

Living in an adopted culture, I know chances are good that the food we consume today is quite different from what our forebears had on their dinner plate. Food and water are important to sustain life and to meet our body's basic needs for growth, development, and function.

However, do we really know what it is that we are eating nowadays? How healthy and sustainable are the lifestyles that we lead today? Some of us are apprehensive about the inevitable changes in our food habits, while some of us have already consciously started to make a change, while even others are still ignorant about the situation.

Originally in India, farming was the only prevalent profession. Farming was for self-sustenance and the farmers respected the soil. Hence the farming methods exercised by the people were unintentionally sustainable. The methods embraced farming practices that mimicked natural ecological processes. When did we lose this system?

During the 1960s India went through an era of the Green Revolution where the chemical-industrial model of agriculture was adopted. The Green Revolution was the need of the time then to fulfill the food requirements of the growing population and to become self-sufficient. This system, with its reliance on monoculture, mechanization, chemical pesticides and fertilizers, biotechnology, and government subsidies, has made food abundant and affordable. However, the ecological and social price has been steep: erosion, depleted and contaminated soil and water resources, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, labour abuses, and the decline of the family farm.

Growing up in a farm, I was always only exposed to food that was healthy and natural and grown on the farm. But as I moved to the city, I had to naturally shift my eating habits to accommodate the city lifestyle. Every time I have chicken on my plate, I consume it knowing that they are not chickens anymore; they are just Hormone-infused pretentious chickens, thanks to the industrialization of food production and procurement.

Eating habits of people have changed drastically so that it can no more be ignored.

When I was a kid I used to spend my time outdoors, climbing, plucking and eating fruits from the trees. My father would tell me to eat all the fruits that I wanted leaving the last two for the birds. This attitude of my father towards the environment he lived in benefited me as I still live in an environment with an abundant presence of birds.

« Human beings engage their own futures » (Appadurai, 2001).

Making the right choices not only benefits us but also the world that we live in today and the future generations.

Theorize through collaborative and situated making

To push a theoretical understanding of the capacity to aspire and cognitive behaviour to understand the food cultures of collectives living in the city and on a farm, understand and strengthen their capacity to aspire and provoke them to speculatively aspire to a desirable alternate future. My final output would be the co-creation of two future food cultures in urban and rural areas and a comparative analysis of their contrasts, patterns and tensions that are rooted in their individual cultures.

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