(e) Current marital status of the consumers

Current marital status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	58	33.1	33.1	33.1
	Unmarried	117	66.9	66.9	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Majority consumer in the study is unmarried i.e. 66.9% and married are 33.1%. The exposure to various cuisines would also depend upon the marital status, as the spouse brings a different taste and also the choice of ingredients and other food items would also vary. The unmarried would be in the habit of following a particular trend and accordingly they follow a single cuisine or would come to know about more through their relatives or friends.

(f) Household Annual Income of the Consumers

Household annual income					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upton 2 Lacs	68	38.9	38.9	38.9
	2 - 4 Lacs	35	20.0	20.0	58.9
	4 - 6 Lacs	20	11.4	11.4	70.3
	Above 6 Lacs	52	29.7	29.7	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Majority consumer in the study are having household income up to 2 Lacs i.e. 38.9%, followed by above 6 Lacs i.e. 29.7%, 2 – 4 Lacs i.e. 20% and remaining 11.4% are having their income between 4 – 6 Lacs. The ingredients and choice of consumer could vary based on their annual income. Some food items are costly and could not be affordable by everyone.

(g) Frequency of Trying Mithila Cuisine during a Year

Frequency of trying Mithila cuisine during a year		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Often	63	36.0	36.0	36.0
	Often	24	13.7	13.7	49.7
	Sometimes	53	30.3	30.3	80.0
	Rarely	9	5.1	5.1	85.1
	Very rarely	12	6.9	6.9	92.0
	Never	14	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Majority consumer in the study have tried Mithila cuisine and have indicated their response towards trying of the said cuisine as very often i.e. 36%, sometimes i.e. 30.3%, followed by often i.e. 13.7%, then never i.e. 8%, very rarely i.e. 6.9% and remaining 5.1% have indicated that they rarely try Mithila cuisine. The consumer considered in the study have tried Mithila cuisine with a different frequency. It depends upon the liking of taste while selecting the cuisines. There are many other cuisines which are also available and this makes it easy to taste different cuisines at the same time and it is based on the likes and dislikes of consumer while they are choosing the food items which are a part of the Mithila cuisine.

(h) Like most about the culinary heritage of Darbhanga

Like most about the culinary heritage of Darbhanga		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hand-picked vegetables	26	14.9	14.9	14.9
	Freshly crushed spices	12	6.9	6.9	21.7
	Staple food like wheat and rice, barley, maize, pulses	24	13.7	13.7	35.4
	Dairy products	15	8.6	8.6	44.0
	Non-veg preparations like Fish, crab, mutton etc.	36	20.6	20.6	64.6
	Sweet dishes like Gur Kheer, Makhana ki kheer, Regula etc	62	35.4	35.4	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Based on the culinary heritage of Darbhanga, the consumer considered in the study like the Sweet dishes like Gur Kheer, Makhana ki kheer, Rasgulla etc (35.4%) which are a part of the Mithila cuisine, followed by Non-veg preparations like Fish, crab, mutton etc. (20.6%), Hand-picked vegetables (14.9%), Staple food like wheat and rice, barley, maize, pulses (13.7%), dairy products (8.6%) and remaining 6.9% like Freshly crushed spices. This indicates that the consumers of Darbhanga are fond of sweet dishes and also prefer to eat the non-veg preparation, hand-picked vegetables and staple food etc. Lesser consumers prefer Dairy products and freshly crushed spices.

(i) Popular Ingredients Used in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District

Descriptive Statistics	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Vegetables	175	1	4	1.71	.829
Fruits	175	1	5	2.03	.861
Dairy products	175	1	5	2.02	.956
Sattu based Dishes	175	1	4	1.95	.886
Fresh water fish	175	1	5	1.82	.981
Poultry	175	1	5	2.39	.982
Mutton	175	1	5	2.14	1.060
Mustard oil	175	1	4	1.75	.924
Ghee	175	1	5	1.75	.879
Valid N (listwise)	175				

The popular ingredients used in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district have been understood by the consumer who has participated in the study based on 5 point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Vegetables (1.71), Fruits (2.03), Diary products (2.02), Sattu based Dishes (1.95), Fresh water fish (1.82), Poultry (2.39), Mutton (2.14), Mustard oil (1.75) and Ghee (1.75). The standard deviation is Vegetables (0.829), Fruits (0.861), Dairy products (0.956), Sattu based Dishes (0.886), Fresh water fish (0.981), Poultry (0.982), Mutton (1.060), Mustard oil (0.924) and Ghee (0.879). The highest mean is of Poultry i.e. 2.39 and lowest mean is of Vegetables i.e. 1.71. Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Vegetables, which means the consumer of the study have mentioned that vegetables are the most important ingredient of Mithila cuisine.

6.2 Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District

(a) Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District – Breakfast

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Paddy Products like rice, chura and puffed rice	175	1	4	1.57	.848
Chura -Dahi	175	1	5	1.51	.779
Parantha -Bhujia ex-aloo, parwal,kela,bhindi	175	1	5	1.66	.814
Mango shake	175	1	5	2.05	.972
Roti with different variety of vegetables	175	1	5	1.62	.762
Poori-aloo dum	175	1	5	1.93	.888
Chini wali roti	175	1	5	2.13	1.006
Chura Aam	175	1	5	1.75	.872
Valid N (listwise)	175				

Popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district – Breakfast have been evaluated and the response has been considered on the basis of 5-point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Paddy Products like rice, chura and puffed rice (1.57), Chura –Dahi (1.51), Parantha -Bhujia ex-aloo,parwal,kela,bhindi (1.66), Mango shake (2.05), Roti with different variety of vegetables (1.62), Poori-aloo dum (1.93), Chini wali roti (2.13) and Chura Aam (1.75). The standard deviation indicates the variation in the response and the standard deviation of Paddy Products like rice, chura and puffed rice (0.848), Chura –Dahi (0.779), Parantha -Bhujia ex-aloo,parwal,kela,bhindi (0.814), Mango shake (0.972), Roti with different variety of vegetables (0.762), Poori-aloo dum (0.888), Chini wali roti (1.006) and Chura Aam (0.872). The lowest mean is of Chura –Dahi and the highest mean is of Chini wali roti. Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Chura –Dahi, which means the consumer of the study have mentioned that Chura –Dahi is the most popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district as a breakfast and the least popular among different dishes is Chini wali roti.

(b) Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District – Lunch

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dal (lentil)	175	1	5	1.59	.858
Bhaat (rice)	175	1	4	1.51	.765
Roti (breads)	175	1	5	1.85	.947
Tarkari (vegetable preparation)	175	1	4	1.49	.718
Bhunjia (dry vegetable preparation)	175	1	4	1.61	.787
Chokha (mashed vegetable)	175	1	4	1.69	.793
Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter)	175	1	5	1.74	.876
Chutney	175	1	5	1.79	.819
Achar (pickles)	175	1	4	1.74	.758
Papad	175	1	4	1.81	.819
Meat (mutton)	175	1	5	1.91	.984
Machli (fish)	175	1	5	1.85	.953
Murga (chicken)	175	1	5	2.21	1.070
Kakor (Crab)	175	1	5	2.50	1.154
Doka (black snail meat)	175	1	5	2.50	1.188
Anda (eggs)	175	1	5	2.32	1.099
Dahi-Chinni	175	1	5	1.65	.837
Valid N (listwise)	175				

Popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district – Lunch have been evaluated and the response has been considered on the basis of 5-point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Dal (lentil) is 1.59; Bhaat (rice) – 1.51; Roti (breads) – 1.85; Tarkari (vegetable preparation) – 1.49; Bhunjia (dry vegetable preparation) – 1.61; Chokha (mashed vegetable) – 1.69; Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter) – 1.74; Chutney – 1.79; Achar (pickles) – 1.74; Papad – 1.81; Meat (mutton) – 1.91; Machli (fish) – 1.85; Murga (chicken) – 2.21; Kakor (Crab) – 2.50; Doka (black snail meat) – 2.50; Anda (eggs) – 2.32 and Dahi-Chinni – 1.65. The standard deviation indicates the variation in the response and the standard deviation of Dal (lentil) is 0.858; Bhaat (rice) – 0.765; Roti (breads) – 0.947; Tarkari (vegetable preparation) – 0.718; Bhunjia (dry vegetable preparation) – 0.787; Chokha (mashed vegetable) – 0.793; Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter) – 0.876; Chutney – 0.819; Achar (pickles) – 0.758; Papad – 0.819; Meat (mutton) – 0.984; Machli (fish) – 0.953; Murga (chicken) – 1.070; Kakor (Crab) – 1.154; Doka (black snail meat) – 1.188; Anda (eggs) – 1.099 and Dahi-Chinni – 0.837. The lowest mean is Tarkari (vegetable preparation) and the highest mean is of Kakor (Crab) and Doka (black snail meat). Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Tarkari (vegetable preparation), which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Tarkari (vegetable preparation) as a part of Mithila cuisine.

(c) Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District – Evening Snacks

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Chura ka bhunja	175	1	5	1.63	.820
Makai ke lawa (popcorn)	175	1	5	2.06	.920
Chana ka bhunja	175	1	4	1.89	.827
Mungphalli dana,	175	1	5	2.10	.897
Masaledar murhi	175	1	5	1.89	.894
Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter)	175	1	5	2.00	.935
Aloo chops	175	1	5	1.73	.866
Vegetable cutlets,	175	1	5	2.23	.931
Singharas,	175	1	4	1.71	.851
Singhara chaat	175	1	4	1.97	.867
Ghoogni chura and	175	1	4	1.74	.857
Kachri-Moorhi	175	1	5	1.66	.894
Chura -Matar	175	1	4	1.93	.824
Other snacks	175	1	5	2.22	1.007
Valid N (listwise)	175				

Popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district – Evening snacks have been evaluated and the response has been considered on the basis of 5-point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Chura ka bhunja is 1.63, Makai ke lawa (popcorn) – 2.06, Chana ka bhunja (1.89), Mungphalli dana (2.10), Masaledar murhi (1.89), Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter) – 2, Aloo chops (1.73), Vegetable cutlets (2.23), Singharas (1.71), Singhara chaat (1.97), Ghoogni chura (1.74), Kachri-Moorhi (1.66), Chura –Matar (1.93) and Other snacks (2.22). The standard deviation indicates the variation in the response and the standard deviation of Chura ka bhunja is 0.820, Makai ke lawa (popcorn) – 0.920, Chana ka bhunja (0.827), Mungphalli dana (0.897), Masaledar murhi (0.894), Tarua (Deep fried Vegetables in a batter) – 0.935, Aloo chops – 0.866, Vegetable cutlets – 0.931, Singharas – 0.851, Ghoogni chura (0.857), Kachri-Moorhi (0.894), Chura –Matar (0.824) and Other snacks (1.007). The lowest meaning is of Kachri-Moorhi and the highest mean is of Vegetable cutlets. Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Kachri-Moorhi, which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Kachri-Moorhi as a part of Mithila cuisine for evening snacks.

(d) Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District – Dinner

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Roti	175	1	4	1.45	.755
Variety of Tarkari	175	1	4	1.54	.763
Variety of Saag	175	1	4	1.91	.911
Variety of Chutney	175	1	5	1.99	1.053
Bhaat	175	1	5	2.13	1.128
Kheer	175	1	5	1.95	.946
Sevyian	175	1	5	2.11	.982
Vegetable cutlets,	175	1	5	2.28	1.076
Curd	175	1	5	1.90	.957
Butter milk (mattha)	175	1	5	2.31	1.077
Sweet dishes	175	1	5	1.94	.948
Doodh roti	175	1	5	1.81	.937
Valid N (listwise)	175				

Popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district – Dinner have been evaluated and the response has been considered on the basis of 5-point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Roti is 1.45; Variety of Tarkari (1.54); Variety of Saag (1.91); Variety of Chutney (1.99); Bhaat (2.13); Kheer (1.95); Sevyian (2.11); Vegetable cutlets (2.28); Curd (1.90); Butter milk (mattha) – 2.31; Sweet dishes (1.94) and Doodh roti (1.81). The standard deviation of Roti is 0.755, Variety of Tarkari (0.763), Variety of Saag (0.911), Variety of Chutney (1.053), Bhaat (1.128), Kheer (0.946), Sevyian (0.982), Vegetable cutlets (1.076), Curd (0.957), Butter milk (mattha) – 1.077, Sweet dishes (0.948) and Doodh roti (0.937). The lowest meaning is of Roti and the highest mean is of Butter milk (mattha). Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Roti, which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Roti as a part of Mithila cuisine.

(e) Popular Dishes in Mithila Cuisine in Darbhanga District – Special Delicacies

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pua	175	1	5	1.73	.960
Bagiya	175	1	4	1.92	.880
Khajja	175	1	4	1.90	.842
Kheer	175	1	4	1.70	.846
Sevian	175	1	5	1.93	.910
Chandrakala	175	1	5	2.03	.976
Rasgulla	175	1	4	1.69	.850
Kala jamun	175	1	4	1.76	.809
Chura lai	175	1	5	1.82	.865
Tilwa	175	1	5	1.78	.984
Bhuswa	175	1	5	2.03	1.044
Moongwa	175	1	5	2.12	1.131
Valid N (listwise)	175				

Popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district – Special delicacies have been evaluated and the response has been considered on the basis of 5-point likert scale i.e. very high, high, neutral, low and very low. Based on the response given by them, the mean for Pua is 1.73, Bagiya (1.92), Khajja (1.90), Kheer (1.70), Sevian (1.93), Chandrakala (2.03), Rasgulla (1.69), Kala jamun (1.76), Chura lai (1.82), Tilwa (1.78), Bhuswa (2.03) and Moongwa (2.12). The standard deviation indicates the variation in the response and the standard deviation of Pua id 0.960, Bagiya (0.880), Khajja (0.842), Kheer (0.846), Sevian (0.910), Chandrakala (0.976), Rasgulla (0.850), Kala jamun (0.809), Chura lai (0.865), Tilwa (0.984), Bhuswa (1.044) and Moongwa (1.131).
The lowest mean is of Rasgulla, and the highest mean is of Moogwa. Since the values to Very high is 1 and very low is 5, hence lower mean represents whose preference is towards the higher side, the lowest mean is of Rasgulla, which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Rasgulla as a part of Mithila cuisine.

(f) Famous Cuisine in Darbhanga

Famous cuisine in Darbhanga		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bhojpuri Cuisine	13	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Mithila Cuisine	147	84.0	84.0	91.4
	Magahi Cuisine	4	2.3	2.3	93.7
	Other Cuisines	11	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	175	100.0	100.0	

Based on the above table, the most famous cuisine in Darbhanga is Mithila cuisine since 84% of consumers prefer this cuisine, 7.4% prefer Bhojpuri cuisine, 6.3% prefer other cuisines and 2.3% prefer Magahi cuisine. Consumers in Darbhanga are fond of Mithila cuisine and they make a choice among the different options available for breakfast, lunch, evening snacks, dinner and special delicacies. There are certain similarities in the Mithila cuisine with North Indian and Bengali food, but still the way food ingredients are used in Mithila is quite unique and famous among consumer in Darbhanga.

6.3 Testing of Hypothesis
- H_{01} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender.
  H_{11} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender.

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Famous cuisine in Darbhanga	Male	125	2.07	.611	.055
	Female	50	2.08	.528	.075

The mean response based on the variety of cuisines available in Darbhanga and the preference among consumers who have been a part of the study has been considered. There are different cuisines available in Darbhanga such as Mithila, Bhojpuri, Magahi and other cuisines and the consumer has a different choice. In this hypothesis, the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender has been understood and since the groups are two i.e. male and female, t-test has been applied. The mean response of male is 2.07 and the females is 2.08, hence there is not much difference in the preference among males and females towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Famous cuisine in Darbhanga	Equal variances assumed	.777	.379	-.081	173	.935	-.008	.099	-.203	.187
	Equal variances not assumed			-.086	103.778	.931	-.008	.093	-.192	.176

Based on the above table, the significant value is above 0.05 (as per 5% level of significance), hence null hypothesis has been accepted i.e. H_{01} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender and the alternate hypothesis has been rejected i.e. H_{11} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their gender.

- H_{02} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age.
  H_{12} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age**.**

Descriptives

Famous cuisine in Darbhanga

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mini mum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
18 - 25 years	105	2.09	.709	.069	1.95	2.22	1	4
26 - 40 years	53	2.08	.385	.053	1.97	2.18	2	4
41 - 55 years	12	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00	2	2
Above 55 years	5	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00	2	2
Total	175	2.07	.587	.044	1.99	2.16	1	4

The mean response based on the variety of cuisines available in Darbhanga and the preference among consumers who have been a part of the study has been considered. There are different cuisines available in Darbhanga such as Mithila, Bhojpuri, Magahi and other cuisines and the consumer has a different choice. In this hypothesis, the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age has been understood and since the number of age groups are four, ANOVA has been applied. The mean response as given by the consumer of the age group 18 – 25 years is 2.09, that of 26 – 40 years is 2.08 and the mean of 41 – 55 years and above 55 years, the mean is 2.00.

ANOVA

Famous cuisine in Darbhanga

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.108	3	.036	.102	.959
Within Groups	59.927	171	.350		
Total	60.034	174			

Based on the above table, the significant value is above 0.05 (as per 5% level of significance), hence null hypothesis has been accepted i.e. H_{02} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age and the alternate hypothesis has been rejected i.e. H_{12} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their age.

- H_{03} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status.
  H_{13} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status.

Descriptives

Famous cuisine in Darbhanga

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Mini mum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Employed Full time	148	2.03	.552	.045	1.94		1	4
Employed Part time	7	2.29	.756	.286	1.59	2.98	2	4

Student	11	2.36	.809	.244	1.82	2.91	2	4
Homemaker	7	2.29	.756	.286	1.59	2.98	2	4
Unemployed	2	2.00	.000	.000	2.00	2.00	2	2
Total	175	2.07	.587	.044	1.99	2.16	1	4

The mean response based on the variety of cuisines available in Darbhanga and the preference among consumers who have been a part of the study has been considered. There are different cuisines available in Darbhanga such as Mithila, Bhojpuri, Magahi and other cuisines and the consumer has a different choice. In this hypothesis, the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status has been understood and since the number of age groups are five, ANOVA has been applied. The mean response among consumers of different employment status is between 2.00 to 2.36. There is a difference among the preference of consumers based on their employment status.

ANOVA					
Famous cuisine in Darbhanga					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.801	4	.450	1.314	.047
Within Groups	58.234	170	.343		
Total	60.034	174			

Based on the above table, the significant value is below 0.05 (as per 5% level of significance), hence null hypothesis has been rejected i.e. H_{03} - There is no significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status and the alternate hypothesis has been accepted i.e. H_{13} - There is a significant difference in the preference of consumer towards various cuisines available in Darbhanga district based on their employment status.

6. FINDINGS

- The males and females of Darbhanga district are having similar preference towards food culture.
- The preference of food is not much varied among consumers of different ages.
- With the increase in the education of consumers, they come to know more about the process, ingredients, and other details about the food items.
- Consumers who are employed full-time would be able to have more information about the cuisines as they will be able to understand more about the options available in Darbhanga district.
- The homemakers and students are not exposed much towards the various cuisines and tastes of different food items.
- The exposure towards various cuisines also depend upon marital status, as the spouse brings a different taste and also the choice of ingredients and other food items would also vary.
- The ingredients and choice of consumer could vary based on their annual income.
- Some food items are costly and are not affordable for everyone.
- The majority of consumer in the study have tried Mithila cuisine and have indicated their response towards trying of the said cuisine as very often.
- Consumers of Darbhanga are fond of sweet dishes and also prefer to eat the non-veg preparation, hand-picked vegetables and staple food.
- A few consumers prefer dairy products and freshly crushed spices.
- Vegetables are the most important ingredient of Mithila cuisine.
- Chura –Dahi is the most popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district as a breakfast.
- Tarkari (vegetable preparation) is considered to be the main dish for lunch among consumers belonging to Darbhanga district.
- Consumers prefer Kachri-Moore as a part of Mithila cuisine for evening snacks.
- Rasgulla as a part of Mithila cuisine is being preferred by the selected consumer as a special delicacy.

7. CONCLUSION

The food being prepared as a part of Mithila cuisine is different in preparation and the taste is also quite different. In general discussion about Mithila cuisine, the plate includes fish, wheat, rice and a few sweet dishes, here the use of herbs, spices, and various natural edibles play a very important role and they seek attention of consumer. For many consumers, breakfast starts with Dahi Chura. Chura –Dahi is the most popular dishes in Mithila cuisine in Darbhanga district as a breakfast and the least popular among different dishes is Chini wali roti. The lowest mean is of Tarkari (vegetable preparation), which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Tarkari (vegetable preparation) as a part of Mithila cuisine. Kachri-Moorhi is most preferred among evening snacks as a part of Mithila cuisine. The lowest mean is of Roti among different food

items for dinner, which means that the consumer whose response has been considered prefer Roti as a part of Mithila cuisine. The lowest mean is of Rasgulla and the highest mean is of Moogwa, hence the most favorite delicacy is Rasgulla and least favorite is Moogwa.

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