

Culinary Heritage of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract—Himachal Pradesh, located in the Himalayan region of India, boasts a varied and rich food culture influenced by its natural setting, weather, agriculture, and cultural practices. This research examines the traditional dishes of Himachal Pradesh as a vital aspect of the state's cultural essence and nonphysical heritage. Himachal cuisine signifies a profound relationship with nature, the seasonal access to ingredients, and time-honored cooking methods that have been passed down through ages. The culinary practices in Himachal Pradesh differ across areas like Kangra, Chamba, Kullu, Mandi, and Lahaul-Spiti, yet they exhibit shared traits such as the utilization of locally cultivated grains (barley, buckwheat, maize), legumes, dairy items, and items sourced from forests. Owing to the chilly climate and mountainous landscape, meals tend to be nutritious, energy-dense, and uncomplicated, aimed at providing warmth and nourishment. Conventional cooking techniques, including slow cooking, boiling, and steaming, are commonly adopted, often utilizing clay or metal cookware. A unique aspect of Himachal food is its strong connection to festivals, rituals, and community gatherings. Dishes such as Dham (a celebratory meal offered during festivities), Madra, Chha Gosht, Siddu, Babru, and Aktori showcase the ceremonial and social significance of food in Himachal society. Temple fare and food served during religious occasions also play a crucial part in maintaining traditional recipes and culinary practices. The research also emphasizes how geographical remoteness has historically helped in conserving genuine food customs, while contemporary influences, tourism, and urban development are progressively altering eating habits. Despite these shifts, the traditional cuisine of Himachal Pradesh remains resilient through home cooking, local festivals, and cultural occasions. Nevertheless, there is an increasing demand for documentation, advocacy, and sustainable culinary tourism to protect this heritage for the next generations. Traditional Himachal food is not merely sustenance; it embodies history, the environment, beliefs, and communal life. Safeguarding this culinary legacy not only fortifies cultural identity but also creates

avenues for rural development, tourism enhancement, and global acknowledgment of the distinctive food traditions of Himachal Pradesh.

I. INTRODUCTION

Food serves as a potent representation of culture, geography, and history, with the traditional gastronomy of Himachal Pradesh mirroring the way of life and surroundings of its inhabitants. Positioned within the majestic Himalayas, Himachal Pradesh is famous for its towering snow-covered peaks, expansive valleys, flowing rivers, and secluded villages. These natural characteristics have greatly shaped the eating practices, culinary methods, and ingredients found within the area, creating a distinctive and eco-friendly food tradition. Himachal food culture is profoundly linked to the agricultural lifestyle prevalent in the state. The culinary landscape has developed around domestically cultivated grains such as barley, wheat, corn, and buckwheat, as well as pulses, dairy items, and seasonal produce. Given the chilly climate and the physically challenging way of life in mountainous regions, traditional meals are typically nourishing, rich in energy, and uncomplicated. The frequent incorporation of desi ghee, yogurt, lentils, and whole grains mirrors both dietary requirements and farming customs. Another significant feature of Himachal gastronomy is its deep ties to celebrations, ceremonies, and communal events. Food transcends mere sustenance; it plays a vital role in social and religious contexts.

Unique dishes are prepared for weddings, fairs, and temple festivities, with Dham recognized as one of the key ceremonial meals. These communal feasts, usually made by traditional cooks referred to as Boti, demonstrate the continuity of ancient recipes and

cooking methods passed down through generations. The regional variation further enriches the culinary landscape of Himachal Pradesh. Distinct districts like Kangra, Chamba, Kullu, Mandi, and Lahaul-Spiti each possess their own specialties shaped by local climate, cultural influences, and historical connections with neighboring regions such as Tibet and Punjab. For example, cuisines from Lahaul Spiti often feature barley-based foods and fermented dishes, whereas the lower Himalayan regions tend toward lentils and dairy-centric curries.

Nevertheless, with the influence of modernization, urban growth, and evolving lifestyles, traditional culinary practices are facing gradual decline. The younger population increasingly leans towards fast food and commercial diets, jeopardizing the continuity of indigenous recipes and culinary knowledge. This research seeks to document and explore the conventional cooking practices of Himachal Pradesh, grasp their cultural importance, and emphasize the necessity for conserving and promoting this invaluable heritage. Ultimately, the traditional cuisine of Himachal Pradesh encompasses more than just flavors; it embodies identity, environment, customs and communal existence. Grasping this culinary heritage offers perspective into the socio-cultural tapestry of the area and highlights the critical need for its protection.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Traditional Himachal food is a significant aspect of the cultural legacy of Himachal Pradesh, but it has not been adequately recorded or represented in scholarly work, tourism literature, or popular culinary conversations. Additionally, there is a scarcity of comprehensive research on how factors like geography, climate, farming, and cultural norms together influence Himachal cuisine. In the absence of sufficient documentation and understanding, this rich culinary tradition faces the danger of being diminished or entirely lost. Consequently, the research issue focuses on the importance of investigating, recording, and evaluating traditional Himachal cuisine as an essential aspect of cultural identity and enduring heritage.

2.1 Need for the Study

The exploration of the culinary traditions in Himachal Pradesh is vital for numerous reasons. To begin with, food plays a crucial role in the realm of intangible cultural heritage, and cataloging age-old recipes, ingredients, and cooking techniques aids in safeguarding cultural wisdom for the generations to come. With modernization shaping dietary patterns, it is essential to document genuine practices before they fade away. Additionally, gaining knowledge about traditional cuisines enhances the advancement of sustainable food practices. The culinary customs of Himachal Pradesh predominantly revolve around locally sourced, seasonal, and naturally occurring ingredients, illustrating eco-friendly and self-reliant lifestyles. Investigating these customs can offer valuable perspectives on sustainable eating and environmentally conscious living. Furthermore, this research is important for tourism and the development of rural areas. The field of culinary tourism is on the rise, and highlighting traditional Himachal cuisines could boost the cultural attractiveness of the area while providing financial benefits to local residents. Finally, scholarly investigation into regional Indian dishes is still scarce, and this research contributes significant insights to the disciplines of food studies, cultural studies, and hospitality management.

2.2 Scope of the Study

This research emphasizes the conventional food of Himachal Pradesh as a symbol of the state's rich cultural and culinary heritage. It investigates how food practices vary across various districts, focusing on commonly made dishes, traditional ingredients, and cooking methods. Additionally, the study looks into the cultural, religious, and social importance of food during festivals, rituals, and community events. It addresses elements such as agricultural impacts, climate variations, and geographical aspects that influence eating habits. Traditional meals like Dham, along with other ceremonial dishes, are underscored for their crucial role in maintaining culinary customs. Moreover, the research analyzes how modernization and tourism affect traditional culinary practices. It is important to note that the focus remains solely on traditional and native cuisine, without delving deeply into contemporary restaurant variations or fusion meals. This research is mainly descriptive and

cultural, aiming to record and examine rather than to offer a comprehensive nutritional or commercial assessment.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

- 1) Tanwar, M., Tanwar, B., Tanwar, R. S., Kumar, V. & Goyal, A. (2018)

Himachal dham: Cuisine, heritage, and culture Journal of Ethnic Foods Exploration of the cultural and nutritional aspects of the Himachal Dham feast, a fundamental culinary aspect in Himachal Pradesh.

This research describes Dham as a ceremonial repast presented during weddings, festivals, and unique events, featuring staple dishes such as rajmah madra, kadi, khatta, and sepua badi.

- 2) Deepak Kumar & Rajiv Ruliya (2025)

Examining Culinary Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: A Focus on Kullu District. International Journal for Multidimensional Research Perspectives (IJMRP). Impact of traditional dishes on stimulating culinary tourism in the Kullu region. According to a survey conducted among tourists, the findings reveal that 92% of respondents express a desire to taste genuine local dishes such as Dham.

- 3) Raj Kumar & Gaurav Bathla (2022)

Culinary Heritage and Tourist Choices: Investigating the Role of Himachal Dham in Sustainable Tourism: Neuroquantology Connection between Dham practices and the growth of sustainable tourism. The study demonstrates that offering Dham in hospitality and festival settings bolsters cultural preservation and draws in tourists. It posits that utilizing traditional dishes can strengthen destination branding and enhance a sense of authenticity, thereby fostering sustainable tourism growth.

- 4) Aradhna Bharti, Anchal Sharma & Sanjay Kumar Uniyal (2025)

Traditional cuisines of Pangwal and Bhot groups: A comparative study. Discover Food. An account of traditional recipes among the Pangwal (Hindu) and Bhot (Buddhist) groups in the Pang Valley.

- 5) Amit K. Mathur & Shefali Saini (2014)

Cuisine, Culture, and Tourism: A Driver for Sustainable Tourism in Himachal Pradesh IJRISS

(International Journal of Research in Social Sciences): Leveraging local cuisines as tourism assets in Himachal Pradesh. This investigation contends that native foods enhance cultural tourism by linking visitors with heritage practices. It emphasizes that featuring regional dishes in tourism contexts boosts cultural appreciation and provides economic advantages for rural populations.

- 6) Arvind Kumar (2017)

Developing Cultural Tourism in Himachal Pradesh: Advocating for Local Cuisine

IJRISS: Incorporating indigenous food into strategies for tourism marketing. Recording local cuisines and integrating them into tourism offerings can enhance the cultural image of the state and attract tourists searching for genuine experiences. Classic dishes such as Dham, Siddu, Babru, among others, are highlighted as representatives of various regional cultures.

- 7) Sharma (2019) (as referenced in related literature)

Culinary Aspects: Uncovering Himachal Tastes An investigation into mainstay dishes and their cultural relevance, such as Dham and Babru, within social practices. Sharma points out that regional tastes reflect cultural principles and seasonal food traditions. The study underscores the danger of losing culinary heritage without proper documentation.

- 8) Verma (2018) (as referenced in related literature)

Threats to Culinary Heritage Due to Modern Changes Analyzes the dangers posed to traditional food knowledge by urban development. Verma highlights modernization, diminished transfer of knowledge between generations, and the impact of media.

- 9) Functional Foods Research (2024)

Investigating Functional Foods in the Northwestern Himalayan Area Journal of Ethnic Foods: Assessment of traditional foods from the Himalayas regarding their nutritional and functional characteristics in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The review highlights various local grains, fermented breads, flatbreads (like bhaturu, chilra), siddu, dairy items, and drinks that are rich in nutrients and may offer health benefits.

- 10) Prashant Balodi, Vineet Kumar, Akshey Dehal & Mohit Atri (2025)
 Tourist Contentment with Himachal Gastronomic Experiences
 Educational Administration: Theory and Practice / European Economic Letters. Contentment among visitors regarding Himachal cuisine and food festivals. This study reveals that tourists attending festivals centered on Himachal gastronomy report high levels of satisfaction.
- 11) Kalyanam, R. (2019)
 Exploration of Dham Cuisine and Complementary Narratives from the Hills. The Hans India. Narrative examination of Himachal Dham practices, Boti chefs, and the quest for genuine local cuisine.
- 12) Kuthiala, N. (2025)
 The Comfort of a Himachal Dish
 TheInvogueLife.com
 An informative article depicting the regional variety and emotional significance of Himachal dishes. Kuthiala vividly describes the sensory aspects of traditional Himachal cuisine, illustrating how meals like Siddu, Babru, Sepu Badi, and various stews encapsulate the cultural essence of distinct valleys.
- 13) Mathur, A. K. (2014)
 Cuisine, Culture, and Tourism: A Driver for Sustainable Tourism in Himachal Pradesh IJRISS
 Significance of traditional foods in tourism and cultural relations. Mathur stresses that local foods not only preserve cultural heritage but also allow travelers to engage profoundly with local populations.
- 14) Cultural Anthropology Writings — Food and Identity Food, Culture & Society journal articles and essential contributions from scholars such as Sidney Mintz and Jack Goody. Main Concentration: Theoretical models linking culinary practices with social identity, rituals, and collective memory.
- 15) Regional Cultural Studies — Himalayan Food Systems Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems (2025) examines how Himalayan food systems adapt. Cultural and social traditions within Himalayan food systems and ecological adjustments.
- 16) Food Heritage Literature — Indian Regional Cuisines K. T. Achaya (1998) The Story of Our Food: A Historical Companion to Indian Food.: The historical origins and development of Indian regional cuisines. Achaya's research places Indian foods within historical frameworks, outlining the impacts of agriculture, climate, trade, and migration.
- 17) Tourism & Gastronomy Studies Notable Authors
- Long, L. M. (2004), Culinary Tourism
 - Bessière, J. (1998), research on food heritage and identity.
- Main Focus: The influence of cuisine on branding places and tourism.
 Results: These researchers indicate that traditional cuisines are vital to experiential tourism and cultural representation. Their findings explain how the promotion of Himachal foods can enhance cultural pride and boost rural economies, offering valuable insights applicable to Himachal Pradesh.
- 18) Sustainable Diets Research — FAO/UN Reports Key Source: FAO publications on Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity (2010 and subsequent updates).
 Main Focus: Connections among eating habits, environmental sustainability, and cultural practices.
 Results: Sustainable diets prioritize locally sourced, minimally processed foods that promote biodiversity and enhance nutrition, concepts reflected in Himachal cuisine featuring millet, barley, and seasonal vegetables. These frameworks bolster arguments for safeguarding traditional dietary practices as both nutritious and ecologically sound.
- 19) Himalayan Agriculture & Cuisine Studies
 Key Research: Studies on traditional crops and diets in mountainous areas (e.g., the sustainability of buckwheat and millets). Main Focus: How the cropping patterns in the Himalayas affects dietary customs.

20) Cultural Food Transmission Literature

Notable Authors

- Sutton, D. (2001), Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory
- Additional scholars focusing on food transmission and memory.

Main Focus: The oral sharing of recipes and intergenerational culinary knowledge.

Results: This scholarly work posits that culinary wisdom persists through social interactions, narrative sharing, and domestic practices precisely the channels currently facing threats in Himachal societies, where modernization disrupts traditional ways of learning. These theories highlight the necessity for thorough documentation of Himachal recipes and culinary customs.

IV. GAP ANALYSIS

- Articles and narratives illustrate the significant cultural relevance of dishes such as Dham and Siddu.
- Numerous sources emphasize the lack of scholarly attention specifically focused on Himachal cuisine.
- Research into food systems correlates traditional eating practices with ecological adaptation.
- Wider food research offers a conceptual foundation for comprehending cuisine as a reflection of identity and tradition. Literature on sustainable diets places Himachal culinary practices within worldwide conversations about environmental and nutritional sustainability.

V. RESEARCH DESIGN WITH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

5.1 Research Design

Culinary Heritage of Himachal Pradesh: A Study of Traditional Himachal Cuisine This research employs a descriptive and exploratory framework to comprehend, record, and evaluate the culinary traditions of Himachal Pradesh. As it centers on cultural customs, food practices, and local diversity, the study is largely qualitative, with some quantitative data included when necessary. The investigation looks into how geography, climatic conditions, farming, and socio-cultural elements

shape traditional eating habits. It also evaluates the significance of food in celebrations, rituals, and community dynamics, along with the influence of modernization and tourism on local culinary customs.

A. Type of Research

- Descriptive Research: To outline traditional foods, ingredients, cooking techniques, and food-related traditions.
- Exploratory Research: To investigate lesser-known local food customs and unrecorded culinary practices.
- Cultural Research Method: To view food as part of the intangible cultural heritage.

B. Research Approach

- Qualitative Approach: Utilizing interviews, observations, and literature evaluation to grasp cultural importance.
- Secondary Data Analysis: Examining books, academic journals, tourism studies, and cultural documents concerning Himachal cuisine.

C. Study Area

The research emphasizes various areas of Himachal Pradesh, such as Kangra, Chamba, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, and Lahaul-Spiti, in order to reflect the culinary variety across regions.

D. Data Sources

Primary Data

- a) Interviews with local families, traditional chefs (Boti), and community elders
- b) Observations at festivals and communal feasts (like Dham)

Secondary Data:

- a) Academic articles, books, tourism publications
- b) Government and cultural heritage documents

5.2 Objectives of the Study

- A. To document traditional dishes of Himachal Pradesh and the ingredients used in their preparation.
- B. To examine regional variations in Himachal cuisine across different districts.
- C. To analyze the influence of geography, climate, and agriculture on traditional food practices.

a) Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the goals and literature analysis, the research puts forward the following hypotheses:

H1: A notable connection exists between climatic and geographical factors and the customary dietary practices in Himachal Pradesh.

H2: The traditional cuisine of Himachal plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural identity and fostering social unity.

H3: Community gatherings, festivals, and rituals significantly aid in the preservation of traditional food items from Himachal.

H4: The effects of urbanization and modernization negatively influence the perpetuation of traditional culinary practices.

H5: The advancement of traditional cuisine positively impacts tourism growth in Himachal Pradesh.

H6: Younger individuals demonstrate lower levels of awareness and engagement in traditional cooking compared to older individuals.

b) Previous Model of the Study

This research is structured around a cultural heritage framework that examines how environmental and social influences shape traditional cuisine, which in turn affects identity and economic growth.

c) Conceptual Relationships

Independent Variables

- Geographical and climatic factors
- Local food resources and agricultural methods
- Cultural traditions and religious beliefs
- Lifestyle changes and modernization

Mediating Variables

- Traditional knowledge about cooking
- Community food customs (festivals, Dham, rituals)

Dependent Variables

- Culinary heritage preservation
- Social cohesion and cultural identity
- Culinary tourism potential

d) Model Explanation

The geography and agriculture dictate ingredient availability. Cultural practices define preparation and consumption. These customs influence heritage conservation and tourism appeal. Modernization could serve as a moderating element that might diminish traditional practices continuity.

e) Research Area

This study is conducted in Himachal Pradesh, a northern Indian Himalayan state characterized by various cultural and ecological niches. Principal regions include:

- Kangra & Chamba – Renowned for Dham traditions and lentil dishes
- Kullu & Mandi – Celebrated for Siddu, Tudkiya Bhath, and festival cuisine
- Shimla Region – Diverse cultural food influences
- Lahaul–Spiti & Kinnaur – Cuisine influenced by barley, fermentation, and Tibetan traditions

These areas are selected to showcase the cultural and geographical variation.

➤ Sampling Design

Population Individuals in Himachal Pradesh who are knowledgeable about traditional food practices, such as:

- Elder members of households
- Traditional cooks (Boti)
- Homemakers
- Community food vendors
- Cultural practitioners

➤ Sampling Technique

Purposive Sampling is implemented to choose participants with genuine expertise in traditional cuisine. In specific regions, Snowball Sampling may be utilized, where one informed participant identifies another knowledgeable person.

➤ Sample Size

A sample consisting of 100–150 participants across the chosen districts is aimed at ensuring the representation of regional diversity.

➤ Sampling Unit

Individual homes, temple kitchens, community chefs, and local dining establishments.

VI. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

This research delves into the diverse culinary traditions of Himachal Pradesh, a state in the Himalayas where gastronomic practices are intricately linked to nature, societal culture, and communal lifestyles. The traditional cuisine of Himachal Pradesh has been shaped over hundreds of years due to the area's mountainous landscape, chilly weather, and farming lifestyle. Consequently, the dishes are nutritious, take advantage of seasonal produce, and primarily utilize ingredients that are locally sourced, including barley, maize, wheat, buckwheat, lentils, dairy items, and wild herbs. The study perceives cuisine as more than just food for survival; it is a significant aspect of intangible cultural heritage. In Himachal Pradesh, food holds a crucial position in aspects of spirituality, celebrations, matrimonial events, and community gatherings. Unique ceremonial feasts such as Dham illustrate how culinary customs are maintained and transmitted across generations, usually prepared by traditional chefs referred to as Botis. These culinary practices enhance social connections and affirm regional identity. The study also investigates the regional variations within Himachal culinary practices. Various districts like Kangra, Chamba, Kullu, Mandi, Kinnaur, and Lahaul Spiti present unique dishes influenced by their local climate and cultural exchanges. For instance, the lower Himalayan regions tend to favor lentil-based curries and wheat meals, whereas those in higher altitudes include barley-based dishes, fermented items, and recipes influenced by Tibetan cuisine. Another significant aspect of this research is the connection between food and sustainability.

Traditional diets in Himachal Pradesh depend on seasonal ingredients, localized farming practices, and minimal processing, which reflects eco-friendly methods. These native food systems provide important insights into sustainable living and nutrition. Simultaneously, the research discusses the difficulties confronting classic culinary practices. The impacts of urban growth, migration, modernization, and the rising trend of fast food are slowly shifting eating preferences, especially among the youth. Numerous age-old recipes live on mainly through spoken traditions, rendering them susceptible to

disappear. By documenting authentic dishes, cooking techniques, and cultural significance, this study aims to help in the safeguarding and promotion of the culinary legacy of Himachal Pradesh. It also emphasizes the potential of traditional cuisine to foster cultural tourism, support rural economies, and enhance cultural pride. Ultimately, this investigation frames Himachal cuisine as a vibrant heritage that encapsulates the region's history, environment, and social dynamics a legacy that merits acknowledgment, safeguarding, and celebration.

1. Festive & Ceremonial Cuisine (Dham Dishes)
These meals are presented at weddings, religious festivals, and communal gatherings.

Madra (Chana Madra)

Primary Component: Chickpeas (chole)

Taste Profile: Creamy, yogurt-based, gently flavored

Components

- 1 cup chickpeas that have been soaked
- 1 cup yogurt that is thick
- 2 tablespoons ghee
- Whole cloves, cinnamon stick, cardamom pods
- Turmeric powder, coriander powder
- Salt to taste

Preparation Instructions

- A. Cook the soaked chickpeas in a pressure cooker until they are tender.
- B. In a pan, heat ghee and introduce the whole spices.
- C. Gently mix in the beaten yogurt, stirring constantly.
- D. Add the spices and the cooked chickpeas into the mixture.
- E. Cook on low flame until it becomes thick and creamy.

Sepu Badi

Primary Component: Dumplings made from lentils in spinach sauce

Components

- 1 cup urad dal that has been soaked
- Puree of spinach
- Onion, garlic, and ginger
- Spices along with ghee

Preparation Instructions

- A. Grind the urad dal to create a thick paste, steam it into small cakes, and then cut into pieces.
- B. Sauté the pieces lightly in ghee.
- C. Create a spinach gravy by incorporating the spices.
- D. Introduce the dumplings and simmer until they are tender.

Meetha Chawal (Sweet Rice)

Basmati rice, sugar, saffron, dried fruits

Prepare the rice using a sugar syrup, saffron, and cardamom, then decorate with nuts.

2. Grain-Based Mountain Foods

Foundational foods derived from wheat, barley, and buckwheat, ideal for colder regions.

Siddu

Steamed bread made from wheat

Ingredients

- Wheat flour
- Yeast or sourdough starter
- Walnut or poppy seed filling

Recipe

- A. Combine flour with yeast and allow it to rise.
- B. Fill with walnut filling.
- C. Cook by steaming for 15 to 20 minutes.
- D. Serve alongside ghee or lentils.

Aktori (Buckwheat Pancakes)

Buckwheat flour, wheat flour, milk, sweetener

Blend into a batter and cook like thick pancakes on a griddle.

3. Dairy-Based Traditional Dishes

Dairy plays a key role because of the farming way of life.

Chha Gosht

Lamb in yogurt sauce

Lamb, yogurt, chickpea flour, seasonings

Prepare lamb with seasonings → incorporate yogurt and chickpea flour blend → simmer until soft.

Himachal Kadhi

Prepared from buttermilk and chickpea flour, it is less dense compared to Punjabi kadhi.

Seasoned with mustard seeds, fenugreek, and dried red chilies.

4. Forest & Seasonal Vegetable Dishes

Use of natural greens and seasonal fruits.

Lingri Sabzi (Fiddlehead Fern)

Cook fern sprouts in boiling water → stir-fry with mustard oil, garlic, and various spices.

Bhey (Lotus Stem Curry)

Sliced lotus stem prepared with ginger, garlic, turmeric, and coriander.

5. Conventional Breads & Snacks

Babru: Deep-fried bread that is filled with a mixture of black gram paste, similar to kachori.

Patande: A local variation of pancakes from Himachal, prepared using wheat flour and milk.

Traditional Beverages

A. Lugri / Chhang

A beverage made from fermented barley or rice, enjoyed during celebrations.

B. Salted Butter Tea

Favored in regions with high elevation such as Lahaul-Spiti.

Type Examples Key Feature

- Festive Fare Madra, Sepu Badi Ritual & community meals
- Cereal Meals Siddu, Aktori High-energy Mountain staples
- Milk Products Chha Gosht, Kadhi Dairy and clarified butter products

Wild Edibles Lingri, Bhey Natural and seasonal components Loaves/Treats Babru, Patande Regular and celebratory treats. Drinks Lugri, Butter Tea Conventional fermented beverages

C. Pahari Rajma

Kidney beans cultivated in elevated terrains — petite, deeper in color, and possessing a more intense flavor compared to standard rajma.

Key Components: Pahari rajma, onions, tomatoes, ghee, cumin

Flavor Characteristics: Dense, luxurious, fragrant

Geographical Area: Regions of Chamba and Bharmour

D. Chilta

A classic pancake created from sourdough mixture.
Key Components: Buckwheat flour, wheat flour, yogurt
Flavor Characteristics: Mildly tangy, tender
Served At: Breakfast time or in winter meals

E. Patande

Recognized as the “Himachal pancake” originating from Sirmaur.
Primary Components: Wheat flour, milk, sugar
Flavor Characteristics: Subtly sweet
Presentation Method: Accompanied by ghee, honey, or chutney

F. Chha Gosht

A well-known curry made with mutton and yogurt.
Key Ingredients: Mutton, yogurt, chickpea flour, seasonings
Flavor Profile: Creamy, gently spicy
Event: Celebrations and weddings

G. Makki ki Roti & Sarson ka Saag (Himachal Style)

The Himachal variation is more delicate and not as rich in butter compared to the Punjabi method.
Key Components: Cornmeal flatbread, mustard vegetables
Time of Year: Cold Season
Nutritional Benefits: Heating, abundant in iron

H. Meethe Chawal

Delicious saffron-infused rice presented during festivities.
Key Components: Rice, sugar, saffron, dried fruits
Event: Holidays and nuptials

I. Sepu Wadi

Lentil balls presented in a sauce made from spinach.
Key Components: Dumplings made from urad dal, spinach, and yogurt.
Included in: Authentic Dham banquet.

J. Bhey (Lotus Stem Curry)

A crunchy and spicy dish crafted from lotus stems.
Primary Components: Lotus stem, ginger and garlic, seasonings
Feel: Crisp and stringy
Well-liked In: Mandi area

VII. DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS OF DATA

Q1. What is your gender?

Interpretation
Ratio
Male 70%
Female 30%
Male
Female

Q2. What is your age?

Men Women
21-25 15% 5%
26-31 30% 15%
32-40 10% 7%
40+ 15% 3%

Interpretation: From the survey, out of a total of 100%, MEN's responses were 21-25 at 15%, 26-31 at 30%, 32-40 at 10%, and 40+ at 15%. The responses from WOMEN were 21-25 at 5%, 26-31 at 15%, 32-40 at 7%, and 40+ at 3%. 21-25, 26-31, 32-40, 40+

1. Traditional dishes of Himachal Pradesh utilize ingredients that are locally sourced.

Men Women
Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%
Agree 15% 5%
Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: As per the survey, from a total of 100%, a segment of men reported Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. Women reported Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 5%, and Strongly Agree at 10%.

A. Strongly Agree
B. Agree
C. Neutral
D. Disagree
E. Strongly Disagree
Answer: A

2. Pulses, cereals, and dairy products are prevalent in Himachal cuisine.

Men Women

Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%
Agree 15% 5%
Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: According to the survey, among 100%, half of the male participants indicated Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. Female participants indicated. Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 5%, and Strongly Agree at 10%.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

3. Traditional cooking techniques are still utilized when making Himachal cuisine.

Men Women
Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%
Agree 25% 10%
Strongly Agree 15% 5%

Interpretation: Based on the survey results of 100%, a portion of male respondents claimed Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 25%, and Strongly Agree at 15%. The responses from women showed Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 10%, and Strongly Agree at 5%.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: B

4. Seasonal produce is significant in the preparation of traditional Himachal cuisine.

Men Women
Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%

Agree 15% 5%
Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: From the survey, among 100%, males had Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. Females showed Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 5%, and Strongly Agree at 10%.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

5. The culinary practices in Himachal Pradesh differ across various districts.

Men Women
Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%
Agree 15% 5%
Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: According to the survey data, from 100%, half of the male respondents reported Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. Female respondents indicated Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 5%, and Strongly Agree at 10%.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

6. Meals from tribal regions are distinct from those found in urban settings.

Men Women
Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
Disagree 10% 7%
Neutral 10% 5%
Agree 25% 10%
Strongly Agree 15% 5%

Interpretation: According to the survey results, out of 100%, a number of men stated Strongly Disagree at

10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 25%, and Strongly Agree at 15%. The women stated Strongly Disagree at 3%, Disagree at 7%, Neutral at 5%, Agree at 10%, and Strongly Agree at 5%.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: B

7. Regional culinary differences are shaped by religious and cultural traditions.

- Men Women
- Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
- Disagree 10% 7%
- Neutral 10% 5%
- Agree 25% 10%
- Strongly Agree 15% 5%

Interpretation: Based on the survey data, among the men surveyed, the responses were: Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 25%, and Strongly Agree at 15%. In contrast, Women Responded: 3% for Strongly Disagree, 7% for Disagree, 5% for Neutral, 10% for Agree, and 5% for Strongly Agree.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: B

8. Cold weather impacts the preference for energy-dense foods in Himachal Pradesh.

- Men Women
- Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
- Disagree 10% 7%
- Neutral 10% 5%
- Agree 15% 5%
- Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: According to the survey data, among the men surveyed, the responses included: Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. In terms of women's responses, it was recorded as: 3%

Strongly Disagree, 7% Disagree, 5% Neutral, 5% Agree, and 10% Strongly Agree.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

9. The mountainous terrain influences the variety of crops that are cultivated and eaten.

- Men Women
- Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
- Disagree 10% 7%
- Neutral 10% 5%
- Agree 15% 5%
- Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: According to the survey data, among the men surveyed, the responses included: Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. In terms of women's responses, the figures were: 3% for Strongly Disagree, 7% for Disagree, 5% for Neutral, 5% for Agree, and 10% for Strongly Agree.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

10. Farming methods significantly influence the traditional ways of preparing food.

- Men Women
- Strongly Disagree 10% 3%
- Disagree 10% 7%
- Neutral 10% 5%
- Agree 15% 5%
- Strongly Agree 25% 10%

Interpretation: According to the survey data, among the men surveyed, the responses included: Strongly Disagree at 10%, Disagree at 10%, Neutral at 10%, Agree at 15%, and Strongly Agree at 25%. For women's responses, the percentage breakdown was: 3% for Strongly Disagree, 7% for Disagree, 5% for Neutral, 5% for Agree, and 10% for Strongly Agree.

- A. Strongly Agree
 - B. Agree
 - C. Neutral
 - D. Disagree
 - E. Strongly Disagree
- Answer: A

VIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Geographical Constraints:

Himachal Pradesh contains remote and mountainous areas that are hard to reach. Consequently, some secluded communities and their distinct culinary customs may not be thoroughly documented.

2. Reliance on Oral Information:

A significant portion of the traditional cooking knowledge is shared through verbal communication. This can result in differences in recipes, measurements, and cooking techniques, making it hard to achieve uniformity.

3. Limited Sample Size:

Owing to constraints in time and resources, the research involves a small group of participants, which may not reflect the full range of Himachal cuisine diversity.

4. Changing Food Habits:

Contemporary influences and population movement have transformed traditional customs, meaning that some gathered data might signify altered rather than original culinary practices.

5. Seasonal Availability of Foods:

Some traditional meals are made only during certain times of the year or specific celebrations, restricting chances for direct observation.

6. Language and Cultural Barriers:

Variations in local languages and cultural customs across different areas may have influenced how certain data is understood.

methods. The dependence on food produced locally, such as grains, legumes, and dairy items, showcases a food system that emphasizes sustainability and self-reliance, formed over many years. The findings also underscore the significant cultural and social roles that food plays. Special meals like Dham and dishes specific to festivals act as important ways to maintain culinary customs and enhance community connections. Collaborative cooking and eating habits help to solidify a shared identity and facilitate the transfer of knowledge between generations.

Traditional cuisine from Himachal Pradesh is an essential part of the region's cultural legacy. It showcases the balanced connection between individuals, their environment, farming practices, a cultural custom. The research reveals that food in Himachal serves not just as sustenance, but also as a significant indicator of identity, spirituality, and communal existence. The uniqueness of Himachal cuisine among Indian culinary traditions can be attributed to its regional variety, seasonal adjustments, and ritual importance. Nonetheless, the pressures of modernization and evolving lifestyles present significant risks to these age-old practices. If not carefully recorded and promoted, this priceless culinary wisdom could slowly disappear. The research highlights that maintaining the culinary traditions of Himachal requires joint initiatives from local populations, scholars, cultural groups, and tourism bodies. Encouraging traditional meals through celebrations, educational programs, and mindful culinary tourism can aid in preserving this rich heritage while enhancing rural economies. Ultimately, protecting traditional Himachal cuisine transcends the mere conservation of recipes it encompasses the preservation of history, identity, and an enduring lifestyle for the future generations.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The results of the research show that the traditional cuisine of Himachal is closely linked to the area's geographical features, weather patterns, and farming