

Research Article

Adoption of traditional knowledge about processed food by Banjara community

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SUMMARY : The investigation was carried out to identify the processed foods prepared by the Banjara women. The adoption practices for preparation of these foods were also documented. The study was carried out in Pusad Panchayat Samiti of Yavatmal district of Maharashtra State. For the study 4 villages were selected viz., Gunj, Gajipur, Wadsad and Savangi. Many Banjara tandas are situated in these villages and they are scattered. Totally 120 Banjara women veterans (old age women) were selected for the study. After identification of the practices the inventory was made to document the traditional food practices. Kdav, Sukaldi, Tuvali, Churmo, Goal Batti, Malli Batti, Amboli, Malap, Nareja, Kharya, Khichdo, Movdalapsi, Malpoli and Rotiya were the traditional processed foods identified. In the second instance, the traditional food processing practices of the Banjara community were identified and documented.

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KEY WORDS :

Traditional knowledge,
Processed food,
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

India has traditional and cultural background over thousand years. There is a rich store of indigenous knowledge in food preparation with its processing of scientific basis. The value of such indigenous food preparation and its processing knowledge can not be ignored as it facilitates sustainable nutritional development.

The indigenous food preparation, its processing knowledge and modern scientific knowledge put together may be useful for effective adoption of food preparation and processing practices by the people.

The Banjara are the largest and historic formed group in India and also known as Lambadi or Lambani. Banjara people are the people who speak Lambadi or lambani. Rural women as a part of society are mostly engaged in laborious work involved in farming in addition to their household duties (Shirohi, 1985). Their life is routine of

labour and drudgery in households as well as in farm work. Banjara women are no exception to this. Banjara women play a significant and crucial role in agricultural development and allied fields including crop production, livestock production, horticulture, post harvest operations, agro and forestry, fisheries etc.

One of the most fascinating tribe of our country is the Banjara, whose colorful dresses and ornaments make them out to be distinct cultural group. According to Gazetteer "Banjara" are known as "Labana" from their farmer occupation of carrying salt. Their community organization is called Tanda. These Tandas were used to carry grains for large armies, especially in food processing practices. These are prepared and served during occasions like wedding, festivals etc. Banjara community has its own specialty in food practices, which are prepared and served during occasions like wedding festivals etc. Traditional skills of food preparation of Banjara community are getting disappeared

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due to change in socio-cultural environment and advanced technology, so there is a need to preserve knowledge. Keeping these points in view, the investigation was carried out with the following specific objectives:

- To study personal, socio-economic and psychological characteristics of the Banjara women.
- To identify and document the indigenous knowledge about food processing practices prevalent among Banjara community.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The descriptive and diagnostic design of social research has been used in the present study. The present study was carried out in Pusad Taluka of Yavatmal district in Maharashtra. Pusad Taluka consists of 189, villages under this four villages were purposively selected namely Gunj, Gajipur, Wadsad, Savangi. Totally 120 Banjara women having age above 60 years were selected for the study. The purpose behind this was these women have abundant knowledge about the traditional food processing methods of Banjara community. These women were contacted and interviewed individually as well as their group discussions were also held to identify the knowledge about traditional processed food practices and the inventory or documentation was made. The women were asked about the name of the recipe, ingredients used to prepare these recipes and the season or the particular festival for which they prepare that particular recipe. The investigation was carried out by the personal interview method with the help of structured interview schedule. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results of the present study as well as relevant discussions have been presented under following sub heads:

General profile of the respondents:

In set of independent variables the socio-economic and psychological characteristics were selected and are presented in the Table 1.

Age:

From Table 1, it has been observed that 51.00 per cent of the respondents were in middle age category *i.e.* between 36-50 years of age level, followed by 43.00 per cent of them in old age categories *i.e.* above 50 years and about one fifth (06.00 %) in young age category. Therefore, it could be concluded majority of the Banjara women were middle aged.

The above findings are in accordance with the observation of Dhanorkar (1998), Masram (1999), Anonymous (2002) and Ingle and Rathod (2002).

Education:

A perusal of data furnished in Table 1 also indicates that majority of respondents (68.33%) were illiterate. The percentage of middle school level respondents was found to

Table 1 : General profile of the respondents (n=120)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	
1.	Age			
	Young	08	06.00	
	Middle	61	51.00	
	Old	51	43.00	
	2.	Education		
		Illiterate	82	68.33
Primary School		16	13.55	
Secondary School		18	15.00	
High School		02	1.00	
College		02	1.00	
3.	Occupation			
	Farming	27	22.50	
	Labour	45	37.50	
	Household	40	33.40	
	Job	08	6.60	
	4.	Annual income		
		Up to 10,000 (BPL)	80	66.66
		10,000 to 20,000	30	25.00
20,001 to 30,000		08	06.66	
Above 40,000		02	01.68	
5.	Social participation			
	Low			
	Medium	00	00.00	
	High	82	06.80	
		38	03.20	
	6.	Extension contact		
		Low	30	25.00
Medium		60	50.00	
	High	30	25.00	
	7.	Socio-economics status		
		Very low	39	32.00
Low		42	35.10	
Medium		29	24.70	
Medium -high		09	07.50	
High		01	00.80	
8.	Attitude towards			
	Un favourable	011	09.16	
	Favourable	100	83.90	
	Highly favourable	009	07.50	

be 15.00 per cent. It was also seen that only 13.55 per cent of them had education up to primary school level. It was interesting to note that 2.00 per cent of respondents were educated up to each high school level and college level. Therefore, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents were illiterate.

The finding of the present study corroborates with the finding of Dhanorkar (1998) and Masram (1999), who reported that majority of the Banjara women were illiterate.

Occupation

It is evident from the Table 1, that more than one third of respondents (37.50%) were having farming + labour as their occupation while one third (33.40%) of the respondents had household work as their occupation whereas over two fifth of the respondents (22.50%) had occupation as farming and only 6.60 per cent of the respondents had job work. Therefore, it can be said that due to lack of education and inadequate employment opportunities, Banjara women were mostly engaged in non-productive farming and labour work and remaining were engaged in household work.

The findings of the present study are in line with the findings of Trifle and Deshpande (1998), Dhanorkar (1998), Masram (1999) and Ingle and Rathod (2002) who have reported that most of the women practiced mixed occupation *viz.*, farming + labour + household + job for their livelihood.

Annual income:

As far as annual income of the selected respondents is concerned, it was noted that majority of the respondents (66.66 %) had income upto Rs. 10,000/- where as 25 per cent of them belonged to lower income group *i.e.* between Rs. 10,001. -20,000. The annual income was from all sources, while only 6.66 per cent of them could earn income between Rs. 20,001 to 30,000/-. The percentage of respondents earning annual income above Rs. 40,000/- was meagre (1.68 %). Therefore, it is concluded that majority of the Banjara women belonged to the lower income group *i.e.* Up to 10,000/- and thus, the economic level of the Banjara women was poor and were below poverty line.

The above findings are in conformity with observations of Kapgate and Ingle (1990) and Ingle and Rathod (2002). They reported in their study that the economic level of the Banjara women was poor and more than 75 per cent of respondents were below poverty line.

Social participation:

It can be seen from the Table 1 that overwhelming majority (06.80%) of the respondents had participation in social organization to a moderate extent. Remainders were spread over in the category *i.e.* high (3.20 %). Therefore, it

is inferred that majority of the respondents has moderate level of social participation.

The findings of the present study are in accordance with findings reported by Kapgate and Ingle (1990), Anonymous (2000) and Ingle and Rathod (2002) who concluded that social participation of most of the Banjara women who resided in the remote areas was very poor.

Extension contact:

It is observed that majority of the respondents (50.00 %) had medium level of extension contact while one fourth of them (25.00 %) had both, low and high level of extension contact. Therefore, it is concluded that majority of the respondents had moderate level of extension contact.

The findings of present study corroborate the findings reported by Kulkarni and Bhusare (1990) and Ingle and Rathod (2002) who reported that the respondents of their investigation had low level of extension contact with extension agents.

Socio-economic status:

It is also observed from Table 1 that over two third of respondents (32.00 %) had very low level of socio-economic status. Relatively a few respondents (24.70% and 7.50%) were found in medium and medium high level of socio-economic status, respectively. However, the percentage of respondents having high level of socio-economic status was found to be very negligible (0.80%).

Therefore, it is can be inferred that majority of respondents had very low to low level of socio-economic status.

The socio-economic status of Banjara women studied by Masram (1999) and Ingle and Rathod (2002) was in case of primitive Banjara community, that was low. Thus, the findings of this study lend support to the findings of the present study.

Attitude towards indigenous knowledge about food processing practices:

It was noted that more than three fourth of the respondents (83.9%) had favourable attitude towards indigenous knowledge. The percentage of respondents having unfavorable attitude towards indigenous knowledge was almost negligible (9.16%) whereas only 7.5 per cent of respondents were having highly favourable attitude towards indigenous knowledge. It is, therefore, inferred that majority of the selected respondents held favourable attitude towards indigenous knowledge.

The findings of the present study are in line with the findings of Ingle and Rathod (2002) and Tribhuvan (1997) who have reported that most of the Banjara Women had positive attitude towards indigenous knowledge.

Identification of traditional food processing practices of Banjara women:

The information with regards to the identification and documentation of the traditional processed food practices of Banjara women, have been presented in Table 2 revealed that in all 14 traditional vegetarian and non-vegetarian items have been identified which were found in vogue among the Banjara women in the study area and documented in the form of inventory.

From the Table 2 it can be stated that, *Kadav* recipe was prepared by using wheat flour mixed with jaggery. They used to consume this recipe during winter and rainy seasons. It may be due to the reason that in these seasons the high energy foods are normally consumed. By consuming wheat and jaggery it can be gained. The second recipe reported by the selected women was *Sukaldi*, which was a non-vegetarian recipe. Firstly the meat is dried. *Sukaldi* was prepared by mixing boiled water in dry meat. They told that this recipe is prepared in summer season. *Churmo* was another recipe, prepared by using wheat flour, jaggery and oil. The recipe was consumed during rainy season and on the occasion of Balaji festival. It also provides energy to the body. *Movda lapsi* was prepared by using the wheat flour, seed of movda and jaggery. In any season, this recipe can be consumed. It may be due to the reason that it was available in all seasons and it is very easy to prepare. *Goal Batti*, which was prepared by using sorghum flour and jaggery with some quantity of oil, also can be consumed in all seasons. *Malli Batti*, which was non-vegetarian recipe and it was prepared by using Malli flour and water. They replied that some times sorghum flour or wheat flour was not available in all the seasons

and then they were preparing *Malli Batti*. *Malap* is very traditional recipe in Banjara community. It was a non-vegetarian recipe and was prepared by using the goat head. The goat head was firstly boiled in water. This head was preserved. The preserved head then cooked on the occasions like, Pola and Holi festivals and even on marriage functions. *Mal poli* was prepared by using the wheat flour and jaggery. They used to consume this recipe during the Balaji festival. It may be due to the reason that it was prepared only for the worship of Balaji and after they distributed this recipe to all people living on tanda. *Kharya*, was a non-vegetarian recipe prepared from the dried legs of goat. *Kharya* was prepared by mixing boiled water to dried leg of goat. The respondents replied that this recipe was prepared in all seasons, especially on the occasion of Dushra festival. They had strong belief that it makes legs strong. *Nareja* is very famous non-vegetarian recipe in Banjara community. This was prepared by using intestine and meat of the goat. Mostly



Fig. 1: Preserved leg of goat for preparation of *Kharya* recipe

Table 2: Identification and documentation of traditional food processing practices

Sr. No.	Traditional practices	Ingredients	Season
1.	Kdav	Wheat flour + jaggery + water	Winter, rainy
2.	Sukaldi	Dry meat + boiled water	Summer
3.	Churmo	Wheat flour + jaggery + oil	Rainy, Balaji Festival
4.	Movda lapsi	Wheat flour + seed of movda+ jaggery	Any season
5.	Goal batti	Sorghum flour + jaggery + oil	Any season
6.	Malli Batti	Malli flour + water	Summer
7.	Malap	Goat head + boiled water	Holi, Pola.
8.	Malpoli	Wheat flour + jaggery + oil	Balaji festival
9.	Kharya	Leg of goat + water + make dry	Dushra festival
10.	Nareja	Goat intestine + water + turmeric	Holi
11.	Bandri (Fish)	Dried small fish + boiled water	Summer, rainy
12.	Khichdo	Bajra Jawar + jaggery + water	Rainy, any season
13.	Rotiya	Wheat flour+ sugar + ghee	Balaji festival

this recipe was used for worship of the god (Tuljabhavani). It provides energy to the body. *Bandri* is like the fish. The recipe is prepared by boiling the dried fish. It is used in any summer and rainy seasons. They stored it for future use. *Khichdo* was prepared by using the bajra flour and jaggery. It is prepared for a change in regular food, also to bring taste in routine diet. It was prepared in all seasons. *Rotiya* is the recipe which was prepared for Balaji festival. It was prepared by using the wheat flour with sugar. It also provide energy to the body.

Conclusion:

Majority of the Banjara women were middle aged and illiterate. Due to lack of education and inadequate employment opportunities, Banjara women were mostly engaged in non-productive farming and labour work and remaining were engaged in household work. Majority of the Banjara women belonged to the lower income group. Social participation of most of the Banjara women who resided in the remote areas was very poor. Therefore, it can be inferred that majority of respondents had very low to low level of socio-economic status and had low level of extension contacts with extension agents. The selected respondents held favourable attitude towards traditional knowledge about processed food. All the women selected from Pused Taluka were adopting the most of traditional food recipes of Banjara community. The food recipes of Banjara community which were widely used were Malap, Nareja, Churmo, Sukaldi, Malpoli, Kadav and Kharya. These recipes were prepared by Banjara women because of its easy availability from the surroundings and these practices were mainly traditional

and it had base of experience.

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