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# TOURISM INNOVATIONS

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## Editor's Note

Tourism is a global economic powerhouse, contributing significantly to the GDP of many countries and providing employment to millions. However, the environmental and social costs associated with traditional tourism practices have raised concerns about its long-term sustainability. Green and sustainable tourism investments offer a promising solution to this dilemma by fostering economic growth while protecting the planet and benefiting local communities.

Green and sustainable tourism investments encompass a wide range of strategies and practices aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and society while maximizing economic benefits. These investments focus on responsible resource management, community engagement, and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines can power hotels, resorts, and transportation services, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable tourism investments prioritize efficient waste management systems. Recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastics are essential steps towards minimizing pollution.

Investing in the protection and maintenance of natural reserves and national parks ensures the long-term viability of tourism destinations while preserving biodiversity. Implementing water-saving technologies, promoting responsible water use, and protecting local water sources help conserve this precious resource.

Green and sustainable tourism investments prioritize hiring locally, empowering communities economically, and reducing income inequality. Supporting cultural heritage through investments in local arts, crafts, and traditions helps preserve the unique identities of tourist destinations. Sustainable tourism investments diversify the local economy, reducing dependence on a single industry and increasing overall resilience.

Green and sustainable tourism investments are not just an ethical choice; they are a smart economic strategy. By balancing economic growth with environmental preservation and social well-being, these investments create a win-win scenario for tourists, host communities, and future generations. As responsible stewards of our planet, it is our duty to support and encourage these investments, ensuring that tourism continues to thrive while safeguarding the natural and cultural treasures that make our world so beautiful.

*Chief Editors*

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# Attributes of The Tourist Destination Image of Shringverpur

Anil Kumar Singh & Aishwary Kushwaha

## Abstract

**Purpose-** To find the attributes of destination image of Shringverpur which can be used in destination branding.

**Methodology-** Research was done in two stages, first interview of the tourists, vendors, local people and pujaris. Second stage was the analysis of the interview and Ramcharitmanas.

**Findings-** It has all the attributes of the components (cognitive, affective and unique image) of destination image. Shringverpur has attributes of unique image also which makes it different from others. It has very poor services (accessibility, accommodation, restaurants and infrastructure).

**Research limitations-** This was done in Shringverpur as all the tourists were from nearby places only. This research focusses on attributes that can be used for destination branding.

**Scope-** These attributes can be classified in cognitive image and affective image to test the destination image and forming the brand identity.

**Keywords:** Destination image, Cognitive image, Affective image, Unique image, Ramayana circuit

## INTRODUCTION

Shringverpur is situated near Prayagraj at a distance of 40 kms approximately. Shringverpur is mentioned in the epic Ramayana as capital of the famous kingdom of Nishadraj or king of fishermen where Shri Ram, Laxman and Sita had stayed overnight before crossing the river Ganga.

The Union Ministry of Tourism had launched the "Swadesh Darshan Scheme" in 2014-15. The main aim of this scheme was to develop the theme based tourist circuits in the country. There is a great scope and need to develop tourist's circuits on specific themes to attract the tourists having interests in visiting such places. Every theme is unique in their own way and it should be developed in sustainable manner which supports the local communities and environment. Under the swadesh darshan scheme there are 13 thematic circuits for development.

Ramayana Circuit is among the thirteen thematic circuits identified for development under Swadesh

Darshan Scheme. There are fifteen destinations included in Ramayana circuit by the government of India for development. All the fifteen destinations included in Ramayana Circuit to promote religious tourism. These destinations are chosen according to the places where Sri Ram is believed to have travelled across India.

BIHAR	Buxar, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi
CHATTISGARH	Jagdalpur
KARNATAKA	Hampi
MADHYA PRADESH	Chitrakoot
MAHARASHTRA	Nashik, Nagpur
ODISHA	Mahendragiri
TAMIL NADU	Rameswaram
TELANGANA	Bhadrachalam
UTTAR PRADESH	Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Shringverpur
WEST BENGAL	Nandigram

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## OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To analyse the information about the Shringverpur from various sources.
- ❖ To examine the tourist view and perception on Shringverpur as a destination.
- ❖ To identify the attributes of destination image of Shringverpur.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Destination image is sum of ideas, beliefs and impressions that a person has of a destination (Kotler et al., 1993; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Kotler, 2002). Cai (2002) states that destination image differentiates and identifies the destination. Destination image is the perception about the place in the tourist memory.

Brand and image are closely related to each other; the former is created through the latter (Cai 2002). He further state that the image formation is the core of branding.

Morgan and Pritchard (2001) have analysed the branding strategies of the Wales Tourist Board and Welsh local authorities. Wales Tourist Board and Welsh local authorities have constructed a branding strategy for Wales by using the language, legend, emblem, myths, person, and heritage. These were seen as the basic elements of Wales's image.

Cognitive image is individual's knowledge on destination attributes (Pike and Ryan, 2004). Cognitive image are formed on the basis of pre-acquired knowledge about the destination (N. Souiden et al. 2017). Affective image is the feeling formed towards a destination (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). Affective image is formed after visiting the destination and consuming the services.

The cognitive and affective image are accepted as influential indicators of destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006). Majority of the studies considered cognitive image for the evaluation of destination image, only few considered both the cognitive and affective image for the evaluation of the destination image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006). The cognitive and affective image are the important components of destination image in building a comprehensive destination branding model (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011), further they state one more component of destination image i.e. unique image, it differentiates the one destination from the other. Uniqueness gives the reason to travellers to choose one destination over the other. Uniqueness is the differentiation among the similar destinations in tourists mind (Cai, 2002; Morrison & Anderson, 2002).

The cognitive image has the strongest effect followed by unique image and affective image on overall image of destination (Qu, Kim and Im, 2011). Further they state that the image of a destination influences the tourists to recommend others.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method was applied for this study. To gather information interview was conducted at the study area. Information about the study area was collected from various sources and analysed.

### In depth interviews of

- ❖ Local People
- ❖ Tourists
- ❖ Local vendors
- ❖ Pujaris
- ❖ Analysis of
- ❖ Ramcharitmanas

### Population

Local people, Local Vendors, Tourists visiting Shringverpur, Pujaris

### Sample

Local vendors: 14

Local People: 11

Pujaris: 3

Tourists: 95

The interview was done during monsoon in the month of August 2018. 14 local vendors, 11 local people, 3 pujaris and 69 tourists were interviewed, sample was taken randomly. Simple random sampling method was adopted for the study. 123 respondents were approached and 97 have responded. 69 tourists were interviewed in 3 days, sample was taken randomly, depends on the tourist's willingness to answer.

A detailed interview was done with respondents, the questions asked were

1. What is Shringverpur famous for ? (followed by series of questions about the incidents happen here in detail)
2. What are the services that are being offered to the tourists ?(accessibility, hotels, restaurants, toilets, guides and Ganga aarti)
3. How do you feel in Shringverpur ?

This interview shows the respondents overall image of Shringverpur. From the help of interview we generated a list of attributes for destination image (cognitive, affective and unique image). The Ramcharitmanas is analysed for the attributes, the attractions for which Shringverpur is famous and the incidents happened here creates an overall image. The respondents have answered in detail.

Content analysis of the interview of respondents has divided into two parts first one is information about the destination and second one is services:



## INFORMATION

- ❖ All the respondents have stated the place as sacred because Shri Ram, Sitaji and Laxman had stayed here overnight.
- ❖ All the respondents have mentioned about the Sage Shringi rishi and his temple
- ❖ 73 respondents(3 pujaris, 14 vendors, 11 local people and 45 tourists) had mentioned about the Nishadraj(King of Fishermen).
- ❖ All respondents do mention about Bharat with family and army coming to Shringverpur in search of Shri Ram.
- ❖ All the respondents have mentioned about the sacred Ganga and aarti.
- ❖ Pujaris, local vendors and local people have mentioned about the tourists coming to the temple of Shringi Rishi for doing pooja to have a child like Shri Ram and also if they are unable to have a child. 14 tourists do mention coming for the same reason.

## SERVICES

- ❖ All the respondents(Tourists, Pujaris and Vendors) mention about that there is no public transport for Shringverpur from Prayagraj. Tourists have to hire a vehicle or come by their own vehicle.
- ❖ All the respondents have mentioned that there is no sign board from the main road to the destination.
- ❖ There are 5 dharamsalas, but only one hotel and one restaurant. There are many small snacks shop.

Vendors and Pujaris have mentioned majority of the tourists are from nearby places only. All the tourists have gathered information from the books and people, 69 tourists have stated that the information about the destination is passed on by people to people or from generation to generation and 11 have stated that they have read about Shringverpur in books also. This shows that the tourists have formed *cognitive image* of the destination.

## Content of Ramcharitmanas

Shringverpur has got its name from the famous sage Shringi Rishi. King was very sad because he has no son, he told his Guru(Vasistha) about all his joys and sorrows, Vasistha comforted him and said you will have four sons, who will be known in all the three worlds. Then Vasistha called sage Sringi, he performed a noble sacrifice for the birth of son to the king.

When the sage devoutly offered oblations into the sacred fire, the fire god appeared with an oblation of porridge(Kheer) in his hand and told king to distribute among his queens in proportions as think fit. Vasistha distributed the porridge to all his queens, in this way the queens became pregnant. This is the one part which makes Shringverpur a religious destination.

When Shri Ram got exile for 14 years, he stayed in Shringverpur overnight before proceeding to the forest. While he stayed in Shringverpur there were series of incidents and activities happened which makes it more famous as a religious destination.

Shri Ram along with Sita, Laxman and Sumantra(minister) reached Shringverpur and it is situated on the banks of river Ganga. Shri Ram narrates numerous stories connected with Ganga and its transcendent glory while gazing at the waves of Ganga. Shri Ram stays outside the town of Shringverpur as he was on exile. Nishadraj(king of fishermen) got the news that Shri Ram has arrived at banks of river Ganga, he along with his dear ones and taking the presents and fruits in the basket proceeded to meet Shri Ram. He lied flat on the ground in the feet of Shri Ram and placed the presents. He asked Shree Ram a favour of visiting his town and said "My land, house and fortune are yours; my family and myself are your humble servant". Shree Ram tells him about the exile that for fourteen years his home will be in the woods and his mode of life and food shall be that of a hermit. The chief of Nishadas thought of arranging the stay beneath the Sheesham tree and Shree was happy with that and said the place was very beautiful. Guha prepared a beautiful and soft bed of kusa grass and tender leaves. He also placed the bowls made from leaves full of fruits and roots. After having the roots and fruits everyone laid down to sleep while Laxman was pressing Shree Ram's leg. When Laxman was confirmed that his lord had fallen asleep, he asked Sumantra to retire and he himself got ready with his bow and arrows for guarding. Nishada chief also guarded himself beside Laxman was asking question, Laxman answered him in a gentle way. Whole night Laxman was telling Shri Ram's virtues the day dawned. Shri Ram wakes up and performed his ablutions.

Sumatra with folded hands ask the lord to return back but he denied to return and told Sumantra to convey his message to father with folded hands that "be not troubled in any way on my account, dear father". He also requested Sumantra to take of his father, do not feel miserable on account of grief of us. Then Shri Ram tells Sita to leave with Sumantra and she can live with her parents or with the parents of her lord wherever she wants. He try to convince Sita in every possible by giving every possible explanations. But Sita responded in a very wise way by giving her counter side, she said sunlight can never exist apart from the sun nor the radiance of the moon leave the moon. Finally she convinced Shri Ram and told Sumatra to fell on the feet of my father in law and mother in law on her behalf and tell them that she feel happy in the forest.

Shri Ram asked the ferryman to take them across the river but ferryman refuses to do so. In favour of crossing the river he asked the lord to let him lave the lord's lotus feet. Shri Ram let ferryman wash his feet, the ferryman drank the water in which they had been immersed along with

the other members of his family and gladly took the lord across the river. After getting down Shri Ram felt bad for not giving anything to ferryman, but Sita read the mind of her beloved and took off her ring to offer it to ferryman as a toll. With jointed hands he refused to take the ring, he told them I worked for my life time but today I got my reward by serving you. Then Shri Ram proceeded towards the forest with Laxman, Sita and Nishadraj.

All these points have information in detail attached to it which forms the destination image in the mind of tourists. Attributes of affective image are selected according to the type of destination as the Shringverpur is a religious destination and by analysing the interview of the tourists. Many of the researchers in their study have selected the attributes of unique image for comparison so that they can differentiate but in this study the attributes are taken which are not in other destinations and makes it unique as mentioned by the respondents and local people in the interview.

After analysis these attributes were formed:

### Attributes for Destination Image

#### Services and quality

- ✧ Accessibility
- ✧ Accommodation
- ✧ Restaurants
- ✧ Local people (friendly or helpful)
- ✧ Guides
- ✧ Cleanliness
- ✧ Rest rooms/toilets
- ✧ Infrastructure or condition of dharamsalas
- ✧ Safety and Security

#### Attractions

- ✧ Ganga aarti
- ✧ Ganga
- ✧ Cultural festivals/fair
- ✧ Local Culture/Cultural traditions
- ✧ Temples
- ✧ Archaeological site

#### Feelings towards the destination(as told by the tourists)

- ✧ Intense
- ✧ Religious
- ✧ Meditativeness
- ✧ Peacefulness
- ✧ Completeness

### Attributes of Unique Image

- ✧ Shringi temple (Tourists pray for to have a child like Shri Ram& people who are unable to have a child)

- ✧ Shri Ram started his journey on foot from here.

- ✧ The conversation between Shri Ram and Nishadraj.

The attributes play a very important role in evaluating destination image as mentioned in the study that have been done by the researchers about destination image and branding.

Brand and image are closely related to each other; the former is created through the latter (Cai 2002). He further states that the image formation is the core of branding.

On the basis of these attributes, tourists build an image of destination in their mind. These attributes can be used for branding, the most of the attributes will be same as compared to the other destinations in Ramayana circuit. The unique image will be the key attribute which makes the destinations different from others.

### CONCLUSION

Shringverpur is famous as a religious destination because of Shringi Rishi and Shri Ram and the series of incidents happened in Shringverpur which presents a short story related to Shri Ram. Ganga flowing through the Shringverpur, makes it more religious. Shringverpur has everything as a religious destination, but it is hidden or not known to everyone. This study focuses on proposing the attributes of the components of destination image (cognitive, affective and unique image). This study proposes the attributes by analysing the previous studies and interviewing the local vendors and tourists. Also the Ramacharitmanas was analysed for proposing attributes. Ramcharitmanas helps in proposing the attributes of the unique image. According to the previous studies destination image plays a very important role in branding, attracting new visitors and preserving the culture.

### Limitations and Scope for further study

This study is limited as the data was collected during the monsoon season, the population is limited to the people who are visiting Shringverpur, all the sample were from nearby places, majority from other villages. Study needs to be done on tourists coming to Prayagraj from different states. This study can be helpful in testing the destination image of Shringverpur and in developing brand identity and destination branding.

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# Nature-Based Tourism (NBT): A Comprehensive Review

Suneel Kumar, Naina Hasija, Varinder Kumar & Nisha Devi

## Abstract

*This review provides a comprehensive analysis of nature-based tourism and explores its key aspects, impacts, and challenges. Nature-based tourism (NBT) refers to travel and recreational activities that primarily focus on the natural environment and its conservation. This study synthesizes existing research to highlight the benefits and drawbacks of nature-based tourism, discusses its contribution to local economies and conservation efforts, and explores emerging trends in this field. This review emphasizes the need for sustainable practices and effective management strategies to ensure the long-term viability of nature-based tourism.*

**Keywords:** Nature-based tourism, Social environment and Economic, Biodiversity preservation, and Sustainable Practices

## 1. Introduction and Literature Review

Nature-based tourism has emerged as a prominent sector within the tourism industry, focusing on travel and recreational activities centered on natural environments. This form of tourism allows visitors to engage with and appreciate the natural world while promoting conservation and sustainable use (Haukeland et al., 2023). It encompasses a wide range of natural landscapes, including national parks, wildlife reserves, forests, and coastal areas (Pamungkas & Jones, 2021). These destinations offer visitors opportunities for relaxation, adventure, and experiential learning, driven by their aesthetic beauty, biodiversity, and cultural heritage they possess (Nduna & van Zyl, 2020). Furthermore, NBT has substantial significance across various dimensions. Economically, it contributes to the growth and development of local communities by generating revenue, creating employment opportunities, and fostering entrepreneurship (Lee & Jan 2019; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007). This sector attracts investment in infrastructure development, accommodation, and ancillary services. Moreover, nature-based tourism provides economic incentives for the conservation of natural resources,

offering local communities an alternative livelihood that aligns with sustainable practices (Phelan et al., 2020).

Nature-based tourism has the potential to support the preservation of fragile ecosystems, enhance biodiversity conservation, and promote sustainable resource use (Adetola, 2023). By valuing and protecting natural areas, nature-based tourism raises awareness of environmental issues and fosters a sense of responsibility among visitors toward ecological stewardship (Hayes et al., 2023). Socioculturally, nature-based tourism contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, traditions, and indigenous knowledge (Gustafsson & Amer, 2023). It facilitates cross-cultural interactions, enabling cultural exchange and understanding (Lehto et al., 2017). Local communities play a crucial role in providing authentic experiences and offering insights into their customs, traditions, and traditional practices related to the natural environment (Hong et al., 2023). While nature-based tourism has received significant attention, there is a research gap regarding the various aspects of this tourism segment. The existing literature predominantly focuses on economic benefits, such as revenue generation and

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employment opportunities. However, a comprehensive understanding of the environmental and socio-cultural impacts as well as effective management strategies is still lacking. Additionally, emerging trends and technological advancements in the nature-based tourism sector require further exploration. Understanding the complex interactions between nature-based tourism and its associated impacts is essential for its effective planning and management. Identifying this research gap is crucial for addressing knowledge gaps and developing sustainable practices that maximize the benefits of nature-based tourism while minimizing its negative impacts. The main objective of this comprehensive review is to provide an in-depth analysis of nature-based tourism and encompass its benefits, impacts, and challenges. The following research questions guided the study.

- I. What are the economic, environmental and sociocultural benefits of nature-based tourism?
- II. What are the positive and negative effects of nature-based tourism on the natural environment, local communities, and cultural heritage?
- III. How does nature-based tourism contribute to conservation efforts and biodiversity preservation?
- IV. What are the sustainable practices and management strategies employed in nature-based tourism?
- V. What are the emerging trends and challenges of nature-based tourism?

This review focuses on nature-based tourism, encompassing various natural environments and destinations. This study draws from a wide range of literature, including academic research papers, reports, case studies, and best practices. The temporal scope encompasses relevant studies up to the present, ensuring the inclusion of recent developments in the field. This review explores both the positive and negative aspects of nature-based tourism and provides a balanced assessment of its impacts and challenges. By addressing this research gap and comprehensively examining the scope of nature-based tourism, this review aims to contribute to the existing knowledge base and inform future research and management strategies. This underscores the importance of sustainable practices and effective management approaches to ensuring the long-term viability of nature-based tourism.

## 2. Research Methodology

This study employs a systematic literature review to address the objectives of nature-based tourism. It investigates the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits of nature-based tourism, as well as its positive and negative effects on the natural environment, local communities, and cultural heritage. In addition, this study examines the role of nature-based tourism in conservation efforts and biodiversity preservation, as well as identifying sustainable practices and

management strategies used in the field. It also seeks to identify the emerging trends and difficulties. The primary data sources included research papers; reports from reputable international organizations; and pertinent literature from the fields of tourism, conservation, and environmental studies. For exhaustive literature access, online databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, and academic library catalogues were utilized. Utilizing predetermined keywords and phrases, such as "Nature-based tourism impacts," "Sustainable tourism practices," and "Conservation and nature-based tourism," a search is conducted using a methodical approach that is refined and expanded as needed. This methodology ensures an exhaustive examination of the relevant literature.

## 3. Benefits of Nature-Based Tourism

Nature-based tourism has gained increasing recognition for its potential to bring about diverse benefits in the economic, environmental, and sociocultural domains. This section provides an overview of the key benefits associated with nature-based tourism, highlighting its positive impact on local economies, environmental conservation, and sociocultural well-being. Understanding these benefits is crucial for stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers seeking to promote sustainable and responsible nature-based tourism.

### 3.1 Economic benefits

Nature-based tourism generates substantial economic benefits at both local and national levels. It contributes to revenue generation through tourist expenditures on accommodation, transportation, food, and recreational activities (Lukoseviciute et al., 2022). These expenditures have a multiplier effect, stimulating additional economic activities such as the growth of local businesses and the creation of employment opportunities. Nature-based tourism can also drive investments in infrastructure development, visitor facilities, and tourism-related services, thereby enhancing overall economic growth and development of host regions (Saluja et al., 2022). Moreover, nature-based tourism can provide economic incentives for the conservation of natural resources (Boley & Green, 2016). By valuing and protecting natural areas, tourism stakeholders and local communities are motivated to engage in sustainable practices that preserve ecosystem integrity and ensure the long-term viability of nature-based tourism as an economic sector.

### 3.2 Environmental benefits

Nature-based tourism plays a crucial role in the conservation of natural environments. Protected areas and natural landscapes designated for tourism purposes often receive increased attention and resources for habitat conservation, wildlife protection, and ecosystem management (López-Espinosa de los Monteros, 2002; Mandić, 2019). By creating economic value from intact

ecosystems, nature-based tourism contributes to the preservation of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem services, and the protection of fragile environments (Tenzin & Norbu, 2020). Furthermore, nature-based tourism can raise awareness among visitors about environmental issues and foster a sense of responsibility for sustainable resource use and conservation (Cerveny, 2022). It provides opportunities for environmental education, interpretation, and engagement with natural systems, empowering visitors to advocate environmental stewardship (Winter et al., 2020).

### 3.3 Socio-cultural benefits

Nature-based tourism offers numerous sociocultural benefits, promoting cultural heritage preservation, community development, and cross-cultural understanding (Lee & Jan 2019). Indigenous cultures and local communities often play a significant role in providing authentic experiences and sharing traditional knowledge, customs, and practices related to the natural environment (Luković et al., 2023). This engagement can enhance cultural pride, identity, and intergenerational knowledge transfers. Nature-based tourism can foster community development by creating employment and business opportunities for local residents (Job & Paesler, 2013). It encourages community involvement and empowerment through initiatives such as community-based tourism enterprises, capacity-building programs, and revenue-sharing mechanisms (Katswera et al., 2022). By incorporating local perspectives and involving communities in the decision-making processes, nature-based tourism can contribute to the overall sociocultural well-being of host communities.

## 4. Impacts of Nature-Based Tourism

Nature-based tourism has the potential to generate both positive and negative impacts on the natural environment, local communities, and cultural heritage sites. Understanding and evaluating these impacts is essential for the sustainable and responsible management of nature-based tourism destinations. This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the potential impacts associated with nature-based tourism, highlighting the benefits, challenges, and concerns related to its development and operation.

### 4.1 Positive impacts on the natural environment

Nature-based tourism contributes to the conservation of the natural environment. Protected areas and natural landscapes designated for tourism purposes often receive increased attention and resources for habitat conservation, wildlife protection, and ecosystem management (Gonia & Jezierska-Thöle, 2022; Štrba et al., 2022). Through visitor fees and revenue generated, nature-based tourism fund conservation initiatives support sustainable use of natural resources. Additionally, it raises awareness

among visitors about environmental issues and fosters a sense of responsibility for sustainable resource use and conservation (Cerveny, 2022). Furthermore, nature-based tourism provides economic incentives for the maintenance and restoration of ecosystems, promoting sustainable practices that minimize negative impacts on natural habitats and species (Chausson et al., 2020). Well-managed nature-based tourism contributes to the preservation of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem services, and the protection of fragile environments.

### 4.2 Socio-cultural Impacts on Local Communities and Cultural Heritage

Nature-based tourism has positive sociocultural impacts on local communities and cultural heritage. Indigenous cultures and local communities often play a significant role in providing authentic experiences and sharing traditional knowledge, customs, and practices related to the natural environment (Cuaton & Su, 2020; Thapa et al., 2022). This engagement enhances cultural pride, identity, and intergenerational knowledge transfers. Incorporating local perspectives and involving communities in decision-making processes contributes to the overall sociocultural well-being of host communities (Giampiccoli et al., 2022). Additionally, it creates economic opportunities for local residents, such as employment and entrepreneurship in tourism-related services (Sisneros-Kidd et al. & Clark, 2019). This has led to the development of community-based tourism enterprises and enhancement of local economies. Revenues generated from nature-based tourism can be reinvested in community development projects, infrastructure improvements, and cultural heritage preservation.

### 4.3 Negative impacts on the natural environment, communities, and cultural heritage

Despite its potential benefits, nature-based tourism poses challenges and has negative impacts. Overcrowding and unregulated visitation leads to habitat degradation, soil erosion, pollution, and disturbance of wildlife populations (Goliath-Ludic & Yekela, 2020; Lanfranchi, Giannetto, & De Pascale, 2014). Inadequate waste management, water consumption, and energy use associated with tourism activities further exacerbate these environmental impacts (Islam, 2015). Local communities may experience sociocultural disruptions due to tourism development (Yeager et al., 2023). The rapid influx of visitors leads to conflicts over land use, increased costs of living, and changes in traditional lifestyles. Additionally, the commodification and commercialization of cultural heritage results in the loss of authenticity and erosion of local traditions.

Nature-based tourism has the potential to generate both positive and negative impacts on the natural environment, local communities, and cultural heritage sites. Positive impacts include conservation efforts, economic benefits,

and cultural preservation. However, negative impacts, such as environmental degradation and sociocultural disruptions, should not be overlooked. Proper planning, management, and regulation are essential to maximize benefits while minimizing the negative impacts of nature-based tourism. By adopting sustainable practices involving local communities and promoting responsible tourism, nature-based tourism contributes to the long-term preservation of the natural environment, well-being of local communities, and safeguarding of cultural heritage.

## 5. Conservation and Biodiversity

Nature-based tourism plays a crucial role in conservation efforts and contributes to the management and preservation of protected areas and biodiversity. This section examines the significant role of nature-based tourism in promoting conservation, focusing on its contributions to protected areas management and wildlife conservation. Understanding the relationship between nature-based tourism and conservation is vital for developing effective strategies to protect the natural environment and safeguard biodiversity.

### 5.1 Protected areas management

Protected areas such as national parks, wildlife reserves, and nature reserves are essential for the conservation of ecosystems and species. Nature-based tourism provides a means to effectively support and manage protected areas effectively (McCarthy et al., 2021). The revenue generated from visitor fees and tourism-related activities is allocated to conservation initiatives, infrastructure development, and monitoring programmes (Whitelaw et al., 2014). This often requires the establishment of sustainable management practices and regulations within protected areas. These measures ensure that tourism activities do not harm the ecological integrity of the area and maintain a balance between visitor experiences and conservation objectives. Effective visitor management strategies, such as limiting visitor numbers, implementing trail-viewing platforms, and providing interpretive programs, help minimize the impact of tourism on sensitive habitats and wildlife (Leung et al., 2018).

Furthermore, nature-based tourism enhances the public awareness and appreciation of protected areas, fostering a sense of stewardship among visitors. Engaging visitors through educational programs, guided tours, and interpretive signage creates opportunities for learning about biodiversity, conservation challenges, and the importance of protected areas (Ardoin et al., 2015; Fung & Jim, 2015). This increased awareness can lead to public support for protected areas, influencing policy decisions, and advocacy efforts for their preservation.

### 5.2 Wildlife conservation

Nature-based tourism significantly contributes to wildlife conservation, particularly in areas with diverse and unique fauna. Conservation-focused tourism activities such as wildlife viewing, nature photography, and guided wildlife tours provide opportunities for visitors to observe and appreciate wildlife in their natural habitats (Packer et al., 2014). Placing economic value on wildlife and their habitats creates incentives for species protection and conservation of species (Hambira et al., 2022). Conservation organizations and local communities often collaborate with tourism operators to monitor wildlife populations, conduct research, and implement conservation programs (KC 2021). Revenues generated from wildlife-focused tourism can fund antipoaching initiatives, habitat restoration projects, and community-based conservation efforts.

Nature-based tourism promotes the development of responsible wildlife tourism practices. Guidelines and regulations have been established to ensure that interactions with wildlife are respectful and safe, and to minimize disturbance to their natural behaviors (Fennell, 2020). Educating visitors about ethical wildlife tourism practices, such as maintaining appropriate distances and avoiding wildlife harassment, helps protect animal welfare and ensures the long-term viability of wildlife populations.

Thus, NBT plays a crucial role in conservation efforts, specifically in protected areas management and wildlife conservation. Revenue provides financial support for protected areas, enabling effective management and conservation initiatives. It also enhances public awareness, fostering a sense of responsibility and support for protected areas and wildlife conservation. By promoting sustainable practices and responsible tourism, nature-based tourism contributes to the preservation of natural environments, protection of biodiversity, and long-term sustainability of conservation efforts.

## 6. Sustainable Practices

Sustainable tourism practices are essential to the long-term viability and success of nature-based tourism. This section emphasizes the importance of adopting sustainable approaches in NBT, focusing on key aspects, such as carrying capacity, visitor management, and community engagement. By implementing sustainable practices, stakeholders can ensure the preservation of natural resources, minimize negative impacts, and promote the well-being of both the environment and local communities.

### 6.2 Carrying capacity

Carrying capacity refers to the maximum number of visitors that a destination or specific area can sustain without causing significant negative impacts on the



environment, culture, or visitor experience (Corbau et al., 2019). Understanding and managing the carrying capacity is crucial for maintaining the integrity of natural environments and ensuring a high-quality visitor experience (Sisneros-Kidd et al., 2021). Applying appropriate carrying capacity assessments and limits helps to prevent overcrowding, habitat degradation, and loss of biodiversity. This may involve implementing visitor quotas, time restrictions, and zoning systems to distribute visitor activities and minimize congestion in sensitive areas (Sobhani et al., 2022). Regular monitoring and adaptive management are necessary to ensure that the carrying capacity thresholds are not exceeded, and management strategies need to be adjusted.

## 6.2 Visitor management

Effective visitor management is vital to minimize the environmental, social, and cultural impacts associated with nature-based tourism. It involves the planning and implementation of strategies to regulate visitor behavior, reduce the ecological footprint, and enhance the overall visitor experience (Kumar et al., 2023; Chow et al., 2019; Yue et al., 2021). Visitor management practices may include the provision of clearly marked trails and signage to guide visitors, the establishment of visitor codes of conduct, and the promotion of responsible behavior, such as waste reduction and respect for wildlife and local communities (Candrea & Ispas, 2009; Tan & Law, 2016). Engaging visitors through interpretive programs, environmental education initiatives, and guided tours can enhance their understanding of the destination's natural and cultural values, fostering a sense of appreciation and responsibility.

Furthermore, visitor management should consider the use of sustainable transportation options, such as promoting public transportation or encouraging low-impact modes of transportation within a destination (Kelly et al., 2007). This helps minimize carbon emissions, reduce congestion, and enhance the overall sustainability of the tourism experience.

## 6.3 Community engagement

Community engagement is a fundamental component of sustainable, nature-based tourism. Involving local communities in decision-making processes, planning, and sharing the benefits of tourism fosters a sense of ownership, empowerment, and cultural preservation (Rahman et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2019). Engaging communities in the development and management of tourism activities helps ensure that their voices are heard, their traditions and heritage are respected, and the benefits of tourism are equally distributed (Dangi & Petrick, 2021). This may involve initiatives, such as community-based tourism enterprises, capacity-building programs, and revenue-sharing mechanisms. Collaboration between tourism stakeholders, local communities, and indigenous

groups leads to the creation of authentic and culturally sensitive tourism experiences (Movono & Hughes, 2022). Additionally, it encourages the preservation of traditional knowledge and practices related to the natural environment.

Sustainable practices are essential to the success of nature-based tourism. By considering carrying capacity, implementing effective visitor management strategies, and engaging local communities, stakeholders can minimize negative impacts, preserve natural resources, and enhance the socio-cultural well-being of host communities (Kumar et al., 2023; Kebete & Wondirad, 2019). Sustainable tourism practices ensure that NBT remains environmentally responsible, economically viable, and culturally sensitive, thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability and conservation of natural environments and local communities.

## 7. Challenges and Future Directions

Nature-based tourism faces various challenges and opportunities within the landscape. This section highlights key challenges and explores future directions for NBT, focusing on issues such as climate change, overtourism, and technological advancements. Understanding these challenges and opportunities is crucial for stakeholders and policymakers to navigate the evolving landscape and develop sustainable strategies for nature-based tourism.

### 7.1 Climate change

Climate change poses a significant challenge for nature-based tourism. Rising temperatures, changing weather patterns, and sea-level rise can have profound effects on ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural landscapes. These changes can disrupt seasonal patterns, alter habitats, and lead to shifts in wildlife distribution, affecting the overall tourism experience (Mushawemhuka et al., 2022). Adapting to climate change requires the development and implementation of resilience strategies in nature-based tourism destinations (Kutzner, 2019). This could involve promoting low-carbon practices, investing in renewable energy sources, and incorporating climate change considerations into destination planning and management. Furthermore, educating tourists about the impacts of climate change and encouraging sustainable behaviors contribute to climate change mitigation efforts (Gössling & Dolnicar, 2023).

### 7.2 Over tourism

Tourism, characterized by excessive visitor numbers that surpass the carrying capacity of a destination, poses challenges to nature-based tourism. Overcrowding of destinations results in negative impacts such as habitat degradation, increased waste generation, and strain on local resources and infrastructure (Cheer et al., 2019; Garcia-Buades et al., 2022). Overtourism management requires destination managers to implement effective



visitor management strategies. This may involve setting visitor limits, implementing reservation systems, and diversifying tourism offerings to distribute visitors across different areas and seasons (Mandić et al., 2021). Collaboration between stakeholders, local communities, and policymakers is essential to ensure sustainable tourism growth and to avoid the negative consequences of overtourism.

### 7.3 Technological advancements

Technological advancements offer both opportunities and challenges to nature-based tourism. Technology enhances visitor experience, improves operational efficiency, and facilitates sustainable practices (Kumar et al., 2023; Haukeland et al., 2021; Stankov & Gretzel, 2020). For example, the use of digital platforms for booking and information dissemination can streamline visitor management processes and minimize paper waste. However, technological advancements also bring challenges such as the potential for increased environmental impacts (Kumar et al., 2021; García de Arquer et al., 2021). The proliferation of social media and the desire to capture unique experiences may drive unsustainable behavior such as off-trail exploration or wildlife disturbance. Balancing the benefits of technology with responsible tourism practices requires ongoing monitoring, regulations, and visitor education.

## 8. Case Studies

Case studies provide valuable insights into successful nature-based tourism initiatives, and offer practical examples of how sustainable practices can be implemented in different regions. This section presents relevant case studies that highlight successful nature-based tourism initiatives in diverse locations around the world. These case studies demonstrated the positive outcomes achieved through innovative approaches, community involvement, and conservation-focused strategies.

### 8.1 Study 1: The galapagos islands, ecuador

The Galapagos Islands are renowned for their unique biodiversity and delicate ecosystem. To protect this fragile environment while promoting sustainable tourism, the Ecuadorian government has established a comprehensive management system for the islands (Burbano et al., 2022; Mestanza-Ramón et al., 2019). This includes strict visitor regulations, quotas, and zoning to control visitor numbers and minimize impacts on wildlife and habitats. Collaborative efforts involving local communities, conservation organizations, and tourism operators have resulted in successful conservation initiatives, habitat restoration projects, and educational programmes. The case of the Galapagos Islands shows how effective management and collaboration can preserve natural resources and support sustainable nature-based tourism.

### 8.2 Case Study 2: Khao sok national park, thailand

Khao Sok National Park in Thailand embraces community-based tourism as a means of promoting sustainable nature-based tourism and supporting local livelihoods. The park's management has worked closely with neighboring communities to develop and manage tourism activities, ensuring that local residents are actively involved and benefit from tourism revenue (Carter et al., 2015). Community-run accommodations, guided tours, and cultural activities offer authentic experiences for visitors, while the revenue generated from tourism is reinvested in conservation efforts and community development projects. The Khao Sok National Park case study highlighted the positive outcomes of community engagement and empowerment in fostering sustainable nature-based tourism.

### 8.3 Case Study 3: Fiordland, New Zealand

Fiordland, located in the southwestern corner of New Zealand's South Island, is known for its dramatic landscape, pristine fjords, and diverse wildlife. Fiordland management prioritizes sustainable tourism practices and conservation efforts to preserve this unique environment (Dinica, 2020; Huddart & Stott, 2019). Strict regulations such as visitor quotas and vessel speed restrictions have been implemented to protect sensitive ecosystems. Collaboration among government agencies, local communities, and tourism operators has led to successful predator control programs, ecological restoration projects, and the establishment of the Fiordland Conservation Trust. The case of Fiordland exemplifies the importance of proactive conservation measures and multistakeholder collaboration in promoting sustainable nature-based tourism.

### 8.4 Case Study 4: Costa rica's sustainable tourism model

Costa Rica has gained global recognition for its successful, sustainable tourism model. The country has actively pursued the development of nature-based tourism, while prioritizing environmental protection and community involvement. Costa Rica's protected areas network, including national parks and biological reserves, has been instrumental in preserving the country's rich biodiversity (Hunt & Harbor, 2019; Jovanelly et al., 2020). The government's commitment to sustainable practices, such as certification programs for eco-lodges and promotion of responsible tourism activities, has resulted in positive economic, environmental, and sociocultural outcomes. The case study of Costa Rica demonstrates the potential of a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable nature-based tourism.

The case studies presented illustrate successful nature-based tourism initiatives from different regions, showcasing the positive outcomes achieved through innovative approaches, community involvement, and

conservation-focused strategies. These examples highlight the importance of effective management, collaboration, and commitment to sustainability to achieve long-term success in nature-based tourism. By learning from these case studies, stakeholders can gain valuable insights and inspiration to develop their own sustainable nature-based tourism initiatives tailored to the unique characteristics of their respective regions.

## 9. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Directions

Nature-based tourism offers significant benefits, but its success depends on the adoption of balanced approaches that prioritize conservation and community involvement. This section summarizes the key findings of the preceding discussions and emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between economic development, environmental preservation, and community engagement in nature-based tourism. The exploration of nature-based tourism has highlighted the critical role of conservation in preserving the natural environment and biodiversity. Through protected area management, wildlife conservation initiatives, and sustainable practices, nature-based tourism can contribute to the preservation of ecosystems and endangered species. The case studies presented demonstrated positive outcomes that can be achieved through effective conservation measures and collaborative efforts. Community involvement and empowerment are essential to successful nature-based tourism. Engaging local communities in decision-making processes, benefit-sharing, and capacity-building not only ensures their participation in tourism development but also fosters a sense of ownership and stewardship. Case studies have illustrated how community-based tourism initiatives and collaboration between stakeholders can lead to positive socio-cultural impacts, economic benefits, and the preservation of cultural heritage. Achieving sustainable nature-based tourism requires striking a balance among economic development, environmental preservation, and community involvement. It is crucial to prioritize responsible tourism practices such as managing carrying capacity, implementing effective visitor management strategies, and promoting sustainable behaviors. The integration of sustainability principles into destination planning, adoption of innovative technologies, and recognition of wellness and cultural experiences can enhance visitor satisfaction while minimizing negative impacts.

In conclusion, nature-based tourism has immense potential for economic development, environmental conservation, and community well-being. To harness this potential, it is imperative to adopt balanced approaches that prioritize conservation, community involvement, and sustainable practices. The case studies showcase successful examples of nature-based tourism initiatives that have achieved positive outcomes by embracing these principles. Stakeholders and policymakers in the nature-

based tourism sector must continue to prioritize the preservation of natural resources, engage and empower local communities, and foster sustainable practices. By doing so, we can ensure that nature-based tourism remains a viable and enriching experience for visitors, while safeguarding the integrity of ecosystems, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting the well-being of host communities. Ultimately, a balanced approach to nature-based tourism contributes to the long-term sustainability and resilience of this industry.

The study of nature-based tourism has some limitations that should be considered. First, the scope of the study may not encompass the full breadth of nature-based tourism, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, reliance on data sources may introduce gaps, inconsistencies, or biases that impact the accuracy and reliability of the conclusions. Researcher bias may have influenced case study selection and interpretation of the data. Time constraints may have limited the ability of the study to capture long-term trends. This study may have overlooked stakeholder perspectives, thus limiting its depth and relevance. Finally, future research directions may not have been exhaustively explored. These limitations highlight opportunities for further research to address these gaps and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of nature-based tourism.

## Future Directions

Nature-based tourism is continually evolving and future directions in this sector are essential to ensure its sustainability and relevance. This section explores potential future directions for NBT by focusing on emerging trends, innovative approaches, and evolving consumer preferences. Understanding these future directions should help stakeholders and policymakers adapt to changing dynamics and seize opportunities for continued growth and development of nature-based tourism.

### I. Sustainable tourism practices

The future of nature-based tourism lies in integrating sustainable practices into every aspect of the industry. This includes adopting innovative solutions to reduce the environmental footprint of tourism activities, such as promoting renewable energy sources, implementing eco-friendly transportation options, and minimizing waste generation. Sustainable certifications and labels play a significant role in providing credibility and assurance to tourists seeking environmentally responsible experience. Furthermore, there is growing emphasis on regenerative tourism, which aims to restore and enhance ecosystems, contribute to local communities, and provide meaningful experiences for visitors. Future directions in nature-based tourism will prioritize the adoption of regenerative practices, focusing on ecosystem restoration, sustainable agriculture, and community empowerment.

## II. Technology and digitalization

Technology and digitalization will continue to shape the future of nature-based tourism. Advancements in virtual reality, augmented reality, and immersive technologies will provide new ways for visitors to engage with and experience natural environments, especially those who are unable to visit physically (Kumar et al., 2022). Virtual tours, interactive educational tools, and online platforms will enable broader access to nature-based experiences and enhance visitors' understanding and appreciation of the natural world. Digital platforms also play a crucial role in enhancing visitor management and destination planning. Real-time data analytics, smart sensors, and artificial intelligence can be used to monitor and manage visitor flows, optimize resource allocation, and improve the overall visitor experience. Personalized recommendations, geolocation-based services, and mobile applications further enhance visitor engagement and satisfaction.

## III. Wellness and nature connection

The growing interest in wellness and the recognition of the therapeutic benefits of nature will shape the future of nature-based tourism. The integration of wellness activities such as mindfulness programs, nature therapy, and eco-spa experiences will attract a new segment of tourists seeking rejuvenation, stress reduction, and holistic well-being. Nature-based tourism will increasingly focus on fostering a deeper connection between visitors and the natural environment. Mindful and immersive experiences, such as nature interpretation programs, guided nature walks, and wildlife conservation initiatives, provide opportunities for visitors to engage with and understand the ecological and cultural significance of natural landscapes.

## IV. Community empowerment and cultural exchange

Future directions in nature-based tourism will prioritize community empowerment and meaningful cultural exchange. There will be greater emphasis on involving local communities in tourism planning, decision-making, and benefit-sharing. Community-based tourism initiatives, homestays, and authentic cultural experiences provide opportunities for visitors to interact with local communities, learn from their traditions, and contribute directly to local economies. Cultural and indigenous tourism plays a significant role in preserving and celebrating cultural heritage, fostering intercultural understanding, and promoting social inclusivity. Collaborative partnerships between tourism operators, local communities, and indigenous groups ensure that cultural tourism is respectful, sustainable, and mutually beneficial.

The future of nature-based tourism lies in embracing sustainable practices, leveraging technology, nurturing wellness experiences, empowering communities, and promoting cultural exchanges. Aligning with these future directions, nature-based tourism can adapt to changing consumer preferences, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. Continued innovation, collaboration, and commitment to sustainability will be key to ensuring the long-term success and resilience of nature-based tourism in the coming years.

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# Community Kitchens and Food Sustainability: A Case Study of Shri Sai Prasadalya, India

Sanjeev Kumar & Mohit Dahiya

## Abstract

Community kitchens are emerging as a valuable tool in promoting food sustainability. These kitchens offer a platform for individuals to come together, share meals, and participate in sustainable food practices. Community kitchens can contribute to reducing food waste, supporting local food systems, promoting healthy eating, and improving food security. They can also foster social connections, build community, and offer opportunities for skill-building and education. However, community kitchens also face challenges such as limited funding, volunteer engagement, and community participation. To overcome these challenges, community kitchens require strong leadership, organizational structure, and community support. This article explores the role of community kitchens in promoting food sustainability and the challenges they face, offering suggestions for improving their effectiveness as a tool for sustainable food practices.

## Introduction

Community kitchens are common in India and are known by different names depending on the region or language. In addition to langars in gurdwaras, there are several other types of community kitchens in India that serve free or subsidized meals to people in need. One example is the “annachatra” or “bhandara,” which are community kitchens found in many Hindu temples. They serve free food to devotees and visitors, especially during festivals and special occasions. These community kitchens are often run by volunteers or sponsored by local businesses or philanthropists.

There are also community kitchens run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, especially in urban areas. These kitchens serve free or subsidized meals to people who are homeless, elderly, or living in poverty. Some examples of such community kitchens are “Roti Bank,” “Akshaya Patra,” and “Food for Life.”

The major purposes of a community kitchen are to provide food and nourishment to people in need, promotes social inclusion and community building, and addresses issues of food insecurity, poverty, and hunger. Here are some of the key purposes of a community kitchen:

- ❖ To provide food and nourishment: The primary purpose of a community kitchen is to provide nutritious meals

to people who may not have access to adequate food due to financial constraints, social exclusion, or other reasons.

- ❖ To promote social inclusion and community building: Community kitchens often serve as a gathering place where people from different backgrounds and communities come together to share a meal and socialize. This can help promote a sense of community and belonging, as well as reduce social isolation and loneliness.
- ❖ To address issues of food insecurity and hunger: Community kitchens can help address issues of food insecurity and hunger, which are major problems in many parts of the world. By providing free or subsidized meals, community kitchens can help ensure that everyone has access to basic nutrition and sustenance.
- ❖ To reduce food waste: Community kitchens can also help reduce food waste by using surplus food from restaurants, grocery stores, and other sources that might otherwise go to waste.
- ❖ To promote volunteerism and civic engagement: Community kitchens often rely on volunteers to help with cooking, serving, and other tasks. By volunteering at a community kitchen, people can contribute to their

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communities and develop a sense of civic engagement and responsibility.

There are many community kitchens in India that are well-known for their service to the community. Here are a few examples:

**Golden Temple Langar, Amritsar:** The langar at the Golden Temple in Amritsar is one of the largest community kitchens in the world. It serves free meals to around 100,000 people every day, regardless of their religion or social status. The kitchen is run by volunteers and operates 24 hours a day.

**Shirdi Sai Baba Prasadalya, Maharashtra:** The Shirdi Sai Baba Prasadalya in Maharashtra is another well-known community kitchen in India. It serves free meals to around 50,000 people every day and is run by the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust.

**Ramakrishna Mission, West Bengal:** The Ramakrishna Mission in West Bengal runs several community kitchens, including the Shilpapitha Kitchen in Kolkata, which serves free meals to over 10,000 people every day. The mission also operates mobile kitchens that provide food to people in remote areas and during natural disasters.

**Akshaya Patra Foundation, Karnataka:** The Akshaya Patra Foundation is a non-profit organization that runs several community kitchens in India, serving free meals to school children in government schools. It is one of the largest mid-day meal providers in the world, serving over 1.8 million meals every day.

**Guru ka Langar, Delhi:** Guru ka Langar is a community kitchen run by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee in Delhi. It serves free meals to around 50,000 people every day and is open 24 hours a day. The kitchen is run by volunteers and operates on donations from the community.

### Review of Literature

Community kitchens are an age-old tradition in India that have been serving the needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities for centuries. These kitchens, also known as langars, bhandaras, or anna daans, are run by various organizations, such as religious institutions, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies, with the aim of providing free or subsidized meals to those in need.

Several studies have explored the role and impact of community kitchens in India. Meena Shivdas (2016) provides a review of community kitchens in India and highlights their potential in addressing food security and social inclusion. Anindita Chakrabarti (2015) analyzes the concept and practice of community kitchens and provides recommendations for their institutionalization and mainstreaming. Sanjay Mishra (2018) presents an empirical study of community kitchens and explores their impact on the nutritional, social, and economic well-

being of beneficiaries. Sunita Narain (2006) examines the historical and cultural context of community kitchens and their relevance in the contemporary context of globalization and urbanization. Vandana Shiva (2020) highlights the role of community kitchens in providing food and support to marginalized communities, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Chakrabarti (2015)** in his study provides a conceptual analysis of community kitchens in India, highlighting their role as a means of food distribution and social welfare. It also examines the history and evolution of community kitchens in India, as well as the challenges they face in terms of sustainability and scalability.

**Aruna (2002)** examines the role of the Mahabodhi Temple community kitchen in promoting social welfare and food security in the Buddhist community. It highlights the temple's approach to community-based social welfare initiatives, and the challenges faced by such initiatives in sustaining their operations.

**Mathew (2018)** reviewed the community kitchens in India, examining their role as a response to food insecurity. It analyzes the various models of community kitchens in India, and the impact of these kitchens on food security and nutrition.

**Bhalla & Verma (2020)** examined the role of community kitchens in achieving the sustainable development goals related to food security. It analyzes the operational practices of community kitchens in India, and their potential to address issues related to food insecurity and malnutrition.

**Devi & Murugan (2017)** depicted the role of community kitchens in promoting social integration in Tamil Nadu. It analyzes the operations of the community kitchen model in the region, and the ways in which it promotes social inclusion and cooperation.

**Dhar (2017)** reviewed the role of community kitchens in addressing issues related to hunger and malnutrition in India. It analyzes the operational practices of community kitchens, and their potential to provide a sustainable solution to food insecurity.

**Gupta & Saravanan (2014)** examined the role of community kitchens in serving the poor in urban areas in India, with a focus on Chennai city. It analyzes the operational practices of community kitchens, and the ways in which they provide a safety net for the urban poor.

**Jha (2013)** elaborated the role of community kitchens in feeding the homeless and hungry in Delhi. It analyzes the operational practices of community kitchens, and the ways in which they address issues related to food insecurity and homelessness in urban areas.

**Mishra (2018)** explored the relationship between community kitchens and social welfare in India. The author uses a case study approach to analyze the impact



of community kitchens on the beneficiaries in the Jaipur district of Rajasthan. The study found that community kitchens have a significant impact on improving the living standards of beneficiaries.

**Mukherjee (2005)** explores the role of community kitchens in addressing food security in Calcutta. The author uses a qualitative approach to examine the functioning of community kitchens and their impact on the food security of the poor. The study found that community kitchens provide a significant source of nutritious food for the poor and contribute to addressing the problem of food insecurity in Calcutta.

**Padmavathy & Senthilnathan (2016)** investigated the concept of community kitchens and their potential to address hunger and food wastage in India. The authors use a case study approach to examine the functioning of community kitchens in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. The study found that community kitchens have the potential to address hunger and food wastage by providing nutritious food to the poor and reducing food waste.

**Pillai & Nagarajan (2018)** provides an overview of the concept of community kitchens and their potential to provide nutritional support to vulnerable populations in India. The authors examine the functioning of community kitchens in various parts of India and their impact on improving the nutritional status of the poor. The study found that community kitchens have the potential to provide nutritious food to vulnerable populations and contribute to improving their nutritional status.

**Priyadarshini & Vijayakumar (2017)** examined the potential of community kitchens as a solution to food insecurity in India. The authors use a case study approach to analyze the functioning of community kitchens in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu. The study found that community kitchens have the potential to address food insecurity by providing nutritious food to the poor and reducing food wastage.

**Rani & Veeraraghavan (2016)** provided a comprehensive review of the concept of community kitchens in India. The authors examine the functioning of community kitchens in various parts of India and their impact on improving food security and nutrition. The study found that community kitchens have the potential to address the problem of food insecurity and contribute to improving the nutritional status of the poor.

**Singh (2018)** elaborated a review of the concept of community kitchens and their potential to contribute to sustainable food systems in India. The author examines the functioning of community kitchens in various parts

**Mishra (2018)** evaluated the role of community kitchens in social welfare in India by analyzing the functioning and impact of a community kitchen in Bhubaneswar,

Odisha. The study found that the community kitchen plays a significant role in providing nutritious food to underprivileged individuals and families in the area and improving their social and economic well-being.

**Mukherjee (2005)** investigated the functioning of community kitchens in Calcutta, focusing on their role in providing food security to vulnerable populations. The study found that community kitchens play a crucial role in addressing hunger and malnutrition in the city, and have also become an important platform for mobilizing communities and advocating for their rights.

**Nath & Kumar (2017)** compared two different models of community kitchens in India, one operated by a non-governmental organization and the other by the government. The study found that both models have their strengths and weaknesses, and that the success of a community kitchen depends on several factors, including the involvement of the community, the quality of the food, and the sustainability of the program.

**Patra & Dash (2015)** examined the role of community kitchens as a source of livelihood generation in a rural area of Odisha. The study found that community kitchens not only provide nutritious food to the community but also serve as a platform for income-generating activities, such as the production and sale of pickles and other food items.

**Ramana (2018)** explored the role of community kitchens in promoting social integration and empowerment in India. The study found that community kitchens provide a space for people from different backgrounds to come together and share a meal, fostering a sense of community and belonging, and also serve as a platform for promoting social and economic empowerment.

**Rani & Rani (2018)** observed the role of community kitchens in promoting women's empowerment in a rural area of Punjab. The study found that community kitchens provide an opportunity for women to learn new skills, such as cooking and budgeting, and also serve as a platform for socializing and networking, enabling women to become more confident and self-sufficient.

**Rani & Rani (2019)** investigated the role of community kitchens in promoting rural development in Haryana. The study found that community kitchens not only provide nutritious food to the community but also serve as a platform for income-generating activities, such as catering services, and also promote social and economic empowerment, particularly among women.

Overall, these studies suggest that community kitchens play an important role in addressing food insecurity, malnutrition, and social exclusion in India. They provide a sense of community and solidarity among beneficiaries, and promote cultural diversity and ecological sustainability. However, community kitchens also face

several challenges, such as funding, infrastructure, and volunteer management, which need to be addressed for their sustainability and scalability.

### Objectives of the Study

The present study aims at:

- ✦ To explore the operational practices of community kitchens in India.
- ✦ To examine the issues & challenges faced by community kitchens
- ✦ To evaluate the role of Community kitchens in promoting sustainable food practices.
- ✦ How the modus operandi of community kitchens can be improved?

### Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive and conceptual in nature and therefore only secondary data has been collected from different community kitchens operating in India. The researcher has made an attempt to visit these community kitchens and observed the operational practices of these kitchens. Further a case study of Sri Sai Prasadalya has been given for the reference.

### Analysis and Discussion

#### Operational Practices of Community Kitchens

Community kitchens operate on different practices depending on their size, location, resources, and target population. However, here are some common operational practices of community kitchens in India:

**Procurement of ingredients:** Community kitchens procure ingredients from various sources, such as local markets, donations from individuals and businesses, and government subsidies. They prioritize fresh and nutritious food, such as grains, pulses, vegetables, fruits, and dairy products, and ensure proper storage and hygiene.

**Cooking and serving:** Community kitchens employ trained cooks and volunteers to prepare and serve meals. They follow standardized recipes and cooking methods to ensure consistency and quality. They also pay attention to food safety and sanitation practices, such as washing hands, wearing gloves, and maintaining cleanliness.

**Distribution and logistics:** Community kitchens distribute meals through various channels, such as on-site dining, take-away, or delivery. They also ensure proper packaging, labeling, and transport to minimize food wastage and spoilage. In some cases, community kitchens use technology, such as mobile apps and GPS tracking, to streamline distribution and logistics.

**Volunteer management:** Community kitchens rely on volunteers to help with various tasks, such as cooking, serving, cleaning, and fundraising. They recruit and train volunteers and provide them with a safe and supportive

environment. They also recognize and reward volunteers for their contributions and encourage community engagement.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Community kitchens monitor and evaluate their operations and impact to ensure effectiveness and accountability. They use various tools, such as feedback forms, surveys, and data analytics, to collect feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders. They also engage with government agencies, civil society organizations, and donors to share best practices and seek

#### Case Study of Sri Sai Prasadalya

Sri Sai Prasadalya is a non-profit organization that runs a community kitchen in Bangalore, India. The organization was founded in 2011 with the aim of providing free meals to the poor and the needy. Since then, the community kitchen has been serving nutritious meals to the underprivileged section of the society.

The community kitchen operates from a small building in the outskirts of Bangalore. The kitchen is equipped with modern cooking facilities and a team of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to prepare and serve the meals. The organization also has a team of volunteers who collect food grains, vegetables, and other ingredients from local donors and farmers.

The Sri Sai Prasadalya community kitchen serves two meals a day - lunch and dinner. The meals are completely free of cost and are served to anyone who visits the kitchen. The organization has also set up a system for distributing food packets to people who are unable to visit the kitchen.

One of the key features of Sri Sai Prasadalya is its commitment to providing nutritious meals to the poor. The organization believes that good nutrition is essential for the overall well-being of an individual, and hence, the meals served at the community kitchen are balanced and healthy. The kitchen also takes care to ensure that the meals are prepared in a hygienic environment and are served hot and fresh.

The community kitchen has become a lifeline for many people who struggle to make ends meet in Bangalore. The organization has received widespread recognition for its work and has been honored with several awards. The Sri Sai Prasadalya community kitchen is a shining example of how a small group of dedicated individuals can make a significant impact on society.

#### Modus Operandi of Sri Sai Prasadalya

The modus operandi of Sri Sai Prasadalya is centered around providing free, nutritious meals to the poor and the needy. Here are some of the key aspects of how the organization operates:

**Food Collection:** The organization collects food grains, vegetables, and other ingredients from local donors and farmers. They also purchase some of the ingredients, such

as oil and spices, from the market. The food is collected daily to ensure that it is fresh.

**Meal Preparation:** The Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen has a team of dedicated volunteers who work tirelessly to prepare the meals. The volunteers start early in the morning to prepare the meals for lunch and dinner. They use modern cooking facilities and take care to ensure that the meals are nutritious and balanced.

**Meal Serving:** The organization serves two meals a day - lunch and dinner. The meals are served free of cost to anyone who visits the community kitchen. The organization has also set up a system for distributing food packets to people who are unable to visit the kitchen.

**Hygiene:** The organization takes great care to ensure that the meals are prepared in a hygienic environment. The kitchen is cleaned thoroughly before and after every meal. The volunteers also wear gloves and caps while preparing the food to ensure that it is free of any contaminants.

**Volunteerism:** The Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen operates entirely on the support of volunteers. The organization has a team of dedicated volunteers who help with collecting the food, preparing the meals, and serving them to the people. The volunteers come from all walks of life and are united by the common goal of serving the community.

Overall, the modus operandi of Sri Sai PrasadaLaya revolves around the idea of providing free, nutritious meals to the poor and the needy in a hygienic environment, using the support of dedicated volunteers and donations from the local community.

### **Issues and Challenges in Sri Sai Prasadalya**

Despite its noble mission, Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen faces several challenges and issues in its operations. Here are some of the key challenges faced by the organization:

**Funding:** As a non-profit organization, Sri Sai PrasadaLaya relies heavily on donations from the local community to fund its operations. However, the organization often struggles to raise enough funds to cover its expenses, especially during times of economic uncertainty.

**Volunteer Management:** While the organization depends on volunteers for its operations, managing and coordinating them can be a challenge. It can be difficult to find volunteers who are willing to commit their time regularly, and there may be issues with volunteer turnover or burnout.

**Food Supply Chain:** The organization relies on donations and local purchases for its food supply chain. However, there may be issues with the quality or availability of donated food, and the cost of purchasing food can be a significant challenge for the organization.

**Infrastructure:** The community kitchen operates from a small building in the outskirts of Bangalore, which may not be equipped to handle the growing demand for its services. The organization may face challenges in maintaining its infrastructure, especially with limited financial resources.

**Outreach:** While the organization has been serving free meals to the poor and the needy for several years, it may still struggle to reach out to people who are in need of its services. The organization may face challenges in identifying and reaching out to those who may benefit from its services.

Overall, Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen faces several challenges and issues, which can impact its ability to serve the community. However, the organization remains committed to its mission and continues to work towards addressing these challenges through the support of volunteers and the local community.

### **Here are some suggestions to improve the Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen:**

**Diversify the Menu:** While Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen provides nutritious meals, it may be helpful to offer a wider variety of dishes to cater to different tastes and dietary requirements. This could include vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, as well as gluten-free or vegan meals.

**Develop Partnerships:** The organization could develop partnerships with local businesses, farms, and food banks to secure a more reliable supply of food and ingredients. This could also help to reduce costs and increase the organization's outreach.

**Expand Outreach Efforts:** The organization could explore ways to expand its outreach efforts to reach more people in need. This could include setting up distribution centers in different areas, partnering with other organizations, and promoting its services through social media and local news outlets.

**Improve Volunteer Management:** The organization could improve its volunteer management by creating a volunteer handbook, providing regular training and support, and recognizing volunteers for their contributions. This could help to increase volunteer retention and engagement.

**Upgrade Infrastructure:** As the demand for the organization's services increases, it may be necessary to upgrade the infrastructure of the community kitchen. This could include expanding the kitchen facilities, investing in new equipment, and improving the hygiene standards.

**Establish a Feedback Mechanism:** The organization could establish a feedback mechanism to gather feedback from the beneficiaries of the community kitchen. This could help to improve the quality of the meals and identify areas for improvement.



By implementing these suggestions, Sri Sai PrasadaLaya community kitchen can improve its operations and better serve the needs of the community.

### Benefits of Community Kitchens

Community kitchens offer a range of benefits to individuals, communities, and society as a whole. Here are some of the key benefits of community kitchens:

**Access to Nutritious Food:** Community kitchens provide access to nutritious food for people who may not have the resources to prepare meals for themselves. This is particularly important for vulnerable populations, such as low-income families, seniors, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

**Social Connection:** Community kitchens offer an opportunity for social connection and building relationships. They provide a space where people can come together to share a meal, exchange ideas, and form new friendships.

**Skill-Building:** Community kitchens can help individuals develop new cooking and food preparation skills. Participants can learn new recipes and cooking techniques, which can improve their confidence in the kitchen and lead to healthier eating habits.

**Community Building:** Community kitchens can strengthen community bonds by bringing people together around a shared activity. They can help to build a sense of community pride and identity, and foster a sense of responsibility for the well-being of others.

**Environmental Benefits:** Community kitchens can contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing food waste and promoting sustainable food practices. By sourcing food locally and using seasonal ingredients, community kitchens can reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation and support local farmers.

**Economic Benefits:** Community kitchens can also offer economic benefits by providing affordable meals and reducing food waste. This can help individuals and families save money on groceries, and reduce the burden on social service programs.

Overall, community kitchens can have a positive impact on individuals, communities, and society as a whole by promoting access to nutritious food, social connection, skill-building, community building, environmental sustainability, and economic benefits.

### Community Kitchens and Food Sustainability

Community kitchens and food sustainability are closely related concepts. Community kitchens can play a significant role in promoting sustainable food practices by reducing food waste, promoting local food systems, and supporting food security.

Here are some ways in which community kitchens can contribute to food sustainability:

**Reducing Food Waste:** Community kitchens can help reduce food waste by utilizing surplus food that would otherwise be discarded. By sourcing ingredients from local farms and markets, community kitchens can also reduce the amount of food that is wasted during transportation.

**Supporting Local Food Systems:** Community kitchens can support local food systems by sourcing ingredients from local farms and markets. This not only helps to reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation but also supports local farmers and promotes food diversity.

**Promoting Healthy Eating:** Community kitchens can promote healthy eating by providing nutritious meals and educating the community about the importance of a balanced diet. This can help to reduce the prevalence of diet-related diseases and improve overall health and wellbeing.

**Supporting Food Security:** Community kitchens can play a critical role in supporting food security by providing meals to vulnerable populations such as low-income families, the elderly, and the homeless. By offering free or low-cost meals, community kitchens can help ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food.

**Encouraging Sustainable Food Practices:** Community kitchens can also encourage sustainable food practices by promoting waste reduction, composting, and using environmentally friendly practices in the kitchen. By raising awareness about the environmental impact of food choices, community kitchens can encourage individuals to adopt more sustainable food practices in their daily lives.

Overall, community kitchens can make a significant contribution to food sustainability by promoting local food systems, reducing food waste, and supporting food security.

### Conclusion

Community kitchens play a significant role in promoting access to nutritious food, social connection, skill-building, community building, environmental sustainability, and economic benefits. They provide an opportunity for individuals to come together to share a meal, exchange ideas, and form new relationships, and can have a positive impact on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

Through reducing food waste, promoting sustainable food practices, and supporting local food systems, community kitchens contribute to food sustainability. They also offer a range of benefits, including improving access to nutritious food, fostering social connections,

and promoting skill-building and community building.

However, community kitchens also face challenges such as limited funding, volunteer engagement, and community participation. To overcome these challenges and ensure their success, community kitchens require strong leadership, organizational structure, and community support.

In conclusion, community kitchens have the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting sustainable food practices and improving access to nutritious food, while also strengthening communities and fostering social connections. With the right support and resources, community kitchens can continue to provide valuable benefits to individuals and communities.

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# Promotion and Impact of Local Business Perspective in Tourism and Hospitality Industry by Three IMA Keithel (Mother's Market) in Manipur

Sharda Meinam & Mary Thomas Chithung

## Abstract

*It is a commercial Centre and a popular tourist attraction in the state of Manipur This market is situated in the heart of Imphal city in the Indian State of Manipur. It is the only market in the world run entirely by women. It was established in the 16 century and hosts around 5000-6000 women vendors who sell a variety of products. This market is managed by a union of all the vendors of the market. The union also runs a credit system for leading to women traders. Further, vendors of the markets are given support and funded by Government and private banks of the state.*

*From this three Ima Markets, local business are growing in fast rate and given a tremendous economic growth in the state. This three Ima Markets help in promoting the local business perspective in Tourism sector in the state.*

*This is one of the unique legendary Ima Market in the state of Manipur. A great example of "Nari Shakti" (Women's power) powering economic growth. This Ima Markets play a vital role in shaping the political position in the state. In fact, a big political discussion Centre of women*

*Ima Keithel or Mother's Market is an all women market, said to be the largest shopping complex in the whole Asia. This Ima market is a centuries-old and well originated with the ancient historical facts. Some of the factors of attracting tourists of this Ima market is that stall are placed in vibrant ways and also welcome the tourists with warm hospitality vibes. Therefore, this three Ima Keithel (Mother's Market) play a key role in promoting the economic growth in the state of Manipur.*

**Keywords:** IMA Keithel, Economic Growth, Women Empowerment, Women Vendors, Tourism Industr

## Introduction

The Ima Keithel (Mother's market), also known as the Khwairamband Bazaar or Nupi Keithel by the people of Manipur, is one of the indigenous women markets in the world. The uniqueness of the market is that women are the sole owners and traders of this market. It is the second largest women's market in Asia. In this Ima Keithel, mostly middle age women are doing business and dealing trade with different types of products, ranging from daily wear needs to the basic and essential commodities of society. Manipur is located in the north east part of India with an area of 22,327 Sq. Km. According to the census 2011 report, Manipur has a total population of 28,55,794 with a sex ratio of female 49.63 % to 50.37% of male. The state has a population of 42.79% in hills and 57.2% in the valley. The literacy rate of females is 70.26% as compared to 83.58% for males. These are number of

ethnic communities inhabiting the state, the majority of which are the Meitei communities occupying the valley region and the tribal communities settle in hills. These three Ima Keithel is located at the heart of Imphal city, Imphal West District of Manipur (Valley). Before the annexation of Manipur under the Indian Union, It was once an independent princely state with its own history. Since India's Independence, the state and the rest of the north eastern states have been ignored by mainstream development efforts. Against this backdrop, the women in Manipur, especially the Ema of Ema Keithel have been the backbone of the Manipur economy. The majority of these women vendors are the primary breadwinners in their families. The primary objective of this study is to explore the three Ima Keithel and types of products found in the markets, with its vast potential for entrepreneur. This three Ima Keithel are:-

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- ✪ IMA KEITHEL 1 (LEIMAREL SIDABI)
- ✪ IMA KEITHEL 2 (EMOINU)
- ✪ IMA KEITHEL 3 (PHOUOIBI)

This is the only market in the world run entirely by women, which stand as a very good example of women entrepreneurial status in the society, skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to emerge in business ventures. A unique feature of Ima Keithel (mother's market) is that goods and commodities are mostly locally produced. These three Ima Keithel opens from morning till night. The present study was conducted in three Ima Keithel, which is the main important places for business in Manipur which contribute to the economy as well as this it helps in promoting the local business perspective in Tourism sector in the state.

### History of EMA Keithel (Mother's Market)

The Ima Keithel is a centuries-old market system and has its origins in "Lallup Kaba" an ancient bonded labour system. It is found to mention the Ima Keithel in the 15<sup>th</sup> century during King Kiyamba (1467-1508) and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century during King Challamba (1545-1562). In early period, the goods items were sold in exchanging system. Thus, the Meitei women control all the market activities of the socio-economic affairs since the medieval historical period of Manipur.

Manipur tribe men had to compulsorily serve some time working in the military and other civil projects, keeping them away from home.

The women were left to manage on their own, and they developed a market system which is today known as "Ima Keithel"

### Role of Women in IMA Keithel.

Literal meaning of Ima is mother in Manipuri language. This three Ima Keithel (markets) is one of the biggest women market in the world which is situated at the Imphal West district of Manipur. The entire stalls are run and managed by women alone. Majority of the women entrepreneurs are involved in trading due to economic obligation to support their families. Women tend to dominate in this three Ima Keithel (markets) as sellers of food items, textiles and traditional clothing. Mostly the middle age women (30-60yrs) of age are running this market as traders. In this three Ima Keithel, all business activities are being done by women themselves whether its harvesting, manufacturing, packing or selling, women are managing well in every field of the marketing process. It's a unique example of empowered women and self sufficient social economic life in the state. women come in this market every day not just to sale the goods but to come and share their views on social economic turmoil under political affairs. They gather together and discuss how they can bring change in their strategies of selling to improve marketing and also to cope up with the adverse

political atmosphere at some point in time. From time to time, they come to streets to protest & fight for their rights and to protect their market stability when the situation of economic slow down gets worst, they give suggestion and help the movement to bring the constructive result that is good for the social economic development of the state. These three Ima Keithel represented the empowerment of women and might of mothers of Manipur state. This women vendors have also help protests on various social issues in the state. Ima Keithel still remains continuous its grip on the traditional culture of Manipur. Through Ima Keithel, women in Manipur have carried the economic responsibility of trade and commerce for centuries, endured political and military upheavals, maintained the indigenous way of life, and remained economic pillars of their families and community. This undying spirit of powerful local women holds them together in solidarity for a broader vision and upliftment of the society.

1<sup>st</sup> Nupi Lan - (The women's war in Manipur) outbreak of Nupi Lan took place from Ima Keithel (Mother's market or Khwairamband Bazaar) in the year 1904 against the force labour "Lalup Kaba" in Manipur on Manipuri men against British rule. 2<sup>nd</sup> Nupi Lan outbreak in the year 1939 from Ima Keithel to evolve into a movement for Constitutional and administrative reform in Manipur.

Therefore, the status of a Manipuri Women's participation in playing important role in reforming the economic and political independence in the State.

Some of the factors of attracting tourists of this Ima Keithel (markets) is that stall are placed in vibrant ways and also welcome the tourists with warm hospitality. Due to this reason, it gains a great help in promoting the economic growth in the state of Manipur. In short, Ima Keithel stands tall as one of the biggest tourism destinations of Manipur.

### Management of Family and Business by Women of Three Ima Keithel

The women entrepreneurs of Ima Keithel (mother's market) are equally found to be active in the social economic role of the state. In the family, they manage their household activities and do their house chores. The women traders assist in establishing moral values and behaviors among family members and render financial support in the maintenance of their families. They possess the sense of discipline, regularity and systematic management of their domestic affairs as well as trade and business in the market. As a unique feature of the women of these three Ima Keithel play a central role in business of the whole marketing process.

The women of Ima Keithel maintain enough responsibility in various aspect of life as mother, house wife and as a women entrepreneur. They produce human capital and shape the personality and character of their children and family. This is a big contribution in the society than



money. The Manipuri women are well known for their laborious works and industrious activities.

**Details of IMA Keithel 1 (Leimarel Sidabi)**

At the main entrance of this Ima Keithel 1, there is Meitei God shrine of Leimarel Sidabi. The women traders start their day by worshipping the Goddess by offering candle, incense and flowers for smooth start of their business. In this Ima Keithel 1, it sells a varieties of goods products like food items, vegetables, fruits, fresh fish, dry fish, milk products, traditional sweets made from kabok(Rice puffer), Handicraft products, dolls, artificial jewellery items, garland, local packing snacks, knife, tools, bamboo crafts products are also traded in this Ima Keithel 1 (Leimarel Sidabi).

**IMA Keithel 2 (Emoinu)**

In this women’s market that specializes principally in the vending of bedding items and mosquito nets. The bedding items include mattresses, pillow covers, bedsheets and bedcovers, Phibong (warm cloth) are sell in this market. Besides bedding sets, it also sells handloom clothing, metal utensils and handloom ritual cloths for various ritual ceremonies that commemorate wedding, births & deaths are sold in this market. Large scale availability of indigenous Manipuri handloom crafts products are also sold here. Many women tailoring stall are functioning and earned their livelihood in this Ima Keithel 2 (Emoinu)

**IMA Keithel 3 (Phouoibi)**

In this market, mostly traditional outlet for the handloom textiles and hand-crafted items that are produced in large volumes. Traditional silk fibric products of natural dye are also available in large scale. Manipuri phanek (women’s loin dress, wrappers) & Pheijom (men’s loin dress), varieties of Silks shawls, Khudei (Men’s wear), Turban, hand woven textile items, Leirum (ceremonial cloth), varieties of land weaving wollen shawals for different tribes of Manipur are sold in this market. This Ima Keithel 3 (Phouoibi) is the source for handloom cloths used in traditional Manipuri dance Laiharaoba costumes as well as the varieties of Mayek Naiba handloom phaneks and other miscellaneous weaving produced are also available in this market.

Women traders or vendors in Ima Keithel 1 (Leimarel Sidabi), Ima Keithel 2 (Emoinu) and Ima Keithel 3 (Phouoibi) are required to follow pre-set rules laid by the Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC) under these rules, only specific commodities can be traded in each of these specialized market sections.

Ima Keithel is now regulated by the Imphal Municipal Council (IMC), under whose central women traders enjoy secure legal status. Regulation of trade and licensing service, shop rental value, civic conservancy charges. Women traders pay a monthly fee of Rs. 95 as vending tax, while another Rs. 15 is realized by IMC for disposal

of solid waste. Paying Rs 10 per vendor for managing storage facilities. The women of Ima Keithel held regular membership cards that declare them o be permanent vendors. Permanent vendors have to obey the IMC vending rules and regulations.

**Table 1 Vendor Respondent Selection at Ima Keithel vending sites.**

Vendor Market Site	Vending Sheds	Vendors Operating	Vendor Respondent selection
Ima Keithel 1 (Leimarel Sidabi)	28	1691	100
Ima Keithel 2 (Emoinu)	14	734	100
Ima Keithel 3 (Phouoibi)	18	1196	100
Total	60	3621	300

Source: Imphal Khwairamband Vendor Survey 2019



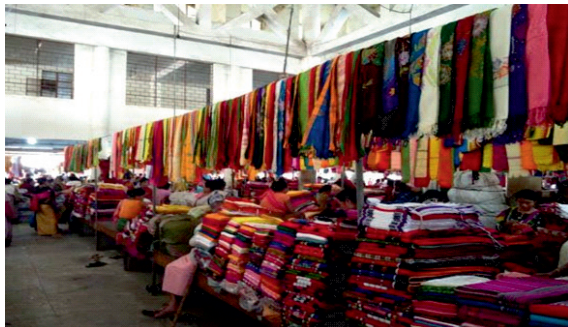
**Women Vendors of Ima Keithel 1**



**Women Vendors of Ima Keithel 1**



Women Vendors of Ima Keithel 1



Women vendors of Ima Keithel 3

**Financial Support Sysytem of IMA Keithel**

For any business financial support is a major key to start. The new trend in the economic participation of women is the emergence of self-help groups that are gendered under the principle of thrift that the Manipuri local people term as “ Marup” with the advent of a self group in the state, the women vendors are able to produce substitute goods and become more effective in creating economic efficient. From the survey reports data, this present days women vendors are getting Government as well as private micro finance banks funded small loan to them to run a smooth trade in the Ima Keithel.

**Objectives**

- ✦ To study the 3 (three) Ima Keithel & local traditional products sell.
- ✦ To asses how far they are self-sufficient.
- ✦ To examine how they manage their house chores with business entrepreneurship.
- ✦ To explore their social economic & political roles.
- ✦ To examine their economic growth in local business which help in promoting Tourism Industry in the state.

**Methodology**

The Present study was conducted through survey method on the random sample of 300 women vendors. Vendors are selected from each Ema Keithel 1, 2 & 3. The test for the study has used an interview followed by questionnaire methods.

**Suggestions**

- ✦ To improve the condition of women vendors of Ima Keithel by providing adequate fund or loan from Government sector with less interest rate.
- ✦ Expanding extra space to accommodate more women vendors.
- ✦ To encourage the women vendor of Ima Keithel to open the saving account in the bank.
- ✦ To showcast their products or items of the Ima Keithel through online shopping media so that to improve their economy impact to large extent.
- ✦ To introduce digital payment system in the whole 3 Ima keithel.

**Conclusion**

The socio-economic life of women in this three Ima Keithel is remarkable. Their entrepreneur skill activities in running a Traditional business trend are extremely commendable. They took greater part, share, and work activity in the development and upliftment in



the economic life in earning in private as well as social movement participation. Besides their market activities, they always took up seasonal earning practices like agriculture, fishing, collection of firewood etc. Over and above the daily routine, earning programmes such as weaving, pottery marketing and business etc.

The women of Ima Keithel enjoy their economic status according to the prevailing social political and cultural environment. Their entrepreneurship and consciousness provide a livelihood to their family and bring standard marketing system to the state as well. The women of Ima Keithel have a strong capabilities and skill to run a iconic model way of market in the global world. These three Ima Keithel (mother's market) existing market system is indeed a worthy of praise and spectacular and hence their involvement in building the economic freedom & upliftment in the society needs to be recognized and respected.

The three Ima Keithel and the traditional local business are productive and growing in fast rate and given a tremendous economic growth in the state. This helps in promoting the local business perspective in Tourism and hospitality industry in the state of Manipur.

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## Role of Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir Economy

Shahzad Ahmad Bhat & N. N. Mundhe

### Abstract

Tourism sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in terms of economic and social impacts in the whole world. Especially when we talk about Jammu and Kashmir which is popularly known as the paradise on earth or Switzerland of the Indies, tourism can possibly be called backbone of J and K economy with its tremendous impacts on the economy of the UT. The tourism sector contributes to job creation, infrastructure development, revenue generation, regional and rural development and much more. The present study is an attempt to draw a holistic view of what the tourism sector plays its role in Jammu and Kashmir economy. The study is totally based on the secondary data collected from different sources. The study found that the travel and tourism sector in J and K plays an important role in the economic and social development of the erstwhile state, but the sector is not harnessed according to the potential of the J and K in the sector. The tourism sector in the UT is male dominated while as the women have a less or no participation at all. The study recommends the government policies and the participation of the local communities in the tourism development process, so that the potential benefits could be achieved through this sector.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Development, Economy, Employment, Infrastructure, Regional Development.

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries and can play a major role in encouraging more consumerist lifestyles (Colin Hunter, 2007). Tourism which has grown significantly since the late 1980s, is today considered by many to be the world's biggest business (M. R. G. Herrera and M. F. Aranda, 2013). Tourism is travel for leisure, recreational, or business purposes, the WTO defines tourists as people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (Samira Khan; Ibrahim Wani and Bilal Ah. Bhat, 2017).

Various types of tourism which are found in the UT of J&K are adventure tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, pilgrimage tourism, leisure tourism, wildlife tourism, wellness tourism and cruise tourism (Samira Khan; Ibrahim and Bilal Ah. Bhat, 2017). Tourism has played an important role in integrating J and K with the entire world, opened up a new window for resources,

both investment and generation, leading to employment generation as well as socio-economic development of the local populace at large, poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Dr. Manzoor Hussain, 2014). The lush green forests, perennial rivers, picturesque alpine scenery and pleasant climate of Kashmir valley, also known as 'the Paradise on Earth', has remained an internationally acclaimed tourist destination. The Jammu region of the erstwhile state which is known as the land of temples also attracts a large number of pilgrims throughout the year. The Ladakh region, known as moon land, has been much sought-after destination especially for the foreign tourists and is famous for adventure tourism (Khan j. I., 2011).

According to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the tertiary sector in the erstwhile state contributes nearly 44.2 % to the states GSDP (current prices, 2007-08). Amongst the various sectors coming under tertiary sector, tourism is a key contributor to the sector growth of 8.7%.

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Keeping in mind the above stated some benefits of tourism, the present study is an attempt to provide a deeper view about the tourism sector in the erstwhile state of J and K.

### Literature Review

Tourism has offered many opportunities to various national governments to establish themselves in the global economic arena and therefore it has become the impetus behind economic development efforts in both urban and rural areas (UNWTO, 2013; WTO, 2006). Tourism has become a key strategy to generate economic, social and environmental benefits to community's faster community development and alleviate poverty (Binns T. and Nel E., 2002). Tourism researchers indicate that tourism has many advantages as a pathway to development based on its ability to sustain growth and opportunities for sharing benefits, utilizes resources and offer new attractions and infrastructure (Khaled Alshboul, 2016). The development of tourism sector not only increases economic growth directly but also stimulates the growth of other sectors through backward and forward linkages and increases domestic incomes and effective demand (Gokavali U. and Bahar O., 2006). Tourism provides opportunity for poverty alleviation and holds the key for creating of rural wealth. It can provide impetus to other industries through backward and forward linkages and can generate huge revenue earnings for the nation (Mushtaq Ah. Bhat and Nabina Qadir, 2015).

Tourism as an industry in J and K has acted as an economic shock absorber helping to support communities in both urban and rural areas. It has foreign exchange earnings, contribution to government revenues, generation of employment and business opportunities. Tourism has also been an interface for cultural exchange, facilitating the interaction between communities and visitors (domestic and international). It has allowed for local crafts, foods and personalities to be kept alive while raising for the community (Dr. Manzoor Hussain, 2014).

### Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the present study are:-

1. To give a general profile of the Jammu and Kashmir UT.
2. To study the tourist inflow trend of the UT.
3. To present a holistic picture of the travel and tourism sector's role in the economy of the UT.
4. To analyse the impact of tourism sector on the environment and natural resources of the UT.

### Research Methodology

This paper examines the role of tourism sector in the economy of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. The data presented in the study has been totally obtained from the secondary sources which include the data from

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), UNWTO, WTO, ILO, Ministry of Tourism JK and India, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, economic surveys, newspapers, journals and some online sources. The data from the 2011 census has also been taken into consideration.

### Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is the northern most part of the Indian union. This was a state till October 2019 with three divisions-Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The total area of the state was 2,22,236 square kilometres of which 78,114 square kilometres is under the occupation of Pakistan and 37,555 square kilometres is under the occupation of China. The remaining area is divided into three divisions with Jammu occupying 26,293 square kilometres, Kashmir has 15,948 square kilometres and Ladakh with the most 59,146 square kilometres. The population of the state was 1,25,41,302 according to the census of 2011. After the JK reorganisation act 2019, Jammu and Kashmir ceased to be a state and was bifurcated into two centrally administered union territories: the UT of Jammu and Kashmir and the UT of Ladakh. Earlier the population density of the state was 124 people per square kilometres according to census 2011, but after the bifurcation, the population density of the UT of J and K is now 290 per square kilometres and for the UT of Ladakh it is 4.6 per square kilometres. The UT of J&K is well known for the tourist spots with lakhs of tourists visiting the UT every year. The Jammu district is well known as the city of temples. Lakhs of pilgrims from all over the India visit Jammu every year to pay homage at the Mata Vaishnu Devi shrine Katra which is located on the Trikuta hills in the Reasi district. The Kashmir division which is known as the Paradise on the Earth due to its natural beauty and the pleasant climate with four seasons and every season here has its own craze among the people all over the world. Kashmir is a valley surrounded by the Pir Panjal range in the southwest and Himalayan range in the northeast which make it a fantastic view for the visitors. The hill stations, the lakes, the gardens and the tradition of the Kashmir attract lakhs of tourists every year. The literacy rate of the J&K according to 2011 census was 67.20 percent with male literacy rate as 78.26 percent and female literacy rate of 58.01 percent.

### Tourism Inflow to Jammu and Kashmir:

Year	No. of tourists(millions)
2014	9.53
2015	9.20
2016	8.43
2017	14.32
2018	17.22
2019 p	16.22

*P: provisional*

*Source: Ministry of Tourism*

In the above table it can clearly be seen that there is an increasing trend in the tourist arrivals of J and K. Exception being the year 2016 which witnessed 8.43 million tourist arrival which is about 0.77 million less than 2015, the reason being the unstable political condition in J and K after the death of Burhan Wani.

In January 2021, tourist arrivals in Srinagar were recorded at 19000 in contrast to 3750 in January 2020 because of COVID outbreak. According to Times of India, Tourism director stated that Kashmir was visited by 179970 tourists in March 2022 which is the highest ever in previous ten years and is expected to grow in the ensuing year. And the Hindustan Times reported that about 1.62 crores tourists visited the UT of Jammu and Kashmir in 2022 which is the highest total in the history of Jammu and Kashmir since independence. These figures show the attraction of the beauty which the UT has got from every sense. This trend is expected to continue over the years.

### **Tourism and GDP**

Tourism sector contributes significantly to the GDP of the world. As per the estimates of WTTC, travel and Tourism's total contribution to the global economy in 2014 was US \$7.6 trillion which equates 9.8% of total economy GDP. However, in 2019 the travel and tourism sector contributed 10.3 % to global GDP; a share which decreased to 5.3% in 2020 due to ongoing restrictions to mobility. 2021 saw the share increasing to 6.1%.

The share of travel and tourism sector in GDP on India in 2019 was 6.9% which decreased to 4.7% in 2020 due to corona pandemic restrictions.

As far as the GDP of J and K is considered, the travel and tourism sector contribute about 7% to the erstwhile state's GSDP.

*Source: world travel and tourism council*

*Digest of statistics, j and k 2019-20*

### **Tourism and Employment**

According to WTTC, travel and tourism generated 2.1 million new jobs directly in 2014 and in total 6.1 million jobs were created globally as a result of total direct, indirect and induced activity. In 2020, 62 million jobs were lost representing a drop of 18.6% leaving just 271 million employed across the sector globally compared to 333 million in 2019. 18.2 million jobs were recovered in 2021, representing an increase of 6.7% year-on-year.

In India, the contribution of travel and tourism sector to employment was 8% of total employment in 2019 which totals to 4,01,11,900 jobs and in 2020 it decreased to 7.3% which equals to 3,17,85,200 jobs.

As per the estimates of Santek Consultants, it is projected that nearly 25 people would get direct employment

per 1000 tourist and 125 persons would get indirect employment per 1000 tourist in that basis total 34.062 lakhs persons would get employment in the end of 2020 in entire Jammu and Kashmir. Out of which 5.677 lakhs would be directly employed and 28.385 lakhs would be indirectly employed in the tourism sector.

*Source: world travel and tourism council and Santek Consultants*

### **Tourism and Infrastructure Development**

The success of tourism sector depends on the development of good infrastructure which include roads, sanitation, electricity, residential, hotels, etc. facilities in the destinations where tourists wish to visit. So in order to boost the tourism sector, it is necessary to develop the infrastructure required. Conversely, the development of infrastructure will automatically attract the tourists to the destinations where they feel comfortable. The tourist destination should have all the things where the tourist can spend their time and money in a satisfying and justifiable manner (*Santek Consultants*). Tourism tends to encourage the development of multi-use infrastructure that benefits the host community, including various means of transport, health care facilities and sports centres in addition to the hotels and high-end restaurants that cater to foreign visitors (*CBSE*).

The Santek Consultants has projected that 227.08 lakh additional tourists will visit J and K in 2020 which will require 3018 hotels, 3023 guest house, 60462 buses, 25697 taxis to handle such a huge tourist inflow.

The lack of infrastructure is among the main causes of underdevelopment of tourism (*Bhatia A. K., 1978*). So in order to develop tourism, the infrastructure has to be developed first.

*Source: Santek Consultants*

### **Tourism and Rural Development**

Tourism acts as a catalyst in the development of backward and far flung regions of a particular area. Development of tourism will lead to progress in rural/ backward regions (*SWOT Analysis*). Tourism has proved to be a powerful engine for economic growth – transforming capital, income and employment from industrial, urban and developed areas to non industrial areas. The key relationship in rural tourism is between tourism development and comprehensive rural development, embracing rural services, new enterprise attraction, conservation, a wider role for women and inward investment (*OECD, 1994*).

According to 2011 census, J and K had a rural population of 72.62% who primarily depend on agriculture and its allied activities for their livelihood. It is evident that most of the urban tourists visit the naturally scenic places which are present in the rural areas. In order to make an increment in the incomes of rural people and raise their standard of living it is important to develop rural tourism.

Under the PMRP scheme there were 45 projects for rural



tourism programme in 2016-17 for which the amount sanctioned was 27.97 crores. So, GoI is working to develop rural tourism which will develop the rural areas and narrow the rural-urban divide.

Source: *Economic survey 2017*

### Tourism and Women Empowerment

Tourism sector helps in the empowerment of women. According to UNWTO, in some countries, tourism has almost twice as many women employees as other sectors. The International Labour Organization found that women make up between 60 to 70 % of labour force in the hotel sector. Study in Bulgaria revealed that 71% of managers and administrators in tourism are women as compared to 29% in the country as a whole.

In India the female share of employment in travel and tourism is 12.1% according to a latest report by WTTC titled 'travel and tourism: driving women's success'.

Worldwide, the trend is that organized activities in tourism business, trade or industry has involved the participation of women in a big way. However the situation is quite unique in J and K. Extensive field enquiries show that women entrepreneurship is of high order existing in Ladakh region, women have a fair share of participation in the hospitality services undertaken in Jammu region and there is virtual no participation in women entrepreneurship in Kashmir region. The one single exception is that handicraft sector of the industry, women have a significant share in the manufacturing of handicrafts which finally are moving out of the state through the tourist traffic (*Santek Consultants*).

Source: *UNWTO, WTTC and ILO*

### Tourism and Environment

Tourism has both the positive and negative impacts on the environment of the destinations. The positive impacts include improved environmental management and planning, raising environmental awareness, protection and preservation of environment, etc. Whereas the negative impacts include depletion of natural resources-water, local land, etc., pollution- air and noise, solid waste and littering, sewage, destruction and alteration of ecosystem (*Mrs. Neeta Rath and Dr. Rashi Gupta, 2017*).

According to surveys done by various environmental and ecological departments, the Kalahoi glacier in Pahalgam has shrunk by 18% during the last three decades (*Samira Khan: Ibrahim Wani and Bilal Ah. Bhat, 2017*). The Dal lake in Srinagar and the Wular lake in Bandipora are falling prey to the increasing pollution and the encroaching. According to a report submitted to the former Governor of J&K, N. N. Vohra, by the CMD of Dredging Corporation of India in 2018, the area of the Dal lake had decreased from popularly known 22 square kilometres to 10 square

kilometres, the original size of the Dal lake was about 75 square kilometres back in 1200 AD. This is a matter which requires an urgent solution. Some steps have been taken by the government to control the encroachment and the disposal of sewage, but the local population must feel their duty to preserve such a treasure from getting disappeared.

Same is the story of the famous Wular lake, which is the largest fresh water Lake of Asia. According to the Action Plan of Wular Lake (2007), the area of the lake was 217 square kilometres in 1911 which include 58 square kilometres of associated marshes. The lake has shrunk nearly to half of its original area due to the encroachment for agricultural and construction purposes.

Every tourist destination has a sad story to be conveyed to the local people and the visitors for their attention, so that they may help in reducing the pollution level and make the spots last longer. Awareness programmes on a large scale need to be organised at every location for the preservation of the tourist sector of the UT.

There is a need to minimise the various impacts which badly affects the environment through proper planning and utilisation of resources. The government should take strict actions for the preservation of the tourist places and the awareness should be generated in the local and the visitors, so that they would protect these precious resources from getting destroyed.

### Miscellaneous

There are various other impacts of tourism on the economy, society and ecology of the world. Some among the other benefits include foreign exchange earnings, revenue generation, poverty alleviation, change in the land-use pattern, social change, etc. Tourism plays an important role in avoiding the rural-urban migration as tourism is viewed as an economic diversification tool in part to stabilize out migration of young people from small towns because of unemployment (*Samuel V. Langford; Oksana Grybovch and Jill K. Langford*). Moreover, tourism has a wider impact on other economic sectors through backward and forward linkages such as on agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, transport, construction, etc (*Dr. S. Sachdeva and Ishfaq Ah. Ganai*).

Despite all these positive impacts tourism can have negative impacts as well which includes local level inflation, social evils, low paid jobs, inequality among residents, etc. But these evils of the tourism sector can be avoided if the stakeholders in the tourism development process act responsibly and avoid the concentration of power and wealth. Besides, the social activist groups and NGOs can come forward to make awareness among the host communities and the visitors about the evil effects of the wrong behaviour on the tourism sector.

## Conclusion

It is evident from the above mentioned benefits of the tourism sector that this sector surely plays an important role in the economy of J and K. Now, the need of the hour is that all the stake holders of the sector should work together in the further development of the tourism sector. Especially, in the Kashmir division, where there is less developed industrial and private sector, the tourism sector can prove to be a leading sector in every aspect of the economy as the valley has an immense potential in the tourism industry. New destinations can be developed in order to spread the effects to far flung and rural areas and the congestion on the already developed destinations can be lowered. The infrastructure required for the betterment of the sector should be developed so that the sectors growth and contribution can be sustained in future. Moreover, the government should come forward with the policies for the further development of the sector and the community participation should be made active through awareness generation, imparting skills and providing financial support, so that the tourism sector will sustain its growth for the present as well as the future generations. The local community and tourists should be made aware about the environmental considerations because it is through the natural environment that the tourism sector gets its major products such as natural scenery, mountains, flowers, water bodies, wildlife, etc.

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# An Analytical Study of IRCTC in Promoting Tourism and Upgrading Catering Services Towards Travelling Commuters in Indian Railways at Gwalior Railway Station

Manoj Kumar Yadav

## Abstract

IRCTC is a subsidiary wing of Indian Railways responsible for ticketing, promoting tourism and providing catering services to travelling commuters of Indian Railways. For better control and effective management, the Indian railway network is decentralized into 16 railway zones. It sells around more than 5 lakh tickets everyday which makes the IRCTC site second busiest site in the world. Apart front ticketing, it also manages tourism and catering related services for domestic and international tourists and travellers. Besides conventional tourism, nowadays it also offers adventure tourism and customized tours. Recently, IRCTC launched "Rail Tourism India" to provide direct catering and tourism packages to its users. This research study reveals about the challenges faced by IRCTC and what measures IRCTC can take for making the travel passengers' meal experience and moment of truth better. Tools like One way ANOVA and Descriptive analysis are used to draw the inferences.

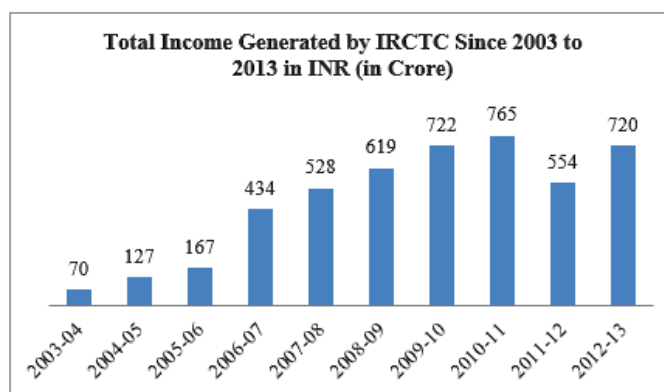
**Keywords:** Rail Tourism, PSU, MICE, Moment of Truth, Meal Experience, Single-Window Platform

## Introduction

The network of Indian Railways is third largest railway network in the world. The milestone in the growth phase of Indian Railways can be traced back in year 1853 when it started its first journey of 53 km from Mumbai to Thane. As compare to any other mode of transport, Railway is considered as cheapest and affordable mode of transport for millions of passengers, particularly for long run journey. For better management, Indian Railway is divided into 16 railway zones and 73 railway divisions throughout the nation.

Indian Railway plays a significant role in the social and economic growth of India. Upto 2013, Indian Railways served to 1.4 crore passengers every day and during the year 2015 it increased to 8.101 billion passengers. As a result, the revenue generation of Indian Railways is also increased gradually. IRCTC is a subsidiary body of Indian Railways responsible for managing catering and tourism services besides ticketing. The revenue growth rate of IRCTC, from year 2003 to 2013, can be seen in the below given bar chart. Conventionally, ticketing is the major revenue source for Indian Railways but as time passes Indian Railways increases its revenue sources

particularly by offering tourism and catering oriented services. Initially, catering venture was handled by Indian Railways and its Zonal points but from the year 1999 the responsibility of catering was handed over to the newly formed IRCTC. Nowadays IRCTC organizes budget and deluxe tour packages for domestic as well as foreign tourist via different high speed and luxury trains.



Source- India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

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Apart from travel related activities, earlier Indian Railways was also managing its catering services through departmental catering units available on different Railway Zones. In broad spectrum, the work profile of railway from ticketing to catering was vast and completely different in nature. As a result complaints from travelling commuters are obvious but these complaints started increasing day-by-day, particularly meal and beverage related complaints. To strengthen the marketing efforts and service capabilities in the areas of rail catering, hospitality and passenger amenities a corporate entity IRCTC was formed.

IRCTC, formed on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1999, is a Schedule “B” PSU Enterprise under the direct control and supervision of Ministry of Railways. But it obtained the certificate for commencement of Business on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1999 and full flesh functioning was started on 01 August 2001. IRCTC is an extended arm of Indian Railways to upgrade, professionalize and manage the catering and hospitality services of Indian Railways on railway stations, trains, and at other locations. IRCTC was formed with an aim and objective to promote domestic and international tourism through the development of budget hotels, special tour packages, information and commercial publicity and global reservation system. The five inherent activities of IRCTC are- catering; hospitality; internet ticketing; travel & tourism; and manufacturing packaged drinking water (i.e railneer).

Currently, IRCTC manages more than 1500 specialized hospitality professionals and a widespread network across India. IRCTC works as a *single-window platform* for managing multifaceted, most prominently hospitality, tourism and travel related concerns. During the last decade, the corporation has made significant progress in catering, travel and tourism segment of business. The

revenue turnover of this segment (except departmental catering units) has almost double due to significant strides made in the domestic tourism.

In new catering policy 2010, the business of catering and hospitality run by IRCTC is limited to Food Plazas, Food courts and Fast Food Units on railway network nationwide. Besides railway catering, IRCTC also manages its catering services at various offices, institutions and at high-end events and functions. Apart from catering, IRCTC also promotes tourism sector by different means of efforts, for instance introduce new trains, air fare arrangement, extension of route of exiting trains, new tour packages, organization of MICE events and so forth.

All above given areas of development collectively promote tourism and hospitality services for Indian national and international tourist arrivals. But yet the share of Indian in International Tourism Index is floating around 1.2% which is extremely low as compare to other countries. This research paper is written in an attempt to determine the catering and service quality through assessment of expectation and perception of travelling passengers who used to purchase meals and beverages from IRCTC operated outlets.

**Tourist Arrival in India**

Tourism is important for the country’s economic growth and from the perspective of employment. According to WTTC, tourism generated around 15.24 lakh crore rupees or 9.4 % of India’s GDP in year 2017 and supported around 08% of its total employment. In addition, WTTC also forecasted the growth of tourism in India at an annual rate of 6.9% to Rs. 32.05 lakh crore by the end of year 2028- it means 9.9% of GDP. All these figures clearly reveals about the role and importance of tourism and its related component in the growth and development of the country. The growth rate of inbound tourism from year 2000 in India can be seen in below given Table 01.

**Table 2 Inbound Tourism- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs), Arrivals of NON-Resident Indians (NRIs) and International Tourist Arrivals (ITAs) 2000-2017 (till June)**

Year	FTAs in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year	NRIs Arrivals in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year	ITAs in India (in Millions)	Percentage change over previous year
2000	2.65	6.7%				
2001	2.54	-4.2%				
2002	2.38	-06%				
2003	2.73	14.3%				
2004	3.46	26.8%				
2005	3.92	13.3%				
2006	4.45	13.5%				
2007	5.08	14.3%				
2008	5.28	04%				

2009	5.17	-2.2%				
2010	5.78	11.8%				
2011	6.31	9.2%				
2012	6.58	4.3%				
2013	6.97	5.9%				
2014	7.68	10.2%	5.43		13.11	
2015	8.03	4.5%	5.26	-3.15%	13.29	1.4%
2016	8.80	9.7%	5.77	9.67%	14.57	9.6%
2017(P) (Jan-June)	4.89	17.2%				

(P) Provisional, @ Growth rate over Jan-June2016

Source - A) Bureau of Immigration, Government of India, for 2000-16 and B) Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, for Jan-June 2017

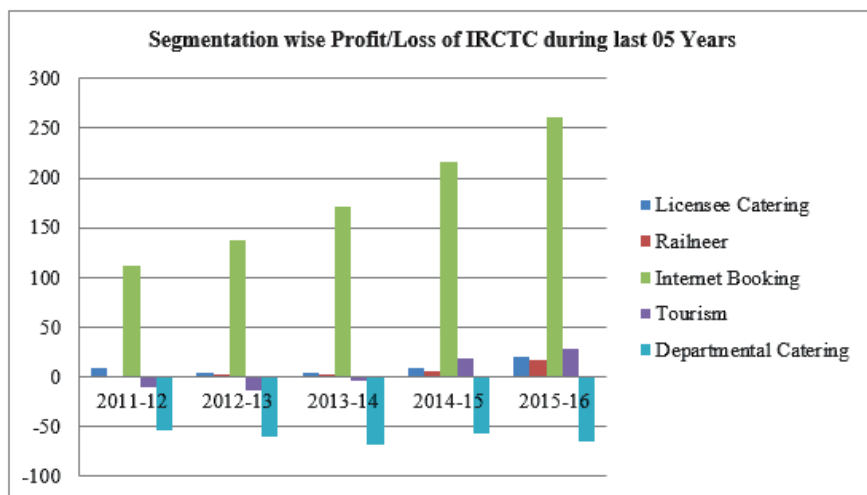
The role of IRCTC in the growth and development of railway catering and hospitality services towards

travelling passengers can never be denied. For detail reference, Table number 2 and 3 can be referred to see segment wise break-up of last five years' profit and loss in the various business segments of IRCTC.

**Table No. 2**

Business Segment	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16 (P)
Licensee Catering	9.42	3.20	3.97	8.22	19.44
Railneer	-0.82	0.45	2.65	5.52	16.71
Internet Booking	111.02	137.51	171.62	215.59	260.41
Tourism	-10.83	-12.98	-4.68	18.65	28.15
Departmental Catering	-53.59	-59.84	-68.23	-57.32	-65.66
Total	55.20	68.34	105.33	190.56	259.05

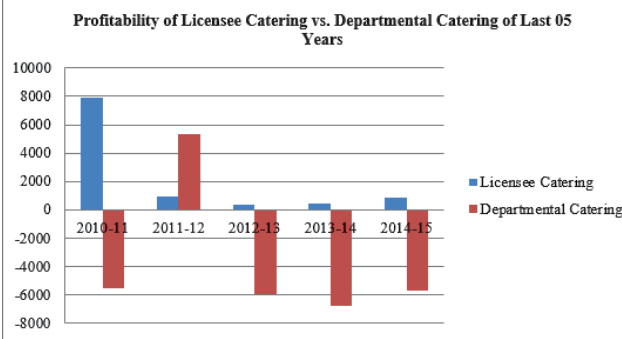
Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017



**Table No. 3**

Particulars	Years (Profit/Loss)				
	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Licensee Catering	7874.18	941.75	319.97	396.59	822.37
Departmental Catering	-5546.84	-5359.79	-5984.12	-6823.40	-5732.16

Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

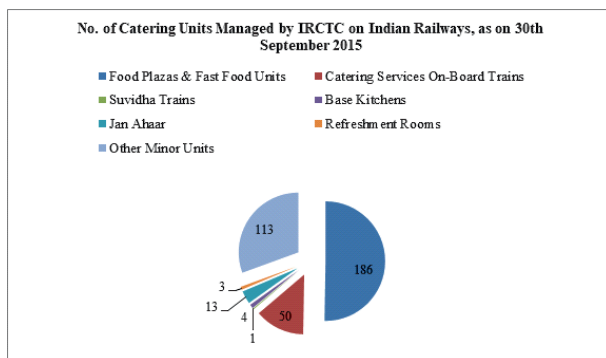


Since its inception and still IRCTC continuously putting all efforts for the betterment of passengers’ overall meal experience and moment of truth. It provides catering provision via different on-board and off-board mechanisms. Its efforts in terms of number of outlets on railway stations and on-board catering provisions can be seen in below given Table 04.

Table No. 04

1	Food Plazas & Fast Food Units	186 units
2	Catering Services On-Board Trains	50 trains
3	Suvidha Trains	01 train
4	Base Kitchens	04 kitchens
5	Jan Ahaar	13 units
6	Refreshment Rooms	03 stations
7	Other Minor Units	113 units

Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017



Source - India Tourism Statistics at a Glance, 2017

IRCTC works hard to take new initiatives in various fields to encash new opportunities in railway and non-railway segments to sustain its high level of performance, simultaneously also emphasis on existing business segment for betterment and improvement. Today, IRCTC operates more than 200 outlets throughout the Indian railway network.

### Literature Review

Railway catering is almost identical to airline catering due to various factors, most prominently in terms of target market segment i.e. travelling passengers. The difference lies in both industries only in the average spending power of passengers. Generally, the average spending power of airline commuters is quite high as compare to railway passengers. **R. Archana and M.V. Subhain (2012)** stated in their study, titled “Study of Passenger’s Satisfaction with Respect to the Catering Facilities Available at Raipur Railway Station” that there are three dimensions of perceived service quality by airline commuters i.e. cuisine, seat and safety. These three identified dimensions collectively play a significant role in overall passengers’ satisfaction.

**Mohd. Zahari, M.S, Salleh et al (2011)** stated in their research work that retaining old passengers and attracting new passengers is an important strategy to survive in this competitive business era. They concluded that flight meals/food service plays an important role in generating business for airlines.

**Geethika and Shefali Nandan (2006)** identified in their research work, titled “Determinants of Customer Satisfaction on Service Quality: A Study of Railway Platforms in India”, that refreshments and behavioural factors are counted as most important determinants that determines the passengers’ satisfaction with the provided service quality on railway stations.

Catering not only plays a considerable role in transport catering segment but it also forms a key component in welfare catering sector too. **Firenze A, Morici N et al (2009)** concluded in their research work “Patients Evaluation of Hospital Food Service Quality in Italy: What Do Patients Really Value”, that the satisfaction level of patient regarding catering in private hospital was 80% and that of public hospital was 50%. Resultant, the catering services in public hospital needed to be improved.

**Cronin and Taylor (1992)** revealed in their research work “Measuring Service Quality: A Re-examination and Extension” that perceived service quality led customers to satisfaction and also stated that this is the service quality which actually an antecedent of customer satisfaction.

**Bitner and Hubbert (1994)** revealed in their research study that the customer’s perception is an important dimension of service quality. The service quality varies with profession and customers’ perspective; thus the definitions of service almost formulated in accordance with customers’ perspective.

**M. Joseph (2000)** stated in his work “Customer Satisfaction in Southern Railway, Madurai Division” that the service quality of meals and beverages served in Indian Trains must be improved to make the passengers satisfied. For improvement, he suggested for frequent and random



inspection of catering units by railway officials and local NGOs.

**Gronoos (1884)**, counted as a pioneer in conceptualization of the service quality, revealed in his research work that technical, functional and reputational quality are considered as major concern for service quality. Later on **Gronroos (1988)** stated that the overall perception of quality was a disconfirmation of a customers' expectation and evaluation of a service offered. The same assertion is continuously maintained by world renowned authors Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) in their research work.

**Chang Ee Ling and Cyril De Run (2009)** stated in their research work that supporting services, products and promotional efforts are few major variables for customer satisfaction. On the flip side, they stated that convenience, services, satisfaction and associate costs are primary determinants of customer loyalty. The findings of the research work concluded that service providers must look beyond price wars to keep their customers satisfied and loyal.

Service is most important concern for **T and A. Stephen (2012)** they stated with the help of Railquail model in their research study that reliability, assurance and empathy are three major concerns for travelling passenger.

**Aggarwal R. (2008)** discussed in his research work that the behaviour of employees play a significant role in overall satisfaction of guest. He said that in Indian Railways, the impact of catering staffs' behaviour work as a determinant for passenger satisfaction.

### Statement of Problem

The facility of on-board and off-board catering improves a lot after the involvement of IRCTC in catering services of Indian Railways. Now it is convenient for passengers to place their orders via mobile number as well as on-line booking portal but yet there is a need of further development in the sector of generosity in the behavioural aspect of railway catering staff, food quality and waste treatment in an attempt to meet passengers' expectation level. This research paper confers about the pre-determined standard level of catering with on-going reality and describes how passengers of Indian Railway can be better satisfied by its catering and hospitality services.

### Objectives of the Research

- ❖ To study the role and impact of catering services in passenger's overall *moment of truth* and *meal experience* cycle.
- ❖ To find out the impact of different catering dimensions (preferable travel mode, travel frequency, purpose of travel, class of travel, travel itinerary, purchase preference and ASP) over the passengers' overall satisfaction level.

- ❖ To evaluate the passenger satisfaction level among the travellers of Indian Railways with the services of IRCTC, particularly catering and hospitality services.
- ❖ To observe the passengers' post purchase behaviour towards the offered catering services and hospitality services provided by IRCTC.

### Period of Study

This research study was conducted in between the month of July, August, September, October and November 2019

### Sources of Data Collection

The primary data for this research work has been collected through questionnaire and personal observation of travelling passengers. In questionnaire, 20 questions (divided into 05 parts- each contains 04 questions) were used to collect the response and feedback in respect to catering services provided by IRCTC. For questionnaire, the *sample size* of the study was around 75 respondents but proper and complete responses were received from only 43 respondents. The sample selection was done randomly who travelled via express and Mail trains. The sample composition was consists of those travellers who travel towards Delhi meanwhile passes from Gwalior railway station. On the flip side, the secondary data has been collected from newspaper, magazines, CAG report, articles, relevant websites, previous research papers and annual report of Indian Railways.

### Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data analysis of this analytical study is based on the hypothesis testing- finding the differences between variables then analyze these variables on the basis of their mean and percentage score. In reliability statistic, the Cronbach's Alpha is .724. Additionally, collective response of travelling passengers in regard to five major questions which included in questionnaire is briefly explained below-

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.745	.724	20

**Question 01** Do you prefer to purchase meals and beverages from the catering service providers during the travelling hours, irrespective to authorized or unauthorized vendors?

**Remark-** From all the chosen respondents from captive market segment (i.e. railway commuters), around 65% respondents accepted that they mostly prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the journey hours. On the opposite side 30% respondents responded that they do not prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the journey. And remaining 05% respondents said that sometime they prefer to purchase but not always.

**Question 2** From whom, authorized or unauthorized vendors, you would mostly prefer to purchase meals and beverages during the travelling hours?

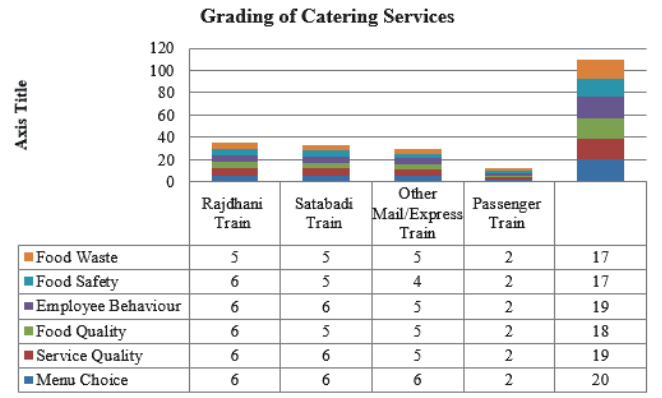
**Remark-** Around 40% respondents accepted that they mostly purchase meals and beverages from authorized vendors only (or IRCTC affiliated vendors) particularly due to safety and quality assurance. In contrary, 35% respondents said that they purchase from local vendors/ non-authorized vendors and 15% accepted that they purchase from both authorized as well as unauthorized vendors. The remaining 10% respondents claimed that they mostly prefer to carry food from their home because it is more safe and hygienic as compare to vendors' food.

**Question 03** How do you wish to rate the various catering dimensions (menu choice, food quality, service quality, employee behaviour, food safety and food waste) of Indian railway catering services in order-of-their-importance?

**Remark-** For 25% passengers' food quality is highly important followed by food safety (21%), service quality (18%) and employee behaviour (18%) as compare to other dimensions. 12% respondents claimed that menu choices also form a significant role in catering services after food quality and food safety. On the flip side only 06% respondents have given weightage to food waste and said it also plays a significant role in catering related services apart from other stated core components.

**Question 04** How do you wish to grade the various catering oriented, in regard to menu choices, serving method, food quality, employee behaviour, food safety and food waste, services provided by IRCTC and its authorized vendors.

Source - Author



**Question - 04**

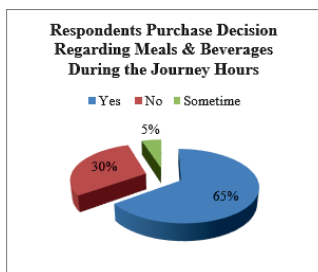
Source - Author

**Remark-** The overall facility of catering and its related components are highly acceptable in Rajdhani trains followed by Satabadi and other mail/express and passengers trains. The collective response of all respondents is somewhat like-

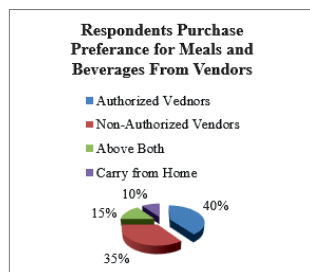
Catering Components	Marks	Overall Percentage	Ranking of Catering Components
Menu Choice	20 marks out of 40, it means 50%	16.67%	01st Rank
Service Quality & Employee Behaviour	19 marks out of 40, it means 47.5%	15.83%	02nd Rank
Food Quality	18 marks out of 40, it means 47.5%	14.95%	03rd Rank
Food Hygiene and Food waste	17 marks out of 40, it means 42.5%	14.17%	04th Rank

All selected respondents collectively gave 61.62 % marks out of 100% to catering and its related components. Yet catering components are lacking behind with 38.38% marks which is not a good indication of passenger satisfaction. The above given response figures clearly reflected that respondents have gave maximum marks to menu choice followed by service quality, employee behaviour and food quality. Food hygiene and food waste dimension get minimum marks and placed on 4<sup>th</sup> position. But remember the entire response scenario varies with type of train.

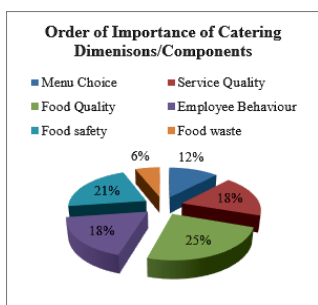
**Question 05** How do you want to evaluate the overall catering services provided by IRCTC, its co-partners and unauthorized vendors to travelling passengers?



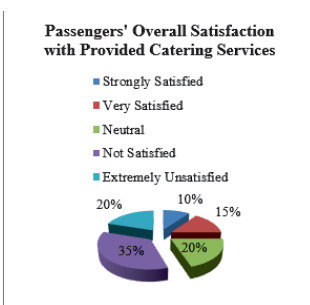
**Question - 01**



**Question - 02**



**Question - 03**



**Question - 05**

**Remark-** In terms of overall passenger satisfaction, 35% passengers are not satisfied with various catering services provided by authorized (or IRCTC/Indian Railways affiliated) and unauthorized vendors. 20% passengers are extremely dissatisfied with catering services and 20% passengers gave their neutral response (neither

fully dissatisfied nor completely satisfied) with catering services of Indian Railways. Only 10% passengers are strongly satisfied with provided meals and beverages whereas 15% passengers are very satisfied.

Distribution of Catering Dimensions and Response Figures of Travelling Commuters and Passengers

Catering Dimensions		Frequency	Percentage
Preferable Travel Mode	- Rail	37	85
	- Bus	02	05
	- Car	02	05
	- Air	02	05
	- Water	-	-
Travelling Frequency	- On daily basis	01	02
	- Once a week	03	07
	- Once a month	22	51
	- Once in half year	06	14
	- Once in a year	11	26
Purpose of Travel	- Business	08	19
	- Leisure	35	81
Class of Travel	- Sleeper Coach	27	63
	- AC Coach	16	37
	- General Coach	-	-
Travelling Itinerary	- Pre-planned	17	40
	- On the Spot	08	18
	- Both	17	40
	- Not Sure	01	02
Food Preference	- Carry food from your home	28	65
	- Purchase from catering vendors	08	19
	- Both	07	16
Purchase Preference	- Authorized Vendors/IRCTC affiliated Bodies	30	70
	- Unauthorized Vendors/Local Vendors	02	45
	- Both	11	25
Purchase Frequency	- Once a day	23	54
	- Twice a day	08	18
	- Thrice a day	05	12
	- Round the clock	01	02
	- Never	06	14
ASP	- Below Rs. 500	29	68
	- Rs. 501 – Rs. 1000	06	14
	- Rs. 1001 –Rs. 1500	07	16
	- Rs. 1501-Rs. 2000	01	02
	- Above Rs. 2001	-	-

The result of hypothesis testing reveals-

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Travel Mode	Between Groups	2.415	3	.805	2.122	.140
	Within Groups	5.690	15	.379		
	Total	8.105	18			
Travel Frequency	Between Groups	2.231	3	.744	.552	.654
	Within Groups	20.190	15	1.346		
	Total	22.421	18			
Travel Purpose	Between Groups	.507	3	.169	1.039	.404
	Within Groups	2.440	15	.163		
	Total	2.947	18			
Travel Class	Between Groups	.343	3	.114	.456	.717
	Within Groups	3.762	15	.251		
	Total	4.105	18			
Travel Itinerary	Between Groups	.310	3	.103	.113	.951
	Within Groups	13.690	15	.913		
	Total	14.000	18			
Food Preference	Between Groups	.729	3	.243	1.502	.255
	Within Groups	2.429	15	.162		
	Total	3.158	18			
Purchase Preference	Between Groups	.939	3	.313	.398	.756
	Within Groups	11.798	15	.787		
	Total	12.737	18			
Purchase Frequency	Between Groups	4.922	3	1.641	1.081	.387
	Within Groups	22.762	15	1.517		
	Total	27.684	18			
Average Spending Power	Between Groups	.308	3	.103	.265	.849
	Within Groups	5.798	15	.387		
	Total	6.105	18			

H<sub>00</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level and their preferable travel mode.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level in respect to their preferable travel mode. The significance value is 0.140 (p= .140) which is above 0.05 and F(3,15)= 2.122

H<sub>01</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level and their travelling frequency.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level in respect to their travelling frequency. The significance value is 0.654 (p = .654) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .552

H<sub>02</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level and their purpose of travel.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level in respect to their travel purpose. The significance value is 0.404 (p = .404) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = 1.039

H<sub>03</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level and their class of travel.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there is no significant difference between passengers’ satisfaction level in respect to their class of travel. The significance value is 0.717 (p = .717) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .465



H<sub>04</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their travelling itinerary.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their travelling itinerary. The significance value is 0.951 (p = .951) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .113

H<sub>05</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their food purchase preference.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their food purchase frequency. The significance value is 0.756 (p= .756) which is above 0.05 and F(3,15)= .398

H<sub>06</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level and their purchase frequency.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their purchase frequency. The significance value is 0.387 (p = .387) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = 1.081

H<sub>07</sub> Statistically there is no significant difference between passenger satisfaction level and their average spending power.

Result - One way ANOVA clearly reflects that statistically there was no significant difference between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to their average spending power. The significance value is 0.849 (p = .849) which is above 0.05 and F (3,15) = .265

**Table 3 Descriptive Analysis of Satisfaction Dimension**

S. No.	Rating Scale	Percentage					Mean Score and SD	
		SU	US	SA	VS	SS		
1	Menu Choice (Food)	9.1	20.5	59.1	9.1	-	2.70	.773
2	Menu Choice (Beverages)	2.3	18.2	56.8	20.5	-	2.98	.707
3	Menu Choice (All Round Snacks )	-	20.5	43.2	29.5	2.3	3.14	.783
4	Food Quality	11.4	25.0	52.3	11.4	-	2.64	.838
5	Service Quality	9.1	13.6	31.8	40.9	4.5	3.18	1.040
6	Food Hygiene and Safety	4.5	15.9	45.5	27.3	2.3	3.07	.876
7	Prices of Meals & Beverages	4.5	36.4	47.7	4.5	2.3	2.62	.764
8	Food Waste Disposal	11.4	25.0	47.7	4.5	6.8	2.69	1.000
9	Employee Behaviour	4.5	11.4	56.8	27.3	-	3.07	.759

Note. SU- Strongly Unsatisfactory, US- Unsatisfactory, SA- Satisfactory, VS-Very Satisfactory, SS- Strongly Satisfactory

In the above given table of descriptive analysis of satisfaction dimension, this is observed that four out of nine dimensions has a *mean score* on a higher note, i.e. <3 and remaining five dimensions are on a lower note >3. The dimension with very lowest value is prices of meals and beverages with *mean score* of 2.62 followed by food quality (2.64) and waste disposal (2.69). The *mean score* of service quality stands at 3.18 followed by menu choices of all-round snacks at 3.14 and satisfy the condition of catering services and provision provided by the Indian Railways at this particular junction. Consequently the above given analysis also suggests that passengers are least satisfied with prices of offered meals and

beverages (followed by food quality) with rest of the dimensions on catering provisions at Gwalior Railway Stations.

**Limitation of the Study**

1. The data collected may not be generalized for the entire catering provisions throughout the Indian Railway network because it is collected from limited passengers who pass from Gwalior railway station.
2. The correctness of the data analysis and interpretations is subject to the correctness of responses given by the randomly chosen respondents.

3. Respondents' responses may suffer from their personal biasness also which can affect this research work either positively or negatively. .
4. Apart from tourism and catering provisions, there are countless variables that determine the satisfaction of passengers. So, the study may not reveal comprehensive result.

### Findings of the Study

The tested hypotheses clearly specify that there were no significant differences between passengers' satisfaction level in respect to varying catering dimensions. The *mean score* of menu choices, food quality, prices for meals & beverage and food waste disposal clearly intimates that these weaken areas should be seriously addressed and need to be strengthened.

### Recommendations and Suggestions

1. The result of tested hypothesis reveals that there are no significant differences in between the catering dimensions in respect to passengers' satisfaction level. Consequently, the framed policies, in respect to catering provisions and services, by IRCTC and Indian Railways should be quantified in general. Therefore, these dimensions need not to be specific.
2. A differential margin is found with respect to prices of meals and beverages, food quality and food waste disposal. These dimensions should be strengthened with respect to others particularly service quality, menu choices, employee behaviour followed by food hygiene and safety and menu choices (all round snacks).
3. Collectively, catering service provider must focus on all dimensions of catering services, especially on food quality and prices as these dimensions significantly affect to others and significantly affects in forming overall passenger satisfaction level.

### Conclusion

Indian Railway is a highly preferable mode of transport for majority of travellers. IRCTC, a subsidiary of Indian Railways, plays a significant role in ticketing, tourism and catering oriented services to travelling commuters. This analytical study reveals that catering is a vital aspect of Indian Railways and performs a noteworthy contribution

in overall satisfaction of passengers. This study explores an insight of passengers' satisfaction with catering services at Gwalior Railway station. Tested hypothesis revealed that there are no significant differences between catering dimensions and passengers' satisfaction level. However the qualitative and quantitative aspects of food quality and prices of meals and beverages followed by food waste and menu choices are significantly not prevailing at expected level.

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# Transformative Experiential Tourism as Sustainable Rural Development Model in Himachal Pradesh

Nitin Vyas & Priti Nagal

## Abstract

Himachal's economic growth is based on agriculture, horticulture, and tourism sectors. Based on a mix of agro and farm tourism typology, it is identified that a working farm or orchard can passively contact a tourist who will be provided farmhouse bed and breakfast, along with a direct contact to Experiential tourism that offers some attractions (e.g, visiting fruit orchards for plantation and picking of fresh fruit, jam and juice production with demonstrations, tasting and packaging). With this Transformative travel for Experiential tourism, tourists won't just relish picking fresh fruits and other yields or learn about horticulture and composting, they would be able to live the life-enriching experiences –language lessons and traditional cooking classes, handicraft and anticraft, riding the waterfalls, trekking to remote locations and swimming in ponds.

Transformative Experiential tourism has been receiving a lot of attention in recent years because of its potential to positively transform both the individual and the world we live in. It is a relatively emerging activity that is relentlessly refining its operating mechanism globally. It has appeared as a widespread substitute for limited socio-economic development, because it sustainably utilises the local natural resources and focuses on traditions and cultural heritage of the villages in solidification of the rural economy. Transformative travel focuses on the self-identity and consciousness attributes of travel, as well as how visitors can incorporate the growth, they've witnessed on one's trip into their day-to-day existence back home. However, Transformative Experiential Tourism needs to be executed/practiced with due understanding toward conservation of orchards and farms, ecology, environment and native culture in the countryside. The countryside landscapes in the state of Himachal Pradesh already facilitates and promotes tourist activities in the form of farm house stays and orchard tourism.

The present paper examines the potential of an innovative integrated sustainable development model in Himachal Pradesh. The development of this model would be considering viable strategies, methods and techniques to promote Transformative Experiential Tourism in the hilly terrain of this state. Since such tourism is an activity, harmonizing to sustainable horticulture, with plentiful scope for economic development, it is a way for expansion and promotion of the rural community in the state.

The present paper intends to study how Experiential tourism can be one of the forms of tourism that includes the aspects of sustainable rural development along with active provisions for protection of culture, ethics, farms, agricultural land and environment along with the development of village entrepreneurship. This paper aims to promote transformative travel for modern tourist along with due conservation of age-old ethnic village ethnicities, customs, morals and practices.

To improve Transformative Experiential Tourism development and contribution to sustainable economic growth of the state, appropriate capacity building programs on experiential tourism for local community, supported by government budget and/or corporate social responsibility programs will be helpful and useful.

**Keywords:** Experiential Tourism, transformative travel, sustainable rural development.

## Introduction

Travel and tourism, being one of the world's most rapidly growing industries, has long been associated with the idea of transformation, with hospitality experiences having the power to impact and alter people's lives and function as operators for individual development. Combined, both tourism and transformation can alleviate the difficulties the world is confronting right now, by shifting people's perspectives and increasing their consciousness, all towards a better tomorrow as "human life is intrinsically linked to human transformation".

When combined with its undeniable cyclical nature as a process rather than an end goal, transformative tourism gains the ability to manifest anytime and at any moment because it depends on the person and the diverse environmental factors that he encounters rather than being a particular type of tourism.

Tourism has a long history of being affiliated with the idea of transformation, and it has frequently been depicted in literature as a tool for spiritual development, subconscious discovery, and intrinsic discovery. There has been a rise in interest in the concept of transformational tourism from tourists and tourism providers, destinations, and scholars in recent years, which is also regarded as one of the most significant developments for the future of the tourism sector. Although individual transformation can always be found in so many studies of tourist motivations and behaviours, as well as pilgrim tourism, transformative tourism has only surfaced as a distinct research field in the last two decades.

Few studies have investigated the supply prospective of the tourism sector, despite the fact that earlier research has revealed the advantages that come from transformative experiences for both travellers and the tourism industry. According to Sheldon (2020), Designing transformative experiences is difficult and necessitates paying close attention to visitors' values, goals, and level of consciousness in addition to taking decision-makers' and tourism providers' levels of understanding into account. Soulard et al. (2019), who created a framework for organizations and companies aiming to provide transformative experiences, emphasizes the employee's contribution to the creation of customised transformative experiences for tourists. Kottler (1997), who argued that travel provides greater opportunities for transformation both in life and at personal level, offers the phrase "transformative tourism" for the first time in intellectual context. The potential of tourism and travel to be transformative and serve as a catalyst for personal change may be universally recognised, but there is less understanding on issues like who can be transformed, under what conditions and contexts can this transition occur, what different types of transformation can happen, and for how long the outcomes of the transformation prevail.

The majority of research on transformational tourism, or research related to it from the viewpoint of self-development and self-change, has focused on the possibility of specific tourism niches to pursue personal transformation. While the most of previous studies on transformation concentrated on particular tourism experiences, more recent studies have emphasised the change process itself. For instance, Robledo and Batle (2017) proposed a design based on Joseph Campbell's "hero's trip" that takes into consideration 3 phases of a person's psychological journey: leaving the familiar, travelling (being initiated into a source of power), and returning (to live life more meaningfully). According to the authors, there really are eight elements that can influence a transformational experience: personal circumstances, engaging in unfamiliar activities while away from home, social contact, living in the moment, challenge, setting, reflection, and integration.

Similar models with four steps – the disorienting dilemma, self-reflection, resolution by exploring new activities, and the resulting new abilities, attitudes, and beliefs – were put out by Soulard, McGehee & Stern (2019) and Wolf, Ainsworth & Crowley (2017). The latter also provided a profile of a transformational traveller, in which fourteen-character qualities were associated to transformation. One or more of the factors that could influence the transformation process and lead to significant gains for the tourists, such as one's wellbeing and health, personality attributes, and sense of accomplishment to name just a few.

A Transformative Travel Experience Scale (TTES) was created by Soulard, McGehee, and Knollenberg in 2020 with the intention of quantifying the process and results of the transformative travel experience. Despite the methodological and theoretical ramifications of the construction of such tools, it is important to underline their usefulness for the current study.

Even though past research has highlighted the relevance of tourists' motivations and traits, it also points to a strong connection between destination-related aspects, experience qualities, and the process of tourist transformation. Tourists are increasingly seeking for locations and experiences that can assist their inner journey of discovery and transformation, which might present an opportunity for destinations and service providers to establish new strategies (Skirka, 2018; Follitt, 2019). Different facets of the local culture, such as the spiritual, physical, intellectual, and psychological ones, could be the objective of transformative travel. Regardless of the fact that there are various studies on a broad range of special interest travel (such as spirituality and yoga, linguistic travel, voluntary work, ecotourism, etc.) that deal with transformative tourism, are only one special kind of travel-based research and do not provide a comprehensive picture and general specific features



of a new type of cultural tourism. Few academic studies have been conducted on transformative tourism as a new form of cultural tourism that explores beyond the notion of experiences and how to achieve them (Lean, 2009; Ross, 2010; Reisinger, 2013 and 2015; Wolf et al., 2017; Soulard et al., 2019).

The interdisciplinary subjects that are crucial to the growth of transformative tourism are just now being studied by researchers. Researchers have been unable to recognise significant studies in the development of requirements of experiential tourists and accessible ways to address them from an organisational and development perspective due to a failure to collaborate across disciplines. In light of this, it is uncommon to come across research on the key qualities of transformative tourists and transformative experiential tourism businesses. The literature on policy and administration of tourism innovations in attracting and managing a new emerging age of tourists by means of adapting to a servitized and knowledge-based economic system has been left with major gaps as a result. Transformative experiential tourism takes a long-term outlook and can result in high value communal, social, cultural and environmental benefits as well as financial viability. Although this new form of tourism shows countless potential, efforts to everlasting transformational travels experience into sustainable rural tourism business practice are still rare and disorganized.

The delayed adoption of innovations in the tourism industry is the main barrier to the development of transformative tourism businesses. According to Reisinger, 2013, it is not enough to only offer "an alternative and special interest tourist" experiences, which are solely based on the market segmentation principle, based on the little study done on transformative tourism. Similarly significant innovations are required to address the dramatic shift in customers' values, habits, and purchase behaviour. But most tourism developments to date have been progressive rather than revolutionary (Hjalager, 2010). Tourism developments are generally characterised by businesses that display moderate developments, and they frequently take the form of modifications to the cost (price)/quality ratio of the product, product line evolution through brand policies, or product differentiation (Sundbo et al., 2007; Camisón and Monfort-Mir, 2012).

From the perspective of consumers, business owners and policymakers, the development of experiential rural tourism based on the transformative tourism idea demands fundamentally new methodological and applied judgements. Therefore, research efforts are required to examine the phenomenon of transformative tourism through the prism of significant paradigm shifts in the economic structure. In order to project the role of paradigm innovations in sustainable rural and cultural tourism, the study was conducted using a systematic research methodology that handles the research subject

as a structure that is an integral part of a larger system (Abnor, Bjerke, 1997). Even as emphasising the importance of tourists' inspirations and characteristics, preceding research suggests a persuasive bond between destination associated features, involvement characteristics and the progression of tourist transformation.

### **Statement of The Problem**

The emphasis in tourism experiences is changing from enjoyment and leisure to transitional. Urban tourism is no longer consider a striking long-time option. The demand for life style change experiences of tourists focuses on issues such as learning new things, having first hand experiences of rural life, maintaining an area's inherent appeal, encouraging tourism projects at the extent that is suitable and apt to an area, and having admiration for carrying capacity levels, the raw authentic style of life, and the cultural traditions of the host community. With the emphasis shifting to quality life, the local community must focus more on the potential for tourism destinations and service providers. This can denote an opportunity to progress a new competitive aligning, as tourists are progressively looking for spaces and experiences that can endorse their internal voyage of discovery and transformation.

### **Purpose of Inquiry and Inquiry Questions**

This conceptual paper proposed to recognize and comprehend the aspects that affects rural farm tourism in general and particularly in transitional experiential tourism and its future prospects in Himachal Pradesh. Therefore, the investigation questions for this paper are: How will you differentiate farm tourism with transitional experiential tourism? What are the future potential factors for the development of experiential tourism in the orchards of Himachal? What experiences can be offered to the tourists that can enhance their life style once they go back in their normal lives? How to promote Himachal Rural areas on the world map to attract experiential tourist segment? What support is sorted for from the government bodied and other intermediaries for the implementation of this model

The answer to the inquiry questions will be based on an extended review and analysis of literature and formulation of a model to promote it for a tourist segment in all horticultural regions of Himachal during the harvest or non-harvest times of the fruit crop.

### **Transformative Experiences in Rural Based tourism**

Development, increase in per capita income, flexible working hours, and the want to improve individual well-being are some of the aspects that have led to a growth in tourist demand for more experiences based on countryside and sustainability (Elmahdy et al., 2017). According to Puhakka and Siikamaki (2012), travellers visiting raw, virgin and beautiful natural areas consider

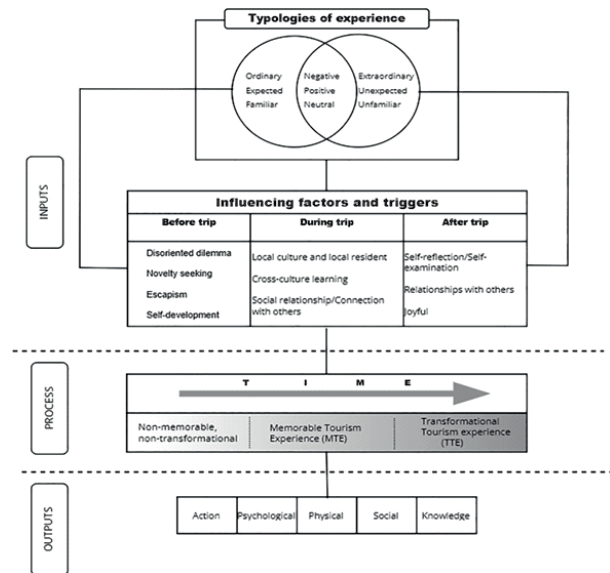
the location primarily as a key constituent that contributes to the superiority of their outing experience. Experiences and direct involvement in rural tourism bring biological, psychological, physical, and communal benefits to tourists. The studied by Ruhanen (2019) found that travellers visiting ecotourism sites are chiefly determined by the involvement in the natural environment, and acknowledged individual benefits, such as exploration, physical activity, learning, and pleasure, as the main purposes for traveling to natural areas. Experiences relating to responsible and maintainable practices directed by ethics of admiration for ecosystems and hosts have countless possibilities for transforming tourists. This has also been detected in numerous studies which proposes that experiences in rural lives have positive health results (Shin et al., 2010) that lead to a lessening the chances of heart attack (Wolf et al., 2017), and a huge drop in stress (Hansmann et al., 2007), cerebral and social well-being, as well as a assortment of optimistic emotions, such as fulfilment, enjoyment, and contentment (Ballew & Omoto, 2018). Thus, the experience that one can get from a sustainable rural tourism destination is perceived as a place that allows the mystical growth and psychological rejuvenation of people. Experiences in transformational rural tourism have also been found to have positive communal consequences, such as generating civic cohesion and strengthening personal networks.

Travellers always gets a pleasant experience that brings joy, and encourages inquisitiveness and a desire to learn whenever they come in the close interaction with the natural environment. As a consequence, they identify that there is an upsurge in understanding, consideration, and admiration for nature by tourists, and in the long run, augmented ecological awareness leads to changes in ecosystem preservation behaviour and travel aims. More explicitly, these tourists are opening to search intensively for a sustainable rural tourism offers and to support the growth of a tourism industry that will not threaten its own future. As per, Walter (2016) after going back home, these tourists begin to participate in ecological initiatives, such as planting trees, participating in political engagement for environmental fortification and safety, and begin educating children about the need to preserve the environment, thus contributing to the world.

More lately, numerous authors have begun to view such experiences as a way of gaining a competitive benefit. Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) points out that it is not as easy as it looks for a destination to persuade tourists to visit it again. Various other studies have recognized that live experiences are a chief driver of retreat to in transformative tourism. Transformative experiences bind travellers to the place where they get experiences and such experience, increase the quantity of word-of-mouth references and revisits (Jepson & Sharpley, 2015). Miller et al. (2019) by structuring the outcomes of various studies (e.g., Pinkus et al., 2016; Snyman, 2017;

Jorgenson et al., 2019) conducted in different parks and protected areas found that providing worthwhile experiences to visitors lead to the financial sustainability of the areas as it leads to the growth in the number of recurrence visits and constructive word-of-mouth publicity, which leads to the conception of extra jobs for the local people, thus dipping scarcity and providing backing to the local economy. Increasing tourist preferences for environmentally friendly activities and the exposure to the native lives of the residents have shown increased volumes in tourists persuaded by the transformative experiences in nature.

**Conceptual Framework in Transitional Tourism**



Source: Adopted from Roshini Nandasena, Alastair M. Morrison and J. Andres Coca-Stefaniak

**Designing Transformative Experiences of Rural Tourism In Himachal Pradesh**

To provide Transformative Experiential Tourism, and to ensure the permanency of responsible behaviour, i.e. the implementation of such behaviour in everyday life, numerous resolutions have been offered in the literature. Butcher (2002) focused on the elevation and performance of tourism experiences where one needs to present sustainable behaviour and sustainable travel as “saving the world” and “doing tourism differently”. The sociocultural interchange, escapism, risk-taking, overcoming obstacles, building confidence, developmental in new roles, and managing negative emotions like fear, wrath, and anxiety may be the focus of these experiences. Similarly, transformative progressions at the individual level have been connected by research studies to tourist experiences where escapism was a vital motivation (Chen et al., 2014; Lochrie et al., 2019), getting a break from the monotony of the daily routines and responsibilities (Adams, 2013), and getting the feelings of own freedom encouraged by travel

continued to be the core of visitors' enjoyment (O'Reilly, 2006). For illustration, a study done by Deville and Wearing (2013) surveyed ecotourism's transformational potential in the situation of organic farms, where budget conscience travellers intermingled with resident people over long periods of time, subsequently forming sturdy bonds with the host communities. Another research by Jernsand (2017) found that there are three characteristics disturbing the delivery of transformational experiences in tourism. These include relationship building, acknowledging and sharing power generated from participating in development projects, and contextual and embodied learning. Correspondingly, Massingham et al. (2019) found that participant emotions, learning, relationships, and reflective processes were frequently linked to their involvement in environmental conservation programmes and their experience components (such as education and wildlife interactions).

Tourism industry epitomizes a dominant tool for social and economic expansion of any country and decrease of scarcity of resources, through the creation and of careers and enterprises, substructural development and export earnings. Well-thought of and managed tourism can not only contribute significantly to all dimension

of sustainable growth, but also has close connections to other areas that can generate decent occupations and trade prospects. Though, tourism needs support and is dependable on the accessibility of ecology and other environment-based services. The economic development of Himachal Pradesh as a state is based on primary (agriculture), secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (service sector including tourism) sectors that in the year 2020-21 contributed about 14%, 40%, and 46% of the economy, respectively.

Himachal is recognized as a state with an extremely rich cultural heritage since the traditional practices are so historic that they are rare elsewhere in the nation. Himachal is the ideal destination for tourism because of the mountains, interconnecting river systems, forests, orchards, temples, and social niches. Variety of fruit crops, including mango, banana, citrus, grape, apple, apricot, and many varieties of stone fruits, are found growing in a variety of soil types and climates. The unpredictable rainfall patterns are a reflection of this diversity. In these places, similar oscillations in temperature, sunlight, relative humidity, etc. are also observed. The range of temperate, sub-temperate, dry-temperate, and plain region, made fruit crops possible through this agro-ecological scenario.

S. No	Zone	Elevation (meters amsl)	Rainfall (cms)	Apt fruit crops
1.	Low Hill and Valley areas near the plains	365-914	60 - 100	Mango, Guava, Loquat, Litchi Citrus Fig,, Papaya, Early varieties of Grapes, Banana, Jack Fruit, Low chilling varieties of Peach, Pear, Plum and Strawberry.
2.	Middle Hills (Sub Temperate)	915-1523	90 - 100	Stone Fruits (Peach, Apricot, Plum, Almond), Pear, Pomegranate, Persimmon, Pecan nut, Kiwi Fruit, Walnut, Strawberry.
3.	High Hills and Valleys in the interiors (Temperate)	1524-2742	90 - 100	Apple, Cherry, Pear (Soft), Almond, Chestnut, Hazel- nut, Walnut, Strawberry.
4.	Cold and Dry Zone (Dry Temperate)	1524-3656	24 - 40	Apples, Drying type of Apricot, Prunes, Almond, Pistachio nut, Walnut, Chilgoza, Hazel-nut, Hops and Grapes.

*Horticulture Zones in Himachal Pradesh*

*Source: Department of Agriculture, Govt of Himachal Pradesh.*

Since most of these fruit crops are cultivated in rural regions, Transformative Experiential Tourism can both economically and socially benefit rural populations as well as promote contact between visitors and locals for mutually beneficial involvements. Transformative Experiential Tourist activity model for Himachal Pradesh is based on the orchards for all the fruit types based on the Horticulture Zones. This model is applicable for all the fruit crops and would serve the tourist on both harvest and non-harvest season time of the year. This model will have an unquestionable role to play for the benefit of both- tourist and the individual. Both the parties have mutual advantages to gain their experiences from.

The experiences with visitors help individuals think about concepts that have a transformative effect on them. Orchard activities are classified into functional and non-functional orchard activities in which a tourist would be engaged while he is in the farm house staying with the host community. This concept is almost similar to the one given by Sznajder et al. (2009) where he distinguished between old agro-tourism and modern agro-tourism.

The earlier is only to offer the guest short-term lodging and on-farm resources, and the host gets a minor supplementary income. The farmers within the later seem to have more resourcefulness to offer many more agro-based tourist goods and services in return to get additional farm income significantly. The model



proposed here would keep the tourists busy with the farm activities. It is aimed at becoming a hybrid model where urban life meets the rural life and without harming the individuality of both the lifestyles, one takes back home a transitional lifestyle.

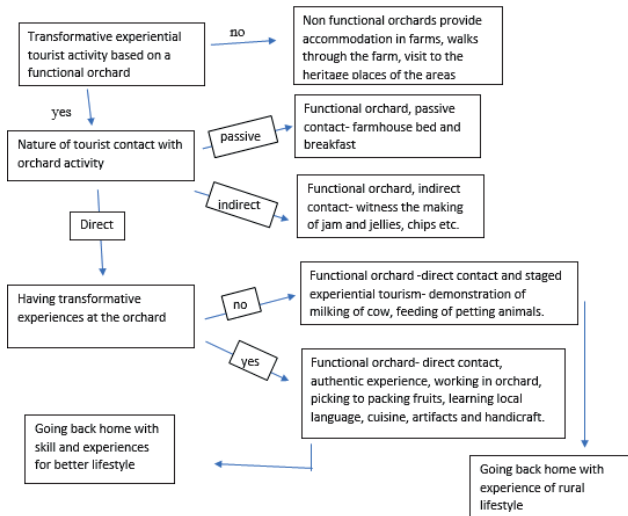


Fig. 1 A typology for defining Transformative Experiential Tourism

Fruit crops in Himachal are spread over all five seasons and there are times when the orchard is non-functional i.e fruit crop is not there in that specific region. But since transformative experiential tourism is not based only during the times of harvesting, the tourist gets to get involved in various other activities. People visiting the place would create connotation with hosts through direct experience. The experience comprises meeting people, visiting places, the activities joined in to create memories. Such experiences include pre-departure trip preparation and post-trip follow-up. Transitional Experiential tourism draws individuals into local nature, food, culture and history. Such Experiential visits are low volume, low impact, and high yield which is very personal, exclusive and discrete for each visitor. Tourist experiences are based on quality memories shared between them and the experience provider. Experiential tourism activities allow for personal development, reflect the beliefs and interests of the individual visitor, and offer a variety of experiences that match their interests and give them a feeling of personal accomplishment, allowing them to create their own special memories. The goal of this transitional experiential tourism is to provide a fully engaged experience in the orchards that offers fresh insights and real-world encounters along with promoting the interaction and integration of many cultures, challenges, and possibilities.

Himachal is a state with rich traditions and culture and these cultural elements are shared with people in an atmosphere of traditional ways of life. Transformative

Experiential tourism aims to show this rather than describe. It not only has the opportunity to expand personal horizons but also provides personal enhancement, enlightenment, encouragement, and engagement as persuaders. Since this model aims to offer Experiential tourism engagement in all five senses, it would attract individuals to villages and markets to merchandise. Transformative Experiential tourism includes the “tales of places” with the opportunities to learn a new skill or engaging oneself in a new activity. Transformative Experiential Tourism in Himachal and India as a whole is emerging as an excellent tourist destination because of its inimitability in many areas like culture, heritage, history, flora and fauna, natural charms and the very people of the country.

The tagline for the state, “Unforgettable Himachal” or “A Destination for All Seasons and All Reasons” is well recognized as a popular destination brand. Success of Himachal Tourism is chiefly based on how willing government understands the need for developing tourism in the state and how actively the vibrant private sector tourism industry operates in the state. There are vibrant policies marked by the government namely “The Himachal Pradesh Tourism Policy” as to how the tourism in the state has to be escalated and developed. There is an excessive amount of communication and interfacing between the government and the private sector stakeholders. Himachal as a state advocate and implements responsible tourism, which is an extensively sustainability motivated model of tourism. The natural desirability of the state, wonderful weather conditions throughout the year, humble and honest public, high literacy rates, hotels and resorts and other facilities established across the state are mechanisms for the development of tourism in the state.

**Research Observations & Findings**

- (i) Paradigm alteration: Destination tourism to Client based Tourism
- (ii) A new segment of transitional experiential tourists needs to be identified.
- (iii) Post Covid Universal drive toward experiential exposures.
- (iv) Increase in appreciating quality family time in unconventional settings.
- (v) There is a significant concern over Length of stay and high pricing of serving transitional exposures.

**Initiatives Required For Growth of Transformative Experiential Tourism**

1. Destination infrastructure and settings are to be identified and improved, such as construction more basic sanitation facilities, tourist information centres with modern communication services, post offices, ATM machines, roads, Hospitals or modern



medical aid centres, road direction signs as well as boards stating the history of the people or products, parking areas with shuttle automobiles (carts, bicycles or autos) from the parking areas to tourism sites.

2. Fruit Harvest products to handicraft and services are to be expanded and standards needs elevation such as professional hospitality in demonstrating harvesting and producing process of the product, folk cultural performance, distribution services, life style projections and much more.
3. Trained and skilled human resources are to be developed for collective skills in working, product design, language, work safety, administration in finance, providing services, marketing, environment.
4. Systematic planning and management for clear targets and indicators needs to be underlined for combined implementation among government, nongovernment and local authorities for single goal achievement.
5. Presentation of folk tales of the villages and products are to be presented and displayed with authentic product designs and packaging done an atmosphere of traditional ways of life.
6. Promotion and marketing on tourism sites, and enthusiastic travel agents to promote and attract experiential tourist segment who are willing to purchase experiences for life time and carry these transitional changes as souvenirs from the host destination.
7. Accessible and approachable Government aid understanding and assistance for the local community to makes working much easier.

### Future Potential

Our focus would be to further develop and endorse niche products like, Wellness and Medical Tourism, Adventure and Wildlife Tourism, Sports Tourism, Film Tourism, Heritage tourism, Eco tourism. There is a need for the state of Himachal Pradesh to reconsider projection of the same resources we already have with a new prospective to serve the evolving demands and tastes of tourists. We need to bring a paradigm shift of Himachal from a short-term destination of developed tourist regions to extended stays at rural areas for mutual benefits of the tourists and the local people.

### Conclusion

Transitional Experiential tourism as a tool for sustainable rural tourism model is an outgrowth of a comprehensive movement toward experiential learning, where visitor creates meaning to their visit through direct experience at the host destination. Transitional Experiential tourism is

also tied to the progression of mass customization and the understanding local economy. For the tourist, the experience comprises, among other aspects, the individuals one meets, the rural places they visit, the raw non-commercial accommodations where they stay, various activities participated in, the memories created and the skills learned from the local people that they carry back to their native modern settings. Transitional Experiential tourism inspires guests to participate and endorses activities that join into communities, values, culture, life styles and the outdoors. Our effort is to give and promote Transitional Experiential tourism in the state and show case true Himachal. The visitors to Himachal Pradesh should be forced to come again and again and revisit the involvement because of its rich diversity that brings them closer to the nature and let the modern Gen Alpha know the real India.

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## “AMRITSAR City of Gastronomy” From International Criteria to Local Practice

Harpreet Singh, Raj Kumar & Jaswinder Singh

### Abstract

The culinary heritage of Amritsar is representative of the culinary traditions of Punjab and has garnered international prominence. The street food in Amritsar plays a crucial role as a vital component of gourmet tourism. In the city of Amritsar, a considerable number of tourists, along with the local residents, choose to patronize dining places that are not affiliated with their respective hotels or accommodations. The incorporation of indigenous gastronomy exhibits potential in enhancing sustainability within the tourism sector and promoting the growth of culinary tourism in the local area. A significant association between cuisine and tourism is seen. The peculiarity of the food is enhanced by the utilization of locally sourced materials and the incorporation of traditional appliances, which in turn generates attractiveness among tourists. Amritsar boasts a diverse array of street food restaurants, each renowned for its unique culinary delicacy that captivates the palates of discerning guests. Gastronomic tourism involves a diverse array of activities, including the discovery of specialized restaurants, street food vendors, and engagement in food festivals. Street cuisine has a pivotal role in both molding and reflecting diverse facets of culture, religion, caste, local culinary traditions, and the utilization of traditional culinary tools.

Gastronomic tourism surpasses the constraints imposed by cultural culinary practices. The recognition of towns, regions, or countries for their gastronomic offers is a prevalent phenomenon. Food consumption holds a crucial role in the realm of tourism, since each visitor normally engages in the consumption of three meals each day. Hence, the economic importance of food in the context of the tourism sector is substantial. Several nations, like Ireland, the Philippines, and Canada, are presently allocating significant resources towards the advancement of gastronomic tourism. The implementation of food tourism programs has yielded favorable results, seen in the increase in visitor expenditures and overnight accommodations.

The city of Amritsar is renowned for its culinary offerings, making it an attractive destination for gastronomic tourism. Tourists are drawn to Amritsar to indulge in its diverse and delectable food options.

**Keywords:** Amritsar, Food, Gastronomic Tourism, Tourist

### Introduction

The academic discipline of gastronomy and gastronomic tourism encompasses the comprehensive examination of the complex dynamics of food, culture, and tourism. The subject matter comprises the mastery of proficiently creating and showcasing delicious and alluring cuisine, the unique culinary customs of particular geographical regions, and the scientific concepts that underlie the notion of pleasurable and nourishing consumption. A gastronome is someone who possesses a profound understanding and exceptional expertise in the domain of gastronomy. Conversely, a gastronomist is an expert

who integrates theoretical knowledge with practical implementation in the scholarly investigation of gastronomy. The field of practical gastronomy involves the practical implementation and academic analysis of the methods, procedures, and display associated with the development, production, and provision of a wide range of culinary products and beverages originating from various locations worldwide. The discipline of theoretical gastronomy establishes a fundamental framework for the implementation of applied gastronomy. This concerns a methodology and framework that prioritizes the utilization of recipes, methods, and cooking guides. The

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field of food gastronomy is closely interconnected with the scholarly examination of food and beverages, as well as its historical roots. Technical gastronomy serves as the fundamental basis for practical gastronomy, offering a methodical and thorough framework for evaluating various gastronomic topics.

Gastronomic tourism primarily entails domestic travel, wherein persons visit different areas to engage in the consumption and exploration of distinctive food and beverage options, often derived from the local region. During the process of conducting a domestic analysis on leisure travelers in the United States, it was found that 17% of these travelers engaged in culinary-related activities. The International Culinary Tourism Association has projected a significant growth in the upcoming years. In the year 2018, the European region played a substantial role in shaping the market, followed by contributions from North America, APAC (Asia-Pacific), South America, and MEA (Middle East Africa), in sequential order. It is expected that the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region would witness significant growth throughout the predicted time period, principally driven by the increasing economies of APAC nations.

#### **The Topic of Discussion Pertains to Amritsar.**

Amritsar, previously recognized as Ramdasapur, is a municipality located in the north-western territory of India. The city of Amritsar in the state of Punjab functions as the administrative hub for the Amritsar district.

Based on the census statistics from 2011, the population of Amritsar was documented as 1,132,761 inhabitants. The city is located at a distance of 217 kilometers in the northwest direction from the state capital, Chandigarh. The geographical area under consideration is situated in close vicinity to the Pakistan Border, more specifically known as the Wagah Border, at an approximate distance of 28 kilometers from the urban center of Amritsar. The nearest major center is Lahore, located 50 km to the west, and it holds the distinction of being the second largest city in Pakistan.

Amritsar is widely recognized for its historical connection with Harmandir Sahib, sometimes referred to as the Golden Temple, which holds a prominent position as the primary religious and cultural center for the Sikh community. The Golden Temple, a significant Sikh temple of devotion, attracts a larger number of tourists in comparison to the Taj Mahal. The place in question attracts a significant number of visitors, with a weekday footfall over 150,000 individuals. This indicates a high level of popularity and visitation. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that this particular site is highly preferred by non-resident Indians (NRIs) residing in India. Furthermore, the city houses the Akal Takht, a prominent institution of temporal authority for the Khalsa, along with the committee responsible for the upkeep and conservation of Gurudwaras.

The economic sectors in Amritsar are mostly focused on tourism, carpets and fabrics, agricultural products, handicrafts, service industries, and light engineering. The urban center is widely recognized for its lavish gastronomic options, lively cultural legacy, and the notorious Jallianwala Bagh massacre that transpired in 1919 within the period of British imperial domination. Amritsar has been officially declared as one of the heritage cities as part of the HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana) scheme, which was started by the Government of India.

#### **The Study Aims to Identify and Analyze The Specific Objectives That Guide The Research.**

1. To assess the gastronomic potential in the city of Amritsar
2. The objective of this study is to validate the characteristics that underlie the selection of culinary preferences among tourists in Amritsar.
3. The objective of this study is to examine the various elements that contribute to the long-term viability and success of gourmet tourism in the city of Amritsar.

#### **The Significance of Food in Human Existence**

The preservation of gastronomic history has been effectively enhanced by the efforts of UNESCO, which has actively promoted the universal significance of cultural landscapes, including those associated with food, that have been officially recognized and included in the World history List. Furthermore, it is worth noting that UNESCO has officially acknowledged the significance of culinary and traditional food practices as manifestations of intangible cultural heritage. These practices have been duly included in the prestigious Intangible Heritage List curated by UNESCO. In addition, UNESCO has played an active role in advocating for the recognition of gastronomy as a separate and unique category within the Creative Cities network. The Council of Europe has played a proactive role in the promotion of many European Cultural Routes, including initiatives such as the Olive Oil Route and Iter Vitis - the Ways of the Wine. These itineraries not only emphasize cultural features but also integrate gastronomic heritage as a substantial element. In accordance with the findings of UNESCO (2014), the culinary field has experienced a significant and profound transformation with the official recognition and support from the organization.

#### **The Emergence and Development of Gastronomic Tourism in India**

Gastronomic tourism, as defined by the World Food Travel Association (WFTA), encompasses the purposeful and enjoyable participation in distinctive and extraordinary food and beverage encounters, regardless of their proximity or remoteness. The importance of a

destination's culinary offerings, as demonstrated via its portrayal. The research on Food Tourism conducted by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation reveals that a significant proportion, namely over one-third, of visitor expenditures are dedicated to gastronomic experiences. The high salivary reaction in individuals is not only elicited by the awe-inspiring vistas, but also by the wonderful flavours. In conjunction with the captivating appeal of India's rich cultural past, there is a growing inclination among travellers to delve into the country's gastronomic customs. There is a growing trend among modern travellers to actively pursue the integration of two distinct yet captivating experiences, namely the act of travelling and the exploration of gastronomy. A multitude of culinary expeditions are presently being organised throughout the country, offering vacationers enduring gourmet encounters.

These excursions involve a wide range of culinary encounters, including dining at esteemed institutions, immersing oneself in lively food markets, experiencing local cuisines, and embarking on gastronomic expeditions lead by a proficient chef. Presently, there exists an increasing tendency among individuals who travel to actively participate in and deeply involve themselves in the indigenous culture of a particular urban area, as opposed to adopting a passive stance of solely visiting tourist sites.

The tourism sector in India is of considerable economic significance and is seeing substantial growth. Based on projections provided by The World Travel & Tourism Council, the tourism industry made a significant contribution of INR 7.4 trillion, which accounted for around 7.6% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the year 2016. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention that this specific industry has generated job prospects for roughly 40.5 million persons, constituting approximately 7.9% of the total employment statistics. Based on forecasts, it is expected that the sector would see a compound annual growth rate of 7.9% from 2013 to 2023. Based on the findings of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2012), it is anticipated that India will attain the third position in terms of the fastest-growing tourism industries among countries in the next decade. In 2011, India experienced a significant increase in the number of international tourists, totaling six million. This achievement resulted in India being acknowledged as the "world's leading destination" at the prestigious World Travel Awards in 2012. The adoption of the 'Incredible India' campaign and the aggressive efforts taken by various state tourism agencies have led to a notable increase in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India. India has emerged as a significant contender in the international tourism sector, attracting tourists from both non-traditional and traditional source markets. The

present article from Travel Biz Monitor critically analyses the upward trajectory of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India and the concomitant revenue earned over the past several years.

### **Punjabi Cuisine**

The culinary customs of Punjab, a geographically expansive territory including both India and Pakistan, exhibit a strong association with Punjabi food. The culinary practices of the area demonstrate certain similarities with the gastronomic customs of Kashmir and other neighboring places. The culinary traditions of Punjabi cuisine demonstrate a notable degree of diversity and encompass several geographical variations. The culinary customs of the region are influenced by the enduring agricultural practices and rural lifestyle that have defined Punjab for a significant period of time. The gastronomic practices in question are upheld by the cultivation of locally procured staple crops. The majority of the prominent elements observed in Indian food, as it is presented to individuals who do not have Indian heritage, may be attributed to the Punjab region. The aforementioned elements encompass tandoor, naan, pakora, and vegetable meals that prominently showcase paneer. In the rural communities of Punjab, it is customary to utilize animal fats in the culinary preparation of meals. While Punjabi cuisine preparations are widely consumed in other regions of India and Pakistan, there are some food items that are exclusive to the Punjab region. Some examples of traditional Punjabi dishes are sarson da saag, tandoori chicken, and makki di roti. Rice, wheat, and dairy products are among the staple foods frequently ingested by individuals. The components utilized in this culinary preparation consist of clarified butter, sunflower oil, paneer, and butter.

### **Amritsari and Punjabi Food - A Culinary Journey:**

Amritsari food and Punjabi food are both celebrated regional cuisines in India, originating from the Punjab region, which stretches across northern India and Pakistan. These cuisines are known for their rich and robust flavors, generous use of spices, dairy products, and a diverse range of dishes. Let's explore these cuisines from various angles:

*Cultural Significance:* Both Amritsari and Punjabi cuisines are deeply rooted in the culture and traditions of Punjab. They represent the heart and soul of Punjabi identity and hospitality.

*Ingredients and Preparation:* These cuisines often feature fresh and locally sourced ingredients, including an array of spices like cumin, coriander, turmeric, and red chili, which create the distinctive flavors.

Wheat is the primary grain in Punjab, giving rise to staples like roti (unleavened flatbread), paratha (stuffed or spiced flatbread), and various breads.

*Use of Dairy:* Punjab, often referred to as the "Land of Milk and Butter," places great emphasis on dairy products like ghee (clarified butter), butter, and yogurt in cooking and as condiments.

*Vegetarian and Non-Vegetarian Offerings:* Both cuisines offer a wide range of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. Vegetarian favorites include saag (mustard greens), paneer (Indian cottage cheese), and various dals (lentil dishes), while non-vegetarian options feature chicken, mutton, and fish.

*Tandoori Cooking:* The tandoor, a cylindrical clay oven, is a hallmark of Punjabi cuisine. Tandoori dishes like tandoori chicken, naan (leavened flatbread), and kebabs are cooked in this oven, imparting a unique smoky flavor.

*Street Food Culture:* Both Amritsari and Punjabi cuisines have vibrant street food cultures. Street vendors offer a variety of snacks and quick bites, showcasing the diversity and deliciousness of these cuisines.

*Festive and Celebratory:* Meals in Amritsari and Punjabi cultures are often associated with celebrations, and lavish spreads are prepared during festivals, weddings, and special occasions.

*Community Dining:* Community dining is a significant part of both Amritsari and Punjabi traditions. Sharing meals with family and friends fosters a sense of togetherness.

*Global Influence:* These cuisines have gained international popularity, with Indian restaurants worldwide featuring Punjabi dishes. The global Punjabi diaspora has contributed to the preservation and evolution of these culinary traditions.

### **Famous Dishes from Punjabi Cuisine:**

*Butter Chicken (Murgh Makhani):* A creamy tomato-based curry with tender chicken.

*Tandoori Chicken:* Marinated chicken cooked in a tandoor, known for its smoky flavor.

*Paneer Tikka:* Grilled or tandoori-marinated paneer cubes.

*Chole Bhature:* Spicy chickpea curry served with deep-fried bread.

*Dal Makhani:* Creamy lentil dish slow-cooked with butter and cream.

*Sarson da Saag and Makki di Roti:* Mustard greens curry with maize flatbread.

*Aloo Paratha:* Stuffed flatbreads with spiced potatoes.

*Punjabi Samosa:* Deep-fried pastries filled with potato and spices.

*Rogan Josh:* Flavorful lamb curry with aromatic spices.

*Punjabi Lassi:* Refreshing yogurt-based drink.

Both Amritsari and Punjabi cuisines offer a flavorful journey through the cultural and culinary heritage of the Punjab region. These cuisines are celebrated for their rich traditions, robust flavors, and their ability to bring people together in the spirit of warmth and hospitality.

### **Definition**

Food and culinary tourism can be described as the active engagement in the exploration and indulgence of distinctive and enduring gastronomic encounters. Culinary tourism provides both local residents and tourists with an opportunity to authentically experience the unique flavours of our abundant province by incorporating travel with these gastronomic encounters.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted just using the data obtained from a survey with a restricted scope and range.

The study pertained to the current market situation, and the perspectives, evaluations, and forecasts of the participants may vary based on temporal factors, social standing, cognitive state, and geographic location.

### **The Impact of Amritsari Cuisine on Gastronomic Tourism in Its Early Stages**

The district of Amritsar in the state of Punjab is widely recognised for its gastronomy, cultural heritage, and historical significance. Amritsar possesses an extensive infrastructure of public transit and communication. Several prominent towns within the district include Ajnala, Baba Bakala, and Majitha, among others.

Amritsar's tourism mostly caters to visitors with a keen interest in cultural exploration, ancient civilizations, spirituality, and significant historical events. Harmandir Sahib is well recognised as a prominent spiritual destination, attracting a substantial number of pilgrims and tourists on a daily basis, estimated to exceed 100,000 individuals (Lonely Planet, 2008). According to the India tourism statistics for the year 2017, Punjab experienced a notable increase of 18% in the number of domestic visitor arrivals over the year of 2016-2017. In 2017, the number of international tourist arrivals was recorded at 1,108,635. Share of Top 10 States/UTs of India in Number of Foreign Tourist Visits in 2019



Rank	State/UT	Foreign Tourist Visits (2019)	Percentage Share
1	Tamil Nadu	6,850,000	18.2%
2	Maharashtra	5,150,000	13.7%
3	Uttar Pradesh	4,730,000	12.6%
4	Delhi	4,490,000	11.9%
5	Rajasthan	3,870,000	10.3%
6	Kerala	3,690,000	9.8%
7	Goa	3,290,000	8.7%
8	Gujarat	2,030,000	5.4%
9	West Bengal	1,740,000	4.6%
10	Madhya Pradesh	1,040,000	2.8%
11	Punjab	310,000	0.8%

Source: State/ UT Tourism Departments

In Punjab a rapid increase in tourists is noticed from 2016 (Punjab tourism statistics, 2022)

**Year-wise Tourist Visits in Punjab**

Year	Tourist Visits to Amritsar (in lakhs)	Tourist Visits to Punjab (excluding Amritsar) (in lakhs)	Percentage Change for Amritsar	Percentage Change for Punjab (excluding Amritsar)
2015	29.50	1,550.00	-	-
2016	31.00	1,556.00	+5.08%	+0.39%
2017	32.50	1,583.00	+4.84%	+1.74%
2018	34.20	1,589.00	+5.23%	+0.38%
2019	35.70	1,625.00	+4.38%	+2.27%

Source- <http://punjabtourism.gov.in/Punjab.html#/StatisticsSurveys>

This table provides a consolidated view of tourist visits to both Amritsar and the rest of Punjab for the specified years, along with the percentage changes over the years. The popularity of Amritsar Food is growing leaps and bounds especially because of the rising number of Punjabi immigrants. Canada & United Kingdom are now known as an extension of Punjab and there is growing influence of Punjabi Culture in these regions whether it’s relating to music or food. Punjabi food is relished not only by NRI’s but even the foreigners.

**Amritsari Food yn Social- Anthropoligal Perspective**

Amritsari food is a popular and distinctive cuisine from the city of Amritsar in the Indian state of Punjab. Examining

Amritsari food from a social and anthropological perspective provides insights into the cultural, historical, and social aspects that have shaped this cuisine. Here are some key points to consider:

*Cultural Significance:* Amritsari food is deeply rooted in the culture of Punjab, reflecting the traditions and way of life of the people in this region. It’s an integral part of Punjabi identity and is often associated with warmth, hospitality, and celebration.

*Ingredients and Preparation:* The cuisine is known for its use of fresh and locally sourced ingredients. It typically includes generous amounts of dairy products, spices, and wheat-based products. Common ingredients include ghee (clarified butter), paneer (Indian cottage cheese), various dals (lentils), and a variety of spices.

*Community and Sharing:* Food in Amritsari culture plays a central role in fostering a sense of community and togetherness. Meals are often shared with family and friends, and large gatherings with feasts are common during festivals, weddings, and other special occasions.

*Religious Influences:* Amritsar is home to the Golden Temple, one of the holiest Sikh shrines. The langar (community kitchen) at the Golden Temple serves free meals to thousands of visitors daily, emphasizing the Sikh values of equality and community service. This religious influence has shaped the culture of sharing and providing food to those in need.

*Street Food Culture:* Amritsari cuisine is renowned for its street food. Dishes like Amritsari kulcha, chole bhature, and various types of kebabs are popular street food items. Street food vendors are often seen as a symbol of entrepreneurship and contribute to the local economy.

*Gender Roles:* Traditionally, women in Punjab play a significant role in the preparation of meals. Cooking is seen as an essential skill, and family recipes are passed down from one generation to the next. However, changing societal dynamics have also led to shifts in gender roles, with more men taking an interest in cooking.

*Global Influence:* Amritsari cuisine has gained popularity worldwide, with Indian restaurants featuring these dishes in many countries. The global diaspora has contributed to the preservation and evolution of these culinary traditions.

*Economic Aspects:* The food industry in Amritsar, including restaurants, street food vendors, and agricultural production, has a significant economic impact. It provides employment opportunities and supports the livelihoods of many residents.

*Health Considerations:* The high use of dairy and fats in Amritsari cuisine has health implications. It’s essential to consider how dietary choices impact public health and the changing patterns of diet and lifestyle.

*Changing Food Practices:* Like many other regions, Amritsari food practices have evolved over time due to



urbanization, globalization, and changing lifestyles. Fast food and processed foods have become more prevalent alongside traditional dishes.

In conclusion, studying Amritsari food from a social and anthropological perspective reveals a rich tapestry of culture, tradition, and community values. Food is not just sustenance; it is a reflection of history, identity, and the evolving dynamics of society. Understanding Amritsari cuisine in this context helps us appreciate its significance beyond the plate.

### **The Mega Kitchen in the Golden Temple is a Notable Culinary Establishment.**

The urban hub of Amritsar is home to the Golden Temple, which is often referred to as Harmandir Sahib. The mentioned establishment is of great importance as a Gurdwara and is highly esteemed as a site of sanctity within the Sikh community. The edifice was initially constructed in the year 1604, followed by a further rebuild in 1764.

Individuals are afforded the opportunity to engage in gratis meals at this particular establishment, with the average individual being capable of availing themselves of this service. The Golden Temple, situated in the city of Amritsar in western India, is notable for its provision of a complimentary dining facility that caters to a substantial number of individuals each day. This undertaking entails the distribution of 200,000 Indian flatbreads, 17 quintals of lentils, and lunches for 150,000 individuals. Significantly, on weekends, the quantity of individuals receiving benefits rises to 250,000, whilst prominent festivals such as Bhasaki, Diwali, and Gurburab experience a notable increase in the number of receivers, reaching one million. Several elements contribute to the distinctive operation of the free kitchen located at the Golden Temple. The langar, a communal meal practised in Sikhism, is a perpetually ongoing activity in which a significant amount of food is cooked on a daily basis. On average, the culinary process involves the utilisation of roughly 150 quintals of wheat flour, 16 quintals of rice, 17 to 30 quintals of lentils, and 800 kg of ghee, which is a form of clarified butter. The Mega Kitchen consistently offers complimentary meals to hospitals and orphanage homes located within District Amritsar.

### **Daily consumption of raw material at golden temple kitchen**

Sr. No.	Material	Quantity
1	Dal	17 quintals on week days 30 quintals on week ends
2	Onion	25 kg / quintal
3	Atta	150 quintal- 2lac rotis
4	Rice	16 quintals
5	Vegetables	20 quintals
6	Milk	1500 ltr
7	Tea	2500 to 3000 ltr
8	Masala	5 kg / quintal
9	Ghee	800 kg

*Source- Field survey*

The kitchen facility employs a combination of firewood, LPG gas and electronic bread machines for the cooking process. It is estimated that the facility consumes around 100 LPG cylinders and 7,000 kilogrammes of firewood on a daily basis. The kitchen is overseen by a crew consisting of 550 personnel, who receive support from a considerable number of supplementary volunteers.

Furthermore, volunteers are responsible for the work of sanitising the 300,000 plates, forks, and bowls that are utilised in order to facilitate the provision of nourishment to individuals. The culinary offerings are limited to vegetarian options, and the financial sustainability is reliant on contributions received from a worldwide network of supporters.

### **The Present Study Aims to Identify and Analyse The Popular Street Food Outlets in Amritsar, A City Renowned for Its Culinary Traditions.**

Name of Outlet	Specialty
Giani tea stall	Tea
Makhan da dhaba	Fish amritsari
Sunder meat shop	Mutton
Ahuja's Kesar Wali Lassi	Lassi
Beera Chicken	Chicken
Adarsh Meat Shop	Mutton Chaap
Kanha Sweets	Pinni
Pick n move	Mutton tikka with gravy and kulcha

*Source- Field survey*

### The Amritsari Cuisine is Renowned for Its Assortment of Popular Dishes.

Street Food	Beverages & Cold Desserts	Non-Vegetarian	Vegetarian	Sweets
Tawa puri Nutri kulcha Alloo kulcha Bhija kulcha Pokare kulche Bhutere choole Satpura Matti cholle Lucchi	Lassi Phirni Kheer Kulfifalooda Fruit cream	Butter chicken Fish Amritsar Chamber chicken Chicken tikka Fish tikka Sari Khorare Poot kalaji Tawa chicken Tandoori chicken Mutton tikka with gravy	Dal Amritsari Amritsari Aloo-wadi Dal Fry Makki Di Roti-Sarsonsaag Kadipakoda Chana Masala	Motichoor Ladoo Khjoor Mung dal halwa Gajjar halwa Patisa

Source- Field survey

### Research Methodology

The research design employed in this study is characterised by an analytical approach, focused on gathering factual information. The research methodology mostly relies on qualitative techniques. The collection of primary data involves the utilisation of questionnaires and personal interviews as methods to get comprehensive information from both visitors and staff members of specific food establishments. The objective is to obtain extensive insights on the unique meals offered and the potential appeal to tourists in relation to the cuisine being served at these establishments.

Secondary data is obtained by accessing a range of online sources, including websites, culinary journals, magazines, and newspapers. The examination of marketing strategies employed by various food establishments include the analysis of their routine and promotional menus, brochures, websites, banners, and print and electronic media advertisements. The data gathering device for this study includes a meticulously designed questionnaire. The interview questions are designed in a manner that elicits relevant responses regarding the extent and nature of the influence of Amritsar's cuisine on tourists during their visit to the city.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be inferred that...

Street food plays a significant role in gastronomic tourism, a form of travel when individuals purposefully visit different destinations to indulge in and appreciate the distinct culinary delicacies drawn from the local area. The international acclaim that Amritsar has garnered for its street cuisine establishes it as a highly appealing

location for culinary tourism. Tourists commonly exhibit a notable level of contentment with the indigenous street food offerings, particularly with regards to esteemed local specialties like as tawa puri, alloo kulcha, nutri kulcha, amritsari machhi, kulche-chhole, chole-bhature, lassi, and various confectioneries.

Amritsar should undertake requisite measures to accommodate the prospective growth of culinary tourism by improving its infrastructure in terms of public transit, accommodations, healthcare facilities, and dining establishments like restaurants, food stalls, and dhabas. Furthermore, it is imperative that the focus be placed on the allocation of resources towards the establishment of public amenities such as Sulabh Shauchalya, efficient drainage systems, and enhanced hygienic practices, with the aim of conforming to global benchmarks.

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# Influence of Social Media on Travelers: A Conceptual Analysis

Nitesh Goyal, Geetanjali Thakur & Arun Singh Thakur

## Abstract

*Social media and web are two emerging technologies which has reshaped the way of living. Our lives are predominated by internet. Social media has gained a substantial popularity in online traveling. This study aims to provide a conceptual analysis on prior research work done on social media's influence on travelers and also provide a scope for further researchers. The social media websites assist consumers in sharing and posting travel related experiences and opinions which serve as information for others. The results of the study indicated that, consumers depend upon the experiences shared by others before planning a trip and most used websites for online traveling is tripadvisor.com. The findings also suggest that consumer now prefer online travelling application for travel as they entice customers' friendly package deals and cost-saving solutions. The reports also suggested that the size of the global internet travel market was estimated to be 433 billion US dollars in the year 2022 and 691 billion US dollars by 2026 and two-thirds of the worldwide travel and tourism market's revenue as of 2021 came from online sales channels.*

**Keywords:** Social Media, Travelers, Online Websites, Tourists, Experiences

## Introduction

The evolution of internet has fundamentally reshaped the way of living. Social media and web has brought pervasive change in business all around the world. Social media has the greatest impact on people. Our daily lives are predominated by social media. In this era of technology, social media has become a participatory platform where people share information, experiences and opinions. In recent years, two "mega trends" have emerged on internet namely, social media websites and search engines (Xiang & Gretzel, 2009). These social media websites include various forms of consumer generated content such as blogs, reels, collaborating projects etc shared on sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter. Boyd & Ellison, 2008 defined social media sites as "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system". On the other hand search engines provide

generous information within few seconds. Search engines have become a powerful gateway for providing abundant information according to consumer needs. The usage of social media and search engine is increasing at an alarming rate. These websites influence the consumer in one or another way. Now days, these social media websites have become an emerging platforms for sharing views, or reviewing things before actually buying them. Social media has gained substantial popularity in online travelers too. As many of these social websites assist consumers to post and share their travel related comments, experiences, opinions which further serve as information for others.

Within a short span of time, social media platform has gained a lot of popularity and consumer base and has become an ideal platform for the tourism industry and travelers. Social media sites have become an important center for collecting information to plan trips (Zeng & Gerristen, 2014). The travelers get insight knowledge about the place or ambience before the trip. Sometimes, social media sites also create curiosity to visit a certain

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place which was not planned earlier. Consumers, now a day’s depend upon the experience of the other travelers to plan for vacation. The people evaluates the consumers rating giving by travelers and then plan a trip.

Consumers, are likely to plan their own vacations, particularly through OTAs( Online Travelling Agencies). These internet businesses enable customers to make reservations comfortably from their homes and frequently entice customers with package deals and cost-saving solutions. As a result, many travelers now book their vacations online instead of through conventional brick-and-mortar travel firms. Two-thirds of the worldwide travel and tourism market’s revenue as of 2021 came from online sales channels. The size of the global internet travel market was estimated to be 433 billion US dollars of 2021, and 691 billion US dollars by 2026 (Statista Research Department, 2022).

Another internet travel company that has risen rapidly in recent years is Airbnb, which operates an online marketplace for holiday rentals with a focus on home stays. The gross booking value of Airbnb reservations globally reached a peak in 2021 of around 47 billion dollars (Statista Research Department, 2022).

The tourism sector generates huge revenue to every country. The highest revenue in tourism sector of 2023 is of US \$ 190 billion followed by China and Germany (Statistic Research department, 2023). France receives the most visitors from throughout the world (Global connect, 2022). In terms of travel and tourism, India is placed tenth out of 185 nations in 2019 by the World Travel and Tourism Council. A total of 39 million workers, or 8% of all occupations in India in 2020, were employed in the tourist industry. The travel and tourism sector contributed \$178 billion to the GDP in 2021; this amount is predicted to rise to \$512 billion by 2028 (IBEF, 2023). Bangladesh accounted for the biggest percentage of international visitors to India in 2022 (24.89%), followed by the United States, the United Kingdom,

and Australia (India Tourism Statistics, 2022).

A survey found that the travel business had a greater average interaction rate with brand posts on Instagram last year than the fashion industry. Additionally, social media marketing was identified as the most significant digital transformation issue among hotels in Europe in 2022 (Statista Research Department,, 2023). The most popular travel and tourist websites were booking.com, tripadvisor.com, and airbnb.com (Statista Research Department, 2023).

This paper had made an attempt to evaluate the past literature on social media usage with reference to tourism and its influence on travelers. The authors have tried to provide a conceptual analysis on influence of social media on travelers.

**Review of Literature**

This section provides insight details about the previous work done on influence and usage of social media with reference to tourism sector and travelers.

Social media is extensively used by everyone for sharing their views, opinions and life experience. Currently, social media has become one of the ways to earn money, many people now a day’s earn their livelihood through social media websites. Social media has great influence on travelers while planning for holiday trip (Yuan et al., 2022). It has been reported that 69 % of world’s population use social media for tourism (Manyever & Kurger, 2019). Also, 8 % leisure travel use internet to plan a trip. Social media act as guide or approver for travelers (Liu et al., 2020). This information provided on websites act as a primary motivation for travelers. Social media allows user to share user generated content and it is highly referred by travelers before actually visiting to the place. Few authors have developed models to study the effect of social media on travelers

**Table 1 Variable Adoption in Past Literature**

Author (s)	Objective	Population And Sample Size	Model/ Theory	Variables
Martin et al., 2020	To examines the influence of economic, social, physical, and technological attributes on tourism	Spain 382	Social Exchange Theory	Extrinsic variable ( perceived economic, social, technological and perceived physical value) and Intrinsic value ( experience, anxiety and risk)
Sakshi et al., 2020	To analyze the determinants of actual social media (SM) usage for travel planning	North India 561	TAM MODEL	Technological Convenience, Perceived Risk, Perceived Risk, Media Relation, Trust, Perceived Ease Of , Perceived Usefulness, Behavioral Intention And Actual Usage
Muslim et al., 2020	The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of social media on attitudes and behavioral intentions towards Umrah package among generation X and Y	Malaysia (muslim), 384		Social Media Experience (Interaction And Sharing Of Content), Attitude And Behavioral Intention

Bilgihan et al., 2016	To develop a theoretical model that tests the precursors of intention to share knowledge behaviors in the context of OSNs	USA 322		Perceived Ease Of Use, Utilitarian Benefits, Subjective Norms, Belief In Integrity, Switching Cost, Intention To Share Knowledge
Chung & Koo, 2015	To examine the travel information searches using social media as a new search behavior from a value perspective	695 Korea	VAM (value based model)	Benefits (Information & Reliability), Sacrifice ( Complexity And Effort), Perceived Value And Social Media Usage
Aluri et al., 2015	to examine the effectiveness of embedded social media channels on hotel websites and their influence on traveler behavior	434 US	User and gratification approach	Perceived Enjoyment, Perceived Informativeness, Perceived Social Interaction , Satisfaction And Purchase Intention
Nusair et al., 2012	To evaluate Generation Y users’ social interaction with online social networks (OSNs)	US 515		Information Sharing, Social Interaction, Innovativeness, Perceived Risk And Perceived Utility, Social Interactions, Loyalty And Trust ,
Jeong , 2004	The study examined one actual B&B Web site in a Midwestern area and identified antecedent variables of customers’ behavioral intentions to use a B&B Web	Mid eastern state of US, 123		Information Need, Web Site Quality, Satisfaction, Behavioral Intention

The study done by Chung & koo, 2015 used VAM (value based adoption model) which examined the travel information searches using social media in Korea. The study revealed that benefits have positive and significant influence on travel information search whereas that perceived sacrifices were the major barrier to social media. The factors which influence consumer’s value perception were perceived enjoyment. Perceived enjoyment also had positive impact on perceived ease of use (Sakshi et al., 2020). Respondents were also satisfied with the information provided by websites which lead to increase in behavioral intention too (Jeong, 2004). Room location and reputation also affect the respondent’s satisfaction. Aluri et al., 2015 indicated that perceived informativeness and perceived enjoyment had the major role in improving travelers purchase intention; people were satisfied with website which lead to have positive impact on purchase intention; respondents who used hotel websites embed with social media has positive had higher level of satisfaction than others. It was also found that, people trusted more on the recommendation given by their friend and family (McCarthy et al.,2010, Fabricius & Eriksson, 2017) and positive word of mouth is the major factor which influenceinf factor for people to visit a particular destination (McCarthy et al.,2010; kiralova et al., 2015; Zivlovic et al., 2014; Leung et al., 2013). Nusair et al., 2012 conducted study on generation Y (17-30years) of America and resulted that they were highly active and engaged on social media sites for online travel information search and considered innovativeness in technology as the most important criteria in social interaction but perceived risk had negative influence on social usage the results of this study were in line with the result of work of

Martin et al., 2020. Perceived risk also had negative impact on behavioral intention and trust (Sakshi et al., 2020). It was also found that there exists a high correlation between influences of social to the changes made in holiday plans (fotis el al., 2011) The individual prefer different sources for planning a business and leisure trips (McCarthy et al.,2010). As 40 % people select the same hotel for business trips as recommended by organization but for leisure trips they rely more on the recommendation given by peers and family. Further, social media is also used for different purpose at different phases of vacations. At pre trip phase of vacation, it is used for searching accommodation and attraction options, during trip used to locate a specific leisure attraction and post trip social media is used to share experiences, post photos and videos (Yuan et al., 2021). Jeong, 2004 reported that search engines were the most used method to find B&B sites whereas the result of study done by Xiang & Gretzel, 2009 were different and stated that people used Google for searching info related to travelling and 50 % of millenials referred to user generated content for travel information. Additionally study done by Muslim et al., 2019 on generation X and Y of Malaysia, reported that social media had no influence behavioral intention as people of this country were not familiar with the technology and they had more trust on advice given by their friend and family and most used online website for booking was Umarh travel due to their low prices packages. Martin et al., 2020 analyzed factor which affect online purchase intention of travelers

and reported that perceived social value had the largest impact on purchase intention, whereas negative emotion posted by other travelers lead to create anxiety among people which had negative impact on purchase intention. Further previous experiences and physical factors lead repeat purchases. Moreover, perceived economic value and perceived technological value has positive impact on electronic word of mouth.

Lastly there were few studies which stated that cash and credit will be mostly used in future for travel purpose (Singh & Ranjan, 2019) and internet and travelling agencies will be the priority in future for booking a trip. A study done by Munar et al., 2013 found that social media was not perceived as trustworthy information source but people highly trusted official hotel websites to search for information.

### **Effect of Cultural Difference in Decision Making Process**

The literature also provided few studies which did comparison between two nation and analyzed the behavior and decision making process of consumer of two different nation.

The travelers of Asia pacific region were more likely to share their experiences through blogs after their trips (Zivkovic et al., 2014). Majorly women's of Spain buy travel and tourism services online but Colldan et al., 2019 indicated that men were pre dominantly using social media in all areas, except for Paris.

Amaro & Duarte, 2017 indicated the culture of two different countries that is UK and Portugal. They found that Britishers tend to book trips online more often than Portuguese. The behavioral intention was almost similar in both countries towards social media. The only difference lies in search of information as Portuguese search for general information about place, attraction and activities whereas Britishers search for prices, amenities and hotel room. These differences were due the collectiveness, feminism and power distance. Law et al., 2008 studied travel website uses and cultural influence between China and US travelers, indicated that for Chinese quality of information and destination were main attribute on social media whereas functionality of website were considered by Americans. Moreover, Americans travelers had higher propensity to book a trip through travel websites. Lastly, Manyevere & Kruger, 2019 examined the influence of social sites on trip decision making process. The study results were as follows; Roman people used YouTube for planning a trip and millennial generation US preferred Instagram; whereas people of turkey were influenced by personal experience comments, opinions of other travels posted on social media sites.

### **Top Rated Websites By Travelers**

It was found that 94 % websites of hotel were linked to atleast one social media websites (Aluri et al., 2015) and approximately 50 % people downloaded travel application to search for destination (Zivkovic et al.,

2014). The most preferred social media websites site for information search were Facebook, twitter and YouTube (Manyevere & Kruger, 2019, Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016; Ana & Istudor, 2019; Kiralova & Pavlicecka, 2015). People also trusted and relied on the blogs, live experience posted by people to plan a trip (Pabel & Prideaux, 2016; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010, Zivkovic et al., 2014) and many a times people changed their plans after reading the reviews, opinions and photos posted on social media by other travelers (Muslim et al., 2019; Kiralova & Pavlicecka, 2015). Further, the top rated website which is accessed by almost every individual for planning a trip is Tripadvisor.com (Amaro & Duatre, 2016; Mccarthy et al., 2010; Kiralova & Pavlicecka, 2015; Manyevere & Kruger, 2019; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010, Manyevere & Kruger, 2019; Pabel & Prideaux, 2016). These social media websites are used to get information related to prices, amenities, pictures (Liu et al., 2020) and B&B official websites are accessed only to know about the property. The other sites which people also used are iqougo.com (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), Agoda (Decena & Delfin, 2022), Wechat, sinoweibo and Ctrip and during the vacation goggle maps were used to search for attraction in the destination (Zivkovic et al., 2014). It was also highlighted that time response factor was a crucial factor in deciding whether an individual will use the website again or not. The consumers preferred these websites due their easy minimalistic design and the factors which affect customer's satisfaction were customer rating and reviews, payment convenience and image quality of destination. Lastly, the authors also suggested that hotel websites should be upgraded and updated with latest technology to have more consumer base (Aluri et al., 2015).

### **Findings of The Study**

The above analysis of literature indicated that, social media had great impact on choice of travelers while planning a trip. The usage of social media for dismantling information related to search for destination or planning a trip is not new. Zeng & Gerristen, 2014, opined that the trend of using social media platforms for tourism industry got its popularity after 2010. The most used websites by travelers is tripadvisor.com followed by official websites of destination. The consumers' rely more on the information shared by other travelers and plan their trips according to ratings and reviews given (Narangajavana et al., 2017; Sakshi et al., 2020). 68% of global respondent trust consumer opinions posted online but people also have rely on word of mouth of their friends and family (Kiralova & Pavlicecka, 2014).

It was found that people are satisfied with information provided by websites. The factor which had positive impact are perceived enjoyment and perceived informativeness on purchase intention but perceived risk and negative emotion had negative impact on choice of



travelers. In the study of Sakshi et al., 2020, technology convenience had the highest impact on PEOU towards actual use of social media for travel planning. In Malaysia, social media had no influence on behavioral intention of travelers whereas millennial of US highly used social media to search for travel information. It was also found that young generations are more active during trip on social media platforms than older generation. Furthermore, the major factor which had positive impact on behavior of consumers was advice given by family and friend and positive word of mouth related to the destination.

Different people have different behavior towards social media for travel purpose. The business travelers always prefer companies' recommendation whereas, leisure travelers will follow suggestions and recommendations given by their close ones (Narangajavana et al., 2017). Additionally, for consumers image of destination is a deciding factor for finalizing the place. The image of destination is affected by user generated content (UGC) (Riera et al., 2015). Narangajavana et al., 2017, also concluded that people make UGC to socialize and create relation only.

Moreover, the cultural differences were also observed. Romans used YouTube to plan trips, us people referred to Instagram and people of turkey relied on comments and reviews posted by others travelers; Britishers tend to books trips more often than Portuguese; Americans had higher tendency to book trip through social media website than Chinese; Chinese considered quality where American considered functionality of social media website and for Russians, social media act as an inspiration to plan next holiday trip (Fotis et al., 2011).

The study of Fotis et al., 2011, resulted that social media is most preferred or used after the trip or vacation for sharing their experiences. The findings of study Fotis et al., 2011 and in line with study done by Riera et al., 2015 which also stated that UGC is most trusted than tourism websites, travel agency and advertisements. The social media is used for different purpose while planning the trip. For example, before trip, consumer gather ideas about places to visit and narrow down their choices, while during the trip it is used only to stay connected with their family and friends and post trip it is used to post pictures and their experiences (Fotis et al., 2011).

The usage of social media website by travelers is due to their ease of use, convenience, shared reviews and rating by other travelers.

### Conclusion and Future Scope

This paper has studied the influence of social media on travelers. It was revealed that usage of social media is increasing day by day for different purposes. Social media websites have become a platform for travelers to

share their views, experiences of places travelled. These posts serve as information of new travelers. Social media is the most important source for gathering information related to destination or planning a trip.

The social media has great influence on traveler's choice while planning a vacation. Perceived enjoyment and informativeness and positive impact on social media usage but perceived risk and negative emotion were barriers in social media usage. People were satisfied with the information provided by travelling application due their ease of use. The UGC, exerts a influence or motivated people to visit a new place.

Lastly, people lives are predominated by these social media for different purposes. The social media give a 360 degree view about travel places in advance to consumers.

The future research could be conducted on the following topics. Firstly, study based on conceptual and theoretical model to know impact of social media on consumers. Secondly, a comparative study on online travelling modes and offline mode of booking a trip. Thirdly, a comparative study may be conducted between hotels and airbnb options of different nations.

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