

## THE ROLE OF CULINARY TOURISM IN THE PROMOTION OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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### **Abstract**

*Tourism plays an important role in the socio economic development of our country. It is also one of the major sources to earn foreign exchange. The strengthening of the existing infrastructures not only promotes tourism but also serves the local community as well. Tourism has become the second largest source of foreign exchange revenue after readymade garments and jewellery.*

*Tourism is acquiring an important position in the global economy. Tourism both domestic and international takes place on a large scale. Modern tourism has become a major economic activity in the world and India is no exception. Tourism is called smokeless industry because through tourism every country creates more employment opportunities, earns foreign exchange and propagates the level of income through tourism multiplier. The government of India belatedly realised the importance of tourism.*

**Key Words:** *Tourism, Culinary, Cuisine, Agritourism, Smokeless industry, Food tourism*

### **Introduction**

“A customer is the most important visitor in our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are depending on him. He is not an interruption in our business. He is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him. But he is doing us a favour by giving an opportunity to do so”.

The above words stress the importance of customer in any business, whether public or private sector. This paper on hospitality industry has been made to study the services, particularly food offered to the tourist and the role played by it in the promotion of tourism.

### **Objective of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are

1. To discuss the food production operation in Indian hotels.
2. To study the profile of the select hotels and growth in tourist arrivals.
3. To analyze the food administration in select hotels in India.
4. To evaluate the performance of hotels and foods by the sample tourists.
5. To examine meal experience during a tour.
6. To offer suitable suggestion to improve the food quality so as to promote tourism.

**Methodology of the Study**

Designing suitable methodology and selection of analytical tools are important for a meaningful analysis of any research problem. Hence this section attempt to discuss the methodology adopted for the present study.

**Research Design**

Qualitative research method has been used for this study. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, and gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. When used along with quantitative methods, quantitative research can help us to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data.

**Interactive Interviewing**

People asked to verbally described their experiences of the phenomenon.

**Written Descriptions**

People asked to write descriptions of their experiences of phenomenon.

**Observation**

Descriptive observations of verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

**Collection of Data**

This study has been considered both primary and secondary data.

**Primary Data**

The primary data have been collected from the hotels and restaurants in various parts of the city and the researcher has met the tourists directly and made a clear discuss on their likes and unlike of the culinary attraction in Madurai. The interview also contains the details of the availability of traditional food varieties and problems faced by the travellers in various food outlets .The data also collected from various ethnic food festivals organized by luxury hotels as well as other organizations in Madurai.

**Secondary Data**

The secondary data were collected from books, magazines, journals, articles, booklets, books, pamphlets and unpublished projects report under graduate & post graduate. Apart from this some data were collected from research papers and research articles pertaining to the air travelers in Madurai region.

**Period of Study**

The survey was conducted during a period from October 2008 to March 2009. Therefore, the reference of the study was 2008\_09.

**Tools of Analysis**

In order to study the tourist arrivals over time, a multiplicative model type has been used.

In order to analyze to the trend, the data on tourist arrival were subjected to 12 Months moving average, so as to remove seasonal effect from the time series. Further, to test the significance of the trend over time, the linear regression equation has been fitted.

Exponential growth rates were worked out by using the formula.

Cyclical, irregular, variations are computed with the help of the residual method.

In order to measure the variability due to trend, cyclical, seasonal and regular fluctuations, coefficient of variations are worked out separated for tourist arrivals in Madurai.

A five point scale has been devised for measuring the attitude of tourists towards facilities available in and around Madurai city by following the scale developed by liker.

**Importance of tourism**

For India, tourism generates the highest net foreign exchange. It is the low-cost high yielding industry where the outflow being low the gross earnings and net earnings are quite close. Tourism perhaps is the only area where developing countries are on par with or even with a slight edge over the development countries. India is in a position to offer avenues of tourism activities and relaxation. Many economies today are development upon tourism for foreign exchange earnings. For India, tourism is a major source of foreign exchange earnings. It helps to correct the adverse trade balances and regional imbalances.

International tourism receipts totalled over US\$ 297 billion in 1992 with developing countries accounting for 25.2 per cent of the total.<sup>1</sup> Developing countries use tourism foreign exchange, to increase employment to attract development capital and to promote economic independence.<sup>2</sup>

**Role of Hotels in Promoting Tourism**

Over the years, tourism has become a popular global activity .Depending upon the nature and purpose of their travel; tourists need and demand certain facilities and services. This has given rise to a wide range of commercial activities that have acquired industry

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical Data of WTO 1994, Annals of Tourism Research, vol.23, No.3, 1996, p.633.

<sup>2</sup> Briton Stephen," The political Economy of Tourism in the World". Annals of Tourism Research, Vol.9,1991, p.331.

proportions .Thus, travel and tourism nowadays represents a broad range of related industries.

Hotels are commercial establishments that provide accommodation, meals, and other guest services .In general, to be called a hotel, an establishment must have a minimum of six guest rooms, at least three of which must have attached private bathroom facilities.

Although hotels are classified into ‘star’ categories, there is no standard method of assigning these ratings, and compliance with customary requirements is voluntary .An American hotel with a certain rating, for example, may look very different from European or Asian hotel with the same rating, and would provide a different level of amenities, range of facilities and quality of services. Although hotel chains assure uniform standards throughout, non-chain hotels (even within the same country) may not agree on the same standards.

In the travel and tourism industry, the hotel industry plays a very significant role, as all tourists need a place to stay at their destinations, and require many more service and facilities to suit their specific needs and tastes.

Restaurants are retail establishments that serve prepared food and beverages to customers. Though the term is generally applicable for eating on premises, it has also been used to include take- away establishments and food delivery services. Restaurants range from unpretentious dining places with simple food served in simple settings at low prices to expensive establishments serving refined food and wines in a formal setting. Typically, customers are seated at tables, their orders are taken by a waiter, who serves food when it is ready, and the customers pay the bill before leaving. In finer restaurants, there is generally a host or hostess to welcome customers include busboys and sommeliers. Restaurants often specialize in certain types of food, or present a certain unifying, and often entertaining theme. For example, there are seafood restaurants, vegetarian, or ethnic restaurants.

In the travel and tourism industry, restaurants and other food and beverage outlets are very important as tourists like to experiment with local cuisines of the places they are visiting.

### **Culinary Tourism**

Culinary tourism is a relatively new industry<sup>3</sup>. The lure of exotic food has motivated many people to travel, and the tourism industry thrives on providing the utmost dining experiences either of new and exotic foods, or of authentic foods from a particular culture or region, or even of familiar foods, comforting, consistent, and safe to the traveller. Culinary tourism therefore encompasses a range of food activities: from eating out at

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<sup>6</sup> Lawrence C.Rubin,Food for thought: Eassys on Eating and Culture, McFarkand,2008, p.158.

ethnic restaurants and perusing cookbooks for new recipes to sampling new foods while travelling. The in-depth study of culinary tourism remains relatively uncharted territory. The strength of the collection lies in its ability to expose the complexities behind the seemingly simple act of encountering what are perceived as edible or inedible, palatable or unpalatable, exotic or familiar foods, while offering some useful concepts through which to understand and further examine this intriguing subject<sup>4</sup>.

In fact, culinary tourism as an industry did not come into being until the year 2001, when International Culinary Tourism Association President Erik Wolf distributed his culinary tourism white paper<sup>5</sup>. It was this white paper that set of the tone and stage for what would become the international culinary tourism association and lead to the development of the world's culinary tourism industry. Prior to 2001, academics around the world had been faithfully researching culinary tourism and wine tourism. However that body of research rarely, if ever, found its way into the business world. It is, in fact, researcher Lucy Long, from Bowling Green University in Ohio, who first coined the term "Culinary tourism" back in 1998<sup>6</sup>.

Then in 2003, under the guidance of a group of industry advisors, Erik Wolf founded the International Culinary Tourism Association. The ICTA has grown every year in terms of number of members and scope of programmes offered. In 2006, the ICTA created a separate International Culinary Tourism Institute, which oversees the educational and training components of the ICTA's programs. Then in early 2007, it began delivering culinary tourism development solutions to meet the rising industry demand for guidance and leadership in culinary tourism product development and marketing.

### **Defining Culinary Tourism**

In its broadest sense, culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences of all kinds, often while travelling, but one can also be a culinary tourist at home. Also Wikipedia defines culinary tourism as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences, according to the International Culinary Tourism Association. Culinary tourism differs from Agri tourism in that culinary tourism is considered a subset of cultural tourism (cuisine is a manifestation of culture) whereas agritourism is considered a subset of rural tourism<sup>7</sup>.

The phrase "unique and memorable" is key to understanding culinary tourism. Many times people hear "culinary tourism" and they think it means restaurants that have earned 5 stars or better, or high-end wineries. That is not the case, as culinary tourism is not exclusively what is pretentious or exclusive. Culinary tourism includes a local party shop, an

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7 Lucy M.Long, *Culinary Tourism*: University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, 2003, p.33.

8 Erik Wolf, *Culinary Tourism: The Hidden Harvest*, Kendall/Hunt publishing Company (February 20,2006).

9 [www.culinarytourism.org/](http://www.culinarytourism.org/)

10 Erik Wolf, *Culinary Tourism: Hidden Harvest*, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company (February 20,2006).

interesting bar on a nameless street that only locals know about, the pretzel vendor on the streets of New York City, or a gelato vendor on a historic street in Italy. Higher end experiences fall into a subset of culinary tourism called “Government Tourism”. In fact, wine tourism, beer tourism and spa cuisines are also subsets of culinary tourism.

Culinary tourism is not agritourism. While the seeds of cuisine are in agriculture, and agriculture and cuisine are inextricably linked, the two are very different. Agritourism is a subset of rural tourism, while cuisine is a subset of cultural tourism, as cuisine is a manifestation of culture.

Culinary tourism includes culinary experiences of all kinds. It's much more than dining guides and restaurants weeks. It encompasses cooking schools, cookbook and kitchen gadget stores, culinary tours and tour leaders, culinary media and guidebooks, caterers, wineries, breweries, distilleries, food growers and manufactures, culinary attractions and more. Authenticity is also of critical importance to culinary tourists.

While we say that one pursues these experiences while travelling, local residents can be culinary tourists in their own town. How often do we get set in our ways, frequently the same favourite restaurants or rarely leaving our neighbourhoods? Making the effort to trek across to try an interesting new place is indeed culinary tourism.

Since its true birth as an industry in 2003, culinary tourism has grown exponentially every year, as measured by a number of indicators. First the number of customers interested in the subject matter has grown which is a document by the increase in culinary travel shows on television. One sees food shows on travel channels and travel shows on food channels. There continues to be a strong cross-over of these industries.

In recent years, the ICTA has seen an enormous surge in the number of destinations exploring culinary tourism. This can mean organizing a seminar or workshop for their members, culinary tourism product development, or culinary tourism promotion that includes culinary tourism as an important part of their strategic marketing plans.

### **Conclusion**

India is a land of diverse culture and ethnicity. This diversity is also reflected in the cuisine of India. Every culture of India has its unique and exclusive style of cooking. Over the centuries, each new wave of settlers in India brought with them their own culinary practices which, with time, blended into the Indian cuisine as it is known today.

Indian cuisine has also been influenced by environmental, social, religious and political factors from within. Most Indian cuisine is related by significant usage of spices, and by the use of a larger variety of vegetables than most other culinary traditions. Within these recognizable similarities, there is an enormous variety of local styles.

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