Unit II - Topic 7

Salting of fish

29.3.3 Salting

Salting is a process where the common salt, sodium chloride, is used as a preservative which penetrates the tissues, thus checks the bacterial growth and inactivates the enzymes. Some of the factors involved in salting of fish which play an important role are purity of salt, quantify of salt used, method of salting and weather conditions like temperature, etc.

During the process the small fishes are directly salted without being cleaned. In the medium and large sized fish the head and viscera are removed and longitudinal cuts are made with the help of knives in the fleshy area of the body. Then the fish is washed and filled with salt for uniform penetration through flesh. Large fishes like sharks are cut into convenient sized pieces. Generally, sardines, mackerels, seer fishes, cat fishes, sharks and prawns are used for salting.

Dry salting and wet salting and are the methods employed in salting of fish.

a) Dry salting

In this process the fish is first rubbed in salt and packed in layers in the tubs and cemented tanks. The salt is applied in between the layers of fishes in the proportion of 1:3 to 1:8 salt to fish. The proportion of salt to fish varies with the fish since the oily fish require more salt. At the end of 10 - 24 hours the fishes are removed from the tubs and washed in salt brine and dried in the sun for 2 or 3 days.

b) Wet salting

The cleaned fish are put in the previously prepared concentrated salt solution. It is stirred daily till it is properly picked. With large sized fishes, longitudinal slits are made in the flesh to allow penetration of salt. After pickling for 7-10days, the salty water that oozes out from the fish is allowed to drain off. This can be stored upto 3-4months.