
To Study the Relationship between Indian Food Habits and Health for Healthy India

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Abstract : *This paper presents the result of relation between Indian food habits and health. The significant idea is how Indian food habits can be interlinked for good health which can create healthy India. It emphasises the beneficiary factors present in Indian food habits to maintain the human health. Here the food habits associated with Indian culture and social customs are discussed and various factors raised by these analysis are presented. This paper describes relation of Indian food habits and health and their reflection in society.*

Key Words : *Indian food , Indian food habits, Health, Understanding its correlation, Advantages, Importance to good health, changes required ,Development of healthy India.*

INTRODUCTION

The building blocks of our culture are food and food habits .It relates to not only body but mind, society and spiritual harmony. Nutrition and good food habits are the key to continuous health and the impact of food on health is a continuous process. Food habits greatly affects our body .Food and food habits play significant role in health positively or negatively.

It is believed that society or social group who eats well and has nourishing food will be sound and healthy. Food habits is the frame work of what we eat? How we eat? When we eat? Where we eat? How much we eat?

As a human being we should focus on nutrition and its constituents. Students form our major part of population of India. As a hospitality educator we should introduce them to good Indian food habits and their benefits.

BODY

Our great Indian work Bhagwat Geeta says

‘FROM FOOD DO ALL CREATURES COME INTO BEING’

It is said as **‘YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT’**

Because of the physical and culture diversity, there are not one but many distinctive Indian cuisine

based on regional, religious and social differences. In light of this diversity also lies common thread that relates to each one in society. The religious, moral and philosophical significance of food is an important theme of the paper. Feast and fast for health of mind and body are universal in India. Another important theme is the unbreakable connection between diet and health. Diet was and is the prime treatment in Ayurveda. Modern scientific research is now confirming the efficiency of many Ayurveda treatments and Indian food habits

There is great relation found in Indian food habits and health. Existence of this relation is discussed here with the help of four major links i.e.

- Indian food
- Indian food habits
- Eating etiquettes
- Food restrictions

One of the key concept of Indian food is that it is divided into 3 basic qualities:

SATTVIC (pure or dispassionate) it includes savoury, nutritive and agreeable food conducive to serenity and spirituality e.g milk, honey, vegetables, fruits.

TAMSIC (lethargic, dull, ignorant) it includes cold stale, highly spiced rendering food e.g pork, beef, strong brews.

RAJASIK (passionate) food which is bitter, dry, pungent. eg wine , some meat preparations etc.According to Indian philosophy one should have balanced diet considering its qualities. To have a balanced diet it is necessary to have a diet according to season, one’s physical work and body type. Everyday Indian meal (Thali) of vegetables, chapatti,dal rice is considered as highly nutritious and most balanced form of diet. Ideally it should have six basic taste such as sweet, bitter, salty, hot, tangy, and pungent.

Indian common grains are rice, wheat, jowar, bajara, ragi along with many legumes .The availability of abundant vegetables like pumpkin, many beans, brinjals, and green leafy vegetables

adds nutrition to diet. Various fruits like grapes, mangoes, bananas, many dry fruits add many health benefits. Use of oil and oil seeds like castor, sesame, peanut, mustard add good fat to diet. Use of Indian goose berry {amla}, lemon is good source of vitamin c and increases immunity. Use of milk and milk products in Indian diet is highly recognised. Common milk product ghee is considered virtual panacea. It rejuvenates, promotes growth, and prolongs life. There is major use of non-alcoholic beverages in the form of buttermilk, lassi, sherbets, jaljeera and mainly water. Because of religious restrictions meat consumption is comparatively less. Use of many spices like turmeric, asafetida and cumin in everyday cooking has many medicinal properties.

Food habits – There are certain generic rules which formed basic Indian food habits. Some of them are valid today as they were centuries ago

- There are 2 main meals lunch and dinner along with 2 small meals with enough gap to digest previous food.
- Do not over eat
- Do not eat hurriedly. Eat sitting down and with focus on food.
- Feed all five senses. Eat with your hands to enjoy its texture.
- Eat freshly made food.
- Food was never to be eaten standing up or moving as it hampers digestion.

Food Restrictions-

- Milk and fruits not be eaten together.
- Use of Fish and milk combined was restricted.
- Restriction of cooked food and meat on some days.
- Stale food was restricted.
- Water must never be shipped directly from tumbler since saliva is polluting.
- All these practices had its own health benefits.

Changing Times-

Post independence, India is changing drastically with aspect to new trends in Indian food.

Even though agriculture has continued to grow, India ranks near the bottom of the Global Hunger Index developed by the international food policy institute. Notable underweight children are also increasing. People are malnourished not because of insufficient food production but because of waste and poorly managed Storage and distribution.

In 1991 people faced with a balanced payment crisis, the Government decided to liberalize and globalize the country's economy. Foreign capital, exports and industrial production grew. But since then urbanisation has increased. Young Indian consumers with steady income, jobs in call centres, IT companies, international banks, their affluence led to changes in Indian eating pattern.

One of the changes is increase in the consumption of meat and alcohol. Earlier where eating out was discouraged, it is increasing day by day. Because of many reasons like both the parents working, nuclear society and for entertainment eating out has increased. Food safety has become a major problem as many vendors have no access to clean water supply or disposal facilities and often handle food with dirty hands. Increase in fast food chains like KFC, McDonalds, Dominoes has led to increase in obesity and life style diseases. Another post liberation change is proliferation of supermarkets that sell many prepared and packed foods. More women enter workforce and convenience food is necessity. All these affects Indian people and their health.

Conclusion-

During exploration following points were observed-

- Growing prosperity among some segment of society, the availability of fast food, increased in consumption of meat, alcohol, white rice, sugar, fats and decline of physical activity leads to explosion of socialised life style diseases like high blood pressure, type to diabetes obesity etc. More you go away from your roots with aspect to food habits, your health deteriorates.
- Deterioration of health in Indian people has led to new concern with healthy cooking and eating. The link between diet & health always been central to the Indian ethos which is diluting.
- Taking in consideration all these factors Celebrity chefs, authors of cook books, Hospitality educators and T.V. food host have begun to advocate low fat, low carbohydrate and healthy food diet. There has been resurgence of interest in traditional Ayurveda food habits and siddha cures.
- Government has and should promote various programmes to promote production of organic crops, fruits and vegetables.
- Researchers around the world not just in India, are now investigating the health giving properties of traditional Indian remedies with

the help of food. A search of U.S. National Institutes of health's PubMed database in January 2013 found 2143 articles on studies or trials that involved using Indian remedies based on food and Ayurveda to cure diverse medical problems as diabetes, cancer, and tuberculosis.

- Hence if we have to have healthy mind and body we should adhere to rules which are valid today as they were centuries ago related to our food habits to create healthy India. It is observed that there is a strong link between health and Indian food habits as people are going away from their roots diseases are increasing.
- Food habits and health are two pillars of society. It is understood that one influences other and they act as building blocks to society .How society relates and overviews Food habits creates health of its citizen .Food and food habits dictates kind of level of health people will obtain. In my opinion I would also like to mention good Indian food habits promotes health of people and will lead us to healthy India.
- It also discusses as an important factors how different food habits in Indian culture are tools to creating healthy India.

I would like to suggest as a hospitality personnel it is our responsibility to identify and encourage good

Indian food and food habits which are core of Indian ethos. There is need to identify that through communication, exploration and experimentation. Such journey will be successful if we keep open and positive mind about role and impact of Indian food habits on our health .For this first step should be spreading awareness of different practices found in Indian culture related to food and food habits.

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