

Projecting the Indian Culinary Delights as the Focal point of Hospitality

Dr. Ansuman Samal - Associate Professor, Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University

Patita Paban Mohanty - Assistant Professor, Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University

Prof. (Dr.) Bibhuti Bhusan Pradhan - Registrar, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University

Article Info

Volume 83

Page Number: 10212 - 10224

Publication Issue:

May - June 2020

Abstract:

The hospitality Industry has emerged as the one of the prominent sectors globally as it helps in generating billions of funds and enhancing the employment scenario both directly and indirectly across different industry segments. The word hospitality is defined as the act of cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests including the strangers either socially or commercially. It is comprised of those business practices and acts for being hospitable with characteristics of generosity and friendliness to the visitors. Amongst the various verticals of hospitality sector, the culinary aspect forms the core of the phenomena as it is not just about satisfying the appetite but to showcase the expressions and values of the hosts. In this regard, the concept of food has to be explored in detail for bringing fruitfulness to this discussion on hospitality. Coming to the Indian context, with a civilization history dates back to more than 5000 years; it stands at the cross roads of diverse cultures, religions, geographical areas and climate which have greatly affected and help in reshaping its culinary heritage in a significant manner. Therefore, it is the need of the hour to understand the history, growth, development, and current status of the Indian culinary delights in order to bring a holistic approach. The current state of affairs along with the future prospects & associated threats also needs to be dissected minutely in order to strengthen our efforts in order to meeting the very challenging needs of the vivid based customers. This will provide us with the necessary impetus in understanding the founding stones of hospitality.

Keywords: Food, Culture, Heritage, Hospitality, Culinary Tourism

Article History

Article Received: 19 November 2019

Revised: 27 January 2020

Accepted: 24 February 2020

Publication: 18 May 2020

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the civilization, hospitality services has been identified as the process of receiving a guest who may be a known face or even a complete stranger in true spirit, goodwill and generosity. The word hospitality combines the spheres of warmth, respect and even protection. It ultimately builds an understanding between the hosts and the guests and help in appreciating each others' culture. The modern day phenomena called Hospitality has been derived from the amalgamation of Latin words "Hostis", meaning stranger / enemy,

"Hospice", meaning a place of shelter for weary and sick travelers and "Hospes", meaning host, guest, visitor and stranger. Broadly the hospitality industry encompasses various core aspects like food & drink, accommodation, travel, recreation, entertainment, events, and other tourism related services at external venues that are out of one's usual place of residence. Over the years it has become one of the major contributors to the worlds' economies in terms of revenue earnings, creation of jobs, expansion of other industries such as agriculture, transportation, construction, handicrafts, etc. The hospitality & tourism sector has been an important

impetus for the development of the socio-economic conditions of a place by contributing in various ways as it's a great remedy for treating the problems like underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty eradication, social discrimination etc. Thus, it has become one of the biggest "Peace Industries" which strikes a balance between growth and peaceful coexistence between competitors. But as the competition is being intensified day by day, it has become irrelevant for the countries to think that whatever has been done is enough for them. We need to explore new avenues, new strategies and innovative campaigning in order to attract more and more nos. of visitors, provide them with best in class hospitality and retain them for a longer period in order to gain the ever desirable sustainable competitive advantage over others. Going deep into this whole concept of hospitality, one of the predominant aspects evolves as the Food as it forms the heart of the art of hospitality. Apart from fulfilling the fundamental necessity of a human being going out of his usual comfort zone it often strikes the emotion chords of pleasure, belongingness, health consciousness, identity, mindset, comfort, relevance, vitality, life statement, religious aspects, customs, traditions, element for entertainment & stress busting etc. The famous quote by Leon Rappoport, "Eating is more a matter of the mind than it is the body" points towards the importance of food in one's life and culture. Coming to the Indian scenario, heritage, history and a huge slice of God's own country are India's brand images for years now. A melting pot of diverse cultures, its vibrant history, age old traditions, cultural, spiritual, historic & historical sites and splendors of nature have been the USP all these years attracting various rulers, invaders, religious & spiritual leaders, scholars, traders and many other visitors. Over the years, India has done relatively well by attracting the ever increasing global traffic towards it, but it has to take more vigorous steps in order to gain and maintain a lion's share. For which it need to plan and implement innovative strategies

to attract, grow, serve and retain visitors from within and outside the country. In this regard, we can think about the Indian food which is very unique as well as diverse as its culture, religions, geography and climate as a major feature to attract the visitors as culinary voyagers. As acknowledged in the majority of articles, it has been found that the local meals play an impacting factor in attracting the tourists. Such is the importance of food is for the tourist that we can quote a famous saying by Lacy and Douglass in 2002 that "*Every tourist is a Voyeurism Gourmand, (Will travel for food)*". Therefore, the paper here tries to understand the gastronomy of India, its variations, and the prospective impact of it if incorporated effectively as an innovative way to attract and serve the visitors.

Purpose of the study:

Though, not the primary but one of the major factors that always attracts the tourists is Food. In the evolution of cultural tourism, it has created a niche for it. Therefore, this study has been conducted in order to understand and develop the Indian culinary as a concept within food culture and lead the way for its sustainability. Here we have tried to understand the history, geography, climate, religions of India and how they have influenced the food that we eat. Also the chronological transition of Indian Food and events that affected it has been discussed along with highlighting the key ingredients, and spices used in Indian gastronomy. We do have many recipes, which are getting neglected due to lack of exposure, so one of the major purposes of this study is to bring them in to the limelight. Also we have tried to explore the uniqueness of Indian food and various strategies to promote them.

Introduction to Indian cuisine:

The civilization process in Indian subcontinent has started around 5000 years back. Accordingly, the Indian Cuisine also dates back to thousands of years consisting of many regional exotic delicacies. The uniqueness of Indian dishes is characterized by the

use of splendid spices, herbs, vegetables and fruits. Unlike to other countries, here there exist a wide spread of the practice of vegetarianism. Also the assortment of dish and cooking techniques used by the Indian people are different from those used by other countries. Variety wise, the Indian cuisine also differs from region to region, which reflects the heterogeneous demographics of the ethnically – diverse subcontinent. The Journey of Indian cuisine started with a Hindu belief and with the invasions by Mughals and later on by Britishers, it has evolved over the years making it a unique blend of cuisines. Historically, it has affected the course of International relations as the spice trade between India and European countries paved way towards the Europe's age of discovery. Cuisines of other parts of the world especially those from Southeast Asia, Europe, Middle East, East & Southern Africa, North America, Oceania, and Caribbean have also been greatly influenced by the Indian culture and food.

History and Evolution of Indian Cuisines:

With a history of more than 5000 years, the Indian subcontinent has seen many rulers of native areas as well as outsiders who have greatly influenced the cuisine of India. The diversity and delicacy found in the Indian food today is due to the long lasting interactions between various groups and cultures which have prevailed here.

Phase I – 2000 B.C. and earlier: Most of the historian and food researcher believe that the origins of Indian history cuisine are as old as the mankind itself. Around 7000 B.C. in the Indus valley civilization, sesame, eggplant, and humped cattle had been domesticated. By 3000 B.C. turmeric, cardamom, black pepper and mustard were harvested in India. Many recipes first harvested during the Vedic phase. In Vedic times, there used to be three categories of food namely Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. The Satvic food palate mainly comprised of fruits and vegetables provides a positive vive to the body as it possessed calming

and purifying effects. Rajasic food offerings included spicier, oily, salty and bitter elements that were intended to drive ambitious nature, competitive spirits and egoistic pursuits. The Tamasic gourmet was dominated by meat and other processed items which were difficult to digest and possessed a negative effect on the body & mind. In those times, people used to prefer food that was pure, natural and balanced and consisted of predominantly six types of tastes of sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent.

Phase II – B.C. 15th Century: As per the Aryan theory, India witnessed the first phase of invasion by outsiders (The Aryan Race) that pushed the local Mohen-Jo-Daro people towards the southern part of the country. The roots of Hinduism was created and shaped in this phase and the caste system was introduced in the Indian society. Due to this attacks and subsequent migrations, the food habits of people were also divided as the Brahmins were vegetarians where as the Khatriyas had become non-vegetarians.

Phase – III – 7th Century : This era was dominated by the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism, which greatly influenced the cuisine of India. In line with the philosophy of Ahimsa, more varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains were grown throughout the year. The Jain cuisine of non-meat, non-onion and non-garlic method of eating was came into force.

Phase – IV – The Maurya Empire : After the withdrawal of Alexander the Great, the Maurya empire lead by Chandragupta Maurya rapidly extended in the Central and Northern India. People in this era were reluctant in eating meat. People believe in the cycle of reincarnation and lessen the consumption of meat. The Maurya empire was an agricultural based economy for which the Indian cuisine was mostly based on grains. The Gupta dynasty which followed the Maurya empire, also continued with the vegetarian approach until around the 10th century. From the 10th century onwards,

Indian scenario gradually started to change with the outside people and their cultures who started to come here. Influence and food habits started to change according to the Arabs, Portuguese and the Mughals.

Phase –V – The Mughal Empire :After Babur established the Mughal empire in India, the culture and food was greatly influenced by the Mughlai cuisines with various seasoning such as saffron, nuts, and famously the “Dum” based method of cooking. The Islamic rule that followed in India, influenced it with rich gravies, pilaffs, non-vegetarian fares such as kebabs, as well as fruits like apricots, melons, peaches and plums. In the down south Hyderabad, the Nizams perfected their signature Biryani in this era which is believed to be the finest of cuisine of India.

Phase VI – The British Era and afterwards:The British began their affairs with India and they loved the elaborate way of Indian eating and adopted several of food choices of India to their tastes. The product was the Anglo-Indian way of cooking and arrival of new concepts such as “high tea”. Another notable product of this era is the advent and adaptation of the Curry. For the British people the meaning of Curry was any Indian food which was spicy. In fact such was the love affair of the English towards the curry that their whole purpose of sending the merchants of East India Company was to find cheaper rated pepper than offered by the Dutch people. Every incident shapes the history and culture and so did the Britishers. During their rule, the fusion happened between the European and the Indian foods. The English idea of curry was also changed from purely chilly based towards the addition of garlic, ginger and onion mix. After India got independence in 1947, the Indian cuisine was greatly influenced by sub-continental countries as the total population was divided across many countries.

Influences on Indian Cuisines:

Indian cuisines are multidimensional offerings full of depth and richness that can't be matched by anyone in the world. It possesses the rich heritage of the country and thereby; has been shaped by the climate, cultural & historical developments as well as religious faiths of its people. The major factors that have sculpted Indian food are as follows.

Landscapes & Climatic Impacts:With more than 1.3 million square miles, India has one of the largest land masses in the world that consist of 28 states and 9 union territories that all have their fair share in offering unique eateries based on their traditions and tastes. Due to this enormous size, the climate in this subcontinent varies substantially and affects the food habits of the localities. The northern region of India consists of the great Himalayan mountain range followed by the Indo-Gangetic plains that are very fertile lands. The southern side of the country possess lush greenery and tropical weather. Due to modernization and subsequent availability of various means for transportation these differences are gradually diminishing but still a majority of the Indians are dependent upon the locally grown amenities. One of the major indicators of this climatic effect on food that can be distinctively observed is in the type of cereal taken as staple food. In the northern part of the country, the food is dominated by Wheat where as rice is the staple food in the southern part. Varieties of wheat products such as Rotis, Naans, Paranthas, Poories are available across the northern parts of India which are distinguished from each other by the type of wheat (whole or refined) available at a place and cooking methods (Baked, fried, or cooked on a griddle or clay oven) or even shape (small, large, single or multi layered) etc. Similarly, in terms of rice consumption, each area has its own way of preparation like steamed, boiled, flavoured, fermented etc. (Plain rice, Curd rice, Rasam rice, Appam, Idiappam, Idlis, Dosas etc.). The coastal areas are famous for the sea foods but various as per their preparations like the use of coconut milk &

souring agents like mango or tamarind in the west coast where as mustard in the east coast. The use of Oils also varies from region to region as Sunflower oil is preferred in the northern side where as mustard oil is preferred in the east and coconut oil is used abundantly in the southern parts specifically in the state of Kerala. Seasonality in different areas also affects the food choices made by the people residing there. In North India, people experiences distinct seasons of summer, rainy & winter which affects the choice of vegetables in that region depending upon the availability. Contrary to this, in South parts, mostly hot & humid atmosphere exist throughout the year which marks no major change in the choice of vegetables for them. Due to this, the norths Indians enjoy more varieties of vegetarian dishes. Comparatively the northern states are colder which enhances their choices for aromatic & spicier foods such as wheat, ghee, meat and chillies where as the intense heat in the south side inspires the residents to have lighter foods and thereby enhances the use of rice, coconut, pepper and vegetables. In the eastern regions, rice and fish is preferred where as in the western side fruits, vegetables, lentils, peas and other dairy products are mostly used.

Religious Impacts: India is home to more than a billion people reposing their faiths to diverse religious beliefs and faiths and yet peacefully coexist. Thus the religious effects on the Indian cuisine are intense and they have helped in the creation of a diverse range of dishes. As religion and social identity often determines the food choices of people, it becomes necessary to understand their effects in shaping ones tastes and preference for food. Hinduism is the primary influencing religion on Indian cuisine as the followers of it primarily consume and promote vegetarianism. Hinduism predominantly respects all life forms and thereby abstains from killing any animal for consumption. They normally prefer lentils and beans over fish & meat for supplement of protein. As cows are sacred as per their religious beliefs, consumption of beef is prohibited. Milk is

considered as auspicious and all milk based products such as paneer, ghee, curd, cheese etc. are part of the cuisine. Spices are abundantly used in order to bring varieties to the vegetarian dishes. Certain sections of Hinduism also forbids the usage of onion & garlic and rather uses the substitutes like cashew paste, cumin seeds etc in food. The use of vegetarian cuisines in Indian culture also gets major boost from the Jainism. The essence of the Jain religion is non-violence often described as Ahimsa. It strictly guides to follow the non-vegetarian approach in their daily consumptions and do not prescribe the consumption of meat in any form, alcohol, honey, and even root vegetables as well it prohibits the wastages of food. Their religion preaches them to consume after the sunrise and before sunset, fasting and offering of foods to the poor. The religion of Buddhism has influenced the Indian cuisines adequately in the course of history. Majority of the Buddhists are vegetarians where as some of them consume meat only if the animal has died due to natural causes and not hunted. The Tibetan culture has greatly affected the culinary choices and food habits. With the establishment of the Mughal Empire, the Islamic influence on the Indian cuisines began. The lavish Mughlai cuisine has been inducted into the Indian palette. The use of meat is the major differential aspect of this religion towards the food items. The Indian gourmet heritage has been richly influenced by the Muslim rulers who loved their foods, had large & lavish courtyards with elaborated meal rituals, and wholeheartedly patronize the food culture. Cooking techniques and dishes such as the Biryani, Phirni, Kebabs, as well as the use of dates and Tandoor in the cooking process have been introduced to the Indian food system by this religion. Christianity also has its important influence on the Indian platter as they have reshaped the cuisines greatly. With the emergence of the Portuguese and British empires, Christianity has accelerated its influence deep into the foods. Often in the places like Kerala, Goa and Kolkata where the religion started its initial

markings, the food habits, eating patterns as well as cooking techniques are greatly influenced by Christianity. Grilled meats, soups, salads, baked items like cakes & biscuits, puddings, jams, cutlet etc. some of the examples from the Christian food menu. Unlike the Hindus or even Muslims who are strictly prohibited from consuming pork, the Christianity allows its followers to eat any type of meat. In every religion, apart from the regular meals, often special foods are associated with the customs and celebrations. As per Hinduism, Lord Krishna loved milk & its derivatives for which in Janamstami (the birthday celebrations of Lord Krishna) the food & sweets prepared from milk and derivatives become predominate in the plates. Similarly in Islam, special foods known as Iftari such as the Seviyan (Sweet Vermicelli) during the holy month of Ramadan and in Christianity the cakes on the occasion of Christmas are prepared and served. Apart from these, the Parsis, Jews, Sikhs as well as the tribal population leaving across the country has their own unique dishes adding more feathers to the unique Indian panorama of food.

Key Elements of Indian Cuisines:

Rice is the mostly used staple food along with Atta (wheat flour) and variety of pulses like Masoor (red lentil), Arhar (red gram), Chana (bengal gram), Chawli (black eyed beans), Dalia (broken wheat), Toor (pigeon pea or yellow gram), Kabuli chana (Garbanzo beans), Matar (green peas), Poha and Kurmura (beaten and puffed rice), Til (sesame), Urad (black gram) and Mung (green gram) etc. Vegetables Oils are used for preparation of curries. Mustard oil is widely used in the eastern front where as in the North and West India, groundnut oil is the used. Coconut oil as well as the Sesame (Gingelly) oil is common in South India. With the advent of new technologies, the use of modern oils such as soybean and sunflower has gained popularity. Also, the Vanaspati ghee (Hydrogenated vegetable oil) along with the Desi ghee (Clarified Ghee) is used across the region. The

Indian food has become delicious and distinctive due to the unique blend of flavours and spices. Commonly used spices in Indian dishes are Turmeric powder, Chilly powder, Cumin, Ginger, Garlic, Pepper, varieties of Mustard seeds, Coriander, Curry leaves, Tamarind, Cinnamon, Asafoetida (Hing, Perungayam), Black cardamom etc. An unique spices mix called as Garam Masala is heavily used which is a powder mix of five or more dried spices like Clove, Cardamom and Cinnamon etc. Due to the diversities, every region has its own mixture of Garam Masala. In the State of Maharastra another ingredient is Goda Masala which is a popular spice mix. Leaves like Fenugreek leaf, Coriander leaf, Tejpata (cassia leaf), and Mint leaf are also widely used where as in the state of Odisha, an unique spice mix known as Pancha Phutana is used. In the South Indian region the use of curry leaves is a most in all the dishes. Saffron, Rose petal essence, Cardamom, and Nutmeg etc. are normally used in sweet dishes.

Geographical Varieties:

Due to this huge population and diversities found across the plateau, the food culture in India varies from region to region. Some of the glimpses of it can be mentioned as below.

Northern: The major staple food of North India starts with Roti along with a wide variety of lentils, and vegetables. But the preparation and taste of foods varies from place to place. Popular delicacies includes Bhujia, Kachori, Chhat, Mirchi bada, Buknu, Imarti often associated with varieties of pickles, Aam panna, Sharbat, Murabba, Papad, Jalebi, Peda & Petha, Rewdi, Gajak, Gulab jamun, Singori, Kulfi, Falooda, Bal mithai, Ras malai, Gulkand, Khaja, and several varieties of Barfi, Laddu, and Halwa etc. Also exclusive Muslim cuisines like different types of Kebabs, and other meat dishes are very popular. Also the Tawa (griddle) and Tandoor (coal fired oven) are very widely used.

Eastern: In the eastern India, Rice is widely used across various states. In the State of Odisha popular Veg dishes includes Dalma and Santula where as Sukto is very famous in West Bengal. Fish and other sea foods are consumed happily in this part followed by chicken and mutton Fish. Also famous for its sweet dishes like Rasagolla, Rasabali, Sandesh, Chhena poda, Chumchum, Kheeri and Chhena gaja, are available. The unique taste of Posto (poppy seeds) is offered in this part of the country.

Southern: In the south, the story has a twist. As we can only relate foods from different state but actually they are quite different from each other. Every region such as Andhra, Chettinad, Tamilnadu, Hyderabad, Mangalore and Kerala has its own way of cooking and taste. A classic case is the preparation of common Sambar which varies in look and taste from State to State. Other foods such as the Dosa, Idli, Vada, Bonda, Bajji, Sambar, Rasam, Rice with meat curry, Biryani, Seafood (Prawns, Mussels, Mackerel), Ghee, Dry curry, and Kootu and Paper thin Pathiris are some of the delicacies of the South Indian cuisine.

Western: The western part of India is influenced majorly by Gujarati, Maharastrian and Goan cultures. Common foods include rice, coconut and fish where as the Gujrat region is dominated by more vegetarian foods. In the hilly regions, consumption of groundnut, *jowar* (sorghum) and *bajra* (millet) as staples is the trend. Typical Gujarati food includes Roti, daal orkadhi, sabzi / shaak, chhaas, steamed vegetables and a mix of pickles, khichdi, salt, lemon, lime tomato etc. The Goan cuisine includes rice and seafood based curries such as prawns, tiger prawns, Lobster, Squid and Mussels, Kingfisher, Shark, Tuna, Pomfret, Mackerel, and crabs,. Also the famous Portugese delicacy Vindi aloo is a widely popular dish available in this region.

North Eastern: The North-eastern India is greatly influenced by the Burmese and Chinese dishes which uses very less but well established Indian spices. One of the popular sources of meat available in this region is derived from the Yaks.

Beverages : Also a varieties of exotic beverages like Tea, Masala Chai, Coffee, Nimbu Pani (Lemonade), Sharbat (juice derived from fruits or flower petals), coconut water, Lassi (blending of yogurt with other ingredients), Chaach, and Badam Milk (milk with Nuts and Cardamom), etc. are widely available.

India also has its own indigenous Alcoholic beverages, which includes Palm wine, Bhang, Indian beer and Fenny etc. Water is primarily taken with food and it is the most widely used welcome drink while serving the guest before offering hot or cold drinks. If we see the broader picture State wise, we can realise the difference in food habits of the Indian people.

Figure 1: Culinary Map of India



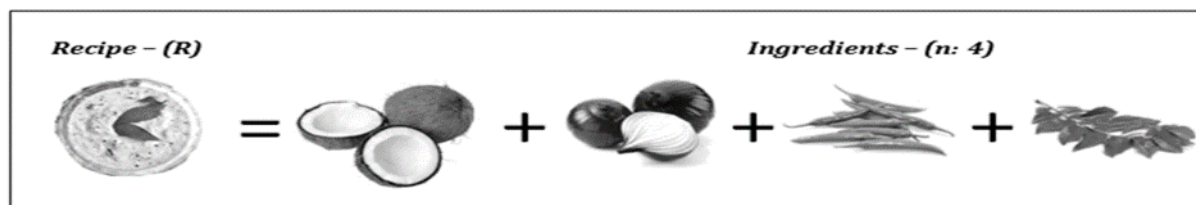
Source: Maps of India & Researcher's Own plot

Uniqueness of Indian cuisine:

All over the world, the Indian cuisine has created a niche for it by offering delicious curries, mouth watering spices and complex flavours. With the better and clever use of various spices such as Cardamom, Cayenne, Tamarind and other ingredients, the resulting taste combinations are unlike anything found elsewhere around the world. Thus, they form the pillar, on which the tasty Indian food stands. Scientists have dissected the Indian cuisine to find out the actual reason which makes it unique over others. Scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur has analyzed over 2000 traditional Indian traditional recipes down to their

molecular levels to find out the core fact that the flavours in Indian dishes don't overlap with each other. On an average, at least seven ingredients are found in the Indian cuisine with various flavours and spicing that are combined, so that each bite can give different combinations of flavour elements. At the basic level, if we take the example of coconut chutney, we can find 4 different types of ingredients (Coconut, Onion, Green Chilli and Curry leaves that go in to it which are not related to each others. But when joined they give a specific flavour which is unique in nature. Diagrammatically it can be shown as follows.

Figure 2: Dissection of Chutney



Source:<http://www.zmescience.com/science/chemistry/what-makes-indian-cuisine-good>

In their database, they mapped around 200 ingredients and surprisingly found that their flavours do not overlap. Such is the uniqueness of Indian cuisine that we can always mix and match between various ingredients to obtain innovative dish.

Promotion of Indian Cuisines as a concept to promote Cultural Tourism:

From the above deliberations, we can infer about the uniqueness and rich palatability of the Indian cuisines that offers enormous range of choices for all in terms of providing a hospitable environment to the visitors. But the million dollar question that arises from this deliberation is how to link this rich culinary treasure house with our age-old hospitality practices in order to attract more and more nos. of visitors for gaining competitive advantages in the longer run. In this regard, the concept of cultural tourism evolves which concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their religion(s), art, architecture, and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Within this ambit of cultural tourism, the idea of culinary tourism fully fits in as Food is the most distinctive part of the culture of a particular area. Over the years, the culinary culture of India has been influenced by both native as well as the outside cuisines such as Persian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, European and Southeast Asian cuisines resulting in an electrifying mix of cultures and food traditions. This amalgamation has

transformed the Indian food to become more exotic, exquisite and heavenly. Also due to the variations in geography, climates, religion, customs, festivals and traditions we can find an unmatched charm in Indian culinary both in terms of Vegetarian and Non Vegetarian food. In addition to that, the hospitality of the Indians is legendary since the Vedic ages. They believe every guest to be the God and provide them with hospitality of top quality. As we have discussed in our previous sessions, we have many exotic, tasty but hidden delicacy treasures available with us which needs International attention. For this we need to understand the issues and challenges thoroughly and prepare accordingly. It is the essence of this article as the concept of Food tourism is spreading across the world now and it is a high time for us to understand and apply this in our efforts to attract, grow and sustain more no. of tourists.

Market size for food tourism:

The market for culinary tourism comprises of both Foreign as well as Indian tourists. Whenever and wherever one man goes out the first thing that comes to his mind is food and accommodation. Therefore we need to capture that tendency of visitors. If we go by the statistics related to tourism activities, we can find a huge potentiality in terms of visitors in India. The trend has been steadily incremental with minute variations in numbers from time to time which shows a bright prospective regarding the application and practices of cultural tourism.

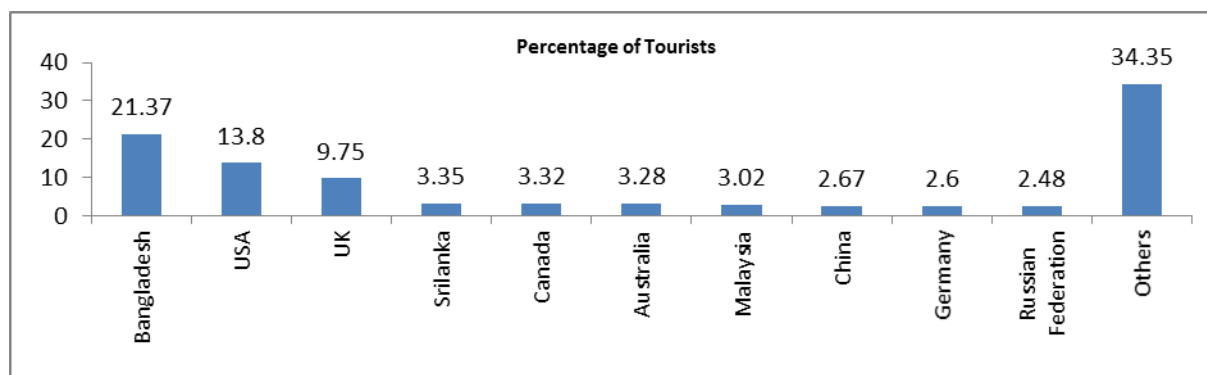
Table 1: Details of Foreign & Domestic Tourists Arrival within India

Year	FTAs in India (In millions)	Domestic Tourists Visits (In millions)
2001	2.54	236.47
2002	2.38	269.60
2003	2.73	309.04
2004	3.46	366.27
2005	3.92	392.04
2006	4.45	462.44
2007	5.08	526.70
2008	5.28	563.03
2009	5.17	668.80
2010	5.78	747.70
2011	6.31	864.53
2012	6.58	1045.05
2013	6.97	1142.53
2014	7.68	1282.80
2015	8.03	1431.97
2016	8.8	1615.39
2017	10.04	1657.55
2018*	10.56	1854.93

Source: India Tourism Statistics 2019

If we see the tourist's profile visiting to India we get the following details.

Figure2:Source Countries for Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2018



Source: India Tourism Statistics 2019

The statistics here, gives us an idea about the no and types of guests coming to India who can get involved in culinary tourism. It's a pretty large number which if utilized properly can give us many opportunities in food tourism area. In essence, the

gastronomy tour is all about heart and stomach and we have with us a decent amount of target group to whom we need to cater seamlessly.

Issues and challenges:

The potential for culinary tourism in a country like India is enormous, however, at the same time; the industry faces various challenges which can be discussed as follows.

- a. **Quality Issues:** Whenever and wherever the tourists got involved in food related activity in a foreign land, the first thing that bothers them is about the quality and safety of food that they consume. In India, wide arrays of food items are available at every corner for which we need to be very cautious and active in ensuring the quality and safety of the food. Here the involvement of local authorities is also important because of the attraction towards street foods, local delicacies and home stay provisions.
- b. **Unavailability of Proper Infrastructure:** We cannot attract and retain the tourists just like that without providing them physical infrastructure like accessible roads, hygienic and comfortable accommodations, well connected airlines, on time railway services, uninterrupted electricity, clean drinking water facility, well maintained and clean waiting rooms, toilets, first aids and health care facilities and wayside amenities such as lounge, cafeteria, and parking facilities, sewerage, telecommunication and internet connectivity etc. Though in this globalized era, India is marching ahead as a newly emerged superpower, but still it lacks in many of these aspects which needs immediate attention.
- c. **Shortage of Trained Man-Power:** To grow and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage over others, we always require a trained and competent man-power at each level like managerial, supervisory, skilled and semi-skilled etc. As the challenges for each level is different so we need to train them differently. Unlike the other Industries, in India we face a very crunch situation in case of talent, as there

are many other avenues such as banking, retail, BPO and airlines which are taking away the trained man-power. Therefore there exists a mismatch in demand-supply scenario particularly in this hospitality sector.

- d. **Non-standardized Service level:** When the tourist goes to a place, he not only interacts with his tour operators, rather he normally interacts with many other people such as hotel staffs, airlines, railways, bus services staffs, taxi / coach operators, ticketing/ travel agencies, small hotels, roadside eateries, staff at heritage sites, and tour guides, amongst others who come from different backgrounds, occupations and experience. They provide significant inputs to the overall experience of the tourists. Though in the recent years, the Indian Government has taken various initiatives to sensitize all those people who gets involved with the tourists, still it is a long way towards make them more sensible and responsible towards the guest.
- e. **Inadequate and unclear marketing and promotional efforts:** In today's hyper competitive market place, the more we market your product, the more amounts of attention (eyeballs) we can draw. Under the ambit of "Incredible India" campaign, we are promoting India as a leading destination for visitors, but there exists some issues here. First, India is one of the largest countries in the World with a diverse culture, geography and climate and we can't show them all under one umbrella at a time. Also the State departments of tourism are also promoting their respective states by showing particular attractions which are more or less not coordinated with that of the Pan-India ads. Also we need to focus more on the emerging concepts such as food tourism, agri tourism, cruise tourism, adventure tourism and rural tourism which require support and to develop and flourish. We need to change our

traditional marketing approaches to more modern and contemporary way of attracting the guests.

f. Taxation and other formalities: India is not a tax-heaven rather it is a high-taxed country for hospitality & tourism services that makes them comparatively expensive. Though the government is gradually streamlining the taxation process by introducing GST and abolishing the previously implemented complex tax structure, but still they are in the higher tax slabs regions for which the overall tax structure is getting affected by it. Similarly the government has taken bold steps towards simplifying the Visa procedures and clearance of visitors but there exist many complications in implementing them in true spirit.

g. Security Concerns: Gradually with increase instances of radicalism and thereby generated terrorism has become a major concern all over the world. Be it 9 / 11 or 2008 Mumbai attacks or any other attack; they always adversely affect the tourists flow to a destination. Insurgency, political unrests, local mobs always stands between the tourism industry and success. Therefore we need to take more serious precautionary measures in order to avoid such situations in future. Another matter of concern is the type and amount of cyber crimes along with the increased use of internet services. To avoid this, the transaction process needs to be more transparent and secure which is the need of the hour.

Recommendations:

From the discussion in the previous sections, there exist many unwanted reasons for which India as an attractive destination has still not fully realised its potentials. Therefore we need to use its rich culinary repository by exploring, promoting and implementing it in a big way so that it can become a culinary hub of the modern world attracting the ever increasing visitor's base. In this regard, here are

some of the suggestions to make it more fruitful and vibrant.

- The Government should act as a facilitator for the upliftment of the local stake holders related to the hospitality & tourism sector.
- The local Indian delicacies should be mandatorily introduced both in government and private hotels and live-counters as well as various other platforms in order to promote them.
- More no. of food festivals needs to be organized round the years in order to explore and popularize the local eateries..
- More nos. of hotel management and food craft institutes should be set up in order to get a pool of trained man power in service sector. Similarly we need to implement the already exiting skill developing programs like CBSP-Hunar Se Rozgar Tak more vigorously to get the skilled and semi-skilled human resources.
- More focus should be given to emerging concepts of culinary tourism, medical tourism, cruise tourism, rural tourism, and ecotourism which have a huge prospect.
- An innovative approach of introducing a culinary tourism train that can be implemented which would be run through various regions of the country and would expose the tourists with region specific food to provide an unique and once in a life time experience.
- The infrastructure facilities of the country have to be strengthen in order to attract and retain the guests.
- The ancillary sector related to foods such as the agriculture, water resources etc. also needs to be braced up so that they can work in tandem.
- The quality of the food needs to be checked seriously at all levels starting from metropolitan cities to the rural levels so that threat of food poisoning and associated ailments can be avoided. The local authorities need to boost up their efforts in this regard.

- Serious measures and initiatives have to be taken to train the various people who come in contact with the tourists during their visit. Atithi Debo Bhaba is a good initiative taken by the government, but it has to be boosted both by the central and the local authorities.
- The culinary aspect of the country also needs to be marketed as a tool to attract guests in synonym with the overall tourism advertisements.
- The taxation facilities along with the licensing procedures need to be simplified and accessible so that more nos. of people can come to this sector of business. Similarly, the visa formalities need to be more streamlined and transparent in order to make the guests' arrivals hassle free.

Way forward:

Indian food is called as the soul food as it not only fills the stomach but the mind of the person who eats it. Therefore we need to analyze our position and accept the current truth and work with the remedial measures to make these exotic dishes more famous and acceptable. We would like to conclude with a famous saying of the futuristic poet F.T. Marinetti, "We think, dream and act according to what we eat and drink" which clearly justifies the importance of food in this whole debate on hospitality.

References

Internet resources:

1. <http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/foreign-tourist-arrivals-to-india>
2. <http://www.tourism.nic.in/writereaddata/Uploaded/Tender/032420150301832.pdf>
3. <http://www.zmescience.com/science/chemistry/what-makes-indian-cuisine-good>
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cuisine
5. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/03/03/>
6. www.tourism.nic.in/
7. www.newworldencyclopedia.org

8. robinsonlms.wikispaces.com
9. www.ibef.org
10. www.qesign.com
11. ijemr.in
12. www.iittm.org

Journals:

13. Ab Karim, S. & Chi, A.G. (2010). culinary tourism as destination attraction: an empirical examination of destinations' food image *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 19, 531-555.
14. Belisle, F. J. (1983). Tourism and food production in the Caribbean. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 10, 597-513
15. Chaudhary, M. (2000). India's image as a tourism destination –perspective of foreign tourists. *Tourism Management*, 21, 293-297.
16. Chuang, H-T. (2009). the rise of culinary tourism and its transformation of food cultures: the national cuisine of Taiwan. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 27(2), 84-108.
17. Garcia, D. and M. Tugores, 2006. Optimal Choice of Quality in Hotel Services. *Annals of Tourism Res.*, 33(2): 456-469.
18. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. 2004 'Foreword' in L. Long (ed) *Culinary Tourism*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky: xi-xiv
19. Moushumi Banerjee, 2015, Food Tourism: An Effective Marketing Tool For Indian Tourism Industry, *International Journal of Science Technology & Management*, 04 (02), 26-35
20. Symons, M. (1999). Gastronomic authenticity and the sense of place. Paper presented at the 9th Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education
21. Van Den Berghe, P., 1984. Ethnic Cuisine: Culture in Nature. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 7: 387-397.