

Traditional Festive Cuisine of North Karnataka

Vijayalaxmi Inamdar and Bharati V. Chimmad

*Department of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Agricultural Sciences,
Dharwad, Karnataka, India*

KEYWORDS Festivals. Traditional Festival Foods. Socio-Economic Factors

ABSTRACT Food is an integral part of any festival wherein, specific traditional festival foods are prepared, both in rural and urban India. An investigation was conducted to document the major Hindu festivals, festive foods and socio-economic factors associated. Data was collected through cross sectional and longitudinal surveys. Hindu families 100 each from rural and urban scattered in four directions of Dharwad taluk were selected randomly by purposive sampling technique. The investigation revealed that the festive cuisine comprised of 45 sweet and 33 savory traditional foods in the form of either main course or accompaniments. The caste, religion and location influenced the festival celebration. It was observed that families belonging to major caste (Lingayat) communities celebrated more festivals than other caste groups and Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes families. However, rural families celebrated more festivals compared to urban counter parts. Association between festival foods and caste categories; number of festival foods, income and size of family was observed in both rural and urban groups. *Nagarpanchami* was celebrated with more number of festival foods both in urban and rural families. It was observed that low-income rural families prepared more festival foods during all the festivals except *Ganesh Chaturthi*. However, the high-income group of urban families prepared more foods during *Sankranti*, *Ugadi*, *Nagarpanchami* and *Ganesh Chaturthi*. During *Ganesh chaturthi* and *Shigehunnive* nuclear families of rural and joint families of urban areas enjoyed more festive foods.

INTRODUCTION

India is a land of rich cultural heritage. Numerous festivals are celebrated through out the country with great pomp and glory. Food is an integral part of any festival wherein, specific traditional festival foods are prepared, both in rural and urban India. The traditional foods are held carefully by the people over a period and passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. Like any other Indian state, Karnataka has a rich history with several festivals observed. Characteristically regional variations are observed as affected by historical, agro climatic and modern influences. There is no systematic documentation of traditional festival foods of North Karnataka to our knowledge. Only available report (Anonymous, 1990) gives a bird's eye view of Bangalore District. The crops and the staple foods differ in the two regions and hence there is variation in food habits and the festival foods. Hence, an investigation was conducted to document the major festivals, festive foods and socio-economic factors associated.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Data was collected through cross sectional

and longitudinal surveys. Pre-tested questionnaire was used to elicit information on family, socio-economic status, festivals and the traditional festival foods from knowledgeable elderly women who were incharge of the family food system. In the cross sectional survey, 200 Hindu families scattered in four directions of Dharwad taluk (100 each, from urban and rural areas) selected by purposive sampling, comprised the target group. In collection of data from rural areas, only those villages that were away from urban influences were selected. An in-depth longitudinal survey of 10 families was undertaken over one calendar year to know the festivals and the methods of preparation of special foods.

The different communities existing in the region were categorized in to different caste groups as per the State Gazetteer in to major caste, other castes and SC/ST groups (Anonymous, 1990). The income of rural families was classified using cut off points of Rs.24, 000/- p.a based on the identification criteria of beneficiaries of *Swarna Jayantim Swayam Rozagar Yojana* (Anonymous, 1999). The urban families were classified in to low income (less than Rs.1000 pm), middle (Rs.1000- to Rs.3000/p.m.) and high income groups (Rs.30,000/- pm) as per Marketing Research Group classification (Anonymous, 1991).

Extension of median test was employed to know the association between number of festival

Corresponding Author: Bharati V. Chimmad
Fax: 0091-0836-2748377 / 2448349
E mail: brchimmad@yahoo.com

foods and caste categories. Chi-square test was applied to determine the level of association between festival foods and family size, income and number of generations living together.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Festivals and Foods: It was observed that a majority of rural respondents were illiterate, having moderate sized families (5 to 7 members), very often with three generation living together. At least 70% of rural families belonged to low economic group and belonged to other caste categories (59%) viz., Kambar, Kambar, Uppar, Maratha, Brahmin, Badiger, Pattar, Kuruba, Simpi, Nekar, Agasar, Ambiger or Hugar. A majority of urban respondents were literates (33%) with nuclear families (83%) having modera sized families and belonged to other caste categories, with monthly income ranging between Rs.10,000 to 30,000/-.

The most commonly celebrated festivals and the typical foods of the region are indicated in Table 1. The festive cuisine is comprised of several sweet and savory traditional foods in the form of either main course or accompaniments. 78 traditional 45 sweet and 33 savory) foods were documented. (*Sankranti* a festival of harvest is celebrated to mark the arrival of new foods from the fields. Energy dense foods containing oilseeds such as linseed, groundnut, gingelly seeds, and jaggery/ sugar were in abundance. A *bhaji* called as *Bhogi palle* containing all new food crops including oilseeds, cereals, pulses, fruits and vegetables was prepared during this winter festival. A ritual of exchange of *Kusurellu* (gingelly seeds coated with sugar) among the friends and relatives was observed. *Shivarathri* was a festival of fast and penance. Special foods were prepared only on the next day after a previous day's fast. *Holi hunnive* was observed in the same spirit as in any other region of India.

Table 1: Major festivals and foods of North Karnataka

Month	Festival	Traditional festive foods	Ritual
January	<i>Sankranti</i>	<i>Madeli</i> , <i>Holige</i> of gingelly seeds, Bengal gram dhal, Ground nut; Jowar <i>dosa</i> , <i>Bajra roti</i> , <i>Bharta</i> , <i>Chutney</i> powders of niger, linseed, ground nut	Festival of harvest
February / March	<i>Shivarathri</i>	<i>Godhi huggi</i> , <i>Allittu</i> , Bengal gram <i>usali</i> , Moth bean <i>usali</i> and <i>Holige</i>	Foods consumed after a day's fast
March	<i>Holi</i>	<i>Holige</i> , Jowar <i>wade</i> , Pumpkin <i>gargi</i> (some caste groups prepare nonvegetarian curry)	Destruction of evil
April / May	<i>Ugadi</i>	<i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , <i>Vermicelli payasam</i> , <i>Bevu bella</i> , and <i>Godhi huggi</i>	New year of Kannadigas
May	<i>Basava jayanti</i>	<i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> and mango <i>Shikarane</i>	Birth day of regional religious leader of 12th century
June	<i>Karahunnive</i>	<i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , Jowar <i>wade</i> , Pumpkin <i>gargi</i> , <i>Kodabale</i> and mango <i>Shikarane</i>	Bullocks worshipped
June	<i>Mannettina amavasye</i>	<i>Karigadabu</i> , <i>Holige</i> , Jowar <i>wade</i> , <i>Sajjaka</i> , Pumpkin <i>gargi</i> and <i>Vermicelli payasam</i>	Clay bullocks worshipped
July	<i>Nagarapanchami</i>	<i>Laddu</i> of semolina, <i>Bunde</i> , <i>Besan</i> , <i>Sev</i> , <i>Ground nuts</i> , <i>Gingelly seeds</i> , <i>Gulladki</i> , <i>Puffed jowar</i> , <i>Kuchagadabu</i> , <i>Allittu</i> , Bengal gram <i>usali</i> , Moth bean <i>usali</i> , <i>Bajra roti</i> and <i>Jowar roti</i>	Cobras worshipped
August	<i>Ganesh chaturthi</i>	<i>Godhi huggi</i> , <i>Holige</i> , <i>Modaka</i> , <i>Vermicelli payasam</i> , <i>Sajjaka</i> , Jowar <i>roti</i> , <i>Mesta bhaji</i> , <i>Curds rice</i> , <i>Panchakajjaya</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , and <i>Gudagana huggi</i> .	Ganesha worshipped
September	<i>Dasara/ Mahanavami</i>	<i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , <i>Sajjakada holige</i> , <i>Sajjaka</i> , <i>Taraga</i> , <i>Foxtail millet holige</i> , <i>Karachikayi</i> , Pumpkin <i>gargi</i> and Jowar <i>wade</i>	Durga puja
October	<i>Shigehunnive</i>	<i>Foxtail millet holige</i> , <i>Chakli</i> , <i>Akki huggi</i> , <i>Kodabale</i> , <i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , <i>Undigadabu</i> , <i>Kuchchida khara</i> , <i>Bhaji</i> of capsicum, cluster beans, pumpkin; <i>Chutney</i> powders of niger, linseed, ground nut (some caste groups prepare nonvegetarian curry)	Farmer's festival; Worship of standing crop
October	<i>Diwali</i>	<i>Holige</i> , <i>Karigadabu</i> , <i>Karachikayi</i> , <i>Laddu</i> of semolina, <i>Besan</i> and <i>Sajjakada holige</i> ,	Lakshmi puja

Traditionally women do not participate in play of colors. *Ugadi* denoted the New Year day for *Kannadigas*. During this festival, apart from several festive foods, *Bevu-bella* a mixture of neem flowers, new tamarind, jaggery, cashew nuts, tender mango, bael fruit and cardamom is prepared in a new earthen pot and exchanged with friends and relatives. This signifies that one should accept the good and bad things of life with balanced state of mind. *Kara hunnive* and *Manne-ttina Amavasye* were typical festivals of this region. The bullocks were worshipped and treated specially with special foods. *Nagar-panchami* was another festival where animals were given importance. Snakes are important in controlling rat menace in the fields and hence the snakes are given recognition. Interestingly, the rats were also offered a special pooja during *Ganesh Chaturthi*. *Shigehunnive* was a festival wherein, the farmers offer various types of foods to mother earth for the crop they were bestowed with. Thus, these are classic examples of variation of celebration of festivals in North Karnataka. Observance of other festivals viz., *Dasara*, *Diwali*, *Ganesh Chaturthi* was reported by Azer (1977), which fairly match with that of South Karnataka. Preparation of a product similar to *Bevu bella* was also reported in Andhra Pradesh by Christian (1982), Reddy (1989) and Devdas (1999).

Association Between Festive Foods and Socio Economic Factors: The cross sectional survey across rural and urban Dharwad indicated that among the numbers festivals 12 were most common and among these at least seven were celebrated by more than 90% of the families of both the areas. *Shigehunnive* the festival denoting the significance of mother earth was another most popular festival in rural North Karnataka with more than 91% of the families as against 25 per cent in urban areas (Table 2). The caste, religion and location influenced the festival celebration.

It was observed that families belonging to major caste (Lingayat) communities celebrated more festivals than other castes and SC/ST. However, rural families celebrated more festivals compared to urban counter parts.

Association between festival foods and caste categories was observed in both rural and urban groups. The extension of median test identified typical festival foods prepared during each festival. Further, Chi-square test indicated significant association between number of festival foods with caste, family size, family income and number of generation living together (Table 2). In urban families, association between the number of festival foods and caste was significant during *Sankranti* and *Ganesh Chaturthi*. The association between number of festival foods and size of family was strikingly evident in small and medium sized rural families preparing more number of festive foods when compared to large families during *Sankranti*, *Nagarpanchami* and *Shigehunnive*. Such an association was also seen in urban families during *Ugadi*, *Ganesh Chaturthi* and *Shigehunnive* in medium and large families compared to small family sized respondents. It was an interesting feature to observe that *Nagarpanchami* was celebrated with more number of festival foods both in urban and rural families. The family size did not have any impact on the number of foods prepared during this festival in particular.

Income is an important variable affecting way of life. The study revealed a significant association of income with festival foods prepared during *Sankranti*, *Ugadi*, and *Nagarpanchami*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, *Dasara*, *Shigehunnive* and *Diwali* in both rural and urban families. It was observed that more festival foods were prepared by low-income rural families during all the festivals except *Ganesh Chaturthi*. However, the high-income group of urban families prepared more foods during *Sankranti*, *Ugadi*, *Nagarpanchami*

Table 2: Association (χ^2) between festival foods and socioeconomic factors

Festival	Caste		Family size		Income		Generations	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Sankranti	6.94*	7.31*	25.99*	1.43	1.16*	11.06*	1.71	5.39
Ugadi	4.03	2.03	0.09	6.40*	0.79*	25.81*	0.23	2.38
Nagara panchami	4.28	1.40	23.57*	2.50	31.21*	33.57*	0.30	3.83
Ganesh chaturthi	4.83	16.80*	1.09	6.59*	3.56*	14.03*	8.15*	17.48*
Dasara	0.54	1.32	0.46	3.57	3.99*	8.44*	2.28	0.87
Shige hunnive	7.40**	0.18	10.75*	62.07	9.32*	11.50*	8.14*	23.27*
Diwali	18.28	1.92	4.17	1.63	1.96*	11.34*	1.00	3.82

and *Ganesh chaturthi*. During *Ganesh chaturthi* and *Shigehunnive* nuclear families of rural and joint families of urban areas enjoyed more festive foods.

CONCLUSION

It was evident from the investigation that among the 12 major festivals of this region, seven were celebrated by a majority of people both in rural and urban areas. During these festivals, several foods, both sweet and savory were prepared, as main course of foods or accompaniments. Caste, family income and number of generation living together influenced the number of festival foods in both the locations. All the families prepared festive foods irrespective of

income levels, however, the number of festive foods only varied.

REFERENCES

- Anonymous: *III People Home -Life*. Karnataka State Gazetteer (Bangalore district) 189-190 (1990).
- Anonymous: Marketing research group classification of income for urban population. *India Today*, March 13-20 pp. 37 (1991).
- Anonymous: Identification of beneficiaries under SJSY. Government of India, New Delhi (1999).
- Azer, R.: Festivals and fairs of Karnataka. *Social Welfare*, **33**: 30-32 (1977).
- Christian F.M.: The end is the beginning, A festival Chain in Andhra Pradesh. pp. 23. In: *Religious Festivals of South India and Sri Lanka*. G. R. Welbon and G. E. Yocum (Eds.). McGraw Hill, New York (1982).
- Devdas, R.P.: Value of traditional foods in Nutrition. *Research Highlights*, **9**: 1-5 (1999).