A food service institution is one which plans prepares and serves food in quantities far greater than those characteristic of usual home meals. Such institutions serve various functions depending on the demands placed on them by their customers and vary from small to very large establishments. Though development has been rapid and widespread during the last 50 years the services have their roots in customs and habits characteristic of our civilisation. In mediaeval times quantity food production was the rule rather than the exception in religious orders, royal households and places of education where it was traditional in India for students to live with the teacher or Guru for the years of their education.

RELIGIOUS ORDERS

As already stated quantity food production was the rule in religious orders, royal households and communities, the costs of which were usually covered through charitable contributions or donations.

Food services in abbeys in England reached very high standards because the stewardship followed religious values of discipline, love, free service to those who came for shelter and food. Records show that an adequate food allowance per person was strictly established, and expenditure was thrifty with accountability for each penny, because these places of worship and residences for nuns and priests thrived on donations from the public especially on feast days, and the entire wealth of those who lived there in the service of the Lord.
In India, the equivalent of abbeys, were dharamshalas, usually situated near places of pilgrimage where people could rest for short periods and then move on. These places provided food to sustain the hungry and poor at fixed times and to pilgrims who would donate money in return for their stay and food, to sustain the activities of these shelters.

TRADITION AND CULTURE

Traditionally India was a country where eating out of the home was taboo, and people who went out to work for long hours always carried food with them whether they went on foot, in carts or on bus or train journeys. It was religion, tradition and culture that have always brought people together in large numbers to celebrate festivals, participate in mass prayers and enjoy social occasions such as marriages, births and other festivities, all of which involved eating together. The traditional langars or mass distribution of food after prayers in gurdwaras, the distribution of prasadam in temples, the breaking of fasts together during Ramadaan in mosques and feasting after mass at Christmas are all evidence of large scale food preparation and service from early times.

Festivities

Tradition and culture dictate that every activity be marked by festivity, whether it is a birthday of a god or goddess, the birth of a child in a family, or whether it is to seek the Lord’s blessings for prosperity in general. Even in bereavement it is traditional not to let sympathisers go un-fed, irrespective of their numbers. People thus find several occasions to get together in large numbers to express their feelings of love and support and satisfy their emotional and social needs. Thus, festivals and celebrations brought community groups together, each member sharing the food production and service activities.

Gradually with communities shrinking in size due to changes in family structures from joint to nuclear, smaller families could not cope with social events either in terms of space, energy, time or active participation in community festivities. This was because couples strived to make ends meet by working outside their homes. Celebration and entertaining therefore, gradually shifted to professional caterers who took over the responsibility of planning, organising and offering package arrangements for home catering, setting up events in restaurants and hotels or even on campuses of institutions and resident’s associations in housing complexes. Today catering and accompanying facilities are available not only for festivals and celebrations but also for conferences, funerals and the like.
Even though development has been rapid and widespread, food services have their roots in customs and traditions which directly affect people's eating habits and behaviour. As one travels from one region to another the food eaten differs so widely that one wonders if one is in the same country. The traditions and culture get built around factors like geographic location, soil conditions, climate, season, and other environmental and social factors.

**ROYAL HOUSEHOLDS**

Royal households had a large number of inhabitants to serve the royalty who were placed in a hierarchy and had established food allowances which were fixed according to their ranks, and a large battery of staff were employed for food preparation and service. The kitchens of these mediaeval households showed high standards of hygiene with respect to food handling, preparation, service and waste disposal techniques depending largely on natural recycling methods.

In India the states were governed by princes who resided in palaces and were morally involved in the welfare of their states, which often competed for excellence in development, uplift and care of the masses. Thus, an endless stream of people including family members, guests and the public were catered to and fed through the kitchens of the palaces, where strict attention was paid to costing, and accounts were maintained in a household book for auditing. The kitchens of these mediaeval households showed exemplary sanitary standards made possible by cheap labour who exhibited a high degree of loyalty and honesty of purpose. Each area compared to the best run establishments of today.

The princely states are now only tourist attractions and mass community feeding is restricted to places of worship or during festivities and celebrations conducted in temples, public places, clubs and hotels where catering is provided according to the menu requirements of the host, be it an individual or an organisation.

The last century has seen many developments in size, number and activities of food service establishments which have tried to keep pace with the development of the country in many spheres, these range from industrialisation, education, social welfare, healthcare, transportation, tourism, job and economic profiles, leisure, lifestyles and national and international trade. Some of these developments made people stay away from home for days together or even months which necessitated their eating at places where they were. So eating out began due to necessity rather than choice and food started being served outside homes for a price.
It is interesting to study how each of the different areas of development have directly or indirectly affected the nature of catering activities in institutions and helped them to develop through time.

**Industrialisation**

Industrialisation brought in its wake, the need to feed the work force in factories, which led to the development of industrial canteens and lunchroom facilities which appear on the premises of every industry today. Industrial food services provide employee feeding through 24-hour canteen services that offer meals, and snacks at break times. Such services usually employ their own catering staff, although some medium sized industries contract the services to catering professionals for providing meals at subsidised rates to their employees.

Office goers too needed similar facilities and therefore office canteens appeared on the scene. These facilities have taken different forms, extending from full meal to mini-meals and snack facilities to those that provide hot and cold meals delivered on order to customers on trays or in tiffin boxes as packed meals.

Industrialisation further, led to the development of roads and transportation facilities giving rise to the tourism sector, and encouraged the trend of eating out. Today, a high percentage of people eat out at least once a month, a large section require catering services in the form of pick-up counters or home deliveries which have resulted from a number of factors that have totally changed the social structure and working and living patterns of families.

Thus, industrialisation by creating job opportunities for men and women led to a number of lifestyle effects such as migration of rural populations to urban settings in search of more lucrative jobs. This resulted in women spending less time at home and therefore having less time for preparation of home meals. In addition domestic help became scarce and more and more women went for jobs outside to make their ends meet.

The result was greater catering options which developed to offer solutions to new needs both in the form of commercial, semi-commercial and welfare institutions that provided pick-up stations for food items and today, even telephonic order and delivery services that are fast adopting information technology options, to offer their products and services on the net.

**Commercial Food Services**

Historically, the evolution of public eating places was stimulated by people’s desire to travel and explore, initially for spiritual enrichment for which people
went on pilgrimages to holy places, followed by other goals like education, work and leisure.

Commercial food establishments started as inns and taverns and gradually developed into profit oriented public eating places where travellers, shoppers and visitors could come and quench their thirst in hot summers and eat at a price. The beginnings of commercial catering can be traced to cook shops of France or the *dhabas* in the remotest parts of India, which were set up as convenient eating places for the traveller. The term restaurant is derived from the Latin word *restaurare* which became *restauer*, in French, meaning to repair, replenish or restore.

**Restaurants**

The cookshops of France were originally licensed to prepare stews which could be eaten on the premises or carried away to inns or homes for consumption. Menus were pasted on the wall or door to attract attention of those who passed by. The story goes that a *boulanger* or *boullion* maker decided to add a meat dish in sauce to his list of soups and stews and was challenged in court for violation of the license rights. He however, won the law suit and his business was legalised as a restaurant. Today the concept has given rise to chains of specialised restaurants serving highly elaborate meals not only in France but globally.

The real boom in restaurants started after the French Revolution when the chefs got displaced from public houses and started their own eating places called cafes in the late 1700s. The most famous of all 19th century Paris restaurants was Café Anglais, which was patronised by Tsar Alexander II of Russia and King William I of Prussia in 1867.

The first restaurant was opened in 1765 in Paris by a soup vendor followed by England where a meal was provided at a fixed hour and price for the first time in a tavern, which later became a meeting place for people. Shakespeare was known to be a regular customer of the Mermaid Tavern in London, and thus eating outside the home began.

In USA the first restaurant opened in 1834 by Lorenzo Delmonico in New York City, where today there are more than 300,000 outlets serving 130 million or more meals per day. The cafeteria was an American innovation popular even today for its less formal food service which could cope with large number of customers at peak hours effectively in comparison to a restaurant.
Institutional Food Management

Boarding and Lodging Services

Gradually the services extended to boarding and lodging establishments offering a variety of services of successively improved quality in the form of lodges, motels and hotels of different sizes. As the demand progressively increased along with the population, mass catering got separated from lodging and food service began to be priced separately from living areas of a hotel, lodge or motel to provide freedom to the customers to choose what they want to eat, when and where. This led to the development of restaurants, coffee shops, snack bars, icecream parlours, specialty restaurants, fast food services, cafes, soda fountains, vending and the like offering single item menus to multi-choice ones to customers, and the basis for eating out changed from necessity to leisure and pleasure. This gave rise to the development of different food production and delivery services to suit the newer needs of customers for food in office and industrial canteens, hospitals, educational institutions etc. in the form of formal seating arrangements to semiformal buffets, self services and automatic vending. The new demands were for food and services that could be offered with speed giving rise to the term fast food services.

Fast Food Outlets

The fast food culture developed although its effects on health were detrimental. Every health and nutrition professional is now trying to counteract this through proper education and awareness campaigns. Every metropolitan city today has health food and gourmet shops offering self service buffets to attract the customer.

Contract Services

Food services are now provided as required by contract caterers who offer wide choices to the customer in the form of home parties which they organise as complete events for the host. They have their base kitchens for food production, bring most food ready prepared to the location along with their staff, tables, linen, crockery, glassware, etc. and serve the food to the guests. The host only pays the prefixed charge per head. Examples of such catering services are seen at large marriage parties.

Another form of contractual arrangement is used by industries or offices in which tenders are invited from contract caterers for setting up their regular feeding services in the form of canteens, or lunch room services. The space, electricity and water is provided, and the caterer who wins the contract plans the complete spaces, production and service of food including waste...
Development of Food Service Institutions

management. Contracts of this nature are renewed periodically, annually or after 2 years.

Commercial operations thus range from leisurely eating restaurants to coffee shops, vending, takeaway and home delivery services and fast food outlets all over the world. Establishments which started with a utilitarian purpose have now become a part of the social fabric making eating out a socially acceptable and fashionable experience, besides according status to people. This trend in expected to continue with increase in urbanisation, improvement in economic status and therefore purchasing power, accompanying changes in living styles and standards. At the end of 1995 there were 990 hotels in India with 58,041 rooms in the approved list of the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) of which 35 were of deluxe and 54 five star categories (Annexure I).

NON-COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS

This category of food services includes those which operate either at very low profit or break-even making no net profit at all. The goal of such organisations is to sustain the services for the inmates of institutions such as educational and social organisations which may be partially or fully subsidised by government or industry for the benefit of its employees or inmates. The development of non-commercial food services have arisen to meet the needs of environmental, social and economic changes that have followed globalisation and resultant policy changes of governments.

Impact of Social Changes

The social aspects of food and eating were in earlier days satisfied within the households or family since the joint family system was in vogue and each family unit comprised of at least five or more children. This led to a social security system working within families and all earning members placed their earnings in the hands of the head of the family who was usually the oldest and most experienced member. He took the decisions regarding disbursement of funds keeping the welfare of the family, based on their particular value systems and the special requirements of individual members in mind.

The change to nuclear families and one-two-three children policies of government have deprived the family of its social interactions. People have therefore moved their social interactions and entertaining to clubs, hotels, restaurants and the like, leading to the development of the party culture centered around fewer individuals, rather than the extended family. This led to the catering industry cashing in on the inability of small family units to entertain
lavishly at home, giving rise to the outdoor catering concept which is prevalent today, in the form of caterers arranging marriage parties, kitty parties, birthday celebrations and the lot, at virtually any location chosen by the host. Caterers and hoteliers today have halls available for such social events and charge for total event management.

**Social Organisations**

Social organisations such as city clubs, athletic and sports clubs, country clubs host dinners and festive events for large numbers for which they are well equipped with respect to staff and facilities. Visits to temples and religious places too increased more as social rather than religious events organised for the explicit purpose of worship.

**Welfare and Rehabilitation**

The welfare which was looked after normally by the large number of members in joint families thus shifted to the government and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and social and religious groups, who today look after the weaker or needy sections of society in an institutionalised manner. With the complete change in the fabric of society more and more illnesses, mental, physical and social have emerged, placing greater demands on the treasury of governments and philanthropic individuals to help solve the problems of the under privileged citizens.

Welfare and rehabilitation has today become a marathon task being executed through the establishment of institutions offering care in the form of hospitals and clinics, orphanages, daycare centers, prisons, and even old age homes. It has therefore become necessary to feed the inmates of these institutions keeping their requirements for health, development and survival in mind. Feeding was never more institutionalised as it is today, providing a boost to the development of contract catering systems. Some such institutions where mass feeding is necessitated by social and lifestyle related changes are briefly outlined.

**Health and Medical Care**

Increased attention to health, medical care and welfare schemes gave rise to hospitals, nursing homes, primary health centers, welfare centers for all age groups such as creches for infants and children, home for the old, handicapped and mentally disadvantaged citizens and so on. Within all these institutions it became necessary to provide catering facilities for inmates, staff and visitors in
the form of staff and other canteens which set up round the clock fast food counters and self-service facilities.

In addition, welfare services were planned by the government to help eradicate hunger and malnutrition in deprived areas through local public health centers and schools. This led to the development of mobile catering and health units to cover rural areas to take care of health, supplementary feeding and mid-day meal programmes. This also provided the impetus to entrepreneurs to start mobile contract catering services even in metropolitan cities under licensed schemes for commercial goals.

**Hospitals**

Hospital catering started with the advent of large hospitals being set up for patient care. These are usually expected to be supervised by an institutional manager and dieticians since the needs for patient diets are different from those of normal people. Further, each type of disease requires different dietary interventions which only a trained dietitian or nutritionist can provide. Hospital feeding requires specialised food delivery systems as patients are served their meals in the wards under supervision of nursing and ward staff. The same is true of private nursing homes, or clinics.

To cope with the rush of patient admissions and their different dietary needs, dietetic services were provided in large hospitals through base kitchens under the direct supervision of trained dieticians. Private hospitals and nursing homes too followed suit, and depending on their size contracted the catering services or set up their own kitchens to provide the dietary needs of patients.

**Institutional Feeding**

Welfare centers, creches and orphanages set up by government, public and private institutions all need to feed and care for their inmates and thus there is a need to cater to the different age groups with their needs. This has been carried out for the inmates of institutions such as prisons, homes for the old and disadvantaged, hostels of boarding schools, colleges and universities. Canteens provided the support to the main kitchens for snakes, beverages and mini meals for day scholars. Institutional catering however was always carried out in an adhoc fashion and this is now expected to invite focus in this century.

**Prisons:** With the jails of the country overflowing due to increase in the crime graph attention was drawn to the massive catering arrangements required to feed people of all ages in prisons. So far the inmates of such institutions have been treated shabbily with food being thrown into their plates with the eat it or
leave it attitude because prisons were no bar zones for the common citizen. But today with the presence of human rights commissions and NGO’s working for the rehabilitation of people the situation has somewhat improved, although there is scope for further improvement.

**Institutions for the handicapped:** There are a number of institutions which required special catering arrangements for the less fortunate citizens. This gave rise to establishments such as homes for the blind, disabled physically or mentally, orphanages and the like, where persons of similar disabilities were housed together and feeding facilities needed to be provided. Today many more kinds of social institutions have come up thanks to the unstinting efforts of non-government organisations who along with the government cater to the special needs of their inmates.

**EDUCATION**

As mentioned earlier, education in ancient India was imparted by the teachers or gurus in residential complexes of which some of the outstanding examples of Shanti Niketan, Sringeri Math, Institute of Higher Learning in Ananthpur, Banasthali, Belur Math still exist today in our midst most of them having been accorded the status of deemed universities. At these places spiritual education was imparted in strictly disciplined environment. The food which everyone shared was as close to natural as possible in its form, and cooking methods involved minimum heat treatment. Emphasis was laid on the freshness of the food prepared and served. Stale food was not known because the left overs were given away to the hungry less privileged or fed to domestic or other animals. This practice still continues at these centers of value education and excellence.

**Residence Halls**

With more and more families sending children to universities and colleges residence halls, dormitories and hostels providing boarding and lodging, sprang up on the premises. When the demand further increased and students needed accommodation, the women and men's hostels and youth hostels came into existence. Snack bars and cafeterias grew on the premises and students were permitted to use hostel facilities on regular basis.

  School education too became distanced for some and canteen and hostel catering facilities became a necessity for the young active clients. For government schools where children could not pay in canteens for food, subsidised mid-day meals providing at lest 1/6 to 1/5th of their daily