

## **Role of Food in Attracting Tourists Towards Popular Tourism Destinations in India: An Empirical Study**

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### **Abstract**

This research reviewed investigates the part food plays in bringing in tourists to Indian tourism hotspots. Food is an integral part of the cultural experience of any destination, and the Indian cuisine is known for its diversity and richness. The literature review below shows that food is a significant factor in enticing tourists to Indian tourism sites. The studies find that tourists are willing to pay more for food that is authentic and represents the local cuisine, and that the availability of a variety of food options is essential in attracting tourists, as they prefer to experiment with different cuisines. The study recommends that the tourism industry in India should focus on promoting the local cuisine as a significant aspect of the cultural experience of the destination. The industry should also work on improving the quality and variety of food options available to tourists. These conclusions can be useful to policymakers and tourism boards to bring in new approaches to attract more tourists to popular destinations in India.

**Keywords:** *Food Tourism, Cultural Experience, Popular Tourism Destinations, Local Cuisine, Variety, Tourism Industry, Policymakers, Tourism Boards.*

### **Introduction**

India is a diverse and culturally rich country that attracts millions of tourists every year. The country offers a plethora of tourism destinations, including historical monuments, natural wonders, and spiritual destinations. Contemporarily, there is an accelerated interest in food tourism, with many tourists seeking to explore the daily cuisine and culinary traditions

of the place. Food in enticing tourists to visit Indian tourism sites is an area that has gained increasing attention from researchers, policymakers, and the tourism industry. Food is considered to be an essential part of the cultural experience of any destination, and India's cuisine is known for its diversity and richness. Indian food is a reflection of the country's diverse history, culture, and geography, and each region offers a unique culinary experience. From the spicy curries of North India to the seafood delicacies of the South, Indian cuisine is a feast for the senses.

Tourism is a significant contributor to India's economy, and the industry has recognized the importance of cuisines factoring in an upward growth within tourism. The tourism industry in India is working to promote the local food cultures as an integral part of the cultural experience of the destination. Many destinations in India now offer food tours and culinary experiences that allow tourists to explore the local food culture. However, there is still a lot of potential for the tourism industry to capitalize on the part food plays in attracting people to popular tourism sites within the country. The industry needs to focus on improving the quality and variety of food options available to tourists. The availability of authentic and diverse food options is essential in attracting tourists, as they prefer to experiment with different cuisines.

The conclusions of the study can be used by policymakers and tourism boards to develop strategies to attract more tourists to popular destinations in India. The study can also help the tourism industry in India to understand the importance of promoting the local cuisine and food

culture as a significant aspect of the cultural experience of the destination.

### Literature Review

Food tourism is an emerging niche in the tourism industry that has been gaining popularity globally, and India is not an exception. This literature review focuses on exploratory studies conducted to understand the role of food in attracting tourists towards popular tourism destinations in India.

Their study by Kaur et al., (2016) uses correspondence analysis to assess the image of tourism locations based on variables acquired from the existing literature. The findings show that natural attractions were favourably rated, while infrastructure was identified as an issue in need of improvement. The most prominent features were the local food, hotels and restaurants, well-known handicrafts, and parking facilities. Policymakers and practitioners can use the practical implications to visualise their rivals' strengths and shortcomings. Chhabra et al., (2013) state that the purpose of this research is to look at how Indian eateries beyond India mediate and reflect genuineness onto visited indicators (both real and intangible) in 'restaurant/ entertainment' encounters. This study examines the web promotional material of north Indian food in the United States using specified authenticity standards and a priority list of authenticating signals. According to the findings, restaurant owners deploy preferred and theology-negotiated versions to instil notions of object authenticity.

Banerjee (2015) states that the only goal of this paper is to further investigate food tourism industry as a concept, as well as to pave the way for its sustainability, through discovering and revealing the antique foods that are concealed and establishing it as a single among the masterpieces of India's great culture regarding food. Through the research, the goal is to determine the starting point and extent of food culture and tourism so that a good strategy for effective destination promotion and product

development can be developed to make it a primary priority in the tourist system. Duttagupta's (2013) study investigates foreign travelers' recommendations of culinary tourism in India based on their perception of cuisine image and satisfaction with experiences at culinary establishments. The author conducted an exploratory study to identify the factors that influence traveller's culinary preferences and decision-making. The study findings suggest that food image and restaurant quality are significant determinants of foreign travellers' culinary preferences.

Berry (2014) explores the growth and potential problems within CT, with special reference to Punjab. Author highlights the importance of CT in promoting regional cuisine, preserving cultural heritage, and generating economic benefits. The study also identifies emerging issues such as the need for infrastructure development, marketing strategies, and quality assurance in CT. Rawal and Takuli's (2017) study focuses on the marketing of CT as an attraction within the destination in the Uttarakhand, India. The authors examine the potential of CT to enhance the region's tourism industry, create job opportunities, and promote the cultural heritage of local cuisine. The study findings suggest that CT can be an effective tool for promoting sustainable tourism development in the region. Puspanjali and Nath's (2017) study investigates the impact of gastronomy on tourism, with a case study on the regional cuisine of Coastal Odisha, India. The authors explore the relationship between gastronomy, cultural heritage, and tourism, and highlight the role of regional cuisine in promoting tourism. The study findings suggest that gastronomy can be an essential factor in attracting tourists, enhancing their travel experiences, and generating economic benefits for local communities.

Updhyay and Sharma (2014) explored the culinary preferences of foreign tourists visiting India. The study used a survey method to collect data from tourists coming from abroad and revealed

that these tourists were interested in trying authentic Indian cuisine, and they preferred local street food over expensive restaurant food. The study also revealed that the quality of food, hygiene, and taste were the major factors that influenced the culinary preferences of foreign tourists.

Kumar (2017) focused on tourism of the culture of Himachal Pradesh, India, with an emphasis on local cuisines and their promotion. The study aimed to identify the significance of the everyday cuisine of the place as a tool for promoting tourism and its contribution to the local economy. The study used a qualitative approach and collected data through in-depth interviews and observations. The findings showed that local cuisine played a crucial role in attracting tourists to Himachal Pradesh, and the promotion of local cuisine could posit towards the development of the location's economy.

Kumar and Rana (2016) conducted a study on the role of CT as an enticing factor within Patiala City, Punjab. The study aimed to identify the popular food items among tourists, the factors influencing their choice of food, and the level of satisfaction with the food. The study collected data through surveys and structures questionnaire. The findings showed that the popularity of local cuisine was one of the major factors that attracted tourists to Patiala City, and the quality of food, price, and ambiance were the key factors that influenced their choice of food. The study recommended the development of governmental efforts and infrastructure for promoting local cuisine and enhancing the overall tourism experience.

Abraham and Kannan (2015) explored the potential of CT in India and highlighted the role of food in cultural identity and heritage. The study found that the development of CT could lead to economic growth and job creation, and that it could provide a platform for promoting Indian culture and cuisine globally. Baruah (2016) focused on the promotion of CT as a destination attraction in Northeast India. The study emphasized the need for creating

awareness among tourists about the unique cuisine and cultural practices of the region. It also suggested that CT could provide opportunities for rural development and help preserve traditional knowledge and practices related to food.

### Objectives of the study:

To ascertain the role of food in attracting tourists towards popular tourism destinations in India

### Research Methodology:

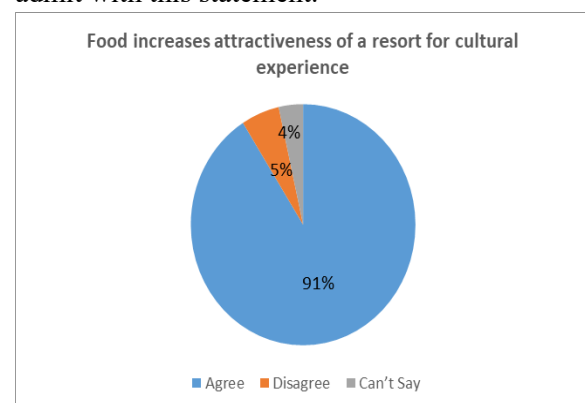
This study nature is empirical. 200 respondents were approached to give their view on the role of food in attracting tourists towards popular tourism destinations in India. The data was analysed through frequency distribution and data was presented with the help of pie charts.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

**Table 1 Food increases attractiveness of a resort for cultural experience**

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	182	11	7	200
% age	91.0	5.0	4.0	100

Table 1 represents the statement **Food increases attractiveness of a resort for cultural experience** and 91.0% respondents admit with this statement.

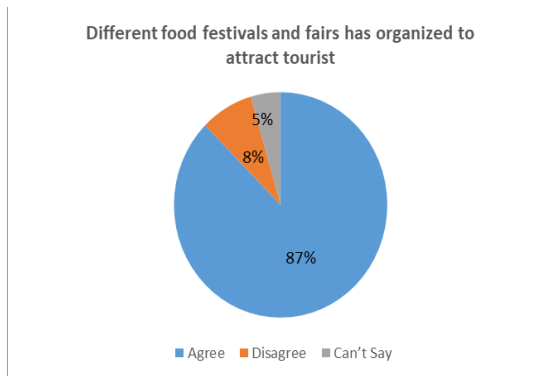


**Figure 1 Food increases attractiveness of a resort for cultural experience**

**Table 2 Different food festivals and fairs has organized to attract tourist**

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	175	16	9	200
% age	87.0	8.0	5.0	100

Table 2 represents the statement **Different food festivals and fairs has organized to attract tourist** and 87.0% respondents admit with this statement.

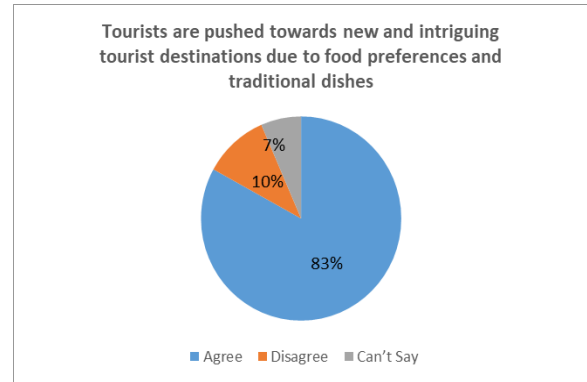


**Figure 2 Different food festivals and fairs has organized to attract tourist**

**Table 3 Tourists are pushed towards new and intriguing tourist destinations due to food preferences and traditional dishes**

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	166	21	13	200
% age	83.0	10.0	7.0	100

Table 3 represents the statement **Tourists are pushed towards new and intriguing tourist destinations due to food preferences and traditional dishes** and 83.0% respondents admit with this statement.

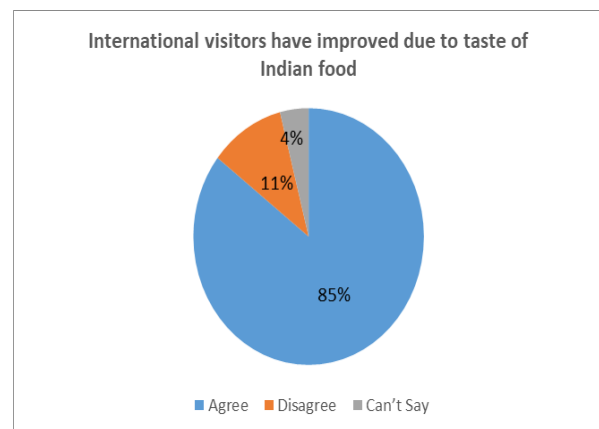


**Figure 3 Tourists are pushed towards new and intriguing tourist destinations due to food preferences and traditional dishes**

**Table 4 International visitors have improved due to taste of Indian food**

Particulars	Agree	Disagree	Can't Say	Total
Respondents	171	21	8	200
% age	85.0	11.0	4.0	100

Table 4 represents the statement **international visitors have improved due to taste of Indian food** and 85.0% respondents admit with this statement. Considering all the responses of the statements, it was found that to a good percentage, the respondents have agreed which means that food plays an important role in attracting tourists towards popular destinations in India.



**Figure 4 International visitors have improved due to taste of Indian food**

## Conclusion

Overall, these studies suggest that food plays a crucial role in attracting tourists to India, particularly in the North region. The local cuisine is seen as a unique selling point and an essential part of the travel experience. However, there are challenges to promoting food tourism, such as the need for a development within quality infrastructure, quality control, and promotion of traditional cuisine. These challenges need to be addressed by policymakers and tourism stakeholders to maximize the potential of food tourism in India.

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