CHAPTER SIX

NEW INFLUENCES AND PRESSURES ON DOMESTIC AND EXTRADOMESTIC FOODWAYS

There has been a growing concern over what food is right and what is not. The media, both the print and media of mass communication, is influential in shaping the consumption foodways. As Alan Warde (1997: 26) notices there is some kind of an enlightenment of the domestic cook in contemporary times. The domestic cook and the family members are now exposed to varieties of influences and pressures. This chapter describes a few of them observed by me in the study area.

Now enormous foodstuffs are available in the market and there is corresponding increase in food related scares and advices to overcome them. I have noticed a few of such scares. Fear of negative influence of food on health and ideas on the relations between food and body image are found in the newspapers and journals. These influences contribute to food avoidance and preferences. In the study area I have noticed that many new pressures are on the relationship between diet and health

Diet and Health

The linkage between diet and health is an inescapable fact of life. While this link is widely recognized in human culture, there are seemingly endless variations in the ways in which it is conceptualised and in the ways in which such conceptualisations are translated into actual beliefs and practices. These conceptualisations of the relationships between diet and health have two opposed aspects: positive and negative.

The positive aspect is based upon the idea that certain food items, combinations of food items or diets can produce beneficial health outcomes and the
negative aspect is based upon the idea that most obviously, a grossly inadequate food intake will lead to weight loss and eventually to death. The new emphasis is how people present themselves and appear to others. Featherstone (1991) draws attention to the contemporary emphasis on general body maintenance that sometimes culminates in an obsession with a procedure for presenting oneself as youthful, healthy and beautiful, almost regardless of biological age. Food scars, dietary regimes, and ideas of correct body are now the concerns of the people of Goa as seen in the dietetic columns in local press. From this observation emerges another hypothesis for further study.

The dietetic regimes in some middleclass and upper class households tend to be overtly directed towards the pursuit of an idealized body weight and shape. A new gymnasium has come up in the study area. My interactions with those who frequent the gym told that they attend the gym for the promise of good health, longevity and a slim, youthful and attractive body. They consume right food along with practising physical exercises. The trained instructors in the gym help them in selecting the right food. The diet columns in the print media and the television shows and suggestions from the elderly members of the family help them in deciding the right food. Such a food is presented as a solution to the problems of illness and old age. Here a combination of ideas of good and right food from the past and present is found.

Even a casual glance at the Doctors’ page of The Sunday Navhind Times, a popular Newspaper from Goa informs that almost all articles on health suggest proper diet as means to fight with or prevent various diseases. Apart from studied articles from such doctors as Rajan Mahatme, S. M. Palkar and Vithal Kamat dietetic facts from other magazines and internet are printed. A few captions are: ‘Diet for Diabetics’, ‘The need for a balanced diet and healthy life-style’, and ‘What Causes
Thinness? Thus the medical knowledge on food is abundantly available in the public sphere. In the context of increasing access to such knowledge by all the literate persons and a few of the people openly quoting these articles in the discussion I have noticed an academic need to find out the extent of the influence. For a future quantitative study of diet and health role of medical knowledge on food in the public sphere may be a relevant problem.

The availability and influence of cookbooks in Goa (Who uses them?)

The cookbooks as well as recipe columns in the newspapers and journals are popular among the housewives in the study area and my relatives. In fact, throughout the world there is some kind of a revolution in the publication of cookbooks. They are found everywhere, in all languages, covering all cuisines.

The phenomenon of cookbooks has attracted the attention of social anthropologists. Appadurai's (1988) study of cookbooks in contemporary India has shown how cookbooks construct a national cuisine for a rising middle class. Bower's (1997a; 1997b) research on community cookbooks has demonstrated that cookbooks reveal class anxiety on the part of immigrants, and that cookbooks can be read as autobiographies. Neuhaus's examination of 1950s American cookbooks shows how cookbooks revealed deep ambivalence about gender roles and "the tenuousness of the domestic ideal" (1999, 531). Finally, Siporin's (1994) account of Jewish cookbooks in Italy shows how one immigrant community (Jews) struggled with cultural assimilation through modifying traditional menus to suit their new cultural environment.

The above studies show that cookbooks are more than recipe books. A careful reader will find non-culinary functions/dimensions of cookbooks. For my examination I have selected five very popular cookbooks of Goa, which are listed below.


All the cookbooks address the housewife and reiterate the gendering of cooking. This is very vocal in Joyce’s introduction:

“...And this cookbook contains recipes from some of the once-upon-a-time zestful women of Goa...women who had (and still do) a sincere interest for good food and drink... women who used a handful of this and a pinch of that formula for cooking....women who cooked in large quantities, in earthenware and copperware, on firewood....and women who believed that Goan cuisine is top!”

All cookbooks are written by women catering to the requirements of women. Most of the authors are catholic Christians. May be among the Christians many people purchase cookbooks. Even Sudha Amonkar, a Hindu authoress, has dealt with many typically Christian dishes.

The cookbooks communicate the essentials of authentic Goan identity. They give Goan recipe as distinct from other recipes. In the era of globalisation and migration of outsiders to Goa these Cookbooks remind Goans of *Goanness*. They also
show that Goa has an authentic cuisine as North Indian cuisine or Chinese cuisine. The role of cookbooks in Goan homes and in Goan society is a potential topic for further anthropological analysis.

**Vegetarian Ideology: Its History and influences in Goa**

The influence of vegetarian ideology through Goa Chapter of the International Vegetarian Society is felt in the study area. Though for predominantly non-vegetarian Goans vegetarianism is a new ideology, as such the ideology is very ancient. A vegetarian ideology was practiced among religious groups in Egypt around 3,200BC, with abstinence from flesh based upon beliefs in reincarnation. Abstention from meat was central to such early philosophies as Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Jainism. Vegetarianism was encouraged in the ancient verses of the *Upanishads* and also mentioned in *Rig Veda* -- the most sacred of ancient Hindu texts. Pivotal to such religions were doctrines of non-violence and respect for all life forms.

Famous philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras encouraged vegetarianism. While wishing to avoid animal cruelty, he also saw the health advantages in a meat-free diet. Pythagoras viewed vegetarianism as a key factor in peaceful human co-existence, putting forward the view that slaughtering animals brutalized the human soul. Other notable Ancient Greek thinkers favoured a vegetarian diet. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle all advocated a 'natural' life that did not involve animal cruelty.

Vegetarianism has always been central to Buddhism, which enshrines compassion to all living creatures. The Mauryan king Asoka, the Great (who reigned between 264-232 BC) converted to Buddhism, shocked by the horrors of battle. Animal sacrifices were ended, as his kingdom became vegetarian.
With the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century there emerged a new appraisal of man's place in the order of creation. Arguments that animals were intelligent feeling creatures were voiced and moral objections were raised, as there was an increasing distaste for the mistreatment of animals. Amongst western religions there was a re-emergence of the view that, in fact, flesh consumption was an aberration from God's will and the genuine nature of humanity.

In the West the Vegetarianism has been an ideology for social movement and facilitated the establishment of Vegetarian Societies. In Europe there is European Vegetarian Union (EVU) and USA has Vegetarian Union of North America (VUNA). In India this movement is slowly gaining momentum. In India the Vegetarian Society with its office located at Mumbai decided to host the First Asian Vegetarian Congress and selected Goa as the venue for the event. Therefore, the First Asian Vegetarian Meet was held during 14-20 October 2001 at Dona Sylvia, Cavelossim in South Goa.

His Excellency Shri R. Venkataraman, the former President of India inaugurated the meet. At this meet was also inaugurated the Goa Chapter of the Vegetarian Society. Dr. Pande is its chairman and Mrs. Sylvia Albuquerque is its treasurer. The Society meets once a month on the second Tuesday at Yatri Niwas (Youth Hostel), Panaji. Their specific aim is to avoid cruelty to animals and to help people attain a healthier life style. Membership is open to all on payment of a nominal fee. The Society is now planning for next 37th International Vegetarian Society’s (IVU) World Vegetarian Congress being held at Goa. The President of the IVU claims that the venue is ideal for a Congress that has as its theme "HEALTHY LIFESTYLE - VEGETARIAN WAY!" The Goa Chapter is now mobilizing local membership for the forthcoming event. The sensitivity of the predominantly non-vegetarian Goans to this movement is slowly gaining momentum.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As far as the food consumption among the humans is concerned there is combination of biological necessity and socio-cultural practice. While fulfilling their hunger and thirst humans form foodways- that are not simply matters of taking enjoyment in gustatory sensations. Food and eating are shaped and reshaped by culture on the one hand and individual likes and dislikes on the other. Simultaneously, the type of food and the availability of food influence the context and content of eating practices. Food and eating on the one hand and society and culture on the other have reciprocal relations. Starting from the sociological observation that society is always in a flux this study attempted to explore the changing foodways in Goa’s domestic dining sphere.

I have selected the domestic dining because in India, the domestic zone or the domain of the household is the central part of social arrangement. The human network begins here in the household and expands from here. Effects of socio-cultural change on foodways and vice versa are encapsulated in the domestic dining practices. The dining practices in the domestic zone have a bearing on several aspects of society and culture. Take for example the issue of gender. The patriarchy is reflected in the gendering of foodways. Food preparation at home absorbs huge amount of time. Provisioning and shopping, storage and preserving, preparation and cooking, serving and cleaning are regular activities necessary to sustain the regular eating habits of all. Women do much of such works. The expectation that the women are the custodians of domestic kitchen remains unaltered. Women are expected to dutifully associate with the tasks of provisioning, preparing, arranging, serving and cleaning. It may be concluded that over the years no change has taken place in this expectation. As such a value is taken for granted it my appear that my conclusion is hackneyed.
My attempt at locating my study in the general corpus of social/anthropological disciplines led me to go for an overview of works in these areas. It has been noticed that the direct intellectual attention to food and eating is not very ancient in sociology. Over the last forty years the anthropologists have shown interest in this area as shown in the classification of social study of food and eating by Goody (1982), Mennel et al (1992) and Beardswoth and Keil (1997). I studied foodways in the domestic dining sphere with a main intention of generating some hypothesis for further quantitative study. In this regard some of my conclusions are listed below.

1. Enormous numbers of new products are constantly made available by food manufacturer. Due to globalisation fresh and new products from around the world are now routinely available everywhere in Goa.

2. The component parts of the average diet are changing driven partly by more prominent concern with health and nutrition.

3. Domestic routines are altering - cooked breakfasts and midday meals at home are on the decline and domestic kitchen displays a greater variety of equipment.

4. The market had expanded for the commercial delivery of meals and snacks, at fast food restaurants in public houses, through home deliveries of take-away food, as indeed it has for complete, pre-prepared chilled or frozen packages purchased from the super market and reheated at home.

5. Food scares, eating disorders and obsession with body shape equally suggest enhanced concern, and often anxiety, about food.

6. An inquiry into the changes in food beliefs has shown nostalgia for the old.
On the basis of their location the households I visited in my study have been classified as semi rural and new settlements. The number of new settlements has been increasing. In these new settlements a clear trend towards industrial food has been noticed. These settlements are cut off from the original source of food. There is no more primary food production practices found here. As testimonies of emerging industrial food new influences such as 'curry in hurry', 'tiffin service' and precooked packaged food can be noted.

There is a clear move towards industrial food. Certain food items which were prepared in the households are now coming into the market as readily cooked packaged food. Some individuals at home traditionally prepared food items in large scale and kept for sale in the market (For example, Sannas, Christmas sweets (Neuros, dodol, pinak, bebinka). In the past every home prepared Christmas sweets, now people prefer to buy from the market. A few of such small entrepreneurs are heading towards the commercialisation of these products. Commercialisation has its own limitations, for certain items have to be consumed fresh having limited shelf life. Certain items like Bebinka are produced by industries using preservatives to extend their shelf life.

Eating habits of villagers and those living in new settlements are different. The villagers prefer traditional food items, fresh fish, meat, fruits and vegetables that are locally grown. Cold or frozen meat is rarely used. The preference is due to the belief that the moment meat is stored in ice it looses its originality. The locally grown vegetables and fruits are preferred as they have been grown with the use of natural manure.

The residents of the new settlement partake more of commercial products. Their children also prefer junk foods available in shops The higher earnings of their
The peer influence acts as pressure for the children. All these processes constitute prima facie evidence of transition of foodways.

I will list a few hypotheses generated on the basis of my observations in the present study. The first hypothesis is about the use of industrial food. The trend is that more the urbanisation of an area higher will be the use of industrial food. As I have observed the swelling of extra-domestic domain the hypothesis is: The participation of the members of households in eating out practices is increasing over the years. The more and more members of the younger generation are participating in eating out practices. Therefore the hypothesis generated is: The eating out practices are more among the adolescents and the youth.

I would like to conclude this study by identifying some limitations. First and foremost it should be noted that this is not a quantitative study. Except for an interaction with a few purposively identified women there is no much statistical data in the study. In the absence of hypothesis testing, it has not aimed at generalisations. It indicates some insights for further hypothesis testing studies. Secondly, the geographical area covered is limited. The findings of the research could have been rigorous if I had taken into consideration and probed into the statistical examination of growth rate of industrial food to find out its impact on the social relations in Goa. The researcher feels that exhaustive family histories in the study area could have been constructed to note the change and continuity of foodways.

The academic contribution of this study consists of its recognition of future areas of study such as industrialising domestic dining, expansion of extradomestic sphere and new influences and pressures on dining.