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THE FORGOTTEN ANCIENT INDIAN FOODS: NEED OF THE HOUR

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Abstract: The paper explains the adverse effects of contemporary food habits on global health, exemplifying India's transition towards lavish and modern diets. The paper discusses how the shift influenced by societal trends and colonial approach, has led to widespread obesity and diabetes-related issues, among the youth. It highlights the significance of traditional knowledge; the piece advocates for a return to ancestral dietary practices, emphasizing the health benefits of incorporating millets like Bajra, Jowar, and Ragi into daily meals. It draws knowledge from traditional Indian cultural heritage and underscores the distinction between Satvica, Rajasika, and Tamasika foods, linking them to mental and physical well-being. Additionally, it delves into Indian archaeological findings revealing the consumption of highly nutritious multigrain laddoos by the Harappans, suggesting a historical precedent for nutrient-rich dietary choices. The paper hopes for a shift away from high-calorie junk foods towards a diverse range of millet-based recipes for better health, drawing on the wisdom of ancient Indian dietary traditions to combat prevalent lifestyle diseases and promote self-reliance. Overall, it emphasizes the critical role of adopting Satvik foods in maintaining good health and vitality while advocating for a return to traditional dietary wisdom to create a healthier, disease-free society.

KEY WORDS: diet, diabetes, traditional Indian food, forgotten food.

I. INTRODUCTION:

In the name of modernity, trend or claustrophobic tendencies, contemporary society is being adopted to the ultra-lavish or modern food habituation rather than the ancestors proposed or prescribed one that we have forgotten today. Nowadays we are facing many consequences due to the modernization in food habits around the world. Almost all countries around the world are in trouble with obesity or its resultant diseases. Hyperglycaemia is one wicked effect that can be seen even in the teens and youth of India nowadays.

II. RECENT STUDIES ON DIABETES

According to a recent study, India has become a “Diabetes Capital” of the globe, as its earlier phase was sensed as “diseases of affluence” seeking with the linkage of Indian urban scenario with westernized behaviour. The negligent colonial rule about famines lead to the thinning of the human bodies with the fall of growth leading to the descendant’s truncal obesity triggered by sedentary life and hyper glycaemic foods. It

may take generation to improve back with the metabolic strengths and capacities. The research work highlights the diabetic risks of South Asian genetics.ⁱ The study at Brown University and Harbin Medical University says that, the rise of present-day diabetes in China too is due to the famines happened to their previous generations.ⁱⁱ

Today millets are the real need of hour and they are the best superfoods and healthier than white rice or wheat. The consumption of nutrient foods like millets like Bajra, Jowar and Ragi in form of Roti, Dosa or in any other form can greatly lower the risks of heart ailments, loosens body weight and controls blood sugar levels. According to Dr. Anuja Agarwala a former senior dietitian at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) says that, apart as a phenomenal diet, millets food is also eco-friendly for the environment in producing more oxygen.ⁱⁱⁱ The lifestyle diseases are widely increasing day by day which needs nutritional supplements like consumption of mineral rich barley, that can reduce many health issues like heavy weight, blood pressure, blood glucose, cholesterol, and colonic cancer etc.^{iv}

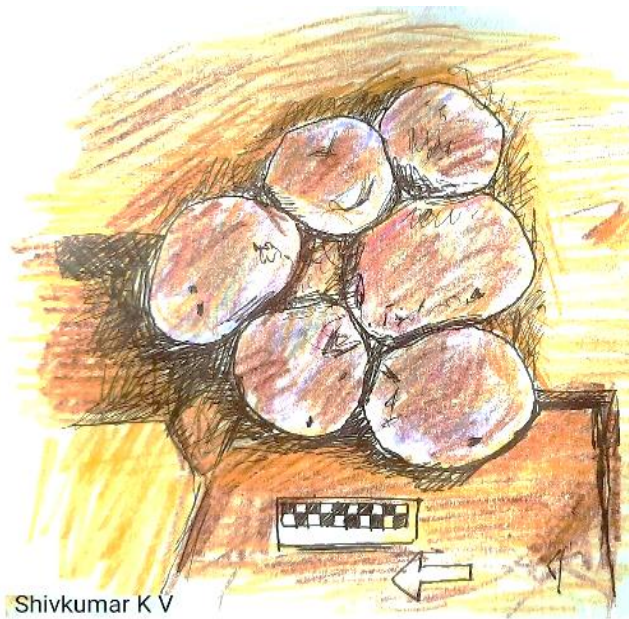
III. REFERENCES TO ANCIENT INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM ABOUT HEALTH

Since from times immemorial Indian based knowledge system passed its conventional knowledge through oral and scriptural notes to its coming generations. The knowledge system graced the communities in India with the information like *Pathyam* (limitation in taking food) and *Apathyam* (harmful habits of diet health conditions) in certain conditions of body, climate, and other aspects of life. Ancient societies were well understood about the Climatic changes and maintaining their health with the conditions of Agni both inside the body and outside, the former is the Agni that digests the food and the lateral one i.e., the Sun. According to Ayurveda the body works according to the climatic system that can be controlled smoothly with the foods supposed to be taken like buttermilk in summer.^v

There were various kinds of food grains and preparation methods in making food with in the Rigvedic Indian subcontinent. These conventional foods are accredited as anti-inflammatory, antioxidants, fibrous, probiotic, and healing in nature. The spiritual text Bhagavad-Gita enlightens that there are three types of foods that were classified as *Satvic* for goodness; *Rajasika* for passion and *Tamasika* for ignorance. The Satvica foods like whole grains, milk-products, fruits, and vegetables give immunity in the human body, purity of body, mind and soul and gives vital energy. Highly salted, bitter, or sour food creates mental illness and distress called *Rajasika*, whereas ignorance, laziness and depression caused by decomposed foods, meat, and unsafe food falls into *Tamasika*.^{vi}

According to Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP) published journal says that, 4000-year-old Harappans are fond of consuming highly proteinic Multi grain laddoos. They have excavated a Harrapan archaeological site earlier known as Bijnor in the Western part of Rajasthan. The scientific study states that the handmade laddoos were large and these Laddoos date back to 2600 BCE and are made-up of barley, Wheat, chickpeas, and some oilseeds.^{vii}

IV. A drawing of excavated Harrapan multigrain laddoos



V. Conclusion:

Today children are prone to high calorie junk foods like pizzas, salted nuts, chips, carbonated drinks and some instant foods that may cause problems tomorrow. Beside fruits, white rice, and wheat-based foods there are number of attractive and creative possibilities in making the millet foods made for the entire family in form of powders, upma, rotis, dosa, cakes, laddoos, soups or in boiled form with add-on garnishes. It is time to change the world order, going back to the ancient roots of knowledge system with Satvik foods to keep India diseases free and self-stronger keeping diseases away and becoming self-evident.

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