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Essence of Food in Human life Food and Identity

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Address for Correspondence: editojohp@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

A sole substance which is undesired by our soul is food, yet it is the basic sustenance for human survival. Life without food is unsustainable for existence, but there are people who strive for a meal a day in the current scenario. It has an unconditional bond with living organisms. Flavors and tanginess of food can tempt a person to eat. Likewise a high standard and virtuous movie can provoke moralistic thoughts within oneself. This paper deals with the ESSENCE OF FOOD IN HUMAN LIFE under the thrust area 'FOOD AND IDENTITY' in the movie 'Ustad hotel'. Food and its nuances become a central character in this movie and act as a catalyst for personal transformation. In our country, there are few major issues like poverty, the problems faced by under privilege and rivalry between the rich and the poor also portrayed. This paper emphasizes on a new perspective on such profit-making exercises. The story revolves around two passionate chefs, Kareem and grandson, Faizi. Kareem teaches his culinary skills to Faizi and also the purpose of food to be served. The major study of this paper is concerned with Marxist criticism based on the society and Selfless service towards humanity. It concludes with the futuristic outlook of food should not be served for business purposes alone, instead it must fill the stomachs as well as hearts of innumerable poverty-stricken people.


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This paper examines the state of meager striving for food in the society where the rich people make profits in food business. The major goal of this paper is to make understand that food should not be served for business purposes and every single person in the society must get their food without any obstacles or struggles. It works for Implementation of humanity in the gluttonous minds.

In the wide varieties of food, the essence is a necessary ingredient for the deliciousness of any food. Similarly, food is the basic essential substance in human life. Food is the support system of our body and it maintains fitness and nurtures our health with all the essential nutrients such as proteins, vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, fats, calcium, iron, etc. It provides sufficient energy for proper body functioning. Each and every food is prepared for some kind of reasons either it may be for regional, cultural, or festive season. According to the situations and circumstances the food should be consumed. It eventually paved the way for introducing many varieties of regional cuisines all over the world. So this paper deals with the importance of food in human life.

Food creates an identity through family bonding and lots of memories to a person because there are some houses where the members of the house would meet each other only while dinning food due to their busy schedules. They spend some quality time together in the name of having food. People earn money for consuming food but the money induced them to live their life in a sophisticated manner. Beyond earning money for food, they became envious and began to run behind businesses or jobs which yield money.

According to the taste and flavor of the dishes, they are categorized into different varieties of cuisines. This paper emphasizes with the Indian cuisines because this

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movie is based on that cuisine. Indian cuisine consists of a huge variety of regional cuisines which are native to India. Essences are a vital part of food preparation and are used to enhance the flavor of a dish. Correct use and blending of the aromatic spices is crucial to the proper preparation of Indian cuisine. Even oil is an important part of cooking, whether it is mustard oil in the north or coconut oil in the south, each section of the country has its own preferences. The traditional Indian food culture should not be forgotten by every generation as it shows the identity of the Indian people itself in terms of culture and norms. Each food has its own tales and sentimental values along with it.

In the midst of all the culinary artists, passionate chefs are the rarest gems to find in the field of culinary arts. Fortunately two gems Kareem and his grandson, Faizi have been food from this movie, Ustad Hotel and this story focuses on them with setting of Kerala background. Kareem, the owner of Ustad hotel, is an experienced and illiterate chef. A respectable person in the society, who wishes to serve foods for all social class. He is well-known for his Malabar Biryani. With that skill, he did not have any intension to get along with any business. No other appetizing food is equal to that. In fact, his biriyani was bought by a high class star hotel and served triple the cost of its actual rare. This kind of profit making business is real and happening at present in some hotels. Faizi, who strives for the identity as a chef against ample number of hardships. He studied culinary arts in abroad but learns the essence of food in depth solely from Kareem, his grandfather.

There is a firm connection between food and identity. Every food has its own identity via culture or geographical features. A common expression 'you are what you eat' can define a person's own identity through the food consumption. Here, even in this movie, the character Faizi strives to create his own identity in culinary arts. As a boy who belongs to high class Muslim religion, were forced to do any other studies rather than culinary studies. But from the childhood, he had a great passion in cooking because he was grown up along with his five elder sisters and he used to spend most of his time in kitchen by helping them. He was the youngest and only son in their family. When a person gets a job in the field in which he is more passionate, that person can excel in his career and he can create his own specific identity for him.

One incident can be marked as the turning point of life and further it can also transform a person. Similarly, a scene from this movie transforms Narayan Krishnan who works as the head cook in a star hotel, witnessed the utter state of poverty in India. He would see a roadside man eating his own waste instead of food in hunger, he felt pity for that man as well as ashamed of himself for not being a good citizen. That incident made him to quit his job and he decided to serve the meals for penniless people in his state. With the help of his assistants every day he prepares food and serves for those roadside homeless people. This ideal person is living in Madurai at present.

The connection between Kareem and Narayan is revealed only in the climax of the movie. Each and every month Kareem donates a little amount to Narayan in order to prepare foods to the penniless people. When Kareem was in his final days, he would send Faizi to meet Narayan and to learn the purpose of food being cooked. Kareem had taught Faizi about all the nook and corner techniques in cooking and even to run a hotel without the intension of making business in the name of food. Kareem maintained a good rapport with all the people such as his workers, customers, vegetable sellers, etc. People used to come from different places to taste his hotel's Malabar biriyani.

Faizi comes to Madurai and witnessed the service and humanity of Narayan, the real hero who goes in search of poor and feeds them food. Narayan used to go to all the places in his town to serve them. Faizi's dream was to go abroad and get reputed job in that country and settle his life there. But after seeing Narayan his whole idea about his career has changed. Even Narayan was working as a chief chef in a reputed high standard hotel, but after witnessing that incident, he too changed his idea towards his career. The character in this movie stands as a great living epitome for all the people.

This paper is contemplated with the Marxist theory or philosophy. According to Marxist view, the major cause of poverty is inequality in distribution of wealth and income. From one point of view, any society with inequality is bound to have poverty. In other words, poverty is more likely to occur in a society which accepts inequality. It is possible for poverty or head count ratios to decline, while inequality simultaneously increases, because income growth for richer segments is relatively more.

Poverty and inequality are not the same. Social inequality means that certain individuals or groups have more material or cultural resources than others, whereas poverty implies some insufficiency in the material or cultural resources of an individual or group (O'Donnell, 1997).

But if inequality increases rapidly, it causes resentment due to the perception that deprived class, castes, women, ethnic, or religious groups or geographical regions are not enough from the trickle-down benefits of growth.

In India the recent statistics of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) shows that poverty figures are down. India, with its population of 1.3 billion people, now has 5 percent of its population living in extreme poverty, according to the World Poverty Clock. World Poverty Clock researchers raised the tantalizing prospect that by 2021, fewer than 3 percent of India's population will live in extreme poverty. India is the first country for estimating the progress over time period, 271 million people were moved out of the poverty between the years 2005 and 2015. The rate of poverty has been nearly halved from the previous years, falling from around 55 percent to around 28 percent over in the period of ten years. The MPI looks beyond the income to understand how people are experiencing poverty in multiple ways.

Even though the rate of poverty level has been decreased from the previous years, yet poverty is still alive. Sociologists who adopt a relative definition of poverty accept that for the eradication of poverty, it is necessary to first abolish all inequality in income. The nine important measures which should be taken to reduce poverty in India are as follows:

1. Accelerating Economic Growth
2. Agricultural Growth and Poverty Alleviation
3. Speedy Development of Infrastructure
4. Accelerating Human Resource Development
5. Growth of Non-Farm Employment
6. Access to Assets
7. Access to Credit
8. Public Distribution System (PDS)
9. Direct Attack on Poverty: Special Employment Schemes for the Poor.

The three basic needs of a human being for survival are food, clothing and shelter. Among those three clothing and shelter can be used as a second hand materials and once if they obtain it, there is no necessary to go in search of those materials everyday but food is a lively substance which can be consumed by humans in their routine life. They can live without clothes and shelter but not food. Thus food plays a vital role in every human's life.

Human started to consume food from the day one of the formation of our fleshes and bones, inside of the mother's womb. Until the human body stops functioning, the body needs food in one or other way. The amount and type of consuming food may vary from one stage to another stage in the life of a human being. Starting from the child birth, infancy, kids, tweens, teens, adults, old aged and then at last his/her last days of life their food diets changes according to their stages of life.

A man will not get satisfied with the money, any kind of materialistic or non- materialistic objects in his life but food is the sole substance which can satisfy the needs of the stomach. He can earn and keep everything in a huge amount for his future use, but food is the lively substance which can be consumed at that particular time. Humans will not feel greedy in consuming food like how they do feel greedy for obtaining money or materialistic objects. Even there is a large quantity and varieties of food were displayed in front of their eyes, they could intake only the enough quantity of food which can be sufficient for their stomachs.

If food is taken in a right manner, it can be the best medicine for humans. People get addicted towards the taste of foods, so they started to consume food in large number without any diet control. They began to consume unhealthy foods which might taste good. They were unaware of the harmfulness of unhealthy foods served in some hotels which would affect their health. So people were easily infected with various diseases and tend to fall sick. People go in search of delicious food and also additionally get health issues. Hotels like Ustad hotel is very rare to find, because the taste of their food was good as well as they maintain the hotel in a clean and hygiene manner. That was the solely reason why people from various places arrive to that hotel and have that appetizing food cooked by Kareem and his workers.

I have chosen this topic because we all know that we need food for our sustenance. Three meals a day is the basic eating style followed from ancient times. Food and water are the common substances which belong to all the people in the world. No person has rights to use those common substances for commercial uses by earning profits. According to my perception, doing business with those substances considered to be a 'sin. Those substances must be served to the destitute

people for free of cost service instead of the commercial purposes. From these incidents, we could realize that there is a huge down fall of humanity.

Food is related to psychology and sociology of a human being. If a person is affected physically or mentally, there occurs some change in their food habits. Psychological and sociological problems directly affect the intake of food in a person's life. Further they may face health issues like stress, obesity, pressure, cardio diseases, lung diseases, breathing problems, etc. After becoming a patient in the hospital, they were forced to spend their money and time in ample number. Few physicians for earning profit, they increase their diseases rather than curing it. Therefore, in that field, politics plays a major role whereas humanity dies.

If the food is taken in a right time and in correct nutritional diet, there is no necessity of any kind of foreign medicines. From our spices and vegetables, all the necessary nutrition can be obtained by our human body. The foreign medicine companies keeping collaboration with our India and Indian hospitals, they abuse and make use of human life for making profits. Thereby slowly our ancient medicine methodologies began to fall and the rise of foreign or English medicines grew up rapidly in our country.

In the proverbial aspect of “Service to mankind is service to god”. Serving to the people is the greatest deed of a human. Their service must be in a selfless manner. Nowadays few rich people do service for boasting and to hide their malpractices which they do in their income tax matters. The service which we do to people must emerge from our bottom of our heart and without any kind of hesitation or disinterest it should be done with love. Democracy could not be flourished in the society without the humanities.

The reason behind opting this movie is, the incidents which were telecasted in this movie are real and it has been happened and still happening in our country. As Kareem says “Anyone can fill a stomach, but only a good cook can fill the heart as well”. This dialogue stands as a great epitome for all the human beings and especially for the chefs. According to the great chef Gusteau's motto in Ratatouille movie, “Anybody can cook food”. In that movie a rat will have passion to cook and finally it would become the French chef. For preparing food, one need not have education, money, good appearance, etc. talent would play the main role in culinary arts.

With the culinary talents, the chef must satisfy all the needs of the people. A chef's duty is to fill the stomachs of people, but a chef who fills the hearts as well is considered to be a good chef. Even the robots can cook mouth-watering recipes but the love could not be found in those recipes. The heart, as a delicate organ of our body could be filled solely by the dishes made by the chefs with intense care and love. Thus, food must be served for the purpose of acquiring pleasures but not to get along with financial benefits. The people who live in our era and our future generation must serve food with fondness and should be compassionate with humankind.

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Marxism and Marxist theories

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