Research Paper

Impact of Rituals, an Important Aspect of Food Culture on Hospitality Sector: A Study of 5-Star Hotels of Delhi NCR

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ABSTRACT

Food is the focal point around which the traditions and customs of a country have evolved. From Birth to life's journey and then its finale, celebrations around food are firmly entrenched in the country to which it belongs. Food tells a story about philosophy, traditions, tastes, and culture of the country. It conveys special symbolism in different cultures. Delhi's lifestyle has emerged as a result of various influences from various parts of the world and from every region of India.

Hospitality sector plays a major role in India's Economy Growth. The proposed study will have its relevance both in academia and in the hospitality industry. Delhi has a vibrant and diverse food culture based on the presence of various cuisines. People in Delhi appreciate regional, sub-regional and international ingredients and various cooking methods. Recipes are altered in order to save time with modifications in their preparations and cooking methods without even focusing on the traditional practices involved in the preparation of a dish. So, it is important to understand whether the hospitality professionals follow the practices associated with the food culture in terms of rituals. The important question is to understand whether Food cultures i.e. rituals is impacting hospitality sector of Delhi.

Keywords: Food culture, Hospitality, Rituals, culture

1. INTRODUCTION

The food itself is considered a group identity which reflects the importance of food in their culture. Similar Food has got a different place in different food cultures so, it is very much important to understand the food cultures to avoid further discomforts in service (Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms, 2016). Asian culture has got a different concept then European cultures in terms of cooking food. In Asian culture like India, most of the cooking is usually done by household women (Sen, 2015) but commercial cooking by men.

Hospitality is a subset of tourism. Financial impact can be seen in hospitality sector by Consistent demand for tourism (Robinson, Lück and Smith, 2013). Ever since independence hospitality industry of India has never experienced a period of slowdown and is growing at a massive rate. In fact, during the period of recession in 2008 also it was growing. According to a report by KPMG in 2017, India's hospitality industry is expected to grow at 16.1% CAGR to reach Rs 2,796.9 crores in 2022.

Delhi by virtue of its location, ease of connectivity and rich cultural legacy draws millions of tourists every year. The national capital is one of the fastest growing states in the country. At prevailing prices, GDP of Delhi increased at a CAGR of 12.2% between 2011-2012 and 2017-2018 thereby reaching a figure of Rs 6.86 trillion. The per capita GSDP caused an increment in CAGR by 10.09% between 2011-2012 & 2017-2018 i.e. An increase of Rs 3,60,644. (IBEF, Delhi State Report, January 2019).

The future of the Indian hospitality industry is very optimistic. More than 40 international hotels brands, each with multiple sub-brands, have settled in India to do business. There is hardly a global hotel

chain which is not eager to gain entry into India. In a similar fashion, the restaurant industry is growing in geometric progressions each year. The market for food production and knowledgeable culinary professionals is growing.

Food explains our lives rituals and cultures. On certain Rituals, we follow specific food intakes such as on birthdays, weddings, religious ceremony and funerals. In ritual context food is an expression of love, sorrow, life and happiness. Rituals refers to special religious practices influenced by food choices, different occasions guide food choices, as food choices are related with gods, and are decided by value systems.

Our personal, social and Spiritual lives reflect in food that we eat (Harris, 1998; Lupton, 1994; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002; Thomson & Hassenkamp, 2002). Ritual vary from our regular routine activities or habits as they are linked with various formal performance. They use artifacts and symbolism which requires personal attention and an effective response. (Neale, Mizerski & Lee, 2008; Rook, 1985).

According to (Aden, 2013; Sen, 2004), When family members eat together it signifies family unity. Apart from many basic need's food also fulfills many other purposes. It has some symbolic meaning in religious rituals and beliefs.

1.1 Statement of the Problem
People in Delhi appreciate regional, sub-regional and international ingredients and various cooking methods. Recipes are altered in order to save time with modifications in their preparations and cooking methods without even focusing on the traditional practices involved in the preparation of a dish. So, it is important to understand whether the hospitality professionals follow the practices associated with the food culture in terms of rituals.

1.3 Need of the Study
Since independence, there are abundant factors that have played a crucial role in the rise of the hospitality sector. Ritual an important factor of food culture is also among one that directly or indirectly influenced the hospitality industry. As the food is the base of Hospitality and presently chefs are trying to bring back the traditional royal customs of Delhi through food festivals and popular dishes on their menus. Delhi has seen so many cultures and invasions that its present cuisine has a variety of Dishes. So, it is an important concern to understand the impact of rituals on the latest trends in Hospitality sectors to have a sustainable means of hospitality for various food cultures in Delhi.

1.4 Research Objectives
The aim of this research is to provide the first detailed assessment of food culture and factors of the hospitality sector. This is supported by the following objectives:
1. To understand whether dimensions of food culture i.e. Rituals is practiced by Hospitality managers in their organizational strategy.
2. To determine whether dimensions of food culture i.e. Ritual is associated with factors of the hospitality sector.
3. To review the academic literature on Food Culture of Delhi and on Hospitality sector.

1.5 Hypotheses
H1: There is a significant and positive influence of rituals of food culture with the hospitality sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Food is the most basic needs of human beings its main objective is to satisfy hunger and to meet the nutritional needs of the body. It denotes ethnic, regional and national identity (Alonzo, 2014).

According to Sudhir (2007) "The hospitality industry is a guest centric service area which includes food service outlets and hotels. It is a hospitable service industry which has an art of creating revenue with guest satisfaction.

Many researchers from anthropology marked that the symbolic importance of

foodstuffs and cooking styles of a cuisine remain fixed to a certain degree and play a pivotal role in defining the cuisines and food culture of the place (levistrauss1969, Douglas 1972, and Barthes 1973).

Food intake of people is largely dependent on culture. Foskett and Patricia (2011) argued that every race and nation has its own culture that influences their own way of cooking and serving, and results in respective food choices from the hospitality sector. According to (Aden, 2013; Sen, 2004), When family members eat together it signifies family unity. Apart from many basic needs food also fulfils many other purposes. It has some symbolic meaning in religious rituals and beliefs.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Exploratory research is done with a general idea of food culture and hospitality sectors then to gain deeper insights into the dimensions and cautious exploration of the dimensions and variables are done. In this study, Delhi and NCR region were chosen as sampling area. Researcher convenient Sampling method is used for this study. Sample size of 394 is taken for study. The data gathered was entered and coded into the computer for analysis. It was analysed

through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21) and Analysis of a Moment Structures (AMOS 21).

3.1 Reliability of Research Instrument

It is concluded that reliability not only measures the consistency but also measures the extent to which it is accurate, error free and stable. The value of Cronbach alpha is a common measure of reliability of instrument (Cronbach, 1951). The instrument is considered reliable if the value of Cronbach is more than .7 (Cronbach, 1951; Hair et. al, 1998; Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1.1: Reliability Results of Rituals

S. No.	Variable	Dimension	No. Of items	Cronbach"s alpha
1.	Food Culture	Rituals	5	0.757

The value of Cronbach alpha is more than .7 that reveals that instruments used for dimensions and variables are reliable.

Table 1.2: Validity Results of food culture

Variable	Dimensions	Factor Loading	KMO
Food Culture	Rit1	.682	0.700
	Rit2	.633	
	Rit3	.781	
	Rit4	.741	
	Rit5	.772	

Table 1.3: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S.No.	Demographics	Dimensions	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	334	84.8
		Female	60	15.2
2	Age (in years)	18-35	257	65.2
		35-55	123	31.2
		Above 55	14	3.6
3.	Educational Qualification	Under Graduate	135	34.3
		Graduate	154	39.1
		Post-Graduate	105	26.6
4.	Total experience	Less than 5 years	162	41.1
		5-10 years	81	20.6
		10-20 years	99	25.1
		More than 20 years	52	13.2
5.	Experience in Current Organisation	Less than 5 years	284	72.1
		5-10 years	78	19.8
		10-20 years	25	6.3
		More than 20 years	7	1.8
6.	Income	Below 3 Lakhs	127	32.2
		3-7 Lakhs	111	28.2
		8-15 Lakhs	93	23.6
		Above 15 Lakhs	63	16.0

Each of the measurement statements used in questionnaire were drawn from previous studies, therefore, confirmatory

factor analysis is employed to verify scale construction and operationalization. The results of CFA are presented in table 1.2 for

dimensions of food culture with factor load of respective items and KMO value of dimensions. Hair et. al (1998) suggested that factor load to be more that .5 and KMO to be more than .7 for valid instrument. The results presented in tables 1.2 are above the recommended value that confirms that instrument used for this study are valid.

The above table 1.3ofDemographic profile of the respondent revealed that there are total 394 respondents out of which 334 are males and 60 are females. This means 85% of respondents are male while only 15% are female. Majority of respondents are in the age group of 18-35 followed age group of 35-55 then least respondents are above the age of 55. There are 105 post graduate, 154 are graduate and 135 are undergraduate. This means most of the respondents are graduate, followed by undergraduate then least number were for post graduate. The highest numbers of respondents are having total work experience of less than 5 years followed by 10-20 years then 5-10 years and least number of respondents has experience of more than 20 years. The highest numbers of respondents are having experience of less than 5 years in the current organization followed by 5-10 years then 10-20 years and least number of respondents are having experience of more than 20 years in the current working organization. It may be due to staff turnover or the new opportunities available in hospitality sector. There are 127 respondents in the income group of below 3 lakhs per annum followed by 111 respondents in the range of 3-7 Lakhs per annum while 93 respondents are in the range of 8-15 Lakhs per annum and the least respondents are in the income group above 15 Lakhs.

Table 1.4: Descriptive Statistics of Dimensions of Rituals

Dimensions and Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rituals	394	1.25	5.00	3.8388	.72116

In Table 1.4 ritual mean is reported more than average by the respondents.

3.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis had been conducted to examine some of the proposed hypotheses.

3.3.1 Impact of dimensions of food culture on the hospitality sector

In this regression analysis, dimensions of food culture (rituals) are taken as independent variables and hospitality sector is taken as a dependent variable.

Table 1.5: Model Summary of dimensions of food culture on hospitality sector

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.753[a]	.567	.561	.38973
A. Predictors: (Constant), Interior, Rituals, Taboos, Tradition, Beliefs				

In the table 1.5, the value of R= 0.753 indicates a strong relationship between dimensions of food culture and hospitality sector. The value of $R^2 = 0.567$ explains that 56.7 % of the variation in hospitality sector is explained by dimensions of food culture, while 43.3 % remain unexplained. Thus, the predictive ability of the model is strong.

Table 1.6: ANOVA of dimensions of food culture on hospitality sector

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.167	5	15.433	101.607	.000[b]
	Residual	58.934	388	.152		
	Total	136.100	393			
A. Dependent Variable: hospitality sector						
B. Predictors: (Constant), Interiors, Rituals, Taboos, Tradition, Belief						

In Table 1.6 the F value is 101.607 and the significance value level is 0.000 which indicates that the predictor variables are not contributing equally to the overall hospitality sector by its

dimensions. Moreover, the significance level of 0.000 is less than 0.05. Thus, the stated dimensions of food culture have an effect on the hospitality sector.

Table 1.7: Standardized Coefficients of dimensions of food culture on hospitality sector

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.009	.139		7.237	.000
	Rituals	.195	.039	.239	4.941	.000
A. Dependent Variable: hospitality sector						

The result in the above Table 1.7 shows that dimension of food culture – rituals is found significantly related to hospitality sector. The value of standardized coefficient beta indicates the change in each dimension of food culture has a unit change in the hospitality sector. This shows that rituals have an impact on the hospitality sector. Therefore, alternate hypothesis H1 is accepted.

4. Measurement Model

The purpose of the measurement model is to measure the validity of the construct using confirmatory factor analysis. It measures the link between items and concerned variables within the framework of the Structural equation model (SEM), (Byrne, 2010).

4.1 Rituals: There are five items in this dimension. The results of confirmatory factors analysis revealed that data is not fitting well to hypothesize model. As suggested by Hair et al. (2006), the revised and improved model can be obtained by deleting few items with low factor load and or using covariance between items of high modification indices and residuals. The revised model is obtained by deleting one item. The fit indices of revised model were as follows: GFI = .992, TLI = .960, CFI = .987, χ^2/df =3.378, p < .05 and RMSEA = .078. The value of the standardized beta estimate is considered as the factor load of the respective item on the construct. The standardized beta estimates of the four items were .62 (p < .01), .65 (p < .01), .75 (p <.01), and .63 (p <.01) respectively.
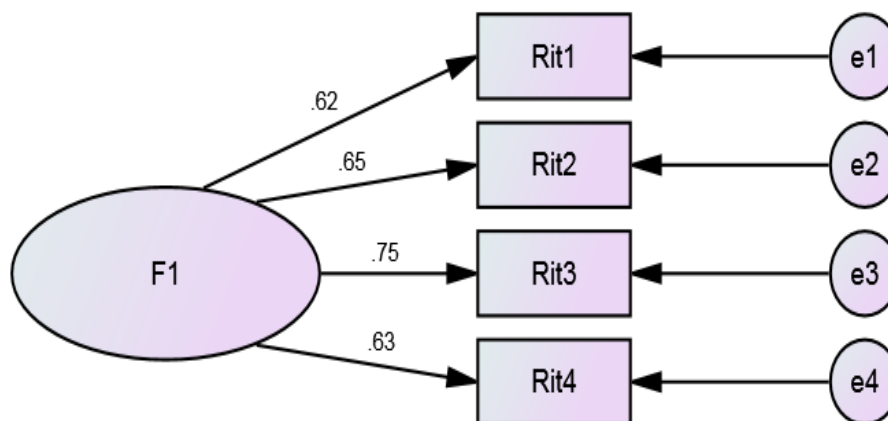

Figure 1.1: Measurement model of rituals

5. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of food culture i.e. Rituals on the hospitality sector of Delhi. Descriptive research is done with two study variables Rituals and Hospitality Sector

Research Question. Whether dimensions of food culture i.e. Rituals practiced in the hospitality sector?

To get the answer to this question "*To understand whether the hospitality managers consider dimensions of food culture in their organizational strategy*" is proposed, and descriptive study is

conducted. The results of the descriptive study revealed that all dimensions are having a level of more than average that means the presence of all dimensions are perceived by practicing managers and all are equally important in the food culture of the hospitality sector. In dimensions of food culture, the highest mean was reported for rituals.

Research Question 2. How dimensions of food culture are associated with factors of the hospitality sector?

To get the answer of the above question the proposed hypothesis H_1 is tested. Regression analysis is conducted to test these proposed hypotheses.

H_1: *There is a significant and positive influence of rituals of food culture with the hospitality sector.*

The results of regression analysis revealed the acceptance of hypothesis H_1 that means there is a significant and positive influence of rituals of food culture with the hospitality sector. It is concluded that special religious practices influence food choices, different occasions guide food choices, food choices are based on as it connects with gods, and decided by values system; having positive and significant influence with the hospitality sector.

5.1 Recommendations

*   In this competitive business environment, providing food and associated services with the cultural aspect is an essential marketing strategy for its success. It is imperative to get the right perception of customers towards the product and service of the company.
*   The hotel industry is having tremendous market potential in India. There are many foreign hotel chains operating in India that are competing with local hotels in terms of location, pricing, and promotion. The success of these sources depends on knowledge about the market. Competitive advantages, quality product, and services are the most

important factors that should be considered at all times to adhere to this competition.
*   Hospitality Sectors can have their popular food trail efforts by curetting, upgrading and creating an aspiring brand to help rediscover local and regional food heritage.

5.2 Managerial Implications

The study reinforces the notion that managers attached to food culture and cuisine of Delhi are very crucial to the organisations and effective in getting customer loyalty and spreading of positivity. Following managerial implications are recommended:

*   Managers are recommended to offer varieties of food based on the cultural viewpoint of the guests. Similar Food has got a different place in different food cultures so, it is very much important to understand the food cultures to avoid further discomforts in service. They need to be pro-active to make changes that focus on customer preferences.
*   Every geographical location has its traditions, that have their origin in past but is still maintained in present with their personal emotions. Traditions hold the community of people together. Even traditional foods and their preparation methods are a part of folklore of certain regions. Managers are advised to respect the traditions of the respective geographical location of the hospitality industry.
*   Rituals are anticipated religious actions which are part of our lives undertaken with care and celebrated in every aspect of life. They vary from our regular routine activities or habits as they are linked with various formal performance, time and place. The study reveals that there is a relationship between rituals and hospitality sectors. The managers should understand the cultural rituals and plan accordingly.

- Hospitality industry is an influx of various cultures on a daily basis. There are several cultural contrasts between employees, employers or customers in organisation while operation. Managers should understand the importance of Cultural diversity management inside the organization. Managers should pay special attention to cross cultural behaviour in providing services with due respects to the cultural aspects of those guests.
- Understanding customer needs and their expectations plays an important role in the success of Hospitality Sector. Managers should focus on improving customer loyalty so that they continue to visit because of the influential touch of culture. It means providing the customer with the product or services which will make him feel that he has received in return the value for what he has paid.

5.3 Scope for Further Study.
Keeping in mind the broad objectives, the results obtained and the limitations of the current study, some possible opportunities have been listed below for future research scope.
1. For a better insight about the relationship amongst the study variable, it is suggested a combined study mix of the quantitative and qualitative approach is followed.
2. This research can be extended to different locations and cities of India with a larger sample size in order to create a larger database.
3. The relationship among variables can be tested with longitudinal data.
4. There is a possibility to include more independent variables to study their impact in relation to the outcome variable.

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