Religion, Caste, and Nutrition of India

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4 pages

1 works cited page
diet) is one of the cornerstones of their society and helps to shape them into what it
is possible for them to become. (Punctuation Problem: always two spaces after sentence) In nutritional anthropology we
study the dietary development of both current and past cultures to learn more about them,
including the crops (Proofreading Problem: something broke down here) produced daily meals, class
differences, extent of agricultural and technological advancement, trade routes, and the extent of
the cultures reach. India is (you have no antecedent for "one such") one such country with a wide variety of cultural and religious
customs that dictate the diets of (Possessive Problem: doubly screwed up with double
apostrophes) it's' (Possessive Problem: shouldn't be possessive here and the construction is extremely awkward) people's. In this paper (who is "we"? I'm looking for a simple formulation: The purpose of this paper is . . . ) we will discuss the diets and associated cultural and religious practices of India including populations, caste differences, and medicinal and nutritional consequences of the various diets (you do realize that you couldn't do this topic justice in 100 pages? You need to focus on a much smaller aspect of Indian diet.).
The first point is to discuss the populations that we will be talking about in this paper, the Indian people. In India the population is divided up according to a hierarchical system into five castes, the highest the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, the Shudras, and the lowest the Dalits (Maloney, 1975). Caste is determined at birth and can not be changed. It also determines much of what your life will be like. The Brahmans are the elites of the population and are normally seen as priests, scholars, and philosophers. The Kshatriyas are the second highest caste and...
are the rulers, warriors, and those who run the country's government. The third caste is the Vaishyas who are the traders, the merchants, and the agriculturalists. The lowest caste is the Shudras who are the servants and laborers for all the other castes. But beneath even the Shudra are the Dalit, the Untouchables, who belong to no caste at all and performed the most menial and degrading of tasks. The Dalit are viewed similarly to the burakumin of Japan.

(Proofreading Problem) ion both the jobs they do and the attitudes in which they are viewed (this comparison to Japan adds no information for those of us raised outside Japan.) (need to focus this on diet—give only the background necessary to understand the nutritional anthropology points you're trying to make.)

Gender is also a point in that while it is a mostly male dominated society there are a few exceptions to the rule. One being that certain positions or religious affinities
(Subject-Verb Agreement Error) does place some women above men; these include becoming a priestess, a medium, or attaining a special place in a high ranking (Proofreading Problem) person company.

(Awkward sentence) Priestesses and mediums allow for the communication with the gods, goddess and the dead. Also it is interesting to note that if a woman is of a higher caste she is considered more important person. (this has no bearing on the paper)

(Ponderous Construction) The next point to discuss

(Proofreading Problem: missing a verb) the diets unique or attributed to each caste and to see if those diets differ during certain events, festivals, or religious practices. One of the first things to consider is the concepts of Karma and purity and what it means in India (this sounds like a possible focus for your paper—see what you can do with these concepts and
nutritional anthropology.) In India karma is the cycle of life where your actions in not only this life but all previous lives (Subject-Verb Agreement Error) is taken into account and (Subject-Verb Agreement Error) determines into what form you will spend (Proofreading Problem) your next life. The Laws of Manu are the guidelines that were published (when? Based on what? Elaborate!!!! Be specific!!!!) telling what was (this is a less used and less formal spelling—use all right, or better yet, rephrase it entirely) alright and what was not alright to eat among the people (so what are these rules?) (Doniger, 1999). Purity refers to how clean or unclean (Possessive Problem) ones soul is.
Proofreading Problem: your sentences are extremely awkward and frequently missing words that might make them understandable. Good proofreading would catch these problems.)

found at any given time and is associated with ritual cleanliness of the body and is influenced by what we eat and touch (Confusing Sentence). The higher up in the caste system that you look the more fixated on purity the individuals become. Pollution by touch can be resolved with a bath and a change of clothes but consuming something other than what is a part of a dietary code for their caste would require purification rites and fines. The food that a person eats, avoids, and accepts can tell much about that person including their caste and gender (Appadurai, 1981) (Critically Review Sources)

Unsupported Assertion) (Use Your Data: how well do people keep to these
rules? What is the cultural and nutritional and ecological [Harris' sacred cow analysis?] context?) Among all the caste layers the cow is sacred and is not to be harmed and (Proofreading Problem considered impure if eaten). The products produced by the cow, milk and [not comma] for a two-item list, ghee, (though) can be consumed and are considered very good for you, even the feces and urine is considered sacred to the people, beef is never consumed (Doniger, 1999) (Confusing Sentence: run-on sentence) (Unsupported Assertion: what data are these generalizations based on?) Meats are restricted due to the fact that they were obtained through violence and death (Unsupported Assertion) (Use Your
Data. Completely raw foods that are uncooked or freshly picked are not considered
polluted and can be given and accepted no matter the caste, as well as toasted or parched foods
(Indian Child, 2000 (unrefereed source)).

The (Possessive Problem) Brahman’s are

(Meaningless Qualifier) almost strictly vegetarian since they are

the (Proofreading Problem purist) of the castes and do not wish
to pollute themselves with the meat (Use Your Data: what
percent are vegetarian—what kinds of
vegetarians, etc.). Kshatriyas do eat non (Possessive

Problem: just non-vegetarian [frequently
referred to as omnivorous meals]) vegetarian's
meals including eggs and fish and high protein meals and consume alcohol in line with their
warrior image (Use Your Data: how many do?)
How often? How important to nutritional status? Vaishyas and Shudras also eat a more regular diet of meat than the higher casts, but that is not to say that they all do (Use Your Data: how many do, how many don't, how important is this to nutrition in India?) since many do abstain in order to increase their purity so as to gain a better Karma. (Possessive Problem: you obviously misunderstand the difference between possessive and plural—need to do some remedial work on the concepts) Brahman's do not eat food that is not prepared by other (Possessive Problem) Brahman's because it is considered unclean and even a shadow touching the food is considered pollution but the lower castes will gratefully eat food that comes from a Brahman.
My third point is that of the medicinal and nutritional aspects of the Indian diet. The traditional Indian diet that consisted of course grains and fresh fruits and nuts (Unsupported Assertion: how do you know this?) was healthy and with the large amount of exercise they received daily through work leaving them fit they had low rates of obesity, coronary heart disease, and certain cancers (Confusing Sentence: need to write in short declarative statements to reduce the chance for grammatical error and clarity). But these rates have been increasing along with the continued urbanization and the break from traditional foods (Unsupported Assertion: what data
support this contention?) (Sinha, (Cite Sources: et al.) Anderson, McDonald, and Greenwald, 2004). The vegetarian diets of many of the people of India are associated with low rates of several types of cancer (This is interesting stuff, but if you treat the diet and nutrition material correctly you won't have any time to think about this "third point." Or focus on this issue, but you need to do adequate research on some point so that you can provide actual data to draw your conclusions from.). Many of the spices and seasonings used in traditional Indian dishes are also healthier for the people, Turmeric especially has been shown to both prevent and stop the appearance and growth of tumors.
(Unsupported Assertion) (Sinha et al., 2004). A study on the body mass index of males in Northeast India showed that though there were differences in the measurements taken, the environmental and genetic factors played a large role in that difference, the men were seen as lean and muscular with a low center of gravity and their health was equal to that of soldiers in the UK (Khongsdier, 2001) (Confusing Sentence: short, declarative statements! And I'm not at all clear on what this has to do with your main points—it just kind of jumps in to the paper with no warning!).

Another study was done on preschool children to determine LBM (lean body mass) and if there was any gender differences. The children tested all came from similar backgrounds and had signs of stunted growth and being underweight (what was the cause of
this malnutrition?). It was found that the boys were less stunted and underweight than the girls and that the LBM increased in boys but decreased with girls as they aged (Critically Review Sources)

(Unsupported Assertion) (Use Your Data). Shaikh suggests that this is evidence of hidden deprivation of female children (Cite Sources) (gender differences would be a great topic for a paper on Indian nutritional anthropology, too!).

India's wide array of cultural and religious practices that dictate (Pronoun Problem: no antecedent) their diet may seem like quite a large hassle to us but to them it is just the way things are. (now it's I not we!)

(Ponderous Construction I am not saying) that all of India
follows these practices, since they are more traditional than some modern businessmen wish to deal with but even they still hold to some of their cultural upbringing. This paper has shown that the Indian diet is complex and greatly depends upon ones social status and beliefs to be able to determine what is safe for them to eat and what might pollute them. The various diets and cultural practices concerning India’s populations and castes and the medical and nutritional importance of them is something that I hope will be explored in greater detail at a later date.

(Your conclusion will have to be completely rewritten based on what you choose to focus the paper on. See how to handle the elements of the Discussion in the Suggested Outline.)
Works Cited


(is this a refereed source?)


