

# Modernization Transforming Traditional Food and Eating Habits

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**Abstract**—Modernization has had a significant and multifaceted impact on traditional foods, leading to changes in their production, distribution, marketing, preparation, and consumption patterns. The introduction of new technologies, globalization, and changing lifestyles has all contributed to the transformation of traditional food practices. The innovation of traditional foods has become a new paradigm in the food industry, driven by advancements in packaging technology, microbiology, biotechnology, and computational methods. The need for high-quality food products and food security has also influenced the transformation of traditional food practices. The transition from traditional to modern food systems has disrupted traditional eating patterns, with an increase in processed foods, eating-out culture, and a decline in the nutritive value of diets. These changes have been particularly evident in societies experiencing urbanization and industrialization. The modernization of food habits has a profound impact on traditional food, altering the way people interact with their culinary heritage and affecting cultural, health, and environmental aspects. As people prioritize convenience, traditional food preparation methods, which often involve slow cooking, fermentation, or specialized techniques, are in decline. Ready-to-eat meals and fast food are favored over traditional dishes, leading to a potential loss of cultural knowledge about traditional recipes and cooking methods. Modernization has transformed food habits, bringing both benefits and challenges to traditional food cultures. While it has increased access to diverse cuisines and convenience, it has also led to the marginalization, alteration, and, in some cases, loss of traditional food practices. Balancing modernization with the preservation of culinary heritage is essential to maintaining cultural identity, health, and sustainability in the evolving food landscape.

**Index Terms**—Modernization, Traditional Food, Food habits, culinary heritage, Preservation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Until few decades back, the people in India led a simple life. They grew and eat fresh cooked home food. With industrialization many people have migrated to cities. This has disrupted their traditional eating pattern. The increasing number of working women in the country coupled with the rise in production and availability of processed foods and changing lifestyle has brought a paradigm shift in the eating pattern of the contemporary Indian society. Eating-out culture has increased. The working women are not able to spend much time in the kitchen. There has been a decline in the nutritive value and increased food-safety hazards with the changing dietary practices.

Traditional food habits have undergone significant changes due to urbanization, technological advancements, and shifting lifestyles. These changes often involve increased consumption of processed foods, high sugar and fat intake, and reduced consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables. Such habits have been linked to increased health issues like obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and other chronic conditions. Understanding and addressing the impact of these modern food habits on health is crucial for promoting healthier lifestyles and preventing the associated health risks.

The impact of modernization on traditional food can be significant and multifaceted. Modernization often increases the availability of diverse ingredients from around the world, which can both enrich traditional recipes and lead to the adoption of new cooking techniques and flavor. As lifestyles change, there might be a shift towards convenience foods or those that require less preparation time, which can sometimes replace traditional dishes that are more time-consuming to prepare. Modernization can bring

awareness to health and nutrition, leading to modifications in traditional recipes to make them healthier or to adapt them to dietary restrictions or preferences. If there is a balance between preserving cultural culinary heritage and embracing culinary fusion, modernization can lead to the fusion of traditional dishes with contemporary ingredients and cooking methods. There's also a risk of traditional foods being standardized or adapted to suit global tastes, potentially diluting their authenticity or uniqueness. Traditional foods may become commercialized for tourism purposes, altering recipes or presentations to appeal to a broader audience. These factors together influence how traditional foods evolve in a modernized world, impacting their availability, preparation methods, nutritional profiles, and cultural significance.

Modernization has transformed food habits, bringing both benefits and challenges to traditional food cultures. While it has increased access to diverse cuisines and convenience, it has also led to the marginalization, alteration, and, in some cases, loss of traditional food practices. Balancing modernization with the preservation of culinary heritage is essential to maintaining cultural identity, health, and sustainability in the evolving food landscape.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Traditional food can indeed be defined as sustainable food. Traditional foods hold significant value in terms of cultural heritage, local production, freshness, and menu diversity, making them a sustainable choice for consumers. Sustainable traditional agricultural products are perceived positively by consumers, signaling environment-friendly practices and food safety, with a higher willingness to pay compared to "modern" organic products. Additionally, the protection and promotion of traditional agro-food products, such as those with geographical indications, contribute to sustainable development by supporting local producers and meeting consumer demand for authentic and natural products. Therefore, traditional foods not only embody cultural significance but also offer sustainable alternatives that align with environmental and social considerations, making them a valuable component of sustainable food systems. Changing

food trends, like increased processed food consumption and eating-out culture, have led to decreased nutritive value, higher food-safety hazards, and disrupted traditional eating patterns in modern Indian society. Currently we are in the midst of a major change in what people eat and in the way they eat (Monteiro et al. 2013., Neumark-Sztainer et al. 2013., Popkin et al. 2012., Story et al. 2008). Some of these changes have been described as a nutrition transition, which refers to a shift from diets high in complex carbohydrates and fiber towards more varied diets with a higher proportion of fats, saturated fats, and sugar (Drewnowski and Popkin 1997., Popkin and Gordon-Larsen 2004., Hawkes 2006., Popkin 2003., Popkin 2009). The changes partially result from the globalization and modernization of food and eating, for example, access to new technologies, modern supermarkets, and food marketing (Chopra et al. 2002., Kearney 2010). Also, urbanization has separated a large part of the world's population from the direct production of foods, which has produced changes in eating behavior (Hawkes 2017). Furthermore, these changes have been accompanied by a general increase in wealth and food supply (Gilland 2002) as well as by a decrease in food insecurity (Simon 2019). Food safety has improved (Almanza et al. 2017), costs for many foods have decreased (Christian and Rashad 2009), and a much wider variety of foods is available to people in almost all parts of the Earth (Drewnowski and Popkin 1997). Another advantage of the globalization and modernization of food and eating is that many of the distinctive, nutritious and delicious foods developed by different cuisines, at different localities in the world are now widely available. According to Medina et al. (2020) and Sogari et al. (2018), dietary habits are generally described as an act of conscious, repetitive habits that guide individuals in selecting and consuming specific foods and diets, influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors. These habits are deeply shaped by personal preferences and cultural norms, highlighting broader patterns within communities (Li et al. 2023). However, in the post-modern era, significant advancements in the food industry, coupled with a critical focus on subjective relativism, have led to increasing criticism of the classical concept of dietary habits. There is now a greater emphasis on the intricate causality between dietary habits and various

economic, social, technological, and traditional stressors, acknowledging how these factors influence each other and fluctuate over time (Mendonca 2023., Zucoloto 2011., Godos 2024). Additionally, traditional norms shape dietary patterns through diverse, natural ingredients that reflect the local availability and cultural heritage of a nation. Conversely, in modern norms, it is increasingly defined by the use of less natural ingredients that rely instead on high-tech machinery and artificial additives (Sproesser et al. 2022), leading to critical health issues. This shift from traditional to modern dietary practices represents a broader evolution in dietary habits globally (Popkin 2006), influenced by socioeconomic, technological, and cultural transformations. Traditional dietary practices characterized by the use of locally sourced ingredients and deeply embedded in cultural heritage, have been gradually altered by the rise of modern food production techniques. Modern dietary habits emphasize convenience, often relying on processed foods, artificial additives, and industrial-scale production. However, in response to increasing awareness of health and sustainability, a hybrid concept has emerged that blends element of both traditional and modern dietary practices (Mozaffarian 2018). This mixed concept seeks to preserve the nutritional and cultural values of traditional diets while incorporating modern techniques to enhance efficiency and availability (Headey 2013). As such, this evolving concept of dietary habits underscores the dynamic nature of food consumption patterns, reflecting the ongoing interaction between rapid globalization, technological innovations, consumer protection, and specific societal challenges (Hawkes 2017., Vanheuveren and Vanheuveren 2019). Nonetheless, this nuanced concept merit comprehensive examination, particularly in the context of developing nations where dietary habits are highly susceptible to the influence of these emerging factors.

### III. OBJECTIVE

- Investigate the extent to which traditional foods are being replaced or modified due to modernization and the reasons behind these changes.

- Explore the health outcomes associated with the shift in eating habits, including potential benefits and risks linked to modern diets versus traditional diets.
- Understand how modernization affects cultural perceptions of food, including attitudes toward traditional vs. modern cuisines.
- Examine how social media, globalization, and urbanization contribute to changing eating habits and preferences for traditional foods.
- Evaluate the role of food policies in shaping eating habits and supporting traditional food systems amid modernization.

The traditional food practices may be strong, evolving or are becoming more obscure as they are incorporated into a global fabric. There are gaps in the literature that necessitate more exportation of the impact of Modernization, environmental changes and health crisis on cultural and traditional food practices. This further raises questions about how the formative theories on food culture apply to modern and future food practices.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

For conceptualizations of traditional and modern eating a qualitative approach was chosen to meet the aims of the article. Specifically, facets were compiled from the previous literature and expert discussions. In an inclusive approach, everything that was mentioned to be part of traditional or modern eating was compiled as a facet. A single mention of a behavior as part of traditional or modern eating by one article or one expert was enough for it to be listed as a facet in the present work.

Factors Driving Modernization and Influencing Changing Eating Habits

*Social Media Trends and Influencers*

The media plays a significant role in shaping modern eating habits and has a profound impact on traditional food practices. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are filled with trending recipes and food challenges that may favor novelty over tradition. Viral food trends (e.g., avocado toast, smoothie bowls) quickly gain popularity and replace traditional meals in daily consumption. Food influencers, often followed by millions, can make or break food trends. They may favor aesthetic appeal over cultural

significance, promoting foods that align with globalized or modern preferences rather than local, traditional ones. The widespread availability of media content such as TV shows, movies, social media, and advertisements often promotes Western fast foods (burgers, pizzas, soft drinks) and globalized food trends. This leads to a shift away from local traditional foods, especially among younger generations who are more exposed to these media influences. These foods often lack the nutritional value of traditional meals.

#### *Shift Toward Processed and Convenience Foods*

Modern lifestyles, characterized by fast-paced work environments and time constraints, have led to a growing reliance on processed, packaged, and convenience foods. These products often replace traditional home-cooked meals that require more time and effort. As people prioritize convenience, traditional food preparation methods, which often involve slow cooking, fermentation, or specialized techniques, are in decline. Ready-to-eat meals and fast food are favored over traditional dishes, leading to a potential loss of cultural knowledge about traditional recipes and cooking methods.

#### *Urbanization and Industrialization*

The rise of urban centers and industrialized food systems has transformed eating patterns. More people now live in cities where access to fast food, chain restaurants, and imported ingredients is easier than sourcing local, fresh produce. Traditional foods, which are often tied to local, seasonal ingredients, can become harder to access in urban environments. This leads to a detachment from regional culinary traditions and a preference for more global, standardized food options, diminishing the importance of traditional, local cuisines.

#### *Westernization of Diets*

Globalization has introduced Western-style diets, characterized by high consumption of red meat, refined sugars, dairy, and processed snacks, to many parts of the world. These food habits are rapidly adopted in regions with previously distinct food cultures. As Western diets become more dominant, traditional diets that are often rich in whole grains, vegetables, and lean proteins are marginalized. This shift can lead to the decline of nutrient-rich traditional foods and contribute to the global rise in diet-related health issues like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

#### *Increased Consumption of Global Cuisines*

With globalization and exposure to new cultures, people are increasingly adopting foods and flavors from different parts of the world. Sushi, pizza, burgers, and other international dishes have become global staples. While this diversity can enrich food culture; it can also overshadow traditional local dishes. Younger generations may gravitate toward globally popular dishes, neglecting their culinary heritage. This leads to the erosion of traditional food practices, with older recipes being forgotten or modified to cater to broader tastes.

#### *Technological Advancements and Food Delivery*

Technology has revolutionized the way food is accessed, with online food delivery services making it easier than ever to order food at any time. This has encouraged more frequent eating out or ordering in, reducing the emphasis on cooking at home. Traditional foods, which often involve communal cooking and family gatherings, may become less common as individuals rely on delivery services. The shift away from family meals and home-cooked food can weaken the social and cultural bonds that are tied to traditional eating practices.

#### *Health and Nutrition Trends*

Modernization can bring awareness to health and nutrition, leading to modifications in traditional recipes to make them healthier or to adapt them to dietary restrictions or preferences. It has led to trends such as low-carb diets, keto, gluten-free, and veganism. People are increasingly looking for foods that meet specific dietary needs or are marketed as "healthy" or "organic.": Traditional foods, while often balanced and nutritious, may be overlooked or modified to fit modern dietary trends. For example, traditional grain-based dishes might be avoided by those following low-carb diets, or meat-based traditional foods might be altered to cater to vegan preferences. While some traditional foods can be adapted to modern health trends, others may be abandoned entirely.

#### *Commercialization and Tourism*

The commercialization of food through tourism has led to the packaging and marketing of traditional foods to appeal to a global audience. Street foods and local delicacies are often adapted or simplified to meet tourist preferences. While this can introduce traditional foods to new audiences; it can also lead to a loss of authenticity. Traditional recipes may be

altered for mass production, and the cultural context of food—such as specific cooking rituals or seasonal variations—may be lost in favor of commercialization.

#### *Loss of Cooking Skills*

As more people rely on convenience foods, takeout, and delivery, there is a decline in traditional cooking skills. Fewer people, especially younger generations, learn how to prepare traditional dishes from scratch. The decline in cooking skills directly affects the transmission of culinary heritage. Traditional food practices are often passed down through generations, and when these skills are no longer practiced, there is a risk that traditional recipes and cooking techniques may disappear entirely.

#### *Global Supply Chains and Ingredient Availability*

Modernization has led to global supply chains that make ingredients from all over the world accessible year-round, which has changed seasonal eating habits. Foods that were once considered seasonal or regional can now be consumed at any time. While this availability of ingredients allows for more variety in diets, it can also disrupt traditional food practices that are tied to local and seasonal produce. The festivals or cultural events that revolve around seasonal foods may lose their significance if those ingredients are available year-round.

#### *Environmental and Ethical Considerations*

Concerns about environmental sustainability and ethical eating have led to shifts in food habits, such as reducing meat consumption, choosing plant-based alternatives, or favoring locally sourced, organic foods. Traditional foods, which may include meat or animal-based products, could face challenges in the modern context of ethical eating. However, many traditional diets are inherently sustainable, relying on local ingredients and minimal processing, and could see a resurgence as people look for more eco-friendly food options.

These factors influence how traditional foods evolve in a modernized world, impacting their availability, preparation methods, nutritional profiles, and cultural significance.

### V. SUGGESTIONS

Media has a dual influence on traditional food and eating habits. While it contributes to the globalization and standardization of diets, it also has the potential

to raise awareness about the value of traditional foods. The challenge lies in balancing modern influences with the preservation of culinary heritage and cultural identity.

*Revival of Traditional Foods:* On a positive note, media can also play a role in the revival and celebration of traditional foods. Cooking shows, documentaries, and social media campaigns that highlight the cultural significance of traditional dishes can inspire younger generations to appreciate and preserve them.

*Food Education:* Some media outlets and food bloggers focus on educating the public about the health benefits of traditional diets. This has led to resurgence in interest in some traditional food practices as part of a healthier lifestyle.

As a primary objective, food producers, manufacturers and governments should not seek to actively diminish cultural borders and markets. Industry and governmental strategists should embrace and promote cultural food messages in any interventional strategies on household food security or marketing strategies and campaigns. The gathering of information from grass root cultural groups about traditional food practices should ground the development of new policies and products. Practical implications Understanding the complexities surrounding traditional cuisines and food ways gives insight into the future of traditional food cultures and how they change.

### VI. CONCLUSION

Modernization has created a shift in food habits that reflects the complexities of modern life. While it brings greater convenience, diversity, and food options, it also contributes to health challenges, the erosion of traditional culinary practices, and the rise of environmental concerns. Bringing both benefits and challenges to traditional food cultures, it has increased access to diverse cuisines and convenience; it has also led to the marginalization, alteration, and, in some cases, loss of traditional food practices. Balancing modernization with the preservation of culinary heritage is essential to maintaining cultural identity, health, and sustainability in the evolving food landscape.

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