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**Exploring Food Culture in India:
Negotiating Access, Uses and Experiences
among Migrant Students Using Social Media**

*-Muhammed Swalih K &
Prof. (Dr.) Sapna. M.S.*

ABSTRACT

Food is an integral part of culture and therefore cultural studies. Each cuisine practices borrow and contain cultural flavours. It can be geographical, social, or religious culture. Migration, short term, or long term is a shift from a certain set of norms and practices to another one. This is a change which happens gradually. Among migrants, food culture can stay intact, or there can be a mixture of home and host food culture, or they can completely change to the culture of the host place.

Though, not apt in all cases, migration for education is generally characterized (and differentiated from other type of migration practices) by the non-economic intention and the short nature of the migratory period.

Social media's role in cultural communication and food communication has been investigated largely by

academicians. It has grown to being a new field of study called Intercultural New Media Studies (INMS). The current study investigates the role of social media in the food habits and the shift in culinary culture among interstate migrant students. One part of the study deals with how students cope with the new culinary environment which is different from their original one with the help of social media. The second part deals with the hands of social media in the exploration of the new food culture.

The study occupies a questionnaire survey among interstate migrant students from Kerala who are studying across India to understand about the said question. The survey data is statistically analysed to draw conclusions about how interstate migrant students use social media in their culinary practices and cultural exploration.

Keywords: *Interstate, Migrant Students, Social Media, Food Culture, Culinary*

INTRODUCTION

Food is an integral part in day-to-day life. For the same reason, it is also a cultural artefact. Each culture has its own specific food culture and tastes. These cultural flavours can be of geographical, social, religious or any other nature. Food is influenced by geography in terms of availability of certain raw materials and crops. Climate is also an important factor in this regard. Cooler areas can consume more spicy food where warmer areas prefer less. Rural-urban-semi urban differences can also be the reasons of differences in food habits. Social factors comprise of religion, beliefs, and other socio-cultural aspects. Certain religious beliefs restrict community members from consuming certain food items. This can influence their food culture.

As a federal republic, India is a federation of several states and union territories. This division is not only based on administrative ease, but at the same time, there are many cultural differences between each state, even within the states. This is very visible in the food culture. In some places, the main dish is rice while some others eat roti as their regular food. People of some geographical areas consume more spicy food while people of some other areas consume less spicy food and so on.

Cultural studies in relation with migration and diaspora is subject to relevant academic investigations. Migrants include forced migrants, labour migrants, student migrants, etc. Though students are well addressed in international migration research, their relevant population is often under addressed in internal migration research. This is visible especially in Indian context where state borders are relevant indicators of cultural varieties and also cultural gaps.

As we already stated, food is an integral part of every culture. Thus, it varies from culture to culture. The differences can be major or minor. When a person migrates to another state, he or she needs to cope with the new food culture for survival. Though many cities offer various cuisines, it cannot be always complete.

A student migrant is different from other migrants in terms of his purpose and duration of migration. The aim of a student migrant is primarily not economical. Here, knowledge is the motivational factor (Raghuram, 2013). The general short-term nature is another important aspect. The experiences of migrant students in terms of their food habits and consumption and its relation to the cultural coping has