

Joint Event

World Congress on

BIOAVAILABILITY & BIOEQUIVALENCE: BA/BE STUDIES SUMMIT

International Conference on
FOOD & BEVERAGES

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August 06-07, 2018 | Tokyo, Japan

Traditional fermented beverages of North Western Himalayan region

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Fermentation is one of the oldest methods for the preservation of food. It has the advantage of being generally regarded as safe (GRAS) and offer immense opportunities for production of novel products which can be classified as “organic foods”, “natural foods”, “health foods”, “functional foods”, and foods for clinical nutrition. Production of food products such as wine, beer, bread, yogurt, cheese and pickle by fermentation constitutes most ancient technologies develop by man to improve the quality and storage life of food materials from time immemorial. The art of fermentation practiced by common man continue in spite of scientific and technology revolution but largely remained confined to rural or tribal areas due to high cost of inaccessibility of the industry made products in remote areas, taste of the people for the traditional fermented products and finally, there socio cultural linkages with such products. In western Himalayan regions the traditional fermented beverages form an important constituent of stable diet of the people. The traditional methods of preparing Indigenous beverages are simple and inexpensive. India has a rich knowledge

of traditional fermented beverages prepared from milk (dahi, butter milk, lassi) and fruits. In North western Himalayan region especially Himachal Pradesh different traditional beverages are still being prepared and those include *likarak/ghanti* prepared using chulli, apple, pear etc., *angoori*, *Lungri*, and *sur*. Traditional starter cultures like Malera and Treh are used as starter culture inoculums in making these fermented beverages. However, in some of the products natural microflora is also used as a source of inoculum. Further, the ancient methods of making such foods are changing rapidly through modern microbiology. In recent years much interest has been generated in foods of Asian and African countries including India where such foods being manufactured according to the traditional but technologically less advanced methods at cottage scale by means of natural micro flora. So, in present review an attempt has been made to present the available information on different aspects of the traditional beverages. Marrying modern science with traditional food products is a vital necessity for the future of these nutritionally rich fermented food products.

Biography

Somesh Sharma is an alumnus of Dr. Y.S.Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni Solan, HP India. He is currently working as Associate Professor in School of Bioengineering and Food Technology, Shoolini University. His chief interests lie in food processing, food fermentation, food industry waste utilization, Post-harvest management of horticultural crops for sustainable development of rural population residing in Western Himalayan region. Another important contribution and achievement is the development of complete technology for the utilization of persimmon fruits for production of functional beverage. During last seven years he has filled 11 patents related to development of various kinds of fruit and vegetable based products and waste utilization.

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