

## Chapter 20

# The Importance of Shifting Responsible to Self-Responsible Behavior Towards Food Waste in the Indian Hospitality Sector

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this chapter is to examine food waste concerns and to observe the patterns associated with food wastage in weddings and temples in India. This research also examines the diverse obstacles encountered by individuals in practicing responsible food consumption and managing their access to food. The chapter is an exploratory study that aimed to gather empirical data on the current situation and individual accountability around food waste. In this study, a qualitative case study methodology was employed to examine the specific methods implemented by stakeholders. The authors of this chapter present their perspective on the increasing quantity of food waste, accompanied by secondary data obtained from a range of scientific research and publications produced by various government organizations. This chapter focuses on promoting self-responsible behavior in the Indian hospitality sector, specifically in relation to food waste. It examines the benefits of avoiding food waste in various settings, such as weddings and Mandirs.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

India is frequently said to as a country known for its many celebrations, religious observances, and cultural festivities. In India, we eagerly celebrate seasonal festivals, religious holidays, and life events

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like weddings, births, and deaths. Weddings hold a unique significance among various social gatherings, since they are cherished and commemorated with immense fervor. During this event, a substantial amount of food is meticulously cooked and a gathering of family, fellow villagers, and friends is invited to partake in the meal. Historically, especially in rural areas, wedding ceremonies would extend over several days. Nevertheless, a restricted range of conventional culinary offerings were prepared for these events. The quantity of food that was discarded, along with its occurrence rate, was thus negligible. If any food remained uneaten or unshared, it was either consumed by the household members directly or taken to other villages, extended households, or relatives for consumption.

In the realm of tourism, food transcends its basic function of providing sustenance and becomes a vital element of the visitor's whole experience and a mesmerizing attraction. However, the generation of food waste resulting in a significant ecological and economical concern for the tourism industry. The social atmosphere and lively setting, combined with ample servings, abundant buffets, and expensive entertainment, intensify the problem of food waste. The problem is further exacerbated by cultural norms that depict food waste as a symbol of exceptional hospitality, so complicating its resolution. As to the findings of Aschemann-Witzel et al. (2015), food waste is a significant worldwide issue that has been recognized by various stakeholders. The references cited are Hall et al., 2009 and Tonini et al., 2018. Environmentalists argue that food waste exacerbates the strain on natural resources, such as freshwater, arable land, and electric power. Simultaneously, nutrition experts have found that discarding food results in a significant depletion of vital nutrients (Chen et al., 2020; Khalid et al., 2019). In addition, it intensifies social disparity (Gille, 2013) and economic recessions (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014), posing a significant threat to global food security (Baig et al., 2019). Furthermore, it presents a substantial threat to world food security. According to estimates, roughly thirty percent of food meant for human consumption is wasted globally, leading to a considerable depletion of natural resources and a major carbon footprint (FAO, 2013).

Food waste results in substantial expenses related to resources, labour, production, storage, transportation, and disposal, as well as causing harmful effects on the environment. It is imperative for professional waste management firms to guarantee the appropriate disposal of food waste in order to avert the production of noxious odours, the allure of insects, and the consequent transmission of diseases. Disposing of food waste, a commonly adopted practice, imposes a significant cost strain. Furthermore, the act of discarding any food item results in the squandering of the financial resources allocated to its creation. According to the research conducted by Baldwin and Shakman (2012), the food industry suffers a daily loss of around 4%–10% of its investment in food processing, resulting in a significant negative effect on the company's income. The social aspect of food waste should not be disregarded, as it is closely connected to societal issues such as poverty and hunger, which worsen food insecurity.

India is a renowned tourist hotspot, drawing an annual average of 1.8 million visitors (Statista India, 2022). In 2022, India experienced a significant rise in domestic tourist visits, with a total of 1731 million trips, surpassing the figures of the previous year. From 2000 to the present, there was a significant increase in local tourist visits across the country. However, the development was abruptly stopped in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic. In 2022, the United States of America accounted for the most number of international tourists visiting India, with a total of over 1,373 thousand visitors. In 2022, American tourists have surpassed the number of tourists from other European and South Asian countries visiting the country. According to a report published by the Statista Research Department on December 7, 2023, Bangladesh, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom were the countries with the biggest number of tourists visiting India in 2022.

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