

Exploring the Food Culture and Dietary Practices of the Thakar Tribe in Ahilyanagar District, Maharashtra

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Abstract: Food culture refers to the practices, attitudes, and beliefs as well as the networks and institutions surrounding the production, distribution, and consumption of food. This ethnographic study delves into the food culture of the Thakar tribe of Udadwane Village, an agrarian community who used to be hunters and gatherers, utilizing participant observation, interviews, and rapport establishment. The aim is to study the culinary practices, dietary pattern, beliefs, taboos, seasonal changes and rituals associated with the food and underscores the importance of recognizing food as more than mere sustenance. The findings shows that rice is the staple food of the tribe. The daily meal includes bhaat, waran and bhakar. They are dependent on forest produce and kitchen-garden. They consume a wide variety of wild vegetables throughout the year like Kaudar, kaili, haredi. The consumption of crabs holds a significance in various life events and rituals of Thakars. Food restrictions, particularly observed by pregnant women, highlights cultural beliefs and taboos. The Thakar tribes' connection to the nature is evident in every meal-from foraging in the forests to cultivating their own crops. The communal aspect of food preparation and consumption strengthens social bonds and ensures that their cultural heritage remains vibrant and alive, rooted in the very flavours that define them.

Keywords: Food culture, Thakar Tribe, Dietary Practices, Communal Food Practices, Ritualistic Consumption.

