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POSITIONING SPICES AS A TOURISM PRODUCT FOR FOREIGNERS: A STUDY FROM THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Spice Tourism is an emerging sector in tourism majorly focusing on the impact of spices on tourism choices, growth, and distinctiveness. Because of the fascinating role of spices in tourism growth and diversification in new emerging economies, there is an increased demand for the promotion and growth of spice tourism in many developing economies like India and Sri Lanka. However, a comprehensive investigation is lacking pertaining to spice tourism. In this situation, the present research attempts to bring together and discuss the role of spices as an instrument to entice foreign tourists visiting India. A structured survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was used for data collection from 400 inbound foreign tourists at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, New Delhi. This study has provided directions to the practitioners and academicians in uncovering a diversity of perspectives on the emerging spice tourism market. It also suggests the role of spices as a tactical tool to recreate the destination image of India as a spice tourism destination. The research can also be utilized to examine the foreign tourist's spice preferences in India, which can be used by stakeholders and practitioners to entice and enhance their revisit to India.

KEYWORDS

Spice Tourism; Tourist; Positioning; Destination; Attraction; India

ECONLIT KEYS

L89; L96; M31; Z30; Z39

1. INTRODUCTION

Spices are defined by the Geneva International Organization for Standardization (ISO) as “vegetable products or mixtures free from extraneous matter, used for flavouring, seasoning, and imparting aroma to foods” (ISO, 1995). Spices have been used since ancient times and their flavours and properties make them important for culinary and medicinal uses (Parthasarathy et al., 2008). Spices include leaves, like mint or rosemary; flowers, like clove; bulbs, like garlic or onion; fruits, like cumin or red chili; stems, like cinnamon; and rhizomes, like ginger. All spices are dried plant organs and they reside among different taxonomical categories that correspond to several vegetal species. The wider classification corresponds to spices that come from monocotyledonous plants, such as garlic, ginger, turmeric, and vanilla, or dicotyledonous plants, such as paprika, pepper, nutmeg, cinnamon, and clove (Spice Board of India, 2013).

The literature on Spice Tourism is substantial with diverse areas having been touched upon for research globally. The diverse nature of literature includes areas like cultural changes and tourism, modern spice production and trade aspects, destination studies, attraction studies, cuisine studies, medicinal properties of spices, spice tours, spice farms, and Agri-tourism. Spice Routes (UNESCO) should be understood from the global context ranging from the west coast of Japan, through the islands of Indonesia, around India to the lands of the Middle East and from there, across the Mediterranean to Europe—covering an area of 15,000 kilometres (also known as Maritime Silk Roads linking the occident to the orient). The word “Spice” is derived from the Latin word, *species*, which means an article of special value, as confined to the ordinary commodity of trade. Travelling to large distances is understandable from the fact that spices had sacramental and therapeutic values and they grow in the tropical east, from the South of China to Indonesia as well as southern India and Sri Lanka.

Spices are renowned globally not only for their role in food preparation and enhancing its taste but also for their contribution to health through their medical properties. In Indonesia, spices are used in traditional ceremonies and festivals (Brierley, 1994). One of the most prominent and historically-exotic spices, nutmeg, displayed a sign of affluence (Milton, 1999). Spices are also known for their cultural

practices and play a part in global tourism (Boniface, 2003). Spices are important to the tourism system (Timothy & Ron, 2013). Tourism may impend the reality of the spice-connected touristic products leading to a constructed reality as altered uses become apparent as real to the tourists (Wang, 1999). Ethnic food and related literature pertaining to food experiences encouraged interest in the usage of spices (Farrell, 1998). Spice farms or farms for growing spices are also on the rise due to their appeal and availability in global markets. The experience of visiting spice farms has become a tourism product globally. This reflects a change from the “mode of production” to the “mode of consumption” as reflected in the trends pertaining to International Tourism (Smith & Robinson, 2002). Spices have also helped in portraying a dish as a national symbol such as “paprika” and “goulash” for Hungary. Spices have been influential in establishing a destination for tourism, especially at centres that produce spices or have an exquisite delicacy on offer in the context of spices. Branding of a destination is identified as a social process connected with building identity including a commercial product that is consumable (Hall & Page, 2003). The aromas of spices have evolved from generation to generation and changed the role of spices in food.

Destination studies indicate that for global tourists, spices and herbs will be the enticing factor to visit Kerala in India (Thampi, 1997). Historically, destinations connected with spices include those which are connected with spice routes and at the modern sites of production and usage such as Grenada in the Caribbean, Zanzibar in Africa, Sri Lanka, India and China in Asia, and so on. India and China are known for their spicy food. Few destinations, because of their spice production facilities, can position themselves as Spice Islands—notably, North Maluku Islands in Indonesia are known for the exotic and royal spice, nutmeg. The destination can be explained through territory branding (Astuti & Ramos, 2012). A modern site for the production of spices can be Grenada in the Caribbean (Nelson, 2012). Another majestic spice island is Zanzibar in Tanzania and Africa uses its unique spice character in branding it for tourism. It is marketed as a majestic spice island in the Indian Ocean.

Spice-producing destinations diversify their spice production through tourism by offering spice tours at the production point and they also package the spices into souvenirs. Spices as souvenirs are the very highlight of spice-producing centres and a symbol of locally produced goods (Gordon, 1986). Destinations rely and bank on

cultural tourism through a “sense of that place” (Timothy, 2011). That sense of place is closely connected to spices. Many such places are located on trade routes as well as at points of spice production. Some destinations have become popular through spice-related cuisines of local or cultural groups. From a geographical point of view, spice destinations can be drawn into countries, islands, trade routes, and regions. Many countries like Grenada, Zanzibar, China, and India have contributed immensely to spice production. Grenada is marketing itself with slogans like “Spice holidays” and “Spice of the Caribbean” (Daye et al, 2008).

At destinations, unique attractions have been developed connected to spice production such as spice farms across Grenada, Zanzibar, China, Sri Lanka, and India. Spice forms an integral part of the cuisine, such as Sichuan pepper contributing to the image of Chengdu, China and positioning it as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gastronomic capital (Liu, 2011). Tourism products are being developed at destinations such as spice gardens, spice-themed routes, spices-related museums as well as providing culinary, spa experiences pertaining to local spices, and their usage in cuisines of different cultures and societies. Few museums are established for promoting spices such as Spicy’s Museum in Hamburg and Longstanten Spice Museum in the United Kingdom. Some events of prime importance are organized at spice-producing centres such as India and Sri Lanka which entice travellers from various parts of the world. Every country has some unique varieties of spices that have passed from one generation to another and from one community to another (Farrell, 1998). Penang in Malaysia has been rebranded as hot and spicy Penang reflecting its tangible aspect through the production of spices and its selling procedures and intangible spice heritage reflected through its spicy cuisine as well as its journey through the spice trading route (Jalleh, 2012). Similarly, Chinese cuisine has been given prime importance as an intangible heritage through knowledge expressed in the form of production and preparation of food and usage of a variety of spices (Cheung, 2012).

Tourism is on the rise and has influenced the nature of spice production demonstrated embodied by the abundance of spice farms as attractions across Asia, Africa, and North America (Central America and the Caribbean). In the areas where spices are grown, tourism has the potential to impact socio-economic development,

generate employment for the local community, and enhance cross-cultural communication between the tourists and the hosts. Scholarly texts indicate an evolving relationship between spices and tourism related to its history, production, consumption, tourist experience of spices at attractions and destinations, and through cuisine, i.e., food-related tourism. Cuisine helps in establishing a regional and national identity that entices tourists for food-specific tourism as well as differentiating destinations (Karim & Chi, 2010).

Spices form an integral part of culinary traditions and food tourism through both their tangible and intangible elements (Civitello, 2008). Culinary tourism is an evolving niche form of tourism primarily focusing on the exploration of food for tourism. It has played a major role in promoting and developing destinations thereby assisting in the supply of tourism products (Smith & Xiao, 2008). At the higher echelon of culinary tourism, it also correlates with spices (Scarpato, 2002). Tourists are also seen looking for sacred and authentic experiences in their cuisine referred to as food pilgrimages (Long, 2003).

India is the land of spices and Indians are known for their liking for spicy foods. From chilli, mustard, clove, cumin, cardamom, cinnamon to nutmeg, whole spice and saffron, India grows it all. Indian spices are known for their myriad therapeutic abilities. Spices not only add to the flavour to the meal but also aid in digestion and have other health-related benefits. Many Indian states, primarily Kerala and Goa, have positioned themselves as spice-growing states.

1.1) NUTRITIONAL VALUE OF SPICES

An extensive literature review suggests that spices are rich in ash and fibre and many spices such as turmeric and ginger have a high protein content. Spices from poppy seeds are rich in phosphorus. Spices such as cumin, celery seeds, cloves, coriander leaves, etc., are rich in sodium. Spices have been used in cooking and as medicines for several years now (Sherman & Billing, 1999).

1.2) CALORIFIC VALUE OF SPICES

Spices such as cinnamon and cumin are very low in calories and add flavour and aroma to the food. Most spices have less than five calories per teaspoon. Cinnamon has antimicrobial assets against *Bacillus anthracis* spores (Tajkarimi et.al, 2010).

1.3) MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF SPICES

Spices are known for their medicinal properties. They are very good remedies against inflammation and protect the body's cells. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 70-80% of the global population is dependent on drugs derived from herbs and spices for treatment (Chan, 2003). Nearly 80% of developing countries and up to 60% of the global population depend directly on herbs and plants for medical treatment (Shrestha & Dhillon, 2003).

1.4) WELLNESS PROPERTIES OF SPICES

Spices have their importance in the food and pharmaceutical industries. They have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antitumorigenic, anticarcinogenic, and glucose- and cholesterol-lowering actions (Mahady et. al., 2002; Reddy et. al., 2005; Wright et al., 2013; Cox et al., 2015).

1.5) USAGE OF SPICES IN CUISINE

Various cultures can position themselves through spices at local, regional, and national levels, such as Mediterranean cuisine, which heavily banks on the usage of spices. The usage of spices in culinary, health, and wellness tourism as practiced in the state of Kerala in India is now part of the burgeoning modern tourism phenomena. The growing relationship between spices and tourism speaks volumes as evidenced through history, tourist experiences at destinations and spice farms, production, consumption, and cuisines. Traditional food is portrayed beautifully in various cultures and forms a part of food tourism (Wang & Tang, 2011).

1.6) VISITING SPICE FARMS

Visiting spice farms supports not only spice tourism but also Agri-based tourism and rural tourism in a sustainable manner. Spices are important to the tourism system. Tourism is on the rise and has influenced the nature of spice production demonstrated by the abundance of spice farms as attractions across Asia, Africa, North America (Central America and the Caribbean) (Timothy & Ron, 2013).

1.7) PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF ESSENTIAL OILS

Literature supports the fact essential oils possess antiviral, nematocidal, antifungal, insecticidal, and antioxidant properties. Aromatherapy applications include massage, topical applications, and inhalation (Mahady et al., 2002; Reddy et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2013; Cox et al., 2015).

1.8) PHYSICAL PROPERTIES OF FLAVOURED OILS

Flavoured oils such as olive possess anti-oxidant properties (Baiano et al., 2016; Mahady et al., 2002; Reddy et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2013; Cox et al., 2015).

1.9) USAGE OF HERBAL SPICES

There is enough evidence to support that herbal spices possess antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antitumorigenic, anticarcinogenic, and glucose- and cholesterol-lowering activities (Mahady et al., 2002; Reddy et al., 2005; Wright et al., 2013; Cox et al., 2015).

1.10) USAGE OF FLAVOURED SPICES

Spices are known solely for their aroma and flavour and create a major attraction for tourists.

1.11) PHYSICAL SPECIFICATION OF SPICES

There are precise estimates of nutritional values contained in the spices which determine the physical specification of the spices.

1.12) CHEMICAL SPECIFICATION IN SPICES

There are precise estimates of nutritional values contained in the spices, which determine the chemical specification of the spices.

Sp.	State/States of India	Name of the Spice
1.	Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Pepper
2.	Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Cardamom (Small)
3.	Sikkim, West Bengal	Cardamom (Large)
4.	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, Mizoram, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand	Ginger
5.	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Meghalaya, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh	Turmeric
6.	Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand	Chilli
7.	Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh	Coriander
8.	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh	Cumin
9.	Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh	Fennel
10.	Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat	Fenugreek
11.	Punjab, Uttar Pradesh	Celery
12.	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka	Clove
13.	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka	Nutmeg and Mace
14.	Kerala, Tamil Nadu	Cinnamon and Cassia
15.	Jammu and Kashmir	Saffron
16.	Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Uttarakhand	Aniseed
17.	Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu	Vanilla

18.	Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Bihar	Garlic
19.	Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir	Ajowan
20.	Gujarat, Rajasthan	Dill Seed
21.	Karnataka	Kokam
22.	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh	Mustard
23.	Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim	Tejpat
24.	Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu	Pomegranate Seeds
25.	Tamil Nadu	Herbal and Exotic Spices
26.	Kerala, Karnataka	Cambodge

Table 1: Spice Growing States of India.
Source: Spice Board India.

India has immense potential of developing itself as a major spice tourism destination. The states of Kerala and Goa over time have developed and carved a niche for themselves as depicted in Table 1. Spice-related tourism and its connection to culture are well-evidenced through a review of the literature. As far as spice production is concerned, India leads in production along with China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, and Nepal (UNIDO & FAO, 2005). Spices find their usage in cuisine, health, wellness, and beauty aspects. The literature points out that culinary tourism and gastronomic tourism have a connection with spices.

In this background, the present study believes that spice tourism is currently an unexplored domain in comparison to other niche forms of tourism such as food and wine tourism, but has great potential to become a major tourist attraction (Jolliffe, 2014). Thus, the development of synergies to improve the region's food and tourism industry and the introduction of effective marketing techniques can make it a unique travel destination (Boyne et al., 2003). Spices are used in food and healthcare and are made in various ways to enhance cultural characteristics. Spice tourism has links with history, cultural heritage, food consumption, and tourist experiences in and around the destinations and attractions (Holladay, 2016). Therefore, this niche form of tourism can be promoted and positioned as a major tourist destination to attract tourists.

The present research will be fruitful for both the scholarly community and the policy framers. The scholarly community can dig into the emerging and contemporary areas and trends pertaining to spice tourism, and the policy framers will acquire information for decision-making in this niche form of tourism that could help to build competitiveness and innovation and develop the socio-economic status of the local

community at large. Thus, this research makes an earnest attempt to answer the following research question:

Which aspect of spices contributes the most to spice tourism and has the strongest effect on the satisfaction level of the foreign tourists?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1) SPICES AS AN AID TO PROMOTE CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

In many countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, spices are used in rituals and festivals. Along with food, spices play an important role as a cultural product, as an expression of the society and its way of life, and in the creation and consumption of international tourism (Boniface, 2003). Spices are an integral part of the tourism system as argued by Timothy and Ron (2013). The advent of globalization has contributed immensely to us crossing and breaking the frontiers and borders between the cultural use of spices and spreading knowledge through exported and imported spices. Spices can play as a major tool and be employed as a cultural heritage attraction by promoting its usage in food tourism such as in Great Britain, Singapore, Canada, and China (Boniface, 2003), and also promoting cultural attractions designated by UNESCO. Therefore, spices can play a major role in promoting cultural heritage tourism.

2.2) MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF SPICES

Spices have been a vital part of our delicacies and are now recognized world-over because of their medicinal properties. In modern times, they have become a part of every household. They contain numerous vital ingredients such as minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, essential oils, and phytonutrients. These nutrients and nutritional value vitalize the human body and build the immune system to fight micro-organisms existing in the surroundings.

The spices provide nutrients that build immunity and add value to food and possess very few calories. Pepper has the sobriquet of the king of spices. Black pepper, in particular, is the native of the Malabar Coast in the south-west of India along the

Arabian Sea. Aniseed is used as an expectorant, and coriander is used as an anti-inflammatory as well as an analgesic because of its medical properties. Garlic is utilized in cough, asthma, and cardiopathy. Aromatic and medicinal oils are used to cure many ailments and destinations such as Kerala in south-west India, also known as God's Own Country, are utilizing wellness therapy to attract tourists from across the globe (Ministry of Tourism, 2020).

2.3) SPICE TOURS

Spice producers are resorting to spice tours which are evolving as a new niche form of tourism. The experience of visiting a spice farm has become a tourism product leading to glocalization. Tourism has directly impacted the nature of spice production which is evidenced by the numerous spice farm attractions across Asia, Central America, the Caribbean in North America, and Africa. Tourism in these developing regions has a large potential in impacting the socio-economic development, employment generation for local communities, and enhancement of cross-cultural communication between locals and tourists. Mediterranean cuisine has major usage of spices. Kerala in southern India banks heavily on spices and is now part of the burgeoning modern tourism phenomena (Nair & Mohanty, 2021). The growing relationship of spices and tourism speaks volumes as evidenced through history, tourist experiences at destinations and spice farms, production, consumption, and cuisines.

2.4) ROLE OF FOOD IN PROMOTING SPICE TOURISM

Food, an important resource for tourism, is in many ways related to tourism and is essential to the visitor's experience. Food plays an important role in tourism, tourism products, decision-making and support, and can be a valuable resource for tourism development. However, to meet or exceed customer criteria, several challenges must be addressed such as benefiting destination image and particular locations of a destination pertaining to food (Henderson, 2009). The sustainable development of products such as flexible use, identification and expression of historical and ethnic

characteristics of goods and services, and marketing as part of the food and tourism community culture in the tourism and leisure sector needs to be incorporated by destinations as a developmental policy. The problem is that the role of food in tourism depends on the use of food as a means of livelihood, short experiences for visitors, as well as major attractions and reasons for travel (Frisvoll et al., 2016). Therefore, a functional classification of food's role in the tourism industry could make this role even more important. However, this interpretation also requires a targeted analysis to determine whether food is of scholarly interest or support (Golley & Bellot, 1999). The main source of information is the primary incentive to attract visitors to vacation destinations. It may not entice the visitors, but it is a tool to support and encourage early motivation. Thailand, France, and Italy are examples of countries where food is a very important source of tourism (Amira, 2009). Regional cuisine is also an integral part of and serves as a destination brand identity. This cultural significance of food often creates an identity and image. In addition, a country's gastronomic destinations influence uniqueness as an integral part of brands and logos.

Local food is also an integral part of destination branding, logos, and unique influences. The cultural significance of these foods is often confirmed for a variety of purposes such as local shopping and ethnic food, which can be major tourist attractions in agro areas. Local food consumption can also play an important role in cultural and recreational activities (Bessière, 1998). Various studies focused on food tourism experiences in various product categories such as professional tourism, agricultural tourism, culinary tourism, food tourism destinations, and food promotional programmes (Everett & Slocum, 2013). The promotion of nutritional practices brings similar benefits to agriculture and tourism. Local food enriches tourism products by providing a platform where tourists can distribute and grow local food. The increasing competition in the global tourism industry and the importance of some resources for gastronomic tourism are due to the emergence of new trends in gastronomic tourism. "Food and tourism are part of a structured production network, but tourism alone cannot add value to quality food" (Montanari & Staniscia, 2009). Destinations are now seeking more creative products based on biodiversity, cuisine, and national character. Cuisine acts as both a pull factor as well as a push factor for travel motivation (Fields, 2002).

2.5) SPICE FARM TOURISM

Spice tourism is relatable to farm or Agri-based tourism that entices the tourists to gain knowledge of the spices and additional benefits accruing from the spices. There are 60 species of spices and herbs which have the potential to become pull factors for spice tourism. Spice tourism also has the potential to develop rural tourism sustainably. Spice tourism could provide a diverse range of tourism products and attractions such as visiting spice farms and food tourism, promoting rural tourism. There are infinite possibilities ranging from acquiring knowledge pertaining to the production of spices, establishing tourist lodgings, developing eateries that offer food made from these unique spices, and giving impetus to the spice vendors by establishing stalls through which they can market their products. This will have a unique touristic appeal by which both rural tourism and spice tourism can be promoted sustainably.

3. METHODOLOGY

Specifically, the measurement instrument in the form of structured questionnaire was comprised of two parts: the first one contained question pertaining to the demographic characteristics of the sample; and the second one included question relating to motivations/preferences, type of use/consumption behaviour, as well as purchasing habits. Motivations and preferences of spices were measured using a 5-point importance/preference scale with this interpretation to facilitate understanding of the scale: 1=not at all, 2=slightly important/preferred, 3=moderately important/preferred, 4=discreetly to highly important/preferred, 5=extremely important/preferred.

The questionnaire was first shown to a panel of experts in the area of tourism academia, having a rich level of experience and exposure to research activities. After their approval and necessary corrections recommended by them, the questionnaire was utilized (it is added as an appendix at the end of the manuscript). Statistical analysis was executed with IBM SPSS Statistics version 21.

The foreign tourists visiting India are presumed to be the consumers of spices,

so their satisfaction level needs to be gauged. Descriptive and analytical statistics were used to derive interpretations from the data. Both primary and secondary data were used to present meaningful explanations. As indicated above, a structured questionnaire was chosen to collect the primary data among tourists preferring and consuming spices and entering India through the National Capital Region. The data analysis was carried out through the following steps:

(a) Primary data was collected from tourists pertaining to the nutritional value of spices, the calorific value of spices, medicinal properties of spices, wellness properties of spices, usage of spices in cuisine, visiting spice farms, physical properties of essential oil, physical properties of flavoured oils, usage of herbal spices, usage of flavoured spices, physical specification of spices, chemical specification of spices

(b) Descriptive and analytical statistics were employed.

(c) Statistical tools were employed.

(d) To investigate the satisfaction level of tourists preferring spices, a compilation of twelve variables was done. 400 tourists were surveyed at the departure lounge of the IGI Airport, New Delhi to understand their overall satisfaction with the various facets pertaining to spice tourism in India.

The sample size of 400 is considered representative of the tourist population, which is verified with the help of Slovin's formula. That formula (Glen, 2012) allows researchers to sample the population, with the desired degree of accuracy, as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N e^2)$$

Where:

n=Size of the sample

N=Size of population

e=Margin of error

1=Constant value

Approximately 18 million international tourists visit India annually out of which 30% of the international tourist arrivals (5,4 million) enter India through IGI Airport, in New Delhi (Ministry of Tourism, 2020). Thereby, in this case, with $e=0.05$, $n=399.97$ (400).

The variables used for the study were based on secondary data. These were the nutritional value of spices, the calorific value of spices, medicinal properties of spices,

wellness properties of spices, usage of spices in cuisine, visiting spice farms, physical properties of essential oil, physical properties of flavoured oils, usage of herbal spices, usage of flavoured spices, physical specification of spices, chemical specification of spices.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-demographic variables of the study indicate that the majority of the respondents are males (56%). As far as marital status is concerned, the majority of the respondents are married (66%).

The majority of the respondents are in the age group between 36 to 50 (36%); this is closely followed by the respondents who are in the age group between 18 to 25 (30%); the age group of 26-35 represents 28% and the number is least in the age group of 51 to 60 years, which is a meagre 6%.

Concerning the educational qualification of the respondents is concerned, it is witnessed that the majority of the respondents are postgraduates (52%). This is closely followed by the respondents who are educated till university diploma/degree (46%). A meagre of the respondents are educated until the higher secondary school diploma though they are only 2% of the total sample.

With regard to their occupation, the majority of them are working in the private sector (46%), followed by the respondents who have their own business (38%). A much smaller number of respondents are government officials (4%), whereas the category of respondents comprising of Students/Housewives and Retired personnel were only 2% of the sample and lastly others were 10% of the total.

As far as (yearly) income is concerned, updated threshold levels published by the World Bank in July 2019 have been taken into consideration. Low income is between 1,026\$-3,995\$. Intermediate income is between 3,996\$-12,375\$ and high income is greater than 12,375\$ (World Bank, 2019). As a result, 75% of respondents had intermediate income (the remaining 25% of them declared high income).

Finally, when asked about the length of stay, the major chunk of the respondents stayed between 5 to 6 days (64%), followed by the respondents who stayed between 3-and 4 days (36%).

The earlier-mentioned twelve variables were reduced to three factors through factor analysis. Multiple regression was also employed on these three factors which were considered independent variables and overall satisfaction of the tourists preferring spices was considered as the dependent variable. This eventually helped in identifying the main factors affecting the overall satisfaction of foreign tourists' spice preferences (Table 2).

Attributes	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. Nutritional value of spices	4.64	0.58
2. Calorific value of spices	4.42	0.69
3. Medicinal properties of spices	4.23	0.59
4. Wellness properties of spices	4.17	0.72
5. Usage of spices in cuisine	4.15	0.84
6. Visiting spice farms	4.13	0.72
7. Physical properties of essential oil	4.03	0.78
8. Physical properties of flavoured oils	4.02	0.83
9. Usage of herbal spices	3.91	0.95
10. Usage of flavoured spices	3.86	0.83
11. Physical specification of spices	3.51	1.05
12. Chemical specification in spices	3.22	1.04

Table 2: Attributes pertaining to satisfaction of tourists.

Source: Author.

The variables with a mean value higher than 4 included nutritional value of spices, the calorific value of spices, medicinal properties of spices, wellness properties of spices, visiting spice farms, usage of spices in cuisine, physical properties of essential oils, and physical properties of flavoured oils. Chemical specification of spices, physical specification of spices, usage of flavoured spices, and usage of herbal spices have the lowest mean values.

4.1) FACTOR ANALYSIS

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was done for applying factor analysis. It was equal to 0.832, which specified the goodness of the sample greater than 0.5 of the acceptable limit (Table 3). Bartlett's test of sphericity was applied and the data delivered a value of 0.00, which was less than 0.05 and reinforced the rationality of the data for factor analysis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Adequacy of Sample		0.832
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Chi-Square value	309.342
	Df	10
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test (responses of tourists and spice preferences).
Source: Author.

Kaiser (1974) endorses that any value of 0.5 arrived through KMO and Bartlett's Test is acceptable and factor analysis can be applied in this case. If the value arrived at is less than 0.5 then more data can be gathered. The values arrived at between 0.5 and 0.7 are considered the average ones, the values arrived at between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered rather good, values in the range of 0.8 to 0.9 are considered great, and values above 0.9 are excellent. In the present case, the value arrived at is 0.832, which is highly reliable and great in nature. Factor analysis is suitable and appropriate pertaining to our data. Exploratory Factor Analysis was carried out on the twelve variables to condense the number of variables into factors. The variables are condensed into three factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and the total variance explicated being 80.056% and is considered to be well displayed in Table 4.

Comp.	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulat. %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulat. %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulat. %
1.	2.859	23.826	68.829	2.859	23.826	68.829	3.015	25.129	67.548
2.	5.400	45.003	45.003	5.400	45.003	45.003	5.090	12.508	42.419
3.	1.347	11.226	80.056	1.347	11.226	80.056	1.501	42.419	80.056

Table 4. Factor analysis.
Source: Author.

4.2) EXTRACTION METHOD: PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS

Variables loaded into three factors have been extracted through Varimax, which is the best orthogonal rotation technique as it enhances the interpretability of the factors (Table 5). EFA was carried out for all the twelve variables. These variables are condensed into three different factors, which explicated around 80.056% of the total variance. The first factor explained about 25.129% of the total variance, the second factor explained about 12.508% of the total variance, and the third factor explained 42.419% of the total variance. All three factors explained about 80.056% of the total variance.

Variables	Factors		
	1	2	3
1. Nutritional value of spices	.031	.769	.115
2. Calorific value of spices	-.032	.738	.048
3. Medicinal properties of spices	.780	.419	-.142
4. Wellness properties of spices	.909	.269	.139
5. Usage of spices in cuisine	.933	.289	.189
6. Visiting Spice Farms	.755	-.424	-.330
7. Physical properties of essential oil	.101	.637	-.620
8. Physical properties of flavoured oils	.141	.679	.168
9. Usage of herbal spices	.143	.041	.591
10. Usage of flavoured spices	.519	.085	.577
11. Physical specification of spices	.181	-.101	.680
12. Chemical specification in spices	.142	.446	.708

Table 5. Rotated component matrix.

Notes: (a) Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; (b) Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; (c) Rotation converged in five iterations.

Source: Author.

Factors	Variables				New Parameters
F1	Var. 3	Var. 4	Var. 5	Var. 6	Touristic Value of Spices
F2	Var. 1	Var. 2	Var. 7	Var. 8	Nutritional Value of Spices
F3	Var. 9	Var. 10	Var. 11	Var. 12	Properties of Spices

Table 6. Identification of new parameters by factor analysis.

Source: Author.

All the twelve variables are condensed into three factors (Table 6). The extraction of the factors was carried out through the Varimax method and Principal Component

Analysis where the eigenvalue should be more than 1. Variables 3, 4, 5 and 6 form Factor 1, which is named 'Touristic Value of Spices'. Variables 1, 2, 7 and 8 constitute Factor 2, which is named 'Nutritional Value of Spice's. Variables 9, 10, 11 and 12 establish Factor 3, which is named 'Properties of Spices'.

4.3 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

The theories and ideologies developed in dealing with sample linear regression (i.e. one explanatory variable) may be protracted to deal with numerous explanatory variables.

Multiple Regression Equation

$$Y = C + \beta X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \beta X_4 + \beta X_5 + \dots + \beta X_n$$

Y = Prediction relationship of types of variables towards service quality.

C = Constant value.

β = Unstandardized coefficient.

x_1 and x_2 . = Dimension of independent variable.

The Regression Analysis predicts the extent of dependence of various factors as its exploratory variable. This was conducted by statistical testing and utilizing the first result of the regression analysis, i.e., ANOVA (F-test). Further, the R square value of the regression analysis is calculated to demonstrate the degree to which the explanatory variables explain the dependent factor. The regression analysis further elaborates the result, i.e., the T-test along with a significant value (P value) indicates the most significant explanatory variable that influences the dependent variable.

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.989
R Square	0.987
Adjusted R Square	0.984
Standard Error	0.020
Observations	400

Table 7. Multiple regression summary outputs (responses of tourists preferring spices).
Source: Author.

The R square value of the Multiple Regression Model is deduced as 0.987, which shows that the dependent variable, i.e., Responses of Tourists preferring Spices, is influenced by all these three variables, i.e., 98.7%, which is a good indicator for establishing satisfaction level (Table 7).

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	84.614	3	28.205	4,604.336	0.000*
	Residual	2.426	396	0.006		
	Total	87.040	399			

Table 8. Multiple Regression (ANOVA).

*Significant at 1% level.

Source: Author.

The ANOVA (F-test) indicates that the scale/factor, i.e., “Responses of Tourists Preferring Spices” was quite significant. All the explanatory variables, i.e., three factors for studying responses of tourists preferring spices regarding overall satisfaction level were quite significant. Further, Table 9 depicts that the significant value (P-value) of the F-test was 0.000, which means that all three explanatory variables, which are Touristic Value of Spices, Nutritional Value of Spices, and Properties of Spices, are highly significant with respect to the explained factor, i.e., “Responses of Tourists Preferring Spices.” Table 8 determines acceptable results as the significance level of the model is less than 0.01 (1% level). Thus, the model employed in this research is considered to be good.

Factors	Coefficients	Standard Error	T Stat	P-value
Intercept	-0.002	0.002	-0.998	0.321
F1	0.213	0.132	100.809	0.000*
F2	0.199	0.012	100.574	0.000*
F3	0.194	0.002	100.327	0.000*

Table 9. Multiple regression coefficients (responses of foreign tourists preferring spices).

Source: Author.

Factors	New Parameters
*F1	Touristic Value of Spices
*F2	Nutritional Value of Spices
*F3	Properties of Spices

Table 10: Factors and new parameters.

*Significant at 1% level

Source: Author.

With the application of multiple regression on the responses of tourists preferring spices and its constituent variable, we can develop the next-mentioned equation.

$$\text{Responses of Tourists Preferring Spices (Y)} = -0.002 + 0.213 (F1) + 0.199 (F2) + 0.194 (F3)$$

The highest Beta value specifies that independent variables are the most significant ones towards the dependent variable. From Table 9 it is depicted that the independent Factor 1 of 0.213 is the highest amongst all the three factors. This means that the independent Factor 1, i.e., Touristic Value of Spices, has contributed the most and has a stronger effect on the satisfaction level as compared to other independent variables. Further, it is witnessed from Table 9 that the significant value (P-value) of the T-test for all items is 0.000, which shows that all the three condensed factors arrived at through factor analysis are highly significant with respect to the dependent variables, i.e., **“Responses of Tourists Preferring Spices”** (Table 10). The application of the ANOVA (F-test) indicates that the scale/factor, i.e. “Responses of Tourists Preferring Spices” regarding satisfaction level was quite significant. All the explanatory variables, i.e., three factors for studying responses of Foreign Tourists Preferring Spices are quite significant, i.e., Touristic Value of Spices, Nutritional Value of Spices, Properties of Spices. Further, statistical analysis displays that the significant value (P-value) of the F-test came out to be 0.000, which means that all three variables are highly significant with respect to the responses of tourists preferring spices regarding satisfaction level.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study aims to contribute to the role of spices as an aid to promote cultural heritage tourism, medicinal properties of spices, spice tours, the role of food in promoting spice tourism, and spice farm tourism. The findings of the review of the literature support several conclusions. Based on the various conceptual definitions identified during the present studies, a review of the selected documents was done and all the authors are cited. The statistical analysis reveals that independent Factor

1, i.e., Touristic Value of Spices, has contributed the most and has a stronger effect on the satisfaction level as compared to other independent variables, namely, Medicinal Properties of Spices, Wellness Properties of Spices, Usage of Spices in Cuisine, Visiting Spice Farms. These have been discussed in length in the introduction section as well as in the review of the literature section.

Spice tourism is currently an unexplored domain in comparison to other niche forms of tourism such as food and wine tourism but has a great potential to become a major tourist attraction. Thus, the development of synergies to improve the region's food and tourism industry and the introduction of effective marketing techniques can make it a unique travel destination (Boyne et al., 2003). Spices have practical uses, historical complexity and surrounding climate, complex values, and medicinal properties. Spices are used in food and healthcare, and are prepared in various ways to enhance the cultural characteristics and add value to the food. Based on the extant literature, it can be understood that spices not only increase the taste of the food but also contribute to health and wellness through their medicinal properties. They are also part of the system of beliefs as they form a vital element in festivals and traditional ceremonies. Spices also find their use in cultural tourism and form an integral part of the tourism system. Spices not only aid in food preparation; in many countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia they are used in rituals and festivals. Along with food, spices play an important role as a cultural product in the creation and consumption of international tourism. In modern times, they have become a part of every household. They contain numerous vital ingredients such as minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, essential oils, and phytonutrients. These nutrients and nutritional value vitalize the human body and build the immune system to fight micro-organisms existing in our surroundings. Spice producers are resorting to spice tours, which are evolving as a new niche form of tourism.

The experience of visiting a spice farm has become a tourism product leading to glocalization. Food, an important resource for tourism, is in many ways related to tourism and essential to the visitor's experience. Food plays an important role in tourism, tourism products, decision-making and support, and can be a valuable resource for tourism development. As a result, valuable food is consumed by tourists and the tourism industry around the world. Spice tourism is relatable to farm or Agri-

based tourism that entices the tourists to gain knowledge of the spices and additional benefits accruing from the spices. As a grey area of Agri-based tourism, spice tourism provides ample opportunities to develop as an attraction like other niche forms of tourism or tourism adjectival.

5.1) THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the research will be in addition to the extant literature available on spice tourism as a niche tourism product. All the values pertaining to the study were more than the threshold values of composite reliability, therefore, this construct is considered a reliable instrument and future studies can be conducted in this respect. Further, the research has thrown light on the behaviour of foreign tourists regarding their spice consumption in India, and added data in this regard will further assist future researchers to understand the consumption patterns of the spice tourists from the Indian perspective. There is extant literature available pertaining to spice tourism but the majority of it has not received scholarly attention, especially that pertaining to positioning spice tourism as a “tourism product” for foreign tourists. This investigation contributes to the scarce literature on understanding the connections between the sub-topics of spice tourism and some new topics that could open up new arenas for research.

5.2) PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

As an emerging niche market, the study has confirmed the impact of spices on tourism choices as well as tourism development and identity. The research has also demonstrated the role of spices in tourism development and diversification. It is reiterated to have synergies to develop the region's food and tourism industry and utilize effective marketing techniques which can develop the region as a unique travel destination (Boyne et al., 2003). This would further encourage the practitioners and policy framers to develop effective marketing strategies to position themselves as a major spice tourism destination.

Spice tourism has links with history, cultural heritage, food consumption, and tourist

experiences in and around destinations and attractions (Holladay, 2016). Therefore, this niche form of tourism can be promoted and positioned by practitioners and policy framers as a major tourist destination to attract tourists. Food and spices go hand in hand and act as a cultural product in the creation and consumption of international tourism (Boniface, 2003). Therefore, the policy framers and the practitioners can devise strategies to position spices as a cultural tourism product from the perspective of international tourism. Thus, they will be able to carve a niche for themselves and position India as a spice tourism destination. Spices are an integral part of the tourism system as argued by Timothy & Ron (2013). The advent of globalization has contributed immensely to crossing the frontiers, utilizing the cultural use of spices, as well as spreading knowledge through the export and import of spices. Therefore, the policy framers can utilize spices as a cultural heritage attraction by promoting its usage in food tourism and in cultural attractions designated by intergovernmental agencies.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Though this research is an earnest effort from the researcher to investigate the satisfaction level of foreign tourists preferring spices entering India through New Delhi, it is a herculean task to investigate all the aspects of this emerging segment due to the availability of limited resources, abilities of the researcher, and confidentiality issues pertaining to the foreign tourists. Hence, the study may not be comprehensive in all situations. The research was conducted to provide an all-inclusive view of the satisfaction level of tourists and their spice consumption. The policy framers need to understand the expectations and satisfaction of tourists on various parameters and thereby focus on improving their facilities and services to cater to the needs of the foreign tourists and their spice preferences. The research is conducted from the perspective of India and cannot be generalized in the context of other countries. The investigation, because of time and monetary constraints, is limited to the foreign tourists entering India through the IGI airport, New Delhi. The study can also be conducted on a bigger sample size and in other parts of the country to get a complete scenario of the tourist's preferences pertaining to spice consumption. Studies can also be conducted by taking into consideration each spice and co-relating it in respect of

demographic characteristics.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

PART I: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE (PLEASE WRITE YOUR REPOSSES OR MARK (✓) IN THE APPROPRIATE BOXES)

Socio-Demographic Characteristics		Response
Country of residence (specify)		
Gender	Male	
	Female	
Marital Status	Married	
	Unmarried	
	Others	
Age	18-25	
	26-35	
	36-50	
	51- 60	
	>61	
Education	Primary School	
	Lower Secondary School	
	Higher secondary school diploma	
	University diploma/degree	
	Master degree or above	
Occupation	Business	
	Government	
	Private	
	Student/ Housewife/ retired	
	Others (specify)	
Income (per year)	Low (1,026\$-3,995\$)	
	Intermediate (3,996\$-12,375\$)	
	High (>12,375\$)	
Planned Duration of stay in India	1-2 days	
	3-4 days	
	5-6 days	
	more than a week (specify)	

PART: II RESPONSES OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

Motivations–preferences–types of use/consumption–purchasing habits of spices	Extremely important / preferred (5)	Discreetly to highly important / preferred (4)	Moderately important / preferred (3)	Slightly important / preferred (2)	Not at all (1)
1. Enhance the nutritional value					
2. Calorific value of spices is indispensable for purchase/consumption					

3. Medicinal properties of spices is indispensable for purchase/consumption					
4. Consumption due to the wellness properties of spices					
5. Usage of spices in cuisine enhances the taste					
6. Visiting spice farms is important for purchase of Spices					
7. Physical properties of essential oil is indispensable for purchase/consumption					
8. Physical properties of flavoured oils is indispensable for purchase/consumption					
9. Herbal spices is a pull factor for spice purchase/consumption					
10. Importance of Usage of flavoured spices is indispensable for purchase/consumption					
11. Physical specification of spices is indispensable for purchase/consumption					
12. Chemical specification in spices is indispensable for purchase					

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