

Popularity of International cuisines in Mcleodganj

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ABSTRACT. Culinary Tourism- An exploratory study on popularity of International cuisines in Mcleodganj (Himachal Pradesh).

Background: The idea of culinary tourism is one of the most influencing determinants towards the tourism development of any destination. The dining experience of the tourist for any particular cuisine becomes the main component of tourist package. Food being the essential part of human existence it is very much in demand by the tourist who is visiting the destination. In addition to the availability of local food for culinary experience if the food of their place of origin is accessible to the tourist, then it may add to the satisfaction level of their overall experience.

Research Significance: This study aims to investigate an underexplored field of research with special reference to the outlets in Mcleodganj who are offering international cuisines to the tourist. The research work will be particularly focusing on the study of popularity level of such international cuisine and to explore the satisfaction level of such cuisines among tourist.

Methodology: In order to achieve the objectives various outlets of Mcleodganj in Himachal Pradesh which are offering international cuisine, will be approached with the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will be circulated among the guest of these outlets as the respondents to find out the popularity level and satisfaction level of cuisines.

Results: The result of our research will be based on the analysis of the data obtained from the respondents through the questionnaire with particular emphasis on the popularity of international cuisine and its satisfaction level.

Conclusion: This study gives complete perceptible of popularity of international cuisines being offered by the outlets of Mcleodganj among the tourist.

Keywords: International cuisines, Himachal tourism, Culinary Tourism, Food & Beverage experience.

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1 Introduction

“Food tourism is the act of traveling for a taste of place in order to get a sense of Place”
Erik Wolf, Executive Director, World Food Travel Association.

Gastronomy is the essence of culture and a major element of intangible heritage world-wide and is a growing driver for tourists that remains often untapped by just the beauty and attractions offered by various destinations. The interrelation between gastronomy and tourism enriches culture which in turn, if properly managed, enhances local economic development, sustainable practices and food experiences. According to 2nd UNWTO World Forum – “Gastronomic Tourism is used to brand and market destinations, as well as assists in maintaining and preserving local tradition and diversity, harnessing and rewarding authenticity.

Culinary (Or Gastronomic) Tourism

According to the oxford dictionary Gastronomy is the art and practice of cooking and eating good food and Gastronomic tourism as defined by www.onecaribbean.org, refers to trips made to destinations where the local food and beverages are the main motivating factors for travel.

In the next few years, the global culinary tourism market is expected to grow at a CAGR of over 9%, according to the latest report by Technavio, a global technology research and advisory firm interested in emerging market trends and product development

The International Culinary Tourism Association predicts that this will grow rapidly in the coming years. In the UK, food tourism is estimated to be worth nearly \$8 billion each year. Tourism on international front is not much decided by the choice of food by the tourist but at a same time food being an essential need of traveler it is one of the important part of the overall experience of tourist. The growth in popularity of ethnic cuisines like Thai, Indian, North African, Mexican and Chinese throughout the industrialized countries is attributable to a significant degree to tourism where visitors sample local foods and develop a taste for them. Food and drink festivals constitute the sole instance where the decision to travel is taken solely on the grounds of the gastronomic experiences offered. This segment of tourist who are travelling for the culinary experience is still very small although it is expected to grow each year.

Professor Barry O’ Mahony identified four major motivations to be important for a food tourist according to his survey. Three of them are push factors: the taste of food, cultural experiences, socialization; and the remaining three are pull factors: core food tourism appeals, traditional food appeals and local destination appeals.

Here are the main points:

- Among food tourists, taste was the most important motivator. Cultural experiences and socialization followed - the latter being described as the desire to make new friends at a food tourism destination.
- Destinations that offer a range of cultural and heritage attractions, unique specialty shops, markets selling local farm produce, a rural environment, and farmers' markets. Food tourism appeals, including traditional food villages, were also cited.

- Local destination appeals included cultural events that featured food and other traditions from a particular food region. Local destination appeals are related to opportunities to engage in diverse cultural activities.
- Dining with locals is another sought after experience, which allows tourists to experience local culture and taste home-cooked food.
- Cooking classes, food markets for visitors and packaged food tours are helpful ways for food tourists to make friends and build a sense of community.

2 Literature Review

Wherever a tourist goes, food is essential for sustain life. Human beings are in a habit of consuming according to their native grown and cooked food. A tourist cannot stay away from food at destination that one visits during their trip. Gastronomical cultural of a country is very essential for choosing of food. Moreover, tourism results from regions' sources, such as; specific landscapes, environments, culture and heritage (Hall, D. 2003). According to Long (2004), the new tourists seek food and beverages combinations and eating experiences that foster learning. For these tourists, food in a destination and eating experiences that foster learning. For these tourists, food in a destination does not only satisfy hunger but, important for them, such consumption means gaining in-depth knowledge about the local and destination's culture. An exploration of international food and eating habits at the tourist destinations is one of the important niche for tourism activities of people visiting the places all over the world.

From an economic point of view, food is a physiological necessity that's why we can easily argue that nearly 100% of tourists spend money for food where they go for holiday or trip (Shenoy, 2005).

Food consumption can be merely the extension of food habits of a person formed at home, a large portion of food consumption in tourism can be seen as the supporting experience for tourists to complete or realize their man purpose off travel. Food tourism termed also as gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, or wine and food tourism, is a niche area of tourism. (Hall and Mitchell, 2005). Actually, it is a way of making difference in the touristic offer among plenty of other products and forms tourism that compete directly to win the race in attracting consumers. In the framework of the affirmation: "gastronomy is a strategic element in defining the brand and image of a destination", culinary tourism can become a significant contributor to the growth of tourism and popularity of local places with specific cuisine outlets. The diversity of culture helps in increasing the satisfaction level of overall experience of tourist especially with regard to their dietary requirements, which are taken care by the outlets which serve the international cuisine. Most tourist prefer to eat food which is cooked as per their native place cuisine and relish a lot if they get the similar aroma , taste and variety of food.

All over the world, a variety and the diversity being notable as travel experience, in fact there is about seeking for unique culinary experiences and enjoyment of taste. A wide variety of gastronomic activities are available across the globe, including: food festivals, food tours, food markets, wineries, food fairs, thematic museums (chocolate,

bread, beer, etc.). Any destination is best explored through its locally prepared food and in turn it acts as the satisfying experience for tourist.

Consumption of food can be unforgettable experience. Through food and drink, we are able to penetrate the culture of the place in a more profound and more complex way, through the senses, and not just from a physical perspective. Tomescu (2014) Food tourism is niche tourism, and the needs that more the travelers in this segment are situated in the Maslow's hierarchy of needs at superior levels (ego needs, self-esteem, accomplishment etc.).

Quan and Wang (2004) noted that food can convey unique experience and enjoyment to travelers. Any trip made by a tourist at a destination improves and magnified due to the excellent culinary experience as food represent the local culture and uniqueness of the visited place. Every tourist spot have something to offer with regards to locally grown and prepared food which may become favorite among the tourist and can further attract more in future to the destination. As a country India is known for its gastronomical richness which is enjoyed by the tourist of various countries whenever they visit India (Travel tips-USA Today, 2012).

The market for culinary tourism in India is growing as the country's culinary traditions continue to garner increasing international attention. According to a new worldwide food survey by Hotels.com (2013), Indian cuisine is among the top 10 list of the world's best food preferred by global travelers preferred by global travelers while on holidays, about five percent off international travelers preferred Indian cuisine and food when on holiday.

As per Subrata Pal (2020) It is already stated that India has diverse food habits due to various reasons. Statistics shows that state wise non veg food consumption follows a noticeable pattern. States in the North-Western region are more vegetarian than states of South-Eastern region. State-wise survey revealed that some states like Punjab, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan etc. have almost 25% Non-veg population whereas Kerala, Tamilnadu, Telengana, Andhra Pradesh, Orisha, Bengal and North-East states have more than 90% of Nonveg population.

Rana, (2016) in his study proposed the segmentation of food tourism based on the "importance of a special interest in food as a travel motivation" The segmentation is based on the following criteria: 1) Gourmet Tourism is defined as a interest of visiting the local restaurants as main aim of travelling 2) Participation of tourist in food related activities is must for culinary tourism 3) A lot of interest is shown by the tourist towards locally grown food product and cooking methods 4) a segment that shows no interest in food related activities but have food as basic necessity in other forms of tourism.

Hall & Mitchell, (2005).

As stated in the assertion, "gastronomy is an essential element of a destination's branding and image." This form of tourism, also known as gastronomic tourism, culinary tourism, or wine and food tourism, is considered a niche area of tourism. In reality, it is a way to make a difference in the touristic offer among the multitude of other forms of tourism that competes directly to attract consumers.

According to Alexandris, K. (2005) Customer satisfaction is described as way of accessing the product and service which is provided to the customer by the service or

product provider. This includes the niche of the product or service and the measure of enjoyment obtained by the customer during consumption of product.

Cohen and Avieli (2004) in this study the perception of food as a key destination attraction was investigated. examined the differences between attraction and impediment from two perspectives: first, how food could be an attractive product for a traveler. Then, how these problems affect the traveler's food choice.

Quan (2004) found that food can convey unique experience and enjoyment to travelers. Moreover, food can totally enhance tourists' experiences and may be the best memory of a trip. As such, the food of a destination can be a reflection of its image and uniqueness. The relationship between food and tourism cannot be overlooked. Tourists from different countries flock to different destinations because of their differences in attractiveness.

2.1 Mcleodganj: A Foodie's heaven

It is a small, but popular hill station in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, particularly known for its Tibetan Population who have popularized Tibetan cuisine everywhere (Diehl, Keila). The Tibetan government-in-exile is based in McLeod Ganj.

Located amidst majestic hills and lush greenery, Mcleodganj is a beautiful tourist destination situated around 5.2 Km away from upper Dharamsala, which is famous for being residence to the world-renowned Tibetan spiritual leader the 14th Dalai Lama.

Some of the celebrated cuisines are available in various restaurants which are spread across the length and breadth of this part of Kangra- Himachal Pradesh. To name a few cuisines Arabic, Italian, Chinese, Tibetan, Japanese, Nepali, Thai, Israeli, etc are very popular at this place. Even traditional Himachali Cuisine is also on the top priority of culinary tourists as remarked by an international tourist group visiting the place.

Some of the popular reviews given by the tourists of this place are mentioned below:

As described by Aashmita Nayar: Like any other Himalayan tourist destination, these restaurants offer cuisine that is a far cry from fancy. Mcleodganj is uniquely known because of food which is being served here. (www.huffingtonpost.in).

Owners of the Mc'LLo restaurant-cum-pub say that many Bollywood actors and actress have visited their outlets and have appreciated the food and service. Even Hollywood's Pierce Brosnan has once raised the toast in the pub. (<http://www.hindustantimes.com/>). With prosperity several problems have also come up. The profit from cafe business is not enough to meet the basic operation cost. Hundreds of cafes have mushroomed alongside the main road in Mcleodganj There's a lot of competition and we don't get much to ourselves in the end" said Lhamo to Garima Pura. (www.thetibetpost.com)

2.2 Tourism in Mcleodganj

Table 1. ESTIMATE OF DOMESTIC TOURIST ARRIVALS

Year	Chamba	Kangra	Kullu	Shimla	Other	Total
2017	1070409	2674948	3732044	3318829	8334311	19130541
2018	1042147	2117675	2912552	2872013	7149548	16093935
2019	1043494	2226897	3056463	3030246	1345568	10702668
2020	270650	217827	763379	599202	1319656	3170714
2021	221819	234251	1647329	951792	2577079	5632270

Note: Other Places of Tourist Importance include: Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Sirmour, Solan and Una. (<http://himachaltourism.gov.in/>)

Table 2. ESTIMATE OF FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS

Year	Chamba	Kangra	Kullu	Shimla	Other	Total
2017	828	138341	133057	162168	36598	470992
2018	1035	107451	96201	123000	28881	356568
2019	1097	115990	2941	132608	30233	282869
2020	192	9921	7080	21111	4361	42665
2021	69	2701	252	825	984	4831

Note: Other Places of Tourist Importance include: Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti, Mandi, Sirmour, Solan and Una. (<http://himachaltourism.gov.in/>)

From the above tables it is evident that there is substantial tourist inflow (both domestic and international) to this place. It can also be concluded that the tourist inflow has declined considerably during past few years which may primarily be attributed to the pandemic and Covid 19 related restrictions.

The domestic tourists visiting kangra has declined from around 23 Lakhs to around 2-3 Lakhs post Covid 19 pandemic.

Similarly the inflow of international guests to kangra has gone down from more than 1 lakh tourist to below ten thousand tourists in past couple of years. It is pertinent to note that the number of international tourist was less than 3000 during last year and may also be attributed to travel restrictions.

3 Objectives:

1. To explore the popularity of international cuisines being offered by outlets in Mcleodganj.
2. To analyse the relation between popularity and satisfaction level of International cuisines among tourist.

4 Hypothesis:

- Null Hypothesis
- Ho: Popularity of restaurants has no significant relationship with the satisfaction level of guest.
- Alternate Hypothesis
- H1: Popularity of restaurants has significant relationship with the satisfaction level of guest.

5 Methodology:

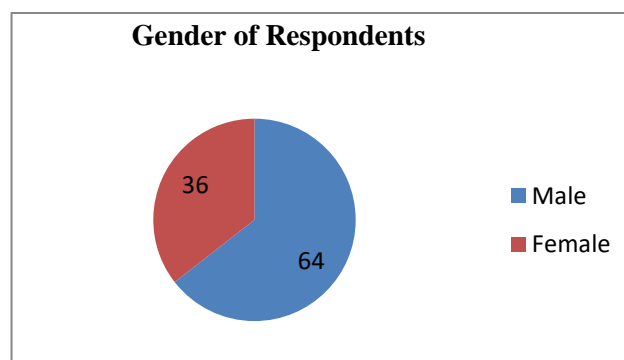
To understand the popularity of international cuisine among the tourist visiting Mcleodganj in Himachal Pradesh, a structured questionnaire has been used. The questionnaire uses the nominal as well as five point likert scale. In total 20 restaurants were selected for the data collection and total 197 questionnaires were received. The data collected has been analysed with the help of statistical tools as percentage, averages and liner regression.

6 Data collection:

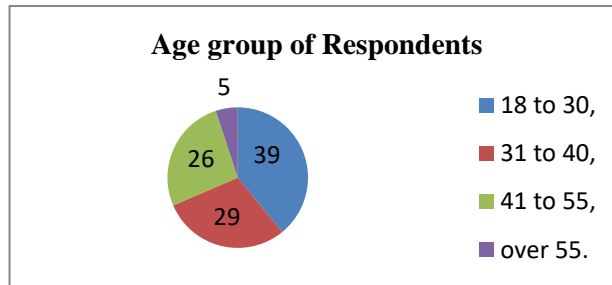
For the current study, relevant data collection is very important. Informal interviews, well structured questionnaire, personal visits are used for collection of primary data. Journals, books, articles, reviews in magazines and newspapers, websites etc. are considered as sources of secondary data.

7 Analysis & Findings:

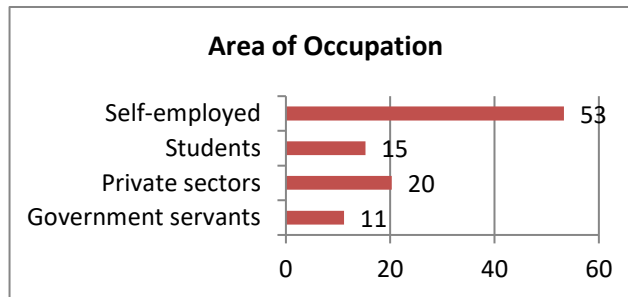
7.1 Demographic profile



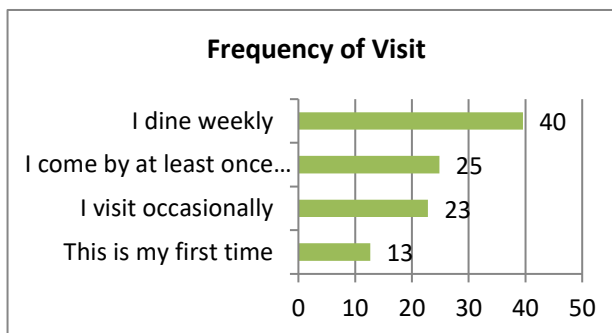
The result of demographic profile indicate that the gender of respondents was differently distributed, representing 36% female and 64% male.



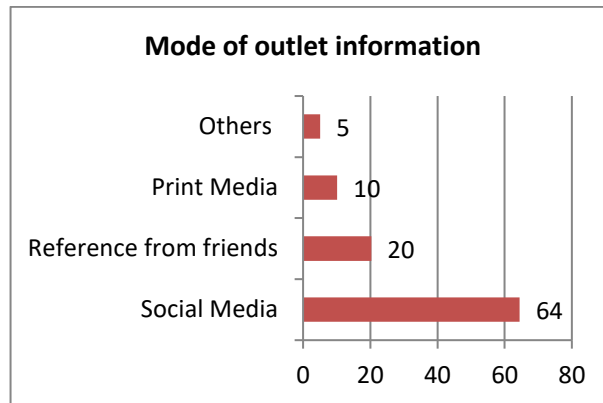
The dominant age group of respondents is between 18-30 years old (39%), followed by 31-40 years old (29%), 41-55 years old (26%) and lastly over 55 (5%) respectively.



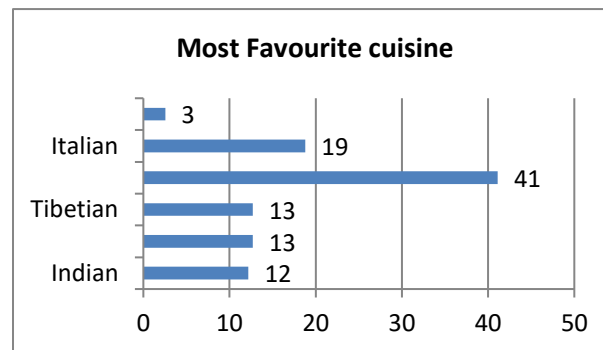
A majority of respondents work as Self employed (53%), followed by private sectors (20%), students (15%) and Government Servant 11%. Respondents who are self employed have better reasons to stay for longer durations and choose a restaurant which is fulfilling their dietary requirements.



Only 40% of the respondents dined as frequent as once in a week followed by 25% once in a month, while 23% respondents dine occasionally and 13% respondents were dining for the first time. Since majority of respondents are visiting the restaurant on weekly basis this shows that the restaurant is specifically chosen by the respondents on the basis of the cuisine they are serving.



Majority of respondents used social media (64%) for getting information of outlets, followed by Reference from friends (20%) and print media (10%) the above results emphasises towards the presence of the outlets on social media which helps the respondents in choosing them.



For choosing the most favourite cuisine majority response was given for French cuisine (41%) followed by Italian cuisine (19%), Israeli cuisine (13%), Tibetan (13%) and lastly Indian (12%) when the respondents were asked to choose their most favourite cuisine the highest response was given for French cuisine, which again indicates that international cuisine is popular among respondents.

Responses of Popularity factors for choosing the outlets for International cuisines (n=197)

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

S. Nos	Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Average
1	Prefer to eat cuisine of my native place	1	20	10.2	4.0
		2	15	7.6	
		3	10	5.1	
		4	52	26.4	
		5	100	50.8	
2	I liked the food preparations	1	10	5.1	4.3
		2	5	2.5	
		3	5	2.5	
		4	69	35	
		5	108	54.8	
3	Dishes prepared are very close to authentic cuisine	1	7	3.6	4.0
		2	10	5.1	
		3	25	12.7	
		4	70	35.5	
		5	85	43.1	
4	Motivates me to stay for longer duration	1	5	2.5	4.1
		2	15	7.6	
		3	23	11.7	
		4	63	32	
		5	91	46.2	
5	I easily find company of my countrymen	1	33	16.8	3.3
		2	35	17.8	
		3	32	16.2	
		4	29	14.7	
		5	68	34.5	
6	I feel at home whenever I visit these outlets	1	18	9.1	3.7
		2	22	11.2	
		3	34	17.3	
		4	45	22.8	
		5	78	39.6	
7	Staff is able to converse in my native language	1	86	43.7	2.5
		2	35	17.8	
		3	3	1.5	
		4	33	16.8	
		5	40	20.3	
8	Food offered has a value for money	1	6	3	4.2
		2	11	5.6	
		3	23	11.7	
		4	44	22.3	
		5	113	57.4	
9	Very few such outlets are available in Mcleodganj	1	11	5.6	4.2
		2	12	6.1	
		3	19	9.6	
		4	32	16.2	
		5	123	62.4	
10	The outlet accommodates my dietary requirements	1	15	7.6	4.0
		2	25	12.7	
		3	8	4.1	
		4	45	22.8	
		5	104	52.8	

From the above table it is inferred that majority of the respondents found that staff serving at various outlets were unable to converse with them in their native language and very few native food serving outlets are available in Mc leodganj. However, guest liked the food prepared and they also agree that all their dietary requirements were met by the outlets. Interestingly it has been observed that availability of authentic food motivates the respondents for staying longer at destination.

Responses for the satisfaction level regarding restaurant (n=197)

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

S. Nos	Questions	Responses	Frequency	Percentage	Average
1	Ambiance	1	10	5.1	4.2
		2	5	2.5	
		3	11	5.6	
		4	72	36.5	
		5	99	50.3	
2	Portion size	1	5	2.5	4.2
		2	12	6.1	
		3	20	10.2	
		4	55	27.9	
		5	105	53.3	
3	Authentic food preparations	1	10	5.1	4.0
		2	23	11.7	
		3	24	12.2	
		4	39	19.8	
		5	101	51.3	
4	Availability of cuisine from your native place	1	12	6.1	3.9
		2	34	17.3	
		3	11	5.6	
		4	53	26.9	
		5	88	44.7	
5	Excellent Service	1	9	4.6	4.4
		2	16	8.1	
		3	10	5.1	
		4	22	11.2	
		5	140	71.1	
6	Hygiene and safety Standards	1	6	3	3.9
		2	19	9.6	
		3	33	16.8	
		4	73	37.1	
		5	66	33.5	
7	Value for money	1	9	4.6	4.2
		2	13	6.6	
		3	26	13.2	
		4	37	18.8	
		5	112	56.9	
8	Welcoming and friendly staff	1	17	8.6	3.7
		2	13	6.6	
		3	43	21.8	
		4	69	35	
		5	55	27.9	

9	Satiety for a longer period after consumption	1	9	4.6	4.0
		2	6	3.0	
		3	45	22.8	
		4	60	30.5	
		5	77	39.1	
10	Overall satisfaction with the quality of food & Service	1	19	9.6	3.08
		2	20	10.2	
		3	29	14.7	
		4	41	20.8	
		5	88	44.7	

From the above table it is inferred that majority of the respondents are satisfied with regard to ambiance, portion size, service standards and preparation of authentic food. However, overall satisfaction in relation to quality of food and service needs some improvements.

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.346722
R Square	0.120216
Adjusted R Square	0.010243
Standard Error	0.366102
Observations	10

ANOVA					
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	0.146515	0.146515	1.093141	0.326336
Residual	8	1.072245	0.134031		
Total	9	1.21876			

R Square (R²) equals 0.1202. It means that 12% of the variability of Satisfaction level is explained by popularity of restaurants. Correlation (R) equals -0.3467. It means that there is a weak inverse relationship between popularity of restaurants and Satisfaction level. p-value = 0.3263, since p-value $\geq \alpha$ (0.05), we accept the Null Hypothesis H₀ that is Popularity of restaurants has no significant relationship with the satisfaction level of guest. With above result it is viable to state that although outlets serving international cuisine are popular among respondents but for satisfaction of respondents, these outlets need to emphasis on towards adopting few more deliverables with regard to the place of origin of their guest.

8 Conclusion

It has been established that there is substantial tourist inflow (both domestic and international) to Mcleod Ganj. It can also be concluded that the tourist inflow has declined considerably during past few years which may primarily be attributed to the pandemic and Covid 19 related restrictions. The domestic tourists visiting kangra has declined from around 23 Lakhs to around 2-3 Lakhs post Covid 19 pandemic. Similarly

the inflow of international tourists to Kangra has gone down by 90% comparing it with the previous pre-pandemic years. It is pertinent to note that the number of international tourists was just 2 ½ Lakhs only during the last year.

Also, the study has focused on the popularity of cuisines and satisfaction level among the tourists visiting McLeodganj in Himachal Pradesh. The result of the study indicates that although tourists are visiting and are satisfied with the overall service standards of the various outlets serving international cuisines, however, popularity of the outlets has no significant relationship with the satisfaction level of guests. This emphasizes that international cuisine outlets are popular among tourists mainly due to the basic need of authentic food. Since the respondents were the diners in the outlets, a generalized approach could not be formed for the local population of this place. It is further suggested that outlets may focus more on personalized services for tourists so that popularity of the outlets can be stabilized with respect to the satisfaction level of tourists.

9 Limitations:

Both domestic and international tourism have declined considerably during the past few years, mainly due to the pandemic and Covid 19. In addition, a number of outlets closed during the pandemic, limiting the number of respondents.

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