



## Reflecting Indian heritage through Food culture - prospects of food tourism in India

**Dr. Veena. H .N.**

Associate Professor, Department of Sanskrit

Government Arts, Commerce and Post -Graduate College (Autonomous)

Hassan- 573201, Karnataka state

E-mail : [veenashashikumar7866@gmail.com](mailto:veenashashikumar7866@gmail.com), Ph : 9480482413

### Abstract

The food tourism or cuisine tourism is an emerging segment of tourism sector. Across the world, there is a rise in the number of tourists who take up tours and travels for the sake of tasting different varieties of food. Domestic tourism of a country is also reliant on food varieties it offers at destinations centres. Tour literature or tour content creators and online tour operations follow research trends in creating tour content. Attracting tourists to a tour destination not only depends on the historicity of the destination or its heritage legacy, tasty food which is available to tourists also do matter. Hotels and restaurants pay great interest in following food trends of international tourists and follow accordingly. But domestic tourists often complain that food availability at tour destinations was either too costly or tasteless. Domestic tourists are often family tourists hence they tour along with children aged persona couple etc whose food demands range from ice-cream to rice. Hence, there is a need to consider food as an important menu of tourism and follow best practices in enhancing cuisine attraction to tourists. Besides food tourism comes with a plenty of employability opportunities. The food tourism is linked with food marketing, food processing, food advertisement, food packaging etc. Food tourism involves tourism marketing and development through gastronomy, wine culture, food varieties, refurbishing customary taste traditions etc. India food processing industry contribution to GDP is 86%. Indian food caters to 320 million tourists daily. 74% of the International tourists enjoy Indian cuisine varieties, while 87% of the domestic tourists travel across the country enjoying Indian food traditions. But, the food tourism segment faces challenges from allied sections such as food marketing, processing, packaging and transporting. If Indian food ministry can come up with more effective guidelines in creation food marketing, processing, packaging and transporting avenues easier for cultivators, then Indian food tourism sector can also match the global standards.

**Keywords:** Food Tourism, Prospects, Challenges, Policy Guidelines

### Introduction

Food and beverage is the largest area of tourism employment across the world. Nearly 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the total visitors spending are on purchasing food and beverage in the visiting destination. It is the fastest growing segment. It is a major driver of local domestic and International tourists. Food tourism is one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism. 88% of the destinations consider gastronomy as strategic in defining their brands and company image.

**Concept of food tourism-** Food tourism is a new concept where tourists take up travel in search of food varieties. In other words, food tourism is the perception of attracting international tourists and domestic tourists with specialized cuisine diversity. It also means reflecting Indian heritage through modern and customary food culture

**Foreign tourists' statistics-**

1	Number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals	10.56 million
2	Number of Domestic Tourists	1854.9 million

Source – India tourism at a glance, Ministry of tourism, Government of India, New Delhi, 2019

The tourists across the world visit India, but international tourist form following countries

Sl no	Country
1	AUSTRALIA
2	BANGLADESH
3	CANADA
4	CHINA
5	FRANCE
6	GERMANY
7	ITALY
8	JAPAN
9	NETHERLANDS
10	PORTUGAL
11	RUSSIA
12	SPAIN
13	UK
14	USA
15	UAE

Source – India tourism at a glance, Ministry of tourism, Government of India, New Delhi, 2019

**Factors influencing food tourism-** there are several factors which has recently influencing the rise in international tourists and domestic tourism market in India.

Trendy growth in International Tourism
Increase in Academic Exchanges
Global Affluence
Changing Demographics
Emphasis On Local Produce
Increased Multi Cultural Living Pattern
Media Focus

1.	Trendy growth in International Tourism	The International Tourism sector is witnessing unprecedented growth and it is contributing to the growth of regional economies with employment avenues and total national GDP growth. There is a considerable increase in the number of tourists across the country due to factors including emerging leisurely thoughts. For some foreign tourists visiting India is a thorough means for recreation as well as leisure.
2.	Increase in Academic Exchanges	There is a considerable rise in foreign students pursuing higher education in India while there is a correspondingly high increase in Indian students pursuing UG / PG degree programs in foreign universities.

3.	Global Affluence	Around the world the trend is increasing middle class population. This section population are eager to travel because they are emerging as affluent population. They spend on shopping, travelling and recreational facilities as majority of them love to spend time in leisure and vacation. This has increased their mobility and flexibility.
4.	Changing Demographics	The globe is witnessing a considerable growth in young population. These youth are adventurous, exploratory and food passionate. The rise in youth who take up solo travel or adventure tourism is increasing which is a major factor in the rise of food tourism prospects.
5.	Emphasis On Local Produce	Food tourism plays an important role in emphasising on agro processing and agro packaging industries and gives stimulus to cultivators to grow varieties of vegetables and fruits. The garden crops are attracting small farmers and
6.	Increased Multi Cultural Living Pattern	As the academic collaboration are motivating students to visit unfamiliar destinations in the name of studies, recreation , leisure , adventure , the influence of multi culture is more keenly evident. The young tourists are fascinated by foodstuff of different regions, they carry the culinary diets to their mother country and cross culture living pattern enhances their love for tasting different varieties of food. This is the primary reason behind impressive attractiveness of Chinese food, Thai food, Mongolian food, Italian food, in Indian hotels.
7.	Media Focus	The food tourism segment has emerged as a major segment through media focus. The youth are techno savvy and are enthusiastic to get information on online. Their searches are curiously equated through media both social and TV. The complete details about destinations are available to them online and they also get information about hotel charges , food available , distances covered and expenses availed.

**Indian states most visited by foreign tourists** – Indian sub continent is blessed with myriad historical artefacts , monumental temples, eye catching structures, archaeological sites , green landscapes , pristine beaches , which attract foreign as well as domestic tourists . International tourists are attracted by the historical monuments in the state of Tamil Nad and flock to visit these marvellous sites. Tamil Nad state outnumbers in any other state in the number of temples and historical structures. These monumental structures are built during the dynastic rule of a host of royal kingdoms , including Pallavas , Cholas , Chalukyas, Vijaya nagara , Rastrakutas , etc To mention a few. There are countless historical places near sea shore as well. The following tables shows the five top states visited by foreign tourist during 2018-2019

Indian states most visited by foreign tourists			
Sl no	state	million	Total share %
1	Tamil nadu	60,74,345	21.19 %
2	Maharashtra	50,78,514	17.69 %
3	UP	37,80,752	13.17 %
4	Delhi	27,40,502	9.52 %
5	Rajasthan	17,54,348	6.12 %

Source – India tourism at a glance, Ministry of tourism, Government of India, New Delhi, 2019

**Other states which attract domestic tourists include** Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Nagaland, Goa attract foreign as well as domestic tourist. The beaches of Karnataka are famous tour spot for domestic tourists and there are tourists all through the year. Besides, Karnataka attracts foreign tourists who come to visit the monumental ruins of Hampi, Hoysala temple of Belur & Halebid, and monolithic statue of Gommateshwara at Shravanabelagola.

**Trends of food demands-** The beach tourists, house boat tourists, home stay tourists and cruise tourists are greatly attracted by varieties of sea food while temple tourists are attracted by Indian traditional vegetarian food varieties. Majority of the hotels / restaurants in India cater to provide vegetarian and non vegetarian food varieties. The local hotels and road side food joints also offer tasty food to domestic tourists all through the year.

Food tourism has gained importance as

1. Popular TV programs
2. Magazines
3. Newspapers
4. Online apps
5. Grocery stores
6. Advertisement

Promoting food as a motivator for best travel has become a part of good hospitality services. .

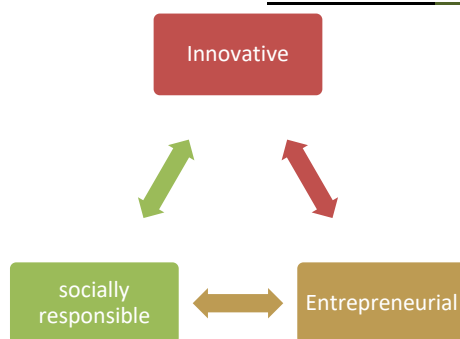
**Career benefits of food tourism-** Indian tourism sector is a very employment and entrepreneurship supportive sector, offering numerous opportunities in food marketing, packaging, processing and transporting. involves tourism marketing and development through gastronomy, delicious food diversity, innovative beverage and wine culture, customised food traditions.

1.	Delicacies, desserts and Food making
2.	Beverage and wine preparation and marketing
3.	Tourism marketing d
4.	tour product development
5.	food tourism entrepreneurships building
6.	Travel and tourism sales and operations management
7.	Food and travel content writing
8.	Economic and community development through food processing
9.	Food / wine /beverage event management

if courses are introduced in food tourism the students would benefits

1.	Culinary / cookery establishments
2.	Government agencies
3.	Food content related article writing
4.	Joining as dietary counselling members of travel group
5.	Joining as Experimental taste experts in hotels

Any food tourism policy need to link following three objectives as shown in this diagram



### Challenges –

1. There is a need to fund research in analysing the trends of local national and global environmental trends in food tourism .This research findings will help to connect local producers to provide a unique destination experience to tourists.
2. There is a need to develop food tourism products that equitably support local environmental and economy while recognizing the diverse needs
3. There is a need to develop marketing strategies to promote a new food enterprise reflecting Indian cultural ambience
4. There is a need to create and implement business plan for sustainable food enterprise that responds to market needs
5. There is a need to develop food business partnerships
6. There is a need to develop food research funding
7. There is a need to develop managing organizational finances to meet the goal and food tourism enterprise
8. There is a need to develop professional development strategy and plans to enhance leadership and management strategies for food tourism
9. There is a need to develop creative concepts in food tourism that are not only innovative but supports career opportunities for youth
10. There is a need to develop strategies which enhance performances with individuals teams communities stakeholders by applying team work.

**Conclusion-** Thus, the need for enhancing food as a motivator for best travel experience has become a part of good hospitality services linking tourism best practices. There is a need for prioritizing food processing sector and agro processing at rural regions. Indian food is known for its ever colourful dishes and cuisines this uniqueness has to be reflected in food also. Across India several Indian states have made their individual food cuisine very attractive through media and through tourism literature or through effective online tour content brochures. Indian tourism policies need to reflect the vivacious aroma of all regional dishes and cuisine through proper research analysis and funding..

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