



Research Article

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY TOWARDS ‘HARE-RAMA HARE-KRISHNA’ RELIGIOUS
TOURISTS FOOD CONSUMPTION HABITS WHILE ON A HOLIDAY IN INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

Food functions as a medium through which we encounter the world. We consume food based on our society’s paramount attitudes towards nature, religious beliefs and nutritional benefits rather than just according to our needs. In this research, the author studied a group of Hare Krishna tourists belonging to ISKCON religious movement of Hindu religion. There are several studies done on the western vegetarian groups based primarily on their ethical, environmental and health-based vegetarian food habits but not many studies on the food consumption behaviour of religious tourists, especially on the Hare Krishnas’ during a holiday. This under-represented and under-researched group’s struggles and behaviour patterns will help us understand other divergent groups of vegetarians and vegans from across the world and help sensitise the tourism industry to this large group of intermingled and often confusing group of people. This ethnographical, qualitative research is focussed on reflexively studying the Hare Krishna religious tourist’s comprehension and interpretation of vegetarianism and the factors which influence their holiday destination choice. The author further strives to understand what happens to the religious food values of a Hare Krishna follower while making food choices during a holiday and whether these tourism experiences influence or transform the religious food values of this group. Food is taken to be a purely functional and supporting resource to tourism and as such tourist’s food consumption behaviour and patterns are largely ignored and neglected in tourism literature. In this research, the author adds to the limited body of knowledge of vegetarians based on their religious beliefs along with revealing the reasons, visible and invisible cues this group exhibit and are engaged in while planning their holidays and food choices.

Keywords: Vegetarian, Hinduism, Hare Krishna, ISKCON, Religious Tourism, Ethnography.

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