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**MARKETING CULINARY TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT- AN  
EMPIRICAL STUDY ON VILLAGES AND COMMUNITIES IN THE UNION TERRITORY  
OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR\***

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**Abstract**

Introduction: Tourism sector is reviving at a very fast pace in these post pandemic times. The tourists have started travelling to legitimate destinations according to their interests. Food is an essential component of human existence, and as long as life continues, the food sector will continue to excel. Food tourism is a swiftly growing area of tourism process in recent times. With an increase in the spending power and disposable income, fellow humans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are much interested to relish delicacies from different parts of the world. Digitalization and advancements in the technology has helped to popularise food dishes and other food ingredients from every remote destination to all around the world and generated a curiosity in the people to know, taste, relish, use and carry such special food dishes and ingredients from around the world in their day today life or at least to their leisure times. This has led the mankind to the type of travel termed as food tourism or culinary tourism and Gastronomic tourism.

Aims of study: The research study aims to examine the interest of resident's in Union territory of Jammu Kashmir in Tourism with special emphasis to food tourism.

The study also intends to observe the interest of local communities for their involvement in tourism related activities with special emphasis to food tourism.

Thirdly, the study purposes the possible ways to promote local food and food related activities as tourist product in JKUT<sup>1</sup> as culinary tourism can be a very sustainable method of creating new job prospects in any location while simultaneously bringing attention to the traditional ways and local cuisine of communities in the various parts of JKUT to the rest of the world.

Methodology: The study used in-depth interviews, house hold surveys, observations and a structured questionnaire to collect the data in the form of responses using online data collection techniques as well as interviewing methods. Data collected from 155 respondents is statistically derived to conclude the results.

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<sup>1</sup> Jammu and Kashmir union Territory

Results and Discussions: People living in the communities and villages in Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory have a rich interest in food and food related activities during their travel as well as in daily life schedules. The data collected and the statistical results show that the local food from JKUT holds enough potential to attract tourists with interest in food. The authors have also recommended marketing strategies based on the responses from the travellers and local population in Jammu and Kashmir UT.

**KeyWords:** Culinary tourism, sustainable development, local food and culinary tourists, Jammu Kashmir Union Territory.

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## 1. Introduction

People travel to different locations for a variety of reasons, and these travellers cherry-pick their vacation destinations from among the available alternatives. Visitors' culinary preferences and travel motivations are diverse, as are their vacation destinations. According to Hall and Sharples (2004), when it comes to categorising food tourism, there must be distinctions between specific visitor activities that include food as part of their travel experience and tourists that prefer just food-influenced places. In his book *Culinary Tourism*, Wolf (2002) characterises culinary tourism as a journey to a market for prepared foods and beverages. The social shifts that occurred in our society have affected the culinary community. Globalization, urbanisation, modernization, and displacement have shaped and changed how industrial society eats food (UNWTO, 2017). Factors like taste of food, associated cost, nutritional aspects, satisfaction and convenience generating a behavioural trend and the expression of human identity play important role in choosing food and drinks for the travellers (Scott & Duncan, 2017). Referring to report by WTO<sup>2</sup>, the culinary tourism offers tremendous potential in stimulating local, regional, and national economies and enhancing sustainability and inclusion (World Tourism Organization, UNWTO, 2017).

Rural tourism destinations have grown in popularity in recent years, especially among travellers looking for peaceful places to relax and unwind (Lin & Yeh, 2013). The word "rural destination" refers to an experience that takes place in a remote location and in which visitors deliberately engage in order to enjoy rural landscape scenery, achieve physical and mental stimulation, and feel more related to nature (Ballantyne, Packer, & Hughes, 2009).

## 2. Literature Review

Central governments, suppliers of tourism services, destination management organisations, local councils, and experts have already recognised food as an integral part of the tourism at any destination and increasing competitiveness of a destination's (Andersson, Mossberg, & Therkelsen, 2017; Steinmetz, 2010). According to previous research, several countries and regions are now focused on the possibilities in local food items as a significant component in enlightening tourism promotion

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<sup>2</sup> World Tourism Organization

schemes (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Bessière, 1998; du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006). Local food is attributed to a rise in visitors traveling to find culinary experiences (Long, 2004; Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007). Furthermore, Long (2004) published local food as the primary factor in destination selection. Food ingredients grown locally will deliver an appealing atmosphere to tourists and inspire them in visiting the destination (Sims, 2009). Rendering Long (2004), culinary tourism is concerned with the 'foodway,' which can be described as cultural activities correlated with cooking food and the traditional ways it is consumed by residents. Thus, local food intake not only feeds tourists' appetite but can also be seen as a critical allurements to a specific destination.

Furthermore, an analysis by Luchaprasith (2017) found that local communities that successfully promoted local food items at Amphawa Floating Market, one of Thailand's rural destinations, benefited economically, socially, and culturally. In the tourism industry background, food service establishments play an essential role in creating employment and profits for many nations, including Malaysia (du Rand et al., 2003). Tourism boosts the local economy by generating economic prospects and purchases of locally grown goods, supporting the local communities in terms income (Bessière, 2013). Additionally, several studies contend that connecting local food and tourism destinations will help both the host and the traveller (Boniface, 2003; Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd, 2000; Sims, 2009). Tourists visiting Punjab considers the food as an important element while selecting the place as destination (Raina et al., 2020). Local food and food products must be added in the knowledge of tourists to build the food image of Jammu and Kashmir UT (Raina, A., Sandilyan P.R. 2021).

## **2.1 Culinary tourism**

Food reflects the ethos of a community and the people who produce it. This is because, as Wolf (2006) points out, food is a representation of culture that lets countries and regions identify who they are and what it means to be human. Many researchers and analysts have stressed the possible use of food to improve destination attractiveness. According to Okumus et al., (2007), local food will boost a destination's reputation by emphasising food items in marketing their destination. Furthermore, Getz, Andersson, Robinson, and Vujicic (2013) argue that the number of visitors travelling for food and gastronomy is increasing fast and this performance can be applied to any destination, even in the rural areas. According to Hall, C.M., Mitchell, and Sharples (2003), the framework of the tourism industry discovered that integrating food and wine into the tourism experience has the potential to improve economic development in rural areas. Researchers claim that local community participation, cooperation and partnership between the governing and remote sectors are necessary for development of food tourism.

Culinary tourism is a phenomenon in directing tourists about other countries' with reference to the cultures followed by introducing the foods dishes and food products from the regions to the rest of the world (Long, 1998). Furthermore, several scholarly concepts of culinary tourism have been proposed by different authors. Plum (2011) describes culinary tourism as "travel for ready-prepared meals and unforgettable culinary experiences". Informal experiential tourism will include a lot of things besides restaurant-based culinary activities like learning about the farming process, attending farmers markets, food festivals, and trying foods in factories, and discovering various regional dishes (Deneault, 2002).

This is able to affect the overall eating and drinking behaviour as well as impart new awareness of the area to visitors (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

In general, the words 'food tourism,' 'culinary tourism,' and 'gastronomy tourism' have been used interchangeably in the tourism sense to describe people travelling to a specific destination for the purpose of food and culinary related events (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). In fact, most tourists would eat the food from new regions at some point, either deliberately or accidentally (Steinmetz, 2010). Food, like other components of tourism such as lodging, transportation, destination attractions, and events, is a fundamental component of the tourism package (A. Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000). According to reports, food plays a significant role in tourist attraction at several destinations and has the prospective to upsurge the tourist experience in many areas (S. Kim & Iwashita, 2016; Long, 2004; Folorunso et al., 2013; Son & Xu, 2013).

## **2.2 Food and food products from communities / Local food**

Local food and drinks can be described as a commodity that is made and grown in the local area and has a cultural identity that is unique to the area (Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd, 2000). According to Nummedal and Hall (2006), the concept of local food should include locally produced items and food that includes raw materials from outside the region and is processed locally. Local food is regarded as an authentic commodity of a specific culture passed on from generation to generation. This can be seen in terms of pre-preparation, cooking techniques, and the use of key ingredients, which can illustrate the distinction between one location and another (Raji, Ab Karim, Ishak, & Arshad, 2017). According to Siti Aziz et al. in 2014, local food owned by a specific population can express both the need and the culture of radically different places, races, faiths, natural resource supply, and eating habits. Previous studies by López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Caizares (2012) emphasised that local food is essential not just for satisfying a physical need for visitors, but also for satisfying a physical need for visitors for understanding and learning about the regional identity and culture, which provide competitive advantages to the destination. Local food plays an important role in marketing a specific society's cultural commodity by allowing people to share experiences (Siti Hajar Abd Aziz et al., 2014). Essentially, a local food commodity produced by a rural population brings more value to their community's cultural identity (Siti Hajar Abd Aziz et al., 2014). This includes their food habits, which emerged explicitly from the original subsistence needs of a single population. To preserve the original flavour of the cuisine, the abundance of ingredients used in conventional food came from available materials, either obtained from the forests or the backyard. Furthermore, the cooking techniques and conventional appliances and instruments demonstrate the various customs at the destination. The mixture of ingredients and cooking system used would boost rural destinations' attractiveness and competitiveness as excellent destinations. According to Kivela and Crotts (2006), food intake is a distinct category of tourist operation that necessitates the use of all five senses (vision, hearing, touch, scent, and taste).

The big problem facing local entrepreneurs and business owners was that when operating a tourist spot, you have to carry out some of your commercial activity there, rather than only acting as a supplement to an outside business (Quan & Wang, 2004). According to current studies, local food at tourist destinations promotes destination recognition, shapes destination individuality, creates traveller

circulation, and contributes to traveller experience and satisfaction (Ojo & Lattimore, 2016). Relishing food and food products from varied cultures caters opportunities of extending awareness or cultural resources from any region to the global levels (Choe & Kim, 2018).

### **2.3 Development of communities through Local food Tourism**

According to Tosun (2000), group engagement in tourist destination creation is "a mode of action in which individuals take the opportunities and obligations of citizenship." This mechanism allows the group to collaborate with others who can help with organising, administration, and decision-making that affects their condition and progress. Timothy (1999) states that community participation in the tourism planning process can be seen from two perspectives: in the decision-making process and in the type of benefits brought by the development. Aside from Timothy's two points of view, the role of neighbour-hood stakeholders in the implementation of tourism growth projects is critical for a long-term solution. According to Cheong and Miller (2000), by including proactive community members in destination planning growth, the local community can ensure that the right ideas are implemented, as well as obtain employment prospects, improve their understanding of the project, improve their understanding of the advantages provided by tourists, and provide them with the ability to control unintended change and the incentive to use local services. To promote community participation in tourism development, a relevant authority such as tourism planners and community leaders may provide educational information services such as training workshops and awareness campaigns to improve their understanding of tourism development in a specific destination.

The association between food and tourism can also be seen in a new research agenda that investigates the phenomenon of Integrated Rural Tourism (IRT) (Sims, 2009). The goal of IRT, as part of a rural development strategy, is to foster environmental, economic, social, and cultural resilience in rural tourism destinations, as well as to encourage local citizens to participate in tourism planning (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008). IRT emphasises a bottom-up model that is focused on publicly and privately owned natural and cultural capital, related utilities, and interpretive services, as well as the provision of lodging, food, drinks, and goods (Cawley & Gillmor, 2008). IRT is intended to allow the most use of capital while both were maintaining and improving them. As a result, IRT is not only concerned with the tourism industry's sustainability policy but also with the development of rural areas and the enhancement of the local climate, economy, and cultures, both of which can be appreciated by both hosts and guests (Sims, 2009). Evidently, the inclusion of sustainable food projects will play an important part in the IRT agenda so they can address all of these issues at the same time.

Previous research has shown that food is a significant factor in promoting sustainable tourism. For example, increasing tourist consumption of local foods in rural destinations may have a multiplier impact on the local economy (Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd, 2000; Luchaprasith, 2017). This is due to the fact that tourists can waste money on food; they must eat while they visit (S. Kim & Iwashita, 2016). As a result, destinations must recognise the role of local food in boosting tourism growth and promoting the local economy (Haven-tang & Jones, 2005). Second, in terms of environmental concerns, producing more local food resources would help to decrease food miles, prompting researchers to conclude that "buying local" is necessary in order to reduce one's carbon footprint (Boniface, 2003; Pratt, 2013). According to Pratt (2013), food miles are the distance traveled

by food from the farm or warehouse to the customer. According to the same source, convincing visitors to "buy local" helps to maintain small-scale agriculture in rural areas because the money invested stays in the region. Tourists who partake in a local food experience, such as a food festival or a cooking show, can gain a better understanding of the "story behind the food" by speaking with a local food supplier. Connecting customers with the individuals and places that provide the food will strengthen their sense of destination, their faith, and confidence in having visited the location and will help to create a healthy connection within the group. As a result, both the host community and the visitors prosper (Sims, 2009). Third, tourist destinations around the world are facing new challenges and accelerated shifts as a result of stagnation, industry globalization, social media in customer interaction, increased competition, and the complex evolution of new technology (UNTWO, 2016). To ensure sustainability, each destination must establish a variety of local attractions that set it apart from others. According to Pearson and Pearson (2016), one of the main elements that can help boost a place's reputation and heighten its appeal is encouraging local food. To back up their arguments, (Bessière (1998) and Y. G. Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) argue that local foods are signature items that visitors will find in a way that is distinct from their usual routine.

Many countries have begun to promote their wide selection of local food items in order to boost destination comparative edge while also developing what could be referred to as 'local taste' (Jalis, 2016). This approach can help the remote communities to work as cultural base operations. Local food events from the communities when added to tourist packages will help to promote destination to the potential tourists (Jalis, Che, & Markwell, 2014). It also has a positive economic effect on destination growth and improves community social well-being, particularly in rural areas. Table 1 provides a list of samples of previous research relating to the benefits of local food in tourism destinations.

#### **2.4 Possible ways for rural development through Tourism with reference to food tourism**

Tourism destinations can boost their attractiveness by implementing successful marketing techniques such as product creativity, pricing, placement, and attraction promotion (du Rand, G.E. & Heath, 2006). In addition, Wang (2011) contends that a carefully planned promotion campaign would support a destination perform efficiently. A promotion plan is a well-thought-out document to get competitive advantage in a global market (Goldsmith & Tsotsou, 2012). A well-planned marketing campaign would include well structured action concepts for the destination in consideration and for the tourists considering that particular destination (Wang, 2011). Since tourism destinations compete in a global market, they must recognise their skills and strengths (Jenkins, Dredge, & Taplin, 2011). Having a clear identity and a good reputation is important for a tourist destination's sustainability. As a result, destinations must have tourism goods and services that satisfy existing industry demand.

According to Okumus et al. (2007), every tourist destination should distinguish itself in order to represent its noticeable and unseen goods and services. In tourism contexts, it is crucial to present a clear identity and a favorable destination picture in order to draw visitors to a specific destination (Fields, 2002). Local cuisine with a clear cultural identity has arisen as a way of accomplishing this, and it suits the changing needs of today's tourists (Steinmetz, 2010). The use of food dishes and produce at destination to create an impression of a place that might draw visitors is accomplished by the use of advertising (Fields, 2002). This is an effective tool for capturing the interest of prospective

visitors, even though they are unaware that food is a significant motivator in their vacation choice (Fields, 2002). As a result, there is an increasing abundance of food television shows, culinary books, and magazines, as well as food blogs that reflect the picture of the destination. Another way to collect facts about a destination is to use the internet (Fields, 2002). According to Ab Karim and Chi (2010), the most effective instruments in shaping tourist buying decisions to visit a destination are public media sources (television, books/magazines, newspapers, and the internet). Thus, implementing this approach in a rural destination raises awareness of the location and its associated attractions, thereby increasing the destination's competitive edge.

In general, a rural destination is one that is located far from towns, has minimal amenities, and is usually difficult to access by travellers. Tourists can consider rural destinations to that are less modernise and are close to nature (Brown & Hall, 2000). According to Jaafar, Kayat, Tangit, and Yacob (2013), rural destinations have significant qualities to attract tourists. Local culture activities and practices in rural destinations, in addition to being rich in natural resource attractions, play an important role in rural destination growth (Rahmani, Hajari, Karimian, & Hajilo, 2013). This is because cultural traditions and traditions are recognised as one of the environmental factors for tourism attraction by tourist destinations (Chin, Lo, Songan, & Nair, 2014), which helps to reinforce the destination's sense of location and civic pride. However, in order to offer overall pleasure to tourists, many rural tourism destinations do need other supporting attractions. Integrating other services belonging to the destination may increase visitor satisfaction and experience. Thus, stressing the numerous and key goods that are locally generated will result in the development of further tourist activity in a specific region (Ojo & Khoo, 2013).

Natural resources, such as local food ingredients used in local cuisine, have the ability to be used to boost rural destination production in places like Lenggong Valley. As a destination rich in natural resource products such as freshwater fish, Lenggong Valley has a host of deer farms, fresh fruits, and vegetables that can be tapped as potential future tourism products. According to Siti Hajar Abd Aziz et al. (2014), the beauty of local traditional dishes, as well as the rich knowledge of local people about the use of many fresh plants and vegetables, should be recognised as a cultural commodity in the Lenggong Valley. According to Razli Ahmad (personal correspondence, October 30, 2016), one of the village headmen, typical local food items in Lenggong Valley such as Kebebe (a raw fruits paste made up of 13 different types of local fruits), daging masak patani (beef cooked with patani herbs and spices), kerabu umbut (salad made from young palm tree shoot), nasi buluh (rice in bamboo), masak lemak ikan pekas The array of fascinating recipes, some of which are already handed down from generation to generation, shows the ingenuity of local populations in diversifying natural resources. Incorporating local food activities, such as cooking demonstrations, into the Lenggong Valley tourist event calendar can thus help to draw more foreign visitors. This technique can also be marketed through media such as food magazines, television, newspapers, and the internet, which can boost the destination's reputation while also offering information about other attractions in Lenggong Valley.

To promote Lenggong Valley as a potential food tourism destination, a concrete strategic plan must be built by identifying the right local culinary items and combining them with the destination's tourism tools. This is due to the fact that an appropriate marketing campaign focused on local food would

encourage visitors to enjoy the uniqueness of other people's culinary cultures while also enhancing the cultural profile of the tourism destination. Increased tourist happiness would result in increased tourist behavioural desire to visit a specific destination. This initiative and policy, however, would be futile unless the local government, tourism organisations, and other related agencies in tourist destinations worked together completely.

### 3. Data Analysis and Results

Table 4.1 represents the demographic profiles of the responding population from communities and villages in Jammu and Kashmir. There is a greater number male population interacting and responding to the data collectors. Maximum people residing in the target area are education to graduate level and between the ages group of 36-45 years claiming their residence in the villages for more than 20 years. 60.4% of the respondents have stated agriculture as their prime source of income along with 86.45% people revealed their family member/s working in Public sector. Also, it is very interesting to see that 95.48% population in the study area is willing to invest and take part in the tourism business.

Table-4.1(Demographics)

| Characteristics                          | Number of respondents<br>(n=155) | Percentage |
|--|----------------------------------|------------|
| Gender                                   |                                  |            |
| Male                                     | 110                              | 70.9677419 |
| Female                                   | 45                               | 29.0322581 |
| Education                                |                                  |            |
| Up to Primary schooling only             | 53                               | 34.1935484 |
| Up to Secondary schooling only           | 29                               | 18.7096774 |
| Graduation                               | 49                               | 31.6129032 |
| Post Graduate and above                  | 24                               | 15.483871  |
| Age                                      |                                  |            |
| 15-25 years old                          | 18                               | 11.6129032 |
| 26-35 years old                          | 39                               | 25.1612903 |
| 36-45 years old                          | 46                               | 29.6774194 |
| 46-60 years old                          | 22                               | 14.1935484 |
| 61 and above                             | 30                               | 19.3548387 |
| Duration of Residence in current village |                                  |            |
| About 10 years or less                   | 19                               | 12.2580645 |
| Between 10-20 years                      | 26                               | 16.7741935 |
| More than 20 years                       | 110                              | 70.9677419 |
| Occupation                               |                                  |            |
| Farmers/Agriculture                      | 94                               | 60.6451613 |
| Business/Shop                            | 26                               | 16.7741935 |
| Employed full-time                       | 31                               | 20         |

|   |     |            |
|---|-----|------------|
| Both employed and Agriculture             | 35  | 22.5806452 |
| Member of family working in Public sector |     |            |
| Yes                                       | 134 | 86.4516129 |
| None                                      | 21  | 13.5483871 |
| Whether Interested in Tourism Business    |     |            |
| Yes                                       | 148 | 95.483871  |
| No  | 7   | 4.51612903 |

In table 4.2, it is clearly observed that local communities in Jammu and Kashmir are welcoming the food tourism with open arms as an option to create opportunities for sustainable development. In all the four statements the results gathered at Likert Scale emphasise that major part of the respondents understand the opportunities and potential that food tourism with holds for the development of a region.

Table-4.2 (Food Tourism and perception of Local communities)

| <b>Recorded perception of population on food Tourism in JKUT</b> |   | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--|---|-------------|-----------|
| 1  | Food Tourism can help villagers to generates income opportunities                                       | 4.31        | 0.6       |
| 2  | Food Tourism can help in exchanging cultural awareness  | 4.31        | 0.9       |
| 3  | Food Tourism provides many worthwhile business prospects in the form of Hotels, restaurants, Parks etc. | 4.15        | 0.8       |
| 4  | Food Tourism can help to celebrate and promote local traditions with other parts of the nation          | 4.14        | 0.9       |

In the table 3.3, the authors have tried to examine the perception of the communities and residents of villages in Jammu Kashmir to develop the food tourism right from the village level. The seven different statements have proved very beneficial to get insights of the thought process that targets a collaborate indulgence of government agencies and local people in the development of food tourism at village to higher levels. The derivation of means and the standard deviations to the circulated data collection instrument reveal that local communities intend to be a part of the planning processing for the development of tourism at their villages. Also, the communities agreed that the representatives from different parts of the target populations can put their viewpoints to the decision makers for an efficient planning with respect to communities and on part of the government bodies.

Table-4.3 (Promotion of Food Tourism at village level)

| <b>Planning tourism development at village level</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------|
|--|-------------|-----------|

|   |   |      |      |
|---|---|------|------|
| 1 | Communities should be referred before making tourism strategies for the villages                                      | 4.47 | 0.72 |
| 2 | Representatives from villages should be involved in decision-making process of village/local tourism development      | 4.15 | 0.8  |
| 3 | Communities should be supported financially in the form of subsidies to develop tourism infrastructure at local level | 3.78 | 1.23 |
| 4 | Communities should take the leading role as entrepreneurs   | 3.75 | 0.94 |
| 5 | Communities should be consulted but the final decision on the tourism development should be made by government bodies | 3.29 | 1.27 |
| 6 | Only local people should get opportunities to work at all levels in tourism process                                   | 2.92 | 1.32 |
| 7 | Communities should not participate in Tourism process   | 1.32 | 0.67 |

#### 4. Conclusions and Summary

It is believed that links between local cuisine and tourism in rural areas can assist in strengthening the economic and social viability of local companies by increasing visitor spending, broadening tourist experiences, and prolonging tourist seasons (Chiffolleau, 2009).

In conclusion, previous research has shown the benefits of using local food products as an important component in contributing to community development and sustainable growth in Jammu and Kashmir UT. Local food products are used to represent the culture and community of the regions. Local food from communities tends to be an appropriate commodity to sell as an attraction in a destination and can theoretically be used in tourism destination marketing.

This rural destination's local food items can be advertised by communities themselves which can lead to community involvement in tourism process. Local food and traditional ways to cook cater food products in Jammu and Kashmir UT can be a major pull in promoting local communities towards sustainable development.

#### 5. Limitations and Further Scope of the study

The major limitation of the study is the sample size. The study is restricted to a comparatively small sample to generalize it for whole of Jammu and Kashmir region. Also, the difference in the food habits of residents in the communities and villages with totally varied climatic conditions can be a possible reason to deviate from the results of the study.

The study proposes to use of the research instrument to collect data from different villages and communities in Jammu and Kashmir UT to get more generalised results.

Also, this study can be used as a sample study to examine the scope of local food and food commodities to be a pull factor for tourism creation, community involvement in tourism and sustainable development of the residents and region as a whole.

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