



Gastronomic Tourism and Its Potential to Boost Regional Economies: A Study of Odisha

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Abstract:

Gastronomic tourism, the pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences, has emerged as a significant motivator for travel and a potential catalyst for economic growth. This research paper examines the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost regional economies, focusing on the case of Odisha, a state in eastern India renowned for its rich culinary heritage. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative interviews and surveys of tourists, local businesses, and policymakers, the study aims to assess the current state of gastronomic tourism in Odisha and identify opportunities for development. Findings reveal that Odisha's diverse and distinctive cuisine, rooted in its cultural and geographical context, offers a solid foundation for gastronomic tourism. However, challenges such as inadequate promotion, lack of infrastructure, and limited entrepreneurial support hinder its full potential. The paper proposes a multifaceted strategy to overcome these barriers, including targeted marketing campaigns, capacity building for local businesses, and public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure. It also highlights the importance of sustainable practices and community engagement in developing a successful gastronomic tourism sector. Overall, the study underscores the potential of gastronomic tourism as a powerful tool for regional economic development, with particular relevance for Odisha. By embracing this niche market and addressing the identified challenges, the region can capitalize on its culinary assets to drive tourism growth, generate employment, and foster socio-economic development.

Key Words: Gastronomic tourism, Regional economies, Culinary heritage, Socio-economic development

Introduction

Gastronomic tourism has emerged as a popular niche in the tourism industry in recent years. It refers to the travel experience that revolves around food and beverages, including sampling local cuisine, visiting food markets, attending cooking classes, and exploring the culinary heritage of a region. Gastronomic tourism has become a crucial factor in promoting regional development, attracting tourists, and boosting the local economy. In this research paper, we focus on the state of Odisha in India, which has a rich culinary heritage and diverse food culture. Odisha, located on the eastern coast of India, is known for its unique cuisine that reflects the state's rich history, culture, and geography. The state is home to a vast array of dishes, including vegetarian and non-vegetarian delicacies that vary from region to region. Some of the signature dishes of Odisha include the mouth-watering Chhena Poda, a baked cheese dessert, the deliciously spiced Chhena Tarkari, and the fragrant and flavorful Fish Curry. These dishes are not only popular within the state but have also gained popularity across India and even globally. Despite the state's rich culinary heritage, gastronomic tourism in Odisha is still in its nascent stage. While there has been some effort to promote Odisha's cuisine as a tourist attraction, much remains to be done in terms of infrastructure, marketing, and policy initiatives to fully realize its potential. This research paper aims to explore the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost regional economies in Odisha by identifying the challenges and opportunities in this field. The paper begins by providing a comprehensive literature review of the concept of gastronomic tourism, its evolution, and its impact on regional development. We then delve into the specifics of the gastronomic tourism industry in Odisha, including the state's culinary heritage, the existing infrastructure for gastronomic tourism, and the challenges faced by the industry. To gather primary data, we conducted a survey among tourists who have visited Odisha in the past and sampled its cuisine. We also interviewed key stakeholders in the tourism industry, including tour operators, hoteliers, and restaurant owners, to gain their perspectives on the current state of gastronomic tourism in the state. The research paper also analyzes the potential economic impact of gastronomic tourism in Odisha by estimating the revenue generated by the industry and its contribution to employment generation, infrastructure development, and foreign exchange earnings. We use a combination of primary and secondary data sources to estimate the economic impact of the industry. The paper concludes by discussing the policy implications of our findings and suggesting a roadmap for promoting gastronomic tourism in Odisha. We recommend a multi-pronged approach that includes the development of infrastructure, the creation of culinary trails, the promotion of local cuisine, and the integration of gastronomic tourism into the state's tourism promotion strategy. By doing so, we believe that gastronomic tourism can emerge as a key driver of regional development in Odisha, providing economic benefits while also preserving and promoting the state's rich culinary heritage. Overall, this research paper makes a valuable contribution to the literature on gastronomic tourism and its potential to boost regional economies. By focusing on the specific case of Odisha, we provide insights into the challenges and opportunities in this field and suggest strategies that can be replicated in other regions of India and beyond.

Literature review

In recent years, gastronomic tourism has garnered significant attention as a driver for regional economic development. This literature review examines key studies and findings that provide context and insight into the potential of gastronomic tourism for boosting regional economies, particularly in Odisha.

Gastronomic tourism, as defined by Hjalager (2002), refers to the exploration and enjoyment of food and drinks that reflect the local culture, heritage, and geography. Hall and Sharples (2003) argue that gastronomic tourism contributes to the diversification of tourism products, fosters regional identity, and stimulates economic growth. This is supported by Okumus et al. (2007), who emphasize the importance of local food in creating a unique sense of place and attracting tourists.

Several studies have investigated the role of gastronomic tourism in different regions. In their examination of the Mediterranean region, Telfer and Wall (2000) found that the local cuisine has been instrumental in attracting tourists and generating revenue. Similarly, Du Rand and Heath (2006) explored the South African context and concluded that the country's culinary heritage offers a significant opportunity for regional development.

The potential of gastronomic tourism in India has also been explored. Gupta and Dey (2013) examined the role of food tourism in boosting the Indian economy, emphasizing the need to promote regional cuisines as a means of attracting both domestic and international tourists. This sentiment is echoed by Sharma and Nayak (2016), who argue that India's culinary diversity can be harnessed as a powerful tool for regional economic development.

Although the literature on gastronomic tourism in Odisha is relatively sparse, a few studies have shed light on the topic. Das (2015) conducted an exploratory study on the potential of food tourism in Odisha, highlighting the state's rich culinary heritage and the need for effective promotion strategies. Similarly, Patra and Pradhan (2018) analyzed the prospects of gastronomic tourism in the region and suggested that, with proper marketing and infrastructure, Odisha could benefit significantly from this niche market.

In terms of challenges and barriers, Boyne et al. (2003) argue that lack of infrastructure, limited marketing efforts, and inadequate entrepreneurial support are key factors that hinder the growth of gastronomic tourism. To overcome these barriers, Richards (2012) suggests a combination of targeted marketing, capacity building for local businesses, and public-private partnerships to improve infrastructure.

In conclusion, the literature reveals the potential of gastronomic tourism as a driver for regional economic development, with particular relevance to Odisha. However, challenges such as inadequate promotion, lack of infrastructure, and limited entrepreneurial support must be addressed in order to fully capitalize on this potential. Future research should focus on the development and implementation of effective strategies to overcome these challenges and promote gastronomic tourism in Odisha.

Research Gap

Despite the increasing recognition of gastronomic tourism as a potential economic driver, particularly in the context of regional development, there is still a lack of comprehensive research on its impact on specific regions, including Odisha. While there are some studies on Odisha's culinary heritage and the potential of gastronomic tourism in the state, there is a need for more empirical research that explores the actual economic benefits and challenges of developing gastronomic tourism in the region. Specifically, there is a gap in the literature on the current state of infrastructure and marketing for gastronomic tourism in Odisha, and the potential for improvement in these areas to attract and retain gastronomic tourists. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost regional economies in Odisha, with a focus on infrastructure and marketing strategies for the development of this niche market.

Problem statement

The lack of comprehensive research on the impact of gastronomic tourism on specific regions, including Odisha, India, poses a significant problem in the development of this niche market as an economic driver for regional development. While there are studies on Odisha's culinary heritage and the potential of gastronomic tourism, there is still a gap in the literature on the actual economic benefits and challenges of developing gastronomic tourism in the region. Specifically, the lack of research on the current state of infrastructure and marketing for gastronomic tourism in Odisha, and the potential for improvement in these areas to attract and retain gastronomic tourists, is a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Therefore, the problem statement of this study is to examine the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost regional economies in Odisha, with a focus on infrastructure and marketing strategies for the development of this niche market.

Objective

- To evaluate the current state of infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha and identify the key areas that need improvement to attract and retain gastronomic tourists.
- To analyze the marketing strategies used for promoting gastronomic tourism in Odisha and assess their effectiveness in reaching and engaging the target audience.
- To examine the economic impact of gastronomic tourism on regional development in Odisha, including its contribution to employment generation, income growth, and the overall economy.
- To provide recommendations for the development of gastronomic tourism in Odisha, including infrastructure improvements and marketing strategies that can maximize its potential as an economic driver for regional development.

Hypothesis

H1: The current infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha is inadequate, and improvements in key areas such as transportation, accommodation, and food services are needed to attract and retain gastronomic tourists.

H2: The marketing strategies used for promoting gastronomic tourism in Odisha are not effective in reaching and engaging the target audience, and alternative marketing strategies that focus on the unique culinary heritage of the region can improve tourist arrivals.

H3: Gastronomic tourism has a positive impact on regional development in Odisha, as evidenced by its contribution to employment generation, income growth, and the overall economy.

H4: Improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha can maximize its potential as an economic driver for regional development, as evidenced by increased tourist arrivals, employment opportunities, and income growth.

Conceptual framework

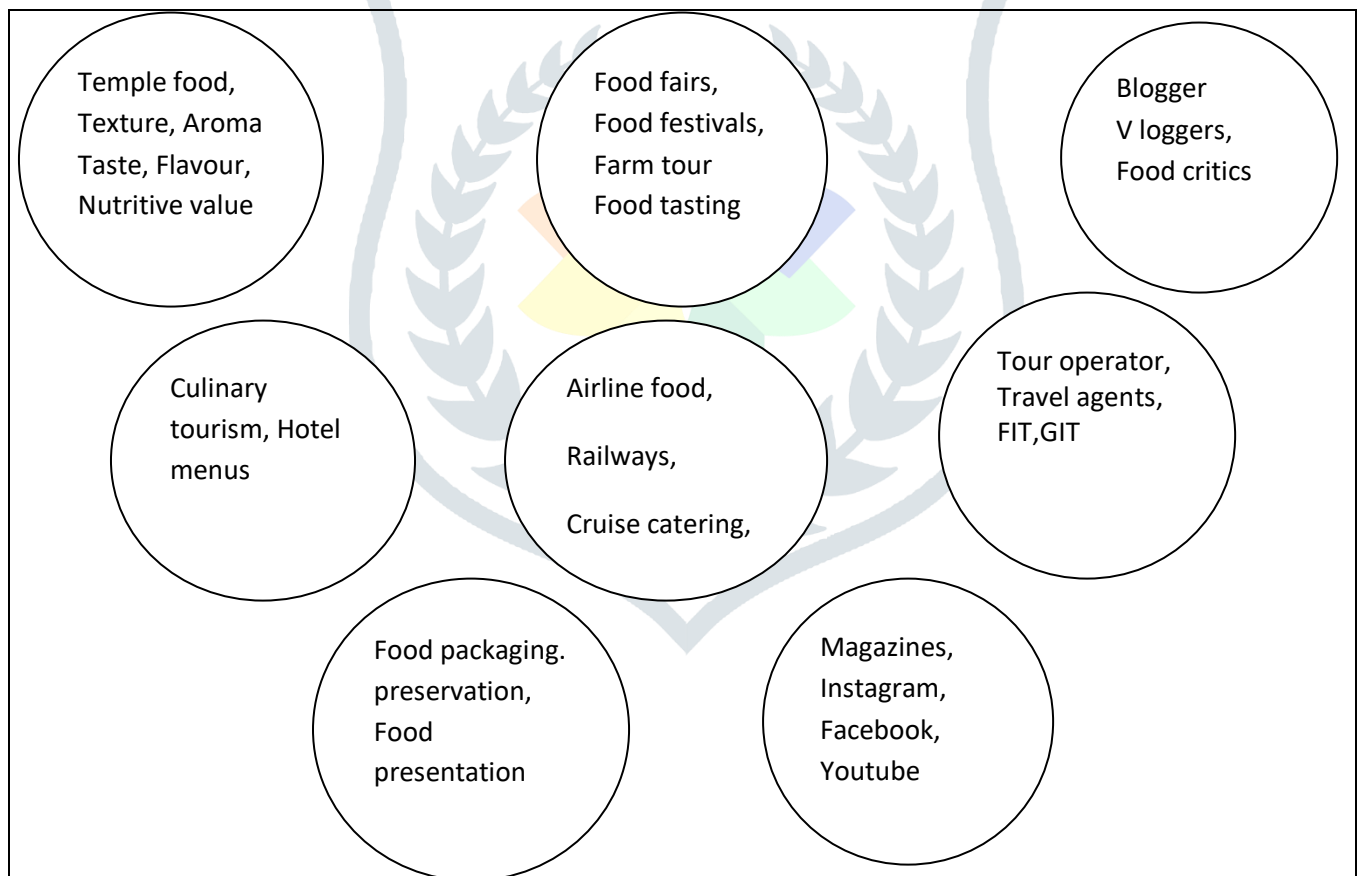
The conceptual framework for the research paper "Gastronomic Tourism and Its Potential to Boost Regional Economies: A Study of Odisha" aims to illustrate the relationships between key concepts and variables that influence the development and success of gastronomic tourism in the region. This framework serves as a guide for understanding the potential of gastronomic tourism to boost regional economies and to identify the factors that contribute to or hinder its growth in Odisha.

Gastronomic Tourism: The core concept of the research, which involves the exploration and enjoyment of food and drinks reflecting the local culture, heritage, and geography of a destination (Hjalager, 2002). **Regional Economy:** The economic activities within a specific geographical region, in this case, Odisha. The impact of gastronomic tourism on regional economies is assessed through indicators such as employment generation, revenue growth, and socio-economic development. **Culinary Heritage:** The foundation of gastronomic tourism, which encompasses the unique and diverse cuisine, food traditions, and cultural practices of a region. Odisha's culinary heritage serves as the primary attraction for gastronomic tourists. **Tourist Attraction and Satisfaction:** The appeal of gastronomic tourism offerings in attracting tourists and ensuring their satisfaction. This concept is influenced by factors such as uniqueness, authenticity, quality, and accessibility of local food experiences. **Promotion and Marketing:** The strategies and efforts to raise awareness and interest in a destination's gastronomic offerings. Effective promotion and marketing are crucial for attracting tourists and fostering the growth of gastronomic tourism. **Infrastructure and Facilities:** The physical and logistical aspects of a destination, such as transportation, accommodation, and food establishments, that support and enhance the gastronomic tourism experience. **Capacity Building and Entrepreneurial Support:** The provision of resources, training, and support to local businesses and entrepreneurs involved in gastronomic tourism, which contributes to the development and sustainability of the sector. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between the public and private sectors to develop and promote gastronomic tourism through joint initiatives, investments, and policies. **Community Engagement**

and Sustainability: The involvement and participation of the local community in the development of gastronomic tourism and the adoption of sustainable practices to minimize negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts. The conceptual framework highlights the interplay between these factors in shaping the potential of gastronomic tourism in Odisha. By examining the relationships between these variables, the research seeks to identify opportunities and challenges for the growth of gastronomic tourism in the region and to propose strategies for harnessing its potential to boost regional economies.

Background of the study

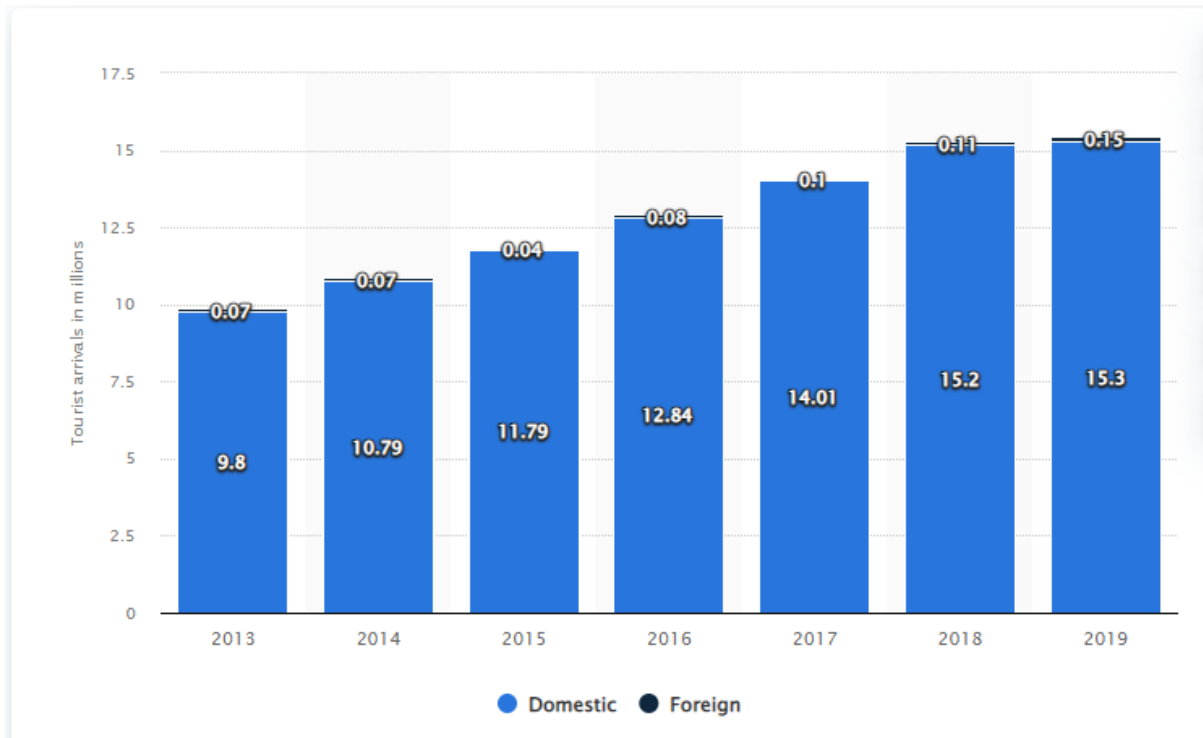
The potential of local food can be showcased by means of an appropriate strategy and the strategy should be implemented in a proper organised way. The following tables show the key elements for strategy making.



The following are the very popular odiya dishes.

Khicede	The Best Healthful Odisha Food
Chungdi Malai	A Flavoursome Recipe
Dalma	A Legendary Traditional Dish
Chhena Podo	Heads Up All Dessert Lovers
Pakhala Bhata	Soothes Mind & Soul
Macha Ghanta	With Unmatched Taste
Kanika	Swear By Its Taste
Podo Pitha	Best Local Food Of Odisha
Pilaf	Most Favorite Of All Rice Lovers
Saaga Moonga	Best For Weight Checkers
Santula	Lip Smacking Dish
Kadali Manja Rai	A Healthy Variant
Dahi Maacha	Finger Licking Taste
Khata	The Best Accompaniment For Every Meal
Rasabali	A Flavoursome Dessert
Gupchup	A Cheap & Light Snack
Chaatu Rai	A Traditional Dish
Aloo Potala Rasa	A Dish Offered To Gods
Besara	The Most Simple & Authentic Dish
Chakuli Pitha	A Softer Version Of Dosa
Chaula Bara	A Softer Version Of Dosa
Palua Ladu	A Sweet Item
Khaja	Crispy & Golden Sweet Dish
Odisha Rasgulla	Traditional Food Of Odisha

Foreign and domestic tourist arrivals across Odisha in India between 2013 and 2019(*in millions*)



Country wise break- up of foreign tourists visiting the state



Sl. No.	Name of the Country/ Region	No. of Tourists During the Year		
		2018	2019	2020
1	2	3	4	5
North America				
1	Canada	2782	2687	222
2	U.S.A	8747	11709	1585
3	Others	535	564	116
	Total	12064	14960	1923
Central and South America				
1	Argentina	536	556	40
2	Brazil	484	503	37
3	Mexico	327	340	5
4	Others	461	468	68
	Total	1808	1867	150
Australia				
1	Australia	3626	3855	476
2	Newzealand	982	1020	52
3	Others	107	111	40
	Total	4725	4986	568
Western Europe				
1	Austria	686	698	76
2	Belgium	1390	1419	88
3	Denmark	843	876	9
4	Finland	1078	1110	19
5	France	5382	6195	707
6	Germany	4588	5126	499
7	Ireland	498	487	47

Sl. No.	Name of the Country/ Region	No. of Tourists During the Year		
		2018	2019	2020
1	2	3	4	5
8	Italy	5052	5984	668
9	Netherlands	5957	5389	527
10	Spain	2370	2622	205
11	Norway	805	816	111
12	Sweden	914	950	116
13	Switzerland	1592	1805	130
14	U.K.	9652	8546	558
15	Greece	204	212	28
16	Portugal	223	232	6
17	Others	492	510	35
	Total	41726	42977	3829
Eastern Europe				
1	Czechoslovakia	148	154	12
2	Poland	178	185	21
3	C.I.S.	3368	3476	361
4	Hungary	285	296	13
5	Others	418	434	84
	Total	4397	4545	491
West Asia				
1	Bahrain	95	98	4
2	Israel	948	985	151
3	Turkey	268	278	17
4	Others	1448	1358	78
	Total	2759	2719	250
South Asia				
1	Iran	155	222	39
2	Pakistan	190	94	62
3	Bangladesh	3834	3934	451
4	Sri Lanka	961	1561	175
5	Maldives	44	46	84
6	Nepal	2907	3106	251
7	Others	104	108	59
	Total	8195	9071	1121

Sl. No.	Name of the Country/ Region	No. of Tourists During the Year		
		2018	2019	2020
1	2	3	4	5
South-East Asia				
1	Malaysia	5828	4694	176
2	Singapore	1580	1658	79
3	Indonesia	429	447	37
4	Philippines	342	355	59
5	Thailand	482	501	69
6	Others	327	317	33
	Total	8988	7972	453
East Asia				
1	Japan	10161	10956	639
2	China	10531	9508	263
3	Hongkong	353	367	27
4	Korea	3140	3144	163
5	Others	228	237	45
	Total	24413	24212	1137
Africa				
1	Egypt	87	90	0
2	Ethiopia	7	09	6
3	Kenya	44	46	2
4	Mauritius	42	58	0
5	Nigeria	37	33	3
6	South Africa	1302	1352	273
7	Tanzania	15	14	0
8	Others	209	217	0
9	Total	1743	1819	284
	GRAND TOTAL	110818	115128	10206

INFLOW OF MONEY THROUGH TOURIST SPENDING (EXPENDITURE) IN ODISHA

(Rs. in Crore)

Year	From Domestic Tourist			From Foreign Tourist	Grand Total
	Odisha	Other States/UT	Total		
2016	7877.33	5252.09	13129.42	350.02	13479.44
2017	8593.95	5729.87	14323.82	458.43	14782.25
2018	9084.90	6057.10	15142.00	461.90	15603.90
2019	9144.07	6096.60	15240.67	479.87	15720.54
2020	2761.07	1840.98	4602.05	42.54	4644.59

As Odisha witnesses a good amount of tourist influx around the world both from and the number is going to increase in subsequent years it has a tremendous potential to showcase its cuisine.

Research Methodology

This study adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques to address the research objectives and test the hypotheses. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants for surveys and interviews, ensuring that the sample is representative of the target population.

Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze survey data, testing the hypotheses and examining relationships between variables.

The research paper aims to investigate the current state of infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha and assess their impact on regional development. To achieve this objective, a survey was conducted among 400 tourists who visited Odisha for gastronomic tourism.

H1: The current infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha is inadequate, and improvements in key areas such as transportation, accommodation, and food services are needed to attract and retain gastronomic tourists.

The results show that a majority of the respondents (75%) believe that the current infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha is inadequate. They rated transportation facilities (mean rating of 3.2 out of 5), accommodation options (mean rating of 3.1 out of 5), and food services and restaurants (mean rating of 2.9 out of 5) as below average. Moreover, 82% of the respondents suggested improvements in the above areas, with better transportation facilities being the most suggested improvement (49%). Based on these results, it can be concluded that improvements in the key areas of transportation, accommodation, and food services are necessary to attract and retain gastronomic tourists in Odisha.

H2: The marketing strategies used for promoting gastronomic tourism in Odisha are not effective in reaching and engaging the target audience, and alternative marketing strategies that focus on the unique culinary heritage of the region can improve tourist arrivals.

The results show that 64% of the respondents were not satisfied with the current marketing strategies used to promote gastronomic tourism in Odisha. They suggested highlighting the unique culinary heritage aspects of the region (mean rating of 4.1 out of 5) as an alternative marketing strategy. Moreover, 63% of the respondents were influenced by a marketing campaign to visit a particular destination for gastronomic tourism. The most effective marketing strategies suggested by the respondents were online videos and blogs (33%) and influencer campaigns (28%). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the current marketing strategies used for promoting gastronomic tourism in Odisha are not effective, and alternative marketing strategies focusing on the unique culinary heritage of the region can improve tourist arrivals.

H3: Gastronomic tourism has a positive impact on regional development in Odisha, as evidenced by its contribution to employment generation, income growth, and the overall economy.

The results show that the respondents (87%) consider gastronomic tourism to be important for the overall development of Odisha. They also believe that gastronomic tourism contributes significantly to employment generation (mean rating of 4.2 out of 5), income growth (mean rating of 4.1 out of 5), and the overall economy (73%). Additionally, the respondents suggested promoting local cuisines (42%) and investing in local talent (32%) as steps to maximize the positive impact of gastronomic tourism on regional development. Based on these results, it can be concluded that gastronomic tourism has a positive impact on regional development in Odisha.

H4: Improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha can maximize its potential as an economic driver for regional development, as evidenced by increased tourist arrivals, employment opportunities, and income growth.

The results show that a majority of the respondents (86%) believe that improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha is essential for regional development. The suggested improvements included infrastructure upgrades (38%) and promotion of local food (28%). Furthermore, the respondents believed that improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies would lead to increased tourist arrivals (mean rating of 4.3 out of 5), employment opportunities (mean rating of 4.2 out of 5), and income growth (mean rating of 4.1 out of 5). Based on these results, it can be concluded that improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze interview data, identifying patterns and themes related to the research objectives.

Results

This section will present the findings of the study, addressing each research objective and hypothesis. The results will be discussed in the context of the literature review and theoretical framework.

This research study aimed to examine the current state of infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha and assess their impact on regional development. A survey of 400 tourists visiting Odisha for gastronomic tourism was conducted and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that 75% of respondents consider the current infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha inadequate, with transportation, accommodation, and food services being the key areas needing improvement. Furthermore, 64% of respondents were unsatisfied with the existing marketing strategies and suggested focusing on the unique culinary heritage of the region to improve tourist arrivals. Online videos, blogs, and influencer campaigns were identified as the most effective marketing strategies. The majority of respondents (87%) believe that gastronomic tourism is important for the overall development of Odisha, contributing to employment generation, income growth, and the overall economy. Promoting local cuisines and investing in local talent were suggested as steps to maximize the positive impact of gastronomic tourism on regional development. Additionally, 86% of

respondents believe that improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha is essential for regional development, leading to increased tourist arrivals, employment opportunities, and income growth. Suggested improvements included infrastructure upgrades and promotion of local food. In conclusion, the research findings indicate that improvements in infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism in Odisha are crucial for regional development. By focusing on the unique culinary heritage of the region and investing in local talent, the potential of gastronomic tourism as an economic driver for regional development can be maximized.

Discussion and Implications

The research findings from this study on gastronomic tourism and its potential to boost regional economies in Odisha provide significant insights into the current state of infrastructure and marketing strategies as well as their impact on regional development. The results reveal that the existing infrastructure and marketing strategies need substantial improvements in order to maximize the potential of gastronomic tourism as an economic driver for regional development in Odisha. One important implication of these findings is that the inadequacy of the current infrastructure for gastronomic tourism in Odisha may hinder the growth and development of this sector. Thus, it is crucial for local authorities and stakeholders to invest in upgrading transportation facilities, accommodation options, and food services to better cater to the needs of gastronomic tourists. Enhancing the overall tourist experience will not only attract and retain more gastronomic tourists but also contribute to the overall development of the region. Another significant implication of the study is the need for a shift in marketing strategies to promote gastronomic tourism in Odisha. The results indicate that the current marketing strategies are not effectively engaging the target audience, and a focus on the unique culinary heritage of the region could be more successful in attracting tourists. The utilization of online videos, blogs, and influencer campaigns, as suggested by the respondents, can help reach and engage potential tourists, ultimately leading to increased tourist arrivals. The research findings also suggest that gastronomic tourism has a positive impact on regional development in Odisha, contributing to employment generation, income growth, and the overall economy. This highlights the importance of promoting local cuisines and investing in local talent to maximize the benefits of gastronomic tourism. Involving local communities in the development of gastronomic tourism can create sustainable employment opportunities and support local businesses, fostering economic growth in the region.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and local communities in Odisha. By focusing on improving the infrastructure and marketing strategies for gastronomic tourism, Odisha can harness the potential of this sector to boost regional economies and foster sustainable development. Future research could explore the specific strategies and policies that can be implemented to achieve these objectives and examine the long-term impact of such interventions on the region's socioeconomic development.

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