

# Mac-Donaldization and Changing Philosophy of food Culture in Post Modern Kerala Society

Dr Binu K.<sup>1</sup> Dr KK HarshaKuamr<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Binu K., Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, St Mary's College, Kerala, India.

<sup>2</sup> KK Harshakuamr Assistant Professor Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (Du) Guruvayoor Campus , Thrissur ,Kerala ,India.

**Abstract:** Human society is in the process of continuous transformation in its socio- cultural framework and lifestyle. Commoditization and food industries and the involvement of multidimensional capitalism in food and restaurants are common and more visible today. The process of irrationality and instrumental thinking has been reconstructing the food habits and life style of modern Kerala people. Capitalism boundlessly expanding the ideology of maximum utilization of edible resources in food industry designing and channelizing new profit making mechanisms in the forms of multicuisine restaurants and the center of variety foods. These food dynamics are basically changes the attitudes of people by replacing their thoughts and living styles and habits. In this cybernetic postmodern world all new philosophies of food are related to technological, economic and political dimensions of social life. Mac-donaldization is the process of introduction of new rationality and food culture in the modern society. It is the phenomenon by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate in food industry and more sectors of human life all around the world. The results of this social psychological process are reflected in to four realms of human thoughts such as Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability, and Control. This study sociologically analyses the role of Mac- donaldizataion in the changing philosophy of food culture in modern Kerala society by using qualitative samples from different parts of Kerala. This study is also analyses the effect of Mac donaldization as a social process in redefining the new food culture, awareness and consciousness of people of modern consumerist Kerala society

**Key Words** – Mac Donaldization, Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability, Control, Intermixing of food.

## Introduction

Human change is very rapid in twenty first century. In modern socio- cultural enterprises social change is becoming an inevitable process. In this postmodern era principles of construction of social sphere has dramatically changed due to the interplay of internal and external factors. Number of new styles of living and food cultures have visited in our restaurants and homes for providing new taste and food habits to the people. Rapid Economic growth, modernization, urbanization, technological socialization have changed the culture of our families. The transition from a traditional to modern lifestyle, consumption, nature of food consumed, consumption of new diets with rich in fat and calories resulted mental stress and number of health related problems. Life style changes and the adoption of a sedentary life style has increased with the problems of Obesity, Diabetes, and Hypertension, Coronary heart disease, metabolic syndrome and Cancer etc. Large degrees of changes has occurred in the pattern of food consumption and prevalence of life style diseases. Fast-food culture and

the social process of Mac-Donaldization has been contributing tremendous changes in the life style of average Kerala family today .MacDonaldization as social process even affects in the food habits of the rural Kerala people. However, the effect of this process are more visible in other changing industries, such as shopping districts, education, healthcare, and more. It implies a search for maximum efficiency in increasingly numerous and diverse social settings. In a MacDonaldised society, people are rarely search for the best means to an end on their own. Rather, they rely on the optimum means that have been previously discovered and institutionalized in a variety of social settings. Thus, the best means may be part of a technology, written into an organization's rules and regulations, or taught to employees during the process of occupational socialization. It would be inefficient if people always had to discover for themselves the optimum means to ends. In this context the present work analysis the process of Mac-Donaldization and Changing Philosophy of food culture in Post Modern Kerala Society with the help of selected qualitative interviews from different parts of Kerala based the degree and frequency of fast food consumption of urbanized people of Kerala.

## **Materials and Methods**

The relevant forces of Mac-donaldization like *Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability, and Control* were divided into four scales of analysis for this study. Qualitative data were collected from 50 respondents on randomly based on their frequency of consumption, eating habits, and eating style. Scores accumulated were calculated separately for analysis and interpretation .Similar and very relevant responses were identified and classified and incorporated in the result section of the study to improve the reliability of the work.

## **Results**

### **The Irrationality of Rationality**

Rationality is logical selection of means to reach decided goals. Modern restaurants offers benefits and conveniences than traditional types by providing varieties of food , fast food , shopping, and often speedier services ,peaceful atmosphere and adequate hospitality with trained personals. In modern Kerala society food consumption and

recreational attitude of people have some changes due to the replacement of rational cognitive thinking pattern to some degrees of irrationality in their purchasing and consumption power. This new food habits and the attitude of consumption are cutting across the barriers of rural urban boundaries and other types of class and caste dimensions etc. There are some new trends in Kerala society towards more tasty foods and services and rather than the traditional household types produced and served with indigenous raw materials and technologies. Macdonaldization in this way acts as a principle and socio psychological force creates new food consciousness among human consumers by replacing the rationality of safe food and water with fast food and services of multicuisine restaurants.

Basics of rationality is precipitating and reforming to the principles of irrationality. This irrationality has been reflected in their consumption power and sometimes denies the activities of the people who work within or outside the food based industrial and traditional systems. (Ritzer 1994:154) The lines at the fast-food restaurants, waiting to get through the drive-thru, menu systems, hospitality in reception. The parking formalities and charges sometimes unaffordable to us. These rational system don't save us money; we might spend less, but we do more work. The food we eat is often less nourishing, loaded with stabilizers and flavor enhancers, fats, salt and sugar. This contributes to the health problems and number of life style diseases and creates a definitely "antihuman" component. They are serving with in the background of constructed hospitality and other iconized images. As our children grow up with in these systems, they develop habits which insure our increasing dependency upon the systems.

Modern Junk foods and Macdonald are acting as an agent of socialization to the younger generation by providing wrong messages and synthetic cultural truth in the areas of food consumption. The packaging used in fast food industry pollutes the environment. Cent percentage of packets used by this industries are plastics are the major source of environmental pollutants. In family relationships are mostly centered around the food culture and eating together. Providing safe and good nutritious food is also one of the basic function of the family. As a socializing agent family is directly or indirectly propagating good and safe food culture to the offspring and other family members. Solidarity and integrity of family members are mostly centered on the family

meal and other types of food habits of the members. In this way food culture definitely catalyzing different types of family ties and relationships. Food culture in the family can strengthen or weaken family relations in material non material terms, in material dimension it influences the different expenses for food and related articles and money utilized for the treatments of lifestyle diseases and other atrocities associated with over utilization food calories in day to day life. In non-material terms it reflects the intensity of family relationships and affecting the process of molding of personality of younger generation. New food purchasing and eating habits has replaced the members from home atmosphere and togetherness to construct and artificial mutilated air-conditioned rooms which proving synthetic food and artificial and distorted environments.

In modern Kerala context marriage and other social functions are the basis of family relationships which are enriched by selfless services of food and other articles in the function. This occasional functional interdependence encourages the family togetherness and social solidarity. If it is lost to us, we shall have to invent new ways to be a family. It is worth considering whether the shared joy that food can provide is worth giving up. (Visser, 1989:42; in Ritzer, 1994:156). Contemporary families are preferring Microwavable foods and fast-food restaurants to arrange food for the functions so the ritual of cooking, eating together, and sharing food, and community lunch ,and in the family relationships etc. are badly affected due to the effect of modern food cultural of rural and urban families . In nutshell family based marital lunch have been shifting from home atmosphere to multifaceted restaurants and catering Centre, may adversely influence the senses of togetherness and social sentiments in our cultural systems. Food distribution in marriage and other function is now undertaken by well-trained catering centers and event management groups has been destroying the pleasure and happiness of community cooking by the relatives and friends and the felling of oneness and we-ness which traditionally rooted in our marital and other types of social bondages and interpersonal linkages in the family system. This traditional functions was the epicenter of family bondage, obligations, commitments, sharing of joy and occasional gathering of relatives and friends. Majority 98 % of the respondents remarked that

No doubt rapid emergence of fast food culture in Kerala has reduced different types of family ties as well as social ties by replacing most modern hospitality

and formal type of food distribution and recreational systems .Types of food and way of cooking and distribution by unknown members in family function becoming a common practices resulted breakdown of age old tradition and practices prevailed in our social systems.

These irrational systems evolve beyond the control of people. How much of our lives are already subject to their influence and control we cannot imagine and measure its intensity with any sociological parameters it influence is growing above all controlled magnitude and direction. As these systems expand and develop interdependencies amongst themselves-both nationally and internationally, the possibility of a small number of individuals exercising tremendous control over the people dependent upon the systems becomes increasingly realistic.

### **Efficiency, Calculability, Predictability. Control.**

#### **Efficiency**

Efficiency means the choosing appropriate means to reach a specific end rapidly with the least amount of cost and effort. It is very much related to division of labor. The idea of efficiency is specific to the interests of the industry or business, but is typically advertised as a benefit to the customer. Efficiency is perhaps the dimension of McDonaldization is most often linked to the seeming increase in the pace of contemporary life. Increasing efficiency is behind just-in-time production, faster service, streamlined operations, and tight schedules in workplace, in homes. Efficiency is generally a good connotation to attract the vigorous customer of modern world. It is clearly advantageous to consumers, who are able to obtain what they need more quickly with less effort within stipulated period of time. Similarly, efficient workers are able to perform their tasks more rapidly and easily than the rest. Managers and owners gain more gain from this managerial principle because more work gets done, more customers are served, and greater profits are earned.

*Remarks from a group of professors, (87%) from a A grade college ,efficiency in new generation hotel are very much appreciable , the services and hospitality in such hotels are very systematic and mind-blowing and emotionally synchronized , the*

*employees are d highly qualified in event management courses run by professional institutes and colleges*

But as is the case with McDonaldization process in general, and each of its dimensions, irrationalities such as surprising mal functions and the dehumanization of workers and customers emerge from the drive for increased efficiency. Efficiency means choosing the optimum means to a given end. However, the truly optimum means to an end is rarely found. People and organizations rarely maximize because they are to encounter with factors like economical constrains, organizational realities etc. formal and informal rules and regulation of the firms etc. Nevertheless, organizations continue to strive for maximization in the hope that they will at least increase their efficiency. In a McDonaldized society, people rarely search for the best means to an end on their own; rather than previously discovered and institutionalized means. They are looking for maximum rewards with in limited time with best way of serving styles and new concerns of hospitality.

### **Calculability**

Involves an emphasis on things that can be assessed, calculated, counted, and quantified. Quantification refers to a tendency to emphasize quantity rather than quality. This leads to a sense that quality is equal to large quantities of things." In modern Mac-donaldized enterprises. Another manifestation of Mac-donaldization is the quicker and better results and services. Status, capability and competence are assumed to be related to the number of initials one lists behind one's name or the number of pieces of paper we have hanging on our office walls. McDonaldization also involves calculability: calculating, counting, and quantifying many different things. This calculability has a number of positive consequences, the most important being the ability to produce and to obtain large amounts of things very rap-idly.

Customers in fast-food restaurants get a lot of food quickly; managers and owners get a great deal of work from their employees, and the work is done speedily. However, the emphasis on quantity tends to affect adversely the quality of both the process and the result. For customers, calculability often means eating on the run (hardly a "quality" dining experience) and consuming food that is almost always mediocre. For employees, calculability often means obtaining little or no personal

meaning from their work; therefore, the work, products, and services suffer. Calculability is intertwined with the other dimensions of McDonaldization. For instance, calculability makes it easier to determine efficiency; that is, those steps that take the least time are usually considered the most efficient. Once quantified, products and processes become more predictable because the same amounts of materials or time are used from one place or time period to another.

Crucial to any discussion of calculability in contemporary society is the impact of the computer. The proliferation of personal computers allows more of us to do more calculations with increasing speed. Many aspects of today's quantity-oriented society could not exist, or would need to be greatly modified, were it not for the modern computer. Although society undoubtedly was already moving toward increased calculability before computer technology advanced to its current level, computers have greatly expedited and extended that tendency.

### **Predictability**

Predictability refers to the attempt to structure our environment so that surprise and differentness do not encroach upon our sensibilities. Rational people need to know what to expect. They want to be sure that the fun, satisfaction, taste, and benefits and verities.

*For a group of professors and a house wives, in modern industries mixing up of different verities of food is a common practice, which resulted in readymade food with different taste. In future it could be a common practices in other strata of the societies Now days multi cuisine restaurants are very capable of preparing readymade food.in modern family prepares the combination "Dosa and pista" ie "doseetha" to inculcate the eating habits of more vegetables and fruits in their menus . In preparing "put" a traditional food of Kerala, usually we intermix certain cut lite in between it , in such a way we intermix European and Kerala food together which leads to a changing food habits among our families. We cannot completely believe that our traditional food like "Vada" and "samosa" are healthy and safe, basically the ingredients we use for its preparation are sometimes contaminated with cumulative poison and other unhealthy substances. We have to make sure that the basic ingredients of food must be safe, predictable and with maximum efficiency and suitable for coping with Indian culture. Intermixing of modern food culture is basis of the new food industries. Usage of food additives are not only in in*

*multi cuisine restaurants but also Indian traditional restaurants. Nowadays Chinese milk and egg are commonly available in Indian markets rather than checking the purity of such chemically made synthetic ingredients we still revolves around the question of purity of our hotel foods. We should propagate the habit of organic farming utilizing our indigenous resources and household labor.*

## **Control**

Control represents specifically, replacement of human by nonhuman technology is often oriented towards greater achievements. In modern food processing industries everything is pre-packaged, pre-measured, automatically controlled. The human employee is not required to think, just follow the instructions and push a button now and then. At home, our ovens and probes tell us when our food is done, seasoning is premixed, or the meal comes complete in one convenient package. Checkers at the supermarket don't have to think either, just scan the barcode (we've already weighed and labeled the produce). "The next step in this development is to have the customer do the scanning," (Ritzer 1994:150). The scanners are replacing the checkers, but they also allow for more control over the customer; prices are no longer on the items we buy so we have less ability to oversee our spending and the accuracy of the store's charges. We accept the "infallibility" of the computerized check-out. Replacement of human by technical based labor in this transformation process the human labor is displaced or controlled by the modern technologies and appliances.

In Kerala the intermixing of western and traditional food and technologies are replacing traditional human technologies in to non-human. In some of the middle and upper middle class families practices of mixture of Indian and European food and drinks are very common. This cultural intermixing in food resulted new food industries in rural areas also which adversely influencing traditionally determined interpersonal relationships and occupational structure in rural areas. For example in marriage and all other family based functions, event management and formal organizations and some catering groups are in charge of preparation and



distribution of food with professional and using technology and modern appliances and styles.

## Conclusion

Mac-donaldization in Kerala context has lot of significance in modern Kerala society .as a sociocultural force it has been reconstructing the food habits of rural and urban people. In our social structure the traditional concern of food, cuisine system, cooking serving and consumption has a dramatic change due to some internal and external force in the last few decades , in efficiency the modern multicuisine hotels has high efficiency in technology used for food preparation ,billing and serving and hospitality but it also it leads to the replacement and displacement of traditional hotel based labor force. in predictability concerns we can have more accessibility and availability of most modern European and Chinese food item to our towns and villages . In calculability and control multicuisine restaurants have high degree of productivity than the native one, in sociologically mac-donaldization and corresponding process has dramatic effect on the traditional food habits of Kerala society by providing intermixing food items and eating styles. In nutshell as a socio- psychological and cultural process is been reconstructing the age old interpersonal and intra-personal relationships based on marriage and other types of rural and urban transactions by replacing formal, organized managerial principles and strategies . To prevent and inculcate the value of Safe food, we should propagate the habit of organic farming by utilizing our own household energy and resources .It might be the first step to prevent food adulteration and contamination. In irrationality of rationality level sociological analysis are very essential and we should follow the European style of anti-adulteration programs and farming systems in European countries they have proper scrutinizing mechanism and have key invigilators in framing and food processing sector, but in Kerala such strong mechanism are ineffective and corrupted .we need safe food but our rationality should be re-formulated and re-socialized.

## Reference

1. Chalmers, J.WHO-ISH Hypertension Guidelines Committee. Technical report Series 628.1999. Guidelines for the Management of Hypertension. J Hypertens. 1999.17:151-185.

2. Campbell NRC, Burgess E, Taylor, G. Lifestyle changes to prevent and control hypertension: Do they work. *Can Med Assoc J.* 1999.160(9):1341-3
3. Key TJ, Allen NE, Spencer EA. 2002. The effect of diet on risk of cancer. *Lancet.* 360:861–8.
4. Knowler WC, Barrett-Connor E, Fowler SE, Hamman RF, Lachin JM, Walker EA, et al. Reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes with lifestyle intervention or metformin. *N Engl J Med* 2002; 346 : 393-403.
5. Lichtenstein P, Holm NV, Verkasalo PK. 2000. Environmental and heritable factors in the causation of cancer. *N Engl J Med.* 343:78–85.
6. Pappachan JM, Chacko EC, Arunagirinathan G, Sriraman R. 12. Management of hypertension and diabetes in obesity: non-pharmacological measures. *Int J Hypertens* 2011 March 22: doi:10.4061/2011/398065.
7. Peto R and Lopez AD. 1990. Worldwide mortality from current smoking pattern. In: Durston B, Jamrozik K, eds. *Tobacco and Health 1990: The Global War.* Perth: Health Department of Western Australia. 66–8.
8. Sobra J, Ceska R. 1992. Diseases of civilization from the aspect of evolution of the human diet. *Cas Lek Cesk.* 131:193–7.
9. WHO/World Economic Forum report. 2008. Preventing non communicable diseases in the workplace through diet and physical activity:. ISBN 978 92 4 159632 9.
10. World Health Report. 2002. Reducing risks, promoting Healthy Life. Geneva. World Health Organization, pp. 7-14.
11. WHO. 2005. Preventing chronic diseases: a vital investment. Geneva.
12. Zöllner N. 1990. The relevance of diet for civilization diseases, especially atherosclerosis. *Wien Med Wochenschr Suppl.* 106:S11–2.