

Sarsatiā Sweet: An Ethnic Gastronomic Practice of Sambalpur, Odisha

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Abstract: The paper explores some regarding Sarsatiā is a famous sweet of Sambalpur. This is a sweet that is not normally found in anywhere as per the categories in food catalogue, probably such types of specific sweet is found only in Sambalpur region some extent nearest border areas of same district. There is so much demand for this Sarsatiā sweet these days from the day people heard the name they are becoming more Sarsatiā. Every place has a famous dessert like sweet from nook and corner of Odisha and this Sarsatiā sweet is a famous dessert of Sambalpur. It is made by mixing rice lime and sugar with the juice of a plant Ganjer. This Sarsatiā sweet has a special medicinal value. It does not harm the body it can also be consumed by diabetics, as it is low in sugar this Sarsatiā is especially useful for the body, it helps people to improve their memory. This famous Sarsatiā sweet is only available from Prabhulal Gupta a shopkeeper of Kunjelpada in Budhimaa Gali, Sambalpur. This shop is about 180 years old for almost 180 years this Gupta family has been feeding itself by making this Sarsatiā sweet. This Sarsatiā sweet is not only Sambalpur now in this period it has already made a name for itself in the country and abroad. it is so delicious that it has become the first choice of all people.

Keywords: Sarasatia, Desert, Food, Ethnic, Consumer, Commercial Transaction, Culture

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The state of Odisha is well-known for its wonderful culinary traditions, particularly its mouth-watering selection of sweet treats. While the *Rasabali* of Kendrapara, the *Rasagola* of Salipur, the *Chena-Poda* of Nayagarha and the *Chena Jhilli* of Nimapada are well-known, the culinary delicacies of Western Odisha are still relatively unknown, just a few decades ago, a sizeable number of homes in Sambalpur

were responsible for the production of *Sarsatiā* (Fig.01), a type of delicacy that possesses a mild sweetness. *Sarasatia* is a material that is made of sugar and has a crunchy texture. It is similar to noodles that are very thin. The fact that *Sarasatia* is derived from the *Ganjer* tree is the source of its desirable and stylish characteristics. Prabhulal Gupta, a confectioner originating from Sambalpur, is the operator of a shop that has been in existence for almost two centuries. Beni Madhav Halwai, the company's current proprietor's great-grandfather, was the one who initially opened the shop. It is by the extraction of resin from twigs that he creates the sweet delicacy. In the beginning, he starts by removing the outer covering of the tree, and then he immerses the tree's smaller branches in water for the remainder of the night. After combining a saccharine resinous extract with uncooked rice powder and sugar, he then deep-fries the mixture in the form of thin noodles in oil. The people who live in Sambalpur consume it as their breakfast routine. Before, the cost of trees was more affordable; however, at the present time, the price of tree twigs ranged from three hundred to four hundred rupees. From a business perspective, it is now only sold in three confectionery businesses, all of which are advantageously located close to 'Badsadak,' which is a historic alley in this historical town. *Sarsatiā* was a famous sweet dish that was traditionally prepared in houses in Sambalpur. It was especially popular during celebrations such as *Pua Jiuntia*, *Bhai Jiuntia*, and *Puspuni*.¹ As a result of the fact that there are numerous other kinds of sweets that can be purchased and the fact that the production of *Sarsatiās* is a laborious procedure, they have become a rare treat. On the other hand, everyone who has ever had the pleasure of tasting this dish, even if it was only once, is definitely going to remember the flavor for a considerable amount of time. *Sarsatiā* is a delight for those who are passionate about food.²

Sarsatiā Sweet is a traditional culinary practice that originates from Sambalpur, which is located in the state of Odisha. *Sarsatiā* sweet has a history that dates back 180 years. There is a consistent increase in the demand for it, and it is anticipated that this trend will continue. When it was first made, the sweet dish known as *Sarsatiā* was customarily baked in an oven. On the other hand, as a result of societal shifts and developments in cooking technology, such as the utilization of liquid petroleum gas *chullha* and electric inductions from village wood fire *chullha*, a wide variety of cooking appliances are currently being utilized. Creating this delectable version of *Sarsatiā* is a straightforward process, but it does require some prior expertise. In spite of the fact that it can be made at home with nothing more than rice, organic-lime, sugar, and *ganjer* fluid (Fig.02), it is only available for purchase in an existing shop in Sambalpur. Scholars of culture believe that it is a beneficial quality that has been around for a long time. Since the beginning of civilization, a great deal of importance has been placed on the provision of sustenance for humans. One example of this is the sweet cuisine associated with *Sarsatiā*.

Sweet *Sarsatiā* is a staple cuisine in Sambalpur, and it is frequently served at a variety of religious holidays to the local population. During these joyous times, it is frequently prepared and consumed in the comfort of one's own home. In addition, it is said that this sweet from *Sarsatiā* is superior to the well-known 'crispy' or 'snacks items' from Sambalpur of Odisha. After tasting the gastronomic delicacies that Sambalpur has to offer, locals and visitors from all over the country build a deep love for the city. Due to the fact that the price of this *Sarsatiā* sweet is so reasonable in Sambalpur, it is now available to everybody who wants something. There is a limited supply of the juice that can be extracted from the *ganjer* tree (*Cannabis sativa*),³ which may be found in the forests surrounding Sambalpur, during the summer months (Fig.03).

The product is only available for purchase at the *Budhimaa'gali* (lane) shop, which is located in Kunjelpada, Sambalpur. This store has been there for 180 years, making it an establishment that is 180 years old from the time it first opened its doors. Prabhulal Gupta, often known as Minchu and his family are the ones that develop it (Fig.04 & 05). A shop that has been in the family for many generations is owned and operated by Minchu. The members of Minchu's family are providing him with aid in order to attain achievement at this immediate moment. *Sarsatiā* sweet is being produced by the Gupta family, which is helping to ensure their continued existence (Fig.06). In spite of the fact that anyone is capable of preparing it, any mistakes that are made during the procedure will result in a look and flavor that are not good. This particular cuisine is only available at a single locality in Sambalpur, and regardless of whether it is located in another city or not, no other establishment can reproduce the one-of-a-kind flavor that this particular establishment offers. Up to this point, there have been a number of business owners who have sought to accomplish this goal, but none of them have been successful.

After approximately forty-eight hours, the preparation of the *Sarsatiā* gooey is complete. In order to obtain the extract, the bark of the *Ganja* or *Ganjer* tree (Fig.07 & 08) is first broken up and then dispersed in water prior to the extraction process. Following an overnight period of incubation, the mixture goes through a metamorphosis that results in a material that resembles juice. After that, the juice is mixed with *Arua*⁴ rice by incorporating lime and sugar, and the combination is well swirled with all five fingers of the hand. This dish has a gentle and thin consistency, which causes it to dissolve quickly on the tongue because of its delicate nature. A slight mistake can have a significant impact on both the presentation and the flavor of the dish, despite the fact that it is very easy to prepare. It does not require the participation of any particular group in order to be developed; rather, it can be created by individuals from all communities. Consequently, members of the '*Keuta*' group are the ones who go fishing, whilst members of the '*Dhibar*' community are the ones who take care of their washing. In the same vein, this *Sarsatiā* sweet is not prepared by any member of any group that is accountable for its preparation. Because it is loved and cooked by people of a wide range of nationalities, Sambalpur has garnered recognition on a global scale.

Rice, organic lime powder, and sugar are the only ingredients that are used in the preparation of *Sarsatiā*, which is a natural cuisine that is made with only the liquid of the *ganjer* tree. The reason why individuals take pleasure in consuming it is because of this. The fact that it contains sugar that is safe for people who have diabetes to consume is especially noteworthy. As a result of the fact that it is extremely useful for the human body, the demand for it is consistently growing. In addition, tourists from Sambalpur export their delectable *Sarsatiā* to a wide variety of countries throughout the world, including significant nations such as the United States of America, China, and Canada. Many people go to the Minchu's shop in Sambalpur with the purpose of gaining knowledge or competence in the art of making the delicious *Sarsatiā* sweet. This is because the shop is located in Sambalpur. A visit to the company was also made by Arundhati Devi, the queen of the Deogarh royal family, with the intention of ensuring its success. The popularity of the sweet known as *Sarsatiā* has skyrocketed to the extent where people from far-flung places are making their way to Sambalpur in order to indulge in it. Because of its delicate texture and the ease with which it dissolves in the tongue, this confection is enjoying a continuing increase in demand on a daily basis. It can be consumed in a variety of ways,

including with tea, *rabadi*, butter, or on its own. Individuals can also choose to consume it without any accompaniments. Despite the fact that food does not change, the ways in which it is consumed are constantly and continuously changing. Due to the fact that this item is so delicious, there is an increasing demand for it, therefore there is no reason to be concerned about it being extinct. A culinary option that has arisen as the predominant favourite of persons in modern times is the one that is being discussed here.

Discussion and Observation

In this above discussion, we investigate several aspects of *Sarsatiā*, which is a well-known sweet from Sambalpur. Sambalpur is the only place in the world where you can find this treat; it is not available anywhere, not even in every part of Odisha. The demand for this *Sarsatiā* sweet has been extremely high in recent times, and ever since people first heard the word, they have been becoming more and more devoted to the sweets are only few of the well-known desserts that can be found in few locations as an ethnic crispy sweet. This *Sarsatiā* sweet is a well-known dessert in Sambalpur. The *Sarsatiā* name is a Sambalpuri language, and it was given the name *Sarsatiā* since it was created during the time of Saraswat Puja. This sweet, *Sarsatiā*, contains a unique medicinal substance. Although it does not do any harm to the body, it is also suitable for consumption by diabetics because to its low sugar content. This *Sarsatiā* is particularly beneficial for the body, as it assists individuals in progressing in their health. This well-known sweet, known as *Sarsatiā*, can only be obtained from shopkeeper in Kunjelpada, located in Budhiman Gali, Sambalpur. This shop has been there for close to 180 years, and over that time period, the Gupta family has been providing for themselves by producing this *Sarsatiā* sweet. This *Sarsatiā* sweet is not only Sambalpur at this time, but it has already established a name for itself that is recognised throughout the country and internationally, it is so scrumptious that it has become the first option for many people every single person.



Fig. 1: *Sarsatiā* Sweet, Kunjela Pada, Sambalpur (Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 2: Wood of *Ganja* or *Ganjer* Plant
(Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 3: *Ganjer* Plant
(Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 4: Preparation of *Sarasatiā* by Prabhulal Gupta (Minchu) (Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 5: Preparation of *Sarasatiā* by Prabhulal Gupta (Minchu), Budhi Maa Lane, Sambalpur (Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 6: *Sarasatiā* Shop at Budhi Maa Gali, Kunjelpada, Sambalpur,
(Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 7: *Ganja* or *Ganjer* Plant's wood fluids use as main ingredient for *Sarasatiā*
(Photo Curtsey: Author)



Fig. 8: Mature *Ganja* or *Ganjer* Plant's wood fluids use as main ingredient for *Sarsatiā*
(Photo Curtsey: Author)

Notes & References

1. *Sarsatiā*: Have A Bite Of Western Odisha's Rare Dessert, Pragativadi , Odia Daily, Bhubaneswar Edition, 05.03.2022, <https://pragativadi.com/Sarsatiā-have-a-bite-of-western-odishas-rare-dessert/>
2. Get a bite of *Sarsatiā*, Odisha's rare dessert, before it goes extinct, Times of India, Times of India, Times Travel Editor, Travel Trend Sambalpur, Bhubaneswar Edition, 18.11.2019. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/eating-out/get-a-bite-of-Sarsatiā-odishas-rare-dessert-before-it-goes-extinct/articleshow/72111215.cms>
3. *Ganjer* Tree or *Ganja* or *Bhanga* is a medicinal herb that has been used for centuries and is also known by the names marijuana, Indian hemp, and ganja. *Cannabis sativa* is the moniker given to the plant by its scientific designation.
4. Arua or Arwa is referred to as white rice and goes by other names in other Indian states. Looking at the entire uncooked rice, Arua is white and clear. Just the husk of the rice is stripped from the paddy to produce this rice. To get rid of extra impurities, dust, husks, and foreign grains, Arua is meticulously treated.