

Changing Food Habits Among the Youth of Tharu Tribe

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Abstract

In the present paper, the food habits of the youth of Tharu tribe was studied. 100 school going and 100 non-school going (total of 200) Tharu youth were interviewed for this study. The Tharu people are traditionally non-vegetarians and maximum youth were also found to be non-vegetarians. They did not have inclination towards milk and milk-products. The Tharu youth which are studying in the cities or town enjoy fast foods in market. Chinese fast foods like chowmin, mommos, maggi, spring rolls were popular in young Tharus. Majority of the young Tharus were found to be ignoring their traditional food habits and accepting fast foods rapidly. The inclination towards fast food was higher in school going young Tharus as compared to non-school going Tharus.

Keywords: Tharu, Tribe, Traditional Food, Fast food.

Introduction

The Tharu tribe are indigenous communities of the Himalayan Terai region and they are famous for their eco-friendly culture. Historically they were not tribal community but were migrated Rajputs (Upper caste Hindus). They have been converted into tribal community during the period of living in forests. The Tharus also claim that they have an amazing historical past in Indian Society. They relate themselves to the area of Rajasthan state of India but they slowly migrated to tarai region of Indo-Nepal border. They are mostly non-vegetarian and consume liquor which is home-made. Liquor is their main drink and rice is the staple food. Besides rice they use fish, pulses, and meat of hunted animals in their food. They rear pig for meat and hen for eggs. They have fixed time for their foods. They have a breakfast known as kaleba (which is taken in early hours of the day), lunch is known as Minzhni and the dinner is known as Beri.

Objective

The main objective of this paper was

“To study the popularity and intake of traditional foods and fast foods by the young Tharus.”

Methodology

Study frame

Young Tharus studying in ‘Rajkiya Inter College’ Paliya, and youth of Tharu tribe engaged in unorganised sector of Paliya block of Lakhimpur Kheri, U.P (INDIA).

Sample Size

100 school going and 100 non-school going Tharu youths were purposively selected for the study. The age group of sample was between 16-20 years.

Tools

An interview schedule was used to record their food practices.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was used.

Analysis of Data

The collected data was tabulated and analysed in accordance with statistical method.

Limitations of the study

1. The sample size was too small in terms of number as well as the age bracket.
2. The study did not investigate the impact of changing food habit on their health.

Results and Discussion

Table- 1
Distribution of Youth by Food Habits

Category	School going youth		Non-school going youth		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Non-vegetarian	86	86.00	91	91.0	177	88.5
Vegetarian	14	14.00	9	9.0	23	11.5
Total	100	100.00	100	100	200	100

Table-1 the above table shows that maximum Tharu youth (88.5%) are Non-vegetarian as their ancestors. This food habit (Non-vegetarian) was

found in almost equal percentage amongst school going and non-school going youth (86.0% and 91.0%) respectively.

Table-2
Frequency of Eating Non-Vegetarian Food

Schedule	School going youth		Non-school going youth		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Almost Daily (4-6 times per week)	--	--	--	--	--	--
2 or 3 times in a week	42	42.0	51	51.0	93	46.5
Once in a week	49	49.0	45	45.0	94	47.0
Occasionally (once in 20 to 25 days)	9	9.0	4	4.0	13	6.5
Total	100	100	100	100	200	100

Table-2 Shows that the frequency of non-vegetarian food was found higher (51%) in non-school going young Tharus. Non-school going youth were more engaged in fishing and hunting compared to school going Tharus. Frequency of non-veg in school going young Tharus was either occasionally (9.0%) or

once in a week 49.0%. However, none of the Tharu youth was consuming non-veg food almost daily. Overall 47% young Tharus consumed non veg food once a week and little less i.e. 46.5% consumed non veg food 2-3 times in a week.

Table-3
Choice for Traditional Foods and Fast-Foods Among Tharus

Choice of food	School going youth		Non-school going youth		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Inclination for traditional food	22	22.0	71	71.0	93	46.0
Inclination for fast-food	78	78.0	29	29.0	107	53.0
Total	100	100	100	100	200	100.00

Table-2 the above table shows that inclination for traditional food was higher (71%) in non-school going young Tharus. School going youth showed more inclination (78%) towards fast foods.

Overall, maximum of 53% Tharu youth showed their interest towards fast food. The percentage of young Tharus 46% who preferred traditional food, related it to their better health.

Table-4
Frequency of Eating Habits of fast-food

Schedule	School going		Non-school going		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Among Daily (4-6 time per week)	8	8.0		-	8	4.0
2 to 3 times in a week	58	58.0	19	19.0	77	38.5
Once in a week	21	21.0	38	38.0	59	29.5
Occasionally (once in 20 to 25 days)	13	13.0	43	43.0	56	28.0
Total	100	100	100	100	200	100

Table-4 Showed as for the frequency of fast food was concerned (38.5%). Young Tharu consumes fast food two or three times in a week. A very little

percentage (4.0%) and that too all school going were found to be consuming fast food on almost daily basis.

Table-5
Frequency of Using Milk & Milk Products

Schedule	School going		Non - school going		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Almost Daily (4-6 times per week)	39	39.0	4	4.00	43	21.5
2 or 3 times in a week	41	41.0	16	16.0	57	28.5
Once in a week	13	13.0	25	25.0	38	19.0
Occasionally (once in 20 to 25 days)	7	7.0	55	55.0	62	31.0
Total	100	100	100	100	200	100

Table-5 shows that the young Tharus did not like milk and milk-products. This fact was supported by the highest percentage i.e. 31% consumed milk and milk product occasionally. Milk and its products were traditionally also not popular in the Tharu communities. Amongst the school going and non-school going youth, frequency of milk and milk product consumption was found higher in school going youth. School going youth of Tharus have developed a habit of taking tea in breakfast which originally did not exist in traditional food of Tharus. Overall 28.5% young Tharus consumed milk & milk product 2-3times in a week.

Conclusion

On the basis of description and analysis, it was concluded that maximum Tharu youth were non vegetarians and they did not showed inclination towards milk and milk-products. Maximum youth liked fast-foods. It seems that The Tharu youth that is studying in cities and towns like to eat fast foods. Chinese fast foods such as Chowmin, Mommos, Maggi, spring roll and other fast foods that are popular among them. However due to their economic problems, they do not eat fast food daily,

but maximum youth like it and want to eat everyday if possible. They think that, use of fast food is a symbol of modernity. They are ignoring their traditional food culture and blindly following the food habits prevalent in modern society. Effects of other cultures and education were the main reasons of changing food habits of young Tharus.

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