



**Regional Cuisine and its impact on Tourism Business: a case study on the Cuisine of Coastal Odisha, India**

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**ABSTRACT:**

*Effort has been made in this study to examine the impact of regional Cuisine for the promotion of Tourism destination in general and coastal Odisha in particular, that influences the Tourist inflow and improves socio-economic life of the people in the study area. This article begins with the meaning, and importance of regional cuisine, and the local food as an attraction for the promotion of Tourism destination which reflects socio-economic development of the local community in the site. The catalytic role of authentic local food and its effect towards the promotion of Tourism business in the coastal Odisha is the central idea of this article. Key issue of this paper is to find out whether the local cuisine has any influential effect to motivate tourist for visiting the selected destination and what importance to be given to promote regional food while marketing a destination. Tourism is one of the major earners of foreign exchange for the country. Food- tourism will definitely add more to what we earn in foreign exchange. It will also boost employment opportunities in rural areas from illiterate people to less educated and highly educated people as well as the products of rural cultivators will find a ready market. This research paper also describes the Significance of regional cuisine for the promotion of Tourism which will have direct impact to Local Economy.*

**Keywords:** *Regional Cuisine, food tourism, socio-economic impact, destination marketing, food festival.*

## INTRODUCTION

Food is one of the most important motivating factors for the tourists while visiting a destination. Regional Cuisine is thus getting more importance to researchers in the field of tourism. Regional development initiatives are increasingly utilising the relationships that exist between the tourism and locally-based food production and processing sectors to strengthen areas' economic and social vitality (Telfer and Wall, 1996; Telfer, 2000; Boyne et al., 2002; Richards and Hjalager, 2002).

Generally, tourists have a lot of fascination for enjoying authentic local food. On the other way few Tourists are also scared about the local food. Culinary tourism is increasing as an area of research among tourism scholars (Hjalager and Richards 2002; Hall et al. 2003; Long 2003). Long (2003) suggests culinary tourism is about food as a subject and a medium, destination and vehicle, for tourism. It is about tourists exploring new foods which are unknown to them as well as using food to explore new cultures of the region. Culinary resources include locally available raw ingredients, traditional methods of preparing or serving foods, conventional or innovative recipes and food production techniques that are unique to the destination. In today's world with the introduction of cookbooks, cooking has become an adventure with an increased awareness and appreciation of dishes from tourists of different parts of the world.

Odisha's culture and religious beliefs have played an significant role in the evolution of its cuisine. However, cuisine in Odisha also has impact to the region's large-scale cultural interactions with neighbouring state. Several customs are associated with the etiquette of food consumption. Traditionally, meals are eaten while seated on the floor. In Odisha, food is consumed mostly without cutlery, using the fingers of the right hand. Eating with hands is considered important in Odian etiquette because a person eating with his/her hands knows the exact temperature of food before putting it in the mouth. Very hot food if consumed by cutlery may burn inside of the mouth and therefore this practice is scientific.

Here the researcher tried to find out the impacts of Regional Cuisine in general and Odia Cuisine in particular on various Tourism destinations in Odisha. Whether the Local food has any appeal towards the tourists coming from other states and countries to Odisha is studied in detail here. Details of findings and suggestions are given after analyzing relevant data through appropriate statistical techniques.

Cuisine of Odisha is easy, simple and delicious. Odia cuisine is popular for the variety of spices used with natural vegetables and food grains. Flavours of these spices increase nourishment into a delightful experience. The variety of food cooked in Odisha is as vast and diverse as the taste and likeness of every Odias.

In Odia Cuisine, the art of cooking was handed down from mother to daughter. As there were no written rules, each family developed styles of cooking best suited to their tastes. In Odisha, most hotels and restaurants have a good selection of menus including some home specialties. The fish and prawn from Odisha coast are totally free from toxic substances like mercury and lead etc.

In Odisha food habit is mainly controlled by *Jagannath* cult. Here, Lord is worshipped like a person observes his daily routine. In Puri *Jagannath* temple, food (*Mahaprasad*) is taken with all eagerness and care. Food tastes excellent being flavoured with emotion and ritual practice. Not a single grain of rice is allowed to fall on the ground. It is taken on banana leaf. The dried grains are treated as *Nirmalya*, which is essential at death bed with water. It is supposed to be the largest restaurant serving maximum number of meals with many varieties. There are around 752 *chulis* (fire), 600

Cooks (Suaras) are busy with 50-60 Head cooks (*Mahasuara*) leading their own team. It serves around 10,000 meals everyday and more than one lakh meals in *Kartik masa* and ceremonial occasions.

In Odisha, rice and vegetables are grown in plenty. Rice is the major staple food for the people of Odisha. Vegetables are also form an integral part of the meal in the state. A large number of people practice vegetarianism because of their deep religious nature.

But a significant numbers of people enjoy fish and other sea food delicacies like prawns, crabs and sea fishes as these are found in plenty in the vast coastline of the state. Both fresh water and salt water fishes are consumed here. Delicacies made of prawns, crabs, fish, chicken and eggs prepared by Odia cook are widely available at the restaurants and fast-food joints. The most popular is fish of both salt water and fresh water. Odia food is spicy and has less calorific value as it is cooked with little or no oil. Grated coconut is used in the food here. Fishes, seafood and vegetables like yams, brinjals and pumpkins are cooked in curd with mustard seeds and curry leaves given as tempering. '*Pancha-phutana*' a magic mixes of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and onion seed is used for tempering vegetables and dals (gram).

People are also very much fond of sweets and many of the recipes these sweets are popular all over the country. Small cakes or '*pithas*' which are both sweet and savoury are extremely popular in Odisha. *Chhenapoda*, the caramelised custard-like dessert is popular not only with the Odians but also with the tourists.



*Odisha Map*

## **OBJECTIVES**

The Main objective of this Research is to find out the status of Odia Cuisine and its impact on Tourism development in this region. Some of the other objectives are as follows:

- 1) To study the origin, growth & present status of Odia Cuisine.
- 2) To understand the importance of 'authentic food' in general and the local cuisine in specific in the progress of Hospitality & Tourism Industry in Odisha
- 3) To study and analyze promoting Odia Cuisine and its impact towards the development of tourism in Odisha.
- 4) To understand the future prospect of Odia Cuisine and how to make local food more admired for rapid growth of Tourism and Hospitality industry in Odisha.

## **SCOPE**

The scope for research is very vast in hospitality industry and covers every component of food service industry. The nature of this research paper is detail feasibility study that determines the development need of food for the growth of Hospitality and Tourism industry in Odisha.

The research paper includes the study of impact and characteristics of the regional Cuisine on Tourism business. Besides the above the analysis will be made on the contribution of food to the enhancement of satisfaction level of the tourists. The study will be confined to hotels of Coastal Odisha, especially, *Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Konark, Chilika, Chandipur and Gopalpur*. This research paper will help in the professionals of the Hospitality and Tourism industry. They can go through this information, before venturing out into the market, so, they can have make better choices on food for providing tourists satisfaction and save time and effort. Information regarding regional cuisine, promotion of local food, food related activities, food products, and food tourism were examined here. The results are expected to help local DMOs to improve their marketing strategies to attract more tourists.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The main purpose of this study is to systematic gathering, recording and analyzing of data about problems related to the impact of Regional Cuisine on Tourism in a destination. For completing the research, the necessary information and data were collected from the following sources:

### **Primary sources:**

For collecting the data from the primary sources, two sets of structured questionnaire were made both for tourists and hotel & restaurant professionals in the study area. Apart from that observation, schedules and interview methods were followed for the above said purpose.

### **Secondary Sources:**

The secondary sources of data collection were made from collection of data cited in the reports of Department of tourism, Govt. of India, Govt. of Odisha, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India etc. Apart from these some relevant books, journals, magazines and news papers were also consulted.

### **ABOUT ODIA CUISINE:**

Odisha, the coastal state is located on the east coast of India. It is the modern name of the ancient nation of Kalinga, which was invaded by the Maurya Emperor Ashoka in 261 BC. Odisha is a wonderful piece of land embellish with serene beauty of nature—Sea, Forest, Rivers and Monuments. It carries its ancient culture and lifestyle with all its superiority being protected by lord Jagannath.

Odisha has a relatively long coastline (about 480 km long) and lakes. The narrow, level coastal strip, including the Mahanadi River delta is the most densely populated area of Odisha. The interior of the state is mountainous and thinly populated. Deomali at 1672 m is the highest point of the state.

Odisha is home to the Hirakud Dam, one of the longest dams in the world. Odisha has several popular tourist destinations. Puri, with the *Jagannath* temple near the sea which is famous for *Rath Yatra* or the Car Festival, the world heritage site Konark Sun Temple, the *Lingaraja* Temple of Bhubaneswar and the Barabati Fort of Cuttack are visited by thousands of tourists every year.

### **CUISINE OF ODISHA:**

In Odisha, the art of cooking was handed down from mother to daughter. As there were no written rules, each family developed styles of cooking best suited to their tastes. In today's world with the advent of cookbooks, cooking has become an adventure with an increased awareness and appreciation of dishes from different parts of the world.

Odia cuisine refers to the cooking of the coastal state of eastern India, Odisha. While relying heavily on local ingredients, foods from this area are rich and varied. The flavours are usually subtle and delicately spiced, unlike the spicy curries of North Indian cuisine. Most hotels and restaurants in Odisha have a good selection of multi-cuisine on their menus including some home specialities. Cuisine of Odisha is simple, easy to cook, and delicious. Odisha food habit is mainly controlled by Jagannath culture. Lord Jagannath is worshiped here like a person observers like daily routine. Vegetarian foods are mainly influenced by Jagannath cult. Delicacies of prawns, crabs, fish, Chicken and eggs, prepared by experts are widely available at the eating joints and the specialized restaurant. The most popular is fish of both salt water and fresh water.

A classic meal in Odisha consists of a main course and dessert. Typically breads (rotis) are served as the main course for breakfast, whereas rice is eaten with lentils (dals) during lunch and dinner. The main course also includes one or more curries, vegetables and pickles. Also one of the most famous vegetarian dish is *Dalma* (made of lentils & vegetables boiled together & then fried with other spices) & *Santula*. '*Pakhala*', a dish made of rice, water, and yoghurt, that is fermented overnight, is very popular in summer, particularly in the rural areas.

Odisha food habit is pretty balanced between the vegetarian and non vegetarian habits. Due to its vast shoreline & number of rivers flowing across, fish is available abundantly and form a very important part of the diet. Odisha also expertises in sea food cuisines like Prawn & Crab. The famous Chilika Lake is particularly famous for offering best Sea Food cuisines that are one of the lifetime experiences.

Rice is the staple food for the people of Odisha. The main course also includes one or more curries, vegetables and pickles. Vegetables which are grown in plenty in the coastal region are also the integral part of the meal in the state. A large number of people practice vegetarianism because of their deep religious nature. But a significant proportion of people enjoy fish and other sea food delicacies like prawns, lobsters and crabs as these are found in plenty in the vast coastline of the

state. Odia food is less spicy and has less calorific value as it is cooked with little or no oil. Curd and grated coconut are used to prepare gravy. 'Panchu-phutana' a magic mixes of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and *kala zeera* (kalanji) is used for tempering vegetables and *dals*.

People are also very much found of sweets and many of the recipes are popular all over the country. The curd here is rich and creamy and gives an additional flavour. Sea foods are traditionally cooked in curd and coconut milk and uniqueness of Odia cuisine. Vegetables like yams, brinjals and pumpkins are also cooked in curd and tempered with mustard seeds and curry leaves makes the preparation delicious. Speciality of Odia cuisine is also using of variety of spices used with freshly gathered vegetables and food grains. The delicate flavours of these herbs and spices increase more nourishments into a divine practice.

People of Odisha are also like sweets and many of Odian sweet dishes are quite popular all over the country. No Odia meal is considered complete without some dessert at the end. Odia desserts are made from a variety of ingredients, with milk, chhenna (cottage cheese), coconut, rice, and wheat flour etc. Milk preparations like *Rasagulla*, *chhena jhilli*, *Malpua*, *Rasmalai*, *Khirimohan*, *Rasabali*, *Kalakand*, etc. are some of the examples of popular sweets. The place, 'Pahala', located on the Cuttack-Bhubaneswar road is famous for its variety of Rasagullas. The famous rice pudding, kheeri (kheer) that is relished all over India, was also originated in Puri two thousand years ago. *Chhenapoda*, the caramelised custard-like dessert is popular not only with the locals but also with the tourists.

Homemade cakes or '*pithas*' which are both sweet and savoury are extremely popular in Odisha. *Pithas* made out of powdered gram, like *chakuli*, *Kakara* etc. are traditional preparation that requires great expertise and served as local snacks. One of the major delicacy during the festival occasions of Odisha is Kakera Peetha (made of sooji or finely grained wheat) especially with coconut filling sautéed with pepper, cardamom, sugar and ghee and sometimes cottage cheese (chena). These *pithas* like arisa pitha, poda pitha, kakera etc are unique delicious preparations loved by the locals as well as tourists.

#### **'Mahaprasad' - The Food of Lord Jagannath:**

Another traditional delicacy of Odissa is '*Mahaprasad*' or the sacred food of Lard Jagannath. This rich food is available at the *Ananda Bazar* of the *Jagannath* Temple, Puri. The speciality of '*Mahaprasad*' preparation lies in its massive cooking that takes place in the temple kitchen that is believed to be the biggest kitchen in the world. Nearly 400 highly efficient cooks work around 200 fireplaces daily to feed over 10,000 people.

**CHHAPAN BHOG (56 sacred items of Jagannath Temple, Puri)**



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Ukhuda ( Sugar coated pup rice)               | 29. Dalma (Dal with vegetables)                |
| 2. Nadia kora (Coconut ladu)                     | 30. Bada Kakara (Large Fried sweet cake)       |
| 3. Khua (condensed milk)                         | 31. Luni Khuruma (Salty Biscuits)              |
| 4. Dahi (Yoghurt)                                | 32. Amalu ( Malpua, Sweet Puri)                |
| 5. Pachila kadali (Ripe Banana)                  | 33. Suar Pitha (Poda Pitha, Baked Cake)        |
| 6. Kanika (Flavoured Rice)                       | 34. Biri Buha (Black gram cake )               |
| 7. Tata Khechudi (Dry Khechudi)                  | 35. Jhadai Nadaa (Small ball shaped cakes)     |
| 8. Mendha Mundia (A kind of cake)                | 36. Khasta Puri (Strong fried cakes)           |
| 9. Bada Kanti (Fried Cake)                       | 37. Kadali Bara (Fried Plantain)               |
| 10. Matha Puli (A kind of Pan cake)              | 38. Sana Arisha (Small fried cakes)            |
| 11. Hamsa Keli (Sweet cake)                      | 39. Sakar (Chatni)                             |
| 12. Jhili ( Thin pan cake like Dosa)             | 40. Podo Pitha (Panned Cake)                   |
| 13. Enduri ( Idli)                               | 41. Kanji (Sour Rice)                          |
| 14. Adapachedi (Ginger Paste)                    | 42. Dahi Pakhal (Curd rice )                   |
| 15. Saga Bhaja (Fried leafy vegetables)          | 43. Bada Arisha (Large size Fried cake)        |
| 16. Kadali Bhaja (Fried Plantain)                | 44. Tipuri (Three stage fillings)              |
| 17. Marich Ladu (Chilli Ladu)                    | 45. Sakara (Sugar candy)                       |
| 18. San Pitha ( Small size Cake)                 | 46. Suji Khir (Milk with semolina)             |
| 19. Bara (Donalds)                               | 47. Muga Sijha (Boiled green gram)             |
| 20. Arisha (Sweet fried cake made of rice flour) | 48. Manohar (A kind of sweet)                  |
| 21. Bundia (Sweet granules made of gram flour)   | 49. Magaja Ladu (A kind of sweet)              |
| 22. Pakhal (Water rice)                          | 50. Pana (Sweet Drink)                         |
| 23. Khiri (Milk Rice)                            | 51. Anna (Rice)                                |
| 24. Kadamba (A kind of sweet)                    | 52. Ghia Anna (Ghee rice)                      |
| 25. Pat Manohar (a variety of sweet)             | 53. Dali (Sweet Dal)                           |
| 26. Takuaa (Sweets shaped like tongue)           | 54. Besar (Mixed vegetable curry)              |
| 27. Bhaga Pitha (A kind of cake )                | 55. Mahur (Vegetable curry with mustard seeds) |
| 28. Gotai (A kind of salty cake)                 | 56. Saga (Leafy vegetables)                    |

Reference: Jagannath Temple, Puri

**Some of the popular food items are:**

Rice, Breads and Lentils:

- *Channa Dali* (Gram curry)
- *Dalma* (Mixed lentils)
- *Khechedi* (Rice and lentils with vegetables)
- *Luchi* (Deep fried flat bread)
- *Mitha Bhata* (Sweetened rice)
- *Moong Dali* (Mung dal, cooked with coconuts)
- *Parata* (Shallow-fried wheat bread)
- *Polao* (Cooked flavoured Rice)
- *Puri* (Deep fried whole wheat flour bread)
- *Pakhala* (Fermented rice)

**Main Course Dishes:**

- *Alu Bhaja* (Fried potato slices)
- *Alu Dum* (Potato curry)
- *Alu Mattar* (Potato and green peas curry)
- *Alu Phoolghobi Bhaja* (Sautéed potato and cauliflower)
- *Alu Potala Rasa* (Potato and parwal curry)
- *Besara* (vegetables with mustard paste)
- *Charchari* (mixed vegetables with shrimp)
- *Chungdi Malai* (Prawn cooked in coconut milk)
- *Crab Kalia* (Crab curry)
- *Dahi Baingana* (Deep fried brinjal curry made with curd)
- *Dahi Maachha* (Fried fish curry made with curd)
- *Ghanto/Ghanta* (mixed vegetable c)
- *Kankara Jhola* (Crab meat and potato curry)
- *Maachha Jhola* (Fish cooked in thin gravy)
- *Soriso Maacha* (fish cooked in curry made with mustard paste)
- *Saaga* (Fried green leafy vegetables)
- *Santula* (Steamed vegetables)

**Desserts and Snacks:**

- *Chhena Gaja* (Deep fried cottage cheese soaked in sugar syrup)
- *Chhenna Poda* (Baked cottage cheese cake)
- *Kalakand* (Condensed milk sweet)
- *Khaja* (Fried dough sprinkled with sugar syrup)
- *Kheeri* (Rice cooked in condensed milk)
- *Malpua* (Banana pancake)
- *Pitha* (Coconut and jaggery sweet)
- *Rasmalai* (Cottage cheese balls in thickened, sweet milk)
- *Rasabali* (Ricotta cheese balls soaked in sweetened condensed milk)

**TOURIST VISIT IN ODISHA DURING LAST 5 YEARS:**

In last five years the tourist arrival to the State is showing an increasing trend:

YEAR	DOMESTIC	FOREIGN	TOTAL
2010-11	77,70,741	53,212	78,23,953
2011-12	84,72,208	62,816	85,35,024
2012-13	92,91,734	65,522	93,57,256
2013-14	100,64,072	67,400	101,31,472
2014-15	110,51,351	72,215	111,23,566

Source: Odisha Tourism

**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>	1,689	35,373	70,600

Source: Odisha Tourism

**FINDINGS:**

The major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. Tourism is a major industry for economic development, employment generation and poverty eradication in Odisha. It has better prospects for promoting pro-poor growth as it involves Hotel, Restaurants, Transport, Shopping, Entertainment, Retail Shops, Food Services, etc.
2. Tourism and Hospitality industry can create job for highly educated, less educated and also to the illiterate people.
3. There is 'need' for tourism awareness campaign for sustainable development in the state.
4. The study indicates that majority of the respondents were strongly polarized with the statement, 'Food can influence the development of Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Odisha.
5. The study depicts that majority of the customers are in favour of selecting Restaurants where variety of Cuisines are available including Local Cuisine.
6. This research reveals that most of the respondents were given their view that ethnic local cuisine has impact on the total food sale of the Restaurant.
7. This study reveals that Odia Cuisine is not as much promoted as per its potential. Looking at its variety Odia Cuisine still has not got that much of exposure in comparison to the other Cuisines like Mughlai Cuisine, Hyderabadi Cuisine, and South Indian Cuisine.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Major recommendations of this study are:

1. State Tourism department should take responsibility and motivate other private organizations specially, hotel and restaurant management and professionals to organize and participate **Odia food festival**. This will provide an opportunity to potential visitor to see the ingredients used, methods of preparations and also have a taste of the ethnic food of Odisha.
2. Tourist centre in and outside of Odisha should create awareness about Odia Cuisine. All Government hotels like *Panthoniwas*, *Yatriniwas* in Odisha must provide Odia Cuisine with the preparation on traditional methods.

3. This study also recommends that the state Odisha used to celebrate many fairs and festivals, Odia Cuisine may be amalgamated with those ethnic festivals.
4. Government may motivate hotels so that they will open specialty restaurants, food outlets of Odia Cuisine.
5. To promote Odia Cuisine, at least one day in every week all approved hotel should be motivated to provide Odia menu for the Guest and price of the food should be low by inventing tax free food so that middle class people can also avail.
6. Financial support as well as encouragement is necessary to Hotel professionals to continue ethnic cuisine in their present Hotel profession. So it is recommended that the Government of Odisha should provide them financial support and create revenues for them by attending different types of organized fairs and festivals to expose their skills and market their products.

## **CONCLUSION**

Odisha is situated in the eastern part of India. Its vast resources are attracting good numbers of tourists around the year. Odisha's culture and religious beliefs have played an important role in the evolution of its cuisine. Odia cuisine is popular for the variety of spices used with natural vegetables and food grains. Flavours of these spices increase nourishment into a delightful experience. The variety of food cooked in Odisha is as vast and diverse as the taste and likeness of every Odias. This paper tried to find out the impacts of Odia Cuisine for the development of Hospitality and Tourism in Odisha.

Cuisine of Odisha is easy simple and delicious. Rice is the major food crop and the staple food of the people of Odisha. Vegetables grown in plenty are essential of the meal and form a large part of Odishan diet. 'Pancha-phutana' a mixture of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and black cumin is used for seasoning vegetables and dals. Besides rice and vegetables the people of Odisha also relish fish and other sea food delicacies like prawns, crabs and lobsters as they are available in abundance in the huge 480 km of coastline. A distinctive cooking style is followed in the preparation of the dishes. Mouth-watering curries are cooked using different vegetables. Pithas (cake) made out of powdered grams, like *chakuli*, *kakara*, *monda* are served as local snacks - a traditional preparation that requires great expertise. These *pithas* are delicious preparations much loved by the locals as well as tourists.

Food can influence the development of Hospitality and Tourism Industry in any destination. This is not exception in Odisha. Odia Cuisine is not as much promoted as per its potential. Looking at its variety Odia Cuisine still hasn't got that much of exposure like its competitors of neighbouring states. Odia food festival may be organized in various Tourism destinations of Odisha. This will provide an opportunity to potential visitor to see the varieties of ingredients used, methods of preparations and also have a taste of the ethnic food of Odisha.

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