



DNA of Mo:Mo: The Evolution, Identity, and Globalisation of Nepal's Dumpling

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Abstract

Food transcends sustenance, reflecting memory, migration, identity, and cultural expression. Dumplings exemplify culinary diversity, with Mo:Mo from Nepal being a key focus. This study delves into Momo's historical roots, cultural significance, wellness aspects, and global presence, advocating for its recognition as Nepal's national dish and a candidate for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, highlighting its importance as both a culinary and cultural symbol. This research is based on a narrative literature review tracing the evolution of dumplings from Zhang Zhongjing's medicinal jiaozi in ancient China, through Tibetan Mog, to contemporary Nepali Mo:Mo. This historical trajectory highlights the adaptation of dumpling culture across diverse geographical, climatic, and socio-cultural environments, illustrating processes of culinary transformation and localisation.

The findings suggest that Mo:Mo has transcended its identity as a simple food item to become a powerful marker of social cohesion, cultural identity, and national pride in Nepal. Its influence extends beyond the Kathmandu Valley, with Mo:Mo now widely consumed by Nepali diaspora communities in cities such as Delhi, New York, and London, where it serves as both a culinary link to home and a symbol of cultural continuity. The study highlights the broader implications of Mo:Mo's cultural "DNA" for tourism development, hospitality industries, and cultural heritage institutions. It also emphasises Mo:Mo's growing global presence, suggesting the need for stronger cultural policy frameworks to support the preservation of food heritage and promote its recognition in international cultural and tourism sectors.

Keywords: *DNA of Mo:Mo, evaluation, globalisation, identity, Mo:Mo, Nepal's dumping*

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Introduction

Dumplings, a fundamental culinary creation, appear in different global cuisines under different names and styles, uniting the concept of food enveloped in dough. In Nepal, Mo:Mo is more than just food; it is an important part of the culture found in many places, from school canteens to fancy restaurants, and is known worldwide for its deep emotional relationship. This article explores the distinguishing characteristics of Mo:Mo, in contrast to similar dumplings such as Chinese jiaozi and Korean Mandu, and analyses its historical evolution, cultural significance, and global dissemination. Rather than being a fixed recipe, Mo:Mo is depicted as a dynamic repository of history and identity, tracing its journey from Tibetan origins to becoming a national icon of Nepal, integral to Newar cultural ceremonies and thriving in diasporic contexts.

Problem Statement

The Mo:Mo, a renowned Nepali dumpling influenced by Tibetan cuisine, is a symbol of cultural evolution and globalisation. Baral and Adhikaril (2024) and Pathak (2024) indicate that research on the historical context, symbolic significance, and global spread of Mo:Mo is limited. Moreover, the analysis of regional differences and the strategies employed to succeed in both domestic and international markets, particularly concerning authenticity and cultural integration, is insufficient (Sharma, Srinivasan & Singh, 2023; Ravintola Gurkha, 2024).

Consequently, the above mentioned lack of research hinders a comprehensive understanding of Mo:Mo's function in expressing Nepal's narrative of tradition, modernity, and globalisation. The future study, "DNA of Mo:Mo," seeks to address the above mentioned gaps by examining Mo:Mo's evolution and cultural significance.

Aims and Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the cultural, historical, and global importance of Mo:Mo as a representation of Nepal's dynamic culinary identity. The future examination chronicles the historical evolution of Mo:Mo, beginning

with its inception and the subsequent cultural exchanges that facilitated its transformation from a localized delicacy to a national symbol of Nepalese culinary tradition. This study specifically focused on Mo:Mo's contribution to the construction of Nepalese cultural identity globally.

This study explored how this reflects societal values and traditions, and how it balances authenticity and innovation within the country's food culture. Furthermore, this study examined the global expansion of Mo:Mo, focusing on its commercialisation, migration patterns, and increasing international appeal, and how the above mentioned elements have influenced its form, significance, and portrayal within the context of Nepal.

Literature

Localisation and Cultural Adaptation

Within the Kathmandu Valley, the historical backdrop of trade and cultural interchange profoundly shaped the development of food, specifically the Mo:Mo dumpling, which was brought from Tibet during the late old-fashioned era (Lakshminarasimhan, 2017).

The Newar civilisation's adaptation of Mo:Mo reflected their culinary principles, which emphasised equilibrium and symbolic significance, thereby altering the Tibetan dumpling into a lighter version that resonated with Nepali palates (Raven & Slusser, 1984). By the mid-twentieth century, Mo:Mo had become integral to Nepal's Bhatti culture, where informal pub venues served Mo:Mo alongside Raski, a traditional alcoholic drink, and Sitan, which are small side dishes (Lewis, 2000). Bhattis function as social spaces that foster community interaction through food; in this setting, Mo:Mo functions as a communal dish that promotes sharing, conversation, and storytelling among patrons, mirroring the role of tapas in Spanish cuisine or pubs in England (Liechty, 2003).

Mo:Mos, once a ceremonial delicacy, found their way into the hearts and hands of the masses, thanks in part to Ranjana Cinema (RC) Mo:Mo, a pioneering establishment in Kathmandu. The

eatery's reasonable prices and speedy service were key to making the dumpling a favourite among the city's diverse population. As a result, the Mo:Mo was no longer just something people made at home or for special occasions; it became a popular snack in urban Nepal. The strength in Mo:Mo stalls created jobs and fueled the expansion of small enterprises. Mo:Mo, now affordable for students and workers alike, became a part of everyday life. By the late twentieth century, it had achieved what few foods manage: universal appeal across economic lines (Baral, 2024).

Expansion and Globalisation

Mo:Mo in the Nepali Diaspora explores the cultural and culinary significance of Mo:Mo, particularly among Nepalis seeking employment and educational opportunities abroad. Originally brought to street markets in cities such as Delhi by Nepali and Tibetan communities, Mo:Mo has become a staple in the culinary culture of Northeast India, with numerous Indians now considering it a part of their own cuisine (Malik, Juneja & Babu, 2023). For those who have migrated, Mo:Mo represents more than just sustenance; it serves as a tangible relationship to their homeland, and its preparation abroad is a crucial practice for maintaining cultural identity.

Global adoption highlights Mo:Mo's expanding footprint in the global food scene. Festivals in cities like London and New York showcase a wide array of Mo:Mo styles, from the classic recipes to inventive takes. This transformation positions Mo:Mo as both an exotic and readily available dish, thereby illustrating the processes of culinary globalisation (Baral, 2024). The Mo:Mo Mission examines the dish's potential to cultivate connections between the economy, agriculture, and tourism sectors.

Mo:Mo can bolster organic farming initiatives for essential ingredients, encourage sustainable local food production, and serve as a cultural attraction through workshops, festivals, and Agro-tourism circuits (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Additionally, Global Mo:Mo Festivals can act as diplomatic tools, enhancing cultural ties and national identity abroad. Proposing a National

and International Mo:Mo Day, especially around Yomari Punhi, could formalize and enhance its cultural prominence and international recognition identity, Health, and Heritage (Putra, 2021)

Distinctive Features of Mo:Mo

Mo:Mo's cultural and culinary identity is characterised by four key elements: achar, or sauce, is indispensable, functioning as a primary ingredient rather than a mere accompaniment; its versatility accommodates a range of fillings, thus appealing to varied palates; it transcends class boundaries, being embraced by all societal strata; and its circular form signifies unity and harmony, reflecting a sense of community; (Baral & Adhikari, 2024). The sustained appeal of Mo:Mo can be attributed to its adaptability; this is evident in the integration of modern trends, including gluten-free wrappers, vegan fillings, and fusion variations such as tandoori Mo:Mos, which illustrate a dynamic interplay between traditional culinary techniques and contemporary innovations (Carney, 2008).

Steaming Mo:Mos offers a more healthful alternative to frying, given nutritional considerations; the fillings provide a well-rounded blend of proteins and carbohydrates, and the spices incorporated into achar promote digestive well-being and bolster the immune system, reflecting its roots in Chinese medicinal practices. Given the contemporary focus on superfoods, Mo:Mo emerges as a traditional yet health-aware option, competing internationally with Mediterranean diets and sushi, while also preserving its cultural importance (Tompkins, 2019). Therefore, Mo:Mo deserves to be recognised as Nepal's national dish, much like pizza represents Italy or sushi represents Japan. This recognition would then boost tourism and encourage a sense of national pride.

Mo:Mo's classification as a traditional, community-based practice, which is significant but at risk due to globalisation, aligns with UNESCO's criteria. This helps to preserve its cultural practices for future generations (Mintz, 1986).

Mo:Mo in the Nepali Diaspora

Within the Nepali diaspora, Mo:Mo, a traditional Nepali dumpling, has become a significant

symbol of culinary identity. As Nepalis pursued employment and education abroad, they introduced Mo:Mo to new locales, contributing to its widespread acceptance in international cities such as Delhi, London, and New York, where it has been featured at many food festivals. This culinary phenomenon reflects cultural continuity, transforming Mo:Mo not just into a dish but into a cherished symbol of home and comfort (Appadurai, 1988). Mo:Mo stands out, in part, because it is always served with achar, a sauce that elevates the flavour and highlights the variety of fillings it can hold.

Mo:Mo transcends class divides, is enjoyed by all social groups, and its round shape symbolises unity and harmony in Nepali culture (Brah, 2005). The dish's evolution is ongoing, incorporating contemporary preferences through inventive adaptations, such as gluten-free and vegan alternatives (Raven & Slusser, 1984). From a nutritional standpoint, the steamed version of Mo:Mo is a healthier option than fried alternatives, providing a balance of proteins and carbohydrates that reflects its Nepali culinary roots. The possibility of its designation as Nepal's national dish, on par with pizza's status in Italy, is significant; furthermore, it could be recognised as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage to preserve its traditions amid the pressures of globalisation.

Mo:Mo's genesis can be traced to the Kathmandu Valley, a historical nexus of Tibetan and Indian culinary traditions, where the Newar culture adapted the dish, incorporating thinner dough and fragrant fillings. In Nepal, the evolution of Mo:Mo has been substantial, emerging as a favoured dish among urban migrants and a common offering in local establishments, thereby reflecting social interactions and strengthening communal ties (Liechty, 2003).

Achar embodies Mo:Mo's distinctive flavour, incorporating spices and tomatoes indicative of Nepal's historical trade routes. The significance of Mo:Mo as a food that bridges modern and historical contexts is further reinforced by its presence in both contemporary celebrations and traditional feasts. Consequently, Mo:Mo distinguishes itself from other international dumpling varieties through

its cultural modifications and the indispensable presence of achar, thereby positioning it as a culinary fusion uniquely rooted in Nepali tradition (Gray, 2017).

The RC Mo:Mo Legacy in Kathmandu

Several key strategies facilitated RC Mo:Mo's ascent to national prominence. These included ensuring accessibility through student-friendly, affordable pricing, establishing visibility through strategically chosen locations in high-traffic areas, and maintaining a consistent standard of dependable, comforting service. Furthermore, by integrating cultural branding elements, such as pairing Mo:Mo with traditional achar and Raksi, RC Mo:Mo solidified its position as an emblem of Nepali culture (Darbar, 2025). Consequently, it evolved from a simple food vendor into a cultural institution, as demonstrated by the widespread use of the phrase "Let us go to RC for Mo:Mo" in everyday conversation (Raven & Slusser, 1984; Liechty, 2003).

Mo:Mo in India

The Mo:Mo phenomenon subsequently spread beyond Nepal, gaining traction in India, especially in urban centers such as Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore. Its popularity surged as street stalls proliferated and established chains like WOW! expanded. Mo:Mo first appeared in 2008. The brand grew quickly, focusing on consistency, new ideas, and appealing to the aspirations of the middle class. What started as a specialised ethnic food became a popular snack, going head-to-head with burgers and pizzas (Baral & Adhikari, 2024). The diaspora also played a role in Mo:Mo's expansion. Communities across the globe set up stalls and festivals to showcase the dish. Its journey reflects that of dumplings found in other cultures, highlighting its significance as both a cultural icon and a marketable item.

Today, Mo:Mo has evolved into a significant ecosystem, impacting both livelihoods and urban economies, thereby becoming a fundamental aspect of everyday existence and a representation of culinary accessibility.

Diaspora Mo:Mo Economies

Mo:Mo's accessibility has expanded significantly among Nepali diaspora communities internationally. In the UK, the US, and Australia, migrants have established Mo:Mo stalls and restaurants, serving as both economic ventures and cultural representations. Annual events, such as the "Mo:Mo Crawl" in Jackson Heights, New York, attract thousands of attendees, who can sample dumplings from Nepali, Tibetan, and Bhutanese vendors. Consequently, those events effectively transform into diaspora food festivals, providing financial support to immigrant communities (Appadurai, 1988).

In 2025, Mo:Mo received accolades at London's National Geographic Traveler Food Festival, sharing the spotlight with international favourites such as Tacos and Ramen, thereby solidifying its reputation as a global culinary representative (Putra, 2021). Furthermore, Himalayan festivals in cities like Sydney and Melbourne feature Mo:Mo prominently. Nepali migrants showcase a blend of classic and innovative offerings, and their stalls consistently draw crowds, often becoming the centrepiece of those events. Those diaspora Mo:Mo economies, in essence, demonstrate how this basic dumpling has developed into a significant transnational enterprise and a representation of cultural interaction (Sassen, 2001).

Comparative Insights

The "Democratisation of Dumplings Worldwide" discusses the globalisation of various dumpling types, highlighting their evolution from niche specialties to universally accessible foods. The analysis focuses on several case studies: Chinese Baozi, which changed from a temple food to a common breakfast in China; Khinkali, originally a shepherd's dish in Georgia that became a symbol of national cuisine; Pelmeni, which evolved from a Siberian staple to a widely available frozen food across the Soviet Union; Pierogi, once a holiday food in Poland that is now eaten regularly worldwide; and Gyoza, adapted from Chinese origins to become a popular dish in Japan and elsewhere (Timothy & Pena, 2015).

The analysis emphasises that, similar to those

dumplings, the Mo:Mo brand follows this trajectory of democratisation, marked by its swift and widespread appeal and its unique position as both a traditional heritage item and a contemporary street food (Gray, 2017). Today, Mo:Mo has evolved beyond a simple meal; it has become a thriving economic ecosystem.

The Mo:Mo supply chain encompassed the provision of vegetables, spices, and meat for its fillings; retailing from roadside carts, stalls, and restaurants; exporting food delivery applications in Kathmandu, where Mo:Mo consistently ranked as the most frequently ordered item, surpassing pizza and burgers; thereby illustrating Mo:Mo's contribution to livelihoods, urban economies, and global trade. Its widespread availability represents a democratisation that is both cultural and significantly economic (Koleth, 2010).

Symbolic Impact: from Special Occasion to Everyday Life

The genuine democratisation of Mo:Mo is evident in its symbolic evolution. Initially associated with Newar ritual feasts, Mo:Mo has now become a commonplace snack, consumed at bus stops, college canteens, and late-night taverns. It has integrated into daily life, accessible to individuals across all socioeconomic classes, age groups, and geographical locations. This transformation exemplifies what food anthropologists term culinary democratisation: the process by which a dish transcends the constraints of ritual, geography, and class to achieve status as a universal staple.

Mo:Mo has achieved this in record time, making it one of the most successful democratised foods in the world, comparable to pizza in Italy or tacos in Mexico. The study's findings demonstrate that Mo:Mo is a living cultural product that has evolved due to diffusion, localisation, and globalisation. The study confirms prior research (e.g., Baral, & Adhikari, 2024; Rai & Tamang, 2016) that Mo:Mo has evolved from a Tibetan dumpling into an essential component of Nepali identity. However, by characterising Mo:Mo as "cultural DNA" and focusing on how it varies, adapts, and replicates across social and cultural contexts, this study contributes to the corpus of current research.

Methodology

This study examined the "DNA of Mo:Mo" in terms of its historical development, cultural identity, and globalisation through a qualitative literature review. For summarising current knowledge and identifying research needs in new or understudied areas, a literature review approach is suitable (Creswell, 2014).

Research Methods

The study's narrative and integrative review methodologies enable the interpretation and comparison of results from a variety of sources, including scholarly publications, books, and reliable internet resources. This method works especially well for interdisciplinary and cultural studies that call for both historical and modern viewpoints (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Sources of Data and Selection Standards

The main sources of the data were peer-reviewed journal papers, scholarly publications and theses, reputable websites, and institutional publications. The relevant literature was chosen using a purposive sample technique. The inclusion criteria involved research on Nepali food, Mo:Mo, or dumplings; studies focusing on globalisation, cultural identity, or culinary legacy; and publications with a solid theoretical and methodological foundation, and to ensure dependability, irrelevant, redundant, or non-scholarly sources were eliminated (Babbie, 2020).

Analyzing Data

Qualitative content analysis was used to examine the empirical literature, identifying important themes such as historical roots and evolution, symbolism and identity in cultures, and the impact of globalisation and diaspora. This procedure enabled the study to analyse trends and connections across many settings and eras.

Results

Table 1. Summary of the Previous Studies

Authors and Years	Sources of Journals	Objectives	Research methods	Key Results	Research Gaps
Baral and Adhikari (2024).	OCEM Journal	To explore how Momo has become globally popular and culturally significant	The survey method	Momo is positioned as a cultural icon of Nepal, with Tibetan and Newari origins; its adaptations (variations in filling, form, and context) foster cultural pride and enable its global spread.	Focus is relatively descriptive; lacks empirical fieldwork (consumer interviews, global market data); limited attention to identity among diaspora, or deeper historical sociology.
Tamang (2025).	London, Routledge (book)	To explore the emergence of Himalayan culinary traditions in the United Kingdom, highlighting how migration patterns and the use of cultural capital have shaped catering enterprises.		The results show that the younger generation reinterprets traditions, creating hybrid dishes influenced by diverse global cuisines. Together, these evolving practices of cooking, adaptation, and presentation function as forms of placemaking, generating new expressions of cultural heritage within the diaspora.	Limited literature on Nepalese Momo, the review method, and knowledge gaps in the literature.
Tamang (2015).		To trace the heritage of Momo in Nepal and its evolution.	Narrative/secondary-source review	Momo roots can be traced to Tibetan influence via Newar merchants; the Newari version, "Momo-cha," emerged. This has led to regional diversity in Nepal, where Momo is now a symbol of Nepali culture and the global Nepali diaspora.	Not peer-reviewed; lacks systematic methodology; little investigation of globalisation (export, diaspora business) or identity dynamics.

Marshall (2019).	CASS Studies	To examine the Momo as a cultural signifier in Tsomo and the Momo, a picture book written and illustrated by Niveditha Subramaniam.	Literature review	This paper examines the Momo as a cultural signifier in the picture book "Tsomo and the Momo," written and illustrated by Niveditha Subramaniam. Carolyn Daniel points out in her book Voracious Children that "cultural food rules and attitudes toward food and the eating body are transmitted via the subtexts of children's fiction and of their everyday lives.	The results are based on secondary data, and minimal sample data were analysed. The next is the absence of association between the objective and the results.
Rai and Tamang (2016).	Journal of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts	To examine how Momo has become central to Nepal's street food and national culinary narrative, and its global spread.	Literature review	The results show that Momo, originally a Newari snack, has evolved into a national dish, becoming ubiquitous in urban Nepal. It is also carried by the Nepalese diaspora and restaurants abroad, highlighting communal eating and identity connections.	This study lacked interdisciplinary approaches, which are necessary to explore how Momo embodies cultural identity, migration, and globalisation, and to reveal the social, economic, and generational dynamics behind its transformation.
Pathak (2024)	Jyxi.jyxi.f.	To investigate the intersection of globalisation, authenticity, ethnic fusion, and cultural identity construction through the lens of Nepali culinary enterprises in Finland.	Qualitative method	The findings reveal a dual challenge faced by Nepali restaurateurs: balancing the fusion of cuisines to suit local tastes essential for market survival while preserving culinary authenticity as a key marker of cultural identity.	A single method was used to collect data, allowing the results to be generalised to the same context. Alternatively, the sample population was not adequately selected because it was not remarkably familiar with Nepalese food.
Sanyal and Sarkar (2025).	People and Mountain Environments: Interconnectedness for Sustainable Development in the Himalayas	To deepen understanding of the Indigenous people's cultural and dietary practices. Preliminary findings reveal a strong local commitment to preserving traditional festivals and heritage despite ethnic diversity.	Qualitative Ethnographic Approach	The results highlight the importance of recognising the park's multifaceted cultural landscape, including its festivals, cuisine, and architecture, while emphasising how Indigenous communities creatively sustain and adapt their heritage amid modernisation.	This study lacks a clear objective and relies on a single qualitative method, rendering the results non-generalisable. The next issue is a lack of a matching research objective, which is overly explanatory and lacks a critical analysis of the literature.
Subba (2019)	Journal of South Asian Studies	To understand culinary adaptation and identity among Nepalese migrants in India.	Qualitative Ethnographic Approach	The results show that today, Momo's culinary DNA symbolises hybridity and identity. The dish has diversified into numerous variations vegetarian, paneer, buff, and chicken Momos reflecting Nepal's multiethnic composition and adaptation to Hindu dietary practices.	This study employed a qualitative approach, which cannot guarantee the generalisability of research findings to a larger population. The next issue is the lack of a proper method for selecting the research population.

Summary of the Results

Multiple studies investigate the cultural significance and adaptability of Mo:Mo, a Nepali food item. Baral and Adhikari (2024) highlights that Mo:Mo functions as a cultural emblem shaped by Tibetan and Newari customs, although they acknowledge the lack of empirical investigation. Tamang (2025) explores the integration of Himalayan cuisine in the UK, particularly among migrants, thereby revealing a deficiency in existing scholarship on Mo:Mo. Tamang (2015) associates Mo:Mo to Newar heritage, suggesting it represents Nepali culture. However, he also points out some methodological limitations.

Marshall (2019) investigated Mo:Mo's representation in children's literature, relying on secondary data sources. The study by Rai and Tamang (2016) examined the role of Mo:Mo in Nepal's street food culture, highlighting the importance of shared meals while also recognising the need for more research that combines different academic fields.

Pathak's (2024) study of Nepali restaurateurs in Finland, which examines their navigation of authenticity and local adaptation, raises questions about the generalizability of its conclusions given sampling limitations. Sanyal and Sarkar (2025) highlight the importance of Indigenous cultural practices and heritage in the context of modernisation, yet their study lacks a clearly defined objective.

Subba's (2019) research on Mo:Mo's identity among Nepalese migrants in India, while observing its diversification, also questions the broader applicability of qualitative research. Research gaps are evident in the existing literature on Nepalese Mo:Mo, largely due to reliance on descriptive accounts and secondary data, with empirical fieldwork notably scarce (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Methodological shortcomings, such as ambiguous research aims and unsuitable sampling techniques, further undermine the dependability of existing studies (Babbie, 2020; Bryman, 2016; Kitchenham, 2004; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). The current body of research often neglects the application of interdisciplinary methodologies, which are crucial for a thorough investigation of Mo:Mo's cultural identity within the contexts of migration and globalization (Mintz, 1986; Appadurai, 1988).

Moreover, there is a lack of research that fully explores the complexities of diaspora identity, the interactions between different countries, and the effects of globalization, including its export potential (Hall, 2015; Sassen, 2001; Held et al., 1999). Finally, numerous studies demonstrate a lack of theoretical precision, with objectives not consistently corresponding to their outcomes, thereby underscoring the need for more rigorous empirical research on Nepalese Mo:Mo as a cultural and socio-economic phenomenon (Bourdieu, 1984a; Foucault, 1977).

The Cultural Significance of MOMO

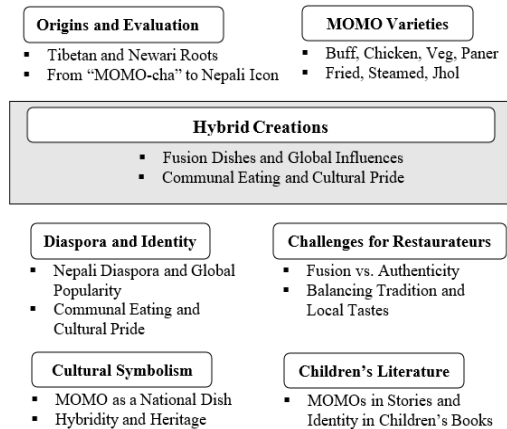


Figure 1. Different Aspects of Mo:Mo's Significance

The graphic highlights key aspects of the "DNA of Mo:Mo" idea, including its global reach, evolution, and identity. Mo:Mo comes from Tibetan and Newari traditions, which means it is part of its basic cultural "genetic code." Later, it turned from "Mo:Mo-cha" to a well-known Nepali emblem. Mo:Mo has changed throughout time into many other versions, such as buff, chicken, vegetarian, and paneer. It can also be cooked in different ways, such as steamed, fried, and jhol. The idea of hybrid products and fusion cuisine shows how Mo:Mo is still evolving by drawing on ideas from all over the world, especially from chefs and younger people. Mo:Mo is also a strong emblem of cultural identity, standing for shared heritage and national pride (see Figure 1).

Discussion

Overview of the Study

This investigation into Mo:Mo underscores its importance as a cultural identity marker within Nepal, thereby exemplifying appadurai's notion of "national cuisine." Mo:Mo's appeal extends beyond socioeconomic and ethnic divisions, thereby demonstrating gastronomic democratisation; it is embraced by a wide array of communities, which in turn reinforces Bourdieu's



concept of shared cultural capital.

Furthermore, its communal dimensions, including the consumption of achar and its circular form, which symbolises unity, bolster its potential as a national dish. Localisation is evident in Mo:Mo's development within the Kathmandu Valley, where Newar communities adapted Tibetan culinary techniques to produce variations that accommodate local preferences and contemporary trends.

This persistent cultural fusion corroborates the culinary adaptation theories highlighted by Mintz and Appadurai. The adaptability of Mo:Mo, as demonstrated by its diverse iterations including vegetarian and fusion varieties, highlights its capacity to respond to evolving culinary environments.

Within the Nepali diaspora, Mo:Mo serves as both a means of cultural preservation and economic support, aligning with studies connecting traditional cuisines to cultural memory and a sense of community. Moreover, globalisation has impacted Mo:Mo, leading to commercial adaptations that raise questions of authenticity while also creating new market opportunities. The economic implications of Mo:Mo are significant, encompassing a supply chain that includes street vendors and restaurants, thus contributing to both livelihoods and food tourism.

The affordability and widespread availability of Mo:Mo foster social interactions, thereby solidifying food's function as a social institution. Discussions of sustainability and health position Mo:Mo as a nutritious choice within modern dietary patterns, though its commercialisation poses potential threats to its original health advantages. This underscores the necessity of reconciling contemporary and traditional culinary practices. Finally, the research recommends the formal designation of Mo:Mo as Nepal's national dish and its potential inclusion on the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list, highlighting its communal importance and historical persistence. Conversely, the homogenising influences of globalisation pose challenges to the preservation of Mo:Mo's cultural distinctiveness amid its growing prominence.

Conclusion

This research examined the "DNA of Mo:Mo" a widely consumed Nepali dumpling, to elucidate its historical development, cultural importance, and international proliferation. The results demonstrate that Mo:Mo transcends its status as a mere food item, functioning instead as a vibrant cultural object shaped by migration, global interactions, and localised modifications. Initially a component of Tibetan cuisine, it transformed within the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley, evolving into a national symbol embraced by various social strata in Nepal, thus fostering a collective national identity. The dish exemplifies culinary democratisation, moving away from its initial exclusivity to become a ubiquitous element of daily life.

Furthermore, Mo:Mo's growth has been supported by diaspora networks, which serve as both economic resources and cultural symbols for Nepalis living abroad. These networks have enabled innovation and adaptation in international markets while preserving the dish's cultural roots.

Conversely, globalisation poses challenges to the balance between commercial interests and cultural authenticity, necessitating strategies that protect cultural integrity while also fostering innovation. Furthermore, Mo:Mo contributes to economic advancement by leveraging local resources, supporting small enterprises, and adhering to sustainable food practices.

This research highlights that Mo:Mo merits classification as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, proposing that such recognition would aid in safeguarding its culinary legacy and amplify its significance within an increasingly globalised context. Mo:Mo serves as a microcosm of Nepal's cultural narrative, characterised by a dynamic interplay of diversity and unity, tradition and modernity, and a localised viewpoint that assimilates international influences. Further research is suggested to explore its cultural and economic dimensions through empirical investigations across various academic fields.

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