



Temporality and Spatiality of Food: How Community Kitchens Write Food Narratives Amidst Pandemics

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Abstract

Food often causes recollections of the past by which a historical consciousness is created. The Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown in India that followed it saw the rise of community kitchens in the state of Kerala, organized by the state government and other organizations. A Community Kitchen is a name given to a group of people who prepare and share healthy meals with people, at an inexpensive rate. Taking the case of Kerala as an example, this paper will look at how physical places where food is prepared and shared are filled with food memories and become a factor in the creation of people's cultural memories. It will look at how communities react to the stigma caused by a pandemic in the form of mobilization through food. The paper will study how food forms the basis of the shared experience and collective memory of the lockdown and the pandemic. It will do a holistic culinary analysis of how food becomes a mediator between public history and personal memory by becoming an 'edible memory', where food leads to actions that create cultural memories. Other aspects that the paper will study include the questions of how food, and memories associated with it creates a poly temporality, and how a food system created and driven by politics and the government construct the way in which a pandemic is remembered as a historical event.

Keywords: Community Kitchen, Food, Memory, History, Pandemic.