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### Exploring the culinary heritage: A study among the Anglo-Indian community

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#### Abstract

Culinary heritage of any country state or region backs history of many years. It may be influenced by culture, socio economic background and cultural heritage. The Anglo Indian community has a mix of culture which they acquired from British, Portuguese, Dutch, and other European settlers with local Indian communities, and their cuisine have a cultural bond with the Indian culture. The study entitled "Exploring the culinary heritage: a study among the Anglo-Indian community" was undertaken with the objectives such as, to analyse food habits and consumption pattern, to identify culinary practices of Anglo-Indian community and to find out the prevalence of diseases. The study was conducted in Kochi where Anglo Indians were more easily available such as Fort Kochi, Vypin and Moolankuzhi etc. A total of 50 sample were selected, sampling procedure was snowball sampling. The data was collected using interview method, with the help of self-developed interview schedule. The majority of the population surveyed follows a non-vegetarian diet with three regular meals a day. Rice remains the universal staple, along with widespread consumption non-vegetarian protein sources. Fruits and vegetable consumption was sufficient. Beverages were coffee and tea, while alcohol, particularly wine, sees notable weekly consumption. Traditional breakfast items such as dosa, sāmbar, idly, and Omlet are still highly favoured, while dinner shows a shift toward lighter options. The popularity of dishes like Vindaloo, raw salads, and Anglo-Indian favourites such as Bull's Eye and chutneys suggests a fusion of cultural tastes and an openness to varied cuisines. The use of spices was deeprooted in regional flavours. In essence, while the community shows strong ties to traditional food habits, there is a clear and growing trend toward health-conscious choices and culinary adaptability, influenced by both cultural exposure and modern health priorities.

**Keywords:** Culinary heritage, Anglo Indian community, flavours, traditional food habits

#### 1. Introduction

Food is the basic necessity of an individual. Each area of world have different types of foods which are basically the outcome of cultural influences. India have people with wide variety of culture and culture based foods too. The different communities have different food, their culinary heritage varies due to various factors. The cuisine is rich in flavor enriched with the culture mix of Britain and Indian. Though there are traditional foods preferred by Anglo Indians, the foods had been adapted to suit our cultural and climatic conditions. Kochi have large number of Anglo Indians, who is mostly found in areas such as Fort Kochi, Vypin and Eloor etc. the main focus on Fort Kochi may be due to their colonial past. The history behind the cuisine traces all the way back to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, when the English soldiers were trying to adapt to the food setting in India and refused to do away with soup being a part of their meal. The Anglo Indian cuisine is enrich with the use of various spices, which are good for health. The use of vinegar and tamarind for tendering the preparations. Variety chutney, meat ball curry are famous Anglo Indian dishes.

#### 2. Materials and Methods

The area selected for the study was Fortkochi, Vypin and Moolamkuzhi. The objectives set were to study Food habits and consumption pattern and to find out the culinary practices of Anglo Indian community. The sample size was fifty and they were selected using snowball sampling. The tool used to collect data was interview schedule.

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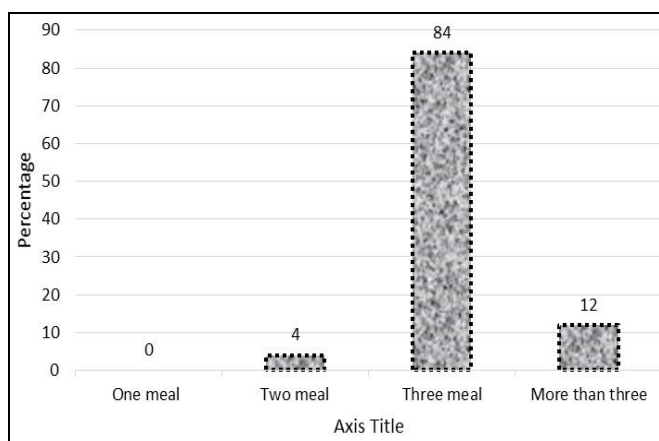
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An interview schedule was developed to systematically collect information about the food habits and consumption patterns of Anglo-Indians, ensuring consistency across all interview. The use of a pre-tested interview schedule enabled the researcher to maintain focus and gather in-depth qualitative data relevant to the cultural and dietary practices of the Anglo-Indian community. (Kothari, 2004) <sup>[2]</sup>. The prepared interview schedule was used to collect data the tool comprised of questions to elicit information's related to food habits, consumption pattern, culinary practices and health issues.

### 3. Results and Discussions

The results of the study is furnished in following tables and figures.

#### Food habits and consumption pattern



**Fig 1:** Daily meal frequency among respondents

The above figure 1 shows that majority (84%) had three meal a day, followed by three meals per day by 12% and only 4% had two meals a day. The figure below shows the diet preference that entire sample was non-vegetarian.

**Table 1:** Consumption of traditional Anglo Indian dishes

Dishes	Daily	Weekly	Occasionally
Ball Curry	Nil	12%	48%
Vindaloo	24%	44%	24%
Jalfrezi	2%	2%	58%
Dolly's Fish Curry	8%	14%	42%
Fish moilee	16%	28%	10%
Bull's eye	66%	34%	Nil
Chops and cutlets	18%	20%	18%
Mulligatawny Soup	Nil	4%	32%
Kedgerie (kitcheree)	Nil	Nil	36%
Deville Eggs	10%	6%	32%
Chutneys and Pickles	56%	14%	6%
Soups	2%	20%	20%
Meat and veg stew	24%	58%	Nil
Veg curries	24%	42%	Nil
Fried vegetable	20%	44%	Nil
Pork chaps	Nil	26%	16%
Coconut rice	2%	8%	26%
Sandwiches	24%	24%	22%
Pan rolls	6%	22%	24%
Salads	58%	42%	Nil
Liver fry	Nil	10%	40%

\*Multiple response

Bull's Eye stands out with 66% consuming it daily and the

rest weekly, showing it's a highly favoured food item. Salads were consumed daily by 58% and 42% weekly, Chutneys and Pickles were consumed daily by 56%. Meat and Veg Stew is a weekly favourite with 58%, while Veg Curries and Fried Vegetables were high in weekly consumption, at 42%. Vindaloo was consumed by 44% weekly and 24% daily. India has a rich and highly varied cuisine, and its various diets are strongly related to social identity, religion and other cultural factors (Vecchio MG, *et al.* 2014) <sup>[1]</sup>.

**Table 2:** Preferred menu for breakfast by sample

Menu	Percentage (%)
Bread, Butter, Jam	66.0
Omlet	64.0
Boiled Banana	10.0
Dosa	74.0
Idly	66.0
Sambar	72.0
Upma	24.0
Poori Masala	14.0
Paratha	16.0
Appam	30.0
Idiyappam	28.0
Porridge	20.0
Puttu	60.0
Kadala	60.0
Dal Curry	64.0
Maggie	28.0
Macaroni	28.0

\*Multiple response

Dosa (74%) and Sāmbhar (72%) was the most preferred breakfast by the community, followed by Bread butter jam (66%) and idly (66%), Omlet by 64%, followed by puttu. The results reveal that there was a strong preference for traditional South Indian dishes like dosa, idly, sambar and puttu. Items like bread, omlet, and dal curry show the influence of modern and North Indian options. While boiled banana, poori, and paratha was used less, this may be due to health awareness, or time constraints. Convenience foods like Maggie and macaroni, was also preferred by 28%. Studies shows that food intake and meal pattern are markers of nutrient intake and diet quality (Kerver *et al.*, 2006) <sup>[8]</sup>. Meal patterns affect resting energy expenditure, body fat, bone density, serum cholesterol and many other situations.

**Table 3:** Preferred menu for lunch by sample

Menu	Percentage (%)
Rice	100.0
Fish Curry	54.0
Roasted beef & Potato	26.0
Fish cutlet & salad	82.0
Variety Rice	100.0
Boiled vegetables	60.0
Raw Salad	96.0
Omlet	100.0
Soup	42.0
Vindaloo	92.0
Chicken & Rice stew	70.0
Prawn curry	68.0
Butter Chicken	84.0

\*Multiple response

Rice was consumed by everyone. Alongside plain rice, variety rice (like lemon rice, tomato rice, etc.) were also preferred. Another item, omlet was used by all. Raw Salad-96%,

Vindaloo-92% this spicy, tangy dish often prepared with pork or chicken is surprisingly popular. Butter chicken (84%), fish cutlets with salad (82%) were also preferred. Prawns curry (68%), fish curry (54%) and boiled vegetable (60%) was also preferred. Meanwhile, items like soup and beef-based dishes are less preferred. According to the study conducted by Desmond E Williams *et al.*, (2001) <sup>[10]</sup> shows that the Anglo Indians consumed less carbohydrates when compared with Indian meals.

**Table 4:** Preferred menu for evening tea by sample

Menu	Percentage (%)
Tea	38.0
Coffee	44.0
Black coffee	20.0
Black Tea	20.0
Milk	26.0
Juice	10.0

\*Multiple response

Coffee (44%) tops the list, followed by tea (38%) these two were widely used daily. Milk (26%) ranks moderately. About 20% avoided milk, for health reasons Black Coffee and Black Tea (20% each) Juice (10%) shows the least preference.

**Table 5:** Preferred menu for evening dinner by sample

Menu	Percentage (%)
Bread	50.0
Chapathi	80.0
Rice	10.0
Dosa	10.0
Salad	40.0
Omlet	30.0
Soup	20.0
Pasta	28.0
Macaroni	28.0

\*Multiple response

Majority preferred Chapathi (80%) followed by Bread 50%, Salad by 40% Omlet by 30% Omlet remains a favourite item. Pasta & Macaroni by 28% each. Soup by 20% Rice & Dosa by 10% each.

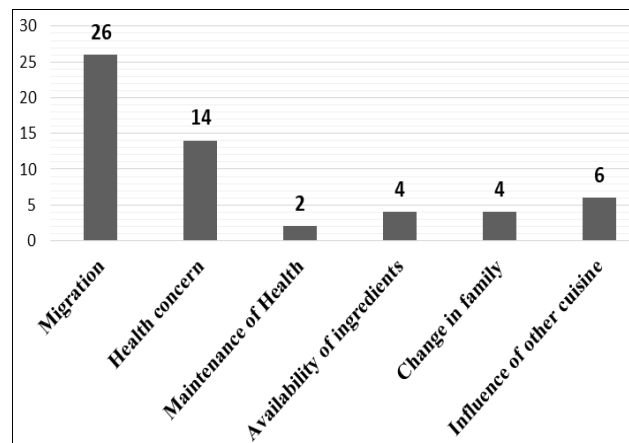
**Table 6:** Important spices used

Spices	Percentage%
Turmeric	62.0
Cumin	62.0
Coriander	62.0
Pepper	84.0
Cinnamon	74.0
Clove	80.0
Cardamom	62.0
Bay leaves	62.0
Mustard	62.0
Red chilli	62.0
Nutmeg	78.0
Mace	62.0
Fenugreek	67.0
Star anise	88.0
Curry leaves	90.0

\*Multiple response

Majority consumed curry Leaves (90%) and Star Anise (88%) followed by Pepper (84%), Clove (80%), and Nutmeg (78%) also shows a preference for warm, spices often used in curries, masalas, and festive dishes. Cinnamon (74%) and

Fenugreek (67%) follow, both known for their distinct taste and digestive benefits. Spices including turmeric, cumin, coriander, mustard, red chilli, cardamom, bay leaves, and mace have continuous use at 62%. Vasanthi Siruguri & Ramesh V Bhat (2015) reveals that Maximum number of spices was consumed at weekly frequencies. Red chillies and turmeric were the most frequently consumed spices by 100% of the households. The mean total intake of spices was observed to be higher through dishes consumed daily.



**Fig 2:** Reasons for change in eating habits

Migration was the important factor by 26% for changing their dietary habits. Health concerns (14%) are another reason, Influence of other cuisines (6%). Availability of ingredients (4%) and change in family structure (4%) also reflected.

### Presence of health issues

**Table 7:** Presence of health related issues

Diseases	Participants	Percentage
Obesity	7	14%
Type 2 Diabetes	4	8%
Fatty liver disease	2	4%
High blood pressure	9	18%
Heart Disease	1	2%
Tooth decay	1	2%
Alcohol Dependency	2	4%
Osteoporosis	2	4%

\*Multiple response

High blood pressure (18%) followed by Obesity (14%) might be due to changing food habits or lack of physical activity. Type 2 Diabetes (8%) Fatty liver disease, alcohol dependency, and osteoporosis was reported by 4% of sample. Heart disease and tooth decay (2% each) are the least reported, though still noteworthy due to their long-term impact.

### 4. Conclusion

The study on “Exploring the culinary heritage: a study among the Anglo-Indian community” can be concluded as the sample mostly preferred three meals a day. Bull’s eye, salads, chutneys, stews and Vindhaloo was the most preferred traditional dishes used by the community. Dosa, Bread butter jam, and omlet was preferred for breakfast. For lunch rice was preferred along with salads, vindaloo, and butter chicken. Tea and coffee was mostly preferred beverages. Preferred items for dinner include chappathi and bread. Inclusion of variety of spices was mostly observed in the culinary practices by Anglo Indian community. A healthy life style was followed by the

community.

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