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Farm-to-Table Tourism Conversance and its Benefaction to Cultural Heritage Preservation

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Abstract

Farm-to-table tourism has emerged as an important dimension of gastronomy tourism, emphasizing a direct and transparent relationship between food producers and consumers. This study explores the role of farm-to-table tourism in preserving cultural heritage while promoting sustainable food systems. By encouraging local sourcing, traditional farming practices, and indigenous culinary knowledge, farm-to-table tourism supports the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage linked to food, agriculture, and community lifestyles. Such experiences enable tourists to gain authentic insights into regional food cultures, agricultural traditions, and rural ways of life, thereby enhancing cultural appreciation and awareness. In addition to its cultural value, farm-to-table tourism serves as an experiential learning platform for culinary students and professional chefs. Direct engagement with farms enhances understanding of seasonal produce, ethical sourcing, and sustainable menu planning, fostering environmentally responsible culinary practices which increase the opportunities for cultural continuity. From an ecological perspective, this model reduces food miles, minimizes carbon emissions, and supports biodiversity conservation through localized and sustainable supply chains. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach integrating tourism studies, food sustainability, and heritage conservation to demonstrate that farm-to-table tourism extends beyond a culinary experience. It functions as a strategic tool for strengthening rural economies, ensuring cultural continuity, and promoting eco-friendly and responsible tourism practices, contributing to long-term sustainable development.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Food Sustainability, Community Lifestyle, Cultural Continuity, Heritage Conservation

Introduction

The concept of tourism has taken a totally new path in the past decade with the upcoming trends and technologies. More than that the increasing awareness amongst the existing population of our country and the need and demand for healthier living has brought in significant amendments in eating habits and choosing of menu options. This has led to the hospitality and tourism industry to derive at many innovative processes to gratify the customer sector and deliver up to the expectations. Farm to table tourism is one such indigenous concept adapted by few hotels that has brought in many changes in the industry.

Objectives of the Study

The core concept of farm to table is to analyse the various beneficial aspects that is delivered to the society emphasising the need and importance of health and also to enhance the opportunities that may improve the economy of the local community residing in a particular region. The key objective is also to retain the cultural and age-old traditional food habits which are free from chemical intervention by following the organic cultivation methods and rearing of domestic animals.

Concept

Farm to table tourism is a concept that completely focuses on resourcing on freshly grown agricultural products which are converted to wide spread menu dishes that cater to the need of customers of all age groups. The core factor of the farm to table tourism can be listed into multiple benefits though it may face challenges.

The key beneficial aspects of farm to table tourism are:

Empowerment of Local Farmers

The concept of farm to tourism can be discussed in two different ways where in one aspect focuses on cultivating the agricultural products pertaining to the season, in the self-owned land by the hotel sector. The other aspect is that of involving the local formers of that region in delivering the fresh raw materials on a daily or regular basis which are used in preparation of various cuisines. This highly benefits the farmers having minimum agricultural land and helps sustain the produce of local cultivation. It also give employment opportunities for farmers in growth of products.

Increased Produce of Local and Seasonal Raw Materials

It is to be noted that there are very many vegetables that are grown only in particular regions of our state and they are highly based on the season. Demand is created for such variety of products which also focuses on the regional cuisine and cultural preservation and lifestyle of the local community.

For ex: Adhalakkai – A naturally grown vegetable available only in Virudhunagar area in common during the rainy season. It contains quiet a lot of medical benefits.



**Source: Resident of Virudhunagar
(Ms. Sharanya – Home maker)**

Reduced usage of Chemical Fertilizers through organic Farming

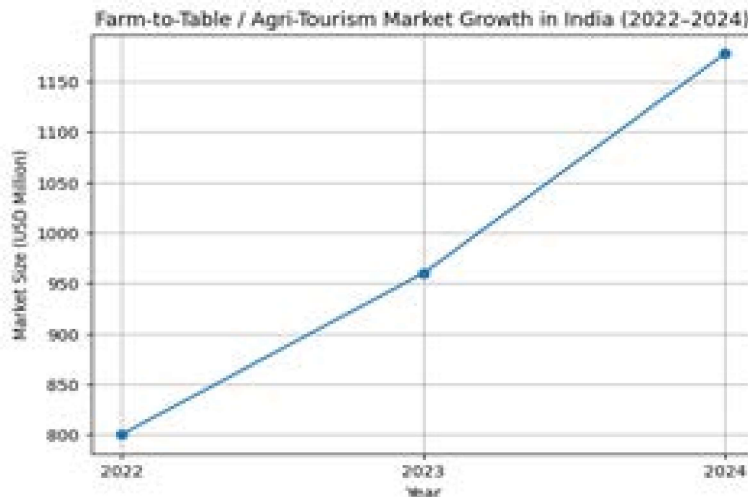
As the notion of farm to table focuses on the growth of agricultural produce is purely organic in nature, the growers are compelled to practise non chemical fertilizers which not only enhances the quality of raw materials but also enhances the food product by its natural quality. The organic fertilizers retain the flavour and legitimate taste of the vegetables which further augments the final product – the food.

Attraction of Tourist through Rich, Authentic Food

The following data is based on the study by a food publishing platform named “Indian Food Times”

Tamil Nadu seems to be in first place for the most preferred food destinations for its variety of south Indian dishes such as Dosas, idlis, filter coffee, and Chettinad cuisine Stats: Tamil Nadu welcomed 5.5 million foreign tourists in 2023. Food tours in Chennai alone grew 30% year-on-year by 2024.

- Trend: Cooking classes for Chettinad cuisine are booming, with over 50 operators in 2025.
- Market Growth: India’s culinary tourism market was valued at USD 304.3 million in 2023 and is projected to grow at an impressive 22.3% CAGR from 2024 to 2030, aiming to cross USD 1.2 billion by 2030.
- Global Contribution: India’s share in the global culinary tourism market stood at 2.6% in 2023, with expectations to rise to 3.5% by 2025.
- Tourist Engagement: A 2022 survey found that 37% of Indian leisure travellers engaged in food-related activities. This number is predicted to increase to 45% by 2025.
- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs): India saw 10.9 million FTAs in 2023, a 43.5% growth from 2022. By 2025, this figure is expected to reach 13-14 million, with 25-30% of these visitors prioritizing food tourism. Source: <https://indianfoodtimes.com/the-rise-of-food-tourism-in-india-trends-data-and-future-insights>



Source: Ministry of Tourism Annual Reports and India Tourism Statistics

Preserve the Natural Food Cuisine and Culture

The statistical data as per the source from Ministry of tourism, India, the culinary tourism is all set to boom up to a very high level in the upcoming years where in apart from street food, local & regional cuisines, farm to table is also an attraction to major components of international & domestic tourists.



Methodology

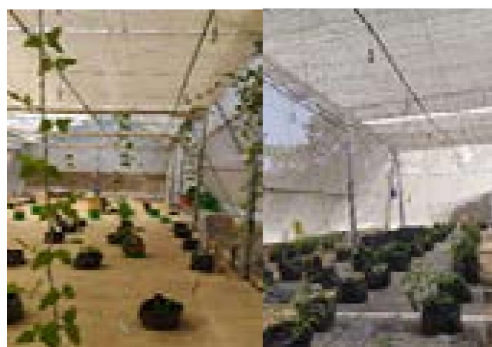
The primary data is collected through visits to industry practising the farm to table culture and through Industrial Exposure training by my students as well during visits to organisations for attending various competitions. The secondary data is based on the statistical data from internet and magazines and journals.

An in depth research was conducted to analyse the practical implications of the farm to table culture in the industry and various benefits as well as challenges were found through the research.

Annexure



Source: ACCASI -Asian Christian Culinary & Agricultural Science Institute



Source: Olde Inn, Bengaluru

Benefits

- Straight linking among the farmers, consumers as well as industry
- Empowerment of local farmers and increased employability
- Elevation of local produce and emphasis on organic farming
- Lucidity in food sourcing
- Experiential learning opportunities
- Strengthening of rural economy
- Sustainable practices and eco-friendly adaptations

Challenges

- Absence of knowledge on the locally available agricultural resources
- Lack of infrastructure in rural areas
- Seasonal dependency of agriculture
- Training requirements for farmers in hospitality services
- Marketing and branding limitations

Suggestions & Recommendations

- Government support through subsidies and training programs
- Collaboration between tourism departments and agricultural sectors
- Promotions of farm tourism destinations
- Development of rural infrastructure
- Inclusion of farm tourism in tourism policy frameworks

Conclusion

Farm-to-table tourism serves as an enigmatic tool for sustainable tourism development which indirectly contributes to conserve our cultural heritage. The hand holding of local farming, fresh and retaining of local culture, creates eloquent experiences for tourists and also upgrades the economic stability for rural communities. With effective planning, legal policy support, and efficient and effective community participation, farm-to-table tourism can significantly donate to heritage conservation and inclusive growth.

Acknowledgement

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