

Cultural Tourism Development in Himachal Pradesh Emphasizing Local Cuisines and Their Promotion

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Abstract

Culture of a tourist destination represents a hybrid of different aspects namely belief, art, morals, dialect, music, dances and cuisines etc. Altogether, culture represents the way people live at a particular place and different aspects associated with their day to day life. Among all aspects, local cuisines remain essential cultural aspect that each tourist loves to experience during his / her tour to any destination. Himachal Pradesh has numerous cuisines, which have been least served to tourists due to lack of promotional efforts as well as due to negligence of local restaurants, hotels and dhaba owners. The present research work was focussed upon different cuisines of Himachal Pradesh and promotional initiatives to be adopted as a part of cultural tourism development in Himachal Pradesh. The study has utilized both primary data (*personal observation & tasting*) as well as secondary information (*Books, journals, magazines and online sources*). During the research work, it has been revealed that there are numerous cuisines which are available across different parts of the state. Few of them are namely Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddukakhatta, Chana-madra, Sepu-bari Madra, Alu-chanamadra, Patande, Bhaturu, Babru, Beduan roti, Mithdoo, Seera, Lasurae ki sabji, Bhruni ki sabji and Patrode etc. Local dhaba owners, restaurant management and hotel managers must promote these cuisines in their menu and provide them on regular basis, on demand or as packaged service.

Keywords: *Cuisines, promotion, destination, culture & tourism*

Introduction

When one talk about cultural tourism development at any tourist destination, various aspects that come to focus are beliefs, artistic work, morals, fairs, festivals, dialects, music, dances and cuisines etc. Moving on to Himachal Pradesh (*One of the popular hilly states of North Western part of India*), there are numerous cultural aspects popular among tourists i.e. fairs, festivals, dance forms (*nati*) and songs. However, less popular are the cuisines made on routine basis in almost every household sprawling across 90% of rural areas of the state. These are Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddukakhatta, Chana-madra and Patande etc. Still many more local cuisines are undiscovered and are in darkness due to lack of their association with food business. The local cuisines are not associated with tourism business and they are not in menu of majority of hotels, restaurants and dhabas. But, when we talk about culture, local cuisines always constitute an integral part of it. Cultural tourism business in Himachal Pradesh is an important alternative form of tourism business. The cuisine part of Himachali culture needs proper marketing not only at major tourist destinations (*Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala & Chamba etc.*), but also in small towns as well as villages. Only, then there production and consumption will fasten among the visitors as well as local people. It will sustain local cuisines and their recipes among the new generation. The promotion of Himachali cuisines requires an initiative from Dept. of tourism, as it will not only provide a centre for availability of local cuisines at different destinations but also direct local restaurant and hotel owners to include local cuisines in their menu. Advertisements through banners, hoardings, newspapers, magazines (*Monal & Hills Pillar etc.*), Television and AIR-FM radio channels etc. Organisation of

food festivals at different destinations regularly twice or thrice each year by outsourcing experts from different villages across the state must be strictly followed. Himachali cuisines require promotional efforts on large scale, so that in coming years we may witness “Himachali Thali” & Himachali cuisines in menu of hotels and restaurants not only in Himachal Pradesh but also in other states & metropolitan regions of country.

Review of Literature

The review of literature was primarily focussed upon culture, local cuisines of Himachal Pradesh and their promotion under various sub-parts as follows:

Culture and Cultural Tourism: Culture of any place comprises of different aspects like dances, music, fairs, festivals, cuisines, religion and language etc. Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. McIntosh and Goeldner (As cited in Academia.edu, 1986) have remarked that cultural tourism comprises of all aspects of travel whereby, travellers learn about the history and heritage of others or about their contemporary ways of life or thought. Cultural tourism covers not just the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the ‘way of life’ of a people or region (Richards, 1996). Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behaviour; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour through social learning (Hofstede, 1997). The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs comes under the category of cultural tourism (ATLAS, 2004). Cultural tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religions, and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities *i.e. festivals, rituals* and their values and lifestyle, as well as niches like industrial tourism and creative tourism (wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_tourism, 2015).

Local Cuisines of Himachal Pradesh: The day to day food of local people is very similar to the rest of the north India. They too have lentil, broth, rice, vegetables and bread. As compared to other states in north India non-vegetarian cuisine is more preferred. Traditionally, Himachali cuisine is dominated by red meat and wheat bread. Thick and rich gravy with aromatic spices is used in abundance as the base of many dishes. Now, steamed momos and noodles are also readily available and popular with travellers. Some of the specialities of Himachal include *Manee'*, Madira, Pateer, Chouck, Bhagjery and chutney of *Til* (Wikipedia.org, 2014). Himachal Pradesh has numerous local cuisines to be offered for tourists in different districts, towns & villages. A true essence of local cuisines can be felt in villages away from major towns of the state. Numerous cuisines are made by local chefs on small scale, few of them in market and majority at homes. Special local cuisines of Himachal Pradesh are namely Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddukakhatta, Chana-madra, Sepu-bari Madra, Alu-chanamadra, Patande, Bhaturu, Babru, Beduan roti, Mithdoo, Seera, Lasurae ki sabji, Bhruni ki sabji and Patrode etc.

Promotion of Local Cuisines: Promotion of local cuisines via linking them with tourism business is very important so as to provide tourists with quality food and everlasting experiences of culinary grandeur of Himachal Pradesh. The promotional efforts will also help to conserve ancestral recipes of local cuisines. There is a strong need of promotional efforts by local hotels, restaurants, dhabas and by Department of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh as an initiator. The local food may be entered in menu of

different restaurants, hotels etc. and marketed through hoarding, advertisement in newspapers and online marketing individually as well as by the Department of Tourism.

Research Design

The research design of the research work has been comprised of various sub-parts elaborated as follows:

1. **Need of study:** There was need of study as local cuisines and their promotion is an integral part of cultural development of Himachal Pradesh. Local cuisines are required to be taken care and linked with tourism business.
2. **Scope of the study:** The scope of the study is in highlighting local cuisines among tourists, conserving recipes of local cuisines and providing suggestions for the promotion of local cuisines.
3. **Objectives of the Study:** The various objectives of the research work are elaborated as follows-
 - ❖ To study selective Himachali Cuisines.
 - ❖ To suggest measures for promotion of Himachali cuisines for cultural tourism development.
4. **Data Collection:** The data was collected during the research work from both primary sources (*Personal observation & tasting*) as well as secondary sources (*Books, journals & online sources*).

Findings & Discussion

After comprehensive research it has been revealed that Himachal Pradesh has numerous local cuisines that have potential to be included in BLD (*Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*) menu of local hotels, restaurants and dhabas.

*****Popular local Cuisines of Himachal Pradesh:** The popular local cuisines of Himachal Pradesh are Siddu, Guchhi-mutter, Sepu-vadi, Kaddukakhatta, Chana-madra, Sepu-bariMadra, Alu-chanamadra, Patande, Bhaturu, Beduan, Babroo, Dhandar, Chilru / Chareli, Rot, Gulgulae, Mithdoo, Seera, Badi, Sepu-bari, Kadi, Khairu, Redu, Jhol, Bicchu buti ka saag, Karelai ki sabji, Lasiare ki sabji, Lingdu ki sabji, Bhangolu ki kari, Bhruni ki sabji, Ambua, Chacha, Mahni, Patrode, Khattibhuji / Garyalibhuji, Kaandal / Khandole.

Ingredients, recipes and localities of *selective cuisines* are elaborated as follows:

S. No.	Cuisine	Nature of Cuisine	Ingredients	Importance of Cuisine	Recipe	Locality of Cuisines
1.	Bhaturu	Cereal based	Wheat & oil	Staple food	Fermentation followed by Deep frying	Hamirpur, Mandi&Bilaspur
2.	Beduan	Cereal based	Wheat, soyabean / black gram & oil	Festival season food	Fermentation followed by Deep frying	Mandi, Hamirpur&Bilaspur
3.	Babroo	Cereal based	Wheat / Rice, salt, spices,	Snack food	Fermentation	Kangra

			water, ghee		followed by shallow frying on griddle (Like dosa)	
4.	Chilru / Chareli	Cereal based	Rice, water, ghee	Festival Occasion food	Shallow frying on griddle (Like dosa)	Hamirpur&Mandi
5.	Seera	Cereal based	Wheat, sugar & ghee	Social ceremonial dish and snack food	Natural fermentation followed by frying in ghee	Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur&Mandi
6.	Madra	Pulse based	Chickpea / red kidney beans, yoghurt & spices	Social ceremonial dish prepared in marriages and other social gathering	Boiling followed by slow heat cooking	Kangra and Chamba
7.	Badi	Pulse based	Black gram & spices	Adjunct for cooking vegetables / grains / legumes	Fermentation followed by sun drying	Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Chamba&Mandi
8.	Sepubari	Pulse based	Black gram & spices	Special dish in marriage feast	Steaming followed by deep frying	Mandi, Hamirpur, Bilaspur&Kangra
9.	Jhol	Milk based	Buttermilk, tender maize kernels	Beverage during summers	Boiling	Mandi&Hamirpur
10.	Bicchubutikasaag	Bicchubuti (Stinging nettle), spices, oil	UrticaparvifloraRoxb. (Leaves)	Seasonal vegetable	Boiling followed by roasting with oil and spices	Chamba&Shimla
11.	Lingdukisabji	Lingdu (Fiddle head fern), spices & curd	Diplaziumesculentum (Retz) Sw. (Fern stems)	Seasonal vegetable	Roasting with spices	Kangra&Chamba
12.	Bhrunikisabzi	Bhruni, green chillies	Ficuscarica L. (Leaves)	Seasonal vegetable	Smoking	Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Chamba&Mandi

13.	Ambua	Mango & spices	Mangifera indica-Fruit (Ripe mango)	Seasonal fruit dish	Roasting with spices	Hamirpur, Kangra, Una & Mandi
14.	Chacha	Mango, onion & spices	Mangifera indica-Fruit (Raw mango)	Seasonal fruit dish	Roasting with spices	Hamirpur, Kangra & Mandi
15.	Mahni	Mango, onion, salt & chillies	Mangifera indica-Fruit (Raw mango)	Accompaniment to main course / food	Boiling	Mandi & Hamirpur
16.	Patrode	Kachalu (Taro), gram flour & spices leaves	Colocasia esculenta (Leaves)	Snack	Steaming followed by frying	Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi and Bilaspur
17.	Bhangolu kikadi	Bhang (Indian hemp), spices, curd, galgal juice (Citrus pseudolimon Tan)	Cannabis sativa (Seeds)	Vegetable curry	Boiling	Mandi

Table 1: A Brief Description of Popular Local Cuisines of Himachal Pradesh

*****Suggestion of Measures Targeting Promotion of Local Cuisines for Cultural Tourism Development of Himachal Pradesh:** There are certain measures that must be adopted by Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh, local hotel and restaurant owners and management committees of different fairs, festivals and public gathering enumerated as follows:

1. Promotion of local cuisines by Department of Tourism through both print (*Newspapers, magazines, hoardings, pamphlets & brochures etc.*) as well as electronic media (*Websites, social sites like facebook, twitter, television, FM radio and digital displays etc.*).
2. Inclusion of local cuisines in menu of different hotels, resorts and restaurants running under Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation.
3. Inclusion of local cuisines in menu of different private hotels, resorts and local restaurants & Dhabas running across the state registered under Dept. of Tourism and allied departments of Himachal Pradesh.
4. Establishment of local cuisines centres in each district and tehsil of the state.
5. Establishment of local cuisines centres also in main cities of different states of India.
6. Inclusion of visit to local cuisines centres by local travel agents in various tour packages offered by them.
7. Organization of local food fairs & festivals in almost each district at least twice in a year by Dept. of Tourism through outsourcing skilled man-power from distant villages to provide the traditional taste.
8. Awareness campaigns by Department of Tourism for making local dhaba, restaurant and hotel owners to include local cuisines in their menu.
9. Individual effort by local restaurant owners to market local cuisines by installing notice boards, hoardings, making local cuisines as part of their menu and also provide local cuisines on demand.
10. Local entrepreneurs must also provide local cuisines as packaged services not only on their shops but also cater to telephonic / online orders.
11. Recipes of local cuisines should be developed into print and electronic media by Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh and circulate them to different dhaba owners and visitors of different festivals.

Conclusion

From the above findings, it is quite clear that Himachal Pradesh has numerous local cuisines which are unique in themselves. They are integral part of Himachali culture and must be included in menu of different catering centres across the state and abroad also. The Dept. of Tourism, Himachal Pradesh must play an active role in promotion of local cuisines not only for cultural tourism development but also for conservation of ancestral recipes of different cuisines of Himachal Pradesh. Similar responsibilities should be exhibited by local hotel owners, restaurant owners, travel agents and local residents themselves.

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