

# The Effect of the Natural Environment on Traditional Foods and Food Products (In the Example of the Population of the Fergana Valley)

Abdusatorov Sherzod Mavlonjonovich

Basic doctoral student of the National University of Uzbekistan

**Abstract:** *This short article discusses traditional foods, the impact of the environment, nature and climate on food, the importance of human health, and its relevance today.*

**Keywords:** Traditional foods, meals, material culture, Fergana Valley, environment, composition, ethno cultural.

## I. Introduction.

It is well known that material culture preserves many customs, rituals and traditions of nations. The main components of material culture are housing, clothing, and food. In this short article, we will briefly discuss the impact of the natural environment on food and nutrition, which is one of them.

One of the most beautiful places in the country is the Fergana Valley, one of the paradise corners of Uzbekistan, located between the mountains, with an ancient history, unique nature, climate, water resources, etc.

The valley is only 5% of the country's land area (22.2 thousand km<sup>2</sup> in total) and is a unique region in Central Asia in terms of population density and ethnic diversity. Its territory is bounded on the northwest by the Qurama and Chatkal ridges, and on the northeast by the Fergana, South Alay, and partly Turkestan ridges. The Fergana Valley is famous not only for its beautiful nature, but also for its kind people.

## II. Discussion.

Indeed, the valley has long been known as the "Pearl of Central Asia" for its fertility, hard work, nobility and beautiful nature and climate. In addition, the inhabitants of this land are the creators of "Fergana" culture and spread it around the world. If we look at the daily life and culture of the people of the Fergana Valley, it is known for the national values, cultural traditions and unique ethnographic aspects of the people living in the valley.

During the years of independence, a number of researches have been conducted on the issues of our national values, traditional material and spiritual culture, and international traditions. In particular, it is important to collect and analyze data on traditional dwellings, clothing, food, their characteristics in different regions, as well as the processes of transformation in them.

In particular, ethnographer I.M. Jabborov also wrote in his monograph "Uzbeks" about the traditional homes, clothes, ornaments, make-up and, in particular, food of Uzbeks living in the Fergana Valley [1].

In the work of K. Shoniyozov and H. Ismailov "Ethnographic plates from the material culture of the Uzbeks in the late XIX - early XX centuries" there is a lot of

interesting information about the traditional settlements of ethnic groups in the Fergana Valley, in addition to clothing listed [2].

In recent years, the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan has published a number of studies on topical issues of ethnology of the Uzbek people, including the monograph "Uzbeks" in Moscow [3]. They also provide some interesting information about the cuisine of the people in the study area.

G. Zunnunova's monograph "Transformation of material culture and traditions of Uzbeks in Tashkent (early XX-XXI centuries)" is dedicated to the traditional housing, clothing and food of Uzbeks living in Tashkent [4]. Significantly, the play explores the impact of interethnic cultural relations on material culture, including the transformation processes in food and nutrition.

The information about the cuisine of the studied area and the composition of the food used in them, their innovations in the works of U. Abdullayev [5] and S. Gubayeva [6] is also noteworthy.

In recent years, Western anthropologists and ethnologists have also conducted extensive research on environmental issues and the direct impact of genetically modified foods on traditional diets and diets. [7,8,9]

The range of Uzbek cuisine is characterized by its diversity and richness. At the same time, food is an important ethnocultural indicator and is often used in modern societies as well as in traditional cultures as a symbol of national, ethnic, or cultural identity [7: 235].

At the current stage of globalization, at a time when the problems of human ecology and environmental protection are very acute, at a time when traditional systems are rapidly disappearing, the traditional life support system of ethnic groups learning, recording them in research videos, slides, articles is a very topical issue. Therefore, it is especially important to assess the adaptive importance of the food system and its dynamic development characteristics.

"What do people eat?" The phrase was never accidental, of course. For decades and even centuries, humans have lived in certain natural conditions and

consumed the products that the environment gives them. These processes continued until the period of rapid development of the industry. Few ethnic groups living in harmony with nature are still present, albeit in small numbers.

Gradually the human body adapts to a particular type of food. As a result, the organism has developed appropriate biochemical and physiological mechanisms that ensure the uninterrupted functioning of all vital systems. Such adaptation of the human organism to the natural environment, which occurs under the pressure of natural selection, ensures its most comfortable life even in the most critical conditions for humanity and determines the characteristics of human family life [12].

However, the situation has now changed. In parallel with the destruction of environmentally adapted populations, the composition of the existing flora and fauna in nature has also changed dramatically, and as a result of these processes, human food has also become unified.

At the end of the last century, the so-called universal, balanced diet ideology began to spread in developed countries, which is still being promoted by some experts. Today, the public catering system is used in all regions and cities of Uzbekistan, which is an important factor in the environmental burden on the body, along with harmful phenomena such as water and air pollution.

The essence of the concept of rational and normative nutrition is that the average is divided into a certain number of products containing the average caloric content, with differences in the "minimum amount" for the younger and middle age categories of different climate zones. There is a need. At the same time, the ethnic and regional specifics of the population's need for food are taken into account.

The transition from natural traditional foods to industrialized food systems will directly affect the socio-cultural life of the population.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, there has been a debate among research scientists about the possibility of applying uniform norms and standards of optimal nutrition developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for different regions of the world. Today, the norms that meet the nutritional needs of the population of the developed countries of the Western world do not provide the population of developed countries equally, which leads to the preservation of traditional eating habits in their daily lives.

Although this gap has narrowed over the years, traditional diets in some parts of the world have persisted for a long time. It depends not only on eating habits and customs, but also on changes in the natural environment and ecology. In our opinion, this type of food is mainly explained by the fact that our traditional food products correspond to the ecological conditions, climate and specific characteristics of the biochemical processes of the ethnic group of the region.

Studies by anthropologists and ethnologists have shown that traditional food as an important element of

material culture is the most distinctive and conservative part of the life and culture of different peoples [13]. This also applies to the distance (sometimes very long) distance that their ancestors migrated directly to the peoples living in the ethnic territory, and to the peoples living in other ethnic environments.

For example, the Uyghurs living in the Fergana Valley are a typical example of the national characteristics of traditional food. They are so close to our people that there is no language to call them diaspora. The dishes prepared by the Uyghur people have had a direct impact on the cuisine of the region for many centuries, resulting in certain changes in the composition of Uyghur cuisine or in the composition of Uzbek national cuisine. For example, lagmon, manti and other Uyghur dishes, which have become Uzbek national dishes, have been enriched. We find such studies in the diet of the Arctic indigenous Pomors, Markovites, Colmians, Gijids, and Inuit (Eskimos) living in Canada and Greenland [14]. According to researchers Kremer and Harrison in T.U. Alekseyeva's work, more than 35-40% of the calories in the diet of Northern natives are made up of protein, while for people in temperate climates the amount of "protein" calories is only 12-15%. [8: 184]. This means that research shows that the process of population food and its composition is also directly influenced by the natural environment of the region.

We see this more clearly in the diet and food culture of the people of the mountainous and foothill areas of the Fergana Valley. This is mainly due to the socio-economic situation of the mountain people. This is also observed in the composition, quantity, of food products prepared in their daily lives. In particular, Baker's research suggests that proteins play an important role in the normal composition of the diet of people in mountainous areas. While "average" protein intake may be quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient to maintain the body's nitrogen balance, the amino acids in the food itself may not be sufficient to meet the needs of growing children. This is especially true of the diet in the north. Insufficient calorie intake or composition of food leads to various diseases and short life expectancy and high mortality rates. First of all, it exacerbates child mortality, which is confirmed by the data that it is very high in the industrialized regions of Russia among the countries of the world. [9: 271].

Types of food, methods of its preparation and diet are one of the constant cultural and daily traditions. Ethnic groups or immigrants living in the area change their clothing and language relatively quickly, but their food traditions are more stable. We base our opinion on evidence from foreign and domestic research. For example, ethnologist V.I. Kozlov argues that migrants from India, currently living in the UK, continue to eat as much as possible at home [10: 121]. This situation is demonstrated by the Armenian and Jewish diasporas in all regions of the world as one of the brightest examples of the preservation of food traditions in other environments. The same is true of the Uzbek diaspora in foreign countries, where their food is consumed.

So far, feeding traditions have been strictly adhered to in traditional rural communities and individual settlements. However, this is due to the fact that the urban population of Uzbekistan, especially in the Fergana Valley, is an important element of nutrition in one, at most two generations urban, eating habits and preferences are relatively rare, and in addition to "moderately rational food."

The Uzbeks, like nowhere else in the world, have many liquid and thick forms of pilaf (Fergana soup or "fried soup" in the Fergana Valley [15: 155]), soup, mastava, somsa and many other traditional cooking methods are common. If we analyze the various aspects of the existing problem of "rational nutrition", we can conclude that the majority of Uzbeks, including the population of the Fergana Valley, also have their own diet and associated eating customs, have preserved their traditions.

Under the influence of the environmental situation, the difficult economic situation in both rural and urban areas is likely to lead to further impoverishment of the less diverse diet. In today's world, children, pregnant women and the elderly are especially affected. On top of calorie deficiency, a lack of vitamins, minerals, micronutrients and a sharp increase in the share of carbohydrates in the diet leads to a weakening of the immune system, which in turn leads to an increase in "environmental" diseases, such as allergies, bronchial asthma and others. The main causes of these diseases are industrial pollution, automobile waste, radioactive decomposition of food, mineral fertilizers and the spread of various chemical treatments.

In recent decades, industrial enterprises in Uzbekistan have been built not only in cities but also in rural areas, which has led to a transformation of the diet. The construction of industrial enterprises close to agricultural lands is likely to have a negative impact on the quality of food produced by households. In addition, residents of rural areas near water and environmental pollutants are at a disadvantage because they are exposed to high environmental pressures: on the one hand from polluted air and water, on the other hand from polluted products grown on similar lands.

Adequate nutrition, which weakens the human body and its immune system, has already become a global problem, especially in cities, where it dramatically worsens the environmental situation, exacerbates anxiety and creates psychological and social emotional states. Industrial pollution has reached such a level that it affects the natural environment at a very long distance from the source of pollution. The lack of high-level specialized technologies in the food industry leads to the production of poor quality products and mass diseases. Thus, salmon and other acute gastrointestinal infections have become more common in recent years.

The same is true for representatives of other nations and ethnic groups, especially those who have migrated to cities or other ethnic areas and therefore sometimes have to drastically change their eating habits, and sometimes the whole food system to this ethnic group. The same is true for

those who are forced to switch to a completely unusual diet. All this leads to an increase in the proportion of gastrointestinal and allergic diseases in the structure of the disease, and in addition exacerbates the cases that cause mental suffering in life in densely populated cities with unfavorable environmental conditions.

Eco-friendly food products can mitigate the harmful effects of a polluted environment. Some high-quality foods perform a protective function in cases where certain pathogens are exposed.

Many foods, meanwhile, are natural remedies that were previously widely used in traditional medicine. First of all, this applies to plant-based products. In addition, animal products also have beneficial factors.

All the information that is positive for human health is contained in traditional food systems, the abandonment of which leads to the current serious state of health of the population, which is natural - canned in large cities and industrial centers. is further complicated by the widespread use of synthetic additives (semi-finished chemical products) instead of food. In the United States, for example, the number of such supplements in the diet can reach up to 8,000. Their consumption reaches 532 thousand tons per year. The average Australian consumes 2.5 kg of various chemicals per year [16].

Numerous studies show that traditional foods are specific not only to "backward" peoples or isolated groups, but also to "scientifically" cultured "cultured" peoples, such as Europeans or Americans. The food complex is known to be conservative, reflecting the ecological adaptation of an ethnos or group to certain conditions. The sustainability of the food complex is linked, firstly, to the sustainability of economic activity, secondly, to established norms of consumption "recorded" in a particular ethnocultural reality, and thirdly, to the long-term physiological adaptation of ethnic groups to their environment.

Nowadays, when ethno cultural differences often come to the fore in connection with the escalation of interethnic relations in the former USSR, the analysis of the real historical interactions of ethnic cultures in different areas remains particularly relevant.

With its vast areas and diversity of ethnic composition in the CIS, as well as processes of a migratory nature, this type of research has important scientific, theoretical and practical significance.

Attempts have been made to look at the problems of traditional food consumption from the perspective of a new scientific discipline developed in recent years - ethnic ecology. Ethnoecology of food is the most important direction of this science, which studies the traditional and new systems of production and consumption of food in specific ecological, social and ethnocultural conditions.

### **III. Conclusion.**

The ethno-ecological approach in the study of traditional food consumption is very effective in studying the phenomenon of longevity, the problem of adaptation of migrants, ethno-cultural diversity in similar environmental

conditions, and a variety of other visible issues we will try to show that it is possible.

The ethnic peculiarity of food ecology is that its problems differ, on the one hand, from the tasks of doctors - nutritionists, and, on the other hand, from the tasks of ethnologists. In our view, the key questions that food ethnoecology answers are: maintaining the demographic integrity of ethnic communities by increasing the number of food forms; the existence of energy systems specific to these communities in what natural-ecological and social conditions; as to what mechanisms cause specific food complexes to proliferate over a long period of time in both the autochthonous population environment and the migrant environment.

In conclusion, it can be said that long-term targeted research is required to solve these problems, and this directly leads to the impact of ecology on traditional nutrition and, in a sense, to the elimination of problems.

#### IV. References

1. Jabborov I.M. Uzbeks. - T., 2007 y.
2. Shaniyazov K.Sh., Ismailov Kh.I. Ethnographic sketches of the material culture of the Uzbeks of the late XIX - early XX centuries Tashkent, 1981
3. Zunnunova G.Sh. Material culture of Uzbeks in Tashkent: transformation of traditions (XX-XXI centuries) Tashkent. "EXTREMUM-PRESS". 2013.
4. Abdullaev U. Interethnic processes in the Fergana Valley (late XIX - early XX centuries). T.: 2005.
5. Gubaeva S. Fergana Valley. Ethnic processes at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries. Saarbrücken, 2012.
6. Uzbeks. Moscow: Nauka, 2011
7. Gennep A. Rites of passage. Systematic study of rituals. - M., 1999.; Shmeleva M.N. Traditions and folk food of Russians (social aspect) // Russian folk traditions and modernity. M., 1995.- S. 235.
8. Alekseeva T.I. Geographic environment and human biology. M. 1977.
9. Baker P.T. Biology of the inhabitants of the highlands. M. 1981, S. 271.
10. Kozlov V.I. Immigrants and Ethnoracial Issues in Britain. M. 1987.S. 121.
11. Salimov T.U. Ethnography of people's of world Jahon xalqlari etnologiyasi. T. 2019.
12. Yastrebitskaya A.P. Western Europe XI-XIII centuries. M. 1978.
13. Berdyev M.S. The origin and distribution of pilaf (to the question of the ethnic origins of the elements of culture). Nukus. 1989.
14. <http://ru/arctic.ru/population/>
15. Ethnic history and traditional culture of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Nukus. 1989.S. 155.
16. Brekhman I.I. Man and biologically active substances. M. 1980.