

A Study on Sustainable Food Sourcing & Farm to Table Practices

Dharmesh Keshav Dodiya

Assistant Professor, Thakur College of Hotel Management Kandivali East, Mumbai

Abstract

Food is the basic need of human beings. People work days and night for getting timely and sufficient food. Agriculture is one of the most significant sectors. The concept of "Farm to Table" practices has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the way hotels approach food sourcing and culinary experiences. This innovative approach within hotel management involves forging direct connections between local farms and the dining tables of guests, with a focus on sustainability, freshness, and community engagement. In recent decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in sustainable food sourcing in India, driven by environmental awareness, climate change concerns, and a global shift towards ethical consumption. However, food security and food wastage remain the grave concerns for India and the world. The farm to table practices can play a significant role in this regard. The present study aims to provide valuable insights on the current scenario, existing practices of food sourcing and farm to table practices from sustainable development perspectives.

Keywords: *Sustainability, Farm to Table, Agriculture, Consumption, Hospitality*

1. Introduction

Hotel management is going through a paradigm transition in the fast-paced hospitality business towards a more sustainable and thoughtful approach. The emphasis on sustainable food sources is a crucial aspect of this change. As discriminating guests grow more conscious of the environmental and social consequences of their decisions, hotels are realising how important it is to match their operations with sustainable practices (Sloan et al, 2019). In the context of hotel management, sustainable food sourcing refers to an all-encompassing dedication to ethical methods that take into account the complete food supply chain, from production and distribution to consumption and waste disposal. This change responds strategically to the increasing need for environmentally and socially conscious hospitality experiences, while also being in line with ethical principles. In this regard, hotels are redefining their stewardship of the environment by implementing eco-friendly measures that improve local communities in addition to lowering their ecological imprint. The present introduction delves into the many aspects of sustainable food procurement from the perspective of hotel management. It looks at the advantages, difficulties, and consequences of adopting this crucial part of ethical hospitality (Joshi et al, 2023).

The hospitality sector is always changing, and one disruptive factor is the notion of "Farm to Table" practices, which is changing the way hotels source food and provide culinary experiences. This creative kind of hotel management focuses on sustainability, freshness, and civic engagement by creating a direct link between nearby farms and the dining tables of visitors. Hotels are realising the benefits of implementing Farm to Table methods as discerning diners look for more genuineness and openness in their dining excursions (Sharma et al., 2019). This approach to cooking not only highlights the flavour and quality of the food, but it also adheres to more general ideas of ethical and sustainable food production. We explore the dynamic world of Farm to Table practices in hotel management in this introduction. We show how this approach not only meets the increasing demand from customers for seasonal, locally sourced food, but also demonstrates a strategic commitment towards environmental accountability and community involvement. Incorporating the Farm to Table philosophy into their culinary offerings not only improves the dining experience for customers, but it also helps create a more integrated and sustainable food chain. (Iles, 2019).

2. Background of Study

India's agricultural techniques are firmly ingrained in its cultural heritage and have a long history of diversity and sustainability. Different regions have varying prevalences of traditional agricultural practices, including rotation of crops, sustainable agriculture, and agricultural forestry. Based on the ideas of harmony with nature, minimum chemical inputs, and safeguarding biodiversity, these techniques were naturally sustainable. Community farming has always been a fundamental part of Indian agriculture. Villages have always shared assets and skills via cooperative farming. Farmers were able to interact directly with consumers at small marketplaces, or "haats," which promoted a localised and sustainable food economy (Kummu et al., 2012).

The ancient Indian medical system known as Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on the link between nutrition and well-being. Customary eating habits have their roots in Ayurvedic principles, support organic, locally grown, and seasonally appropriate foods. The significance of making sustainable food choices for both ecological balance and personal well-being has long been acknowledged by this holistic approach. Sustainable eating methods have also been influenced by Indian culture and religion (Gaikwad, 2014). Vegetarianism, which is common among large segments of the populace, is a practice that naturally supports sustainable agriculture since it lessens the environmental effect of producing meat..

3. Significance of Study

Although the goal of the Green Revolution in the middle of the 20th century was to boost agricultural output, it also brought with it problems such as an excessive dependence on chemical-based pesticides and fertilisers. As a result, there is a rising understanding of the necessity of going back to sustainable practices in order to solve health issues and lessen

environmental deterioration. The last several decades have witnessed a spike in the interest of Indians in sustainable food sourcing, mostly due to worries about global warming, ecological consciousness, and the worldwide trend towards ethical consumerism. Activities supporting ethical trading, organic farming, and the resuscitation of age-old, sustainable agricultural techniques have emerged as a result of this.

4. Problem Statement

The various international experts, research organizations have predicted that the world might have to face the crucial challenge of food security in the coming years. This is due to explosion of population, global warming, climate change, limited agricultural productions and other factors. Hence, it is quite significant to brainstorm, raise the awareness, and minimize the food wastage for sustainable society.

5. Objectives of Study

- a) To examine the current scenario of sustainable food sourcing
- b) To study the food to table practices in India
- c) To identify the major challenges related to sustainable food sourcing and food to table practices
- d) To provide better methods for sustainable food sourcing

6. Review of Literature

According to Pingali et al (2019), Sustainable farm to food practices prioritize environmentally friendly methods, such as organic farming, agro-ecology, and permaculture. By reducing reliance on chemical inputs, promoting biodiversity, and adopting regenerative agriculture, these practices contribute to soil health, water conservation, and overall ecosystem resilience. This approach mitigates the environmental impact associated with conventional farming, addressing concerns like soil degradation, water pollution, and deforestation.

Many obstacles stand in the way of the broad acceptance and efficacy of sustainable food procurement. One major obstacle is the intricate interconnectivity and complexity of the world's food supply chains, which makes it challenging to track and trace the effects each product has on the planet and society (Garnett et al., 2019). Furthermore, the adoption of sustainable farming techniques is sometimes hampered by the monetary incentives and constraints present in contemporary agricultural systems.

Another issue is the lack of knowledge and instruction on the advantages and practices of sustainable food procurement among consumers and producers (Hobbs, 2019). In addition, the absence of agreed-upon criteria and certifications for sustainability, together with the possibility of greenwashing, makes it more difficult to identify really sustainable items on the market. Industries, governments, and consumers must work together to push systemic reforms

in the food sector and promote a more ethical and ecological approach to food procurement in order to overcome these obstacles.

One of the main components of sustainable Farm to Food methods is stressing the use of seasonal and local food sources. This helps local economies, guarantees that consumers receive fresher, more nutrient-dense products, and lessens the carbon impact resulting from long-distance shipping. Connecting customers with local food producers is becoming more and more popular, and examples of this trend include markets for farmers, direct-to-consumer sales, and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programmes. Concerns over the source and methods of production of the food they eat are growing among contemporary shoppers. This need for openness is in line with sustainable farm-to-food practices. Customers are interested in learning about the origins of their food, the production process, and the moral issues surrounding it. Consumers are reassured by licences for fair trade, organic, and other sustainable practices, which also highlight how crucial responsible sourcing is.

Sustainable Farm to Food strategies frequently entails working with nearby farmers and communities, according to Béné et al. (2019). These methods strengthen local economies, provide jobs, and improve farmers' lives by fostering direct connections between producers and customers. Consequently, this helps to maintain rural communities and cultural variety. Sustainable farm-to-food practices are becoming increasingly important, as recognised by major companies and organisations throughout the food supply chain. A rising number of companies, from large-scale farmers to food manufacturers, retailers, and lodging providers, are pledging to incorporate sustainability into their operations. This is demonstrated by programmes like zero-waste objectives, relationships with sustainable suppliers, and responsible procurement guidelines.

Sustainable food systems and agriculture are becoming more and more ingrained in the laws and policies of national and international organisations. Policy initiatives to support the shift to more sustainable food systems include subsidies for organic farming, incentives for farmers to adopt sustainable practices, and the promotion of agro-ecological techniques. Farm to Table sustainability practices in the food and agriculture industries are greatly influenced by government legislation. Governments may promote the adoption of socially and ecologically responsible behaviours that strengthen a more resilient and sustainable food system by putting supportive frameworks, rules, and incentives in place. Policies that encourage agro-ecology, organic farming, and sustainable land management techniques, for example, give farmers the financial assistance and direction they need to move away from traditional, resource-intensive farming practices. Furthermore, by implementing policies like subsidies, grants, or tax breaks, governments may encourage the production and distribution of locally grown food, resulting in the development of a strong network of farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and direct-to-consumer sales. These programmes lessen the carbon footprint connected to long-distance transportation while also boosting local economies (Vittuari et al., 2018).

Regulatory frameworks have the power to establish requirements for traceability and transparency in the food supply chain, guaranteeing that consumers may obtain precise information about the source, methods of production, and environmental effects of the food they eat. Government-endorsed certifications and labelling initiatives may foster consumer and producer trust and enable educated decision-making that supports sustainability objectives. Governments may play a pivotal role in guiding the food sector towards a future that is more ecologically conscious, resilient, and ethical by implementing regulations that prioritise sustainable Farm to Table practices (Parfitt et al., 2010).

Food waste raises issues related to the environment, the economy, and society, making it a major obstacle to sustainable hotel management methods. The problem of food waste is especially noticeable in the hospitality sector, where huge amounts of food are cooked and served on a daily basis (Gössling et al., 2019). In addition to being a loss of important resources like land, energy, and water, excess food waste also releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere when organic garbage breaks down in landfills. Additionally, there is a significant financial impact because hotels have to pay for the purchase and disposal of food waste. From a social standpoint, food waste in the hotel industry has significant ethical ramifications in a world where millions of people experience food poverty. In order to effectively address and alleviate these difficulties, sustainable hotel management practices must adopt effective inventory management, portion control, and food donation programmes. Additionally, staff and guests must be made aware of the significance of minimising food waste

7. Discussion and Analysis

Figure 1: Farm-To-Table: Journey of Food



Food travels through several phases on a dynamic and interrelated journey from farm to table, each of which adds to the ultimate culinary experience's overall quality, sustainability, and ethical considerations. The journey starts at the farm, where farming methods have a significant influence on how healthy and environmentally friendly the fruit is. Responsible land management, organic farming, and sustainable agricultural practices all improve the ecosystem and soil health. Produce is transported and distributed after being grown, which emphasizes how important it is to source locally and seasonally to reduce carbon emissions and boost local economy. The process by which uncooked elements are transformed into delicious dishes by chefs and culinary specialists emphasizes the value of talent, creativity, and respect for the ingredients. The last stop on this trip is the dining table, where customers take an active role in the sustainable food chain by choosing decisions that are in line with their beliefs and help to foster a more socially and ecologically conscious food culture. Thus, the trip from farm to table symbolizes not only the actual movement of food but also the story of moral, environmentally friendly, and thoughtful decisions influencing the development of our food systems.

❖ **The Best Farm To Table Practices:**

- **Local Sourcing and Seasonality:** One fundamental principle of Farm to Table is sourcing ingredients locally and emphasizing seasonal produce. This not only reduces the carbon footprint associated with transportation but also ensures that the food is at its freshest and most flavorful, as it is harvested at the peak of ripeness.
- **Relationships with Local Farmers:** Establishing strong relationships with local farmers is crucial. By forming direct partnerships, chefs and restaurant owners can gain a better understanding of the farming practices, ensuring that they align with sustainability goals.
- **Support for Sustainable Agriculture:** Farm to Table practices often involve supporting and promoting sustainable agricultural methods. This includes organic farming, agroecology, permaculture, and other environmentally friendly approaches that prioritize soil health, biodiversity, and natural resource conservation.
- **Waste Reduction and Recycling:** Minimizing food waste is integral to Farm to Table practices. Chefs employing these principles often implement strategies such as nose-to-tail cooking and root-to-stem usage to maximize the use of each ingredient.
- **Menu Flexibility and Creativity:** Farm to Table menus are inherently flexible and adapt to the seasonal availability of ingredients. Chefs showcase creativity by designing menus based on what is locally and sustainably sourced, allowing for diverse and unique culinary experiences for diners.

7. Findings of Study

- a) Agriculture has a pivotal role in food chain not only in India but across the globe.

- b) There are a series of challenges faced by farmers, hoteliers and consumers regarding sustainable food.
- c) Food wastage is a major concern in developing and developed economies. There should be stringent policies on food wastage.
- d) Global warming, climate change, population have significant impact on the agriculture resulting the food supply chain.
- e) The local to global connect is the key to success for sustainable food sourcing. Farmers, food processors, hoteliers, consumers, governments and other should proactively work for the same.
- f) Creativity and innovation are crucial in hotel management. Waste recycling can be considered as a notable initiative. The preventive approach is appreciated.
- g) Organic farming, eco-friendly products and go green approach will save the planet for future generations.

8. Conclusion

All of the above discussion shows that agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. It feeds the country and the world. However, we should consider the sustainability in everything we do, live, eat, act. Food wastage should be taken seriously. The students, women, employees should be educated for the same. The awareness should be raised for the best food to table practices. In a nutshell, people, planet, processes, products should be sustainable to create the win-win situations for all the stakeholders.

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