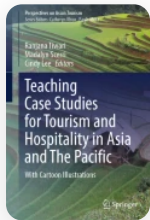


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Food Trucks and Carts: Shaping Goa's Tourism Landscape

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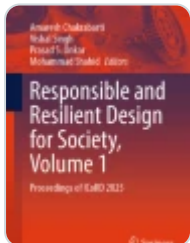
Abstract

The case “Food Trucks and Carts of Goa” delves into the street food landscape of Goa, India, a region pulsating with a history, a vibrant culture, and a thriving tourism industry. Goan cuisine, a unique fusion of local Indian flavors and global culinary elements, is a testament to the various cultural influences and historical legacies, most prominently the Portuguese, that have shaped the landscape of Goa. Using primary interview excerpts from the food truck vendors and Google reviews on the food trucks and carts, this field case examines the role of food trucks and carts in preserving these traditional dishes

while adapting to the evolving preferences of locals and tourists. It allows the students to deliberate on destination foodscape by assessing the business model of food trucks and carts, dealing with challenges, and evaluating their potential as viable and sustainable tourism products. Despite the current stance of the local government and destination management organizations (DMOs) that these culinary ventures are not yet viable tourism products, the case raises the question of their untapped potential. It also advocates for a reassessment of the role of food carts and trucks in shaping a unique and enriching culinary experience for tourists, which could have a profound impact on the region's socio-cultural, economic, and environmental landscape. The inherent allure of mobile food trucks and carts and their strategic utilization could foster a deeper connection between visitors and the local culinary heritage, enhancing the overall tourism experience.

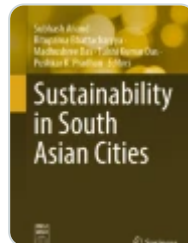
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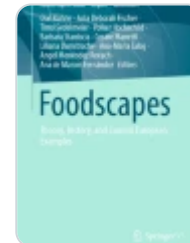
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Freddie, a Goan resident, in deep sleep, was dreaming...

But, in reality, he struggled to attract customers to his food truck, always wondering if he had enough variety of English and Western snacks and beverages for tourists.



Big day! My food truck will make waves in the city!



Once, he pitched a plan for "food truck and tourism" to delegates from the Tourism Department at his friend's beach shack. But, he got brutally dismissed.



It's next big thing!

Sorry. We're busy discussing real tourism attractions. A food truck is hardly worth our time.



Maybe they are right..

Suddenly, a lightbulb appeared above Freddie's head as he got an idea. He thought to change the food truck menu to authentic 'Goan Food'...



... and people started to flock in..

Following month, in his friend's beach shack..

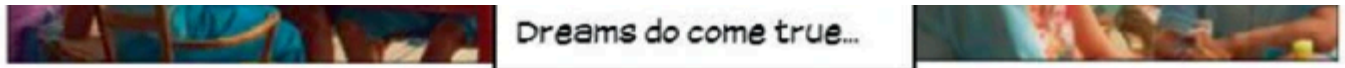


Sorry for dismissing your idea earlier!!



Consider applying to the Goa Startup Promotion Cell for investment in business expansion.

Maybe I will!



10.1 Introduction

Along the western coast of India lies the enchanting state of Goa, a land pulsating with a history, a vibrant culture, and a thriving tourism industry that beckons adventurers, leisure and religious tourists alike. The region was ruled by several dynasties like the Mauryas, Marathas, Chalukyas, and Mughals, who left their imprints on its landscape. However, in the fifteenth century, Goa's destiny took a dramatic turn when the Portuguese general Afonso de Albuquerque captured the territory and took control of the spice trade (Livemore, [2024](#)). The Portuguese continued their dominance for the next 450 years till the Indian army successfully annexed them. Nevertheless, the Portuguese imprinted their culture on the soul of Goa and sowed the seeds of a cultural fusion that is palpable even today.

Goa's tourism industry comprises private-sector hotel, tour, and travel agency operators. The Government bodies make policy decisions and work to preserve heritage and maintain infrastructure (Gore et al., [2024](#)). The state draws millions of visitors annually. The sun-soaked beaches, fringed by palm trees, create a picturesque backdrop that lures tourists seeking tranquility and adventure. Each coastal village offers a unique charm and a different story. One of the most delightful chapters in the tourism story is its foodscape.

Goan cuisine is known for its seafood and spicy curries, which are consumed with either rice or pao (bread). The most prominently used ingredients are coconut and spices like black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, and nutmeg. The staple food of most Goans is fish curry, fried fish, and rice. Meats like beef and pork are also commonly consumed. The locals also love sweet dishes like *bibinka* and *dodol* and alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages like *feni*, *urrak*, and *kokum*. Within the bylanes of Goa are the "food carts and trucks." Customer reviews on Google show that Instagram and YouTube videos are becoming catalysts, propelling the food carts and trucks serving traditional Goan cuisine into the center stage of the Goan foodscape.

The food trucks and carts captivate the wandering eyes of passersby, particularly the curious gazes of tourists eager for authentic flavors and unique experiences. These carts

and trucks serve a feast of Goan traditional cuisine, a culinary heritage that embodies both tantalizing and rich flavors. Their dishes are not just tasty but downright sumptuous. The tastes are so evocative and authentic that they repeatedly beckon the locals and tourists, ensuring a steady stream of returning customers. Each dish tells a tale steeped in tradition, and with every bite, tourists are immersed in the vibrant essence of Goa. However, despite their burgeoning popularity among tourists, the local government or Destination Management Organization (DMO) has not fully recognized the potential of these food trucks and carts as viable tourism products (Policy, [2020](#)). However, within this oversight lies an untapped opportunity. In order to better understand the diverse and vibrant culinary scene in Goa, this case study conducted interviews with various food truck and cart vendors operating in the region. By gathering insights and perspectives directly from these local food truck and cart vendors (see Table [10.1](#) for the details of the vendors), the case offers a deeper understanding of the destination foodscape, offering a unique traditional experience that can be promoted as a viable tourism product.

Table 10.1 List of interviewed vendors (coded)

10.2 Food Trucks and Carts Landscape of Goa

Food trucks and carts are not unique to Goa and are common in developing and developed countries. These mobile food vendors have been a staple in urban areas worldwide, providing a convenient and inexpensive dining option for people. In recent years, gourmet food trucks have become a popular trend in cities like Orlando, Florida. These trendy food trucks offer an eclectic range of food, from classic comfort food to innovative fusion dishes, creating a sense of community among food enthusiasts (Hawk, [2013](#)). Whether in the bustling street markets of Goa or the trendy food truck parks of Orlando, food trucks and carts have become a vital component of the modern food culture, bringing people together over a shared love for good food (Hawk, [2013](#)).

Every evening until late at night, the streets transform into a bustling haven, with each food truck or cart occupying its designated spot. Some date back to the 1990s, while others are newcomers, injecting a fresh vibrancy into the scene. Many carts and trucks are adorned with bright colors and intricate designs inspired by Mario Miranda's art (D'Mello, [2016](#)). Mario Miranda is a celebrated Goan cartoonist who immortalized local

characters and traditions through newspaper cartoons. His legacy is echoed in the vibrant designs that grace the food carts and trucks. See Fig. [10.1](#) for the food trucks and carts of Goa.

Fig. 10.1



Source The author

Food trucks and carts of Goa.

The traditional Goan street food amalgamates Indian, Portuguese, and local influences (Joshi, [2016](#)). Vendors and food stalls have adapted to cater to tourist's preferences while

preserving the authentic flavors of local dishes (see Table [10.2](#)).

Table 10.2 Traditional street foods of Goa

The trucks or carts strategically position themselves within or on the outskirts of picturesque villages, nestled near the serene backwaters or along the banks of rivulets. The vendors choose locations that captivate the attention of passersby, particularly the wandering eyes of tourists. Vendor 1, one of the interviewees, says, *“People are attracted to the ambiance as it is close to the beach, and they get fresh air and watch the sunset as they eat.”* The trucks and carts often become sought-after attractions, drawing inquisitive tourists seeking authentic flavors and unique experiences in Goa. The tantalizing aromas wafting through the air and the Goan music add to the ambiance, forcing the on-goers to stop and try the offerings. Another interviewee, Vendor 16, shares,

The change in people’s lifestyles has increased the demand for street food. Most people, primarily working-class people, students, and tourists, depend on street food, which is convenient and affordable. The other reason is taste.

The carts and trucks owe their existence to personal investments and the unwavering support of angel investors, often family members rallying behind the entrepreneurial dreams of their kin. They are a family affair for many, with parents and children, spouses, or siblings working in unison to ensure the smooth operation of these culinary ventures. Vendor 25, an interviewee, says, *“I had only finished high school. My family motivated and funded me to start the food truck in 2014.”*

A few lone operators run their business on rented carts. Vendor 20, an interviewee, says, *“I served tea on the bike, but that business was not profitable. Now, I have rented a cart. I make enough money to pay the rent and support my family.”*

The resilience of the vendors was tested by the recent challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of many food trucks and carts. However, amidst adversity, the most tenacious have endured, serving as beacons of perseverance.

Vendor 4, an interviewee, mentions, *“During the pandemic, I closed my food truck and sold fruits and fish. Now I have started back. I am getting excellent responses.”*

Some vendors ventured into this business after losing their jobs to the pandemic. Vendor 11, another interviewee, recalls, *“I was a seafarer and was out of India for nearly 20 years, away from family and home. I observed many food trucks in foreign countries, and after the pandemic, I decided to have one of my own in Goa. The demand is higher during vacation and December. In the same line, an interviewee, Vendor 6, says, “I was working as a chef on a cruise line. During the pandemic, I lost my job. I decided to open a food cart as cooking was my passion. I keep changing the menu. Beef Tongue roast is my signature dish.”*

Food trucks and carts have a rich and diverse history in the culinary landscape of various regions and cultures. In Goa, mobile food vendors have played a crucial role in shaping the local food culture, contributing to a vibrant foodscape and serving as a social innovation in eating out. These vendors offer various food options, from traditional Goan dishes to fusion cuisine, and can be found in popular tourist spots and local markets (Joshi, [2016](#)).

10.3 Operations of the Food Trucks and Carts

For all the vendors, the local markets are the primary source of the ingredients. Vendor 3 Carvalho, an interviewee, says, *“I buy fresh meat from the local shop daily and marinate it at home. Since I do not have a big refrigerator, I only buy whatever is needed for the day. I do not have space to stock many ingredients.”*

With limited space and storage facilities at their disposal, the ingredients are crafted into delectable dishes within the confines of their homes during the day. They only make what they can sell for the day. Their experience guides them in estimating the perfect quantities needed. As the sun begins its descent, the carefully prepared food arrives in the carts, ready to be transported to their designated spots. The final touches, whether frying or roasting, are executed right before the customer's eyes, infusing the air with tantalizing aromas and adding that touch of spectacle to the culinary experience. Vendor 11, an interviewee, says,

I start preparation in the morning. I buy fresh meat from the local market and then marinate it. Only frying and serving are done immediately once the customer places the order. I usually

get about 40–50 customers per day. I learned these traditional recipes mostly from my mother and some on my own.

John, another food truck vendor, shared insights into his business. He mentioned that Chicken Steak bread is the most popular item on his menu, attracting around 100–150 customers daily. Vendor 8 also noticed that Mondays are busier than other days, while Thursdays are quiet. To accommodate these fluctuations, he adjusts his raw material orders accordingly. He sources fresh meats from a reliable supplier every morning and marinates them until evening. When orders come in, Vendor 8 cooks the meats on the spot and serves them hot to his customers. He says, *“I am very passionate about cooking and learned the recipe from my mother.”*

Concerning food truck operations, Vendor 1, an interviewee, says, *“My beef steak bread is famous, and people come mostly to eat this. I cater to about 500 to 600 customers daily. Because of my many years of experience, I know how much to prepare daily so there is no wastage.”*

Most food truck and cart vendors have an educational background up to high school or even less. Many deliberately chose to forgo their college education, dive headfirst into mobile culinary ventures, or support their family's business endeavors. Some carry the valuable experience of working in various roles within hotels and restaurants, bringing their expertise to these humble yet vibrant setups. To manage the various tasks, they often hire local assistance for odd jobs, forming a collaborative network within the community. For these vendors, these mobile kitchens are not just a business; they are a lifeline, providing a source of livelihood that sustains them and contributes to the flourishing local economy. Ramita, an interviewee, says, *“I worked in a company before the pandemic but underwent a financial crisis as the company could not pay us in time. So, I rented this food truck to earn and look after my family. I make and serve Goan food from 8 am to 9 pm.”*

The carts and trucks do not have much food wastage as most customers opt for food parcels. Adhering to regulations, vendors provide stainless steel plates for those dining on-site, ensuring they are washed after each use. Additionally, vendors must provide water provisions for drinking and handwashing, aligning with hygiene standards. The food carts and trucks also serve as testing grounds for vendors to experiment and innovate for potential full-service café restaurants. Here, they can introduce new menu

items and receive direct customer feedback, fostering a culture of innovation and improvement.

The food trucks and carts boast low operational costs and swift service, offering a range of dishes priced attractively, from Rs 20 for cutlets to Rs 150 for specialties like Cafreal chicken and pav. Each cart caters to approximately 50–100 customers, with numbers surging from October to March during the tourist season and festive occasions. The loyalty of both locals and tourists toward these mobile eateries stems from their convenience, affordability, and competitive quality of food compared to many restaurants. Vendor 5, an interviewee, says, *“I ran a cart with my sister. As the sales increased, I put up another cart. I only sell beef and pork to avoid competition with my sister.”*

While interviewing the vendors, they confirmed that apart from word-of-mouth publicity, they have also tapped into the influence of bloggers, Instagrammers, and YouTubers, leveraging their posts, videos, and pictures to boost the popularity of their food carts. While all carts and trucks offer online payment facilities, there is a missed opportunity in not integrating services with food aggregators. According to interviewee Vendor 1, the food aggregators demand to fulfill specific regulatory measures and a share of the sales, which the vendors find hard to comply with.

10.4 Challenges Faced by Food Truck Vendors

The world of food trucks and carts is a vibrant yet challenging landscape. Customers have noted a fluctuation in food quality and inconsistency in menu offerings (Holmes et al., [2018](#)). Unfortunately, to cut costs, some vendors resort to lower-quality ingredients or substitutes, impacting the taste and satisfaction of their offerings. The analyzed Google reviews show customers expressing a desire for transparency, urging vendors to provide information about the ingredients used in their preparations, hoping to rebuild trust and ensure a more satisfying dining experience (Trip Advisor, n.d.).

Concerns about hygiene and food safety persist. The analyzed Google reviews on food carts and trucks in Goa highlight customers reporting unhygienic conditions for cooking (Goan Food, n.d.). The reviews often discuss reports of chefs and servers not following proper hygiene practices, such as not using gloves and the same pans for vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. Issues of semi-cooked meats left out for extended periods raise

concerns about foodborne illnesses. Inadequate storage conditions further exacerbate worries about food spoilage (Biswas & Mandal, [2016](#)).

Vendor 21, an interviewee, says, *“I open my food cart at 7 am and shut it down at midnight. I get around 400 customers daily as my cart is near the Goa Medical College, so doctors, nurses, and patients’ relatives are also my customers besides tourists. I serve in steel plates as they can be reused after washing. I was a chef in a hotel in Dubai for 20 years and, hence, am aware of and follow hygiene standards. I also customise the food as per the customer’s preference.”*

Behavioral issues, including discrimination and clashes between vendors and tourists, have smudged the experience for many (Swarbrooke & Horner, [2007](#)). Moreover, the emergence of competitors offering diverse cuisines like Middle Eastern, Mexican, or North Indian presents a challenge, especially in popular locations where the abundance of choices becomes overwhelming. Vendor 10, an interviewee, proclaims, *“I do not feel the competition. I make sure that the taste and quality I offer are consistent. Customers will come back despite competition.”*

Vendor 11 mentions, *“Not all tourists like the Goan flavour (masalas or vinegar). Besides Goan fare, I also serve biryani (chicken and prawns) and Maggie noodles to cater to tourists. Not everyone wants Goan street food. I do not want to lose customers because I serve only Goan cuisine.”*

Some confrontations arise when big restaurant owners restrict the vendors from parking in their vicinity, creating further hurdles. Many vendors prefer parking alongside the roads to avoid confrontations with other food cart vendors, restaurants, or shop owners. Some face constant challenges, compelling them to change locations frequently. Moreover, the concern about parking in unhygienic areas or along highways raises risks for customers (FDA, [2023](#)). Regulatory hurdles add another layer of complexity. Acquiring necessary licenses and permits while navigating health regulations and relationships with local authorities becomes an uphill battle. Many vendors end up operating without proper permissions. Vendor 9, an interviewee, recalls: *“I had a tough time getting all the required licenses to start my business. Corruption is unfortunate. Officials demanded bribes for paperwork.”*

Vendor 22, another interviewee, stresses, “*You need good relations with local panchayats, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) officers, Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB), and fire and police personnel so that your business does not face issues.*”

Another challenge that these food truck vendors face is menu restrictions. Space limitations within these mobile kitchens restrict menu options and affect kitchen capabilities, while customer amenities remain minimal, forcing patrons to stand or sit in the open. Maintenance is a recurring struggle, requiring regular upkeep of equipment, vehicles, and kitchen hygiene, demanding time and financial investments. Most vendors claim they get enough time in the morning to clean the kitchen equipment and vehicles. However, preventive and scheduled maintenance that requires burner or vehicle servicing and pollution checks often takes a backseat.

10.5 Are Food Carts and Trucks Viable Tourism Products?

From 2021 to 2028, the food truck market is expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 6.8% from its 2020 valuation of \$3.93 billion (Khatabook, n.d.). They are often an integral part of the tourist experience in many destinations worldwide, and food trucks and carts contribute to diversifying tourism products, encouraging exploration, and dispersing tourist traffic to lesser-known areas. Food trucks positioned strategically help tourists explore Goa's hidden gems. The décor of the food trucks and the uniforms/clothing worn by the vendors aid in promoting the local culture. The trucks often play local Goan folk and movie songs, which help the tourists connect with the local culture (Stone et al., [2018](#)).

The trucks and carts provide meeting points, encouraging social interaction and a sense of belonging. They foster community bonding and interactions among locals and tourists (Hawk, [2013](#)). Street food is usually more affordable than dining in restaurants, making it an attractive option for budget-conscious tourists. Positive experiences locals or tourists share create word-of-mouth recommendations, drawing more visitors. Further, food carts and trucks operate till late at night, allowing the tourists to grab a bite.

Street food vendors often innovate by offering creative twists on classic dishes or presenting fusion cuisines. Uniqueness and innovation in menu items attract tourists seeking new culinary experiences. The customer wants to include ice cream infused with

local drinks like feni or urrak. The vendors often participate in local events, markets, or festivals. Their presence in these venues introduces their offerings to a broader audience.

Moreover, the rise in online content has transformed food trucks and carts into sought-after tourist attractions (Gore et al., [2021](#)). Delving into its street food is not merely a delight for taste buds but an odyssey through culture and heritage. Encouraging tourists to embrace local cuisine transcends mere flavors; it is about unraveling narratives, immersing in tradition, supporting the economy, and fostering sustainability. The DMO can take initiatives to make the street foodscape sustainable by encouraging reusable packing and zero waste goals, providing subsidies for solar-powered or green roofs on trucks, and encouraging water conservation and refilling stations.

10.6 Aftermath

Goa's tourism status offers a wealth of opportunities for food truck entrepreneurs. By tailoring their marketing efforts to attract tourists and collaborating with local businesses, food truck entrepreneurs can carve out a unique niche in the state's thriving culinary scene. The state government is encouraging caravan and hinterland tourism to attract more tourists. However, the government has not yet explored the possibility of integrating and promoting street food within the scope of hinterland tourism. It is hoped that by promoting caravan and hinterland tourism, more tourists will have the opportunity to explore the food trucks and carts in the interiors of Goa (Policy, [2020](#)).

Moreover, the government of Goa has taken a proactive step toward fostering entrepreneurial spirit by initiating the "Startup Promotion Cell" aimed at empowering local innovators (Startup, [2023](#)). Among the beneficiaries are food truck operators, who now have an opportunity to scale up their businesses. This initiative not only encourages the growth of small enterprises but also contributes to the vibrant culinary landscape of Goa. With support from the government, these entrepreneurs can explore new horizons, expand their reach, and further enrich the region's diverse gastronomic experience.

Discussion Questions

1. Explore the significance of food trucks and carts in offering authentic destination foodscape.
2. Discuss the business model of the food trucks and carts.

3. Using the pillars of sustainability, suggest solutions to mitigate the challenges and limitations of food carts and trucks.
4. Prepare a plan for the DMO to make food trucks and carts a viable tourism product.

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Appendices

Teaching Notes

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the case are as follows:

- To analyze the role of the food trucks and carts toward the destination foodscape.
- To evaluate the contribution of food trucks and carts toward culinary innovation.
- To examine the business model of food trucks/carts.
- To propose sustainable solutions for challenges and limitations faced by the vendors.
- To suggest strategies for DMO for shaping the food trucks and carts as a potential tourism product.

Learning Outcomes

Through the case, the students will be able to

- Gain insights into the role of food trucks and carts within the destination foodscape.
- Critically evaluate and appreciate the contributions of food trucks and carts toward culinary innovation.
- Develop the skills to analyze the business models of food trucks and carts.
- Advance the ability to identify and propose sustainable solutions for challenges faced by food truck and cart vendors.
- Acquire the knowledge and skills to suggest strategies for the DMOs in shaping food trucks and carts as a potential tourism product.

Target Audience

The case is specifically designed to cater to the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in BBA Travel and Tourism, BSc, and MSc Hospitality courses. The case is highly relevant to subjects such as tourism concepts, hospitality, and tourism planning. It can prove to be an extremely valuable resource in disciplines such as Hospitality Marketing, Marketing, and Promotion Tools. The content of the case is focused on providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the tourism and hospitality industry. It is an excellent tool for students to develop practical skills and knowledge that can be applied in real-life scenarios.

Teaching Methods and Equipment

When starting a class or a case discussion, it is important to lay a strong foundation for the case. One effective way to achieve this is by utilizing the Additional Material section, which contains a variety of helpful YouTube videos. Students are encouraged to read up on the concepts of destination foodscape and tourism and to watch videos on topics such as gastro-diplomacy, storytelling, DMO membership, and innovation and diffusion theory. These resources can provide valuable insights and help students gain a deeper understanding of the case at hand.

As the class or discussion progresses, the facilitator may choose to use think-pair-share activities to enhance the learning experience. This technique involves having students think about a particular question or problem individually, then pair up with a classmate to share their thoughts, and finally share their insights with the larger group. This approach

encourages active engagement and collaboration among students, helping to solidify their understanding of the case and its related concepts.

Teaching Instructions Plan

- *20 min*: Introduction—The facilitator can begin the discussion by asking the students about foodscape. The students will be encouraged to discuss how cultural influences and cuisine affect the foodscape. The facilitator may divide the class into groups of 5 students and hand over the case for reading.
- *10 min*: Brainstorming session in groups (Intra Group)—Students can be asked to discuss and note the information presented in the case.
- *30 min*: Discussion question 1 (Intergroup discussion)—The students can be asked to discuss the role of food trucks and carts in offering authentic destination foodscape. The facilitator can guide the students in identifying the types of foodscapes and how the food trucks and carts contribute to the destination foodscape. The students can be encouraged to write their points on the board.
- *30 min*: Discussion question 2 (Class discussion)—The facilitator can ask the students (in groups) to come forward and draw the business model on the board. Class discussion can be encouraged to add minute details till the models become comprehensive.
- *30 min*: Discussion question 3 (Class discussion)—The facilitator can ask the students to discuss possible solutions to the problem using the pillars of sustainability, i.e. economic, environmental, and social. Also, sustainability concerning regulatory framework and innovations could be discussed.
- *30 min*: Discussion question 4 (Class discussion)—The facilitator can ask the students to discuss strategies to encourage the DMO to recognize food trucks and carts within the destination foodscape. Discussion on storytelling, DMO membership, and gastro-diplomacy can be encouraged. Students could also be asked to look up examples of destinations that promote street food.

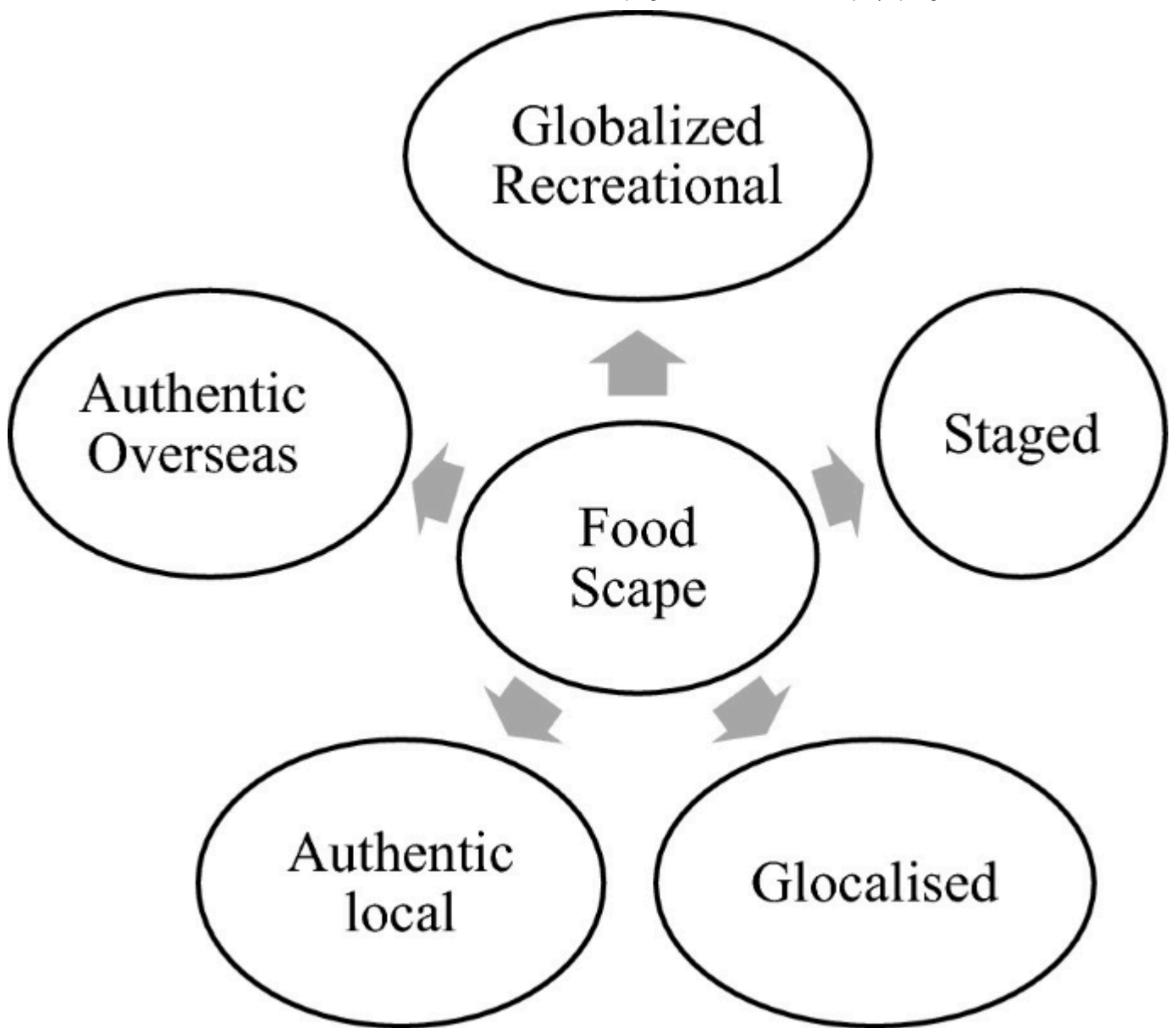
Discussion Questions and Analysis

Question 1: Explore the significance of food trucks and carts in offering authentic destination foodscape.

The concept of a foodscape includes a destination's food ecosystem, incorporating local ingredients, traditional dishes, cooking techniques, street food, restaurants, and the socio-cultural context in which it is prepared and consumed. The foodscape tells the story of a region, its history, and its people. Culinary experiences hold an undeniable influence over the overall appeal of a destination. The fusion of food and tourism creates an inseparable bond, and local cuisine plays a crucial role in shaping tourist experiences. It enables travelers to immerse themselves in the culinary offerings of a region, providing a sensory journey that encapsulates the essence of the place.

Zhu et al. (2022) define five types of destination foodscapes: globalized recreational, staged, glocalized, authentic local, and authentic overseas foodscape (see Fig. 10.2). Globalized recreational areas offer foreign tourists' different types of cuisine and recreational services. A staged foodscape represents local elements in a physical environment. They are created for tourists who demand an experience of local culture. Hence, food taste may be curated according to the tourist's palate. Glocalized foodscape is represented by all the multinational chains serving burgers, pizzas, and pasta. Authentic local foodscape includes places where locals go to eat local food. It is where locals live, and interactions between tourists and locals could happen. Overseas authentic foodscapes are places that offer different international cuisines in the area. They cater to both locals and tourists.

Fig. 10.2



Source Adapted from Zhu et al. ([2022](#))

Destination foodscapes.

Food trucks and carts in Goa offer authentic culinary experiences rooted in the region's cultural and historical heritage. The fusion of traditional indigenous recipes and tourists' demand for genuine Goan dishes have driven the preservation and growth of the local food culture. The vendors' ability to adapt and innovate with cuisines like Italian, Chinese, and Mexican alongside traditional Goan dishes demonstrates the evolving nature of the foodscape, catering to diverse preferences and fostering culinary innovation. The food trucks and carts offer authentic culinary experiences through.

Preservation of Traditional Dishes: Food trucks and carts are instrumental in preserving and serving traditional Goan dishes. These dishes reflect the rich heritage of the region and its historical influences, providing an authentic taste of Goan cuisine.

Cultural Immersion: By offering local, indigenous flavors, the food trucks and carts allow visitors to immerse themselves in the culinary traditions of Goa. Tourists taste authentic, homemade Goan food, providing a more profound cultural experience beyond the typical restaurant offerings.

Engagement with Locals: The food truck and cart vendors cater to locals and tourists. It creates a shared space where locals and visitors can savor the same authentic dishes, fostering cultural exchange and a sense of community.

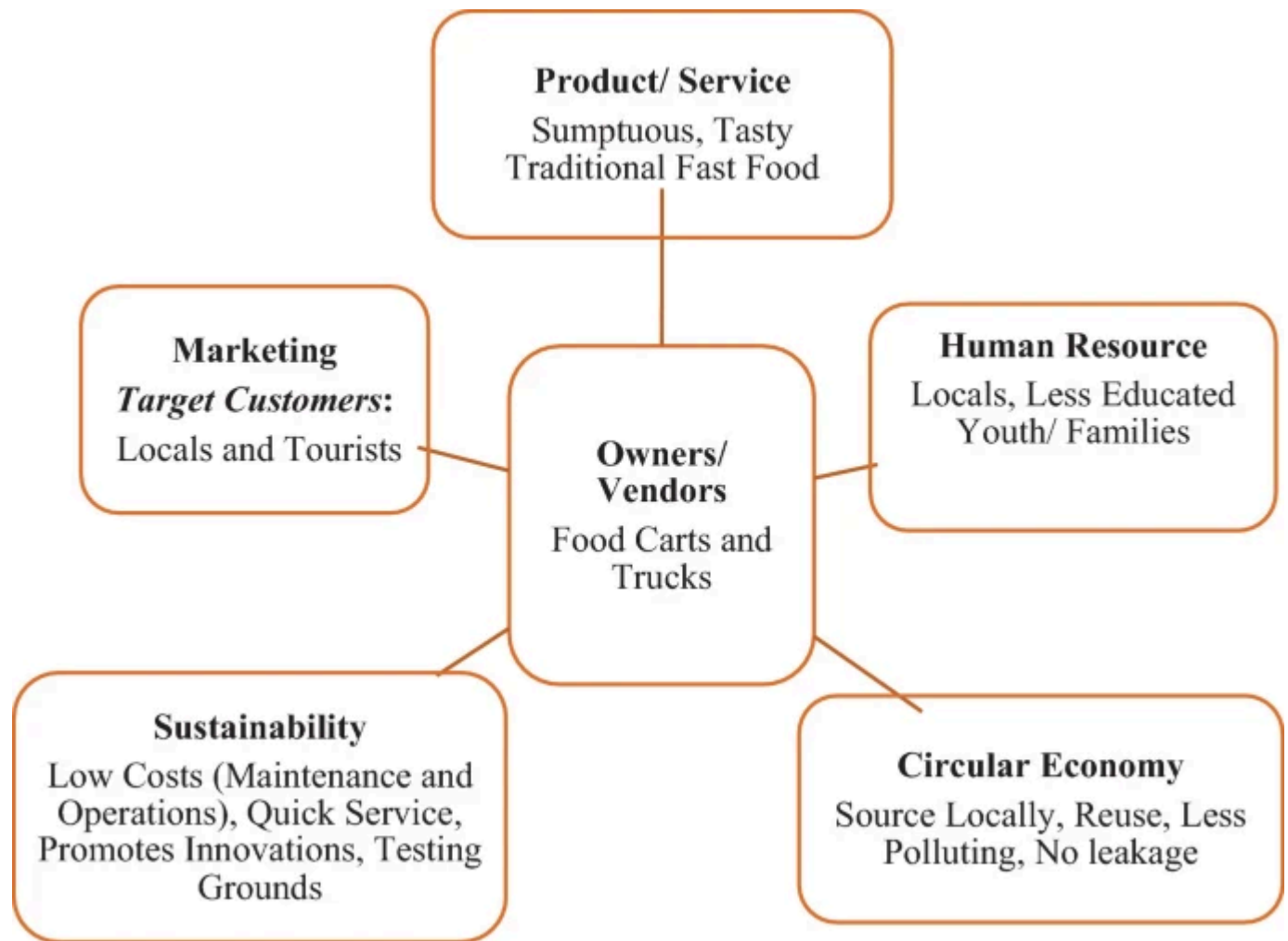
Question 2: Discuss the business model of the food trucks and carts.

A business model shows how food trucks and carts create, deliver, and capture value. It represents how the food trucks and carts operate, generate revenue, and sustain operations.

The different components of the model are as follows:

Product and Service: The carts/trucks provide Goan traditional food, which is tasty and sumptuous. The tastes resonate with the locals, so they keep returning. The raw material is sourced from the local market and is freshly prepared at the vendor's home during the day. Due to a lack of space and equipment for food storage, the vendors only make items they can finish in a day. They do not have an inventory system and know how much to prepare from experience. The food is loaded onto the carts and transported to their assigned spots by evening. The final cooking processes, such as frying and roasting, are done right before the customers' eyes.

Food trucks and carts are located in strategic areas like within or on the outskirts of two villages, picturesque places near backwaters, or the banks of rivulets, which draws attention from passersby, especially tourists. Many times, tourists search for food trucks/carts through Google Maps and explore the unknown treasures of Goa (refer to Fig. [10.3](#) Business model of food trucks and carts).

Fig. 10.3

Source The author

Business model of food trucks and carts.

Human Resource: Most food truck and cart vendors are educated up to high school or less. Many individuals discontinued their college education to venture into the business or help their parents. A few of them have worked in different capacities in hotels and restaurants. Local help is hired to do odd jobs. The food trucks and carts provide them with a source of livelihood.

Circular Economy and Sustainability: Food wastage is minimal. Most people take food parcels. Hence, not much garbage is generated at the site. As per the regulations, the vendors must keep stainless steel plates for those who want to eat at the site. The plates are washed after each use. The vendors are supposed to make water provisions for

drinking and washing hands. They act as testing grounds for vendors who want to open a full-service café restaurant. They can innovate their menu and get direct feedback from customers.

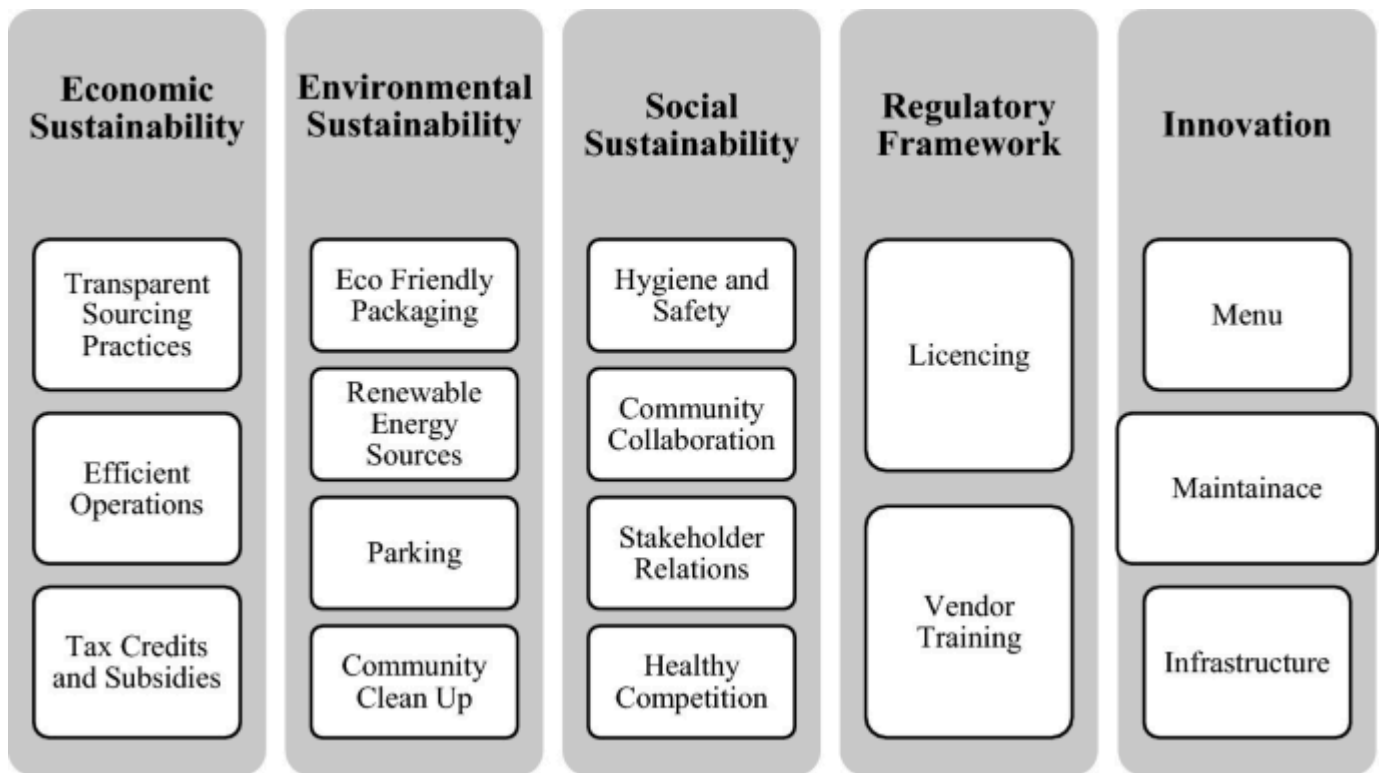
Marketing: The food trucks and carts have low operational costs and provide quick service. Prices of the food items range from Rs 20 for cutlets to Rs 150 for dishes like cafreal chicken and pao. On average, each cart serves approximately 50–100 customers. The numbers increase from October to March due to the tourist season and festive occasions.

Most trucks and carts have a loyal customer base comprising locals and tourists. The locals and tourists find food trucks convenient and economical, offering good quality food. The food truck/cart owners engage in word-of-mouth publicity. Many of them are listed on Google. However, most marketing is done through a third party, i.e., bloggers, Instagrammers, and YouTubers. The videos and pictures they post have helped increase the popularity of the food carts. All the trucks and carts have an online payment facility. The vendors have not integrated their services with food aggregators, which can sustain them long-term. The integration could help them streamline operations and enhance customer experience.

Question 3: Using the pillars of sustainability, suggest solutions to mitigate the challenges and limitations of food carts and trucks.

The challenges faced by food truck vendors are related to food quality and transparency, hygiene and safety, menu restrictions, maintenance and cleaning, behavior, competition, parking, and regulatory hurdles. The following strategies based on sustainability pillars could be used to mitigate the challenges and limitations of food carts and trucks (Fig. 10.4).

Fig. 10.4



Source The author

Pillars of sustainability.

Economic Sustainability: Vendors could be encouraged to disclose raw material suppliers by clearly communicating the origin and quality of ingredients. The practice will help to foster trust and address customer concerns about fluctuating food quality (Holmes et al., 2018). Economic viability could be achieved by implementing cost-effective operational practices like menu offerings, reducing waste, and exploring shared resources with other vendors. The government or DMO could provide tax credits and subsidies to the vendors. It will ensure resilience among food cart operators during the off-season.

Environmental Sustainability: Eco-friendly packaging materials could be advocated to reduce single-use plastic waste. Solar power or green roofs could be used for vehicles to reduce the environmental footprint and align with sustainability principles. The government or DMO could demarcate safe and convenient vendor and parking spaces. Collaborations with the local communities and authorities for periodic clean-up initiatives could be done so that the areas where food trucks operate remain hygienic and safe for customers.

Social Sustainability: Comprehensive training programs could be provided on hygiene and food safety practices for vendors, emphasizing wearing gloves, proper cooking practices, and separate utensils for vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. The government or DMO could encourage collaboration among food vendors to address behavioral issues and conflicts collectively. A code of conduct that promotes positive interactions between vendors and tourists could be suggested. Fostering healthy competition could help the vendors earn profits and showcase a positive image of the destination. Better relationships between food vendors and local authorities, including panchayats, FSSAI officers, GSPCB, and police personnel, could be encouraged for improved communication and smoother operations.

Regulatory Compliance and Relations: Streamlined and transparent licensing processes could reduce corruption and bureaucratic hurdles. Single window systems could also be implemented to get the licenses quickly. Food inspectors and auditors could train the vendors on hygiene practices, food safety, supply chain, procurement, and storage. The unskilled vendors will get a chance to learn the job, streamlining their processes.

Innovation and Diversification: Vendors could offer diverse and flexible menu options catering to different tastes and preferences. It will ensure that customers taste diverse food items from the fare, exposing them to the authentic culture of the place. Planned maintenance and new infrastructure development would ensure that facilities are updated. Regular servicing and pollution checks could be done to make services efficient and environmentally friendly.

Question 4: Prepare a plan for the DMO to make food trucks and carts a viable tourism product.

The DMO can use storytelling, gastro-diplomacy, and DMO membership programs to include food trucks and carts in the destination's foodscape.

Storytelling is a form of communication that involves conveying narratives through spoken word, written text, or visual media (Bassano et al., [2019](#)). It is a method to engage, entertain, educate, and share experiences, beliefs, and cultural heritage. Storytelling in street food promotion humanizes the experience, connecting tourists with the cultural and historical aspects of a destination's culinary offerings. It serves as a means to create

an emotional and memorable connection, fostering an understanding and appreciation of the local food culture. By sharing compelling and engaging stories, destinations can position their street food as an integral and alluring component of the tourism experience, appealing to visitors seeking authenticity and cultural immersion (Ben Youssef et al., [2019](#)).

Elements and application of storytelling in street food promotion:

- a. **Crafting stories that delve into street food history and cultural significance.**
Narratives about how a specific dish originated, its ties to local traditions, and the people behind the recipes could be created. Multimedia, such as videos, photographs, and social media platforms, can create compelling visual narratives.
- b. **Vendor Stories:** Personal stories from street food vendors sharing their journey, passion, and family recipes make for engaging content. These personal stories create an emotional connection and authenticity, providing insights into the culinary heritage.
- c. **Local Traditions and Festivals:** Exploring how street food is intertwined with local festivals, celebrations, and daily life. Sharing tales of how particular dishes are intrinsic to these events can immerse visitors in the cultural experience.
- d. **Guided Tours and Workshops:** Offering guided tours or interactive workshops led by local experts or vendors, where stories behind the dishes are shared while visitors experience and taste the street food. Interactive storytelling enhances engagement and educational value.
- e. **Inclusive Narratives:** Encouraging local community participation by sharing their stories or inviting them to contribute their experiences related to street food. Collaborative storytelling fosters a sense of community and inclusivity. Narrating how street food has evolved, adapted, or fused with new influences reflects culinary dynamism. Highlighting innovative dishes or interpretations adds interest and relevance.

Gastro-diplomacy is also known as culinary diplomacy (Suntikul, [2019](#)). It employs the art of food and cuisine to foster cultural understanding, strengthen relationships, and

promote a positive image of a nation or region. The strategic approaches used to promote street food as a tourism product could involve the following:

- a. Hosting culinary events and exchanges inviting national or international participation where vendors from different regions or countries showcase their offerings.
- b. Organizing culinary workshops and training where local street food vendors or chefs share their expertise with international counterparts.
- c. Promoting culinary tourism through campaigns highlighting street food as a cultural asset. Developing promotional materials using social media and digital marketing to showcase the authenticity and uniqueness of street food offerings, leveraging storytelling and engaging visuals.
- d. Organizing cultural and diplomatic events or initiatives featuring street food and serving by hosting international guests, diplomats, or foreign delegations and offering them an authentic street food experience can strengthen cultural ties.
- e. Empowering local vendors by providing them with the tools, resources, and opportunities to thrive. Vendors can partner with local panchayats, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) officers, and other regulatory bodies. Building relationships and alliances can ease the process of obtaining licenses and permits.
- f. Encouraging community-driven initiatives like cultural groups and government bodies. Collaborative efforts can support street food initiatives, enhancing community pride and participation.

DMO membership refers to the affiliation of businesses, stakeholders, and entities within the tourism and hospitality industry with an organization responsible for managing and promoting a specific destination. Membership in a DMO offers street food vendors opportunities for growth, visibility, marketing, and access to resources that can elevate their businesses. DMOs can play a crucial role in enhancing the success and sustainability of street food trucks and cart vendors within a destination. The critical aspects of DMO membership include marketing support, representation, capacity building, inclusion, and infrastructure support. DMO can designate areas with toilets, washing facilities, and seating space. They may also provide loans and subsidies. Forming a group representing vendor interests can help amplify their voices in regulatory matters, facilitating

constructive dialogue with government bodies to address challenges such as corruption and demanding bribes. The DMO or the local government can implement some benchmark programs other Indian states and countries practice. The programs help boost tourism, preserve cultural authenticity, and sustain local economies.

Indian Cities

- Mumbai and Delhi's local governments organize culinary walks, street food tours, and festivals. Local street food is showcased through initiatives like Mumbai's "Khau Gallis" (food lanes). There are efforts to regulate and formalize street food operations at Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk, an area known for its heritage cuisine.
- Kolkata: Street food festivals and culinary events in the city showcase regional specialties, such as the "Puchka Mela," celebrating the Panipuri.
- Ahmedabad: The DMO collaborates to showcase local favorites through food festivals and culinary events on designated food streets.
- Chennai: The DMO supports guided culinary tours that explore the city's street food specialties.

Other Countries

- Hawker Culture Recognition: Singapore's government, through the National Heritage Board, has recognized hawker culture as an intangible cultural heritage. This move supports and safeguards the local hawker centers and street food culture by offering monetary incentives and preserving cultural heritage. Hawker centers are promoted and protected, ensuring affordable meals for locals and tourists. The DMO collaborates with local authorities to maintain and upgrade these culinary centers to attract tourists seeking authentic street food experiences.
- Bangkok's Michelin Guide for Street Food: Bangkok's DMO collaborates with the Michelin Guide to feature street food vendors and hawkers. The guide awards Michelin stars to outstanding street food stalls, encouraging tourists to explore authentic local cuisine.
- Mexico City hosts events like the "Festival de Comida Callejera" (Street Food Festival), promoting local street foods like tacos, tamales, and esquites. These

initiatives, supported by the local government and DMOs, preserve cultural and culinary heritage and attract tourists.

- Portland, Oregon, is famous for its food cart pods. The local government worked with DMOs to create dedicated zones for food carts, ensuring supportive infrastructure and regulations for vendors.

Additional Materials

Gastro diplomacy: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=gastro+diplomacy, storytelling—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKIZ0bicfFw>

DMO membership: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_-aEAFxxNs

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