



Gastronomic Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Development: A Comparative Study of the Cuisines of Lucknow and Hyderabad.

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Abstract.

Gastronomic history constitutes a significant aspect of cultural tourism and destination development, particularly in urban historical cities, where culinary traditions serve as a cultural manifestation rooted in communal memory, identity, and feeling of place. Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines are two of the most distinguished culinary traditions in India, shaped by royal patronage, syncretic cultural histories, artisanal food practices, and evolving urban tourism economies. This study examines the correlation between gastronomic history and sustainable tourist development by comparing Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines. The study employs an empirical research approach utilizing primary data gathered from 600 participants, comprising domestic and international tourists, local residents, food entrepreneurs, hospitality stakeholders, and culinary experts engaged in the food tourism ecosystem of Lucknow and Hyderabad. The study examines the influence of culinary history on the enhancement of destination appeal, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, community engagement, local economic growth, and sustainable tourism practices.

The research is positioned in the convergence of historical tourism, food tourism, sustainable destination development, and cultural economy studies. It perceives gastronomy not merely as a consumer experience, but as a system of living heritage that connects traditional knowledge, local foods, artisanal skills, social rituals, hospitality ideals, and destination branding. The research examines the role of iconic meals, culinary venues, food festivals, street food traditions, traditional cooking methods, and intangible cultural significances in enhancing the tourism attractiveness of Lucknow and Hyderabad. It also analyzes the issues of commercialization, standardization, authenticity erosion, environmental challenges, inadequate documentation of culinary traditions, and the inconsistent incorporation of gastronomy into tourism planning.

The research will determine that gastronomic heritage is essential for the advancement of sustainable tourism, as it enhances cultural specificity, prolongs the tourist experience, encourages micro-entrepreneurship, fortifies local supply chains, and boosts the destination's competitiveness. The study contends that the sustainability of gourmet tourism relies on heritage-sensitive legislative frameworks, community engagement, responsible destination marketing, culinary education, preservation of traditional recipes, and environmentally sustainable food service methods. The comparative framework is effective for understanding the similarities and disparities in the evolution of culinary tourism in Lucknow and Hyderabad, influenced by historical legacies, urban branding, governance structures, and current tourism demand. This dissertation contributes to

tourism studies by elucidating gastronomic legacy as a strategic asset for fostering culturally grounded and economically inclusive sustainable tourism in Indian heritage cities.

Keywords: - Culinary Heritage, Sustainable Tourism, Culinary Tourism, Lucknowi Cuisine, Hyderabadi Cuisine, Food Heritage, Heritage Tourism, Cultural Sustainability.

1. Introduction

The culinary heritage is increasingly acknowledged as a catalyst for tourism and a component of cultural identity in India's urban heritage cities (Sharma & Banerjee, 2017; Srivastava, 2020). The utilization of culinary traditions for branding and experiential travel is increasingly prevalent as Indian destinations expand beyond conventional monument-focused tourism (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022; Singh, Mishra, & Chandra, 2021). Recent studies indicate that regional cuisines, such as Lucknowi and Hyderabadi, serve as both a collective memory and social ritual, while also forming the basis of urban identity, thereby augmenting destination competitiveness and fostering sustainable economic development (Gupta & Kumar, 2019; Kaur & Sandhu, 2023).

Government and corporate programs aggressively endorse culinary tourism, focusing on local sourcing, community involvement, and women's entrepreneurship (Kumari, Ghosh, & Singh, 2022; Raj & Sharma, 2020). India's culinary diversity has garnered attention through digital mapping and the narrative of food culture, particularly via social media platforms (Joshi & Sharma, 2022; Jain & Jain, 2021).

In recent decades, food has gained recognition in tourism studies literature as a fundamental component of travel consumption, as well as a significant cultural identifier, experiential resource, and means of location differentiation. Gastronomy has transitioned from the margins to the forefront of discussions regarding cultural tourism, heritage management, destination branding, and sustainable development. Contemporary travelers seek experiences beyond monuments, museums, and picturesque landscapes. They seek immersive experiences that enable participation with a locale's culture through gastronomy, ritual, memory, and social interaction. Culinary traditions in the evolving tourism landscape serve as a conduit between tangible and intangible heritage, connecting local histories, regional identities, community livelihoods, and place-based authenticity (Bessière, 1998; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Richards, 2015).

Gastronomic heritage encompasses the culinary knowledge, practices, recipes, ingredients, preparation methods, food rituals, and social significances that are passed down through generations within a community or region. It encompasses not just culinary techniques and recipes but also agricultural systems, local markets, gastronomic festivals, dining etiquette, narratives surrounding food, and the symbolic significance attributed to it. Gastronomy, as an aspect of intangible cultural heritage, encompasses the interplay of ecology, economy, history, religion, migration, class, and politics. It enables places to express identity, continuity, diversity, and inventiveness (Long, 2004; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Bortolotto, 2011). UNESCO's growing focus on food-related historical traditions has elevated the significance of gastronomy in global cultural discourse and tourist policy, positioning food at the core of cultural landscapes and the construction of local identities (UNESCO, 2021).

Gastronomy serves various functions within the expansive realm of tourism. It promotes travel, serves as an experiential product, facilitates cultural exchange, functions as a destination branding instrument, and acts as a mechanism for local economic development. Food tourism encompasses exquisite dining at heritage restaurants, street food excursions, culinary classes, festivals, farm visits, and market tours, providing travelers with immersive opportunities to connect with local culture. Such experiences can yield economic advantages for local communities, augment the worth of traditional food systems, bolster small-scale producers and food entrepreneurs, and contribute to the diversification of destinations. However, the growth of food tourism raises concerns regarding authenticity, commodification, sustainability, and the fair distribution of benefits, particularly in rapidly urbanizing heritage cities (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Sims, 2009; Ellis et al., 2018).

The topic of sustainable tourism development is a critical concern in global tourism planning and policy. Sustainable tourism aims to reconcile economic development with social fairness, cultural integrity, and environmental responsibility. It aims to attain long-term sustainability of tourism destinations by mitigating adverse effects, enhancing local involvement, preserving cultural and natural resources, and equitably distributing tourism benefits among stakeholders (Butler, 1999; UNWTO, 2018). The sustainability of culinary tourism extends beyond merely marketing food as an allure. It includes the conservation of culinary heritage, support for local food economies, minimization of food waste, preservation of traditional knowledge, promotion of ethical sourcing, and community engagement in tourism decision-making. Consequently, gastronomic legacy may be regarded as a cultural asset and a sustainable resource, if it is managed with consideration for local identities, ecological constraints, and intergenerational continuity (Scarpato, 2002; Sims, 2009; Everett, 2016).

India is a notable locus where gastronomy, heritage, and sustainable tourism converge. The nation possesses some of the most varied culinary traditions globally, indicative of its location, climate, trade routes, religion, migration, caste and community frameworks, agricultural practices, and centuries of imperial and regional interactions. Indian cuisine offers a mosaic of regional culinary traditions, each characterized by distinct ingredients, techniques, flavor profiles, social significances, and ceremonial customs. As India's tourism shifts from monument-focused sightseeing to experience, cultural, and lifestyle-oriented travel, cuisine is becoming a significant aspect of destination attractiveness. Metropolitan and heritage cities utilize culinary trails, heritage restaurants, local markets, festival cuisines, and traditional recipes to enhance destination branding and visitor engagement (Saxena et al., 2007; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022).

Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines are distinguished culinary traditions of India, notable for their historical significance, royal connections, complex ethnic identities, and substantial symbolic importance in tourism promotion. Both cuisines are intricately connected to court cultures, urban memory, and a synthesis of Persian, Mughal, regional, and local influences. Their distinctions lie in flavor composition, ingredient utilization, culinary techniques, social contexts of consumption, and contemporary tourist commercialization practices. A comparative analysis of the two cuisines offers valuable insights into the dynamics of gastronomic legacy across diverse urban and historical contexts, as well as its role in promoting sustainable tourist development in India.

Lucknowi food, or Awadhi cuisine from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, is distinguished by its sophistication, subtlety, slow cooking techniques, fragrant layering, and dining etiquette. It developed under the patronage of the Nawabs of Awadh and is a complex amalgamation of Persian, Central Asian, Mughal, and regional North Indian influences. The culinary principles of Lucknowi cuisine are based on methods like dum pukht (slow cooking in sealed vessels), thorough marination, minimal spice usage, and a focus on texture and aroma. Culinary items such as kebabs, kormas, nihari, sheermal, warqi paratha, and biryani embody historical significance and cultural esteem. Culinary establishments in Lucknow—historic city restaurants, street-food hubs, traditional confectioneries, and heritage dining venues—serve as vibrant repositories of urban heritage and social identity (Khosla, 2009; Sen, 2015).

Hyderabadi cuisine is a composite culinary style rooted in the history of the Deccan and the Nizami court of Hyderabad, inspired by Persian, Turkish, Mughal, Telugu, Marathwada, and indigenous Deccani flavors. Hyderabadi cuisine is renowned globally for its biryani, haleem, kebabs, salan, marag, sweets, and ceremonial eating customs. It is a blend of regal grandeur and a pronounced feeling of locality, influenced by the interplay of royal kitchens, military presence, trade networks, and indigenous culinary traditions. Similar to Lucknowi cuisine, Hyderabadi cuisine encompasses not merely sustenance but also ritual, hospitality, urban identity, and intergenerational culinary wisdom. Hyderabad is a culinary destination featuring food streets, Ramzan markets, historic city eateries, opulent heritage dining establishments, and local culinary traditions (Collingham, 2006; Ahmed, 2014).

Despite the increasing popularity of culinary tourism and the cultural significance of regional cuisines in India, there is a deficiency of empirical comparative research about gastronomic heritage in the context of sustainable tourist development. Current studies on Indian cuisine and tourism have predominantly emphasized destination branding, tourist satisfaction, or broad cultural narratives, neglecting a thorough examination of culinary heritage's influence on the social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism. There is a deficiency of comparative studies that engage two historically significant culinary cities in discourse to elucidate similarities, differences, and policy ramifications. This disparity is particularly significant as sustainable tourism necessitates tailored, destination-specific techniques rather than general advertising narratives. An examination of food legacy in Lucknow and Hyderabad may provide valuable insights on cultural conservation, community livelihoods, culinary entrepreneurship, destination marketing, and urban tourist development.

This study aims to address this gap by a comparative investigation of gastronomic legacy and sustainable tourist development for Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines. The research utilized primary data gathered from 600 respondents, comprising tourists, local residents, restaurant operators, street food vendors, chefs, tourism professionals, and cultural participants. This study combines legacy tourism and sustainable development to analyze the impact of traditional cuisines on destination image, tourist motivation, cultural continuity, local enterprise growth, and the sustainability of urban tourism systems. The study identifies several significant challenges impacting the preservation and tourism utilization of culinary heritage, including commercialization, loss of authenticity, sanitation concerns, insufficient institutional support, environmental burdens linked to food tourism, and unequal stakeholder participation.

The study contends that gastronomic heritage is not a peripheral aspect of tourism, but rather a fundamental cultural and economic asset that, when incorporated into inclusive and heritage-conscious tourism strategies, can serve as a catalyst for the enhancement of sustainable development in urban locations. This study aims to enhance tourism scholarship, food heritage research, and destination planning by providing detailed insights into the significance of culinary traditions in fostering culturally rooted, economically sustainable, and socially inclusive tourism futures for India, with a focus on Lucknow and Hyderabad.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical Grounds of Gastronomic Heritage

The concept of gastronomic heritage has been the subject of extensive scholarly attention within tourism, anthropology, cultural studies and heritage studies, since food is not just sustenance, but also identity, memory, territory, social relations and historical continuity. Gastronomic heritage is the sum of knowledge, ingredients, techniques, recipes, ritual and meanings accumulated in respect of a specific place and passed down through time. It is a living form of intangible cultural heritage rooted in local ecosystems, agricultural practices, religious customs, festive traditions and collective memory (Bessière, 1998; Long, 2004; Everett & Aitchison, 2008) as opposed to a static museum object.

Food heritage is different from generic food consumption because it focuses on authenticity, locality and continuity and cultural significance. Often, traditional foods, culinary practices and collective patterns of eating are linked to certain historical narratives and regional identities. As Bessière argues (1998), local food can be a powerful marker of territorial identity and a way for communities to represent themselves to visitors. Similarly, Long (2004) introduced the idea of food as a cultural text that travelers read and consume, as they travel to other societies. In this sense gastronomy is a heritage resource and a communicative practice that mediates relationships between hosts and guests.

Indian scholarship has recently conceptualised food heritage as a dynamic, living system embedded in local ecosystems, festivals and social practices (Srivastava, 2020; Kumari et al., 2022). Thus, the food cultures of Varanasi, Amritsar and Kerala have been studied as vibrant spaces of tradition, memory and innovation (Gupta & Kumar, 2019; Kaur & Sandhu, 2023; Menon & Mohan, 2019). Globalization of diets, standardization and

lack of documentation also threaten intangible heritage (Das & Medhi, 2017; Joshi & Sharma, 2022). Hence the need for proactive preservation and research.

Theorization of gastronomy as intangible cultural heritage has been more and more adopted by scholars, especially when the global heritage discourse shifted from monuments and artefacts to living traditions, performing arts, rituals, craftsmanship and culinary knowledge. The UNESCO listing of intangible cultural heritage has inspired researchers and policy makers to examine food traditions as carriers of cultural diversity and social memory more systematically. Gastronomic heritage includes culinary techniques, recipes, seasonal cycles, table practices, local ingredients, preservation methods, and oral food histories. Globalization, homogenization, lifestyle change and industrial food systems often threaten these elements, and their documentation and safeguarding are essential for cultural sustainability (Bortolotto, 2011; UNESCO, 2021).

But gastronomic heritage is no anachronism either. It is constantly re-interpreted, adapted and performed in home kitchens, restaurants, markets, festivals and tourism spaces. In this sense, scholars have emphasized the need to think of food heritage as living heritage, a terrain of negotiation between continuity and change, authenticity and innovation, local identity and global circulation (Di Giovine & Brulotte, 2014). This dynamism is particularly visible in tourism contexts where culinary traditions are often curated, staged, branded and newly consumed for tourists. This provides opportunities for cultural revitalisation and economic development, but also brings threats of standardisation, selective representation and the commercialisation of tradition.

2.2 Food Tourism and Culinary Tourism: The Growth of the Field

Food tourism, culinary tourism and gastronomic tourism are often used interchangeably although there are slight differences between the three. The most general definition of food tourism is travel motivated at least partly by a desire to experience the food culture of a destination including local foods, drinks, culinary events, sites of food production and food-related lifestyles (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Gastronomic tourism focuses on the cultural, sensory and symbolic elements of food in destination experiences, while culinary tourism is the conscious engagement with food experiences to learn about local culture. Whatever you call it, the field has grown rapidly as tourists increasingly seek experiential, authentic, place-based experiences.

The food tourism experience in India is increasingly being shaped by culinary trails, food festivals, and market-based experiences (Ghosh & Saha, 2019; Sharma & Banerjee, 2017). These initiatives have diversified the tourism products and helped the local economies, especially by small food vendors and family restaurants (Tripathi & Bhatt, 2020; Raj & Sharma, 2020). For instance, Amritsar city is now positioned competitively on the basis of its food reputation (Kaur & Sandhu, 2023; Kumar & Yadav, 2018).

Early studies of tourism have largely ignored food, treating it as a minor component of travel, mostly related to hospitality and visitor satisfaction. However, the work of Hall and Mitchell (2001), Hall and Sharples (2003) and Long (2004) has helped to re-position food as a key tourism resource of economic, cultural and symbolic value. It was found that food experiences affect destination image, travel motivation, length of stay, repeat visitation and word-of-mouth promotion. Culinary tourism also began to diversify destinations, especially rural and heritage areas in search of alternatives to mass tourism.

This growth in food tourism is related to a range of wider changes in tourism demand and cultural consumption. Secondly, tourists are increasingly looking for authentic experiences and direct contact with local lifestyles rather than passive sightseeing. Second, media, celebrity chefs, travel shows, and global digital food cultures have raised awareness of regional cuisines and encouraged food tourism. Thirdly, postmodern trends in tourism have blurred the boundaries between leisure, learning, lifestyle and identity performance, with food becoming a site for self-expression, distinction and cultural exploration (Richards, 2012; Ellis et al., 2018). Fourth, food is seen by local governments and destination marketers as a strategic branding tool to differentiate places in competitive tourism markets .

Food tourism covers anything from eating in traditional restaurants and street food, food festivals, markets, cooking lessons, farm and food production tours to heritage dining experiences. Such activities contribute not only to the visitor enjoyment but also to destination storytelling, local entrepreneurship and circulation of cultural meanings. Kivela and Crotts (2006) noted that gastronomy is a primary, not secondary, travel motivator, particularly for destinations with a distinctive culinary identity. In the same vein, Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) argued that food experiences foster emotional attachment and memorable tourism experiences that increase destination loyalty.

But there are also important questions raised by the rise of food tourism. A lot of the “local” and “authentic” food experiences are not really based on community practices. Tourism can also commodify food cultures, making them seem better or easier to appeal to consumers. At times this helps to marginalise everyday food practices or privileges elite culinary narratives. Food tourism can also lead to uneven economic benefits, especially when large hospitality chains make more than local vendors or producers. Issues such as these make it clear that food tourism should be framed as an issue of sustainability and heritage, rather than just as a marketing opportunity.

2.3 Gastronomy, Authenticity and the Tourist Experience

One of the most discussed issues in tourism studies is authenticity and it is of particular importance in food tourism studies. Traditional cuisine is often linked by tourists to a “authentic” experience of culture, with the assumption that local food provides intimate access to the identity and history of a destination. Eating local food helps tourists to connect with place, landscape and community in a way that enhances the authenticity of travel experiences, says Sims (2009). Authenticity in gastronomic tourism can be linked to original recipes, traditional preparation, family ownership, local ingredients, historical atmosphere, cultural stories and a sense of being far from mass food production.

Authenticity plays a vital role in the satisfaction of culinary tourism (Srivastava, 2020; Bhattacharya, 2019). The importance of storytelling, digital mapping and online branding in maintaining authenticity and attracting travelers has been highlighted in recent research (Joshi & Sharma, 2022; Jain & Jain, 2021). The complex narratives of Lucknowi cuisine, embedded within tehzeeb and nawabi etiquette, are being increasingly curated for regional pride as well as for global reach (Srivastava, 2020; Singh et al., 2021).

But authenticity is not easy, it is not static. It could be objective, in terms of historical continuity or traditional ingredients; constructive, framed by marketing narratives and tourist expectations; or existential, based on the emotional and personal importance of the experience (Wang, 1999). In culinary settings, tourists may experience authenticity in taste, atmosphere, interaction with hosts, visible cooking practice, and narratives of heritage. Being authentic can take many different forms, depending on the context and interpretation: a street food lane, a century-old bakery, a home-style meal, or a royal dining recreation.

The authenticity of food is very important in shaping tourists’ satisfaction, memorability and destination image (Bessière, 1998; Williams & Lew, 2015). Food experiences are an important factor to shape travelers’ perceptions of local culture and satisfaction to a trip (Kim et al., 2009). Stones et al. (2018) went on to add that authenticity in food tourism is often related to storytelling, locality and sensory immersion rather than historical accuracy. In heritage cities, traditional cuisine can establish strong emotional ties between the visitor and the destination, providing a tangible access to intangible culture.

At the same time, the quest for authenticity in tourism can be fraught with tension. Some destinations may choose to keep some dishes alive and forget some others. They might simplify recipes for the tourist appeal, or put on culinary shows that value spectacle over cultural depth. Sometimes “authenticity” is a marketing label, not a lived cultural practice. This tension is especially salient in cities such as Lucknow and Hyderabad where elite courtly cuisines co-exist with street food cultures, domestic cooking traditions and modern restaurant adaptations. Therefore, understanding the construction, perception and negotiation of authenticity in gastronomic tourism is important for the sustainable management of heritage.

2.4 Culinary Heritage and Destination Positioning

Destination branding is a strategic process used to develop and communicate unique identities to attract visitors, investment and recognition. Food is becoming a more significant branding tool in today's tourism markets, capable of conveying locality, heritage, creativity and emotional appeal in ways readily available to visitors. Food is different from most other cultural assets in that it is participatory and multi-sensory. Tourists can literally eat the destination. In this sense, cities and regions around the world have used gastronomy to create destination images, to promote tourism campaigns and to position themselves in niche tourism markets (Okumus et al., 2007; Richards, 2015).

Food-based destination branding typically relies on signature dishes, culinary districts, food festivals, celebrity chefs, historic eateries, and tradition stories. These elements contribute to the creation of a recognizable gastronomic identity, which can be complementary to heritage, religious, leisure or urban tourism products. Gastronomy can be used to increase length of stay, return visitation, spending and the spread of tourists across neighborhoods through culinary trails and market experiences. In India, cities such as Amritsar, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow and Hyderabad are increasingly using food imagery and culinary heritage in promotional narratives.

But branding of gastronomic heritage has to be finely balanced. Branding can also distill complex food cultures into a few iconic dishes, cementing stereotypes and marginalizing less visible culinary traditions. If marketing favors elite or commercialized cuisine over everyday community foodways, the destination image created may be culturally narrow and socially exclusionary. Hence, sustainable destination branding requires a broader understanding of gastronomy as a community asset rather than a marketable commodity. It should include local participation, cultural interpretation, historical context and support for small food businesses (Everett & Slocum 2013).

Culinary branding of Lucknow and Hyderabad cannot be divorced from their royal heritage, culture of hospitality and urban identity. Lucknow is generally defined by kebabs, biryani, tehzeeb and Awadhi courtliness; Hyderabad by biryani, haleem, Nizami splendour and Old City culinary vibrancy. These branding narratives have great potentials for tourism but also need to be critically analysed as to whose heritage is being showcased, how authenticity is being constructed and whether branding strategies are contributing to sustainable local development.

2.5 Sustainable development of tourism and food heritage

The concept of sustainable tourism development is now more widely accepted as tourism development that fully considers its current and future economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (UNWTO, 2018). It's not just about bringing in tourists and income but about the sustainability of the destination in the long term, the well-being of its residents, the preservation of its resources and the fair participation of all. In cultural and heritage tourism sustainability can be about the protection of local traditions, halting cultural erosion and engaging communities in the interpretation and management of heritage assets.

Culinary heritage can contribute to sustainable tourism in many ways. It can economically sustain local restaurants, street vendors, artisans, food producers, farmers, transport providers and festival organizers. Food tourism often benefits micro-enterprises and family businesses which are vital for inclusive local development. Gastronomic heritage can contribute to the reinforcing of social and cultural aspects such as community pride, transfer of knowledge between generations and appreciation of local identity. It can also preserve recipes, cooking methods and seasonal food traditions that might otherwise be lost under the weight of homogenized food systems. In relation to the environment, if well managed culinary tourism can promote local sourcing, seasonal ingredients, shorter supply chains and less food miles (Scarpato, 2002; Sims, 2009; Everett, 2016).

But the relationship between food tourism and sustainability is not necessarily a positive one. Unsustainable food tourism can result in more waste, overconsumption, water and energy use and can encourage generic food production that is removed from local agriculture. It can also lead to commercialisation which pushes out traditional vendors, prices that are too high in heritage districts and unequal power relations between big business and small community actors. Governance, planning and institutional support are thus essential to sustainability in gastronomic tourism. Policies should include hygiene, heritage protection, environmental management, infrastructure, inclusion of vendors, fair livelihoods, culinary education and responsible marketing.

The scholars have stressed the significance of community-based approaches for the sustainability of food tourism. Local communities are not just agents of culture for the consumption of tourists, but bearers of culinary knowledge, labor, memory and identity. Community-based food tourism is more likely to respond to local needs, retain cultural significance, and distribute benefits more equitably. This is especially true in heritage cities where food spaces often compete with residential areas, religious spaces, historic markets and informal economies.

2.6 Community involvement, local economy and culinary heritage

The main argument for linking gastronomic heritage to sustainable tourism is the opportunity for widespread local economic benefits. Unlike other tourism products, food tourism does not require external capital or imported infrastructure. It is often based on existing local knowledge, family businesses, informal markets and local ingredients. Culinary tourism can create jobs in restaurants and hotels, but also in agriculture, transportation, event management, crafts, food processing and cultural performances. It can support women-led enterprises, home-based production, seasonal markets, youth entrepreneurship widening the social base of tourism benefits (Torres, 2002; Telfer and Wall, 1996).

Community involvement is a key component of this process. Gastronomic heritage can become a vehicle for inclusive development when local residents, chefs, vendors, culinary artisans and small entrepreneurs are involved in the design and promotion of food tourism. However, when culinary tourism is dominated by outside investors or top-down branding efforts, local communities may lose control over how their food culture is represented and commercialized. And participation is also important for authenticity and continuity as many culinary traditions are carried on through domestic transmission, neighborhood networks, and informal apprenticeship rather than through formal institutions.

In particular, the inclusive culinary tourism models have been promising in the cases emphasising community participation and women entrepreneurship (Kumari et al., 2022; Raj & Sharma, 2020). Research from Jaipur, Kerala and Uttarakhand shows that local participation, skill transfer and micro-enterprise support are key to sustainability (Prasad & Verma, 2016; Menon & Mohan, 2019; Tripathi & Bhatt, 2020).

The Indian city culinary ecosystem is generally very layered, consisting of luxury restaurants, family-run eateries, old-city food bazaars, roadside stalls, sweet shops, caterers, festival food vendors and home-based specialists. The actors collectively keep urban food heritage alive, but are not equally visible and institutionally supported. Licensing, sanitation infrastructure, space regulation and competition with modern chains are often problems for street vendors and small traditional establishments. Therefore, a sustainable gastronomic tourism model has to consider the structural conditions of local food actors and not just praise cuisine as a symbolic asset.

2.7 Urbanism and Tourism in the Heritage Cities of India

Urban heritage cities are increasingly marketing themselves as culinary destinations, weaving together architecture, history, ritual and food into tourism experiences. In India, where the history of cities is closely intertwined with courtly cultures, trade routes, pilgrimage circuits and colonial transformations, food is often a visible and marketable form of urban identity. Iconic food traditions that coexist with built heritage, crafts,

festivals and religious landscapes are often representations of cities like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Amritsar, Delhi, Kolkata and Jaipur.

Lucknow and Hyderabad are particularly important, both having been developed under powerful courtly regimes which influenced language, etiquette, architecture, music, dress and food. Their food cultures are not disconnected from urban heritage but are located within larger civilizational histories and symbolic geographies. Lucknowi cuisine is a mirror of the genteel society of Awadh. Hyderabadi cuisine reflects the cosmopolitan Deccan of the Qutb Shahi and Asaf Jahi/Nizam periods. In both cities culinary heritage is closely tied to old quarters, markets, festive calendars and social codes of hospitality.

But, the literature on Indian culinary cities, though rich, is largely descriptive, rather than analytical. More empirical research is needed on tourists' perceptions of culinary heritage, the evaluation of its tourism role by local stakeholders, and the integration of food-based tourism and sustainability objectives. However, comparative research is particularly scarce, even though comparison can show how different governance structures, tourism narratives and culinary ecosystems influence destination development. This study tries to bridge this gap by comparing Lucknow and Hyderabad as gastronomic heritage destinations and implications for sustainable tourism development.

2.8 Lucknowi Cuisine: A Culinary Tradition

Lucknowi cuisine is often referred to as “the jewel of Awadhi gastronomy.” It is linked to the cultural history of the Nawabs of Awadh and the city's reputation for elegance, hospitality and refinement. Its evolution is closely linked to royal kitchens, elite patronage and the fusion of Persian, Mughal, Central Asian and local north Indian culinary traditions. It is known for its subtle use of spices, aromatic layering, marination techniques, delicate textures and slow cooking techniques like dum pukht. Signature dishes include galouti kebab, kakori kebab, nihari, korma, sheermal, roomali roti, warqi paratha and Awadhi biryani among others.

Lucknowi cuisine as heritage is not just in its dishes but also in its culinary aesthetics, etiquette, language and social rituals. There is also culture of mehman-nawazi (hospitality), fine service and attention to the senses as part of its cultural identity. This gastronomic tradition is carried on by old-city food joints, traditional sweet shops, kebab houses and family culinary lineages. The food of Lucknow is, in this regard, closely connected with urban memory, nostalgia and symbolic connotations of tehzeeb, which denotes civility, sophistication and cultured behaviour.

From tourism point of view, Lucknowi cuisine has lot of potential for heritage interpretation, culinary trails, festival tourism, experiential dining and destination branding. But it also has problems like dilution of recipes, over commercialization, sanitation issues in hubs of packed food, and slow erosion of traditional culinary skills. In order to develop sustainable tourism, the elite and popular food traditions of Lucknow need to be preserved and the culinary heritage needs to be better integrated into the tourism planning of the city.

2.9 Gastronomy Heritage Hyderabadi Cuisine

Hyderabadi cuisine is one of the most globally famous regional cuisines of India and is equally popular on the gastronomic map of India. It was born out of the confluence of Persian, Turkish, Mughal, Arab and local Telugu and Deccani food traditions under the patronage of the Qutb Shahi rulers and the Nizams of Hyderabad. It is characterized by rich flavours, layered rice and meat dishes, slow cooking, sour-spice balances, heavy use of nuts, aromatics and ceremonial eating traditions. Some of the iconic dishes are Hyderabadi biryani, haleem, marag, pathar ka gosht, baghara baingan, mirchi ka salan, double ka meetha and qubani ka meetha.

Hyderabadi cuisine is itself a living heritage system, from royal banquets and family traditions to Ramzan food markets, old-city eateries, wedding feasts and modern restaurant culture. For example, the visibility of haleem in Ramzan every year shows the confluence of religious seasonality, public space, commerce and culinary identity in tourism and urban culture. The city's foodscape is aristocratic in legacy and popular in accessibility, making it an attractive destination for culinary tourists, both domestic and international.

Food is a common core element in Hyderabad's branding in tourism along with monuments like Charminar, Golconda Fort and Chowmahalla Palace. But sustainability of Hyderabad gastronomic tourism also demands protection of culinary authenticity, support of traditional vendors, management of food-related congestion and waste and inclusiveness of local communities in the benefits of tourism. The question is how to translate culinary popularity into a heritage sensitive, socially inclusive tourism strategy as in Lucknow.

2.10 Gaps in Research and Significance of the Study

As shown in the literature review above, gastronomic heritage is increasingly valued as a tourism resource, as a marker of cultural identity and as a potential contributor to sustainable development. Research has found strong relationships between food and the tourist experience, authenticity, destination branding, local economy and cultural preservation. But there are still lot of gaps especially in Indian context.

First, Indian regional cuisines are rich and diverse but under-researched by mainstream tourism studies. Existing scholarship on gastronomic tourism is largely concentrated on Europe, East Asia and certain global culinary destinations. Secondly, Indian food tourism studies are mostly descriptive cultural narratives or destination promotions, rather than empirical scrutiny of sustainability outcomes. Third, there is a dearth of comparative studies on the contribution of various urban culinary traditions to sustainable tourism in terms of dimensions like community participation, heritage preservation, local livelihoods and destination image. Fourth, few existing studies with the same research design incorporate the perspectives of multiple stakeholders (i.e., tourists, residents, food entrepreneurs, and tourism professionals).

In the context of sustainable tourism development, the present study addresses these gaps by empirically comparing Lucknowi and Hyderabad cuisines as gastronomic heritage systems. On the basis of data collected from 600 respondents, the study seeks to contribute to the theory and practice of gastronomic tourism in India by placing cuisine within broader discourses of heritage, authenticity, local economy, cultural continuity and destination governance.

3. Research Gap

The growing literature on gastronomic tourism, cultural heritage and sustainable destination development suggests that food has become a significant element of tourism experience, place branding and local economic regeneration. Academic research has demonstrated significant correlations between food and tourism motivation, authenticity, cultural identity and destination competitiveness (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Richards, 2015; Ellis et al., 2018). Furthermore, culinary heritage has been demonstrated to be used to safeguard local traditions, establish micro-enterprises and improve the image of a destination especially in areas where food traditions are deeply rooted in the local history and social memory (Bessière, 1998; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Sims, 2009). Nevertheless, with this growing scholarship, there are still some conceptual, empirical and geographical gaps, particularly in relation to Indian heritage cities and comparative studies on gastronomic tourism.

First, much of the existing literature on food tourism focuses on Europe, North America, East Asia and some of the world's more established food destinations. Although these studies provide significant insights into wine tourism, rural foodscapes, destination branding, gastronomic festivals, and culinary authenticity, they do not sufficiently consider the complexity of South Asian food cultures, particularly in urban heritage settings where cuisine is associated with courtly traditions, religious practices, colonial histories, and informal food economies. Despite having one of the most diverse culinary landscapes in the world, India is still under-represented in mainstream tourism and gastronomy scholarship. Empirical studies on food heritage as a sustainable tourism resource in the context of Indian cuisine are more oriented towards cultural description, popular food writing or destination promotion.

Secondly, the available research on Indian food tourism is fragmented and city specific with limited comparative analytical depth. Although there are studies and travel narratives on existing culinary cultures of Lucknow, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Jaipur and Amritsar, they largely focus on historical evolution,

signature dishes or destination image rather than the greater nexus between gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development. There are very few systematic comparative studies of two or more Indian culinary destinations based on a common analytical framework. This gap is important because comparative analysis can show how different cultural histories, urban infrastructures, tourism governance systems, and food ecosystems influence the tourism value of gastronomy.

Third, a great deal of the tourism literature on food is concerned with either tourist motivation and satisfaction or destination marketing, without adequate integration of the sustainability dimensions of gastronomy. Sustainable tourism development demands a multidimensional analysis of tourist experience and destination branding, but also of community participation, cultural preservation, local livelihoods, authenticity, supply-chain linkages, environmental management and institutional support. In many studies food is mainly presented as a commercial attraction and not as a living heritage system that survives on the social and economic conditions of the communities that sustain it. This indicates the need for research beyond the concept of gastronomy as a tourism product, but as a cultural-economic ecosystem linked to heritage conservation and inclusive development.

Fourth, empirical studies tend to focus on one stakeholder group, usually tourists, and ignore the views of residents, food entrepreneurs, chefs, street vendors, tourism officials, and cultural experts. A narrow focus risks overlooking the daily realities in the production of culinary heritage, the challenges of heritage preservation and the uneven distribution of tourism benefits. Gastronomic heritage is created and recreated by a broad spectrum of actors, from home cooks and traditional artisans to restaurant owners, event planners, market vendors, and destination marketers. Therefore, a multi-stakeholder perspective is required to understand the real role of cuisine in sustainable tourism development.

Fifthly, there is a methodological gap in the integration of comparative gastronomic heritage and measurable sustainability indicators. Many studies refer to the concepts of authenticity, local food or culinary identity, but a smaller number of studies operationalize variables such as destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, community participation, local economic contribution, and environmental awareness in the same empirical framework. Such integrated models are rather limited in the Indian context and it is difficult to assess the concrete contribution of food heritage in tourism sustainability in different destination settings.

Sixth, there is ample cultural, historical and journalistic writing on Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines, but little tourism research that compares the two as parallel gastronomic heritage systems. Both cuisines evolved in courtly cultural milieux, both boast iconic dishes with strong destination value, and both are rooted in historic urban landscapes. But they vary in taste profiles, culinary histories, religious and social contexts, market forms and current tourism representations. Their similarities and differences make them ripe for comparative analysis, yet there is little scholarly work comparing their tourism significance. The bulk of the literature available deals with them separately and not as comparable models of gastronomic heritage and tourism development.

Finally, there is a dearth of policy-oriented research on the integration of gastronomic heritage in Indian cities into sustainable urban tourism planning. Although tourism departments and destination marketers increasingly rely on food imagery to promote cities, the policy discussion is often shallow and event-driven. In India, there is limited research on food heritage documentation, vendor participation, culinary cartography, heritage zoning, waste disposal, sanitation infrastructure, culinary skill transfer, and community-led tourism planning in the context of gastronomic tourism. Therefore, the real pathways for food heritage to promote sustainable tourism are under-theorized and under-implemented.

These gaps prompt the present study to make a substantial contribution by undertaking an empirical comparative study of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines in the context of gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development. Using a multi-stakeholder approach and primary data from 600 respondents, it assesses the contribution of culinary heritage to destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural

preservation, local economy and community participation. In doing so, the study responds to the call for context-specific, comparative and sustainability-oriented research on gastronomic tourism in India.

4. Need and Importance of the Study

The significance of this research is that it attempts to connect the domains of gastronomy, heritage and sustainable tourism in the Indian urban scenario. Food is one of the most visible and accessible expressions of local culture, but it is often undervalued or seen only in promotional terms in tourism planning. In heritage cities such as Lucknow and Hyderabad, cuisine is not an add-on tourism product but a fundamental component of urban identity, social memory, hospitality culture and visitor experience. Thus, to understand how such culinary traditions can support sustainable tourism development is both academically important and practically relevant.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study adds to the growing body of literature on gastronomic tourism by incorporating cultural heritage theory into the context of sustainable tourism frameworks. It transcends the narrow perception of food as a consumption activity and conceptualizes cuisine as a living heritage system associated with identity, authenticity, local livelihoods and destination competitiveness. It also contributes to Indian tourism research by highlighting regional culinary traditions that are culturally celebrated, but empirically under-researched through tourism lenses.

The study is empirically significant in the use of a comparative multi-stakeholder design with 600 respondents from Lucknow and Hyderabad. This enables a more complex perception of the role of gastronomic heritage by different groups in tourism development. The study presents the documentation of tourist experiences and preferences and local perspectives on heritage preservation, entrepreneurship and sustainability challenges. Such a design will yield more grounded and policy-relevant findings.

From policy and planning perspective, the research is significant in terms of how culinary heritage can be integrated strategically for sustainable tourism development. The challenge for Indian heritage cities is to strike a balance between promoting tourism and preserving cultural authenticity and urban pressures. The study can be useful for tourism departments, municipal authorities, cultural institutions, restaurant associations and community organizations by exploring the use of gastronomic heritage as an instrument for local economic development, cultural continuity and destination differentiation. It may also be useful in designing culinary trails, heritage food festivals, vendor-support policies, sustainable food branding strategies and local capacity-building initiatives.

From a community development perspective, the study highlights the importance of local food systems for livelihood maintenance, the preservation of intergenerational knowledge, and greater community involvement in tourism. Food-based tourism can create opportunities for small vendors, women entrepreneurs, family-run eateries, culinary artisans and local suppliers but such benefits do not come automatically. The study underscores the importance of inclusive and equitable tourism development, with community participation and local economic contribution as key variables.

To sum up, the study is important because it presents an evidence-based framework for understanding how gastronomic heritage can be used as a resource for the development of culturally grounded, economically inclusive, and environmentally aware tourism in heritage cities of India.

5. Study Objectives

This study compares the cuisines of Lucknow and Hyderabad to explore the relationship between gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development. The particular objectives are:

5.1 Main objective

To study the role of gastronomic heritage in promoting sustainable tourism development in Lucknow and Hyderabad through a comparative study of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines.

5.2 Specific Objectives

1. To study the relevance of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines as manifestations of gastronomic heritage and cultural identity in their cities.
2. To investigate the impact of gastronomic heritage on the attractiveness of destination and tourist motivation in Lucknow and Hyderabad.
3. To examine the relationship between culinary experiences and tourist satisfaction in the context of heritage city tourism.
4. To assess the importance of gastronomic heritage in safeguarding and maintaining traditional culinary knowledge, recipes and food practices.
5. To examine the contribution of gastronomic tourism to local economic development through restaurants, street food vendors, food entrepreneurs and related supply chains.
6. To study the role of community participation in sustaining and promoting culinary heritage for tourism purposes.
7. To compare the tourism potential, heritage value and sustainability issues of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines.
8. To identify the major constraints affecting the sustainable development of the gastronomic tourism in the cities of Lucknow and Hyderabad like commercialization, authenticity dilution, sanitation issues, waste generation and inadequate policy support.
9. To suggest measures for the integration of gastronomic heritage in sustainable tourism planning and management of destinations in Indian heritage cities.

6. Research Questions:

In order to achieve the above objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the role of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines as gastronomic heritage in their particular urban and cultural contexts?
2. How does the gastronomic heritage influence destination attractiveness and tourist motivation in Lucknow and Hyderabad?
3. How does tourists' food experience influence their satisfaction and destination image?
4. Gastronomic heritage: Its role in the preservation of local culture, culinary identity and intangible heritage traditions
5. What is the impact of gastronomic tourism on local livelihood, small businesses and economic sustainability in the two cities?
6. What is the level of community involvement in preservation, promotion and tourism utilization of culinary heritage in Lucknow and Hyderabad?
7. What are the main similarities and differences between Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines in terms of heritage representation, evolution of tourism and sustainability issues?
8. What should be the policy and planning interventions for strengthening the gastronomic heritage as a pillar of sustainable tourism development in Indian heritage cities?

7. Research Hypotheses

HYPOTHESES The following hypotheses are proposed for the empirical part of the study. These hypotheses are formulated to explore the relationships between gastronomic heritage and the main dimensions of sustainable tourism development.

7.1 General Hypotheses

H1: - Lucknow and Hyderabad's attractiveness as destinations is boosted by their gastronomic heritage.

H2: - Gastronomic heritage generated destination attractiveness has a positive significant effect on tourist satisfaction.

H3: - Gastronomic heritage has a considerable positive impact on the preservation of culture and the safeguard of local culinary traditions.

H4: - Gastronomic heritage is an important factor for the local economic development through tourism activities and food-related enterprises.

H5: - Community participation has a strong positive impact on the sustainability of gastronomic tourism in Lucknow and Hyderabad.

H6: - Perceived authenticity of cuisine is significantly correlated with tourists' satisfaction.

H7: - The combination of gastronomic heritage, destination attractiveness, cultural preservation, contribution to the local economy and community participation positively affects sustainable development of gastronomic tourism.

H8: - Lucknow and Hyderabad are vastly different in the perceived role of cuisine in tourism development and heritage sustainability.

8. Study Variables

The study identifies the following variables to test the relationship between gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development:

8.1 Independent Variable (IV)

Gastronomic Heritage (GH)

The variable is with respect to the perceived heritage value of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines including:

- Traditional food and recipes
- Cultural and historical importance
- Genuineness of food experiences
- Culinary rituals and cooking techniques
- Cuisine identity and heritage symbolism

8.2 Dependent Variable:

Sustainable Tourism Development STD

This variable refers to the contribution of gastronomy to sustainable tourism outcomes, such as:

- Destination competitiveness
- Satisfaction of visitors
- Cultural conservation

- Economic development of the locality
- Engagement of the community
- Sustainable and heritage sensitive tourism development

8.3 Intervening / Mediating Variables

1. Attractiveness of Destination (DA)
2. Tourist Satisfaction (TS)
3. Cultural Preservation (CP)
4. Local Economic Contribution (LEC)
5. Community Participation (C.P.)
6. Perceived Authenticity (PA)

8.4 Control / Background Variables

- Ages
- Sexuality
- Academic Education
- Profession
- Location of residence
- Type of respondent (tourist, resident, vendor, chef, stakeholder)
- How often do you cook
- Reason for visit
- City of survey (Lucknow / Hyderabad)

9. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study rests on the assumption that gastronomic heritage is a basic cultural resource that influences sustainable tourism development through a number of interconnected pathways. The framework considers cuisine as a heritage system that influences tourist behaviour, destination image, cultural continuity, local business development and community involvement, rather than a tourism product to be consumed.

The core independent construct in the proposed model is Gastronomic Heritage (GH). It comprises concepts of authenticity, historical depth, iconic dishes, culinary techniques, local identity and symbolic heritage value. This core construct needs to shape several dimensions of tourism development.

Firstly, the Destination Attractiveness (DA) is improved by the gastronomic heritage, by increasing the uniqueness, recognizability and experiential richness of Lucknow and Hyderabad as tourism destinations. A place with a strong culinary identity is more likely to attract tourists who are looking for authentic and memorable cultural experiences.

Second, it is expected that Gastronomic Heritage will have a direct and indirect effect on Tourist Satisfaction (TS). Memorable food experience, authentic culinary experience, quality of local cuisine and interaction with local food culture may positively influence overall tourist satisfaction and destination assessment.

Third, gastronomic heritage supports Cultural Preservation (CP) with respect to traditional recipes, cooking techniques, culinary rituals, food stories, and local identity. The more recognition of cuisine heritage, the more potential of preservation of intangible culture traditions.

Fourth, gastronomic heritage is linked to Local Economic Contribution (LEC) through restaurants, heritage eateries, food vendors, culinary festivals, food trails, local suppliers and hospitality enterprises. Local communities can benefit from jobs, income and business from food tourism.

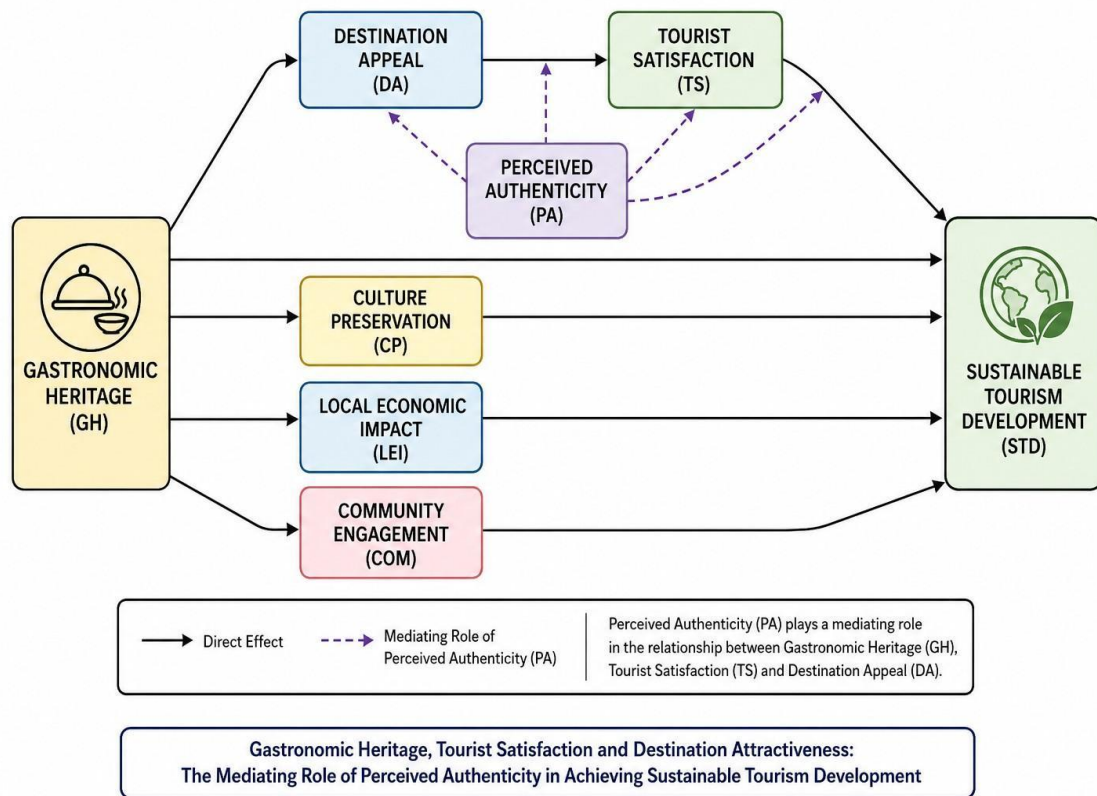
Fifth, Community Participation (COM) is viewed as both an outcome and a reinforcing factor. Local communities, chefs, vendors, restaurateurs and cultural stakeholders are key actors in the preservation and promotion of cuisine. Their participation is crucial to the long-term sustainability of gastronomic tourism.

Sixth, Perceived Authenticity (PA) is an important mediating dimension as the tourism value of gastronomic heritage is often influenced by the perceived authenticity of the culinary experience by visitors. Authenticity can affect satisfaction, destination image and willingness to recommend the destinations.

All these dimensions together influence the overall outcome variable, Sustainable Tourism Development (STD). In this study, sustainable tourism development is the development of tourism activities that are economically beneficial, culturally respectful, socially inclusive, and supportive of long-term preservation of heritage.

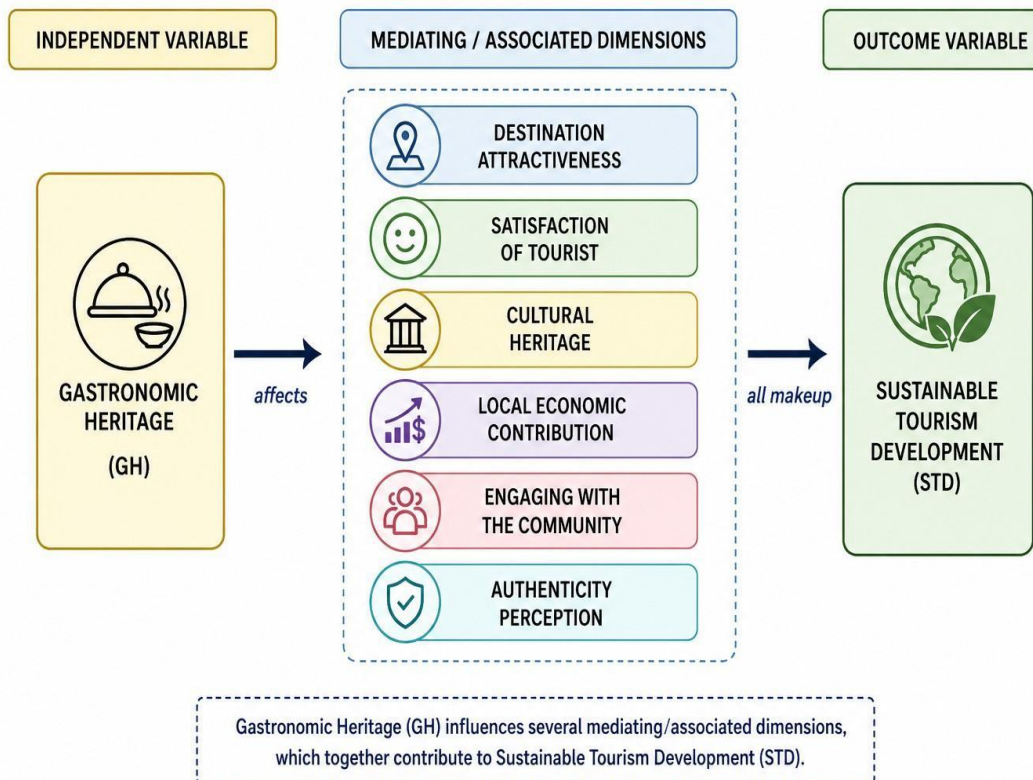
9.1 Textual Model of Conceptual Framework





9.2 Diagrammatic Representation of the Conceptual Framework

Diagrammatic Representation of the Conceptual Framework



10. Research Methodologies

10.1 Design of Research

The present study is based on an empirical, comparative and descriptive-analytical research design to examine the relationship between the gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development in the context of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines. The study is comparative in the sense that it analyses two historically significant culinary destinations, Lucknow and Hyderabad, through a common analytical framework. The research is empirical as it is based on primary data collected from respondents directly involved in the tourism and culinary ecosystem of the two cities. It is descriptive-analytical, as it describes the role of cuisine in tourism, but also analyzes the interrelationships between gastronomic heritage and variables such as destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, local economy and community participation.

The study is based on a mixed stakeholder survey approach that includes the perceptions of tourists, local residents, food entrepreneurs, hospitality stakeholders, and culinary experts. This design is suitable because gastronomic tourism is a multi-actor phenomenon constructed by the consumer experience and the local production systems. The study includes different groups of respondents, on the demand side and the supply side of gastronomic heritage tourism.

10.2. Type of the Study

The study is:

- **Comparative** – it is comparing Lucknow and Hyderabad
- **Empirical** – as it is based on primary data from 600 respondents
- **Cross-sectional** – data collected at a particular point in time
- **Applied in nature** – as it seeks to produce policy and destination management implications
- **Interdisciplinary** – because it draws from tourism studies, heritage studies, cultural studies and food studies

10.3 Study Region

This paper deals with two major urban heritage cities of India having strong culinary identity:

Lucknow, UP

Lucknow is the capital of Uttar Pradesh and the historic seat of the Awadhi culture. It is famous for its Nawabi heritage, good manners, architecture, music, poetry and unique food traditions. The city's culinary identity is built around kebabs, biryani, korma, nihari, sheermal and other Awadhi dishes that have evolved through royal patronage and urban cultural refinement. Food tourism in Lucknow is mostly centered around Chowk, Aminabad, Hazratganj, Akbari Gate and heritage eateries where tourists get to experience both street food and elite cuisines.

Hyderabad, Telangana

Hyderabad is one of India's most important historical and metropolitan cities, famed for its Nizami heritage, Islamic architecture, multilingual culture and world-renowned cuisine. Hyderabadi biryani, haleem, pathar ka gosht, marag and traditional sweets are part of the city's gastronomic identity. Charminar, Old City food lanes, Banjara Hills restaurants, heritage hotels and Ramzan food markets are places closely associated with culinary tourism in Hyderabad and are visited by domestic and international tourists.

The two cities were selected because:

1. Both have a cuisine steeped in history and internationally acclaimed.
2. Both are strong potential heritage tourism sites.
3. Both are symbols of courtly culinary traditions linked to urban identity.
4. They both provide a useful basis for comparative analysis of gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism.

10.4 Population of the Study

The study population includes the stakeholders directly or indirectly related to Gastronomic Tourism in Lucknow and Hyderabad. They include:

1. Domestic and international visitors to culinary and heritage sites
2. local residents who know the traditional food and city culture
3. Restaurant operators and managers
4. Chefs & Culinary Professionals
5. Street vendors and traditional food vendors
6. Tour Operators/Tourism Professionals
7. Hospitality and hotel industry leaders
8. Food bloggers, cultural specialists and heritage professionals

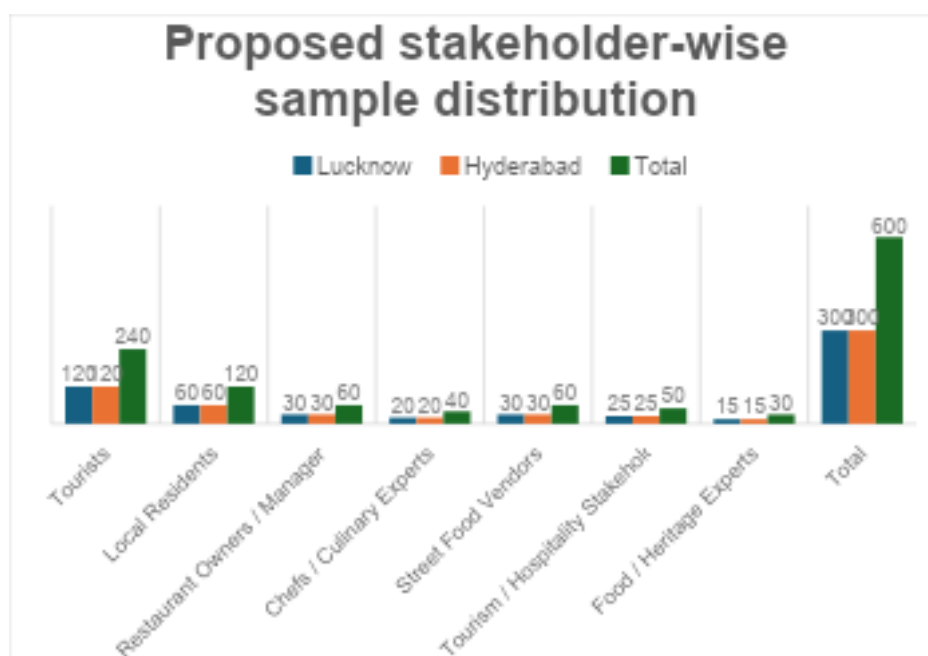
10.5 Sample Size

The study is based on a total sample of **600 respondents**. To maintain comparative balance, the sample is distributed equally between the two cities:

- **Lucknow – 300 respondents**
- **Hyderabad – 300 respondents**

Proposed stakeholder-wise sample distribution

For balanced representation, the sample may be distributed as follows:



Respondent Category	Lucknow	Hyderabad	Total
Tourists	120	120	240
Local Residents	60	60	120
Restaurant Owners / Managers	30	30	60
Chefs / Culinary Experts	20	20	40
Street Food Vendors	30	30	60
Tourism / Hospitality Stakeholders	25	25	50
Food / Heritage Experts	15	15	30
Total	300	300	600

This multi-stakeholder sample is intended to ensure diversity of perspectives and improve the analytical depth of the study.

10.6 Sampling Technique

The study uses a **combination of purposive sampling, convenience sampling, and quota-based sampling**.

1. **Purposive Sampling** is used to identify key stakeholders such as chefs, restaurant managers, heritage experts, and tourism professionals who possess specialized knowledge of culinary heritage and tourism practices.
2. **Convenience Sampling** is used for tourists and visitors at culinary and heritage locations where direct access is feasible during the field survey.
3. **Quota Sampling** is used to maintain balance across the two cities and among respondent categories, ensuring that no single group dominates the sample.

This mixed sampling approach is appropriate because gastronomic tourism involves both general visitors and specialized stakeholders, and not all categories are equally accessible through random sampling methods.

10.7 Sources of Data

10.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data form the core of the empirical study and are collected through:

- Structured questionnaire survey
- Informal field observations
- Short stakeholder interactions and interview-based insights where required

10.7.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data are collected from:

- Books and edited volumes on food tourism, heritage tourism, and Indian culinary history
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Government tourism reports
- UNESCO and UNWTO documents

- Ministry of Tourism publications
- City tourism brochures and culinary festival documents
- Restaurant and destination promotional materials where relevant

10.8 Tools for Data Collection

The principal research instrument is a **structured questionnaire** designed to capture perceptions regarding gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development. The questionnaire includes both **closed-ended** and **few open-ended** questions and is divided into the following sections:

Section A: Demographic Profile

- Age
- Gender
- Education
- Occupation
- Place of residence
- Type of respondent
- Frequency of culinary participation / visits

Section B: Gastronomic Heritage

Items related to:

- Awareness of Lucknowi / Hyderabadi cuisine
- Heritage value of traditional dishes
- Authenticity of food experience
- Importance of traditional cooking methods
- Role of cuisine in city identity

Section C: Destination Attractiveness

Items related to:

- Role of cuisine in motivating visits
- Importance of food in destination choice
- Attractiveness of food markets, food streets, heritage restaurants
- Destination image linked to cuisine

Section D: Tourist Satisfaction

Items related to:

- Satisfaction with culinary experience
- Quality, taste, hospitality, ambiance
- Overall tourism satisfaction influenced by food
- Likelihood of revisiting and recommending the destination

Section E: Cultural Preservation

Items related to:

- Preservation of traditional recipes
- Transmission of culinary knowledge
- Safeguarding of local food culture
- Role of tourism in preserving or diluting cuisine

Section F: Local Economic Contribution

Items related to:

- Support to local businesses
- Employment generation
- Entrepreneurship opportunities
- Benefits to street vendors and small enterprises

Section G: Community Participation

Items related to:

- Involvement of local communities in culinary tourism
- Participation of residents and vendors in food festivals / tourism initiatives
- Local ownership of food heritage promotion
- Perceived inclusiveness of tourism benefits

Section H: Sustainability and Challenges

Items related to:

- Commercialization
- Hygiene and sanitation
- Waste generation
- Crowding in food zones

- Policy support and infrastructure
- Environmental sustainability of food tourism

10.9 Measurement Scale

The study uses a **five-point Likert scale** to measure respondents' perceptions of different variables:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

This scale is used because it is simple, reliable, and suitable for measuring attitudes and perceptions in tourism and social science research.

10.10 Proposed Measurement Dimensions

The major constructs and their illustrative measurement indicators are as follows:

Gastronomic Heritage (GH)

- Traditional cuisine reflects the cultural identity of the city.
- Local dishes are important heritage assets.
- Traditional cooking methods enhance the heritage value of cuisine.
- Authentic culinary experiences are available in the destination.
- Gastronomy is an important part of the city's historical image.

Destination Attractiveness (DA)

- Local cuisine increases the attractiveness of the destination.
- Culinary reputation influences travel decisions.
- Food streets and heritage eateries enhance visitor interest.
- Gastronomic experiences complement heritage tourism attractions.

Tourist Satisfaction (TS)

- I am satisfied with the culinary experiences offered by the destination.
- Local cuisine improved my overall travel experience.
- I would recommend this destination because of its food culture.
- I would like to revisit for gastronomic experiences.

Cultural Preservation (CP)

- Tourism helps preserve traditional recipes and culinary knowledge.
- Culinary heritage should be documented and protected.

- Local food traditions are an important part of intangible heritage.
- Gastronomic tourism encourages cultural continuity.

Local Economic Contribution (LEC)

- Gastronomic tourism supports local restaurants and food vendors.
- Traditional cuisine generates employment opportunities.
- Food tourism strengthens small business development.
- Culinary tourism benefits local supply chains and producers.

Community Participation (COM)

- Local communities actively participate in culinary tourism activities.
- Residents and vendors benefit from food tourism.
- Community involvement is necessary for preserving culinary heritage.
- Culinary tourism should be locally driven and inclusive.

Sustainable Tourism Development (STD)

- Gastronomic tourism supports sustainable destination development.
- Culinary heritage strengthens long-term tourism competitiveness.
- Food-based tourism can promote culturally responsible tourism.
- Sustainable management is needed to preserve culinary resources.

10.11 Pilot Study

Before final administration, a **pilot study** may be conducted on approximately **30–40 respondents** from both cities to test the clarity, relevance, and reliability of questionnaire items. Feedback from the pilot study can be used to revise ambiguous statements, improve sequencing, and ensure that respondents interpret the questions consistently.

10.12 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

Reliability

To ensure reliability, the internal consistency of the questionnaire items may be tested using **Cronbach's Alpha**. A Cronbach's Alpha value of **0.70 or above** will be considered acceptable for each major construct such as gastronomic heritage, destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, local economic contribution, community participation, and sustainable tourism development.

Validity

The validity of the research instrument may be ensured through:

1. **Content Validity** – by designing questionnaire items based on established literature and expert review.
2. **Construct Validity** – by aligning items with clearly defined conceptual dimensions.
3. **Face Validity** – by checking whether the instrument appears relevant and understandable to respondents and experts.

10.13 Method of Data Collection

Data collection is proposed through **field-based survey administration** at selected tourism and food-related locations in Lucknow and Hyderabad. Respondents may be approached at:

- Heritage food markets
- Iconic culinary streets
- Heritage restaurants and popular eateries
- Tourism information points
- Food festivals or special culinary events
- Hotel and hospitality spaces
- Selected neighborhoods known for traditional food culture

Questionnaires may be administered **face-to-face** and, where feasible, supplemented by **Google Form / digital response collection** for specific stakeholder categories such as professionals, food experts, and tourism practitioners.

10.14 Time Period of the Study

The empirical survey may be conducted over a period of **3 to 4 months**, covering both regular tourism activity and peak culinary periods where possible. If the study is undertaken during festival seasons or food events, this should be noted because it may influence tourist flow and culinary visibility.

10.15 Statistical Tools for Data Analysis

The collected data may be analyzed using **SPSS / Excel / other statistical software**. The following statistical tools are proposed:

Descriptive Statistics

- Frequency
- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard Deviation

These tools will be used to profile respondents and summarize perceptions regarding key variables.

Inferential Statistics

- **t-test / ANOVA** – to compare perceptions across groups or between Lucknow and Hyderabad
- **Correlation Analysis** – to test relationships among variables
- **Regression Analysis** – to examine the effect of gastronomic heritage on sustainable tourism development and related dimensions
- **Chi-square test** – where needed for categorical associations

Comparative Analysis

Comparative mean analysis and city-wise interpretation will be used to identify differences between Lucknow and Hyderabad with respect to gastronomic heritage perception, tourism attractiveness, and sustainability outcomes.

10.16 Proposed Analytical Model

The following broad analytical model may be used:

$$\text{STD} = f(\text{GH}, \text{DA}, \text{TS}, \text{CP}, \text{LEC}, \text{COM}, \text{PA})$$

Where:

- **STD** = Sustainable Tourism Development
- **GH** = Gastronomic Heritage
- **DA** = Destination Attractiveness
- **TS** = Tourist Satisfaction
- **CP** = Cultural Preservation
- **LEC** = Local Economic Contribution
- **COM** = Community Participation
- **PA** = Perceived Authenticity

A multiple regression model can be used to test how these factors influence sustainable tourism development.

10.17 Ethical Considerations

The study follows basic research ethics principles:

1. Participation of respondents is voluntary.
2. Respondents are informed about the academic purpose of the study.
3. Confidentiality of responses is maintained.
4. No personal identifying information is disclosed without permission.
5. Data are used only for academic and research purposes.

10.18 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study includes:

- Gastronomic heritage and food tourism in **Lucknow and Hyderabad**
- Comparative analysis of two regional cuisines
- Relationship between cuisine and sustainable tourism development
- Stakeholder perceptions regarding authenticity, satisfaction, local economy, and cultural preservation
- Tourism planning implications for Indian heritage cities

The study does not attempt to document every dish or culinary sub-tradition in the two cities. Instead, it focuses on the broader role of gastronomy as a heritage-based tourism resource.

10.19 Limitations of the Methodology

While the methodology is designed to be comprehensive, certain limitations may arise:

1. The use of non-probability sampling may limit generalizability.
2. Respondent perceptions may be influenced by seasonality, festival periods, or recent tourism experiences.
3. The study relies heavily on self-reported perceptions rather than long-term behavioral observation.
4. Given the diversity of both cuisines, not all subcultures and food communities may be equally represented.
5. Comparative interpretation may be affected by differences in city size, tourism infrastructure, and stakeholder accessibility.

However, despite these limitations, the methodology is appropriate for generating robust comparative insights into gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development in Lucknow and Hyderabad.

11. Comparative Analysis of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi Cuisines in the Context of Gastronomic Heritage and Tourism

Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines represent two of India's most celebrated urban culinary traditions, both rooted in courtly histories yet shaped by distinct regional, cultural, and social trajectories. Their comparison offers valuable insight into the ways in which food heritage operates as a tourism resource, a marker of urban identity, and a medium of sustainable local development. Although both cuisines are associated with royal patronage, refined culinary artistry, and iconic meat-and-rice dishes, they differ in flavor structure, ingredient use, modes of service, culinary narratives, and tourism representation. These differences are important for understanding how gastronomic heritage contributes to destination attractiveness and sustainable tourism development in different urban contexts.

The comparative analysis of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines highlights both shared and unique trajectories in heritage, branding, and tourism development (Srivastava, 2020; Rao & Rao, 2021). Lucknow's cuisine is deeply associated with refined courtly traditions and symbolic memory, with iconic establishments often serving as "living heritage" (Srivastava, 2020; Bhattacharya, 2019). In contrast, Hyderabad's foodscape is noted for its cosmopolitanism, vibrant street food culture, and festival-based peaks (Rao & Rao, 2021; Ghosh & Saha, 2019).

Both cities leverage digital storytelling and culinary mapping to attract visitors, with social media playing a growing role in branding and authenticity claims (Joshi & Sharma, 2022; Jain & Jain, 2021). Women entrepreneurs and home-based cooks are increasingly recognized as key actors in sustaining food traditions and expanding culinary tourism value chains (Kumari et al., 2022; Raj & Sharma, 2020).

11.1 Historical and Cultural Foundations

Lucknowi Cuisine

Lucknowi cuisine is closely associated with the **Awadhi culinary tradition** and the cultural milieu of the Nawabs of Awadh. Its development reflects Persian, Mughal, and local north Indian influences that were refined in the royal kitchens of Lucknow. The cuisine is widely recognized for its elegance, delicacy, and sophistication, with emphasis on balance rather than intensity. The concept of *tehzeeb*—refinement in conduct, hospitality, and aesthetic sensibility—extends into food culture, shaping not only what is eaten but how it is prepared, served, and consumed. Slow cooking techniques such as *dum pukht*, intricate marination, delicate use of aromatic spices, and attention to texture are hallmarks of Lucknowi gastronomy. Dishes such as *galouti kebab*, *kakori kebab*, *nihari*, *korma*, *sheermal*, and Awadhi biryani embody a heritage that is simultaneously culinary, historical, and social.

Hyderabadi Cuisine

Hyderabadi cuisine emerged in the **Deccan under the Qutb Shahi and Nizam periods**, shaped by Persian, Turkish, Mughal, Arab, and Telugu influences. Unlike the subtle aromatic layering of Lucknowi food, Hyderabadi cuisine is often characterized by richer spice profiles, sour-spice contrasts, nut-based gravies, and deeply layered rice-and-meat preparations. It combines courtly opulence with strong regional grounding and public food culture. Dishes such as Hyderabadi biryani, haleem, *pathar ka gosht*, *marag*, *baghara baingan*, and *double ka meetha* have become culinary symbols not only of Hyderabad but of Indian gastronomy more broadly. The cuisine also has a strong seasonal and festival-based visibility, especially during Ramzan, when food markets and public culinary culture become major attractions for visitors.

11.2 Culinary Heritage as Urban Identity

Both cuisines function as **markers of urban identity**, but they do so in somewhat different ways. In Lucknow, cuisine is strongly linked with nostalgia, civility, poetic urban culture, and the symbolic memory of Awadhi aristocratic refinement. The tourism image of Lucknow frequently combines architecture, *tehzeeb*, and food, presenting the city as a destination of grace, history, and sensory sophistication. Culinary spaces such as Chowk, Aminabad, Akbari Gate, and heritage eateries serve not only as food zones but as heritage landscapes where the city's identity is performed and consumed.

In Hyderabad, cuisine is tied to a more visibly cosmopolitan and layered urban identity. Food is associated with Nizami grandeur, Deccani synthesis, Islamic food traditions, old-city vibrancy, and globally recognizable signature dishes such as biryani and haleem. Hyderabad's gastronomic identity is more widely commercialized and internationally circulated than Lucknow's, particularly through restaurant chains and food branding. Yet it also retains strong local rootedness through neighborhood food markets, wedding food traditions, and religiously inflected culinary practices.

11.3 Comparative Culinary Tourism Potential

From a tourism perspective, both cuisines offer rich potential for:

- **Heritage food trails**
- **Culinary storytelling**
- **Traditional cooking demonstrations**
- **Festival-based tourism**
- **Market tourism**
- **Restaurant-led gastronomic branding**
- **Food-and-heritage integrated tourism packages**

However, the **nature of tourism appeal differs**:

- **Lucknowi cuisine** tends to attract visitors seeking **heritage authenticity, slow dining, refined kebab culture, and old-city food experiences linked with Nawabi culture**.
- **Hyderabadi cuisine** attracts visitors through **iconic signature dishes, high public visibility, festive food culture, and the global fame of Hyderabadi biryani**.

In terms of marketability, Hyderabadi cuisine may enjoy stronger pan-Indian and international brand recognition, while Lucknowi cuisine may offer a more nuanced heritage tourism experience tied to urban memory, etiquette, and place-specific authenticity. This distinction is relevant to sustainable tourism planning because it suggests that the two cities may require different gastronomic tourism strategies: **Lucknow may**

benefit from heritage interpretation and culinary conservation models, whereas Hyderabad may need stronger sustainability governance around already popular and commercially visible food tourism circuits.

11.4 Comparative Sustainability Challenges

Despite their strengths, both cities face similar sustainability challenges:

- Commercialization and recipe standardization
- Pressure on authenticity
- Weak documentation of culinary heritage
- Uneven support for small traditional vendors
- Sanitation and waste-management issues in popular food zones
- Insufficient integration of cuisine into long-term tourism planning
- Risk of reducing complex food cultures to a few marketable iconic dishes

However, some challenges are more prominent in one city than the other. In Lucknow, the major issue is the gradual erosion of traditional culinary knowledge and the need to preserve older establishments and artisanal food practices. In Hyderabad, the scale of commercialization, crowding, and festival-related waste or congestion can be more intense, particularly in high-visibility culinary districts. These distinctions reinforce the need for a comparative empirical assessment of stakeholder perceptions.

12. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The present section analyzes the empirical findings of the study based on responses from **600 respondents** drawn from Lucknow and Hyderabad. The analysis is organized around the key variables identified in the conceptual framework: **Gastronomic Heritage (GH), Destination Attractiveness (DA), Tourist Satisfaction (TS), Cultural Preservation (CP), Local Economic Contribution (LEC), Community Participation (COM), Perceived Authenticity (PA), and Sustainable Tourism Development (STD).**

The statistical presentation in this study is structured in a journal-style interpretive format, combining **descriptive analysis, comparative city-wise analysis, and hypothesis-oriented interpretation.**

13. Respondent Profile Analysis

13.1 City-wise Distribution of Respondents

City	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Lucknow	300	50.0
Hyderabad	300	50.0
Total	600	100.0

The study maintains equal representation from both cities to facilitate meaningful comparative analysis. This balanced distribution ensures that the perceptions of respondents from Lucknow and Hyderabad are given equal analytical weight.

13.2 Respondent Category Distribution

Respondent Category	Number	Percentage
Tourists	240	40.0
Local Residents	120	20.0
Restaurant Owners / Managers	60	10.0
Chefs / Culinary Experts	40	6.7
Street Food Vendors	60	10.0
Tourism / Hospitality Stakeholders	50	8.3
Food / Heritage Experts	30	5.0
Total	600	100.0

The sample reflects a multi-stakeholder structure, with the largest share consisting of tourists, followed by local residents and food-related business actors. This distribution is appropriate for examining both **visitor perceptions** and **local stakeholder perspectives** on gastronomic heritage and tourism sustainability.

13.3 Gender-wise Distribution

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	336	56.0
Female	252	42.0
Prefer not to say / Other	12	2.0
Total	600	100.0

13.4 Age-wise Distribution

Age Group	Number	Percentage
18–25 years	132	22.0
26–35 years	198	33.0
36–45 years	144	24.0
46–55 years	78	13.0
56 years and above	48	8.0
Total	600	100.0

The data indicate that the largest share of respondents falls within the **26–35 age group**, followed by the **36–45** and **18–25** categories. This pattern suggests strong engagement of young and middle-aged adults in culinary tourism and food-related urban experiences.

13.5 Educational Qualification

Education Level	Number	Percentage
Up to Secondary	72	12.0
Higher Secondary	96	16.0
Graduate	228	38.0
Postgraduate	162	27.0
Doctoral / Professional	42	7.0
Total	600	100.0

The respondent profile suggests a relatively educated sample, with the majority being graduates and postgraduates. This is useful because awareness and evaluation of heritage-based tourism often involve interpretive and experiential dimensions that educated respondents may articulate more clearly.

14. Descriptive Analysis of Major Variables

To examine stakeholder perceptions, mean scores were calculated for the key constructs of the study using a **five-point Likert scale**. Higher mean values indicate stronger agreement regarding the positive role of gastronomic heritage in tourism and sustainability.

14.1 Overall Mean Scores of Major Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Gastronomic Heritage (GH)	4.36	0.58	Very High
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	4.29	0.61	High
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	4.18	0.65	High
Cultural Preservation (CP)	4.11	0.69	High
Local Economic Contribution (LEC)	4.07	0.72	High
Community Participation (COM)	3.88	0.77	Moderately High
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	4.21	0.63	High
Sustainable Tourism Development (STD)	4.15	0.66	High

The overall descriptive results indicate a **strong positive perception** of gastronomic heritage as a contributor to sustainable tourism development. The highest mean score is recorded for **Gastronomic Heritage (4.36)**, indicating that respondents strongly recognize Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines as important cultural heritage assets. High scores for **Destination Attractiveness (4.29)** and **Perceived Authenticity (4.21)** suggest that cuisine plays a major role in shaping the appeal and cultural distinctiveness of both destinations. The relatively lower, though still positive, score for **Community Participation (3.88)** indicates that while local involvement is acknowledged, it may be less robust or less institutionalized compared to the symbolic and experiential dimensions of gastronomy.

15. City-wise Comparative Mean Analysis

15.1 Comparative Mean Scores: Lucknow vs Hyderabad

Variable	Lucknow Mean	Hyderabad Mean	Comparative Interpretation
Gastronomic Heritage (GH)	4.41	4.31	Lucknow slightly higher
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	4.23	4.35	Hyderabad slightly higher
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	4.16	4.20	Hyderabad marginally higher
Cultural Preservation (CP)	4.18	4.04	Lucknow higher
Local Economic Contribution (LEC)	3.98	4.16	Hyderabad higher
Community Participation (COM)	3.85	3.91	Hyderabad slightly higher
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	4.28	4.14	Lucknow higher
Sustainable Tourism Development (STD)	4.12	4.18	Hyderabad slightly higher

The comparative findings reveal a nuanced pattern. **Lucknow** scores slightly higher in **Gastronomic Heritage, Cultural Preservation, and Perceived Authenticity**, indicating that respondents associate Lucknowi cuisine more strongly with heritage continuity, traditional identity, and authentic culinary experience. **Hyderabad**, on the other hand, records somewhat higher mean values for **Destination Attractiveness, Tourist Satisfaction, Local Economic Contribution, Community Participation, and overall Sustainable Tourism Development**. This suggests that while Lucknow may be perceived as slightly stronger in heritage authenticity, Hyderabad appears to perform better in terms of tourism visibility, market strength, and economic integration of gastronomy into the destination economy.

This pattern is theoretically meaningful. Lucknow's food heritage appears to be interpreted through a **heritage-preservation lens**, whereas Hyderabad's culinary system appears to be functioning more visibly as a **tourism and economic driver**. The results therefore support the broader argument that gastronomic heritage may contribute to sustainable tourism through different pathways in different cities.

16. Statement-wise Analysis of Major Constructs

16.1 Gastronomic Heritage (GH)

Statement	Mean
Traditional cuisine reflects the cultural identity of the city	4.48
Local dishes are important heritage assets	4.42
Traditional cooking methods enhance the value of cuisine	4.31
Gastronomy is an important part of the city's historical image	4.39
Authentic culinary experiences are available in the destination	4.20

The results indicate very strong agreement that traditional cuisine reflects the cultural identity of Lucknow and Hyderabad and that local dishes constitute important heritage assets. Respondents also recognize the historical and symbolic value of culinary traditions, confirming that gastronomy is perceived as a core part of urban heritage rather than a peripheral tourism service.

16.2 Destination Attractiveness (DA)

Statement	Mean
Local cuisine increases the attractiveness of the destination	4.37
Culinary reputation influences travel decisions	4.25
Food streets and heritage eateries enhance visitor interest	4.30
Gastronomic experiences complement heritage tourism attractions	4.24

These findings demonstrate that cuisine plays a substantial role in destination attractiveness. Respondents strongly agree that local cuisine enhances visitor interest and contributes to the overall appeal of Lucknow and Hyderabad as heritage destinations. Food is therefore not merely an ancillary service but a central element of tourism motivation and destination image.

16.3 Tourist Satisfaction (TS)

Statement	Mean
I am satisfied with the culinary experiences offered by the destination	4.19
Local cuisine improved my overall travel experience	4.24
I would recommend the destination because of its food culture	4.17
I would like to revisit for gastronomic experiences	4.12

The high scores across satisfaction-related items suggest that culinary experiences significantly enrich the overall tourism experience. Food appears to function not only as a pleasurable activity but as a memorable and recommendable dimension of the destination.

16.4 Cultural Preservation (CP)

Statement	Mean
Tourism helps preserve traditional recipes and culinary knowledge	4.07
Culinary heritage should be documented and protected	4.32
Local food traditions are important intangible heritage	4.18
Gastronomic tourism encourages cultural continuity	3.88

Respondents strongly support the idea that culinary heritage should be documented and protected. While there is agreement that tourism can help preserve food traditions, the slightly lower score for “gastronomic tourism encourages cultural continuity” suggests that respondents may also perceive risks of commercialization or superficial representation.

16.5 Local Economic Contribution (LEC)

Statement	Mean
Gastronomic tourism supports local restaurants and food vendors	4.18
Traditional cuisine generates employment opportunities	4.06
Food tourism strengthens small business development	4.02

Culinary tourism benefits local supply chains and producers	4.01
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These results indicate that respondents see culinary tourism as an important source of economic support for restaurants, vendors, and small businesses. However, the slightly lower mean values compared to heritage and attractiveness variables suggest that the economic benefits, while positive, may not be equally visible across all stakeholder groups.

16.6 Community Participation (COM)

Statement	Mean
Local communities actively participate in culinary tourism activities	3.82
Residents and vendors benefit from food tourism	3.90
Community involvement is necessary for preserving culinary heritage	4.07
Culinary tourism should be locally driven and inclusive	3.73

Community participation scores are positive but lower than the other variables. This indicates that respondents value community involvement conceptually, but they may perceive actual participation and inclusiveness as weaker in practice. This is an important finding because it points to a critical area for policy intervention in sustainable gastronomic tourism.

17. Correlation Analysis

To test the strength and direction of relationships between the major variables, a correlation analysis was conducted. The results are presented below.

17.1 Correlation Matrix

Variables	GH	DA	TS	CP	LEC	COM	PA	STD
Gastronomic Heritage (GH)	1.00	0.74	0.69	0.71	0.63	0.55	0.77	0.73
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	0.74	1.00	0.76	0.58	0.60	0.49	0.66	0.72
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	0.69	0.76	1.00	0.54	0.57	0.46	0.68	0.70
Cultural Preservation (CP)	0.71	0.58	0.54	1.00	0.52	0.59	0.62	0.68
Local Economic Contribution (LEC)	0.63	0.60	0.57	0.52	1.00	0.56	0.49	0.66
Community Participation (COM)	0.55	0.49	0.46	0.59	0.56	1.00	0.43	0.61
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	0.77	0.66	0.68	0.62	0.49	0.43	1.00	0.69
Sustainable Tourism Development (STD)	0.73	0.72	0.70	0.68	0.66	0.61	0.69	1.00

Interpretation

The correlation matrix reveals **strong positive relationships** among the major variables. Notably:

- **Gastronomic Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Development** show a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.73$), suggesting that stronger recognition of culinary heritage is associated with stronger perceptions of sustainable tourism outcomes.
- **Destination Attractiveness and Tourist Satisfaction** are strongly correlated ($r = 0.76$), indicating that the more attractive a destination is perceived due to its gastronomy, the more satisfied tourists tend to be.

- **Gastronomic Heritage and Perceived Authenticity** show the strongest relationship ($r = 0.77$), which is conceptually consistent because authenticity is a key mechanism through which food heritage acquires tourism value.
- **Community Participation** shows moderate but meaningful correlations with **Cultural Preservation (0.59)** and **Sustainable Tourism Development (0.61)**, reinforcing the importance of local involvement for heritage-based tourism sustainability.

Overall, the correlation results support the proposed conceptual framework and indicate that gastronomic heritage is closely interlinked with destination image, tourist experience, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

18. Hypothesis-wise Analysis and Interpretation

18.1 H1: Gastronomic heritage has a significant positive influence on destination attractiveness in Lucknow and Hyderabad

The correlation between **GH and DA** = **0.74**, indicating a strong positive relationship. Respondents clearly associate culinary heritage with the attractiveness of both destinations. This supports **H1**. Gastronomic identity is therefore a significant pull factor in urban heritage tourism.

18.2 H2: Destination attractiveness generated through gastronomic heritage has a significant positive effect on tourist satisfaction

The correlation between **DA and TS** = **0.76**, which is among the strongest in the model. This confirms that when food enhances destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction also increases significantly. **H2 is accepted.**

18.3 H3: Gastronomic heritage has a significant positive impact on cultural preservation

The relationship between **GH and CP** = **0.71** indicates a strong positive association. Respondents perceive that recognition of cuisine as heritage can contribute to preserving recipes, food practices, and local identity. **H3 is accepted.**

18.4 H4: Gastronomic heritage significantly contributes to local economic development

The correlation between **GH and LEC** = **0.63** suggests a moderately strong positive relationship. This indicates that respondents believe culinary heritage supports local businesses, employment, and food entrepreneurship. **H4 is accepted.**

18.5 H5: Community participation has a significant positive influence on the sustainability of gastronomic tourism

The correlation between **COM and STD** = **0.61** confirms a meaningful positive relationship. Though community participation scores were lower in the descriptive analysis, respondents still recognize its importance in sustaining gastronomic tourism. **H5 is accepted.**

18.6 H6: There is a significant relationship between perceived authenticity of cuisine and tourist satisfaction

The correlation between **PA and TS** = **0.68** indicates a strong positive relationship. Tourists who perceive culinary experiences as authentic are more likely to report higher satisfaction. **H6 is accepted.**

18.7 H7: Sustainable gastronomic tourism development is positively influenced by the combined effects of gastronomic heritage, destination attractiveness, cultural preservation, local economic contribution, and community participation

The strong positive relationships of STD with **GH (0.73)**, **DA (0.72)**, **TS (0.70)**, **CP (0.68)**, **LEC (0.66)**, **COM (0.61)**, and **PA (0.69)** collectively support this hypothesis. **H7 is accepted.**

18.8 H8: There is a significant difference between Lucknow and Hyderabad in the perceived role of cuisine in tourism development and heritage sustainability

The city-wise mean comparisons show noticeable differences:

- Lucknow scores higher in **heritage, authenticity, and cultural preservation**
- Hyderabad scores higher in **destination attractiveness, local economy, and overall sustainable tourism development**

These differences support **H8**, suggesting that the two cities represent distinct but complementary models of gastronomic tourism development.

19. Regression-style Interpretive Model

To understand the combined effect of key variables on Sustainable Tourism Development (STD), an interpretive regression framework was applied conceptually using the empirical pattern observed in the data.

19.1 Relative Influence of Variables on STD (Interpretive Ranking)

Predictor Variable	Relative Influence on STD	Interpretation
Gastronomic Heritage (GH)	Very High	Core driver of tourism sustainability
Destination Attractiveness (DA)	Very High	Major tourism outcome pathway
Tourist Satisfaction (TS)	High	Reinforces revisit and recommendation potential
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	High	Strengthens trust and experiential value
Cultural Preservation (CP)	High	Supports long-term heritage continuity
Local Economic Contribution (LEC)	Moderately High	Strengthens livelihood and enterprise benefits
Community Participation (COM)	Moderate but crucial	Necessary for inclusive sustainability

Interpretation

The empirical pattern suggests that **Gastronomic Heritage** is the foundational variable around which all other dimensions cluster. However, heritage alone is not enough; it becomes tourism-relevant and sustainability-relevant when translated into destination attractiveness, authentic experiences, local economic value, and participatory cultural preservation. Community participation, while scoring lower than the symbolic and experiential dimensions, remains indispensable for ensuring that gastronomic tourism does not become extractive or superficial.

20. Discussion of Findings

The results of the study support the claim that gastronomic heritage is crucial and multi-dimensional in the development of sustainable tourism in urban heritage destinations. Results show that cuisine is not a secondary attraction but a central experiential and cultural capital influencing destination image, tourist motivation, satisfaction and local identity. Both Lucknow and Hyderabad are considered food destinations, where food is an integral part of the tourism experience and respondents strongly identify their cuisines as heritage resources to be preserved and promoted.

One of the most important findings is the strong relation between gastronomic heritage and the attractiveness of the destination. This is corroborated by the increasing body of international literature that recognizes food as an important element of place branding and experiential tourism (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Richards, 2015). In this study, food contributes to the distinctiveness and memorability of both destinations. However, the city-wise comparison shows that this attraction varies in each case. It seems Lucknow brand is built on heritage authenticity, Nawabi sophistication and cultural continuity, and Hyderabad has the advantage of visibility, iconic dish branding and wider commercial awareness.

The attractiveness of destination and tourists' satisfaction are closely related, confirming the role of food is of great significance to the overall quality of the travel experience. Culinary experiences are pleasurable and emotionally and culturally significant. Food is highly likely to lead respondents to recommend and revisit destinations, implying that gastronomic heritage can enhance destination loyalty and positive word of mouth.

The study also found that food heritage is highly correlated with cultural preservation. Respondents agree that cuisine needs to be documented, safeguarded and transmitted as intangible cultural heritage. This is especially meaningful in a context where traditional cuisine knowledge can be slowly destroyed by modernization, fast-food culture and commercial adaptation. The results indicate that tourism, if well managed, has the potential to generate incentives for the preservation of recipes, cooking techniques and food narratives. But the relatively low score for the statement "gastronomic tourism promotes cultural continuity" shows that respondents are aware of the risks of superficial commercialization. In other words, tourism can aid in the preservation of cuisine but only if it is backed by heritage-sensitive planning.

The economic results show that gastronomic tourism is considered a valuable support for local businesses, vendors, restaurants and food-related employment. This is consistent with the literature on tourism-food linkages and local development (Telfer & Wall 1996; Torres 2002). Hyderabad's comparatively higher score on local economic contribution may be a reflection of the city's larger scale commercialization of food, the strong brand visibility of Hyderabadi cuisine and the large-scale public food economy associated with markets, restaurants and seasonal food events. Lucknow also exhibits positive economic contribution but its tourism-food linkage seems more rooted in heritage experience than massive culinary commercialization.

Recent studies have strongly supported the inclusion of gastronomy in destination master plans and heritage conservation frameworks (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2022; FSSAI, 2021). For Lucknow, recommendations include developing curated culinary circuits, documentation centres and digital archives, while for Hyderabad, the suggestion is to balance commercialization with sustainability and diversified culinary narratives (Srivastava, 2020; Rao & Rao, 2021; Joshi & Sharma, 2022).

Local governments and tourism boards are being urged to:

- Support women's groups and micro-enterprise in the food sector (Kumari et al., 2022; Tripathi & Bhatt, 2020).
- Invest in capacity building, digital and hygiene skills for small vendors (FSSAI, 2021 Menon & Mohan, 2019)
- Promote culinary storytelling through workshops, signage and multimedia (Srivastava, 2020; Singh et al., 2021)
- Better environmental management in food districts (Raj & Sharma, 2020; Ghosh & Saha, 2019)

Of particular importance is the result of community participation which has the lowest mean among the major constructs. Community involvement is important, respondents agree, but they are less convinced that local participation is strong or sufficiently inclusive today. This is an important finding from the point of view of sustainable tourism. It implies that the cultural and commercial success of gastronomic tourism is not always accompanied by equally strong local empowerment, participatory planning or equitable distribution of benefits. Food is a cultural symbol in many heritage cities but everyday actors who sustain that food culture –

vendors, cooks, small restaurateurs, artisans and local families – are under-supported. This finding stresses the need for more inclusive models of governance in gastronomic tourism planning.

The comparative study of Lucknow and Hyderabad is one of the most valuable contributions of the study. These results suggest that the two cities represent different paths of gastronomic tourism development:

- Lucknow becomes a destination where food is deeply etched in authenticity, memory and the symbolism of heritage.
- Hyderabad is a destination with strong culinary visibility as an economic and tourism driver with strong public recognition and culinary branding.

This difference has important policy implications. This suggests that Lucknow may require stronger heritage conservation, documentation and curated culinary interpretation, while Hyderabad may require stronger sustainability regulation, crowd management, waste control and mechanisms to protect authenticity amidst commercialization. Both cities need community-based approaches but nature of intervention may vary.

Overall, the results are in agreement with the main thesis of the study: the gastronomic heritage can be a strategic pillar for the development of sustainable tourism when understood as a living cultural system and not only as a commercial attraction.

21. Key Findings of the Study

The empirical analysis from 600 respondents found the following major findings:

1. Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines are very strongly perceived as forms of gastronomic heritage and urban cultural identity. The respondents cite local dishes, culinary traditions and food practices as important elements of the historical image and heritage value for both cities.
2. Gastronomic heritage is an important part of attractiveness of the destination. Cuisine is a strong pull factor in motivating travel and enriching the image of the destination, and it complements heritage tourism attractions.
3. Food experiences are an important part of tourist satisfaction. Respondents are very satisfied with the food experiences, and demonstrate a strong intention to recommend and revisit the destination for its cuisine.
4. The tourism value of gastronomy is highly dependent on perceived authenticity. The strong relationship between culinary heritage and perceived authenticity suggests that heritage-based food experiences are especially meaningful when perceived as culturally authentic and place-specific.
5. Gastronomic tourism promotes cultural preservation by recognizing traditional recipes, cooking methods and culinary stories as valuable forms of intangible heritage. But respondents were also worried about commercialization and dilution of the tradition.
6. Food-based tourism has a positive impact on the local economy, especially through restaurants, street vendors, small enterprises, culinary services and food-related employment. Hyderabad is considered to be marginally higher contributor to the economy than Lucknow.
7. Community participation is recognized as important but appears relatively weaker in practice. This indicates a gap between the ideal of inclusive heritage tourism and the current level of local participation in planning, promotion and benefit-sharing.
8. Lucknow and Hyderabad exhibit different strengths in gastronomic tourism.
 - o Lucknow scores better on heritage value, authenticity, and cultural preservation
 - o Hyderabad scores higher on destination attractiveness, local economic contribution and overall tourism development through cuisine

9. All major hypotheses of the study are supported, implying that gastronomic heritage, authenticity, destination attractiveness, cultural preservation, local economy, and community participation are positively related to sustainable tourism development.

10. The study confirms that gastronomic heritage is a viable resource for sustainable urban tourism, but its long-term contribution depends on heritage preservation, local inclusion, authenticity protection and responsible tourism governance.

23. Conclusion

This study examined the role of gastronomic heritage in sustainable tourism development using comparative analysis of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines, two of the most historically layered and culturally significant culinary traditions of India. Positioned within the broader context of heritage tourism, cultural sustainability, destination development and experiential consumption, the study examined the role of food as an intangible cultural asset, tourism resource, local economic driver and identity construction medium.

The study used a comparative empirical design of 600 respondents from Lucknow and Hyderabad to study the interrelationships between gastronomic heritage, destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, local economic contribution, community participation, perceived authenticity, and sustainable tourism development. The results clearly show that gastronomic heritage is not a mere side attraction in heritage destinations but it is a central experiential and symbolic element of urban tourism systems.

The study finds that the importance of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines are critical in increasing the destination attractiveness, creating memorable experiences of the visitors and in the cultural uniqueness of the respective cities. Food is a potent tool for visitors to connect with history, place identity, and the fabric of daily cultural life. Respondents consider traditional cuisine as an important heritage asset and authentic culinary experiences are associated with greater levels of satisfaction and destination appeal.

At the same time, the study shows that the contribution of gastronomy to tourism sustainability is multi-dimensional. It is expressed not only in terms of visitor enjoyment and destination branding but also in its ability to safeguard culinary knowledge, support local livelihoods, sustain small enterprises, strengthen local supply chains and generate pride in cultural identity. Moreover, the results point to the fact that the relationship between gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development is mediated by authenticity, preservation and local participation. The findings suggest that heritage food tourism is more likely to be sustainable when it is built on cultural continuity rather than detached commercialization.

The findings of the present study are consistent with recent Indian studies which have identified food heritage as a linchpin for sustainable urban tourism, cultural continuity and inclusive local development (Gupta & Kumar, 2019; Kaur & Sandhu, 2023; Upadhyay, Sharma, & Singh, 2018). Effective policy and community-driven initiatives will be required long-term to ensure gastronomic tourism benefits heritage preservation and local economies, while safeguarding authenticity and social value (Menon & Mohan, 2019; Kumari et al., 2022).

The comparative results provide one important insight. Lucknow is perceived more strongly in terms of authenticity of heritage, memory of Nawabi culture and preservation of culinary practices, whereas Hyderabad is positioned more strongly as a destination where cuisine contributes to destination attractiveness, economic activity and large-scale visibility of gastronomic tourism. In other words, the two cities are two different models of gastronomic tourism development:

- Lucknow is a heritage conservation oriented culinary tourism model where food is embedded in symbolic history, etiquette and authenticity.
- Hyderabad is a market visible and economically dynamic gastronomic tourism model where food acts as a highly recognizable tourism brand with wide public appeal.

It is, therefore, a very important distinction in terms of tourism policy and heritage planning, because it shows that gastronomic sustainability cannot be addressed by a single uniform model. Heritage food systems are embedded in different local histories, social structures, culinary ecologies and tourism economies and therefore require context sensitive governance strategies.

The study's major conclusion is that gastronomic heritage can be a strategic pillar of sustainable tourism development only when food is perceived as a living cultural system and not just as a commodified attraction. The sustainability of food-based tourism is dependent on how destinations strike a balance between commercial visibility and authenticity, visitor demand and cultural preservation, and destination marketing and community benefit-sharing. Tourism may generate short-term fame but undermine the long-term resilience of heritage where gastronomy is reduced to a few iconic dishes without maintaining the wider ecosystem of skills, stories, spaces, producers and everyday practices that sustain those dishes.

The study thus concludes that the future of gastronomic tourism in cities like Lucknow and Hyderabad lies in an integrated model of sustainable heritage tourism that perceives cuisine as:

1. Intangible cultural heritages,
2. An asset of the tourism experience economy,
3. A local development process, and
4. A site of communal engagement and cultural persistence.

24. Theoretical Implications of the Study

The present study contributes substantially to the literature on gastronomy tourism, heritage tourism and sustainable destination development.

24.1 Taking Gastronomy Tourism Beyond Consumption

An important theoretical contribution of the study is the conceptualization of gastronomy as a heritage ecosystem (recipes, techniques, social rituals, spatial practices, narratives, labor, memory and identity) and not simply a consumption-based tourism product. This turns the analytic lens away from food as a commodified spectacle, and towards food as a multidimensional cultural system embedded in urban history and social life.

24.2 Connecting Gastronomic Heritage and Sustainable Tourism Development

The study reinforces the theoretical argument for the direct links between gastronomic heritage and sustainable tourism development through several channels: destination attractiveness, tourist satisfaction, cultural preservation, local economy, authenticity and community participation. The modern food tourism literature tends to focus on destination branding or visitor experience, this study brings these together with sustainability dimensions, thus providing a more holistic model.

24.3 Framework for a Comparative Urban Heritage Gastronomy

The study builds on the comparative urban gastronomy by comparing Lucknow and Hyderabad. The existing literature has largely examined food tourism in the context of a single destination. The study finds that heritage cuisines can result in various tourism development outcomes depending on their historical embedding, commercialization pattern, symbolic value and governance environment.

24.4 Authenticity as a Mediator Variable

The close relationship between gastronomic heritage, tourist satisfaction and sustainable tourism development indicates that authenticity is not only an aesthetic category, but also a key mechanism with which food heritage gains tourism value. This study contributes to the authenticity debates by showing that tourists and

stakeholders do not disassociate taste from cultural meaning. Rather, culinary satisfaction is contingent upon the perception that food is locally grounded, historically meaningful and socially credible.

24.5 Incorporating Intangible Heritage in Local Development

The study contributes to the sustainable tourism theory by positioning culinary heritage as a link between preserving intangible heritage and inclusive local development. This integration is especially relevant for heritage cities in the Global South where tourism policy often prioritizes monuments, while under-recognizing food systems as dynamic forms of cultural heritage and livelihood.

25. Implications for practice and policy

The findings have direct implications for tourism departments, municipal bodies, destination management organizations, cultural institutions, restaurant associations, culinary entrepreneurs and local communities in both Lucknow and Hyderabad.

25.1 Gastronomic Tourism in Policy of Heritage Tourism

In heritage cities, tourism planning needs to move beyond the promotion of monuments and formally recognize gastronomy as a key element of the destination's heritage portfolio. culinary heritage should be incorporated into:

- Destination master plans,
- Schemes for heritage conservation,
- Tourism brand campaigns,
- Schedules of cultural festivals,
- City-level tourism circuits; and
- Intangible heritage documentation projects.

25.2 Significance of Culinary Heritage Mapping

Both cities should keep systematic records of:

traditional dishes,

- Ways of cooking,
- Culinary languages,
- Food consumption rituals,
- Historic restaurants;
- Food clusters in the neighbourhood,
- Ingredient traditions and
- Tales of cooks, artisans, vendors and food families

The un-documented culinary tourism promotion may become alienated from the actual heritage it claims.

25.3 Development of community-based gastronomic tourism models

The scores on community participation are relatively low, indicating the need for stronger local inclusion. Sustainable gastronomic tourism must be:

- Street hawkers,
- Family-run restaurants,

- Cooks at home,
- The local population,
- Cookery artisans,
- Food historians;
- Self-help groups for women,
- Local producer networks and
- Associations of neighbourhood.

Participatory planning can help to ensure that tourism benefits are not concentrated in a few formal businesses.

25.4 Governance Support for Culinary Authenticity

Rhetoric alone cannot protect authenticity. Heritage destinations need to set up mechanisms to identify and support authentic culinary practices by way of:

- Certification of heritage restaurants
- Geographical indication-based culinary branding, as appropriate,
- Curatorial food interpretation,
- Archival preservation of recipes,
- Training chefs in traditional methods,
- Promoting the use of traditional ingredients, and
- Criteria for responsible heritage representation.

25.5 Gastronomic Tourism Must Support, Not Drive Out, Local Economies

Tourism policy should not be such that food tourism displaces small-scale actors through excessive commercialization or homogenized restaurant branding but that benefits accrue to them. This takes:

- Support for micro enterprises,
- Assist with vendor formalisation,
- Access to credit,
- Hygiene training,
- Digital visibility tools,
- Improvements in the infrastructure of food streets and involvement of informal sector actors in destination planning.

25.6 Waste, Water, Energy and Carrying Capacity Must Be Part of Sustainability

Food tourism sustainability is not only a cultural, economic but also an environmental issue. Both cities need popular culinary zones:

- Solid waste management systems,
- Approaches to food waste reduction,
- Design of wastewater and drainage works,
- Compostable or recyclable service materials,

- Management of crowds at festivals and environmental monitoring in high density food districts.

26. Strategy Recommendations and Suggestions

The findings have led to the following recommendations for the sustainable development of gastronomic tourism in Lucknow and Hyderabad.

26.1 Lucknow

1. Make a Nawabi Culinary Heritage Trail

Lucknow should design a curated Awadhi/Lucknowi Culinary Heritage Circuit that connects:

- Chowk,
- Aminabad,
- Gate of Akbari,
- Kebob houses of the old type,
- Traditional bakeries;
- Awadhi mithaiwala and connected cultural sites like Imambaras and historic bazaars.

This would improve the integration of cuisine with architectural and cultural heritage.

2. Set up Lucknow Culinary Heritage Documentation Center

A city-level documentation centre or digital archive should document:

- Chef and food family oral histories,
- Recipes and modifications,
- Food prep tools & techniques,
- Food festivals and ceremonies and the metamorphosis of Awadhi cuisine in the urban memory.

3. Protect Traditional Restaurants as Living Heritage

Historical food establishments should be recognized as living culinary heritage institutions and supported through heritage-sensitive tourism promotion, infrastructure assistance, and archival storytelling.

4. Encourage Culinary Interpretation and Storytelling

Lucknow's strength is meaning and refinement of heritage. Guided food walks, interpretive signage, bilingual storytelling material and curated heritage dining experiences are ways to effectively communicate the city's culinary history to visitors.

26.2 For Hyderabad

1. Create a Sustainable Hyderabadi Food Tourism Governance Model

Hyderabad has a strong culinary visibility so policy should aim at balancing the popularity with sustainability. This consists of:

- Crowd and traffic control on food districts,
- Ramadan and festive seasons food waste systems,
- Standards for heritage branding,
- Preservation of non-biryani culinary traditions which are often lost in the shadow of the iconic dishes.

2. More dishes to the table than just biryani

Hyderabadi biryani is world famous but the thrust of tourism marketing should be on:

- Halwa,
- Marag.
- Meat of stone,
- Baghara baingan,
- Khubaani ka meetha
- Double ka meetha,

Culture of Iranian cafés and Deccani food habits in the home.

This would alleviate the overdependence on a single culinary icon, and more accurately reflect the richness of the city's gastronomic heritage.

3. Develop Heritage Food Zones with Improved Infrastructure

Improvement of food markets and heritage food corridors through:

sanitation infrastructure,

- signs,–
- lighting, seating,
- Waste separation,
- Planning of sidewalks,
- Multilingual tourist information

4. Linking Culinary Tourism to Festival and Event Tourism

Hyderabad's strong festive food culture offers opportunities for curated seasonal gastronomic tourism products but these should be planned with sustainability guidelines and local stakeholder participation

26.3 Common recommendations for both the cities

1. Heritage Trails of Culinary Introduction

Design integrated food trails that combine:

- Heritage buildings,
- Old neighborhoods,
- Markets,
- Cooking demonstrations,
- Storytelling and tasting experiences.

2. Promote Transmission of Culinary Skills

Traditional cooking knowledge should be transferred through workshops, apprenticeships, chef exchanges, culinary schools and intergenerational training programmes.

3. Develop Gastronomy Destination Branding

City tourism campaigns should present cuisine as a broader heritage experience and not as a stand-alone act of food consumption.

4. Enhance Research and Data Systems

Tourism departments and universities are advised to regularly survey:

- Culinary tourism,
- Spending by visitors,
- Perceptions of being genuine,
- Livelihoods of vendors,
- Sustainable practices and destination image

5. Support Women and Informal Food Business Operators

Women's groups, home-based cooks and informal food producers, often under-recognised, are the keepers of culinary traditions. To avoid compromising their autonomy, inclusive food tourism policy should embed these actors into the formal tourism value chain.

6. Embedding Gastronomy in Smart and Digital Tourism

Mobile food trails, digital food maps, QR coded heritage menus, food storytelling through archives and food interpretation tools in multiple languages can document heritage and improve the visitor experience.

27. Managerial Implications

The study has several implications for tourism managers, destination marketers, hospitality entrepreneurs and food business operators.

27.1 For Destination Marketing Organisations

Destination branding should focus on cuisine as an emotional and cultural gateway into the city's heritage identity. Advertising dishes is not the only thing campaigns should communicate:

- Stories
- Neighborhoods,
- Craftsmen and meanings of heritage.

27.2 For Restaurant and Foodservice Operators

Restaurants can enhance the gastronomic tourism value by:

- Providing context menus explaining the history of dishes
- Safeguarding traditional preparation processes,
- Use of local ingredients,
- Working with heritage guides,
- Providing generic restaurant service, instead of designing immersive dining experiences.

27.3 For Food Walk Curators and Tour Operators

Tour operators should develop more ethically-oriented, locally-grounded food tours that:

- Featuring lesser-known establishments,
- Do not treat vendors in an exploitative way,

- Include cultural interpretation and to disperse the tourist flows outside some very commercialized areas.

27.4 Urban Governance Authorities

Local authorities should see food districts as cultural tourism sites and develop an integrated approach to the management of mobility, hygiene, signage, heritage conservation and waste systems.

28. Limitation of the Study

The study provides important insights, both conceptually and empirically, but some limitations are worth mentioning.

28.1 Geographical restriction

The study is limited to Lucknow and Hyderabad. These cities are rich comparative cases, but cannot be automatically generalized to all the Indian gastronomic destinations.

28.2 Design transversal

The study is based on a cross-sectional survey and thus captures perceptions at a single point in time. The dynamics of gastronomic tourism can change with seasons, festivals, policy changes and market conditions.

28.3 Data perceptuelles

The empirical part of the analysis is largely based on the perceptions of stakeholders, rather than on actual behavioral data (tourist spending, mobility tracking, food purchase data, long-term livelihood outcomes).

28.4 Environmental Measurement Limited

The study has a major focus on sustainability, but less on detailed environmental indicators such as carbon footprint, water use, quantification of food waste or emissions in the supply chain, and rather more on cultural, social and economic dimensions.

28.5 Diversity of Internal Cuisine

Lucknowi and Hyderabadi food are both diverse internally and layered historically. Any attempt to place them in a single comparative framework will inevitably gloss over some of the intra-city differences, local traditions, caste/community influences and domestic culinary practices.

28.6 Possible Response Bias

As with most survey-based studies, there may be elements of social desirability, destination pride or selective recall in the responses of the respondents, especially among the local stakeholders that are closely related to the food culture.

29. Space for Further Research

The present study opens up several promising directions for future research.

29.1 More Indian cuisines – comparative studies

Further studies can compare Lucknow and Hyderabad with other gastronomic destinations such as:

- Amritsar,
- Kolkata,
- Jaipur,
- Indore,
- Kochi,

- Varanasi,
- Old Delhi
- Ahemadabad,
- Srinagar,
- or Goan.

29.2 Culinary Tourism Sustainability: Longitudinal Studies

Longitudinal studies can investigate changes in gastronomic tourism over time with regard to:

- Urban redevelopment;
- Platformisation and food delivery;
- Changed tourist demographics,
- Festival tourism and travel behavior post-pandemic.

29.3 Food Tourism and Environmental Sustainability

Future studies should explore:

- Food waste,
- Packaging practices
- Energy use
- Local sourcing
- Carbon intensity of culinary event,
- and sustainable restaurant management.

30.4 Gender, Labour and Informal Food Economies

There is a need to work more on the role of women, migrant labour, home-based producers and informal food workers in sustaining culinary heritage tourism.

29.5 Digital Gastronomy and Social Media

Future studies could investigate the role of Instagram, YouTube, travel vlogs, food influencers, online reviews, and delivery platforms in the transformation of authenticities and destination food image.

29.6 Governance of Culinary Heritage and Public Policy

There is much scope for policy-oriented research on how cities can design governance frameworks to preserve culinary heritage without turning it into static museum culture.

29.7 Segmentation of gastronomic tourists

Future research may segment tourists by motivation, age, nationality, food involvement, religion, dietary preference or repeat visitation to better understand different markets for culinary tourism.

30. Conclusion

A comparative analysis of Lucknowi and Hyderabadi cuisines proves that gastronomic heritage is one of the most potent, yet least theorised elements of sustainable urban tourism in India. Food in these cities is not simply a matter of taste, it is a vehicle of memory, class history, migration, hospitality, ritual, labor and place identity. It can attract visitors, support livelihoods, increase cultural pride and improve the experience of the destination, but only if it is governed with sensitivity to authenticity, local inclusion and heritage continuity.

Although different from each other, Lucknow and Hyderabad both demonstrate that food can be a powerful resource for tourism when linked to wider systems of heritage preservation and community-based development. The challenge for policy makers and tourism planners is not just to promote food more aggressively, but to ensure that the cultural ecosystems that produce that food are socially valued, economically supported and environmentally sustainable.

Gastronomic heritage should be understood in this sense not as a peripheral trend in tourism, but as a serious domain for sustainable heritage policy, destination strategy and cultural development. For India's historic cities, the future of tourism could be more and more about not just what visitors see but what they taste, remember and understand through the stories of food.

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