

**TASTING TOURISM: A NEW PHASE TOWARDS EXPERIENCING INDIAN CUISINE AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

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**Abstract**

Since the evolution of mankind, the need for food and drink has been a major concern for humans. It has been reported from the ancient records that human had to cultivate and the store food for consumption but as time passed humans started to travel from one place to another in search of food and drink which further in the modern era gave rise to the tourism sector where people travel for one place to another to explore new culture and experience the local cuisine which depicts about the place and its community living around the region. Due to this, there was a tremendous increase in the percentage of tourists every year in different continents where they only travel for leisure and availing the local cuisine that included both food and the local beverage of the location. Therefore, the essence of food is also a vital part of the lifestyle for every individual and tourists who travel to the destination and try to experience the local cuisine. If you see the world, most of the tourists are eagerly mad at traveling to India, wherein every 100 meters you will get a varied cuisine influence which fascinates the international tourists towards the country's culinary inheritance. Therefore, the role of promotion and marketing of the regional cuisine of a country as it showcases the cultural identity of the nation's heritage. Henceforth, the paper explores the framework of the tasting tourism as to create a new phase of tourism after the Covid-19 in order to increase the tourism sector by introducing a new segment where the cuisine will showcase the opportunity for providing an extensive knowledge for the regional cuisine and beverages available, where they can experience during their travel to the region. But due to the pandemic situation, it has been seen that the Indian tourism sector had a drastic change as the inflow of foreign tourists decreased, and also the food business sector is facing downfall due to the rapid spread of the virus.

**Key words:** Gastronomy; Tasting tourism; Indian cuisine; Marketing; Promotion; Tourists.

**TURISMO DE DEGUSTAÇÃO: UMA NOVA FASE PARA EXPERIMENTAR A CULINÁRIA INDIANA APÓS A PANDEMIA****Resumo**

Desde a evolução da humanidade, a necessidade de alimentos e bebidas tem sido uma grande preocupação para os seres humanos. Foi relatado pelos registros antigos que o homem tinha que cultivar e armazenar alimentos para consumo, mas com o passar do tempo os humanos começaram a viajar de um lugar para outro em busca de alimentos e bebidas, o que mais tarde na era moderna deu origem ao setor de turismo, onde as pessoas viajam de um lugar para outro para explorar nova cultura e experimentar a culinária local que retrata o lugar e sua comunidade vivendo ao redor da região. Devido a isso, houve um tremendo aumento na porcentagem de turistas a cada ano em diferentes continentes, onde só viajam por lazer e aproveitam a culinária local que incluía tanto a comida quanto a bebida local do local. Portanto, a essência da comida é também uma parte vital do estilo de vida para cada indivíduo e turistas que viajam para o destino e tentam experimentar a culinária local. Se você vê o mundo, a maioria dos turistas está louca por viajar para a Índia, onde a cada 100 metros você terá uma influência culinária variada que fascina os turistas internacionais em relação à herança culinária do país. Portanto, o papel da promoção e do marketing da culinária regional de um país, ao mostrar a identidade cultural do patrimônio da nação. A partir daí, o documento explora a estrutura do turismo de degustação para criar uma nova fase do turismo após o Covid-19, a fim de aumentar o setor turístico, introduzindo um novo segmento onde a culinária mostrará a oportunidade de fornecer um amplo conhecimento da culinária regional e das bebidas disponíveis, onde eles podem experimentar durante suas viagens à região. Mas devido à situação de pandemia, constatou-se que o setor de turismo indiano teve uma mudança drástica com a diminuição do fluxo de turistas estrangeiros, e também o setor de negócios de alimentos está enfrentando uma queda devido à rápida disseminação do vírus.

**Palavras-chave:** Gastronomia; Turismo de degustação; Culinária indiana; Marketing; Promoção; Turistas.

**TURISMO DE DEGUSTACIÓN: UNA NUEVA ETAPA PARA CONOCER LA COCINA INDIA DESPUÉS DE LA PANDEMIA****Resumen**

Desde la evolución de la humanidad, la necesidad de comida y bebida ha sido una de las principales preocupaciones de los seres humanos. Según los registros antiguos, el ser humano tenía que cultivar y almacenar alimentos para su consumo, pero con el paso del tiempo empezó a viajar de un lugar a otro en busca de comida y bebida, lo que en la era moderna dio lugar al sector del turismo, en el que la gente viaja de un lugar a otro para explorar una nueva cultura y experimentar la cocina local, que describe el lugar y su comunidad que vive alrededor de la región. Debido a esto, hubo un tremendo aumento en el porcentaje de turistas cada año en diferentes continentes donde sólo viajan para el ocio y el aprovechamiento de la cocina local que incluye tanto la comida como la bebida local del lugar. Por lo tanto, la esencia de la comida es también una parte vital del estilo de vida para cada individuo y los turistas que viajan al destino y tratar de experimentar la cocina local. Si se observa el mundo, la mayoría de los turistas se vuelven locos por viajar a la India, donde cada 100 metros se encuentra una variada influencia culinaria que fascina a los turistas internacionales hacia la herencia culinaria del país. Por lo tanto, el papel de la promoción y la comercialización de la cocina regional de un país, ya que muestra la identidad cultural



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del patrimonio de la nación. Por lo tanto, el documento explora el marco del turismo de degustación como para crear una nueva fase del turismo después de la Covid-19 con el fin de aumentar el sector turístico mediante la introducción de un nuevo segmento donde la cocina mostrará la oportunidad de proporcionar un amplio conocimiento para la cocina regional y las bebidas disponibles, donde pueden experimentar durante su viaje a la región. Pero debido a la situación de la pandemia, se ha visto que el sector turístico indio ha sufrido un cambio drástico al disminuir la afluencia de turistas extranjeros, y también el sector de los negocios alimentarios se enfrenta a la caída debido a la rápida propagación del virus.

**Palabras clave:** Gastronomía; Turismo de degustación; Cocina india; Marketing; Promoción; Turistas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Tasting tourism is also said to be similar to food and drink tourism but if you widely talk about tasting tourism, it is termed tourism where tourists visit a destination to taste the local food and drink of the region. It is a segment in gastronomy tourism that has simultaneously been increased due to the demand among the tourists due to the demand in the sector (Bruwer et al, 2013; Boniface 2017; Henderson 2004).

In view of the immense expansion of the tourism sector in India, the tourism market got segmented into different trends, where the food and drink tourism sector created a new urge for the tourists to explore and taste the culinary essence of India along with the opportunity for experiencing the taste of Indian liqueurs and wine varieties (Lee, Scott & Packer, 2014).

According to the global report of world tourism organization, it has been recorded that the gastronomy segment in tourism came into existence from 2001 but the tourist's literates note that the interest in gastronomy was back since tourists started to visit India. According to tasting tourism, it is safe to say that if tourists want to have a taste of the cuisine and wine varieties then he/she should travel to that destination to experience the culinary of the location (Petroman et al 2016; Banerjee 2015).

To set a clear example, if a person thinks of experiencing the taste of wine in France then he should visit France and taste the wide variety of every region in France. Likewise, a tourist doesn't need to visit a foreign destination to experience their culinary but instead as a tourist we can experience and taste the culinary diversity of our locality. But it is always said that a country that has a rich and diversified regional cuisine is said to be a demanding destination for tourists.

Seeing this situation, people are concerned about traveling to domestic and international destinations which would reduce the gatherings in the destinations and lead them to experience their cuisine and explore it to understand its variance in the region along with the regional varieties.

In the paper "Progress and Emerging Issues in culinary tourism: A study with special reference to Punjab", the author says that the tourists should prefer

dining at the dhabas and the local street vendors instead of dining in the fine-dine restaurants whereas they will experience the real taste in the dhabas which they will not get in the restaurants which is a lacuna for the region where after exploring the region the local taste will be untouched.

Whereas in the paper "Culinary choices: Developing as a Culinary Destination", the authors narrate that the Durban cuisine is not preferred by the tourists who visit Durban and instead prefer to the Portuguese, Italian food during their stay period, whereas it has been seen that food items like Bunny chow, breyani, etc. are the popular dishes of Durban that are liked worldwide by many but either the government or the restaurant and café do not take initiative in popularizing the local cuisine which is a disaster for the Durban community.

Seeing this situation, people are concerned about traveling to domestic and international destinations which would reduce the gatherings in the destinations and lead them to experience their cuisine and explore it to understand its variance in the region along with the regional varieties.

## 2 PROGRESS OF TASTING TOURISM IN INDIA

Indians are always known for their outstanding hospitality. As there is a saying in Sanskrit. i.e. "Atithi-Devo-Bhava", which means that the guest is truly your god that always dwells in the heart of every person in India towards their guest or Atithi may it be his dear ones or any tourists who visit his place.

If you see the current era and compare it with all the distinctive cuisine of the world, the Indian cuisine has always been in the heart of every traveler, due to the unmatched charm because of the multi-lingual cuisine varieties, combination of spices, preparation styles, festivals, and many other conditions.

Therefore, as a traveler the most interesting part to know about Indian food is that you should travel to every region of the sub-continent as you will get to counter varied preparation style, use of spices, and beverage variety.

Per the World Travel & Tourism Council report, it was calculated that India generated 247 billion dollars

in 2018 with a contribution of 16.91 lakh crore or that is 9.2% to the country's GDP in 2018 and by creating employment of 42.673 million or 8.1% jobs in the tourism sector in the year 2018, which is tremendous growth showing the tourism scope of approach in the international market.

It has been predicted that there would be a 6.8 % growth in the tourism sector of the country within the period of 2018-2028. With the introduction of the "Incredible India" campaign with some other initiatives by the various state tourism departments in India, it has been seen that the Indian tourism department has given a boost to the Foreign tourist's arrivals in the country.

Therefore, it has helped India to become a powerful player in tourism where it motivates tourists from various locations to explore the country's destination, cuisine, and culture.

**Table1: showing the Foreign Tourists Arrival in India**

Month	Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India			Percentage (%) Change	
	2017	2018 (P)	2019(P)	2018/17	2019/18
	January	9,64,109	10,45,035	11,03,380	8.4
February	9,31,025	10,49,255	10,87,694	12.7	3.7
March	8,85,936	10,21,530	9,72,866	15.3	-4.8
April	7,17,899	7,45,051	7,71,353	3.8	3.5
May	6,22,408	6,06,522	6,10,590	-2.6	0.7
June	6,63,470	6,83,928	7,21,015	3.1	5.4
July	7,79,309	8,06,495		3.5	
August	7,19,129	7,86,003		9.3	
September	7,19,964	7,19,845		0.0	
October	8,66,976	8,90,229		2.7	
November	9,97,738	10,12,564		1.5	
December	11,67,840	11,91,472		2.0	
Total (Jan-June)	47,84,847	51,51,321	52,66,898	7.7 @	2.2 @
Total (Jan-Dec)	10035803	10557929		5.2	

**Source:** <http://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/Other/India%20Tourism%20Statistics%20at%20a%20Glance%202019.pdf>

According to a report, it has been studied that India has a multi-dimensional and eclectic mixture of cultures where you will find variety in the cuisine compared to the diversified region and culture within the country (Duffy & Pang 2020; Timothy 2015). Hence readers surely find the most foreign arrivals in the country due to its recognition and attention to the food delicacies and drink varieties, which is loved and admired by many international tourists who make a visit or plan for a visit to India.

The tourists are very much crazy about Indian food but most of them don't have or experienced the beverage varieties of India which is most preferred by

many international nations. Talking about Indian beverages, the only thing that will come to our mind is tea but apart from tea, there are various beverages like various coffee varieties, wine, local traditional beverages which have not been tasted by the travelers which are incomplete during the culinary travel where food is not the only urge of demand for a tourist.

If you see in the past years, there were many local alcoholic drinks like Bhang, Chhanga, Gudamba, Kaju Feni, Bangla, Handia, Zawlidi, Mahua, Lugdi, Kesar Kasturi which were found in different locations of the country that were consumed by the locals.

But as time passed and people started to experience and learn about taste and combinations they slowly started to have a flavour of alcoholic beverages such as wines and other international liquors, where the Indian gastronomy market was lacking behind which lead to the formation of United Breweries group that introduced the world with the kingfisher, as the first Indian beer and along with it gave an enormous number of liquors varieties to both the Indian and international market but still if you see India was lacking behind the production of wine varieties where Indian had the only brand Grover Zampa which got established in 1988 which is the second-largest wine producer in India after the Sula wines that got established in 1998 in India.

By the introduction of these two wine brands, they gave the world a good experience of the Indian wine and also, they go well with few Indian delicacies like the pairing of the Sula Satori Merlot Malbec that goes well with the Gilafi Kulcha and the Sula Late Harvest Chenin Blanc that matches well with the famous khubaani ka meetha. Food has always been a signature for India but the introduction of these beverages gave the Indian food market a new look that attracted the tourists more to explore the delicacies of every region of the country.

According to a survey done by yougov.in, it has been found that the popularity of Indian is more in comparison to other international food. Therefore, Indian food holds 9th rank in the world among the 24 countries in terms of its food which has been reported that the popularity of Indian food is 62% in terms of other international cuisines like French, Italian, Chinese, etc. And the country where the food is popular is mostly in Europe, Australia, Canada, and the Middle East where Indian food is said to be a hit in itself.

## 2.1 Challenges & Issues that Food & Tourism Industry Face During this Pandemic Towards Boosting the Tasting Tourism

Due to the COVID situation, there was trauma between the people to avoid traveling which tremendously affected both the tourism as well as the

hospitality sector where the generation of revenue was more in comparison to the other sectors in the economy. This leads to the business minds to understand the cause and what result it may or might showcase in this circumstance.

To encourage the individuals and to make an initiative for organizing various schemes of online events, companies like Amul and various other hospitality-related events were scheduled where they focused on the active involvement of every individual. This helped every single mind to come up with a new preparation, this also helped them to have an experience of the food and knowledge that they gained through participating in these events.

During the lockdown, it was seen that people tried several Indian as well as international food by preparing them in the house which also was a good experiencing factor for the individuals. Along with the use of fusion cooking the people got to have an exploratory experience by themselves towards tasting new food.

But still, no one has thought of after the situation gets stable and cured properly, what will be the scenario for the hotels, restaurants, street food vendors, dhabas, etc.? What precaution will they take after re-opening the business again? If you talk about these attributes, I would recommend that the hotels and other food business institutions should follow certain measure like they should make a partition in the restaurant sitting to prevent direct contact between the guests, they should also place sanitizer either on the table or with the hostess, where the guest should use to sanitize himself before entering the restaurant.

The best recommendation would be that people should opt for food delivery instead of dining in the restaurant. All these circumstances indicate that the tasting tourism will be a boon for all the countries, if they take precautionary steps to face the challenges, after the COVID crisis which would somewhat help the travelers to take a step forward in exploring the taste variance in the cuisines.

### 3.2 Objectives

After reading all the above data, we have therefore designed an objective for doing further study:

1. To study the food preference and experience during this COVID-19.
2. To understand the challenges and issues that result in tasting tourism during the pandemic situation.
3. To understand the scope that would help for improving the tasting tourism in India after the pandemic crisis.

## 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used for the study is qualitative in nature. The study approach is based on a convenience sampling method. The primary data is collected through a close-ended questionnaire with the help of google forms designed to get detailed information about their food and drink tasting experience from the food served at various destinations, they visit along with the food served in different restaurants and outlets. Whereas, the secondary data is collected from websites, gastronomic journals, and magazines. The statistical information from the ministry of tourism has been used to understand and analyze the foreign tourist arrivals into the country.

## 5 DATA ANALYSIS

The data is collected through a survey done by Google using a close-ended questionnaire, where the questionnaire is distributed to 100 participants using a convenience sampling technique, but we got responses from 88 respondents where the questionnaire includes both male and female respondents. From figure 1, we got to know that out of 88 respondents the count of male respondents was 62(70.5%) and female respondents were 26(29.5%).

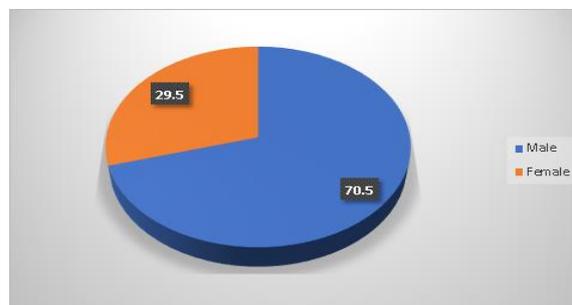


Fig 1: Gender of the respondents.

Source: own elaboration.

In Fig 2, the age of the respondents was 14.80% were in both the age group of 18-21 and 22-24 respectively, 21.60% were in the age group of 25-27 and 48.90% were in the age group of above 27.

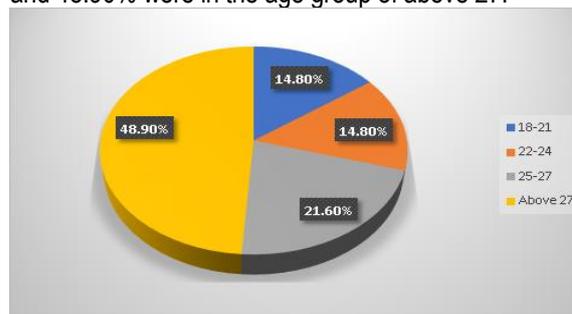
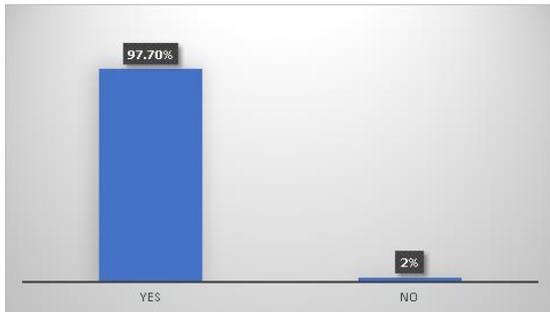


Fig 2: Age of the respondents.

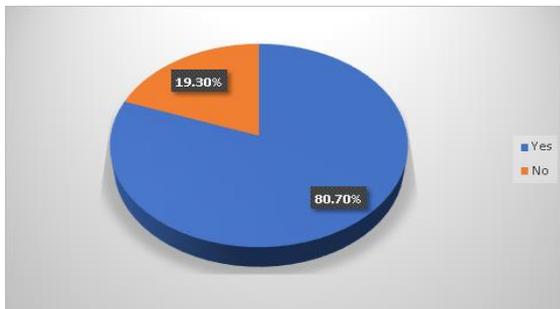
Source: own elaboration.

In Fig.3, we got to know from the survey that 97.7% of respondents were aware of the coronavirus concerning 2% who were least aware of the situation.



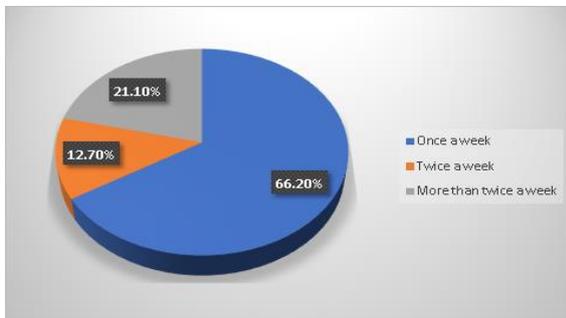
**Fig 3:** Awareness regarding Coronavirus.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 4, we got to know that 80.7% of respondents visited restaurants before the COVID effect and 19.3% of respondents were less concerned about going to the restaurants.



**Fig 4:** Information regarding food experience & preference before the pandemic situation.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

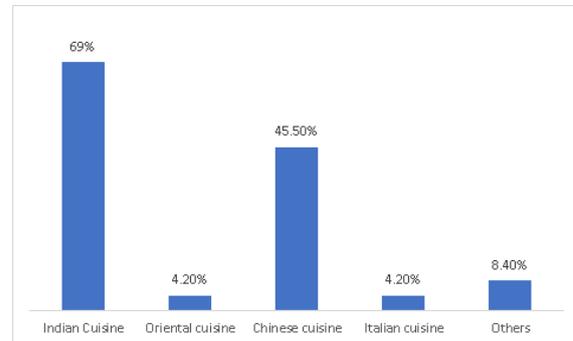
In figure 5, we got to know that before the pandemic situation 21.1% respondents visited the restaurant more than a week, 12.7% respondents visited the restaurant or any food outlet for more than two times in a week and 66.2% respondents were the ones who mostly visited the restaurants or any food outlet only once in a week.



**Fig 5:** No. of times visit the restaurant before the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

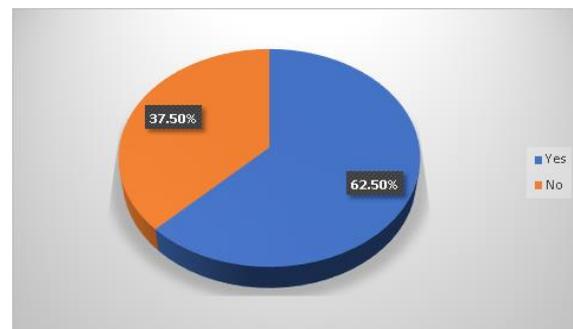
In figure 6, it showed that before the pandemic situation 69% of the respondents preferred to go for

Indian cuisine, 4.2% respondents had an interest for Oriental and Chinese cuisine respectively and at last 8.4% of the respondents had an interest in different food preference that includes fast food, Islamic food, Mexican food, African food and also few had an interest for having only coffee & burger as a meal.



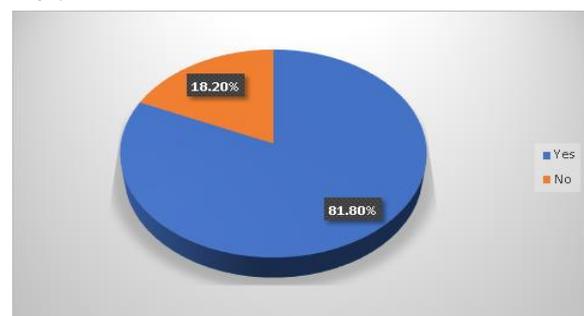
**Fig 6:** Most preferred cuisine during a visit to the restaurant before the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 7, we got to know that 62.5% of respondents traveled to foreign countries to explore their cuisine whereas 37.5% of respondents remained to stay in their homeland and experience the local cuisine.



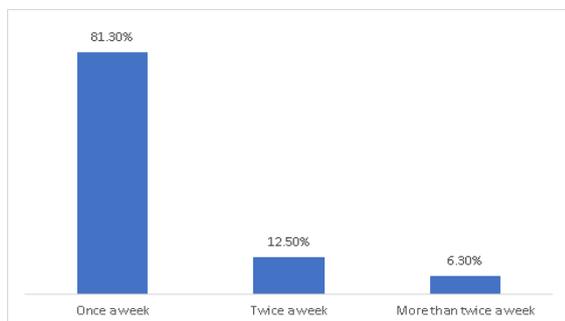
**Fig 7:** Visit any country before the COVID-19 situation.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 8, we got to find out that during the pandemic situation 81.8% of respondents visited the restaurants and other food outlets whereas 18.20% of respondents remain to stay inside their houses and enjoy the home-cooked food.



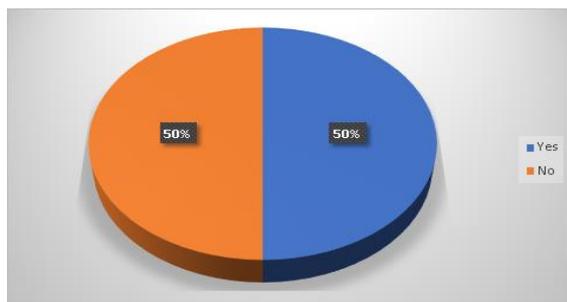
**Fig 8:** No. of times visit the restaurant during the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 9, we got to find that 81.3% of people visited restaurants agreed that they went to restaurants more than a week during the corona situation, whereas 12.5% visited twice in a week and 6.3% visited more than twice a week during the pandemic situation.



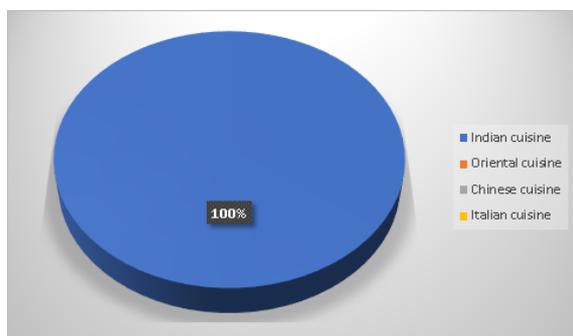
**Fig 9:** No. of times visit the restaurant during the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 10, the respondents gave a 50% response from both the groups, respectively where we could see that few preferred to have the same food taste and others had a different food taste during the corona situation.



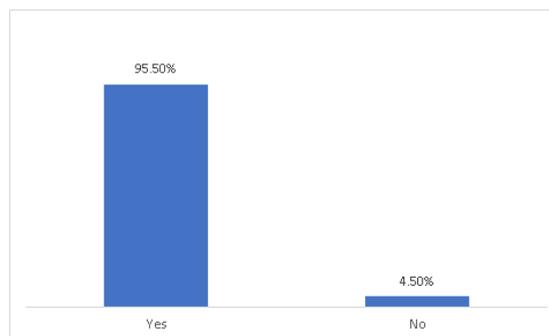
**Fig 10:** Change of food preference during the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 11, it is found that most of the respondents preferred to have Indian cuisine during this COVID situation in comparison to others.



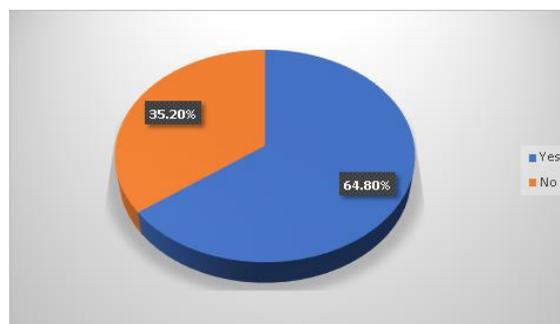
**Fig 11:** Cuisine preference during this pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 12, it is seen that 4.5% of respondents traveled during the pandemic situation whereas the other 95.5% of respondents felt to stay in their house to stay safe.



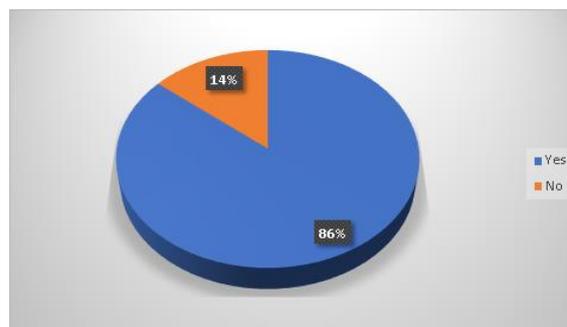
**Fig 12:** Visit any country during the COVID-19 situation.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 13, we found that 64.80% of respondents thought that there would be growth in the tasting tourism after the COVID-19 situation gets cured whereas 35.20% of respondents stated that it may not show any growth after the COVID-19 situation.



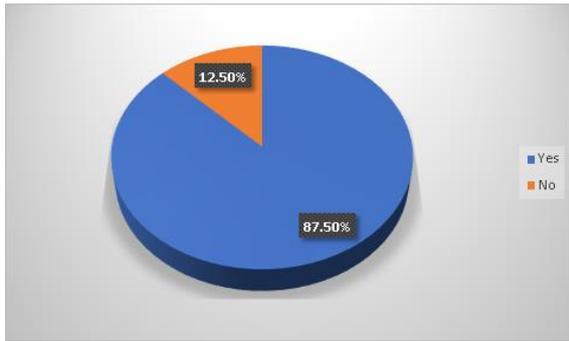
**Fig 13:** Is tasting tourism possible in this or after this pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 14, 86% of respondents said that they will visit the restaurant after the COVID situation gets cured whereas 14% said they would not visit any of the restaurants or any food outlet after the pandemic situation.



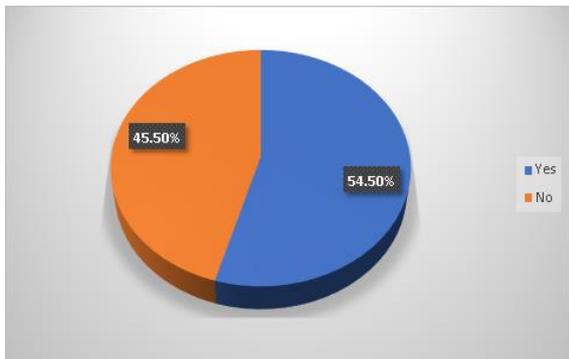
**Fig 14:** Preference of going to the restaurant after the pandemic.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 15, it is found that 87.50% of respondents felt that restaurants and other food outlets follow the protective guidelines mentioned by the government whereas other 12.50% felt that the restaurants and food outlets do not follow any protective measures against COVID-19 during the pandemic.



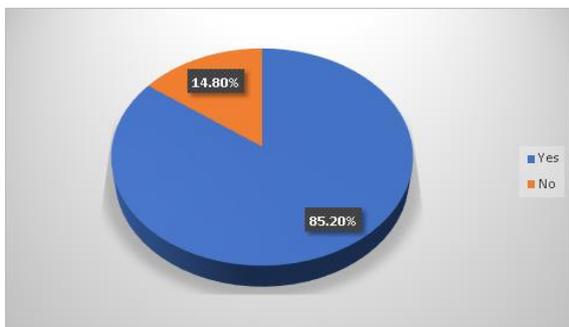
**Fig 15:** Restaurants and other food outlets follow government guidelines as a protective measure against Covid-19.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 16, 54.5% of respondents stated that the guidelines recommended by the government will help in enhancing the scope for the growth of tourists towards tasting tourism whereas 45.5% refuse to the statement regarding the recommended guidelines by the government towards the scope of tasting tourism.



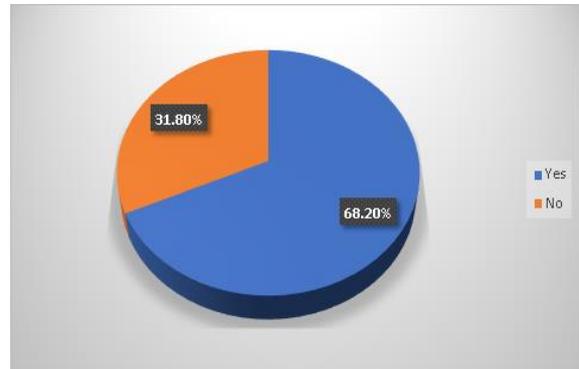
**Fig 16:** Guidelines will be sufficient to enhance the scope of tasting tourism in India.  
**Source:** proper elaboration.

In figure 17, 85.20% of respondents say that the government needs to adopt some protective measures against COVID-19 for the foreign travelers while 14.80% say that the government should not adopt any protective measures against COVID-19 for the foreign travelers to increase the scope and enhance the tasting tourism in the country.



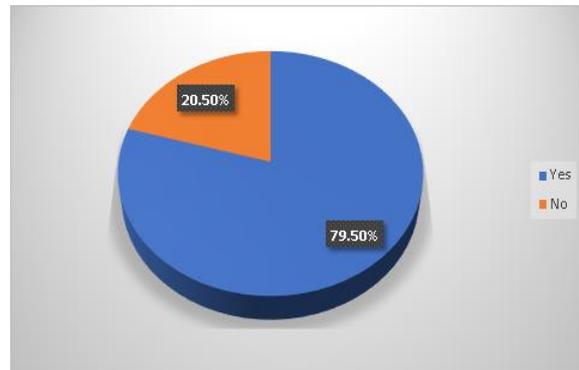
**Fig 17:** Does the government need to adapt any protective measures for foreign travelers against COVID-19 to increase the scope and enhance the trend of tasting tourism in India.  
**Source:** own elaboration.

In figure 18, 68.20% of respondents say that the pandemic has led them to explore the local cuisine of India whereas 31.80% of respondents disagree that the pandemic has prevented them from exploring the local cuisine.



**Fig 18:** Pandemic situation leads you to explore nearby Indian cuisine.  
**Source:** proper elaboration.

In figure 19, 79.5% of respondents say that the pandemic situation can allow exploring Indian cuisine whereas 20.50% disagree with the statement that the pandemic situation as an opportunity to explore more about Indian cuisine during the lockdown.



**Fig 19:** Pandemic situation as an opportunity to explore more about Indian cuisine during the lockdown.  
**Source:** proper elaboration.

## 5 FINDINGS

1. Most of the respondents showed that they were aware of the coronavirus pandemic situation. This shows that the respondents have good awareness regarding the corona situation.
2. The maximum number of respondents visited the restaurants before the pandemic situation.
3. The maximum number of respondents who visited restaurants before the pandemic used to visit more than twice a week.
4. From the survey, it was seen that the maximum number of respondents used to prefer Indian cuisine before the COVID situation.

5. The maximum number of respondents agreed that they visited foreign countries before the COVID situation.
6. Most of the participants were found to have visited more than twice a week during the pandemic situation while others prefer to stay at home and eat home-cooked food.
7. The maximum number of respondents showed a high interest in visiting restaurants for more than a week during the pandemic situation.
8. The study shows that the food preference was subsequently equal between different groups of the respondent where it was seen that few preferred foods of their taste whereas others preferred a different food during the COVID situation.
9. Maximum respondents agreed that the policies that are introduced by the government would help to explore Indian cuisine during the pandemic situation.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The tourism sector in India should work on implementing a few safety guidelines and policies for the tourists, which would help them to travel safely after the pandemic situation.

A whole portion of the respondents also showed a positive image towards the government implemented policies and guidelines towards increasing the tasting tourism in India. But this might give a decreased face to the market as people might travel less in comparison to before the pandemic situation.

In order to increase the tourism towards food and wine, the government should introduce few arrangements like food tours, cooking classes or food festivals which would help the tourist to understand and increase the tasting tourism as a new phase of tourism for India.

The results were found to be both positive and negative from both the respondent groups, i.e. male and female regarding the COVID situation. The study shows that most of the participants agree that the pandemic situation gave new strategies and mindsets towards experiencing tasting tourism during the situation.

Whereas few respondents have negative viewpoints regarding tasting tourism, this will lead to show a decrease in tourists in the tourism sector. In view of this, the government has implemented a few guidelines and policies towards creating positive thought in the mind of tourists to visit international locations after COVID.

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