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THE IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION ON TRIBAL FOOD SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT:

This study explores how modernization has transformed the traditional food systems of tribal communities. It analyses the shift in dietary habits, agricultural practices, and cultural food values due to modern influences.

The research emphasizes the need to preserve indigenous food knowledge while adapting to modern lifestyle changes.

Keywords: Modernization, tribal communities, traditional food systems, cultural change, dietary habits.

INTRODUCTION

Modernization has brought tremendous changes in every aspect of human life, including food systems. Tribal communities, known for their close connection with nature, have unique food habits that are deeply rooted in their culture and environment. Their diets traditionally consist of locally available grains, roots, forest produce, and organic sources, ensuring a balance between nature and nutrition. However, with the spread of modernization, tribal food systems have started to change. The introduction of market-based foods, processed items, and modern agricultural practices has altered their dietary patterns.

While modernization offers convenience and accessibility, it also poses challenges such as loss of traditional knowledge, decline in nutritional quality, and dependence on external food sources. Tribal communities possess rich food traditions that reflect their deep relationship with forests, land, and climate. Each tribe has its own food culture based on locally available resources and seasonal variations. However, with

increasing contact with urban areas, migration, education, and media influence, their food patterns are rapidly changing. Younger generations often prefer modern, processed foods over traditional meals, which impacts both their health and cultural identity.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the demographic factors of the respondents.
2. To study the impact of modernization on traditional tribal food habits.
3. To analyze the changes in agricultural and food production methods among tribal communities.
4. To assess the nutritional and health consequences of modern food adoption.
5. To identify the factors influencing the shift from traditional to modern diets.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on understanding how modernization affects tribal food systems, covering aspects such as food production,

preparation, and consumption. It highlights the social, cultural, and economic factors influencing dietary transitions and aims to create awareness about the need to protect indigenous food knowledge.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Modernization has changed the food habits of tribal communities, leading to a gradual loss of traditional dietary practices. The easy availability of processed and packaged foods has replaced nutrient-rich local foods. As a result, many tribal groups face nutritional imbalances and lifestyle-related diseases. Understanding these impacts is crucial to preserve traditional knowledge, promote sustainable food practices, and maintain the cultural identity of tribal societies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research in common refers to a search for knowledge. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The research design indicates the steps that have been taken in the sequence they occurred.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the arrangement of conditions analyses of data in a systematic manner that aims to combine relevance to research purpose. The research study applied here is convenience sampling.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling technique used in this study is 'convenience sampling'. Respondents From Coimbatore were selected on the basis of convenience and comfort of the researcher to The information for this study.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size is certified to its nature of data collection. Data collection is based on primary data. 52 respondents are selected from coimbatore district for the purpose of the Study. Direct questionnaires are used to survey the respondents.

SOURCES OF DATA

The data is collected in two ways;

Primary Data: Information collected through direct interviews, surveys, and interactions with tribal households and local community leaders regarding their changing food habits.

Secondary Data: Data obtained from research articles, government reports, books, journals, and previous studies related to tribal food systems and modernization impacts.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The tools used under for the study are

- Simple percentage method
- Chi square

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE METHOD

A percentage analysis is used to interpret the data by the researcher for analysis and Interpretation. Through the use of percentages, the data are reduced in the standard form with Base equal to 100 which fact facilitates relative comparisons. In the percentage analysis, Percentage is calculated by multiplying the number of respondents into hundred and it is Divided by the same size.

Formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents} \times 100}{\text{TOTAL RESPONDENTS}}$$

CHI – SQUARE:

The chi-squared test is done to check if there is any difference between the observed value and expected value.

Formula:

$$\text{Chi square formula } \chi^2 = \sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E$$

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is confined to selected tribal communities only.
2. Time and resource constraints may limit extensive data collection.
3. Responses from tribal participants may be influenced by language barriers.
4. The findings may not be generalized to all tribal groups in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Kumar (2018) in his study highlighted how modernization has replaced traditional food habits with fast food among tribal youth.
2. Patel (2020) emphasized the nutritional decline due to the reduced use of wild fruits and roots.
3. FAO Report (2021) discussed how indigenous food systems contribute to food security and biodiversity conservation.
4. Sharma (2022) observed that modernization has both improved accessibility and threatened cultural food identity in tribal regions.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The present study explores the deep connection between modernization and the traditional food systems of tribal communities. It examines the transformation of food culture from locally sourced organic diets to modern, commercially available foods. The study aims to identify the causes and consequences of this shift and assess its impact on health and sustainability.



Moreover, it provides insight into the social and cultural dimensions of food transition among tribal people. The findings aim to support policy makers, researchers, and NGOs in designing strategies that preserve traditional food systems while embracing the benefits of modernization. The study also seeks to bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern development. It emphasizes that modernization should not completely replace indigenous food practices but rather integrate scientific methods with traditional knowledge to ensure sustainability. By examining the lifestyle, agriculture, and dietary changes of tribal communities, this study highlights the importance of cultural preservation in achieving nutritional security.

DATA AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE :1. SHOWS THE AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERSENTA GE
below 20 years	3	6%
21-35 years	17	34%
36-50 years	22	44%
Above 50 years	8	16%
Total	50	100

INTERPRETATION:

From the above table, it is observed that the majority of the respondents (44%) belong to the age group of 36–50 years, followed by 34% of respondents who are between 21–35 years of age. About 16% of the respondents are above 50 years, while only 6% are below 20 years. This indicates that most of the respondents are middle-aged individuals, suggesting that this age group is more actively involved or represented in the study.

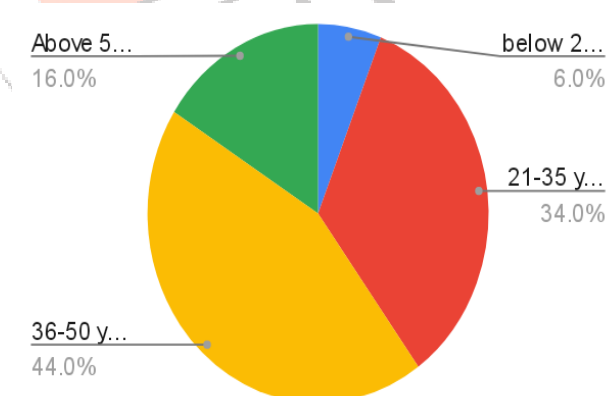
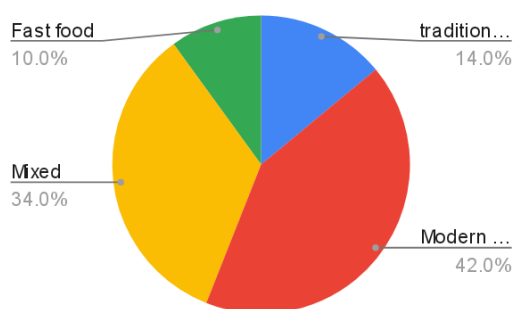


TABLE 2: SHOWS THE FOOD CHOICE OF THE RESPONDENTS

FOOD TYPE	NO OF RESPONDENT	PERSENT AGE
traditional tribal food	7	14%
Modern pack aged food	21	42%
Mixed	17	34%
Fast food	5	10%
Tota	50	100

INTERPRETATION:

From the above table, it is observed that the majority of the respondents (42%) prefer modern packaged food, followed by 34% who consume a mix of both traditional and modern food types. About 14% of the respondents prefer traditional tribal food, while 10% opt for fast food. This indicates that most respondents are inclined towards modern packaged food, reflecting a shift in eating habits toward convenience and modern dietary preferences.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST****Table 1.1: Observed Frequencies (O) for Age Group and Food Type**

Age Group	Traditional tribal food	Modern packaged food	Mixed (both traditional and modern)	Fast food	Total
Below 20 years	1	1	0	0	2
21–35 years	2	7	8	1	18
36–50 years	1	8	13	2	24
Above 50 years	0	1	3	2	6
Total	4	17	25	6	52

INTERPRETATION:

The table shows the distribution of food consumption across age groups for the first 50 respondents. The largest group is 36–50 years (48%), and the most consumed food type overall is Mixed (both traditional and modern) (48%).

Chi-Square Analysis Formula: $\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no relationship between age group and the type of food consumed most often.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a relationship between age group and the type of food consumed most often.

O	E (Expected Value)	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
1	0.16	4.41
1	0.68	0.1506
0	0.96	0.96
0	0.2	0.2
2	1.44	0.2178
7	6.12	0.1265
8	8.64	0.0474
1	1.8	0.3556
1	1.92	0.4408
8	8.16	0.0031
13	11.52	0.1901
2	2.4	0.0667
0	0.48	0.48
1	2.04	0.5302
3	2.88	0.005
2	0.6	3.2667
Total (N=50)	Total (N=50)	{11.4505}

RESULT:

Significance Level : 0.05

Degree of Freedom (df):

$$df = (\text{Rows} - 1) \times (\text{Columns} - 1)$$

$$df = (4 - 1) \times (4 - 1) = 3 \times 3 = \mathbf{9}$$

Critical Chi-Square Table Value (significance level=0.05, df=9): {16.919}

The Calculated Chi-Square value (11.4505) is lesser than the Critical Chi-Square Table value (16.919).

Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0).

Conclusion: Based on the Chi-Square test, there is no statistically significant relationship between the age group of the respondent and the type of food they consume most often at the 0.05 significance level. The differences observed are likely due to chance.

FINDINGS

1. Majority of the respondents are Female (58.0%)
2. Majority of the respondents belong to the 36–50 years age group (44.0%)
3. Majority of the respondents are College level and above (46.0%)
4. Majority of the respondents earn ₹10,001–₹20,000 per month (40.0%)
5. Majority of the respondents belong to an Extended family (38.0%)
6. Majority of the respondents consume Mixed (modern) food (42.%)
7. Majority of the respondents stated Time-saving as the main reason for shifting to modern foods (30.0%)
8. Majority of the respondents consume Traditional tribal dishes occasionally (46.0%)
9. Majority of the respondents purchase their food items from Government ration shops (38.0%)
10. Majority of the respondents noticed a Preference for ready-made meals (32.0%)
11. Majority of the respondents said Nutrition influences their food choices the most (28.0%)
12. Majority of the respondents feel the Nutritional value of modern and traditional foods is about the same (40.0%)
13. Majority of the respondents stated that Education has a slight influence on changing food preferences (42.0%)
14. Majority of the respondents use an Electric/induction stove for cooking (36.0%)
15. Majority of the respondents said there is No change in the availability of traditional ingredients (44.0%)

16. Majority of the respondents said Food expenditure has slightly increased due to modernization (38.0%)

17. Majority of the respondents consider Traditional tribal foods as good but outdated (28.0%)

18. Majority of the respondents said Young people ignore tribal food traditions (46.0%)

19. Majority of the respondents suggested Preserving traditional tribal foods through government support programs (34.0%)

20. Majority of the respondents feel that Modernization has a negative impact on the food system (40.0%)

CONCLUSION

Modernization has influenced tribal food systems both positively and negatively. While it has introduced new technologies and improved access to food, it has also disrupted traditional practices and reduced nutritional diversity. Preserving indigenous food knowledge and promoting sustainable local food systems are essential for maintaining the health, identity, and heritage of tribal communities.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Promote awareness programs on the nutritional value of traditional foods.
2. Encourage cultivation of indigenous crops through government support.
3. Document and preserve tribal food knowledge through research and education.
4. Develop policies to integrate tribal food systems into mainstream nutrition programs.

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