

CATERING AND FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Whenever a person leaves his/her home for more than a few hours, s/he has to seek hospitality elsewhere. Often it may be a snack, a drink or even a meal because his/her home is too far away to go to and eat. In a long work day, even if a person takes a packed lunch, s/he may want to drink some beverage — it may be tea, coffee, juice or an aerated drink. Thus, we require services that will supply food whenever and wherever necessary. These services are performed by the catering industry. The catering industry provides, to varying extents, a substitute for food that one would have got at home.

In ancient times in India, *dharmashalas* catered to travellers who went on pilgrimages. Even today, such *dharmashalas* are in operation, offering

an economical place to stay and have meals. Besides this, at religious places, it is traditional to give *prasad* or *langar* to the devotees. Similarly, during the month of Ramzan, food is provided to all people when they break their fast. All of these foods are prepared in very large amounts, by persons who have the expertise to do so.

With changes in the socio-economic scenario, food service and catering has evolved into an industry that is expanding, as there is much greater demand for food outside home which is tasty, hygienic, healthy and aesthetically served. In some situations, there is a demand for food with longer shelf life. Scientific and technological advancement has helped those involved in mass production of food to streamline their activities, be more effective, improve the safety and quality and yet make it less tiring. Use of computers has also contributed tremendously- not just for maintenance of records, accounting systems, but also for on-line ordering of food, information about equipment manufactured in different parts of the world and recipes for various preparations.

SIGNIFICANCE

Today with increasing migration, urbanisation, globalisation, international travel, tourism, exposure to various cuisines and advertisements, as well as increasing interest of local people to try out new foods, there is demand for variety of cuisines and typical ethnic foods. Fig. 4.1 shows the factors influencing development of food services.

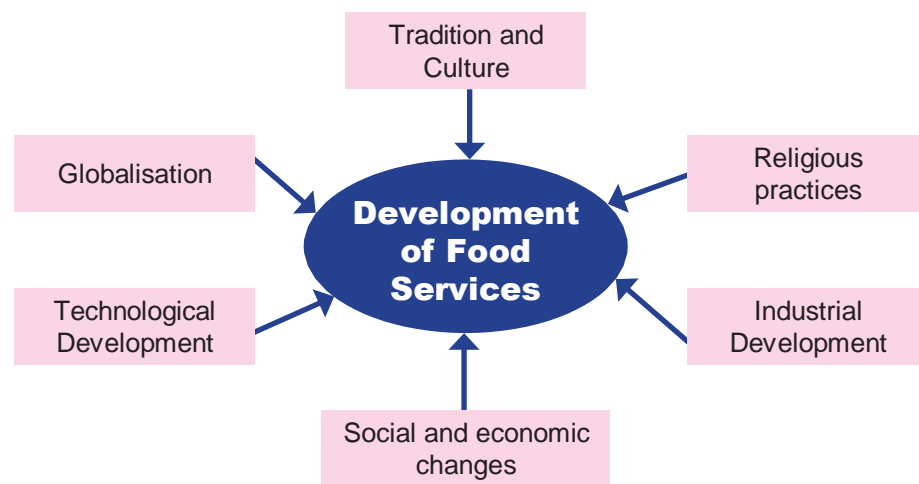


Fig. 4.1: Factors Influencing Development of Food Services

Knowledge of a variety of cultures and their ways of cooking is important. Thus people involved in this business need to have broad culinary experience. Media, particularly television, has stimulated interest in cooking and the different food patterns of various cultures. Have you seen most TV channels deal with cookery and cuisines? In India alone, we have a very wide variety of regional cuisines from Kashmir in the North to Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the South, to the North Eastern states, Orissa and West Bengal in the East to Gujarat and Maharashtra in the West. This has made “Cuisinology” an area of interest and provided new professional avenues. Similarly, across the world, there are numerous cuisines e.g. British, Welsh, Irish, Scottish, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Austrian, Russian, Eastern European, Swiss, Scandinavian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern, American, Mexican, Caribbean, African. In Asia and S.Asia, besides Indian, we have Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Thai, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Indonesian, among others. In each of these cuisines, the ingredients used and the methods of preparation vary considerably.

Food needs to be provided to people of all ages, in all walks of life, at any and all times in a 24-hour period. One thing is common to all – the need for food to be cooked and served well. Besides, providing food at the workplace, institutions providing care for different target groups, such as hospitals, old age homes, orphanages, hostels, have developed. Other institutions where food is routinely provided are school, college, office, prisons, feeding programmes undertaken by the Government or voluntary sector to improve the health and nutrition of specific groups.

Services that cater/provide food service are also known as Catering Services.

Catering can also be regarded as a service that provides a pleasant change from home cooked food. People like to enjoy a meals/snacks/beverages that have been prepared and served in different and pleasant surroundings. More families are now eating out at weekends or go out to eat sometimes in the evening for pleasure. Also, many families increasingly travel away from home on holidays. They need to eat while traveling and throughout the holiday period in restaurants/hotels etc, making national and international tourism and catering a ‘growing’ industry.

There are individuals or groups who prepare food and send them to persons at their places of work or to their homes. This is known as home – based food service. Such entrepreneurial catering activities are many,

for example take home meals or delivery of home made meals. Many of these enterprises are undertaken by women who use their interests and skills at cooking. The demand for food to be catered is brought about by the large number of families where both husband and wife are working, and in some places where people live alone, have limited facilities for cooking or are unable to cook for themselves. There are also mobile units that serve food. Provision of food/snacks and beverages is needed at community activities such as fairs, exhibitions, rallies, flower/fruit/vegetable shows where visitors would like to avail of some refreshments. Similarly, refreshments, lunches may be served at meetings. All of these reflect the scope of opportunities in the catering industry and the potential for different careers in this field of food service management.

Before we discuss the various careers, let us acquaint ourselves with important concepts and aspects that are relevant to this industry.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Food service industry is large and encompasses those places, institutions and companies that are responsible for any food or beverage preparation outside the home. These vary from expensive hotels and restaurants to less expensive outlets such as fast food outlets, street food vendors, food services in canteens /cafeterias in schools, colleges, universities, industries, offices as well as flight and railway catering. Food service industry may also be referred to as 'catering' industry.

Food service management is the art of providing food and beverages aesthetically and scientifically to a large number of people, in a satisfactory and cost effective way. It requires a professional approach along with special skills, knowledge and vigilance at each and every stage in food service operation.

Food service is the practice or business of making, transporting and serving prepared foods. The purpose of food service is to supply palatable food prepared under acceptable standards of sanitation, aesthetically served at specified cost.

Food service manager is the one who assumes responsibility for the management and administration of a food service unit /department / organisation.

Menu is a means of communication by which the caterer / food service unit, whatever type it may be, informs the customer / consumer what food items are being offered.

Let us acquaint ourselves with the types of food service establishments.

Types of Catering Services

Catering services can be broadly categorised as shown in Figure 4.2 , based on their social and economic significance. This categorisation is based on whether the aim of the catering is primarily profit making or otherwise.

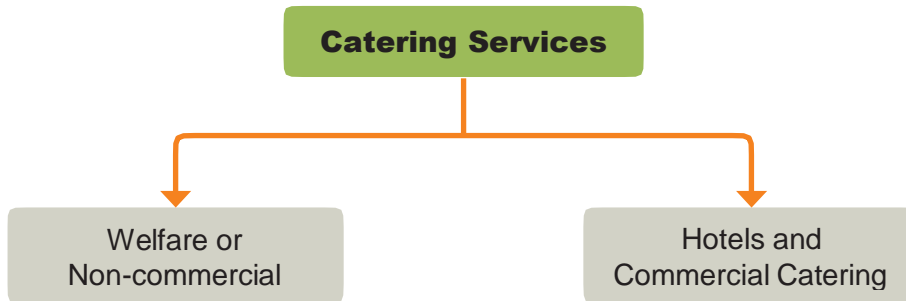


Fig. 4.2: Types of Catering Services

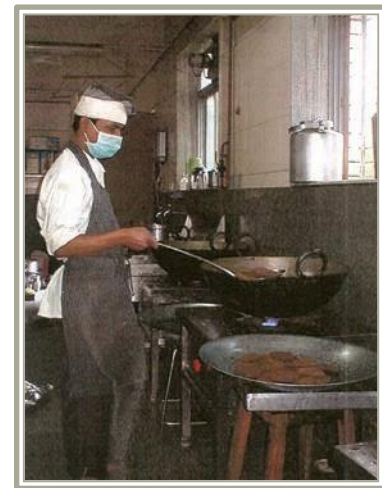
Welfare / Non-Commercial Services: The major purpose of these services is philanthropy and social welfare. Persons / organisations who undertake these services, aim to ensure that people are well and properly fed, and if any profit is made through their business, it is of secondary importance. Examples of such catering services are feeding people at workplaces, the armed forces, in schools, in supplementary feeding programmes implemented by the government or for sick people who are in hospitals. Industrial catering is one form of welfare catering. Many industries provide food to their employees as part of their welfare activities. It is believed that work output is related to the welfare of the employees. Well-fed workers produce more and better work. Workers receive free food or food at a price much lower than its actual cost (subsidised), with the rest of the cost being borne by the company. In industrial, institutional and welfare outlets the objective is mainly to provide a necessary service. Caterers / managers of these services may be given limited budgets within which they are required to successfully manage the operations. In such situations, the caterer may not be in competition with other caterers for business since the functions 'belong' to the employing organisation. Also, in such establishments, the service is not available to the public, but only to the members of the institution/organisation for which the service is operated.

Commercial Services: Such services and establishments are open to the public and sell food and beverages primarily to make a profit. However, these services are valuable because they provide for the needs of their

consumers as well as are source of employment. Also, these services have tremendous economic significance to the country. Hotels and catering services support the tourist, travel and holiday industries. It is a major earner of foreign exchange since this industry brings money into the country in exchange for its services. Through the tourism industry, hoteliers and caterers indirectly contribute to advancing understanding between different countries.



Quantity Food Preparation by a Women's group



Food Production in a School Canteen

Examples of establishments that undertake food service and sales are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Types of Food Service Establishments

Welfare Catering	Commercial Catering
Mid-day meals in schools	Small to large hotels, restaurants, dhabas, cafes
School food services	Expensive luxury restaurants, Spas, Speciality restaurants
Industrial canteens(when employers provide free or subsidised food to employees)	Guest houses, Holiday camps
Institutions – school and college hostels, working women's hostels	Fast food joints/ Take away(quick service restaurants)

Special needs e.g. hospitals,	Snack bars
Old age homes, nursing homes	Coffee shops, speciality food services e.g. ice cream parlours, pizza
Orphanages	Food services in cinema halls, theatres, malls
Prisons	Wine Bars
<i>Dharmashalas</i>	Travel services on sea, land, air (Transport catering) e.g. flight kitchens, buffet cars in trains
<i>Langar, Prasad</i> including meals offered to devotees at temples	Catering for seminars, workshops, conferences, parties and weddings
Feeding programs undertaken by religious orders e.g., Ramkrishna Mission, ISKCON	Catering for industries and institutions on contract basis (in-house food service)
Creches	Chain catering organisations
Supplementary feeding programmes of government/municipality e.g., Midday meal programme, ICDS' supplementary feeding	Clubs/gymkhanas
	Mobile Catering

Styles and standards of functions in catering by the commercial sector vary widely:

- At internationally famous 7/5-star establishments, meal service is elegant, luxurious, usually a large variety of cuisines are available, and the banquet manager has at disposal all the resources of skill and equipment needed. It requires highly skilled professionals and is costly to provide and maintain. Prices at such establishments are always extremely high.
- Less expensive establishments such as 3 / 4 star hotels, restaurants, etc. have a pleasant and cheerful ambience, the food and service is of a high standard where costs and prices are less than at the very top level.
- Small restaurants using minimum number of equipment and food is relatively cheaper. Menus may not vary much.

Having acquainted ourselves with types of food service establishments, it is also important to have some knowledge about types of food service systems and delivery of foods.

Types of Food Service Systems

There are basically four types of food service systems—conventional, commissary, ready prepared and assembly/serve.

1. *Conventional food service system:* Food is prepared in a kitchen on the premises where the food is to be served. Following food preparation/ production, food is held hot or cold and served as soon as possible. The food may be distributed for service directly to an adjacent service area e.g., in cafeterias, restaurants, dining halls of hostels. Alternatively it may be carried on trays e.g., served to patients in hospitals. This system is more adaptable to individual preferences. Seasonal ingredients can be used and there is greater flexibility in menu planning. Also, distribution costs are minimal.
2. *Commissary food service system:* In this system, food is prepared centrally at one place, but it is distributed to several remote areas for final preparation and service, since the food production centre and the service areas are located in separate facilities. Hence, a food distributor is necessary to ensure that the food is supplied to the various outlets. For example, there are chains of outlets like Coffee Day, Barista, etc. where the basic food items like ice cream, milk, cookies etc. are supplied from a centralised kitchen. When a customer orders a milk shake, it is prepared as per the flavours and other ingredients, toppings, etc. are added as per the customer's

wishes. The advantages are that all ingredients can be purchased in bulk (saves money), there is no need for separate equipment and personnel to cook the food in each unit. Uniformity of quality of products for all units can be assured and it is cost effective.

3. *Ready-prepared food service systems:* Food items are prepared well in advance before the time of service and kept frozen until they are to be used. In large cities, many such food items are available e.g. frozen parathas, samosas, cutlets, French fries etc. Mafco and Godrej are examples of industries that have developed and are marketing such products. One important aspect in this kind of operation is the need for special equipment for freezing the food and separate freezers for storing the food in frozen condition. Extreme care must be taken in food handling procedures to prevent contamination and spoilage.
4. *Assembly-service system:* In this, fully prepared foods are purchased from manufacturers and only finishing processes such as seasoning, thawing, reheating is done at the place of service. These operations require minimal cooking at the point of service e.g., sale of 'gol gappas/pani puri or bhel puri'. The manufacturing process is separated from the distribution process/service. One of the limitations is that the number of items prepared may not be large.

Irrespective of the type of establishment and food service system, the overall goal is to ensure that the food supplied is of good quality. For this, the food service manager/caterer should have (i) knowledge of menu planning, food selection, preparation and service, equipment required, (ii) have organisational and managerial skills, successful personnel direction, (iii) ensure that sanitation and hygiene are optimal, (iv) have an adequate system of cost control, (v) wisely utilise space for the physical layout of the unit, (v) ensure appropriate waste management practices and procedures are used, and (vi) the entire operation should be environment-friendly to the extent possible.

In all food service establishments, planning of a menu (also called bill of fare) is a vital component since all activities in a food service unit/organisation are centred on the menu.

Menu Planning

The success of the organisation is determined by the menu and how well the various items are prepared and served. Menu compiling is one of the most important jobs in catering. All activities in the food service unit are influenced by the menu. The menu determines the ingredients required, the type and number of equipment, the expertise of the personnel and the number to be

employed. Some of the points to be considered while planning a menu are: season and availability of ingredients, price range, time of day— determines which meal and the type of items to be included e.g., breakfast, snacks, lunch, dinner, special function, types of beverages to be served, sensory appeal and attractiveness of food, no repetition of colours and flavours, nutritional considerations and food habits of inmates, consumers, e.g., in industries, schools, colleges, etc., menu pattern and sequence of courses, i.e., food items to be served (generally soup is served first in western meals).

Functions of a menu: The menu essentially performs two functions: (a) it informs the customer or consumer about what is available, and (b) the catering staff about what is to be prepared. A well planned menu reflects careful thought. It represents three points of view (a) the customer gets value for money in terms of the quantity of food served, variety and the palatability as well as the way the food is served, (b) the employees who have to translate the written menu into the actual food products, and (c) the management who get satisfaction in terms of profit, good reputation, satisfied customers who will come back to the establishment. In profit making establishments, the menu creates an image which also reflects the overall style of the restaurant. Attractive, well designed menus help to promote sales and can be a means of advertising. There are several kinds of menus which are very interesting and challenging, particularly for those who have keen interest in varied cuisines.

The advantage of menu planning is that it is labour-saving, time saving and cost-effective. Nowadays, menu planning is being increasingly computerised. Translating the written menu into production of high-quality food is the responsibility of the manager. Whatever the type of food service and establishment, running the establishment requires management skills.

Management in Food Service

Management is a process of using resources to achieve goals through various interacting elements. Essentially it involves taking decisions in order to achieve goals. Thus we can also define management as a process of decision-making and control over the action of human beings for the explicit purpose of attaining predetermined goals. This includes management of human and non-human or material resources. These resources in general are known as 6 M's – *money, material, man (human resource), machines, minutes (time) and markets.*

Management includes several functions—planning, organising, delegating, motivating, directing, reporting, budgeting and coordinating the entire process. Let us briefly discuss each of these:

Planning: This is a basic and crucial function. All other functions are dependent on planning. The objective of planning is to think in advance, determine clear objectives and policies, and select an appropriate course of action in order to accomplish the goals. Planning includes formulating a plan of action in accordance with the objectives and policies, delegating work to various staff members to ensure smooth functioning of the organisation. It is short term and long term, and also requires day-to-day planning of activities. Planning is the foundation based on which the participants (staff) at various hierarchal levels, are enabled to execute their work effectively. In planning we ask questions such as: *What to do? Where to do? When to do? Who will do it? How to do it?*

Organising: This involves identifying the tasks of the organisation and dividing it into positions, and the jobs and tasks each position demands, grouping together workers of one particular skill and ability together in order to use human resource and other resources effectively and efficiently. Organising serves as a link between various other functions of management.

Staffing: This function involves employing and training human resource. It is important to hire persons with the required knowledge and skills so that the desired results are obtained in accordance with the goals and objectives.

Directing and Delegation: This requires the skills and ability for making decisions quickly, on an on-going basis. Delegation involves distribution of workloads to appropriately qualified individuals at various levels within the organisation.

Directing also involves looking after the interests of the staff and not just the interests of the organisation.

Controlling: This aspect is important to ensure that the performance is in accordance with the plans. This also includes cost control, which is very essential for financial operations. All items of income and expenses are to be monitored and controlled. Good cost control necessitates use of a system of records that serve as a tool to operate within predetermined financial limits.

Coordinating: This function helps in interlinking and interconnecting various types of activities for smooth running of the organisation and achieving its objectives.

Reporting: This requires, keeping the different authorities of a department, e.g., managers, executives, informed about the various tasks through reports, papers and records. This needs to be done to ensure smooth functioning.

Budgeting: This is important for all organisations including food service and catering units. All activities are planned and undertaken keeping in mind the finance available. Budgeting involves planning for allocation and use of financial resources and accounting.

PREPARING FOR A CAREER

Persons involved in this industry also need to have knowledge about planning and establishing the physical facility for food preparation and service. Some of the personal skills essential to succeed in the food service industry are:

- An interest in food and regular update of trends in national and international cuisines.
- Ability to have a good focus on quality, production, sanitation and food cost controls.
- Ability to establish, maintain and enforce consistently high performance standards.
- Good communication and interaction skills (Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, to an array of diverse internal and external clients).
- Good organising abilities with an eye for detail.
- Pleasant, cheerful and energetic personality.
- Good command over English, other preferred languages especially foreign languages.
- Ability to be on your feet for long hours.

SCOPE

Within this one vast industry, there are different kinds of jobs requiring different kinds of skills. Some who have the appropriate training may work in a palatial '7'-star establishment, with a luxurious atmosphere and come into contact with famous and important people of many nationalities. It is an international industry, providing opportunities for trained persons to be able to work abroad for some or throughout their careers. There is demand for well-trained experienced professionals who can participate in opening hotels and other catering establishments in different countries. Other opportunities to work in this field are in the catering units providing food to cruise ships, airlines and the railways. Large private hospitals

also have catering managers in their kitchens, cafeterias and hostels. Most departments in the catering industry are complicated specialisations requiring a great deal of work, dedication, practice and mastery. These are basic qualities that must be possessed by any young person who wants to embark on a career.

Careers in the Catering and Food Service Industry

In this industry, a person can work in various positions such as Food Service Supervisor, Cafeteria Manager, Catering Manager, Production Manager, Purchase Manager and Food Service Director /Asst Food Service Director. Placement can be obtained in independent restaurants, corporate restaurants, franchised restaurants, managed services in educational institutions, health care industry, e.g., hospitals, industrial canteens, catering services in travel related transport systems such as air (flight kitchens), trains, cruise lines (ship).

Persons who are interested in cooking, who have good culinary skills, with additional and specialised training can work as Executive Chef, Sous Chef, Chef Tournant, Station Chef. Besides this, there are vast opportunities to take up catering independently. One can set up independent restaurants, corporate restaurants, franchised restaurants.

Also, one can undertake managed services for education, healthcare, business and industry (catering meals at work places), catering in amusement parks, catering in national, state, and regional parks, catering for adventure/eco-tourism, catering for theme parties, product launches, banquets, official functions, etc., preparing and supplying special, nutritionally modified meals/health foods that are low in Calories, fat, and cholesterol, high in fiber and nutrition, breakfast foods that are healthier. Media, particularly television, has stimulated interest in cooking and the different food patterns of various cultures. In fact, the scope of the food service industry is unlimited.

CAREER AVENUES:

- In catering industry as Food Service Supervisor, Cafeteria Manager, Catering Manager, Production Manager, Purchase Manager and Food Service Director /Asst Food Service Director
- As chefs in hotels, speciality restaurants
- In charge of school, industrial and hospital canteens
- Catering in amusement parks, catering in national, state, and regional parks, catering for adventure / eco-tourism, catering for theme parties, product launches, banquets, official functions
- In media shows
- Own entrepreneurial ventures
- Specialists in Cuisinology
- Writing for magazines, newspapers, blogs and media shows
- Consultancy

