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## **Gastronomic identity and culture: A comparative study of Mewar and Marwar regions in Medieval Rajasthan - 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century**

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### **Abstract**

From the medieval period, the culinary practice and consumption continued and which later became a part of popular cultural tradition under the Rajputs of the Mewar and Marwar region from the 16th century to the 18th century. We found that the study of the gastronomic culture and practices was an interesting way to not only look at the culinary practice of Rajputs (Elite class) but also of the other rural communities and members of the society.

This study is based on the primary literature and some secondary sources such as books, journals and articles which dealt with the broader theme of the gastronomic culture of the Mewar and Marwar region. India's diversity reflects the complex picture of culture of India. Food is a significant part of Indian culture because of its sophisticated cuisine identity and recipes that reflect the culture, art, knowledge, innovation and techniques. In this paper, we will briefly look at the Rajasthani cuisine which is diverse in nature that varies with the region having different seasons. These also reflected the demographic change, climatic conditions, culinary practice, and regional variation. Indian cosmopolitan cuisine varies from vegetarianism to non-vegetarian, spices to desserts. Rajasthani food doesn't include vegetarianism but also many traditional dishes of Mewar including non-vegetarian dishes. This paper will try to critically analyse that how the gastronomic culture became a popular culture among the Rajputs in the 16th-18th century, the role of culinary tourism, consumption pattern of elite and non-elite class and the role of gender and also highlights the lavish obtrusive lifestyle of the royal family. This research also delves into a critical understanding of the culinary practice that was not only meant for consumption purposes but beyond that in the society. To conclude, we found that Rajasthani cuisine characterizes the food culture of the particular region as in the case of Mewar and Marwar region. Moreover, it was important to note that it was an already existing culture that was influenced and became popular in those centuries. This paper attempts to look at the culinary consumption practices as a part of popular cultural identity.

**Keywords:** Gastronomic culture, critically analyse, Mewar including

### **Introduction**

Undoubtedly, one of the most important and generous qualities of the people is cooking the food. There is a difference between the cooking and cuisine as cooking means a variety of foods prepared with the techniques and methods and cuisine as having food planning techniques that helps in making the food in the solid form. Indian cuisines were specific to a regional state and this regional food in India was a delightful splendid feast. The Mewar and Marwar have their own ways, methods and techniques of cooking. The food presented to us shows the geographical features of the state behind it. Food culture is one of Rajasthan's attractions in the Indian nation. From the royal kitchens of Mewar and Marwar, we see the emergence of various traditional new dishes. The culinary traditions that produce the exotic dishes were a part of the cultural heritage that promotes the cultural diversity of the nation.

### **Literature Review**

Marwar is a Jodhpur region located in the southern part of the western Rajasthan. Marwar derives from the Sanskrit word '*maruwat*' which means 'regions of desert'. This region includes the districts of Marwar, Barmer, Jalore, Pali, Nagaur, Jodhpur. The founder of this region was Rao Jodha from the dynasty of Rathors in the western region. Mewar is a region in south-central Rajasthan. It includes the districts of Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Rajsamand, Udaipur, Jhalawar, Neemuch. The famous dynasty of this region was Sisodias. G.N. Sharma in his book *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*

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analyses that geography of both the regions that plays an important role as inhabitants depended on its nomadism that was practiced in the Marwar region while central part did the cultivation <sup>[1]</sup>. So, geography also affected the eating habits of the people. Animal husbandry is important for several communities as it was their main source of occupation and we know that most of the dairy products like milk, buttermilk and clarified butter were used in preparing the Rajasthani meal. But it was Gitanjali Gurbaxani who in her book *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination* highlighted that it was the war condition of the region that influenced the regular habits of the inhabitants as food without heating was preferred by their necessity <sup>[2, 3]</sup>. The important food item in the battlefields that was used by the soldiers is *batti*, i.e, wheat dumplings as they leave these *baatis* under the hot sand, so that they would be ready by the time when they return from the battlefields <sup>[4]</sup>. Due to the wars and natural calamities like famines, it created the situation for an unordinary culinary practice that was fascinating for the people of the Indian subcontinent.

G.N. Sharma and Harrington both of them rightly pointed out that the climate conditions and demographic change was further reflected in the taste of the foods, in texture, aromas and exoticness <sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, we understand that Rajasthani cuisine is the result of geographical, historical and cultural and social backgrounds.

We all know that Rajasthan was the important producer of the spices including the seed spices such as coriander, fenugreek and cumin. M.S. Rathore and N.S. Shekhawat in their journal, "Incredible Spices of India: From Traditions To Cuisine" mentions about the spices for which the Jodhpur region, Marwar is well known. Spices were commercial crops for both domestic and international consumption <sup>[6]</sup>. From K.D. Dubey's book *The Indian Cuisine*, we get to know about some of the important common herbs and spices used in Indian cooking such as turmeric, cumin seeds, clove, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, tamarind and mustard seed <sup>[7]</sup>. In my opinion, based on the above journal, these spices make up the powerful ingredient in the royal recipes and this is the main reason that the royal families from the medieval era to the present times look up to the royal recipes so that they serve the pure authentic taste to the foreigners or tourists. Also, it serves several purposes like a popular continued heritage as well as profits from it and both were interlinked. It is the heritage food that attracted the tourists to this place and further promoted the culinary tourism of the regions. The food culture of these regions

<sup>1</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.33.

<sup>2</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai,

<sup>3</sup> p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Rajasthani Cuisine: A Fusion of Resilience- A Royal Past and Innovation*, Indian culture, <http://indianculture.gov.in>.

<sup>5</sup> R.J. Harrington, "Defining Gastronomic Identity- The Impact Of The Environment And Culture On Prevailing Components, Textures And Flavours In Wine And Food", *Journal Of Culinary Science And Technology*, 4/ 2:3, 2005, p.130.

<sup>6</sup> M.S. Rathore, N.S. Shekhawat. "Incredible spices of India: From Traditions To Cuisine", *American-Eurasian Journal of Botany*, 1:3, IDOSI publications, 2008, pp.85-88.

<sup>7</sup> K.D. Dubey, *The Indian Cuisine*, PHI Learning Private Limited: New Delhi, 2011, p.184.

also promoted the business and trading activities. Dr. Durgesh Batra and Saurabh Sharma in the paper *Culinary*.

**Inheritance of Rajasthan:** Its Role In Rajasthan Tourism And Economy Intensification" also throws light on the food industry that further promoted the tourism and economy of the region. The speciality and delicacy of the traditional food attracted the tourists from the different regions that shows that the hospitality industry interlinked with culinary tourism <sup>[8]</sup>. The tourism industry impacted the financial as well as social, cultural life of the people of this region. The important key component between food and tourism is the traditional food items. Therefore, the combination of food and tourism reached its new height and presented regional food as a part of the tourism only.

This paragraph deals with the various traditional cuisines including vegetarian and non- vegetarian food items of the Mewar and Marwar region from the 16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the shortage of water as J.S. Rathore and Gitanjali Gurbaxani notes, most of the dishes were prepared from clarified butter (pure *ghee*), buttermilk and milk. For instance, as we all know the popular dish of the Marwar and Mewar region was *daal baati and choorma*, these boots were made from the wheat dumplings that were cooked with heaps of ghee over hot charcoal and served with the yellow daal. Other items such as the *kheechada-* made with squashed millet with some sugar and ghee, *gatte ki sabzi* and other favorable items of religious delicacy were garlic *chutneys* and red chillies <sup>[9]</sup>. Apart from this, J.S. Rathore mentions some of the very famous non- vegetarian recipes that emerge from the royal household of Marwar as well as from the hunting expedition of Mewar and that were *laal maas, safeed maas, khad khargosh and kesar murg*. Gitanjali Gurbaxani also mentions other non-vegetarian recipes like fish *jali kabab, junglee maas and keema baatis*. Other items like pickles and *chutneys* were mostly preferred as they had a longer shelf- life and could be consumed by the royal class as well as non- elite class which helps in digestion aid and also improves the health condition. These dried items like the different forms of pickles, *chutneys* and *papads* were incorporated into the culinary cuisine that can also be seen in the vibrant forms of *thalis* <sup>[10]</sup>. Now, let us discuss in the next paragraph how these non- vegetarian cuisine was influenced from the other cultures, particularly the Mughals during this time.

Mewar cuisine includes both vegetarian and non-vegetarianism while Marwari cuisine includes vegetarian cuisine as we have already discussed.

**Here, the question arises:** Does the Rajasthani cuisine was influenced from the Mughal kitchen or vice versa in the same period? The Mughal culinary practice somewhat influenced the royal kitchens of the Rajasthan region. But on the other hand, some scholars believe that the food of this region can never be matched with the Mughal cuisine or others. Lizzie Collingham argues that Rajputs have their

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Durgesh Batra; Saurabh Sharma, "Culinary Inheritance Of Rajasthan: It's Role In Rajasthan Tourism And Economy Intensification", *International Journal For Research In Engineering Application And Management (IJREAM)*, 4:1, 2019, pp. 451-452.

<sup>9</sup> J.S. Rathore, *Indian Cuisine And Culture*, University Of Huddersfield: United Kingdom, 2013, p.37.

<sup>10</sup> *Rajasthani Cuisine: A Fusion of Resilience- A Royal Past and Innovation*, Indian culture, <http://indianculture.gov.in>.

own hunting culture and also have their own hunting recipes that were having great importance among regional cuisines<sup>[11]</sup>. She went further to argue that it was Mughal culture that was influenced by the already existing Rajput culture. For instance, it was the Persian *pilau* that was infused with the spicy rice dish of India that resulted into the Mughlai *biryani*<sup>[12]</sup>. The 16th- 17th century were known for the Mughal- Rajput relation and later shaped the culinary influence of the Rajputs cuisine but little is due to the war like conditions, climatic and demographic changes<sup>[13]</sup>. In my understanding, it is partially correct as it was also the Rajput inhabitants who had influenced the Rajasthan culinary dishes because of the arid-demographic changes. Furthermore, in the upcoming paragraphs we will try to discuss the role of gender, caste, class and social.

### Cultural practice in the culinary practice of the different sections of the society

Gitanjali Gurbaxani highlighted the role of gender in preparing the regional cuisine as well as to keep it as a culinary secret. From the Chandrima Pal in her essay in scroll.in and Gitanjali Gurbaxani's argument, we notice that male and female members belonging to the royal imperial family has the equal responsibility related to the culinary practice that on one hand women were acted as the culinary secret guards while man (*khansamas*) engage in preparing the royal feast. So, based on these arguments, we can argue that the idea of gender inequality seems to be invalid here. And, the next paragraph deals with some of the common cooking techniques and methods that were used to prepare the traditional cuisine of the Mewar and Marwar region.

Food culture shows the various perspectives of the class, caste, gender, kinship ties, family lineage. Varsha Joshi in her article *Rajasthan- A Mosaic of Culture* critically analyses the geography of these regions that had the livestock population and that gives a clear sign for the caste system and social hierarchies that were prevalent in the region during this time<sup>[14]</sup>. Lizzie Collingham in the book, *Curry- A Tale Of Cooks And Conquerors* talks about the notion of caste system which wasn't applicable in the case of the Rajputs. In the caste system, the high rank or position wasn't assigned to the individual who ate only vegetarian food. Lizzie Collingham quoted the statement of the Italian wanderer, *Pietro Della Valle* who noticed that warrior class or *kshatriyas* who eat the nonvegetarian food particularly the meat " without thinking themselves prejudiced as to the degree of nobility"<sup>[15]</sup>. Lizzie Collingham mentions the diet of the Hindu Marwari which includes vegetarian cuisines as well as the roasted meat. She argues that there were certain principles of purity and impurity attached with the notion of food such as meat was regarded as the impure food while vegetarian food and grains were highly regarded that determine the individual position in the society but this was not the case with the *kshatriya* clan as their cuisine included

both of the vegetarian and non- vegetarian food<sup>[16]</sup>. It was the Rajput cuisine that reflected the royal obtrusive lifestyle of the Rajputs of Mewar and Marwar. The royal Rajputs found their leisure activity in hunting and which made way for the hunting (*shikar*) recipes. So, Dr.Durgesh Batra, Saurabh Sharma, G.N. Sharma and Gitanjali Gurbaxani pointed towards the culinary consumption of the non-elite section which includes some of the basic food items such as roti, buttermilk, *khichdi* and different *chutneys*. Therefore, The system of social hierarchy directly points to the concept of affordability and availability by the non-elite sections of the society having limited resources with them.

The traditional cooking methods of Rajasthani cuisine generally differs from one another as we can notice from the various scholarly writings. From the J.S. Rathore article *Indian Cuisine And Culture*, we get to know about the several cooking techniques that were used while preparing the food like *tadka*, *bhunav*, *dum* (steaming), *sekhna* and *dhungar* (smoke seasoning). Himanshu Rajak in his essay *Food Production Notes* tells us about the cooking equipment that was used like *tikra*- to obtained the earthly flavour of dal from claypot, *chulha*- cow dung stoves to cook the food slowly to the flavour of spices and other one was *sigri* for grilling kebabs<sup>[17]</sup>. Gayatri Singh in his article *Rajasthani Cuisine in the Traditional Cuisines of India* also differentiates in great detail the various cooking methods and techniques used to prepare the Mewari and Marwari cuisine such as<sup>[18]</sup>.

- Clay Baking - In this method, the cuisine was marinated and that was wrapped in the muslin cloth, clad with clay and then it was baked in the coal.
- Stone Roasting- here, the flat stone was placed on the hot coal. Then, the food will be grilled and a roasted dish will be prepared.
- Pit- Cooking - a small pit was dug out and wood and hot charcoal was layered up with. Food was placed and then food was covered with the coal having a breathing pipe. The food was packed in the tree leaves and cooked over on the coal.
- Dum/Steaming- this technique was used to retain the flavour, aroma and texture as food was sealed with the dough so that moisture could get into it.
  - Bhagar - it was used to enhance the boiled food. Spices were used that were added into the heated ghee to arouse the aromas and flavour of the spices.
  - Dhungar/ Smoking- The most practiced technique in Rajasthan was *dhungar*, that is hot coal kept in a small bowl that was placed in a pot and hot ghee was poured which gives us the slight flavour and smell of coal.

After discussing the consumption pattern of the different communities that pass through the trail of class, caste and gender and some common methods and techniques, we will next try to discuss the theme in great detail with the reference of primary sources.

### Primary literature

#### 1) Factors that impacted the culinary habits of the

<sup>11</sup> Lizzie Collingham, *Curry- A Tale Of Cooks And Conquerors*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2006, p.21

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p.27.

<sup>13</sup> *Rajasthani Cuisine: A Fusion of Resilience- A Royal Past and Innovation*, Indian culture, <http://indianculture.gov.in>.

<sup>14</sup> Varsha Joshi, "Rajasthan- A Mosaic of Culture", *Rajasthan The Quest For Sustainable Development*, pp.347-348.

<sup>15</sup> Lizzie Collingham, *Curry- A Tale Of Cooks And Conquerors*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2006, p.21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> Himanshu Rajak, *Food Production Notes*, 2021, <http://www.hmhub.in/rajasthani-cuisine/>.

<sup>18</sup> Gayatri Singh, "Rajasthani Cuisines", *Traditional Cuisines of India*, The Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development Publication (ITHRD): New Delhi, 2014, pp.125- 126.

## People of Mewar and Marwar in Medieval Rajasthan Climatic Conditions and Geography

The plains of Mewar were populated and cultivation also happened but most of them depended on the subsistence of cattle who can be fed only on plains <sup>[19]</sup>. G.N. Sharma in his book *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)* talks about the *Nainsi* who noted that hilly regions of the Mewar where climatic conditions weren't so good. The hilly tracts of Mewar have trees of mango, babul, gular, dhak <sup>[20]</sup>. The people living in the desert were daring in nature as they had to shift their livelihood due to the shortage of rain and lack of water sources. From the H. Beveridge translation of *The Akbarnama: History of the reign of Akbar Including And Account of His Predecessors*, we came to know that the desert sand and the wind was hot on the 28th February, 1568 in Chittor. There was scarcity of water when Akbar went on the hunting expedition and even there was no water carrier in the desert region. He was so thirsty that he lost his power of speech and he was not able to speak properly <sup>[21]</sup>. In the years of scarcity, grass was used either as fodder or food such as *karar* grass (*iseilema laxum*) is a tall and thin leaved grass used as fodder and the *bhurat* grass (*Cenchrus catharticus/biflorous*) as a *burr* grass and the size of the seeds was equivalent to size of pin's head and these seeds were grounded to used a flour in the Marwar region <sup>[22]</sup>. Richard D. Saran and Norman Ziegler in their translation of *The Mertiyo Rathors of Merto, Rajasthan: Select Translations Bearing on The History of A Rajput Family* pointed out that the famines was also spread in the Marwar region in the late 15th century and that led to the poor harvests and scarcity of food caused by Rav Varsingh's men, Jodhpur <sup>[23]</sup>. Jodhpur covers some part of the desert also. *Manucci* notes the scarcity of water as wells were so deep only little water could be drawn. The life of Rajasthan people greatly influenced by the deserts of Jodhpur. The climatic conditions were hot in Marwar, says *Jauhar*. While analysing the geography and climatic conditions, G.N. Sharma mentions that the climate had a great effect on the flora and fauna in this region <sup>[24]</sup>. The wheat is attributed to the whole Rajasthan region, especially the Marwar. They use wheat because the climatic and soil conditions were conducive and a staple diet of that region. Despite this, people have found their ways by introducing new solutions in the food culture of Rajasthan from using the berries, wild beans, millets, saffron and other dried natural products. We can find a variety of savories and curries from these regions. Also, the cuisines had less vegetables as it was a desert region which did not support much vegetation here and that is why the people of these regions found the substitutes in

<sup>19</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, pp.11-12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p.16-17.

<sup>21</sup> Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama: History of the reign of Akbar including and account of His Predecessors*, trans., H.Beveridge, Vol.2, The Asiatic Society: Calcutta, p.552.

<sup>22</sup> Richard D. Saran; Norman Ziegler, *The Mertiyo Rathors Of Merto, Rajasthan: Select Translations Bearing On The History Of A Rajput Family, 1462- 1660*, University Of Michigan: U.S.A, 2001, pp.194,248.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p.421.

<sup>24</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, pp.12-16.

the wide variety of pickles and *chutneys*. The main agricultural crops depending upon the climatic conditions were maize, barley, millet, peanuts, and other seasonal vegetables. For instance, *Ker*, the desert berry and *sangria*, beans were used in making pickles and dried vegetable dishes <sup>[25]</sup>. Due to the scarcity of water, food is either cooked in *ghee* or milk as many scholars have pointed out. In the dry region of Marwar, gram flour (*besan*) was used in the Marwari food. In my understanding, the main focus while preparing food was that it should be consumed for many days that could be eaten without rotting. Apart from the climatic conditions, food was also impacted from the battle episodes of the medieval era from the 16th to the 18th century.

## War Like Conditions

While on the siege of Chittor by Akbar, Rana strengthened the Chittor fort and provisional supply was sufficient. H. Beveridge highlighted the war- episodes like when the siege of Chittor happened, Akbar's army destroyed the remaining state including the grass that was found there <sup>[26]</sup>. We can assume that dry things that could be consumed for many days were preferred and consumed instead of freshly green vegetables. The supply of provisions was the main factor in the battlefields <sup>[26]</sup>. I agree with the H. Beveridge argument and based on his arguments, I would like to argue that it was the deciding factor for winning in the battlefield as it can make the group stronger and the opponent weaker, so food was necessary in the battlefields and what kind of that we have already discussed. In my understanding, due to war-like conditions the food supplies were generally cut down, that is why food in large quantities were already prepared that could be preserved for longer times in the storage rooms, apart from the royal kitchens in the forts of Marwar and Mewar in those centuries. Rajasthani cuisine was influenced by war- like situations in which inhabitants had to survive and also from the availability of the ingredients from the dry region as well as scarcity of water and vegetables. The food that was preferred was those items that can last for many days without heating them. Therefore, Mewari and Marwari cuisine despite having limited sources gives much more to the culinary artform.

## 2. How Rajasthani Cuisine Became A Part of Popular Culture?

### The Royal Recipes of Marwar and Mewar

The question here arises is that do we have any original recipes written by the members of royal families of Mewar and Marwar and if yes, how did we come to know about these recipes after keeping it as a culinary secret? The answer is clear that for many years we don't have any written recipes as it passes from one generation to another. Many cookmans or *khansamas* who worked in the royal kitchen had their own original recipes that were not published anywhere and this is the limitation of the paper. But in the present times, it was the descendants of the royal

<sup>25</sup> *Rajasthani Cuisine: A Fusion of Resilience- A Royal Past and Innovation*, Indian culture, <http://indianculture.gov.in>.

<sup>26</sup> Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama: History of the reign of Akbar including and account of His Predecessors*, trans., H.Beveridge, Vol.2, The Asiatic Society: Calcutta, p.464. <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p.470

family who decided to reveal and take a dig into these recipes. Gitanjali Gurbaxani's book gives us a great detail on the royal recipes of the Jodhpur and throws a light on the hunters and *rajmats* of these regions who were also the recipe hoarders. She argues that as most of the Marwaris were vegetarians so they found the substitute for the meat dishes in the form of *gatte ki sabzi* that were prepared by *khansamas* in the royal kitchens. Traditional food items present the extraordinary culinary practice of the Mewar and Marwar. In the 18th century, hunting feasts were organized in Udaipur and common people also anticipated the pleasure in meat eating [27]. Scholars argue that authentic taste depended on the key ingredients that were used and that plays a major role in any of the cuisines. These key ingredients generate the new flavours and aromas that exhibits the authenticity of Rajasthani cuisine. The common ingredients that were used in the traditional dishes were *garam masala*, coriander powder, tamarind, ginger, garlic paste, cinnamon and clove. Gram flour was the major ingredient used to make *pakora*, *gatte ki sabzi*, *dahi curry*. Dried lentils turn into *mangodi* used in a curry. Sun dried *gavarfali* were fried and mixed with the red chilli powder and salt which were served with *khichdi* as Gitanjali Gurbaxani highlighted in the book *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination* [28]. Richard D. Saran and Norman Ziegler also gave us the reference of *khichdi (khi)*, the dish prepared from the cooking of millets or wheat with various kinds of pulses [29]. On the other hand, J.S. Rathore mentioned another dish that was *Jodhpuri biryani*, a royal Rajasthani *biryani* of Jodhpur made up with dry fruits and nuts cooked in buttermilk [30]. From Marwar, *chakki ki shaag* was made from the gluten that was extracted from the wheat flour, this dish emerged from the culinary race between the Jodhpur communities and also to find the substitute of meat as it was Marwaris who invented this. Marwari cooking was also based majorly on *ghee* and *mawa* with flavoring seeds like black salt, ginger, fenugreek and *ajwain* [31]. The popular food item of theirs was *pyaaz kachori*. Thus, the Marwari population mostly prefer the *shakahari bhojan* (Vegetarian food) was cooked with some onions, coriander, cumin, ginger and garlic [32]. We can note that the Game cuisine is used as the leisure act which can be seen as beyond consumption. J.S. Rathore argues that this *shikar* was not cooked immediately after the hunt but was kept for two- three days so that meat fibers were softened and could be soft in texture when cooked. The *Khansamas* of Rajasthan invented the lip smacking recipes from lamb that included the very famous *laal maas* as red meat was marinated in a yogurt with some spices that was kept for

overnight and was prepared with the heat of the coal, *sula* known for grilled meat prepared by marinating it and then they were smoked over charcoal, *Khad Khargosh* is another royal Marwari dish prepared in summers, as meat is tender and lean, *kesar murg* (Saffron chicken) was a slow cooked dish made up from cashew, saffron, and cream [33]. Chandrima Pal quotes the Gitanjali Gurbaxani, 'the art of cooking lay in the cooking medium, the type of meat being cooked and in its freshness'. Gurbaxani also mentions the hunting recipes that emerge on expeditions as *fish jali kabab*. The origin of its name came from the grills that were carried by them while on trips. From the Marwar royals, another popular dish was *jungle maas*, the freshly slaughtered meal was cooked over a charcoal to raise the aroma and flavour of meat. The upper class of the region enjoyed the great and varied taste of food due to the available sources to them. Another favorable delicacy was the *keema baati*- having the filling of fiery mutton. The royal houses had the team of specialist cooks meant for specific dishes such as cooking for bird delicacies, another cook for *baatis*, some other cook for *laal maas*, *khad khargosh* [34]. In the 18th century in Jodhpur, on the occasion of Abhaya Singh marriage the lavish.

Contrary to this, Mewari inhabitants prefer non vegetarian food and that developed from the hunting activity of the wild animals and birds like geese, rabbit, wild boar, deer, goat by the royal families of the state in the medieval period as suggested by

J.S. Rathore and Gitanjali Gurbaxani. For instance, *safed maas*, *laal maas* and other unordinary dishes emerged from the royal household. The *maharaja* of Jodhpur arranged a special train for his guests for *shikar*. L. Collingham argues that hunting was one of the important cultures of Rajput and that is why game cuisines were preferred more and always look upto the hunting recipes of boar that feasts consisted of mutton items, *pulau* and *qabuli* [35]. There's a difference that can be found in the recipes that emerge in the royal kitchens and others that were prepared while on hunting expeditions as they were comparatively simpler from them. In my opinion, hunting expeditions was a means for the availability of sources as a better option to sustain for longer days as the kshatriya class hunted the wild boars, deers, antelope and others. According to me based on the above readings, we can analyse that while on a hunting expedition there were cooking parties, they cooked the food and eat for which people come together and created the bond of friendship over the cuisines seen as a political and social bond created over cuisine. *Maharajas* were successful in creating friendship bonds with their companions that created the socio- political environment and important decisions were taken. This suggests that hunting parties beyond entertainment were manipulating and precipitating [36]. I tried to discuss regional cuisine as the object of social

<sup>27</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.33.

<sup>28</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.10.

<sup>29</sup> Richard D. Saran; Norman Ziegler, *The Mertiyo Rathors of Merto, Rajasthan: Select Translations Bearing On The History Of A Rajput Family, 1462- 1660*, University Of Michigan: U.S.A, 2001, p.215.

<sup>30</sup> J.S. Rathore, *Indian Cuisine And Culture*, University Of Huddersfield: United Kingdom, 2013, p.33-37.

<sup>31</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.13.

<sup>32</sup> Lizzie Collingham, *Curry- A tale of cooks and conquerors*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2006, p.21.

<sup>33</sup> J.S. Rathore, *Indian Cuisine And Culture*, University Of Huddersfield: United Kingdom, 2013, pp.31-34.

<sup>34</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.13.

<sup>35</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.164.

<sup>36</sup> Pal, Chandrima, *A New Cookbook Shows There's A More To Rajasthani Cuisine Than Daal Bati Churma And Gatte Ki Sabzi*, 2018, scroll.in.

interaction and a medium of an exchange. In my opinion, doing a good turn to succor the alliance by further enhances the 'process of bond' as it has a close relationship over regional cuisine. On the contrary, it didn't balance out the social hierarchies present in the society even by the close social interactions.

Can we say that serving desserts was the medium to show hospitality towards others and having the honor for presenting a rich variety of food? The desserts were generally prepared from pure desi milk and were served along with the meal. The favourite sweet dish of Marwar is made from wheat that was cooked in a ghee known as *lapsi*. On the occasion of marriage or other religious rites, *lapsi* was prepared from the gur, ghee and wheat. Another dish prepared from condensed milk and dry fruits is *ghevar*, found specially on *teej* festival. Paanch pakwana or five sweets were also prepared on the marriage occasion. G.N.Sharma noted the consumption of betel leaves after meals as mentioned in the *rajvilasa* and also the way to show hospitality to others by offering them <sup>[37]</sup>. G.N. Sharma recorded that in the *amarsara*, daily food of Amar Singh was mentioned which includes the *phenika*, *mandika*, *ghewar*, *khajja*, *sashkuli*, raisin and date palm, milk and curd which suggests that dry fruits and milk products were also easily available and afforded by them. The long list of sweets that was prepared on the special occasion was given by Bhatta Sadasiva that includes *mashpheni*, *dadhi laddu*, *ghevara*, *kshirmodaka*, *dadhi vatika*. Apart from these, pickles and *murabbas* with papad were served in the daily meals and curd was used to digest the food <sup>[38]</sup>. The sugared and salted pickles of mangoes, cloves and lemons were made and this suggested that they can be consumed for many long days due to the dry region <sup>[39]</sup>.

### Mughal influences on the Rajput culinary practice

From the primary sources, we came to know that the Mughal had a culinary influence on the royal dishes of Mewar and Marwar due to the political and matrimonial alliance which was seen in the non-vegetarian items. Richard D. Saran and Norman Ziegler mentions the political incident of 1556, for the legitimization of *jagir*, Rav Jaimal Viramdevot, his son and his successor made an alliance with the Mughals to secure the ancestors land from other Rathor brotherhood. Jaimal paid service to the Akbar and came back to Marwar with a Mughal force under the head of Mirza Sharifuddin Hussain. Rav Jaimal's sons, Kesavadas Jamalot and his paternal nephew Nahardas Isardasot entered into the Mughal service by giving their daughter and turned into matrimonial alliance and another daughter married to his son, Jahangir <sup>[40]</sup>. H. Beveridge in his translation also gives us the reference of the Rajputs influence from the Mughals through matrimonial alliance. For instance, Raja Bharmal of the Kachwaha clan of Amber (Marwar) was loyal and provided service to the Mughal court in the 16th century. He thought of making an alliance with them and

introducing his elder daughter to the imperial court. Akbar was also eager to make this political cum matrimonial alliance and the marriage feast was organized at Sambhar <sup>[41]</sup>. This suggests the cultural, social influence of the Mughals in the Mewar and Marwar region.

There was another reference of a political incident when Akbar made the Dholpur his camp station before marching on to the Malwa and made the political alliance with the Sakat Singh, son of Rana Udai Singh <sup>[42]</sup>. This incident led to the Mughals influence on the Rajputs as both of the group needed the food to consume in the battlefields as they had to consume whatever was available at that time. Contrary to this, even when both the groups were in non-alliance state still they might be influenced with each other's culinary practice. Another incident reflecting the social relation with the Rajputs was when Akbar went on the hunt in the pargana *bari* and had hunted the tiger and deer in the Rajput state as there was no prohibition of hunting animals in their state to pay the respect to the guests. H. Beveridge noted that Akbar went hunting to find a *shikar* and went on to hunt with his hunting group on 14th January 1562 <sup>[43]</sup>. Sonal Ved, the food editor, *Vogue*

*India* presented the view that Rajputs non vegetarian cuisine inspired from the Mughal cuisine culture which involves various aspects such as slow cooking, overnight meat marinated and smoky dishes. For instance, *aat ke kabab* has all incidents which are not fresh and can be used upto one or two months like *masalas* and dry fruits and easy to carry the ingredients. *Aat ke kabab* comes from the Middle East and Rajputs were greatly influenced by Mughals and their cuisine.

This dish was the unique example of a hunted animal from its *aat* <sup>[44]</sup>. Their cuisine culture which had a Mughal influence fused into it and the development in such a way that it resulted into a widespread 'popular cuisine culture' in the Rajput society.

G.N. Sharma also tells us that Rajasthani dishes had the influence from the Mughals as we had reference of *baburbari*, *kachori* in the *rajavilasa* and *pulao*, *murabba*, *khurasani khichdi* in the *abhaya vilasa* <sup>[45]</sup>. On several occasions we found *kheer*, *sikharana* and items from milk and curd. Another popular item was *puva*, a sugared cake fried with ghee. Some of the popular dishes of the region were fried, roasted, souped dishes mentioned in *ain-i-akbari*. Other food items that had a Mughal impact were *Akbari jalebi* and *pakora* as *ain-i-akbari* mentions. Total 32 kinds of vegetables and 38 varieties of sweets were served. Some of the roasted and fried items were *seva*, *amarti*, *khurma*, *bari*, *ungoda* and *pakori*. The common dishes found in the festive occasion were *pulau*, *murabba*, *khurasani khichdi*, pudding of rice and pulses with some dry fruits like almonds and raisins <sup>[46]</sup>. Indian food is prepared

<sup>41</sup> Abul Fazl, The Akbarnama: History Of The Reign Of Akbar Including And Account Of His Predecessors, trans., H.Beveridge, Vol.2, The Asiatic Society: Calcutta, p.241-242.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.442

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p.240.

<sup>44</sup> You Tube, Lost Recipes, The Epic Channel, Season 1, Episode 2, 2019. <http://bit.ly/2061BIO>. <sup>45</sup> G.N. Sharma, Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D), Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra,1960, p.351. <sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.163.

<sup>45</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.11.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.10-14.

<sup>37</sup> G.N. Sharma, Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D), Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra,1960, p.162.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.161.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.163.

<sup>40</sup> Richard D. Saran; Norman Ziegler, The Mertiyo Rathors Of Merto, Rajasthan: Select Translations Bearing On The History Of A Rajput Family, 1462- 1660, University Of Michigan: U.S.A, 2001, p.3-4.

with attention and planning for a meal and can be seen in the texture and taste of it.

### 3) Culinary Significance: Beyond the life pleasures Culinary Practice: From the Gender Perspective

The question of patriarchal norms came forward while talking about the food identity and culture. For instance, the royal family recipes were protected by the female members of the royal household of Mewar and Marwar. These royal women share these recipes only with their daughter-in-law and not even to their daughters as they were married to other households and couldn't be trusted with these original recipes as Gitanjali Gurbaxani noted. *Khansamas* also kept the culinary secret as they did not share the recipes handed by the royal family<sup>[45]</sup>. *Khansamas* don't share their recipes but those rajas who are interested in cooking cook with them and get to know some recipes. Chandrima Pal in her essay in scroll.in pointed out that *Rajmats* was very much concerned about the daily menu of the royal household. Based on their choices of the dishes, the *khansamas* worked with their own handwritten notes with the great details of recipes. In my understanding, we are at the end of the loss as most of the royal recipes turn out to be culinary secrets which were guarded by the royal families and we might lose out on what we call as the heritage food.

The meat was cooked by the ordinary man belonging to the upper class on the *chullas* in the courtyard. Does this suggest that man knows the right flavour especially of the non-vegetarian items as they went to the hunting expeditions and knows the recipe of it and can't rely on women as it was a matter of taste? On special occasions, the Rajput man generally cooks non-vegetarian items like *kaleji*, *keema kofta*, *handi*, *butha*.<sup>46</sup> In my opinion, the idea of patriarchy and gender inequality also doesn't seem to work here as women and men work together in the royal kitchens.

**Culinary Ideas And Patterns: From The Social Perspective:** Here, the question arises: what could be the common household dishes that were prepared or eaten by the common Mewari and Marwari population and how's it different from the royal dishes? Scholars mentioned that apart from these royal dishes there were common household variations for the wheat rotis and that were *jowar ki roti*, *bajre ki roti*, *chane ki roti* as due to the natural habitat *jowar*, *bajra* and *makai* were well grown. Rice that was found in the *pulaos* of the royal family but could be part of the staple diet of the common household too<sup>[47]</sup>. Dr. Durgesh Batra and Saurabh Sharma noted the daily meal of every household that constitutes the *chatpati dal*, *tarkari*, *achar* followed by the milk products and meat items based on the availability and affordability of the Rajasthani people<sup>[48]</sup>. G.N.Sharma also noted that Hindu population mainly eat vegetarian food. According to him, the popular diet of the common people mainly the peasants and villagers were the *ghata* (boiled maize in the grinded form), *raba* (maize mixed with the curd and the thick bread). Interestingly, the

fact is that ordinary people also ate dry fruits, breads, and barley/*khichdi*. The staple food of Rajasthan for the common people is maize, barley and *bajra*. Curd which could be easily available in these dry regions. For the middle class, wheat, ghee, rice and jaggery was popular food<sup>[49]</sup>. Gitanjali Gurbaxani also tries to distinguish between the royal and ordinary plate, the former one focuses on the variety of dishes on the royal plate and later focuses on the innovative kitchen being limited in terms of green vegetables and cereals. According to her, the meal of the desert inhabitants includes the thick *bajra roti* eaten with red chilli and garlic *chutney* with a glass of buttermilk<sup>[50]</sup>. We get the varieties of Rajasthani chilli which are popular in our homeland as well as in the international markets<sup>[51]</sup>. The important subgroup of agricultural commodities was spices in the culinary art. The unique characteristics of the Rajasthani dishes is the use of spices that enhances the flavour, aroma and texture of dishes. Indian spices, an important commodity for trading practice that was exported from India to several countries.

As in the arid region, spices here were very well grown and had a more pungent taste and that is why they play an important part in the recipes that arouses the taste and smell of the dishes.

The food is the main factor in determining the social status of the group as well as distinguishes between the group identity through cultures. Varsha Joshi argues that there were only three major crops in Western India, Rajasthan were *bajra*, *makki* and *jowar* and the livestock population including the goat and sheep available in the deserted area were also dependent on the agricultural pattern<sup>[52]</sup>. And I agree with her that it was a sign of identification of the caste system.

G.N. Sharma also gives us the reference of the caste system that was prevalent in that society as traditional people take agricultural occupation and their position similar to artisans of higher category. Another group was *ahirs* who domesticated the cows and prepared *ghee*. Mainly *gujjars* were herdsmen and Brahmans can be found in royal kitchens<sup>[53]</sup>. Gitanjali Gurbaxani highlighted the caste system of the region as cooks or *khansamas* were appointed who belonged to the Brahmin caste as they were allowed to touch the food. There were norms attached to the cooking like first they had to bath and wear new clothes before entering into the kitchens<sup>[54]</sup>. This throws the light on the caste system and social hierarchy of the state.

Richard D. Saran and Norman Ziegler in their translation examines the relation between the master and servant that

<sup>49</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, pp.160-161.

<sup>50</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, pp.9-10.

<sup>51</sup> M.S. Rathore, N.S. Shekhawat, "Incredible spices of India: From Traditions To Cuisine", *American-Eurasian Journal of Botany*, 1:3, IDOSI publications, 2008, p.85.

<sup>52</sup> Varsha Joshi, "Rajasthan- A Mosaic of Culture", *Rajasthan The Quest For Sustainable Development*, p.348.

<sup>53</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, pp.95-105.

<sup>54</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.13.

<sup>47</sup> Himanshu Rajak, *Food Production Notes*, 2021, <http://www.hmhub.in/rajasthani-cuisine/>.

<sup>48</sup> Dr.Durgesh Batra; Saurabh Sharma. "Culinary Inheritance Of Rajasthan: It's Role In Rajasthan Tourism And Economy Intensification", *International Journal For Research In Engineering Application And Management (IJREAM)*, 4:1, 2019, p. 451.

was determined and expressed through the idiom of foods: it is the responsibility to feed the servants and in return expect the loyalty towards them. A Rajput who has eaten the grain or salt of anyone was indebted to them and had to pay through their services. Through the idiom of food, the expression for bonding is revealed in this lines- “Rajput, Hardas, had swallowed a bitter pill, or that the symbolic food, the land, had turned sour in his stomach”<sup>[55]</sup>. Another instance was when Rao Malde demanded an elephant. Then, Viramji said, “give the elephant to Rav Gango”. After that one Mertiyo said, “we shall not just hand over the elephants but if he would be our guest, we would feed him and give the elephant. They had food for the Malde”<sup>[56]</sup>. On one hand, we see bonding over food and on the other side it was as a sign of punishment made to oneself. Similarly, to the case of Rani Kachvahi Sahodramji who was a daughter of Kachwaha Bhimvraj Prithirajarat, Amber. She promised her husband that she will not remain alive after his death but his husband's paternal family members did not give her the permission to become a *sati*. Then, she started with the fast, refused to eat anything except buttermilk (*chach*) due to this she died after three months<sup>[57]</sup>. Richard D. Saran and Norman Ziegler argue that through food, Rajputs tried to express their relationship and in their symbolic language they use the terms like *dharti khaano* or *dharti bhogno* which means land was eaten or consumed<sup>[58]</sup>.

We had the reference of the dining practice of a community which held an important place in the society as *havalabahi* shows that if the punishment would be made out then man was not permitted to dine with the members of his community<sup>[59]</sup>. Gitanjali Gurbaxani noted that making papad was a community act and doing the chores together. This reflects that preparing food promotes social harmony and culture with each other. As these women do the work together by singing, chatting and resting. In my knowledge, friendship over food is not only limited to the men's community but also to the women community as they prepare together *mawa kachori*, *sohan papdi*, *til ladoo*, *besan barfi* and many more items. Gitanjali Gurbaxani and Mita Kapoor also give us the reference of the community dining on *sharad purnima* followed by a dress code like men had to dress up in white colour and women wear pink color. The menu had white color dishes such as cottage cheese, *safed gobi*, *white meat*, and *kheer*. The culinary practice helped the people to come and perform several activities.

Gitanjali Gurbaxani talks about the various communities and how they adapted and evolved through the cooking techniques from others while retaining their own preferences and these communities were *jains*, *maheshwari*,

*sindhi* and *Brahmins*<sup>[60]</sup>. G.N.Sharma describes the usage of *brass* that was used in the cooking utensils<sup>[61]</sup>. There are various methods and techniques that were used in the food making process. G.N. Sharma mentions the utensils used by ordinary people and the food is served in either wooden plate or *vatka* (brass cup). The cup and dishes were also made from the leaves of *khakhra* that were stitched together with the thin bamboo chips.<sup>66</sup> The exotic dishes by the *khansamas* were presented in the vessels made of precious metals made for the royal class. In my opinion, the social hierarchy is reflected in all the aspects such as in the food items of royal class and ordinary class, their occupation, cooking equipment or utensils used by them.

### **Thali Connoisseurs: From the cultural perspective**

Rajasthani cuisine characterizes the food culture of the particular region as in the case of Mewar and Marwar region. For instance, in the western region of India, wheat also works as a synonym of food in the Rajasthan region. When we talk about Indian food then we must look into the concept of *thali*- a plate that was divided among several portions which includes rice, bread and many more items. The important ingredients in Rajasthani cuisine was onion and garlic but it's a taboo in Marwari *brahmin* kitchen. The dried spices used in cooking the Mewari and Marwari food can be better seen in the *thalis*. Gitananjali Gurbaxani mentions some of the ingredients of Marwari *thali* includes the shredded ginger, fenugreek, red chili powder, coriander, dal, yogurt, rice, roti, sweet dish and papad.<sup>61</sup> *Thali* presented the assorted food items like *daal baati*, *raabadi*, *gatte sabzi*, *chavadi*, *panchkuta*, *kadhi* and *boondi*. Marwari *thali* includes most of the dishes made from gram flour-*besan* and other vegetables like *ker sangri*, *gavarfali* were also included. Both the regions had the similarity in the use of dry spices, *ghee* and cooking techniques. Hence, the regional *Thalis* presents a rich variety of food such as chutney, pickle, papad, chach and two-three varieties of vegetables.

Every recipe has its own history behind it. The outline of the food production reflected the culinary culture of this region. Rajasthani culinary traditions were preserved by Rajputs who prefer only simple things. The food identity is a national identity of the region. Culinary traditions got interlinked with the national identity or symbol and resulted into the culinary nationalism as having a sense of pride for their gastronomic culture. This cuisine culture provided the lens to know about the food history, culture, society, geography. Royal food is percolated in the masses and food evolved through traveling, availability and external influences. Mewar is a mountainous region and Marwar is a more dry region. We can see how these cuisines' culture changed from royal to ordinary class and a prestigious sign for gastronomical identity. The perception is to create the status-symbol and identities to create legitimacy so we have to look at the relation between state process and cultural process apart from political and economic processes.

<sup>55</sup> Richard D. Saran; Norman Ziegler, *The Mertiyo Rathors Of Merto, Rajasthan: Select Translations Bearing On The History Of A Rajput Family, 1462- 1660*, University Of Michigan: U.S.A, 2001, pp.191-192.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p.113.

<sup>57</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.350

<sup>58</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.350

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.33.

<sup>60</sup> G.N. Sharma, *Social Life In Medieval Rajasthan (1500-1800 A.D)*, Lakshmi Narayan Agarwal Educational Publishers: Agra, 1960, p.38. <sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p.161.

<sup>61</sup> Gitanjali Gurbaxani, *Jodhpur: An Insight To A Gourmet Destination*, Notion Press: Chennai, 2018, p.33



### Conclusion

Rajasthani cuisine is popular worldwide. In the present times, many tourists went to the Rajasthan region especially the Mewar and Marwar region for the pure authentic taste of the past that was carried by the legacies of *Maharajas*. These Rajasthani cuisines not only served in this region but also to the other parts of the Indian nation. Apart from Rajasthani regions in the present times, the Rajasthani thali served in *chokhi dhanis* organized the rustic feast serving the garlic *chutneys*, *choormas*, *rotis of wheat, millet with gatte ki sabzi*, yellow lentil with some pickles. It is a great example of having great flavors with the available spices or ingredients. Tourists having the Rajasthani traditional food, also start preparing and consuming the local foods in their own region. Therefore, Rajasthani food had a remarkable impact on the international cuisines as having the pure - authentic and exotic taste.

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