

Cases on Tour Guide Practices for Alternative Tourism



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Chapter 8

Analysing the Tour Guides' Perceptions About Gastronomy Tourism in Himachal Pradesh

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gastronomic activities like tasting of local cuisines, visiting of apple orchards, tea gardens, fruit marts, and attending cookery classes have always been an integral part of tour itinerary in Himachal Pradesh. Tourists rejoice it as a means of entertainment as well as cultural learning. The growing trend of gastronomy tourism and development of specific tourism policy under the theme of 'Agro/Organic Tourism' is certainly going to increase the demand for 'gastronomic tour guides' in coming years. Hence the present research tries to analyse the tour guides' perception about Gastronomy Tourism in Himachal Pradesh, their background knowledge, and opinion about the branding of Himachali Cuisine. Responses from 120 tour guides were collected through a survey instrument via convenience sampling. The analysis depicts the requirement of specialized food guide training programs, attracting young and women tour guides into the profession and emphasis on branding of Himachali Cuisine through listing of ethnic restaurants, preparation of gastronomic map, and organisation of culinary tours and events.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has always been a key driver of socio-cultural and economic development due to its unique potential for creating infrastructures, generating employment, earning foreign exchange and in overall contributing to World's GDP (UNWTO, 2017). In this regard, the cultural attractions around the globe have always played a substantial role in the development of tourism industry from very ancient times. Association of tourism and culture can be traced back to the era of Herodotus (of Ancient Greece) who wrote about the "7 Miracles" of the ancient World in 440 BCE. This association got a major boost during the 19th century as culture was an essential part of education for the wealthy scions. But the synergistic relationship between tourism & culture brought about a paradigm shift in the tourism industry during

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