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# PROGRESS AND EMERGING ISSUES IN CULINARY TOURISM: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUNJAB

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**Karan Berry**

*Assistant Professor, School of Hospitality & Tourism, Bahra University, Distt. Solan, Himachal Pradesh, (India). Email: karanberry@ymail.com*

## ABSTRACT

*Culinary tourism or food tourism is experiencing the food of the country, region or area, and is now considered a vital component of the tourism experience. Dining out is common among tourists and “food is believed to rank alongside climate, accommodation, and scenery” in importance to tourists. A high percentage of travellers, consider dining and food as relevant activities during their travel (McKercher, Bob, Okumus, Fevzi and Okumus, Bendegul, 2008). Local food holds much potential to enhance sustainability in tourism; contribute to the authenticity of the destination; strengthen the local economy; and provide for the environment friendly infrastructure. Destination marketing campaigns around the world show that there is a strong connection between tourism and food.*

*Many players in the Indian food business are expanding their arena, to cater to the increasing demand of culinary tourists. There are several specialized tour operators taking care of culinary tourism market. Government is also taking initiatives to promote culinary tourism through various campaigns like the ‘Dabba’ project to give tourists the taste of Indian cuisine.*

*The research methodology used is an in depth literature study on the topic and survey through a well-structured questionnaire. The paper concludes with the present scenario of Culinary tourism along-with suggestions for improving and expanding this sector in Punjab.*

**Keywords:** *Culinary Tourism, Food, Tourist, Punjab*

## Introduction

Culinary or food tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences (WFTA, 2013). Culinary tourism, also referred to as gastronomic or wine and food tourism, is a niche area of tourism studies that has grown rapidly in recent years in terms of tourism research and education (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

*Department of Hotel Management, BIT-Mesra, Ranchi-835215*

The trend of culinary tourism rose to particular prominence in 2001, but many tourists participated in it before this time.

If a person wants the best steak they may travel to Texas, the best barbeque in Louisiana and no visit to New York city would be complete without sampling a piece of New York style pizza. Overseas, a trip to Singapore wouldn't be complete without sampling Singapore chilli crab, butter chicken in India, chicken stay in Malaysia, peking duck in China, sushi in Japan, quesadilla in Mexico, Maori cooked hangi in New Zealand and the best pasta would require a trip to Italy, of course. The list is endless when it comes to culinary tourism (Benjamin, 2010).

A culinary tour may include different activities like visiting restaurants, street food stalls, food festivals and attending cooking classes. Any country with a rich local cuisine is a possible culinary tourism destination. China, for example, has numerous different styles of cooking popular in different provinces across the country. Countries particularly popular for culinary tourism include Thailand, Japan, France, Italy, China, Vietnam, the United States, and India.

### **Progress of India's Culinary Tourism**

India's popularity as a tourist destination is increasing. The hospitality of the Indians is legendary. In Sanskrit literature the three famous words 'AtithiDevoBhava' or 'The guest is truly your god' are a dictum of hospitality in India. Indians believe that they are honoured if they share their meal with their guests (Ancient history, 2012). Indian cuisine is considered to be one of the three great distinctive cuisines of the World, the other two being the Chinese & the French. Indian food has an unmatched charm because India is a land of diverse religions, customs, festivals, culinary flavors and climatic conditions. Each region has nurtured its own culinary tastes using different combination of spices & implying different methods of cooking.

Tourism industry of India is economically important and grows rapidly. The World Travel & Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated INR6.4 trillion or 6.6% of the nation's GDP in 2012. It supported 39.5 million jobs, 7.7% of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.9% from 2013 to 2023. This gives India the third rank among countries with the fastest growing tourism industries over the next decade (WTTC, 2012). In 2011 six million foreign tourists visited India, and the country was named 'the world's leading destination' at World Travel Awards 2012. The 'Incredible India' campaign and the efforts taken by individual state tourism boards have given a boost to Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in

the country. India has emerged as a strong player in the world tourism market, attracting travellers from new destinations along with the traditional source markets. TravelBiz Monitor presents the growth story of FTAs in India and the revenue earned from the same in the past few years.

**Table I: Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India**

Year	FTAs in India (in million)	Percentage (%) change over the previous year
2005	3.92	13.3
2006	4.45	13.5
2007	5.08	14.3
2008	5.28	4.0
2009	5.17	-2.2
2010	5.78	11.8
2011	6.31	9.2
2012	6.58	4.3
2013 (Jan-June) (P)	3.31	2.6@

(P) : Provisional, @ Growth rate over Jan-June, 2012.  
Source:(i) Bureau of Immigration, Govt. of India, for 1997-2012.  
(ii) Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, for 2013

Source:[http://tourism.gov.in/writereaddata/CMSPagePicture/file/marketresearch/publications/India%20Tourism%20Statics\(2012\)%20new.pdf](http://tourism.gov.in/writereaddata/CMSPagePicture/file/marketresearch/publications/India%20Tourism%20Statics(2012)%20new.pdf)

India is famous for its cuisine as it is aculmination of different flavours and textures from different regions (Travel tips-USA Today, 2012). The market for culinary tourism to India is growing as the country's culinary traditions continue to garner increasing international attention. Cooking classes, both formal and included in home stays, are favourite among foreign visitors. India's broad culinary culture reflects influences of Persian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian and Southeast Asian cuisines. India is home to a multi dimensional and eclectic mix of cultures resulting in a variety of food traditions. There is no single dish that represents the country; rather, Indian culinary traditions vary greatly from region to region (Nazimiec, 2013).

Tourists savour curries and chutneys, relish the flavours, and breathe in the aroma of subtle spices, while travelling through various destinations in India.

According to a new worldwide food survey by Hotels.com (2013), Indian cuisine is among the top 10 list of the world's best food preferred by global travellers while on holidays, about five per cent of international travellers preferred Indian cuisine and food when on holiday.

### **Measures Taken by the Indian Government & Private Authorities to Boost Culinary Tourism**

World Tourism Mart (WTM, 2013), an annual international tourism event, was held from 5 November" 2012-8 November"12, in London. The Tourism Ministry launched two new campaigns to promote Indian destinations abroad

and within the country. While the international campaign is called “Find what you seek”, the domestic campaign is titled as “Go Beyond”. With the new campaign we have tried to take the Incredible India campaign to the next level with shifting focus from products to consumers. Till now we had been promoting India from the destinations and products point of view internationally. The campaign has been very successful so far. But the time has come to take it to the next level and now our focus is on consumers (Chiranjeevi, 2012).

We can't keep selling the Taj Mahal again and again in name of tourism. We need to explore wider areas and hence we decided to go deeper in to the food culture (Sunil, 2012). The “Incredible Tiffin” project, recently launched by the Cuisine India Society in Delhi, provides a tiffin packaged with local food for people outside the country, to help them get an idea of the choices of food available in India. There will be Indian food weeks all-over the world, tiffin boxes and food maps as well as books and pamphlets would be available for sale as memorabilia. Jayaram Banan, founder of south Indian restaurant chains Sagar Ratna and Swagath, is starting yet another restaurant chain, this time offering north Indian vegetarian cuisine for consumers who don't eat onion and garlic, mainly the Jain and Marwari communities (Bhushan, 2012). It is not just about epicureans alone. If the world is itching to gorge on exquisite Indian cuisine, the Indian kitchen is turning into a hub for cuisine tourism across the sub-continent (Ganguly, 2007).

Cuisine tourism is no longer just about giving a taste of Indian food to the food lovers. Now, the world is getting a glimpse into the Indian kitchen and also getting to learn the basics of epicurean delights from the local people.

Indian kitchens are transforming into perfect hubs for cuisine tourism, offering tourists with an option to learn the specialty dishes of the region while staying with the locals. Tourists from across continents have been thronging India to learn traditional cuisine of the land (Nambiar, 2012).

Rashmi Singh, the lady of the house at the Rohet Garh Palace has been personally conducting culinary workshops for her guests from France, Australia, Europe and US and giving them insight into traditional Indian cuisine ranging from sula, laalmaas, gatta, pachkuta, halwas, pakodas to stuffed parathas.

Mumbai-based Mercury Travels has been promoting traditional cooking classes for spouses of corporate biggies. Trans India Holidays, New Delhi has been attending to substantial clients seeking culinary tours of the country.

## Emerging Issues and Challenges

Culinary tourism is strongly affected by socio-cultural, economic, technological and political impacts in various tourism sectors.

The enormous growth and multifaceted nature of tourism industry, will call for strengthened research, education and training to establish and promote new culinary products and to meet rising demand for skilled human resource. For these initiatives, tourism industry definitely need source of funding, especially from government. The industry will establish extended strategies to encourage funding from government as well as private partnerships (Hall, 2005; County, 2005).

As Yeoman (2008) indicated, people aged above 50 will be the most populous age group by 2015. This will increase the demand for package holidays, second homes, health facilities and organic healthy food which will influence the destination development strategies (Hall, 2005).

The survey conducted by the North American Lifestyles journal is a proof that older population prefer to travel as they have more leisure time and hold a good amount of disposable wealth. A specialised tourism sector focused on health oriented holidays will begin to emerge by end of 2015 in response to the increasing market size of the above said age group.

Terrorism would affect the industry significantly. The world political scenario would further worsen due to the US acting as a world police (Hall, 2005). Tensions rising in terrorism affected countries such as India, Pakistan, England and US would be critical to the industry.

The research carried out by Future Foundation (2008) indicates that the ratio of working married woman has increased from a quarter in 1950s to 75% at present. This will tend to increase by 5% in another 10 years, which indicates a beginning of shift in eating out trends.

Food travelers spend around \$1,200 per trip on an average, with over one-third of their travel budget going towards food-related activities. Those considered to be “deliberate” food travellers (i.e. where culinary activities are the key reason for the trip) tend to spend a significantly higher amount of their overall travel budget (around 50%) on food-related activities (International Culinary Tourism Association, 2012).

The governments across the globe would understand the value of culinary tourism and additional funds would be allocated to this industry. Countries across the globe would work together to fight against terrorism. Globalization would increase migration along with the cross cultural experience in terms of food tastes and preferences. Fusion cuisine would finally be a success.

All these studies indicate that culinary tourism will be a boon for the developing nations, if they gear up to face the challenges.

## **Popularity of Punjabi Food**

The state of Punjab is renowned for its cuisine, culture and history. Punjab has a vast network of public transportation and communication. Some of the main cities in Punjab are Chandigarh, Amritsar, Jalandhar & Ludhiana.

Tourism in Punjab is principally suited for the tourists interested in culture, ancient civilization, spirituality and epic history. Harmandir Sahib is one of the world's best spiritual sites with over 100,000 pilgrims and tourists visiting on a daily basis (Lonely Planet, 2008). Punjab has recorded a growth of 16% in domestic tourism arrivals over the period of 2011-2012 (India tourism statistics, 2012).

There is an increase in tourist visits in Punjab from 1,91,19,943 in 2012 to 1,67,63,360 in 2013 up to the month of September (Punjab tourism statistics, 2013).

**Table II: Year-wise Tourist Visits in Punjab**

<b>Year-wise Tourist visits in Punjab</b>			
<b>Sr.No</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amritsar</b>	<b>Punjab</b>
1.	2009	22,58,402	54,80,399
2.	2010	48,99,701	1,07,20,631
3.	2011	57,06,342	1,65,67,596
4.	2012	99,70,810	1,91,19,943
5.	2013 (Jan-Sept.)	94,22,185	1,67,63,360

Source- <http://punjabtourism.gov.in/StatisticsSurveys.aspx>

Northern part of India and especially Punjab is the crowned jewel of the nation boasting of delicacies that are world famous. In Punjab, food is a gift of Gods and it is treated with respect. Punjabi cuisine aims to satisfy needs of the tongue & body, from sweet to sour bitter or hot, from heating to cooling foods, from food for the body to foods for the brain. Herbs and spices used in Punjabi food are believed to have a particular physical benefit when used in proper proportion in different dishes. It is common practice to eat using the right hand, although utensils are frequently available upon request. Sharing food is another common practice, and restaurants typically serve family-style portions for the entire table. Visitors can taste a variety of foods in one sitting by ordering thali, a meal that consists of variety of local dishes.

The popularity of Punjabi Food is growing leaps and bounds especially because of the rising number of Punjabi immigrants. Canada & UK 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. You won't be surprised to see Germans or the Dutch relishing Dal Makhani & Tandoori Roti in an Indian restaurant (Narang, 2012).

Customer feedback analysis done by Haveli restaurant, Punjab reveals that Punjabi cuisine is amongst the personal favourites of many Bollywood & Hollywood celebrities like Madonna, Michael Jackson, Arnold Schwarzenegger etc. The cuisine of Punjab has an enormous variety of mouth-watering vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian dishes. The spice content ranges from minimal to pleasant to high. Punjabi food is usually relished by people of all communities. In Punjab, home cooking differs from the restaurant cooking style. At the restaurants, the chefs make a liberal use of desi ghee, butter and cream to make the food lip smacking and finger licking (Cultural India, 2012).

**Table III: Popular Punjabi Dishes**

<p><b>Non Vegetarian</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter Chicken</li> <li>• Chicken Curry</li> <li>• Rara chicken</li> <li>• Chicken Tikkas</li> <li>• Fried Garlic Pepper Chicken</li> <li>• Amritsari Fish</li> <li>• Tandoori chicken</li> <li>• ZeeraMurg (Cumin Chicken)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vegetarian</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AmritsariAloo-wadi</li> <li>• AlooTikki</li> <li>• BaiganBharta</li> <li>• Chana Masala</li> <li>• DahiBhalle</li> <li>• Dal Fry</li> <li>• Dal Makhani</li> <li>• Makki Di Roti-sarsonsaag</li> <li>• Kadipakoda</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cold desserts &amp; beverages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malailassi</li> <li>• Phirni</li> <li>• Kheer</li> <li>• Kulfifalooda</li> <li>• Rabri</li> <li>• Rajbhog</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sweets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrot Halwa</li> <li>• Patisa</li> <li>• Pugga</li> <li>• MotichoorLadoo</li> <li>• Pinni</li> <li>• Mung dal halwa</li> </ul>

Source: Field survey

### **Objectives**

Keeping in view all the above facts, a study is thus designed with the following objectives:

- I. To study the progress & emerging issues of culinary tourism in Punjab.
- II. To make suitable suggestions for the improvement of culinary tourism in Punjab.

### ***Research Methodology***

Research approach- The research design used for this project is exploratory in nature. The study approach is predominantly based on qualitative methods. Primary data is collected through questionnaire and personal interview with the tourists and staff of selected food outlets to get detailed information about their special dishes and tourist expectations from the food being served at their outlet.

Secondary data is collected through various websites, gastronomic journals, magazines & newspapers. Marketing strategy of different food outlets is studied through their regular and promotional menus, brochures, websites, banners & advertisement in print and electronic media.

Research instrument- A survey schedule is used to seek information through interviews. A well-structured questionnaire is scheduled as one of the data collection instrument for this study. The interview questions are structured in such a manner that they reveal appropriate answers on what and how far the tourists have been influenced by Punjabi food during their stay in Punjab.

### ***Sampling Plan***

Sample Universe- Specialty food outlets of 4 major cities of Punjab including Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Jalandhar & Amritsar are included in this study.

Sampling Unit- Tourists at famous eateries of Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, & Chandigarh.

Sampling Size- Sample size includes 400 tourists.

Sampling Technique- To select the food establishments a list of all specialty food outlets of Punjab is prepared. Out of this list, four outlets from each city are selected based on random sampling technique. From each outlet 25 tourists willing to be a part of the study are selected based on purposive sampling. Only those people are given the questionnaires to be filled up, who do not belong to Punjab.



**Table IV: Food Outlets Selected for Conducting the Survey**

City	Names of food outlets visited	Sample Size
Amritsar	• Surjeet Chicken House	25
	• KesarkaDhaba	25
	• BhrawanBros.Dhaba	25
	• Makhan fish corner	25
Jalandhar	• Haveli Resort	25
	• Lucky VaishnoDhaba	25
	• Apna Punjabi Dhaba,Quazimandi,Jalandhar	25
	• NavManniDhaba,Shastrimarket,Jalandhar	25
Ludhiana	• Bala Chicken, Sarabha Nagar	25
	• Sukhmani Punjabi Dhaba, Friends Colony, Rasia Road, Ludhiana	25
	• Punjabi Handi, Rajguru Nagar, Ludhiana	25
	• PanditPranthawala	25
Chandigarh	• Sher-e-Punjab,Sector-35C	25
	• Nukkar Dhaba,Sector-22	25
	• Punjabi Haveli,Sector-64,Mohali	25
	• Pal Dhaba,Sector-28	25
Total		400

Source: Field survey

## Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected through 400 questionnaires& interviews with owners of food outlets and customers is subjected to tabulation, categorised and analysed to interpret the findings of the study. 260 respondents belong to Indian states other than Punjab and rest 140 belong to foreign countries.

**Table V: Choice of Travel Companion of Domestic and International Tourists**

Place of residence	Friends & relatives	Spouse	Parents	Total %
Domestic tourists	15%	42%	10%	67%
International tourists	5%	24%	4%	33%
Total %	20%	66%	14%	100%

Source: Field survey

Table V clearly shows that most of the tourists (66%) prefer to travel along-with their spouse. Only 14% of the tourists came with their parents.

Domestic tourists make up a major share (67%) in tourism market of Punjab and usually travel with their spouse.

**Table VI: Purpose of Visit & Duration of Stay in Punjab**

Purpose of visit	Overnight	2-5days	More than 5 days	No. of respondents	Total %
Culinary tourism		224	40	264	66%
Business traveller	40	16		56	14%
Visiting friends and relatives		20	60	80	20%
Total % of respondents	10%	65%	25%	100%	

*Source: Field survey*

As per calculations from table VI, this survey includes 264 culinary tourists, 80 VFR tourists, and 56 business tourists.

Majority of respondents (66%) who filled up the questionnaire at selected food outlets in Punjab, are culinary tourists. They have passion for Punjabi food, so they had come a long way from their place of residence to Punjab for authentic Punjabi food. Most of them had come for the second time and others have heard about Punjabi food specialities available at famous food outlets from their friends and relatives.

It can also be inferred that 65%of the respondents have come to Punjab for a visit of 2-5 days. This includes 224 culinary tourists who find this time period to be sufficient for them to explore Punjab with a well-planned itinerary.

Business travellers usually stay overnight and VFR tourists stay for more than 5 days at their friends and relatives place.

Promotion of culinary tourism could be very effective in increasing the number of visits to Punjab.

Study of demographic profile of culinary tourists is important to understand the factors which influence them for a culinary tour.

As observed from Table-VII, majority of the culinary tourists (53.03%) belong to the age group of 20-30 yrs.

It can be seen that most of the culinary tourists lie in the income group of 20000-30000 rupees/month. Private job professionals tend to spend more and enjoy their lives. This might be the reason that they form the major share of culinary tourists.

Table VII: Demographic Profile of Culinary Tourists

Profession	Age groups & income level/month										Total
	20-30 yrs (140 culinary tourists)			30-40 yrs (82 culinary tourists)			Above 40 yrs (42 culinary tourists)			Total	
	upto 20000	20000- 30000	Above 30000	upto 20000	20000- 30000	Above 30000	upto 20000	20000- 30000	Above 30000		
Private job	25	30	20	2	18	24				4	123
Government job	10	20	10	4	5	10				10	69
Business	5	15	5	2	7	10				5	72
Total	40	65	35	8	30	44	5	37			264

Source: Field survey

Private job professionals form a major share of culinary tourists in this age group of 20-40 yrs. as they are young, energetic and passionate. Some of them also get incentive tour packages by their companies as a means of motivating them. This group majorly consists of newly married couples. They are usually DINKS (Double income no kids). They are free to move and explore the World, as they don't have small children to look after.

Analysis of the different income groups and professionals in the age group of above 40 yrs. reveals that most of the culinary travellers are again from private jobs but with a higher income level of above 30,000/month.

We can see that there is a positive relation between age and income level of private job professionals. This can be explained by increasing experience in the same job and maturity level of the individuals.

Analysis of the different income groups and professionals in the age group of 40-40 yrs. reveals that most of the culinary tourists are having their own business and have a income of more than 30000/month. They feel that their business is being handled by their kids, so they have time to travel and explore their interests. Government employees who have retired from their positions, form a second major group in this category of age & income.

This analysis strongly indicates towards growth and popularity of Punjab as a culinary tourism destination amongst domestic and international travellers.

Culinary experience of tourists in Punjab is studied through the response given by the tourists on a 5 point Likert's scale. This data is subjected to tabulation and analysed through deductive approach to interpret the findings of the study.

Most of the respondents said that they prefer to have only Punjabi food, during their stay in Punjab as they don't want to miss the Punjabi food delicacies. This shows the interest & passion of tourists towards Punjabi food. They like to dine at local street food vendors and dhabas instead of restaurants, because of variety and authentic taste available at such outlets in Punjab. This further proves that popular old food outlets serving Punjabi food have maintained their quality and standard.

76% of the respondents believe that there are a lot of quality food outlets in Punjab.

Only 10% of the respondents feel that Punjabi food is hot and spicy. This proves that it is a misconception to say that Punjabi food is hot and spicy. Rather, it is flavorful and nutritious. 78% of the respondents rate Punjabi food as flavourful and tasty.

Table VIII: Culinary Experience of Tourists in Punjab

S.no	Attributes of Punjabi Food and Punjabi Food Outlets	1 Strongly Disagree%	2 Disagree %	(1+2) Total %	3 Can Not Say %	4 Agree %	5 Strongly Agree%	(4+5) Total %
1	There are a variety of dishes available in Punjabi Cuisine.	8	64	72	8	15	5	20
2	Punjabi Food is reasonably priced.	8	8	16	4	16	64	80
3	Punjabi food is spicy & hot.	24	62	86	4	6	4	10
4	Punjabi food is safe and hygienic.	42	60	82	8	4	6	10
5	Punjabi dishes are flavourful & tasty.	8	10	18	4	34	44	78
6	Rich and heavy ingredients like cream, butter& ghee impart taste to Punjabi food.	4	6	10	8	42	60	82
7	Punjabi meal is nutritious and well balanced.	6	8	14	10	24	52	76
8	There are quality food outlets in Punjab.	8	8	16	8	28	48	76
9	Punjabi food outlets lack in service standard.	8	10	18	4	34	44	78

S.no	Attributes of Punjabi Food and Punjabi Food Outlets	1 Strongly Disagree%	2 Disagree %	(1+2) Total %	3 Can Not Say %	4 Agree %	5 Strongly Agree%	(4+5) Total %
10	Staff of Punjabi Outlets lacks in grooming and service etiquettes.	6	4	10	4	46	40	86
11	Punjabi food outlets lack in hygienic & sanitation.	2	6	8	6	44	42	86
12	Staff of Punjabi food outlets lacks in professionalism.	4	6	10	8	42	40	82
13	Punjabi food outlets do not give importance to presentation of food.	8	8	16	8	26	50	76
14	It is worth coming back to Punjab for food	4	8	12	10	43	35	78
15	You would recommend your friends and relatives to visit Punjab for food	6	8	14	12	34	40	74

Source: Field survey

72% of the respondents feel that Punjabi food lacks in terms of variety, as most of the dishes use almost same combination of masalas and method of preparation.

Punjabi food also lacks in presentation as voted by 76% of the respondents. Most of the dishes served in Punjab either have no garnishing or similar garnishing like chopped coriander, cream, juliennes of ginger, fried red chillies, etc., and no plate presentations as the dishes are served in simple bowls and plates.

80% of the respondents feel that the staff in most of the Punjabi food outlets lack in service standards and professionalism. After talking about this issue with the owners and staff of food outlets, it was revealed that there is no formal training for service, grooming standards and professional etiquettes given to the staff in most of the food outlets.

86 % feel that Punjabi food outlets lack in hygiene & sanitation. They feel that the workers should wear neat and clean uniforms, sitting area should be well cleaned and service utensils should be well washed and sanitized before serving food.

80% of the respondents say that the dishes are reasonably priced in Punjab against 16% who feel that they are not, but they agree to the fact that it is due to rich ingredients used in cooking like desi ghee, butter, cream, saffron, etc. Owners of the food outlets comment that Punjabi food is famous for its richness, so the food quality cannot be compromised by lowering the prices.

Hygiene and sanitation is a major issue that needs attention in Punjabi dhabas. Respondents had lesser concern regarding food quality, pricing and quantity served in Punjabi dhabas, which is a good sign. But, the issue of food hygiene & sanitation needs a stringent action, before it becomes a bad word of mouth.

78% of the tourists were happy with their travel experience in Punjab and said that they would come back to Punjab for the same experience. 12% of the respondents said that they would not come back because of some bad experience during their stay in Punjab. 74% of the respondents say that they would definitely recommend their friends and relatives to visit Punjab for relishing Punjabi food, as they had a wonderful experience with food and culture of Punjab.

## **Conclusion**

Culinary tourism is a tourism activity, when consumers travel to different places to eat and drink, specifically the local produce of that area. Punjab has

a bright future in culinary tourism as it is famous all over the world for its cuisine. Analysis of gastronomy tourism in the state of Punjab is carried out with the help of tourists dining in certain establishments of major cities of Punjab, who were asked about their reasons for coming to Punjab and to what extent the local cuisine attracted them to the destination.

There is a high level of general satisfaction among visitors regarding the local cuisine, and particular satisfaction with the famous local dishes like sarson-ka-saag-makki-k-i roti, kulche-chhole, chole-bhature, lassi and several sweet items.

Foreigners appreciate the local style of preparation and service of food, which is unique to Punjab, like the tandoori starters, breads, cold malai-lassi, traditional clay pot curries and rich sweets. The growth in popularity of Punjabi food throughout the industrialized countries is attributable to a significant degree to tourism where visitors sample local foods and develop a taste for them.

Culinary tourists majorly tend to be couples that have above-average income, are usually professionals and are middle aged.

Tourists appreciate the local food and beverages available to them while they halt or stay in Punjab. Government is also taking initiatives to promote Culinary Tourism, as the number of people coming to Punjab especially for a dining experience has increased in recent years.

Areas where improvement in the food sector is required are hygiene and sanitation of food facilities, garnishing and presentation of food and delivering a quality experience to the food travellers so that they appreciate the food experience.

Future prospects of culinary tourism reveal that Punjab still has to prepare itself to cater to the needs of more tourists, with better infrastructure in terms of public transport, accommodation, medical facilities, eating options like restaurants, food stalls, dhabas, public convenience facilities like Sulabh-Shauchalya, effective drainage systems and better hygiene and food handling practices which should match with the International standards.

## **Suggestions**

Gastronomy tourism presents a great opportunity to promote and strengthen particular tourist destinations, especially as tourists are ever more aware of the cuisine available in their chosen destination. It is well known that the key objective of some tourists is to visit a particular eating establishment or to generally indulge themselves in the local cuisine. For many more, the



quality of the cuisine on offer is an important part of the holiday experience as a whole. Destinations must bear this in mind when developing their long-term plans for the local tourism industry.

A diverse range of food businesses including farms, restaurants, gourmet or specialty food stores, cooking schools, tour operators, breweries, wineries, historical attractions and many other related businesses across the country have capitalized on their region's culturally unique cuisines to attract visitors. Some suggestions to improve the culinary tourism sector in Punjab are:

### ***Starting a New Food Tourism Business***

The success of any venture depends upon initial research and planning process. It is important for new food entrepreneurs in Punjab to research into a similar existing operation & consult available resources when starting a culinary tourism business.

### ***Understanding Customer Profile***

Understanding the customers profile helps in preparation & pricing of different dishes, according to the liking and demand. Regular contact can be maintained with the customers through e-marketing campaigns or social networking sites like Facebook.

### ***Uniqueness in Authenticity***

Punjab should take advantage of the unique heritage, charm, & hospitality, which can be marketed through educational and training programmes about growing or preparation of foods, cooking classes, food festivals and tasting events.

### ***Trained Staff***

Businesses that serve tourists are the face of the community. Trained staff that interacts well with customers to ensure a safe and high quality experience will likely make the customers return and spread word of mouth publicity for the destination.

### ***Health, Safety & Environmental Considerations***

Culinary tourism businesses should have sufficient capacity in terms of staff and infrastructure to provide basic services such as parking, transportation, signage, customer assistance, and restrooms, whether the establishment is on a farm, in a restaurant, or at a processing facility. Property and facilities should be well maintained and in compliance with health, zoning, and environmental regulations. It is important to follow food safety regulations and design a food safety plan for a food enterprise.

### ***Future Planning***

Every food business, whether small or large scale should make a business plan, which will help to think about potential issues before investing money. It is advisable to integrate a risk management plan, as the facility would be used by general public. Plans should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

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