

# Importance of Culinary Competency for Hospitality Industry – Opportunities and Challenges for Employability in Odisha

Shruti Mohanty

Research Scholar

School of Hotel Management

Siksha o' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar, India

**Abstract-** Culinary Competency is one of the most important elements of the hospitality industry as it looks after the major part which is cooking. Culinary art is not only limited to cooking, it includes aspects of food preparation and food presentation as well. Experts in this area need to have skills and knowledge on food science and nutrition, various types of diet, while the modern culinary art deals with areas of chemistry, food safety and contamination, thermodynamics, visual aspect of food, human nutrition, butchery etc. Looking at the vast aspects of Culinary, in order to get employed in the hospitality industry one must have in-depth knowledge of Culinary skills and for which training needs to be imparted so that the workforce becomes more employable. Odisha, soon to be the education hub of India, has various institutes and colleges to impart the training on Culinary skills, but it lacks the focus and direction for implementing it. Moreover, with due course of time the traditional art of cooking food in Odisha is also getting extinct. Thus, the Culinary competency would not only help in making the potential candidates more employable, but it will also open the doors for entrepreneurship in Odisha. This paper aims to highlight the skills required for culinary competencies and the opportunities and challenges that Odisha is presently facing to implement it.

**Keywords-** Culinary, knowledge, employability, food

## INTRODUCTION

The term 'Hospitality' can be described as the well being of services and facilities related to tourists and travellers. Hospitality is not restricted to accommodation and its services, it includes "food and beverage, event management, transportation, entertainment, cruise lines, theme parks and others" which constitutes the entire tourism industry. The Indian Hospitality industry has evolved over the years, and has been growing extensively and making use of technology, pricing, regional segmentation and preferences. According to the Economic Survey of India and Technopak, the Indian Hospitality sector is estimated to be about USD 17 billion, from which 70 percent belong to the organized sector while 30 percent belong to the unorganized sector. The hospitality industry is indeed one of the most important drivers of economic growth by employing around 8.78 percent of the total population in the country, signifying the world's largest employer. A global report on Hospitality says that more than 255 million people are currently employed in this sector and by 2022, it will employ around 328 million people, which will create 73 million new jobs. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in its report states that, "every new job created in the hospitality industry supports 1.5 jobs along the supply chain, with a proportionate economic boost to local communities". The present scenario of employment in a country like India is such that, it is blessed with the "Demographic Dividend", when compared to the other developed countries. The industry which utilises and incorporates the youth into the business gain much more than expected. The hospitality sector in India, can also look for pre-employment activities, to make them aware of the jobs in this sector and to help them for entry-level industry jobs through employability training. This can be further done by teaching the young people about the job market and establishing "job shadowing programs and internships", to introduce the potential employees and students to the various types of employment the hospitality industry offers like the food and beverage operations, maintenance, housekeeping operations, management, finance and accounting, guest relations, marketing and customer services and the skills required for each of the above sub divisions of the hospitality sector. This would provide the young people with practical knowledge, operations and possibility of changes which would ultimately help them in their future workplace. The hospitality industry's training set up is a continuous process in which people acquire skills through apt professionalism, real time problem solving, business communication, improving flexibility at every level. Understanding the needs of the present functioning in the hospitality industry and young people's expectations from themselves and their communities could be an added advantage in selection, recruitment and training procedures.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the importance of Culinary competency in the hospitality sector .
2. To find out the prospects of Odisha's culinary and cuisine as an opportunity to employ more people
3. To find out the potentiality and challenges that are faced by Odisha's hospitality sector and how culinary art can act as an aid, in terms of employability.

## Research Methodology

The main aim of the study is to analyze the importance of culinary skills in the hospitality sector and regional cuisine and to find out their potential in terms of employability. For completing the purpose of study, the data was collected from the following sources:

Secondary Sources-The study has made use of the various secondary data from books, journals, magazines and newspapers. Reports from the Department of tourism, Government of Odisha, Odisha Tourism Policy and Food processing were also studied.

## CULINARY SKILLS- It's importance in the Hospitality Industry

Culinary Skills can be described as 'the art of cooking'. "Culinary" is defined as something related to cooking or kitchens. A person working in the culinary arts is said to be a Culinarian. While a Culinarian working in a restaurant is commonly known as a cook or a chef. Culinary artists have the responsibility of skilfully preparing meals that makes the food more appealing. Culinary artists do not only artistically prepare the food and present it, but, they also need to have knowledge of food science, diet and nutrition. All methods of cooking follow the principles of radiation, conduction, and convection. While cookery follows the method of boiling, poaching, steaming, braising, stewing, baking, grilling, frying, paper bag and microwave. Culinary arts is based on certain elements, few of the elements are :-

- 1.**Colour-** is vital for every dish , as it makes the dish look good.
- 2.**Taste-** it's the most important element in the culinary art , as it makes the food taste good , spices and herbs help the dishes to balance which makes it more interesting.
- 3.**Flavours-** makes the food special by adding flavours of sweet, sour, spicy,bitter, and salty
- 4.**Texture-** this element adds crunchiness, crispness, tenderness, chewiness, or some kind of texture in the dish.
- 5.**Aroma-** makes the food attractive through the smell of the dish
- 6.**Style-** it is related to how the chefs serve the dishes to the customers
- 7.**Plating-** it deals with how the things are put on the table and what type of plates one uses.

The Culinary Art further deals with the balance, pattern, contrast, emphasis, unity, and variety in the process of making food. Johnson and Winterton (1991), in their research state that "theories, concepts, and tacit knowledge gained from performing tasks must be merged together as a part of the academic experience". Some of the industry employees feel that the persons, who impart education, are not adequately and successfully developing graduates "who possess the employability skills needed to compete in today's complex hospitality industry" (Hertzman 2006). Presently, the students are not ready to meet the demand as they do not have the skills that are needed to be effective in the working arena (Peddle ,2000). Okeiyi et al ,1994 and Tetreault,1997 in their research gave importance to the skills and competencies that the students need in order to succeed in the industry. While Zopiatis (2010) gave emphasis on Culinary Arts by saying that culinary- specific competencies are considered more important than any other competencies. To add on to the importance of culinary skills Diplari and Dimou (2010), while examining the tourism industry , found that it has a close relation with the culinary arts and hospitality industry and where there is a growing need to include more practice – oriented elements in the curriculum. Thus, it can be seen from the above researches conducted, culinary art is one of the most vital element and required competency in the hospitality sector.

## ODISHA'S CUISINE AND CULINARY- Its origin and importance for employability

Indian Culinary art can be traced back to 8000 years, consisting of various cultures and communities , which ultimately led to the variety of flavours and regional cuisines , presently found in India.In comparision to all the regional cuisines, Odia cuisine is one

of its kind , as it makes use of minimum oil and spices , so that the food doesn't lose its nutritional value and is aptly cooked. Odisha is enriched with bountiful of culture and tradition. The Cultural enrichment of the state has been enhanced through the arts and the local traditional foods. The style of cooking has been passed from generation to generation. The traditional method of preparing food has attracted many foreigners from the past and presently also many tourists , both domestic and international , come to taste the authentic food. The image of the destination is enhanced by the traditional food and its integration with its culture. "The way in which various ingredients are combined , cooked and eaten forms an important element of a national cultural identity and the destination's culinary heritage"(Bessiere,1998, Cusack , 2000). Selwood (2003) , suggests that the appeal of the destination increases due to the authenticity of local food, and for every tourists, eating is one of the major attraction especially the traditional delicacies. The people of Odisha need to feel proud for their local cuisine and cultural heritage .The Culinary style of Odisha has been religiously and culturally influenced. At every step of food preparation, serving, and consuming , the culinary art follows many customs and ritual practices . For example , it is customary for the people of the state to eat with the right hand as it is ethical according to them. Odia cooking style is very easy to learn and apply , but one needs an authentic trainer in order to master it. The cuisine is mostly dependent on the local ingredients . It is also popular for different types of seafood like fish, crab, shrimp, prawn etc. The essence of the spice of the Odia food is the "Panchphutana", which consists of mustard seeds, fennel seeds, cumin seeds, fenugreek seeds and nigella seeds, to cook dishes of many kinds. The cuisine has a great influence by the Jaganath Temple , where garlic and onion are not included in the preparation of food. Infact, according to scriptures , Puri, is famous as food destination. The traditional food of Jaganath Temple, known as 'Mahaprasad' is offered inside the temple premises and the method of cooking is quite unique which can be seen no where else around the world. The kitchen in the temple produces more than 10,000 meals a day and has a manpower of 600 cooks known as the 'Suara', 752 fire ovens known as the 'Chulis' and 50-60 'Mahasuara' who are known as the head cooks.

The traditional culinary of Odisha offers a wide range of variations from meals to snacks. It can be broadly categorized into two types namely, the 'Satwika' (Vegetarian) and the 'Tamasika'(Non-vegetarian). The Satwika type of food are mostly done in a traditional style during special occasions and festivals, few of the dishes are Chada chakta on the eve of Kumar Purnima, the turmeric leaf preparations of local cake known as Enuri Pitha for Prathamastham, and the Chapan Bhog of Jaganath Temple which prepares more than 256 variety of dishes every day. Odia cuisine mostly makes use of herbs like Mustards, Poppy seeds, Garlic , Ginger, Dried salted mango and others. Odia dishes are known to be served on Banana leaves, with sprinkled water and salt, lemon and green chillies are also served along with it. Odia cuisine is also famous for its mouth watering delicacies, especially the sweets and deserts which is popular worldwide. Few of the popular sweets are Chennapoda , Chenna jhili, rasagulla, rasaballi, jalepi, nadia kora etc. 'Pithas' which are otherwise known as small cakes vary in taste from sweet to salty, are specially made during festivals , few of them are Poda pitha, Manda Pitha, Kakara, Potali pitha , Saru chakuli, Chitau pitha, Chandra Kanti, Budha Chakuli etc. The main course also offers a wide range of delicacies both for vegeterarian and non – vegetarians , famous odia dishes include, Aada Khichadi, Dalma, Dahi Baigana, Aambula Rai, Badi Churra, Ghanta, Kanika, Kanjee, Chadachadi, Lau Rai, Ouu Khata, Potala Rasa, Sakara, Satula, Besara, Mahura, Macha Thukutuka, Mansa Kasa, Baunsa Poda Mansa, Pohala Rai etc. All the above delicacies require special attention while cooking and skills have to be implemented for doing it in an authentic manner.

The youth of Odisha need to know about the authenticity and style of cooking which is the culinary art , so that those who are interested to be a part of hospitality industry can be made employable , if special skill development approaches are undertaken in Odisha Culinary Art. Training in Culinary art is very vital for the growth and success of the hospitality industry. Some of the training institutes or hotels give less importance to the training as they are unwilling to spend both time and money . Ryan (2008), in his study state that, if people who are new to the industry or have not stepped into the industry are not imparted proper culinary training , then, "the employee will not be able to help a client the way they should, the client will be left unsatisfied by the hotels service level, and lastly the employee will become frustrated by the company and his or her service level will drop to a minimum". Hotel should rather give more emphasis on skill development approaches to improve and retain the essence of Culinary Art of Odisha to increase the opportunity for the people to be more employable, which would further help in increasing the morale, satisfaction and retention of the employees leading to less turnover and selection rates. If customers are satisfied with the quality and the presentation of food, the employees will have more enthusiasm to develop their skills and to provide excellent customer service. The Odisha Food Processing Policy (2016) has aimed to develop food processing in a competitive manner by creating a facilitating environment and standardized infrastructure with an aim to add more value and to maximize employment . As per a report , Odisha has the potential to acquire an investment of USD 33 billion in the coming years and to provide employment to 9 million persons. The Hospitality and Culinary sector especially has the potential to grow at 11% of Compound Annual Growth Rate. According to the Odisha Food Processing Policy , 2016, assistance will be provided upto Rs.3 Lakh for conducting a 30 days certification programme in the hospitality sector for the youth to make them more employable.

<b>DOMESTIC &amp; FOREIGN TOURISTS VISIT TO ODISHA</b>								
Year	Domestic		Total	% growth	Foreign	% growth	Grand Total	% growth
	From Odisha	Outside Odisha						
2012-13	55,79,909	37,11,825	92,91,734	9.67	65,522	4.30	93,57,256	9.63
2013-14	60,38,746	40,25,326	1,00,64,072	8.31	67,400	2.87	1,01,31,472	8.27
2014-15	66,30,499	44,20,852	1,10,51,351	9.81	72,215	7.14	1,11,23,566	9.79
2015-16	72,40,304	48,27,391	1,20,67,695	9.20	67,364	6.72	1,21,35,059	9.09
2016-17	78,67,321	52,45,407	1,31,12,728	8.66	77,496	15.04	1,31,90,224	8.69

Source- Annual Activities Report 2016-17, Government of Odisha

The above table shows the increasing trend of tourists arrival in the state in the last five years from 2012-2017, thus giving an opportunity for more employment in the hospitality sector.

### **HOTEL POSITIONS IN ODISHA:**

Category of Hotels	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds
High Spending Group (HSG)	334	11,303	23,344
Middle Spending Group (MSG)	399	8,120	16,864
Low Spending Group (LSG)	956	15,950	30,392
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>35,373</b>	<b>70,600</b>

Source: Odisha Tourism

The above table gives a scenario of the hotel positions in Odisha in which it gives a detail information about the category of hotel, number of hotels, number of rooms and number of beds available in present. As per statistic every hotel room produces about 4 jobs directly or indirectly, so this again shows that Odisha has the opportunity of employing thousands of candidates in order to cater the growing demand of the industry.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN ODISHA TO IMPLEMENT CULINARY COMPETENCY**

The Challenges faced by the hospitality sector to employ young people in the culinary art can be following :-

1.The youth of Odisha do not know the nature of work that the hospitality industry offers and even few people have the misconception about the industry as a whole, this misconception starts with the information barrier. The lack of information about the job profile in the field of culinary art may create a bridge in cultures where the youth who solely depend on their parents beliefs and decisions about the career that they are going to take up, and get confused. For example, in some gulf countries young people and women are discouraged to work in the hospitality sector. Lack of information further limits to know the procedure of applying for these types of jobs. In Odisha, young people from disadvantaged groups or backward communities may not have the encouragement from the family who are not socially inclined towards the industry. With such attitude, the youth of Odisha will

not be able to make decisions about their future, about their education and classes which would help to get the jobs in the field they want.

2. Another challenge for the Odisha Hospitality sector especially in the culinary art, is the skills mismatch, where the employees enter the industry without having any knowledge about the required skills for culinary art, literacy and lack of basic information and communication skills. 'Skill shortage' is referred by the employers which happens due to skill mismatch in the hospitality sector.

3. One of the major challenge is the turnover issue of retaining talented people in the industry. The cost involved in making the potential employees skilled, to train them, to recruit and, to finally select them involves huge investment, which can sometime exceed an employee's annual remuneration. There is always a threat in the hospitality sector as young people are always prone to changing jobs within the same or different sector. Thus, there is a major challenge for the hospitality sector in Odisha to develop skills in culinary, to nurture and retain them and further encourage the young mass to get benefit out of the skills i.e. getting employment.

4. Unequal opportunities for employees is another challenge that presently the hospitality sector in Odisha is facing. Though according to a report, International Labour Organization and UNDP, "Women perform 66 percent of the World's work, produce 50 percent of the food, but earn 10 percent of the income and own 1 percent of the property", but, women do not get equal facilities of land, education and capital as they face gender discrimination and overload of work. Women are usually not allowed to go for culinary jobs in the hotels though they are the need of the hour.

5. Low wages and harsh working environment do not allow the people of Odisha to go further in this industry. Infact, most of the people have the view of hospitality industry that it provides low wages and hourly pays, overtime work without any remuneration, less breaks and long working hours during peak seasons. The working environment usually is not disciplined with proper management and leadership very less attention is given to the process of training and development on different areas.

6. Though Odia food is very authentic and delicious most of the people now a days have the nag to learn about other types of cuisine of different cultures which is again a challenge for the hospitality industry to implement culinary competency.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPLEMENT CULINARY COMPETENCIES IN ODISHA**

In spite of the challenges Odisha has immense potential Odisha has immense potential for developing and imparting Culinary competency in the hospitality sector, few of them are :

1. There are many culinary schools, colleges and universities across Odisha who provide the culinary education with the best resources and facilities available. The institutes which are specialized in Culinary education are the following :-

- a) Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition-Bhubaneswar
- b) Institute of Hotel Administration and Culinary Technology (IHACT) – Bhubaneswar
- c) Biju Pattnaik College of Hotel Management Tourism and Social Work(NCHMCT) – Bhubaneswar
- d) Xavier College of Hotel Management- Cuttack and Bhubaneswar
- e) National institute of Hotel Management and Tourism – Bhubaneswar
- f) Institute of Management and Culinary Art- Baripada
- g) National college of hotel management- Rourkela
- h) Swosti Institute of Management and Social Studies- Bhubaneswar
- i) State Institute of Hotel Management- Balangir
- j) School of Hotel Management- Bhubaneswar
- k) Shalom Institute of Management studies- Bramhapur
- l) Premiere Institute of Hotel Management Catering Technology and Tourism- Puri

m)Centre institute of Hotel Management and Catering- Bhubaneswar

n)Ashutosh Maharaj College of Management and Technology – Baripada

2.Training Programmes related to Hospitality which functions under the skill development training programme of Odisha Skill development Authority (OSDA), Government of Odisha, where around 269 young people have been trained in various departments in the hospitality sector like “Cook (General), Cook (Indian Cuisine), House Keeper , Baker, Food and Beverage Service and Front Office cum Receptionist”. More and more programmes of such skill based are assigned to the State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHM) which is yet another wonderful opportunity to implement culinary art in Odisha.

3.There are efforts made by the Government of Odisha to encourage , “the private sectors for investments in the star category hotels, convention centres , heritage hotels, eco camps” by acquiring “fiscal incentives, single window clearances and marketing and media support”.This would further open the doors for better development of Culinary art in Odisha according to Odisha Tourism Policy , 2016.

4.The ever growing and demanding industry of hospitality has created several opportunities in this sector, and moreover tourists from other countries look for local cuisines and local food outlets , which in turn creates an opportunity to develop skills in culinary and prepare workforce for meeting the demands of providing local food.

5.The tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) , which is a joint initiative by the Government and other training institutes has also agreed to look after the skill development in the field of hospitality in Odisha.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study , few of the recommendations are:-

- 1.Awareness campaign can be made in order to propagate and make people aware about Odia Cuisine and Culinary.
- 2.Development of a strategy for youth to match the growing needs of the industry can be undertaken. Along with training and making a skilled workforce ,a strategy would ensure the fulfilment of the purpose.
- 3.Developing a monitoring tool to measure the progress of Skill development to ensure the development.
- 4.There should be participation both from the public and private agencies to promote Odisha’s Cuisine and Culinary.
- 5.Creating study material according to the present day technology with the use of audio and visual media so that it can be retained for future use.
- 6.The Odisha’s Cuisine can be used as a means to attract more tourists by organizing food festivals .
- 7.More and more institutes should be set up , in order to impart Culinary education. Trainers should be trained with specialization in Odia cuisine.
- 8.In many fairs and festivals celebrated in Odisha , Odia cuisine can be made as a part of it, so that more people will get employed and trained.
- 9.Support from the Government can be taken regarding the entrepreneurial activities to open food court , restaurants, and other food outlets which are specialized in Odia Cuisine
- 10.Wages of the employees can be increased in order to encourage more people to get into the hospitality industry.

## CONCLUSION

In the present study, it was clearly seen that the Hospitality sector is one of the sectors which contributes towards the world economy in a great manner. The industry has created millions of jobs , but mostly from the unskilled and semi- skilled workforce. Culinary competency is one of the most important elements of the hospitality industry which requires skilled workers. Though Odisha has many institutes who provide Culinary education , but they lack in having right direction and focus in order to implement it. There is also a threat of Odisha Cuisine getting extinct. Culinary competency, thus, imparted on the youth of Odisha , would make them more skilled and employable . The misconception of the people of Odisha regarding the hospitality sector needs to be changed. On the other hand ,to meet the demands of the industry entrepreneurial activities by opening food outlets and

food courts with specialized Odia cuisine should be encouraged , so that the employable candidates are fully utilized by the industry.

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