



SPECIFIC FOOD CULTURE OF THARU TRIBE

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Abstract

Tharu tribes are most backward community which is localized both side of the Siwalik range in parallel strip of tarai at India-Nepal border. Presently this community lives in Gorakpur, Baharaich, Basti, Balrampur, Lakhimpur Kiri, Pilibhit and Bijanaur district in U.P. and in Nainital, Udham Singh Nagar, and Champavat district in Uttarakhand. In Balrampur, maximum population of Tharu tribe live in Gainsri and Panchperawa development blocks of Tulsipur tahasil. Out of total Tharu tribes of district, 70.68% tribe live in Panchaperawa and 22.51% tribe live in Gainsara development block. 06.06% of Tharu population is live in five forest village (vangram) which is reserved forest and attached with Gansari and Panchperawa development block. Due to those poor circumstances of survival, Tharu tribes do not get rich diet/meal. They survive themselves on self produced grain and forest products like fruits, vegetable and hunted animals. They get less nutrition and calories in their food. Environment of their habitat has greatly affected their food culture.

Key Words: Tribes, Communities, Food-Culture, etc.

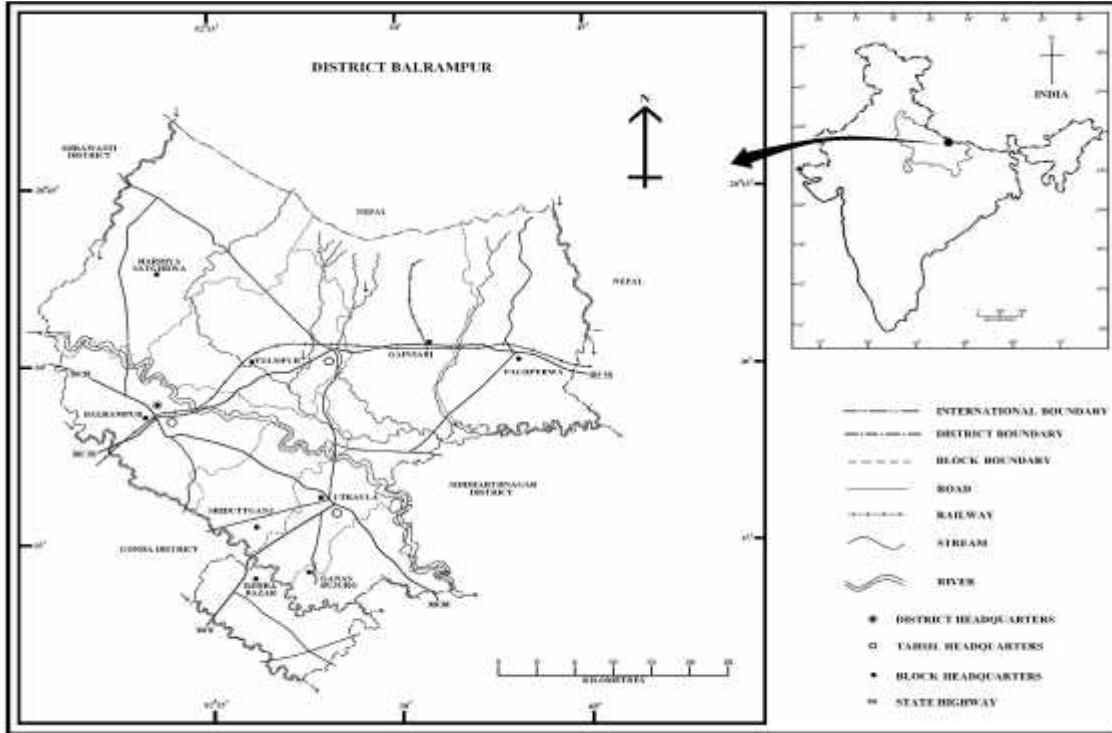
Introduction

India is the country of diversity where people are divided into different casts, communities and social groups. Generally, those people which have specific social and organisational frame and it has segregated from another civilized society on social-cultural characteristics, are called tribes. According to anthropologist D.N. Majumdar (1937), any type of group tribe family and family class, which have a general name, live on a certain land use, a general language and some restriction in their marriages and occupations are called tribal group. Gilin and Gilin (1950) has defined that tribes are those spatial communities which live on a certain land uses, general language and have a general culture in their behavior. Art. 366 of Indian constitution have defined that those communities will be tribal communities which have mentioned as scheduled tribes in Art. 342 of Indian constitution. There are 574 tribal groups in India which have announced as a scheduled tribe. The word 'scheduled tribe' has mentioned in the fifth schedule of Indian constitution. The president has been authorized by Art. 342 to announce that any particular tribal group will come into scheduled tribe class accordingly to Indian constitution. After the division of Uttarakhand, Buksha and Tharu are mainly found in U.P. at present.

The Tarai region of the Himalayan in India is very rich region in term of plants, medicinal plants, timber, fiber etc. All the ethnic groups living in the hills and the valleys prefer wild plants/plant parts as foods to introduce cultivate plant. Through many of these plants are available, nowadays the number and quality of species are much less than past (Devi & Kumar, 2012). Different tribes have their own traditional food and Beverages. The ecology provides a range of probability to select the plants and animal sources, culture decides the tradition and the ethics determines the habit of eating the food (Devi & Kumar, 2012). Indigenous fragmented food have been prepared and consumed for thousands of year and are strongly linked to culture, traditions and reveal the intellectual richness of indigenous people of the country in terms of their ability to prepare microbial products for varied purposes in addition to food and beverage (Sekar & Mariappan, 2007). The Tharu tribe is most important community of the Himalayan Tarai region. The Tharu are semi Hindus people having Mongoloid affinity. They are of average medium height with round head and medium broad face, their cheekbones tend to be high and flat. They speak Tharuhati language but can communicate in Hindi and write in Devnagari Script (Sharma & Rajkumari, 2010). Scientific study and research work of Indian tribal group has started recently, in which socialist, anthropologist, economist and geographers has contributed in reference to tribal development. First of all, Albaruni (1027-28) has mentioned Tharu tribe in his book 'Tahkikul Hind' on the basis of physical structure and their habitats, which called *Tharuhat*. Similarly, Neschfield (1885), S. Knowls (1889), D.N. Majumdar (1937, 1942), H.D. Pradhan (1937), S.K. Shrivastava (1948, 1949), R.L. Singh (1956), C.T.Hu (1957), S.K. Shrivastava (1958), T. Prasad (1959), R.P. Srivastava (1964), V.K. Kochar (1965), Bhatia and Bhatnagar (1972), N. Kumar and A.K. Mishra (1975), J.P. Bhatiya (1976), J.K. Maheshwari, K.K. Singhand S. Shah (1981), B.S. Bist (1993), A. Husan (1990,1993), Damodar Gaivali and M.B. Singh (1996), Jagdev Singh (1997), Sumedha Nasva (2001), Akhilesh kumar, D.D. Tiwari and J.P. Tiwari (2006), Prakash Chand Dube (2006), Subodh Kumar Srivastava, J.P. Tiwari and D.S. Shukla (2008), Tej P. Sharma and Rajkumari (2010), Subhash Chandra Varma and Girija Sankar Yadaw (2010), Subhash Chandra Varma (2010) have been completed valuable research work.

Location and Extent

Balrampur District (28° 2' N to 28° 54' N) and (82° 3'E to 82° 49' E) lies in the North East part of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), India. Its boundary is formed by the 3 district of U.P such as Sidharthnagar (east), Shrawasti (west), Gonda (south) and north of the district is formed by the international boundary (Nepal).



Blocks	Population	Per cent
Harrya Satghrwa	-	-
Balrampur	45	0.23
Tulsipur	14	0.07
Gainsari	4,356	22.51
Pachperwa	13,673	70.68
Shreeduttganj	-	-
Utraula	7	0.04
Gadas Bujurg	-	-
Rahera Bazar	10	0.05
Forest village	1,172	6.06
Total Urban	69	0.36
Total District	19,346	100

Table 1: Tharu Population in Balrampur District

Administratively, the present Balrampur district occupies an area of 3419.50 km² with a population of 1,6,82,350 persons (2011). It has been divided into Three Tahsils namely (Balrampur Sadar, Tulsipur and Utraula) and 9 Developmental blocks. There are mainly two distinct blocks, Pachperwa and Gainsari, of Tharu concentration. (Fig. 1 & Table 1).

Objective

Socio-economic life of Tharu is greatly affected by its habitat environment. So their socio-economic and cultural structure is very different from civil society. In this paper we studied about specific food culture of Tharu tribe because they take less nutrient diet but in drink item they take wine to make enjoy full life. Wine plays major role not only their daily life but also in their cultural and social life.

Data Base and Methodology

Present research paper is based on primary and secondary data. Base map has been prepared on the basis of Toposheet no. 63 I (1:250,000) in this research paper. Related data of food habits have been collected through primary survey. Different statistical methods have been applied for presentation of primary data. In the study area, Tharu concentration has found in 54 villages of two development blocks namely Panchperawa and Gainsari. 10 per cent sample survey has done in those villages



of the study area, where Tharu people and family were highly concentrated but those villages which have less concentration of Tharus and 10% sample survey was fulfilled through one or two questionnaire, only five questionnaire schedule has used to collect primary data. Collected data has tabulated and it has analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) programme.

Food Culture of Tharu

Each tribal population has its unique food habits. The Tharu culture is very eco-friendly, all cultural things and activities of this tribe are deeply related with nature. Their residence, food, art, religion, economy and many part of life are based on nature and keep ecological balance (Verma, 2010). The economy of Tharu community is based on agriculture and forest (Pradhan, 1937). Food-habits of Tharu are fully affected by their habitat environment. They get fruit and meat from forest and hunting of wild animal and grains from agriculture. Animal-husbandry provides him milk and meat. The Tharu women gather many forest products for food, drink, fodder, medicine etc. In Tharu society, they eat four times a day. They take breakfast, known as *kalewa* in the morning approximate 8 o'clock. In *kalewa* they take *mand* (liquide of boild rice) with *chattani* or pickles and *sirka*. They take lunch of noon 12 to 2 o'clock known as *mijhani* in which they take bread, rice, vegetables (*Tarkari*), pulses and curd. *Sijhani* is the evening time meal which they take remains meal of lunch (noon). *Beri* is the meal of Tharu at night. In which they take *tina* (juice full vegetable), rice and perhaps bread and pulses. Remain meal of night has taken by children in the morning which is colled *Basi*.

Rice (*bhat*) is very important food of Tharu. Daily meal of Tharu is never completed without *bhat*. 63.50 percent Tharu of *Tharuhat* take *bhat* (rice) at breakfast, lunch and dinner (three times) whereas, 36.50 percent Tharus take *bhat* only in lunch and dinner time (two times) which shows rice popularity in Tharus (Table no. 2). There are two reasons which are related to rice popularity in Tharus. First, in Tarai belt, rice production is high due to fertile soil where Tharu habitat is located and it has maximum capacity to fulfill the stomach. Second reason is, after taking rice, hunger comes again at long time and person gets better sleep. In the first choice of Tharu meal is fried rise of *Anandi* rice. They produce three type of *Anandi* rice. First type is *pakhrcce Anandi*, second is general *Anandi* and third is *pahari Anandi*. General *Anandi* has maximum produced because they take it with fish and make fried such as *Bhuja* and *Chiura* also. Occasionally they like to take rice with curd. They cook special vegetable of rice which called *Chachi* or *Chichar* which they like to take at special festival and on marriage ceremony. *Chechi* become light juice and heavy which digest longer. Those Tharu females which make a ceremony of *Jiyutiya* festival, take *Chechi* with milk and sugar. Rice lover Tharu produce many type of rice such as Bagari, Anajanava, Dudharaj, Satraj, Barchha, Devasar, Sathi, Kankarjira, Basabhoga, Ghritakumari, Basamati etc. Fish and rice are popular as food in Tharu communities. The *Chakhna-Bhat* and *Machhi-Bhat* are main and special dishes of the Tharu communities (Govila, 1959).

Table 2: Food Pattern of Tharu Society

Food Time	Rice	Bread	Vegetable	Pulses	Milk	Curd	Meat
Only in Breakfast	-	7.40	-	-	8.40	4.50	-
Only in Launch	-	18.40	-	22.50	0.20	5.20	-
Only in Dinner		7.70	-	7.50	3.20	1.50	21.80
Two time	36.50	5.50	36.00	17.50	0.50	0.50	-
Three time	63.50	3.50	64.00	18.40	0.50	-	-
Occasionally	-	57.50	-	34.10	87.20	88.30	78.20
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Personal survey, 2009-2010

Many types of grain are also produce in Tharuhat. Mustered and Til are major oilseed and Gram, Masoor, Keraw and Khesari are major pulses, which grown in the Tharu study area. Pulses are least popular in Tharu food habits. Only 18.40 per cent Tharu take pulses at breakfast, lunch and dinner. 7.50 per cent take only at night in dinner whereas 34.10 per cent Tharu take perhaps. 57.60 per cent Tharu people take bread occasionally whereas 3.50 per cent people take it three times at dinner, lunch and breakfast and 7.40 per cent like to take at morning breakfast. Bread popularity in Tharu has seen at noon time lunch which is 18.40 per cent. Less popularity of bread in Tharues are due to non- favorable climatic condition of wheat production in Tarai region. Maize bread is much popular comparison to wheat bread in Tharu community. Tharu takes Sattu in breakfast which is nutritional food and Dhokhla which made by *Atta* of wheat mixed with Juice of Mahua flower.

Non Vegetarian - In fact Tharu tribe is non-vegetarian. In other word we want say that they are great meat eater. They cook meat of hundred wild animals, birds and take interestally. Meat is generally prepared by being first boiled in water and then



either cut up and made into curry or fried in oil. Fishes are the main non-vegetarian item of food in Tharus. They preserve fishes by drying in the sun. *Jhinga* and Dry fishes called *Sidhra* by Tharu people. They are also preserving another meat by cutting into stripes and drying it in the sun. *Padhani, Sewar, Tegna, Bomla, Rrohu, Magur, Bhakur* and *pichi* are famous fishes in Tharus. Tharu use meat of pet animal such as pig, sheep and goat and wild animal of deer race such as chital, Sambhar, rabbit and wild pig, mongoose and bring them home and eat them with great delight. Hunted birds by tharus are pet hen, duck parrot, cock, Banboka, *shahil* wild hen, sikhapar etc. Tharu take interestally *gengata* (Crab) and *talha* (Snail). According to survey many Tharu family have pet pigeons in their houses and use daily. Some time, they also eat field rats. They also make *Sukthi* of pig's meat which preserve and use long time. They will never take beef, nor the flesh of the monkey, crocodile, snake, lizard, jackal and other vermin. Because of the social reforms movement among the Tharu meat making is being discarded and on marriage occasions is strictly prohibited (Singh, 1956). In Tharu community three animals sacred above all others like cow, monkey and serpent. The above table reveals that 78.20% Tharu use meat occasionally whereas 21.80% take meat only at night per day and remain cooked meat take on next day (Table 2).

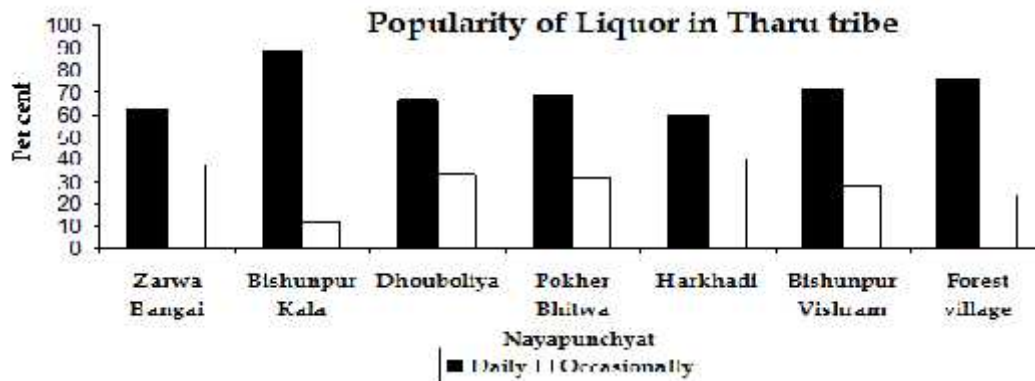
Vegetables - Tharu have also interest in vegetables but they produce in very little amount. They have sown vegetables seeds beside their houses. In fact they have well maintained kitchen gardens where they grow all vegetables and fruits. Tharus grow lentil vegetable which spread on their *Chhappar* such as pumpkin (*kohda*), Bottle gourds, (*lauki*), Bitter gourds (*karela*), Ridge gourds (*taroi*), Striped pear gourds (*parwar*), Kidney beans (*sem*), (*ghevra*) (*khhabha*), (*satputiya*) etc. They also produce potato, onion, ladyfinger, tomato, radish (*muli*), turmeric, Garlic (*lahsun*), *dhaniya*, *methi* etc. They get *sag* of gram and *sarso* from kitchen garden. They have sown kind of vegetable beside home in which *suran*, *sekharua*, *ghuiya*, are important. Second major source of vegetable are forest. They have better knowledge of seasonal vegetable of forest. Gathering of vegetables from forest by Tharu females is their important homework. New leaves (*kopal*) of many trees such as bamboo, *pakar*, *poya* etc. are forest vegetable. *palak*, *chaurai*, *bathua*, *kermua*, *sirwari*, *melsa*, *kheksi*, *koin*, *bhutfor*, *putki*, are specific *Sag* vegetables of forest. According to survey, 64.00 per cent of Tharu take vegetables at three time of their meal whereas 36.00 per cent take only two times (Table 2). This figure shows popularity of vegetables in Tharu tribe.

Beverage - *Jaha daru vaha tharu* It is very true for Tharu people. Generally every Tharu family has a better skill of making/producing wine. There are mainly two varieties of local fragmented and distilled drinks like *Jand* and *Daru*. These kinds of drinks are purely brewed at home. *Jand* has a very low alcoholic content which is used as a traditional local beer in Tharu society. In this case, *Aanandi* rice is used for the preparation of alcoholic beverage *Jand*. For the preparation of *Jand* the *Aanandi* rice with leaves of jack fruit, root of Kurla (thorny makhana) and other *jari buti* (harbals) grinding is done in a mortar till it become powder. After that, mixture of rice flour with water is made into small cubes or tablets form (*Litti/Bhouri*) and powder of another *litti* spread on it. The prepared tablets are placed on *Payal* of it and are again covered with this *Payal* for 2-3 days. After 2-3 days *fafundi* (*Gurwana*) has become on small cubes or tablets (*Litti/Bhouri*). After which the prepared tablets are sun dried the material is completely dried. After this, in this boiled *Aanandi* rice the water is added and it deep mixed by hand continuous till it gets liquid (*Paniha*). A small cube (*litti*) is also added in it, and then it is covered by muslin cloth or polythene and kept for one day and one night without any disturbance. After that the mixture is kept in earthen pot (*Golara*), so *Jad* is ready to drink after 1 day and 1 night but this will give a very light drink but at long time. It gives mild test of banana and can be stored in cool, dry place for over a year. *Daru* is another wine which is made from *Mahua*. It is not true that the Tharu drink only to get drunk. Liquor not only has a solemn ritual significance, but their flavor gives an exquisite pleasure. Females are also drunk wine after their delivery because it helps to control the delivery pain. Baby and mother both have *masaj* (*malis*) with wine which make them strong. It is very essential with food in welcome of guest and also essential in festival birth ceremony, marriage ceremony god worship and death ceremony. They try to satisfy god at worship with wine.

Table 3: Popularity of Liquor in Tharu Tribe

Nayapunchyat	Liquor time	
	Daily	Occasionally
Zarwa Bangai	62.30	37.70
Bishunpur Kala	88.0	12.0
Dhouboliya	66.70	33.30
Pokher Bhitwa	68.90	31.10
Harkhadi	60.0	40.0
Bishunpur Vishram	72.0	28.0
Forest village	76.0	24.0
Total	72.20	27.80

Source: Personal survey, 2009-2010



Male and female both take wine interestlly. Even teenager boys also take wine.

Above table reveal that 72.20 per cent Tharu take wine per day whereas 27.80 per cent take it on only festival, marriage ceremony or other ceremony. It was observed from table 3 that maximum percentage (88.00) has found in Bishunpur Kala whereas minimum percentage (60.00) in Harkhadi Nayapunchyat. During field investigation it was found that Tharus take wine after dinner with their whole family member in male, female, old and children all are involve. In Tarai region, Habitat climate is the major factor of wine drinking in Tharus. Wine taking make them not only disease less but also remove their loneliness, tiredness, make them cold resistant and help to increase social friendship.

Mad - Tharu family uses mad as a breakfast in morning, after making mad it put on in open space. They take it with chatani or *Tina* (vegetable) at morning before they go on work. Mad is very digestible liquor because it is carbohydrate concentrated liquid which gives long time working capacity.

Use of Milk and Milk Products: Milk and its products like curd were less popular in the Tharus communities. Very few Tharus have milk giving animals such as cow, buffalo and goat. They arrange milk only for children, weak and ill person. They much like curd than milk. At the worship time milk and curd are necessary in this community. 87.20 % percent Tharu family use milk occasionally whereas only 0.50 % family uses milk two and three time at meal. 88.30 % of Tharu families use curd occasionally and only 04.50 % Tharu family like to take curd with breakfast (Table. 2).

During field investigation it was found that new and educated generation of Tharus are ignoring their traditional food and accepting fast food rapidly. Chinese fast foods such as Chowmin, Indian Dosa, Chat-Pakoda, and other packed food like cream Biscuit, Kurkure, Chips and Cold drinks are popular in educated Tharus. Due to their economic problem, religious factors, effects of other cultures, some youth are ignoring non-vegetarian food at present (Verma and Yadav, 2010). Introduction of fast foods through globalization process, accompanied by decrease in the use of traditional foods of local tribe has resulted in many disease notably diabetes, heart disease, anemia particularly to pregnant and lactating women (Mao & Odyou, 2007).

Conclusion

Tharu are major tribal group of India and U.P. Their habitat, culture and economy has fully influenced by environment mainly climate of Tarai and forest. Literacy is very powerful instrument of social change and overall development but due to low level of literacy in this community they have very few knowledge of healthy diet for their body requirement. Rice, wheat and meat are major part of their meal and home made wine like *Jand* and *Daru* is not only essential part of their food but also their environmental circumstance and social behavior. Mineral and vitamin full vegetable, fruit and milk have very little role in their meal. So they take very insufficient nutrient in their diet, because of that they have not develop mentally and physically.

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Photo Plate



Milum & Black Til



Buffalo in Tharu's Home



Cow in Tharu's Field