INTRODUCTION

The present study is an attempt to explore how the praxis of religion, social norms and gender, which were already being redefined and reformulated by the impact of colonialism, went into the making of food and cuisine in the 19th and 20th century Malabar. Though there is some general awareness about the changing food habits of Kerala in the last two or three centuries, no historical studies had so far been attempted to trace the linkages of the changing ingredients and the culinary habits that constituted the food and dining patterns of the people in the British colonial era through the exercise of power that generated by the agencies like religion, society and gender. The question of food and cuisine has always been one of the central concerns in the construction of ‘colonial modernity’ in terms of the society of India in general and society of Kerala in particular.

The study takes food and cuisine as a focal point to site the diverse cultural transactions that rooted in the notions of power and gender, which later lead to the making of food in colonial Malabar, can be analysed and historicized. The significance of food and cuisine in terms of the wider social and cultural history of Kerala is a desideratum in the historiography of Kerala.

Subjection of the subaltern under colonialism appeared in multiple forms; on the basis of language, dress, food, material culture, social distance etc. Notions of purity and impurity were very much woven into the social fabric. The members of every social category were expected to keep prescribed physical distances among themselves. The lower castes were expected to keep a certain physical distance from the upper castes. In short one’s ‘natural’ membership (by birth) to a lower caste was taken as a metaphor of pollution in terms of physical contact. Different types of castes had different names for their dwelling, for instance, Parays home was called Cheri, those of Cherumas were Chala, and the
abode of artisans were called *Pura*. Therefore, while speaking with a person of higher caste, the members of these so called lower castes had to use debasing terms even about themselves. Also, the dress code of a person indicated the identity of his/her caste. The food also was practiced as a tool used by the upper caste for subjection and subordination of the lower caste people by different means.

The most prominent influence that went into the making of food and cuisine was the power that emanated from the domain of religion. These could be seen in the form of various rules and regulations on dining and food preparation. The ritualisation of food is an instance for the exertion of the powers by caste over the society, and the caste is marked quite conspicuously by different food habits and rules prohibiting lower castes from co-dining with the upper castes. The religious powers were articulated through ritual and social powers. By taking food as a medium, social powers structured the gender behaviour too. The power relations between men and women are expressed through various practices related to food. In the colonial environment, many features of caste system underwent remarkable changes. By using the measures of caste, the colonial system redefined the concept of family organization, laws of inheritance and social relations in and among various communities. The core concept of the study is to unravel the transformations of the notion of food that took place among the people of Malabar during colonial regime.

**Area of study**

The geographical focus of this study is Malabar districts of Madras Presidency during the British period. Malabar is geographically and historically one of the most prominent regions, not only in Kerala but also in the Indian subcontinent. Malabar is situated on the West Coast of India, a distance about one hundred and fifty miles and lying between north latitude 10°15’ and 12° 18’
and east long 75°14’ and 15°56’.

The boundaries of Malabar are Canara district in the north; Coorg, Mysore, the Nilgiris and Coimbatore in the east, Thrissur revenue district in the south, and the Arabian Sea in the west.

Malabar was abundantly gifted with natural resources which attracted foreigners particularly the Arabs, the Chinese and the Europeans. The region produced a variety of agricultural products such as pepper, cardamom, paddy, coconut, betel nut, ginger, and horticultural products like mango, jackfruit, and plantain and so on. Among these products the important items exported during the early nineteenth century were, pepper, cardamom, coconut, coconut products and betel nut.

The time period chosen for this study is from 1858 to 1947. The period 1858 denotes the beginning of the British crown rule in India. This period was also a turning point in the cultural history of India. The British colonial rule was ended in 1947 when India attained independence. The period from 1858 to 1947 was a long period of cultural transformation in the life of the colonised subjects in India.

The District of Malabar changed greatly in the wake of colonialism. Malabar was under the direct control of the British government. So it was a state of colonial lab for many experiments. Many scholars have examined the cultural impact of colonialism in Malabar, but no particular study has been done so far to explore the cultural transformation of food practices in the society of Malabar.

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**Objectives of the Study**

- To understand how social and religious powers regulate the nature of food and cuisine.
- To analyse the factors of influence of religion in the practices of food and dining among different communities of Kerala.
- To analyse the concept ‘ritualization’ and implementation of food as a tool of communication in the relation between men and God.
- To understand the role of food as a determining factor from the perspective of caste hierarchy.
- To establish the concept of Vegetarianism in the social idea of Sanskritization.
- To analyse the role of Western knowledge that influences the customs and manners of food habits among the middle class communities of Malabar.
- To analyse the gender relations of food practices in colonial Malabar.
- To analyse the concept of food from the perspective of means of modernity.
- To understand the role of food in the making of middle class society in colonial Malabar.

**Hypothesis**

Food is a site of the exercise of ritual and social power in regulating the code of behaviour and manners of the society. It can be observed that in Kerala, food was often used to keep castes and communities separate from other castes and communities on the bases of their culinary habits. Therefore, food becomes a barrier to social interaction and integration. A person’s position in the social
structure could be understood from what, how much, and with whom he/she eats. Apart from being a necessity in the biological survival, food has multiple meanings. It has an important role in contributing to the construction of social structures and identities.

**Review of Literature**

No separate and comprehensive study concerning the politics of the food culture of Malabar has been undertaken by any agency now. Utsa Ray’s *Culinary Culture in Colonial India, A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle Class*, is a work inquiring how cuisine became a central idea in the construction of colonial middle class in Bengal. One of the chief arguments of this work is that the middle class in colonial Bengal has indigenized the culinary experiences that came with Colonialism. She also discusses the concept of ‘Hybridity’ in the new cuisine emerged in the colonial period. The process of indigenization was only possible through certain social practices. These social practices created a new domesticity within the colonial modernity. In this theoretical position she argues that the act of cooking was more gendered in the colonial period than in the pre-colonial period.

Ray presents various documents to prove the interesting story of how middle class in Bengal attempted to distinguish itself as rational social class through the medium of food in colonial India. She puts forward an argument that the new culinary skill was acquired by the middle class women through the support of modern education. For analysing the construction of middle class in colonial Bengal she has made use of the Bourdieuan phrase of the ‘disgust for others taste.’ According to this, the refined taste was associated with formation of middle class in colonial Bengal. Taste has become a marker of the middle class self through standards of good and bad, acceptance of certain things and rejection.
of some others. Ray’s book is primarily interested in finding how food and
cuisine functioned as an aid in the construction of a class.

Cecillia- Leong-Salobir’s book *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, presents a social history of colonial food practices in India, Malaysia and Singapore. She addresses the contribution of domestic servants in the
development of hybrid cuisine in colonial countries, especially the South Asian
countries between 1858 and 1963. She refuses the current historical notions on
colonial food and argues that rather than trying to differentiating themselves the
British colonialists adapted their own culinary tradition linking it with the
indigenous practices. She clearly highlights the fact that the British colonialist
consumed a hybrid or fusion of food, espousal of the local and British culture.

Leong - Salobir, explores the variation of colonial food culture in the three
colonies of British. India is primary concern of study in this book; it also
includes an analysis of Malaysia, and Singapore. It is not a comparative study on
the subcontinents, but a portrayal of the colonial culture using the platform of
culinary tradition and patterns domestic service. She also discusses the variations
of food culture among the different caste, class race and ethnic groups of the
servants involved in it.

The work is divided into five chapters which analyses the making of the
British colonial food culture in relation to race, caste, gender and food production
and preparation respectively. In the first part, the author argues that the British
did not try to differentiate themselves from the local people by their own separate
cuisine. She also argues that, on contrary to this practice, a hybrid cuisine
emerged through the blending of British and local food culture in India.

In the second chapter author analyses the curry as the important dish of
British colonial cuisine and traces its origin and development. In this part she
reveals the contribution of the indigenous cook in the creation curry dish in the
South Asia. The third and fourth chapters explore the power relationship between the British colonialist and local servants in a domestic sphere. Using the cookbooks, travelogues and other sources, the author magnificently documents the study about the British colonial culinary tradition in India, Singapore and Malaysia. The book is very useful in this study, but her arguments are highly debatable in the context of colonial kitchen and the emergence of hybrid cuisine in India. Uma Narayan, Nupur Chaudari and other post colonial feminist writers also used curry as tool for investigating the colonial cultural imperialism.

Uma Narayan’s *Dislocating Cultures Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*, is a remarkable exploration in the field of postcolonial feminism. Postcolonial feminism offers a wide range of theoretical and historical approaches, based upon a variety of concepts and strategies. The concluding chapter, in short, is an attempt to observations about the links between curry, colonialism, and Indian identity. It is in this context that Uma Narayan introduces and engages the notions ‘food colonialism’ or ‘Culinary imperialism’.

She rereads the social meaning of ‘ethnic food’ from the view points of immigrants to Western contexts, arguing that discussions of multiculturalism and respect for others must concentrate not only on relationship between ‘mainstream citizens’ and ‘ethnic others’ but also on the crucial bonds between various minority ‘ethnic’ groups. Thus she does not merely problematises what might be called a Cook-Book approach to other cultures, but also proposes how the history of colonial-imperial power and knowledge nexus, subalternising the Third-World identities and cultures, has not reached its end.

A. R. Venkatachalapathy, *In Those Days There Was No Coffee* explains how coffee became entrenched in the late colonial Tamil society and he tries to map the cultural practices surrounding coffee as a metaphor for a range of signifying practices. The book is a collection of nine essays covering a wide area
of Tamil experiences from drinking coffee to writing literature and engaged in politics in the colonial Tamil Nadu. The first two essays are definitely seminal to a cultural historian. The first is titled ‘In Those Days There Was No Coffee’: Coffee drinking and Middle Class Culture in Colonial Tamil Nadu. This brilliant essay breaks through hierarchy of knowledge and hierarchy of sources that characterized much of historiography. The hierarchy of knowledge is primarily created by looking at the established works in Sanskrit and their interpretation in English books written by the Orientalists, Nationalists or any other brand of historical scholarship characterized by one or another dimension.

Venkatachalapathy uses collective memory, biographies, fiction and oral traditions to reconstruct the cultural past of the Tamils and in so doing, opens up new perspectives and vistas to the study of social history. The second essay in the collection ‘Triumph of tobacco’ also treats of the recently emerging consumption patterns. ‘In Those Days There Was No Coffee’ was a stock phrase in autobiographies written in the early decades of the twentieth century. Coffee drinking became a cultural practice sometime in the late twenties or the thirties.

Chitrita Banerjee’s food travelogue *Eating India: Exploring a Nation’s Cuisine* is a reputed one in the quest for culinary purity in a pan Indian context. The project has encouraged her and gave her enough insights to evaluate the Indian food culture by its geographic position and by its ability to embrace the outside influences and form them into various culinary items. The ever moving aspect of Indian culinary practices has always reflected the influential sociocultural sentiments of modern India flourished in the economic mobility it recently achieved. In this new world order the authenticity of the Indian food becomes a mark of the nation’s cultural mobility and strength. Chitrita Banerjee’s travelogue reproduces some of the common diasporic anxieties about space, motherland and citizenship. However, Chitrita produces a finely moulded model of culinary exploration both by consuming the food and by writing about it as ways of relating to the nation itself. In doing so she has observed that modern
Another important work in the field of food history is the edited work of Supriya Chaudhuri and Rimi K. Banerjee, titled *The Writer’s Feast, Food and the Cultures of Representation*. This work is a collection of essays that makes important contributions to the field of food and culture. The work innovatively rereads the socio-political and symbolic meanings of food in a broad aesthetic and cultural context. The second part of the book deals with the gendering of food. In this part, one of the articles was written by Sharamila Sreekumar, who wrote an interesting and academic article on the history and social relevance of the culinary columns published in an early twentieth-century Malayalam magazine.

K.T. Achaya’s *Indian Food a Historical Companion* presents a wide view on Indian gastronomic culture through its discussions and analysis. The book is divided into sixteen chapters. Through these chapters, he captures the history of the Indian diet from pre-historic period to modern era. He brings an interdisciplinary approach in this work. He utilises the possibilities of Archaeology, Anthropology, Sociology, and even Botany too. Some of his arguments are debatable in many ways. But this work helps a researcher in knowing the general understanding about gastronomic culture in India.

D.N. Jha’s *Myth of Holy Cow* changed the dietary history of India; it also questioned the previous notions about dietary habits and food taboos prevailed among the Hindus of India. The focus of this work is the practice of ‘eating beef’ in ancient India documented with Vedic and post-Vedic texts. Jha argues that the habit of beef eating among Hindus prevailed in Rig Vedic times and it continued till the 19th century. He also argues that the Brahminical injections against cow killing started to develop around the middle of the first millennium A.D. He established that animal sacrifice were very common in Rig Vedic period with unearthed irrefutable evidences. He argues that the cow slaughter and
consumption of beef were common among the Hindus for all classes, including Brahmins. The magic sacrifices in Vedic period involved killing animals, including cattle. Jha says that the Vedic gods have no marked dietary preferences. Milk, butter, barley, oxen, goats were the usual food offered to them. He established the concept that cow as a ‘sacred animal’ only after the movement conducted by Dayanada Sarwasthy in nineteenth century. The killing of cow was stopped gradually with agrarian society and caste rigidity. Myth and Holy Cow is an important historical work using vast historical sources to trace the practice of beef eating from ancient India onwards. This book raised a considerable controversy in Indian politics.

Louis Dumont, Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications is a profound contribution to Indian caste studies. Purity and impurity concepts that prevailed in Varna system in India was carefully analysed by Dumont through the various essays in this book. In chapter II, Dumont argues that ‘pure and impure’ opposition underlies all aspects of the caste system in India. In chapter VI, the author discusses the purity impurity rules concerning the contact of food and cuisine among the different castes in India.

Similarly one of the brilliant studies of caste system in India is the work of M.N. Srinivas titled Social Changes in Modern India. It is a critical and objective analysis of the caste and class subjectivities. The term ‘Sanskritization’ was made popular by M.N. Srinivas. He argues that the members of low and middle class group adopt the customs, rituals and ways of life of upper caste in order to claim a higher position in the caste hierarchy. He established this argument by investigating the practice of adopting the idea of Vegetarianism and teetotalism by the lower caste people for claiming higher status in the caste structure. Social Changes in Modern India documents innumerable instances for such transitions and explores the sources promoting social mobility. The book offers an objective
assessment of the impact of the different factors that existed in the social ethos of country.

Counihan and Van Esterik’s *Food and Culture: A Reader* is a relevant material on ethnic cuisine and gendered structures that are promising to this research, as it focuses on the reproduction of traditional structures within the context of migration, relocation, globalization and modernization. Counihan has also written *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power* which shows food from an anthropological perspective using the lens of gender and empowerment.

Peter Garnsey, in his famous work ‘*Food and Society in Classical Antiquity*’, is an endeavour to trace the universal activities of food and eating on the way of illuminating the distinctive nature of Greco-Roman society and culture. Apart from the monographs like Garnsey’s that are intended at a scholarly audience, there are expanding efforts to write more popular histories of food.

Felipe Fernandez–Armestio in his work *Food: A History* has studied the history of food, the origin of cooking and the ritualisation of eating, the invention of agriculture, the rise of inequality which made food an indicator of status, the long range exchange of food stuffs which broke down cultural barriers and the industrialization and globalization of food.

In his work, *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices*, Andrew Dalby describes the history of places, spices, and the ways in which spices gradually become parts of the global diets. Diane M. Spivey takes a different approach in *The Peppers, Cracklings, and Knots of Wool Cookbook*, a search for political and cultural meaning in food attempts to correct the ‘insensitivity and blatant misinformation’ about the history of African cuisines. Works such as these try to
overlap the divide between the interests of the academia and the public, a stretch that seems very difficult under the best of circumstances.

One of the important studies on food and cuisine is the *The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food* and Padolsky’s *You are What You Eat: Ethnicity, Food and Cross-Cultural Spaces* that works focus on women and the importance of women’s contribution to maintaining the traditional structures as well as women’s diet in comparison to men’s diet. The literature of food and ethnicity are useful, especially since there is not a large literature on Bengali or Bangladeshi populations when it is concerned with the rituals and attitudes surrounding food. So, looking at other ethnic groups who see food consumption and preparation as integral to the social dynamism provides a comparative literature.

Parasecoli’s *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture* provides a general estimation of the relationship between food and identity politics. This work discusses how tourism and the technological advancements of science have changed the consumption of food. Parasecoli talks about food in the contemporary context, introducing issues of social regulation of food customs, taste and identity.

Carol Brekendige, in her *Consuming Modernity Public Culture in South Asian World* presents an unexplored area of twentieth century Indian culture. It consists of a variety of essays that hold together a series of lively debates on the discourses on public culture. The book was divided in to two sections of essays. In the first section Arjun Appadurai, David Lelyveld, Barbosa Ramuscak, and Frank Conlon focus on the historical past and its relation to modernity in contemporary India.

In Frank Conlon’s essay ‘Dining Out in Bombay’ he argues that the development of the restaurant culture in Bombay as a response to the social and economic pressure of work, leisure, status, taste demand and opportunity is genuinely interesting. This argument is also applicable in the study of the middle
class responses in the material life of Modernity in colonial India. His discussion on restaurant culture, he claims that the restaurant goers are both audience and shapers of public culture adds as new pattern of economic philosophy of preference and need.

In the second session Sara Dickey, Paul Greenough, and Philip Zarrilli discusses the historical present. Sara Dickey, in her essay, follows the Frank Frut’s school’s idea of ‘bad taste’ and tries to explain how it affects the Indian public culture. Consuming Modernity Public Culture in South Asian World is an important contribution to the discussion on public culture in colonial and contemporary India.

Arjun Appadurai’s book Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation is a theoretical text in examining how globalisation and the cultural imaginary have shaped out the world. In this book he mainly focuses on the cultural dimensions of globalisation.

In the context of colonial Malabar, there is no work to trace food as a cultural metaphor in social hierarchy. William Logan’s Malabar Manual discusses the food habits of different castes and communities of Malabar. P. Baskaranunni’s Pathonpathaam Noonttantile Keralam traces food culture of Kerala, the agrarian tradition of Kerala and relationship between food and festivals. The rituals surrounding food are discussed well in this work. Certain articles are also available on the food culture of Kerala. Some of them are: ‘Food Memory Community: Kerala as Both Indian Ocean Zone and as Agricultural Home Land’ by Caroline Osella and Fillippo Osella, ‘Bakshanam Oru Chinnam’ by Vijaya Kumar Menon, and ‘Bakshanavum Jatiyum Kerala Charithrathil’ by Mini. P.V These articles have approached the food culture of Kerala in a general way.
Research Questions

- How did the upper castes of Kerala use food as a metaphor to determine the behaviour of the lower castes?

- How did the lower castes of Kerala use vegetarian food as a medium to attain the status of the upper castes? How far it has become a process of Sanskritisation?

- How does food become a means of power and oppression between women and men?

- How did the social reformers who were inspired by the concept Indian nationalism, used food as a social and political weapon?

- How food became a symbol of middle class identity in colonial Malabar?

- How food and cooking became gendered during the colonial situations?

Sources

Primary sources for the study include archival sources, official documents, literary sources, and oral sources. Archival sources include palm leaf records, the port records pertaining to import and export of food and related items at Cochin and Calicut during the period form an invaluable source. These are available in the regional archives of Kerala.

Another important source is the records of various temples in Kerala. It includes the records of Vaikom Siva temple regarding the Oottupura attached to it Information on Pattinippura was taken from the records of Vadakkumnatha temple, Thrissur; the records from Guruvayur temple offered the information of Namaskarasadya that was conducted exclusively for the Brahmins. Other important sources are the official documents like the Malabar Marriage
Commission Report of 1891 which, deals with the marriage ceremonies of that period. The Malabar Famine Commission Report gives the details of famine relief centres in the different parts of Malabar.

The various Census Reports of India since 1871 refer to the fairs and festivals of Kerala. The Railway Records related to pantry services introduced new items of food and made some items which are pan-Indian in their nature. Memoirs/diaries of some important public persons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are equally important sources for understanding the changing attitudes of the people towards the new food and cuisine. The Granthavari of the Zamorins of Calicut and the Tellicherry Factory Records give information of the feasts conducted as a part of rituals and festivals. The Portuguese-Malayalam Dictionary of Ernestus Hanxleden (Arnos Padre), Hermann Gundert’s Dictionary of Malayalam, the travelogues and tour-diaries of various British travellers and officers like Francis Buchanan, Ward and Conner and others are also valuable source of information reflecting upon the problems raised in the study. The records of royal feasts conducted by Sakthan Thampuran and Pazhasi Raja are very valuable sources. The early Malayalam magazines and newspapers and the published articles in Unni Namputhiri, Vidyavinodini, Rasikaranjini, Sahodaran, Mitavadi etc. on the eating habits of Brahmans, and the need for reformation in eating and dining habits is also an important source of information. Advertisements of new kitchen products published in the newspapers like the Mathrubhumi and the early magazines like Sarada and Lakshmibai give information concerning the culinary style of that time. The museumised utensils and crockery of various culinary traditions and social mores which survive to this day in Kerala in abundance has thrown enough light on the changing food and cuisine. The second chapter of the study discusses the sources in a detailed way.
Methodology

It was with the work of the French school of historiography, generally known as *Annales* that is interested in food, dress, emotion sex, mentalities etc. attracted the attention of historians, and that these have subsequently become focal points of historical inquiries. However, such studies are yet to become fashionable in the case of Kerala. Following the traditions of the *Annales*, an attempt will be made to historicise the food and cuisine of colonial Kerala to investigate the wider social and cultural history of the period.

Some key terms that are used in the present study need clarification. ‘Politics’ is used here not in the literal or traditional sense of politics. It is used more as in the recent academic discussions in social science disciplines pertaining to post-modern readings of the term. It will refer here to the discourse of making food a site of inventing colonial modernity. Another term, ‘Gender’ is used here not as it is used in the feminist studies, rather, in this study; it is very much inclusive of both the genders.

The methodology adopted for the writing of local history will also be resorted to in this study. Field surveys and interviews were extensively useful in the collection of data. The method for collecting information includes participant observation and interviews. Participant observation is conducted on religious festivals that are celebrated by different communities of Kerala. The interpretive or hermeneutic methodology is used in the analysis of data. It is an interdisciplinary study. Insights from Anthropology and Sociology will also be used in this study.

Chapterisation

The present study is divided in to four chapters excluding Introduction and Conclusion that focuses upon religion, power and gender in the making of food and cuisine in the 19th and 20th century Malabar.
The first chapter that is titled as *Sources and Methods* intended to evaluate the sources, methodology and importance of the study. It also analyses the history of gastronomy in a theoretical perspective. The chapter is devoted to the review of the data base of the study such as colonial archival records and Government sources, records from the jails and hospitals records, maps and travelogues, and literary sources and the advertisements of the period under study.

The Second chapter entitled *Beliefs and Rituals in the Politics of Food and Cuisine* tries to evaluate the ways of religion in the construction of food and cuisine in colonial Malabar. The chapter covers the topics such as food in religion and, that is studied in the backdrop of the social landscape of Malabar. The notions of ‘purity’ and ‘impurity’ involved in religious and ritual practices that get manifested in food and culinary practices are studied from a critical point of view. Offering food to deities as an important field of area in sociological and anthropological literatures is studied from a historical perspective in this part. The symbolic meaning of food exchanges in life cycle rituals are studied under the titles of ritual feast, marriage feast and the feeding the dead. The feast and festival associated with agrarian culture are historically analysed in this chapter.

The third chapter is entitled *Power in the Politics of Food and Cuisine*. The first part of this chapter tries to explore the colonial agrarian policy and diet. This part tries to examine the ‘Columbian exchange’, the commercialization of agriculture, and subsequent changes in economy and society. The famine and agrarian crisis, shortage of rice and introduction of Carolina rice are critically studied here to understand the irrational agrarian polices of British colonial powers. ‘Modernity’ is an important subject in historical analysis on various discourses surrounded around the cultural space of Colonialized subjects. Colonial Modernity has redefined many cultural habits of the colonized people. Colonial Modernity and changing dietary habits that opened a number of debates
in the cultural history are inquired in this chapter through various titles like Modernity and tradition: A debate on drinking tea and coffee, Emergence of Public Eating Places. The concept of Nationalism and Swadeshi movements are analysed from the perspective of tradition and modernity. The debate on diet and health and changing body concepts in the Victorian period is also critically studied in this chapter.

*Gendering Food and Cuisine*, the fourth chapter discusses the topic of food and women, the studies of various scholars on food and gender, and their conclusions are analysed and historically criticized in this chapter. The ritual purity in the domestic space was maintained by women through various fasting and other rituals. The power relationship between men and women are encoded through dietary distributions in every society. These problems are studied through the lens of food. The emergence of ‘new domesticity’ and ‘new women’ under the project of modernity also come under the discussion on this chapter. Through this chapter the scholar argued that the gender role on food and cooking has been redefined in the process of modernity.

The conclusion mainly discusses the findings of the study. The ritualisation of food and its symbolic structures are shaped by notions of proper foodstuffs, food preparation, service, social hierarchy, and gendered philosophies. Food serves as a symbol of tradition and a link to culture.