



CHANA CHUR

TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS OF BANGLADESH

Chana chur is essentially a mixture of two or more components. The most common components are fried noodles made from pulse flour (bason); flour chips of different sizes and shapes; fried and puffed dhals; cereals and peanuts. Spices and condiments are used as to flavour the mixture. It is a similar product to "Bombay Mix".

The combination of ingredients varies considerably depending on the price and the market. In the rural areas, small producers produce a low cost Chana chur using only two or three components. Some large scale producers produce a Chana chur which may contain more than 10 components. This is mainly consumed by the cities.

The Importance of Chana Chur

Chana chur is a popular snack food in Bangladesh and India. It is available in almost all grocer's shops, even in the most remote villages of Bangladesh. Vendors often are found selling "Chana chur" in public places like stations, bus terminals or in front of schools.



Figure 1: A small "Dokan" (kiosk) selling a wide range of snack foods.

Chana chur consumption is increasing in rural areas. Producers are coming up with more and more new ideas on Chana chur: from new packaging to new varieties. Entrepreneurs are taking interest. In nearly every town in Bangladesh, there will be several family engaged making Chana chur, as can be seen from the case studies below. This product is becoming one of the important food processing businesses in Bangladesh.

Not only is it economically important but it is providing a means of income generation for disadvantaged groups in Bangladesh as can be seen in the case studies below.

Nutritional aspects of chana chur

"Chana chur" is rich in protein and calories. Its exact nutritional quality depends on the combination of different ingredients. Sometimes it is consumed with puffed rice (muri) and with other snack foods by children and working people. This increases its nutritional value, as consumption of cereals and legumes complement each others in respect to amino acids. It also has a high calorie level, since all of the ingredients are fried in oil.

Making Chana Chur

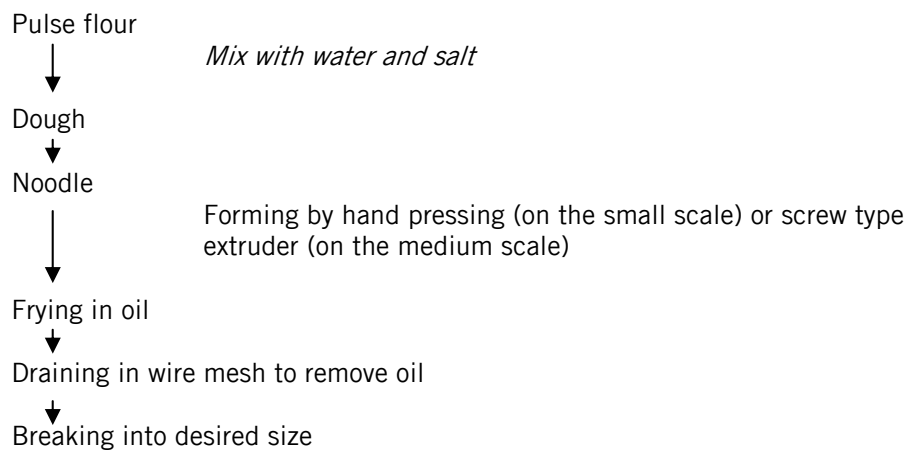
Ingredients

Black gram	1kg
Pea	500kg
Chick pea	500kg
Peanut	1.5kg
Rolled rice	500kg
Black gram flour	3.5kg
Dhal flour	1.5kg

As has been stated above "Chana chur" is a mixture of different components: fried noodles, flour chips of different sizes and shapes, pulses and peanuts.

Fired Noodles

Flow diagram



Process

Thin fried noodles

1. Use 1 part black gram flour to 3 parts dhal flour.
2. The flour is mixed with water and salt until a sticky dough is formed.



Figure 2: The dough being prepared.

3. The dough is pressed through a perforated sheet of metal with the appropriate shaped holes (see diagram) into hot oil.



Figure 3: The dough being extruded into hot oil.

- When the noodles are crispy and a golden colour, they are removed from the oil.

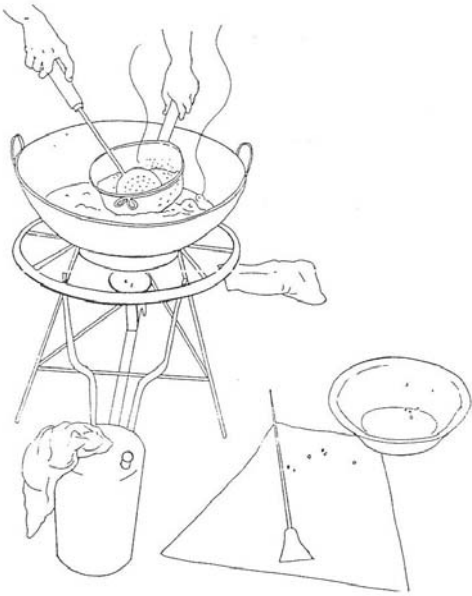


Figure 4: The noodles are removed when they are a golden colour and crispy.

- The fried noodles are drained on a wire mesh to remove excess oil.

Thick fried noodles

- Only black gram flour is used with two teaspoon of soya bean oil.
- Add 2 teaspoons of ground black cumin and salt,
- This is mixed with water to make a dough.



Figure 5: The dough being prepared.

4. This is pressed through a perforated metal sheet with the appropriate shaped holes (see diagram) into hot oil.



Figure 6: The dough being extruded into hot oil.

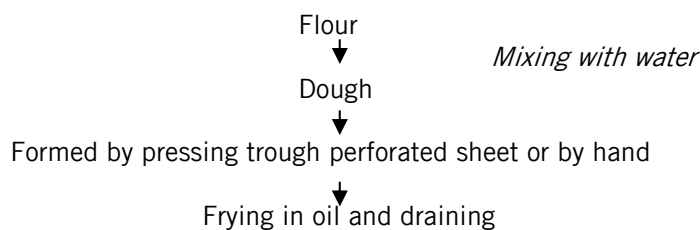
5. When crispy and golden the noodles are removed and drained.



Figure 7: The finished product.

Flour Chips

Flow diagram



Large papur

1. Black gram flour is mixed with 2 teaspoons of sodium hydroxide, salt and 2 teaspoons of black cumin.
2. This is pressed through a perforated metal sheet with appropriate shaped holes (see diagram) into hot oil.
3. When they are crispy and a golden colour, they are removed from the oil.
4. They are drained on a wire mesh to remove excess oil.

Small papur

1. One part black gram flour is mixed with part dhal flour and 2 teaspoons of soya bean oil.
2. This is made into a dough and pressed through a perforated metal sheet with the appropriate shaped holes (see diagram) into hot oil.
3. When they are crispy and a golden colour, they are removed from the oil.
4. They are drained on a wire mesh to remove excess oil.

Small balls

1. Only black gram flour is used.
2. Small balls are shaped and fried in oil.
3. When they are crispy and a golden colour, they are removed from the oil.
4. They are drained on a wire mesh to remove excess oil.

Other ingredients.

* Chick peas are soaked in water for 4-5 hours and then fried in hot oil.

* Peanuts are fried in hot oil.



Figure 8: Peanuts are fried in oil.



Figure 9: Rolled rice is fried in hot oil.

* Rolled rice is fried in hot oil.

Mixing the mixture

1. All the above components are mixed together.
2. Spices (eg ground cloves, cumin, chilli, ginger and pepper) are added to flavour. Citric acid or lemon juice can be also added.



Figure 10: Mixing the ingredients and adding flavourings.

Packaging

Chana chur is nowadays sold in polythene packets. The sizes of the packets range from 100g to 1kg with 250g. The packets are usually sealed by hand using a candle. Polythene sealing machines are available in Bangladesh but not appropriate for the small scale.



Figure 11: Weighing out the Chana Chur for packaging.



Figure 12: Sealing the polythene bags.



Storage

"Chana chur" has a good keeping quality and if the packet is sealed well will last for 4 months.

Price of equipment

At least 4 sheets of perforated metal with different shaped holes are needed. Each sheet will cost 200 Taka.

Rolling pin	75 taka
Pan	700 taka
Sieve	30 taka

Case Studies

Takerhat

A study on "Chana chur" producers was carried out in Takerhat and adjacent areas.

The supply of "Chana chur" at Takerhat and nearby bazaars mainly comes from 3 localities: Cohala, Sundikuri and Amgram. There are over 50 families involved in this trade in this area which shows how economically important this product is.

The first "Chana chur" production in this area started in the early 1960s. Mobarak Hossain Mollah and Fazlul Haque Miah of Kutibari were the first producers. It is interesting to note that the pioneers are descendants from the weavers community. They started to produce "Chana chur" as an alternative to their existing livelihood. They came to know of this product when they were looking for work in Jessore. Now almost all of the "Chana chur" producers in this area come from Weavers community.

There are 3 types of producers in this area:

(i) Producers who produce a low priced Chana chur in bulk quantity. This consists of only fried noodles and flour chips. These producers sell their products in local "hats" (rural markets) according to local demand.

(ij) Producers living in Kutibari who produce a comparatively medium priced product containing additional components like fried peanut and fried pulses. They generally sell their products in small packets in grocer's shops.

(iji) Street vendors who either purchase from local producers or make it at home on a small scale. Generally, they sell the Chana chur with "Muri", boiled potato, onion and spices. The profit margins in public places is high.

In recent years higher priced products in eye catching packets are found in bigger shops. These are not produced in the area but in the big cities and are marketed throughout the country.

Mubarak Hossain Mollah

Mubarak Hossain Mollah (42) is one of the biggest producers in this area. He and his immediate forefathers were weavers. But in the course of time, they had to change their profession. Mubarak went to Jessore in quest of a job. He met Chana chur producers there. When he came back home in the early 1970s, he adopted Chana chur making as his profession. This change of profession has improved his financial condition. This influenced other members of his community to change their occupation. It has been already mentioned that the "Chana chur" producers of this area are mainly from the weavers community.

Mubarak Hossain is now producing 40 kgs of "Chana chur" per day on average. He uses a specially designed extruder. He purchased this machine from his master producer in Jessore in 1973. He started with a handmade local extruder with a lower capacity. Every day he uses 10kg of soya bean oil and 20 kg fuel.

The peak season is from "Aswin Kartik" to "Poush" (September to March). The summer and the rainy season are dull seasons for "Chana chur". During the peak seasons nearly 1 00 kg has to be produced in a day. He sells his products in Takerhat and the other adjacent bazaars.

Mubarak Hossain has to work from morning to night with a short break for lunch. When he has to go to his suppliers, the production stops.

No labour from outside is involved in the production. It is a family business. Mubarak's wife, two sons and three daughters run this small scale industry. The profits are sufficient for the whole family to live off without any financial trouble.

Mubarak is not concerned the hygienic precautions during the production process. His colleagues wore dirty cloths. The fried noodles are left on the dusty floor. His argument was that dust helps to dry the noodles.

Fazlul Haque Miah

Fazlul Haque Miah (45) of Kutibari. Rajoir has been involved in Chana chur making from the last 30 years. All of his relatives are also Chana chur producers.

He was also involved with weaving once. He produces 30kg Chana chur per day. He also became a "Chana chur" producer when he was in Jessore looking for work. He uses a simple wooden extruder. He packaged his products himself. To make 30kg production, he uses 8 - 22 kg of pulse flours. 3kg of peanuts, 6kg of oil, fuel, salt and spices.

He supplies his product to shops in Rajoir. He sells his product for 40 Taka per kg on average (information collected in 1992). He also sells some of his Chana chur directly to the public in the street. His daily profit is 200-250 Taka.

Sandwip Island

Sandwip Island is a low lying island in the Jamuna/Ganges delta. It was one of the worst effected places in Bangladesh by Hurricane Gorky in 1991. Thousands of people were killed, most of the houses destroyed and most landless people's livelihoods ruined since the rice fields, where they worked as day labourers, were flooded with salt water. There were reports of wages falling as low as 10 Taka a day which is not enough to live off.

At the time of the cyclone no one was making Chana chur on the island. It was made in Chinagong and Noakhali and transported by boat to the island. The quality of this Chana chur was poor.

Two years later 6 Women are making a living by producing Chana chur. They all received training from Tahmina Chowdhury of Nari Progroti (a women's development organization), who attended the first Practical Action food processing training course. Tahmina Chowdhury has been so successful, that she became the Chana chur trainer on the Practical Action course.

Rohima Begum

Rohima Begum was a widow with two children at the time of the cyclone. Her mother Hazera also lives with her. She had no fixed work. Life was difficult and she barely had enough money to keep her family alive. She was one of the twelve women that received training from Tahmina Chowdhury on Chana chur production.

Rohima and Hazera (who also received training from Tahmina Chowdhury) make 2 - 3 kg of Chana chur every day. They produce a high quality Chana chur with 5 different ingredients including fried noodles, peanuts and pulses. They package this in 250g polythene packages with a colourful label. Her son Ibrahim Mohammad markets the packaged product in the shops of the local village.

They make 12 Taka profit on each kilogram produced and make between 24 and 36 Taka a day. This is equivalent to the average daily labourer's wage. However in Sandwip (a very poor area), this is regarded as very good. She has expanded the business and now also produces "Moa/Mola" puffed rice and gur balls which she sells to labourers in the paddy fields. She is sometimes paid in paddy which she processes and sells for a profit.

This has had a very big impact on her family. They have for the first time a regular supply of food. They feel secure. Their position has improved so much that her son Ibrahim Mohammad can now attend the Junior High school regularly which will greatly improve his chances of getting a good job.

Madaripur

Madaripur is in the centre of the country. Mokbul Hossain of the Rural Employment Sector Programme works in this region. He attended the 4th Practical Action food processing course. After attending the course, he has worked with many groups of disadvantaged people on food processing enterprise development. Fifteen businesses have been set up and nearly 200 people are benefitting from this work.

Sarwar Hossain

Ten years ago due to a lack of work in this area, Sarwar Hossain left his village and went to Dhaka to find work. The only work he could find was as a rickshaw puller. This is hard and difficult work and he often only made 30 Taka a day, which does not go very far in Dhaka. He was often tired and exhausted and became sick.

One day on a visit to his village, he heard about the work of RESP. He decided to return to his village and join the Durgabandi Assetless group. He received training from Mokbul Hossain and a 5,000 Taka loan.

Now 2 years later, he and his family are making Chana chur. He produces a high quality Chana chur with many ingredients and packages it in polythene packets. It costs him 25 ½ Taka to make 1 kg. He sells a 200g packet for 5 ½ Taka, so he makes 2 Taka profit on each kilogram produced. He usually produces 50kg a day. He is now making 100 Taka a day profit. He produces Chana chur 18 days a month. He is thinking of making other products like garlic pickle and olive pickle.

This business has improved his and his family's quality of life. He now has enough money to send three of his 4 children to school.

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