

Food Culture as an Element in Promoting Punjab as a Tourist Destination

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Abstract

Availability of special food ingredients or the food culture of a tourist destination is a key element in choosing travel destinations in today's world. Food culture certainly claims a vibrant role in the consolidation, sustainability as well as enhancement of a tourist destination. The paper aims to contribute to the culinary awareness leading to generate food tourism in India, specifically Punjab as research will be done in Amritsar, a city of Punjab, India. The methodology in this research involves surveys with foreign tourists (NRI's) travelling Amritsar and having their luncheons and dinner at various restaurants and historic outlets in the city. Research results that a major part of total tourists emphasizes the culinary aspects to choose the travel destination. On the basis of responses received to the categorizing variables, tourists have been recognized as highly gastronomic tourists, gastronomic tourists and generic tourists. The study highlights the importance given to the food culture and the satisfaction achieved by the food availability at Amritsar.

Keywords: Culinary, Amritsar, selection of tourist destination, Gastronomic

I. Introduction

Tourism studies have already been emerged to focus food tourists, food hygiene and food destinations focusing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Cohen &Avieli elaborated the Gastronomic tourism as comprehensive sensory practice especially in terms of flavor and taste of the food which means tourists gets a better engagement with the environment of the destination through the locally available food ingredients and other available raw materials for cooking food dishes. Further food habits at a destination showcase the culture, social life, the environment, economy and the people as food is directly rooted in their own culture and traditions. Hence, the locally available food provides supplementary importance to the destination and competitiveness to the geographical location. Many gastronomical researchers emphasize that place being it a country or a city, should promote its food to attract tourists those travelling for

dining out and trying new food dishes from new cuisines. By gastronomy, it becomes possible to share beliefs, lifestyles and other aspects about people, their cultures and customs.

Punjabi food culture is known in the world for many special aspects such as the freshness of raw materials used, the wholesome and richness of the food dishes, a distinctive taste and flavor in food, the use of special species and condiments any much more. In addition to this there is perhaps another aspect which gets the cuisine so much of attraction and that is the style of serving the food dishes in the brass plates and specialty drinks such as lassi, haldi milk, aampanna etc. in large brass glasses. The cooking style and the richness of the food dishes make them famous in almost all parts of India as well as throughout the globe. Punjabi food is long been preferred by the tourists coming to India and those visiting north India from other states as well. The use of milk and milk products have historical influence as land in Punjab is

known for its fertility and the rivers flowing within the state. Various revolutions as green revolution (an increase in the agricultural production in Punjab) and the white revolution (an increase in the dairy products in Punjab) have their impact on the food habits of the inhabitants of the state.

This paper aims to answer questions related to local food of Punjab and styles of serving such food to better understand the food culture of the place and promote food culture as a tourism resource. Local food and styles of serving local food dishes can encourage the experience of both inbound and outbound tourists visiting Punjab. This paper discusses the evaluations regarding different aspects of Punjabi food and the traditional style of serving food dishes by tourists visiting Amritsar, Punjab.

The paper comprises of a brief introduction to the topic followed by the literature review in context of the subject. Description about the geographical location of Punjab is also included briefly in the paper. The model of research is followed by the results in the fifth paragraph. After explaining the results and concluding the observations derived in the study, the reference sections add value to all the resources used to complete the study.

II. Literature Review

The gastronomic tourism has been analyzed in different forms in the academic literature. Highlighting few among all the work done, between year 1997 to 2013 AM Hjalager and Richards in the form of a series of articles being leading experts at the time; contribution by Boniface; research by Long, where articles were published to the identity and address gastronomic tourism; research by Cohen and Avieli: 2004, the two works coordinated by Professor Hall which analyzes both gastronomy, and wine and the contributions of Croce and Perri: 2010. Scientific literature has also approached the gastronomic tourism in different parts of the world, highlighting mostly Asian locations. Thus, the importance of gastronomic tourism in Asian countries is analyzed. In

addition, in Asian countries, investigations have also been conducted focus in Argentina, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Finland, Portugal or Spain. Studies that have focused on the analysis of a particular type of food are different, as they identify a particular region or an area, although it is known internationally, as it occurs with pizza, sushi or any other food from a particular region. For example, we find religious food, Chinese food, Indian food or goulash.

JC Henderson in year 2004 has describes the relationship between tourism and gastronomy in three research lines as: Food as a tourism product, the marketing of food to tourists, and food tourism as an instrument of destination and general development. On the other hand, Tikkanen in 2007 claims four different aspects through which gastronomy establishes a synergy with tourism: as an attraction, which means that the destination can use its food to promote the place; as a component of the product, where it turns into the design of dining routes; as experience, addressing the existence of one or more locations where gastronomy takes on a different level and claiming itself, for example the cuisine made by the great masters; and as a cultural phenomenon, premised on the existence of food festivals. It implies here that the gastronomical tourism would have a greater or lesser degree of development depending on the level of connection that the cuisine has with the culture of the place, as the cuisine plays an important role in tourist satisfaction experience and represents cultural heritage of particular destination. Therefore, tourism type reinforces the importance of locally available ingredients, learning about their consumption, and the importance of other culinary resources. A tourist destination can be promoted by its own food culture only when its food culture and cuisine is presented clearly using available culinary resources, the cuisine which is identified by the travelers and has large establishments where tourists can enjoy various food dishes in the cuisine. Cuisine at a tourist destination is the second most important element of attraction after

public safety: Enright and Newton: 2004. Considering the relative competitiveness, food/cuisine becomes the most important attraction even surpassing the public safety at a destination. Concluding the studies of all authors, along with cuisine, public safety, nightlife and sightseeing are the elements in selection of destination by the tourists. In order to perform various explanatory studies related to food and beverage tourism, it is required to segment tourists on the basis of their nationality and also distinguishing between international and domestic tourists. In his research, Duarte Alonso in 2010 presents the socio demographic profiles of wine tourists in New Zealand segmented by their nationality. J.H. Nam and T.J. Lee: 2011 in a study on the satisfaction of international visitors in traditional Korean restaurants and J.S. Hornig: 2012 focuses on the analysis of the perception of brand equity in international tourists. L.M Long in 2013 states that the prime focuses on food for creating a tourism destination is culinary tourism. C.M. Hall in 2013 declares wine, food and tourism marketing as the contemporary practices and trends in tourism industry. S. Frisvoll and M. Forbord in 2016 after their research publish that the role of the food in tourism is multipart and multi-layered as food is not only the necessity but it creates memories and experiences for the tourists. T.D. Anderson, L. Mossberg and A. Therkelsen in the year 2017 announce that food and tourism are closely related and they were always closely related to each other. Authors also print that interest of the tourists in the food has reached a level, as there is a large potential for food to create tourism at various destinations in recent years. A Ellis, E Park, S. Kim and I Yoeman in a research during year 2018 analytically review and evaluate the essential competencies related to tourism at a destination, defining food and tourism as food tourism evolving as a foremost subject in tourism industry. Stone, M.J., Migacz, S. and Wolf, E., 2019 explore that the experiences which tourists get with food get connected to their memory and

influence the image as well as revisit or repurchase decision by the tourists.

Studies are also available where analysis of perceptions and motivations of International tourists has been presented. Researchers have included international tourists from Canada, Italy, Germany and Australia as respondents to the questionnaires regarding food culture in Amritsar.

III. Description of Geographical area

Situated at a height of 755 feet above sea level, Amritsar is one of the most populated cities of Punjab which connects India with its neighboring country Pakistan through international border famous for border tourism by its name Wagha Border. The Golden temple also called Harmandir Sahab is the most sacred place in the city which captures tourist attention massively throughout the year. Being center of religious activities related to Sikh religion, city has grown and developed by Sikh population. Established in 1577, the city is about 410kms from national capital, Delhi. Talking about the climate in the city, both summers and winters show their extreme effect making the time between November to March as winter season and April to July is considered as summer season. June is considered as the hottest month of the year and January is known for the coldest climatic conditions in Amritsar. City is also prone to heavy fog in the winters which has resulted in flight cancellation many times in past years.

IV. Methodology

Primary data has been collected from the tourists in the form of questionnaires through fieldwork to determine the valuation of International tourists (NRI's) visiting Amritsar, Punjab on the food culture of the state/city through the Punjabi food. Establishments near Harmandir sahib (Golden Temple) were selected to conduct the survey considering the fact most of the international tourists visiting Punjab do visit Harmandir Sahab, secondly a popular food dishes like Amritsari Kulcha, Amritsarivadiyaan, Amritsarinaan which actually represent the

gastronomy of Punjab were considered for valuation by the tourists. Questionnaire was filled by the guests once they have finished their luncheons or dinner. Permission was requested from the heads of the establishments on condition to avoid any hinderances in customer service to the guests. Further, survey used in this research is based on previous works and aspects as: socio-demographic characteristics of tourists, satisfaction of visit, perception and relationship between culture and gastronomy.

Surveys were conducted between the months of July to December 2018. Interviewers have handed over the questionnaire to the tourists with complete independence to put their valuation, the presence of the interviewers helped to resolve any doubts to the tourists. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed and responses were recorded during the said period. The survey included 11 statements in the form of questionnaire and explains evaluation for reason of the visit, socio-economic profile of the tourists, the knowledge of the typical dishes, perception about culinary aspects of Punjab to determine their satisfaction and other factors majorly affecting guest satisfaction at food and beverage outlets. A five point scale to judge perception of tourists, yes/no answers, both open and close ended questions were used to make comments about the gastronomic experience. Out of 450 responses 360 questionnaires were observed with appropriate communication.

Total tourists visiting Amritsar	Foreign Tourists+ domestic tourists	4,45,95,061
	1200969+45796030	

(Jan-Dec 2018)		
Sample size	400	
Error in sampling	+/- 5%	
Time frame	July to December 2018	
Sampling	Convenience sampling	

Table 1. Research Design

Primary data collected were organized, tabulated and analyzed using IBM SPSS 25.0. Both Univariate and bivariate statistical tools were used for processing the data. The data, results and conclusions presented are taken by using different statistical tools as: factor analysis: cluster analysis: ANOVA and the chi-square test from the contingency tables between variables.

V. Result of the research and discussions

To meet the objectives of the study it becomes essential to group the visitors to Amritsar into different categories. Visitors to the Amritsar may come with different reasons but the desire to know about the food culture of a destination creates a gastronomic tourist. There are tourists who visit Amritsar as a religious destination but at the same time same tourist can have an instinct to know about the food culture of the residents of Amritsar. Thus, it becomes important to group all types of visitors to the city Amritsar into categories as Highly gastronomic tourists, Gastronomic tourists and Generic tourists. For the purpose a questionnaire with Likert scale with 5 points was used where 1 denotes completely disagreeing to a statement and 5 being completely agreeing to another.

Table 2. Explanatory factors regarding Traditional/local food

Factor	Denomination
Local food is an element of socialization	Socialization
Local food offers the taste of food dishes prepared with unique style & skills	Tasting
Local food dishes are cooked with fresh ingredients	Ingredients
Local food is easy to digest in that specific environment	Digestion
Local food has added hygiene value	Hygiene

Local food is of good quality and a economical price	Quality & price
Traditional presentation of local food is attractive	Presentation
Local food is healthy to eat	Nutrition
Local food combines traditional & culinary aspects	Combination
Local food is the reflection of culture at a city/location	Traditions

On the basis of factors in table 2, a cluster analysis was implemented wherein 19 repetitive replies of the respondents about the food culture/traditional food of Amritsar were observed. On the basis of these monotonous responses the data from the respondents was been divided into three clusters wherein first cluster was of 178 cases, second with 98 cases and third with total 84 cases.

Table 3. Factor analysis and reliability test

Factor Loading

Items	Factor Loading		Factor
	1	2	
Hygiene	0.81		Health
Nutrition	0.8		
Digestion	0.78		
Ingredients	0.7		
Presentation	0.68		
Price & quantity	0.61		
Socialization		0.83	Culture
Taste		0.83	
Traditions		0.65	
Combination		0.58	
Eigen value	5.03	1.24	
% of variance explained	50.27	12.39	
Cronbach's alpha	0.86	0.79	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = 0.89			
Bartlett test of sphericity = 1713.53; p = 0.000			
Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis: Rotation Method: Varimax			

Table 3 shows the results of the factor analysis applied in IBM SPSS 25 to the attributes to find factors affecting the which majorly define the dimensions of food culture and traditional food. Factor analysis derived two factors which in total explain all the attributes in the statements. The obtained value of KMO was 0.89, Bertletts test was 1713.5 and value of p is 0.00 which implies that it is appropriate to apply factor analysis. The first obtained factor explaining 50.27% variance is Health and second factor explaining 12.39% variance is culture.

Table 4. Factors deciding level of satisfaction while visiting Amritsar

Items	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
	"Highly Gastronomic" (n = 178)	'Gastronomic" (n = 98)	"Generic" (n = 84)
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Hygiene	3.76(*)	4.74(*)	2.77(*)
Nutrition	3.66(*)	4.80(*)	2.54(*)
Digestion	3.62(*)	4.71(*)	2.87(*)
Ingredients	4.06(*)	4.87(*)	2.83(*)
Presentation	4.00(*)	4.83(*)	3.17(*)
Price & quantity	4.27(*)	4.73(*)	3.27(*)
Socialization	3.90(*)	4.59(*)	3.39(*)
Taste	4.05(*)	4.76(*)	3.32(*)
Traditions	4.12(*)	4.89(*)	3.18(*)
Combination	3.92(*)	4.84(*)	2.89(*)

Table 4 describes the values of variables to all three clusters. As observed first cluster comprising of 178 visitors i.e. 49.44 % of the responding population have got commendable mean score in Taste, traditions, combination and socialization. Thus, visitors in the group can be called highly gastronomic visitors/tourists. In the second cluster there are 98 visitors and it makes 27.22% of the respondents. Respondents in the second cluster have got good mean score in ingredients, traditions, nutrition and combination. These visitors can be grouped as gastronomic visitors/tourists. Third cluster with 84 visitors

and 23.33% of the responding elements have got lowermost mean scores for almost all aspects related to gastronomy. Thus, it is significant enough to put these visitors under the category of Generic visitors.

Also, the highest mean scores to the culture, fresh ingredients and presentation in the cluster 2 defines the relationship between nature, tourism and sustainability. Even in cluster 1 use of fresh ingredients and the traditions of the city have got highest mean scores which implies that the highly gastronomic tourists seek their preferences to the tourism and its sustainability.

Table 5. Demographic characteristics of the different clusters of visitors in Amritsar city

Socio-Demographic	1 "Highly Gastronomic"	2 "Gastronomic"	3 "Generic"	Total (%)	Statistics
Characteristics	(n = 178)	(n = 98)	(n = 84)		
Gender					
Male	53.67	56.12	43.37	52	Chi2 = 5.569; p = 0.473
Female	46.3	43.9	56.6	48	
Age					
Below 30 years	22.6	26.8	28.9	25.2	Chi2 =

Between 30–39 years	30.5	19.6	20.5	25.2	20.041;
Between 40–49 years	24.3	19.6	9.6	19.6	p = 0.010
Between 50–59 years	14.1	24.7	24.1	19.3	
Above 60 years	8.5	9.3	16.9	10.6	
Education					
Primary education	3.4	1	1.2	2.2	Chi2 = 5.646;
Secondary education	17.1	26.8	19	20.2	
University education	79.5	72.2	79.8	77.6	p = 0.227
Employment					
Govt. Employee	14.6	25	113.4	17.1	Chi2 = 21.025;
Working in private sector	52.6	43.5	35.4	46.1	
Self-employed/ Business	15.2	13	14.6	14.5	p = 0.021
Student	7	8.7	18.3	10.1	
Retired	8.8	9.8	17.1	11	
Income per day					
Under 700	11.7	12	17.6	13.1	Chi2 = 7.466;
Between 700 to 1000	9.4	4.3	5.4	7.1	
From 1001 to 1500	14	14.1	16.2	14.5	p = 0.487
From 1501 to 2500	33.3	29.3	23	30	
Above 2500	31.6	40.2	37.8	35.3	

The collected data was also been tabulated on the basis of socio demographic variables. Variables like age, gender, education, employment and income were used. Results of the chi-square test showed significant difference when age and employment were compared. Cluster 1 & 2 were described with more male population where as cluster 3 had more females visiting city Amritsar. Cluster 1 contains 54.8% of tourists between an age group of 30-49 years and cluster 3 has 28.90% tourists between an age group of 16 to 30 years and 16.9% of tourists above 60 years of age. Similarly, 72.2% tourists were having university education (graduates/post graduates) in cluster 2 and 43.5% of tourists were working in private sector whereas 25% were working in government sector. It is very important to highlight here that in cluster 2 there are 40.2% of tourists who earn more than 2500 Indian rupees per day which means that cluster 2 has observed best results in the research.

Results obtained from the survey of tourists in cluster 2 implies that there are still less number of

tourists who visit Amritsar city purely for gastronomy but most of other tourists. Visiting Amritsar do have an interest in the gastronomy and culture of the Amritsar. Thus, it is clear that food culture of city Amritsar can be highlighted as a tourist attraction which will definitely promote gastronomic tourism in the state.

VI. Conclusions

Tourists while visiting a heritage tourism destination are keen interested to increase their sensory experience mainly through the culinary aspects of the destination. In this sense the food culture i.e. gastronomy and its relationship to the tourism is a key aspect in analyzing destinations especially related to culture and heritage. Amritsar, a city of Punjab is an important cultural destination with an importance of its historical heritage. The typical regional food culture has been reinforced offering typical culinary dishes to the tourists visiting the city. In addition to typical food culture of Punjab some specialty dishes are also introduced through the concept of traditional gastronomy of Punjab. The results of cluster

analysis described the tourists visiting to the city Amritsar in three different categories as Highly gastronomic tourists, Gastronomic Tourists & generic tourists. Further, it was found through the research that a major part of tourists visiting Amritsar for reasons other than gastronomy have a good spending power and have an interest in the gastronomy and culture of Amritsar. Thus, it's safe to conclude that culture food culture of Amritsar can be promoted as a key element to attract gastronomic tourists in Amritsar.

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