

Influence of Tribal Culture on Telangana Cuisine

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Abstract:- Every cuisine has its own roots which go deep down in the history and is majorly based on locally available ingredients. In India we have some food which come from the tribal community and is famous among the citizens because of its distinct flavors and cooking methods. In the newly formed state of Telangana (2-June-2014) which was earlier a part of Andhra Pradesh. Telangana has many things in common with Andhra Pradesh but however Telangana has its culinary journey as the Telangana cuisine is more on the mellower side as compared to Andhra Cuisine or say it is less spicy because in Telangana they don't use much of red Guntur chili. The state comprises of people from tribes like Banjara, Koya, Gond, Yerukala, and Pradhan. These tribal communities play a major role in the food that is consumed in Telangana. Telangana cuisine is famous for its roti made from millets and spicy & tangy curries which comes from the cuisine of tribes like Banjara, Koya and Gond as they had a staple diet of rotis made from millets and spicy & tangy curry. Further the Koya tribe contribute to preserved food and pickles and Banjara tribe to the fried delicacies. The Yerukala tribe consumed more of rice and hence the consumption of rice as a part of meal comes from this tribe. This paper will throw light on the influence of Tribal culture on the Telangana Cuisine.

Keywords:- Cuisine, Culture, Tribe, Communities, Culinary Journey

I. INTRODUCTION

Telangana is the newly build state in 2014 which earlier was a part of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh cuisine is divided into 3 major cuisine i.e. Coastal Andhra cuisine, Rayalseema cuisine, Hyderabad cuisine and Telangana cuisine. The tribal communities which resided in this region and few are still a resident here are Banjara, Koya, Gond and Yerukala. These tribes are not only known for their culture but also for their food. The influence of tribal culture is still seen in the cuisine and its firmly believed that few techniques of cooking which were used by them can never be replaced by any modern technologies however some alternatives can always be used to match up to the taste. (Govt., 2017)

II. OBJECTIVE

- To understand the cooking methods and ingredients used by tribal community of Telangana.
- To study the influence of tribal culture on Telangana cuisine.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Telangana Cuisine

The region of Telangana lies on Deccan plateau and its topography dictates more bread based dishes due to its proximity with Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka. Jowar and bajra feature prominently in the cuisine. The predominant occupation of the people in Telangana is agriculture. The region is mostly dry lands with hot summers and scanty rainfall. The soil is rocky and gravel, the common crops are jowar, bajra and ragi along with pulses as well as vegetables. The centuries old cooking practices and especially the use of mud pots are still in vogue but are getting replaced with steel and other vessels. Locally grown ingredients are widely used.

Due to the ancient history and the several rulers who ruled this region the Food is a heavy mix of different regions and yet has the distinction of being unique in its own way. The ancient Hindu rulers have given their flavor to the basic food while the various Muslim rulers have brought their recipes off course only to be modified according to the locally available ingredients, hence we can say that Telangana cuisine is a confluence of Cuisines. There are influences of the neighboring States like Karnataka and Maharashtra. One should however not forget that the Capital city's Cuisine that is Hyderabad cuisine is omnipresent all through the region without having to say.

The people of Telangana region are simple eaters. The food comprises of more of millets than cereals as they are grown in .Cereals and pulses are considered as lavish and rich food. The food is generally dry in form and spicy. It is believed that the spicy food compliments the hot weather conditions only to keep their bodies cool! The region has seen many parts which have been added as well as those which it lost. Due to the reason that some parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka were actually a part of this region before the states reconstitution there is a vivid influence of these states in some parts of the present Telangana region. Though the region was ruled for a long time by the Muslim rulers there is no significant culinary imprint left in the region other than the city of Hyderabad. The region as mentioned is very dry and the temperature soar as high as 45 in the summer months, as such the land under cultivation is very less and drought conditions are a common phenomenon.

B. Tribal Culture in and around Telangana

Different tribes settled in this part of the country centuries ago and they still continue to reside here. Their living standards might have changed but what remains unchanged is their culture and food habits. The tribes settled in Telangana had bread based diets and loads of

chilly as it is difficult to grow vegetables or any other crops in such a dry region. The breads they consumed were generally made of jowar, bajra etc. They use easily available materials and made their own vessels which were generally made of clay or mud. The tribals had meat more often than vegetables and they had their own intoxicating drink called Mohua (Kallu). The tribal communities are not only good with their food and culture but they knew how to make the best out of what they have. Banjara, Gond, Koya, Pradhans and Yerukala are tribal communities which reside in Telangana region.

IV. FOOD HABITS OF DIFFERENT TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

A. Banjara Tribe:

➤ Introduction:

They are also known as Lamabada tribe. They are spread across India in different states however as per the census report they dominate the tribal population of Telangana which was last recorded as 20,46,117 in 2011. The Banjaras are excellent crafts person and possess great skills in dance forms, arts, rangoli, embroidery, and tattoo. The women from banjara tribe possess excellent skills in lepo embroidery which involve stitching of mirrors.

➤ Geographical Location:

They are found in the mid of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

➤ Historical Background:

Lambadi or Goar-boali, also called Banjari, is a language spoken by the once nomadic Banjara people across India and it belongs to Indo-Aryan group of languages. The language does not have a native script. The language is known by various other names, including Lamani, Lamadi, and Banjara, Banjari, Bangala, Banjori, Banjuri, Brinjari, and variants, Tanda. Regional dialects are divided between the Banjara of Maharashtra (written in Devanagari), Karnataka (written in the Kannada script) and Telangana (written in the Telugu script). Speakers are bilingual in either Telugu, Kannada, or Marathi.

➤ Staple diet:

Jawar roti, Mamsam Saloi, Daliya, Bakra boti and other rotis prepared from various cereals and spicy nonveg gravies prepared from offals.

➤ Festivals:

Teej is one of the most important festivals they celebrate in the month of August (Shravana). During this period the unmarried Banjara Girls pray for a good groom and they soak seeds in bamboo bowls followed by watering them 3 times a day for 9 days at a stretch, growth of thick and dense sprouts is said to be good omen.

➤ Commonly used ingredients:

The use spices used by Banjaras are just like any other spice that we use today however they preferred spices which are available in abundance and close to them,

namely cinnamon, cloves, pepper, and cardamom. The use of cereals, wheat and meat is seen in abundance as Telangana being a dry land it is difficult to grow rice and vegetables in most of the regions. (zone, n.d.)

V. CONCLUSION

The cuisine of Telangana is greatly influenced by the tribal communities which was residing here previously and they still continue to reside among us but they have adopted to the modern world.

The Telangana cuisine that we know today is very versatile as the cooking methods used by the tribal communities were simple and it can be replicated in the modern world.

The ingredients used by the tribal communities are available in abundance and even today it is available because of which we are able to prepare the dishes or at least have a touch of them in our cuisine today.

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