

Gender Studies: Student Project Series

Isn't This Plate
Indian?

Dalit Histories and
Memories of Food

ही थाळी भारतीय
नाही का ?

अन्नविषयक दलित
आठवणी आणि इतिहास



Authors

WS 10 Class of 2009



प्रकाशक

क्रांतिज्योती मावित्रीबाई फुले स्त्री अभ्यास केंद्र
पुणे विद्यापीठ, पुणे

Gender Studies: Student Project Series

Isn't This Plate Indian?
Dalit Histories and Memories of Food.

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**Remembering WS-10:
Studying Caste and Gender:
Issues in History and Memory**

“We live our lives sunk in a vast forgetting, a fact we refuse to recognise” (Milan Kundera, Ignorance 2002)

The Course WS -10 on ‘Caste and Gender in Modern India: History and Memory’ was floated this semester (Jan-April 2009) at the Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Women’s Studies Centre as an open course. WS-10 is a course propelled by dalit life narratives, seeking to draw all participants into recognizing histories of caste and gender ‘usually forgotten’ in the official structuring of curricula. The memories that constitute the narratives have a moral and political force that confronts the ‘officially forgotten’ histories of caste and gender oppression, resistance and struggles. WS-10 is a modest attempt to open ourselves to the turbulent processes of learning and thereby intervening in the ignorance on caste and gender in modern institutions and practices; an ignorance manufactured and sanctioned by our academic practices. Twenty-two students registered for this course, ten opting for Marathi and the remaining twelve for English as their medium of expression. Reading materials were made available in both the languages and it was decided that preparatory reading for classes would be ensured by designing ‘surprise comprehension exercises’ and students’ participation in teaching of the course. All narratives in the course it was decided would be introduced in the classroom by students who would work in four groups sometimes across languages at other times around a common language of expression in order to ‘read collectively in translation as many dalit narratives as possible.

The course began with reading the classics on caste and gender which are often forgotten in constructing the classical

tradition in the curricula. We began with reading Jotiba Phule's Satsaar and Sarvajanic Satyadharm Pustak before turning to feminist explorations of Dr Ambedkar's Castes in India, Rise and Fall of Hindu Women, Riddles in Hinduism and Ramaswamy Naicker Periyar's critique of enforced motherhood. Ironically, as we were reading these texts and were turning to writings and memories of women in the Satyashodhak, Ambedkarite and Self Respect publics the visual space of Pune city came to be occupied by hoardings of Parshurama (who beheaded his mother and later fixed a 'matangi's' head to restore her to life) calling for participation in Multilingual Brahman Parishad. The Multilingual Brahman Parishad meeting in Pune city, boasting of star speakers passed resolutions against inter caste marriages and for vegetarianism and in a sense drove home the 'contemporary relevance' of the classics we were reading in class. The students articulated the complex ways in which class, region and moral economy of the household mediated in their caste communities to actively discourage, limit the boundaries of or violently oppose intercaste marriages. Students, especially first generation learners argued that the economic insecurities in higher education were rendering them more dependent on family and kinship networks and reducing the already shrunken space for independent decisions on life and family.

The discussion on history and memory began with students introducing and initiating discussions on four narratives – Vasant Moon's 'Growing up Untouchable in India', Baby Kamble's 'Prisons We Broke', Sharan Kumar Limbale's 'The Outcaste' and Om Prakash Valmiki's 'Jhootan'. Vasant Moon and Baby Kamble's narratives were discussed as offering from two different locations contesting narratives of the nation. These memories of Moon and Kamble allowed an understanding of the ways in which differences of gender, caste and region mediated the Ambedkar movement. Sharan Kumar Limbale's and Om Prakash Valmiki's narratives created discomfort that comes with

recognizing the violence of ‘our ignorance’. Groups discussed memories of caste in Nehruvian India from locations stigmatized by ‘scavenging’ labour and ‘illegitimate’ birth. The consumption of Jhoota food and the sexual violence that structures and is structured by caste was the focus of discussions. Questions of identity – as they emerge in Valmiki’s family name and Sharan Kumar Limbale’s ‘impossibility of belonging to any one single community’ generated considerably emotionally charged discussions. Can the violence of caste become a ground to justify violence of rape? The issue of hegemonic and subordinate masculinities produced by the caste/gender nexus and the complicity with hegemonic models was the focus of much heated discussion. What was most encouraging about the discussions was the absence of posturing of politically correct positions by participants thus producing the classroom as a space for reflecting on caste inside and outside the classroom. Discussing the significance of memories of caste for the troubled relations between feminism and history, we tried to compare the case with memory work on partition in rewriting the histories of the nation. Detailing the conjuncture that makes doing history and memory of caste and gender possible, the class discussed why this called for a democratization of the methods of knowledge. In other words, we asked why and how dalit narratives constituted by memory, experience, identity, embodiment and agency democratize methods of knowing caste and gender.

At this point in the course, the centrality of hunger and food in memory and articulations of pain, humiliation, assertions of self respect, taste of own culinary skills and distaste for ‘bland brahmanical’ food was pointing to the limitations of structural anthropological discourse on caste and food and the sanskritisation model of understanding changes in caste based eating and drinking practices. The idea of doing a food project – of undertaking an analysis of representation of dalit food practices and documenting memories and recipes began to float

in the classroom but had not generated immediate responses. Infectious enthusiasm and engagement came much later when students began to document memories of food and recipes.

The groups of students now working separately in Marathi and English were asked to introduce and discuss Bama's *Karraku* and Uttam Kamble's 'Aai Samjun Ghetana'. It was heartening to see students introduce a third text Shantabai Kamble's 'Majhya Jalmachi Chittarkatha' that was not 'a part of the assigned task for class'. As a course co-ordinator who has often been thoroughly depressed trying to figure out why many of the students resist reading for class discussions- this was a pleasant shock. It had nothing to do, needless to say, with 'pedagogical talents' of the teacher or teaching assistants but the discourse of participation that dalit life narratives generate as against the discourse of distancing that some of the 'more regular' readings produce. These narratives were discussed to detail the memories of kinship – fictive and real, patriarchies and caste in diverse times and spaces. The works of two feminist historians on caste, kinship and patriarchies in diverse settings – matrilineal Malabar and patrilineal Haryana was introduced to detail routes that make a historian challenge 'the field' through a re-reading of the archives and memoirs as also take 'routes to the field' to document oral histories to make sense of the archives. The relations between memory, contexts and concepts in 'doing caste and gender' were discussed by Uma Chakravarti in a two hour presentation on how she came to 'Brahmanical Patriarchy'. A detailed discussion on Urmila Pawar's 'Weave of my Life', detailing the memories of labour, household, food, culinary skills, romance, conjugality, migration, routine violence of caste in the city and its institutions and of 'becoming Buddhist' focused on dalits as producers of modernities countering the dominant discourse of dalits as 'poor consumers' of modernity.

At this point in the course students and the team of Tina Aranha, Sangita Thosar, Deepa Tak got down to nitty-gritty for

doing memory work on food and culinary practices. Rough list of questions were drawn, circulated, appointments made with our respondents and schedules for collective work drawn. The sensitivity of the group on ethics of doing memory work, the genuine engagement in learning from ‘live memories’ was appreciated by the respondents. There was no ‘classical anthropological gaze’ at the ‘other’ during the three days on intense memory work that we did collectively. As the reflections in this book will bear out, the exercise in documenting memories made us throw the gaze of the respondents on ‘ourselves’, ‘our lives’ and academic practices. The axes of power in our classroom were considerably destabilised as students and team members from the Centre working in Marathi and coming from marginalized communities ‘lead’ the exercise of memory work as many of ‘us’ were at a complete loss to understand what ‘Vazdi’ and ‘Chanya’ or Ghoul Sabjee meant. The class discussed the process of putting the documentation together before moving on to the next module in the course.

The discussions on caste, violence and sexuality began by addressing the question of ‘official forgetting’ of caste violence in postcolonial India and the documentation of memories of holocauste being limited to fact-finding reports and testimonies. Drawing upon the writings of Ravi Kumar on caste violence in Tamil Nadu, the class discussed the limitations of social science methods and tools in documenting this violence. Recalling Chunduru, the Khairlanji massacre was detailed to locate the gendered grounds of changing caste relations in post 1960s rural India. Why does the attack on pubs in Karnataka generate a ‘nation wide’ protest campaign by women and Khairlanji fail to be inscribed in the ‘collective memory’ of ‘women’ despite the marches, protests by dalit women across Maharashtra ? Asking why and how ‘we’ forget the sexual atrocities, rape and massacre at Khairlange, it was argued that this has much to do with the complicity with structures of caste and class and the

routine violence of caste and gender. Groups presented Aravind Mallagatti's 'Government Brahmana' and Baburao Bagul's 'Mother', to discuss the routine violence that is produced by institutionalized stereotypes and binaries of love and dharma, desire and nurture, caste and merit in caste-patriarchal society. Methodological questions raised by the research on caste, labour and masculinities in a Tamil village were discussed - and the possibilities and limitations for studying the production of hegemonic and exaggerated subordinate masculinities were detailed.

The course ended with groups presenting Narendra Jadhav's 'Outcaste: A Memoir' to delineate how an archive of the public and private and of structure of feelings of the Ambedkar movement is built from fragments. We discussed how the notes in a diary that comes to be kept to 'keep a retired father busy' and reconstruction of memories by a family produce radical empiricism and alternate histories that move beyond the evidentiary rules of social science.

This collection of narratives 'Isn't This Plate Indian?': Dalit Memories and Histories of Food, has emerged from the collective efforts of all involved in WS-10. I would like to put on record my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Raosaheb Kasabe and Dr Sulbha Patole who helped me to think through the project before floating the idea in class. Kasabe Sir in his characteristic style narrated his own memories of food, kinds of meat, nausea and attempts to get the better of socialized limitations of taste. Sulbha's enthusiasm and sharing of memories outside Namdeo sabhagraha convinced us that such a project was indeed needed. This project was not possible without the 'insider's' perspective that Sangita Thosar and Deepa Tak lent to the project besides their efforts in organizing the meetings with respondents and editing the narratives. Tina's translations and painstaking efforts at editing both the Marathi and the English narratives have made this 'in record time' publication possible. The faculty members, non-

teaching staff and research team at the centre, particularly Nirmala Jadhav who assisted the teaching of this course but could not be a part of the project due to other research commitments have helped in diverse ways to make this project possible. Thanks are due to Deepak Kasale for typing and typesetting of this book. Lastly, a big thanks to all the students who participated in the course and the project for their insights, hard work and the enthusiasm they brought to the project. It has encouraged me to restart my long pending work on 'Ambedkar: Feminist Explorations', a reader in the Navayana Series. This book will be for the WS -10 batch of 2009.

Sharmila Rege
April 2009

Preface: Process and Reflections

The journey of this project has been like a roller-coaster taking us to the heights of excitement and joy as well as the depth of pain and deprivation. Having never truly experienced hunger, this project gave us a slice of the pain of hunger, desperation for food as also the joys and aspirations associated with food.

The course on Caste and Gender in Modern India: History and Memory involved reading lot of Dalit autobiographies which we feel truly directed us towards the dynamics of food practices. For example the name 'Joothan' itself is a strong statement that indicates how food is central to the sustenance of the caste system. It has been emphasised through varied texts and experiences that food is an identity marker and this project truly brought this thought alive underlining its regional specificities, personal histories and as a marker of social status.

Acknowledging that modern institutions and practices have reinvented caste, the class reflected on cookbooks and the absence of Dalit recipes in them. It led to the pertinent question of 'Why are not Dalit cooking practices worthy of study or why are they not to be considered as knowledge and documented in a cookery book?' It is towards unearthing these invisible histories and demanding their value, that this project took shape.

Indian society is a caste-based society and its hierarchy revolves primarily around paternal residence, food practices and marriage. Food was central to the practice of untouchability – first because who could eat what was regulated by the brahmanical ordering of society and then this itself became a marker of pure and impure status. Recognising this fact, this project looked to engage with memories of Dalit women and men to explicate the caste and gender intersections on the site of food.

While the class consisted of 22 students, the editorial team comprised of the course coordinator Sharmila Rege alongwith Deepa Tak, Sangita Thosar and Tina Aranha. The team, over several meetings, worked on the conduct of the interviews, identifying and sourcing resource persons, distributing work within the team, finalising ‘the space’ to conduct interviews and crucially managing available time. There was much disagreement within the team over the number and the specific resource persons we ought to include in this project. After much discussion, we came up with a rough list of resource persons who would be approached by Deepa and Sangita (many of them they knew personally) to ask if they would agree to be part of this project. The consent was sought and thus informed to the team.

Meanwhile the entire team decided to prepare a questionnaire schedule and likewise students came with possible questions they would want to ask. 22 different set of ideas were put together and the team discussed the prepared interview-guide. This schedule was given beforehand to students to help them familiarise themselves. The team also used it to inform resource persons of the type of questions that would be asked. The team then arduously made a timetable to ensure that one English medium student and one Marathi medium student engaged and wrote one life narrative.

Selection of resourcepersons was an intimate and conscious decision. It was earlier decided that 6 Dalit women would be interviewed recognising that food is intrinsically linked to women. This number rose to 8 and on the insistence of students, two male resourcepersons were added. Students wished to interview more male resource persons to trace the gendered nuances of food practices, but time constraints meant we had to limit them to two. Hence we had 10 resourcepersons – 8 women and 2 men. They belonged to Matang, Valmiki, Neo-Buddhist and Pinjari castes.

The interviews were conducted across three days – 17th, 18th and 19th March 2009. The students were divided into groups and students opposed this idea. When the rationale of conducting the interviews was explained, they agreed but insisted that all students would attend all interviews. Thus the timetable included one Marathi/Hindi speaking student as the main interviewer while one English medium and one Marathi medium student wrote out the interviews. This timetable underwent many changes with resource persons either being unable to come for the interviews or requesting for change in date. Since the resource persons spoke in Marathi and Hindi, Sharmila and Tina took charge of translating the interview into English for the benefit of students who didn't understand Marathi and Hindi. Even as much care was taken to take note of every detail and translate it, it was understood that nuances of spoken word/expressions do get lost in translation.

In order to ensure that the resource persons spoke freely, they were informed of the project in advance. The classroom was organised in such a way that students sat around the resourcepersons to make it less intimidating. There were discussions with students over the manner to ask questions as well as informal meetings with the resourcepersons when they arrived at the Centre.

Our resourcepersons were shy, humble, extremely gregarious and with a funny bone. They shared their lives and recipes with us even as it opened up sore points as well as tickling memories of the past. Every moment was savoured, all recipes baked in the specificity of the individual/region/community and all memories deep fried with questions, comments and sharing of experiences by students and the team.

When the students' enthusiasm dipped or there was hesitation sensed in students or resourcepersons, the team took over and intervened. This helped because when resourcepersons felt embarrassed speaking of some aspects of their lives or called

some meat as ‘mothyacha mutton’ (big mutton) the team ensured they felt comfortable as also asked pointed questions to cull out that ‘mothyacha mutton’ means beef or asked for the meaning and recipe of ‘chania.’

Each recipe was mouth-wateringly explained, some almost as if cooked right there with gestures of mixing the mutton or sprinkling the masala. Questions of the recipe of the masala always brought a twinkle in the eye of the resourcepersons and as one of them responded “Saying swadanusaar (as per your taste) for any measure in recipes is the most misleading piece of information!” Interacting with the resourcepersons opened up a new world of finger-licking savouries and everyone on board felt that they were participating in a food festival!

While students had to write one life narrative each, they were advised to write in third person format. Yet some students felt it lent much more to the subject and hence wrote in first person format.

Moreover since this is the first attempt to document these memories and histories, the lives and recipes do not follow pre-ordained formats of narration and hence writing. The resourcepersons didn’t always follow a chronological format in narrating their lives nor gave quantitative measures in describing recipes.

The students submitted the essays in 5 sections: Why this project, Connecting read passages with the project, Analysing Existing Cookbooks on Shelves, Documenting Life Narratives with Recipes and Reflections. The editorial team looked at the essays and edited them for factual accuracy, copy-editing and sometimes length. Care was taken to ensure original thought was retained. Editing was an arduous task what with bringing together 22 voices across 2 languages ensuring that arguments made by students came across in their continuities and discontinuities to build a coherent text- produced at once individually and collectively.

The editorial team noted that across essays there was unanimity in the selection of passages, critique of cookbooks and also the critical act of reflecting on their lives and practices and hence learning relationally. There was variation in what they noticed in the cookbooks depending on their location as also their specific styles of sketching out the narratives.

Coming from very diverse locations, we as a team disagreed immensely on issues as also brought specific flavours to the plate of this project.

For Sangita, this project underlined that food can be knowledge and acknowledged that it granted legitimacy to her childhood memories of struggling to assert her food choices even as she questioned the right of others granting it legitimacy. She recalled how as a child she would remain silent on the question of eating beef but later as she joined the Satyashodhak Movement, started sharply asserting her food choices as a spontaneous reaction against the years of silenced oppression against her and many like her who didn't have a voice. She truly believes that this project has shown how caste and its cultures determines what we eat as well as what we 'prefer' to eat. She asserted how in the city one would hide the act of eating beef and she recalls how her mother instructed her that in case anyone asks, Sangita should say 'today we are eating potatoes at home.' She believes that this project has truly brought alive the concept that one learns of how caste and gender construct division of labour as also indicated pertinent points of the relation of food to the caste economy. The possibility of a project that researches food that we eat surprised her, and later she enjoyed it immensely.

Deepa pointed out that through the course on Caste and Gender and this project; she truly understood how food can also be a site for knowledge. She notes that her own experience always reflected that food was a site of oppression – of deeming people like her lowly due to their food practices. The project

made her think on the need for documenting this knowledge as well as led her to the Food Section of a bookstore marvelling at the titles like *Buddhist Peace Food*. As someone who doesn't consume pig meat and had hidden it from her friends in college, Deepa has always revelled in the 'shuddhata' (purity) attached to her in her family. She sees this act as having ingrained the dominant belief of pure and impure food. Even as she has never truly experienced hunger, she recalls how she would wonder why males in the family would always get a larger share. She also underlines how it wasn't always easy to convince the resource persons for this project who laughed it off or hesitated and how many of them placed their trust in her to discuss their lives. In this process, she believes being an 'insider' helped.

Tina hadn't fathomed the deeply enriching journey this was going to be when she agreed to be a part of the project. Even as this project was underway, she read many dalit autobiographies like *Weave of my Life*, *Joothan*, *The Outcaste* and *Outcaste: A Memoir*, which brought to her attention the question of food, it being site of humiliation and a site to claim modernity. As someone who has never regarded cooking as a skill or been interested in cooking, this project led her to reflect on the violence she inflicted by brushing off her mother's battle in building a 'negotiated taste' across two cultures in an inter-religious marriage. It also brought back memories of how there would be 'controversies' over what kind of food was served, how it was served and to whom was it served first not so much in marriages (what with marriages now having buffets) but with death ceremonies and rituals. For her, being a part of this project has underlined her privileged upper caste status as also made her recall and appreciate her childhood fetish for bhakris and chutney, eaten relishingly at a neo-Buddhist neighbour's home. It has resolved for her many disturbing questions of the past as well as provided answers to the many nagging questions of the present.

Even as this was an effort to document the process, it has made us reflect on the materiality of the everyday, convincing us of the diverse paths this project will take hereon. In essence, this project doesn't end here.

Deepa Tak
Sangita Thosar
Tina Aranha

(April 2009)

**आमच्या दहा उत्तरदात्यांकरीता तसेच भूकेच्या
व जातीयवादाच्या सत्तासंबंधांच्या विरोधात
संघर्ष करताना 'चव' निर्माण करणाऱ्या असंख्य
दलित स्त्री-पुरुषांकरिता...**

***For our ten respondents and innumerable
dalit men and women who created 'taste'
struggling against hunger and resisting
power of caste regimes...***

अनुक्रमणिका

विभाग १ :

ही थाळी भारतीय नाही का?

अन्नाविषयक दलित आठवणी आणि इतिहास१

विभाग २ :

राष्ट्रीय व प्रादेशिक पाक कलांची पुस्तके :

दलित थाळी भारतीय नाही का?१०

विभाग ३ :

अन्न व पाककृतींच्या दलित आठवणी :

इतिहासाच्या पुनर्लेखनासाठी१३

रामवती कुडियाँ - राजश्री शिंगटे१३

आशा खरात - शरीफा बाले१८

अबिदाबाई शिंदे- योगिता ढाणे२३

लक्ष्मी शिरसे - स्वाती खांडरे२६

भामाबाई ठोसर - श्रद्धा पाटील२८

सलीम शेख - राहुल पैठणकर३२

शोभा टाक - अजित पडवळ/सविस्तर रूप - दिपा टाक३६

विष्णु शिरसे - युवराज सुर्यवंशी४०

धोंडाबाई कांबळे - शितल कदम४४

गीता बिवाल - रोहिणी यादव५१

विभाग १

ही थाळी भारतीय नाही का? अन्नाविषयक दलित आठवणी आणि इतिहास

भूमिका:

भारतीय समाजव्यवस्थेत हक्क, अधिकार, सत्ता, संपत्ती व अस्मितांचे 'केलेले' असमान वाटप व ह्याच वाटपाचे 'केलेले' नैसर्गीकीकरण हेच खऱ्या अर्थाने दलित समाजाला शोषित, अस्पृश्य बनवण्यास कारणीभूत आहे.

दलित समूहांचा इतिहास जर बघितला तर त्यांचा संघर्ष हा ज्याप्रमाणे अस्मिता जपण्यासाठी होता त्याचप्रमाणे तो स्वाभिमान जपण्यासाठीचा होता त्याचबरोबर 'अन्नासाठीचा' देखील होता. कारण दलित समूहांचा अन्नासाठीचा लढा हा एक-दोन पिढ्यांचा नसून तो सात-आठ पिढ्यांचा मोठा संघर्ष आहे. कारण उत्तम कांबळे म्हणतात त्याप्रमाणे, "माझ्या सात पिढ्या ह्या भाकरीसाठी खपल्या आहेत."

दलित साहित्याच्या लिखाणाचे प्रमुख आधास्तंभ जर बघितले तर त्यात 'भूक' हा कळीचा मुद्दा आहे. भारतीय समाजव्यवस्थेत एकीकडे 'काय खावे' असा प्रश्न आहे तर दुसरीकडे 'हे का ते खावे' ह्या बदलची छापील पुस्तके आहेत. एकीकडे अन्नाच्या निवडीचे स्वातंत्र्य नव्हते तर दुसरीकडे जातिआधारीत अन्नाची 'खासियत' (speciality) हा सामाजिक गतिशीलतेचा मार्ग बनतो. समाजामध्ये काय खावे शाकाहार की मांसाहार, शाकाहारामध्येही ताजे की शिळे, मांसाहार ते पण कुठल्या प्राण्याचे, कुठल्या भागाचे या गोष्टी माणसाचा दर्जा ठरवितात. जातिवर्ग पितृसत्ताक समाजव्यवस्थेतील हा विरोधाभास आहे.

भारतीय समाजव्यवस्थेत जे जातिधिष्ठित अन्न व अन्नपदार्थांचे राजकारण होते, ते सत्ताधारी जातींच्या हितसंबंधांची जोपासणा करताना 'एतर' (excluded) जातींना 'अस्पृश्य' व 'घाणेरडे' ठरविण्यासाठीचेच राजकारण होते. याला अन्नाचे जातिधिष्ठित राजकारण म्हणावे लागेल. तसेच या राजकारणाचे लिंगभाव आधारित पदर लक्षात घ्यावे लागतील.

स्वयंपाक ही कला स्त्रियांशी जोडली गेलेली आहे त्यामुळे खाण-पानामध्ये जातीय रचना तर आहेच पण लिंगभावात्मक रचना सुद्धा आहेत.

उदा. पुरुषांनंतर स्त्री ने जेवणे, जेवताना ताट कसे वाढावे ह्या बदल नियम असणे, मांसाहार असेल तर कुठला भाग पुरुषाला दिला जातो तर कुठला भाग स्त्रीला दिला जातो यामध्ये भेद असणे, तसेच सणासुदीला कोणाकडे ताट पाठवायचे व घ्यायचे यातून स्त्रियांमार्फत खाण-पाण विषयीची जातीय विषमता जोपासली जाते.

‘आमच्यात’ हे चालते, ‘तुमच्यात’ नाही असे म्हणताना अन्नाधारीत जातिधिश्रित विषमतेच्या वाहक म्हणून स्त्रियाच पुढे येतात.

इतिहासात मागे वळून पाहिले तर राष्ट्रवादी विचारप्रणालीत देखील अन्नविषयक भिन्न परिप्रेक्ष्य पुढे येताना दिसतात. गांधी उपवासावर भर देतात तर डॉ. आंबेडकर अन्नाच्या राजकारणाच्या गाभ्यावरच हल्ला चढवतात. मेलेल्या जनावराचे मांस न खाण्याचा व स्वाभिमान जोपासण्याचा आदेश ते देतात. या ठिकाणी राष्ट्रवाद्यांनी आयोजित केलेल्या सहभोजनांच्या कार्यक्रमांचे विश्लेषण करणे महत्त्वाचे ठरेल. भारतीय राष्ट्रीय सभेने किंवा सावरकरांनी आयोजित केलेल्या सहभोजनाच्या कार्यक्रमातील पदार्थ जर आपण बघितले तर ते तथाकथित उच्चभू जातींचेच असत (जिलबी, वरण, भात इ.) बोकड, रेडा, डुकराच्या मांसाचे सहभोजन झालेले दिसत नाही. ‘आम्ही सवर्ण तुम्हा दलिताना आमच्यात सामील करू परंतु आमच्या पद्धतीने तुम्ही खावे हे ठरवूनच सामील करू’ असे हे सामिलीकरणाचे राजकारण स्पष्ट दिसते.

एखादा अन्न पदार्थ दर्जेदार तर दुसरा तुच्छ किंवा कमी दर्जाचा हे ठरविण्याचे निकष कोणते? हे ठरविणारे कोण? असा जेव्हा खडा सवाल येतो तेव्हा असे म्हणावे लागते ज्याच्या हाती ससा तो पारधी म्हणजे इतिहास घडविणाऱ्यापेक्षा तो लिहिणाऱ्यांचाच अधिक! परंतु हा इतिहास आपल्याला अमान्य असेल तर त्यात काहीच वावगे ठरू नये कारण ह्या इतिहासाचे ठोस निकष व पुरावे प्रस्थापित व्यवस्थेकडे नाहीत.

दलित समाजात फुले-शाहू व आंबेडकरांच्या प्रेरणेने प्रगती झालेली आहे. दलित समाजाने ह्या प्रेरणेच्या जोरावर प्रस्थापित समाजव्यवस्थेचे बुरूज खिळखिळे केले आहेत. उदाहरण सांगायचे झाले तर आज राजकारण, शिक्षण,

साहित्य, विज्ञान इ. क्षेत्रात दलित समुदाय स्व सामर्थ्यावर प्रवेश करत आहे. जातिआधारीत समाजाने लादलेल्या नकारात्मक अधिकारांना विरोध करत आहे व या नकारात्मक अधिकाराला अनेक पिढ्यांनी केलेल्या प्रतिकाराचा इतिहास मांडत आहेत.

ज्या अर्पित दर्जाला प्रस्थापित व्यवस्थेने डोक्यावर धरून मिरविले होते त्या अर्पित दर्जाला उपडे करून अर्जित दर्जा प्राप्त करण्याकडे प्रवास केला आहे व त्यातून एक समांतर पर्यायी व्यवस्था आज दलित समाजाने दलित साहित्य, दलित पक्ष, दलित वृत्तपत्र, दलित चळवळ, दलित साप्ताहिके-पाक्षिके या स्वरूपात उभारली आहे. थोडक्यात सर्वच क्षेत्रात आज दलितांनी केवळ प्रवेशच केला आहे असे नाही तर प्रतिक्षेत्रेही उभी केली आहेत. पण ज्या गोष्टीसाठी अनेक पिढ्यांनी उपासमार झेलली, संघर्ष केला त्या अन्नाच्या क्षेत्रातील दलित संघर्षाचा व सृजनशीलतेचा इतिहास अजूनही टिपायचा आहे. कारण आजही आपण पाककलेच्या बुक स्टॉलवर गेलो किंवा रेस्टॉरंटमधील मेनूची यादी बघितली तर दलित पाककला कुठेही नोंदवलेली दिसत नाही. परंतु दलित स्वकथनातून मांडलेल्या इतिहास व आठवणींमधून अन्नासाठी केलेला संघर्ष हा केंद्रस्थानी असलेला दिसतो.

डॉ. आंबेडकरपूर्व काळातील अन्नगृहणाबाबतची नकारात्मक हक्क, सक्ती, हालअपेष्टांच्या आठवणी या स्वकथनातून मांडलेल्या दिसतात. तर आंबेडकरी चळवळीतून मिळालेल्या अन्नाविषयीच्या नव्या संदेशाच्या स्मृती चळवळीचा दैनंदिन इतिहास सांगतात.

भारत खाना खा रही थी। माँ टोकरा लिए दरवाजेसे बाहर बैठी थी। मैं और मेरी छोटी बहन माया माँ से सिमटे बैठे थे। इस उम्मीद में कि भीतर से जो मिठाई और पकवानों की महक आ रही है, वह हमें भी खाने को मिलेगी।

जब सब लोग खाना खाकर चले गए तो मेरी माँ ने सुखदेव सिंह त्यागी को दालान से बाहर आते देखकर कहा, “चौधरी जी, ईब तो सब खाणा खा के चले गए... म्हारे जाकतों (बच्चों) कू भी एक पत्तल पर धर के कुछ दे दो। वो बी तो इस दिन का इंतजार कर रे ते।”

सुखदेव सिंह ते जूठी पत्तलों से भरे टोकरे की तरफ इशारा करके कहा, “टोकरा भर तो जूठन ले जा री है... उप्पर से जाकतों के लिए ख्राणा माँग री है? अपणी औकात में रह चूहड़ी। उठा टोकरा दरवाजे से और चलती बन।”

सुखदेव सिंह त्यागी के वे शब्द मेरे सीने में चाकू की तरह उतर गए थे, जो आज भी अपनी जलन से मुझे झुलसा रहे हैं।

उस रोज मेरी माँ की आँखों में दुर्गा उतर आई थी। माँ का वैसा रूप मैंने पहली बार देखा था। माँ ने टोकरा वहीं बिखेर दिया था। सुखदेव सिंह से कहा था, “इसे ठाके अपने घर में धर ले। कल तड़के बारातियों को नाश्ते में खिला देना...” (ओमप्रकाश वाल्मिकी : १९९७)

ही बातमी आमच्या आयला कळली, ती लालूच्या घरी गेली. आय लालूला म्हनली, “आगं लालू, मका कशी खाल्लीच? बारा दिसाचं प्वार कसं करंल?”

“गवळाबाय, त्याला काय होत नाय. तुला आठवंत का? माझा तुका बारा दिसाचा. तुमची नाजा बारा दिसाची. आपून बाळातीन झालू तव्हा खायला कायच नव्हतं. तवा तुमी म्हनला, ‘लालू, दंडाच्या वाडीला गोडस्याची बाजरी मोडायला चल संगं. बुकाबी इतीया.’ आपून बारा दिसाची पोरं कैकाडी पाटीत घातली. आन् दंडाच्या वाडीला बाजरीची कनसं मोडायला गेलू. मुलाच्या पाट्या गुराच्या गोट्यात ठिवल्या. आपून बाजरीची कनसं मोडायला लागलू. वारा सुटला. आबाळ काळकुट्टं झालं. दुपारीच पाऊस पडायला लागला. पाऊस काय थांबना. आपून गोट्यात गेलू. गोटा पन गळायला लागला. पोरान्या पाट्या उचलून जितं गळत नाय तितं ठिवल्या. पाऊस बंद झाल्यावर, मालकानं दिलेली कनसं हातावर चोळून ती प्वाटभर खाल्ली, बाकीची कनसं घरी आनली. ती बडवली. बाजरी जात्यानं दळली. भाकरी केल्या. तवा मुलाबाळांनी खाल्ल्या. जरा बरं वाटलं. भुकंच्या पुढं काय करनार?” (कांबळे शांताबाई : १९९०)

जनावरांची वाटणी गुडशांप्रमाणे होई. गुडसा हा काय शब्द आहे, म्हणून कुतूहल वाटेल. लक्ष्मीबाई टिळकांच्या आत्मचरित्रात हा गुडसा शब्द आलेला. मराठी सारस्वतांना पण ह्या शब्दाचा अर्थ लागला की नाही, कुणास ठाऊक! पण लक्ष्मीबाईंना ठाऊक होता. महार ख्रिश्चनांची ओळख होती ना? तेथे पाहिजे जातीचे, हेच खरं. काय सांगत होतो? गुडसा प्रकरण. जनावरांच्या शरीरातील हाडांचं हे नाव. काही गुडशांची नावं आजही आठवतात. कमरेजवळची मांडी तो धाऱ्या, घोट्यापासून वर तो चाकळ्या, आणि गुडध्यापासून वर तो मेट्या. ह्या गुडशांवरून महारवाड्यात भांडणं होतं. कधी मारामाऱ्या. बाया एकमेकींच्या झिंज्या उपटीत. त्यात आईमाईचा उद्धार. आजही ह्या समाजाचं भांडण म्हणजे गुडशाचं भांडण. सत्ता-स्पर्धेचं भांडण भेगू असलेला गुडसा कुणाला मिळावा? जाऊ दे. विषयांतर झालं. (दया पवार : १९८९)

कुणीच वाटा माझ्या आजीला आदलून बदलून देईना. तेव्हा माझी आजी फारच चिडली आणि रागाच्या भरात म्हणाली, “आज पसनं जी ढोराचं मांस खाईल त्याला सोराचा आन. (सोर म्हणजे डुकर)” ह्या डुकराचं साधं नाव घेण्यासही महार आणि मुसलमान यांना धर्माप्रमाणे शपथ होती. डुकराचं नाव काढलं की गडीबायका पचापचा थुंकू लागल्या आणि गाडग्यामडक्यांत भरलेले वाटे त्यांनी कवड्यावर टाकून दिले. काही बायका माझ्या आजीला मारायला उठल्या. काहीजणी हातपाय चोळून तिच्या सत्यानासाची ओवी गाऊ लागल्या आणि जी तरणी पोरं जमली होती त्यांनी माझ्या आजीची पाठ थोपटली. “शाब्बास सीतायवैनी! आज बरीक तुम्ही म्हारवाड्याला डोळं दिलं. आंबेडकर सांगत्यात तीच सीतावैनीच्या शिपतीतून आपून पाळू.”

मग ढोरमांस न खाण्याच्या तिथंच शपती घेतल्या आणि आपोआप त्यांच्या तोंडून पहिली घोषणा निघाली, ‘भीमराव की जय!’ अशी गर्जना करून त्या दिवसापासून वीरच्या महारवाड्याचं मडं खाणं बंद झालं. अजूनही वारच्या माणसांची गाठ पडली तर ती जुनी आठवण काढून म्हणतात, ईरातील पहिलं मडं सीतायवैनींनी बंद केलं. ही मडींपडी म्हणजे महारांचं वैभव होतं. (बेबी कांबळे : १९९०)

तर अनेक लेखक/इतिहासकार अन्नाभोवती असलेल्या विशिष्ट नैतिक अर्थकारणाशी त्यांच्या स्वकथनातून आपली ओळख करून देतात.

भाकर माणसाऐवढी. भाकर आभाळाऐवढी. भाकर सूर्याऐवढी प्रखर. भूक माणसापेक्षाही मोठी. भूक सात पाताळापेक्षाही दांडगी. माणूस भाकरीऐवढा; भुकेऐवढा. पोट माणसापेक्षाही दांडगं. एक पोट म्हंजी पृथ्वी. पोट असतं ईतभर; पर सारं जग गिळून ढेकर दील. पोट नसतं, तर कशा झाल्या असत्या लढाया, चोऱ्या, मारामाऱ्या? पोट नसतं, तर कसे झाले असते पाप-पुण्य, स्वर्ग-नरक आणि ईश्वराची निर्मिती? पोट नसतं, तर झालाच कसा असता देश, सीमा, नागरिक आणि संसद, घटना वगैरे? पोटातून तर जन्मले जग. जगाचे संबंध. आई-बाप, बहीण-भाऊ वगैरे वगैरे. (शरणकुमार लिंबाळे : १९८४)

सारं ऐकल्यावर आक्का म्हणाली, “उतम्या, आता एक गोष्ट लक्षात ठेव. माणसानं मरणासाठी खायचं नसतं. जगण्यासाठी खायचं असतं. जास्त खायची इच्छा झाली की पाणी प्यायचं. जेवणाच्या अगोदर पाणी प्यावं. जेवता जेवता पाणी प्यावं म्हणजे अन्न लागत नाही.”

आक्काने दिलेला हा फॉर्म्युला मला पुढं उपासमारीच्या काळात खूप उपयोगी पडला. पाण्याचा मारा करून भूक दाबून टाकता येते काही क्षणांपुरती याची मला खात्री झाली. आक्काही जास्त पाणी का पिते हेही समजाला लागलं. आपल्या सारख्या गरीब माणसाला पाणी किती उपयोगी पडतं हेही कळायला लागलं.

पुढं मला मधुमेह झाला. जेवणावर मर्यादा आल्या. कडाडून भूक लागली तरी मर्यादित खायचं असतं. प्रत्यक्षात खूप खूप खायची इच्छा होते. मर्यादित जेवणामुळे पोटातला खड्डा काही बुजत नाही. तो बुजण्यासाठी मग पाण्याचा तांब्या उचलतो. अशा वेळी आक्का शेजारीच बसली आहे असं वाटतं. ती सांगू लागते, “आतडी मोकळी आहेत का? उचल पाण्याचा तांब्या आणि लाव तोंहाला...” (उत्तम कांबळे : २००६)

काही स्वकथनातील आठवणी दलित समाजातील पाककलेच्या स्वादाचा इतिहास ताजा करतात. तर काही स्थलांतरानंतर होणाऱ्या शहर-गाव यांच्यातील देवाण-धेवाणीच्या आठवणी नोंदवतात.

गावी जाताना लोक पाव-भटार आणि सुके बोंबील मासे घेऊन जायचे. येताना शेतातला हुरडा घेऊन यायचे. त्याला 'वानावळा' म्हणतात. या वानावळ्याचा सर्वत्र एवढा सुक्याळ असे की 'ज्याचा कट्टाळा, त्याचाच वानावळा' अशी म्हणच प्रचलित होऊन बसली होती. फारच चैन म्हणजे गावाकडून येणारी मंडळी बेसनाचे गोड 'लाल शेंगुळे' किंवा कुळीथाच्या पिठाचे तिखट शेंगुळे आणीत. मात्र, अशा प्रकारे गावाकडून कोणत्याही कुटुंबाकडे आलेल्या गोष्टी तत्काळ चाळीत सर्वांना वाटून दिल्या जात. (नरेंद्र जाधव : १९९४)

महार समाजाध्ये मुलगी पाहायला जाणे हा एक सोहळा होता. साधारणपणे मुलगी दिसायला सुंदर, शालीन व चारित्र्यवाण असावी ही अपेक्षा असे. परंतु मुलीकडून आणखी एका गुणाची अपेक्षा करीत. तिला मांडे करता यावे अशी बऱ्याच कुटुंबाची मागणी राही. जेवणात मांडे असले की मुलगी सुगण आहे असे समजत. मांडे म्हणजे लंब्यारोट्या बनवणे ही महार-बौद्ध समाजातील नष्टप्राय होत चाललेली एक पाककला आहे. उपड्या घागरीवर पाणी भलेही न थांबो, परंतु मांडे मात्र उघड्या मातीच्या घड्यावरच करण्यात येतात. या घड्याला 'रात्रे' हा खास शब्द आहे... मांड्यांसाठी कणीक तिंबताना बायका मात्र नवऱ्याचे उट्टे भरपूर काढीत. चांगले परातभर पीठ घेऊन त्याचे कणीक, आटीव दुधाच्या रबडीसारखे फार पातळ नाही परंतु घट्टही नाही असे तयार करायचे. मग तो संपूर्ण कणकेचा एकच 'उंडा' दोन्ही हातांनी उचलून डोक्यावर उचलायचा नि परातीत जोराने आपटायचा. पुन्हा पुन्हा पाण्याने पिटाला गोंजारायचे व आपटायचे. या कणकीतील कण नि कण एकजीव होताना अधूनमधून त्यावर उठवणारे फुगे कणकेचा रुसवाच व्यक्त करीत. अशी आपटून आपटून तिंबलेली कणीक खरोखरच एकजीव झाली की नाही, हे रान्यावर छोटीशी रोटी टाकून पहायचे असे.

डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर नागपूरला आले की ते आवर्जून या मटन मांड्यांच्या पाहुणचाराचा आस्वाद घेत. १९३० मध्ये योगेश वराडेची आई सगुणाबाई हिला बाबासाहेबांनी बोलावले. लंबी-रोटी समोर धरीत बाबा म्हणाले, “या पातळ रोटीतून तुझा चेहरा दिसतो. इतकी सुंदर कला तुझ्या हातात आहे.” त्याती तिला चोळीच्या खणाकरिता स्वतः पैसे दिले. (वसंत मून : १९९५)

साधारणतः सणासुदीला किंवा भेट पाठवायला हमखास केलं जायचं ते भानोरे. हे भानोरं केकसारखं लागायचं. मला ते फार आवडायचं. ते करायची पद्धत सोपी असायची.

तांदळाच्या जाडसर पिठात पाणी गूळ, खोबरं, हळद, चिमूटभर मीठ घालून ते मिश्रण आतून तेल लावलेल्या पातेल्यात ओतायचं. मग पातेल्यावर झाकण ठेवून झाकणात व पातेल्याखाली फुललेले निखारे ठेवून भानोरं अंगच्या वाफेवर शिजवायचं. आई, विशेषतः रात्री ते शिजायला लावायची. रात्रभर त्याच्या कमंग वासानं झोप उडायची. शिजलं की केळीच्या पानावर पातेलं ‘भानोरं’ उपडं करायचं. मग त्याचे केक सारखे तुकडे पाडायचे. हे भानोरं आठ आठ दिवस टिकायचं. बोटीतून मुंबईला येणाऱ्या माणसाकडे भेट हमखास असायची. (उर्मिला पवार : २००३)

बारीक माशांमध्ये मला विशेष आवडायचा तो ‘काटांचा मोटला’ बोटाएवढा बारीक ‘कांटा (बोटपडवे) किंवा नदीचे बारीक मासे धुऊन, साफ करून त्यांना तिखट, मीठ, हळद, आमसूल व तेल चोळून कुंभ्याच्या भरपूर पानांत गुंडाळून, वेलींनी बांधून घेत. मग जरा चपटा आकार करून तो मोटला चुलीत राखेखाली ठेवत. वर राख पसरून स्वयंपाक वगैरे करत. तीन-चार, कधी सात-आठ दिवससुद्धा हा मोटला गरम राखेखाली शिजवत. ते मासे फ्रिजमध्ये ठेवल्यासारखे चांगले राहात व हवे तेव्हा काढून खाता येत. फारच रुचकर लागत. ते संपेपर्यंत जीभ पाझरत राही.

हे असलं डब्यातून वर्गात किंवा सहलीला नेणं दूरच, पण आपण ते खातो हे मुलींना सांगायलाही मला लाज वाटायची. आपण त्यांच्यापेक्षा खरोखर हीन आहोत असं जाणवत राहायचं. (उर्मिला पवार : २००३)

वरील सर्व उताऱ्यांवरून पुढे येणारा इतिहास प्रमुख प्रवाही इतिहासलेखनात तसेच पाककलेच्या समाजशास्त्रीय विश्लेषणात कधीच दिसत नाही. जातिधिष्टीत शोषण व संघर्षाला पुन्हा एकदा सिद्धांकनाच्या विश्वात अदृश्य (invisible) केलेले दिसते.

विभाग २ :

राष्ट्रीय व प्रादेशिक पाक कलांची पुस्तके: दलित थाळी भारतीय नाही का?

'How to make a national cuisine : cookbooks in contemporary India' या लेखामध्ये अर्जुन अप्पा दुराई पाककृतीच्या सामाजिक इतिहासाबाबत विवेचन करतात. भारतात १९६०च्या दशकापासून इंग्रजीमधील पाकशास्त्राच्या प्रकाशित पुस्तिकांच्या संख्येत वाढ झालेली दिसते. ही पुस्तके पाक कला सांगताना संस्कृती रचत असतात व गृहीणीविषयक विचारप्रणालीही मांडत असतात. घरादाराच्या अंदाजपत्रकाविषयी ते महत्त्वाचे स्रोतही ठरतात.

भारतामध्ये जी पाककलेविषयक पुस्तके प्रकाशित झाली ती 'राष्ट्रीय' स्वयंपाक व 'प्रादेशिक' अशा द्वैत विश्लेषणांमध्ये अडकलेली दिसतात. अप्पा दुराई यांच्या मते या पुस्तकांच्या माध्यमातून आधुनिक समाजात समुह दुसऱ्या समुहासमोर आपले प्रतिनिधीत्व करू शकतो. एकमेकांच्या चवी, आवडीनिवडी याबाबतही देवाण-घेवाण करू शकतो. अप्पा दुराईच्या या वक्तव्यालाही देवाण-घेवाण नक्की कोणते समुह खुलेपणाने एकमेकांशी करतात हा प्रश्न विचारावा लागेल.

आधुनिक भारतात आणि प्रामुख्याने स्वातंत्र्योत्तर काळात शहरात उदयास आलेला नवा मध्यमवर्ग रोटी व्यवहाराची बंधने शिथिल करतो असे अप्पा दुराईचे मत आहे. भिन्न पाककृतींची देवाण-घेवाण सुरू होऊन वेगवेगळ्या जाती समुहातील माणसे एकत्र अन्न ग्रहण करू लागतात असे ते मानतात. पण आम्ही आभ्यासलेल्या दलित स्वकथनातील इतिहासाच्या व आठवणींच्या आधारवर ही देवाण-घेवाण नेमक्या कोणत्या जातींमध्ये होते किंवा शहरी मध्यमवर्गात अन्नविषयक स्पृश्य-अस्पृश्यच्या कल्पना कोणती नवी रूपे धारण करतात हे अभ्यासावे लागेल. थोडक्यात अप्पा दुराई म्हणतात त्याप्रमाणे जर खुली देवाण-घेवाण व्हायला लागली असेल तर पाककलेच्या पुस्तकातून मासिकांमधून दलित पाककृती आजही अदृश्य का राहतात. म्हणजे कोणाच्या पाककृतीला ज्ञान समजून ते छापले जाते व इतर त्या पाककृतीचा प्रयोग केला जातो का हे प्रश्न विचारले तर आमच्या या छोट्याशा अहवालाचा उद्देश वाचकांच्या लक्षात येईल.

वसाहतकाळात मराठी भाषेतून 'रसचंद्रिका' नावाचे सारस्वत गृहीणीसाठीचे पाककलेचे पुस्तक मुंबईतून प्रकाशित झाले. या पुढील दशकात पाककलेची जी पुस्तके प्रकाशित झाली त्यांचे शाकाहारी, मांसाहारी तसेच प्रदेशवार वर्गीकरण केलेले दिसते. गेल्या दोन दशकात प्रकाशित झालेल्या पाककलेच्या पुस्तकांची तपासणी आम्ही पुस्तकालयांमध्ये फिरून केली. या पुस्तकांमध्ये तीन प्रकार असलेले दिसतात.

१) आंतरराष्ट्रीय पाककला (चायनीज, मेक्सीकन इ.)

२) भारतीय पाककलेची पुस्तके (साधारणतः आंतरराष्ट्रीय वाचकांसाठी भारतातील विविध प्रदेशातील पाककृतींचे संकलन)

३) प्रादेशिक पाककला (साधारणपणे गुजराथी, राजस्थानी, मालवणी, खानदेशी, पंजाबी इ.)

जागतिकीकरणाच्या रेट्यात पटकन बनविण्याचे पदार्थ किंवा कमी कॅलरीचे पदार्थ तसेच एकट्या राहणाऱ्या, नोकरी करणाऱ्यांसाठीचे पदार्थ अशी शिर्षके आम्हाला दिसली.

मराठीतून प्रकाशित झालेल्या पाककलांच्या पुस्तकातून व मासिकातून काहीवेळा 'जातिनिहाय' पाककला मांडलेली दिसली. उदा. १०१ मराठा पाककृती, सारस्वत स्वयंपाक, सी.के.पी. खासीयत, पांचाळ समाजाची पाचाळीची थाळी अशी अनेक पुस्तके आम्हाला उपलब्ध झाली. यावरून असे लक्षात येते की पाककलेतील जातिधिष्ठित इतिहास व आठवणींना एकतर 'राष्ट्रीय' किंवा 'प्रादेशिक' या विश्लेषणांमागे लपवले जाते किंवा पाककलेतील जात दृश्य स्वरूपात पुढे आली तर ती तथाकथित उच्चजातीयांचीच असते. म्हणजे दलित पाककृतींनी वाढलेली 'थाळी' भारतीय नाही का हा प्रश्न पडतो. टी.व्ही.वरील आम्ही सारे खवय्ये, खाना-खजाना अशा कार्यक्रमातून देखील जणू काही पाककला काहीच 'जातीं'मध्ये असते असे गृहित धरून मांडणी होताना दिसते.

तथाकथित उच्चवर्णीय व उच्चवर्गीयांनी 'टाकाऊ वस्तूंपासून स्वादिष्ट प्रकार' (Tasty dishes from waste items) अशा शिर्षकांची पुस्तके दिसतात. पण ज्या समाजाने व वर्गाने आणि प्रामुख्याने या जातीवर्गातील स्त्रियांनी अन्नधान्याच्या तुटवड्याशी, दुष्काळाशी संघर्ष करताना पर्यायी पाककृती नव्याने निर्माण केल्या

अशा थाळ्यांची इतिहासात नोंद होताना दिसत नाही. म्हणूनच आम्ही दलित समाजातील भिन्न जातीवर्गातील दहा स्त्री-पुरुषांच्या आठवणींचे संकलन करून प्रमुख प्रवाही इतिहासातील चुटी अधोरेखित करून अधिक लोकशाहीवादी इतिहास लेखनासाठी आठवणींचे असलेले असामान्य महत्त्व लक्षात घेऊन पुढील विभाग अन्न व पाककृतींच्या दलित आठवणी मांडत आहोत.

या आठवणींचे संकलन करताना आपल्या मनातील मिथकाला व प्रस्थापित राजकारणाला धक्का बसलेला दिसतो. गोमांस सेवनाविषयी जमातवाद्यांनी केलेल्या प्रचाराला भौतिक पाया नाही हे लक्षात येते. भारतातील बहुतांश दलित समुह 'मोठ्याचे' व 'डुकराचे' मांस खातात व त्यामुळे जमातवादाचा प्रश्न हा जातिच्या प्रश्नापासून सुटा पाहता येणार नाही हेही आमच्या लक्षात आले. म्हणजे अन्नाचे 'खाजगी' वाटणारे प्रश्न थेट जमातवाद्यांपर्यंत जाऊन पोहचतात. खाजगी व सार्वजनिक मधील विभेदनाला प्रश्न विचारून स्त्रीवादी राजकारणालाही पुढे नेणारे ठरतात.

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विभाग ३

अन्न व पाककृतींच्या दलित आठवणी : इतिहासाच्या पुनर्लेखनासाठी

नाव: **रामवती बाबूलाल कुडियाँ**

वय : साधारण ५० ते ५५ वर्षे

जात : वाल्मिकी

श्रम इतिहास : काही वर्षे (बाढ्याचे) सफाई काम गावात केले सध्या घरकाम करतात.

यांचे संपूर्ण लहानपण हे अहमदनगरला गेले. लग्नानंतर त्या अलिगडला आल्या. त्यांचे वय हे त्यावेळी १५-१६ वर्षांचे असेल. लग्नानंतर त्या एक वर्ष पुण्यात राहिल्या. नंतर पुन्हा अलिगडला जाऊन त्या व त्यांचे पती तिथे ३ वर्षे राहिले. तिथे त्या दुसऱ्यांची शेती करणे, त्यांची जनावरे पाळणे अशी कामे करित होत्या. या कामाचे त्यांना ठाकूर लोकांकडून धान्य मिळायचे जे ५ पायली असायचे. त्यात गहू, मका, चना अशा धान्यांचा समावेश असायचा. तसेच ठेकेदारांकडूनच त्यांना रोज जेवण मिळत असे. त्या आपल्या शिळ्या-पाक्याच्या आठवणी सांगताना सांगतात की, कधी कधी त्यांना ठाकूर रात्रीची शिळी चपातीपण घ्यायचे त्यांचा वास यायचा. तर कधी कधी सगळं जेवणं मिक्स करून खरकट्यासारखं दिलं जाई. ते असं शिळं जेवण गार्यांना टाकायच्या. ठाकूरांकडे तक्रार केल्यावर चुकून असं झालं असेल असे उत्तर त्यांना मिळायचे पण पुन्हा चूक व्हायची पण, सांगणार तरी कुणाला?

पुन्हा पुण्यात आल्यावर विद्यापीठात त्यांना रोजचे ४ रु. मिळायचे आणि १५ दिवसांनी पगार मिळायचा. त्यामुळे किराणा हा आठवड्याचा भरला जाई आणि आता महिन्याचा किराणा भरला जातो असे त्या सांगतात.

तसेच त्या सांगतात की, गावाला असताना त्या लहान मुलांची नाळ कापण्याचे कामही करत होत्या. या कामाचे त्यांना सहाव्या दिवशी (छटी पूजनाला) साडी, ब्लाऊज व पैशा एवजी काही धान्य मिळायचे. त्या काळात

कोणताही व्यवहार हा पैशाने होत नव्हता. धान्याची देवाण-घेवाण करून वस्तू मिळत असत. उदा. एक किलो बकऱ्याचं मटण आणण्यासाठी २ किलो गहू द्यावे लागायचे.

आपल्या लहानपणीच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या सांगतात की, त्यांच्या घरात एकूण सहाजण होते. तीन बहिणी, भाऊ व आई-वडिल. त्यावेळी त्यांची आईपण कामाला जात होती. त्या घरात सर्वात लहान होत्या. त्यांचा भाऊ सर्वात मोठा असल्याने तो त्यांचे सर्व आवरून-सावरून त्यांना शाळेत पाठवत होता. त्या फक्त दोनच वर्षे शाळेत गेल्या. नंतर शिक्षणात रस नसल्याने त्या घरीच राहिल्या. त्यामुळे त्या २ वर्षात मी काय शिकले ते पण मला आठवत नाही. त्यामुळे मी पूर्णतः अशिक्षित राहिले.

त्या सांगतात की, त्यावेळी आमची घरची परिस्थिती अतिशय बिकट होती. आई कामाला जात होती. मिलो या निकृष्ट धान्याची चपाती आम्ही बनवायचो आणि ती कैरीच्या किंवा लसनाच्या चटणीबरोबर खायचो आणि कधी पैसे मिळाल्यावर भाजी करायचो, नाहीतर कधी कधी शिळ्या चपाती किंवा भाकरी या परतून कडक करून चहा बरोबर खायचो आणि चहा नसल्यावर ते कडक तुकडे पाण्यात भिजवून ते मऊ करून चटणीबरोबर खायचो. त्या सांगतात की, वडिलांना सरकारी नोकरी लागल्यावर आमची परिस्थिती जरा सुधारली. त्यांना त्यांच्या बहिणीचे हातचे 'चिले' (गुळाचे घावण) आणि भावाने बनवलेले 'डुकराचे/मोठ्याचे मटन' खूप आवडत होते. त्या या मटणाची खासियत सांगतात की, त्यात काहीही वाटून-घाटून किंवा भरमसाट मसाला टाकलेला नसायचा. मात्र त्याला खूप अप्रतीम चव असायची.

त्या सांगतात की, आमच्याकडे देवाला नैवद्य दाखवताना शाकाहारीमध्ये 'दालचा भात' तर मांसाहारीमध्ये 'डुकराच्या मटनाचा' नैवद्य दाखवतात. हा नैवद्य दाखविताना आधी डुकराचे पाय आणि डोकं हे जसंच्या तसं कापून देवासमोर ठेवलं जातं. त्या सांगतात की, माझ्या मामा व काकांना या नैवद्याचा राग यायचा व आजही येतो. पण मुलांसाठी ही प्रथा तोडायला नको वाटतं आणि वडिलांच्या काळात सांगायचं झालं तर ते कोणाच्याही विरोधाला जुमानत नव्हते.

त्या सांगतात की आमच्यातही काही लोक डुकराचे मटन खात नाही. मग

त्यांच्यासाठी बकऱ्याच्या मटनाचा ही नैवेद्य दाखविला जातो. गुडगाई आणि मरिआई देवीला बकरं कापावं लागतं. तर शितळा देवीला डुकराची जोडी कापावी लागते. ज्यावेळी त्यांच्या समाजाचा मोठा भंडारा होतो. त्यावेळी लोक थोडं थोडं धान्य घेऊन येतात. तेव्हा गोड-धोडामध्ये दालचा भात तर तिखटामध्ये मोठ्याचं मटन/बकऱ्याचं मटन याचा नैवेद्य दाखविला जातो. यावेळी जे मोठ्याचं मटन खात नाही त्यांना बकऱ्याचं जेवण दिलं जातं. त्या सांगतात की, गावाला असताना सणासुदीला ऊसाच्या रसाची खीर हा पदार्थ नेहमी बनविला जात असे. सगळ्या जातीचे लोक हा पदार्थ बनवित असत. त्या सांगतात की, उपवास हा नेहमी शाकाहारी जेवणानेच सोडला जातो.

त्या सांगतात की, लग्नापूर्वी मला घरी आईनेच जेवण बनवायला शिकवलं. नंतर सासरी गेल्यावर जेवण बनविण्याची पूर्ण पद्धतीच बदलली. त्यावेळी माझ्या मामीसासून मला उत्तम स्वयंपाक करायला शिकवला. त्यांनी शिकवलेली 'सागाची' भाजी त्यांना आठवते. त्या सांगतात सासरी नेहमी त्यांच्या जेवणाचं कौतुक झालं. त्या सांगतात की, आत्ताही माझी सून काही पदार्थ बनविताना/खेकड बनविताना मलाच ते करा म्हणून सांगते. कारण माझ्या हातची चव काही वेगळीच आहे हे त्या अभिमानाने सांगतात.

त्या सांगतात की, पूर्वी हळद, मीठ टाकून पदार्थ चविष्ट बनायचे पण आता वाटून-घाटून सगळे मसाले टाकून जेवण बनवावं लागतं. आता मिक्सरमुळे काही त्रास होत नाही. पण त्यावेळच्या पाट्यावरची वाटणाची चव त्या मसाल्याला येत नाही. अलिगडला असताना त्यांना माशाचे कोणतेही प्रकार येत नव्हते. नंतर मुलाने मित्रांकडून शिकून ते त्यांना शिकवले आणि आता त्या मासेही उत्तमरित्या बनवू शकतात आणि त्यांचा मुलगाही. यात त्या बांगड्याचा रस्सा आणि खेकड्याचा रस्सा याचा आवर्जून उल्लेख करतात. शेजाऱ्यांमध्ये पदार्थांची देवाण-घेवाण होते का, यावर त्या म्हणाल्या की शेजाऱ्यांना आम्ही मोठ्याचं मटन खातो याविषयी काही देणं-घेणं नसतं. सणा-सुदीला ते आम्हला पदार्थ देतात आणि मीही मटण सोडून इतर पदार्थ त्यांना देत असते.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

राजश्री शिंगटे

रामवती कुडोयाँ यांनी दिलेल्या पाककृती:

१) चुनचुन्या:

साहित्य : कोंबडीच्या किंवा डुकराच्या चामडीच्या पट्ट्या कापून त्यांचे छोटे छोटे तुकडे, मीठ

कृती : डुकराच्या चामडीच्या पट्ट्यांचे तुकडे घेऊन ते गरम तव्यावर ठेवणे. मग त्यातील तेल हळूहळू निघून ते कडक बनते. मग त्यावर मीठ टाकून ते कुरकुरीत खायला देणे.

२) बांगडा:

साहित्य : बांगडा अखडा, हळद, मिरची पावडर, तेल, ओलं किंवा सुकं खोबरं, आलं, लसून, कोथिंबीर, पुदीना, टोमॅटो, मीठ चवी पुरतं

कृती : प्रथम बांगडा घेऊन ते स्वच्छ साफ करून त्यावर सुरीने चिरा पाडणे, त्यावर हळद, मिरची पावडर आणि मीठ लावून ते तसेच ५-१० मिनिटे ठेवून देणे. नंतर खोबरं, लसून, आलं, कोथिंबीर, पुदीना, टोमॅटो यांचे वाटण करून एका कढईत तेल गरम करून त्यात हे वाटन चांगले परतने व नंतर वरून त्यात बांगडा सोडून ते शिजवायला ठेवून देणे.

३) दालचा भात:

साहित्य : भातासाठी - तूप, तांदूळ, काळी इलायची, दालचिनी, तेजपत्ता दाल - तुरडाळ, मसूरडाळ, गरममसाला (दालचिनी, शहाजिरे, मेथी-आंबटचुक्याची भाजी, कांदा, हिरवी मिरची, दुधी भोपळा, काळी मिरी, दगड फुल, जायफळ, मोठी विलायची, लसून, चिंच, पुदिना.

कृती : भात करण्यासाठी एका पातेल्यात तूप गरम करून त्यात काळी इलायची, दालचिनी, तेजपत्ता टाकून धुतलेले तांदूळ टाकणे आणि पाणी टाकून तो शिजवण्यासाठी ठेवून देणे.

दाल करण्यासाठी प्रथम दोन्ही डाळींमध्ये मेथी-आंबटचुकांची भाजी, चिंच, दुधीचे तुकडे टाकून ती डाळ शिजवून घेणे, नंतर एका पातेल्यात तेल टाकून त्यात लसून टाकणे, नंतर चिरलेला कांदा टाकून तो चांगला परतून गरम मसाला

टाकणे. मग त्यात चिंच, पुदीना, चिरलेला टोमॅटो, हिरवी मिरचीचे तुकडे टाकून हा मसाला चांगला परतुन घेणे. मग वरून शिजवलेली डाळ टाकून त्याला उकळी देणे आणि भाता बरोबर वाढणे.

४) ऊसाच्या रसातली खीर:

साहित्य : १ ग्लास ऊसाचा रस, अर्धा ग्लास तांदूळ, सुकं किसलेलं खोबरं.

कृती : ऊसाचा रस उकळवत ठेवणे त्यात धुतलेला तांदूळ टाकून वरून खोबर टाकून ती खीर शिजवायला ठेवणे.

नाव : आशा खरात

वय : साधारणपणे ४५ ते ५० वर्षे

जात : नवबौद्ध

श्रमइतिहास : निवडणुकीच्या काळात एक ते दीड महिना मतदार यादी बनविण्याचे काम केले सध्या त्या बौद्ध महिला मंळाचे काम करतात.

आशाबाई खरात यांचे वडिल पोलिस खात्यात हवालदाराच्या नोकरीवर होते. त्यांचा बिल्ला नंबर ६४८१ पण बाईच्या नादाने ते एक महिना कामावर गेलेच नाही. ते त्या बाईला घेऊन गावाला राहत होते. आशाबाई यांची आई पाच वर्षांची असताना त्यांचं लग्न झालं आणि एवढी लहान बायको नको म्हणून बाईचा नाद लागला. एक महिना नवरा घरी नाही आला म्हणून आशाबाईंच्या आई पोलिस चौकीत विचारपूस करायला गेल्या तेव्हा त्यांना आदराने वागवण्यात आले. चौकशीनंतर असे समजले की त्यांचे पती हे गावालाच आहेत. एक महिना कुठलाही अर्ज न देता रजेवर राहिल्यामुळे त्यांची नोकरी गेली. आणि याला कारणीभूत त्यांच्या आईलाच धरण्यात आले. अशावेळी त्यांच्या पाठीशी त्यांना आधार देणारे कुणी नव्हते.

वडिलांची नोकरी गेल्यानंतर खूप आर्थिक ओढाताण झाली व बटाटा भरणीचे काम करू लागले. नंतर नविन काही कामाच्या शोधात ते सांगलीला जाण्यास निघाले. घरातून निघाले तेव्हा त्यांच्या जवळ एक पैसाही नव्हता. त्यांच्या मूळ गावी चालत आले. घराचा पत्रा विकला. त्याचे त्यांना ८ रुपये मिळाले. या आठ रुपयात त्यांनी सांगली गाठले. ते ज्या मित्राच्या भरोशावर गेले होते तो मित्र तिथे नव्हताच.

पुन्हा त्यांच्या घरापासून स्टेशनपर्यंत चालत आले. वाटेत एक शेतकऱ्यांने त्यांना शेंगा खायला बोलावले. त्यांच्या आईने थोड्या शेंगा तोडल्या आणि त्याच घेऊन ते पुन्हा चालू लागले. शिव्या देवू लागले. त्यांच्या आईने त्या शेंगा विकल्या आणि त्या पैशात बिडी आणि लहान बाळासाठी खायला आणले.

नंतर हे विनातिकीट प्रवास करून मुंबईला पोहचले. मुंबईतील मित्राने त्यांना मदत केली. नविन कपडे घेतले चप्पल घेतली. त्यांनी मुंबईतच चटईची झोपडी बांधली आणि दारूचा धंदा सुरू केला. एका सरदाराने त्यांच्या घरच्यांच्या

स्वभावावरून त्यांना व्होल्टास कंपनीत नोकरी मिळवून दिली. पण काही काळाने ती कंपनी बंद पडली मग वडिल पुन्हा दारूच्या धंद्यात काम करू लागले. लहानपणीच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या आणखी एक आठवण सांगतात ती म्हणजे गुरूद्वारामध्ये जेव्हा लंगर असे तेव्हा शिरा वाटण्यात येई. प्रत्येकाला थोडा थोडा शिरा मिळत असे. घरच्यांसाठी सुद्धा हा शिरा मिळावा म्हणून त्या दोन-दोन, तिन-तिनदा रांगमध्ये उभे राहत.

आशाबाई यांचे शिक्षण १० वी पर्यंतच झालं आणि त्यांचे लग्न २२ व्या वर्षी झालं. लग्नानंतर मळाय देवस्थानावर पाया पडायला गेले तेव्हा त्यावेळी त्यांना एकटीला संपूर्ण पुरणाचा स्वयंपाक करावा लागला होता. सासरी त्यासाठी त्यांना रात्री १ वाजता उठाव लागले.

लहानपणाबद्दल त्या अजून सांगतात की त्यांचे वडिल त्यांना सांगायचे जर एखाद जनावर खायचं असेल तर त्याला मारण्यासाठी ज्वारीच्या भाकरीत बिट्ट्या टाकायच्या आणि ते जनावराला चोरून लपून जावून खायला घ्यायचं, म्हणजे ते जनावर मरत असे आणि मग इतर वर्गीयांकडून महार लोकांना जनावर उचलून नेण्याचा सांगावा येत असे.

त्यांनी अजून आठवणी सांगताना सांगितले की एकदा एक बकरी मेली होती त्या मेलेल्या बकरीचे वाटे घालण्यात आले होते. त्यांच्या सासूबाई ते वाटे घेण्यासाठी जात होत्या. पण त्यांनी जावू दिले नाही. आंबेडकरी चळवळीचा प्रभाव त्यांच्यावर होता.

अशाप्रकारे आशाबाईंनी त्यांच्या खान-पान विषयीच्या आठवणी सांगितल्या.

* मुलाखत उत्तरदात्याच्या विनंतीवरून या मुलाखतीतील काही भाग वगळण्यात आला आहे.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

शरिफा बाले

आशा खरात यांच्या पाककृती :

१) शिळ्या भाकरीचा चिवडा :

साहित्य : दोन-तीन शिळ्या भाकरी अथवा चपाती, १ मोठा कांदा, १ चमचा तेल, १ चमचा लाल तिखट, १ छोटा चमचा हळद, चविनुसार मीठ.

कृती : शिळ्या भाकरीचे किंवा चपातीचे तुकडे करावेत. कडक असल्यामुळे ५ मिनीट पाण्यातच टाकून ठेवावे. नंतर तव्यावर तेल टाकावे. त्यात उभा चिरलेला कांदा परतावा. त्यात हे तुकडे, लाल तिखट, चिमुटभर हळद आणि चवीनुसार मीठ टाकून परतावे.

२) कांदवणी :

साहित्य : ३-४ मोठे कांदे, तेल (असल्यास एक चमचा नसले तरी चालेल), पाणी, लाल तिखट, मीठ

कृती : कांदे मध्यम आकाराचे काप करून घ्यावे. पातेल्यात तेल टाकून कांदे भाजून घ्यावे. (तेल नसेल तर तसेच भाजावे) त्यात पाणी आणि लाल तिखट, मीठ टाकावे एक उकळीनंतर तयार.

३) मटन :

साहित्य : आर्धा किलो मटन, १ वाटी खोबर, एक छोटा चमचा जिरे, १ छोटा चमचा हळद, घरी बनवलेला मसाला, ७-८ लसून पाकळ्या, २ कांदे, अर्धा इंच आले, तेल, चवीनुसार मीठ, पाणी.

कृती: प्रथम मटन धुवून घ्यावे, पातेल्यात तेल टाकून चिरलेला कांदा टाकावा. कांदा लाल होईपर्यंत भाजणे. हळद, मीठ लावून मटन त्यात टाकावे त्यांच्या अंगाचं पाणी सुकून द्यावे. नंतर गरम पाणी करून त्यात टाकावे. मटन मऊ शिजवून घ्यावे.

मटन शिजल्यावर खोबरं, आलं लसून पेस्ट आणि जिरे वाटून हा मसाला दोन चमचे टाकावा. त्यात मटन टाकावे. चविनुसार मीठ टाकावे. एक उकळी आल्यानंतर मटन तयार.

४) रक्ती :

साहित्य : बकरे कापनाता त्याच्या मानेतून जे रक्त येतं त्यालाच रक्ती म्हणतात. ते रक्त, तेल, कांदा, लाल मसाला, मीठ.

कृती : रक्ती फोडायचं, स्वच्छ धुवायचे, तव्यामध्ये तेल टाकून कांदा लाल करून घ्यायचा त्यात रक्ती टाकून फ्राय करून घ्यायचं, नंतर लाल मसाला, मीठ टाकून फ्राय करावे.

५) वजडी :

साहित्य : आर्धा किलो वजडी, १ छोटा चमचा हळद, २ चमचे लाल तिखट, १ मोठा चिरलेला कांदा, तेल.

वजडी धुण्याची पद्धत

१) वजडी गरम पाण्यात ५ ते ६ वेळा धुवावी.

२) राखेने वजडी धुवावी.

३) चुन्याने वजडी धुवावी.

वरिल तिन्हीपैकी एका पद्धतीने वजडी धुवावी व तिचे तुकडे करावेत.

कृती : वजडी शिजवून घ्यावी (कुकरला लावल्यास ५ शिष्टी होवू द्याव्यात) कढईत थोडं तेल टाकून कांदा लाल परतून घ्यावा. हळद आणि लाल तिखट घालून वजडी फ्राय करावे. चविनुसार मीठ टाकावे.

६) भेजा फ्राय

साहित्य : बकऱ्याचा भेजा, १ कांदा, तेल, लाल तिखट, मीठ

कृती : भेजा धुवून घ्यावा. तव्यात तेल गरम करून कांदा लाल परतून घ्यावा त्यात भेजा लाल तिखट आणि मीठ टाकावे आणि फ्राय करावे.

७) पाया :

साहित्य : बकऱ्याचा पाया, १ चमचा हळद, पाणी, मीठ, १ मोठा कांदा, आलं, लसून पेस्ट, लाल तिखट

धुण्याची कृती : ज्वारीचे पीठ लावून स्वच्छ धुवावे.

कृती : बकऱ्याचा पाया, हळद, मीठ, कांदा टाकून शिजवावे (कुकरला

लावल्यास ८ शिट्या होवू द्याव्यात. सूप तयार.

याचे कालवण करण्यासाठी पातेल्यात तेल टाकावे, कांदा लालसर परतून घ्यावा. आलं, लसून पेस्ट टाकावी. लाल तिखट व चवीनुसार मीठ टाकावे. एक उकळी आल्यावर कालवण तयार.

८) मुंडी:

साहित्य : बकऱ्याची मुंडी, पाणी, मीठ, १ मोठा कांदा, आलं, लसून पेस्ट, लाल मसाला, हळद.

कृती : मुंडी फोडून स्वच्छ धुवावी, पाणी, हळद, मीठ, टाकून शिजवून घ्यावी (कुकरला लावल्यास ५-६ शिट्या होवू द्याव्यारत) पातेल्यात तेल टाकून कांदा परतून घ्यावा. त्यात आलं लसून पेस्ट टाकावी. शिजवलेली मुंडी टाकावी. लाल मसाला व चवीनुसार मीठ टाकावे. एक उकळी आल्यानंतर तयार.

९) वर्ष भराचा मसाला:

साहित्य : १ किलो लाल मिरची, पावशर धने, अर्धा तोळा पुढील साहित्य घेणे - शहाजिरे, पत्री, बडी इलायची, दगडी फूल.

खोबरे दिड पावशेर, १ किलो कांदा, तेल आर्धा किलो, पावशेर लसून, आर्धा किलो खडे मीठ, पावशेर लसून.

कृती : कांदा उभा चिरून वाळवून घ्यावा. खोबरं किसावे, मोठ्या घमेल्यात लाल मिरची तेलात भाजून घ्यावी, धने व इतर गरम मसाला भाजून घ्यावा व मिक्स करावा, लसून आणि खोबरे न भाजताच टाकावे मीठ सर्व मिश्रण डंकेतून दळून आणावे.

नाव: अबिदाबाई शिंदे

वय: साधारणपणे ४५ - ५० वर्ष

जात: मातंग

श्रमइतिहास: सुरूवातीला धुणीभांडी करत होत्या. नंतर काही वर्ष कागद, काच, पत्रा गोळा करण्याचे काम केले. सध्या पुणे मनपामध्ये सफाई कामगार आहेत.

अबिदाबाई शिंदे यांचे जन्मगाव अकोला. त्यांना सहा भाऊ व सहा बहिणी आहेत. घरात सगळ्यात लहाण असल्याने त्यांनी फारशी कामे केली नाहीत. त्यामुळे लग्नानंतरही त्यांना स्वयंपाक येत नव्हता. नंतर आईने शिकविला. आबीदाबाई या सत्यशोधक विद्यार्थी संघटनेचे कार्यकर्ते किशोर शिंदे यांच्या आई. मोठ्या भावजयीच्या हातचे कोणतेही पदार्थ हे त्यांच्या खास आवडीचे.

वयाच्या अकराव्या वर्षी त्यांचे लग्न झाले. अबिदाबाई या त्यांच्या नवऱ्याच्या दुसऱ्या पत्नी आहेत. पहिल्या पत्नी त्यांच्या सोबत नांदली नाही. ती पळून गेली. त्यामुळे अबिदाबाईंबाबत त्यांचे पती संशयाने वागले. त्यांनी सांगितले की, एकदा सजलेली रिक्षा दारात उभी होती. ती रिक्षा पाहून त्या 'रिक्षा किती छान आहे' असे म्हणाल्या. 'त्यावर नवऱ्याने चिडून जळता कंदील फेकून मारला. त्यात पती कपडे शिवण्याचा व्यवसाय करायचे ते कपडेही जळाले व मलाही भाजले. त्यामुळे घरातील इतर मंडळींनी आम्हाला घरातून हाकलून दिले. एकतर दुष्काळ अशात सहा महिने रस्त्यावर रहावे लागले. त्यावेळी खूप उपासमार झाली. नवरा मात्र स्वतःपुरते काहीतरी आणून खात असे. कुणी उरलेले अन्न दिले तरच जेवण मिळे. फरशीवर भाकरी कराव्या लागत व पर्वतीच्या डोंगरावरून सरपन आणावे लागत असे. या दुष्काळाच्या व गरीबीच्या काळात त्यांनी सातुच्याही भाकऱ्या खाल्ल्या.'

पुर्वी गरज पडेल तसे स्वयंपाकाचे सामान तेल मीठ आणले जात होते. आता परिस्थिती पूर्वीपेक्षा चांगली असल्याने महिन्याचे साहित्य भरले जाते.

लग्न झाल्यानंतर आलेल्या परिस्थितीत त्यांनी टेलरिंगचे काम करून घराला हातभार लावला. त्यांच्याशी केलेल्या चर्चेतून खाण्या-पिण्याविषयीच्या आणखी बऱ्याच गोष्टी निदर्शनास आल्या. त्यांच्या मते पुर्वी (त्यांच्यावेळी) लग्न समारंभामध्ये

ही थाळी भारतीय नाही का?

लापशी, वांग्याची भाजी बनवली जात असे, लापशी हा गोड पदार्थ असून तो मक्यापासून बनवला जात असे. एखाद्याची आर्थिक परिस्थिती चांगली असेल तर लग्नमध्ये पुरणपोळ्या बनवल्या जात असत.

मांसाहारी पदार्थांच्या बाबतीत बोलताना मोठ्याचं मटन व वजडी हे दोन्हीही त्यांच्या खाण्यात आले असे त्या म्हणतात. त्यांच्यावेळी बाळतीनीला तूप भात मिळेलच असे नाही. तेव्हा गव्हाच्या भरडलेल्या कण्या खिरीप्रमाणे पातळ करून असेल तर तूप टाकून ते बाळतीनीला दिले जात असे. त्या काळात हालाखीची आर्थिक परिस्थिती असल्याने मांसाहार मिळेलच असे नव्हते. त्यामुळे स्वतःला त्यांना मांसाहार जास्त मिळाला नाही.

त्यांच्या सहवासात जेवढ्या व्यक्ती आल्या त्याच्यामध्ये त्यांचे वडिल सोडून कोणीही पुरूष स्वयंपाक करत नसे. त्यांचे वडिल तेही फक्त मटन असेल तरच त्यांच्या एका विशिष्ट पद्धतीने पाट्यावर मसाला वाटून मटन करायचे असे त्या सांगतात. आज इथल्या पाण्याला चव नाही तर अन्नात गोडी कुठून येणार? अशी खंत त्या व्यक्त करतात.

पूर्वी त्यांचे जेवण खाण्याचे खूप हाल होते. कागद, काच, पत्रा गोळा करण्याचे काम त्यांनी केले. परंतु प्रत्येक सण करून मुलांना खायला मात्र घालत असे त्या सांगतात. त्यांच्या गल्लीत महार व चांभार अशी दोन घरे होती. त्यामुळे त्यांच्याकडे पूर्वी पदार्थांची देवाण-घेवाण होत असे. इतर जातीतील लोक आमचं खाणं खात नाहीत. कारण आम्हाला घाण खायची (मोठ्याची) सवय आहे अशी त्यांची टोचनी असते. परंतु आता फक्त आम्ही घरात करून खातो. बाहेर देण्या-घेण्याचा फारसा संबंध येत नाही असे त्या म्हणतात.

सध्या रोजच्या जेवणामध्ये मेथीची भाजी, वांग्याची भाजी, गवारीची शेंग हे त्यांच्या आवडीचे पदार्थ/भाज्या होतात. तसेच चपातीपेक्षा ज्वारीची भाकरी खाणे त्या पसंत करतात. बाहेरचं खाणं (वडा-पाव वगैरे) त्यांना आवडत नाही. तसेच टि.व्ही.वरील रेसीपीचे कार्यक्रम त्या बघतही नाहीत असे त्या म्हणतात. अशा प्रकारे परिस्थितीशी झगडत उभ्या राहिलेल्या अबिदाबाई यांनी वेळप्रसंगी कण्याखावून मिळेल तेवढे खावूनच दिवस काढले.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

योगिता ढाणे

अबिदाबाई शिंदे यांच्या पाककृती:

१) चाण्याची भाजी :

साहित्य : चाण्या, धने, कांदा, तेल, खोबरे, लाल मिरची, मीठ, कोथिंबीर, खडा मसाला किंवा आत्ताचा तयार मसाला.

कृती : चाण्या भाजून घेवून धने, कांदा, खोबरे, लाल मिरची, मीठ, कोथिंबीर, खडा मसाला हे एकत्र वाटून घ्यावे. नंतर कढईत तेल घालून वाटलेला मसाला परतून घ्यावा. त्यात चाण्या घालाव्यात व पाणी घालून उकळून घ्यावे.

२) वजडी :

साहित्य : वजडी, तेल, धने, कांदा, खोबरे, लाल मिरची, मीठ, कोथिंबीर, खडा मसाला.

कृती : सुरुवातीला वजडी आणल्या नंतर ती राख किंवा चुना चोळून स्वच्छ धुवून घ्यावी व नंतर तिचे तुकडे करून कांदा, मीठ, तेल व हळद याच्या फोडणीत मटनाप्रमाणे शिजवून घ्यावे. कांदा, खोबरे, खडा मसाला, मिरची भाजावे. नंतर भाजलेला मसाला आलं, कोथिंबीर, लसूण हे एकत्र करून वाटून घ्यावा. नंतर वाटलेल्या मसाल्याची फोडणी देऊन शिजलेली वजडी त्यात घालावी व थोडावेळ उकळू द्यावे.

नाव : लक्ष्मी विष्णु शिरसे

वय : साधारण ५० ते ५१ वर्षे

जात : वाल्मिकी

श्रमइतिहास : सुरुवातीला खडकी येथे मिलिट्री हॉस्पिटलच्या मेसमध्ये काम करत होत्या सध्या घरकाम करतात.

लक्ष्मी विष्णु शिरसे या वाल्मिकी समाजातील आहेत. ह्या समाजातील स्त्रियांना नात्याने पुरुषांसमोर घुंगट घ्यावा लागतो. ही त्यांच्या समाजातील सक्तीची परंपरा असल्याचे दिसून येते. पण त्या त्यांच्या घरातील मोठी सून असल्यामुळे फक्त सासऱ्यांसमोर त्यांना घुंगट घ्यावा लागे. त्यांचे वडिल खूप वर्षांपूर्वी राजस्थानमधून पुण्यात रॅजहिल्समधून कामाच्या निमित्ताने स्थलांतरीत झाले. त्यांची आई ही मिलिट्री हॉस्पिटलमधील सिस्टर मेसमध्ये काम करित होती तर वडिल फॅक्ट्रीत काम करित होते. त्यांचे शिक्षण तिसरीपर्यंत झाले परंतु आता त्यांना लिहिता वाचता येत नाही.

लग्ना विषयीच्या आठवणीत सांगितले की, त्यांचे लग्न झाले तेव्हा त्या १२ वर्षांच्या असतील. त्यांचे लग्न हे त्यांच्या आजोबाने जुळविलेले होते. लग्न झाले तेव्हा त्या खूप लहान होत्या त्यामुळे त्यांना स्वयंपाक येत नव्हता. त्यांच्या माहेरी त्यांची मोठी बहिणच स्वयंपाक बनवत असे. लग्नानंतर जेव्हा त्या सासरी आल्या तेव्हा त्यांनी पहिल्यांदा डाळ भात बनविला. लग्नापूर्वी त्या मांसाहार करायच्या पण लग्नानंतर त्यांनी मांसाहार करायचे सोडून दिले. डाळभात आणि खोबऱ्याची चटणी आणि मिरची पुड त्यांना खूप आवडते.

शिळ्या अन्नाविषयीच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या म्हणाल्या की, जर शिळं अन्न उरत असेल तर ते त्यांनाच जास्त करून खावे लागते. जर रात्रीचा भात उरला तर दुसऱ्या दिवशी धुवून तो परत हळद, कांदा, जिरं टाकून परतून त्या परत खातात. त्यांना येणारा स्वयंपाक त्या त्यांच्या नवऱ्याकडूनच शिकल्याचं त्या सांगतात. त्यांच्या पतीस मांसाहार खूप आवडतो. पण त्या शाकाहारी आहेत. पण जर त्यांच्या पतीला मटन बनवून हवे असेल तर त्या ते बनवतात.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

स्वाती खांडरे

लक्ष्मी विष्णु शिरसे यांच्या पाककृती :

१) वरण भात :

साहित्य : तूर किंवा मुगाची डाळ, कढीपत्ता, कोथिंबीर, टोमॅटो, लाल मिरची, मिरची, लसून, खोबरं, जिरी-मोहरी, मीठ.

कृती : खोबरं, मिरची, लसून याचा मसाला वाटने, तुरीची डाळ शिजवून घेणे. फोडणी देताना तयार केलेला मसाला टाकण्या अगोदर जिरे-मोहरी, कढीपत्त्याची फोडणी देवून वाटलेला मसाला टाकावा व चांगले परतून घ्यावे. त्यानंतर शिजलेली तुरडाळ टाकून हवं तेवढं मीठ व पाणी टाकून उकळून घेणे.

भात :

साहित्य : कांदा, तांदूळ, जिरे, मीठ.

कृती : कांदा व जिरे परतने, त्यानंतर त्यात तांदूळ टाकून पाणी व मीठ घालावे. २-४ कुकरच्या शिट्या होवू देणे.

२) आलू मटर :

साहित्य : बटाटा, वाटाणा, खोबरं, लसून, मिरची, जिरे-मोहरी इत्यादी

कृती : बटाटा शिजवून, सोलून घेणे. खोबरं, लसून, मिरचीचा मसाला बनवून घेणे. तेल कढईत घालून जिरे-मोहरीची फोडणी देवून मसाला परतून घेणे. त्यानंतर शिजलेला बटाटा कुस्करून आणि वाटाणा टाकावा. त्यानंतर बाहेरून आणलेला कांदा मसालाही त्यात घालून परतून घ्यावे. हवे तेवढे पाणी व मीठ टाकून उकळून घ्यावे.

नाव : भामा चंदू ठोसर

वय : साधारणपणे ४५ - ४७ वर्ष

जात : नवबौद्ध

श्रमइतिहास : सुरुवातीला बिगारी काम व शेतामध्ये शेतमजुरी केली. नंतर काही दिवस धुणीभांडी केली, सध्या बौद्ध महिला मंडळाचे काम करतात.

श्रीमती भामाबाई ठोसर यांचा जन्म पोथरे, जि. सोलापूर येथे झाला. त्यांचे बालपण देखील त्याच गावी गेले. त्यांचे लग्न वयाच्या आठव्या वर्षी झाले. त्यावेळी त्यांच्या पतीचे वय हे १४ वर्ष होते. त्यांना मराठवाड्यामध्ये दिले. त्या महार जातीतील असून १९७२ साली दुष्काळ पडला त्यानंतर पुण्यात स्थलांतरीत झाल्या. सध्या त्या सांगवीत राहतात व बौद्ध महिला मंडळाच्या त्या कार्यकर्त्या आहेत. सांगवीला त्या मुलासोबत राहत असून पतीचे निधन झाले आहे. त्यांना तीन मुलं आहे. दोन मुली व एक मुलगा आहे. दोन्ही मुलींची लग्ने झाली आहेत. मुलगा पोलीस खात्यात नोकरीला आहे.

बालपणीच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या म्हणतात की, त्यांना शाळेत घातले तरी त्या लाडाने शाळेत गेल्या नाहीत. नदीवर पाणी आणायला गेल्यानंतर गावातील सर्वर्ण स्त्रिया पाणी भरायला आल्यावर तेव्हा त्यांचा पदर धरत असत. त्यामुळे ती स्त्री बाटली म्हणून परत पाणी भरत असे. अशा प्रकारचा खेळ त्या लहाणपणी खेळत असत. त्या निम्न जातीतील असल्यामुळे त्यांना हिनवले जात असे. त्यानंतर ज्यावेळी विचारले की बालपणी कोणत्या प्रकारचे अन्न जास्त खाळे जात तर त्या म्हणाल्या मासे जास्त प्रमाणात जेवणात असंत. तसेच चाण्या व मोठ्याचे मटन खात असत. ते खाण्यासाठी मराठा समाजातील लोक त्यांच्या वस्तीवर गुपचुप येत असत पण त्यामध्ये सर्वर्ण स्त्रिया नसत. असे त्या म्हणत होत्या तसेच शिळे खाण्याचा प्रसंग तर लहाण असताना आला नाही. कारण त्या बऱ्यापैकी सधन कुटुंबातील होत्या.

ज्यावेळी त्यांचे लग्न झाल्यावर त्या पतीसोबत पुण्यात आल्या, तेव्हा त्यांच्या पतीला नोकरी नव्हती. त्या स्वतः व त्यांची सासू ह्या दोघीजणी काम करत. तर सासरे म्हतारे असल्यामुळे काम करत नव्हते. त्या गवंढ्याच्या हाताखाली काम करायच्या. गवंढ्याच्या हाताखाली काम करताना दिड रुपये तर शेतात खुरपायला

बारा आणे अशी मजुरी मिळत असे. त्यांचे पती हे बॅन्डमध्ये ट्रॅम्पेट वाजवत असत. पुण्यातील सकाळनगर गणेशखिंड परिसरातील पोलीसखात्यातील व्यक्तींशी ओळख झाली व कालांतराने त्यांना पोलीस खात्यामध्ये बॅन्ड पथकामध्ये नोकरी मिळाली. पोलीसमध्ये नोकरी मिळाल्यानंतर त्यांना पोलीस कॉटर मिळाले. ते मिळण्यापूर्वी त्यांचे कुटुंब बाणेरला राहत होते. नंतर औध आय.टी.आय. येथे झोपडपट्टीत ते राहत असत. नंतर तेथून हुसकावले गेल्यानंतर ते पुन्हा औध येथील डि.पी.रोड शेजारी झोपड्यात राहू लागले.

तेव्हाच्या त्यांच्या आठवणी त्या सांगतात, त्यातील एक म्हणजे त्या काम करत असत तेव्हा कन्स्ट्रक्शन साईडवर काम करत असताना जेवणाच्या वेळी त्या जादाचे काम करत असत व त्यातून जे पैसे मिळत ते घरी न देता त्यातून खारी, केळी असे घेवून खात असत. रोजच्या जेवणात चटणी भाकर असे. कामाला जाताना देखील तेच असे. परंतु त्यांच्या पतीला कामाला जाताना चपाती भाजी असे तर ह्यांना भाकरी खावी लागे. तसेच त्यांच्या सासऱ्यासाठी रोजच्या जेवणात सुकटाची चटणी करावी लागत असे. तसेच इतरांच्या शेतातून येताना मिळणारी कांद्याची पात वगैरेचा स्वयंपाक केला जाई. तरीही सासरचे लोक त्यांच्यावर चोरून खातात असे आरोप करत असत.

त्या काळात महिन्याचेच काय पण आठवड्याचेही पूर्ण सामान भरणे परवडत नसे म्हणून लागेल तसे साखर, चहा पावडर, गहू, ज्वारी असे सामान आणले जाई. तर फक्त रविवारी तांदूळ घेवून भात केला जाई. स्वयंपाक करायला त्या स्वतःच शिकल्या. परंतु लग्नाआधी आईच्या हातचा स्वयंपाक खूप आवडत असे. स्वयंपाक करत असताना काँग्रेसचे सरपन असे, तर उकळीमध्ये मिरच्या कुटून मसाला केला जायचा.

ज्यावेळी त्या पोलीस कॉर्टरमध्ये राहायला गेल्या तेव्हा तिथे तुलनेत जातीयवादी व्यवहार अनुभवास आला नाही. परंतु त्या तसा एक प्रसंग सांगतात, तिथे ठोसर हे आडनाव मराठा असेल असे अनेकांना वाटले. त्यांच्या शेजारची बाई त्यांच्या मुलीला जेवण चारण्यासाठी त्यांच्या घरी यायची. तेव्हा त्यांची थोरली मुलगी लहान होती. नंतर त्यांच्या घरी आंबेडकर व बुद्धाचा फोटो पाहिल्यानंतर ती बाई यायची बंद झाली. यावर भामाबाई त्या बाईशी भांडल्या. असा जातीवरून उद्भवलेला प्रसंग त्या सांगतात.

सणासुदी विषयीच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या म्हणतात, की लग्नानंतर सण हा कधी साजरा केला असे फारसे झाले नाही. कारण तशी परिस्थिती नव्हती. मुलं मोठी झाली तेव्हा कुठे मुलांसाठी दिवाळी हा सण साजरा केला जावू लागला. पण आता दिक्षा घेतल्यामुळे हिंदुधर्मानुसार साजरे केले जाणारे सण त्या साजरे करत नाहीत. पण त्यांना स्वतःला स्वतःसाठी विशेष काय खायला आवडते असे विचाऱ्यावर त्या म्हणाल्या की, चहाच खूप आवडतो बाकी काहीच आवडत नाही. त्यांची मोठी मुलगी तिथेच त्यांच्या जवळ सांगवीत राहत असल्या कारणाने तिने काही विशेष केले तर ती जेवायला बोलवते.

त्या सांगतात, आता आमचे राहणीमान सुधारले आहे. ते पाहून तुम्हाला वाटेल की मी सुखात आहे. पण मला आता कशातच सुख दिसत नाही कारण पूर्वी खूपच कष्टात व दुःखात दिवस काढल्यामुळे सुख कोणत्याच बाबतीत जाणवत नाही. मुलांचे चांगले चालले आहे त्याबद्दल बरे वाटते इतकेच. मानसिक आणि शारीरिकदृष्ट्या थकल्याचे त्या सांगतात, त्या म्हणतात, आता त्यांना फारसे दिसतही नाही आणि लक्षातही राहत नाही.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

श्रद्धा पाटील

भामा ठोसर यांच्या पाककृती :

१) बेसन पिठाच्या वड्या :

साहित्य : एक वाटी बेसन पीठ, सात-आठ लसनाच्या पाकळ्या, मीठ, तिखट, हळद, तेल, शेंगदाण्याचा कुट.

कृती : बेसनपीठात थोडी हळद घालून ते मळून घ्यावं, नंतर त्याची पोळी लाटावी, त्याचे सारखे चौकोनी तुकडे करावे, कढईत तेल टाकून लसून व तिखटाची फोडणी द्यावी, त्यात पाणी व शेंगदाण्याचा कुट घालून उकळी आल्यानंतर त्यात बेसनपीठाच्या वड्या सोडाव्यात. ते १० मिनीट उकळू द्यावे.

२) कोणत्याही प्रकारचे मासे :

साहित्य : मासे, खोबरं, आलं, कोथिंबीर, हळद, दोन-तीन चमचे तिखट, मीठ.

कृती : खोबरं, आलं, कोथिंबीर एकत्र वाटावे नंतर कढईत तेल टाकावे. तेल गरम झाल्यानंतर वाटलेला मसाला थोडा परतून यावा व नंतर धुतलेले मासे त्यात टाकून थोडावेळ एकत्र परतावे, नंतर पाणी टाकावे. थोडावेळ उकळू द्यावे.

नाव : पिंजारी शेख सलीम शेख रज्जाक

वय : ३२

जात : पिंजारी (मुस्लिम)

श्रमइतिहास : गवत कापणे, गवंढीकाम, बांधकामावर मुकादम, संगणक क्षेत्रात काम (विद्यार्थी दशेत सुट्टीत), आता इतिहास विषयाचे महाविद्यालयात प्राध्यापक.

सलीम शेख यांचे पूर्ण नाव पिंजारी शेख सलीम शेख रज्जाक असून पिंजारी ही त्यांची जात आहे. त्यांचा जन्म मालेगाव नाशीक येथे झाला आहे. मालेगाव प्रशाकीयदृष्ट्या पश्चिम महाराष्ट्राशी जोडलेला असला तरी तो एक खानदेशाचाच भाग म्हणून ओळखला जातो. त्यामुळे अन्न बनविण्याच्या प्रक्रिया खानदेश व मालेगाव यांत फरक जाणवत नाही. कारण मी खानदेशाचाच! असे सलीम म्हणतात. सलीम यांचे वय आज घडील बत्तीस असून ते अविवाहीत आहेत. ते एकूण ५ भावंडे आहेत. त्यांचे बालपण हे दारिद्र्यातच गेले होते. त्यांच्या जन्माच्या अगोदर १९७२ चा दुष्काळ आलेला होता. त्यामुळे त्यांच्या दारिद्र्यात आणखीनच भर पडली होती. लहानपण सांगताना सलीम म्हणत होते की “घोड्यांना खावू घालणारे चणे हे देखील आम्ही खात होतो, त्याला आम्ही घुगरी म्हणत असू.” बालपणीच्या खाण्यासंबंधीच्या आठवणी सांगताना सलीम सांगत होते की आईचा नवव्या वर्षीच विवाह झालेला होता. त्यात आम्ही ५ भावंडे! आई कामाला भाजी-पाला विकायला सकाळपासून निघून जायची त्यामुळे दुपारचे जेवण आम्हाला माहित नव्हते. आई संध्याकाळी आल्यावर स्वयंपाक बनवत होती. जर भाकरी उरली तर आई त्या शिळ्या भाकरीचा काला बनवत असे. त्याला आम्ही ‘सुगर भुगर’ म्हणत असू. गरीबी असल्या कारणाने पाणी लागलेल्या बाजरीच्या भाकरी खाल्ल्या आहेत. ह्या बाजरीचे वैशिष्ट्य म्हणजे ह्या बाजरीला पाणी लागले तर ती बाजरी कडू होते व तिच्या पासून बनविलेल्या भाकरीसुद्धा कडू होतात. परिस्थिती गरीबीची असल्याने ह्या अन्नाशिवाय पर्यायच नव्हता. सलीम शेख यांनी यात्रा, विवाह प्रसंग, गोंधळ किंवा सामाजिक कार्यक्रम ह्याप्रसंगी कोणकोणते पदार्थ बनवतात हे देखील त्यांनी सांगितले. उदा. कुळीदाचे शेंगोटे (मुटकुळे), शिरखुर्मा, पुलाव, मिर्च का

पाणी, मटन, मांडे, पुरणपोळी, ऑम्लेट, मेथी, कार्ले, बोंबील.

सलीम शेख हे शिक्षणानिमित्त मालेगावहून पुण्यात ५ वर्षांपासून स्थायिक झाले आहेत. परंतु त्यांनाही आजही गावाकडच्या मसाल्यापासून बनविलेले पदार्थ रुचकर वाटतात. ते म्हणतात की, 'मी स्वतः स्वयंपाक करतो. त्यामुळे आजही माझी आई मालेगावहून येताना आठवणीने माझ्यासाठी खानदेशी गरम मसाला घेवून येते. ज्याप्रमाणे मसाल्यात फरक आहे. त्याप्रमाणेच ते म्हणत होते की, पाण्यातही फरक आहे.'

सलीम शेख त्यांचे वसतिगृहातील अनुभवदेखील सांगत होते. ते म्हणत होते की, दर रविवारी वसतिगृहात आम्ही वेगवेगळ्या जातीचे मित्र (मराठा, गोसावी, माळी इ.) रुमवर बिर्यानी बनवत असू.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

राहूल पैठणकर

सलीम शेख पाककृती :

१) सुगरभुगर काळा :

साहित्य : शिळ्या भाकरी, कांदा, लसून, तिखट, हळद, मीठ, कोथिंबीर, हिरवी मिरची, व तेल इत्यादी.

कृती : प्रथमतः शिळ्या भाकरीचा बारीक चुरा करून घ्यावा व तो चुरा पाण्यात पंधरा वीस मिनिटे भिजवावा. तवा तापायला ठेवावा त्यात अंदाजाने तेल ओतावे. तेल थोडे कोमट झाले की त्यात तिखट, मीठ, हळद, कांदे, मिरची, कोथिंबीर टाकून परतावे. व त्यात भाकरीचा चुरा टाकावा. नंतर १० - १५ मिनिटे ते शिजू द्यावे.

२) बिर्याणी :

साहित्य : कांदा, बटाटे, गाजर, हिरवा वाटाणा, लसून, आलं, गरम मसाला (दालचिनी, लवंग) वेलची, जिरे, शहाजिरे, मीठ, हळद, लाल मिरची (लवंगी), तेल (शेंगदाण्याचे किंवा करडईचे), बकऱ्याचे मटन किंवा मोठ्याचे मटन.

टीप : मोठ्या तोंडाचे भांडे वापरावे.

कृती : लसून, आलं व २ कांदे बारीक करून गोळी करा, भांड्यात तेल घालून गरम झाल्यावर गोळी लाल होईपर्यंत परतावी. मग त्यात लवंगी मिरची उभी घालावी. मटन शिजवून घ्यावे. वरील सर्व गरम मसाला १० ग्रॅम घालावा. मीठ व हळद घालून गोळी अजून लाल करावी. मग उकडलेल्या मटनाचे तुकडे त्यात घालावे. मटन ह्या गोळीशी एकजीव होऊ द्यावे व तेल सुटल्यानंतर मटन शिजविलेले पाणी ह्यात घालावे. तसेच बटाटे, गाजर, वाटाने व कोबी घालावे व शिजू द्यावे.

३) भरलेलं कारलं :

साहित्य : मध्यम आकाराचे कारले, शेंगदाण्याचा कुट, हळद, मीठ, तिखट, तेल.

कृती : कारले मधून चिरावे, त्यातील पिकलेल्या बिया काढून टाकाव्यात. त्या कारल्यात मीठ भरून आर्धा तास झाकून ठेवावे. त्याला पाणी सुटल्यानंतर

त्यातील पाणी पिळून काढून ते पुन्हा धुवून घ्यावे. मग शेंगदाण्याचा कुट, तिखट, मीठ, हळद, ह्याचं मिश्रण कारल्यात भरावे. त्यानंतर कढईत तेल घेवून तेल गरम झाल्यावर त्यात भरलेली कारली टाकावीत व झाकण ठेवून शिजू द्यावे.

४) पुरणपोळी :

साहित्य : गहू, गुळ, हरबऱ्याची डाळ.

कृती : प्रथमतः गुळ व हरबऱ्याची डाळ याचे (हरबऱ्याची डाळ शिजवलेली) चांगले एकत्रित मिश्रण करून पेस्ट बनवावे. तद् नंतर पिठात पाणी टाकून ते मळावे. ते पीठ चांगले मळून घ्यावे. नंतर छोटे छोटे गोळे करावे. त्या गोळ्यांमध्ये पुरण भरून चपाती लाटावी. नंतर खापरावर किंवा तव्यावर ती शेकावी.

टीप : पुरणपोळी बनविण्यासाठी एक विशिष्ट प्रकारचा गहू लागतो. तो गहू तपासून पाहण्यासाठी टेरिकॉटच्या कापडावर ठेवतात व त्याला इकडे तिकडे करतात. जर तो गहू कापडाला चिकटला तर तोच गहू हा पुरणपोळीसाठी योग्य समजावा. कारण पुरणपोळीचे पीठ फ्लेग्जिबल होते. तसेत गहू दळण्यासाठी चक्रीवाल्याला सांगावे लागते की गहू हा पुरणपोळीचा आहे त्या हिशोबाने दळा.

नाव : शोभा बालकिसन टाक :

वय : साधारण ४५ ते ५० वर्ष

जात : वाल्मिकी

श्रमइतिहास : सुरूवातीला असंघटीत क्षेत्रात आणि लग्नानंतर गेल्या २३-२४ वर्षांपासून पुणे विद्यापीठात सफाई कामगार म्हणून काम करीत आहे.

शोभा बालकिसन टाक ह्या दौंडच्या राहणाऱ्या असून त्यांचे आई-वडिल हे दौंडमध्ये कामानिमित्ताने स्थलांतरित झाले. त्यांचे आई-वडिल हे दोघेही म्युनिसीपालिटीत काम करत होते. त्यांची आर्थिक परिस्थिती चांगली नव्हती. त्यांचे आई-वडिल हे शासकीय नोकरीत असले तरी कुटुंब मोठे होते. त्यांना ७ बहिणी आणि २ भाऊ होते. त्यांची आर्थिक परिस्थिती बेताची होती. त्यांचे शिक्षण झालेले नाही. घरातील फक्त दोन मुलांना शिक्षण दिले गेले आणि त्यांच्या छोट्या बहिणीला ७ वी पर्यंत शिक्षण देण्यात आले.

त्यांना त्यांच्या बालपणीच्या खाणपाणाच्या आठवणीबद्दल विचारल्यानंतर त्यांनी सांगितले की त्यांची आई ही बाड्यात सफाई कामगार म्हणून काम करीत त्यामुळे त्यांची मोठी बहिण घरातील स्वयंपाक करत आणि बऱ्याचदा त्यांना शिळे खावे लागे. त्यात बऱ्याचदा ज्वारीची भाकरी आळव किंवा कांदा कापून त्यात लाल तिखट टाकून खात किंवा लसून मिरची मीठ हे पाट्यावर वाटून ते खात आणि बहुतेकदा न्याहरीला देखील शिळे अन्न खावे लागत असे. त्यांच्या आईनेच त्यांना स्वयंपाक करण्यास शिकविले. त्यांच्या माहेरी आणि नंतर सासरीही महिन्याचे सामान भरून आणले जात.

सणाच्या दिवशी कधीतरी पुरी, शिरा किंवा गव्हाच्या कापण्या आणि तांदळाची खीर बनवली जात. पुरणपोळी विषयी बोलताना म्हणाले की, आई बाड्यात काम करत असल्याने त्यांची आई ही जिथे काम करत तिथून अन्न मागून आणत. त्यामुळे घरी कधीतरीच पुरणपोळीचा स्वयंपाक केलेला त्यांना आठवतो. तसेच आई-वडिलांचा पगार झाल्यावर घरात मटन किंवा मिठाई आणली जात. पण त्यातही त्यांच्या भावालाच त्यातील मोठा वाटा मिळत असे. म्हणजे जर मटण आणले तर त्यातील मटनाचे तुकडे हे भावाला दिले जात व रस्सा हा मुलींना दिला जात. त्यांनीही काही वर्षे ह्या वाड्यात काम केले होते.

त्यावेळच्या आठवणी सांगताना त्या म्हणतात की, ज्यावेळी ह्या मोठ्या लोकांच्या घरात वाटाणा किंवा श्रीखंडासारखे पदार्थ त्यांना खाताना पाहत तेव्हा त्यांना नेहमी वाटायचं की हे मोठ्या लोकांचं अन्न आहे. आमच्या सारखे लोक हे विकत घेवू शकत नाही. पण ज्यावेळेस त्यांची आई त्या बाड्यात जात त्यावेळी बऱ्याचदा ते अन्न शिळे झाले आहे म्हणून ह्यांना खान्यास दिले जात होते. त्यांच्या घरी डुकराचे आणि बकऱ्याचे मटन आणले जात. तसेच त्यांच्या घरात डुकरं पाळली जात. त्यामुळे घरातील पुजेच्या दिवशी बऱ्याचदा जनावरं बळी दिली जात. ते जनावर मोठं असेल तर शेजाऱ्यांमध्ये त्याचे वाटप केले जात. त्यातही डुकराचा काही भाग हा नेहमी भावांनाच दिला जात.

त्यांच लग्न झालं तेव्हा त्या सोळा-सतरा वर्षांच्या होत्या. लग्न करून त्या पुणे विद्यापीठात स्थायिक झाल्या. लग्नाच्या पाच दिवसांनी घरी आल्यावर त्यांनी पहिल्यांदा डुकराचे मटन आणि रोटी बनवली. त्यांचे पती शासकीय नोकरी करत होते. त्यांना तीन मुली असून त्यातील दोन मुलींची लग्न झाली आहेत व एक शिकत आहे. लग्नाच्या काही वर्षांनंतर त्यांनीही पुणे विद्यापीठात सफाई कर्मचारी म्हणून काम स्विकारले. २३-२४ वर्षांपासून त्या पुणे विद्यापीठात काम करत आहे. त्या सुरुवातीला डुकराचे मटन खात पण लग्नानंतर काही वर्षांनी डुकराचे मटन खाणे सोडले. पुजेला डुकराचा बळी देणे हे फार महत्त्वाचे आहे. आधी घरी जनावर आणून त्याचा बळी दिला जात. पण पुणे विद्यापीठात आल्यानंतर जिथे डुकर मिळते तिथेच कापून फक्त मटन घरी आणून पूजा केली जात.

त्यांनी मटन खाण्याचे सोडले कारण इथे लोक नावं ठेवतात. भंगी आहे म्हणून हिणवतात म्हणून त्यांनी सोडून दिलं. पण कधीतरी चिकन किंवा मटन खातात असे त्यांनी सांगितले. त्यांच्या घरातपण त्यांनी कधीच घरच्या देवाची पूजा केली नाही त्यामुळे डुकराचा बळी देण्याचा प्रश्नही उद्भला नाही. तसेच मुलीच्या लग्नातही एका विधीचा भाग म्हणून डुकराचा बळी द्यायचा असतो. पण त्यावेळेसही त्यांनी तो विधी पार पाडण्यास नकार दिला. त्या म्हणत होत्या घरात शुभ कार्याच्या वेळी बळी देणं काय चांगलं असतं का? भंगी जातीमध्ये अशा वार्ड परंपरा दिसून येतात. इथे आल्यानंतर वेगवेगळ्या जातींचे लोक एकत्र राहत. त्यामुळे इथे आल्यानंतर पुरणपोळी, करंज्या, चकल्या, ह्यासारखे

पदार्थ बनवायला त्या शिकल्या. हे पदार्थ बनविण्याच्या संदर्भात एक प्रसंग आठवून सांगताना त्या म्हणाल्या की, एकदा त्यांनी चकल्या बनवल्या आणि त्यात डाळीचं प्रमाण जास्त झालं आणि म्हणून सर्व खराब झाल्या. त्यामुळे ते सर्व गाईला खाण्यास टाकले. इथे आल्या नंतरही त्यांच्या सासरी हे जास्त करून उडीद डाळ, हरभरा डाळ आणि गव्हाची रोटीच जास्त बनवली जात. लग्नाच्या काही वर्षांपर्यंत त्यांनी बरेच सण त्यांच्या माहेरी साजरे केले. त्यामुळे विशेष काही सासरी बनवत असू असे त्यांच्या लक्षात नाही.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

अजित पडवळ

विस्तारीत रूप:

दिपा टाक

शोभा बालकिसन टाक यांच्या पाककृती :

१) हुआनी : (गरोदरपणात स्त्रियांसाठी केल्या जाणाऱ्या पाककृती)

साहित्य : गुळ आतपाव, ओवा, असली तूप.

कृती : कढईत एक कप पाणी गरम करावे. त्यात तूप आणि गुळ टाकावा. त्यानंतर एक चमचा ओवा टाकावा आणि त्याला घट्ट होईपर्यंत हलवावे. ते मिश्रण भांड्यात चिकटू नये. ते घट्ट झाल्यानंतर त्यात वरून दोन चमचे असली तूप टाकावे. त्यानंतर ते पाणी गार करून घ्यावे.

२) हरीरा : (गरोदरपणात स्त्रियांसाठी केल्या जाणाऱ्या पाककृती)

साहित्य : गुळ, तूप, काजू, बदाम, मनुका, सुके खजूर, खोबरं.

कृती : कढईत पाणी गरम करून गुळ टाकून थोडं हालवावे. नंतर थोडा गुळ विरघळल्यानंतर त्यात काजू, बदाम, मनुका, सुके खजूर, खोबरं हे घट्ट होईपर्यंत हालवावे. तो घट्ट झाल्यानंतर तूप टाकून खायला द्यावे.

३) गव्हाच्या कापण्या :

साहित्य : गव्हाचे पीठ, गुळाचे पाणी, तेल.

कृती : गव्हाचे पीठ हे गुळाच्या पाण्यात थोडे मीठ घालून मळून घ्यावे. त्यानंतर जाड पोळ्या लाटून त्या चौकोनी कापाव्यात. नंतर त्यांना तेलात तळून घ्यावे.

४) मलीदा :

साहित्य : डुकराच्या चरबीचे तेल, गव्हाची जाड रोटी, गुळ.

कृती : डुकराच्या चरबीचे तयार झालेले तेल घ्यावे. त्यात गव्हाची जाड रोटी तयार करून घ्यावी. त्यानंतर ती गव्हाची रोटी व गुळ कुस्करून एकजीव करून घ्यावी. ते करताना त्यात डुकराच्या चरबीचे तेल टाकावे व त्याचे गोळे करावे किंवा तसेच खायला द्यावे.

नाव : विष्णु शिरसे

वय : साधारणपणे ५६ वर्षे

जात : वाल्मिकी

श्रमइतिहास : साधारणपणे ३० वर्षांपासून पुणे विद्यापीठात सफाई कामगार म्हणून काम करतात.

मी विष्णु शिरसे, माझे परदादे मुळचे राजस्थानचे होते. परंतु कामानिमित्ताने पुण्यातच स्थायिक झाले व पुणे विद्यापीठात काम मिळाले. माझा जन्म पुण्यात झाला आहे. माझे वय सध्या ५६ वर्षे चालू आहे. माझे लग्न १९७३ मध्ये झाले. शिक्षण ५ वी पर्यंत झाले आहे.

लहानपणी गरिबीची परिस्थिती होती. आज कमवायचे आजच खायचे त्यावेळेस भाजी, चपाती, बटाटा, फ्लॉवर इ. खायला मिळायचा. १९७२ च्या दुष्काळात लाल ज्वारी गरम पाण्यात मिसळून भाकरी करायचो.

शाळेत माझ्या मित्रासोबत उष्ट्र-पाष्ट्र खाण्याची वेळ आली नाही. शाळा आणि घर जवळच होते. म्हणून सुट्टी झाल्यावर मी जेवण करायला घरी जायचो. आम्ही (उत्सव) वीर जन्मसे साजरा करतो. तेव्हा-दाल भाटी करतो. तुरडाळ, मुगडाळ तुपात टाकून भिजवावे व ते एकत्र करून खायला देतात. तसेच चुर्मा व बाजरीच्या भाकरीत गुळ टाकून लाडू बनवतो. मी सर्वच प्रकारचे मटन खातो. बकरी, बोकड, रानडुकर, मोठ्याचे, मांजर, रानबोक्याचे असे सर्वच प्रकारचे मटन खातो. मासेही सर्व प्रकारचे खातो. झिरप्या, मोठा मासा, झिंगा, बॉबील इत्यादी त्यासाठी लागणारे कांदा, मसाला, पुदिना, मिरची, जिरे, हळद, लसूण पेस्ट, मटन धुवून तेलात टाकावे. नंतर हे सुकं किंवा रस्स्याचे बनवू शकतो. घरात आम्ही वीस सभासद आहोत. त्यापैकी १२-१४ व्यक्ती मांसाहार करत नाही. माझी बायकोही कुठल्याप्रकारचा मांसाहार करत नाही. मी स्वयंपाक करण्याच्या सुरुवातीला भाकरी टाकायला शिकलो व मला कोणीही शिकविले नाही.

मित्रांच्या पार्टींतील जेवन मीच बनवतो ह्या पार्टींत मटन असते. व स्वयंपाकाबाबतीत माझे कौतुक होते. मी बनविलेले पदार्थ दुसऱ्यांना देतो व त्यांच्याकडून मिळालेले पदार्थ मी खातो. एकदा टी.व्ही.वर खवय्ये या कार्यक्रमात

बिर्याणीची पाककृती दाखवली जात होती. मी त्या पाककृतीत काही बदल करून माझ्या पद्धतीने बनवली. माझ्या रोजच्या जेवणात भात, भाकर, मटन इत्यादी असते.

मोठ्याचे मटन आणतो; तेव्हा कलेजी, खिमा, भेजाखिमा, मेथीखिमा इत्यादी तयार करतो. माझ्या लग्नामध्ये साधे जेवण होते. सध्या लग्नाच्या कार्यक्रमात शिरा दिला जातो. मी बाहेर फिरायला जातो तेव्हा हॉटेलमध्ये बटाटा वडा, पाव भाजी, खायला आवडते. मला शाकाहारी जेवणामध्ये मेथीची भाजी आवडते, यासाठी भाजी धुवून चिरणे, लसून हिरवा मसाला, मिरची, तेल, जिरे येवढ्या वस्तु लागतात. मला गोसावी जातीचे लोक मटन करून देण्यास सांगतात. एखाद्यावेळी मटन नसले की आयत्यावेळी अंडी बनवितो. एकदा राजस्थानमधील अजमेर येथे फिरायला गेलो तेव्हा तेथील ब्राह्मण व्यक्तींनी आम्हाला विचारले असता आम्ही म्हणालो पुण्याचे. तेव्हा त्याने आमच्यासाठी चहा बनविला. परंतु बरं झालं आम्हला जात विचारली नाही, नाहीतर बोलवलं नसतं.

आठवणीयचे संकलन:

युवराज सुर्यवंशी

विष्णु शिरसे यांच्या पाककृती:

१) मटन करी:

साहित्य: मटन १ किलो, हिरवी मिरची ६, लसून पाकळी १०, तीन इंच आले, पुदिना, तीन कांदे, टरबुजाच्या बिया एक कप, ४ मोठे चमचे तेल, स्वादानुसार मीठ.

कृती: मटनाचे मध्यम आकाराचे तुकडे करावेत. कढईत तेल गरम करावे. नंतर त्यात धुतलेले मटन परतून घ्यावे. थोडे पाणी घालून झाकण लावून शिजवून घ्यावे. दुसऱ्या कढईत तेल गरम करावे. नंतर त्यात कांदा तळून घ्यावा. हिरवी मिरची, लसून, आले, पुदिना एकत्र करून वाटून घ्यावे. नंतर वाटलेला मसाला व कांदा एकत्र करून शिजवावे. नंतर मटन व पाणी घालून शिजवून घ्यावे. रस्सा घट्ट होण्यासाठी त्यात टरबुजाच्या बिया वाटून त्यात मिसळव्यात.

२) मेथी खिमा:

साहित्य: कोणत्याही प्रकारचा खीमा १ किलो. ४-५ हिरवी मिरची, ४-५ लसून पाकळ्या, दोन इंच आले, पुदिना, एक कप मेथी, तेल व मीठ.

कृती : मटनाचा खिमा स्वच्छ धुवून शिजवून घ्यावा. हिरवी मिरची, लसून आले, आणि पुदिना एकत्र करून वाटावे. नंतर कढईत तेल गरम करावे. वाटलेला मसाला परतून घ्यावा व त्यात खिमा टाकून परतून घ्यावा, खिमा चांगला परतून घेतल्यानंतर त्यात मेथी घालावी व चांगली शिजू द्यावी.

३) मांडे:

साहित्य: गव्हाचे पीठ दोन कप, दही दोन चमचे, मीठ चवीला, आर्धा कप पाणी.

कृती: गव्हाच्या पीठात मीठ व दही घालून पाण्यात मळावे. पिठाचे छोटे गोळे करावेत मग ह्या गोळ्यांच्या पातळ चपात्या लाटाव्यात. तव्यावर भाजाव्यात.

४) दालच्या भात :

साहित्य : तूरडाळ दोन कप, तांदूळ दोन कप, २ कांदे, तीन इंच आले, ४-

५ पाकळ्या लसून, चार हिरवी मिरची, गरम मसाला (तमालपत्र, ५ लवंग, शहाजिरे १ चमचा, मीठ, तेल ४ चमचे.

कृती : तुरडाळ शिजवून घ्यावी. तव्यावर कांदे भाजून घ्या. आलं, लसून, हिरवी मिरची वाटून त्याची पेस्ट करावी, त्या पेस्टमध्ये उकळलेली डाळ त्यात घालून शिजू द्यावी.

भातासाठी :

कृती : भात शिजवून घ्या, कढईत तेल गरम करून त्यात मसाला घालावा. नंतर त्यात शिजलेला भात घालून शिजू द्यावा.

५) चुर्मा :

साहित्य : तीन बाजरीच्या भाकरी, तीन चमते तूप, गुळ १ कप,

कृती : भाकरी कुस्करून घ्या, गुळ कुस्करावा व त्यात तूप घालावे, ह्या दोन्हीचे एकत्र मिश्रण करावे. नंतर ह्या मिश्रणाचे गोळे बनवावे.

६) दाल बाटी :

साहित्य : मसूर डाळ आर्धा कप, तुरडाळ आर्धा कप, मुगडाळ आर्धा कप, गहू पीठ १ कप, पाणी साडेतीन कप, मीठ, तूण १ कप.

कृती : सर्व डाळी शिजवून घ्या. नंतर गव्हाचे पीठ मळून घ्या. त्याचे छोटे गोळे करून घ्या. हे गोळे तुपात तळा. तळल्यानंतर हे गोळे डाळीत घालून उकळा.

७) सखराना :

साहित्य : २ कप तांदूळ, भुरा १ कप (भरडलेली तपकीरी साखर), तूप आर्धा कप.

कृती : तांदूळ शिजवा. शिजलेल्या तांदूळात भुरा व तूप एकत्र करा.

नाव : धोंडाबाई कांबळे

वय : साधारण ५० ते ५५

जात : मातंग

श्रमइतिहास : सुरुवातीला शेतमजूरी केली., नंतर काही वर्षे कागदकाचपत्रा गोळा करण्याचे काम केले. सध्या घरकाम करतात.

धोंडाबाई कांबळे यांचे लहाणपण बीड येथेच गेले. त्यांचे शिक्षण काहीच झालेले नाही. घरामध्ये नऊ मानसे होती त्यामुळे शिक्षणतर काही नाहीच. परंतु वयाच्या बाऱ्याव्या वर्षी तेथील मांग समाजातील एका वयाने मोठ्या असलेल्या पुरुषाशी विवाह झाला. १९७२ च्या काळात त्या रोजंदारीवर काम करत होत्या. परंतु दुष्काळामुळे यांना पुण्यामध्ये स्थलांतर करावे लागले. व त्या १९७२ मध्येच पुण्यात दांडेकर पुल येथील मोकळ्या जागेत झोपडे टाकून राहू लागल्या.

लहानपणीच्या व गावाकडील आठवणी सांगताना त्यांनी असे सांगितले की, मराठ्यांच्या व जमीनमालकांच्या शेतात किंवा खळ्यात जाऊन काम केले व वेळ पडल्यास भीकही मागीतली. तसेच ज्वारी काढणे, मळणे ही कामे त्या करीत असत व त्यातून त्यांना काही धान्य मिळत असे. त्यातून त्यांची दररोजच्या दररोज चूल पेटली जात असे. परंतु त्यावेळी त्यांनी असे सांगितले की कोणतेही काम हे वाट्यावर चालायचे. म्हणजेच चिंचा फोडणे, सिताफळं तोडणे, हरभरा काढणे ही कामे केली तर जेव्हा आपण दहा घमेली करू तेव्हा त्यातील एक आपल्याला मिळत असे. तसेच धान्य काढल्यावर राहिलेले धान्य म्हणजेच जे धान्य काढतील त्यातील किलोभर धान्य दिले जात असे. तसेच मराठ्याकडून व जमीनमालकाकडून त्यांना शिळे अन्न खायला दिले जात असे.

सनाच्या दिवशी म्हणजेच सर्वात मोठा सण दिवाळीचा समजला जात असे. त्या दिवशी म्हणजेच सणाच्या दिवसात भीक मागून आणलेले फराळाचे पदार्थ व अन्न खाळे जात असायचे. अथवा आपल्याकडे जसे पैसे असतील तशा प्रकारे करंज्या, कापण्या, चकल्या असे पदार्थ केले जात. परंतु जास्त प्रमाणात त्यांनी मागून आणलेले पदार्थच मिळत असे. तसेच त्यांनी सांगितले की त्यावेळी कोणतीही वस्तु दुकानातून आणायची झाल्यास ओंजळभरून धान्य द्यायचे व त्या बदल्यात हवी असलेली वस्तु घेवून यायची.

त्यांनी सांगितल्या प्रमाणे त्यांना चपातीही देखील कधीतरी मिळत असे. तसेच त्या ज्वारीची भाकरी व भाजी खात असत. भाजीमध्ये विशेषतः आखळे मूग व त्यामध्ये हिरवी मिरची घालून त्याची भाजी खात असत. तेल असो किंवा नसो जसे असेल तशी भाजी केली जात असे.

तसेच घोळ, तरवढा ह्या शेतात कुठेही येणाऱ्या भाज्या आहेत. त्या जणूकाही गरीबांसाठीच असलेल्या भाज्या! त्या कितीही व फुकट मिळत. त्यामुळे त्या दोन्ही भाज्या एकत्र निवडून त्यांना खाल्ले जात असे. त्यांची खाण्याची आवड विचारली असता, फक्त तिखटच पदार्थ त्यांना आवडत. पुरणपोळी गोड असल्याने त्यांना ती आवडत नसे. त्यामुळे खाणे फक्त तिखटच होते.

त्या पुण्यातील आठवणी सांगत असताना पुण्यात आलेले अनुभव त्या सांगतात. त्यामध्ये त्यांनी कशा प्रकारे कागद, काच, पत्रा वेचून रोजच्या रोज आपल्या दैनंदिन आर्थिक गरजा भागवत असत. त्यावेळी मुल लहाण असल्याने व त्यांच्या नवऱ्याला एकत्र कामावर जाणे शक्य नसल्याने दोघेही आलतून पालतून एकमेकांच्या वेळा सांभाळून काग, काच, पत्रा वेचण्याचे काम करत असे व नंतर त्याच्यातूनच पुढे स्वतःचे भंगारचे दुकान उभे केले व ते आता काही वर्षांपर्यंत चालू होते. ५-६ वर्षांपूर्वी ते बंद केले.

धोंडाबाईना दोन मुले व तीन मुली आहेत. त्यामध्ये मुलींची लग्न होऊन त्या आपापल्या घरी नांदत आहेत. हे सांगितल्यावर त्यांनी मध्येच गावाकडील एका गोष्टीला उजाळा दिला. ते म्हणजे त्यावेळी दुष्काळाच्या दिवसात मिळत असणाऱ्या आठ्याचे व मिलोबद्दल सांगितले. त्या सांगत होत्या की, आटा ९० पैसे व मिलो हे ६० पैसे एक किलो असे मिळत असे व ते खावूनच आम्ही आमचे दिवस काढले. दुष्काळात अतीशय हाल अपेष्टा सहन कराव्या लागल्या, कारण रोजंदारीवर काम करत असूनही ती रोजंदारी मिळणे कठीण झाले होते. मुलांच्या बाबतीत सांगत असताना त्यांनी आपली दोन्ही मुले ही शिकलेली आहेत व ती दोघेही आपापल्या पायावर उभी आहेत. हे सांगितले. एका मुलाने भाड्याने वडगाव येथे दुकान घेऊन मोबाईल दुरुस्तीचे काम करत आहे. त्याचे लग्न त्याच्या आत्याच्या मुलीशी झाल्याचे सांगितले व त्यांचेही स्वतःचे लग्न हे

देखील त्यांच्या आत्याच्या मुलाबरोबर झालेले आहे हेही सांगितले. थोरल्या सुनेला आई नसल्याने लहाणपणापासूनच सर्व कामाची स्वयंपाकाची सवय आहे व ती त्यांच्या जातीतीलच आहे असेही त्यांनी सांगितले.

दुसऱ्या मुलाच्या आठवणी सांगताना सून ही वेगळ्या जातीची असल्याने तिचा आधी त्यांच्याकडून रागराग होत असे. त्यांचा मुलगा हा एस.पी. कॉलेजमध्ये शिकून एका बॅटरी कंपनी कामाला जात आहे. त्यांची एस.पी. कॉलेजमध्ये असताना एका कोळी मुलीशी ओळख होऊन प्रेम झाले व नंतर लग्न झाले. परंतु ती वेगळ्या जातीची असल्याने विरोध असूनही त्याने लग्न केले. लग्न झाल्यावर तिला त्यांच्या जेवणाच्या पद्धती अतीशय नवीन होत्या. त्यामुळे तसा स्वयंपाक करणे तिला अतिशय कठीण गेले. हळूहळू त्यांनी (सासूने) सर्वकाही गोष्टी शिकविल्या. तिला तिच्या येथील असणाऱ्या पद्धतीने मासे, खेकडा, झिंगे, भात, तांदळाची भाकरी ह्या सर्व गोष्टी खाण्याची सवय होती. परंतु येथे सर्वानाच मोठ्याचे मटन व ज्वारीची भाकरी लागते. त्यामुळे हे शिकणे गरजेचे आहे हे सासूने सांगितले. पहिल्यांदा त्यांनी सासूपण गाजविले. नंतर हळूहळू सर्वकाही व्यवस्थित झाले असे त्यांनी सांगितले. ज्वारीची भाकरी येत नसल्याने त्यांच्या मुलाला शेजारून भाकरी घ्यावी लागत असे. परंतु किती दिवस त्यांच्याकडून भाकरी आणून खाणार म्हणून त्यांच्या मुलानी आपल्या पत्नीला तुला ज्वारीची भाकरी जमलीच पाहिजे असे खनकावून सांगितले व ती सून आता चांगल्याप्रकारे स्वयंपाक बनवते. असे त्यांनी सांगितले. दोन्ही मुलं विभक्त राहतात असे त्यांनी सांगितले.

त्यांची दोन्ही मुलेही सत्यशोधक विद्यार्थी संघटनेत असल्याने ते आंदोलनात होते त्यामुळे त्यांच्यावर शिक्षणाचा व आंबेडकरांच्या विचारांचा पगडा होता. त्यामुळे त्यांच्या विचारात खूप फरक पडला. त्यांच्या एका मुलाने विद्यापीठातून मिळणाऱ्या स्कॉलरशीपसाठी अर्ज केला होता परंतु काही कारणास्तव ही स्कॉलरशीप न मिळाल्याने त्याने विद्यापीठात आत्महत्या करण्याचा प्रयत्न केला होता. त्याची पोलिसात तक्रार देखील नोंदविलेली होती. तेव्हा घडलेला प्रकार आईला सांगून ठेवला होता. तेव्हा घरी पोलीस आल्यावर कशी माहिती सांगायची हेही सांगितले होते व त्यांनी ती तशीच पोलीसांना सांगितली देखील. म्हणजे मुलांच्या शिक्षणामुळे आपल्याही विचारात बदल होत गेल्याचे त्यांनी सांगितले.

धोंडा बाईना चार नातवंडे आहेत. बाळंतपणातील अथवा गरोदरपणातील आठवणी सांगताना त्यांनी बाळंतीनीला चार दिवस गव्हाच्या कण्या त्यामध्ये तूप, गुळ घालून खिर करून दिली जाते व पाचवी पुजल्यानंतर तिला मोठ्याचे मटन म्हणजे त्यामध्ये विशिष्ट भाग उराडी, टांग, मऊ मांस बाळंतणीला शिजवून व कमी तिखट करून दिले जाते. त्याच बरोबर भातही दिला जात असे. तसेच रव्याची खीर ज्वारीची भाकरी, डाळ, भात, भाजी ह्या गोष्टी बाळंतणीला दिल्या जात असे. तिला दूध दिले जात नसे. कारण दूध दिल्याने दूध येत नाही अशी समज असल्याने तिला ते दिले जात नसे.

तसेच तुळजापुरची देवी, येडशीची देवी यांची चैत्र पौर्णिमेला जत्रा असे तेथे पुरणपोळी व दही भाताचा नैवेद्य पहिला दाखवला जातो. यात्रेवरून येताना राहिलेल्या सर्व गोष्टी म्हणजेच जेवणदेखील पुन्हा घरी आणले जात असे.

लहाणपणी त्यांना त्यांच्या आईने स्वयंपाक शिकविला. त्यामुळे लहाणपणापासूनच स्वयंपाक करण्याची सवय होती. घरातील कोणताही पुरुष हा स्वयंपाकाच्या घरात लक्ष घालत नाही असे सांगितले.

त्या जिथे राहतात तेथील अनुभवे सांगताना त्या म्हणाल्या की त्या जेथे राहत होत्या तेथे सर्व जातीचे लोक राहत होते परंतु त्यामध्येही जातीयता येतच होती. खाण्यापिण्यामध्येही बौद्ध, मांग, भंगी अशी जातीची उतरंड दिसून येते. शाळेत जाताना मुलांना कोणाच्या डब्यातील अन्न खाऊ नये असे सांगितले जाई, परंतु कालांतराने शिक्षण घेतल्याने मुलांच्या विचारात बदल होत गेला. त्यांनी आईला भेदभाव पाळू नये असे सांगितले. परंतु आधी त्यांना मुलांचा राग येई. परंतु हळूहळू सगळे समजत गेले.

तसेच त्या सासर व माहेरच्या आठवणीतून सांगताना त्या म्हणाल्या की माहेरी कशाचेही बंध नव्हते. परंतु सासरी हे करू नये ते करू नये असे सासूबाई नेहमी सांगत असे परंतु नंतर पुण्यात आल्यावर त्या आणि त्यांचा नवरा दोघेच असल्याने हवे तसे सर्व करत होत्या.

पुण्यामध्ये त्या १९७२ सालापासून राहत असून त्यांची अडवलेली जागा आता स्वतःची झाली आहे. सर्व सोयी सुविधाही उपलब्ध झाल्या आहेत. त्या राहतात तेथे अण्णाभाऊ साठे जयंती करतात. तेथील लोकांकडून वर्गणी काढून ते जयंती साजरी करतात. अण्णाभाऊ साठे व डॉ. आंबेडकरांची मिरवणुक

बरोबरीने काढतात. घरामध्ये पुरणपोळीचा स्वयंपाक केला जातो असे त्यांना सांगितले.

त्यांनी आठवणीतून अनेक गोष्टींना उजाळा दिला असे की आधी फक्त पुरुषांना मटन दिले जात व स्त्रियांना राहिलेली हडके व रस्सा दिला जात असे किंवा हरबऱ्याची भाजी सुकवून त्याची भाजी खाल्ली जात असे. परंतु नंतर एकत्रपद्धतीने जेवणाची सुरुवात झाली.

शुक्रवार व मंगळवार हे देवीचे उपवास त्या करित होत्या. त्यांना उपवास सोडण्यासाठी शाकाहार व मांसाहार असे दोन्ही प्रकारचे जेवण चालते असे त्यांनी सांगितले. फक्त एकादशी व शिवरात्री ह्यावेळी शाकाहारी जेवण चालते. घरातील पुरुष हे शिळ्या अन्नातील भात फोडणी करून दिल्यावर खात परंतु स्त्रियांना भाकरी व आणखी काही भाजी वगैरे सर्व गोष्टी खाव्या लागत असे.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

शीतल कदम

धोंडाबाई कांबळे यांच्या पाककृती:

१) मोठ्याच्या मटनाची रस्सा भाजी

साहित्य: आपल्याला हवे तेवढे मटन घेणे, त्यासाठी कांदा, टॉमॅटो, कोथिंबीर, संपूर्ण गरम मसाला, लाल मिर्ची, हळकुंड, मीठ, सुखलेलं खोबरं, ज्वारीचे पीठ.

कृती: मटन आणून त्याला बारीक कापून स्वच्छ धुवून घेणे, त्यामध्ये कांदा व टॉमॅटो बारीक कापून शिजवावे, पंचवीस ते तीस मिनीटे शिजवावे, तो पर्यंत वरती सांगितल्याप्रमाणे अंदाजानुसार सर्व पदार्थ घवून त्याची पेस्ट करून मसाला तयार करावा व नंतर एका पातेल्यात तेल टाकून चांगली फोडणी द्यावी. त्यात आधी तयार केलेला मसाला टाकावा व नंतर शिजलेले मटन घालावे. नंतर ज्वारीचे पीठ हे पाण्यात भिजवून त्यामध्ये भाजीघट्ट होण्यासाठी टाकावे व हे सर्व झाल्यावर १० ते १५ मिनिटे सर्व चांगले उकळून घ्यावे.

२) मटनाच्या चाण्या:

साहित्य : मटन, मीठ आणि साखर

कृती : मटनाचे मांस हे एकसारखे कापून घ्यावे व दोन तीन दिवस दोरीवर वाळवणे. नंतर त्याचे छोटे छोटे तुकडे करून ते निखाऱ्यावर भाजून घेणे व त्यात मीठ साखर घालून खाणे.

३) चुनचुण्या:

साहित्य : बैलाची चरबी (मांद)

कृती : बैलाची चरबी ही एका कढईत घेवून गॅसवर अथवा चुलीवर ठेवून गरम करावी. त्यातील चरबी निघून गेल्यावर एक घट्ट पदार्थ खाली राहतो त्या म्हणजेच चुनचुण्या. २५ ते ३० मिनीटे ठेवणे. त्याचे बारीक तुकडे करून ते भाजून खाणे.

४) घोळ व तरवड्याची भाजी:

साहित्य : घोळ व तरवड्याची भाजी, हळद, मीठ, शेंगदाणे कुट, तेल, हिरवी मिरची.

कृती : आधी दोन्ही भाज्या निवडून धुवून एका पातेल्यात दहा मिनिटे शिजवून घेणे. मगज त्यातील पाणी पिळून काढून त्यामध्ये मिरची, मीठ, हळद, तेल, शेंगदाना कुट वरून घालून हलवणे व पुन्हा दहा मिनिटे उकळून घेणे.

नाव : गीता बिवाल

वय : साधारणपणे ४७

जात : वाल्मिकी

श्रमइतिहास : १६ वर्षांपासून पुणे विद्यापीठात सफाई कामगार म्हणून काम करत आहे.

गीताताई यांचा जन्म कोल्हापूरमध्ये झाला. त्यांची जात ही वाल्मिकी आहे. लग्नानंतर त्या पुण्याला आल्या. गीताताई पुणे विद्यापीठात १६ वर्षांपासून नोकरी करत आहेत. गीताताईचे लग्न १९८० मध्ये झाले. लग्नाच्यावेळी गीताताईचे वय हे १८ वर्षे होते. लग्नानंतर पुण्याला आल्यावर त्यांच्या सासरच्या घरी पाच जण होते. आता त्यांच्या घरी चार जण आहेत. त्यांना एक मुलगा आणि तीन मुली आहेत. त्यातील दोन मुलींची लग्ने झालेली आहेत.

गीताताई लहाणपणी कोल्हापूरला होत्या तेव्हा त्यांची परिस्थिती चांगली नव्हती. लहाणपणी त्यांच्या जेवणात भाकरी, मटन, वरण, भात, रव्याचे उपीट हे पदार्थ त्यांच्या जेवणात असत. गीताताई यांच्या लहाणपणी ते बकऱ्याचे मटन खात होते. त्यावेळी ते ७०-८० रुपये किलो होते. मटन हे फक्त पगाराच्या दिवशी आणले जात असे. गीताताईचे आई-वडिल हे सरकारी नोकरीत काम करत होते. त्यावेळी गीताताईच्या वडिलांना दिडशे रुपये तर आईला ८० रुपये पगार होता. सणाच्या वेळी ते शेवई खात होते. त्यावेळी सरकारी कामातही स्त्रियांना पुरुषांपेक्षा कमी पगार होता.

लहाणपणीच्या आठवणीमध्ये गीताताईंनी सांगितले की, सणाच्या वेळी त्यांच्या आई-वडिलांना जे कोणी सण म्हणून पदार्थ देत होते ते आधी कोणीतरी खालून उरलेले असायचे. काहीवळेला तर ते शिळेपण पदार्थ देत होते. पोळीही शिळी उरलेली असायची. कधीकधी ते सर्व पदार्थ एकत्र झाल्याने खराब झालेले असायचे.

गीताताई लग्नानंतर पुण्याला आल्या. गीताताईंना त्यांच्या सासूने स्वयंपाक करायला शिकवले. सासरी त्यांच्या रोजच्या जेवणामध्ये मेथीची भाजी, चपाती भाकरी, खिचडी, वरण-भात, तुरडाळीची आमटी इत्यादी पदार्थ होते. पुण्यात आल्या नंतर गीताताईंना वाल्मिकी जयंती साजरी करतात हे कळले. गीताताई

आता सणाच्या वेळी किंवा दिवाळीला पुरी भाजी करतात. पुण्यामध्ये सुरूवातीला शेजारी पाजारी लोकांना सणाचे ताट देत होते. पण जेव्हा त्यांच्या शेजाऱ्यांना कळाले की त्या वाल्मिकी समाजाच्या आहेत तेव्हा शेजारची मुले त्यांच्या खेळेनाशी झाली व काही दिल्यास खात नसत.

गीताताई आता ज्या ठिकाणी राहतात त्या ठिकाणी वाल्मिकी समाजातील लोक आहेत. तसेच ख्रिश्चन, मुसलमान, मराठी लोक गीताताई प्रमाणेच काम करतात. म्हणून ते सणाच्या वेळीचे त्यांचे ताट घेतात व त्यांनापण देतात.

गीताताई यांच्या समाजात जत्रेला देवीचा नैवेद्य हा वेगळा असतो. त्यांची टेमलबाई ही देवी आहे. त्यांच्यामध्ये देवीचा नैवेद्य म्हणून मटकीची भाजी, वरण, भात, लोणचे इत्यादी घेऊन जातात व त्या ठिकाणी खातात. तसेच त्यावेळी त्यांच्या घरात ते कोंबडीचे मटन करतात. शेजारील लोकांकडून त्या पुरणपोळी करायला शिकल्या आहेत आणि आता गीताताई पुरणपोळी बनवतात.

गीताताईंनी सांगितल्या प्रमाणे त्यांच्या समाजामध्ये बाळंतीनबाईला डिंकाचे लाडू तसेच बोंबील तळणे. ज्यात नंतर खोबरे आले लसून, गरम मसाला, कमी प्रमाणात मिरची इत्यादींचे मिश्रण करून त्यामध्ये तळलेले बोंबील टाकून ते बाळंतीनीला खाण्यास देतात. कारण तिच्या आरोग्यासाठी ते चांगले असते. गीताताईंच्यावेळी त्यांच्या सासरच्या माणसांनी त्यांना विकतचे डिंकाचे लाडू व बदाम दिले होते.

आठवणींचे संकलन:

रोहिणी यादव

गीता बिवाल यांच्या पाककृती :

१) डुकराचे मटन :

साहित्य : डुकराच्या मांसाचे मध्यम आकाराचे तुकडे, लाल मिरची, आले, लसून, डाळीचे पीठ, कांदे, मीठ, हळद, तेज पत्ता, ज्वारी किंवा हरबऱ्याच्या डाळीचे पीठ, तेल.

कृती : प्रथम मटनाचे तुकडे स्वच्छ करून नंतर लाल मिरची, आले, लसून इ. बारीक करून मसाला तयार करणे. मटन, मीठ, हळद टाकून शिजवून घेणे. नंतर फोडणी देताना लाल मिरचीचा मसाला, तेज पत्ता, कापलेला कांदा, हे तेलात परतून घेणे त्यात शिजलेले मटन टाकणे, त्यात ज्वारीचे किंवा चण्याच्या डाळीचे पीठ टाकणे, त्यामध्ये चवीनुसार मीठ टाकणे. थोडावेळ उकळू देणे.

२) तुरडाळीची आमटी :

साहित्य : तुरडाळ, खोबरे, आले, लसून, कोथंबिर, जिरे, मोहरी, कढीपत्ता, गरम मसाला, इ.

कृती : प्रथम तुरडाळ स्वच्छ करून ती शिजवून घेणे, खोबरे, आले, लसून, कोथंबिर हे पाट्यावर वाटून घेणे. नंतर एका भांड्यामध्ये तेलामध्ये जिरे, मोहरी, कढीपत्ता व वाटलेला मसाला टाकणे. त्यामध्ये शिजलेली तुरडाळ टाकणे.

३) कारल्याचा खिमा :

साहित्य : खिमा, कारले, हळद, मीठ, आले, लसून, मोठी विलायची, खोबरे, दालचिनी तेजपत्ता, दालचिनी, शहाजिरे, कांदातेल, टोमॅटो इ.

कृती : प्रथम खिमा स्वच्छ धुणे. त्यामध्ये हळद मीठ पाणी टाकून शिजवून घेणे व ते सुखल्यासारखे होईपर्यंत ठेवणे. नंतर त्यामध्ये आले, लसून, जिरे, मोठी विलायची, खोबरे, लाल मिरची, दालचिनी, शहाजिरे इ. वाटून मसाला तयार करणे. नंतर तेलामध्ये कांदा कापून तेजपत्ता व टोमॅटो टाकणे व तयार केलेला मसाला टाकणे. यामध्ये सुखलेला खिमा टाकणे. नंतर कच्च्या कारल्याचा वरचा भाग कापणे, त्यामध्ये खिमा भरणे, त्यात पाणी टाकणे व आर्धातास शिजत ठेवणे.

४) मेथीची भाजी :

साहित्य : मेथी, सुकट, कांदा, मिरची, लसून, तेल, टोमॅटो, चवीनुसार मीठ इ.

कृती : मेथी साफ करताना मेथीचा पुढचा भाग घेणे. सुकट भाजणे. कांदा, मिरची, लसून, टोमॅटो हे कापून घेणे. एका भांड्यात तेल घेणे व तेलात हे कापलेले पदार्थ टाकणे. नंतर मेथी व भाजलेली सुकट टाकणे व थोडावेळ ते शिजवणे.



Ramvati Kudiya



Asha Kharat



Abidabai Shinde



Lakshmi Sirse

ही थाळी भारतीय नाही का ?



Bhamabai Thosar



Salim Sheikh



Shobha Tak



Vishnu Sirse

ही थाळी भारतीय नाही का ?



**Dhondabai
Kamble**



Geeta Biwal



Students interacting with the respondents

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Section I

Isn't This Plate Indian? : Dalit Memories and Histories of Food

Rationale of the Project:

As students whose everyday lives make the campus mess and fast food of various kinds issues of immediate concern; two controversies centring on food in the last decade have caught our imagination. In May 2001, McDonald's India was in the news concerning the alleged reports of its 'delicious French fries being laced with beef extracts'. This probably was rooted in the practice in the U.S. where the French fries are indeed made in beef tallow to cater to their U.S clientele who have a preference for French fries with beef flavour. Consequently in India, Managing Directors of McDonald's India had to go live to let the people know that their product of French fries is fried in vegetable oils and that the segregation in vegetarian and non-vegetarian food is maintained even at the farm level. The McDonald's U.S confirmed that its imports of par-fried French fries by McCain Foods India Pvt Ltd and Lamb Weston are par-fried in pure vegetable oil sans beef tallow or any fat ingredient of animal origin.¹ At this juncture it is not difficult to realize that this agitation was initiated by the middle class and upper class consumers of McDonalds, but the focus on beef also 'reveals that they were speaking as so called upper caste Hindus'. It is interesting to note that in the entire controversy upper caste Hindu sensibilities of food were homogenised as Indian sensibilities.

The other incident concerns the meat eating controversy at the Hyderabad Central University where ten Dalit students were rusticated in 2002. One of their grievances was that they were treated differently in college mess because they ate meat. The issue concerned an imaginary symbiotic and direct relationship

between food composition and mess bills. Further the HCU hostel administration followed a policy of segregating vegetarian and non-vegetarian eaters. The Dalit Students Union argued that this segregation structurally reinforces the Varna distinction of Hinduism into impressionable young brains. The concept of 'Indian food sentiments' under the name of secular and pan Indian tradition was being hegemonised as one of vegetarianism. The implication was that rich upper-castes could survive on such diet since they could afford the different vegetables and milk supplements needed for proper nutrition but the lower-castes would have to survive on just cereals, thus denied the meat that could have been a source of nutrition for them. The students argued that in a system where dalits and minorities tend to be alienated culturally, both by the choice of texts and teaching methods, unreflective adoption of vegetarianism only adds to the cultural alienation felt by them.

The students underlined the need to declare food habits as a fundamental right of a citizen and any kinds of impediments, 'hate campaigns' against particular food should be regarded as violation of basic human rights. A couple of years later, the campus saw the organisation of dalit food festival on campus where students had to wage a struggle to serve beef and pork in the festival.

Both the incidents suggest that in a caste-based society like India, foods eaten constitute one of the key elements that distinguish the most valued attributes from the lowest valued ones in terms of pure and impure within the pyramidal structure of the caste system². Eating habits and foods starkly mark the boundaries between the pure and the polluted, as well as between the upper and lower class, male and female, humans and god. Conversely, what kinds of food are 'permitted', 'tolerated' and 'enforced' for consumption and the ways in which they are consumed are structured primarily by the caste, class, gender inequalities in society. This project emerges with a modest aim

of at least untangling caste, class and gender on the food plate and the assumptions in the making of national and regional cuisines.

This project aims to flesh out the politics of caste oriented cultural contestations which are embedded within the discourse of food. Cultural practices of dining, serving and cooking have always been imbued with the quest for social and political power. Historically, the nationalist struggle has also been rife with ideological struggles on practices of food consumption. Gandhi and Ambedkar's views about food reflect political contestations over the idea of modernity. Food in the formation of the nationalist politics is not a neutral or unimportant category as the memories in dalit narratives of interdining³ would bear out. The practice of interdining between the 'touchable' and 'untouchable' castes for breaking taboos of untouchability, a programme with which V. D. Savarkar's name came to be associated always served vegetarian (if not Brahmin) meal thus not addressing the very act of eating meat that branded some castes as untouchable castes.

According to Ambedkar, the principle of untouchability initially emerged as a practice to ban the consumption of eating beef. The imposition of this ban was articulated in order to win an ideological battle of ethics against Buddhism. The consumption of non vegetarian food has thus been ethically and morally delegitimized by the Hindu discourse⁴. The cow as a sacred animal, D.N. Jha believes, did not really gain currency until Dayanand Saraswati's cow protection movement in the 19th century. "The cow became a tool of mass political mobilization with the organized cow-protection movement",⁵ the historian points out. He argues that the killing of cows stopped gradually with the agrarian society and caste rigidity. The Brahmins found it convenient to say that those who ate beef were untouchables. But they themselves continued to consume it, recommending it for occasions such as *shraadh*. In the present era, this history

becomes important as the flag of beef eating is wagged by the Hindu fundamentalists to render Islam and Christianity alien and communal and explains why Jha's book came to be banned and his life threatened. Food is therefore an important site on which the memories of why the question of communalism in India is also at once a question of caste are inscribed.

September 24, 1932 undoubtedly remains etched in the collective memory of the dalits not just as the time when Poona Pact was signed as a result of Gandhi's opposition to the British government's provision of separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes, but also as the moment where the aspirations of citizenship of dalit communities were obliged to conform to the Hindu majority's view through Gandhi's strategic use of fasting. This event proved the experience of hunger would never be politically neutral; while the experiences of hunger of those ascribed as 'pure' by caste society amounted to an empowerment through self restraint; for those inscribed as impure by the same order, hunger and negative rights on food (the compulsion to eat meat of dead cattle) became norms they were obliged to suffer from.

John Thieme and Ira Raja⁶ in an anthology on food in South Asia, analyze the dialectic relations between food and culture, by giving emphasis on the communicative dimensions of food and its important role as a signifying system. This immediately raises questions about the limitations of a semiotic analysis for addressing the power and inequalities produced by food practices. As Aravind Mallagati, a folklore scholar in his life narrative 'Government Brahmana'⁷ argues that the interpretations of symbolism and exaggerated scholarly comments often say nothing about the violence routinised through practices in caste society. The need to undertake this project on 'memory work on dalit food practices' comes partly from the vacuum that is left behind by most theorizations on food and from seeing food not so much as melting pot, but as an invisibilised site of contentions, where numerous silent battles are raised simply to say 'I exist'.

The project has its beginnings in our reading of dalit life narratives which, as opposed to other life narratives, deal explicitly with the question of food. Memory here comes to play a significant role in the critical reflexivity that is an integral part of these narratives. Consider for instance the following selections from dalit life narratives:

“During a wedding, when the guests and the baratis, the bridegrooms party, were eating their meals, the chuhras would sit outside with huge baskets. After the baratis had eaten, the dirty pattal or leaf plates were put in the chuhras basket, which they took home to save the jhootan sticking to them. The little pieces of pooris, bits of sweetmeat and a little bit of vegetable would be enough to make them happy. The jhootan was eaten with much relish. The bridegroom’s guests who didn’t leave enough jhootan behind on their pattals were denounced as gluttons. Poor things, they had never enjoyed a wedding feast, so they had licked it all up. During the marriage season, our elders narrated, in thrilled voices, stories of baratis who had left several months of jhootan.”

(Om Prakash Valmiki, 2003)⁸

‘Nobody was ready to exchange his or her share with my grandmother. She got really angry and in a fit of rage she declared ‘ from today on who ever eats the meat of dead cattle will swear by the pig’ ...some women rushed ahead to beat my grandmother. Some began to rub their palms and sing curses that would finish her. The young in the crowd patted my grandmother on her back. “great work sitavahini! Today you have opened the eyes of the Maharwarda Later oaths were taken and promises made to give up eating dead cattle and spontaneously the slogan of Bhimrao ki Jai was given’. (Baby Kamble, 2007)⁹

“When the menfolk went out and women and girls remained at home, they dined only on kaat. A small quantity was poured in water and cooked as a soup with chilli powder, salt and piece of raw mango or amsul. This was called saar. Women ate their rice with this watery dish. Similar saar would be made with the stock of other fish. This was an extremely low quality dish with no nutritional value. It would invariably upset the stomach....

... “Hey what is that funny “dug dug” noise,

What is the foul smell spreading all over?

Well, what they cooked was fish water!

Someone’s had a bellyful! And how!

She wears a short sari, down to the feet now

To hide what’s trickling down from her butt!

This saar used to be the regular diet for the daughters in law. The poor things ate it without complaint and naturally faced the consequences. I too grew up on this saar, this why my digestion is excellent”

(Urmila Pawar, 2008)¹⁰

“Making Mandes , a very thin chapatti ,is an art of cooking in the Mahar community that is dying away. This kind of bread is made on an overturned, heated earthen pot.... Along with Mandes of course mutton or chicken was necessary. It had to be spicy enough so that guests should gasp for breath when they soaked a piece of the Mande in the gravy and ate it.... When ever Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar came to Nagpur he would eat mutton and Mandes. Once in 1930, Babasaheb Called Yogesh Varade’s mother and said, holding out the Mandes “through the almost transparent Mandes your face can be seen. Such a beautiful art in your hands”

(Vasant Moon, 2001)¹¹

“Bhakari is as large as man. It is as vast as the sky, and bright like the sun. Hunger is bigger than man. Hunger is vaster than the seven circles of hell. Man is only as big as a Bhakari, and only as big as his hunger. Hunger is more powerful than man. The world is born from a stomach, so also the link between mother and father, sister and brother”
(Sharan Kumar Limbale, 2003¹²)

“My man licked his lips at the remembered feast. Whatever meat could not be consumed quickly before it got spoiled, she dried it in the sun. After a few days of drying, the sun turned the meat into thin, crackly strips. Those chanya were so delicious!. Aae would roast them in the fire for us to eat and for so many weeks, we would beg her for the treat” (Narendra Jadhav, 2003)¹³

On Sunday we usually had a good meal. They butchered a cow exactly at the time when we returned from the morning Pusai. With our midday kuuzh we would be given a little of the meat in its plain stock. For this, the meat was just boiled with a touch of salt, but no masala whatever. . . . when they were cooking meat, we came home as soon as the prayers were over at the church, without getting led away into anything else. . . .

“Usually we had rice and kuzhambu only in the evenings. Otherwise, it was some kind of kuzh in the mornings and at mid-day. It would be a kuuzh appropriate to the season. To go with the Kuuzh there would be something or the other - onions, groundnuts, moulded jaggery, green chillies. If there was a little money in hand, there might be a relish of roasted and ground gram or a pickle from the nadar shop, or anything else we could buy. This pickle was usually hung up in packets in the shops. The shop owners would usually

prepare this 'kadichukira' in their own homes and bring it to their shops. They used to make it full of flavours, with all sorts of good things like brinjals and red chillies. They'd give you five or ten paisa's worth wrapped up in a banyan leaf. To this day, I relish this Kadichukira. It always went very well with our kuuzh. "(Bama, 2000¹⁴)

It is apparent from these selections that the struggle against hunger and for food is central to dalit life narratives. There are memories of negative rights, compulsions and coercion of eating the meat of dead cattle in the pre-Ambedkar era and those of the message of Ambedkar translating into food related practices in the Ambedkar era. The moral economy of the household how to consume - who consumes what and how much is also an important part of the critical memories. The memory is not always one of pain, so that authors recount relishing a particular dish and also the ridicule of the gluttony and taste of the so called upper castes. The memories often comes heavily tinged with emotion, so that shame, humiliation encountered as part of a process of collecting or begging for food and disgust over what was eaten in a pre- Ambedkar era has the moral and political force that pushes the reader to question such a politics in an effort to unseat such a deeply embedded system of discrimination.

Food, as we have argued in this section, is very much a political question and cannot be equated to personal choice and taste. In a society where what we eat, when we eat, how we eat and how what we eat is produced, is marked by gender, caste and class; the question of food cannot be pushed under the carpet as a private question. Having highlighted the memories of caste and gender in the dalit life narratives, in the next section, we address the gap between these and the world of cookbooks and sociological writings on Indian cuisine.

Section II

‘National’ and ‘Regional’ Cookery Books: Isn’t the Plate of Dalit Recipes ‘Indian’?

“Cookbooks, which usually belong to the humble literature of complex civilizations, tell unusual cultural tales.”

Arjun Appadurai begins his essay on cookbooks in contemporary India by pointing out how cookbooks reflect the logic and economics of household budgets and domestic ideologies. They are meant for a literate society where food displays class and caste hierarchies. What is to be eaten, how and in which order it is to be eaten and when it is to be eaten – all are expressed through cookbooks seen as a communicable variety of expert knowledge.¹⁵

During the month of March, all of us participating in this project visited bookstores in Pune and one of us also visited a Marathi bookstore in Thane to get a sense of the cookbooks on the shelves – to see the history of cuisines of India as constructed in them. A single glance at the food and cooking section of any major book store in the city was enough to tell us the audience these books are addressed to. There is a tendency to address mostly the urban elite, the upper caste and the vegetarian public.

Our small survey at the bookstores on the variation of cookbooks available reveals that the shelves are full of ‘national’ and ‘regional’ cookbooks in more or less equal number. While national cuisine is constituted by selections from different regions, regional cuisines homogenise differences within the region and both show no hesitation in referring to the single, overarching Hindu tradition as ‘Indian’. For instance, consider *Dal Chaval* by Satarupa Banerjee (Vasan Publication) and *Non Vegetarian Delights* by Sandhya Kumar (Lotus Press). Banerjee, a Bengali Brahmin, in her preface acknowledges the richness of regional

variations though she put together dal and chawal under one category. The second book is written by non-brahmin and does not acknowledge regional variations of cuisines even within India as if non-vegetarian cooking was the same all over India. Other books, like *Vegetarian Fare* by N. Radha Rao (Longman), seems to cater to cosmopolitan taste of readers by providing a variety of recipes from India and some other countries like Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Continental, and Iran. Indian foods are divided into some sections that include rice dishes, curries with side dishes, chutney, masala, among others.

‘Annapurna’ written by Mangala Barve and translated by Snehlata Datar is originally a Marathi book and has had the stupendous luck of having 50 editions in 30 years. The author claims that her ‘husband and father loved gourmet cooking and were fastidious about nutritious and sumptuous food. So to be happy I had to be a good cook. I began collecting recipes.’ Her husband was into advertising, thus she met several elite families from different communities during parties. The translator claims that this book is a popular gift to newly married and those who live abroad.

In this context, it is interesting to look at the creation of national cuisine through the discourse of cookbooks in India. Appadurai (1988) has argued that the authentic Indian cookbook did not hide the regional differences, but rather the regional cuisines came to be represented as national cuisines. Although Appadurai recognizes the homogenization of certain regional cuisines as the ‘authentic’ national cuisine, he does integrate caste as an analytical category in deconstructing the ‘national’ cuisine in India. He concludes, perhaps a little too hastily that the cookbooks signify cross-caste flow of recipes in an urban cosmopolitan. The absence of a dalit cookbook or the deafening silence of cookery magazines on the ‘dalit food festival’ organised by Chandra Bhan Prasad in Delhi would lead us to be cautious about any hastily drawn conclusions.

A brief analysis of the cookbooks revealed that in addition to regional cuisines being represented as Indian cuisine, certain upper class/caste recipes are reproduced as dominant recipes of particular regions. Minakshi Dasgupta's cookbook 'Bangla Ranna' (the Bengali recipes) depicts the 'authentic Bengali recipes' in the so-called traditional way of serving food, in a silver plate, with rice in the middle and curries in separate bowls. This resembles the food habits and practices of the upper caste and class. The recipes of what gets represented as 'authentic Bengali cuisine' is typically upper caste and the use of costly ingredients like ghee and more costly fishes is representative of the taste of Bhadrakol. The homogenization of Bengali cuisines across erstwhile East Bengal (present Bangladesh) West Bengal is glided over. The authors acknowledge that the use of different types of fish, onion, garlic and poppy seeds vary across social classes. *Panta bhaat* (the cooked rice stored in water) gets recognized as 'what' is consumed by the poor. A case of the classical collapse of caste into class?

There were titles which by their sheer flippancy cannot fail to amuse the readers (in the stores and of our project!!). There were titles like '*How to forget your Ex With the Stab of a Fork*'-Solo recipes for sporadic singles or titles like '*The cookbook for Girls Who haven't Learnt Much from their Mothers*' or a book called "*Small Tasty Dishes for Moms on the Verge of a Nervous Break-down*" in trying to cope with the food demands of children. Books by Karen Anand, Neeta Mehta, Tarla Dalal and Sanjeev Kapoor were stacked on the shelves along with plenty of other books by foreign authors. Our selection of books was however based on uncommon unheard names of experience in the hope that some authors who are not chefs or professionals may through daily experiences just see the caste differences in food.

What we found was a series of cookbooks on 'satvik' diet and calorie conscious diet. The idea of food devoid of any

trappings of desire, food that helps one renounce the desires was what this cookbook on satvik diet tried to endorse. The commonplace items like pani puri, dahi puri were given Sanskrit names like pushpanjali etc. This cookbook performed the enormous feat of invoking what the Right wing has been trying for so long, i.e. a golden Vedic past that is pan Indian. Idli, jostled with Dhokla and Khandvi, as Jalebi, Rasgulla and Gulab Jamun ended things on a sweet note, in this book. There seems to be a trend towards healthy eating as cookbooks for people with high cholesterol or diabetics were seen lining shelves after shelves. These diseases are also seen as afflicting the well to do classes of the society, making the audience of a cookbook amply clear. Food as therapy was a strong theme throughout. Be it eating 'satvik' or going lowcal (low calorie), food was the miracle cure. The multiple discourses on food, of following certain diets could be American or Vedic, their audience and perspective on food was not very different from that of the other.

There were increasing number of 'continental cookbooks', they included Chinese, Italian and Thai cuisines. It marks clearly the upper middle class and elite shopper who is as much at home buying Dior perfumes as while eating 'continental' to carry on the global consumption project. The politics of defining global though can be summed up as First World as continental and Third World as Oriental. Its interesting to see India, carrying on its shoulders the tag of the Orient, now looks at China, Thailand as Orient, Vietnam and Korea are conspicuous by their absence on this Continental /Oriental scene.

It would be too simplistic to say that the English books cater to upper middle class to upper class clientele and regional (Marathi) to a lower middle class. Both address a middle class, largely one where the woman works outside the home, but sees the home as her prime responsibility. In Betty Freidan's words, the woman must be busy enough to buy a cake mix, but not so busy that she doesn't want to bake. Appadurai's study on cookbooks too

assumes a housewife, the one who will cook special meals to entertain her husband's boss and different ones for his extended family. Most cookbooks today cater to the working woman, who wants to cook in a jiffy and still impress her guests. It is not only about being a good wife, ideal hostess, great cook, but also being someone who knows a lot about diet and nutrition, while holding down a career and two or more children.

In the English cookbooks while caste differentiation is hidden under the garb of inter- regional cuisine(Maratha cooking called 'Assal Kolhapuri' /Authentic Kolhapuri), the Marathi books may go as far as titles like 'Maratha Recipes', 'Saraswat Cuisine', 'CKP Specialities' or 'The Plate of Panchali' - Recipes of Panchal Caste Women's Club in Mumbai. Caste when articulated is restricted to the 'upper castes' and the books then claim to be storehouses of information for a new bride and include various party menus, including some caste specific foods with a few 'universal ' items thrown in for a good measure.

History as all processes of remembering tends to be selective as this process is often embedded in power, and therefore what comes to be treated as the norm and what gets erased from collective memory all together often has to do with what interests this recording of history served. Thus when Appadurai(1988) mentions that the Mughal texts that have recipe sections are perhaps the first time we have a textualisation of culinary practices in India and further mentions how this *Mughalai* cuisine has now come to be regarded as a pan Indian cuisine; it is a testament to the fact that food like any other social practice comes to be determined by the practice of power. As social science researchers, what gets written of is of immense importance for us but so is that which is written off. It is even more necessary, to excavate if necessary culinary practices that have been marginalised over the years. This process of marginalisation often comes not through direct attacks on particular foods but through insidious attacks on questions of

nutrition, hygiene but all importantly taste.¹⁶ Further, in matters of representation the cookbooks have remained highly selective, thus while they did manage to foray in the direction of what are the types of food popular amongst the Mopallah's or Muslims in Kerala, or among the Boharis; cookbooks generally steer clear of beef and pork.

A trend of metropolitan pragmatism is witnessed in food practices through the composition of cook-books. A sense of eroding traditional concepts is found in the role of left over food in the new cook-books. As observed by Appadurai (1988), left over food has been a sensitive category in traditional Hindu thought and even if in certain traditional circumstances they are positively transvalued most often the eating of leftover was equated with the risk of moral degeneration, contamination and loss of status. However these books make no reference to those who driven by the violence of the caste regimes 'discovered' ways of drying and storing food. For a country like India, ridden with droughts, famines and floods, the absence of even one book on how to cook during disastrous times says a lot about which India we are really talking about. While a book on cooking during recession might be in the offing to address the 'needs' of those who might have to give up their international tastes for indigenous dishes who would pick up a cookbook that reminded them about starvation deaths or of castes that learnt to dry stale puris and bhakris for 'even more difficult' times? Our project to publish such a book is not merely to add one more 'different cookbook' to the list but an act of struggling against power by bringing into collective memory that which is 'readily and officially' forgotten.

Today the bookstores seem to have cookbooks that bring about a paradoxical mix of the Gandhian and Savarkarite approach to food and untouchability. There is an exchange of recipes symbolizing inter dining and there is a focus on food as other worldly, as renunciation and as worship. People can now

eat food 'belonging to other castes' but within the limits set by the Varna order and 'pure pan India Hinduism'. A Tamilian Brahmin can cook Dhokla or Khandvi as it is good for the health, and carries the mark of satvik rasa, while a Maharashtrian can take to idlis, yet neither might have ever given a thought to learning to cook what the woman who works in their house eats on an everyday basis.

Modernity of the cookbooks emerges through a displacement of contexts of region, religion and caste in adopting and adapting to culinary practices across the country. Caste though here has not been forgotten: merely garbed differently so that an abundance of books on vegetarian cooking, for instance 'Satvik Cooking'. Caste can now be written in a discourse of not what is considered as pure and polluted food, but rather through a discourse on health and nutrition which works within the larger paradigm of Hinduism, which the book cover reminds us of.¹⁷

What do we do then to address the deafening silence on dalit food in both national and regional cuisines - Isn't the plate of dalit food Indian? If it is then what do we do to build an alternate archive of histories and memories of dalit culinary skills and recipes? Our project makes a modest beginning by documenting the memories of food and recipes in practice in dalit households by doing memory work with 10 dalit men and women from Buddhist, Matang, Valmiki and Pinjari castes. As feminist researchers, we believe that the memories of food – of lives lived and the culinary skills and knowledges they make in the process cannot be separated. This is what we present in the next section.

- **Aashima, Amrita,**
Christina, Debasmita,
Gayatri, Kena,
Marushka, Pallavi,
Priyanka, Sarnali,
Smriti, Supriya.

Section III

Dalit Memories of Food and Recipes: Towards Rewriting Histories

Name: Ramvati Kudiya

Age: 45-50 years

Caste: Valmiki

Work History: Worked as *safai karamchari* in Aligarh and is currently employed as *safai karamchari* in Pune University for the last 20 years.

Ramvati Babulal Kudiya belongs to the Valmiki caste. She was born and brought up in Ahmednagar. Her family had migrated to western India from Uttar Pradesh (UP). She was married off at the age of 15. Just after her marriage, the couple shifted to Pune for a year and then went to Aligarh, where they stayed for three years. She is presently employed at the University of Pune working as sweeper for the last twenty years.

Recalling her memories of her conjugal home, she says that her family members included very less number of people. In the village she engaged herself in tasks such as village cleaning, cattle rearing and grass cutting etc. Whereas, her husband as she put it, did 'netagiri' i.e. was involved in local politics. For her hard labour, she would often be rewarded with *makka* (corn), *chana* (gram), wheat as well as left over chapattis instead of money by the Thakurs in the village.

Remembering the leftovers, she would often complain to the Thakur's wife for giving such food and would feed the stale food to the cows rather than eating herself. She also remembers performing the task of midwife and cutting the umbilical cord. On the occasions of 'chatti' i.e. a celebration done on the sixth day after the baby's birth, she remembers getting gifts such as

saris, blouse pieces and grains. But here also she never received money. The most striking feature that came out from the interview was the barter system that prevailed during earlier times. For e.g. two kilos of wheat could be exchanged for one kilo of mutton. Later when she came back to Pune University, she got a salary of Rs. 4 due to which she could afford weekly ration at home while in the current situation, monthly provisions of grocery is made.

She recollected her childhood memory as living under poor economic conditions, having a big family consisting of parents, three sisters and a brother. Both her parents were employed and struggled hard to make both ends meet. Being the youngest among all of them, the brother pampered the sisters at home by giving them baths, tied their hair neatly and dropped them to school. She confessed of having lack of interest in studies due to which she went to school for only two years and considers herself as illiterate. As a child she remembers eating *jowar* and *milo rotis* with garlic and raw mango chutneys. At times when wages were received, she remembers eating good vegetables and mutton. She hardly remembers eating chicken at home. Her memories of stale food included leftover chapattis being warmed up in the pan with oil and then eaten with tea. Or even if that was not available, dried up *puris* were cut into pieces and soaked into water to make gruel and this dish was eaten with great delight.

However she recalls that after her father got a government job, their socio-economic condition improved. She still remembers her heart craving for the '*chillas*' cooked by her sister and the mutton prepared by her brother, which consisted of not much spices but still tasted very good. Once she remembers her father brought frog pickles and on looking at the meat, she felt nauseated and refused to eat. She laughingly recalls how her father ate all kinds of meat while her uncles did not like eating pig meat at all due to which fights would often occur

between them. As some of her family members did not like pig meat, goat meat was brought for them.

During *pujas* or religious occasions to impress deities such as ‘Gudgai’ and ‘Mariaai’ sacrifices of the goat was made, while to impress goddess ‘Shitala’ pigs were slaughtered offering the special parts of the animal such as the head and legs. During *yatras* as well, the whole community would come together with rations and cook food collectively in temples. The dishes comprised of ‘Dalcha Bhaat’ for the vegetarian and pig/goat meat was prepared for the non-vegetarian lovers. Fasts were broken by eating strictly vegetarian food which included rice, daal, vegetables, *methi*, *khichdi* or fruits etc. for her. During festivals like, Raakhi and Diwali, she remembers eating vermicelli, sugarcane *kheer* and *puris* cooked in every household, be it a Thakur or Valmiki.

Her mother taught her cooking but later in her conjugal home, there was some minor changes in the cooking practices as her mother in law took great interest in teaching her various dishes which were highly nutritious, such as spinach soup, ‘sattu’, ‘mattha’, different kind of raitas of *lauki* and cucumber which were good for the summer season. She reveals that she never faced criticism or tensions over food at her in laws place; on the contrary they always appreciated her efforts. On being asked about any male member known to be ‘great cook’, she instantly recalls the delicacies prepared by her brother and father. For instance, the soup made by him by boiling the goat’s head and leg which was considered to be very nutritious for pregnant women.

Her son held high expectations from his wife with regard to cooking because his mother is a great cook. Therefore, the daughter in law often would take her help while preparing some special dishes of fish. She lamented that earlier cooking involved simple spices such as salt, turmeric and red chilies which made a dish tasty. She is of the opinion that the authentic flavor of the

traditional cooking has lost its taste due to the commercialization of readymade *masala* in contemporary time. Even though she uses different varieties of readymade spices like garlic, ginger and *garam masala*, it does not have the taste of grinding stone *masala* of earlier times. Among her favorite dishes, she relishes eating *pani puris* and chunchunis.

She admits the fact that, when she was in Aligarh, she did not know how to cook fish. But later, she learned making different varieties of fish such as, ‘mackerel’ and ‘khekda’ from her son. After coming to Pune, she recalls a smooth exchange of food in the neighborhood. Except for pig meat, they exchange all kinds of food during festivals as well as in the everyday. From her lived experience, she said, caste has never been a barrier or an issue of purity and pollution in terms of cleanliness and utensils.

Memories Documented by
Priyanka Sinha

Recipes Contributed by Ramvati Kudiya:

Sugarcane Kheer

Ingredients:

One glass of sugarcane juice
Half glass rice
Grated coconut

Process:

Take a big bowl and boil the sugarcane juice. After boiling add the rice and grated coconut to it. Leave it for sometime till it gets cooked and is ready to serve.

Chunchuni

Ingredients:

Skin and meat of Pig
Salt

Process:

Clean the skin of pig and meat then cut it into long pieces. Take a pan and put the skin part that has been cut. After sometime the skin shrinks and the fats are turned into oil. Add the meat and let it cook in that oil till it gets crispy. Add a pinch of salt to make it tastier and serve it hot. If pig meat is not available chicken and mutton will also serve the purpose.

A closer look at the above mentioned recipes shows the limited use of ingredients by the Dalits to bring out such flavored recipes which if added in the national cuisine can bring a new revolution in the world of cuisine altogether.

Name: Ashabai Kharat¹⁸

Age: Between 50-55 years

Caste: Neo-Buddhist

Work History: She has done election duty, vended vegetables and now is active in the Buddhist Mahila Mandal.

Born in Mumbai, Kharatbai was 22 years old when she got married and moved to Koregaon Taluka, Satara. She currently lives with her husband and three sons and one daughter in law. For her, life changed drastically after moving to her in-law's house. The first time they were to pay respects to God, she had to get up at about 1 am even before the rooster crows at the dawn, and prepare food for a whole family until 6 o'clock. At one point of time, apart from doing household chores, she worked for one and a half months at the collector office where she wrote more than 400 names per day. She acknowledged, it is her husband who taught her English. She also did vegetable vending for one and half months.

When she was a child, Kharatbai used to fetch water and make cow-dung cake before going to school. This was particularly true in 1972 when there was a drought in the city. In such hard times, Gujarati and Sindhi families who lived next door, used to give them leftover food which was very helpful in relieving economic burden of the family. Despite this hardship, she remembered she had a lot of fun during *langar* in the nearby Gurudwara wherein foods, particularly *shira*, was distributed to all communities. She managed to get more food by approaching the priest two or three times; and for her this was a kind of fun. They would crumble the leftover food handed to them and add sugar and water to it and eat it.

Her memory on food suggests that the most delicious dishes she ever had was *puran poli* and mutton bought by her father from Mumbra. The mutton was smeared with *masala* which

was made on a yearly basis. Her mother used to serve it with thin gravy which was a delicacy for the whole family. Now she cooks mutton in a different way in her in-law house (see recipe for mutton).

She cooks *rakti* during financial crisis for the simple reason: *rakti* is cheaper than mutton; sometimes she even gets it for free, and is a delicacy. Foods made of *rakti* as well as of goat intestine, head and brain are favorites of the family. Head and legs are particularly given to the women after her delivery. She also makes *kandawani* in crisis while in Dasera she prefers to serve *dhapate* (spicy bhakri).

Talking about her father, Kharatbai remembers her father was born in the village outside Mumbai. He told her that when he was a child, they used to kill ‘good looking’ animal with a poison called *bithya*. The next day after getting poisoned, the animal died. They cleaned it in such a way that the meat won’t be poisonous.

Kharatbai’s father worked at police department as a *hawaldar* and she recalled his buckle number as 6481. Being disappointed with his too young wife, he had an extramarital affair with a young woman and lived in the village for a month. Not knowing her husband’s whereabouts, Kharatbai’s mother came to the police station and got information that her husband had took a month-long leave without any notification. On the report of his wife, he was called to the city and got fired from his job. Kharatbai remembers her father blamed mother for this incident, and nobody at home supported her.

Her father got a job in a potato farm, but he kept looking for a better job. They went to their conjugal village but had no money on them. They sold the tin roof of their house for Rs 8 and walked till Koregaon station. With the money they went to Sangli by train, only to know that there the friend they were banking on to help them, was not in town. They then walked till Karad station. On the way, a groundnut farmer asked them to

help him in gathering groundnuts. Her mother did a fine job and got a handful of groundnuts for her work. At the station, her mother sold the groundnuts, and the money she got was used to buy beedi for her father and some food for her sister.

From Sangli they traveled to Mumbai ticketless. In Mumbai, they were received by a friend who later gave them clothes, shoes and some money. Her father started running an alcohol business and a few months later he was given a job in Voltas company. Unfortunately, the company was closed, putting her father back to the alcohol business.

(Certain parts of the narrative have been deleted on the request of the resource person.)

Memories Documented by
Christina Udiani

Recipes Contributed by Ashabai Kharat:

Rakti

Ingredients:

Oil, Goat blood, Onion, Red chili powder, Salt

Process:

Clean the blood well. Heat oil in a pan. Add onion and roast it till it turns brown. Add rakti until it is cooked. Add chilli and salt and fry.

Mutton Gravy

Ingredients:

Mutton – ½ kg, Onion – 2, Turmeric powder (1 teaspoon), Coconut 1 cup, Jeera (1 teaspoon), Garlic (7-8), Ginger (1/2 inch), Oil, Water, Salt

Process:

Clean the mutton. Put oil in pan. Fry onion till it turns brown. Add mutton and cook it becomes dry. Add hot water and cook further. Make a paste of coconut, garlic, ginger and jira. Roast it in oil and add garam masala (2 spoons). Add the cooked mutton to it. Add salt to taste and bring to boil.

Homemade Masala

Ingredients:

Lal Mirchi (1 kg), Dal chini, Lawang, Tejpatha, Dagdiphul, Chakripul, Shahgira, Kali Velchi, Dhania (1/4 kg), Garam masala (10 gms), Coconut (1/2 kg), Garlic (1/4 kg), Onion (1 kg), Oil, Salt (1/2 kg)

Process:

Cut onions into pieces. Grate the coconut. Roast the red chillies in oil. Also roast dhaniya and other garam masala. Mix them all. Add grated coconut. Grind it after adding salt.

Kandawani

Ingredients:

Onion (3-4 large ones), Salt, Oil (1 tablespoon), Red chili powder, Water

Process:

Fry medium sized pieces of onion in oil in a pan. If there is no oil, simply roast them in a pan Add salt, red chili powder. Add water, red chilli and salt. Bring to boil and ready to serve.

Name: Abida Bai Shinde

Age: Between 45-50 years

Caste: Matang

Work History: Has been a domestic help and scrap collector. Currently does *safai* labour in the Pune Municipal Corporation.

A big, dark crimson “bindi” adorned her forehead, her jet black oiled hair was neatly parted at the center and tied into a bun. Her bright face caught my attention the moment she entered the room, glancing at us confused yet smiling. Draped in a yellow checked sari she sat before a class of ten, in a coy yet lively manner, urging Salim (another respondent) who sat beside her, to have the tea he held in his hand for a long time and talked Even before we had interviewed her, there was a warmth about her that created an agile first impression

In her introduction it was known that Abidabai Shinde’s son is an active member of the Satyashodhak movement and even though she hasn’t joined the movement she has been its avid supporter. Nodding her head in agreement to what was told, she geared up to unravel her life briefly.....

Born in Akola, married in Solapur, Abida bai came to Pune during the 1972 drought and lived near Dandekar pool. She recalled how as a child she was much pampered; she would drink water and throw away the glass anywhere she felt like. She does not remember having had to work as such. After marriage she lived with her in-laws. Since she had no experience of doing house-hold chores, she had a difficult time at her in-laws house. Her mother-in-law would yell at her at times. Since she did not know how to make *bhakris* by hand and later when the chapattis that she made did not become fluffy she got beaten up .Sharing an incident about her lack of cooking skills she told us how one day her husband asked her to make an omelette. Let alone making an omelette Abidabai did not even know what

it was. In such instances her husband would also scold and yell at her. At her natal home *bhakris* were rolled and prepared and at her husbands' home they were made with hand. She could not make either. It was her mother who came to her rescue and taught her all kinds of household work and cooking in fifteen days. She recalled that she liked to eat everything that her *vahini* (elder sister-in-law) would prepare. Food would be a distant thought when their economic condition was bad and even worse at the time of famine.

Recalling difficult times she told us about her dire situation when she and her husband were thrown out of the house. On enquiring about why they were thrown out she told us:

One day when she had seen a rickshaw standing outside their house, all decorated with strings of colored light and commented on how bright it looked, her husband had hit her with an oil lamp because he had thought that his wife would leave him just the way his first wife had. Its here that we got to know, that her husband was also disabled and feared being abandoned by his wife. She was almost burnt and the tailoring shop that they had also caught fire. After this her elder brother-in-law said that Abida bai should be sent to her mothers' place. Eventually joined by her husband both of them came away to Pune and lived on the streets for about 6 months. She remembered how her husband would eat Pav and chutney but never offered her anything.

These conditions pushed her to work in people's house and there she was given the left over food to eat. One day somebody gave her two mats with which they had made a makeshift hut to live in. She went all the way to Parvati hill to fetch congress grass with which she would light the hearth. She did not have any utensils, *bhakris* that she made of *sattu* and wheat out of *barbara* had to be made by keeping a chair on the hearth. In those days economic conditions were not good enough that ration could be stored in the house, so they bought according

to whatever money they had on a daily basis; like out of half a kilo of wheat six *bhakris* could be made and they had to survive on it. In this way some time they bought spring onions and some time *besan*.

Her husband had taught her some tailoring work when they were at home. So for some time she had also done some tailoring work to earn money. She also worked as a *safai* labourer on the streets.

She would earn money like that and feed her sons, give them what they wanted and would celebrate most of the festivals for their sake.

Memories of food from her marriage are that of *lapshi* – it is a sweet dish like *sheera* made of coarsely ground corn and *puri* and *wangechi sabji*- preparation of brinjal. She said that rich households however have *puran polis*.

During her pregnancy she remembers having something made out of semi ground wheat, sugar, cardamom and water that was light in consistency. She recounted that usually during pregnancy women were fed with *badam*, coconut, *haliv ki laddu* and *dink ki laddu*. She said that they were in too much of poverty to be well fed. There was not even enough food to eat. She recalls that because she delivered in the monsoons her mother did not give her rice as that causes swelling. She said that she had had non-vegetarian food only five days after her delivery. However their financial condition was not good enough that she could eat meat often.

She does not remember having elaborate meals ever. She shared her memories of the times when her sons in their childhood would keep nagging for good food like *laddu*, *shankarpali* and *chakli*.

She likes *methi*, *gawar falli* and *baingan ki sabji* and *jowar bhakri* but not *wheat rotis* and does not like to go out and eat in hotels. Once she had *vada pav* out side and fell sick.

Circumstances are different now. The financial condition of their family is also stable. They eat a lot of mutton now since they don't like anything else. She has never cooked the head or feet of the cow. She agreed with Salim (another respondent) that the water is not very good in Pune and it takes a lot of time for food to get cooked. She smiled saying that now she makes very good bhakris. Her sons love the food cooked by her, and she knows it because whenever she cooks there is nothing left and not only that they feel there was not enough.

Her neighbourhood had a Chamar and a Mahar family. She remembered how people would scorn at her saying that “*yeh log to kuch bhi khate hain*” (these people eat anything and everything). Hence nobody shared food with them. She said that even though now people's attitudes have changed they don't exchange food with anybody. They just keep to themselves and even the daughter-in-laws don't interact much with neighbors.

When asked whether any men she knew cooked, she replied that though no one in her in-laws house cooked, her father used to cook mutton. He would grind all the *masalas* by hand. She said that even today she liked to grind the *masalas* by hand rather than using a mixer-grinder. Her daughters-in-law use a mixer and she does not like it.

Memories Documented by
Amrita Laha

Recipes contributed by Abidabai Shinde:

Mutton

Ingredients:

Beef; wajdi (intestine), Turmeric, Salt, Red chillies, Coriander, Ginger paste, Garlic paste, Onion, Garam masala (cinnamon, cardamom, cloves), Coconut

Process:

Clean the mutton and cut into big pieces. Marinate with salt, turmeric and red chilly powder. Fry onion, ginger paste, grated coconut and coriander. Add some chilly powder and salt to taste. Mix well. Add some more ginger and garlic paste and roast well. Add the mutton and mix well with the gravy. Cook well till mutton is soft. Serve hot.

Chanya

Ingredients:

Dry slices of mutton (*chanya*), Coriander, Onion, Coconut, Red chilly powder, Salt, Turmeric, Ginger and garlic paste.

Process:

Fry the dry pieces of *chanya* in oil. Roast the onion till brown. Add ginger garlic paste, coconut and coriander and stir fry. Add salt to taste, chilly powder and turmeric. Mix the fried *chanya* with the gravy and cook well.

Name: Lakshmi Sirse

Age: 50-51 years

Caste: Valmiki

Work History: Worked in the Military Hospital Mess in Khadki and as a *safai* labourer in the girls hostel. Currently does housework.

Lakshmi Sirse belongs to the Valmiki caste. She was born and brought up in Khadki, Pune. Her ancestors originally migrated from Rajasthan to Pune many years ago. Since both her grandparents were from Pune, she barely recalls any of her family members talking about her Rajasthani roots. Her father was a factory worker and her mother worked at the Military Hospital mess in Khadki.

Before the death of her father, the financial condition of her family was very stable. However, after his demise her mother had to work for long hours to make their ends meet. Her childhood memories of food are associated with her elder sister. As her mother used to work during the day, it was always her elder sister who cooked meals for her. Her favourite dish since her childhood has been *dal-chawal*. Either *moong* or *tur* were used to prepare *dal*. It always used to be spicy and garnished with garlic and chilli. Till this day she continues to cook *dal-chawal* in a similar manner every day.

She was married at the age of 12 to Vishnu Shirse. She only knew how to make chapattis then. The first complete meal that she cooked at her in-laws place comprised of *dal-chawal* and coconut chutney. Her husband, being a passionate cook, furnished her culinary skills by teaching her various vegetarian and non-vegetarian recipes and dishes. Despite being a vegetarian, she enjoys cooking mutton (goat meat), pork and beef for her family and friends. Although taught by her husband, over the years she has improvised upon the recipes by adding crushed

cashews, yogurt and fried potatoes in the mutton gravy. Her husband also taught her how to prepare mutton *dalcha*. She cooks the *dalcha* by boiling *toor dal*, mutton and rice together. She then fries it with onions and *garam masala* (garlic, ginger, *tej patta*, green chillies). While preparing pork or mutton gravy she always uses the ham slices and never buys leg pieces as they do not have much flesh on it.

As a child she had once tried tasting mutton, but it almost made her vomit. Whereas her husband eats mutton for both lunch and dinner, she prepares either *dal chawal* or *bhaji* for herself. *Aloo mutter* is her favourite *bhaji* and she enjoys cooking it the most.

Often she uses the previous day's *dal chawal* or *bhaji* by re-heating them. Often she washes the stale rice and stir-fries them for her lunch. However, she is always the first one to finish the stale food, her husband rarely eats it. When she is feeling unwell, she doesn't like to spend time in the kitchen. Instead she prefers eating street food like *bhel* and *panipuri*. During holidays as well, she takes a break from her kitchen work. Her husband would make Maggie when there is no food in the house. However, she is not particularly fond of Maggie herself. While on fast, she makes *sabudana khichdi*. She prepares the *khichdi* by adding *jeera*, green chillies, fried potatoes and peanuts.

She enjoys cooking and treating her guests a lot. Never has she experienced any sort of caste discrimination in terms of food exchange. Her neighbours in Pune are from several different castes, but never have they shown any kind of hesitance. They love her mutton preparations, especially mutton *kurma*. She cooks this mutton dish by stir frying the meat in gravy made of curd, garlic, mint, ginger and chillies.

She prepares a variety of chutneys and rice *papads* along with her meals. Some of the chutneys that she prepares most frequently are tomato, coconut and *Bombil* (type of fish). Green chillis, garlic and *jeera* are the main ingredients that she uses to

prepare the base for all the chutneys. *Bombil* chutney is prepared by boiling the fish first and then frying it with the base.

For making rice *papads*, she soaks the rice first, grinds it and then mixes it with salt, *jeera*, chilli powder and *papad khar*. During festivals like Diwali and Bagal she treats her guests by making sweets like *karanji*, *kapli* or *shankarpali*.

Both she and her husband are passionate cooks. Her husband is also invited to cook at various social gatherings and parties. His meat dishes are some of the most popular ones. Both of them have never encountered any sort of caste discrimination in their life. Neither have they or their grand-parents ever tasted the meat of a dead carcass. Their food is enjoyed and appreciated by people across the boundaries of caste and class.

Memories Documented by
Kena Wani

Recipes contributed by Lakshmi Sirse:

Waran Bhaat (Dal-Chawal)

Ingredients:

tur or moong dal, chillies, garlic, coconut, gira and rai.

Process:

Grind coconut, garlic and chillies together to make the masala. Cook tur/moong dal. Add gira and rai to the masala and roast it. Add the dal alongwith water and salt as per requirement and bring to boil.

Rice: Fried rice

Ingredients: Onions, Rice, Gira and Rai

Process:

Roast the onion pieces. Add the rice and cook. Add as much water and salt as required. Cook till 2-4 whistles of the pressure cooker.

Alu Mutter (Potato-Peas curry)

Ingredients: potatoes, peas, coconut, garlic, chillies, gira and rai.

Process:

Cook the potatoes and peas. Grind coconut, garlic and chillies together to make the masala. Add oil to a pan and roast the gira and rai in it. Roast the masala in it. Add the cooked and mashed potatoes and peas alongwith readymade masala. Add water and salt as per requirement and bring to boil.

Name: Bhamabai Thosar¹⁹

Age: Between 45-47 years

Caste: Neo-Buddhist

Work History: Has done agricultural labour, masonry work and domestic work. Now is active in the Buddhist Mahila Mandal.

Bhamabai Thosar impressed me with her simple looks. Although initially she was quiet, she gradually opened up in front of the class. Through out the interview, I felt the passion with which she narrated the experiences of her life.

She hails originally from the Potre village of Solapur district in Maharashtra. After her marriage at the age of eight, she shifted to Pune. At the time of her marriage, her husband was fourteen years old. Her first experience of change after marriage at the site of food was eating *roti* made of *barbara* for the first time in her life.

Although she was enrolled in primary school, she confesses that she did not learn much because being a stubborn child, she didn't attend school. During her chores of filling water at the river, she recalls the acts of mischief done. She said that after the upper caste women had filled drinking water, she and her friends would pull the loose end of their saris. The notion of pollution caused by lower castes forced the upper caste women to throw the water and fill it again. I read this small act of mischief as their way of resisting the exploitative practices of purity and pollution.

In comparison to other Dalits, her natal family was economically comfortable. She remembers that the everyday meal in her family included fish. She has memories of upper caste Maratha men coming to her house on the sly to have beef meat. However she feels that the situation has changed in the present times when Marathas openly ate meat.

During the period of famine, she had to substitute the family income of her in-laws. Although she never ate stale food before, poverty and struggle for survival after marriage forced her to eat stale food. In order to sustain the family, she worked as assistant to a mason, at a wage of Rs 1.50/day.

She does not remember hunger in her in-laws house, but food never consisted more than bhakri and chutney. Here she painfully recalled the continuous suspicion and surveillance of her mother-in-law. If at all any vegetable and meat was cooked in the house, it was only for the men. Curries were made out of vegetables brought while working in the agricultural field. Sometimes curries made of onion leaves were also made. She recalled buying *khari* and banana with the extra money she made by working during lunch time (eg: cleaning sands.) She never got rest as she had to do household work on Sundays.

Her life was too engaged in struggling for sustaining her family, to think of cooking special dishes. The family meal sometimes consisted of *roti* made of leftover grains, dried fish and chutney made of salt and red chilly. The weekly provision of her family included sugar, tea and *jowar*. Only on Sundays, rice was cooked along with mutton. Since oil was mostly absent, she used *jowar* flour to make thick gravy.

So for her, festivals had no special meaning. However, if she had money in hand, she would make *karanji* and *besan ka laddu* for her children. Except for this, she doesn't remember cooking special dishes during festivals. Even to this day, her past haunts her. Since she suffered so much, she fails to derive happiness and satisfaction from wealth. As she has not been able to forget her experience of poverty, she does not like wasting food. She is the only person to eat the leftover food in the household.

On being asked about why she does not make special food during festivals, now that she can afford it, she boldly stated that if a person can afford it, she should have good food on all days

of the month, and not only on festive days. Moreover, she informed us that being a neo-Buddhist, she goes to Buddha Vandana on every Monday and Thursday. The collective reading of Buddha and his Dhamma and discussions on the true meaning and nature of the Hindu festivals has made her reflect on the Hindu festivals and she doesn't celebrate them.

She has no special memories of food regarding pregnancy and childbirth even though she mothered two daughters and a son. Her first child, Sangita was born the day after her brother's marriage. So after childbirth, she remembers eating leftovers of the marriage feast. She confesses that after the birth of her second daughter, she did not see her baby for three days because she wanted a son. Even after the birth of her son, she was left alone in the government hospital for twelve days because her alcoholic husband was celebrating the birth of son. Needless to add, he did not even look after his two daughters. As she recalls this painful past, we could read the pain written on her face. Our study gave us a glimpse of painful realities of the Dalit women's life.

She is a self-taught cook, who learnt cooking after her marriage. A faint smile appeared on her face when she declared that her husband could cook excellent mutton and *bhakri*. She recollected the help of her husband in grinding *masalas* and washing clothes. When she was asked about the change in cooking practices, she commented that unlike before, she could now use ingredients like oil, garlic, coriander and ground nut. She also added that there have been changes in food practices after conversion to Buddhism. She has does not eat dead cattle meat, pork and beef.

She hinted that in some cases, caste became an issue in sharing food with neighbors and friends. She recalls one incident when one of her friends stopped coming to her house and restricted her daughter Sangita from playing and eating with her daughter, when she saw Ambedkar's photo in the house and

‘discovered’ their identity. But she said that her other friends had no ‘problem’ with her Dalit identity. She feels that in the present period, exchange of food with the upper caste was normal. She believes that they socialize more ‘freely’ with Dalit women. Personally, she does not accept the hierarchy created by the caste system. So she allowed her daughter to have inter-caste marriage.

She then goes on to inform us that her husband used to play in the police band. But due to his drinking habits, he often lost his salary. So she had to work casually as domestic help and as mentioned before, as assistant of mason. When she worked outside, she carried stale *roti* of previous night or *bhakri* and chutney. She used to cook chapatti and *sukhat* (made of dry fish) for her husband and father-in-law respectively. In this context, she declared that even now, when times have changed, she can not cook more than one vegetable curry.

Her neglect of her own desires becomes very apparent when she says that she likes no special food other than tea. It is also indicative of the fact that previously, in her struggle to sustain her family, she had no time to desire food. She opined that eating out is a wastage of money. Instead, the money spent could have been saved for better use. This in itself shows how her past experience of poverty has taught her to value money.

Memories Documented by
Debasmita Deb

Recipes Contributed by Bhamabai Thosar:

Bhamabai Thosar's special recipes can teach us how to make tasty dishes out of limited means.

Sukaat

Ingredients:

Dry fish and red chilly powder.

Process:

Fry the fish in the pan, without any oil. Add red chilly powder for taste.

Mutton Liver (Kaleja)

Ingredients:

Mutton, flour made of jowar, oil, salt and red chilly powder.

Process:

Clean the mutton. Mix the flour made of jowar with the other masalas and fry it in oil. Add the meat and fry it very well.

Besan Pitacha Wada

Ingredients:

Besan flour, oil, garlic, groundnut.

Process:

Knead the besan flour adding turmeric and salt. Roll it in chapati form and cut it into 4 pieces. Add garlic to a pan with masala. Add water to the pan and mix groundnut powder. Bring to boil. Add the rolled out pieces of besan made earlier and cook.

Name: Pinjari Sheikh Salim Sheikh Raza

Age: 32

Caste: Pinjari

Work History: Done grass cutting, mason work, has been a supervisor in civil construction and computer related work as a student. Currently is a teacher of history in a college in Pune.

Salim was born in Malegaon in 1977 to a family that wasn't very well off, so much so that he has always had to work during holidays to support his own education. Times were difficult when Salim was born. They were six siblings (five brothers and a sister) and his parents, all of whom had to survive on bare minimums especially in the aftermath of the famine and the floods in Malegaon. Malegaon is a well irrigated area with rich black soil and yet happened to be struck both by the famine and the flood. Three of his brothers were born around this time and Salim claimed how most families in the area were struck with a problem of feeding themselves. This was especially so since the floods had also destroyed the crops. Yet times were so desperate that they even ate the *bajra* that had become wet owing to the floods and leading it to develop a bitter taste. This *bajra* was mixed with vegetables found growing on cactuses to make a vegetable. Further Salim also mentions eating *ghugri*, which is animal fodder, which was bought from the local ration shop. This *ghugri* was then boiled in water; salt was added and then consumed. *Kudith* was another food item consumed during times of crises. *Kudith* is made by making dough of it, adding chutney to it and boiling it in water, red chillies and salt is then added to it. This mixture is then dried and eaten. Another version of the same dish involves, flattening the dried dough, cutting into little pieces, flattening these into little cakes and then steaming it. This dish was known as *shengole*. *Kudith* was also seen as

crucial part of food during times when food supplies ran low because it was said to have very high iron content.

His mother who was married at age nine, worked extremely hard to keep the family together. In order to add to the income of the family she began working to collect grass (also known as *rateeb*). Salim recollected how he and his siblings helped with this labour so that while one lot of grass had been cut and brought, someone else would go in to get the next. This however was surplus labour the family undertook. Thus much of this labour, in addition to the household labour, was performed by his mother early in the morning, the rest of the day being spent on working in the fields. This meant that his mother cooked food early in the morning before five, with everyone eating only breakfast and dinner. Skipping lunch was not an option but a necessity. Many a times he and his siblings remained hungry until their mother returned home from work and cooked a meal. It was because of the low income levels of the family then that provisions for food were usually bought on a daily basis. Salim mentions how one's journey back from work was also the journey of converting the meagre raw resources they bought, to be converted into a processed form, so that grains bought on one's way back from work were also given to be pressed and grounded so that one returned home with the flour ready. Friday was the day of the weekly bazaar in the area and this was the time when the family also stocked up on provisions that would last through the week, such as onions and potatoes.

But food wasn't easy to come by and with a shy smile Salim recollects how there were also times when the food they ate came from others. Many a times they received leftover food from other households. Of these, the stale *rotis* were taken, broken into little pieces and boiled in water, following which onions and garlic were added to it and a completely different dish all together, similar to *Upma*, was created from it. Ironically Salim mentions this food which was then eaten owing to a lack

of any ability to afford anything better, is consumed today simply because it tastes so great.

Food wasn't just a matter of everyday consumption for people in Khandesh. Salim revealed how food was taken very seriously so that it was a tradition to feed any guest to the house, sweet dishes and fried food, chief amongst which was *Puranpoli*, no matter how destitute one maybe. Further he claims normative ideals on the perfect wife in Khandesh is based on whether or not she can cook make good *Puranpolis*. This is simply because of the extreme time consuming and hard labour that is involved in its making, and therefore the belief that if one can make good *Puranpolis* they have mastered the art of cooking.

Puranpoli (recipe given below) was also a dish that was prepared as part of the festivities surrounding Holi by Maharashtrian Hindu households. Although Malegaon was a Muslim dominated area, Salim mentions how all festivals were celebrated and food shared on these occasions. What was seen as especially significant about celebrating these festivals was that food that one otherwise might not consume owing to issues of affordability were now made and consumed. This also included the cooking of goat meat during the period of Ramzan.

An integral part of the celebration of these festivals was the village fairs that were organised. Salim mentions how the Chandanpuri Temple area was especially famous for such fairs and claimed that locals from all over flocked there for different reasons but the food remained the highlight, chief amongst this being the mutton and bajra roti that was served there. The Metha pakoda²⁰ served here was also a highlight.

Memory around food and its practices for Salim aren't restricted to recent history only. Further this memory comes handy in dispensing with stereotypes associated with 'Muslim' cooking. The most common assumption associated with any Muslim household's food practices are that they make mutton biryani. Salim claimed that the Biryani wasn't native to

Malegaon's food practices. It is an acquired dish and one whose history is very interesting to note. It was in the aftermath of the 1857 revolts that a group of weavers moved from Azamgarh(located in what is now Uttar Pradesh). The governor of Malegaon at this time a certain Naroshankar, allowed them into the area and asked for people from the Yuwela area to come in and provide business to this caste of weavers²¹. Most of the people who had thus come to now reside in the Malegaon area came in without their families. Cooking in such a situation tended to remain basic and simplistic. It is in light of this situation then that the concept of *biryani* emerged as a dish which was simple to make it since all it required would be a cooking of rice, meat and vegetables and that too all at one time. It is also therefore that Salim claims the *biryani* made in Malegaon also has a lot of vegetables as part of it and this concept of the *biryani* comes essentially from Azamgarh. The meat usually consumed in the area, Salim points out is goat meat or chicken. Sheep meat is not consumed since it tends to generate a lot of body heat and with a hot climate in Malegaon, becomes especially difficult to consume.

Meat is usually bought, not taken from dead cattle because this is associated with a low caste status. Salim can thus recall how a Mahar man in his village was usually entrusted with carrying away and disposing the carcass of dead animals, which he did by carrying it over his head to a shop where he would sell the hide and bones. This man he vividly remembers as stinking immensely owing to the smell of the carcass. Pointing out that the business of selling the hide, eat and bones of these animals yields a lot, today Salim claims his son does the same job, running through the village with the dead animal on its head. Nothing much has changed, Salim wistfully points out.

It is because of this association with meat that Mahars were a caste also considered as possessing great culinary skills in cooking meat and thus Mahar women are seen as making

especially delicious mutton dishes. Significantly, Salim points out that while these women who cook meat have adapted parts of the recipe traditionally associated with the cooking of meat in Muslim households, the process has not operated in the other direction, possibly due to the inferior caste status that could get attached to them and also because Mahar cooking is perhaps seen as inferior owing to a claim of its low hygiene standards.

Food was and is, thus intrinsically linked to social practices in an area, a fact Salim recognises well when he claims that he uses his own cooking skills as a way of socialising and extending networks with people. And here he is able to sharply recognise that his cooking, associated with as he says a certain expertise in what he does,²² gives him a certain social status of which he is proud. He treats his cooking and the skills associated with it then as an art so that even a process of making tea can take experimental turns, with the addition of either different spices to it or making exotic versions of it such as cinnamon tea or lemon tea. This process of cooking then which saw its humble beginning on a day when his mother was away and gave him five rupees with which he bought ingredients for and made his first omelette, has today turned into a deep passion that for him, although remains grounded in a past where there was a struggle for the most basic of necessities, today also gives him a sense of extreme pride and a way to break out of any constraints that the operation of caste and patriarchy may have imposed on him.

Memories Documented by
Gayatri Nair

Recipes Contributed by Salim Sheikh:

Biryani

Ingredients: Onions, potato, carrots, peas, turnips, garlic, ginger, garam masala made of cinnamon, cloves, cardamom and jeera and shahajeera (types of fennel), salt, turmeric powder and laungi mirch i.e. red chillies of a particular variety, oil, can use either groundnut or sunflower oil (the latter being more expensive). For meat can use mutton or beef.

Tip: in order for the Biryani to cook well and the meat to acquire all the flavours it is preferable to cook in a vessel with a narrow bottom and large upper part.

Process:

Take a piece of garlic, a two inch piece of ginger and two large onions, crush and make a paste of the same. In a cooking vessel add this paste to oil and cook. When the paste turns brown in colour, take the laungi mirch and making vertical incisions in it add it to the paste and oil in the vessel. At the same time as this boil the meat in water and let it cook. In the vessel where the paste is cooking, add garam masala (approximately ten grams of it), salt and turmeric powder to the paste and cook till the paste turns a darker shade of brown. When the paste acquires the desired colour, add the boiled pieces of meat to it. Let the meat mix with the paste and absorb the oil. Once this is done, add to this, the water in which the meat was boiled, along with the chopped vegetables (potato, carrots, peas and turnips) and let this cook. The *biryani* is now ready to be served.

Puranpoli

Ingredients:

Channa Dal (a type of pulse), jaggery, wheat flour and water.

Process:

Mash the *Channa dal* along with the brown jaggery to get

thick dough of it. Alongside, prepare a dough of the wheat flour and roll this dough into round rotis. On a flat vessel, place a piece of cotton cloth and flatten one roti on it, place a bit of the *channa dal* and jaggery mixture on this roti, all the while rolling it out in order to cover the roti. Seal the ends of this thick roti now with water. Take an earthen pot and overturn this on a flame. Place these thick rotis on this pot and roast. When they turn a pale brown in colour they are cooked.

Name: Shobha Tak

Age: 45-50 years

Caste: Valmiki

Work History: Currently employed as a *safai* labourer in Pune University.

Shobha Tak works in the University of Pune and hails from Uttar Pradesh. She and her youngest daughter live on campus now. Her father had a government job. They are seven sisters, she is the sixth and they have two brothers. Circumstances were difficult since there were only two earning members in the house. The food they ate was *dal, sabzi*, mutton. They ate outside food on occasions and hence not much food was cooked at home. They mainly ate *jowar roti*, not wheat. They frequented her maternal grandmother's house where her mother made sweet- rice *kheer*.

They used to celebrate Maharashtrian festivals and did not really follow the culture of Uttar Pradesh. In the month of August, they celebrated Baagad festival when *kheer* and *puri* was eaten. Special *masala* was made at home.

She mentions how in her childhood every time anything special came, they felt that this must have been what the 'big people' ate. Many times their mother got *shrikhand* or some vegetable which they enjoyed eating but never knew what it was. She notes how her brother used to be given more food always. The sweets, many a times *laddoo*, was only brought for him. Mutton was also brought only for him and she and her sisters ate *dal* and rice. Moreover, there were some things which she only ate after coming to Pune, like *urad dal, chakali*.

She didn't cook in her natal home. After her marriage she came to Pune and has been here since 30 years. Her age at marriage was 16-17 and her husband was also around the same age. They both were not really educated. Her husband worked here. Her family in Pune is relatively smaller and thus, the

economic situation is better. She used to eat non- veg, pig meat was traditionally eaten. She has stopped eating pig meat for the past 23 years and claims that there was no caste factor. The entire family left it and no one said anything. The children also did not ask for it. She made no mention of *rakhti* here. Pregnant women were given *chwani*, *khichdi*, *moong dal* and *chawal*. Dry fruits like almonds and *Sandha* were also given.

They worship and perform puja for which pig meat is made but she does not offer it to the Gods. It must be noted, that only the men were allowed to slaughter the pig. She claims that no one complains about the food she cooks since she was the only one who was cooking. In rural areas everyone asked how much a girl knows how to cook but not here. She mentions differences in the way food was cooked in her natal and the conjugal home. When she went to her conjugal home, not Pune but Delhi, there was nothing special that they cooked or she cooked. They made wheat *rotis* which she did not know how to. They did not know *pooranpoli*. They knew about rice *kheer*, *puri*, *gulgule* which was made on all occasions. Plain *sewayee* was also made. Ready made *masala* was used in her conjugal home.

Sharing of food with other households was appreciated largely. But she expresses herself saying that there were some houses with whom she has not kept any connection and that there are some things she does not accept from them and some things they do not accept. She mentions one house of Konkanis from where if something comes, they do not eat it. She argued that it is only because of the cleanliness factor that she refuses to eat.

She faced caste discriminations not in Pune, but in rural areas and in Delhi. She narrated an experience of a wedding she attended where water was asked for but not taken from them.

Her favourite food is *shakkarpare* and *methi sabzi*, especially on fast days. She learnt how to make *chole*, *matar alu* on her

own. She did not know how to make *chakali* and learnt it later. She explained that “ratt te raho ek akshar, toh aa hi jata hai”. (If you keep learning a single word, you will surely learn it in some time).

She worships their *kul devata*, Chaturshringi, who was called Masani Mata by her. Goat was offered to the Gods collectively. On the day of Baagad, sweets are offered and not pig.

Memories Documented by
Aashima Subberwal

Recipes Contributed by Shobha Tak:

Rice kheer

Ingredients:

milk, sugar and rice.

Process:

Boil the ingredients to cook

Home made masala

Ingredients:

Dry coconut, garam masala, dal cheeni and tej patta.

Process:

Grind the spices. (If ground on stone, they give better taste) Fry in oil.

Pig meat

Ingredients:

small pieces of pig meat, salt, home-made masala, onion, garlic, dry coconut, garam masala, red chillies, water.

Process:

The entire pig is considered tasty and the ribs are most delicious. Small pieces of pig meat are to be boiled with the ingredients. Fry and put water. After which you cook for 10- 15 mins.

Chuani

Ingredients:

jaggery, one spoon ghee, ajwain and water

Process:

After giving birth, the mother is given chwani which was made of jaggery, one spoon of ghee, ajwain and water. It is thin and has to be eaten with a spoon.

Chana dal

Ingredients:

dal, plain masala, 1-2 onions, garlic.

Process:

Soak the dal. Add the ingredients and fry.

Methi vegetable

Ingredients:

methi, chillies, onion, dal, oil

Process:

Made on days of fasting. The methi leaves were broken, and chillies, onion, dal and oil was added. It is a dry vegetable.

Name: Vishnu Sirse

Age: 56 years

Caste: Valmiki

Work History: *Safai* labourer in Pune University for the past 30 years

The memories of migration, that he had not even seen, lived on, as he narrated food habits. Vishnu Sirse claims he has lived in Pune for more than hundred and fifty years. That is not how old he is, yet his recollection of himself, even a perfunctory introduction begins with how long ago his family migrated here. Beginning where he began, he hails from the Alwar district of Rajasthan. His great-grandfather migrated to Pune (perhaps in search of better opportunities), and worked for the governor. Today what is known as the Main Building of Pune University, used to be the governor's bungalow where his great-grandfather worked, and the great grandson works as a sweeper in the Pune University, carrying on the legacy. In a way everything has changed, in another, nothing much really has.

Born in 1953, Sirse recalls, his school being very close to his house. He never had to carry tiffin to school; he just came home for lunch. He didn't have to live the experience of being told that some children cannot eat from his tiffin/lunch box, or that he may not even touch their lunch boxes. He doesn't remember being treated any differently at school than the other children. Discrimination for him is what happened to his grandfather, as he was made to sit at the far end of class, from where he could barely see the board. His grandfather dropped out early from school, but the learning process continued. He could speak, read and write Gurumukhi, Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi. This is exceptional for even those with access to higher education, and it was phenomenal for a man who dropped out of school because of the discrimination. To his grandson, this remains one of the biggest unsolved mysteries of life.

Sirse studied till the fifth standard, and remembers eating a simple meal of *subji roti* everyday during his school days. Meat was unaffordable, even amongst vegetables; the family could only afford cauliflower and potatoes. His love for meat perhaps is compensating for days of not being able to eat any. The epicurean bliss that he finds in any and all type of meat, comes from days of being unable to afford it. He fondly recalls the first time he cooked was when he was in the fourth standard. He was sitting idle at home and his mother was at the hearth, so she asked him to lend a hand with the housework by roasting/baking the *bhakris* (bread made of *jowar/bajri*). This was the first step to a life long romance with food and cooking.

He might have started with lending a helping hand, but is a completely self taught cook. He doesn't measure his ingredients and goes by the gut feeling. A trademark of most expert cooks, who don't believe in fixing recipes to ingredients, he improvises, experiments and innovates. He watches cookery shows on the television and loves to try out different recipes.

The numerous wars (1961, 62, 65) and drought (1972) affected the Sirse family adversely. They had to eat *milo* (red jowar) that would take a lot of effort to be kneaded into a dough. Rolling this dough out into *bhakris* was a very difficult task and he remembers how sometimes they just had to simply cut the dough into pieces and eat. On their lucky day they could hope to have the hard *milo bhakri* with a vegetable or *dal*. He lived and survived starvation during these years. It seemed like the starvation would never end as the wars seemed to go on and follow each other in quick succession.

He got married soon after the drought to his soft spoken wife, who was barely twelve years old, in 1973. His wedding feast was therefore very simple, due to poverty and existing conditions. It was the simple *dalcha bhaath* and *sheera* that was served to the guests. His wife is a complete vegetarian, since childhood. Ironically he loves to feast on meat, and if

is pressed for time prefers eating eggs. The only vegetable that he favours is *methi* (fenugreek leaves). His experimental nature has led him to concoct a strange combination of vegetables and meat in the form of *methi kheema* (mince). He celebrates festivals of Maharashtra, sees himself as belonging here and yet the food of Rajasthan is just as special for him. Be it *dalcha bhaath*, *churma* or *dal bati*, a little bit of Rajasthan lives on in his home.

In keeping with this he celebrates Holi, Diwali as much as he celebrates the Veer Gogadev Janmotsav. On his pilgrimage for this Janmotsav, he recalls, feasting on simple yet rich/ghee (clarified butter) laden *churma* and *dal bati*. These delicacies not only give one energy but are easy to make and good for the health. Not all pilgrimages were pleasant experiences. When he went to Pushkar, Ajmer, with an intention to gauge his caste, he was asked where was he from. He was witty enough to tell them that he is from Pune and shares ancestry with the Shivaji clan. On hearing this they rolled out a carpet/mat for him to sit on, offered him tea and chatted with him with great enthusiasm. If he was to speak the truth, they would have thrown him out.

He doesn't discuss caste per se. He talks of it in terms of numerous subtle (therefore insidious practices). "People say that our caste people eat a lot of meat, specifically pig meat, but I have seen how the other castes eat a lot more pig meat than we do. In my family of twenty people, thirteen are completely vegetarian, they don't even eat egg. The so called vegetarian families actually eat egg, saying it doesn't count as non-vegetarian." His friends from the Gosavi caste ask him to cook pig meat for them. He manages to avoid them though. Because calling them over means having to clean after them, as his vegetarian wife hates to clean up vessels in which meat was cooked and served. Though she does it out of love for her husband sometimes, he sheepishly admits.

He might hate cleaning up after a feast, but he loves to cook for one. He basks in praise people shower on him after he cooks for them. He recently cooked seventy five kilos of pork for a feast at Dhobi Ghaat for someone from his community. This feast was attended by a diverse bunch of people, including Maratha, Konkani and Christians. “They loved the meat preparation so much that I didn’t even get a piece of meat from the curry I had prepared. I had to make do with some *puris* and tea at 4 pm.”

He loves to try out variations not only while cooking meat, but even while frying fish. He loves his fish fried and tries to coat marinated fish in a mixture of rava and poppy seeds, crushed butter (the one from bakery), a clear influence of a city which boasts of numerous Irani cafes. While he loves all types of meat equally, he has his favourites in sea food. He loves prawns over other varieties of fish. His love for meat has induced the wrath, of his mother, who is annoyed at how her son eats any and every meat available under the sun. “Main mutton ke saath saath gaali bhi khaata hoon. Par mutton jaroor khata hoon,” he adds cleverly. (He tolerates the abuses, eats them up literally as an accompaniment to his meat preparations)

His infectious smile and indomitable spirit are the first things you will notice about him. He often answers questions asked to his wife, simply because he cannot stop chatting. He enjoys *bhajjis with paav* (bread), cannot live without *dal bati* but loves ham the best. He unites a lot more cuisines than any one else I have met so far. He is the personification of the term *joie de vivre* and takes pleasure in experimenting with food.

Memories Documented by
Supriya Bandekar

Recipes contributed by Vishnu Sirse:

Maande

Ingredients:

Wheat Flour - 2 cups, Curd - 2 tsp, Salt to taste, Water – ½ cup

Process:

Take wheat flour and add salt, curd, water. Knead it into dough. Divide the dough into small balls. Roll out these small balls into thin rotis. Roast them one at a time on a pan.

Earlier these Maandes were roasted on the hearth. Now one roasts it on gas. His variation is a salty one; most others versions of maande make it like sweet bread.

Dalcha Bhaat – the simple wedding feast

Ingredients:

Toor Dal - 2 cups, Rice – 2 cups, Onions – 2, Ginger – 3 inch piece, Garlic - 4 to 5 cloves, Green chillies - 4, Garam Masala (whole) – Bayleaf - 1, Cloves - 5, Shah Jeera (a type of fennel seeds) – 1tsp, Salt, Oil - 4 tbsp

Process:

For the Dalcha

Boil Toor Dal. Sauté onions in a pan. Grind ginger, garlic and green chillies together. Add this paste to the fried onions and cook it together. Add the boiled dal to this mixture and let it cook.

For the Bhaath

Boil Rice. Heat some oil in a pan. Add the Garam Masala to it and lightly fry. Add the cooked rice to this mixture. Mix it well and let it cook together.

Serve piping hot. For meat lovers, while making dalcha, meat can be boiled with the dal and the process carried on as the same.

Churma

Ingredients:

Bajri Bhakri - 3, Clarified Butter – 5 tbsp, Jaggery – 1 cup

Process:

Crush Bajri Bhakri finely. Add some crushed jaggery and clarified butter. Knead this mixture well. Roll into balls.

This dish can be prepared with stale bhakris too. It stores well and is often carried along on journeys.

Dal Bati

Ingredients:

Masur Dal - ½ cup, Toor Dal - ½ cup, Moong Dal - ½ cup, Wheat Flour - 1 cup, Water - 3 ½ cups (3 cups for dal and ½ for the dough.), Salt, Clarified Butter – 1 cup (to fry and garnish)

Process:

Boil all the dals together. Knead the wheat flour into dough. Divide into small portions and make balls. Fry these dough balls in clarified butter. When fried, add these balls into the boiled dals.

Methi Kheema

Ingredients:

Red Meat (Beef / Pork/ Mutton) – 1 kg, Green Chillies – 4 to 5, Garlic – 5, Ginger – 2 inch, Mint leaves – a handful (10 sprigs), Methi ki Sabji (Fenugreek leaves) – 1 cup, Oil, Salt

Process:

Mince the meat of choice. Boil the mince. Grind green chillies, garlic, ginger and mint leaves together. Heat oil in a pan. Add the paste and fry. Add the boiled mince and mix well. When the mince begins to cook, add chopped methi. Bring the entire mixture to a boil.

Mutton Curry

Ingredients:

Mutton - 1 kg, Green Chillies – 6, Garlic – 10, Ginger – 3 inch pieces, Mint leaves – 10 sprigs, Onions - 3, Watermelon Seeds – 1 cup, Oil - 4 tbsp, Salt to taste

Process:

Chop the mutton into medium sized pieces. Heat oil in a pan, add the pieces and fry. Add some water and cover and cook. Heat oil in another pan, add onions and fry. Grind green chillies, garlic, ginger and mint leaves together. Add this paste to fried onions. Cook. Add the meat and bring it to a boil. To thicken this gravy, add ground watermelon seeds. You can add the more conventional tomatoes, potatoes or curd to thicken the gravy. However watermelon seeds give it a very distinct flavour.

Sakrana

Ingredients:

Rice – 2 cups, Brown Sugar – 1 cup, Clarified Butter – ½ cup

Process:

Boil Rice. Coarsely grind brown sugar. Mix boiled rice, brown sugar and clarified butter.

Biryani (He saw on TV show Khavaiyya and tried out)

Ingredients:

Rice – 3 cups, Meat - 1 kg, Garam Masala (whole) – Bayleaf - 1, Cloves - 5, Shah Jeera (a type of fennel seeds) – 1tsp, Salt to taste, Oil - 3 tbsp.

Process:

Chop meat into medium sized pieces. Heat oil in a pan. Add meat and fry. Add rice and water. Tie all the garam masala in a cloth, Drop this bundle into the meat and rice. Cover and cook.

This biryani captures all the flavour of the masala very subtly.

Name: Dhondabai Kamble

Age: Between 50-55 years

Caste: Matang

Work History: Has done agricultural labour, masonry work, scrap collection. Currently is engaged in housework.

Draped in a bright yellow saree with a big red *kumkum* on her forehead, along with a tattoo on her right hand she entered in the room with a big smile on her face, which stayed throughout the interview.

Dhondabai belongs to the Matang caste and is from Beed district. She got married at the age of twelve. She worked in the Beed dist. as a daily wage labourer on the land of the Marathas land and in return she used to get grains. If she plucked ten baskets of custard apple, she used to get one basket and sometimes left over food in return but never any money. Her working time was from 10am to 7pm without any holidays.

Due to the famine and drought in 1972, she moved to Pune with her husband and started living in Panmala near Dandekar Pool. After migrating to Pune, she and her husband both started working as ragpickers. They would work on alternative days due to their children. The daily food they used to eat was *dal*, *jowar bhakri*, and very rarely chapatti along with *bhajis* like *moong bhaji*, which was made sometimes. Vegetables like *ghol* and *tarautha* was made everyday as these vegetables do not need any particular place to grow and the upper caste people did not eat this. They managed day-to-day meals since both of them were daily wage earners.

She remembered how in her childhood, when they asked food from the Maratha family they used to get stale food. If by mistake they touched the utensils of the Maratha family either the utensils were thrown away or burnt in the *chula* (hearth).

She had a huge family including her parents, six sisters; she is the seventh one along with two brothers. At present in Pune she lives with her husband, two sons, two daughter- in-laws, four grandchildren and three daughters. At present, they have their own shop. She worked till recently her son got a job. One of her sons works in the mobile repair shop and the other son works in battery making factory. Her sons are active in Satya Shodhak Movement.

When she first came to Panmala, the neo-Buddhists would not eat from their hands and on the other hand even she and her family would not eat from the Valmikis as they are lower than them. But now the time has changed and her son had asked her to change all this. At first she did not agree but then she made the effort. She recalls how she used to prohibit her son from eating from anybody's tiffin at school.

They now have their own house and get proper water supply. The place they started staying in initially when they came to Pune now turned out to be their own land due to the long duration of the stay. When they first came to Pune, wheat was Rs 9 kilo, so they used to eat *milo* which was 60pc kilo.

The biggest festival they used to celebrate was Diwali and Annabhausathe Jayanti. Matang community looks at Annabhausathe Jayanti as a major event. On his birth ceremony his idol is taken out on a rally in the community. With his idol they used to keep Ambedkar's idol. On this day they used to make *puranpolis* and some special food. On Diwali they made *laddoo*, *shira*, *karanji*, and *chakli*. They used make these if it were available in the house or else they used to beg. Mostly during festivals they used to beg and not cook.

Another festival was of *devis* of Tuljapur and Yedsi. During the Chaitrapurni Utsav there is no sacrifice of animals. Food like curd, rice, *puranpoli*, and *dhapatta* are given to God.

In many communities whatever food is cooked in temple premises and presented to God; devotees are not allowed to

take it home. But in their community they can take home the food. She observes fast on Tuesdays and Fridays in the name of the *devis* of Tuljapur and Yedai. During fast, in the morning she has only *sabudana khichdi*, but in the evening when its time to break the fast she does it by eating beef. This is a break of custom and tradition from the upper castes whose women do not even eat garlic or onion on the day of fast. But on the Shivratri and on Ekadasi which are days of male Gods, she does not eat non-veg food.

She recalled that in her natal home, she could cook anything, but at her in-laws place she had to measure the amount of food for particular preparations. She remembers of the food given to the women after they delivered a baby. It is a *kheer* made up of wheat flour, jaggery and ghee which is given for four consecutive days. And on the fifth day a *puja* is held known as Paanchvi Puja where the women are given the leg or the ribs of the beef cooked. They are not given milk as it is believed that it does not produce breast milk. For the lactating mother food like sweet *suji* is given in the morning and *jowar roti*, *dal* and some leafy vegetables in the afternoon.

They prepare a special kind of *masala* (i.e. paste of cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, slices of onion deep fried, raw turmeric, dry coconut, red chili, garlic, ginger, coriander leaves, cumin seeds) and store it to use for almost the year.

Her younger son got married to a girl from Koli caste from Konkan region. She likes to have mainly fish, crab etc. Dhondabai was against this intercaste marriage, but with time she accepted it. Her daughter-in-law's way of preparing food was different, which was not liked by the family member. But she started taking lessons from Dhondabai and now cooks separately for them and for herself, as she is not fond of having meat. As the daughter-in-law was not able to make chapattis, her son used to buy it from the neighbors and later decided to order for a dabba. At this thought, the daughter-in-law started

cooking. She used to send stuffed crab to her in-laws which were not liked by them, instead when they used to send beef; she used to cook for it her husband. Her elder daughter in law was her own niece, who knew cooking well as her mother died in a very young age which meant that the daughter-in-law had started cooking from a very young age.

She recalls one of the sad moments in her life, when her younger son, being a bright student could not get the scholarship to go to study. He was supposed to get it, but due to some problem he missed it. Hence he tried to commit suicide. The University itself lodged a complaint against it and she even went to meet the police, but to no avail. With time, her son fell in love and studies took backseat, she felt. She was very upset about this entire matter, as she remembers the hard days of her life collecting rags and waste along with her husband so that their son could study and have a better future.

Moving on, she asserted that in her family men never cooked. The food was served first to them and the children and the gravy was left for the women to have their food at last. But now, it does not matter so much. They eat together and sometimes women may eat first. Even among the stale food, the rice used to be re-heated and was eaten by everybody, except *jowar roti* which was meant only for women.

Memories Documented by
Sarnali Banerjee

Recipes contributed by Dhondabai Kamble:

Dhapatta (preparation time: 10-15min.)

Ingredients:

Wheat flour, Gram flour, Cumin seeds, Salt

Process:

Mix all these ingredients with a bit of water and make dough. Then put a cotton cloth on your palm and pat the dough in a round shape and bake it on the pan.

Chunchune (preparation time: 30-35min.)

Ingredients:

Fats of beef, Oil, Salt

Process:

In a pan add the entire piece of beef fat and cook it on a medium flame. Slowly the oil will come out and it will dry up. Then take out the lump of fat cut it into small pieces. In another pan take oil and deep fry the pieces of the dry fat adding salt to it.

Chanya (preparation time: 2-3days and 15-20min.)

Ingredients:

Beef meat, Salt.

Process:

In this the meat of the beef should be cut into long strip pieces. Then it should be dried under the sun for two-three days by hanging it on a rope. As it becomes dry, it should be taken down and the next step is to roast it. It can be stored for months.

Mutton (preparation time: 30-45min.)

Ingredients:

Mutton, Oil, Salt, Onion, Garam masala, Raw turmeric, Dry coconut, Red chili, Ginger, Garlic, Cumin seeds, Coriander leaves

Process:

First boil the pieces of mutton. Heating oil in a pan, add the paste of masala (i.e. paste of cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and slices of onion deep fried, raw turmeric, dry coconut, red chili, garlic, ginger, coriander leaves, and cumin seeds) including salt. Then stir it for a while. After it is fried properly add the mutton pieces and cook it for few minutes. Then add water and bring it to boil. To make the gravy thick, add jowar flour.

Name: Dhondabai Kamble

Age: Between 50-55 years

Caste: Matang

Work History: Has done agricultural labour, masonry work, scrap collection. Currently is engaged in housework.

Her typical traditional jewelries with her big red round *kumkum* on her forehead and simple style of her attire fascinated us. Her entrance in the class in that appearance charmed me. The smile and glow in her face was very delightful and therefore attractive; nevertheless, the past memories of her life do not seem to be as joyful as her persona appeared to be.

Dhondabai Kamble hails from Beed district and belongs to Matang caste from Maharashtra. Apart from her father, mother and herself, she had six sisters and two brothers in her natal family. There was no chance of going to school and educating themselves due to poverty. Following the tradition and customs of her family, she got married to her aunt's son (father's sister's son), within her own caste at the age of twelve. In Beed, she worked on the land of the Marathas as a daily wage labourer. But this wage did not include money in return of their hard work. Rather in return she would be provided with some grains, stale food and very rarely chapatti. Infrequently, when she collected at least 10 baskets of custard apples in a day for the Maratha family, then they would give her 1 basket of custard apple. With this bitter memory of hard work and servitude she continued working for several years even after the marriage.

Abruptly, due to the famine and drought in the village during 1972, she and her husband migrated to Pune. Both of them worked as rag pickers to earn for their family and their own survival in Pune. She recalled how during the famine she and her family had to suffer a lot for food. Due to their poor economic condition, the wheat which was available at Rs. 9 per kg was

not at all affordable. So in order to survive the hunger they ate *rotis* made by *milo*, provided by government at 60 pc. However, before her sons were able to earn and handle the family expenses, she never stopped working whether it may be serving the Marathas or as a rag picker for the subsistence of her family. It is very recently that she gave up her waged labour work and concentrated on household work. At present, she stays near Dandekar pool, Panmala with her husband, two sons, two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren.

Her elder son is now working as a mobile repairer and is married to her husband's sister's daughter following the traditional practices. She is of the opinion that her elder daughter-in-law, knows how to cook properly as she belonged to the same caste with her mother's demise started cooking at an early age. Her younger son works in a battery industry. She sorrowfully mentions that her younger son who was very talented in his study lost out on a scholarship due to some problem. As a result of this, he had even tried to immolate himself within the University of Pune campus.

As the time passed by he felt in love with a Konkani girl and settled down. She had some problem with her younger daughter in-law in the beginning as she belonged to different caste firstly and secondly, her tastes of food were very different. As she had to train her younger daughter in-law regarding the food and cooking, she got irritated. With time as Kamblebai realized that there is no such natural system called caste, she has accepted her younger son's inter-caste marriage and her daughter in-law has also learned to cook according to their taste. This change in her thought and attitude was because her sons are active members of Satyashodhak movement. She with a gentle smile on her face appreciates her sons for making her realize that everyone in this society are human beings and there is no such natural system called caste, rather it is a man made social system to maintain the hierarchy in society.

In this context, she recalls how in her community, where the purity and pollution practice was very prominent. If people from Matang community by mistake touched the utensils of Marathas, they would immediately burn the utensils and wait until it turns red. This was done, since they thought that the burning of the utensils would purify the polluted utensils touched by the Matang. She does not deny the fact that she was also a follower of caste system. She agrees that when she came to Pune, the Mahars (neo-Buddhists) did not eat food made by Matangs as they were lower to Mahars. Similarly even the Matangs did not eat the food made by Valmikis who are considered to be lower than Matang. As she belonged to Matang community she followed these practices. Later, when her two sons started writing lyrics and sang for the Satyashodhak movement and became activists, these purity and pollution practices also changed within her family. She was a bit anxious and apprehensive about the changes that was taking place in the beginning but these anxieties vanished when she started to follow them and further claims that, things have changed as compared to older times.

Her food practices had a lot to do with her social background, i.e. of being a Matang and her economic status, i.e. of being poor. She learnt cooking before her marriage from her mother. She laughed a bit and put it in plain words that when it was about cooking in her natal family, there was no any restriction of how you cook, whether the food tasted good or not. But after getting married, in her in-laws house, she had to be very careful in her cooking. However, the kitchen work was always handled by the women even in her natal family as well as in her husband's family. Coming from a poor Dalit family, her daily food included *jowar*, *bhakri*, *daal* and very rarely chapatti. *Ghole* and *Tarauda* were two types of vegetables that she preferred eating daily as a curry because these vegetables did not need any specific place to be grown; was available everywhere and never eaten by the upper castes.

When asked about fasting food practices, she said she observed fasts on Tuesdays and Fridays in the name of goddesses like Tuljapur and Yedai. Fasting among the Matangs is distinct from other communities, in the sense that the person who keeps the fast can eat Sabudana and rice in the afternoon and break her fast at night even by eating beef. Juxtaposing the fasting practices of some upper caste women who do not even eat solid food during the fast, she surprised us through her beef eating practices while breaking the fast. Simultaneously, she also mentioned about the fast kept for male gods on the day of Shivaratri and Ekadasi, which prohibits non-vegetarian food on the day.

When asked about feasting food practices, she stated that Diwali was the biggest festival celebrated among the Matang community. During this festival, women from the house prepared Karanji, Chakli and Kapni. But these foods were cooked only when her family had sufficient ingredients in house, or else they would beg for the food from other houses during festivals. Along with Diwali, Mrs. She went to two *jatras*, i.e. Tuljapur and Yedsi. These two *jatras* took place during the month of Chaitra, on full moon day. Dhapata (roti cooked in oil) was the food that she carried during her visit to temple of Tuljapur and Yedsi. The foods offered to these goddesses were cooked within the temple premises itself and sacrifice of animals was strictly prohibited. After the offering of food to the goddesses, it was distributed among the devotees and bringing back of these sacred foods from the temple was permitted.

Accompanied by these big festivals, she remembers celebrating the birth anniversary of Annabhau Sathe. Although, Ambedkar Jayanti might have been well-known among the neo-Buddhists, she said that Matangs idealized Annabhau Sathe and therefore celebrated his birthday. Mahars, who were larger in population within the community had a hall to come together to celebrate Ambedkar Jayanti in pomp and grandeur. But, as the

Matang were smaller in number, they could not celebrate the birth anniversary of Annabhau Sathe grandly. But they did collect and contribute money for the pictures and statue of their idol went on a long procession. After reaching a particular place and positioning the statue of their idol, they would pray for him and wish each other. They cooked and ate *puranpolis* at home to celebrate his birthday.

Apart from the feasting and fasting activities during the festivals and religious days, she also spoke about the eating practices of pregnant woman after the delivery. After four days of delivery of a baby, the woman is given *kheer* made from wheat, rice and *suzi* where jaggery and ghee is compulsory to keep the mother healthy and nutritious. After the fifth day of delivery, known as Panchvi Pujan; the mother is provided non-vegetarian food that includes soup made from different parts of the beef - chest, ribs, legs and boneless meat of the beef are considered healthy with *jowar roti* and rice. *Dink ka ladu* is also one of those nourishing food provided to the mother of the baby. Milk of any animal is considered to be injurious to both mother and child as they believed, if mother drinks the milk she won't be able to feed milk to her own baby.

Her favorite food is chunchuna and chanya. Chunchuna is eaten with bhakri and is made from beef. The food, so far as described by her sounded very tasty.

Memories Documented by
Smriti Gurung

Recipes Contributed by Dhondabai Kamble:

Ghole and Tarauda (curry)

Ingredients:

Ghole and Tarauda, Ground nut, Garlic, Salt, Turmeric powder, Red chilli powder.

Process:

Mix ghole and tarauda and boil. After a while the water from the vegetables separates. Ground nut and garlic are mashed and added in mixture of ghole and tarauda. With a pinch of salt, turmeric and red chili powder, the mixture is fried for 10 to 15 minutes.

It can be served hot with bhakri, jowar and chapatti.

Dink ka Ladoo

Ingredients:

Dry coconut, Dink, Fenugreek, Dry fruits, Dry dates, Ghee, Sugar or jaggery.

Process:

All the mentioned ingredients are mixed and mashed together. This mixture is rolled with hand to bring out the shape of the lado.

Chunchuna

Ingredients:

Beef meat, Fat, Oil, Sugar

Process:

The fats of beef known as 'mand' is heated in the pan. After the oil separates from the fat and it starts to shrink, add the meat. Little bit of sugar is a supplementary to make the recipe more tasty.

Chanya

Ingredients:

Beef flesh

Process:

Chanya needs only the flesh of the beef. Flesh is cut into thin long pieces like strings and it is let to dry under very hot sun for 2 to 3 days. They are cut into small pieces and then roasted and eaten.

Chanya can last long for 8 to 15 days.

If given a closer look at the above mentioned recipes, we can see that the limited ingredients used by Dalits can actually bring out flavorful recipes that can bring a new turn in the world of cuisine.

Name: Geeta Biwal

Age: 50 years

Caste: Valmiki

History of work done: Has been working as a *safai karamchari* in Pune University for the past 16 years.

Born in Kolhapur, Geetabai migrated from Rajasthan and post marriage has been living in Pune. Her father is from Uttar Pradesh and mother is from Rajasthan. She was married in the year 1980 at the age of 18. She presently lives near Sasoon Hospital in Pune. She has 3 daughters and 1 son. Two of her daughters have already been married. She has been employed at the University of Pune for the last sixteen years as a *safai labourer*. She recollects her childhood as living in poor economic conditions. Both her parents were employed as sweepers and earned a monthly wage of Rs. 150 and Rs. 80 respectively. She remembers eating her fill only when her parents brought home their salary. As a child she usually ate *suji* (rawa), upma, dry dal, *jawar roti* and *besan roti* and goat mutton when her parents received their wages. Since chicken was very expensive, she recalls, they hardly ever ate chicken at home. But she clearly remembers that *puri bhaji* was a special dish served at home. As a child she remembers begging for food. She had great desire to eat *puranpoli* and often would receive leftovers of it from others. She remembers how she would share food with others but once they discovered her caste, would stop sharing their food. In her village, food was exchanged during festivals, which were usually thrown out by upper castes after receiving from the lower castes. In terms of begging for food it contained leftovers such as *chakalis*, *roti with dal*. She also recollects food cooked during *yatras* or religious occasions. The food was taken to the temple and offered to the Goddess. The offering consisted of *matki ki sabji*, *varan bhat*, *achaar* (pickle). At

the end of the yatra chicken was cooked in the evening. Geetabai shared her memories of living in Pune after marriage. Her economic condition has improved since her employment. She talks of food exchange taking place since different communities such as Christians and Muslims have been working as *safai* labourer. Her husband dislikes the chicken dish she makes using onions, Everest chicken *masala*, ginger and coriander. Among the festivals her family celebrates Diwali and was not aware of Valmiki Jayanti. She also shared some specific recipes for pregnant women such as Bombay duck (*Bombil*). Her mother usually gave her ghee, *khari*, dry coconut all powdered together when she pregnant. Similarly her mother-in-law gave her *dink laddoo* made of almonds, *kaju*.

Memories Documented by
Marushka Abranches

Recipes contributed by Geeta Biwal:

Pork Masala

Ingredients:

Pig meat or pork, ginger, onions, haldi(turmeric), Jowar flour or Besan flour, Red Chillies, Coriander.

Process:

Wash and cut the meat. Prepare a masala using chilly powder, garlic and ginger. Fry the masala and add the meat to it and cook. Add besan flour or jowar flour to thicken the gravy.

Karela stuffed with kheema

(Bitter gourd stuffed with mince)

Ingredients:

Karela, Mutton Kheema, Garlic, Onions, Ginger, Haldi (Turmeric), Garam masala (cloves, dal chini,tej patta ,shahi jeera,dry or wet coconut, red chillies), Tomatoes, Salt.

Process:

Boil the mutton kheema and karela separately. Prepare the masala with the above spices. Slit the karela open. Mix the kheema with the masala and stuff it in the karela. And steam the karela to cook it.

Dry Methi Sabji

Ingredients:

Methi (fenugreek leaves), onions, crushed garlic, chillies, tomatoes, salt.

Process:

Wash the methi and keep aside. Fry the tomatoes, onions, garlic. Then add the methi into the fried spices adding salt. And let it cook.

Name: Geeta Biwal

Age: 50 years

Caste: Valmiki

History of work done: Has been working as a *safai karamchari* in Pune University for the past 16 years.

Geeta Biwal has been working as a *safai karamchari* in the University of Pune since the last 16 years. She belongs to the Valmiki caste (which is essentially a migrant community). Her father was from Rajasthan but they settled in Kolhapur.

She was born in Kolhapur and received education till the 4th grade. She got married in 1980 at the age of 18 and came to Pune. She has 3 daughters and 1 son. (2 daughters are married now). She lives near Sasoon Hospital in Pune with her husband and 2 children.

She remembers that her family's economic condition was bad when she was a child. Since both her parents were employed in the *safai* labour, they would cook at night and keep. Usually they would make *upma* from *rawa* or dry *dal* or *pithla*. They would cook mutton only after the day of wages. (Her father used to earn Rs 150/- and mother Rs 80/- per month). She remembers that chicken was more expensive than mutton then. She also recalls eating pork in her childhood when her father would make it. She has bitter-sweet memories of food (especially during festivals) in her childhood. On the one hand, Diwali was the special festival where sweets such as *suji shira* would be made. On the other hand, she remembers stale left-over *puranpolis*, *karanji* and *chakli* given to them by the upper castes. This food however, was asked for only during festivals. *Puri-bhaji* was considered special food but hardly remembers eating it as a child. Since the labour they do is considered polluting, in school, children would not share food with her. Even during festivals, sweets would be distributed to neighbours

but she was aware that they would throw it away. Nobody would ask them for the recipe.

She remembers her father as a great cook. He used to cook mutton gravy with *jowar* and *karela* (bittergourd) stuffed with mutton. She learnt cooking from her mother-in-law. Before marriage, she only knew how to cook *dal*. However, her mother-in-law (who was also from Rajasthan) taught her how the everyday '*toor*' *dal* had to be seasoned with a paste of wet *khobra* (coconut), ginger, garlic and coriander. Later, a '*tadka*' had to be added with mustard seeds, *jeera* and *kadi patta*. She recalls being fed a powder of ghee, *khari*, *khobra* and dink during her pregnancy by her mother. Her father-in-law used to get '*dink ke ladu*' from the market for her. She says that pregnant women are generally served fried *Bombil* (Bombay duck) as well which is prepared by frying the fish and making a paste of dry coconut, ginger, garlic, coriander and frying it with the fish. This recipe has fewer chillies in it (non-spicy).

Her favourite food is *methi sabzi* and she loves to prepare it for others. Sometimes, when her husband does not like the way she prepares chicken using coconut, so he makes it himself with ginger, garlic and some readymade chicken *masala* which is easily available in the markets. Otherwise her family members do not complain about her cooking.

She feels that things have changed now as far as sharing food is concerned. Since there are Muslims, Christians, Neo-Buddhists and other communities who are employed in the scavenging labour, sharing food is not an issue of pollution anymore. The difference however, arises in the way one eats food. She has a Brahmin family from Karnataka as a neighbour now and she points out that the difference (of caste) is brought in when discussing whether the *puranpolis* were made in oil and are had with *methi* or brinjals. Memories

Documented by

Pallavi Das

Recipes Contributed By Geeta Biwal:

Karela (bittergourd) stuffed with kheema (minced goat meat)

Ingredients:

Karela, kheema, onions, turmeric powder, salt, red chillies, tomatoes

Spices: Dhaniya, cloves, dalchini, tej patta, shahjeera, elaichi (big and small), coconut (dry or wet)

Process:

Wash the kheema and keep it aside. Make a paste of the spices mentioned above (by grinding). On the stove, fry onions (finely chopped). Add turmeric and salt. Add the paste. Add red chillies and fry. Put the kheema, fry well and add finely chopped tomatoes. Slice the karela from the top and stuff it with prepared kheema. Add water to it and steam it for half an hour.

Methi with Dry Fish

Ingredients:

Onions, tomatoes, garlic (crushed), chillies, Salt, methi (fenugreek leaves), small fish (dried)

Process:

Fry fish and keep aside. Fry onions, add tomatoes, add crushed garlic, put chillies in it and add salt. Put the fish in it. Add the methi leaves and fry them all together.

Pork (which her father used to make)

Ingredients:

Salt, turmeric, onion, ginger and garlic, besan or jowar flour, chilly powder, pig meat.

Process:

Cut and wash meat. Fry the masala made of ginger and garlic paste and chilly powder. Add the meat to this masala and fry it well. Add water. Add besan or jowar flour to increase the quantity of the gravy.

Section IV

Reflections

This was a project in which the tasks were assigned to individuals but fulfilling them required group effort and ‘collective presence’. While the above sections are put together from the papers we wrote individually after doing memory work in groups; the option on reflecting on the process was left open. Some of us felt that we were still thinking through and will postpone the in-depth reflections while others did put down detailed reflections. In what follows we present these reflections:

“One of the narratives revealed that a fast can be opened by eating beef. This was for me quite striking as that was something I had never really thought of. Realizing that food eaten during fasts and food eaten to open fasts is also an important area of study.”

(Aashima Subberwal)

“It was also very clear from their interview that among the dalit themselves, there are variations in their customs, traditions and food practices. Therefore, the homogeneity of the Indian national cuisine, that is actually the high class and caste cuisine is proved to be false in this sense; firstly due to the newly discovered flavour full cuisine of the dalit women and secondly due to the variations within the Dalits food practices itself that has been totally excluded from the national cuisine as if Dalits are not the citizens of India”.

(Smriti Gurung)

“The most fascinating part of this project for me was the process of the interviews. This fascination stemmed not only from the facts revealed by our interviewees but also by us, the class as interviewers. For, so many of the spontaneous

questions that were asked came so deeply rooted from our own specific class experiences and it is difficult to imagine how little we have been able to reflect on our own lives. But what proved most interesting for me was to listen to Salim, the man whose case I was writing, talk. Here was a man who took his food seriously not just in terms of what he ate or cooked but was also one who had a deep sense of the history associated with not just with the consumption practices of where he came from but also the why and how of it. That he was a student of history was perhaps one of the reasons for this but I also think the sharp understanding he possessed was a result of the process of comprehending that social life is complex and intricate and thoroughly embedded in systems of power. The fact that he could grapple with his own exertions of power (the man 'lower than his caste' as being foul smelling) is thus a sign that he has been able to get to the heart of the politics, especially that of caste that affects so much of our lives.

Salim is someone I think we all can learn from.”
(Gayatri Nair)

“Thus, reflecting back on all the interviews and memory work done through out the project really compels me to think about the Dalit’s lived experience where caste oppression, food crisis and hard labour done for survival becomes the crucial feature of their lives. Yet another striking attribute found among all the interviews was that, each sub-caste within the dalit has uniqueness and individuality of its own, in the names of the recipes, ingredients, styles of preparation, distinctive occasions for such preparations and of course the flavour and taste vary. However, it is really disturbing to see how inspite of having such rich traditions of food practices; they have been excluded from the national cuisine”

(Priyanka Sinha)

“Meat, although commonly associated with the Dalit identity, is prepared and cooked in a manner which is very distinct from the urban middle class/upper caste styles of cooking. Their styles of cooking are essentially derived from their experiences of deprivation and exclusion. Although many interviewees had not experienced the violence of caste discrimination, the memories of caste violence passed on by generations have left an indelible impression upon their culinary practices. As many interviewees pointed out only the paya, ribs or the body parts that are generally disposed are used while preparing pork dishes.

On the other hand, Mrs Lakshmi Shirse, whom I had interviewed, was a vegetarian since her childhood. Most of her siblings and family members are vegetarians as well. This evoked a great amount of surprise and shock in the class. While taking her interview I was reminded of the chapter in Government Brahmana by Aravind Malagatti which discusses how certain identities associated with food practices are imposed upon the Dalits by non-dalits. Therefore when a Dalit chooses not to eat meat, this decision always elicits suspicion and shock amongst the non-dalits”.

(Kena Wani)

“Many of the interviewees have now turned vegetarian but they remember eating pig meat or cattle meat as children. “Bhitya” – poison for cattle would be prepared to kill a ‘tasty looking’ animal. The people however, knew the art of cleaning the meat from the poison. Some Neo-Buddhists gave up meat after conversion whereas some gave up meat during pregnancy etc. Many also remember how upper caste men came on the sly, to their houses to have ‘chanya’-dried meat of cattle. The interesting thing to note here is that most of the interviewees spoke about relishing the ‘paya’ (leg) of the goat or cattle (This is considered healthy even

for pregnant women and lactating mothers) and the ribs and 'wajri' (the part where the waste is stored) of the pig. Chicken has become popular amongst them now after shifting to the city.

Another interesting aspect which came out through one of the interviews is that beef is not considered polluting for the lower caste. In fact, one may finish one's fast by consuming beef. The whole image of a strict vegetarian fast is extremely upper caste. Pigs and pork are given as offerings to the goddess Yellamma and other gods during yatras. Hence, beef and pork are not considered polluting and lowly.

Everyone remembers discrimination against them. As one of them correctly pointed out that the Mahars wouldn't eat from the Matangs and they wouldn't eat from the Valmiki's as they are lower in the ladder. As they were growing up, it was clear as to who could eat from whom. So, generally mothers would instruct the children not to share tiffins in school. However, all the interviewees feel that this has changed in the last ten years. They can easily share food now even with the upper castes in their neighbourhood."

(Pallavi Das)

"Reflecting on the narratives what seems significant were the continuities and discontinuities that emerged. Most of the women had memories of economic crisis during their childhood. What seemed most problematic was how National Cuisine was equated to Hindu Cuisine as if India is Hindu. . What seemed most disturbing was how caste was completely absent on the shelves of book on cooking."

(Marushka Abranches)

"The food project was an interesting assignment as it led me to look deeper into every day food practices that apparently seem very normal. It is after this arduous exercise

of unravelling notions and discourses about food that caste and food and redefinition of identity seem intimately related. It led me to reflect back upon food practices exercised by my grandmothers, parents and relatives .incidents narrated by my grandfather makes a lot more sense than before. An analysis of cook-books at a book store brought forth the ambiguities concerning collapsing of caste and food and identity. At times the distinction was very stark and at other times caste seemed to have been shifted to the secondary and food for the sake of taste and the diasporic consumer was presented. This assignment has certainly developed some food for thought”.

(Amrita Laha)

“For me, the way migration lives on through food has been a very interesting trope. Mr. Salim narrated his personal journey from North Maharashtra to Pune, his life as a student sharing living space with boys of another caste, cooking and eating together. The memories of migration that live on through 150 yrs for Mr. Sirsa talk of his love of the roadside Bhajji Pav in Pune and a concurrent craving of Dalcha Bhaath at home. The distress migration post famine for Bhamabai and surviving in the city talk of being a woman and migrating. These are all different and fascinating perspectives on migration.

Personally, the history of migration has been a very strong motive in my own food habits. My paternal and maternal grandfather migrated to Mumbai in search of livelihood, and cut ties with villages a long time ago. This is not to say that there as an attempt to erase the village identity, but that the dealings and visits to the village were kept to a bare minimum. Food was often about improvising the lack of certain items taken for granted in the village, and incorporation of dishes as yet unknown to them.

The minimalism of one family was as much to do with migrant identity, of using as few items as one would in the village. A suspicion of substituting what is easily available with what is used when one lived in the village on my father's side, met with a making do with what was easily available on my mother's side. Food of other migrant communities has held particular fascination for me, be it the Irani cafes near my college or the eateries on Mohammad Ali Road that cater to migrant workers. Perhaps it is the bias of coming from the city I come from, but I prefer what the Muslims in Bombay cook to that which the ones in Hyderabad do. Sacrilegious as it may sound I prefer the biryani in Bombay to the one in Hyderabad, which I find uses a bit too much of spices (garam masala). The biryani seems to be an interesting dish for all the migrants who spoke to the class. All of them remember their own experiments with it, love it and have a completely different version of biryani than the more mundane ones served in hotels. Migration in most cases is a question of survival and not much of a choice. The food project allows us to fill in the blanks. To say what has not yet been said and cannot be said."

(Supriya Bandekar)

"Semiotic analysis proved to be unable to capture dalit's voice as it carries a bias towards the powerful. The same case is true of cookbooks which facilitate the dialogue between class and regional identity but keep silent on the caste issues. In view of this complexity, what are the ways in which we could address Valmiki's lament (2003): "How come we were never mentioned in any epic? Why didn't an epic poet ever write a word on our lives?" Held as a part of 'course of caste and gender in Modern India', this food project attempts to take up this challenge."

(Christina Udiani)

“My mother is the only person to eat the leftover food in the household. I was reminded of my mother who is the only consumer of leftover food in the house.

The memory study of who eats the stale and leftover food in the household can bring forth interesting ways in which, caste is related to gender and food. We need to understand how food becomes a site on which gender discrimination is practiced in newer forms. Who produces what food and who consumes what kind of food is very much gendered.”

(Debasmita Deb)

“Memories of begging around for food during the festival time, and also people with the fear of not touching them of throwing the food towards them - how in childhood a game comes to be devised to touch the sari of the upper caste women and run away - make me think of the pains and struggles of the lives of the women we met”.

(Sarnali Banerjee)

(Footnotes)

¹ Retrieved on 14.3.2009; [file:///H:/McDonald India denie beef flavouring.htm](file:///H:/McDonald%20India%20denie%20beef%20flavouring.htm)

² Chakravarti Uma.2002. Gendering Caste. Kolkotta: Samya

³ See for instance Pawar Urmila. 2008. The Weave of My Life. Kolkatta : Samya

⁴ See Ambedkar .B.R. 1948.The Untouchables : Who Were They? New Delhi : Amrit Book company

⁵ Jha. D. N. 2002. The Myth of the Holy Cow. London: Verso press

⁶ Theime John and Raja Ira .2006.

The Table is Laid: The Oxford Anthology of South Asian

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⁷ Mallagati Arvind. 2007 .Government Brahmana. New Delhi.Oxford University of Press

⁸ Valmiki Om Prakash..2003. Joothan : A Dalit 's Life. Bombay : Popular Prakashan

⁹ Kamble Baby. 2008. Prisons We Broke. Kolkotta. Samya

¹⁰ Pawar Urmila. 2008. The Weave Of My Life. Kolkatta. Samya.

¹¹ Moon Vasant. 2001. Growing Up Untouchable In India. New delhi: Vistaar

¹² Limbale. Sharan Kumar.2003. The Outcaste. New Delhi: Oxford university Press

¹³ Jadhav Narendra. 2003. Outcaste: A Memoir. New Delhi: Viking

¹⁴ Bama.2000.Karakku. New Delhi: Macmillan

¹⁵ Appadurai Arjun (1988); “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India” ; in Comparative Studies in Society and History, No 30:3-24, Cambridge university press

¹⁶ Bourdieu for instance points out how taste if often determined according to the social position from which it stems.

¹⁷ The cover page being of Hindu god.

¹⁸ Writing this narrative would be impossible without the helping hands of Sharifa Bale, Tina Aranha and the most patient translator in the world, Sharmila Rege.

¹⁹ I wish to acknowledge the help given by my classmate Shradha Patil and my course coordinator Sharmila Rege without whose help it would be impossible to write this narrative.

²⁰ This is made by adding jaggery to wheat dough, drying this mixture, making pieces of it and then frying it.

²¹ Salim doesn't spell out that this group was a caste group but given the occupational structure of castes it is a safe assumption to make.

²² I believe that his status as being a male who cooks also contributes to this sense of expertise and status.

