

Full Length Research Paper

Food habits among the educated youth of Tharu and Buksa tribes

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In this paper, we studied about food habits of the educated Tharu and Buksa youth. 76 Tharu and 40 Buksa (total of 116) youth were interviewed for this study. At present, some Tharu and Buksas youth are ignoring their traditional food and accepting some fast foods rapidly. The Tharu and Buksa people were non-vegetarians and traditionally so, maximum youth were non-vegetarians also. Maximum Tharu-Buksa youth used non-vegetarian food after a week. They also like milk and milk-products. 92.24% youth used non-vegetarian foods; only 7.76% youth were vegetarians. Female youth were more (15%) than males (3.95%) in vegetarian's category. 96.05% males and 85% females used non-vegetarian foods normally. The Tharu and Buksas youth that is studying in the cities like to eat fast foods in market. Chinese fast foods like Chowmin, Indian Dosa, Chat-Pakoda and other packed food were popular in Tharu and Buksas. Maximum (64.66%) youth eat fast food one time in a week, 18.10% is two or three times in a week and 17.24% used it sometimes. Percentage of females (57.5%) is more than male (52.63%) in weekly and some times (7.89%), (17.5%) is use of fast foods.

Key words: Tharu, Buksa, food, non-vegetarian, traditional, fast-food.

INTRODUCTION

The Tharu and Buksa are tribal and indigenous communities of the Himalayan Terai region. Tharus and Buksas are famous for their eco-friendly culture. Four renowned researchers Risley, Knowles, W. Crooke and Nesfield declared that, the Tharu and Buksas are mix blood tribe (Srivastav, 1958). According to H.R. Nevill, the Tharu and Tharu and Buksas are an aboriginal race who claims royal descent (Srivastav, 1958). The theory of Rajput origin of the Tharu and Buksas could not be explained on basis of serology because the Rajputs do not have Mongoloid and Dravidian physical features normally (Majumadar, 1941). At least we can say that, the Tharu and Buksas are Mongoloid people, or predominantly so, because they have successfully assimilated non-Mongoloid physical features as well.

Historically, they were the only ones that were able to reside in the malarial jungles. Recent medical evidence supports the common belief that, the Tharu and Buksas

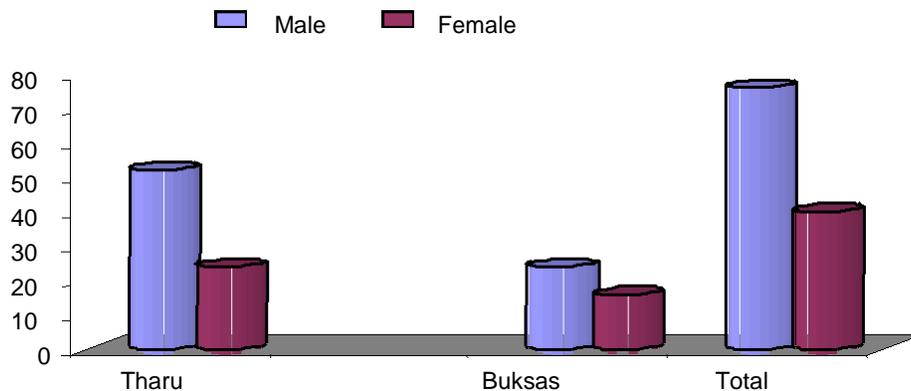
people, having lived in the swampy Terai region for centuries, have developed an innate resistance to malaria that is likely based on an unidentified genetic factor (Kumar, 1968).

The Tharu-Buksa area has very good and more agricultural land and other natural resources for industry. Many farmers, industrialist and others are existed in this area. This is why the Tharu-Buksas are regularly in touch of other cultures and also accepting their specialties (Raj, 2001). There are many religious missionaries that are also working in the Tharu-Buksa area for converting them in their religions. Mainly the Christian and Hindu missionaries are doing conversion of the Tharu-Buksas in their faith.

The Tharu and Buksas are physically strong and fit generally, because they eat healthy natural foods and they also have many traditional treatment systems (Eide, 1997). These people eat mostly fish, pork, chicken with more garlic, onions, ginger, lemon etc. Fish and rice are popular as foods among Tharu and Buksas communities but they also used roti, vegetables, milk products and more others. The *Chakhna-Bhat* and *Machhi-Bhat* are main and special dishes of the Tharu and Buksa

Table 1. Classification of interviewed tribal youth.

Sl. No.	Name of tribal community	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Tharu	52	68.42	24	60	76	65.52
2	Buksa	24	31.58	16	40	40	34.48
	Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

**Figure 1.** Status of interviewed youth by community.

communities (Govila, 1959). At present, hunting is banded in the forest, so, they cannot use more meat of forest animals and birds in their food, but they use more fishes in their food. At present, some Tharu and Buksas youth are ignoring their traditional food and accepting some fast foods rapidly.

In this paper we studied about food habits of the educated Tharu and Buksa youth. This study covered only educated youth of both communities, so this study has some limitations.

METHODOLOGY

Scientific research method has been used in this study, and findings were presented in descriptive research design. Interview and closed ended questionnaire have been used as research tool for primary data collection. There are 116 Tharu and Buksa students registered in Government Post Graduate College Rudrapur District Udham Singh Nagar of Uttarakhand. This study has completed "between" 21st - 25th July 2009. These Tharu-Buksa students were taken as research universe. Details of these students are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1. Totally 116 students (76 Tharus and 40 Buksas) were taken for this study. Related literature also used in this study as secondary data sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Thinking of choice about traditional food and fast-food

Table 2 and Figure 2 showed that, maximum

Tharu-Buksa youth were favored for fast-food, 56.90% youth think that fast-food was the best, though 43.10% youth were traditional foods. They think that it is good for their health. There is an interesting fact, which has been found that, 50% female were favored for traditional food as well as fast foods. At least, it seems that new and educated generation of the Tharu and Buksa communities are ignoring their own traditional food trends and accepting new food trends.

Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food habit

The Tharu and Buksa peoples were non-vegetarians and traditionally so, maximum youth were non-vegetarians also. Table 3 and Figure 3 inferred that 92.24% youth used non-vegetarian foods and only 7.76% youth were vegetarians. Female youth were more (15%) than males (3.95%) in vegetarian's category. The male and female used non-vegetarians food of 96.05 and 85.0% respectively. Due to some problems, religious factors and effects of other cultures, some youth are ignoring non-vegetarian food at present.

Maximum Tharu-Buksa youth used non-vegetarian foods after a week. Table 4 showed that, 54.31% youth were fed with non-vegetarian foods one time in a week, 34.38% youth eat fast food two or three times and 11.21% sometimes. Totally 52.63% males and 57.5% females used non-vegetarian foods once in a week, 39.48% males and 25% females is two or three times in a week, and 15.79% males and 17.5% females used

Table 2. Choice of food by Tharu and Buksa tribes.

Sl. No.	Thinking of youth about food	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Traditional food is best	30	39.47	20	50	50	43.10
2	Fast-food is best	46	60.53	20	50	66	56.90
	Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

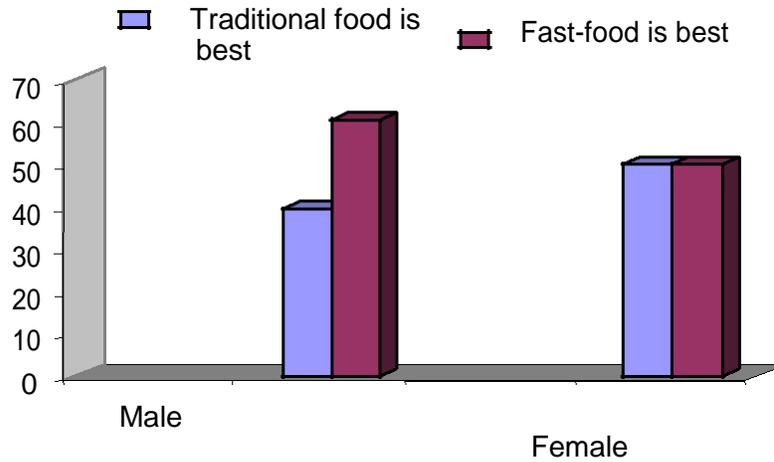


Figure 2. Status of traditional and fast-food choice.

Table 3. Classification of youth by food habits.

Sl. No.	Category	Male		Female		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Non-vegetarian	73	96.05	34	85	107	92.24
2	Vegetarian	03	3.95	6	15	9	7.76
	Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

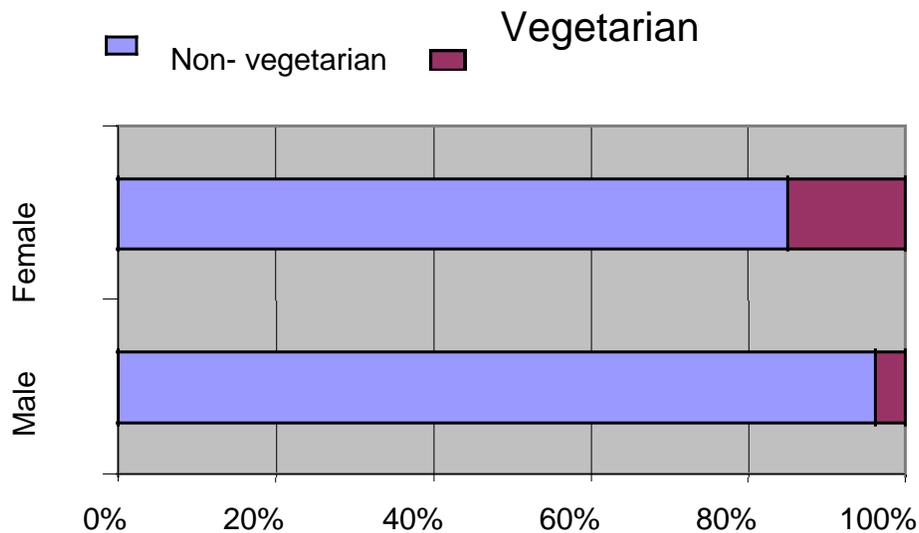


Figure 3. Non-vegetarian and vegetarian youth.

Table 4. Schedule of eating non-vegetarian food.

Schedule	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Daily	----	----	----	----	----	----
2 or 3 times in a week	30	39.48	10	25	40	34.38
One time in week	40	52.63	23	57.5	63	54.31
Some times	6	7.89	7	17.5	13	11.21
Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

Table 5. Schedule of eating fast-food.

Schedule	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Daily						
2 or 3 times in a week	14	18.42	7	17.5	21	18.10
One time in week	50	65.79	25	62.5	75	64.66
Some times	12	15.79	8	20	20	17.24
Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

Table 6. Schedule of using milk or milk-products.

Schedule	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Daily	14	18.42	8	20	22	18.97
2 or 3 times in a week	26	34.21	14	35	40	34.48
One time in week	26	34.21	15	37.5	41	35.34
Some times	10	13.16	3	7.5	13	11.21
Total	76	100	40	100	116	100

non-vegetarian foods sometimes.

Habits of fast-food

As it has been stated above that, most educated Tharu-Buksa youth are in favor of fast food culture at present. But due to economic problem, they can not afford fast food everyday. Table 5 showed that, maximum (64.66%) youth fed fast food one time in a week, 18.10% is two or three times in a week and 17.24% used it sometimes.

The Tharu and Buksas youth that is studying in cities like to eat fast foods in market. Chinese fast foods such as Chowmin, Indian Dosa, Chat-Pakoda and other packed food that is popular in Tharu and Buksas. Due to their economic problems, they do not eat fast food daily, but maximum youth like it and want to eat everyday. They think that, use of fast food is symbol of educated and advanced people, this is why they are ignoring their traditional food culture.

Use of milk and milk-products

Milk and its products were popular in the Tharu and Buksa communities. This is why the youth of these communities also like milk and milk-products. Table 6 revealed that, 18.97% youth used milk and its products daily, 34.48% is two or three times in a week and 11.21% used it sometimes. A total of 18.42% males and 20% females daily, 34.31% male and 35% females two or three times in a week and 13.16% males and 7.5% females used it sometimes in use of milk and its products. Percentage of females was more than males in this category so we can conclude that, women were more aware than male in use of milk and its products.

Conclusion

On the basis of description and analysis, we concluded that, educated youth of the Tharu and Buksa

communities have both traditional and new food habits. Some youth are ignoring their own traditional food trends, but some youth are still respecting their culture and traditional food trends. Effects of other cultures and education were the main reasons of changing food habits. Maximum Tharu-Buksa youth were non-vegetarians and they also like milk and milk-products. There is no major difference between male and female about food habits. Maximum youth like fast-food culture but they can not afford it daily. So, they used normal and traditional food in daily life but weekly and some times they enjoy with fast-food.

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