

Integration of Colonial food culture into Pakistani Cuisine.

Abstract

Pakistan has a significant value for being a part of South Asian historic culture which had remained home to variety of cults and diverse creeds. British settlers possessed India in the 19th century and reigned her for almost a century till its partition in the year 1947. United India endured major cultural and societal changes during British era. After the freedom and partition from India, Pakistani culture evolved considerably over a period of time. To learn about this transformation and evolution directed the purpose of this study. Food is one of the most substantial aspect of cultural legacy and national character of any people (Murcott, 1982). Multiple studies (Atkinson,1980; Lévi-Strauss,1983; Leach,1976) have stressed about literal and symbolic value of food, cuisine, culinary practices and their relationship with nations and their philosophies. The variable under study for this paper is Cuisine of Pakistan. This paper attempts to study the integration of Colonial food culture with various aspects of Pakistani Cuisine. A thematic analysis of emergent themes which are cultural impact, economic impact and sociological impact of Colonial era on Pakistani cuisine was conducted and discussed with reference to the food products and food culture of British India which eventually got integrated in Pakistani culture and society. Purposive sampling was done for this study. Lahore is selected for this study to be conducted at and is delimited to the cuisine of Lahore, since it is a cultural hub and a historic city and also the provincial capital. Data was gathered through interviews with select panel of art historians, writers and field experts. Visual and literary evidences from newspaper and museum archives were also included as primary data. Thematic analysis of three main themes demonstrated a significant impact of Colonial era on Pakistani cuisine which has seamlessly assimilated in the culture and society of Pakistan.

Key words: *Integration, colonial era, food culture, Cuisine, Pakistan.*

Pakistan is a fascinating study of connection between diverse cultures. This contact has imparted Pakistan a distinctive cultural identity and a significant value for being linked to its roots in South Asian historical culture, a living place for cradle of civilizations, variety of cults and diverse religions. In 19th Century British rulers colonized the land of India and ruled the region for almost a century. During this period India had been through major cultural and societal changes which resulted in impacting the nascent Pakistani culture after its inception in 1947 **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Sub-continent's cuisine was the result of several impacts. From the religious partialities such as Hinduism and Islam to the foreign incursions by Central Asians, Mughals and eventually British; Indian cuisine evolved as an assorted, vivacious and diverse unit (Ahmad, 2012). It is actually a culmination of a history of successive imperial movements and syntheses (Zubaida, 2009).

The regional ingredients, invasions, religions, ethos and the tastes of empires who had ruled Indian society all contributed to establish rich Indian cuisine (Ramzi, 2012;Naheed & Azfar, 2017).

The colonial food was a distinct fusion; the food was prepared mostly through the dependence of British colonizers on native servants (Ahmad,2012;Leong-Salobir,2011; Prabhu,2019). Local chefs, were contributory in the expansion of the colonial gastronomy. Their awareness of local constituents, food preparation services, creativity and inexpensive labor added to the expansion of uniquely amalgam style of food (Leong-Salobir, 2011; Prabhu, 2019).

The British positioned their tea production in Northern India. By the 1880s, Indian tea replaced Chinese tea in the British marketplace (Breed, 2020). British colonials used to consume tea often at daybreak and evening (Goodman, 2018). A dynamic movement to promote tea drinking in Punjab was launched by Indian Tea Market expansion board. Tea was imported to Indian subcontinent through EIC traders. Portable tea stalls were positioned at vantage areas in streets and Bazaars of Lahore which resulted in acclimatizing local taste buds to foreign flavors. (Nevile, 2016). Not just tea but The British were responsible for bringing potato to India (Rana, 2014) which is now a cash crop in Pakistan(Memon, 2017).Club culture was also a British import. Clubs were established in every corner of the British Empire. The clubs in India had restaurants and bars that catered European club members (Leong-Salobir, 2011), a culture which got integrated in Pakistani lifestyle (Khalid; Khan, Personal Communication, June 20, 2019).The cultural and sociological dynamics of Pakistani society drove the researcher to trace the causes and impact of this amalgam of civilizations which we observe today as intricately woven in one social order. Research questions like how these changes got assimilated in our society over time and what has been the scope of this impact vis-à-vis the general mindset of its people were sought answers for. To find the answers to such questions make for much needed studies in understanding the societal patterns through various variables.

Lahore has been known for its cultural diversity. The cuisine, crafts, music and fashions of Lahore advocate the assimilation of varied cultures and their tastes (Talbot, 2016). Lahore remained a central city during the Raj and is considered as culinary nucleus of Pakistan where you can find all the traditional and western tastes (Imtiaz, 2018) therefore the cuisine of Lahore is selected as sample for present research. The degree to which the foods, food practices and food culture of the British impacted regional cuisine is explored at length.

Methodology

The study is Qualitative in nature. Qualitative research supports various research Designs. The one opted for this study is Historical research design. Understanding the history of areas to be analyzed gives a clearer picture of how communities evolve in their attitudes and perceptions (Creswell, 2011). The question of Colonial impact on Pakistani cuisine is addressed with reference to those food products and food culture as was practiced by British in India but became part of Pakistani culture and society immediately after Partition in 1947 and the ones which had a lasting impact and ended up as a vital part of Pakistan culinary practices till today.

Thematic analysis technique is used for interpreting data. Thematic analysis involved the following stages: familiarization with the facts; generating initial codes having research questions in mind; searching for patterns; defining and identifying themes; refining themes and producing the report. Unstructured interviews generate qualitative data using open ended questions allowing the interviewee to converse in some depth. This benefits the researcher to develop a factual sense of a person's understanding of a situation. They also increase validity of the inquiry (Shanahan, 2019). In-depth Interviews were conducted to gather further information regarding collected data and for the purpose of validity of findings.

The Primary sources for data collection were observations of the cuisine practices in Pakistani society, Photographs from post partition years collected from museum and newspaper archives, libraries and cuisine related field visits. In-depth interviews were conducted with field experts; 1. Mehmood Akber, Food and Beverages Expert, Owner of Salt and Pepper Restaurants; 2. Zubair Ali Khan, Executive chef at Lahore Gymkhana club, Former chef at PC Lahore, 3. Khawja Asif, Senior Manager at Pak Tea House. All above mentioned experts are veterans of food business since many decades and are significant witnesses to changes happened in cuisine and culinary practices. 4th panelist is Writer Mustansir Hussain Tarar; A Renowned Writer, travel enthusiast, novelist, columnist, Former Anchor and actor. 5. Agha Amir Ali, writer and history expert, owner of Sputnik magazine. 6. Prof. Dr. Shaukat Mehmood *si*, former Head of Research Department, PUCAD, University of Punjab Lahore. He is an eminent Scholar, rt Historian, Architect and Art Critic. 6. Dr Kanwal Khalid, art historian, educationist and Director Punjab Archives, she is a South Asian History Expert. These history experts and educationists provided valuable information to the questions regarding evolution of Pakistani food culture under the influence of Colonial Era. The information about the area to be investigated has been translated by their vast knowledge and life experiences and helped validate the collected data. The Secondary sources for data collection were books, research journals, and online sources. Sampling technique employed was Purposive Sampling. The cuisine of Lahore City was selected as a sample. Analysis of interviews and visual and literary data identified three major themes. These were: (1) Cultural impact on cuisine: (2) Socio-Economic impact on cuisine (3) Sociological impact on cuisine. The study is significant for identifying the pattern of change in Pakistani culture. The variable that is selected for research purpose lacks in-depth and updated information and documentation. The study aims to fill the gaps in existing body of knowledge. The outcomes of this research would be helpful for the history and cultural studies students.

Results

Food culture refers to the practices, approaches, and philosophies as well as the systems and organizations surrounding the production, supply, and consumption of food. Food expresses distinctiveness, communal sense, identity, beliefs, status, command, creativity and inspiration (Boutaud, Becuț & Marinescu, 2016). Colonial impact on Pakistani cuisine is assessed considering all these aspects.

The themes that emerged from collected data are discussed in detail below as findings of the research along with their codes as sub-headings. Data is also presented with the help of illustrations.

Cultural impact on cuisine:

The first theme to emerge was Cultural impact on cuisine which includes following points:

Introduction of novel food items and their related paraphernalia:

The impact of British Cuisine can best be felt with the introduction of certain food items like tea, potato and beverages, which were not otherwise a part of subcontinent food heritage.

Nothing has impacted Pakistani food culture and cuisine like Tea. Tea or *Chai* has become an integral part of Pakistani culture. It is widely consumed in homes and workplaces. The abundance of Tea and coffee houses and

cafes that we see today are a reminder of Colonial era. Tea was introduced by British Colonists in 1930's in Lahore. It was distributed for free at that time. According to M. H. Tarar and Prof. Dr. S. Mehmood tea was introduced as a drink with medicinal value. Drinking tea in porcelain became fashionable soon after that. The tea stall was installed at railway station before Partition. Tea had become such a vital ingredient of every household that in 1971, after separation of East Pakistan from West Pakistan, West Pakistan started importing tea from all over the world (Rehman, Rani, Akmal, & Khan, 2012).

Various tea brands raided the Pakistani market like Isphahani and Lipton tea (*figure 1*).

During British Raj Lahore had plenty of Hotels and Restaurants located mostly at The Mall. Literary and artistic activities revolved around the cafes and restaurants. Pak Tea house, also located at the Mall Lahore, was established in 1940s by Boota Singh which was a famous meet up point for the literati; critics, poets and artists spent hours there sipping endless cups of tea. Since the inception of Pakistan in 1947 till today tea has become major component of socializing. From households to workplaces, traditional Lahori chai (tea) to Hi- Tea in Hotels, and cafés tea has become inherent constituent of Pakistani culture.

Changes in Foods and Mannerisms:

Fondness for English breakfast and afternoon tea mannerism was adopted by local elites; the impact has continued ever since. Afternoon tea with tea essentials became fashionable and popular for upper class. Tea Crockery (Teapots, milk pots, sugar pots, tea cups and saucers) and Trolley Setting was introduced. That is how Tea became a thing of fashion and merit replacing the traditional drink *Lassi* especially at breakfast time (Khalid, Personal Communication, April 22, 2019).

M.H. Tarar, Z.A. Khan, M. Akber and K.Asif posited that British breakfast is the strongest influence on Pakistani society. British introduced foods like cereals, bread, butter, jam and variety of eggs in breakfast replacing *Desi Nashta*. According to Dr. K. Khalid, Z.A. Khan and M. Akber before the Raj Bakar khani and khatai were local bakes. Bread, muffin, cake, patties, cookies and biscuits all were introduced during British times (*figure 2*). Shezan Restaurants and Bakers, in vibrant memory of Experts M.H. Tarar, and M.Akber, were famous for offering English cuisine like Fish and chips as reported by Dr. K. Khalid, M. Akber and Z. Khan.

The Bakes are now widely consumed nationwide as an inseparable component of Pakistani cuisine. In fact, Baking has also become a part of domestic cooking as well in Pakistan since long. The impact seeped Pakistani cuisine so much that there are multiple industrial brands in Pakistan that make variety of bread, buns, biscuits and cakes and deliver them across the nation. All types of bakery items are offered through bakery outlets, restaurants, hotels etc. even made to order online services are also offered via individual businesses.

Not just foods and recipes changed but a change in dining mannerisms also happened. In typical Indian household food was eaten mostly in kitchen while sitting on low height *Peerhas*. The culture of Dining table, peculiar table settings and table linen were foreign additions (*figure 3*) which gradually penetrated and became an imperative component of our food culture as imitating English mannerism equaled being modern, civil and sophisticated (Dr. S. Mehmood, Personal Communication, May, 2019).

With the consumption of tea, cigarette/cigar/pipe smoking was also introduced by the British and quickly became a part of urban culture bringing Ashtrays to the modern living-rooms (Dr. S. Mehmood, Personal communication, May, 2019).

It is observed that smoking was promoted in the 30s and 40s through advertisements. Initially smoking was endorsed as a healthy habit and Capstan was the leading brand (*figure 4*). In mid 90s Tobacco industry faced some restrictions and bans on promotions due to hazards of smoking. Yet the smoking culture not only penetrated in every stratum of society but also flourished over the years for its stylistic appeal and to develop a likeness with their British masters from colonial days (M. H. Tarar, Personal Communications, May, 2009).

Socio-Economic impact on cuisine:

The other theme that evolved from collected data was the socio-economic impact of Colonial era on our local cuisine.

Addition of Industrialized Processed Food to the Local Cuisine:

Francis J. Mitchell a British Industrialist founded the company in 1933 and established a fruit farm on 720-acre plot leased from Punjab government. Initially, named as Indian Mildura Fruit Farms but after partition, in 1948, the company's name was changed to Mitchell's Fruit Farms Ltd and the brand name "MITCHELLS" became the exclusive property of the Pakistani company (Mitchells, 2020; Khan, 2019). Jams, Jellies, chutneys like ketchup and other sauces, pickles and wide range of flavored drinks that are produced by this company set the trend for other food companies like Shezan, Shangrila, National and numerous others are making processed food like the British's

Mitchell's for many years now. (*figure 5*) all these industrially manufactured processed food items have become a staple in everyday diet of a common household in Pakistan.

A range of non-alcoholic beverages like soft drinks got introduced in the Indian markets in 19th century by the British (Emmins, 1991). By 1913, more than 150 licensed soda factories were operating in India already (Patel, 2016). The trend went to become a must-have ingredient to the cuisine of Pakistan leaving a socio-economic impact on all classes of society. Soft drinks replaced home-made drinks. Also offering soft drinks to guests became more modern and prestigious thus upsetting domestic budgets.

As the industrially manufactured food and processed food found its way to the dining tables of almost every household, the sociological and economic impact is hard to ignore. It has become a matter of prestige and fashion to have processed cereals, meats, jams, sauces etc. for everyday meals, a cultural drift which impacted and burdened every household by upsetting the budgets and widening a sociological divide (Patel, 2016; Z.A. Khan, Personal communications, May, 2019).

Introduction of New Food Crops:

According to Gazetteer of the Lahore District year 1883-84 "*Potatoes, Cabbage and peas are the English Vegetables. The most profitable vegetable is Potato, Onion and Chili.*"

Potatoes are widely consumed in Pakistan. It is now an indispensable Part of Pakistani Cuisine. Potato always remained a low-cost vegetable even during the Raj. Due to its cost, satiety value and taste it is widely consumed by all socioeconomic levels. Potatoes are a central ingredient used in the food and hotel industry in countless types over decades and are prepared in both English and traditional ways (Ahmad, 2012; Zafar, 2013). Potatoes are also industrially processed to make potato chips and snacks, also an imported cuisine item, in Pakistan. Lays, Super crisps, Kolson and Smiths are the leading brands of processed Potato chips.

Children and youngsters are the main clients for this food industry. These processed food items and snacks consume a large chunk of domestic budgets.

Socio-psychological Impact on cuisine:

Another theme that evolved from collected data was the socio-psychological impact of Colonial era on our local cuisine.

Social Entertainments:

Social entertainments of British in India were mostly imported from Britain. Dinner parties, tennis parties, fancy dress shows, morning coffee parties, picnics, dances, Sunday lunches and regimental balls (*figure 6*) were common British practices in India (Gimour, 2017). Colonial and post-colonial migrations of the twentieth century developed those formations into a restaurant culture (Zubaida, 2009).

Faletti's Hotel Lahore is the oldest Colonial style hotel built by an Italian Giovanni Faletti in 1880. The hotel offered British style services and food. Presently the legacy of these suites is maintained as it is.

Inter-Continental Hotel was originated in 1964 and renamed as Pearl-Continental in 1985, has branches all over the country. PC hotels are Colonial style hotels and are best known for maintaining International standard facilities for the inland and foreign customers and serve food for all kinds of customers. During an interview with an Executive Chef Z. A. Khan at Gymkhana Club who also served in PC Hotels stated that British created a class and culture difference between themselves and locals; gradually this difference was transferred to elites of the society who were close to British and wanted to adopt that culture became club members. Clubs were established by them for socializing. Social groups were formed who used to share their views on different subjects. These clubs offered food, entertainment and leisure time activities to its members. Casinos, bars, food and drinks were part of these clubs. Lahore Gymkhana Club is one of such establishments working since Colonial times i.e., 1878. After Partition Casinos, Ball dances and beer consumption remained a public affair and is still followed in Pakistan's modern cities like Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi. M.H. Tarar informed that Quaid-e-Azam Library's main hall was famous for New Year night ball during 70's. Balls were common even after Partition and were arranged on special occasions like Independence Day, New Year night or Christmas etc. Civil Services officers, politicians and businessmen were the common guests and visitors.

There was a cultural shift in 70s. M. Akbar, M. H. Tarar and S. Mehmood said that it was possibly due to separation with East Pakistan in the name of cultural diversity, interaction with the outer world, Television becoming popular and impact of hippie way of life. Taboos became norms in 70s even in food. Earlier on consuming Barbeque was even considered as immoral in noble families for the notion that the one who consumes such food must drink beer with it. Tikka shops were mostly located in Red Light area. Till Bhutto's regime Pakistan had a very relaxed socio-political. One can witness liquor drinking in dramas also, but there was a great cultural jolt during Zia ul Haq regime (Khalid, Personal Communication, April 22, 2019). In fact, the first ban on alcohol and gambling was imposed by the liberal Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1977 (Paracha, 2018; Shah, 2003) later endorsed in

letter and spirit by President General Zia. (Paracha, 2018). Z.A. Khan, K. Khalid and M.H. Tarar state that the ban, this British introduced culture is still followed as a private affair and alcohol is still consumed by the visitors in clubs and hotels, that's why these facilities have Bars.

A drift in collective mindset of society:

India was governed as a military dictatorship and profitable enterprise, moderated by philanthropic impressions developed and adapted from British liberalism and radicalism. Settlers were primarily the agents of British civilization and mindset who took with them British tastes and values (Johnson, 2003).

The British colonists used Education to turn a small elite into imitation Englishmen. A somewhat larger group was trained and educated to be raised as government clerks. This new elite adopted a Western life-style by embracing the English language and English schools which helped establishing a formal and Victorian Society (Maddison, 2013).

This educated and elite buffer class learnt to mimic the ways of its masters to satisfy the need to feel superiority that British enjoyed being in India. The ethno-religious-cultural diversity in all facets of modern society is a continuation of the legacy of the British Raj (Rahman, & Kahn, 2018) The British, being a capitalist and globalizing empire, had far reaching effects on "Indian food" and mannerisms (Zubaida, 2009). The idea of a meticulously detailed white pristine household was maintained by 'memsahibs' in colonized lands (Fletcher, 2003). Memsahibs were always expected to espouse a proper code of conduct that was becoming of colonizing women. They relied heavily on the services of local servants for this purpose. The mistress-servant relationship in the colonial household is the story of racial and gender roles as well as class and caste in India. All these serving Indians became the careers of hybrid cuisine and mannerisms for all times to come (Leong-Salobir, 2011).

British created this division in society to enslave people's minds to further their own rule. Their subjects got salaries and pensions by British. Their kids used to get international Projects. British had a great impact on the elites, bureaucrats and politicians. On the one hand they labeled locals as savages and denigrated local cuisine as unrefined food. On the other hand, they relied on local chefs for their services in households and clubs. The impact of British slavery is imprinted in the minds of our people as the people eagerly embraced much of British culture in their cuisine and service in households as well as commercially. The British gave an inferiority complex to our nation. They systematically did that because they could not rule over proud nation. The people were hammered by putting big cross on their achievements, intelligence and wisdom (Maqsood & Imran).

All the experts Dr. K. Khalid, K. Asif, M. Akber, M.H. Tarar, and Z.A. Khan commented that *Farshi* system was totally abolished in the favor of table-setting. Eating with knife and fork and concept of written menu came with British (Ahmad, 2012).

The British colonists had a lasting impact on the lives and mind-sets of people of India. Their attitude of superiority crushed the self-confidence of people. More than half a century after freedom, the young generation of the state sometimes expresses the belief that it would have been better if the nation was still run by British colonial tenet (Saleem & Rizvi, 2011)

Discussion and Conclusion

The organization, administration and presentation of British Colonists was noteworthy. The themes that emerged from collected data were cultural, socio-economic and socio-psychological impact of Colonial Era on Pakistani Cuisine and cuisine practices. British Colonial Era has a great impact on Pakistani cuisine. From observation and investigation, it is concluded that British had introduced multiple foods and a distinct food culture to the sub-continent. English Tea and English breakfast (Gimour, 2017) (Ahmad, 2012) along with the related paraphernalia become essential part of culture (G.C.Walker, 2006; Nevile, 2016) substituting local drinks, *desi nashta* and *farshi* system as endorsed by Dr. K Khalid and M. H. Tarar (Personal Communications). Bakery products, Potato as a crop (G.C.Walker, 2006; Leong-Salobir, 2011) Industrial and processed food and preserves like jams, jellies, sauces and squashes in India (Prabhu, 2019) and the impact continued and grew after Partition in Pakistan has a substantial cultural and socio economic impact as quoted by Z.A. Khan, Dr. K. Khalid (Personal Communication). A factor that contributed in this penetration was the affordability of these items as they are easily affordable for every socio-economic levels as suggested by Z.A. Khan, M.H. Tarar, Dr. K. Khalid and M. Akbar (Personal communication). Tea although was a cash crop for the British as it was introduced to the society for commercial purposes (Memon, 2017). Clubs, smoking, hospitality industry, and tableware are all the elements that were introduced by the British to local cuisine (Leong-Salobir, 2011) that gradually got assimilated in the society even after partition and became part of Pakistani food culture. Psychologically, British created a divide in society to enslave people's minds for their stronger rule and had a lasting impact on the lives and mind-sets of people of India that continues till date (Ahmad, 2012). Their superior attitude crushed the self-confidence of people as the people eagerly contained much of British ethos in their cuisine and service in households and at commercial level (Imtiaz, 2018), explicated by A. Khan, M.H. Tarar, Dr. K. Khalid, K. Asif and M. Akbar (Personal communication). Clubs (Leong-Salobir, 2011) as an example

in Pakistan still promote the same class-based culture as was practiced by the British and such practices have left a lasting social, cultural, economic and psychological impact on Pakistani society and its cuisine stated Z.A. Khan (Personal communication).

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Figure 1. Tea Company advertisement, *The Pakistan Times*, 1948, photograph taken by author.



Figure 2. Promotional ad of Bread Company, *The Pakistan Times*, 1956, Photograph taken by Author.

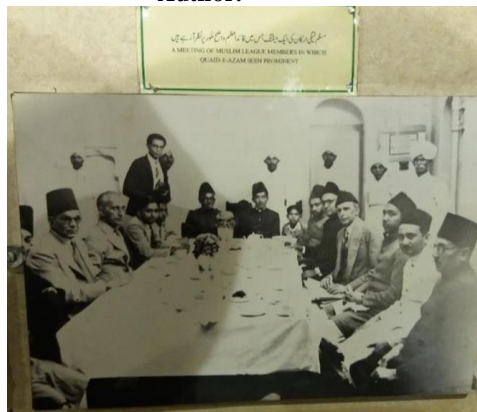


Figure 3. Western style table setting during Muslim league Meeting, 1947, Courtesy Lahore Museum Gallery.



Figure 4. *Pakistan Tobacco Industry ad, The Pakistan Times, 1972, Photograph taken by Author.*

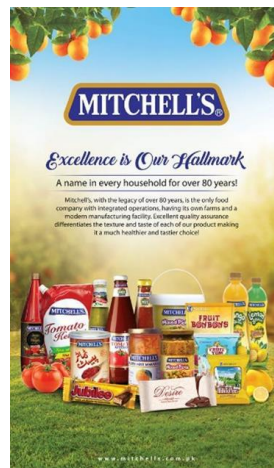


Figure 5. *Products Process by Mitchell's Fruit Firm, Photograph retrieved from Mitchell's official website.*

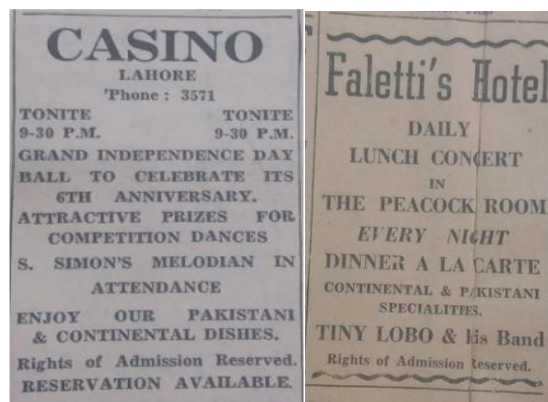


Figure 7. *Independence Day Ball, 1953 and Concert at faletti's ,1956, The Pakistan Times, Photograph taken by Author.*