

Development and emerging concerns in Culinary Tourism: a study with special reference to west Bengal.

***Ramen Chowdhury ** Dr.Bhola Chourasia**

*PhD scholar, Department of Hospitality & Tourism, Management, Assam downtown University. Assam -781026 (E-mail id:-admissions@downtowngroup.in)

**Associate Professor & HOD, Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management, Assam downtown University. Assam-781026 (E-mail id: admissions@downtowngroup.in)

ABSTRACT

Food is a significant element along with visiting a place for tourists. A huge number of tourists, journey all over the West Bengal to experience different types of cuisine and create unforgettable experiences. Although foodstuff can be the primary reason one travels it plays a substantial role in any tourist's daily routine. It's true that tourist doesn't visit any place only to eat foodstuff but local cuisine can act as "icing on the cake" for any destination for the tourist, at any point. Culinary tourism assists a great opportunity to promote, support, and strengthen a particular tourist destination. Nowadays tourists are more concerned about the cuisine accessible in their designated destination. It is also well known that the key objective of some food lovers is to visit a particular eating establishment or to generally pamper themselves in the native, home-grown cuisine, while visiting a place. The quality of the cuisine offers to them, is an important part of the holiday experience as a whole. While the inspiration for culinary tourism has been around for two decades and unfortunately it has received limited research attention. The purpose of this dissertation is to present an innovative study in the culinary tourism field that develops and tests a comprehensive culinary tourism experience model from the supply sector perspective. While food, as an element of culture, is increasingly being used in many destination marketing strategies, most research on food-related tourism marketing has been conducted from the demand-side focusing on food-related visitor experiences. The researcher aims to identify the significance and benefits of promoting local food as a powerful marketing device in tourism. Food could be a main attraction or know-how for tourists and the term "culinary tourism" came into being. Culinary tourism is getting popularity and appreciation as an area of cultural tourism. Its significance and positive effects that transmit for several years are being increasingly acknowledged and appreciated as

well. People interested in traveling for many reasons and along with culinary motivations also increasing rapidly.

Key words: Culinary, Culinary Tourism. Food, Tourist, West Bengal.

INTRODUCTION

Currently culinary tourism becomes more and more popular and appears more often in various forms of media. Its growing importance we can see through various statistics, research, and often by human behaviour. The developing significance is visible everywhere. Also in West Bengal, we are able to see changes towards up. Stakeholders are participating in food festivals and other associate activities. We pay more attention to the foodstuff we eat for our diet and a growing number of people eat compatible with a healthy mode of nutrition. The study indicates development and emerging concerns in the west Bengal culinary tourism & also information about how many of us are willing to change eating habits in favour of tasty dishes of the region where we travel. The work includes also economic dates pointing at revenue from tourism and its growing amount in recent years. All cases show that the importance of culinary tourism is steadily increasing. Culinary tourism or food tourism is experiencing the food of the country, region, or area, and is now considered a vital component of the tourism experience. Dining out is common among tourists and “food is believed to rank alongside climate, accommodation, and scenery” in importance to tourists. A high percentage of travellers, consider dining and food as relevant activities during their travel (McKercher, Bob, Okumus, Fevzi, and Okumus, Bendegul, 2008).

Local food holds much potential to enhance sustainability in tourism; contribute to the authenticity of the destination; strengthen the local economy; and provide for the environment-friendly infrastructure. Destination marketing campaigns around the world show that there is a strong connection between tourism and food. Many players in the Indian food business are expanding their arena, to cater to the increasing demand for culinary tourists. There are several specialized tour operators taking care of the culinary tourism market. The government is also taking initiatives to promote culinary tourism through various campaigns. The paper concludes with the present scenario of culinary tourism along-with suggestions for improving and expanding this sector in West Bengal. (Source: cuisine tourism in west Bengal by Konsam Suchitra Devi.)

Culinary tourism or food tourism is experiencing the food of the country, region, or area, and is now considered a vital component of the tourism experience. Dining out is

common among tourists and “food is believed to rank alongside climate, accommodation, and scenery” in importance to tourists. A high percentage of travellers, consider dining and food as relevant activities during their travel (McKercher, Bob, Okumus, Fevzi and Okumus, Bendegul, 2008).

Local food holds much potential to enhance sustainability in tourism; contribute to the authenticity of the destination; strengthen the local economy, and provide for the environment-friendly infrastructure. Destination marketing campaigns around the world show that there is a strong connection between tourism and food. Many players in the Indian food business are expanding their arena, to cater to the increasing demand for culinary tourists. There are several specialized tour operators taking care of the culinary tourism market. The government is also taking initiatives to promote culinary tourism through various campaigns like the ‘Dabba’ project to give tourists the taste of Indian cuisine. The research methodology used is an in-depth literature study on the topic and survey through a well-structured questionnaire. The paper concludes with the present scenario of culinary tourism along-with suggestions for improving and expanding this sector in West Bengal. Culinary Tourism was a term first suggested in 1998. It expressed the idea of tourists’ experiencing the culture of a destination through food. According to the International Culinary Tourism Association, culinary tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking. It means that exists a particular audience of people who are willing to travel the world in order to sample and experience authentic international cuisines, explore the origin of flavours, discover customs of a given region deeper than ever before. The ground here is human curiosity and a constant desire to do action over standards. A standard is no longer an ordinary tour. There is even an analysis for the individual products and their role in the history of mankind. Food studies are the subject of university education, especially in the United States as for instance in Indiana University, New School New York City, Chatman University or in Europe (in Italy)- Umbra Institute in Perugia, Gustav Institute – Food and Culture Centre in Rome. Introduction “Food, in the end, in our own tradition, is something holy. It's not about nutrients and calories. It's about sharing. It's about honesty. It's about identity.” — Louise Fresco Eating is a physiological need that requires fulfilment whether at home or during travel. The consumption of food in travel is unique because it occurs in a foreign environment. Recent research has shown that tourists spend almost 40% of their budget on food when traveling (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002). 2004 Restaurant & Foodservice Market Research Handbook states that 50% of restaurants’ revenue was generated by travellers (Graziani, 2003). It shows that there is a symbiotic relationship between food and the tourism industry. Reynolds (2004) asserts

that food, like other elements of travel transportation, accommodation, activities, and attractions plays an essential role in the travel experience. As an attribute or creation of a destination, cuisine bears a symbolic meaning and is a determinant of overall travel satisfaction (Henkel, Henkel, grass, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006; Rimmington& Yüksel1998), when other forms of tourism have been saturated by the tourist. More importantly, food has been recognized as an effective promotional and positioning tool of a destination (Hjalager& Richards, 2002).

Cuisine Tourism in world

Food is our common ground, a universal experience.” - James Beard Cuisine tourism is defined as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences. By combining travel with these edible experiences, culinary tourism offers both locals and tourists alike an authentic taste of the place. To discuss Culinary Tourism it has to be recognized first that the important place 'culinary art' occupies, in its own right, in today's world. The dynamism of culinary art, which emerged during the past few years, has led to the pursuit of new flavours and of new tastes. (Hjalager and Richards 2002; Hallet al. 2003; Long 2003). As Long (2003) notes culinary tourism is about food as a subject and a medium, destination, and vehicle, for tourism. It is about individuals exploring foods new to them as well as using food to explore new cultures and ways of being. It is about groups using food to "sell" their histories and to construct marketable and publicly attractive identities, and it is about individuals satisfying curiosity. Finally, it is about the experiencing of food in a mode that is out of the ordinary, which steps outside the normal routine to notice the difference and the power of food to represent and negotiate that difference. In contrast to Long's definition, the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA) (2006) defines culinary tourism as dining while on vacation and as "something every visitor does." Food can be a travel attraction that augments the visitor's experience (Henderson, 2009). Traveller's destination choice may be significantly affected by the destination's culinary richness and offerings and can ultimately impact overall satisfaction levels. Destination will use food as the main attraction and will develop marketing strategies that will focus on the food. It is important for marketers of a culinary destination to know the image currently held by its targeted customers and how to affect their intention to visit through effective marketing strategies. Frochot (2003) recommended food images can be utilized to exhibit the cultural aspects of a country. As such, destinations can use food to represent its “cultural experience, status, cultural identity,

and communicating”. Further, Hobsbawn & Ranger (1983) argued that cuisines that are highly known for their taste and quality can be developed into tourist products.

Cuisine Tourism in India

There is no sincerer love than the love of food - George Bernard Shaw India's cuisine is as rich and diverse as its people. Food is an integral part of India's culture, with cuisines differing according to the community, region, and state. Indian cuisine is characterized by a great variety of foods, spices, and cooking techniques. Moreover, each religion, and caste has left its own influence on Indian food. Many recipes first emerged when India was predominantly inhabited by Vedic Hindus. Later, Mughals, Christians, British, Portuguese, and others had their influence. Vegetarianism came to prominence during the rule of Ashoka. In India, food, culture, religion, and regional festivals are all closely related. The specialty of Indian cuisine is lies between two dietary extremes vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism. But the adherence to vegetarianism or "Satwik Diet" was not restricted to the Brahmins from northern India and orthodox Brahminical values and hence vegetarianism made its way beyond South. A vegetarian diet for them meant that their minds would be pure to conduct the necessary rituals. However, not all Brahmins are vegetarian. A classic example would be the Kashmiri Brahmins who continued to pride themselves on their mutton dishes. There are also the Brahmins of Bengal who eats fish. Thus vegetarianism became more linked with the cuisines of South India rather than the North. Muslim infiltration into the subcontinent caused a Gastronomic revolution. India's culinary tradition is constantly changing in relation to vegetarianism and non- vegetarianism whereby adherence to a specific food habit, becomes a powerful symbol of the cast, ethnic group, and religious orientation. The market for culinary tourism to India is growing as the country's culinary traditions continue to garner increasing international attention. Cooking classes, both formal and included in homestays, is a favourite activity among foreign visitors. India's broad culinary culture reflects the influences of Persian, Middle Eastern, Central Asian, and Southeast Asian cuisines. India is home to a multidimensional and eclectic mix of cultures resulting in a variety of food traditions.

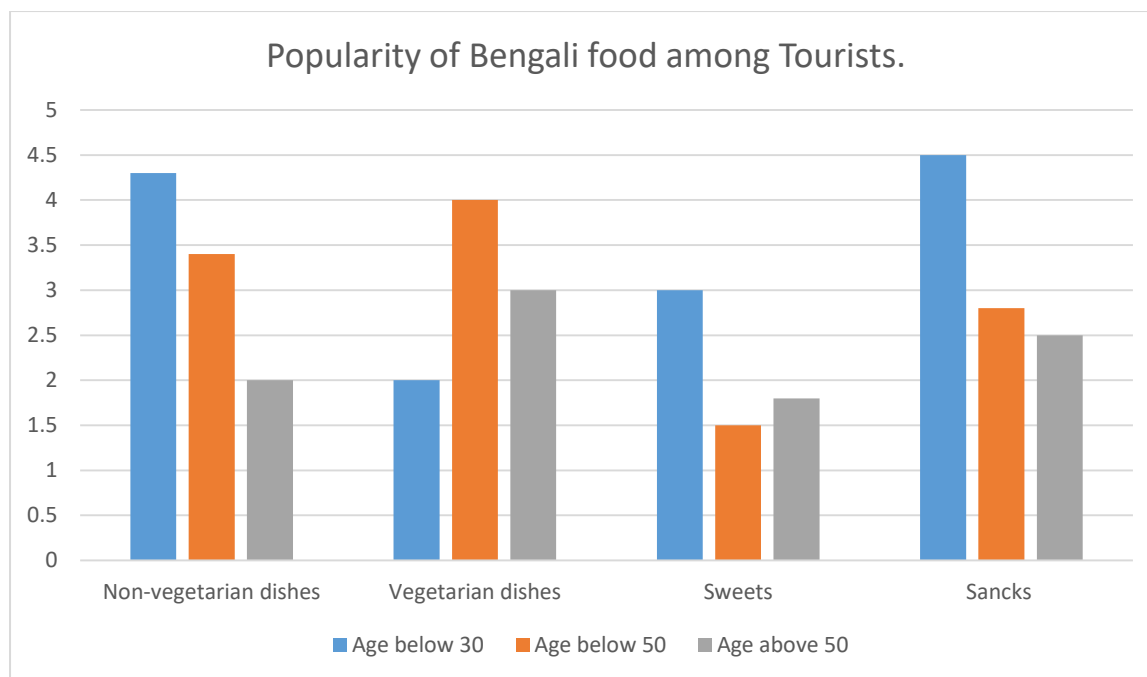
Culinary Tourism in West Bengal

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

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

West Bengal is a state in the eastern region of India and is the nation's fourth-most populated place. The state includes two comprehensive natural areas: the Gangetic Plain in the south and the sub-Himalayan and Himalayan area in the north. West Bengal, located on eastern bottleneck of India extending from the Himalayas in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south, presents some of amazing landscape features and natural scenic beauty. Some of India's most preferred travel destinations like; the Darjeeling Himalayan hill region in the northern extreme of the state. Bengali cuisine is one of the finest & premium blends of non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes. Bengal is the land of fish, rice & sweets. The wide varieties of Bengali cuisine in carnivals and occasions are a fundamental part of Bengal culture. Bengali cuisine has an exclusive feature being an integration of the one of the best of and divers culinary of India. Sweets of Bengal are famous not only in India all around the globe. Bengali cuisine is known for its varied use of flavors, as well as the spread of its confectioneries and desserts.

Figure: 1



Emerging issues and challenges

Culinary tourism is strongly affected by socio-cultural, economic, technological, and political impacts in various tourism sectors. The enormous growth and multifaceted nature of the tourism industry will call for strengthened research, education, and training to establish and promote new culinary products and to meet the rising demand for skilled human resources. For these initiatives, the tourism industry definitely need a source of funding, especially from the government. The industry will establish extended strategies to encourage funding from the government as well as private partnerships (Hall, 2005; County, 2005). As Yeoman (2008) indicated, people aged above 50 will be the most populous age group by 2015. This will increase the demand for package holidays, second homes, health facilities, and organic healthy food which will influence the destination development strategies (Hall, 2005). The survey conducted by the North American Lifestyles journal is proof that the older population prefers to travel as they have more leisure time and hold a good amount of disposable wealth. A specialized tourism sector focused on health-oriented holidays will begin to emerge by end of 2015 in response to the increasing market size of the above-said age group. Terrorism would affect the industry significantly. The world political scenario would further worsen due to the US acting as world police (Hall, 2005). Tensions rising in terrorism affected countries such as India, Pakistan, England and the US would be critical to the industry. The research carried out by Future Foundation (2008) indicates that the ratio of working married woman has increased from a quarter in the

1950s to 75% at present. This will tend to increase by 5% in another 10 years, which indicates the beginning of the shift in eating out trends. Food travellers spend around \$1,200 per trip on average, with over one-third of their travel budget going towards food-related activities. Those considered to be “deliberate” food travellers (i.e. where culinary activities are the key reason for the trip) tend to spend a significantly higher amount of their overall travel budget (around 50%) on food-related activities (International Culinary Tourism Association, 2012). The governments across the globe would understand the value of culinary tourism and additional funds would be allocated to this industry. Countries across the globe would work together to fight against terrorism. Globalization would increase migration along with the cross-cultural experience in terms of food tastes and preferences. Fusion cuisine would finally be a success. (Source:- Progress and emerging issues in Culinary Tourism by Karan berry)

Progress of West Bengal Culinary Tourism

India as well as west Bengal’s popularity as a tourist destination is increasing. Majority of the domestic and foreign visitors visited West Bengal in their Holidays, leisure & recreation. The next important purpose of visit is pilgrimage and religious activity for domestic visitors. And according to their opinion, along with place and accommodation, food was major concern area for them. Bengal’s cuisine is considered to be one of the great distinctive cuisines in our country. This cuisine has an unmatched charm because Bengal is a land of diverse religions, customs, festivals, climatic conditions and for its herbs & spices. Each region has nurtured its own culinary tastes using different combination of spices & involving diverse methods of cooking.

Figure: 2

Month-wise Foreign Tourist Arrivals in India, Jan 2017 – June 2019					
Month	Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India			Percentage (%) Change	
	2017	2018 (P)	2019(P)	2018/17	2019/18
January	9,64,109	10,45,035	11,03,380	8.4	5.6
February	9,31,025	10,49,255	10,87,694	12.7	3.7
March	8,85,936	10,21,530	9,72,866	15.3	-4.8
April	7,17,899	7,45,051	7,71,353	3.8	3.5
May	6,22,408	6,06,522	6,10,590	-2.6	0.7
June	6,63,470	6,83,928	7,21,015	3.1	5.4
July	7,79,309	8,06,495		3.5	
August	7,19,129	7,86,003		9.3	
September	7,19,964	7,19,845		0.0	
October	8,66,976	8,90,229		2.7	
November	9,97,738	10,12,564		1.5	
December	11,67,840	11,91,472		2.0	
Total (Jan-June)	47,84,847	51,51,321	52,66,898	7.7 @	2.2 @
Total (Jan-Dec)	10035803	10557929		5.2	

Source: <http://tourism.gov.in>

Objectives of the Study

Cuisine can't be the first factor or preference to prompting tourists to visit a particular place but food can be one of the highly rated products of tourism. The study aims to figure out the prospects of culinary cuisine of west Bengal in enhancing the quality of tourist stay and at evolving ways to sustain culinary tourism in West Bengal. A special emphasis has also been made on food as an attraction in destination marketing apart from other tourist attractions. Throughout the study, the purpose is to find out the initial growth and scope of food tourism in West Bengal, so as a strong a marketing strategy can be chalked out for successful destinations promotion and product improvisation to make it a prime focus in the tourism system. Objectives keeping in view all the above facts, a study is thus designed with the following objectives:

- i) To study the progress & emerging issues of culinary tourism in West Bengal.
- ii) To make suitable suggestions for the improvement of culinary tourism in West Bengal.
- iii) To create adequate employment opportunities for the people of the state and improve the quality of life in general.

Research Methodology

The research approach or the research design used for this project is exploratory in nature. The study approach is predominantly based on qualitative methods. Primary data is collected through questionnaires and personal interviews with the tourists and staff of selected food outlets to get detailed information about their special dishes and tourist expectations from the food being served at their outlet. Secondary data is collected through various websites, gastronomic journals, magazines & newspapers. Marketing strategy of different food outlets is studied through their regular and promotional menus, brochures, websites, banners & advertisements in print and electronic media. Research instrument-A survey schedule is used to seek information through interviews. A well-structured questionnaire is scheduled as one of the data collection instrument for this study.

Choosing a travel destination: factors to consider

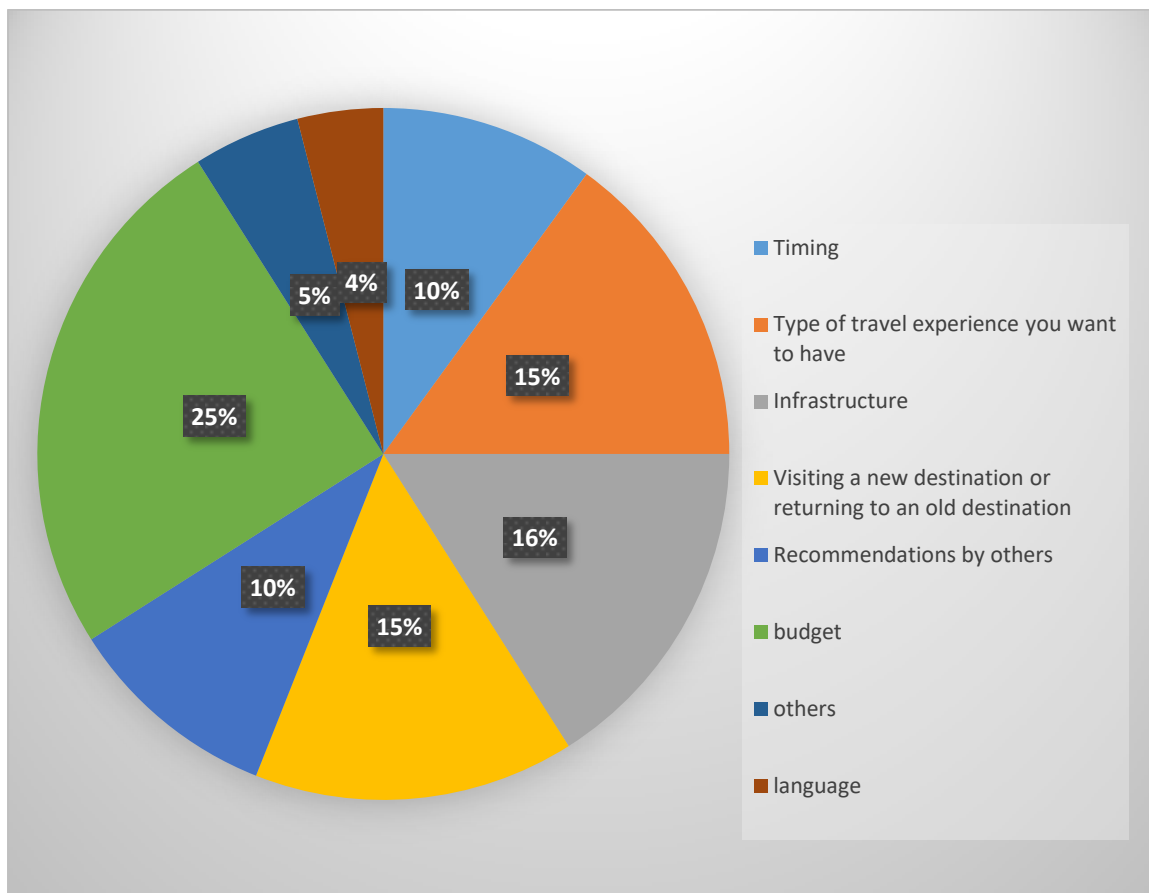


Figure-3. The most important components deciding about place of a trip.

Result and Discussion

Each of us is unique and has also different prospects about tours and journeys. For some people the most important part of a tour is the price, for others, it can be a convenience, the environment, and scenic beauty, access to the sea, mountain, or the ability to entertain. However, a theme that appears most often is a theme related with food. When travellers homecoming from a trip or tour, they talk about what they saw, where they stayed, but one of the biggest sentiment evokes unique and local foodstuff they experienced. According to research, the most vital factor that determines the choice of destination is definitely the price. Eighty percent of tourists acknowledge that price is a vital aspect during a selection of a journey of localization. The tourist doesn't visit any place only to eat foodstuff but this act as "icing on the cake"

for any destination to the tourist. Culinary tourism presents a great opportunity to promote, support, and strengthen particular tourist destinations, especially as tourists are ever more aware of the cuisine accessible in their designated destination. It is also well known that the key objective of some food lovers is to visit a particular eating establishment or to generally pamper themselves in the native, home-grown cuisine while visiting a place. For them, the quality of the cuisine on offer is an important part of the holiday experience as a whole. Destinations must accept this when developing their long-term strategies for the local tourism industry. A diverse range of food businesses including food catering, farms, hotel, restaurants, gourmet, food stores, catering college, tour operators, breweries, wineries, historical attractions and many other related businesses across the country have capitalized on their region's culturally unique cuisines to attract visitors. Some suggestions to improve the culinary tourism sector in West Bengal are:

- Understanding client profile helps within the preparation & valuation of various dishes, in step with the feeling and demand. Regular contact may be maintained with customers through on-line selling campaigns or social networking sites.
- Starting a replacement food business, the success of any venture depends upon the initial analysis and coming up with a method. It's vital for brand spanking new food entrepreneurs in the state to analysis into an analogous existing operation & consults offered resources once beginning a cooking business.
- Uniqueness in legitimacy west, geographic region ought to profit of the distinctive heritage, charm, & cordial reception, which might be marketed through instructional and coaching programs concerning growing or preparation of foods, cookery categories, food festivals and tasting events. Trained workers of companies that serve tourists or the face of the community.
- The government could inspire hotels in order that they're going to open specialty restaurants, food retailers, etc. to push Bengali culinary art, a minimum of at some point in hebdomadally the building ought to be intended to supply Bengali menu for the Guest and worth of the food ought to be low by inventing tax-exempt food that materialistic folks may avail.
- Trained the workers that interact well with customers create to confirm a secure and top quality the expertise can possibly make the purchasers come back and unfold the word of mouth packaging for the destination.
- Future coming up with, each food business, whether or not little or massive scale ought to build a business arrange, which can facilitate to believe potential problems before investment cash. It's advisable to integrate risk management

arrangements because the facility would be utilized by the overall public. Plans ought to be reviewed and updated on a daily basis.

CONCLUSIONS

Firstly we have to understand the significant place of culinary skill which occupies in today's domain. Also, we have to understand the vitality of culinary art, which developed during the past few years and has led to the pursuit of new flavours, new tastes, and new waves in culinary tourism. The study conducted here and additional information calmed that culinary tourism increasing its own importunacy and value. That's why it's more and more popular all over the world as well in west Bengal nowadays. Purpose of the research was to present the growing importance of food tourism, which contributes to the development of human relations all over the state-owned. Culinary tourism has an impact on one of prime nationwide integration through curiosity to discover cultures and setting new ways. Food festivals, live cooking show and other forms of promotion attract plentiful tourist and becomes more popular. Currently, it is a trend too far out from common destination, search his own tourist spot to lead, interact with native people, with wildlife, learning about their lifestyles, cultures, and their food habits. All acknowledgment goes to the culinary tourist those who make new associates, relationships all over the state-owned; they learn more about different community, cultures, and beliefs and at the same time also about themselves. We can be assured that travel helps to improve relationships through the local people and allow us to recognize additional about the state. It's all connected with our wish to explore and travel and what each region is offering for travellers. It's a fact that nothing unites folks like a common foodstuff. Rapidly increase of culinary tourism importance is also affected by a greater interest in the subject of food nutrition and taking care of fit and healthy lifestyles by a growing amount of people. Nowadays, which pay much attention to culinary tourism is increasing gradually everywhere, including west Bengal. However, there are still some unclear queries and under-explored subjects in culinary tourism. For this specific type, like culinary tourism, we need to dedicate more thoughtfulness, attention, care, and try to figure out more practical use, realistic proposals to be proposed in the forthcoming. Only in that way, culinary tourism will be able to come across the expectations of an increasingly higher group of consciously or sensible traveling culinary tourists. Culinary tourism has also established its habitation in environmental tourism. We find ourselves in a way within the process of the taste of local cuisine. Travelers movement

owing to the progress of transportation and the appeal of new palates, both covered the way for the development of culinary tourism and hence of tourism in over-all. The improvement of the living standard in many states has made culinary accessible to a bigger number of travellers. Culinary tourism now more preserved of the elite people, it has become reachable to all budgets. Culinary no longer confines itself to just "consumption good foodstuff" rather it becomes a cultural hobby, passion of the individual, and artistic leisure for all segments of people. To dine at the table of grandmother's recipes is a pleasant experience & lifelong memory, like to attend a great show and to participate in a party with a great chef. Not only fish and sweets, the cuisine of West Bengal is characterized by its sophisticated and delicate use of many spices and herbs to grow across the state and also for the general practice of vegetarian stuff across its society. Religious beliefs and culture have also played an influential role in the evolution of west Bengal Cuisine. Considered one of the most varied cuisines, each family of this cuisine is characterized by a wide range of dishes and cooking techniques. As a consequence, west Bengal is having so many cuisines that vary from region to region, reflecting the varied demographics of the ethnically diverse Indian subcontinent.

References:

- Ancient History. Retrieved from Know India. (2012)
- Destination Marketing and the "FOOD" element: A Market Overview. (2010)
- Dabba Project to Give Tourists Taste of Indian Cuisine. (2012)
- Food Tourism as a viable market segment: It's all how you cook the numbers. Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 25(2), 137-148. Mehta, S.G. (2007)
- Indian-restaurant-Indian-cuisine-ready-to-eat-meals. (2012)
- Indian-cuisine Indian-food-foreign-tourists. (2012)
- Indian Cuisine among Top 10 Preferred Food by International Travellers. (2012)
- Indian kitchens turning into a hub for cuisine tourism. (2012)
- Retrieved from World Food Travel Association. (2010)
- Space-time accessibility and the tourist area cycle of evolution: The role of geographies of spatial interaction and mobility in contributing to an improved understanding of tourism.

The Future Trends of Culinary Tourism. (2010)

Tourism Area Life-Cycle. Clevedon: Channelview. Hall, C.M. Tourism: Rethinking the Social Science of Mobility. Prentice Hall, Harlow. (2005)

Tomorrow's Tourist: Scenarios and Trends. Routledge Publication. (2010)

Bibliography Websites:

https://www.clemson.edu/centers_institutes/tourism/documents/Shenoy2005.pdf.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culinary_tourism.

http://www.bengalcuisine.in/food_festivals.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digha>.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandarmani>.

<https://en.wikipedia.org>.

<http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in>

<http://food.ndtv.com>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengali_cuisine.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shankarpur>.

<http://abouttourism.wordpress.com/tag/culinary-tourism>.

http://knowindia.gov.in/knowindia/culture_heritage.php

<http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com>

<http://tourism.gov.in>

<http://www.Culturalindia.net/indian-food/punjabi.html>

<http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com>

<http://traveltips.usatoday.com/food-tourism-india-18335.html>

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com>