

Healthy Eating & Cultures  
[Name of the Writer]  
[Name of the Institute]

## Healthy Eating & Cultures

### Introduction

People of different cultures have different eating habits. Their healthy eating standard varies from culture to culture. The purpose of this paper is to critically analyze the statement "Traditional meals and their preparation based on local food produce show a wide diversity from culture to culture. There is a belief that the older the food culture, the more nutritious and well-balanced meals are likely to be". For analysis purpose, eating habits and traditional meals of different cultures will be discussed. The change and transformation of meals in those cultures will also be argued for comparison purpose. Furthermore, food industrialization and globalization will be discussed.

### Critical Discussion

The food culture around evolves with time. In early times, people did not use as many preservative or stored food compared to current times. They had different healthy eating habits in comparison to eating habits today. Some of the preservative foods remain traditional, but early preservative methods were natural in comparison to today's preservative methods. Methods used then were drying, pickling in vinegar, salting or smoking the food to make them last longer. In current times, people use different chemical products in combination with the natural preservatives to make food last longer. The shift in the preservative and preparation method of food is the main reason why historic food culture was assumed healthier (MacLennan R & Zhang, 2004).

### Food Culture across Globe

Food culture varies from country to country across globe. Eating habits and healthy eating concepts are completely different from one country to another. Scully (2011) gave reference of the cookbook by Domenico Romoli published in 1560, he argued that the change in food culture is due to establishment of trade route between countries who passes their trends to other. These trends are remoulded and reshaped according to the taste of different countries and shape themselves into a new cuisines. The change of this recipe mix from the original healthy recipe makes it an unhealthy meal which. Throughout the years, the continuous remould of the already mould cuisines and addition of chemical preservatives have made current cuisines unhealthy to consume (Scully, 2011).

**Indian Cuisines.** The native Indian cuisines encompass variety of regional dishes. Unique climatic condition and soil type of the country makes Indian cuisines different from countries with dissimilar climatic conditions. The choice of food in Indian cuisines is heavily influence by traditional and cultural choices as well as religious. In historic Indian cuisines, the use of pure ghee was mandatory with a mixture of special Indian herbs and vegetables. Since majority of Indian population is vegetarian, Indians specializes in preparing delicious vegetarian food. However, with the change of time, usage of natural ghee changed to processed vegetable oil and the original herb recipes were infused with different recipes from around the world. This increases the level of unhealthy eating in Indian food (Scully, 2011).

**Chinese Cuisines.** Chinese food is highest in demand in different countries of the world. Marshall (2011) argued that the origin of Chinese foods stretch back to thousands of years, the change in authentic Chinese recipes from time to time in various regions occurred with period. The mix of ingredients in pre-modern times and in current times is completely different. The ingredients used in Chinese food in pre-modern times were all natural, now extensive use of preserved herbs and sauces are used in the food preparation. Chinese is also the most

transformed food in the world. The recipe for Chinese food is different in separate countries. Naives of countries do additions and subtraction in the recipe according to their taste and preferences. The odd mixtures of herbs and preservative do enhance the taste of the cuisines but at the same time makes it extremely unhealthy for the eater (Marshall, 2011).

**European Cuisines.** The second famous and most transformed cuisine in the world is European cuisine. The transformation of European food from early times has transformed compared to early times but Europeans still prefer healthy eating and include healthy natural ingredients in their recipes. European cuisines usually consist of large serving of meat and a lot of herbs and seasoning, cheese is also extensively used in European cuisines. Europeans prefer more protein diet as compared to any other diet form. However, with time, use to artificial preservatives and seasoning have become common in European food which makes it unhealthy compared to their original recipes. Similar to Indian and Chinese food the mixture of European cuisines differs in countries as they adopt and change the food recipe mix (Marshall, 2011).

### **Industrialization and Globalization of Food**

Industrialization and globalization of food have resulted into transformation of natural food process. Artificial infusion and use of processed food has become trend in the food industry. This has increased diseases and several physical and mental problems in human body. The combination of various preservative foods, change in climatic conditions and soil has resulted in growth of unhealthy fruit, vegetables and herbs. One of the basic reasons behind this is the extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides in the agricultural sector. This has increased the level of harmful chemicals in the plants and killing the healthy vitamins and other nutritious elements from the naturally grown food. Cooking of this naturally grown food with unnatural sauces and seasoning have further deteriorated the health elements from the cuisines (MacLennan R & Zhang, 2004).

### **Analysis of the Statement**

The statement regarding the increase of unhealthy eating compared to historical times is correct. There are many factors affecting the health level of cuisines. The most important and affecting factors were highlighted and discussed. The odd mixtures of cuisines and changes made in food by native people according to their taste make cuisines unhealthy. The evolution of cuisines and urbanization of agribusiness continues for decrease the level of healthy elements in the food used on daily basis. The most common example of this is tetra-pack milk, in pre-modern time. Milk kneading from animals was fresh on daily basis. Now milk is preserved in tetra packs with 1-2 month expiry date.

### **Conclusion**

The paper reviewed the statement regarding the diversity in the food from culture to culture and these cuisines are unhealthier, less nutritious and less balanced in comparison to pre-modern times. Different factors were highlighted to support the argument as to why the level of unhealthy element is increasing in the cuisines with the change of time. The main reasons highlighted were odd mix of recipes, use to preserved seasoning, artificial ways of growing food and globalization of food. Hence it can be concluded that the statement regarding the level of unhealthiness is current cuisines is true.

## References

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