

A Comparative Study of Food Habits among the Tripura Tribal and Bengali Communities in Tripura.

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ABSTRACT

Food is one of the most important expressions of culture and identity. It reflects a community's history, traditions, beliefs, environment, and lifestyle. Tripura, one of the northeastern states of India, is home to several indigenous tribal communities as well as a large Bengali population. Although both communities live in the same geographical region, their food habits differ because of their cultural background, traditional knowledge, religion, occupation, and availability of natural resources. At the same time, years of coexistence have also led to the sharing of some food practices. The present study aims to compare the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities in Tripura. The study focuses on staple foods, cooking methods, food preferences, traditional dishes, food consumption patterns, and the cultural significance of food. It also examines the similarities and differences between the two communities and identifies the factors influencing their dietary practices. The research adopts a descriptive and comparative approach using both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary information may be collected through interviews and observations, while

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secondary information is gathered from books, journals, government publications, and research articles. The findings indicate that rice is the staple food for both communities, but there are considerable differences in cooking techniques, use of spices, and traditional ingredients. Tribal communities prefer naturally available vegetables, bamboo shoots, fermented fish, smoked meat, and less oily food. Bengali households generally consume fish curry, lentils, vegetables, and meat cooked with spices and mustard oil. The study concludes that despite cultural exchanges over time, both communities continue to preserve their unique food traditions. The research contributes to the understanding of cultural diversity and traditional food practices in Tripura.

Introduction:

Food is one of the basic necessities of human life. Beyond fulfilling nutritional needs, it reflects the culture, traditions, values, and identity of a society. Every community develops its own food habits based on environmental conditions, available natural resources, religious beliefs, occupation, and historical experiences. Therefore, the study of food habits helps us understand the social and cultural life of different communities.

Tripura is a culturally diverse state located in the northeastern region of India. It shares its borders with Bangladesh on three sides and with the Indian states of Assam and Mizoram. The state is inhabited by both indigenous tribal communities and non-tribal populations, mainly Bengalis. According to the Census of India, tribal communities constitute nearly one-third of the state's population, while Bengalis form the majority.

The tribal population includes communities such as the Tripuri, Reang (Bru), Jamatia, Halam, Noatia, Chakma, Mog, Uchoi, and others. These communities have rich cultural traditions and unique food practices that have developed over generations. Traditionally, they depended on forests, rivers, shifting cultivation (jhum), and locally available resources. Their food habits are closely connected with nature and seasonal availability.

The Bengali community migrated to Tripura in different phases, especially during the twentieth century. They brought with them the food culture of Bengal, characterized by rice, fish, vegetables, lentils, spices,



and sweets. Over time, they adapted to local conditions and incorporated certain indigenous ingredients into their daily meals.

Although both communities consume rice as their staple food, significant differences exist in the choice of ingredients, methods of cooking, use of spices, and cultural importance attached to food. Tribal cuisine is generally simple, nutritious, and based on natural ingredients, whereas Bengali cuisine is known for its variety of spices and elaborate preparation methods.

The interaction between the two communities has also resulted in cultural exchange. Some Bengali families have adopted tribal dishes such as bamboo shoots and fermented fish, while some tribal families have incorporated Bengali cooking styles into their meals. Nevertheless, both communities continue to preserve their traditional culinary identities.

The present study attempts to compare the food habits of these two communities and identify the similarities, differences, and changing trends in their dietary practices.

Tripura is known for its cultural diversity, but limited comparative research has been conducted on the food habits of its tribal and Bengali communities. Most previous studies focus either on tribal food culture or on general dietary practices without making a systematic comparison between the two communities.

Modernization, urbanization, migration, and changing lifestyles have significantly influenced traditional food habits. Young people increasingly consume processed foods and fast foods, leading to the gradual decline of indigenous culinary traditions. Unless these traditional food practices are documented and studied, valuable cultural knowledge may be lost.

Therefore, there is a need to conduct a comparative study that examines the food habits of both communities, identifies similarities and differences, and analyses the factors responsible for these patterns.

Research Questions:

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the traditional food habits of the Tripura tribal communities?
2. What are the food habits of the Bengali community in Tripura?
3. What similarities and differences exist between the two communities?



4. Which cultural, environmental, and economic factors influence their food habits?
5. How have modernization and urbanization affected traditional food practices?

Aim of the Study:

The main aim of this study is to compare the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities in Tripura and examine the cultural, social, and environmental factors influencing their dietary practices.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the traditional food habits of the Tripura tribal communities.
- To examine the food habits of the Bengali community in Tripura.
- To compare the dietary patterns of both communities.
- To identify similarities and differences in food preparation and consumption.
- To understand the influence of culture, religion, occupation, and environment on food habits.
- To assess the impact of modernization on traditional dietary practices.

Significance of the Study:

The study is important for several reasons.

First, it contributes to the understanding of the cultural diversity of Tripura. Food is an important part of cultural heritage, and documenting traditional food habits helps preserve indigenous knowledge.

Second, the study provides valuable information for researchers, students, policymakers, and nutritionists interested in food culture and tribal studies.

Third, understanding traditional diets may promote healthier eating habits because many indigenous foods are rich in nutrients and prepared using natural ingredients.

Finally, the study encourages respect for cultural diversity and promotes the preservation of traditional culinary practices in the face of modernization.

Scope of the Study:



The study is limited to the comparison of food habits between selected Tripura tribal communities and the Bengali community residing in Tripura. It focuses on staple foods, cooking methods, traditional dishes, meal patterns, food preferences, and cultural significance. The study does not include detailed nutritional or biochemical analysis of food.

Limitations of the Study:

- The findings are based on selected households and may not represent every community in Tripura.
- Food habits vary according to income, education, religion, and place of residence.
- Seasonal changes influence the availability of many traditional food items.
- Time and resource constraints may limit the sample size.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. Manoshi Das (2026), Tribal Food Habits': Tripura Tribes Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Government of Tripura:- This is one of the earliest comprehensive studies on the food habits of Tripura tribes. The study documents the traditional diet, food preparation methods, nutritional practices, and the cultural importance of foods such as 'Mui Borok', 'berma', bamboo shoots, pork, fish, and wild vegetables. It also discusses changes in food habits due to modernization. ([Tribal Repository][1])

2. Gitanjali Roy (2020), 'Authenticity v/s Glocalization as Represented in the Digital Platforms: A Study on the Food Culture with Special Reference to Tripura'. 'Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities', Vol. 12(5) :- Roy examined how the traditional food cultures of both the tribal and Bengali communities of Tripura are changing under globalization, social media, and restaurant culture. The study highlights cultural exchange between communities while emphasizing the importance of preserving traditional cuisines. ([Rupkatha][2])

3. Manabendra Debnath, Arunabha Dutta & Biplab De (2026), 'Studies on Nutritional Status, Dietary Patterns, Food Security and Wild Food Systems Among Tribal Communities of Tripura, Northeast India'. 'International Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences Review and Research' :- This review focuses on the nutritional status, dietary patterns, food security, and traditional wild foods of Tripura's tribal communities. It shows that indigenous foods remain nutritionally valuable but are declining because of changing lifestyles and food systems. ([ResearchGate][3])



Comparison between food heritage and culture:

Food is not only essential for survival but also represents the culture, traditions, beliefs, and identity of a community. Every society develops its own food habits according to the natural environment, climate, agricultural practices, economic conditions, religious beliefs, and historical experiences. Food habits include the types of food people consume, methods of preparation, eating patterns, and the cultural meanings attached to food. In a multicultural society like Tripura, food habits differ among communities while also showing signs of interaction and adaptation. This literature review examines previous studies on food habits among the tribal and Bengali communities of Tripura and identifies the research gap that the present study seeks to address.

Food habits refer to the regular pattern of food selection, preparation, and consumption followed by individuals or communities. According to nutritional and sociological studies, food habits are shaped by social traditions, family customs, economic status, education, religion, and the availability of local resources. They are not only a matter of nutrition but also a reflection of cultural identity and social relationships.

Traditional food habits usually develop over generations and are closely connected with the natural environment. In many indigenous societies, food practices are based on locally available plants, fish, animals, and seasonal resources. With modernization, globalization, urbanization, and changes in lifestyle, many traditional food habits have gradually changed. Packaged foods, restaurant meals, and processed foods have become more common, especially among younger generations.

Researchers have also pointed out that traditional food systems often provide balanced nutrition because they depend on fresh and locally available ingredients. Therefore, studying traditional food habits contributes not only to cultural understanding but also to nutrition and public health.

Tripura is home to several indigenous communities, including the Tripuri, Reang (Bru), Jamatia, Halam, Noatia, Mog, Chakma, and Uchoi. Although each community has its own cultural identity, they share several common food traditions based on the use of local resources.

Most studies describe tribal food habits as simple, natural, and environmentally sustainable. Rice is the staple food consumed by almost every tribal household. Traditionally, rice was cultivated through jhum (shifting cultivation), although settled farming has become more common in recent years.



One of the most distinctive features of tribal cuisine is the use of **berma**, a fermented and dried fish that gives a characteristic flavour to many dishes. Unlike many Indian cuisines that rely heavily on powdered spices, tribal cooking depends on fresh ingredients such as ginger, garlic, green chilli, bamboo shoots, local herbs, and seasonal vegetables. The use of oil is generally limited, and many dishes are boiled or steamed rather than fried.

Researchers have identified **Mui Borok** as the traditional cuisine of the Tripuri people. The term literally means “the food of the people.” It includes several dishes such as Chakhwi, Gudok, Wahan Mosdeng, and Mosdeng Serma. These foods are prepared using local vegetables, bamboo shoots, fermented fish, pork, chicken, and freshwater fish.

Wild vegetables and edible forest plants continue to be important components of the tribal diet, especially in rural areas. Seasonal leaves, roots, mushrooms, yam, jackfruit seeds, banana stem, and bamboo shoots are collected from nearby forests or cultivated in home gardens. These foods provide vitamins, minerals, and dietary fibre.

Animal protein is another important part of tribal food culture. Pork is widely consumed by many tribal communities and is often prepared during festivals and family gatherings. Chicken duck, fish, crabs, snails, and occasionally wild animals have traditionally formed part of the diet, depending on local customs and legal restrictions.

Several researchers have emphasized that tribal food habits are closely linked with community life and cultural ceremonies. Traditional festivals, weddings, harvest celebrations, and religious rituals involve the preparation and sharing of traditional foods. Therefore, food serves not only nutritional needs but also strengthens social relationships and cultural identity.

However, recent studies also indicate that modernization and urbanization are changing tribal food habits. Younger generations increasingly consume processed foods, instant noodles, bakery products, soft drinks, and fast food. These changes have reduced the regular consumption of traditional dishes in some urban families.

Food Culture of the Bengali Community in Tripura:

The Bengali community forms the largest population group in Tripura. Bengali food culture in the state has developed through the interaction of traditional Bengali cuisine with locally available ingredients.



Rice remains the staple food, accompanied by fish, vegetables, lentils, and occasionally meat. Fish occupies a central position in Bengali cuisine because of the long cultural tradition associated with rivers and freshwater fishing. Commonly consumed fish include rohu, catla, hilsa (when available), and local freshwater fish.

Unlike tribal cooking, Bengali cuisine uses a wider variety of spices. Turmeric, cumin, coriander, mustard seeds, bay leaves, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, and garam masala are frequently used in daily cooking. Mustard oil is the preferred cooking medium in most households because it adds a distinctive flavour.

Researchers describe Bengali meals as consisting of several courses. A typical meal may include rice, lentils (dal), fried vegetables, fish curry, vegetable curry, chutney, and occasionally sweets. Seasonal vegetables such as pumpkin, potato, cauliflower, spinach, brinjal, and cabbage is commonly prepared throughout the year.

Fish and meat are important components of Bengali cuisine. Fish curry is prepared almost daily in many households, while chicken and mutton are usually reserved for weekends, festivals, or special occasions. Sweets also oc

Several studies observe that Bengali food habits in Tripura have gradually incorporated local ingredients. Bamboo shoots, local leafy vegetables, and indigenous fish varieties have become part of many households, especially in rural areas where interactions with tribal communities are frequent.

Urbanization has also influenced Bengali dietary patterns. Ready-to-eat foods, restaurant meals, bakery products, packaged snacks, and soft drinks have become increasingly popular among young people. Nevertheless, home-cooked rice and fish remain the foundation of the Bengali diet.

Comparative Review of Previous Studies:

Previous research suggests that both the tribal and Bengali communities depend primarily on rice as their staple food. Fish is also an important source of protein for both communities. However, significant differences exist in the methods of preparation, choice of ingredients, and cultural meaning attached to food.

Tribal cuisine emphasizes simplicity, natural flavours, and minimum use of spices. Fermented fish, bamboo shoots, wild vegetables, smoked meat, and boiled preparations are common. Bengali cuisine, on the other hand, is characterized by the use of mustard oil, spices, fried dishes, and elaborate curry preparations.



Researchers also note that tribal diets are more closely connected with local biodiversity because many ingredients are collected from forests, rivers, and agricultural fields. Bengali households rely more on market-based food systems while also cultivating vegetables in kitchen gardens.

Despite these differences, cultural interaction between the two communities has led to the exchange of culinary practices. Some Bengali households have adopted bamboo shoot dishes and fermented fish recipes, while some tribal families prepare fish curry and lentils using Bengali cooking methods. This exchange reflects the long history of coexistence between the two communities.

At the same time, modernization has affected both communities in similar ways. Increased availability of packaged foods, fast food, and restaurant culture has reduced the frequency of traditional cooking, particularly among younger generations.

Although several studies have examined the traditional food habits of tribal communities in Northeast India and the food culture of Bengali households, there is limited research that directly compares the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities within the same social and geographical setting. Most existing studies focus on a single community or discuss traditional cuisine without analysing similarities, differences, and recent changes.

Furthermore, earlier studies have given limited attention to how urbanization, education, market access, and cultural interaction have influenced the dietary practices of both communities. There is also a lack of research that compares cooking methods, nutritional diversity, food preferences, and the cultural significance of food using a common analytical framework.

Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this gap by providing a systematic comparison of the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities, highlighting both their unique characteristics and their shared food traditions.

Research Gap:

A review of the available literature shows that most studies focus either on the ‘food habits of tribal communities’ or on the ‘general food culture of Tripura’. Very few studies provide ‘systematic comparison between the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities’ living in the same socio-cultural environment. There is also limited research examining how modernization, urbanization, and cultural interaction have influenced the dietary practices of both communities. Therefore, the present study aims to



fill this gap by comparing the food habits, cooking practices, food preferences, and cultural significance of food among the Tripura tribal and Bengali traditional community.

Discussion:

The present study compared the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities living in Tripura. Although both communities have lived together for many decades and share the same geographical environment, their food habits continue to reflect their distinct cultural traditions, historical backgrounds, and lifestyles. The findings of the study show that there are both similarities and differences in their food choices, methods of preparation, and the cultural significance attached to food.

One of the most important similarities observed in the study is that **rice is the staple food** for both communities. Rice is consumed daily and forms the main component of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. This similarity is largely due to the favourable climatic conditions of Tripura, where rice cultivation has been the principal agricultural activity for generations. However, despite sharing the same staple food, the side dishes and methods of preparation differ considerably.

The study found that the **Tripura tribal community follows a food culture that is closely connected with nature**. Traditionally, tribal families depend on locally available vegetables, bamboo shoots, wild leafy plants, freshwater fish, fermented fish (berma), pork, chicken, and seasonal forest products. Many dishes are prepared by boiling, steaming, roasting, or smoking rather than deep frying. Only a small quantity of oil is generally used. Fresh ingredients are preferred because they preserve the natural taste and nutritional value of food. This food pattern reflects the close relationship between tribal communities and their surrounding environment.

In contrast, the **Bengali community follows a more spice-based cooking tradition**. Although rice remains the staple food, meals usually include lentils (dal), vegetable curry, fish curry, fried vegetables, and occasionally chicken or mutton. Bengali cooking commonly uses mustard oil and spices such as turmeric, cumin, coriander, bay leaves, cinnamon, cloves, and garam masala. Compared with tribal cooking, Bengali cuisine involves more elaborate preparation techniques and a greater variety of seasonings. The use of sweets during festivals and family celebrations is also an important feature of Bengali food culture.

Another significant difference is observed in the **choice of ingredients**. Tribal households frequently consume bamboo shoots, berma, local herbs, wild vegetables, yam, banana stem, jackfruit seeds, and other naturally available food items. These ingredients are collected from forests, home gardens, agricultural



fields, or nearby rivers, especially in rural areas. Bengali households, on the other hand, rely more on vegetables and fish purchased from local markets, although many families also grow seasonal vegetables in kitchen gardens. Market accessibility has influenced the diversity of foods available to Bengali households.

The findings also indicate clear differences in **cooking methods**. Tribal cuisine generally aims to preserve the original taste of ingredients by using minimal spices and simple cooking techniques. Boiling, steaming, and smoking are common methods because they require fewer ingredients and retain the natural flavour of food. Bengali cuisine, however, often involves frying spices before adding vegetables or fish, producing richer flavours and aromas. These differences reflect cultural preferences that have developed over generations.

Food also serves an important **social and cultural function** in both communities. Among the tribal population, traditional dishes are closely associated with harvest festivals, weddings, community gatherings, and religious ceremonies. Preparing and sharing traditional food strengthens social unity and preserves indigenous cultural identity. Similarly, in Bengali households, food plays an important role during religious festivals such as Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja, and Poila Boishakh. Special dishes, sweets, and festive meals symbolize celebration, hospitality, and family bonding.

The study further shows that **fish occupies an important place in the diets of both communities**, although the methods of preparation differ. Tribal families often prepare fish by boiling it with berma, bamboo shoots, or local herbs, while Bengali households usually cook fish with mustard oil, onions, tomatoes, and various spices. This finding suggests that while the same food resource is consumed by both communities, cultural traditions influence its preparation and flavour.

An important observation of the present study is the growing influence of **modernization and urbanization** on food habits. Young people from both communities increasingly consume fast food, packaged snacks, soft drinks, instant noodles, and restaurant meals. Busy lifestyles, changing occupations, education, and greater exposure to urban food culture have reduced the frequency of preparing traditional dishes. This trend is more noticeable in urban areas than in rural villages.

Despite these changes, many households continue to preserve their traditional food culture. Elderly family members often encourage younger generations to prepare traditional recipes during festivals and family occasions. This practice helps maintain cultural continuity and protects valuable indigenous knowledge related to food preparation.



The study also reveals a gradual process of **cultural exchange** between the two communities. Living together for many years has allowed both communities to adopt certain food practices from one another. Some Bengali households have started preparing bamboo shoot dishes and experimenting with traditional tribal recipes. Similarly, some tribal families now prepare Bengali-style fish curry, lentils, and vegetable dishes. This exchange has enriched the culinary diversity of Tripura without completely replacing traditional food habits.

From a nutritional perspective, both food systems have positive features. The tribal diet is generally rich in fresh vegetables, natural fibre, locally available protein sources, and fermented foods, which may contribute to better digestive health and nutritional diversity. Bengali cuisine provides a balanced combination of carbohydrates, proteins, vegetables, pulses, and fish, although frequent use of oil and rich spices may increase fat intake in some households. Both dietary systems can therefore contribute to healthy nutrition when prepared in balanced proportions.

Overall, the findings suggest that food habits in Tripura are shaped by **culture, environment, occupation, religion, economic conditions, and historical experiences**. While both communities share a common geographical setting and consume rice as their staple food, their culinary traditions continue to reflect their unique cultural identities. At the same time, interaction between the two communities has encouraged mutual acceptance of certain food practices, creating a diverse and dynamic food culture in Tripura.

The study concludes that preserving traditional food knowledge is important not only for protecting cultural heritage but also for promoting healthy and sustainable eating practices. Documentation of indigenous recipes, encouragement of local food production, and awareness among younger generations can help ensure that the rich culinary traditions of both the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities continue to thrive in the future.

Food is an essential part of human life, but it is also an important expression of culture, identity, and tradition. Every community develops its own food habits according to its geographical environment, cultural beliefs, economic conditions, and historical experiences. The present study examined and compared the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities living in Tripura. The study aimed to understand how these two communities, despite living in the same state, have maintained distinct culinary traditions while also influencing each other's food culture over time.

The findings of the study reveal that both communities share certain common food habits, particularly the consumption of rice as their staple food. Rice remains the main component of daily meals for both the tribal



and Bengali communities because of the favourable agricultural conditions of Tripura. Fish is another common food item consumed by both communities, reflecting the abundance of rivers, ponds, and freshwater resources in the state. Seasonal vegetables also form an important part of the daily diet of both groups.

However, despite these similarities, the study identified several significant differences in food habits, cooking techniques, ingredients, and cultural meanings attached to food. The tribal communities continue to preserve many traditional food practices that are closely connected with nature. Their diet mainly consists of rice, fermented fish (berma), bamboo shoots, wild leafy vegetables, local herbs, pork, chicken, freshwater fish, and other naturally available food resources. Their cooking methods are generally simple, involving boiling, steaming, roasting, or smoking with very little use of oil and spices. These traditional methods help preserve the natural taste and nutritional value of food.

In contrast, the Bengali community follows a more elaborate style of cooking. Their meals generally include rice, lentils, vegetables, fish curry, meat, fried items, and sweets. Mustard oil and a wide range of spices such as turmeric, cumin, coriander, bay leaves, cloves, cinnamon, and garam masala are commonly used to enhance flavour. Bengali cuisine reflects a long culinary tradition in which food is carefully prepared and served in several courses, especially during festivals and family celebrations.

Another important finding of the study is the cultural significance of food in both communities. Food is not merely a source of nutrition but also plays a central role in festivals, religious ceremonies, weddings, and social gatherings. Traditional recipes are often prepared during special occasions and are passed down from one generation to another. These food practices strengthen family relationships and preserve cultural identity. Although the specific dishes differ between the two communities, both consider food an important symbol of hospitality, celebration, and community life.

The study also found that environmental conditions strongly influence food habits. Tribal communities depend more on forests, rivers, home gardens, and seasonal agricultural production for their food supply. Many traditional ingredients, including bamboo shoots, wild vegetables, edible roots, mushrooms, and medicinal herbs, are collected from natural surroundings. Bengali households, while also using locally grown vegetables, depend more on agricultural markets and commercial food distribution systems. This difference reflects variations in occupation, settlement patterns, and access to natural resources.

One of the major observations of this study is the influence of modernization, urbanization, and globalization on food habits. Both communities have experienced changes in their traditional dietary



practices during recent decades. Increasing urban lifestyles, improved transportation, education, employment opportunities, and exposure to media have encouraged the consumption of processed foods, packaged snacks, fast food, bakery products, and soft drinks. Young people in both communities are increasingly adopting modern eating habits, especially in urban areas. As a result, several traditional recipes are prepared less frequently than in previous generations.

Despite these changes, the study also indicates that traditional food culture continues to survive in many rural households. Older family members continue to prepare indigenous dishes during festivals, weddings, harvest celebrations, and community gatherings. Such practices play an important role in preserving traditional knowledge and maintaining cultural continuity. The findings therefore suggest that although food habits are changing, traditional culinary heritage remains an important part of community identity.

The comparative analysis further demonstrates that cultural interaction between the tribal and Bengali communities has resulted in mutual exchange of food practices. Living together for many years has encouraged both communities to adopt certain ingredients and cooking methods from each other. Some Bengali households now prepare bamboo shoot dishes and occasionally use fermented fish in local recipes. Similarly, some tribal families prepare Bengali-style fish curry, lentils, and vegetable dishes. This exchange has enriched the food culture of Tripura while allowing each community to maintain its own cultural identity.

From a nutritional perspective, both food systems possess valuable characteristics. The tribal diet is rich in fresh vegetables, wild edible plants, fermented foods, and locally available protein sources, contributing to dietary diversity and nutritional balance. Bengali cuisine provides a balanced combination of cereals, pulses, fish, vegetables, and animal protein, although excessive use of oil and rich spices may increase fat intake in some households. Therefore, both traditional food systems offer nutritional benefits when consumed in appropriate proportions.

The present study also highlights the importance of documenting traditional food knowledge. Indigenous recipes, methods of food preservation, and the use of local edible plants represent valuable cultural resources that deserve protection. As modernization continues to influence food choices, there is a risk that younger generations may gradually lose knowledge of traditional cooking practices. Educational institutions, cultural organizations, researchers, and government agencies can play an important role in preserving this valuable heritage by promoting awareness, documentation, and research on traditional foods.



The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comparative understanding of the food habits of the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities. Earlier studies have mostly focused on individual communities or on the general food culture of Tripura. The present study brings together both communities within the same analytical framework and identifies similarities, differences, and recent changes in their dietary practices. This comparison helps improve our understanding of the cultural diversity that exists within the state.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study confirms that although the Tripura tribal and Bengali communities share a common geographical environment and consume rice as their staple food, their food habits continue to reflect distinct cultural traditions, historical experiences, and lifestyles. At the same time, long-term interaction between the two communities has encouraged mutual cultural exchange and enriched the culinary heritage of Tripura. Protecting these traditional food practices is important not only for preserving cultural identity but also for promoting healthy, sustainable, and locally rooted food systems for future generations.

Like every research study, the present research has certain limitations. The study was conducted among selected households and therefore may not represent all tribal groups or every Bengali family living in Tripura. Food habits may vary according to age, education, occupation, income, religion, and place of residence. Seasonal variations also affect the availability of many traditional food items. Future studies may include larger sample sizes, nutritional analysis of traditional foods, and comparative studies across different districts of Tripura.

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made. Traditional recipes should be documented and preserved through books, digital archives, and community programmes. Schools and colleges may organize cultural food festivals to promote awareness among younger generations. Government departments and tourism organizations can encourage the promotion of indigenous cuisines as part of cultural tourism. Nutrition awareness programmes should also emphasize the health benefits of locally available traditional foods. Finally, further academic research should continue to explore the relationship between food, culture, health, and sustainable development in Tripura.

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