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Destination Marketing of Odisha: Role of Traditional Food and Tourism

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Abstract: *This research examines the growing influence of integrating traditional culinary and heritage elements into the destination marketing strategy of Odisha, India. Drawing on an impactful body of existing educational literature, this study explores how traditional cuisine is rapidly becoming a primary driver of tourist arrivals and destination appeal, rather than a mere ancillary service. This paper discusses Odisha's sustainable potential in traditional cuisine tourism, rooted in its special cuisine recognition, which encompasses everything from traditional food and local cuisine to regional authentic dishes, as well as the sacred Mohaprasad served at the Jagannath temple in Puri. The reviewed studies on destination tourism strategies emphasize the promotion of particular food-centric experiences, such as cuisine combinations within major festivals like the Konark festival, initiatives under the "Vocal for Local" campaign, and marketing branding efforts for the state.*

The collective data from several research studies suggest that strategically leveraging traditional culinary and cultural assets consistently enhances the state's destination marketing image. Investment in branding and marketing local food experiences is consistently agreed upon, including the use of GI (Geographical Indication) tags for tribal products, traditional products, and marketing religious cuisine. The researchers' approach not only successfully attracts tourist sections but also substantially contributes to the sustainable development of regional income.

Keywords: *traditional food; culture; destination marketing; tourism; culinary.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional food and tourism have played a significant role in the development of Odisha, contributing to income generation, fulfilling employment needs, and driving infrastructure development across the state. Studies on destination marketing, growth, prospects, and challenges of the tourism industry in Odisha require branding and regional development

(Chaudhury et al., 2022; Biswas, 2014). The tourism sector directly supports the economic development of Koraput and plans how it can contribute to growth and livelihood diversification in the state (Tripathy & Patra, 2021). The coastal degradation and climate change in the area have an impact on tourists, indicating that tourism development needs to be repositioned within a sustainable framework of silent destination marketing (Behera et al., 2023; Biswas, 2014). In light of this, destination marketing must promote both conventional and heritage aspects to strategically foreground distinctive traditional cultural assets, such as traditional food and local cuisine.

Internationally and nationally, traditional food tourism is recognized as a powerful tool for enhancing destination competitiveness, shaping the destination image, and improving tourist satisfaction. Traditional and local food enhance the destination image, creating a lasting impact on the minds and hearts of tourists, encouraging them to return repeatedly (Kumar & Pandey, 2018). Reviews of recent food tourism research in our country have highlighted the rapid growth of scholarly attention, indicating a need for more practice in specific regions and traditional cooking methods that link with destination marketing (Kumar, 2014). Moreover, several studies on traditional food tourism have been conducted in our country. However, they require more attention to areas such as the cuisine of local food tourism in Himachal Pradesh, as well as exploring how gastronomy can attract tourists (Gautam et al., 2024). Culinary tourism has also been linked to building impactful destination images and fostering emotional connections with places, thereby strengthening the strategic value of traditional food in tourism promotion (Dhillon, 2024).

Within this broader context, Odisha provides a rich yet comparatively under-marketed gastronomic landscape. An improving concept of work documents the diversity and distinctiveness of traditional cuisine, local foods, festive cuisines, and Prasad from temples, underscoring their impact on tourism resources. Enhancing the guest experience through the authenticity of cultural heritage and the day-to-day life of coastal communities, studies have focused on local cuisine, including the use of local ingredients, traditional cooking methods, and authentic foods (Mohapatra & Biswas, 2017). Research on traditional cuisine tourism in Odisha highlighted the potential and prospects of traditional food as a starting point for tourists and as an impact-creating element in the overall destination product (Mohanty & Sadwal, 2019). The Mohaprasad of the Lord Jagannath Temple has been a unique attraction, blending devotion, taste, and ritual to create impactful religious and traditional culinary tourism circuits (Sahoo, 2019; Mondal et al., 2025). Likewise, explorations of traditional food and festival spreads, such as Vocal for Local, indicate the growing recognition of traditional food as a medium for tourism marketing and local value addition (Chani & Suyal, 2022).

The marketing of Odisha, as well as its branding, is growing rapidly, similar to Jet Airways, due to its vast tourism destinations and gastronomic resources. Initially, studies focused on destination marketing, with an earlier emphasis on quality service and infrastructure, but paid little attention to food culture as a distinct aspect (Mohanty & Rout, 2016). Studies on Chaurashi village, as well as assessments of the impact of rural tourism, traditional food, festivals, and culinary practices, can create value for rural tourism when it is promoted (Shaoo & Singh, 2018; Mohanty, Sadual, & Samal, 2019). Similarly, studies on stakeholder engagement in ecotourism destinations, such as Chilika, involve the local people's engagement, and tourists are served traditional food, also showcasing sustainable destination development and marketing (Samal & Dash, 2024). Moreover, recent studies have shown that tourists perceive and return to various destinations in Odisha due to images of the destination and food, as well as traditional and local cuisine offerings. Studies on the impact of food tourism often highlight the importance of local ingredients, quality, authenticity, and traditional cultural symbolism in attracting visitors to engage with local food (Kar, Mohanty, & Mohanty, 2023). Recently, studies on tourists' attitudes regarding the origin of destination food images have found that branding, marketing, information availability, hygiene practices, and the creation of an impact on how tourists incorporate local cuisine into their travel plans (Kar et al., 2024). Overall, the role of traditional food in attracting tourists to their destination is helping to bring them back again and again for enjoyment (Gupta, 2018). In addition to traditional food itself, related cultural products, festivals, and extraordinary instruments are becoming increasingly relevant levers of destination marketing. Local

products and culinary enhance the destination tourism and market visibility (Mishra, Das, & Patnaik, 2024). Studies on Festivals in Konark have highlighted that the roles of arts, tourism, monuments, and cultural events can create tourism magnets, drawing attention not only to the performing arts and culture but also to traditional cuisine, thereby creating value for marketing (Mishra et al., 2025). Traditional food and destination marketing in Odisha provide an overview, creating points of attraction through nature, heritage, craft, and food (Sahoo & Lenka, 2023). Many important gaps remain in the literature on food and destination marketing development in Odisha, such as studies that treat traditional food, festivals, ecotourism, rural tourism, and coastal tourism as relatively individual domains, not fully integrated into a holistic destination marketing perspective (Samal & Dash, 2024). When it comes to tourist safety and hygiene, particularly in relation to local food analysis, there is a lack of work that systematically integrates these insights into concrete destination-marketing strategies, branding structures, and campaigns tailored to Odisha (Kar et al., 2024; Dhillon, 2024). There is a necessary step for marketing and promotion, which must review how traditional food can contribute not only to attracting tourists but also to fostering sustainable and resilient destination development. The current research paper acknowledges these gaps by examining how traditional food, local cuisine, and tourism can collectively enhance the destination marketing of Odisha. Building on the existing structure of work on culinary tourism, gastronomy, coastal tourism, rural tourism, and festival-based inclusive and resilient destination development (Behera et al., 2023).

Promotional tourism and stakeholder engagement are key to creating an impact through a more practical framework. The vision and mission are to clarify the role of Odisha's rich traditional food heritage, including local food, everyday cuisines, festive foods, and temple foods, in shaping tourist experiences, destination image, and marketing narratives. Additionally, this study also examines how the traditional food of Odisha aligns with the broader goals of sustainable tourism development in the state. Traditional food is not just a supplementary attraction; resources highlight that it is the heart of destination marketing for Odisha.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Various research in the tourism field, especially in traditional food and culturally rich regions like Odisha, India, has led to the convergence of traditional food and destination marketing as a key area of research. Now, the area of literature widely agrees that traditional cuisine acts as an impactful catalyst for boosting destination marketing appeal, shaping the behavior of tourists, and driving economic development in the state.

A. *The Key Role of Traditional Food in Destination Marketing:*

There is a consistent argument among researchers that tourism and gastronomy, as part of a "Gastronomy trilogy," can enhance destination marketing efforts (Mohanty et al., 2020). A key component of destination marketing in Odisha, India, is its traditional cuisine (Kumar, 2024). Researchers have focused explicitly on the sea beach region of Odisha, demonstrating that gastronomy has a profound impact on tourism, which in turn maps the destination's impact and attracts tourists (Dhillon, 2024). The traditional and local food, with the essence of the place, creates a positive image that attracts tourists (Kar et al., 2024). The potential for traditional food tourism has been widely recognized, with literature spreading its potential, prospects, and future projection (Singh et al., 2025).

B. *Leveraging Unique Traditional Cuisine and Culture:*

The rich cultural heritage of Odisha boasts extraordinary traditional cuisine assets, which further leverage specific destination marketing strategies. A central point of study highlights the unique role of traditional food in the region. The Jagannath temple, Mohaprasad, is a major tourist attraction and plays a significant role in the development of gastronomy tourism in the Puri region (Gautam et al., 2024). The topic of traditional food culture at tourist destinations, such as Puri, is also a subject of research, involving the mapping of the evolution of traditional cuisine practices in response to destination tourism

(Prasad et al., 2024). Additionally, local food and festive foods, such as those associated with the festival, mixed culture and culinary experience, create powerful tourism magnets that enhance destination appeal (Mondal et al., 2025).

C. Destination Tourism and Local Empowerment through Traditional Food:

Traditional and local food play a vital role in developing sustainable destination tourism and empowering local people. Several studies support marketing Odisha as a tourism destination, with some suggesting that this approach should incorporate integral aspects of local life and culture, as well as local products (Mishra et al., 2024). Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the "Vocal for Local" campaign has further emphasized the need to review and promote traditional Odia cuisine, supporting tourism recovery and local empowerment (Kar et al., 2023). The literature review also identifies specific impactful points for empowering tribal products through Geographic Indication (GI) tags, positioning these extraordinary products as key selling points in destination marketing and contributing to economic development in districts like Koraput, Odisha (Sahoo et al., 2023).

D. Key Determination of Tourist Behavior:

Understanding why tourists crave local or traditional food creates an impact on destination marketing. Studies have examined the dimensions affecting food tourism intention among tourists to Odisha, focusing on specific motivators related to novelty, authenticity, and cultural experience (Sahoo et al., 2018). These studies focus on food tourism research in India, emphasizing the scope for future research on consumer behavior (Kumar, 2024).

E. Key Challenges and Opportunities:

The tourism industry in Odisha faces numerous challenges, including infrastructure gaps, limited growth prospects, and environmental concerns such as beach degradation and the impact of climate change on natural resources, including the Chilika Wetland (Samal & Dash, 2024). Hospitality industry and stakeholder engagement are identified as key components for advancing sustainable ecotourism, ensuring that the development of culinary tourism is balanced with environmental preservation (Gupt, 2018). The literature review confirms that the traditional food in destination marketing is an applicable and productive strategy for Odisha.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed study utilized a desk-based, qualitative approach, depending exclusively on secondary data analysis. This perspective aims to synthesize existing knowledge and provides a general overview of how traditional food and tourism contribute to destination marketing in Odisha, utilizing the rich structure of educational literature provided.

A. Design of Research:

The research used a systematic literature review and content analysis design. This structure of designs enables researchers to review existing research, reports, and articles in preparation for this article.

B. Systematic Review of Literature:

The impact of methodology involves thoroughly surveying the insights, findings, and theoretical contributions, as well as other publicly available Government reports and tourism board documentation, to answer the research question.

C. Content Analysis:

Officially available specified educational papers and documents were subjected to content analysis to extract impact themes, metrics, and strategies related to traditional food tourism, beach tourism branding, festival marketing, and the role of GI tags in Odisha.

D. Sources of Data (Secondary Data):

The data were collected and analyzed from various educational journals and conference papers that have been published and are already available.

E. Topics cover:

The "gastronomy trilogy" of food, culture, and tourism in Odisha. Case studies of specific locations, Puri Sea beach, and Chaurashi village. Analysis of specific food elements, such as Mohaprasad and traditional foods. Impact on branding, tourist intention, and marketing strategies.

F. Official Government and Tourism Reports:

Available reports from the Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) and the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, served as official sources for campaigns and challenges faced by the hospitality industry.

G. News Archives and Online Databases:

Blog posts, articles, and news related to the "Vocal for Local" campaign, as well as traditional food festivals in Odisha, are utilized to create an impact on the hearts of tourists.

H. Procedure of Data Collection:

Data assembly is a continuous and systematic process for extracting relevant information from multiple sources, such as published journals, the Internet, and grievances.

I. Source from Screening:

Researchers screen references to create an impact on the core of the topic of traditional food and destination marketing in Odisha.

J. Extraction of Information:

Main data points are collected and identified into a database, including: Identification of market strategies; For marketing promotion, using impactful examples- Economic, social, and branding sources identification.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A. Analysis of Data:

Collected data, including information from various sources, were examined by the researcher using a synthesis approach and thematic analysis. The table below outlines various themes and key findings from vital research available in different literature.

SL.NO	NAME OF THE AUTHORS	YEAR	ANALYSIS
01	Mohanty, Rout, & Sadual	2020	A strong relationship and dependency have been established between food, culture, and tourism, creating an impact on destination development and marketing.
02	Singh, Singh, & Prakash	2025	This study aims to document the traditional culinary heritage and evaluate the economic contributions of cuisine tourism, specifically its effectiveness in destination marketing to attract tourists.
03	Mohanty & Sadual	2019	Traditional food tourism refers to the name and fame of culinary and gastronomy tourism, which has gained worldwide recognition among tourists, particularly in the state of Odisha. It has significant potential to brand its demandable food tourism as a destination offering.
04	Mohanty, Chandran, & Mathew	2018	This research is the first step in assessing the actual impact of marketing on the Odisha tourism industry as a rural destination tourism and highlighting the impact of authentic flavors. Branding is one of the most effective tools for

			destination marketing promotion. Branding for destination marketing of traditional food tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing the local economy.
05	Mishr, Das, & Patnaik	2024	The research highlights the potential of combining GI-tagged products with destination marketing strategies to boost Odisha's tourism. This approach emphasises sustainable development by empowering tribal artisans and promoting their economic growth. While respecting the traditional cultural values of these communities, marketing strategies can preserve their heritage while encouraging innovation.
06	Mohanty & Rout	2016	This research aims to examine the scenario of Puri's sea beach, focusing on all existing tourism facilities and the evolving expectations and demands of tourists. Moreover, it explores the significance of marketing for the beach destination, identifying specific ideas and methods to enhance its appeal and attract a larger volume of tourists to Puri's sea beach. Despite its renowned temples, heritage sites, beaches, art, and crafts, Puri's tourism impact remains vastly underutilized. Cultural and traditional richness is yet to be fully appreciated by domestic, national, and international tourists. The state partially neglects this tourist destination, and it needs marketing to attract tourists.
07	Chaini & Suyal	2022	The state of Odisha is widely known for its impactful history, culture, and heritage, all of which are deeply connected to each other, such as the Lord Jagannath Temple in Puri, the Temple of Lingaraj in Bhubaneswar, and the Sun Temple in Konark, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. These monuments and marvels reflect a cultural authenticity that shows the impact of the state. Additionally, this state's culinary tradition has a strong and sacred connection to the Rosaghara (kitchen) of the Lord Jagannath temple, which is renowned as the world's largest and oldest organized kitchen. - The history and culture of the state identify the authenticity of the age-old; similarly, the cuisine has a prolonged history of intermingling with the Kitchen of the lord Jagannath temple. This study highlights the impact of Odisha's traditional food on tourism marketing in the post-COVID-19 era. It examines the use of traditional ingredients in authentic food preparation, and researchers also explore the cultural significance in terms of revitalizing and attracting tourists to the area.
08	Kar, Mohanty, & Mohanty	2023	This research examined the relationship between various factors and tourists' intentions to engage in local food tourism, with a focus on traditional culinary practices. The results indicated that all examined dimensions-health concerns, physical surroundings, and desire for prestige, had a positive and significant impact on these intentions. The paper discusses the practical implications derived from these results regarding the food tourism intention of a traditional food.
09	Mohapatra & Biswas	2017	This study examines the profound impact of gastronomy on tourism development, highlighting that cooking is both an art and a science dedicated to catering to diverse tourist needs. Food serves as a powerful element in human celebration and ritual, marking everything from joyful events like births and weddings to somber occasions like funerals. Authentic food is a reflection of a place's culture. Traditional cuisine is a must for celebrating ethnic culture. To gain a proper sense of the local culture, tourists should try the local cuisine. However, culinary excellence extends far beyond the basic process by integrating aesthetic, nutritional density, and sensory precision into the service.

			In modern views of hospitality, food is a cornerstone of the tourist experience.
10	Mondal, Gantait, & Singh	2025	This study examines the intersection of spirituality, gastronomy, and tourism through an analysis of the "Mahaprasad" tradition at Puri's Jagannath Temple in India. Originally a holy offering, "Mahaprasad" has evolved into a cultural and culinary attraction, influencing gastronomy tourism in this state. Employing a multidisciplinary approach that blends cultural anthropology, culinary studies, and tourism management, the research utilizes qualitative content analysis of scholarly articles, reports, and media information to explore the role of Mahaprasad in regional identity and tourism. The study highlights the cultural significance, socio-economic impact, and motivations of pilgrims and visitors regarding Mahaprasad. It suggests leveraging cultural and culinary heritage for sustainable tourism, respecting the temple's spiritual sanctity while promoting local development.
11	Dhillon	2024	This study examines how traditional cooking encounters shape destination perception and influence visitors' motivation. Through further case research, the study reveals that food cuisine has a significant impact on destination marketing, which in turn attracts tourists. For instance, Delhi's diverse culinary impact reflects its traditional cuisine identity through its culture, and also encourages civilization discovery. Likewise, the specific culinary traditions of Rajasthan and Kerala serve as pillars of their respective traditions, enhancing the authentic experiences sought by visitors, who reflect the traditional identities of the states.
12	Tripathy & Patra	2021	The hospitality and tourism sectors play vital roles in identifying and preserving a society's traditional and cultural identity. Currently, the hospitality industry is creating important roles to drive economic expansion through job creation, generating foreign revenue, and revitalizing tourist destinations. The hospitality sector contributes the third-largest amount to India's foreign revenue.
13	Sahoo & Lenka	2023	Short-term tourists often lack awareness about the dangers, and they may be the victims of sudden natural hazards. Unfortunately, this can create a negative perception of the tourism destination, potentially damaging its reputation. This research examines Odisha, particularly the sea beaches of the Puri and Ganjam districts, which are frequently struck by cyclonic storms along the state's 482 km coastline. The research aims to provide a structural framework for disaster-prone coastal areas to regenerate their brand marketing and shift visitors' perceptions.

(Source: Author)

B. Synthesizing Information:

Researchers combined research findings to create a comprehensive picture that connects ideas about traditional food, beach tourism, rural tourism, religious gastronomy, and determinants of destination marketing image.

C. Thematic Analysis:

Collected data were found in various themes, and it was also found that they influence each other, such as:

- The enhancement of religious food (temple food) and its impact on destination tourism intentions.
- Food festivals, local foods, and cultural events are creating destination tourism appeal.

- Marketing and branding for the unique traditional food of Odisha.
- The challenges and economic potential of destination marketing and traditional cuisine.

After examining all the above themes available in various literature research, researchers analyzed and reached certain conclusions.

V. CONCLUSION

This research suggests that traditional Odia culinary practices have a significant impact on the state's traditional tourism marketing. Research consistently validates that culture, food, and tourism form a vital trilogy, elevating culinary tourism from supplementary activities to a core component of a state's marketing and branding strategy. The findings underscore that an "Odyssey of Taste" is central to discovering Odisha's gastronomic marvels and unlocking its full traditional tourism potential.

In essence, by targeting the marketing of its rich and diverse culinary heritage, Odisha can significantly enhance its destination appeal, attract a broader demographic of tourists, and solidify its position as a must-visit destination.

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