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Operational Procedures for the Preparation of Traditional Sweet Thikpurli Burfi in Kolhapur District of Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

Background: Thikpurli burfi is a heat-desiccated dairy product originating from Thikpurli village, widely recognized across the Kolhapur district in Maharashtra since the 20th century. Keeping the view to generating preliminary data for optimization of standardized method for its production, this study aims to evaluate the different stages involved in the preparation of burfi.

Methods: To gain insights into its manufacturing methods and marketing strategies, surveys were conducted among 20 burfi producers through personal visits, utilizing a structured interview schedule and an approved questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools.

Result: Thikpurli burfi production operates as a small-scale industry, exhibiting notable variations in processing techniques and ingredient usage, including sugar, flavoring agents and milk. Local producers have developed their unique method, which involves adding sugar during the boiling stage. Furthermore, approximately 200 ml of milk is removed from the karahi before sugar is added and later reintroduced before the burfi is setting in the karahi. This burfi is particularly renowned for its distinctive caramelized flavor, appealing physical attributes and characteristic body and texture, contributing to its widespread popularity in the region.

Key words: Burfi Producer's, Manufacturing Techniques, Small-Scale Industry, Thikpurli Burfi.

INTRODUCTION

Khoa and khoa-based sweets such as burfi, peda, kalakand and milk cake represent a major group of indigenous dairy delicacies from the Indian subcontinent. Burfi is a highly popular khoa-based sweet enjoyed across India (Arora *et al*., 2010). Their preparation typically involves open-pan concentration of milk with continuous stirring and scraping until a semi-solid consistency is achieved, after which sugar, flavouring agents and sometimes colouring materials are incorporated (Badola *et al*., 2023). In recent years, the demand for traditional milk-based products has been rising steadily, both in India and in international markets (Shariati *et al*., 2020; Kumar *et al*., 2021). It is estimated that India produces nearly 1.5 million tonnes of khoa annually, with a market value of approximately Rs. 18,000 crore (Indiatimes, 2021).

Various types of burfi, which ware investigated by different reporters, are available in the market, distinguished by the different additives used in their preparation. These include mango and apple pulp burfi (Singh *et al*., 2022), ragi burfi (Kokani, 2023), proso millet burfi (Jadhav *et al*., 2024) and fig burfi (Kamble *et al*., 2015). Additionally, certain traditional sweet variants are well-known for their place of origin, such as Rajkot peda (Patel, 1986), Doda burfi (Chawla *et al*., 2014) and Ujani basundi (Gaikwad and Hembade, 2010).

Within this wider context, Kolhapur district of Maharashtra has earned a strong reputation as a hub of dairy production and processing, owing to its fertile agricultural base, rich buffalo milk resources and deeply rooted sweet-making traditions. Among its many indigenous dairy sweets, Thikpurli burfi occupies a unique place. This sweet is not only cherished for its rich taste and texture but also reflects the culinary heritage and cultural identity of the region. Its preparation relies heavily on traditional methods, utensils and manual skills, distinguishing it from mass-produced commercial variants.

Despite its popularity, there is limited scientific documentation of the operational procedures involved in preparing Thikpurli burfi, including milk quality, ingredient use, processing step and packaging and storage practices. Systematic study of these aspects is important for standardization, quality improvement and potential commercialization, while also preserving the authenticity of this traditional sweet.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present survey was conducted in the Thikpurli village and other villages of Kolhapur district, where this type of

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burfi was manufactured and the Department of Dairy Science, Yeshwant Mahavidyalaya, Nanded during 2023-24. To examine the various practices adopted by burfi producers, they were categorized based on their production location and place of residence. They were classified into two groups: G1 - producers operating within the village and G2 - producers manufacturing burfi outside the village but belonging to Thikpurli. A list of burfi producers was compiled with assistance from local sources and from this list, a total of 20 producers were randomly selected, with 10 representatives from each group. Data collection was conducted through personal visits using a structured interview schedule and an approved questionnaire. This data statistical analyzed using Chi-square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General information and production statistics of Thikpurli burfi

The survey data presented in Table 1 highlights the origins and development of Thikpurli burfi production. The journey of this traditional sweet began in 1985, with Shahaji Shripati Chougale, Ananda Maruti Malage, and Ashok Jaypal Shete credited as its beginners (Pudhari paper, 2014). Before 1990, only five out of the 20 surveyed burfi producers had established their businesses in Thikpurli. However, after 1990, the industry saw significant growth, with approximately 75% (15 producers) entering the market. All burfi producers in the village continued to manufacture their product locally, supplying markets in Radhanagari, Karveer, Kagal, Gargoti Taluka and Kolhapur city. The COVID-19 pandemic led to changes in marketing strategies, prompting some producers to relocate their production sites to main roads within the village, while others moved their businesses along major routes such as Kolhapur to Murgud, Kolhapur to Radhanagari, Kolhapur to Panhalaand within Kolhapur city itself. At present, the average daily milk utilization for burfi production stands at 1,825 liters. The estimated daily production is 599 kg, amounting to an annual output of 218,635 kg and total market value is approximately ₹ 7,65,22,250.

Utensils and equipment used by burfi producers

Table 2 reveals that the analysis of utensils and equipment use among burfi producers revealed a highly significant reliance on traditional methods. All producers (100%) exclusively employed Chullha (Bhatti) with firewood fuel and Iron Kadhai was universally used instead of modern jacketed vats. These findings clearly establish the dominance of traditional heating and cooking equipment in Thikpurli burfi preparation. Similar findings have been reported by Patel (1986), Patil *et al*. (2022) and Gaikwad and Hembade (2010) where firewood-based bhattis were found to be the dominant heating source in small-scale traditional dairy units. Producers emphasized that the Chullha not only reduces operating costs but also imparts a characteristic flavor to the product. Earlier studies on burfi production also highlighted iron vessels as the standard, primarily due to their heat retention properties and low procurement cost (Kamble *et al*., 2015).

In terms of stirring implements, Iron flattened-end stirrers were used by 85% of producers, compared to 15% using stainless steel stirrers. Statistical analysis confirmed this difference as significant (χ^2 = 9.8, p<0.01), indicating that traditional iron implements remain strongly preferred despite the availability of modern stainless-steel alternatives. While stainless steel is generally preferred for hygienic handling (Mohan, n.d.). Tray size showed more variation than other equipment. The 55×36×3 cm tray (yielding 136 pieces) was the most preferred (55%), followed by 50×45×3 cm (20%), 50×39×3 cm (15%) and larger or alternative sizes (10%). The statistical analysis confirmed that this distribution was non-random and significant (χ^2 = 17, p < 0.05). This suggests that, while tray size allows for some flexibility, producers converge on certain dimensions that balance production convenience with portion standardization. Similarly, Vijayalakshmi *et al.,* (2005) also documented freshly prepared square-shaped burfi measuring 5.5 × 5.5 ×1 cm. Taken together, the results confirm that burfi producers depend heavily on traditional utensils and equipment, with very limited modernization.

Quality of milk used by burfi producers

The statistical evaluation of milk quality practices (Table 3) demonstrates a clear and significant reliance on buffalo milk (χ^2 = 20.0, p<0.05). Producers neither standardize fat and SNF contents nor regularly monitor parameters such as acidity. These findings highlight that the methods adopted are deeply rooted in traditional approaches,

Table 1: Production statistics of burfi producers in relation to Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N = 20)
		G1	G2	
Starting year of business	< 1990	3	2	5
	1991-2020	4	5	9
	> 2021	3	3	6
Average daily milk used. lit/day		801	1024	1825
Average daily production of burfi in Kg.		289	310	599
Annual production of burfi in Kg. (approximately)				218635
Turnover of burfi. (Rs.350/ Kg). (annually)				Rs.7.65.22.250/-

strongly influenced by local practices and show minimal evidence of modernization or scientific regulation. This trend is consistent with the wider Indian dairy industry, where buffalo milk remains the primary raw material for khoa-based sweets because of its elevated fat (7-8%) and solid content, which enhances both texture and yield (Aneja *et al*., 2002; Kamble *et al*., 2015; Rajorhia, 2002). Nevertheless, the lack of systematic quality assessment and standardization poses potential risks for maintaining product uniformity, safety and shelf stability. Comparable results were noted by Badola *et al*. (2023), who observed that traditional producers largely depend on experiential knowledge and sensory judgment rather than laboratory testing for quality control.

Other ingredients used by burfi producers

The data presented in Table 4 reveals that the statistical evaluation of ingredient usage demonstrated highly significant variation in sugar levels (crystalline Grade II) (χ^2 = 20.15, p<0.01), with a majority (70%) of producers preferring additions in the range of 15-20%, exceeding the recommended standard of 80 g/L. Kamble *et al.* (2015) similarly reported that 87.50% of burfi producers used crystalline sugar in the preparation of fig burfi. The stage of

Table 2: Utensils and equipment used by burfi producers for preparation of Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N = 20)	Chi-square (χ^2)
		G1	G2		
Types of heating equipment.	Chullha (Bhatti)	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Khoa machine / Steam boiler	0	0	0	
Fuel type.	Wood	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	LPG or Oil	0	0	0	
Types of karahi.	Iron Kadhai	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Khoa machine / Jacketed Vat	0	0	0	
Types of stirrers.	1. Iron Flattened End	8	9	17	9.8 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	2.Stainless still Flattened End	2	1	3	
Size of burfi Tray (cm) having 5 × 3 × 1 cm burfi size	55 × 36 × 3 (136 burfi piece)	5	6	11	17 > 9.49 at 5% level df = 4
	50 × 45 × 3 (150 burfi piece)	1	3	4	
	50 × 39 × 3 (130 burfi piece)	3	0	3	
	55 × 48 × 3 (176 burfi piece)	0	1	1	
	Others	1	0	1	

Table 3: Quality of milk used by burfi producers for preparation of Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N = 20)	Chi-square (χ^2)
		G1	G2		
Types of milk.	Buffalo	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Cow + Buffalo	0	0	0	
Milk fat and SNF percentage in milk	Differed everyday	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Uniform everyday	0	0	0	
Checking the milk fat, SNF percentage daily	No	10	9	19	16.2 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Yes	0	1	1	
Daily check milk acidity and standardization of milk for fat and SNF	No	10	10	20	20 > 3.84 at 5% level df = 1
	Yes	0	0	0	

sugar addition was found to be a strong preference exists (χ^2 = 19.9, p<0.01), with most producers (80%) incorporating sugar at the boiling stage, reflecting a strong traditional preference. Sugar plays a crucial role beyond sweetness, contributing to bulk, lowering water activity and enhancing the texture of traditional sweets (Chetana *et al.,* 2010). Different studies have documented sugar addition at various stages in traditional sweet preparation, such as at the rabari stage for wood apple burfi (Sakate *et al.,* 2004), at the pat formation stage for high-quality mango burfi (Kadam *et al.,* 2009) and during boiling in Ujani basundi preparation (Gaikwad and Hembade, 2010). The use of flavoring was nearly universal (95%), with cardamom identified as the predominant choice, while variations in flavor quantity (< 10 g, 10–20 g, > 20 g per batch) were not statistically significant (χ^2 = 3.89, p>0.05). Additionally, none of the producers reported the use of preservatives or additives, a practice that preserves authenticity but likely reduces product shelf life. Collectively, these findings highlight pronounced traditional uniformity in sugar addition stage and flavoring practices, coupled with flexibility in sugar concentration and flavor quantity. A lack of

Table 4: Other ingredients used by burfi producers for preparation of Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N =20)	Chi-square (χ^2)
		G1	G2		
Quantity of sugar *	10.1 to 15.0	2	3	5	20.15 > 9.49
added % on the basis	15.1 to 20.0	6	8	14	at 5% level
of milk taken (crystalline	20.1 to 25.0	2	1	3	df = 4.
sugar -Grade II)	25.1 to 30.0	2	1	3	
	> 30.1	1	0	1	
Stage at which	At Boiling stage	8	8	16	19.90 > 5.99
sugar added.	Basundi stage	2	1	3	at 5% level
	Before Boiling stage	0	1	1	df = 2
Addition of flavour	Yes	10	9	19	16.2 > 3.84
	No	0	1	1	at 5% level
					df = 1
Name of flavor in	Cardamom	8	9	17	26.95 > 5.99
Powder form	Cardamom + Jaiphal	1	0	1	at 5% level
	Cardamom + Jaiphal + Ginger	1	0	1	df = 2
Quantity of flavour	< 10	4	6	10	3.89 < 5.99
added (g/batch)	10 to 20	4	2	6	at 5% level
	> 20	2	1	3	df = 2
Stage of flavour	Before Setting	10	9	19	-
addition	Burfi				
Addition of colour,	No	10	10	20	20 > 3.84
other substances	Yes	0	0	0	at 5% level
and preservatives					df = 1

*Total number of N=26 samples on the basis of different types of burfi.

Table 5: Method of production followed by burfi producers for preparation of Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N = 20)	Chi-square (χ^2)
		G1	G2		
Quantity of milk	< 10 lit.	3	4	7	5.54 > 3.84
taken for one batch*	10 to 15 lit.	10	9	19	at 5% level
					df = 1
Types of Traditional	M1	6	7	13	34.6 > 11.07
methods	M2	2	1	3	at 5% level
	M3	1	0	1	df = 5
	M4	1	0	1	
	M5	0	1	1	
	M6	0	1	1	

*Total number of N=26 samples on the basis of different types of burfi.

awareness regarding these factors remains a key challenge for standardizing the process and maintaining consistent product quality (Chetana *et al.,* 2010).

Method of production followed by burfi producers

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that the findings indicate a strong reliance on traditional operational approaches in the preparation of Thikpurli burfi. A majority of producers (73%) prepared burfi in batches of 10–15 liters, which proved significant (χ^2 = 5.54, df = 1, p<0.05), highlighting efficiency-oriented scaling rooted in tradition. Ramanna *et al*. (1983) also documented traditional burfi-making methods where 5 to 10 liters of cow's milk were used per batch. Similarly, Method M1 was overwhelmingly dominant (65%), with other methods rarely adopted, as illustrated in Table 6. Analysis confirmed this pattern as highly significant (χ^2 = 34.6, df = 5, p<0.01), suggesting that production choices are not uniform but strongly skewed towards M1 and culturally embedded rather than random. During the production process, burfi makers have developed specific techniques, including adding sugar during the boiling stage, removing about 200 ml of milk from the karahi before sugar addition and then reintroducing it before setting the burfi. The earlier researcher reported that traditional dairy product prepared in small batches using manual methods, which have very slow, labour intensive, results in quality variability, unhygienic and short shelf-life of product (Anadani *et al*., 2020).

Table 6: Different steps followed for burfi preparation in Traditional Methods.

Steps followed for burfi preparation	Types of methods					
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Receiving milk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Filtration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Addition of sugar before boiling						✓
Boiling of milk in karahi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stirring cum scrapping of milk still pasty consistency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Removing of 200 ml milk before sugar adding	✓		✓			✓
Addition of sugar after 5 min. of boiling	✓	✓				
Addition of sugar at basundi stage			✓	✓	✓	
Solid mass leaving sides of pan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Removing karahi from fire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Add removed 200 ml milk and mix	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Addition of flavour and mix	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Tray filling and spreading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cooling 20 to 30 min.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cutting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Packaging and Storage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 7: Practices followed by burfi producers related to yield, package and storage of Thikpurli burfi.

Particular		Group of burfi producer		Total (N = 20)	Chi-square (χ^2)
		G1	G2		
Approximate weight	< 30 g	0	1	1	18 > 7.82
of one piece of Burfi.	31 - 35 g	1	3	4	at 5% level
	36 - 40 g	7	6	1	df = 3
	> 41 g	2	0	2	
Burfi Average Yield % *	< 30.0	7	3	10	7.85 > 7.82
	30.1 to 35.0	4	6	10	at 5% level
	35.1 to 40.0	1	1	2	df = 3
	> 40.1	1	3	4	
Packaging material used for burfi.		Butter paper, Plastic paper, Newspaper, Plastic bag, Cardboard plus plastic paper, Glass burni.			
Storage period of burfi.	< 10 Days	6	4	10	5.20 < 5.99
	11 to 20 Days	3	5	8	at 5% level
	> 21 Days	1	1	2	df = 2
Storage temperature of burfi.		Only room temperature.			

*Total number of N=26 samples on the basis of different types of burfi.

Yield, quality, package and storage of burfi

Table 7 indicates that the analysis of yield, packaging and storage practices in Thikpurli burfi production underscores both uniformity and variability within traditional systems. A statistically significant preference ($\chi^2 = 18.0$, $p < 0.05$) was observed for standardized piece weights of 36-40 g (66.67%), which aligns with consumer expectations of consistency in portion size and marketing efficiency (Khan *et al.,* 2008). Yield variation across producers approached significance ($\chi^2 = 7.85$, ≈ 0.05), with half reporting yields below 30%. This pattern suggests technological inefficiencies or variability in raw milk quality. In terms of quality.

Flavor: The burfi had a sweet, caramelized flavor, with some samples exhibiting a slightly burnt or cardamom taste.

Body and Texture: It was denser than conventional burfi, with a medium-granular texture, which is a defining feature.

Color and Appearance: The burfi had a brownish hue, likely due to sugar addition during milk boiling and excessive concentration. The surface appeared oily due to free fat content. Badola *et al*. (2023) reported that the distinctive sensory characteristics of khoa and its traditional dairy products are developed during processing, which enhances their uniqueness; however, their limited shelf life remains a significant challenge for the dairy industry. Storage duration practices were statistically non-significant ($\chi^2 = 5.20$, $p>0.05$), indicating flexibility, though nearly half of the producer's stored burfi for less than 10 days, reflecting its limited shelf life under room temperature. This outcome corresponds with the inherent perishability of khoa-based sweets (Sachdeva and Rajorhia, 1982). Packaging practices remained non-standardized, dominated by low-cost traditional materials such as butter paper and plastic bags. Aggarwal *et al*. (2018) also documented packaging also plays an important role in increasing the shelf life and enhancing their marketability of traditional dairy products.

CONCLUSION

Thikpurli burfi is celebrated for its unique caramelized flavor, appealing physical characteristics, body and texture, making it quite popular in its local region. There is significant potential for its market to expand beyond the Bhogawati area, provided that the quality, safety and shelf life of the product are enhanced. The production of Thikpurli burfi operates as a small-scale industry, with notable variations in processing techniques and ingredients, including sugar, flavorings and milk. Each producer employs their own methods, such as adding sugar during the boiling stage and removing about 200 ml of milk from the karahi before incorporating the sugar, which is then added back before the burfi is set. To facilitate wider acceptance of this product outside the district, it is crucial to develop technologies that improve production methods and extend shelf life.

Conflict of interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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