The Role of Local Food in Maldives Tourism: A Focus on Promotion and Economic Development

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Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AUTEC	Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FHTS	Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies
FTMP	First Tourism Master Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MFAMR	Ministry of Fisheries Agriculture and Marine Resources
MIFCO	Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company
MMA	Maldives Monetary Authority
MNC	Multi National Corporation
MPND	Ministry of Planning and National Development
MTCA	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation
MTPB	Maldives Tourism Promotion Board
MRC	Marine Research Centre
NZTB	New Zealand Tourism Board
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
Short eats	Finger food
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STMP	Second Tourism Master Plan
TALC	Tourism Area Life Cycle
TTMP	Third Tourism Master Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHDI	United Nations Human Development Index
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

Attestation of authorship

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning".

Fathimath Amira

Ethics approval

As this thesis used surveys that included human participants, ethical approval was required from AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Approval was received on 28th April 2008 with Ethics Application Number 08/72.

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Abstract

In the fiercely competitive globalized tourism industry, where there is growing concern for the development of sustainable tourism, tourism stakeholders are confronted with the challenge of creating innovative product differentiation and effective marketing that will increase yield and promote sustainable tourism development.

Food is a fundamental part of the tourist experience. Increasingly, local food is used in tourism as an integral part of the visitor attraction to enrich tourist experiences. Local food acts as a differentiating feature for destinations and can play an important role in increasing visitor yield, stimulating growth in other economic sectors and promoting sustainable occupations. The close relationship between local food and culture enables the promotion of cultural heritage by promoting local food. Thus, linking local food and tourism has the potential to create more sustainable tourism practices and outcomes.

This study evaluates the role of local food in tourism promotion. It also focuses on economic development, exploring the potential for creating linkages between local food and tourism in the context of sustainable tourism practices. The research is based on a case study of the Republic of Maldives, a country which has gained success in the international tourism market by promoting the natural beauty of its tropical islands. Like many Small Island Developing States (SIDS), tourism is the key to the Maldives' economic development. But a heavy reliance on imports and a large expatriate labour force cause a significant leakage of tourism revenue. Tourism has been developed under a one-island-one-resort concept. This has created tourist enclaves that limit distribution of tourism benefits among local communities. Hence, Maldives' tourism needs ways to broaden economic linkages and increase tourism yield. Broader visitor experiences that enhance product attractiveness in ways that still conserve and protect the fragile ecosystem are also required.

This research utilized content and discourse analyses and surveys in a mixed-methods approach. Content analysis of printed and web-based tourism marketing materials reveals that food is not featured prominently as a tourist attraction in the Maldives. Surveys conducted among operators and experts indicate considerable support for and the potential benefits of, linking food to tourism; these stakeholders also state that they believe there is a strong desire on the part of tourists to experience local food. A range of issues and constraints that work against linking local food and tourism are revealed;

these include under-developed transportation and logistics, shortages of skilled staff, and a lack of communication between producers and tourism operators. A variety of suggestions on linking local food to tourism are presented with recommendations of potential local foods and food-related events that could be successfully integrated into the tourist experience.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Tourism has existed in one form or other since societies have been in existence and its roots can be traced back to ancient times (Sharpley, 1999). The latter half of the twentieth century saw a spectacular development and expansion of modern tourism to all corners of the globe (Ayers, 2000). Facilitated by remarkable technological advances, especially in transport, as well as increases in leisure time and disposable wealth (Sharpley, 1999), tourism has become one of the largest and most important industries of the world (Bojanic, 1991; Trunfio, Petruzzellis, & Nigro, 2006). The growth in leisure travel has matched the number of countries, regions and destinations opening up for tourism. As a result, today there is hardly any part of the globe that is not 'invaded' by tourism (Sharpley, 1999).

The main reason that growing numbers of countries are getting involved in tourism activities is the economic gains promised by the industry (Burns & Holden, 1995; Gretzel, Yuan, & Fesenmaier, 2000; Heath & Wall, 1992; Kim, Chen, & Jang, 2006; Lee & Chang, 2007). Due to the industry's vast opportunities for employment and income generation, less-developed countries (LDCs) see tourism as their "passport" to development (Ayers, 2000, p. 114; de Kadt, 1979). Indeed, The Manila Declaration on World Tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 1980) recommended tourism as a gateway for "a steady acceleration of economic and social development" particularly for developing countries (p.1).

The increasing number of destinations competing in the global tourism arena has created a fiercely competitive industry where nations, regions and communities have to vie with each other to lure the 'elusive' tourist (Ark & Richards, 2006; Ashworth & Voogd, 1990). Consequently, competitive advantages, innovative product differentiation and effective marketing have become essential to sustain the tourism industry (Pike, 2004). Strong competition in the tourism industry makes it extremely difficult for destinations to survive without differentiation (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

Adding to these concerns is increasing evidence of the adverse effects of tourism development (Costa & Buhalis, 2006). The growth of tourism has had distinct negative social, economic, cultural and environmental impacts (Jackson, 2006; Li, 2006). As a

result, tourism practitioners, policy makers and academics are today keenly pursuing alternatives to conventional tourism – alternatives that yield maximum benefits while creating minimum negative impacts (Trunfio et al., 2006). As Poon (1993) notes, "Mass tourism has brought social, cultural, economic and environmental havoc in its wake, and it is mass tourism practices that must be radically changed to bring in the new" (p. 3).

In response to these warnings, and as a solution to the detrimental impacts associated with tourism, the concept of sustainable tourism emerged in the 1980s, becoming "the buzz word of the 1990s" (Sharpley, 1999, p. 299). Recent tourism research focuses a great deal of attention on sustainable tourism (Altinay, Var, Hines, & Hussain, 2007; Tosun, 2001; Tzschentke, Kirk, & Lynch, 2008), emphasizing the significant contributions to the quality of the environment and economic well-being of the host community that tourism can provide while still giving a high-quality visitor experience (Lim & McAleer, 2005).

This study seeks to identify the role that local food can play as a tool in tourism promotion and as a means to enhance destination competitiveness, increase tourism yield and contribute to more sustainable forms of economic development. The focus of the research is the Republic of Maldives. This country has become a successful tourist destination by promoting its natural environment, but with few differentiating factors, the Maldives' tourism product seems vulnerable to other competing countries with similar products, such as the Seychelles or Mauritius (The World Bank, 2006). Maldives' tourism is dependent on the environment, yet the country's fragile ecosystem is threatened by global warming and natural disasters (Conrady & Bakan, 2008). Tourism plays a key role in the country's economic development, yet there is leakage of a large percentage of the benefits generated from tourism. For example, the country has limited skilled labour, and as a result much of the wages paid are repatriated by the expatriate labour force; similarly, there is leakage through imports.

Tourism in the Maldives has been developed under the unique concept of one-island-one-resort. While this concept was successful in providing privacy for tourists and was believed by policy makers to eliminate much of the negative socio-cultural impacts of tourism (MTCA, 2008a), the tourist enclaves restricted tourism multiplier effects and community participation in tourism (Shareef & McAleer, 2007). This study seeks to provide information that can assist Maldives in effective marketing, enhancing product

attractiveness and promoting sustainable tourism development by linking local food and tourism.

A fundamental component of the tourist experience is food (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003). Food is a "hot" topic today – it is discussed "on prime-time television, in the popular press and on the radio" (Sharples, 2003). Similarly, as Hashimoto and Telfer (2003) point out, the numerous food, wine and travel magazines and continuous television channels devoted to food are proof of the increasing interest in food tourism. The important role that food plays in tourism renders it an effective device to promote and position a destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). One of the major elements of this important relationship between food and tourism is the development and promotion of local food (Hall & Mitchell, 2002a; Hall & Sharples, 2003). Local food can also play an important role as an innovative tourism marketing strategy, and as a tool through which to create economic linkages and development (Sharples, 2003).

Many tourist destinations overlook the potential benefits of promoting food. Instead of portraying food as a key tourist attraction, often food is marketed as part of other services and facilities or as merely a secondary component of the tourism experience (Boniface, 2003). Those destinations that do use food in their marketing also do not always do it effectively (Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2007).

Food is a topic that has been relatively under-researched in the tourism literature (Selwood, 2003). Researchers have devoted extensive studies to the relationships between tourism and different aspects of culture. However, the relationship between food and tourism has been neglected by researchers in both fields (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). As a result, there is a deficiency in current literature related to food and tourism (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Until recently the role of food in marketing destinations has received little attention (du Rand, Gerry, Heath, & Alberts, 2003). In particular, there is a lack of research on the extent that food is used in tourism promotion and development in destinations whose success in the tourism industry is generally based on primary attractions other than food (Okumus. et al., 2007).

1.2 Aims and objectives of the research

The primary aim of this research is to establish the potential for creating linkages between local food and tourism in the Maldives (see Figure 1.1). To achieve this, the extent that food is currently promoted in Maldives' tourism marketing is identified and the scope for creating linkages between tourism and local food is evaluated.

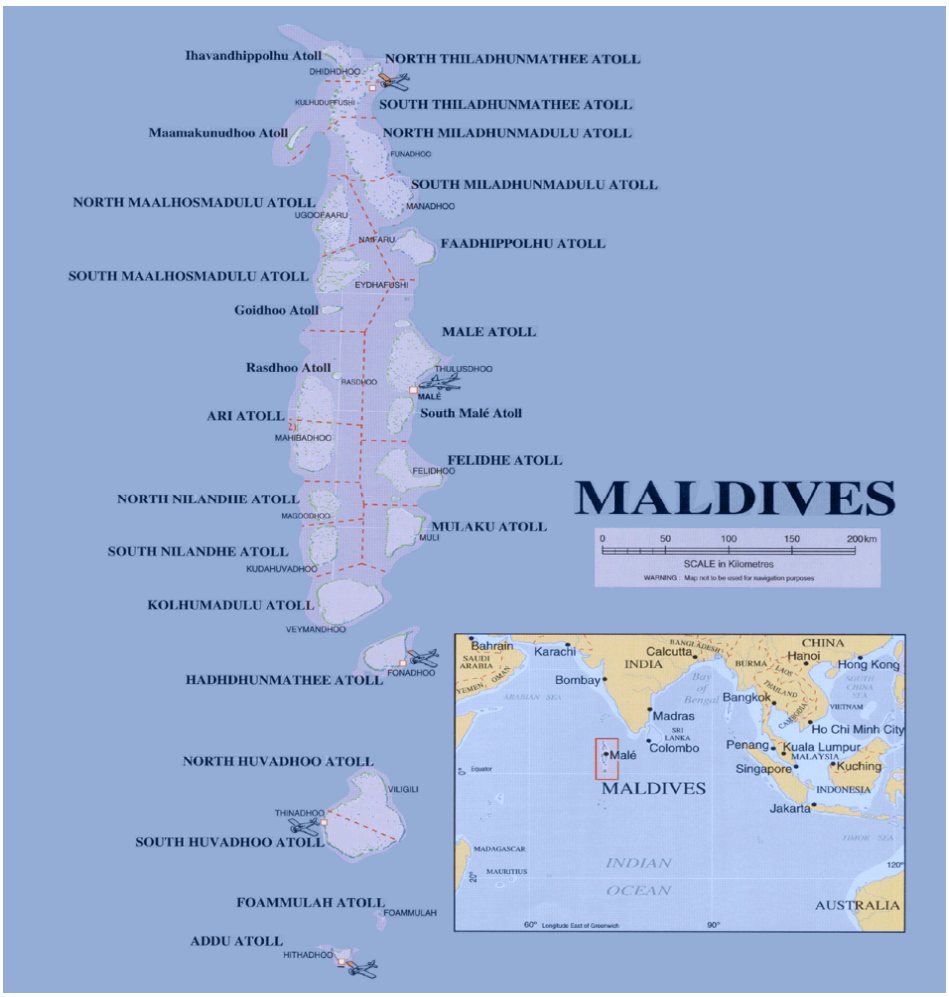
The objectives of the research are:

- to identify the extent that local foods are used in Maldives tourism print and e-marketing materials
- to examine the current role of local food in tourism and to identify the opportunities for creating linkages between local food and tourism
- to identify the ways in which linking local food and tourism can integrate tourism and other economic sectors with a particular focus on supply linkages, and
- to discuss the findings in the context of sustainable tourism development

This research aims to provide a good understanding of the way in which food is used in the promotion of Maldives' tourism. Building on that, the research also identifies the potential benefits of creating linkages between local food and tourism and the scope for using local food as a marketing tool in tourism. The research will be of value to those who wish to have an understanding of the role that local food can play in the promotion and development of tourism in SIDS. It will be of particular importance for the Maldives' tourism industry because of the lack of prior research in this area.

The research also contributes to the literature by providing support for current research on the use of local food to promote sustainable tourism, and the importance of marketing food to generate reciprocal positive impacts for tourism and food service industries. This study will hopefully inspire further research in the Maldives by demonstrating possible gaps that may exist between the current role of local food in tourism promotion and the opportunities that exist for local food to be utilized in promoting and developing tourism.

Figure 1. 1 Map of the Republic of Maldives



Source: www.worldmapfinder.com/En/Asia/Maldives

1.3 Organisation of the thesis

Chapter 2 provides a review of a number of bodies of relevant literature. Globalisation, the impacts of globalisation on tourism, particularly on SIDS, and the relationship between globalisation and tourism are discussed. In addition, the implications of globalisation on local food, sustainable tourism, the role of food in tourism and the relationship between local food and sustainable tourism are presented.

The research design, methodology and analysis used in this research are discussed in chapter 3. An overview of the research design is presented, commencing with an outline of the methods and instruments used, i.e. case study, content and discourse analyses, and questionnaire surveys (see appendices 1 and 2 for surveys). A brief account of the theory-generating method used in this study, namely grounded theory, is also presented. Each method is justified because of the importance of the choice of research instruments

to the design, and hence validity, of the research. The specific processes of data collection are followed by an overview of the methods that were used for data analysis. In addition, ethical issues concerning the research processes are clarified.

Background on the Republic of Maldives, the country which is the case study used in this research, is provided in chapter 4. Information on the Maldives, important economic sectors and key challenges are presented. The development of tourism in the Maldives and information about the Maldives' tourism industry are discussed. This chapter also presents an overview of Maldivian cuisine.

The research findings and results from the content and discourse analyses and from the surveys that illustrate the current situation of local food in Maldives tourism are presented in chapter 5. Content and discourse analysis of printed marketing materials and websites that reveal the use of food in tourism promotion are discussed. Results from both the surveys that provide information on the extent that local food is used in tourism are also presented. From these findings, the current role of local food in tourism and the extent and ways that local food is used in tourism and tourism marketing are derived and discussed.

In view of the findings from the previous chapter, Chapter 6 discusses prospects and constraints for linking local food and tourism. Based on the results of operator and expert surveys, the potential for and the benefits of linking local food and tourism as well as prospective local foods and food related events that could be successfully linked to tourism are presented. The constraints that stand in the way for creating this linkage and the possible solutions for the constraints are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 7 concludes this thesis by reviewing the key findings of the research and the degree to which the research objectives have been met. This chapter also provides suggestions and recommendations on how some of the issues raised by this thesis can be further researched in the future.

CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

The opening section of this chapter evaluates the effects of globalisation on tourism and the implications for tourism destinations – especially SIDS. These impacts associated with globalisation are increasingly viewed as critical problems in need of corrective measures, with the aim being more sustainable tourism. A key focus of this discussion is the homogenizing influence of globalisation and the challenges and opportunities this poses for SIDS tourism destinations. The discussion highlights the ability of local food to be used as a tool to create a sense of place and a unique destination profile.

The second section identifies the literature that deals with the overlaps and links between food and tourism. Beginning with a brief overview of the history of how food became associated with travel, this section pinpoints the different inter-linkages between food and tourism. Specifically, the areas that encourage complementary benefits between food-production sectors and tourism within a local economy are identified. This can be achieved through encouraging the use of locally produced food products by tourism businesses while at the same time representing local food in the promotion and marketing of tourism. In the increasingly competitive tourism industry, destinations are keen to develop unique aspects that differentiate their industry in a globalized world, where products and services are ever more standardized and homogenized.

The chapter draws parallels between sustainable tourism practices and developing linkages between tourism and local food. The linkage between tourism and local food is then considered as a tool for effective tourism promotion and economic development. How the challenges brought upon the tourism industry by globalisation could be overcome through local food promotion is also assessed. In addition, the extent to which sustainable tourism is promoted by integrating local food and tourism is considered.

2.1 Globalisation and tourism

There is considerable dispute over the meaning and definition of globalisation (Wells, Shuey, & Kiely, 2001), its impacts (Dehesa, 2006) and ways for weighing those impacts (Fayos-Sola & Bueno, 2001). However, most authors concur that globalisation is a chain of events that has occurred due to unprecedented advances in human innovation, especially communication and transport technology which made possible almost

instantaneous transmission of information and improved mobility of people, capital and goods (Schirato & Webb, 2003). Literature on globalisation reveals a general perception that these events have connected countries throughout the world by shrinking travel time, and that they have made the world a 'global village' (Seaton & Alford, 2001). Globalisation encompasses the ensuing economic, social, cultural and environmental interdependence among countries, with its wider impacts across the globe due to the liberalization and integration of global financial markets, lowered trade barriers and the demolition of national boundaries between countries by international free trade (Radice, 2004; Schirato & Webb, 2003).

Significant reciprocal impacts have been created on tourism by globalisation (Keller, 2000). While tourism has supported and speeded up the process of globalisation, Buhalis (2001) states that the dynamics of globalisation are also causing continuous change for tourism to such an extent that the only thing constant in tourism is change. Swarbrook (2001) identified five dimensions of globalisation that influence tourist destinations: the globalisation of the tourism industry, the tourism market, communication technologies, the media, and political power. According to Fayas-Sola and Bueno (2001) the aspects of tourism that are most affected by globalisation are: increase in global tourism, similarities in consumer demand and the related homogenisation of tourism products and services.

One of the most prominent effects of globalisation on tourism is increased travel which is "both a reason for, and the result of, the global lifestyle" (WTO, 1990 cited in Vanhove, 2001, p. 59). By opening up "the whole world to international tourism" (Sharpley, 1999, p. 83), globalisation has changed the nature of tourism (Wahab & Cooper, 2001). There are various elements related to globalisation that have contributed to the worldwide expansion of tourism operations (Buhalis, 2001). Among the contributing factors are the shrinking of the globe in time and space due to the advances in communications and technology, an increase in long-distance travel, the reduced cost of long-distance travel as a result of over capacity, the introduction of charter flights to long-distance destinations, the demolition of political barriers for travel, and the popularization of tourism among countries worldwide (Vanhove, 2001). The promotion and advertising of destinations using innovative communication technologies, the trend for novel destinations and experiences, and the growth in number of countries generating outbound travel have all added to the growth in tourism (Swarbrooke, 2001). Through tourism, peoples' understanding and knowledge of different cultures, religions

and nationalities are broadened (Sharpley, 1999). At the same time, increased awareness leads to rising curiosity and an interest to explore and experience those places – this, too, creates an increase in tourism (Bentley, 2004). Technological advances have made international travel much easier and faster, bringing distant countries closer within reach in terms of travel time, which in turn has created tourist demand for far-flung destinations.

The above activities, combined with the world's population growth and the increased prosperity of nations, have caused a phenomenal increase in world tourism (Sharpley, 1999). With international tourist arrivals totalling 924 million in 2008 (UNWTO, 2009), tourism has become the most important (Trunfio et al., 2006) and the largest (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006) industry in the world. According to UNWTO estimates, worldwide receipts from tourism reached US$856 billion in 2007 (UNWTO, 2009).

Globalisation has major implications for both the supply and demand sides of tourism (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, & Scott, 2009). Rising levels of income, ageing populations, saturation of established tourist destinations, novel interests and changing lifestyles are all factors that influence tourism demand (Guzman, Moreno, & Tejada, 2008). At the same time, the decreased cost of air travel provides access to new destinations at lower costs, opening the international tourism market to low-income tourists. On the supply side, the computerised reservations and global distribution systems associated with the global transfer of tourism-related information enable airlines, hotel chains and tour operators to perform and compete on an international scale (Guzman et al., 2008).

While advances in information technology opened up destinations from around the world to the tourism market, innovative technology also provides instant access to information and images to consumers about every tourist destination from around the world (Hjalager, 2007). The Internet is seen as an "unparalleled" source of information that shapes consumer knowledge and decisions (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001, p. 384). The more informed and knowledgeable tourists are in their search for new destinations, the more empowered they become in their choices (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005). This is apparent in recent research on travel-related information and experiences sought by tourists which shows that the new generation of tourists are more experienced, sophisticated and demanding (Aguiló, Alegre, & Sard, 2005). With globalisation of media as well as the increased education levels, emerging global lifestyles and their

experience gained from increased travel, "post-Fordist" tourists are keen and willing to explore new, authentic and varied experiences (Bentley, 2004). In 2001, Buhalis noted that consumer choice in tourism was inclined more towards those activities that enabled tourists' participation and involvement. With reference to the transformations occurring in the tourism industry, Milne and Ateljevic (2001) noted that "the creation of meaning and experiences is becoming a key avenue for capital accumulation, with leisure and tourism at the forefront of this trend" (p. 386).

Since 'post-Fordist' tourists are argued to reject mass tourism concepts in preference to alternative forms of tourism (Aguiló et al., 2005), recent years have seen a diversion from the popular mass tourism products offered at relatively low prices which are made possible by economies of scale and effective packaging of experiences (Brown & Hall, 2008). These are often standardized sun, sand and sea holidays widely referred to as '3S's' in tourism.

The change in consumer demand is also a result of the demographic and social trends of present day populations (Ryan, 2003). Mature travellers of today belong to generations that have grown with tourism, travellers whose expectations for destination choice and activities are heightened with experience (Middleton & Clark, 2001). The younger generations, on the other hand, are growing up with global warming and warnings for environmental protection; these tourists prefer environmentally friendly tourism activities (Andereck, 2009). The aggressive marketing by the mass media about the availability of innumerable choices, as well as the rapid advancement in information technology providing tourists with instant information and images of every destination in the world, also contribute to a large extent to the change in consumer demand (Sharpley, 1999).

Globalisation alters the competiveness in the tourism-generating regions and this, in turn, gives rise to changes in tourism demand (Buhalis, 2001). While there is fierce competition in the global tourism industry among nations, regions and communities for market share, (Ark & Richards, 2006; Ashworth & Voogd, 1990) travellers are faced with destination choices that are basically similar and easily substitutable. Therefore, building a positive and strong identity and image has become one of the most powerful strategies in destination management and marketing (Gnoth, Baloglu, Ekinci & Sirakaya, 2007). Buhalis (2001) points out that limitation on time have created a desire among consumers to seek value for time and money. Hence, tourism destinations should

focus on creating "meaningful tourism products ... which can delight consumers and enhance the competitiveness of destinations ... within the global market" (p. 71). As Crocket and Wood (2002) caution, "In today's cut-throat market place, only those destinations which have a clear market position and appealing attractions will remain at the top of consumer minds when they book their holidays" (p. 124). Wahab and Cooper (2001) advocate that the most successful destinations are those that possess considerable tourist attractions and which offer varied and unique facilities and services that meet the evolving trends in international tourism.

According to Skuras, Petrou and Clark (2006), for today's consumers the level of attraction lies in the contrast with their daily environment. This preference reflects consumers' growing appreciation of nature (Jacobsen, 2007). It was observed by Reichel, Uriely and Shani (2008) that tourists' preferences are increasingly inclined towards experiences that focus on, and preserve nature and culture. Hence, tourism experiences considered as environmentally less friendly will be increasingly unacceptable (Cooper & Ozdil, 1992). Environmental concern will be the determining factor for consumers' choice of tourist destinations and they will be willing to pay premium prices for the privilege (Dwyer et al., 2009). Consequently, as Aguiló et al. (2005) warn, "The emergence of this new type of consumer combined with the environmental deterioration experienced by mass tourism destinations would force the later into a phase of economic decline" (p. 219). As put forward by Urry (2002), "What makes a particular tourist gaze depends upon what it is contrasted with; what the forms of non-tourist experience happen to be" (p. 1). Aguiló et al. (2005) advise that for destinations where the tourism resource base is confined to sun, sand and sea, the best way forward would be to incorporate innovative products that are compatible with the emerging tourism demands. The authors demonstrated with the case of the Balearic Islands that "introducing innovations to a holiday product and paying particular attention to individual needs are not necessarily incompatible with sun and sand package holidays" (p. 229).

The effects of globalisation are of course not limited only to increases in international tourism (Theobald, 1994). Globalisation involves "problems and benefits in equal measure" (MacGillivray, 2006). Several features of globalisation are spurned as threats to culture, the environment, health, safety, and employment opportunities and wages (Wells et al., 2001). Global media have a powerful influence on world tourism: a

country's tourism industry is vulnerable when local problems, such as terrorist activities and crimes, are reported by the global media and instant news networks (Sharpley, 1999).

Therefore, globalisation is viewed as more of a threat than an opportunity, and this has significant implications for tourism marketing (Swarbrooke, 2001). Increased competition under the conditions of globalisation will cause production of tourism and their marketing strategies to take a new direction (Wahab & Cooper, 2001).They warn that:

> Globalisation would undoubtedly lead to unwarranted decline for destinations and also for companies that are not sufficiently competitive on the international market, or have ceased to become competitive either because of deteriorating attractions, facilities or lack of service quality or high prices. (p. 13).

2.2 Mass tourism and homogenisation of products and services

Worldwide communication has spread and popularized Western and other cultures across the globe so that now tastes and consumption patterns are converging (Mooij, 2004). This trend was assisted by the deregulation of travel, transportation and trade which enabled wider and more flexible opportunities for investment, partnerships and the movement of labour (Buhalis, 2001). As a result, differences in ways of dress, food, music and life style are becoming increasingly similar throughout the world:

> Globalisation has made the world a global market place, where the impacts of globalisation have impacted upon communications, culture, international trade and travel to create homogenization and standardization in all spheres including products, lifestyles, architecture, food, eating habits and entertainment. (Ritchie, 1991, in Vanhove, 2001, p.321).

Producers of goods and services responded to (and shaped) this consumer culture with the supply of standardized and homogenized products and services (Clegg, 2005). Assisted by the activities of multinational corporations (MNCs), tourism has contributed to this homogenization of culture because uniformity of tourism products and services was required to maintain standard and quality and to keep abreast in the global market (Hall & Page, 2006). The standardization of products and services also increased consumer expectations of quality. Therefore, if destinations are unable to raise the

quality of their services and products to compete with similar destinations, their survival will be threatened (Grew, 2004). Grew points out that the positive aspect of this for tourism could be that the familiarity of tourism products and services could provide a sense of safety for consumers and lead to increased tourism.

Globalisation has given MNCs a dominant role in all types of businesses. This includes international tourism (Wilkinson, 2004), where MNCs are increasingly taking control of a destination's whole tourism industry by vertical and horizontal integration through franchises and management agreements. In vertical integration, the various stages of production, delivery and marketing of products are controlled by a single firm (Burns & Holden, 1995). Horizontal integration occurs when MNCs reproduce similar processes of production across countries to avoid costs of international trade (Yeaple, 2003).

It is often the case in many SIDS and LDCs that the survival of their tourism industry is dependent on foreign airline companies, tour operators and hotel companies (Weibing & Xingqun, 2006). The growth of MNCs through foreign direct investment (FDI), and vertical and horizontal integration (Radice, 2004) added to the standardization and homogenization of products and services throughout the world (Dehesa, 2006). Price now becomes the only way that products can be differentiated. Swarbrooke (2001) cautioned that differentiating on lower prices alone runs the risk of limiting economic gains from tourism. Particularly, the entrance of a low-cost destination will cause loss to all destinations in the market (ibid). Conversely, Hall and Mitchell (2000b) suggest that, "In the global market long-term competitive advantage will be gained by differentiation on the basis of what is unique to a place, not on the production of low-value undifferentiated product" (p. 204).

Swarbrooke (2001) explains that when tourism corporations expand into other countries, they are inclined to build upon the skills and experience achieved in their home country. As a result, irrespective of the location, tourism products or experiences offered to tourists are increasingly similar in physical appearance, operating procedures, and hospitality and service attitudes (Honey & Stewart, 2002). Moreover, when the interests of the businesses are put ahead of those of the destinations, the businesses' commitment to local destinations becomes weak. Honey and Stewart (2002) point out that when MNCs operate in LDCs, standardization is an inevitable consequence because limitations in resources and knowledge compel LDCs to rely on the established standards of MNCs to develop their businesses.

But on the other hand, in order to gain popularity in host countries and penetrate their markets, MNCs often conform to local culture (Fayos-Sola & Bueno, 2001). In addition, Seaton and Alford (2001) pointed out that not many tourism organisations are international at the location level. Thus, despite the profuse references in the literature to globalisation of tourism, in most cases tourism is a network of small industries of local origin (Fayos-Sola & Bueno, 2001). Therefore, while Fayos-Sola and Bueno concur that tourism contributes to the diffusion of social and cultural practices by supporting the globalisation process, they dispute that tourism can be declared as among the most globalized of industries.

Nonetheless, the weight of evidence points to the standardization of products and services reducing the distinctiveness of destinations (Fields, 2002). Therefore, while the familiarity of Westernized countries may appeal to a certain segment of the market, for many tourists, cultural homogenization and standardization of products and services is likely to reduce the attractiveness of a destination. As a result, Wahab and Cooper (2001) believe that globalisation has the effect of generating an appreciation and awareness of local cultures, and that a trend for 'localization' has emerged in parallel to globalisation. Consequently, cultural differences between tourist destinations will be one of the key motivating factors for tourists' choice of destination.

Wahab and Cooper (2001, p. 147) suggest that in order to prevent product standardization and loss of local uniqueness which globalisation can cause, the best way to take advantage of the opportunities that globalisation presents is "to think local and act global", or to adapt to local requirements while exploiting the benefits of global strategies. Paradoxically, in the increasingly global market for tourist destinations, local uniqueness becomes the "key to their survival and success" (Swarbrooke 2001, p. 181). Askegaard & Kjeldgaard (2007) advised that when the forces of globalisation dissolve the boundaries of local cultures, local businesses can look to the cultural capital of their destination and market its unique attributes to compete with and 'outlocal' the international rivals.

Ironically, in the quest for uniqueness in promoting tourism, cities and regions often end up creating "serial reproduction of cultural attractions" (Richards & Wilson, 2006, p. 1221). The authors give Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain as an example. Bilbao's cultural distinction has been denigrated with the establishment of Guggenheim Museums in Las Vegas and Berlin, with Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro and Edinburgh in the

waiting list for future Guggenheim Museum locations. Therefore, the authors suggest the only way to avoid turning culture into a commodity is by applying creativity to the integration of culture and tourism: "It has to involve the creative use of destination assets (inherited, created and creative assets) to provide creative experiences for tourists" (Richards & Wilson, 2006, p. 1221).

Heightened competition in the tourism industry will severely affect destinations with undifferentiated products (Sharpley, 1999). Re-examination of the strength of their competitiveness is crucial for all competitors in the tourism industry. Whether their attractiveness is threatened or remains constant, the changing nature of competition will make competitive advantage a necessity in order to keep abreast in the global industry (Crockett & Wood, 2002). According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003) the true competitiveness of a tourism destination is reflected in their capability:

> …to increase tourism expenditure, to increasingly attract visitors while providing them with satisfying, memorable experiences, and to do so in a profitable way, while enhancing the well-being of destination residents and preserving the natural capital of the destination for future generation. (p. 2).

Effective marketing and advertising strategies are equally as important as competitive advantages. With no effective marketing strategies, substitutability will be an imminent threat for destinations with limited attractions (Sharpley, 1999). Demand levels and market trends can be influenced by tour operators' marketing strategies. Trunfio, Petruzzellis et al. (2006) described tour operators as "one of the most powerful and most influential entities in the tourist industry" because their marketing strategies are focused on sending the most number of tourists to a destination using economies of scale, irrespective of the impact on the destination (p. 427). As a result of this, tour operators' marketing strategies are believed to hasten destinations' life cycles (ibid).

The notion of a changing tourism destination – moving from an initial small-scale start to large-scale mass tourism – is provided by Butler's (1980) Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), a widely used model to study destination growth within the tourism industry (Fig. 2.1). The TALC claims that tourist destinations evolve and change over a period of time due to a number of factors: changes in visitors' preferences and needs, a decline in facilities and services, and the transformation or disappearance of original attractions (Butler, 2006). Using Plog's (2001) categorization of travellers as allocentrics, mid-centrics and psychocentrics, Butler (2006) explains that during the discovery phase of a

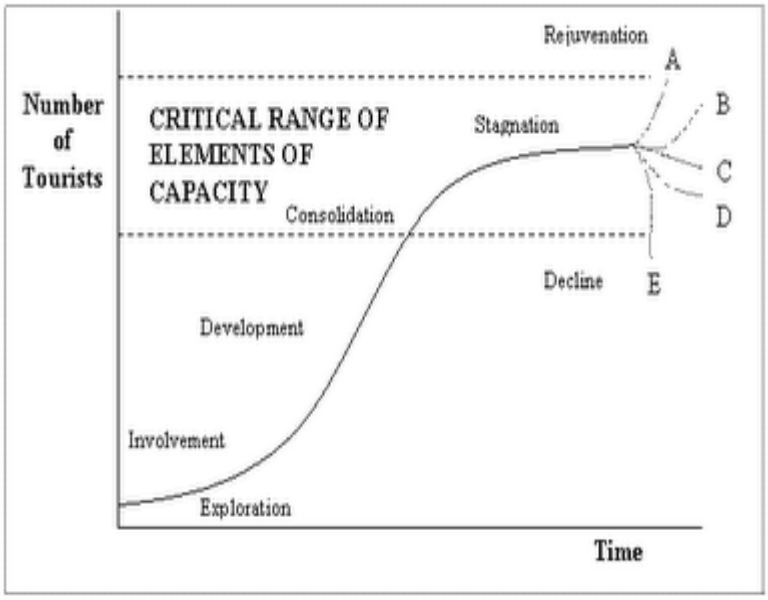
destination, small numbers of allocentrics arrive; then, as the destination becomes well known and established, mid-centrics follow; and finally, when the area grows mature and eventually outdated, only declining numbers of psychocentrics visit the destination.

According to Butler (2006), from evidence it is clear that tourist areas change steadily: "The rates of growth and change may vary widely, but the final result will be the same in almost all the cases" (p. 4).

Seven stages are depicted on the model. The first is the exploration stage, when tourist numbers are small, visitation patterns irregular, and tourists make individual travel arrangements to destinations where no special facilities or services are provided for tourists. Contact with residents will be high, contributing to enhanced attractiveness and more tourist visits.

Second is the involvement stage. Locals get involved in providing services and facilities to tourists who by now have formed a regular pattern of arrival. Promotions and marketing to attract more tourists are carried out. A market and a tourist season are established and start to take shape.

Figure 2. 1 The hypothetical evolution of a tourist area



Source: Butler (2006, p. 5)

Third is the development stage, marked with a well defined tourist market due to the advertising in tourism-generating countries. Larger, more modern facilities developed by foreign companies replace the basic facilities that have been offered until now.

Natural and cultural attractions are built and promoted, making obvious changes to the physical environment. Tourist arrivals may equal or exceed local populations. As this stage progresses, expatriate labour will have a strong hold on the destination's labour force.

Consolidation happens during the fourth stage. Tourism constitutes a significant part of the economy but, starting from now, the number of visitors will begin to decline. Stagnation is the fifth stage: tourist arrival numbers have peaked and while the destination may have an established image, it will be outdated. Strong advertising will be required to fill the over-capacity that has been created. The built environment does not complement the natural environment.

The sixth stage is one of decline: the destination is not able to compete with new competitors, and hence there is a decline in visitor numbers. Many tourist facilities may convert to other facilities, such as permanent tourist homes or function facilities.

At the seventh stage, rejuvenation may occur. This may happen by adding man-made attractions or venturing into a new direction.

With regard to the stages that tourist destinations go through in the life cycle, Butler (2006) cautioned:

> The assumption that tourist areas will always remain tourist areas and be attractive to tourists appears to be implicit in tourism planning. Public and private agencies alike, rarely, if ever, refer to the anticipated life span of a tourist area or its attractions. Rather, because tourism has shown an, as yet, unlimited potential for growth, despite economic recessions, it is taken for granted that numbers of visitors will continue to increase. The fallacy of this assumption can be seen in the experience of older tourist areas, such as those of southern Ontario, over the past two decades. (p. 9)

2.3 Small island developing states (SIDS) and globalisation

Many SIDS have demonstrated continued economic and social development during the last thirty years, proving that small size does not hinder sustained growth (Read, 2004). However, Read predicts that the globalisation process will make future growth more challenging for SIDS: "Globalisation represents a particularly significant threat to the continued survival of many successful small island states as independent entities given the greater susceptibility of their economies in the international system" (p. 365).

Tourism has particular significance for SIDS. The environmental and cultural features with which they are endowed make SIDS primary locations for tourism development (Giannoni & Maupertius, 2007). Remoteness, a frequent feature of SIDS, is an advantage for tourism because relative isolation can render the destination "more attractive, exotic and enticing, especially in the case of small islands" (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008), p. 27).

Hence, it is not surprising that in most SIDS tourism is the main economic activity (Neto, 2003), bringing in most of their foreign currency earnings (Ashe, 2005), in addition to being the largest source of employment generation (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). However, in spite of these positive outcomes, the global tourism industry is also believed to have negative impacts on SIDS. As Rosalie (2002) stated, "Tourism in the developing world has both the potential to be an agent of social and economic development ... or a source for friction and alienation within the local community" (p. 95).

A lack of resources often makes the natural environmental assets the only means for economic development for SIDS (Ashe, 2005). But tourism development in SIDS has a significant impact on the environment. When tourism development is dependent on fragile ecosystems it causes immense pressures on these resources (Neto, 2003). The extent of the impact can be understood when the small land area and population of most SIDS is weighed against annual tourist arrivals per year, which often exceeds several times that of the total population (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). In addition, SIDS are among the countries that are most vulnerable to the threats of climate change such as rising sea levels, saltwater intrusion, extremities in weather, loss of biodiversity and damage to ecosystems (Quarless, 2007). Unfortunately, due to limitations in human and financial capabilities, these countries are less capable of protecting their natural heritage than their larger counterparts (Rosalie, 2002).

However, with the "inexorable growth of transnationalism and globalisation", the invasion of tourism into the world's poorest countries cannot be prevented (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008, p. 23). This makes the option of sustainable tourism a necessity for SIDS (Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996). Hawkins and Holtz (2001) with reference to United Nations Economic and Social Council (1999), put forward that tourism is a more sustainable choice for economic development, because in contrast to other industries based on natural resources, tourism is dependent on the "enjoyment and appreciation of

local culture, built heritage, and the natural environment" which presents as a powerful motivation to protect and preserve those positive features (p. 262).

At the same time, tourism is blamed for fostering unbalanced dependency and the spread of unequal socio-economic development (Milne, 1997). While tourism provides much needed employment and revenue for SIDS, its overall contribution to a country's national income and any tourism multiplier effects are significantly diminished due to the high leakage of tourism benefits (Ashe, 2005). A considerable drain on tourism earnings from SIDS comes from the high rate of imports in comparison to domestic production. One of the largest areas of foreign currency leakage is food imports. With low levels of local production in SIDS, most of the food requirements for the tourism industry are met from imports (Ashe, 2005). Moreover, the higher-end the tourists are, the more will be the cost of food imports (Torres, 2003). Hull (1998) with reference to Milne and Wenzel (1991) also stated that the impacts of tourism on a destination are dependent on the types of tourists that the destination attracts.

Belisle (1983) identified several reasons for the tourism industry's reliance on imported food products. Among them are that imported foods are often cheaper than locally produced goods, imports often provide a higher level of guaranteed quality and supply, and tourists prefer familiar food. In addition, lack of communication between local producers and the tourism industry means that suppliers are often ignorant of the requirements of the industry, while operators are unaware of what is available locally (Telfer & Wall, 1996).

MNCs play a dominant role in the tourism industry of many SIDS. Waters (2001) portrayed the prominence of MNC's role in SIDS by stating that, "it is impossible to deny that multi-national or trans-national corporations are frequently more powerful than the states whose societies they operate in" (p. 106). For this reason the presence of MNCs in SIDS are regarded by some as an exploitative form of neo-colonialism (Ayers, 2002).The small economies of most SIDS, comprising of only a few export sectors and tourism, limit economies of scale while, at the same time, small populations restrict a domestic market. Thus, unable to generate sufficient domestic investment for tourism development, these countries turn to foreign investors and MNCs for the development and establishment of tourism. In addition, SIDS rely on the "management skills, technological know-how and access to international markets" from MNCs for the successful development of tourism (Bende-Nabende, 2002, p. 82). This is one of the

reasons why MNCs are described as the "key agents for economic activity in SIDS" (Read, 2004, p. 366).

However, the dominant role of MNCs in SIDS contributes to a number of adverse effects. Among these are leakage of tourism revenue as repatriation of wages and profits, loss of control of the tourist industry by the host country and the creation of tourist enclaves detached from local communities (Bende-Nabende, 2002). These negative impacts are further aggravated when tourist hotels establish supply systems with foreign suppliers cutting out local businesses as is often the case in SIDS.

High dependency on tourism also makes an economy susceptible to external shocks from both global and regional incidents. The impact is often more profound on SIDS whose tourism industries often rely on long-haul flights for the majority of their incoming tourists. The devastating impact on tourism after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States (Neto, 2003), and the spread of Avian Flu and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in Asia (Kuo, Chen, Tseng, Ju, & Huang, 2007) are both examples of how external shocks can affect local tourism industries. In addition, any event that causes changes in tourists' travel patterns, such as political unrest in a region or a rise in oil prices, can have a direct impact on tourism-dependent economies.

Excessive reliance on a particular economic sector, particularly when combined with unstable social and economic conditions, is said to create an ideal situation for political insecurity which then would impede sustainable development (Sönmez, 2002). When most investment and development is focused on tourism, development in other economic sectors can be overlooked. Neglect and decline in industries such as fisheries and agriculture can cause locals to abandon these occupations for jobs in tourism, and the motivation for developing, expanding and modernizing local production would be restrained. Tourism multipliers can be restricted and the resulting inequalities of income distribution would lead to local farmers, fishermen and others who work in food sector to feel alienated from the tourism industry (Jamal & Lagiewski, 2006). This may eventually foster hostility among local communities towards tourism and lead to social unrest (Telfer & Wall, 1996). The goodwill and support of local communities is an important but often neglected tourism resource (Milne, 1997). Participation and involvement of local communities is necessary for the successful and sustainable development of a tourism industry (Tsaur, Lin, & Lin, 2006); hence local communities should not be ignored (Dodds & Butler, 2009).

Although the above inherent characteristics make sustainable development a challenging task for SIDS (Ashe, 2005), due to their lack of other resources any diversion from tourism would create economic hardships for SIDS (Briguglio & Briguglio, 1996). Hence, development strategies that incorporate sustainable tourism practices are one of the most viable options for policy makers of SIDS (Ashe, 2005). In this regard, given tourism's potential to stimulate demand in other economic sectors, it is very important that linkages are created between those sectors and tourism. For instance, linkages between agriculture and fisheries and tourism, in addition to encouraging the involvement of local communities, would stimulate growth and development in these sectors. Shaw and Williams (2002) advised that if the benefits of tourism are to be distributed through the local communities, strong linkages between the tourism industry and other economic sectors need to be developed. This in turn, would assist in reducing a country's economic dependency on imports and even tourism itself.

In spite of the challenges brought upon SIDS by globalisation and tourism development, and in the face of strong pressures for homogenization, SIDS have retained their cultural, religious and social differences. In some destinations, instead of conforming to homogenizing forces, a counter-reaction to the effects of globalisation on culture and societies is evident (Vanhove, 2001). There is a growing focus on sustainable tourism development emerging as a result of the awareness and appreciation of local culture, and as a movement to safeguard traditional and cultural heritage.

2.4 Sustainable tourism

Most of the definitions of sustainable tourism highlight socio-cultural and environmental preservation, a high level of community involvement and planning that considers present and future use (Liu, 2003; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Some definitions also advocate that sustainable tourism must contribute to the economic stability of the host region or community (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Twining-Ward & Butler, 2002). Sustainable tourism is about economic, social and environmental sustainability, and is dependent on all three areas (Mbaiwa, 2005).

The fundamental purpose of tourism is to gain economic benefits by using a destination's cultural or environmental wealth. Detrimental impacts on those assets are alarming for the overall tourism industry because, "what is at stake is not just tourism but the survival of tourism-dependent economies" (Poon, 1993, p. 25). Therefore, tourism is required to be sustainable in order to contribute to development

(Ntibanyurwa, 2006). Just as a healthy economy is the key to development which is necessary to enhance the quality of life of its residents, a healthy economy is also crucial for a healthy ecology as well (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Referring to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Ritchie and Crouch point out that unless basic physiological needs are satisfied, individuals will not be motivated by the next level of needs in the hierarchy such as environmental protection. Thus, in order to conserve the natural resources and preserve cultural heritages, long-term economic sustainability is essential for all tourism destinations, particularly LDCs and SIDS where the economy depends on tourism.

Pigram (2000) declared that sustainability is multi dimensional and hence, requires its application in all human activity and development. Since uncontrolled tourism development will impact negatively upon the environment, it is crucial to focus on sustainable tourism in all aspects of management. Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) argue that "sustainable tourism development policies do not need to adhere to "text-book" principles" to be successful (p. 241). Similarly, Milne (1998) cautioned against creating a polarization between "alternative" and "mass" tourism in the search for the correct forms of tourism, because of the interconnected nature of all forms of tourism (p. 47). As Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) have illustrated from the case study of a remote hotel in The Gambia, if the needs of the tourists are met in a way that satisfies the requirements of local community and environment, there is no need to create a specific sustainable tourism product labelled as such, because the product can be sold to tourists who are not even seeking a sustainable tourist experience.

Some countries aim to achieve maximum profits with smaller numbers of high yield tourists to achieve sustainable tourism objectives. In this regard, Wilson (1997) described "up-market tourism" as a form of sustainable tourism which aims to achieve "higher earnings from smaller numbers" as in the case of Seychelles (p. 191). However, Weaver (2002) portrayed with examples from South Pacific tourist destinations that there is no evidence to suggest any connection between extent of earnings and sustainable tourism.

2.5 The role of food in tourism

Food has been associated with travel from prehistoric times (Boniface, 2003). Changes in the ways in which food was obtained in ancient times transformed the status of food from a basic survival necessity to a commodity associated with wealth, celebration,

rituals and leisure (Tannahill, 2002). At the same time, the exchange of food stuffs over long distances and the transfer of food-related ideas and knowledge across cultures assisted in the construction of cultural identities and social hierarchies (Pilcher, 2006). These historical events were interpreted by Boniface (2003) as a "precursor" that laid the foundation for "culture, food and drink, and tourism to feature and interact together" (p. 3).

The "reflexive consumption of gastronomic experiences by tourists" is described as gastronomy (Fields, 2002, p. 36). Scarpato (2002a) delved into the origin of the term 'gastronomy', stating that gastronomy first appeared as the title given to a poem more than 200 years ago in France and was included in the dictionary of French Academy as "the art of good eating" (p.53). The Encyclopaedia Britannica (2000) defines gastronomy as "the art of selecting, preparing, serving, and enjoying fine food" (cited in Richards, 2002, p.3). Richards went on to explain that initially gastronomy was dedicated to upper-class needs, but more recent times have seen gastronomy encompass a wide range of foods including local cuisines and food-related cultural practices.

The relationship between food and tourism has progressed from "traditional hospitality, cuisine and gastronomy" to the development of the innovative concept of "food tourism" (Jones & Jenkins, 2002, p. 115), also referred to as "culinary", "gastronomic" or "gourmet" tourism (Okumus et al., 2007, p. 19). Today, food is an integral part of the overall tourism experience, in addition to it being a prime motivation for travel (Hall, Mitchell, & Sharples, 2003). Hall and Mitchell (2005) with reference to Hall and Mitchell (2001) defined food tourism as, "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations ... it is the desire to experience a particular type of food or the produce of a specific region" (p. 74).

As Boyne, Williams, and Hall (2002) stated, the "inter-linkages between tourism and food are many and deep" (p. 91). Food fulfils a functional need of tourists (Molz, 2004); hence it comprises a considerable part of tourism expenditure in both individual and organized travel (Jones & Jenkins, 2002). According to Mitchell and Hall (2003), when it is part of the overall travel experience, food becomes "highly experiential" and "much more than functional" (p. 60). A significant part of tourism involves food, because providing food experiences is one of the central functions of the tourism industry (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Richards (2002) also notes that tourists' days are organized around

food, and that a substantial part of most tourist experiences are spent either consuming food and drink or planning what and where to eat.

Long (2004) points out that consumption of food is the only tourist activity that utilizes all five senses and, therefore, the experience of food consumption provides a "deeper, more integrated level of experience" (p. 21). Hence it is not surprising that food is a major source of satisfaction for tourists (Smith & Hall 2003; Boyne & Hall, 2004), and often considered the most enjoyable activity they undertake during a vacation (Ryan, 2003; Frochot, 2003). Food is believed to encapsulate most of the motivations that underlie the decision to undertake a tourist experience because consuming food involves relaxation, excitement, escapism, education, status and lifestyle (Corigliano, 2002; Frochot, 2003).

The spend on food comprises a significant amount of total tourism expenditure (Trunfio et al., 2006; Belisle, 1984). Belisle's study on interrelationships between tourists' food preference, food imports and local food production in Jamaica established that tourists spend one-third of their total holiday expenditure on food (Belisle, 1984). A study conducted in Egypt in 2000 to assess the economic impact of tourism revealed that approximately 30% of tourists' total expenditure is spent on accommodation, food and drink in hotels, and an additional 11.3% is spent on food and drink away from the hotel (Tohamy & Swinscoe, 2000). Another study based on rural tourism in the UK revealed that 40% of tourists' expenditure is spent on food (Boyne & Hall, 2004).

Tourists not only spend a substantial amount of their total expenditure on food, it is also the least likely activity for tourists to cut their costs on (Pyo, Uysal, & McLellan, 1991). This high regard given by tourists for food is reflected in the increase in food related travel as more and more tourists want to "taste" the regions they see (du Rand et al., 2003, p. 99). This increased interest in food has made it an important part of the image and attractiveness of a destination and a key motivating factor for tourists (Pearce, 2002). In the selection process of a destination, food presents tourists with an experience that includes excitement, cultural exploration and inspiration (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003; Sharples, 2003). In fact, it is argued that food is the most important attribute after climate, accommodation and scenery, in choosing a destination, (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Consumption of food is believed to provide unforgettable tourist experiences (Law & Au, 2000), the memories of which are recalled long after the holidays are over (Ravenscroft & Westering, 2002). The opportunities for involvement

and participation in the experience such as preparation and cooking make food related activities meaningful and symbolic tourist experiences (Trossolov, 1995 in Mitchell & Hall, 2003). The greater interaction and communication with local communities that these activities provide further enriches the experience (Poulain, 2000, in Frochot 2003). Hall and Mitchell (2005) also point out that trying out local foods in restaurants, cafes and hotels create memorable experiences for tourists.

It is well documented that tourists make up a significant part of the market for restaurants and cafes throughout the world (Hall et al., 2003). The enormous growth in the restaurant industry in tourist destinations is also an indication of tourists' interest in culinary experiences (Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003). According to Sparks, tourists rank food as an important part of a good vacation.

Food is an important tourist motivator. Tourist motivation consists of two basic aspects: "pull factors" and "push factors" (Hudson, 1999, p. 9). Pull factors influence the destination choice while push factors motivate travel to a destination. Fields (2002) declared that gastronomy achieves both these functions by "pushing people away from their familiar foods and eating patterns" and "pulling them towards new and exciting foods" (p. 37). To the pull and push factors, Fields, with reference to McIntosh et al. (1995), added four other travel motivators that can be satisfied by food: physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige.

Physical tourist motivators are often related to needs that cannot be satisfied in daily life such as complete relaxation, and changes in climate and scenery (Crompton, 2004). Consumption of food acts as a physical motivator because eating is a physical experience that provides sensory stimulation in a similar way to other physical experiences, and the sampling of new foods offer the experience of an activity out of the ordinary from daily life (Fields, 2002). Food experiences involve senses that other physical tourist experiences cannot always provide, such as smell and taste (Long, 2004). Therefore, food is an important physical tourist motivator.

Status and prestige have long been associated with food (Tannahill, 2002; Pilcher, 2006). More recent times have seen chefs and restaurants vying for Michelin stars in their desire to climb the ladder of status and prestige (Chelminski, 2005). While many destinations such as Tuscany and Provence are renowned for their distinguishing cuisine (Munt, 1994), caviar and champagne have long been known as class markers of lifestyles (Bourdieur, 1979 in Bessiere, 1998). Fields (2002) argues that differentiation

can also be achieved from more basic culinary experiences, with much knowledge to be gained from local cuisines:

> The most basic of meals can ... deliver a novel gastronomic experience. Such basic gastronomy can also satisfy status-related motivations as tourists explore new cuisines and foods that they ... are not likely to encounter at home. While the less experienced or less adventurous traveller may seek comfort in familiar foods in mass tourism resorts, the modern status-conscious traveller is likely to seek out the local cuisine, very often the 'traditional' or 'peasant' food not supplied by the mainstream tourist industry (p. 40).

The role of food in tourism can be determined by considering its function as a tourism resource (Fields, 2002). The resources required by a destination can be classified as either principal or supporting (Godfrey & Clarke, 2000). Principal resources are the main factors that motivate and attract tourists to travel to a destination; supporting resources, while they do not act as a tourist motivator on their own, enhance and complement the key motivating factors. France and Italy are examples of countries where food is known as a principal resource, although for the majority of destinations food is a supporting resource.

Recent tourism research reveals an increasing interest for consumer experiences rather than individual factors as tourist motivators (Quan & Wang, 2004; Obenour, Patterson, Pedersen, & Pearson, 2006). Since consumption of food provides the experience of excitement, inspiration and cultural exploration, gastronomic activities increasingly feature among tourists' choice of destinations (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003). Food is seen as an important part of a wide range of consumer experiences where a variety of tourist activities and culinary experiences are seen to converge. Some examples are museums, theme parks and rural holidays. According to Scarpato (2002b) food tourism satisfies the requirements of modern consumption tourism by providing quality tourism experiences, and is a possible alternative for sun, sand and sea destinations. Food is also one of the few components of the intangible heritage that has retained its authenticity among immigrant populations (Lysaght, 1998). For this reason tourists from some source markets are likely to be familiar with indigenous cuisine, for whom local food could be a motivation for travel (Okumus et al., 2007). Thus it is clear that food does not merely fulfil a functional need, rather it is an important part of the whole tourism experience (Sharples, 2003).

Cultural exploration is an integral part of tourism experiences. As competition in the tourism industry increases, culture is increasingly seen as an asset for product differentiation (Richards, 2002). Tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences find food as one of the most important attractions (Selwood, 2003). The culture of a society, according to Sharpley (1999) is "the combination of its values, morals, behavioural norms, dress, cuisine, artefacts and language" (p. 146). Food is "definitely a medium of cultural tourism" and the meal is a "cultural artefact" (Scarpato, 2002a, p. 64).

The culinary heritage of a destination embodies the character and mentality of a society in the types of food and the way they are eaten, and therefore is an integral part of identity formation (Bessiere, 1998). Consumption of food is also a cultural event that portrays a social bond by the ways food is eaten (Chiva, 1997 with reference to Poulain, 1996). Local food is a powerful medium for cultural exploration because food reflects the geography, history, culture and people of a country (Ferguson, 2000) and because it embody the cultural identity and authenticity of destinations (Hall & Sharples, 2003). It was agreed by Long (2004) as well that the differences in food and eating habits determine a society's culture and religion. Leigh (2000) notes:

> Some Catholics still avoid meat on Friday, as an act of contrition, and so often eat fish on this day. Japanese love raw fish. Chinese eat dogs and monkeys. Moslems and Jews do not eat pork. Hindus do not eat beef. French eat frogs, snails, horses and raw meat. Arabs eat camel meat and drink camel milk. Aborigines eat earth grubs. Greeks drink sheep's milk. Some African tribes drink blood. Yanamamo Indians of South America eat fresh uncooked lice and fried insects. Jews fast on Yom Kippur. Arabs fast throughout the month of Ramadan in the daytime. Other peoples, like many Hindus, avoid all meat products for food (p. 10).

As Leigh points out, such differences are the foundations for a robust tourism industry. Tourist activities related to food consumption provide opportunities for greater interaction and communication with locals (Poulain, 2000, in Frochot, 2003) and therefore are an enriching tourist experience. Involvement in local food experiences – for example, through participating in the preparation and cooking of the food – further enhances the meaningfulness and symbolism of the experiences (Trossolov, 1995, in Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Food also represents a symbol of distinctiveness for destinations (Rusher, 2003) and is strongly associated with place identity (Grottanelli & Milano, 2004). Hence, the close link between food and place identity makes food an ideal "place marker" in tourism promotion (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 5).

For these reasons, food plays a key role in the "establishment of a quantitatively and qualitatively satisfactory tourism industry" (Meler & Cerović, 2003, p. 1). The promotion of food and food-related activities has reciprocal benefits for both the food and tourism sectors at a particular destination. Local food enhances and strengthens the tourism product, while tourists provide a market for the expansion and development of local food products (Boyne & Hall, 2003). When local food is used by restaurants, it increases food production and assists in branding and promoting both the menu as well as the restaurant (Henchion & McIntyre, 2000). Furthermore, it provides authenticity to the establishment, enriches the wider experience (Symons, 1999, in Rosario Scarpato, 2002a) and helps to develop a regional food brand (Smith & Hall, 2003).

Food is acknowledged as an important tourist attraction that both enhances the value of a destination (Handszuh, 2000; Telfer & Wall, 1996) and is a tool for competitive advantage that reduces substitutability (Hall & Mitchell, 2002b). Destinations with undifferentiated primary resources can find a valuable resource in culinary experiences. Destination marketing literature stresses the importance of differentiation by emphasizing a destination's distinctive tangible and intangible products and services (Okumus et al., 2007). According to Fields (2002), "When marketing any product with a high level of competition from identical or similar products, manufacturers strive to differentiate their product in some way in order to gain competitive advantage" (p. 42).

Food is an important tool in the creation of brand identity for tourist destinations. The French have used the term 'terroir' to describe the position and characteristics of a food that belongs to a region which is part of French appellation system. Hall and Sharples, (2003) put forward the idea of 'touristic terroir': this embodies the physical, cultural and environmental qualities of a region to create a distinctive tourist experience which also includes the region's food and wine. Creation of such a brand of experiences benefits the food, wine and tourism industries. With their interrelationships, they can promote one another and provide the economic and social linkages which become a source of differentiation.

Local cuisine is often represented as a major source of a destination's intangible heritage that provides an authentic cultural experience (Grew, 2004). The association of certain foods with specific localities has been used in tourism in several ways, including marketing and promotion where it proved to be a strong and valuable tool for destination promotion in those regions (Boyne & Hall, 2003; Rusher, 2003; Richards,

2002). As Jones and Jenkins (2002) advocate, "Food is now used as a means of developing new niche markets, supporting regional identities, developing quality tourism and sustainable tourism" (p. 115). They go on to note that:

> The evidence currently available suggests that food tourism is becoming an important means of providing new tourism products that 'sell' the 'distinct character' and 'culture' of a destination. Food tourism is also a potential antidote to stagnating mass tourism demand and a means of supporting and promoting sustainable tourism ... All of these factors have tended to strengthen arguments for the development of food tourism (p. 116).

While there are apparent benefits that can be gained by linking food and tourism, it is equally important to be aware of possible negative consequences that such a relationship could foster. Fields (2002) points out that although many tourist destinations attempt to meet tourists' demand for authentic and traditional food, the majority of tourist resorts end up presenting an "emergent authenticity" as a result of altering local dishes to suit tourists' tastes (p. 39).

In view of the substantial benefits that food-related tourism activities are capable of generating, it is imperative that such initiatives are effectively promoted to ensure a competitive advantage in the international market (Boyne & Hall, 2003). Effective marketing is necessary if the demand for food and food-related activities is to be increased, with similar increases on production and consumption (Pearce, 2002). Therefore, effective marketing is the key to positively influencing tourists' buying behaviour towards local food (Okumus, et al., 2007; Boyne, William, & Hall, 2002).

Tourists gather information about potential destinations and prepare and plan their trip prior to travel (Money & Crotts, 2003). Similarly, tourists also plan their meals in advance (Warde & Martens, 2000). Hence, preconceived ideas can greatly influence the level of tourist satisfaction. Fields (2002) stated that since tourists' knowledge of culinary activities are likely to be less before consumption, food marketing in tourism should focus on developing "the pre-consumption knowledge" of tourists (p. 43). Creating unique cultural images and attractive culinary products can stimulate tourists' anticipation and lead to increased demand.

Fields (2000) argues that the media is very influential on potential tourists; in particular, it can get the attention of those who do not usually view culinary experiences as key motivators for travel. Tourist destinations will gain the advantage of promoting their

culture by marketing local food because culinary activities portray the culture of the destination. This has the potential to revive and sustain traditional food and the cultural activities related to it.

Food provides an excellent way for tourist destinations to increase the economic contribution from tourism. This is especially so when gastronomy and tourism present opportunities for "value-added" at different phases of the process, from supplying the raw materials through to the service of food, (Hjalager, 2002 , p. 7). Creating backward linkages into local industries through food will spread tourism benefits and will also sustain and develop those industries (Boyne & Hall, 2003; Eastham, 2003; Meyer-Czech, 2005).

Creating synergies between local food production and tourism, and implementing effective marketing strategies have helped areas develop as destinations that offer a unique point of difference (Boyne, Hall, & Williams, 2003). An example given by Boyne et al. (2002) is the Isle of Arran Taste Trail, which features local food producers, cooks and vendors who work together to provide an enriching tourist experience (see Figure 2.2). At the same time, backward linkages into other economic sectors created along the trail spread the economic benefits of this tourist food trail.

Figure 2. 2 Isle of Arran food trail webpage

Source: www.tastetrail.com

The tourist trails in Austria also portray examples of the benefits of linking local products and tourism. These trails are developed as tourist experiences revolving around existing agricultural or cultural products. Some cultural heritage trails also make regional food an integral part of the tourist product. For example, the Iron Trail developed to revive the history of processing and extracting iron ore in the region includes regional specialities and is marketed under the slogan of 'Eating like the blacksmiths' (Meyer-Czech, 2005).

The 'Top of the South Aquaculture and Seafood Trail' in New Zealand is another example where tourism is integrated with fisheries (Fig. 2.3). The 350 km trail links businesses in the South Island cities of Blenheim, Picton, Havelock and Nelson that are engaged in seafood and aquaculture. By involving a wide range of businesses including restaurants, accommodation providers, local tour operators, mussel farms and seafood suppliers, the trail assists in diversifying the economy and educating locals about seafood while retaining the character of the local community (http://seafoodnewzealand.co.nz).

Figure 2. 3 Seafood trail advertisement (NZ Marine Farming Assn.'s website)

Source: http://www.nzmfa.co.nz/publications.asp

Complementary benefits can be gained by both gastronomy and tourism operators from joint marketing strategies (Fields, 2002). Such a strategy is illustrated by Boyne, et al. (2002, p. 92) where a "bi-directional" approach to tourism development encourage reciprocal benefits for both tourism and food production sectors – encouraging the use of local products in tourism related food and retail operations while developing a marketing and promotion strategy that combines tourism and food.

Joint marketing strategies that link food with tourism have been successfully implemented by Australia and New Zealand (Hall & Mitchell, 2002a). In the case of New Zealand, it was recognized that food, export and tourism marketing made ideal partners for joint marketing due to the similarities in their target consumer groups, brand statements and the images that they portrayed. The marketing campaigns launched by New Zealand Tourism Board (NZTB) in 1993 under the slogan of 'The New Zealand Way' involving a wide range of tourism and non-tourism products proved to be beneficial for both the tourism and non-tourism products. Similarly, several Australian states have established specific food, wine and tourism bodies to capitalize on the benefits of linking these sectors (Hall & Mitchell, 2002a). In New South Wales for example, marketing and promotion of wine boosted regional tourism in these regions. Thus, Hall and Mitchell (2002a) conclude "it is apparent that from the seeds of

globalisation strong local food identities and sustainable food systems have the potential to grow with tourism playing an important role" (p. 83). Therefore, Bestor (2000) argues that globalisation does not reduce cultural diversity, but enhances and uplifts both the cuisine and the country that it belongs.

Another example is The Taste of Wales project developed in Wales with the aim of promoting local food as a tourist experience (Jones & Jenkins, 2002). This project has also contributed to enhancing the quality of local food and promoting the culture of Wales. In addition, as a result of promoting quality local food products, a niche tourist market that offered authentic tourist experiences was created, providing positive impacts on local agriculture. Even in established tourist destinations such as Melbourne, Singapore and Italy, the promotion of local gastronomic culture can enhance tourism (Scarpato, 2002b). Initiatives to promote Spain's culinary heritage as part of the region's cultural products have enabled Spain to be re-branded as a destination with a valuable cultural heritage alongside its primary attractions of sun, sand and sea (Ravenscroft & Westering, 2002). Further support for joint marketing is presented from a study by Sparks et al. (2003) that evaluated tourists' perception of restaurants. The study revealed that participants viewed restaurants as part of the overall tourist experience.

2.6 Globalisation, local food and sustainable tourism

Advances in communications and transport technology have propelled globalisation and have also drastically altered the ways of food production and consumption by increasing the rate that food products and information regarding food are exchanged around the world (Hall & Mitchell, 2002b). As Symons (1993) stated, food production has become global, with a universal food technology directing the growing, preserving, processing, distribution and cooking of food. The integration of global economies that has fuelled globalisation also supports economies of scale and scope in food production; this has resulted in standardization and homogenization of food products. While contributing to the eradication of famine and allowing the enjoyment of foods from across the globe (Grew, 2004), globalisation has also provided the means for food that was previously restricted by environmental and climatic conditions to be freely available, irrespective of location or season (Richards, 2002). This instant access to ingredients and information on cooking styles across the globe has led to the creation of 'fusion' (Goody, 1982, cited in Hall & Mitchell, 2002b) or 'nouvelle' (Sharpley, 1999) cuisine.

The ‘mobility of foods’ was also caused to a large extent by tourism because, “As tourists become more mobile, so does the food they eat” (Richards 2002, p. 3). Moreover, tourism operators are usually willing to cater for tourists’ wishes for familiarity of food. As a result, foods in tourist destinations became increasingly standardized and homogenized (Richards, 2002). Richards also points out that the shared knowledge and experiences made possible by the process of globalisation are held responsible for threatening the close relationship between local food and regional identities. Eventually, industrialization of food may lead to loss of biodiversity as certain plant and animal products take preference over others (Hall & Mitchell, 2002a).

Hall and Mitchell (2002a) also argue that the homogenization of food is only undesirable to those who have experienced the richness of different cultures and not for the majority of global consumers. Ritzer (1993) agrees that standardization of foods meets the needs of those tourists who prefer the comfort of familiarity and availability of predictable, safe and cheap meals. The spread of common types of food also increases the opportunities for unique and exotic food products to be promoted. Tourists’ interest in these products will instil an awareness and appreciation among locals for these products and lead to community pride and a strengthened cultural identity (Hall & Mitchell, 2002a). For these reasons, “it is apparent that from the seeds of globalisation strong local food identities and sustainable food systems have the potential to grow with tourism playing an important role” (Hall & Mitchell, 2002b, p. 83).

Some critics of globalisation warn that ‘McDonaldization’ (Ritzer 1993), and the creation of “new global cuisine” will be the ultimate demise of gastronomic tourism (Symons, 1999, in Scarpato, 2002a, p. 62). However, Bestor (2000) argues that globalisation does not “homogenise cultural differences” but enhances and uplifts both the cuisine and the place to which it belongs (p. 97). Hall and Mitchell (2002b) express similar views by stating that in many instances the successes of transnational food manufacturers have been based on the customization of their products according to the cultural differences of host destinations. For instance, multinational restaurant chains such as McDonalds and Pizza Hut have adapted their menus to suit the tastes and culture of host countries. The popularity of McDonald’s in Japan was largely due to such items on the menu as Teriyaki burger, Chinese fried rice and oolong tea (McIntosh, 2004). Similarly, Dominos and Pizza Hut were able to succeed in India by customizing their pizza according to Indian tastes (Hall & Mitchell, 2002b). Exclusive

vegetarian pizza outlets are run by Pizza Hut for strict Hindus who do not eat meat and a 'Jain Pizza' for orthodox members of Jain religious sect whose diet excludes roots and bulbs such as onions and potatoes. Hence, Hall and Mitchell argue that:

> … homogenization and diversity act as two countervailing forces in the food and globalisation debate ... it is impossible to have globalisation without simultaneously having localization. One cannot exist without the other.... it indicates how places can in fact use globalisation positively to improve their economic condition and sustain their ways of life, food production and eating. … it is here that travel and tourism is regarded as playing a major role in reinforcing local identity and production. (p. 72).

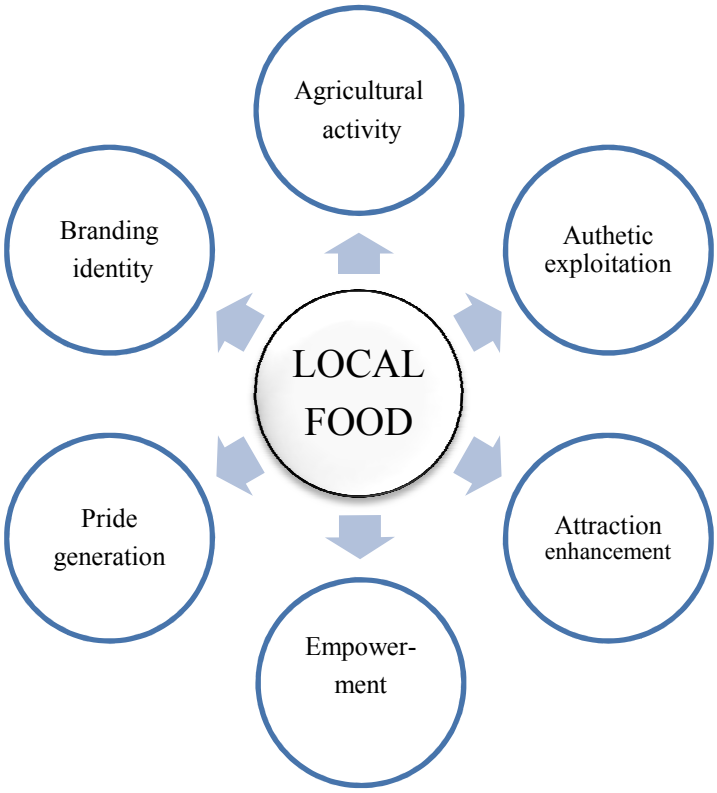
According to Scarpato and Daniele (2003), the new global cuisine is the combination of 'fresh' ingredients coming from all corners of the world, freely combined by creative global celebrity chefs to become the "local cuisine of the global village" (p. 306). The new global cuisine allows consumers instant transportation to become a tourist (Bauman, 1997), through vast multi-culinary, multi-ethnic yet affordable buffets (Scarpato & Daniele, 2003).

Roden (2000) notes that the new global cuisine has lost some of its allure as the freedom that it provided chefs stripped traditional foods of their identity and origin. As a result, no one is interested in "the same, usually bad, 'international' cuisine" (Roden, 2000, p.13). Instead, tourists seek local foods when they travel, neither "Californian-Italian dishes in Egypt nor French food in Japan" (ibid). Therefore, at a time when globalisation has weakened culture and tradition by homogenisation and standardisation, "what appeals and fascinates and touches the heart is that which distinguishes a country, which recalls her past and which is a part of her heritage and traditions" (ibid). Hall and Mitchell (2002b) also support that region, religion, traditions and tastes will always determine the boundaries of globalisation of food. They state that "globalisation is impossible without localization", that promoting the differentiating local assets can achieve success by the competitive advantage that they offer (p. 82).

Local food, as part of the tourism experience, involves a number of benefits that reflect the principles of sustainable development. The backward linkages of food production enhance and strengthen the economic and social vitality of rural regions, while involving local food in tourism enriches the visitor experience and could strengthen the likelihood of repeat visits (Boyne & Hall, 2003). The labour intensive nature of food services generates jobs, involves local communities, and assists in the development of

other industries such as agriculture, fishing, services and transport (Telfer & Wall, 1996; Frochot, 2003). Local food contributes directly and indirectly to tourism sustainability by stimulating food production and agriculture, conserving authenticity, increasing destination attractiveness, empowering communities through increased job creation and commercial activities, engendering community pride and strengthening brand identity (du Rand et al., 2003). Enhanced local food production is viewed as the key to pro-poor tourism initiatives (Goodwin, 2009). du Rand et al., (2003) illustrated the different ways that local food contributes to sustainable development (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2. 4 The contribution of local food to sustainable development



Source: Adapted from du Rand et al. (2003, p. 100)

Tourism is closely linked to local food production. If tourists' food requirements can be met from local resources, it will be of great benefit to the local economy. On the other hand, if most of the food for tourists has to be imported, it will reduce net tourism revenue, add to imports and harm local agriculture (Belisle 1983). An investigation of food as part of the culture that was being offered to tourists in Bali, Indonesia found that tourists' desire for traditional food was not being met (Reynolds, 1993). The study revealed that the growth in international and Western foods is damaging traditional foods and eating habits. Therefore, as Reynolds stated, in the same way that culture and

tradition are made sustainable in tourism, ethnic and traditional foods and other art forms must also be conserved.

Studies that have considered the factors necessary for economic sustainability emphasize the importance of equal distribution of the costs and benefits of tourism, utilization of local skills and knowledge, and creation of a wide range of employment opportunities (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). However, a number of hurdles render achievement of these strategies challenging, particularly for LDCs and especially for SIDS. Some of these obstacles are the uneven distribution of tourism development (Opperman, 1993, cited in Sharpley, 1999), the high import content of tourism products and services due to lack of local resources, and leakages of tourism revenues in the form of profit repatriation by MNCs and remittances and salaries of expatriate employees (Ashe, 2005). In addition, most island destinations confine tourism development to self-contained resort enclaves, thus restricting the tourism multiplier effect (Shareef & McAleer, 2007). Self-contained resort enclaves are often criticised for their seclusion from local communities. Such enclaves take away the rights of local people to use beaches, surrounding lagoons and a certain area of the sea that border these enclaves. In addition, all tourist needs are fulfilled on the resort leaving only a slight prospect for local businesses to access tourists. Nonetheless, Swarbrooke (2001) believes that self-contained resort enclaves protect the local communities from any negative effects that could result from tourism. Therefore, if managed well, self-contained enclaves could be constructive in sustainable tourism development.

Eastham (2003) suggests that the true economic benefits from tourism can be achieved by integrating local supply networks into the tourism system in ways that maximize linkages to the local communities. Local food is seen as a vehicle that provides vital economic linkages between tourism and other economic sectors including fishing and agriculture (Santich, 2007). Use of local food encourages promotion of locally raised and grown products and ingredients in preference to imports (Sharma, 2005). When meals are prepared using traditional recipes and locally grown produce, leakages are negligible. The intensive labour required for the production and service of food contributes greatly to tourism employment. Sustainable occupations such as farming and fishing, and the small manufacturing and hospitality sectors benefit from the income generated (Tao & Wall, 2009). Moreover, scarce resources and more money are retained in the community and this leads to the promotion of economic development and creation of sustainable food systems. Finally, making optimum use of goods and

services produced within the region enriches the tourist experience. However, as pointed out by Richards (2002), "The preference of tourists for familiar foods can be a major drain on the economy", particularly for "areas with a limited capacity for agricultural production, such as many small island destinations" (p. 13).

One of the economic challenges faced by developing countries is avoiding the "high-cost, high-tech" methods of the West (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003, p. 88). Ritchie and Crouch advise that a favourable solution for those countries would be to employ methods that benefit local communities and focus on initiatives that require local participation. They suggest that developing tourism based on "traditional lifestyles" would enable the achievement of these goals (ibid).

Another challenge faced with tourist destinations in LDCs and SIDS is having to utilize costly and technologically advanced Western processes in tourism development (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). These authors advised that this could be avoided by developing tourism based on "traditional lifestyles" that use methods and initiatives that call for more local participation and benefits for local communities (p. 88). Food and drink tourism is believed to comply with WTO's Global Code of Ethics (Boniface, 2003):

> The code advises that attention should be given to allowing 'cultural products...and folklore to survive and flourish' (WTO, 1999, Article 4, 4). It calls for attention to tourism policies acting towards improving local conditions and integration with 'the local economic and social fabric' (Article 5, 2). It suggests that 'Special attention should be paid to... vulnerable rural and mountain regions, for which tourism often represents a rare opportunity for development in the face of the decline of traditional economic activities (Article 5, 3). (Boniface, 2003, p. 38).

Food is increasingly used as an important tool for promoting established and new tourist destinations. A positive impact of using food as a promotional tool is that gastronomic tourists are more likely to be culturally aware hence, less inclined towards the issues associated with mass tourists (Fields, 2002). Therefore, by linking tourist experiences to culture, heritage and rural experiences, a niche and high quality experience that reflect sustainable tourism approaches could be created. Boyne et al. (2002) illustrated that creating synergies between local food production and tourism and implementing an effective marketing strategy have helped to create areas as niche destinations.

As stated by Jones and Jenkins (2002), "Food is now a means of developing new niche markets, supporting regional identities, developing quality tourism and sustainable

tourism" (p. 115). As their example of tourism development in Wales illustrate, promoting local food had similar effects to creating and promoting a niche tourism market. In addition, the promotion of locally produced foods provided tourists an authentic experience while at the same time reviving local traditional foods, supporting and encouraging locally produced products, stimulating traditional farming practices and creating a healthy agricultural community. This in turn contributed to creating agricultural landscapes, the images of which could be used to brand and market the destination. Thus, promotion of local food is a means to develop and support sustainable tourism products, especially as a "potential antidote for stagnating mass tourism demand" (Jones & Jenkins, 2002, p. 116).

While diets across the world have become more varied and the distinctive boundaries of local cuisines hazy, the food-service sector throughout the world is littered with global food brands such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds and KFC. Branded as "fast foods", they are said to embody all the negative aspects of globalisation and homogenization (Schlosser, 2001, p. 96). Scarpato and Daniele (2003) envisage that with the blurring of regional borders, regional cuisine is constantly evolving and cuisine will never again be restricted to just locally available ingredients. These issues have to be noted when considering the development and promotion of local cuisine in order to insure its authenticity, and particularly because of its wider implications on the sustainability of local communities (Chappel, 2001, in du Rand, et al., 2003).

Fields (2002) advocates that the pressure for destinations to differentiate corresponds to tourists' demand for unique products and experiences. Therefore the key for success is for destinations to link their unique local culinary experiences to the primary resources. Fields further notes that:

> If a destination wishes to build a strong identity in the minds of tourists, it must market its differences along with its main motivational attractors. In an increasingly look-alike world, food with a strong national or regional identity can become one of the vehicles for achieving this. (p. 43).

In today's globalized world, where social and cultural structures are weak and disintegrated, there is a high level of social and personal insecurity (Bauman, 1997; Giddens, 1990). Through culture and heritage, tourism provides a source of identity for those who are in search of 'themselves' (Palmer, 1999). The character and mentality of a society is embodied in the culinary heritage of a destination (Bessiere, 1998). Since

types of food and eating habits are determined by a society's culture and religion, food is an integral part of identity formation (Long, 2004).

The association between quality food and health benefits has been increasingly appreciated by many people in recent years. As a result, the popularity of and demand for quality foods are increasing: "In the contemporary world the quest for good eating can no longer be dismissed as trivial", where "(a)ccess to quality food is poised to become a political issue as well as an environment issue" (Scarpato, 2002a, p. 66).

Negative attitudes towards 'McDonaldization' and the fast food industry are being increasingly advocated in countries the world over (Ritzer, 2000). Strong hostility and rejection over cultural and national issues and the growing concern and awareness about healthy eating have forced global fast food retailers and suppliers to tailor their products to meet local needs in order to survive (Hall & Mitchell, 2005). According to World Health Organisation, (WHO, 2009), the spread of fast food chains combined with growing affluence throughout Europe and Asia is believed to have caused the increasing numbers in obesity in those regions which was termed as "globesity" (BBC, 2009). While WHO warned that obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, it is believed that healthy eating has become one of the most popular aspects of food culture which will go on to have a dominant influence on the food industry (Mackay, 2004 cited in Hall & Mitchell, 2005).

Hence, Hall, Sharples, and Smith (2003) argue that the factors that caused globalisation present "as much an opportunity as they do a threat" for local food and gastronomy (p. 32). It is important to utilize globalisation "as a means of strengthening the relationship between tourism and gastronomy" (Hjalagar & Richards, 2002, p. 224). The future of food could be about producing food that is both sensitive to the environment and nourishing to the mind and body. Hence, integrating sustainable practices in food production and tourism will become the practical future perspective (Scarpato, 2002b).

In response to growing concern over the influence that McDonalds outlets were having on the food cultures in Italy, the "Slow Food" movement was established in Bra, Northern Italy in 1986 (Petrini & Padovani, 2006). The Slow Food movement promotes regional food prepared by traditional methods, and its leisurely consumption (Davidson, 1999). The movement aims at spreading knowledge about local cuisines and products to consumers and saving from extinction those foods that are declining by providing publicity and building markets (Miele & Murdoch, 2006). The establishment of The

Slow Food Award in 2000 which recognises those "who preserve biodiversity as it relates to food" (Kummer, 2002, p. 25), and "reward those anywhere in the world who defend, promote or enhance produce, knowledge or flavour, with public recognition, cash prizes and promotion of their activities" brought Slow Food movement to the attention of world media (Scarpato, 2002b, p. 135). As the movement continues to raise awareness on issues related to local foods and strives to provide assistance to producers in saving foods that are threatened of extinction, more and more countries are joining the movement (Mitchell, 2005). By 2005, there were 85,000 members in more than 132 countries (www.slowfood.com).

The European Network of Regional Culinary Heritage is another organisation that promotes local food. The network which enables consumers to locate restaurants and shops offering local specialities was established with the aim of providing a rich travel experience, support sustainable regional development and enhance regional identities within Europe (Ohlsson, 2000).

2.7 Summary

In summary, this chapter has shown that the homogenizing pressures of globalisation are not only leading to uniformity in experience, but also spawning a local back-lash where there is a need and desire to showcase the unique attributes of destinations. Food with its intimate links with culture, heritage and sense of place represents an ideal tool to foster this local presence and also provides an important way to link tourism to local development through economic linkages. However, the challenge remains as to how destinations like the Maldives, that are not food tourism destinations, can enhance the role of food in tourism.

CHAPTER THREE:
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a discussion of the methodological approach and research design used to examine the aims and objectives set out in Chapter 1. The discussion clarifies the methods, instruments, and specific processes of data collection and analysis as well as the ethical issues involved.

Tourism and food involve several actors and so the relationship is a complex one. Therefore, the study of food and tourism requires the use of more than one method. A variety of information needs to be gathered from different data sources, and a number of different research methods which complement and compensate for the weaknesses and strengths of one another are necessary in order to provide a reliable, valid and complete understanding of the situation and issues. Thus, a case-study method based on a grounded theory approach using multiple methods has been employed.

3.1 Methodological approach

There are two primary approaches to data gathering in any research: the qualitative and the quantitative (Jennings, 2001). Quantitative research gathers data by "rigorous scientific" methods (Finn, Eliott-White & Walton, 2000, p. 8), using statistical analysis and numerical evidence to arrive at conclusions and usually engaging large numbers to prove reliability (Veal, 1997). Research that uses quantitative methodologies has the advantage of acquiring responses from a large number of people to a limited number of questions, thus enabling data to be compared and statistically aggregated, and the findings to be generalized (Patton, 2002). Quantitative research processes are guided by a deductive approach. As such, the research often commences with a hypothesis related to the phenomenon being researched which is tested with data gathered by statistical methods and empirical evidence (Neuman, 2003). Examples of quantitative research methods include surveys, experiments, statistics, structured observation and content analysis (Silverman, 2006, with reference to Bryman, 1988).

In contrast, qualitative research is defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) as "any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p. 10). Qualitative methods can produce rich and thorough information from a small group of people due to the increased depth of understanding of the cases

being researched. Although the small numbers limit how much the findings can be generalized, a significant advantage of qualitative research is its liberty from predetermined categories of analysis – this allows openness, detail and depth to the enquiry (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research is inclined towards inductive analysis (Jennings, 2001). An inductive approach builds "theory from the ground up", where data is gathered from the phenomenon being researched to construct a theory (Neuman, 2003, p. 51). Interviews, observation, focus groups, analysing texts and documents, and audio and video recording are commonly used qualitative research methods (Silverman, 2006).

Quantitative research focuses on measurement and examination of the relationship between variables from an etic or 'outsider' perspective and seeks less detail; in contrast, qualitative researchers employ an emic or 'insider' approach to observation and investigation, which enables in-depth, detailed access to individual perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Often qualitative and quantitative methodologies are integrated to combine their respective strengths and weaknesses in a mixed method (Bryman, 2006) or multi-method (Brewer & Hunter, 2006) approach. Lincoln and Guba (2003) argue that:

> researchers should think beyond the myopic quantitative-qualitative divide when it comes to devising a suitable methodology for their research, and select methods – quantitative, qualitative or a combination of the two – that best satisfy the needs of specific research projects. (p. 266).

All these methodologies are governed by research paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). A paradigm is a fundamental set of beliefs that guides the conduct of the research (Jennings, 2001). With reference to Henderson (1990), Finn et al. (2000) proposed two paradigms that govern tourism and leisure research: the positivist paradigm, and the interpretive or phenomenologist paradigm. According to Jennings (2001), tourism research can be informed by one of six paradigms: the positivist, interpretive social sciences, critical theory, feminist perspectives, post-modern, or chaos theory paradigm.

All paradigms contain three elements: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Ontology is the nature of reality that researchers investigate, epistemology is the relationship between the reality being investigated and the

researcher, and methodology is the technique used by the researcher in exploring the reality in question (Healy & Perry, 2000).

According to Veal (1997), the positivist research paradigm views the object being researched as observable facts to be studied by external observations, whose behaviour can be explained with facts and data gathered by using theories and models. The ontology of the positivist paradigm is governed by natural laws independent of human consciousness (Sarantakos, 1998).The epistemological stance of the positivist paradigm is objective and value-free, employing an etic approach where the research is conducted from an outsider's perspective (Jennings, 2001). In a positivist paradigm, quantitative methodologies such as systematic processes and theoretical models that assist in quantifying observable facts are used to gather information, the results of which are confirmed with empirical evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

The interpretive research paradigm is relatively flexible and focuses more on the perspectives of the subjects being studied, viewing the world from their point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The ontological view of interpretive paradigms is grounded in multiple, divergent and interrelated social realities – they are not restricted to one reality, unlike the positivist paradigm (Finn et al., 2000). Interpretive paradigms embrace a subjective epistemology, analysing behaviour from the perspective of the phenomenon being researched; this permits the emic position which will enable the identification of "multiple realities" (Jennings, 2001, p. 128). Interpretive paradigms utilize qualitative methodologies to study the research phenomenon.

Jennings (2001) suggests that any choice of paradigm must take into account the nature of the tourism that is being researched. Finn et al. (2000, p. 7) suggests that a researcher engaging in tourism and leisure research needs to choose between the positivist and interpretive paradigms, and proposed that the choice of paradigms depends on the answers to four fundamental questions. In order to follow a positivist approach, the answers to the following four questions have to be 'yes':

1. Can behaviour be measured and the results regarded as facts?
2. Can the measurement be carried out objectively without the distortion of the value judgement of the researcher?
3. Should the researcher only be concerned with what is observable?
4. Is human action a response to the external system?

On the other hand, the focus of the research moves away from a positivist paradigm if the answers to the following four questions are 'yes':

1. Is reality socially constructed by the interactions of individuals?
2. Should the investigation focus on what is meaningful to individuals in the social world?
3. Should the conscious experience of human life be studied?
4. Is human action a response to interaction with others and the perceptions and experience of others?

According to Veal (1997), leisure is a qualitative phenomenon and so for many researchers qualitative research is the most suitable technique for leisure and tourism studies. Similarly, Riley and Love (2000) affirm that although tourism research requires quantification, mainly due to the economically driven nature of the industry, qualitative research provides an important perspective from which to view the phenomenon. Therefore, "tourism needs to embrace a general recognition of the legitimacy of a variety of research tools" (Walle, 1997, p. 535). In this regard, it is proposed that no method is privileged over the other, and the ideal method would be the most appropriate one for the task at hand (Veal, 1997).

This research will follow the interpretive research paradigm. The design of this research will be a case study that uses mixed methods which will be conducted from a grounded theory perspective.

3.2 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is "theory that was derived from data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). This approach involves collecting and inductively analysing data to build "middle-range theoretical frameworks" derived from the collected data (Charmaz, 2000, p. 509). The emerging themes and concepts are coded; this helps to categorize the data and leads to theory development (Patton, 2002):

> What distinguishes the discussion of theory in much of the literature on qualitative methods is the emphasis on inductive strategies of theory development in contrast to theory generated by logical deduction from a priori assumption. (p. 125).

One of the strong points of grounded theory is that since theory is drawn from the data, it is more likely to "resemble the 'reality'" and present better insight and understanding

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). Since theory development is a significant concern when using qualitative methods, this aspect of grounded theory is important and useful (Patton, 2002) because it enables researchers to fill the gap in theory development. This is done by focusing on gathering data from a particular area of research to derive theories inductively, as opposed to using a deductive approaches where theory is hypothetically generated (Finn et al., 2000).

Another significant advantage of grounded theory is the ability to produce founding concepts upon which to build research (Corbin & Holt, 2005). This provides explanatory frameworks for researchers that indicate links between research concepts (Charmaz, 2000). Since grounded theory can be used from either an objectivist or constructivist perspective and from varied forms of quantitative or qualitative data collection methods, it enables flexible research strategies to be adopted (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded theory is a useful approach for this research because the inductive approach of grounded theory allows identification of concepts better than testing a *priori* hypothesis. Furthermore, the case-study approach has been chosen in order to gain a deeper insight, but it does require information from a variety of data sources and the flexibility of grounded theory in data-collecting methods and data sources makes it compatible with this approach.

3.3 Case studies

Case studies are one of the most common approaches used in qualitative and mixed methods inquiry (Stake, 2000), providing an empirical investigation of an existing phenomenon in its real-life context (Yin, 1994, in Jennings, 2001). The case-study approach is particularly useful in situations where the research topic is required to be defined broadly (Yin, 2003).

Jennings (2001) portrayed the advantages and disadvantages associated with case studies; these are summarised in Table 3.1. One of the key advantages of case studies is that they give access to in-depth data. This research is grounded in a social setting, and the case-study approach gives the opportunity for participants to verify the accuracy of the evidence. The possibility of verification by participants also eliminates chances of researcher bias. Another useful advantage is that case studies allow methodological triangulation.

A disadvantage of case studies is that they do not reveal the focus of the research at the beginning but provide an emergent focus. The fact that reproduction of the findings may be denied due to verification by participants is also a disadvantage. In addition, since the findings are case sensitive, they may not be able to be generalized beyond the case studied.

Table 3. 1 Advantages and disadvantages of case studies

advantages	disadvantages
• permits in-depth data • evidence is grounded in the social setting being studied • accuracy can be verified by study members • possible elimination of researcher bias due to member checking • methodological triangulation	• research focus not clearly stated at the start (emergent focus) • subjective research focus • possibility of denied reproduction of evidence due to member checking • potential of bias in data collection,analysis and findings • findings are specific to case • non- generalizability to other cases

Source: Adapted from Jennings (2001, p. 178)

Most previous research related to food and tourism is based on case studies. This is because, among other reasons, case studies can demonstrate the "richness" of the experiences (Sharples, 2003b, p. 49). Among some of the recent case study research, Hashimoto and Telfer (2006) explored the relationship between place identity and food marketing in Canada. A similar study was conducted by Kenken and Go (2006) to investigate the relationship between tourist encounters and destination identity in Zeeland, Netherlands. The Juneteenth festival celebrated in Kansas, USA was studied by Donovan and de Bres (2006) to investigate how African–American culture was promoted by the festival as a culinary attraction. Use and perception of local food in the bed and breakfast sector in New Zealand's South Island was researched by Nummendal and Hall (2006).

Further studies include the study by Smith and Xiao (2008) to explore the possibility of extending the techniques of supply chain analysis to culinary tourism activities such as restaurants and farmers' markets. Stewart, Bramble and Ziraldo (2008) explore the issues and advances made in wine and culinary tourism to provide recommendations for the future success of these activities in Canada's Niagara region. The connection and

impact on tourism promotion by the sale of shrimp at dockside retail establishments or by shrimp fishermen in South Carolina was investigated by Deale (2008).

It is argued that case studies are often the most appropriate method to adopt when analysing the background, processes and practices that are related to a research topic (Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Finn et al., 2000). A case-study method was used in this research because it allowed the context of tourism to be better understood in relation to the research question. Gillham (2000, p. 3) identified two fundamental characteristics of case studies: they rely on multiple sources of data and the research does not start with an '*a priori*' theory: "The case study researcher, working *inductively* from what's there in the research setting develops *grounded theory*" (Gillham, 2000, p. 12). Hence, as a case study, this research necessitates the use of multiple methods and an inductive research process where theories will be formulated from the research findings.

3.4 Multiple methods and triangulation

Due to the richness of the context that case studies provide, a single method for data collection is often not appropriate. Instead, multiple sources of evidence gathered by different methods are required. Such an approach is known as "multi-method" (Gillham, 2000, p. 13).

Restricting research to purely quantitative methods runs the risk of neglecting the social and cultural composition of the research object (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). On the contrary, since qualitative research utilizes a wide range of interrelated methods and belongs to multiple paradigms, qualitative methodologies are able to secure a thorough comprehension and better insight into the research question than quantitative approaches that rely on just empirical evidence (Patton, 2002).

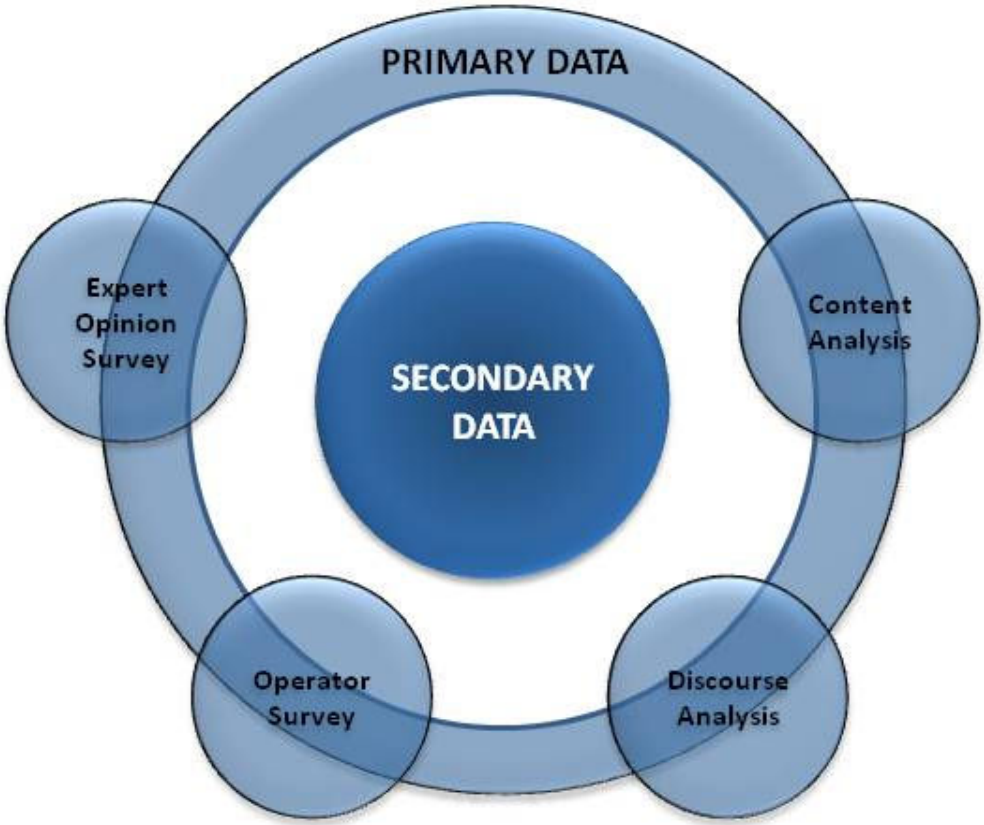
However, combining qualitative and quantitative methods can be challenging because of the technical difficulties of effectively combining the two approaches, and because of the conflicting paradigms of these methodologies (Morgan, 2006).

The approach of focusing on the same study from different methodological perspectives is known as triangulation (Gillham, 2000). Triangulation "involves the use of multiple methods – each representing a different perspective or lens – to assess a given phenomenon in order to enhance confidence in the validity of findings' (Greene, Kreider & Mayer, 2005, p. 274). Denzin (1978, in Janesick, 2000) identified four types of triangulation:

1. data triangulation: uses a range of data sources
2. investigator triangulation: uses a number of evaluators to review findings
3. theory triangulation: employs multiple perspectives to data interpretation, and
4. methodological triangulation: involves multiple methods.

In this study, two forms of triangulation are applied: data and methodological. In the former, data were drawn from various sources, and in the latter, both quantitative and qualitative methods were combined (See Figure 3.1).

Figure 3. 1 Methodological triangulation



First the pictorial and textual content of tourist brochures and websites were analysed. The results from this analysis were then validated by a discourse analysis conducted on the same brochures and websites. In order to confirm and validate the emerging themes from these two analyses, two questionnaire surveys, one among tourism operators and the other among experts in the tourism industry, were conducted. The operator survey focused on quantitative details as well as qualitative information, while the expert survey was qualitative in nature, seeking in-depth and opinion-based answers.

In terms of this research, this approach reduced the vulnerability of the findings to errors that can arise when using only a single method, thus helping to enhance the validity of the findings.

3.5 Secondary data

Secondary data is an important and significant part of this research. An important advantage offered by secondary data is "retrospectivity"; this "enables researchers to go back in time to re-examine tourism phenomena" – a task primary data cannot always perform (Jennings, 2001, p.68). Retrospectivity thus "enable(s) the prediction or forecasting of future events, trends and patterns" (ibid). This feature of secondary research was useful for this research because once future trends in destination and food choices were identified from secondary data sources, then they could be related to the findings of this research.

The Internet proved to be a particularly useful source of secondary data about the Maldives because there is not much readily available printed data. Important statistical data and information on strategic plans and reports could only be accessed via the Internet because while some information was available from Maldives government websites, international organisations such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and The World Bank supplied a lot of valuable data and information on the Maldives on their websites. Since this research relied greatly on the Internet, especially for information on the Maldives, only information from published reports, surveys and documents on the official websites of the government of the Maldives and international organisations were used; this was to ensure the reliability of the information.

The websites of the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (MTCA), Ministry of Planning and National Development (MPND), and Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources (MFAMR) were very useful as they provide up-to-date reports and statistics which otherwise are usually available only in annual publications. Similarly, the website of the Maldives National Centre for Linguistic and Historical Research provided information about the history and culture of Maldives, especially material by local authors which is rarely published and hard to find. However, more recently, academic research materials about the Maldives have appeared in journals and websites and these provided up-to-date and reliable information for this research.

A number of international organisations and donor agencies closely work with the Maldives government and play a prominent role in various development projects. Reports, surveys and plans that these organisations carry out are published on the websites of these organisations, while they may not be accessible through the local government. Documents that provided information used in this research include 'Country Report on Animal Genetic Resources' submitted to the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (UNFAO) by Ministry of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, (MFAMR) in 2004; 'Tsunami Impact Assessment Report 2005' by Ministry of Planning and National Development (MPND) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); 'Vulnerability and Poverty Assessment Report 2004' by ADB, and 'European Community Country Strategy Paper on the Maldives 2007 - 2013'.

Finn et al. (2000) noted that a key disadvantage of using secondary data is the possibility that the data may not be neutral since it has been collected for a specific purpose. This was found to be true since most of the articles researched regarding tourism impacts was seen to highlight the issue in focus, be it economic, environmental, cultural or social. Hence, as Jennings (2001) noted, the reliability of secondary data could be questionable.

3.6 Primary data

Primary data was gathered using content analysis, discourse analysis and surveys. The stages of the data-gathering process and the instruments used are now described.

3.6.1 Content and discourse analyses

This research commenced with both a content and discourse analysis of tourist brochures and resort websites. The analyses were conducted to identify the role of food in the marketing materials that are designed to shape consumer demand and expectations.

Content analysis refers to the examination of texts (Wood & Kroger, 2002). It aims to study the "manifest content" or the "latent content" of "texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication" (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 279). The manifest content refers to words or sentences that are observable from a text, whereas the latent content is the hidden meanings and messages that can be deciphered from a

document (ibid). Content analysis is endorsed as a research technique in tourism for making "reliable and valid inferences" from pictures or texts to "the contexts of their use" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 8).

Content analysis involves identifying a group of materials to analyse and establishing a system to record particular features about the materials being analysed (Newman, 2003). This technique requires a sample that is representative yet small enough to enable a substantive analysis (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001). According to Krippendorff (2004), having a context in which to examine the selected texts is very important. In this research the context in which the unit of analysis sought was the indication of availability or the offer of local Maldivian food for tourists. A set of categories are then established from the sample and the number of cases that fall under the categories within the context are recorded (Sarantakos, 1998). The reliability and validity of content analysis depends on the accuracy of the categories and the precise counts of cases that fall under each category, so that different analysts will be able to produce the same results with a given set of materials (Silverman, 2006).

Sarantakos (1998), with reference to Mayring (1983, 1985, and 1988), proposed that the process of analysis can proceed in one or more of three ways:

1. Summation: the data is reduced into categories that integrate and generalize the important themes from the texts
2. Explication: the aim of analysis is to explain the text based either on the content of the document or in relation with other sources, or
3. Structuration: the data is arranged into predetermined categories or an order determined from the texts.

Summation and explication were the methods chosen for this research. The first stage of content analysis was selecting the sample of materials to be used in the research. Since the geographically dispersed nature of the islands of the Maldives made it difficult to obtain material from all of the resorts, the size of the sample was dictated by availability. Thus, the sample belongs to the category of "Haphazard (convenience or availability) samples", which is one of a number of non-probability sampling methods described by Finn et al. (2000, p. 118). Sarantakos (1994) stated that units of analysis in content analysis could be "texts of books, transcripts of interviews, or other forms of verbal or visual communication" (p. 284).

Content analysis has been a valuable and frequently used research technique in tourism to analyse "difficult, contentious and usually subjective cultural objects in order to identify the projected image of destinations" (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001, p. 172). Employing content analysis, Hunter and Suh (2007) evaluated visual perceptions of the Dolhareubang, an important representation of Jeju Island in the Republic of Korea. Markwick (2001) used a sample of 500 postcards collected over a period of three years to extract symbolic meanings projected in terms of Malta as a tourism destination. In addition, Frochot (2003) was able to identify the range of food and wine images used by French tourism brochures using content analysis in order to draw a parallel between those images and the positioning strategies of the regions.

Finn et al. (2000) warned that reliability is a key concern for content analysis because of the tendency for the analysis to be generalized. According to Silverman (2006) the reliability and validity of content analysis is based on the accuracy of the categories and the precise counts of cases within each category so that the same results may be obtained from a given sample by different analysts.

Content analysis in this research was conducted by a single analyst. Using more than one analyst could have achieved greater reliability. At the same time, using different analysts runs the risk of causing problems of reproducibility. Analysis of this research is based on secondary data thus presenting the option of re-testing. However, websites and promotional materials are temporal in nature. Web-based information is regularly updated while new printed promotional materials are often published on an annual basis.

According to Pritchard and Morgan (2001) supplementing content analysis with other methods of textual analysis such as discourse analysis renders a thorough and multifaceted interpretation of the depictions.

To improve research validity, in conjunction with content analysis, discourse analysis was conducted in this research on the same brochures and websites. Use of discourse analysis also helped to understand the background and identify the embodied meanings from the materials as the materials depicted a context unique to the case under investigation. As Fairclough (2003) stated, discourse analysis represents language from the context of a given social and cultural practice.

Discourse analysis is defined by Brown and Yule (2003) as "the analysis of language in use" (p. 1). Discourse analysis encompasses "knowledge about language beyond the word, clause, phrase and sentence" (Paltridge, 2006, p. 2). The concept of content is more extensive in discourse analysis than it is in content analysis, hence discourse analysis is able to provide a more sensitive and in-depth analysis than content analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Pritchard and Morgan (2001) used content and discourse analysis of tourist brochures to identify how the identity of Wales is represented by Welsh tourism marketing bodies. Ateljevic and Doorne (2002) used discourse analysis to examine images used in tourism marketing of New Zealand. Their study revealed political processes behind the social and cultural messages represented in the marketing imagery. A similar study was conducted by Mellinger (1994) who analysed tourist postcards used in America. By applying discourse analysis to the photographic postcards, Mellinger was able to identify hidden racist images of African–Americans. Using content and discourse analyses, Norton (1996) investigated how tourism marketing in East Africa represented its culture and nature, and how these images were interpreted by tourists.

Discourse analysis helps identify themes or lack of themes. An important consideration in discourse analysis is the attention paid to the absence of themes. The absence of themes, instead of being considered as irrelevant, is viewed in discourse analysis as possibilities (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, lack of themes can be seen as a powerful tool in investigating hidden messages in tourism information texts and images, particularly advertising and promotion material. Hannam and Knox (2005) elaborated on the use of discourse analysis:

> Increasing numbers of researchers in the field of tourism studies are using discourse analysis as a means of critical investigation when faced with qualitative or textual forms of data, such as written documents, or visual materials such as photographs and brochures. Such data is often representative of how a group of people have made sense of and reflected on their own world and that of others. (p. 23)

Substantiating content analysis with discourse analysis in this research assisted in identifying the core themes related to food that were presented in the materials and thus answer the research aims and objectives. Discourse analysis was particularly useful in understanding the extent to which local culture and the environment were represented in relation to food in the marketing materials.

3.6.2 Surveys

"A survey is a good way, often the only way, of getting a picture of the current state of a group" (Janes, 1999, p. 321). Furthermore, it is the "most important source of information for tourism analysis" (Smith, 1995, cited in Finn et al., 2000, p. 86). Surveys follow a deductive approach, which means that the research "begins with a theoretical or applied research problem and ends with empirical measurement and data analysis" (Neuman, 2003, p. 267). The findings from this survey will be used to draw conclusions on the extent local food is used in tourism marketing and development by Maldives tourism operators.

Two surveys were conducted to gain a clearer picture of the ways in which local food is used by tourism establishments and in tourism promotions and to review the validity of the findings from the content and discourse analysis. One survey focused on the resort operators and sought mainly quantitative data. The other survey was aimed at finding opinions of experts in the field of Maldivian tourism and was of a qualitative nature. The results of the surveys were compared with the findings from the content and discourse analyses to reveal the extent to which local food is used in tourism marketing. Qualitative responses from the operators' survey and the results from the expert opinion survey were analysed to find out the potential for local food to be linked into tourism and used as a tourism marketing and development tool. The type of surveys and the instruments utilized are discussed in the following sections.

The surveys conducted among tourism operators used probability sampling. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000, p. 153) elaborate on probability sampling:

> Probability sampling is most commonly associated with survey-based research where you need to make inferences from your sample about a population to answer your research question(s) or to meet your objectives. (p. 153)

The most important feature of probability sampling is that the sample is representative of the population (Saunders et al., 2000). The target population for the first set of questionnaires was resort operators in the Maldives. The sampling frame was selected from the database of MTCA that listed hotel and resort operators in the Maldives. All 84 resorts that were in operation in June 2008 were included in the sample frame.

Expert sampling was used for the second set of questionnaires. This set was e-mailed to ten experts that the researcher identified as people who have the specialist knowledge needed to make informed opinions and comments.

Frazer and Lawley (2000) described four types of questionnaires: mail questionnaires, personally administered questionnaires, telephone questionnaires and Internet questionnaires. Of these, personally administered questionnaires and telephone questionnaires are conducted by the researcher who asks the questions and records the responses given by the respondent. Mail questionnaires and Internet or e-mail questionnaires are "self-administered questionnaires" with no direct interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Bernard, 2006, p. 258).

Two of the most prominent advantages of mail questionnaires are their economy and ease of administration (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Mail questionnaires also provide greater anonymity. Furthermore, mail questionnaires reduce the rate of errors caused by any bias created by the nature of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and the variability in the skills of the administrator (Sarantakos, 1998). Finally, mail questionnaires grant respondents more time to consider their answers rather than having to give an immediate response (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

However, a marked disadvantage of mail questionnaires can be their low response rate (Bernard, 2006), because a low response rate will affect the validity of generalizing any research findings (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Frankfort–Nachmias and Nachmias suggest that non-respondents usually are the poorly educated who may have difficulty understanding the questions, the elderly who are not able to respond, and the more mobile who are difficult to locate. If these categories of respondents are excluded due to their non-response, then the returned responses may not accurately represent the population originally defined by the researcher and this will create a bias in the findings (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Furthermore, since questionnaires can use only simple, straightforward questions, this method eliminates the opportunity for probing further than the given answer (Jennings, 2001). Finally, there is no guarantee that the questionnaire is completed by the intended respondent (Bernard, 2006). The advantages and disadvantages of mail questionnaires are compared in Table 3.2.

Table 3. 2 Advantages and disadvantages of mail questionnaires

advantages of mail questionnaires	disadvantages of mail questionnaires
• low cost • no influence of interviewer or technique, therefore reduced biasing error • higher level of anonymity • considered answers • wide access to geographically dispered areas at low cost	• simple, straightforward questions • limits opportunities to further probe or clarify answers • cannot control who completes the questionnaires • low response rates

A more recent advance on traditional form of mail questionnaires is the e-questionnaire, i.e. using e-mail (electronic mail) to distribute questionnaires. E-mail questionnaires have the advantage of being able to be distributed to a large population at a relatively low cost (Bernard, 2006). In addition, the most significant appeal of e-mail questionnaires is their "scope and speed of contact" (Jennings, 2001, p. 240). This aspect of e-mail questionnaires makes them ideal to use in geographically dispersed and remote areas where conducting interviews would seem impractical and the cost of mail questionnaires prohibitive (Bernard, 2006). E-mails can be delivered within minutes at a relatively low cost compared with conventional mail, which could take days to deliver and cost more (Sheehan & Hoy, 1999). In terms of response quality, Paolo, Bonaminio, Gibson, Patridge and Kallail (2000) stated that respondents tend to provide longer responses to open-ended questions in e-mail surveys than in most other types of surveys. However, the success of e-mail questionnaires depends on the extent that the target population uses the Internet (Sue & Ritter, 2007). Moreover, again there is no guarantee that the questionnaires are completed by the targeted respondent (Patton, 2002).

The two questionnaires used in this research were e-mail based. The deciding factors for choosing e-mail questionnaires were their ease of distribution and their low cost in comparison with interviews or other forms of questionnaires. In addition, e-mail is the most popular and widely used method of communication among businesses in the Maldives. Mail questionnaires or personal interviewing would be arduous, time consuming and the costs unreasonable in a country like the Maldives where the islands are separated by water and spread over a vast area. Thus, the e-mail questionnaire is less costly, less time consuming and more accessible. In addition, the assurance of

anonymity granted by an e-mail questionnaire is considered very important for a country with a small population like the Maldives, where most people are known by each other, especially when they work in the same industry or same kind of business.

Response rate is a decisive factor in judging the quality of a survey's outcomes (Stoop, 2005). In e-mail surveys, response rate is influenced by survey length, pre-notification, survey follow-ups and issue salience (Sheehan, 2001). Sheehan noted that research has shown conflicting results with regard to the influence of survey length on response rate. Sheehan also caution that since pre-notification messages in e-mail surveys may be regarded as 'unsolicited' mail, only short messages that provide the option to participate in the survey may be acceptable to respondents. The e-mails sent to participants of both the surveys contained Participant Information Sheets (Appendix 3) explaining the purpose and benefits of the study and assuring participants that no identifying information would be included in the study. This e-mail also contained the option to participate in the survey.

Two weeks from the date of sending the surveys, a follow-up e-mail was sent to potential participants of both surveys. Getting responses to the operators' survey proved difficult. Saunders et al. (2000) suggest that any non-responses require additional respondents to be sought in order to achieve the necessary sample size. Initially the operators' survey was e-mailed to managers of the resorts. Due to the limited initial response, the survey had to be e-mailed again, with department managers being included in the list of respondents the second time.

By the end of the three week duration that the survey was run, a total of 12 completed surveys were received from operators which gave a 14% response rate. From the experts' opinion survey, six completed surveys were received providing a response rate of 60%.

The data entry and analysis used 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences' (SPSS Version 16). In accordance with the ethical guidelines issued by Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC), privacy and confidentiality were respected throughout the research process (see appendix 4 for Ethics Approval form).

3.7 Data validity and reliability

In any research, whether the methodology is quantitative or qualitative, the methods being used to gather data have to be reliable and valid (Jennings, 2001). Reliability means whether or not a specific method, when applied repeatedly to a particular entity, would produce the same result every time (Finn et al., 2000). Validity refers to the representativeness of the measurements to the concepts being researched (Lewin, 2005). Finn et al. (2000) go further and distinguish between external validity and internal validity. External validity asks whether the research results can be generalized, while internal validity refers to the extent to which the observations reflect the research hypothesis (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Jennings (2001) explained that validity and reliability are not the same. Research findings can be reliable but not valid: i.e. the instrument used can generate the same results consistently but this does not mean that the findings are the intended results of the research (Lewin, 2005). However, perfect validity would signify perfect reliability (Jennings, 2001).

Finn et al. (2000) refers to Decrop (1999) to propose four criteria for assessing both quantitative and qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Credibility questions the truthfulness of the research findings, transferability is concerned with the application of the results to other populations, dependability questions the consistency of the findings, and conformability assesses the unbiased nature of the findings.

Saunders et al. (2000) cautioned that a high non-response rate may cause response bias. Response rate is different from response bias. Dey (1997) claimed that:

> It may be that a survey that yields a very low response rate, say 10%, does a fairly good job of representing the population from which the mail-out sample was originally drawn. This would be the case if the 10% who responded to this hypothetical survey were quite similar to the 90% who failed to respond. (p. 217)

A factor that strongly influences response rate was found to be the salience of an issue to the sample population (Martin, 1994). According to Bean and Roszkowski, (1995), salience has greater influence on the response rate than the length of the survey. The low response rate received for the operator survey could have been caused due to operators' lack of interest in the survey topic.

A frequently used benchmark in literature is the Babbie response rate (Stoop, 2005), according to which a 50% response rate is considered as adequate, 60% is good and 70% is very good. In a web survey, Deutskens et al. (2003, cited in Stoop, 2005, p. 23) regarded a response rate of 31% as "promising for the future of online market research".

The respondents to the operator survey represent a mix of resorts in terms of the number of rooms and the number of years that they have been in operation. The respondent resorts range in size from less than 50 rooms to those more than 500 rooms. The number of years that these resorts have been in operation also ranges from less than one year to more than 10 years. While low, the 14% response rate has managed to deliver a good mix/variety of operators. The range of respondents adds to the overall value of the study as it more closely reflects the nature of the industry.

The participants of the expert opinion survey represent policy makers, businessmen and academics. Thus, it can be justified that the 14% response rate achieved for the operators' survey and the 60% response rate received for the experts' opinion survey represents the population and is not constrained by response bias. The response rate of the experts' opinion survey fits the 'good' category of Babbie response rate (Stoop, 2005).

This research did not utilize standard classifications; analysis was based on one person's interpretations. Hence, claims of accuracy and reliability are difficult to establish. Accuracy issues could have been resolved by using categories from previous research of a similar nature. However, this would not have enhanced the understanding of the present case. Greater reliability could have been achieved by using more than one coder, because only one coder was used for the content analysis of this research.

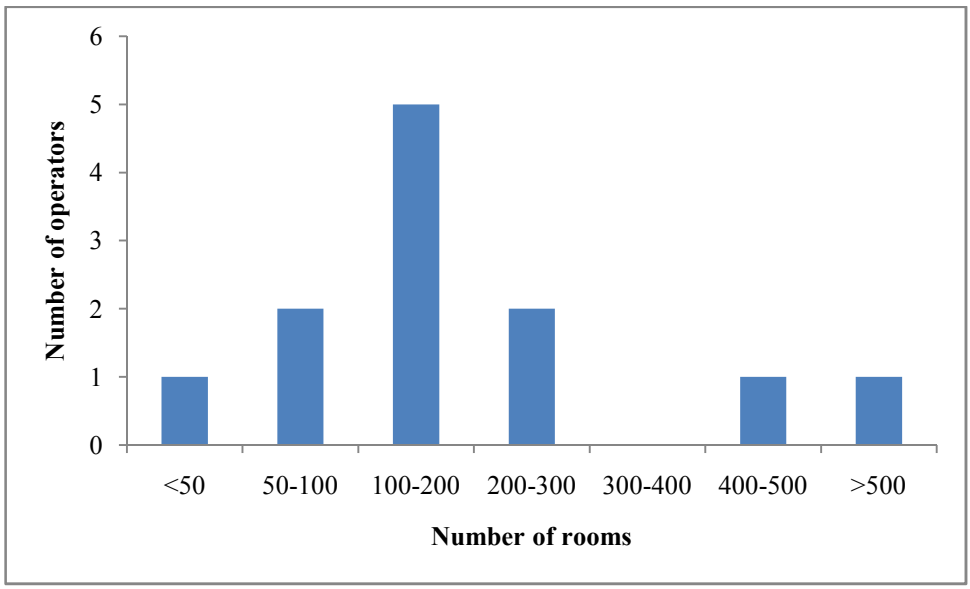
The survey data might have been compromised by the respondents' determination to project their businesses as welcoming and open to local labour, which could reflect on the answers about the number of locals employed. Furthermore, since a large number of expatriates are employed in tourism industry, particularly at managerial levels, there is a risk that their understanding of local food, availability and cost might not always be accurate.

3.8 Survey characteristics

Out of the 12 respondent resorts, ten have been in operation for seven or more years. Out of these, there were three resorts that have been operating for more than 20 years. Considering that a number of new resorts have recently come into operation (MTCA, 2007b), the fact that some of participant resorts are among the more experienced operators will enrich and provide strength to the findings of this research because their responses and opinions will be informed by experience and insight. There are also enough new resorts to make the sample relevant.

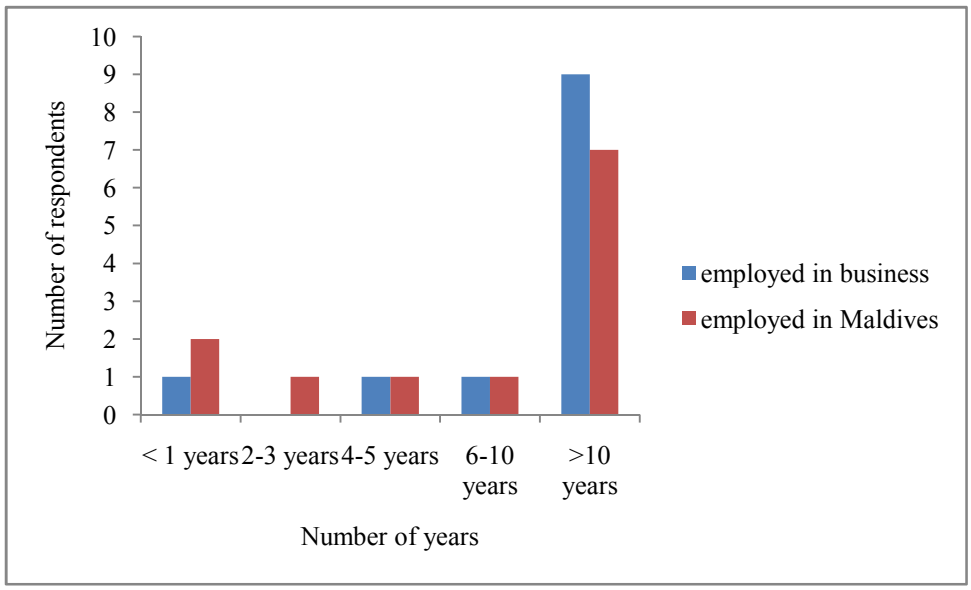
Figure 3.2 indicates that most of the resorts were quite large in terms of capacity. Five resorts had 100 - 200 rooms, two resorts had 200 – 300 rooms, and one resort had 400 - 500 rooms while one other had more than 500 rooms. There were two resorts with 50 – 100 rooms and one that had less than 50. As the Tourism Yearbook 2007 (MTCA, 2007b) indicates, the bed capacity of 41% of all operators in Maldives is 100 – 200.

Figure 3. 2 Capacity of responding businesses



The respondents comprised seven managers, three department managers, one assistant manager and one chief executive. The group is quite experienced, with nine of the respondents holding their job for more than ten years. Their experience in the Maldives tourism industry is also significant with seven of the respondents having worked for more than ten years in the Maldives tourism industry (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3. 3 Respondent duration of employment in business/Maldives tourism industry



The representativeness of the sample and the respondents' experience in the tourism industry, combined with the fact that all respondents are senior personnel of the resorts contribute to the strength of the survey data.

The experts that responded to the expert opinion survey included two policy makers, two businessmen and two academics (see Table 3.3). All of the experts play prominent roles in the Maldives' tourism industry and four of them have been involved in Maldives' tourism for more than 20 years.

Table 3. 3 Description of expert respondents

EXPERTS	
Description	**No. of Participants**
Policymakers	2
Businessmen	2
Academics	2

The policy makers are government officials who played significant roles at decision making levels. The businessmen are from two of the largest private companies of the Maldives that are closely related to the tourism industry. One of the businessmen is the chief executive officer of the company while the other is a director. The careers of the two academics that participated in the survey are in tourism and culinary areas. Both

were doing doctoral research that was based on Maldives' tourism industry at the time the survey was conducted. Thus, the expert participants are in positions to provide in-depth, knowledgeable opinions.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE MALDIVES CASE

4.1 Geography and climate

The Republic of Maldives consists of 1196 coral islands, spread over approximately 90,000 square kilometres in the Indian Ocean, 500 km south-west of the southern tip of India (Bell, 2004). The islands are formed into 26 natural atolls, but for administrative purposes have been grouped into 20 atolls by the Maldives' government (Lutfy, 1995). A total of 196 islands are inhabited, of which 89 have been developed as tourist resorts while the rest are used for agriculture and other economic purposes (MTCA, 2007a). The islands are small and low-lying with an average area of only one to two square kilometres and elevations of a mere 1 to 1.8 metres above sea level. There are no hills or rivers, but small lakes and marshes can be found in a few islands (Maniku, 1983).

The Maldives experiences a warm and humid tropical climate with temperatures ranging between 23˚ and 31˚ C throughout the year. The high humidity is balanced by constant sea breezes. Two seasons dominate the weather: the dry north-east monsoon and the rainy south-west monsoon. The north-east monsoon extends from December to March, giving clear skies, sunshine and calm seas. The south-west monsoon, which runs from April to November, brings heavy rain, strong winds and rough seas. The average annual rainfall is 1927 millimetres. Since the Maldives is situated on the equator, it rarely gets affected by severe storms and major cyclones (www.meteorology.gov.mv; Maniku, 1996).

4.2 People, history, culture

The earliest settlers of the Maldives are believed to be from Sri Lanka and southern India. Indo-European speakers, or 'Aryans', followed them from the Indus Valley (Lutfy, 1995). Over the centuries, the islands have been visited and their development influenced by sailors from East Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asian countries (www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv). Today, the Maldivian ethnic identity is a blend of these cultures, made distinct by religion and language.

The Portuguese subjugated the Maldives in 1558 and ruled the islands for 15 years before being driven away by the warrior-patriot Muhammad Thakurufar Al-Azam. The Maldives has been governed as an independent state for most of its history, although it

was a British protectorate from 1887 until 1965. The Maldives became a republic and assumed its present name in 1968, three years after independence from Britain (Maumoon, 2002). Since 1978 President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has been ruling the country. Politically, the Maldives is currently undergoing fundamental constitutional changes. These have led to the country becoming a multi-party democracy in 2008 (BBC, 2008).

Islam is the official religion of the Maldives. However, archaeological evidence suggests the existence of Hinduism and Buddhism before the country embraced Islam in AD 1153 (Mohamed, 2002). The official and common language of the Maldivians is Dhivehi, which has its roots in Sanskrit and Sinhalese, both spoken in Sri Lanka (Maumoon, 2002). The Maldivian script known as *thaana* is written from right to left. English is used widely in commerce and as the medium of instruction in schools.

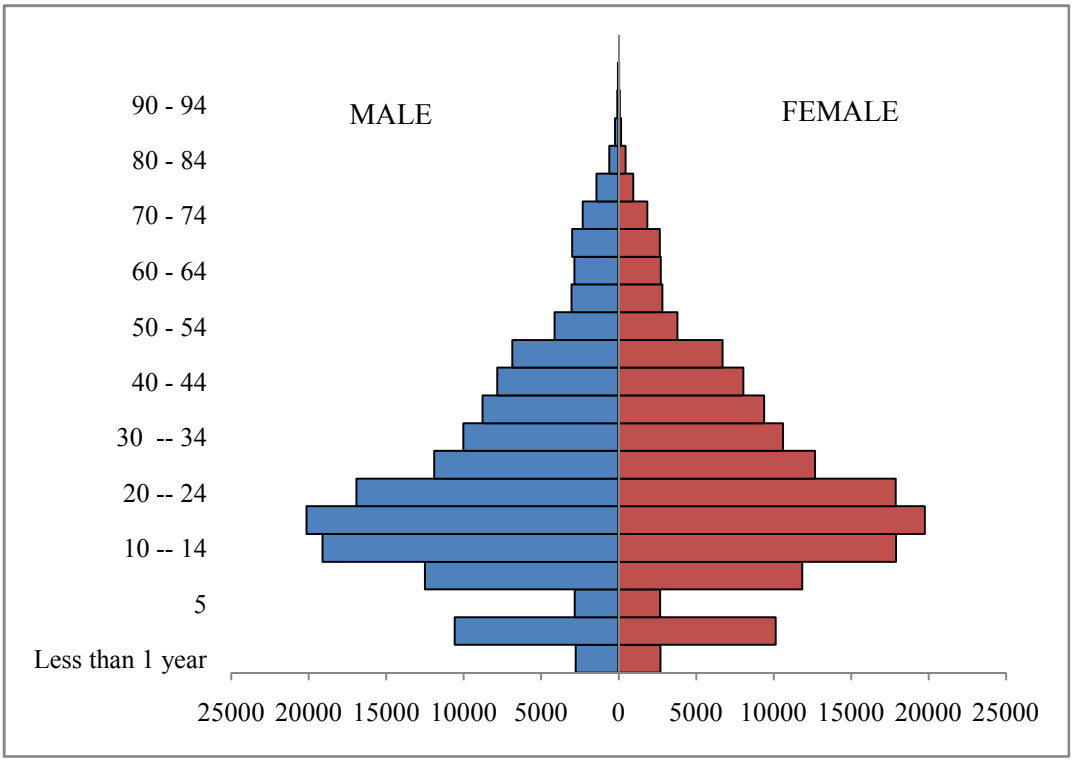
The culture of the Maldives has developed over the years in accord with the island environment. This is reflected in the construction of boats, house design, food and cooking, rituals, music, dance and social practices (Maumoon, 2002). However, modern developments have brought dramatic changes to all spheres of life. In Maumoon's (2000) words, the country now is "… at a crossroads where the people have to maintain a delicate balance between their own unique cultural practices and a mass global culture (p. 22)."

4.2.1 Population

The Maldives has a population of 298,968 (in 2006) spread among 196 islands. Strong disparities are evident in the population distribution between the islands: Male', the capital island, has a population of 102,377, or nearly one-third of the total population, whereas there are 142 islands with fewer than 1000 inhabitants and 76 islands with fewer than 500 persons (MPND, 2007a). Only three islands have a population greater than 5000 (Shareef, 2007). Hence, most of the inhabited islands are sparsely populated while a small number of islands are heavily congested. The growth of Male' is a result of migration from the other islands as people seek better job and educational opportunities, and an improved quality of life. However, this migration has resulted in inequalities – both economic and social – between Male' and the other atolls (Yahya, Parameswaran & Sebastian, 2005). Youth unemployment, increasing crime rate, social disharmony and drug abuse are all outcomes of the highly congested living conditions prevalent in Male' and some other islands (Latheef & Gupta, 2007).

The Maldivian age structure is very young with approximately 77% of the population below the age of 40 years (Figure 4.1).

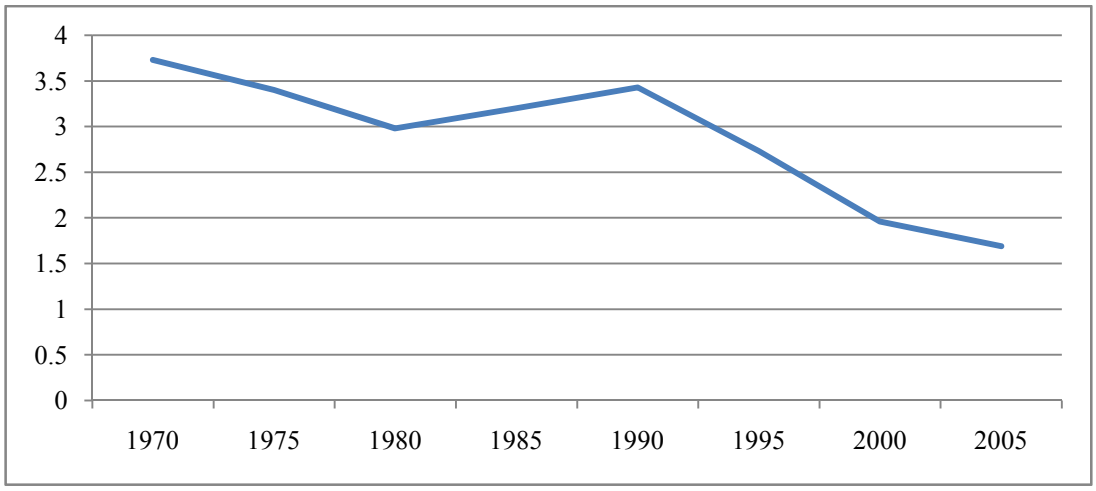
Figure 4. 1 Age structure



Source: MPND (2007a)

This is explained by the enormous growth in the population since the late 1960s due to improved health care, eradication of malaria and treatment of childhood diseases such as dysentery (Ghina, 2003). As a result of improved education and family-planning campaigns run by the government, a decline in the population growth rate was apparent from 1990 (Naseem, Gubhaju & Niyaaz, 2004). From the years 2000 to 2006, the population growth rate dropped to an average of 1.69% (MPND, 2007a). The trend in the population growth rate is illustrated in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4. 2 Population growth rate



Source: Adapted from MPND (2007a)

The combination of high population densities in selected islands and rapid population growth has exerted immense pressure on natural and economic resources (Ghina, 2003). Male' and other densely populated islands are faced with scarcity of fresh water, overcrowded living space and problems in solid waste management (United Nations Environment Programme, [UNEP], 2002). In these islands, overuse of water has led to depletion of fresh water aquifer making ground water unusable due to high salinity. In addition, improper sewage disposal facilities and the porous nature of the soil make groundwater susceptible to contamination (UNEP, 2002).

Male' and the tourist resorts rely on imported bottled water and desalinated water as the main fresh water source (Brown, Turner, Hameed & Bateman, 1997). Piped desalinated water is supplied by the government in Male' (Ghina, 2003), while the resorts have their own desalination plants (Domroes, 2001). In most other islands, rainwater is harvested for drinking and cooking. During dry seasons, islands that depend on rain and groundwater experience water shortages (Ghina, 2003).

Management of solid waste is also a significant problem faced by the Maldives. The rapid increase of the population, changing consumer patterns, fast economic growth and the small size of the islands are some of the reasons that waste management has become an issue. The recent State of the Environment Report warned that the escalating problem is causing environmental pollution and conditions harmful to public health (UNEP, 2002).

In the absence of space for effective rubbish disposal on Male', from the early 1990s the government began using a neighbouring 7-km lagoon, Thilafalhu, as a refuse dump (Omidi, 2009a). Rubbish from other islands is taken by *dhonis* or local boats, while in Male' the rubbish is collected in a dump yard from where truckloads of rubbish are taken on landing vessels to Thilafalhu. As more and more rubbish was dumped, the shallow lagoon took the form of an island and progressively grew in size. Today, it is Thilafushi Island, and covers 124 acres (Ramesh, 2009). The growth of the island has been assisted by additional land reclamation (Omidi, 2009a). The government saw the potential to generate revenue from the growing island and leased plots of land for industrial purposes (Omidi, 2009a). To give some relief to over-crowded Male', some commercial activities that disturb residents, such as cement storage and carpentry, were moved to Thilafushi.

According to Male' Municipality, rubbish is separated before being transferred to Thilafushi. Compacted metal cans and iron are re-exported to India. However, hazardous waste such as batteries and electronic waste are not separated from other refuse and this is a major ecological concern (Omidi, 2009a).

The development of this island can be seen in the two photographs in Figure 4.3. On the left is the original Thilafalhu Lagoon before it was being used a rubbish dump, and on the right is an aerial view of Thilafushi Island that has been created from this lagoon.

Figure 4. 3 Thilafalhu Lagoon and Thilafushi Island

Source: Ramesh (2009)

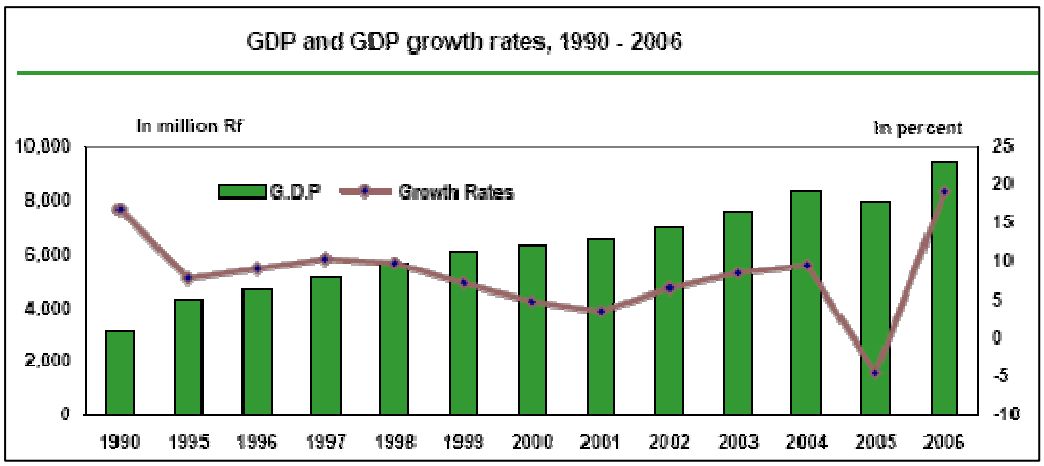
Source: www.flickr.com

4.3 Economy

The Republic of Maldives is categorised as a SIDS with limited resources for economic development (Domroes, 2001). With no land-based natural and mineral resources, the economy of the Maldives is mainly dependent on tourism and industries that rely on its marine resources, such as fishing (The World Bank, 2006). Over 90% of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Tourism accounts for 28% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and more than 60% of foreign exchange receipts. Fishing is the second leading sector and made up 6% of the GDP in 2007 (Maldives Monetary Authority, [MMA], 2008). Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play lesser roles in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labour (The World Bank, 2006).

As illustrated in Figure 4.4, GDP growth averaged over 7.9% per year for more than a decade, except in 2005 when the GDP contracted by 5.5% as a result of the 2004 Asian Tsunami (The World Bank, 2006). The Tsunami left 108 dead and 15,000 displaced (Carlsen, 2006), and property damage exceeded US$470 million (ADB, 2005).

Figure 4. 4 GDP and GDP growth rates



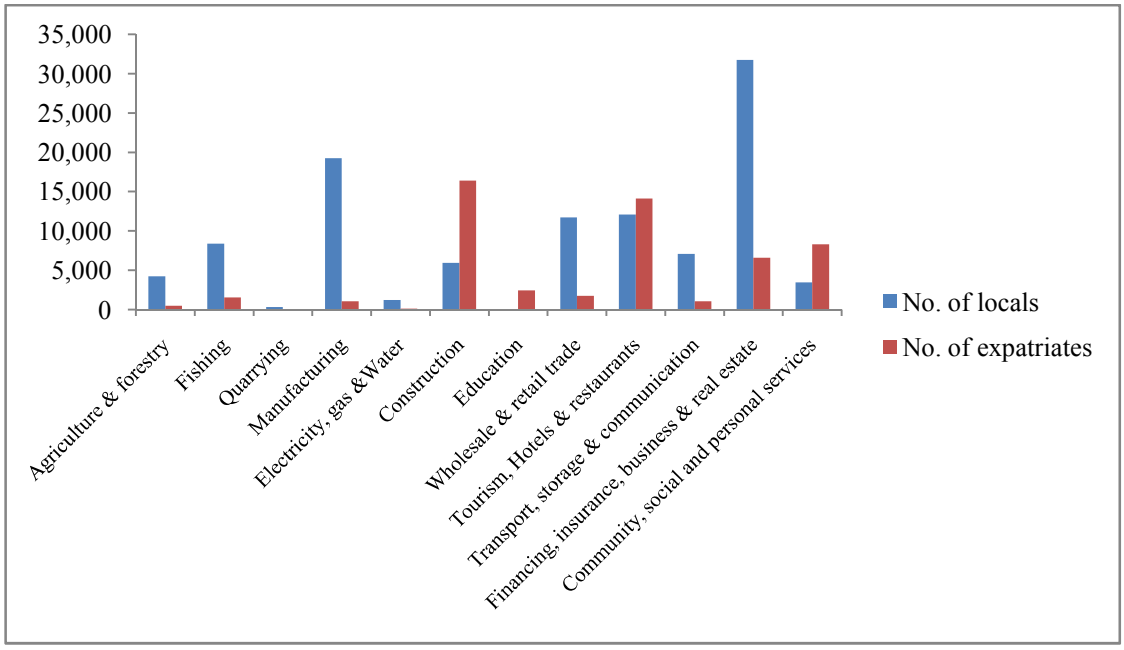
Source: (MPND, 2007a)

In 2007, GDP totalled US$855 million with a per capita GDP of US$2,806 (MPND, 2008) – this was the highest in the region (The World Bank, 2006). The local currency is Rufiyaa, which is equal to approximately Rf. 12.00 per US$ 1.00 (MMA, 2008). In the United Nation's Human Development Index (UNHDI), the Maldives stands at 100th out of 177 countries, with a value of 0.741. The adult literacy rate is 96.3% (UNDP, 2008).

The Maldives depends on imports for commodities, including staple foodstuffs, petroleum, construction materials, and most of the goods needed for the tourism industry (UNESCAP, 2003). In 2007 over 15% of imports consisted of food products (MPND, 2007a). This dependence on imports makes the country's economy very vulnerable to external shocks such as increases in fuel prices, which affect domestic inflation and tourism's cost structure (ADB, 2008). In 2007, the average inflation rate was 7.4%, which was blamed mainly on food prices which rose 30% more than the previous year (ADB, 2008).

The total labour force in 2007 was 110,231. With a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labour, nearly one-third of the local labour force is comprised of expatriates (MPND, 2007a). Social and cultural norms restrict women's participation in the tourism industry, resulting in a large percentage of expatriates being employed in the hotels and restaurant sector (MTCA, 2007b). Figure 4.5 illustrates the numbers of the local population and expatriates employed by industry.

Figure 4. 5 Employment of locals and expatriates by industry



Source: MPND (2007a)

4.4 Agriculture

Agriculture plays only a limited role in the economy, accounting for only 2% of GDP and employing 4% of the total labour force in 2007 (MPND, 2007a). While the poor quality of the sandy soil and the shrinking freshwater lens in many of the inhabited islands limit agricultural potential, imported fruits and vegetables also impede local production. Most of the domestic agricultural demands are met through imports, with the ratio of food imports to domestic food production being 10:1 (ADB, 2008). This dependence on imports for most of its food requirements, including the staple food rice, makes the country vulnerable (MPND, 2007b).

As Lutfy (1995) noted, from the time of the earliest settlers subsistence agriculture has been important for the livelihood of the local population. Traditionally, women played a significant role in agriculture, and they continue to do so today. Excluding the one-third of the population that lives in Male', the majority of the population is scattered in rural areas. Fishing and subsistence agriculture form an essential means of occupation to this population as well as the main source of food security for the vast majority of the population (Shabau, 2008).

A variety of crops including cereals, vegetables, fruit, tubers and plantation crops are cultivated in home gardens, plots and islands designated for agricultural purposes by the government (Lutfy, 1995). The coconut palm is an especially important tree for the people, with each and every part of the tree having a specific use. Coconuts form an integral part of the diet and coconut timber is widely used for boat building and construction. A special delicacy is *rukuraa*, a non-alcoholic drink made from coconut palm and the honey, *dhiyaahakuru* made by boiling the *rukuraa*, although in recent years the lack of interest by the younger generations for the professions of making these traditional items has seen them become less available. Each island has coconut groves and in most uninhabited islands the coconut palm is the main cultivated tree.

In recent years the government has taken significant steps to develop agriculture (Naseer, 2007). Leasing islands for agriculture on a long-term basis and allocating selected large islands exclusively for agriculture are strategies expected to contribute to the recent commercialization plan for agriculture (ibid).

To combat the lack of fertile land and fresh water, hydroponics farming has been introduced in the islands recently and this has been successfully producing melons,

cucumbers, chillies, herbs and lettuce on commercial and household scales. In addition, goat and poultry farming and other agricultural projects are run by the government, foreign-aid agencies and private parties in uninhabited islands leased from the government (MFAMR, 2004).

The Maldives Poverty Assessment Report (ADB, 2007) indicates a vast disparity in income and poverty levels between the population living on the capital island, Male', and those on the other islands. The report also reveals that among the characteristics of the poor, the probability of belonging to the poorest households is highest when they are engaged in agriculture, fishing and local manufacturing. Interestingly, the poorest households were stated to comprise more women. UNFAO expressed concern that the disparity between the populations on Male' and those on the atolls is attributed to the slower growth in agricultural and fishery as compared with other sectors (MFAMR, 2004).

4.5 Fishing

The fishery is the main activity outside of Male' and the tourist resorts; it employs about 11% of the labour force and contributes 6% of GDP. Fish and fish products also provide more than 90% of the country's export revenue (MPND, 2007a). Fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted and canned reef fish and tuna are exported largely to Asia and Europe. Fishing is done by pole and line, and according to the Maldives Industrial Fisheries Corporation (MIFCO) regulations, using nets is illegal (MIFCO, 2008).

Fish is an essential ingredient in the Maldivian diet. Almost 30% of the total catch is consumed locally. Traditionally, demand existed mainly for varieties of tuna as these were generally preferred over reef fish (ADB, 2008). In 2006, over 75% of the catch consisted of skipjack and more than 12% was yellow fin tuna (MIFCO, 2008). However, in recent years, in response to the demand of overseas markets, falling stocks and the development of tourism, there has been considerable increase in the catch of reef fish and other varieties, particularly grouper and sea cucumber (Naseer, 2007). High demand for reef fish from tourist resorts has increased their price in local markets.

The Maldives has experienced a drop in its fish catch in recent years; this is attributed to over-fishing and a depleted resource (Mullon, Freon, & Cury, 2005). In 2007, fish exports dropped by 23.7% as a result of a decrease of about 70,000 metric tons in the fish catch. This translated to a 1.5% reduction in GDP growth (ADB, 2008). The local

population was badly affected by the decrease in fish catch because when fewer fish reached the local markets, the tourism industry was willing to pay higher prices and this resulted in a considerable increase in the price of fish.

4.6 Tourism development

Tourists first started coming to the Maldives in significant numbers in 1972 when the first resort, with a 280-bed capacity, was established. In the years since, five phases can be identified in the development of the Maldivian tourism industry (MTCA, 2008a). The first phase is considered to be from 1972 to 1978, when tourism was largely unplanned and took place according to individual initiative (Dowling, 2000). The 17 resorts with 1300 beds that were established during this time (MTCA, 2008a) were very simple in facilities and modest in services due to a lack of resources and trained personnel in the field (Sathiendrakumar & Tisdell, 1989). Speed boats and mechanised fishing boats were used to transfer passengers and cargo between the airport, Male' and different resort islands (ibid). Thus all resort development was concentrated in close physical proximity to the only international airport, i.e. near the capital island of Male' (Yahya et al., 2005). This has resulted in over 47% of the resorts being located in the central region of the country (MTCA, 2008a). During this initial phase, tourism did not play a significant role in the economy (Domroes, 2001).

The second phase covers the years 1979 to 1988. With the opening of a further 41 resorts, this period witnessed the establishment of a large number of resorts within a short period of time. The creation of a wide network of air services through charter carriers with various promotional packages, as well as the increased capacity of resorts, fuelled development of tourism in a short span of time (Sathiendrakumar & Tisdell, 1989). It was during this period that foreign companies began to invest in the Maldivian tourism industry. By the end of 2006, out of the 89 resorts operating in the Maldives, 68 were leased to local parties, 14 resorts were leased to joint-venture companies and the remaining seven islands were leased to foreign companies. Only 47% of the resorts are operated by local parties, with the rest being operated by foreign companies or foreign shareholding companies (MTCA, 2007a).

An important highlight of the second phase of tourism development was The First Tourism Master Plan (FTMP) which was formulated in 1983. The FTMP laid the foundation for sustainable development of tourism, emphasized environmental protection and called for integration of tourism into the social and economic

development of the country. Resorts developed during the final years of the second phase followed the FTMP. Policies set out in the FTMP that limit built-up space on resorts, require building heights to be compatible with the natural vegetation of the islands, and include measures for environment and reef protection are still adhered to in resort development. Rules introduced during this phase also set the guidelines for the quality of services and facilities provided to tourists. A regulation instigated under the FTMP stated that the built-up area on tourist resorts should not exceed 20% of the total land area of the island. This regulation contributed to the creation of peaceful and quiet environments on resort islands – now a key feature of Maldives' tourism.

The third phase of tourism development, from 1989 to 1997, saw the opening of 16 additional resorts with a further bed capacity of 4920. The positive impacts of the vast developments in transport and technology experienced in the Maldives, and the world over, during the early 1990s were reflected in tourism development during this period. Thus, apart from growth and expansion of resorts, this was the phase when innovative and high-quality services were introduced to tourism development.

The Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies (FHTS) under Maldives College of Higher Education began to play a key role in the industry during this time. Locals trained by FHTS added to the quality of service provided to tourists. When the experience gained in tourism combined with modern facilities and high-quality services, the third phase of tourism development saw the Maldives emerge as a destination capable of competing in the international arena.

Due to the fast rate that tourism developed, and with a shortage of local skilled labour, local manpower alone was unable to cater for the demand for jobs created by the tourism industry. As a result, during this phase a large number of expatriates joined the industry. By the end of 2006, out of the 22,000 jobs in the tourism sector (MTCA, 2008b) 11,095 jobs were filled by expatriates (MPND, 2007a). This was in spite of a government regulation that states that the employment of expatriates in tourist resorts should not exceed more than 50% of the total employees (Yahya et al., 2005).

The period from 1998 to 2001 was the fourth phase of tourism development in the Maldives. Tourism development during this period came under the Second Tourism Master Plan (STMP) which covers the years from 1996 to 2005. A key feature of the STMP was the plan to expand and develop tourism into more regions across the country, with the aim of decentralizing tourism from Male' atoll and spreading the

benefits of tourism among all the atolls, particularly the southern and northern regions. In addition, reducing expatriate labour and increasing the participation of women in the tourism labour force were also key targets.

With regard to women's role in tourism, there is a huge gender disparity in employment: only 1512 women were working in the industry in 2006 compared with 10,578 men (MTCA, 2007a). Cultural and social norms play a major role in this imbalance. The isolated nature of resorts and the unavailability of the option of commuting to work daily from the inhabited islands are contributing factors that discourage women from working in resorts. A seminar on the Management of Human Resources in the Tourism Industry notes:

> It was generally agreed that hiring women to work at resorts proved difficult due to security concerns and attitudes of parents who do not want their children to be employed at resorts, which are perceived as predominantly male working environment (MTCA, 2008b).

It was during this phase that international resort brands began to establish themselves in the Maldives. While spa resorts were launched with the aim of introducing higher quality tourism, a wide range of accommodations were also introduced in order to attract tourists from various market segments. As such, apart from resorts, hotels, guest houses, yachts and safari boats began their operations. With resorts opening in areas far from Male' International Airport, seaplanes were introduced in place of speedboats to transfer tourists from the airport to resorts. During the fifth phase of tourism development, which extends from 2002 to 2008, the Third Tourism Master Plan 2007–2011 (TTMP) was launched in 2007. Its key aim is "taking tourism to the people within the broader framework of sustainable development in the economic, environmental, and social spectra" (MTCA, 2007a, p. 1).

During this period, islands throughout the country were released for tourism development. Islands and plots for tourism development are leased from the government on fixed-term contracts under a competitive bidding process (Shareef & McAleer, 2007). In 2006, 35 islands were designated for tourism development. This latest release of sites included plots of land for city hotel development on inhabited islands. This was a new initiative because, until then, tourist development had strictly followed the one-island-one-resort concept which was aimed at limiting potential negative social impacts from tourism (Shareef & McAleer, 2007), a policy which has

created the "distinctive concept of 'Resort Islands"' (Domroes, 2001, p. 123) in the Maldives. Each resort island provides its own infrastructure, power, water supply, sewerage and rubbish disposal arrangements (Dowling, 2000). Government regulation dictates that for waste management, each resort must have incinerators, compactors and bottle crushers (Domroes, 2001).

For the first time a public company was formed within the tourism industry to give locals a share in the tourism industry. Maldives Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) holds 45% government share and 55% public share.

By the end of 2007, there were 89 resorts with a bed capacity of 17,802. In addition, safari vessels, hotels and guest houses provide lodgings totalling 235 tourist establishments with a bed capacity of 20,505 (MTCA, 2007a). Hotels and guest houses cater for tourists, business and domestic travellers. These facilities provide convenient accommodation for tourists who transit in Male' before or after their stay in the resorts or safari vessels. Tourism has become the largest economic industry in the Maldives, providing 22,000 jobs (ibid) and contributing 30% of government revenue, 30% of GDP and 70% of foreign exchange (MMA, 2008).

Today, the Maldives is a world-renowned tourist destination, with several international brand names in its tourism portfolio, and it continues to win numerous international tourism awards (www.visitmaldives.com). Most of the resorts in the Maldives are capable of providing state-of-the-art facilities and services, entertainment and high-tech telecommunication services (Dowling, 2000). Over-water bungalows built on stilts in the shallow lagoons surrounding the resort islands and spas are a popular theme of recent years (Jamal & Lagiewski, 2006). In addition, some resorts boast underwater spas and restaurants (MTCA, 2008a).

At present each resort has its own fleet of speed launches providing fast and convenient travel. There are three airports serving inter-atoll domestic flights in addition to seaplane operators. In 2008, Gan International Airport commenced operations as a second international airport bringing tourists directly to the southern part of the Maldives. By the summer of 2007, 14 charter and 15 scheduled international airlines were operating flights to the Maldives from different destinations in Europe, Asia and Africa (MTCA, 2007b).

As tourism became established in the Maldives, it played a major role in the country's economic and infrastructure development, especially the establishment of transportation links between the atolls and islands and the development of regional airports. Tourism has contributed both direct and indirect benefits. Among the direct benefits are increased employment opportunities and tourism-related construction (Brown et al., 1997). There are also a number of indirect benefits, though to a lesser degree, through increased activity in other economic sectors such as telecommunications and transportation (Shareef & McAleer, 2007), and the revival of the handicrafts industry (Brown et al., 1997).

Due to the scarcity of resources, all major goods for developing and maintaining tourism services and facilities are imported, including building materials and equipment for the construction of tourist hotels and resorts (Shareef & Hoti, 2005). Hence, tourism does not generate a high overall multiplier effect (Brown et al., 1997). Instead, the high rate of imports, the large number of expatriates employed in tourism industry, and the prominent role that foreign investors play in the ownership, management and operation of tour companies are all factors that cause leakage of a major portion of tourism revenue earned by the Maldives. "This means that eighty cents of every dollar spent on tourist inputs accrued to foreign companies" (Yahya et al., 2005, p. 461). The TTMP's emphasis on increasing linkages between tourism and other supporting sectors, namely fisheries, agriculture and handicrafts, was a strategy to reduce these leakages of tourism revenue.

As acknowledged by the TTMP, in spite of having a rich culture, heritage and history, "cultural and heritage tourism has not taken root in the Maldives", hence it is argued that these forms of tourism should be promoted along with the key attractions of sun, sand and sea (MTCA, 2007c, p. 58). Maldives' tourism is dependent on the tropical beauty of the islands. The wealth of underwater coral gardens, white sandy beaches, crystal clear lagoons, underwater flora and fauna is the nucleus of the tourism resource (Domroes, 2001). All tourist experiences offered by tourism operators to various market segments are based on the identity of a tropical island destination.

Usual tourist activities in the Maldives include water sports such as diving, snorkelling, windsurfing, catamaran sailing, water skiing and surfing. In addition to these, resorts organize fishing and excursion trips to nearby inhabited and uninhabited islands and to the capital island, Male', by modern speedboats or traditional fishing boats (*dhoni*).

Night fishing is a particularly popular activity – the trips usually end with a barbecue at the resort with the day's catch. Aerial excursions by seaplane and submarine diving are also provided by some resorts. Most resorts and hotels have facilities for a variety of indoor and outdoor sports such as tennis, football, volleyball, badminton and squash. Live entertainment programmes are held in the evenings, often with local bands and dance troupes.

As a diversification strategy, forms of tourism that portray "a strong identity of a perfect island destination" were proposed in the TTMP (MTCA, 2007c, p. 50). As such, Eco Tourism Resorts, Health Resorts, Luxury Islands, Floating Resorts, Budget Resorts, Live-aboard, Luxury Yachts and Training Resorts were identified as potential diversifications. All marketing communications for these products are proposed to be "designed to retain the unique image and brand of the Maldives" (ibid).

While tourism has helped upgrade the general standard of living, Yahya et al. (2005) believe that the concentration of tourism development close to the capital Male' has contributed to creating income disparities between Male' and the other atolls. The proposition of the TTMP to promote community-based tourism was aimed at increasing the benefits of tourism to local communities as well as being an avenue for promoting culture and protecting heritage.

While there is a high degree of economic dependence on the natural environment through tourism, as Dowling (2000) warned, "environmental problems faced by Maldives ... are threatening the sustainability of the industry" (p. 253). A major issue is solid waste disposal, the methods for which are incineration or dumping into the sea. With the annual average number of tourist arrivals exceeding that of the total population (MTCA, 2007b) and all requirements for tourist industry catered for by imports, including "thousands of tonnes of meat, vegetables and diesel oil every year", the amount of waste produced is "unsustainable" (Ramesh, 2009). From the resorts alone, 16.5 kg of waste per visitor is produced every week (Dowling, 2000).

The Maldive islands are low and flat, with elevations less than two metres above sea level. Thus, these islands are extremely vulnerable to elevated sea levels caused by climate change. Domroes (2001) pointed out that the environmental volatility of the Maldives archipelago is camouflaged by the detrimental impacts of tourism. Already the Maldives suffers from inundation and shoreline erosion, which are believed to be consequences of global warming and greenhouse gas emission (Gayoom, 1998). A dire

prospect repeatedly proclaimed by environmentalists is that low-lying small islands such as the "Maldives archipelago will most likely disappear under the ocean" (Conrady & Bakan, 2008, p. 32). However, more recently, it has been announced that the question of Maldives going under the sea is overstated, because it has been established that islands can adjust to environmental changes such as rising sea levels and increased global temperatures (MSNBC, 2009).

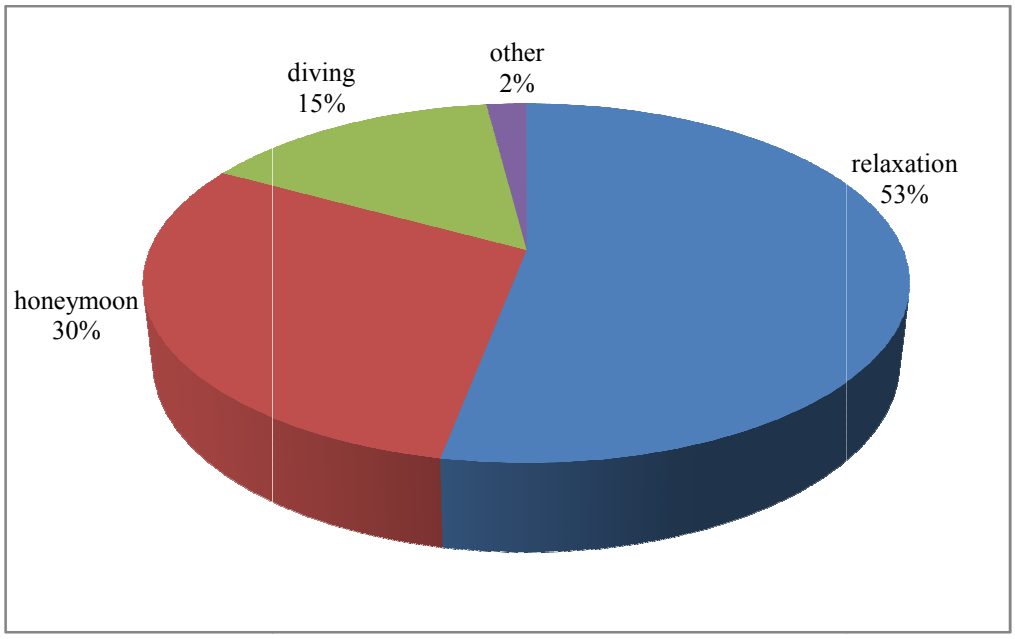
Global warming threatens coral reefs – the key attraction of the Maldives – as these natural attractions are sensitive to increases in temperatures (Conrady & Bakan, 2008). The massive coral bleaching that occurred during 1998 as an impact from El Niño is an example (Wilhelmsson, 2002). A large portion of the coral in Maldives reefs bleached and died during that period (Edwards, Clark, Zahir, Rajasuriya, Naseer & Rubens, 2001). As Domroes cautioned: "Tourism therefore hangs in the balance, its sustainability depends on how the environment is protected" (p. 135).

4.7 Tourist arrival trends

As Figure 4.6 shows, the main reasons that tourists come to the Maldives are for leisure, honeymoon and diving. The majority of tourists (53%) seek leisure and relaxation, but with its strong appeal as a romantic destination, the 'honeymooner's' category (30%) is also significant. The underwater beauty of the islands also attracts divers; they make up 15% of all visitors.

Tourist arrivals to the Maldives have been increasing steadily at an average of 9% per annum over the last ten years, except for the dramatic decline in arrivals during the year 2005 due to the December 2004 Asian tsunami. The tsunami caused the closure of a number of resorts and tourist arrivals declined by 35.9% in 2005. The Maldives sustained significant economic losses from the tsunami due to the economy's heavy reliance on tourism. However, Maldives' tourism has shown remarkable recovery after the tsunami: in 2006 the annual growth rate in tourist arrivals rose to 52.3%, with nearly 602,000 visitors. The annual average occupancy rate has been 75.2% from 2002 to 2006 (MTCA, 2007b).

Figure 4. 6 Purpose of visit



Source: MTCA (2007b)

Monthly international tourist arrivals to the Maldives show clear seasonal patterns (Table 4.1). Since the largest tourist source market is Western Europe, the biggest concentration of monthly tourist arrivals occurs roughly from October to April, i.e. the winter months in Europe. The warmer months in Europe coincide with the months of lower tourist arrivals, which are from May to September.

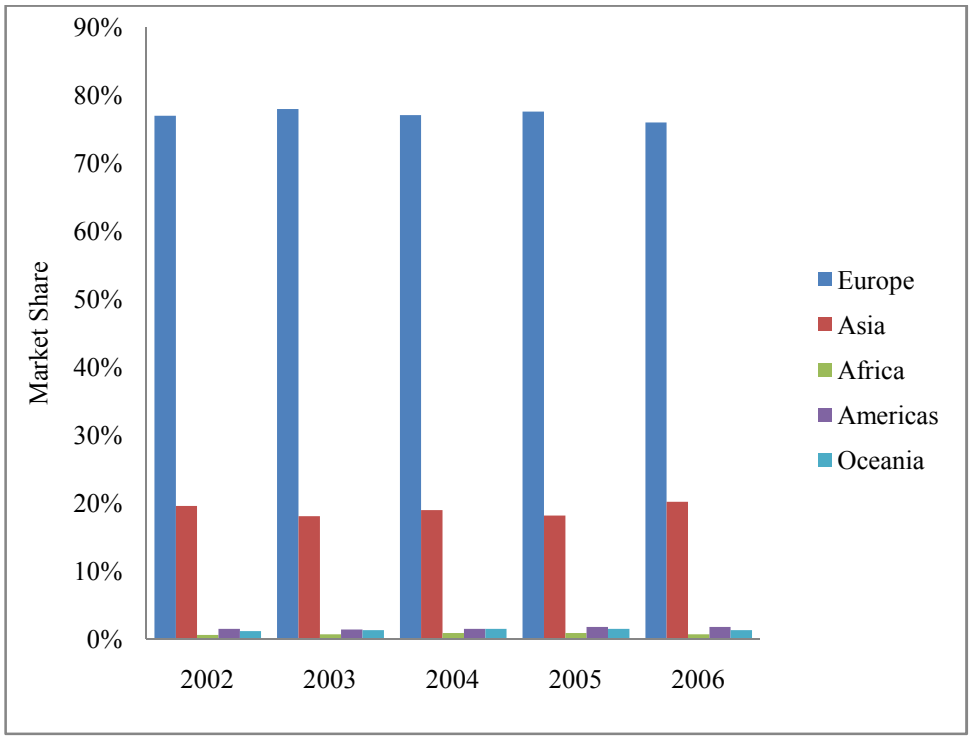
Table 4. 1 Maldives tourist arrivals by month 2002–2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
January	36,211	54,503	61,861	18,747	58,332
February	47,024	56,706	59,692	29,391	54,741
March	49,280	56,441	63,855	35,742	54,596
April	42,647	48,742	55,396	29,714	55,983
May	31,529	31,119	42,197	25,309	40,961
June	23,641	26,915	33,835	22,590	33,037
July	34,341	38,076	43,527	29,860	42,776
August	41,243	48,431	55,843	38,366	49,968
September	39,760	44,951	46,838	33,748	44,593
October	42,579	48,357	52,511	40,543	54,721
November	42,310	51,087	56,656	44,461	53,594
December	54,115	58,265	44,505	46,849	58,621
TOTAL	**484,680**	**563,593**	**616,716**	**395,320**	**601,923**

Source: MTCA (2007b)

Over the last five years, Europe has been the leading tourist source market to the Maldives, contributing an average of more than 76% of the total tourist arrivals. Trends in source markets between 2002 and 2006 are illustrated in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4. 7 Contribution of source markets

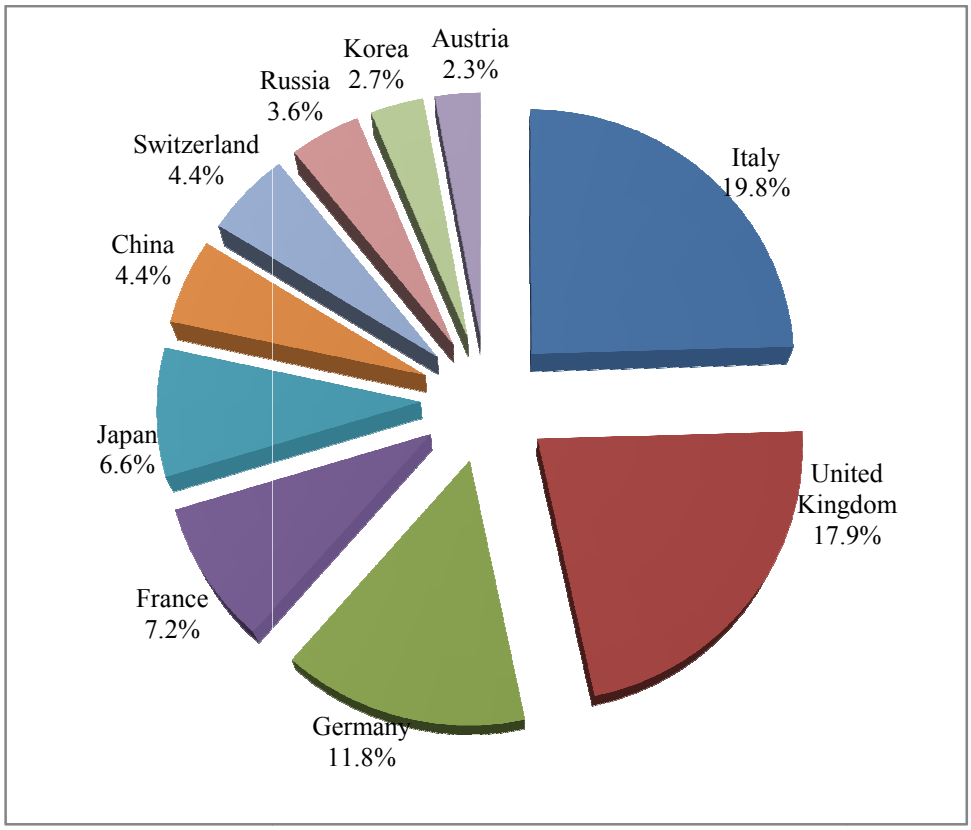


Source: MTCA (2007b)

Out of the leading source markets, Italy ranked first in 2006 with a share of 69.6% of the European market. The UK was the second largest (19.8%), followed by Germany (11.8%) then France (7.2%). Switzerland, Russia and Austria all had much smaller shares (4.4%, 3.6% and 2.3% respectively). From Asia, Japan was the largest contributor in 2006 with 6.6% of market share, followed by China (4.4%). The market share of Africa was 0.7% for the same year, while the countries from the region of the Americas contributed 1.8% and from Oceania only 1.3%.

The top ten markets for Maldives in 2006 are Italy (25%), United Kingdom (22%), Germany (15%), France (9%), Japan (8%), China (5%), Switzerland (5%), Russia (5%), Korea (3%) and Austria (3%) which is illustrated in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4. 8 Market share of top ten markets, 2006



Source: MTCA (2007b)

4.8 Maldivian cuisine

The Maldives has a rich variety of traditional cuisine which varies considerably between the atolls. Being an archipelago of islands with limited cultivable land, it is not surprising that a wide variety of fish and other seafood should form an integral part of the Maldivian cuisine. Initially, traditional fare was fairly basic, consisting mainly of fish and coconuts, breadfruit, millet and tubers. However, as the Maldives are at an important crossroad in the Indian Ocean, over time traders and visitors have left their mark on Maldivian cuisine just like they have contributed towards the moulding of the country's culture and norms (MTPB, 2007). With travellers from different parts of the world, new seasonings and vegetables were introduced into the country and added to the existing repertoire. Each new discovery was incorporated into the diet in quantities most palatable to Maldivians. Thus Maldivian cuisine today is a combination of Asian, European and Middle Eastern tastes, blended into a unique cuisine that embodies a culinary identity of its own. "Maldivian cuisine offers a wide range of tastes ranging from mild to very hot and almost always the dishes are prepared using local ingredients" (www.maldiviancuisine.com/recipes.html).

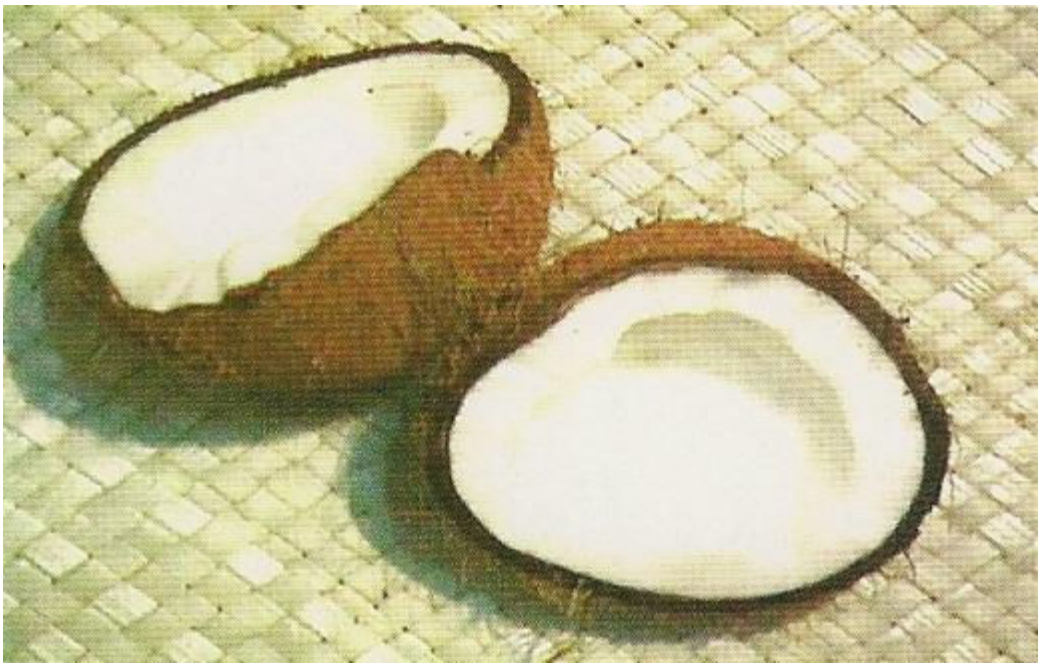
Maldivian culture and tradition comprise numerous events and occasions that involve traditional culinary experiences in the celebrations. For example, the naming ceremony of a newborn is always marked with local traditional sweet and spicy meat dishes. On *Eid*, a religious occasion celebrated twice a year and Prophet Mohamed's birthday, each household prepares elaborate lunches with a number of modern and traditional dishes. Inviting family, friends and neighbours and sending parcels of food for those who could not join in is a highlight of these occasions. Another traditional event is the *Bodumaaloodhu,* which involves prayers and feasting that go on for several days where the whole population of the island and often guests from nearby islands take part. Traditional dishes are prepared by each and every household and brought to a special function hall where it is served in traditional style. However, with fewer islands marking this event, it is an activity that is on the verge of disappearing. The circumcision ceremony of young boys is another local event marked with entertainment and feasting that continues for a week.

However, the increased importation of food items and adaptation of the local population to convenience foods and food from other countries have seen a decrease in demand for local ingredients and products which in turn made them scarce. Where before locals relied on local farming and home gardens for most vegetables, salad greens, fresh chilli and lemon, today even curry leaves and pandan leaves – a vital ingredient of local cuisine - are imported from neighbouring countries. Homemade pickles that used largely home grown ingredients are now replaced by imported bottles of pickle, the taste of which is often far removed from Maldivian tastes.

Another example of a local product that is losing out to imported products is coconut milk which is a vital ingredient in Maldivian cuisine. Coconut milk used to be extracted when required from freshly grated coconuts (Figure 4.9). Today shelves of local shops in every island are lined with packets, cans and bottles of imported coconut cream and instant coconut milk powder (Figure 4.10). The scraping of coconut on locally made coconut scrapers (Figure 4.11) – a low wooden stool with a blade attached to one end – has been discarded for the convenience of instant coconut milk. Used coconut shells also fulfilled many uses. Craftsmen made jewellery and house hold utensils such as ladles (Figure 4.12). The container for collecting *rukuraa* from coconut palm called *raabadhi* is also made from coconut shells (Figure 4.13). Coconut shells also used to provide a good source of fuel for locals before gas, electricity and kerosene became popular. When the shells were burned to cook fish stew, the remaining hot coals

provided a slow burning barbecue to make roast fish (Figure 4.14), which completes the local delicacy of *garudhiya baiy* – fish stew, roast fish and rice. Even today, locals agree fish baked this way tastes better and more "Maldivian" than those baked in modern ovens.

Figure 4. 9 Coconut



Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 62)

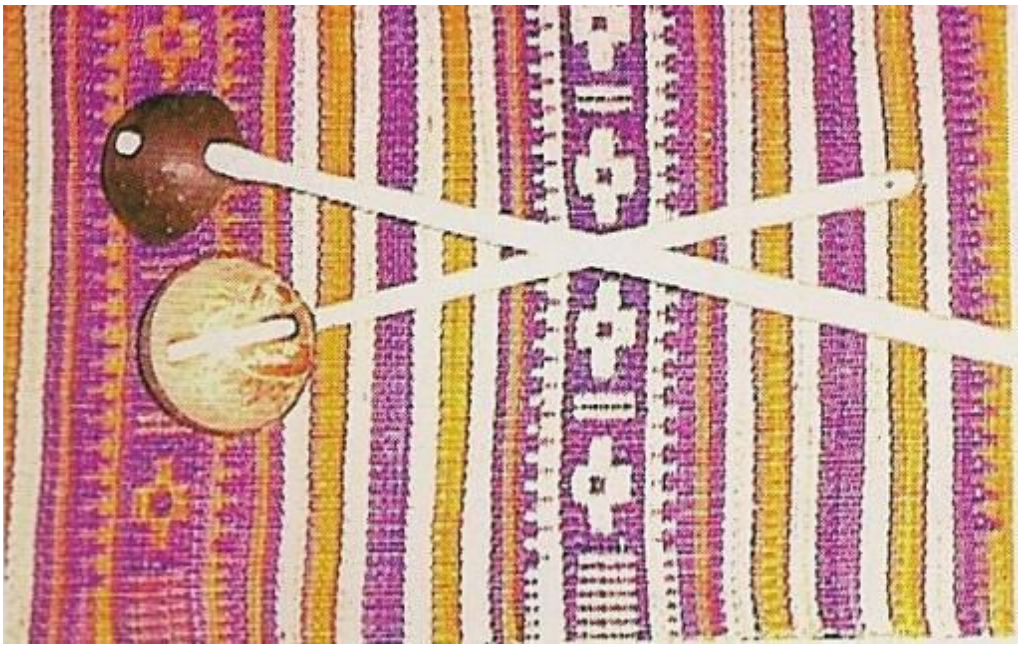
Figure 4. 10 Imported coconut milk

Source: http://images.google.co.uk

Figure 4. 11 Locally made coconut scraper

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 71)

Figure 4. 12 Traditional ladles made from polished coconut shells



Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 73)

Figure 4. 13 ***Rukuraa* and *raabadhi***

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 63)

Figure 4. 14 **Making *fihunu mas***

Source: www.flickr.com – (The fish are skewered into strips of coconut palm stems and put over an open spit fire of burnt coconut shells)

Local spices that go into making different varieties of curries are also losing out to imported curry powders and spices. Recipes for spices used to be passed from one generation to the other, from mothers to daughters and protectively guarded like family heirlooms. The significant thing about Maldivian spices is that, even though more or less the same ingredients are used to make a wide range of curries, by varying the quantity, or the addition or omission of one or two ingredients can create a completely different tasting dish. Readymade imported curry powders have largely robbed this magic from Maldivian curries.

Local cuisine is not given much attention by the tourism industry. All tourist hotels and resorts provide 'Westernized' international food – it is common for resorts to feature Italian, Thai, Mediterranean or Japanese restaurants – yet there are very few Maldivian restaurants or local menu items. Local cuisine for tourists is limited to the few items included in a buffet, often a grilled or baked whole reef fish, placed together with other international cuisine.

CHAPTER FIVE:
THE CURRENT ROLE OF FOOD IN TOURISM

This chapter presents an array of data on the role that food currently plays in the Maldives tourism industry. It presents content and discourse analysis of Maldivian tourism marketing materials (websites and printed marketing materials) and discusses the findings from the survey of industry experts and industry figures. It is vital to understand better the current 'baseline' of the food-tourism link, hence, the information provided here provides a link to the potential for closer links discussed in chapter six.

5.1 Role of food in tourism promotion

In the analysis of marketing materials, all relevant units of analysis that could be obtained were included in the sample. These comprised printed material with information for tourists about the Maldives that were collected from resorts, promotional bodies (Maldives Tourism Promotion Board [MTPB], Hallo Maldives, and Group Empire), travel agents and cruise operators. Brochures from 16 resorts, three tourist guide books from promotional bodies, four brochures from travel agents or resort companies and one leaflet from a cruise operator were gathered.

The brochures from resorts contained information about that particular resort, where as brochures from travel agents and resort companies contained information about a group of resorts that belonged to the company or were promoted by the travel agent. Out of the three guide books, one was published by MTPB, the official tourism promotion body of the Maldives. The other two were published by private organisations. All three guide books contained general information about the Maldives, Maldives' tourism, information about tourist hotels and resorts and other facilities and services available in Male' and from tourist hotels and resorts. Guide books also displayed information on local culture, cuisine and prominent places in Male'. The leaflet from the cruise operator contained promotional information about a safari boat that provides live-aboard accommodation, cruises and dive trips.

The same 24 entities were identified as the sample for website analysis, out of which six websites were not accessible. One website was omitted as their online version is exactly the same as that of the printed material. The sources for the samples of printed materials and websites are listed in table 5.1.

Table 5. 1 Content/Discourse analysis samples

SL	Business Type	Printed Materials	Websites
1	Resorts/Hotels	Island Hideaway	www.island-hideaway.com
2		Meeru Island	www.meeru.com
3		Huvafenfushi	www.huvafenfushi.com
4		Baros Maldives	www.baros.com
5		Ranveli Village	www.ranveli-maldives.com
6		Angsana Resort & Spa Maldives Ihuru	www.angsana.com
7		One & Only Maldives at Reethi Rah	www.oneandonlyresorts.com.mv
8		Royal Island Resort & Spa	www.royal-island.com
9		Naladhu Maldives	www.naladhu.com
10		Club Rannalhi	www.clubrannalhi.com
11		Bathala Island Resort	www.bathala.com
12		Meedhupparu Island Resort	www.meedhupparu.com
13		Lily Beach Resort	www.lilybeachmaldives.com
14		Velavaru Island Resort	www.smartstays.com/angsana-resort-and-spa-ihuru-north-male-atoll-maldives
15		Veligandu Island Resort	www.veliganduisland.com
16		Summer Island Village	www.summerislandvillage.com
17	Guide Books	Leisure Guide Maldives	-
18		Hello Maldives	-
19		Maldives Resort/Hotel Guide 2007	-
20		Maldives Visitors' Guide 2007	www.visitmaldives.com
21	Travel Agents	Deen's Orchid Agency	-
22		Villa Hotels	www.villahotels.com
23		Intourist Maldives	-
24	Cruise Operator	Discovery Safari Boat	-

By employing content analysis at the initial stage of the research, emerging concepts linked to food in tourism could be identified to help classify themes. As such, the contrast between the portrayal of local food and other types of food was pinpointed as an emerging theme. Once the theme was identified, the next step was selecting categories and units: "Categories are selected in order to make classification of the text

possible" (Sarantakos, 1998, p. 282). In this regard, Maldivian food and other types of food were selected as categories. The units of analysis were words, sentences, paragraphs and messages that indicated the presence of food. Following a manifest coding approach, these units were coded and their frequency and presence recorded.

In the second stage of content analysis, the units of analysis were evaluated. In analysing data for content and discourse analysis, Sarantakos (1998) proposed explication method, a technique that enables analysis in a broad context, using information sources outside the procedure, and also enables the content of the documents to be explained in the context of the case being researched.

The next stage of the content analysis involved carefully reviewing the websites and printed materials for words and images depicting food and food related activities. The analysis was conducted manually and recorded on Excel Spreadsheets as the volume of responses did not require computer assisted review.

A total of 12 image and nine textual categories were identified and the frequency of occurrence of textual content and images were recorded. Following the categorization of images and texts, the fourth stage of the content analysis involved data consolidation and reduction. The initial 12 categories of images and nine categories of texts were reduced to two categories of images and two categories of textual content. After the process, the two image and textual categories to emerge were: (a) local food, (b) other food.

In order to portray the extent that food was used in tourism marketing materials, the most frequently used themes from the texts and images were identified and their frequency of occurrence were recorded. Web-based and printed materials were recorded separately (Tables 5.2 and 5.3).

Table 5. 2 Frequency of text in printed and web materials

TEXTS	FREQUENCY		
Categories	Printed materials	Websites	Total
1. Local food*	61	9	70
2. Local food as attraction	10	1	11
3. Food events with local food	2	-	2
4. Local theme restaurant	1	-	1
5. Other food	259	112	371
6. Restaurant/bar as facility	124	37	161
7. Dining experiences	34	21	55
8. Restaurant/bar as attraction	31	10	41
9. Other food events	10	2	12
TOTAL	532	192	724

* Food stuffs that are locally-grown, produced or made mainly from local food (Handszuh, 2000)

Table 5. 3 Frequency of images in printed and web materials

IMAGES		FREQUENCY		
Categories		Printed Materials	Websites	Total
1.	Local food and beverage staff	25	11	36
2.	Local food	28	1	29
3.	Local fruits/vegetables	8	5	13
4.	Local market	8	-	8
5.	Tourists with local food	4	-	4
6.	Locals with food	2	-	2
7.	Other food	28	21	49
8.	Restaurant/bar	13	13	26
9.	Tourists with other food	13	6	19
10.	Restaurant/bar with people	2	15	17
11.	Table setting	4	9	13
12.	Foreign food and beverage staff	12	-	12
	TOTAL	135	81	228

In analysing texts and images content analysis was used. Such analysis enables the researcher to either:

> evaluate the items that appear to be theoretically important and meaningful and relate them to the central question of study or relate the meaning of parts of the text to the whole document and the general thinking of the author and develop relevant hypothesis. (Danner, 1979 in Sarantakos 1998, p. 284).

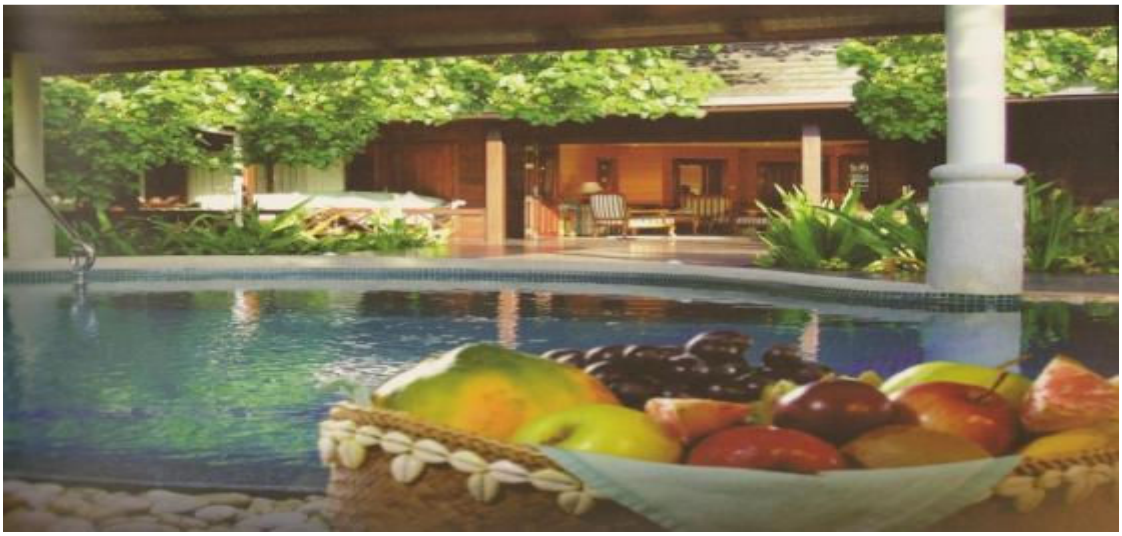
One of the most frequently portrayed images of food in the marketing materials is fruit. It was also the most common image of local food. However, these images were mostly used as displays and decorations and (Figure 5.1). For example, a papaya in a basket of fruits including grapes, apples and oranges as in Figure 5.2 cannot be said to represent local food, because apart from the papaya, the rest of the fruits are imported and are not produced in the Maldives. This paper follows Handszuh (2000) in defining local food

products as "(p)roducts predominantly made of locally made or locally-grown, seasonal and locally-produced foodstuffs and based on local culinary heritage" (p.5).

Figure 5. 1 Fruits as display

Source: Brochure from Royal Island Resort & Spa

Figure 5. 2 Local and imported fruits



Source: Brochure of Island Hideaway

Another frequently displayed local product is fresh coconuts. Coconuts which are a popular local drink are usually offered to tourist as a welcome drink at tourist resorts

(Figure 5.3). As Figure 5.4 illustrates, fresh coconut water as a drink symbolizes local hospitality.

Figure 5. 3 A tourist with a coconut drink

Source: Brochure of Island Hideaway

Figure 5. 4 Coconuts representing local hospitality

Source: www.royalisland.com

Food and beverage staff are also frequently portrayed in the marketing materials. Local staff (Maldivian appearance) are pictured 36 times while foreign staff are portrayed 12 times. Local staff are mostly pictured either with or serving drinks (inlet in Figure 5.7). While some local food and beverage staffs are pictured with non local foods such as a tray of breakfast containing croissants (Figure 5.5), pictures of local staff with local food rarely appeared in the promotional materials. The significance of this is that the pictures of local food and beverage staff do not represent "localness" in relation to food.

Figure 5. 5 Local food and beverage staff with non-local food

Source: Brochure of Island Hideaway

Restaurants and bars are also a frequently featured image. Pictures of empty restaurants and table settings appeared (26 images) more than restaurants with people or people with food (17 images). Table settings without people were featured 13 times. The different messages that are portrayed from these pictures have significant importance to this research. An image of a couple or group of tourists enjoying a meal projects an image of food as part of the tourist experience as in Figure 5.6. On the other hand, table settings and restaurants without people seem to somehow disembody the visitor experience. The difference between these two types of pictures is illustrated in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5. 6 Dining experience

Source: Brochure of Veligandu Island Resort

Figure 5. 7 Restaurants with and without people

Source: Brochure of Meeru Island

Sometimes, only minor attention was given to food and dining by limiting the information provided to only the name of the restaurant and the opening hours of the restaurant. For example the only mention of food in a brochure reads: “24 hour in-villa dining with a variety of international cuisine to choose from”.

Some of the websites linked to information on dining together with accommodation or hotel facilities (Figure 5.8) while some did not have any information or link to food or dining as the example in Figure 5.9.

Figure 5. 8 Combined information about dining and facilities

Source: www.clubrannalhi.com

Of the 18 websites that were analysed, 10 did not have a separate section focused on food and dining. These websites had fewer images and less descriptive information about food, restaurants and dining experiences. These websites often only listed the name of the restaurant or bar and opening hours with very little information provided about food (see Figure 5.9). A typical example of such information is: “The Dhonveli Restaurant is the main dining room and serves ‘all you can eat’ buffet styles meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner.”

Figure 5. 9 Website with no information about dining or food

Source: www.meedhupparu.com

In the few instances where dining experiences are mentioned, local foods are rarely given any emphasis as the following example illustrates:

> ...refreshing drinks are offered at the bar while you relax in the shade or tan in the sun. Continental and Eastern cuisine, prepared by professional chefs are served at the restaurant and private dinners on the beach are also arranged on demand.

Only a few establishments presented their food and dining as a special feature. It was identified that those that did were more descriptive with the information about the experiences, often referring to the skills of their chefs. An example from a brochure reads:

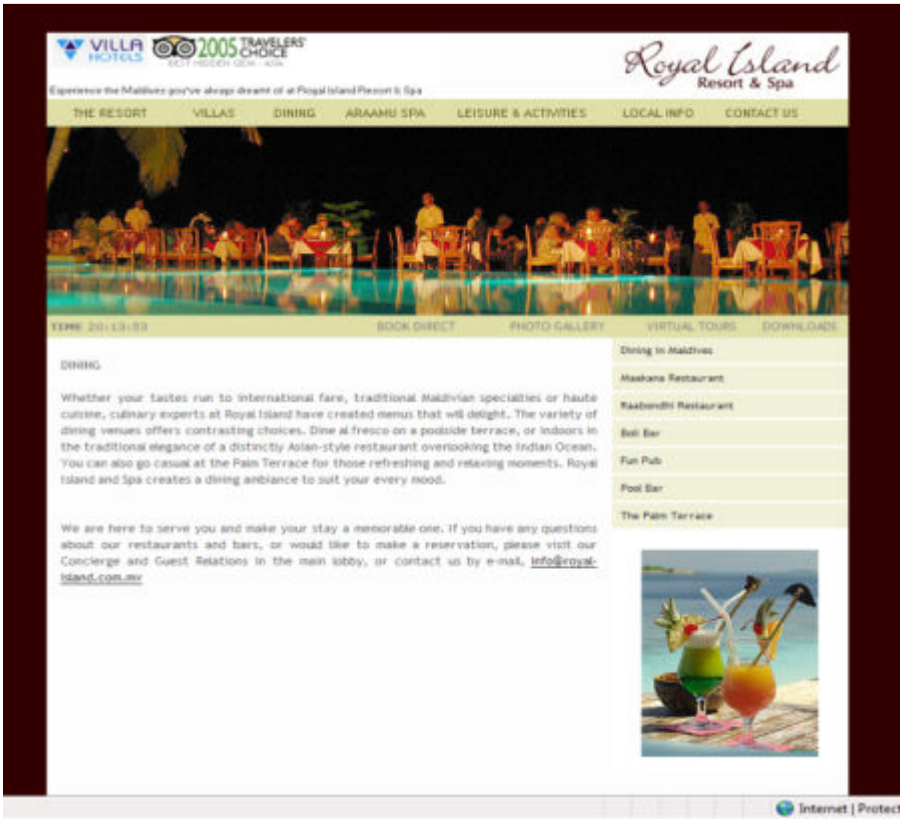
> ...is not a resort, where you can lose any weight during your holidays, the food here is simply too excellent and rated very highly by our guests. To offer you the utmost variety during your holidays we change the menu every week.

Those websites that projected food and restaurants as part of their attractions gave more emphasis to food. These websites provide a link on the homepage to a separate section providing information on dining, restaurants and bars (Figure 5.10). The information on these websites emphasise speciality restaurants and food experiences. The opening lines of one such website reads:

> Whatever takes your fancy and whatever the time of the day or night, our resident chefs remain entirely at your disposal. They can conjure up a myriad of succulent gourmet dishes to tempt your sensations and satisfy any taste at any time...

Again, there is no specific mention of local food.

Figure 5. 10 Website with more information on dining and food



Source: www.royal-island.com

The description indicates that food is a special feature of the establishment. The 18 websites that were analysed, only six were found to provide this kind of detailed information on food.

Most of the marketing materials do not place much emphasis on portraying food as an important part of the tourist experience. Moreover, in all the marketing materials the scarceness of information about local food and local food related activities is evident. This finding is supported by the results from content analysis which revealed a clear picture of comparison between the extent that local and other foods were used in tourism promotion. There were a total of 176 local food images and mentions in the text, whereas for 'other' food a total of 776 images and text references were recorded.

Websites had less information on local food than printed materials. A total of seven websites mentioned local food, out of which only four described local food in ways that suggested local food was an attraction. Food events that involved local food were mentioned twice and local theme restaurants mentioned only once. Information about local markets is also scarce. More images of tourists with non-local foods were displayed than with local food. There were 19 images of tourists with non-local foods such as pasta and breads, whereas there were only 4 images of tourists with local food. In the textual content, other types of food were mentioned 371 times while local food was mentioned 70 times. The types of local foods that were featured in the marketing materials and the frequency of occurrence are illustrated in Table 5.4.

Table 5. 4 Local foods used in marketing materials

Food type	Locally grown/harvested	Local use	Number of Occurrences
Fish	Yes	Yes	6
Prawns	Yes	No	2
Lobster	Yes	No	2
Roti bread	No	Yes	1
Rice	No	Yes	4
Short eats*	Local and imported ingredients	Yes	5
Curry	Local and imported ingredients	Yes	1
Dessert	Local and imported ingredients	Yes	1
Papaya	Yes	Yes	7
Coconut	Yes	Yes	15
Banana	Yes	Yes	9
Water apple	Yes	Yes	1
Sweet melon	Yes	Yes	2
Water melon	Yes	Yes	2
Screw pine	Yes	Yes	1

*finger foods

Although prawns and lobsters are locally harvested products, they are not commonly used by locals. Most of the locally harvested seafood products, including reef fish are sold to tourism establishments. Although screw pine is a traditional local food that is used to make numerous dishes, the picture of a bunch of screw pine in Maldives Visitor's Guide 2007 neither illustrated it as a local food nor was there any information on screw pine (Figure 5.11). Therefore, it was not identifiable from the guide book whether screw pine is a local food.

Figure 5. 11 Screw pine

Source: Maldives Visitor's guide 2007

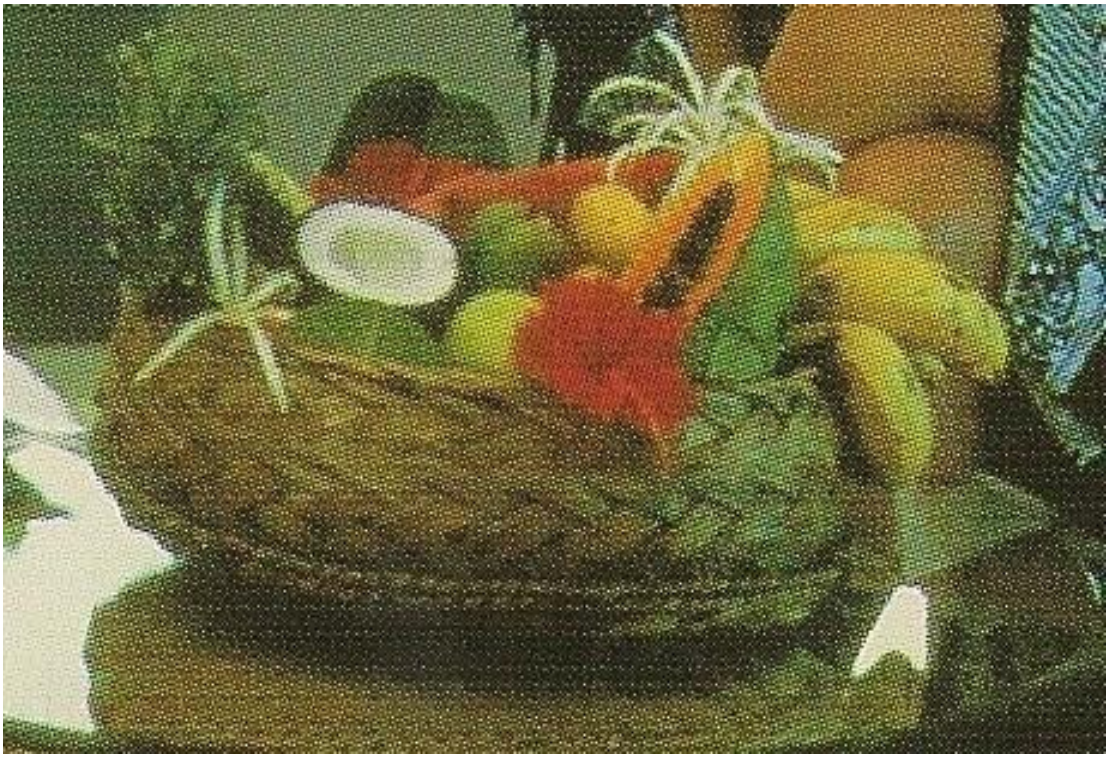
Fish is a vital part of Maldivian diet and is used by locals to make a range of different dishes. In the marketing materials, fish is sometimes portrayed as being used in dishes that are not local in nature, for example, tuna used in sashimi and sushi. Figure 5.12 shows tuna used in a non-local dish together with salmon, which is not a locally harvested product.

Figure 5. 12 Tuna used in non-local dish

Source: Brochure of Intour Maldives

Coconuts also are a key ingredient in most local dishes. Scraped dry coconuts and milk extracted from the scraped coconuts are used to make curries, short eats, sweets and rice dishes. Fresh coconuts are mostly used as drinks and are usually drunk from the coconut. In all the marketing materials only fresh coconuts were illustrated except one picture that had half a dry coconut in a basket of fruits (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5. 13 Dry coconut in a fruit basket



Source: Brochure of Veligandu Island Resort

Activities related to food consumption are said to provide opportunities for greater interaction and communication between tourists and locals (Poulain, 2000 in Frochot, 2003). Images that portray food related experiences and interaction with host communities as in Figure 5.14 are rare in Maldives tourism promotional materials. This picture displays a typical Maldivian 'tea' or *sai* ceremony with 'short eats' *(hedhikaa)* and black tea at the home of a local family. The picture was in the guide book published by the official tourism promotional body, MTPB. The guide book included information and pictures about local restaurants, tea shops and coffee shops and local markets in Male'. The website of MTPB, www.visitmaldives.com, also displays information about local food, describing the main local foods and where they are available.

Figure 5. 14 Local 'tea' ceremony

Source: Maldives Visitor's Guide 2007

Local markets are an important part of culinary tourism and are a central venue for experiencing culinary heritage of a destination (Long, 2004). From the analysis it was revealed that pictures and information of local markets are rarely displayed in the marketing materials. Local markets in the Maldives are the centres for selling and purchasing locally grown and produced products. Imported items are not generally sold at local markets (Figure 5.15).

Figure 5. 15 Local markets

Source: Maldives Visitors' Guide 2007

Most of the information and images about local food and local markets were found in guide books. These books contained description and pictures of local foods, restaurants, cafés and teashops in Male' and provided information about the kind of foods available at those places. This kind of information about local food or local markets was not portrayed in any of the marketing materials of tourist establishments. This is an indication that local foods are rarely available at tourist establishments and are not promoted by tourism marketing. Moreover, in spite of the number of images of local food and beverage staff, bars and restaurants, these images signify service rather than local food. This provides support to the finding in literature as was mentioned in chapter 2 that food in tourism is often marketed as part of other services and facilities or as just a secondary component of the tourism experience (Boniface, 2003).

In the classification of local and other food, discourse analysis was useful in this research. An advantage in using discourse analysis is the capacity of discourse to contain several meanings, thus eliminating the need for coding into different categories (Paltridge, 2006). In discourse analysis, texts are not viewed as independent means of communication, instead are seen as "sites in which social meanings are created and reproduced and social identities are formed" (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001, p. 172).

Hence, the kind of analysis needed for this research seemed only possible through discourse analysis, because it was important for this research to identify the context and understand the background embedded in the texts and images related to food in order to differentiate local food from other types of food.

A deeper understanding of the background and situation is required to analyse food events described as "traditional Maldivian buffet", "beach barbecue" and "picnic lunches". At first glance, these events appear to portray local or traditional food experiences. However, when subjected to discourse analysis, it is clear that "beach barbecues" and "picnic lunches" do not involve any local food. For example, the image in Figure 5.16 depicts a picnic by the beachside. The bunch of coconuts, the traditional boat and the coconut palm on which the food is displayed on designate local culture and tradition. The white sandy beach and clear sea portrays the environment of Maldives. However, the food is largely imported. Apart from tuna that is used in some of the sushi and sashimi in this picture, the only other local food is a plate of short eats. Therefore, the key message portrayed in this picture is not about local food.

Figure 5. 16 Picnic lunch

Source: Maldives Visitors' Guide 2007

Similarly, the words "beach barbecue" in the following sentence needs to be reviewed carefully:

> A very popular excursion arranged by all resorts is visiting different fishing villages, resort islands and uninhabited islands. Most excursions include a beach barbecue.

The impression that the words "beach barbecue" imply is of a local food event that involves local food. With regard to the case investigated, the words 'beach barbeque' cannot be categorised under local food experience. When subjected to discourse course analysis, these words reveal no relation with local food experience, because "beach barbecues" is not a traditional or cultural Maldivian culinary experience. 'Beach barbecues' such as those held in resorts were introduced to the Maldives with tourism (Figure 5.17).

Figure 5. 17 Beach barbeque at a tourist resort

Source: www.angsanavelavaru.com

Further, local food at these events is limited to grilled fish or seafood. This is clearly evident from "beach barbecue" menus that were available for download from one of the websites (Figure 5.18). On the Mixed Grill Beach BBQ Dinner menu, none of the items is Maldivian. On the Seafood Beach BBQ Dinner menu, seafood is the only local ingredient.

Figure 5. 18 Barbecue menus

MIXED GRILL BEACH BBQ DINNER

AVOCADO, TOMATO AND MOZZARELLA CHEESE SALAD

BEEF TENDERLOIN, BEEF SIRLOIN, PORK CHOPS AND LAMB CUTLETS SERVED WITH BBQ SAUCE

GRILLED SEASONAL VEGETABLES

BAKED POTATO WITH SOUR CREAM

CHEF'S SPECIAL DESSERT

FRESHLY BREWED COFFEE OR TEA

US$100 per person

SEAFOOD BEACH BBQ DINNER

AVOCADO, TOMATO AND MOZZARELLA CHEESE SALAD

JUMBO PRAWNS, FILET OF LOCAL FISH, TUNA STEAKS, GRILLED LOBSTER SERVED WITH A LIME AND GARLIC BUTTER

GRILLED SEASONAL VEGETABLES

BAKED POTATO WITH SOUR CREAM

CHEF'S SPECIAL DESSERT

FRESHLY BREWED COFFEE OR TEA

US$100 per person

Source: www.veligandu.com

The menus that were downloadable from websites were searched for local food. Some items were identified that implied Maldivian food at a first glance:

> Grilled Tuna Steak: Glazed with sauce and set on seasoned noodles with bok choi sweet chilli dressing.

> Grilled Catch of the Day: Set on sautéed potatoes and onions and served with roasted mushrooms, grilled asparagus and lemon butter emulsion.

The first item, Grilled Tuna Steak, gives the impression that it is a local food because tuna is a common Maldivian food. The second item, Grilled Catch of the Day, suggests that the item is a fresh local seafood item. However, when the accompanying sentences are analysed, the ingredients and cooking methods do not indicate that they are local dishes even though both use fish or seafood. Apart from the fish and seafood, no local products or ingredients are used.

It was also noticed that the words 'local food' portrayed different meanings in the marketing materials depending on the context of the sentence. The use of 'local' food in the following sentence is an example:

> Excellent cuisine, local, international and oriental, are served at the restaurant.

A very different picture is given by the way local food is offered in the next example:

> As you delight in the Maldivian specialities prepared by our chefs, enjoy the gentle lapping of the waves on your feet, under a canopy of stars on a private sand bank.

It is apparent that the latter is an exclusive experience while the previous sentence only suggests the availability of local food along with other types of food. In the second sentence the fact that the dinner is held on a 'private sand bank' suggests the exclusiveness of the experience. Private sandbanks may be present in resort islands either as part of the main island or separated by a lagoon. They are viewed as assets by resort operators as it is not a feature common to every island. Therefore, if a special feature such as a sandbank or a nearby uninhabited small island is in the territory of a resort island, it is common practice for operators to organise events such as special dinners, overnight stays for honeymooners and cocktails at sunset and market them as special experiences to tourists at those resorts.

The example below suggests an experience that provides tourists' participation and involvement in local tradition and culture:

> Learn how to prepare tasty, traditional Maldivian dishes with our resort chef.

It is an important characteristic of discourse analysis that it facilitates the identification of themes or lack thereof (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In the case of this research, the scarceness of local food related textual content and images in promotional materials are considered as an important 'theme' that points to the fact that local food is not given much emphasis in tourism marketing and promotion.

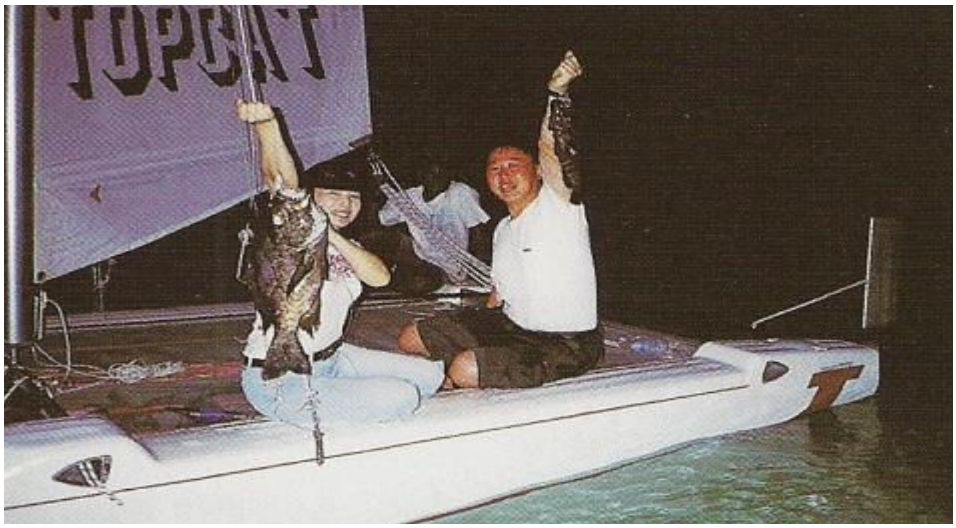
An important finding from the marketing materials was the prominence given to fish and different types of seafood. Images and information about fish and seafood (Figure 5.19) and activities that involved fish were used more frequently than other types of food and food related activities.

Figure 5. 19 Seafood display

Source: Brochure of Royal Island

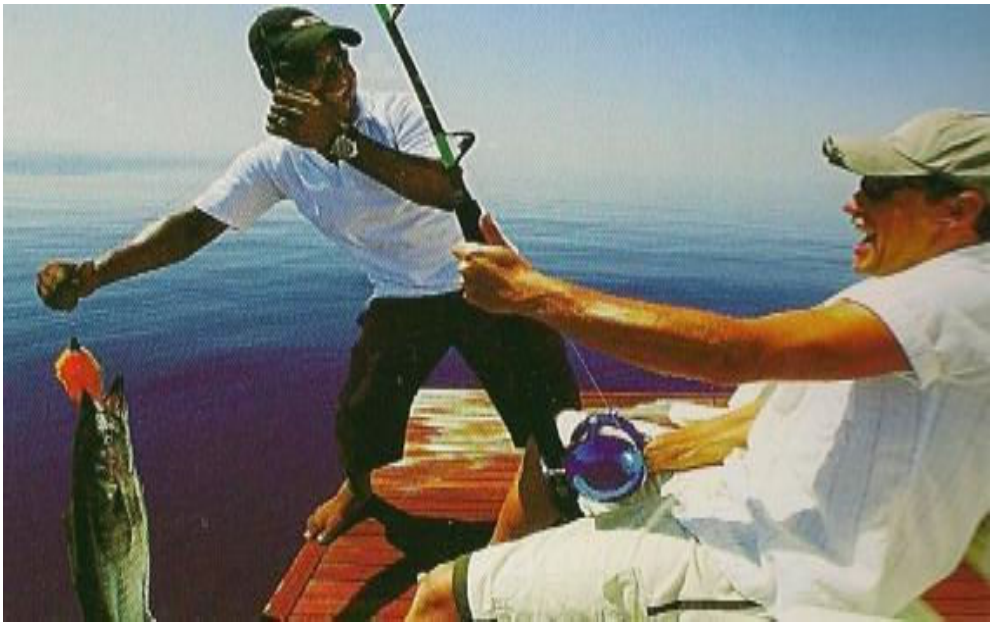
The menus on resort/hotel websites also show that fish and seafood are labelled as 'local cuisine' as in the beach barbecue menus illustrated earlier in this chapter. In addition, fishing is an activity that is emphasised as an outdoor entertainment programme by most tourist resorts (Figures 5.20 and 21).

Figure 5. 20 Night fishing displayed in brochure as an outdoor activity



Source: Brochure of Villa Hotels

Figure 5. 21 Fishing displayed in brochure as an outdoor activity



Source: Brochure Intourist Maldives Pvt. Ltd.

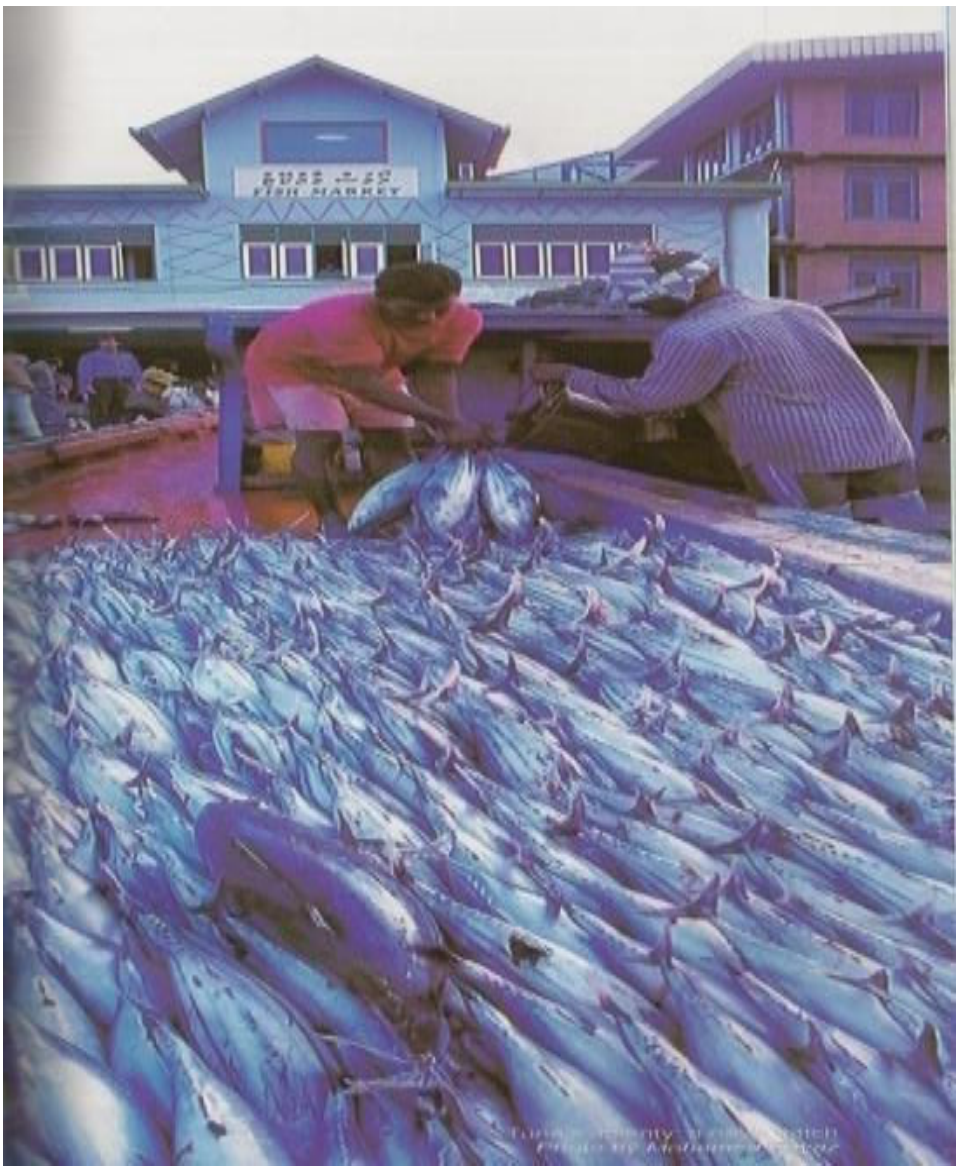
Sometimes fishing trips that combine cooking and eating the catch are described as in the following example in a brochure from a travel agent:

> The most popular fishing with visitors is night fishing for groupers, snappers, emperors, jacks, squirrelfish, barracuda and other reef fishes. The catch normally ends with an exquisite barbecue or fresh raw dinner on the beach.

Although raw fish is not part of traditional Maldivian cuisine, this example illustrates that fishing is portrayed as a local food related experience.

The fish market (Figure. 5.22) is an important tourist attraction in Male' which is included in all tourist excursion trips. It is one of the major centres in the country where fishermen sell their daily catch. Pictures and information about the fish market were featured in all the guide books and two of the resort/hotel brochures.

Figure 5. 22 Unloading fish to the Fish Market



Source: Hello Maldives guide book

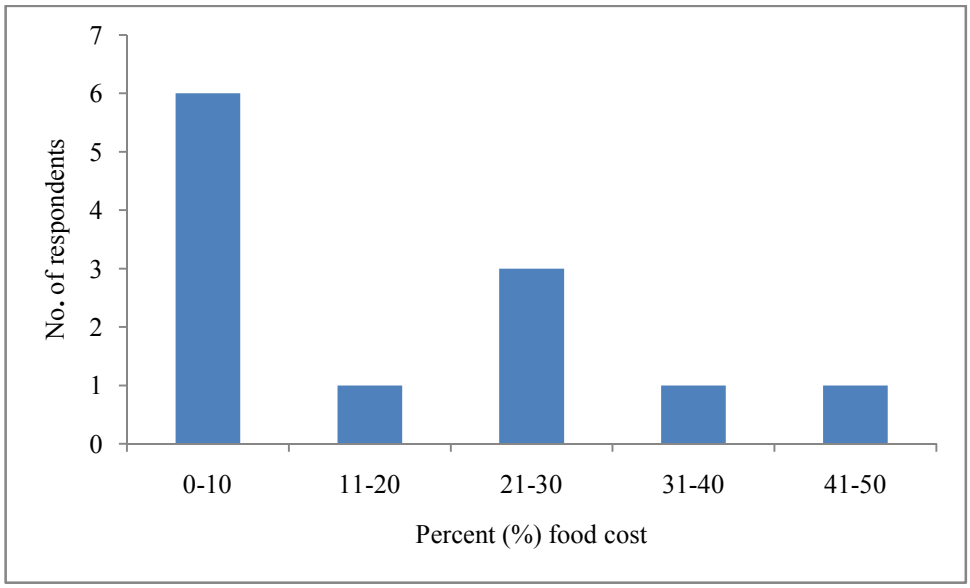
The fact that different types of local food are scarce in the marketing materials while fish, seafood and fishing were frequently featured shows that fish and seafood are the only 'local food' promoted in tourism marketing.

5.2 The use of local food in tourism

The operator and expert opinion survey provided an insight to the current situation of local food in Maldives' tourism industry. The operator survey established three important observations made in the Maldives case study in Chapter 4: The Maldives depends on imports for most food products; a large portion of tourism revenue is spent on food imports; the Maldives' tourism industry is comprised of a large number of expatriates.

Apart from three operators who stated that 21 – 30% of their total food cost is spent on local products, for most tourism establishments surveyed, imported food constitutes the major share of total food costs (Figure 5.23). Half of the respondents (n=6 or 54.5%) said that a very small proportion (<10%) of the average total food cost is spent to purchase local food products. Therefore, a large disparity exists in the proportion of local and imported food as a percentage of the total food cost. Belisle (1983) had cautioned that if most food products for tourism have to be imported, it will reduce net economic benefits related to tourism, increase imports and harm local agriculture.

Figure 5. 23 Total food cost spent on local food

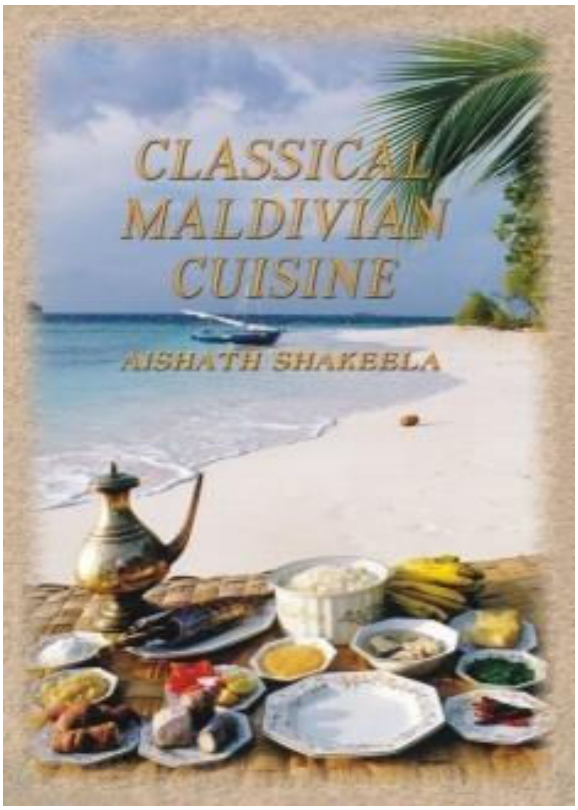


More than half of the resorts surveyed (n=7 or 58.3%) offered a drink or food made out of local products to welcome guests upon their arrival. It is customary for tourist establishments to offer a drink – usually fresh coconuts or juice. The high percentage of operators that practice this custom also explains the frequent use of coconuts in marketing materials.

The most common local food related souvenir available at tourist hotels and resorts was found to be local cook books or recipes which were available at over 33% (n=4) of the establishments. The first local cook book published in English and targeted for the tourism industry is "Classical Maldivian Cuisine" by Aishath Shakeela (2000). The book features traditional recipes, local ingredients and cooking methods from all the atolls of Maldives is marketed for tourists through resorts, hotels and souvenir shops (Figure 5.24). Apart from providing a compilation of traditional local cuisine, the book was aimed at being used by "those following craft, technical and supervisory courses, in the catering industry" (Shakeela, 2000, p. xi). The book was also intended to "attract

chefs in our booming tourist industry who wish to add national delights to their motley menus from different continents of the world" (Gayoom, 2000, p. vi).

Figure 5. 24 Local cookbook "Classical Maldivian Cuisine"



Source: www.maldivian.cuisine.com

Other food related souvenirs sold at tourism establishments include dried fish and related products available at two resorts (16.7%). Local snacks are also available at two resorts (16.7%). Local snacks include packets of dry fish chips, fried breadfruit, taro and different short eats. They are produced on a small scale by households and small companies. The production of snacks complies with the General Food Regulation of the Ministry of Health (Ministry of Health, 2009) and Ministry of Trade and Industries. Hence the quality of these products is maintained at a certain standard, which also explains the reason for the positive response for the ability to obtain the right quality of products from snacks suppliers.

All the 12 operators who participated in the survey of this research provided outdoor activities for tourists. Out of these, all except one business (n=11 or 91.7%) said that the

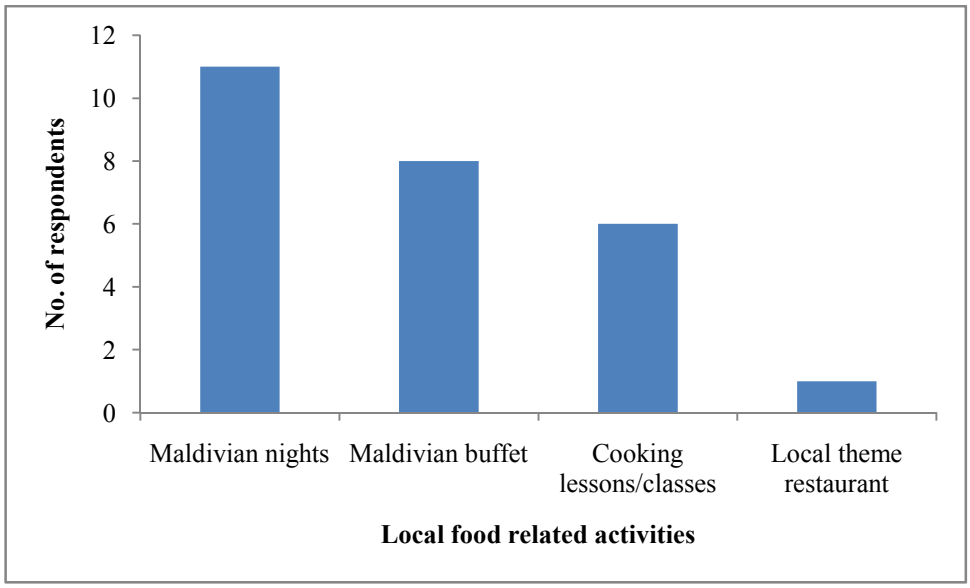
activities included local food related experiences including visits to local cafés and restaurants, food production or preparation sites, local markets or cooking classes.

Activities that involve local food are featured as special attractions in tourist hotels and resorts (Figure 5.25). The most popular event was "Maldivian nights" conducted by 11 resorts, followed by Maldivian buffets by eight resorts, local cooking lessons or classes conducted by six and local theme restaurants at one resort.

"Maldivian nights" include local food and cultural entertainment programmes. These dinners are always a buffet and the food is not solely local – some local fare is spread with other types of food (Figure 5.26). Often the highlight of the buffet is a whole grilled or baked fish. The use of other dishes at these dinners limits the use of local products because other dishes require imported products most of which are not locally produced. Although it is common to see food items being prepared on request at the buffet, local food preparation is rarely demonstrated. The only exception could be a barbecue where fish and other sea food may be grilled. The difference between "Maldivian nights" and "Maldivian buffets" is that dinners on "Maldivian nights" are usually followed by a cultural entertainment programme. Dance troupes and music groups that perform cultural items are often hired to perform.

As the content and discourse analyses show, events and experiences that involve local food are featured only twice in the marketing materials. The fact that operators' survey indicates these activities are frequently held at tourist resorts, yet they are not featured in the marketing materials shows the limited focus placed on these activities in terms of overall promotion. Instead of being featured in tourism promotional materials, it was revealed that alternative methods of advertising were used to promote local food in the resorts. The most common mode of supplementary advertising was found to be staff recommendation which is practiced by 58.3% (n=7) businesses. Other methods include food displays in the restaurant (n=6 or 50%) and daily specials (n=5 or 41.7%).

Figure 5. 25 Activities featured as special attractions



Respondents to the expert opinion survey unanimously agreed that at present there is little or no link between local food and tourism, and that for Maldives, culinary tourism is a new concept. They also stated that at the moment the only linkage between tourism and local food is the weekly "Maldivian nights" hosted by a few resorts. One comment read that even these events are rare.

> The link is minimal. If I am not wrong local cuisine is served once a week in some resorts. However few resorts combine food with local culture and present "Maldivian Night" for their guests. But this is rare.

The experts' survey revealed that thus far there are no well planned programmes to create linkages between local food and tourism. It was also noted that development of culinary tourism is not emphasised in the TTMP.

It was noted by an expert that MTPB has been displaying local food in overseas promotional events since 2007. Visitors to these events can watch the preparation of food and enjoy the food as well. While it was suggested that these events should continue, it is not evident that when tourists from the countries where these promotions are held visit Maldives, the local foods that were displayed at the promotional stalls are available for tourists.

It was noted by a policy maker that the first cultural festival designated specially for tourists was to be held in December 2008 in Dhangethi, an inhabited island in Ari Atoll.

This festival was meant to be the beginning of an annual festival where food would play a key role in addition to cultural arts and crafts.

Figure 5. 26 Buffet dinner

Source: www.ranveli-maldives.com

To evaluate the operators' opinion on the importance of using local food in the promotion of their businesses, a seven-point likert scale was used (1 is unimportant, 7 very important). Their responses (Table 5.5) indicate that the respondents were divided in their responses. This is an indication of the perception among operators that current promotions are doing well even without including local food in marketing activities. The expert survey also supports this argument. One commentator had stated that even without the component of local food being included in promoting tourism, Maldives tourism has been very successful. Therefore, it would be a challenge to develop interest among those who engage in tourism promotions to link local food to tourism marketing. This finding reflects the observations by (Okumus. et al., 2007) that although "food is growing in importance, not all destinations capitalize on the potential opportunities it provides".

Table 5. 5 Importance of using local food in marketing

N	Mean	Frequency scale Un-important						Very important
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	4.08	-	3	3	1	1	3	1

Tourism operators believed that since Maldives is not known for its cuisine, it is not important to promote Maldives by using local food. Half of the experts also pointed out that all tourism marketing so far has been focused on the natural beauty of the Maldives. Recently Maldives has been marketed as a spa destination. The current branding of Maldives as a romantic, relaxation and beach destination has been developed and marketed for a considerable duration without the inclusion of any food aspects.

> Probably this area has been neglected because we have been having double digit growth in the tourism sector for a long time and the players in the industry did not feel the need for other tools to market the product.

Operators were asked to indicate the importance given to different types of cuisines in the marketing and promotion of their businesses from a scale of 1 to 7 (1 is not important at all, 7 extremely important). The responses are illustrated in Table 5.6.

Table 5. 6 Importance of different cuisines in tourism marketing

Types of cuisine	N	Mean	Frequency scale Not important at all						Extremely important
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Italian	11	5.09	-	1	-	3	2	3	2
Mediterranean	12	5.08	-	1	-	2	5	2	2
Asian	12	5.33	-	-	1	2	3	4	2
Maldivian	12	4.58	-	-	4	2	2	3	1
Continental	12	5.42	-	1	1	1	2	3	4
Other	4	6.5	-	-	-	-	1	-	3

Compared to other types of cuisine, Maldivian cuisine is considered as the least important type of food in tourism marketing. Foods that were given the highest importance reflect the dominant tourist market groups. As discussed in Chapter 4, the largest source market is Europe with Italy leading the market from this region, while from Asia Japan is the market leader. 'Other food' which was specified as Japanese and Korean was selected as extremely important by three out of the four respondents who answered this question. All these types of cuisines use mainly imported food and not much local products are used apart from fish that is often used in Asian dishes. Considering the importance given to these foods in the tourism establishments, the high food cost percentage on imported food can be explained.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has shown that local food plays a relatively limited role in the marketing and promotion of Maldives tourism. This is reflected in the comparatively limited use of local produce and cuisine in the tourist resorts. Both operators and experts argue that there is limited use of local products by the tourism industry and that use of local food in tourism marketing is limited and is not viewed as important.

CHAPTER SIX:
DEVELOPING LINKS BETWEEN LOCAL FOOD AND TOURISM

This chapter discusses the potential for tourism to form closer links with the local food sector in the Maldives and the opportunities that exist to enhance these links. The existing obstacles that hinder the achievement of this objective are discussed, followed by suggestions to overcome the difficulties. The chapter draws on the surveys conducted among tourism operators and experts in the tourism industry.

6.1 Prospects for tourism and food linkage

Local food provided for tourists has the potential to add "diversity and excitement" and enhance 'the Maldives experience'. As an expert who works closely with both tourism and the food industry stated:

> It would be an absolutely fantastic Maldives experience if you add local food to the menus for the tourists visiting this country. I can surely state that if a tourist has a good Maldivian meal made with local produce he or she will never ever forget the experience. That taste will last a life time.

It was put forward by a businessman involved with the tourism industry:

> Maldives is the apple of the eye of the world as quoted in a recent forum in Europe. Maldivian food as well has immense potential to become popular as a tourist attraction.

Although it is evident that local food is not used much in tourism marketing and tourism operators do not believe local food is important in promoting their businesses, they have indicated that if local food is used in marketing, it can improve and affect the image of their businesses positively. Operators indicated their opinion for this question on a seven-point likert scale (1 is very negative and 7 very positive). Most of the responses are at the higher of the scale and the mean score of the responses is 5.7 (Table 6.1). Therefore, it is clear that most of the operators believe that local food would have a positive impact on their businesses' image.

Table 6. 1 Effect of using local food on image of business

N	Mean	Frequency scale Very negative						Very positive
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	5.7	-	-	1	3	3	3	2

The overall responses also suggest a willingness among operators to increase use of local food, and as suggested by an operator, "this is something that we have to think (about) in the tourism industry". Even though at present most of the food used by tourist resorts is imported, a large majority of operators (n=10 or 83.3%) believed that food imports would decrease if more local food could be used in tourist resorts and hotels. The expert survey also suggests that tourism industry needs to make use of more locally produced fruits, vegetables, salad greens and varieties of fish. It was also revealed that operators do not believe that the price of local food is high compared to imported food. Using a seven-point likert scale (1 is much lower, 7 is much higher), operators were asked to indicate the price of local food compared to that of imported food. Since the mean score of the responses is 4 (Table 6.2), it is an indication that the price of local food is considered neither much lower nor much higher than imported food.

Table 6. 2 Price of local and imported food

N	Mean	Frequency scale Much lower than imported						Much higher than imported
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	4	-	1	3	4	3	1	-

The research revealed that fishermen are the only local food suppliers that all of the respondents work with (see Table 6.3). Given that fish and seafood are the only local food that appeared to be promoted in the marketing materials, the association of fishermen and tourism establishments can be expected. Other local suppliers that tourism operators mostly worked with are fruit growers (n=10 or 83%) and farmers (n=6 or 50%). Fewer operators worked with coconut growers (n=3 or 25%), snack suppliers (n=2 or 16.7%) and marine farmers (n=1 or 8.3%). 'Other' was marked by one respondent which was specified as local fish distributors.

Table 6. 3 Number of respondents that work with local suppliers

Local Suppliers	Fishermen	Marine Farmers	Farmers	Fruit Growers	Snacks Suppliers	Coconut Growers	Other
No. of respondents	12	1	6	10	2	3	1

To find out the ability of operators to purchase the right quality and quantity of products from local suppliers, seven-point likert scales (1 is very easy, 7 extremely difficult) were used. The results for obtaining the right quality of produce show that for fishermen, fruit growers, snack suppliers and coconut growers, most of the responses are on the lower end of the scale and the mean scores are less than 4 (Table 6.4). There is not much difference between the mean scores among the responses which range from 3.09 for fruit growers, 3.11 for coconut growers, 3.55 for snack suppliers through to 3.80 for farmers. This indicates that it is relatively 'easy' to purchase the right quality of products from these suppliers. The table also shows that the lowest score (2.67) are for fishermen where four out of the twelve respondents have said it is 'very easy'. This indicates that most respondents find it easiest to obtain the right quality of products from fishermen. In contrast to all the suppliers marine farmers received a high mean of 5.22, indicating that marine farmers are the group of suppliers that are most difficult to get the right quality of produce from.

It is common for fishermen to sell their catch at fish markets in Male' and other islands, and sell wholesale to collecting vessels and canning factories of MIFCO. Resorts and hotels will often have contracts with local fishermen to supply fish daily. These contracts provide fishermen a guaranteed market and constant competitive prices while the businesses get regular supplies of fresh fish when fishermen sell their daily catch directly to the businesses. The other option for hoteliers to source fish is to buy from Male's fish market or MIFCO centres, where the businesses would have to arrange shipping. This explains the positive scores for the ability to meet demand and to obtain the right quality of products from fishermen.

Table 6. 4 Ability to obtain the right quality of products

Suppliers	N	Mean	Frequency scale Very easy 1	2	3	4	5	6	Extremely difficult 7
Fishermen	12	2.67	4	2	2	3	-	1	-
Marine farmers	9	5.22	-	1	1	1	1	2	3
Farmers	10	3.80	2	1	2	-	2	3	-
Fruit growers	11	3.09	3	3	1	1	-	3	-
Snack suppliers	9	3.55	1	3	2	-	-	2	1
Coconut growers	9	3.11	1	4	1	1	-	2	-

Marine farming is a new concept and is not a well developed sector in the Maldives. This is evident from the fact that only one of the operators worked with marine farmers. In addition, out of the nine respondents that have answered the question on the ability to purchase the right quality of products from this group, six responses are on the higher end of the scale. This shows that it is difficult to source the right quality of products from them. A similar result is present for the ability to source supply to meet demand (Table 6.5). The only marine farming conducted in the Maldives is the culture of grouper. Fishing for reef fish varieties such as grouper became a commercial fishery activity only after the inception of tourism during the 1970s due to increased demand. By 1990s, grouper became an export fishery segment focused on Far Eastern countries and the grouper fishery became an alternative source of income for fishermen in outer atolls. In 2004, it was discovered by Maldives' Marine Research Centre (MRC) that grouper were heavily fished and catch rates had declined. MRC took the initiative to culture groupers in floating cages as a pilot project in 2005 (MRC, 2008). The only other ongoing activity is the UNDP funded pearl culture, also run by MRC. Recently MIFCO announced their interest in venturing into aqua culture and mariculture activities in the near future (MIFCO, 2009).

The ability to source sufficient quantity from suppliers is illustrated in Table 6.5. The table indicates that the lowest mean score is for fishermen (3.08) hence it is easiest to source supply from fishermen. Again, the worst performing group of suppliers is marine farmers with the highest mean score of 5.38. Therefore, the ability to obtain the right quantity of products is most difficult from marine farmers. For fruit growers the mean is 3.67 and for coconut growers it is 3.78, hence it is comparatively easy to source the

right quality of products from these suppliers. For farmers and snack suppliers the mean is higher at 4.20 and 4.13 respectively. Therefore, the ability to source supply to meet demand from these suppliers can be concluded as neither very easy nor extremely difficult.

Table 6. 5 Ability to source supply to meet demand

Suppliers	N	Mean	Frequency scale Very Easy						Extremely difficult
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fishermen	12	3.08	4	-	4	1	1	2	-
Marine farmers	8	5.38	-	-	1	-	3	3	1
Farmers	10	4.20	1	-	3	2	1	2	1
Fruit growers	12	3.67	2	1	4	-	2	3	-
Snack suppliers	8	4.13	-	-	4	2	-	1	1
Coconut growers	9	3.78	1	1	3	1	1	1	1

Farmers, fruit and coconut growers from neighbouring islands sell their produce directly to tourist hotels and resorts according to the latter's requirements. Resorts and hotels that are outside Male' atoll find it better to have regular supplies delivered directly by farmers than purchasing from the Local Market in Male'. The Local Market in Male' is the central marketplace for local products where produce from all over the country are brought to be sold.

Farming is not conducted in all the atolls. Depending on the fertility of the soil, farming is conducted on a commercial scale only in some atolls and some are well known for producing certain varieties of fruit or vegetable. For example, Thoddu in Ari Atoll is a productive island in farming a range of vegetables and fruits. Thoddu is particularly well known for watermelon farming. Similarly, islands in the south Maldives including Addu Atoll and Fua Mula have lots of mango trees. These islands provide a large supply of mangoes to the market during mango season. Although coconut is widely grown throughout the country, some islands, for example Kashidhu island in Male' Atoll, are among the most productive islands in coconut growing.

The significance of this variation in farming activities and productivity among the atolls and islands is that those businesses in close physical proximity to farming islands are

better positioned to access produce grown in those islands than the businesses that are further away. For example, islands within close proximity take a few hours by mechanised boats to travel between each other. Mechanised boats are the usual mode for inter island transport. However, travel time between atolls and far flung islands could take between one to two or more days depending on weather conditions.

Considering the fact that every island in the Maldives has coconut groves and coconut is a main ingredient used in almost all Maldivian food, the number of operators that work with coconut growers is less than expected (n=3 or 25%). In addition, it has been established earlier from the analysis of marketing materials that coconuts are among the most frequently featured local products. The limited number of operators that are working with coconut growers is an indication that not much local food is used in the resorts and hotels.

The large majority of operators (n=11 or 91.7%) also feel that tourists are interested in consuming Maldivian food and that "tuna fish is very popular" among tourists. The perceived popularity of seafood and tuna among tourists certainly supports the argument that they are interested in local cuisine. Seafood was rated by operators as the second most important food in marketing. Seafood, fish and fish products are also given as the first choice in the type of food that has the highest potential to be developed for tourists. The expert survey also point to fresh fish and seafood as having great potential to link tourism and local food. A policy maker in the tourism industry stated:

> I am a firm believer that local food could be used as a marketing tool. There is abundant seafood here and why not promote this destination as is famous for with the crystal clear water, milky white sand, the sun and add it with the best seafood destination? Instead of sun, sand and sea (SSS) we should add that additional S (SSS+S) for seafood.

The operator survey revealed that an opportunity exists to link local food and tourism. All respondents except one agreed that more local food could be used in their businesses. An operator noted that there is a need to introduce more varieties of local food, as at present "it is only grilled fish" that is available. Tuna and other fish form a fundamental part of Maldivian diet and there are a large variety of local dishes made with fish; local food at tourist businesses need not be limited to only grilled fish.

All the operator respondents believed that closer links between tourism and other sectors could be successfully created through local food. As stated by one of the

experts, "It is of great potential. We have failed to utilise this vital component in the past". Comments provided by some operators indicate that they believe such linkages will provide direct benefits to the local communities and increase their living standard and boost multiplier effect of tourism benefits:

> It will directly affect the living standard of the local community, since local products will be purchased from local farmers which will make tourism benefits to roll throughout the community.

Increasing linkages with other economic sectors is emphasised in TTMP as an important avenue for the "equitable distribution of the economic benefits from tourism among Maldivians" in order to "ensure sustainable social and economic development of tourism" (MTCA, 2007c). The Plan further elaborates:

> The leakages from the tourism sector can be reduced through strengthening the linkages between the tourism sector and other supporting sectors namely fisheries, agriculture and handicraft (p. 32).

The lack of cultural dimensions in tourism was highlighted by tourism operators and experts. It was noted that in the Maldives, local food is not given due recognition in the tourism industry. It was suggested by an operator that local food can be used as a tool to promote culture because "food represents the way of life" of Maldivians. Thus it is evident that tourism operators recognize that local food is part of Maldivian "cultural heritage" and that they believe interest in culture and heritage is a tourist motivator.

Industry experts also noted that "local culture is a seriously neglected area" in promoting Maldives tourism, and that "there is an urgent need" to promote culture. It was also highlighted by two of the expert respondents that although development of cultural tourism is stressed in the TTMP, culinary tourism is not included. As a policy maker warned:

> Unless we have these added attractions we could lose the glory of being the most famed tourism destination in the world. This is the right time to take these additional strides in further developing our industry.

One operator noted that tourists are conscious of Maldives' "fragile eco system and are attentive to the local resources". There is a strong feeling that adding local cuisine and the related cultural factors would enhance the uniqueness of Maldives and the overall

attractiveness of the product. One commentator in the expert survey declared that Maldivian cuisine has great potential to be exploited as an attraction for tourists:

> Our food suits the tropical climate and exotic culture of Maldives. Our food tells the passage of our history including the influence of Portuguese, Indian subcontinent and Africans who came and settled in the Maldives. Our food relates to Islam and the Islamic-Arab culture and foods. Therefore, those factors that differentiate Maldives are intertwined with local food. We need to further look into these connections and celebrate them by providing local food products, with the knowledge of its historical, social and natural context that derive these food products.

Maldives participates in a number of international tourism fairs every year. Examples include ITB Berlin fair held in Germany, JATA World Travel fair held in Japan, and BIT fair held in Italy. It was pointed out by two policy makers that the success of promotional events held at some of these fairs with local food as an attraction has proven that local food has immense potential to be linked to tourism.

While local food alone may not work as a means to attract tourists to Maldives, it can at the very least be used to supplement and enhance the Maldives visitor experience. A local academic whose work focuses on the tourism industry stated:

> Local cuisine in any destination has great potential to be exploited as an attraction for their guests. Countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and India have used this asset in tourism development. Similarly, Maldives could use local cuisine as well.

Of the six respondents in the expert survey, five experts strongly believed linking local food with tourism could enhance the differentiation of the Maldives from other competing tourism destinations. It was stated that local food offers the potential for Maldives to be promoted for more than just its environmental features. Literature related to food and tourism supports the argument that regional cuisine has the potential to differentiate tourist destinations in the global market (Hall & Mitchell, 2002b), and that it is an important tourist attraction that enhances value of destinations (Handszuh, 2000).

The general opinion among all the respondents of the expert survey is that local food has the potential to enhance the 'Maldives experience'. As pointed out by an industry expert, local food represents a "vital component" of the product mix that so far "we

have failed to utilise". One of the experts suggested that the fact that Maldivian cuisine comprises "healthy and organic foods" should be marketed more clearly. It was noted that for this reason, Maldivian food would appeal to most tourists who visit Maldives because Europeans make up the largest tourist market and currently health foods are the most popular type of food in Western countries. Moreover, as noted by a local business man:

> tourists that visit Maldives are holiday makers rather than business travellers, who seek relaxation, enjoyment and lasting memories of a wonderful experience in a unique place. During vacation, food becomes part of the experience; an experience tourists look for three or four times a day. As such, those who come to Maldives are in a situation to appreciate and enjoy local food as part of their vacation experience.

With reference to a widely used slogan by MTPB in tourism marketing that reads, "In the Maldives we teach the art of doing nothing", a tourism industry expert advised that "Maldives tourism needs more than white sandy beaches, crystal clear waters, or 'the art of doing nothing' slogans".

There is strong support for the idea of linking local food to tourism as a marketing tool from operators and experts. According to an expert, using local food as a marketing tool is important in order to cater to the demand from the 'niche market' of culinary tourism.

6.2 Constraints in linking food and tourism

One of the key constraints to linking local food and tourism and using local food in tourism marketing was given by tourism operators and experts as the success of the Maldives tourism industry. There has been huge growth in the tourism sector, which convinced key stakeholders in the industry that no other tools are required to promote and market Maldives tourism other than the natural environment of the islands. Given the success of the current branding and its excellent results, the rationale behind linking local food to tourism marketing was envisaged as difficult to justify to tourism stake holders. An industry expert pointed out that the potential of local food in enhancing the tourist experience is not recognized by owners and operators of tourism establishments.

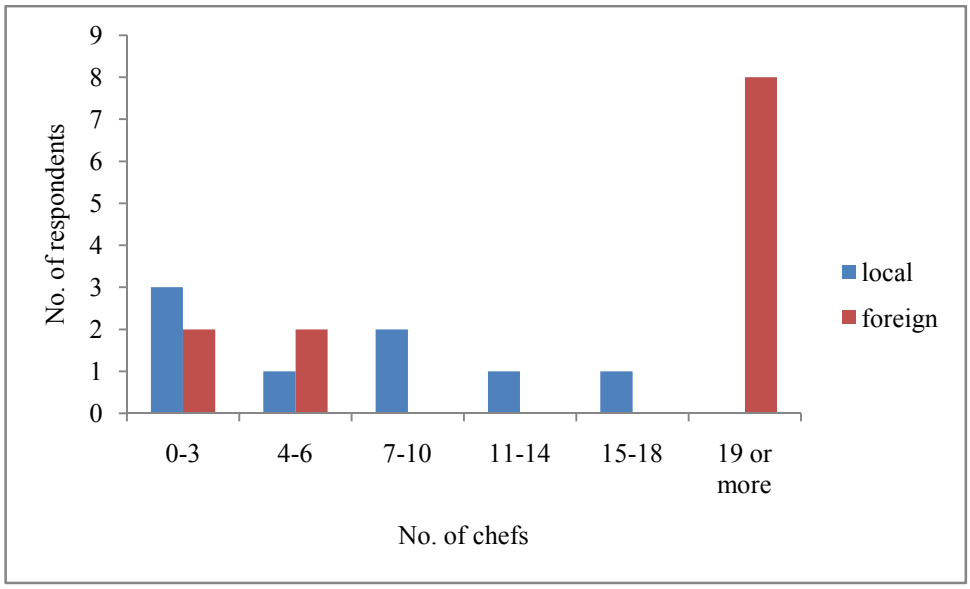
The large number of foreigners employed as chefs in the tourism industry was also argued to be an obstacle to linking local food and tourism. The operators' survey provided support to this argument: a resort manager stated that the reason why more

local food cannot be used at the establishment was that most of the chefs were Sri Lankans unfamiliar with local cuisine. This confirms the concern expressed in Chapter 5 that the number of foreign chefs as well as the nationality of the head chef would influence the role of local food in tourism businesses. This is also an indication that knowledge of local products is important for their wider use in tourist establishments. Local chefs would not only possess the skills on local food preparation, they would also be more knowledgeable about available local products and where to obtain them. The ingredients required for the foreign cuisines that are widely used in tourism establishments are not produced locally and those cuisines do not call for the use of products that are usually harvested locally. Local produce are mostly used in local cuisine. Therefore, foreign chefs' lack of information about local food and local products hinders their use in tourism establishments.

The operators' survey revealed that on an average, tourism operators employed 10 local chefs and 15 foreign chefs (Figure 6.1), in simple terms for every two local chefs working in tourist resorts/hotels, there are three foreign chefs employed. The number of foreigners employed in the tourism industry is also reflected from the nationalities of the operator respondents who completed the survey. Out of the 12 respondents, three were Europeans and one was an Indonesian. In addition, the head chef of 54.5% of the responding businesses was a foreigner.

This information is very important for this research, because often it is the head chef who is the decision maker in menu creation. His/her knowledge as well as those of the other chefs working in the businesses will affect the importance given to local food in the establishment (Gomez, Bouty, & Drucker-Godard, 2003).

Figure 6. 1 Number of local and foreign chefs in responding organisations



Tourism industry experts' cautioned that in spite of the lack of skilled professionals, development of local skilled labour would be arduous because of the social stigma attached to culinary profession. The culinary profession tends to be looked down on by society, perhaps because there are not many educated and qualified locals in this field and opportunities for career opportunities are seen to be limited.

There is strong support from tourism operators that increased use of local food is dependent on the availability of constant and sufficient supply of the right quality of products at reasonable prices. Since most local products are not developed at a commercial scale, obtaining sufficient quantities of products and ingredients would be an impediment to linking tourism and local food. In addition, as pointed out by experts and operators, logistics, storage facilities and transportation between islands are expensive as well as not well established. Particularly bad weather conditions greatly affect transport between islands. Cost of transport rises during times of bad weather which gets reflected in the cost of local products coming from outer atolls. As noted by The World Bank (2006):

> Transport and logistical issues also affect the supply of competitively priced inputs to agricultural islands, as well as the supply of high quality produce to the capital of Male and the major tourism islands; much as 25 percent of perishable production can spoil before reaching Male.

For these reasons local producers have difficulties in delivering fresh products to hoteliers even if sufficient supplies are available. Sharma (2005) disclosed the factors that affect linkages between local food production and tourist hotels: conventional tastes of tourists, low cost of imported foods, willingness of hotels to pay more in return for high quality and reliability of imported products and ignorance on the part of hotel operators about local products. In addition, local producers may not be aware how to establish contact with tourist establishments. These factors are echoed in operators' explanations of the constraints they face in purchasing the right quality and quantity of local products and why they opt for regular deliveries of imported products. An operator stated that "90% of the food products are imported or purchased from an agent in Male' due to unavailability of products in local markets."

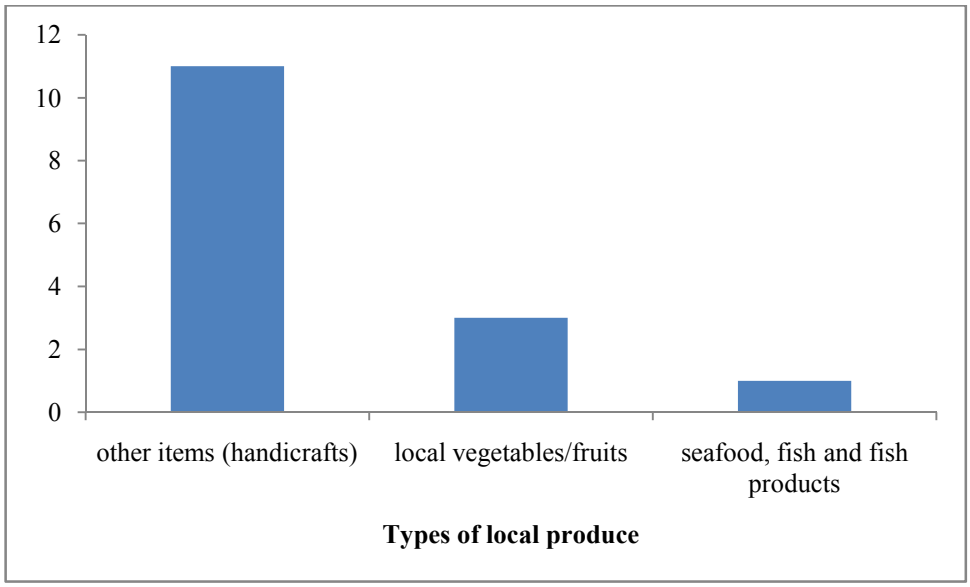
Another obstacle in linking local food and tourism was noted as the restricted access for tourists to experience local ways of life due to the isolated nature of tourist resorts. It was stated by an expert that this compels tourists to experience "only half of the sunny side of Maldives". "Maldives – the sunny side of life" is a widely used slogan by MTPB in tourism marketing. As one commentator stated, the other half of 'the sunny side' is about "how we live, what we eat and how we celebrate together". Tourism operators and experts concurred that local culinary events are a way to display culture and tradition for tourists, and expressed that tourists are interested in visiting local islands and experiencing local culture. However, it was revealed that opportunities are rare for such activities because cultural tours or festivals for tourists in inhabited islands have not developed.

In spite of the fact that fish was found to be the only local food that was really promoted in the marketing materials, it is an unexpected finding that tourism operators do not believe seafood, fish and fish products could be further developed for the tourism industry. Only one respondent selected seafood, fish and fish products as a potential local product that could be developed for the tourism industry (see figure 6.2). From the marketing materials it was found that fish and seafood were often presented as non-local dishes. Therefore, the fact that operators do not believe that seafood, fish and fish products could be developed for tourism suggests that operators are unsure of tourists' reaction to local dishes. This argument is reinforced by the statement from an operator that read that the spicy nature of most local foods as well as limitation of varieties could deter the appeal of local food for foreigners. At the same time, it was also warned that modification of local food to tourists' tastes carries the risk of affecting the identity of

local cuisine. This warning echoes the concern expressed by Fields (2002) that often the result of tourist destinations' attempts to meet the demand for traditional food results in an 'emergent authenticity' as a consequence of altering local dishes to suit tourists' tastes.

Operators were asked to select the local produce that has the greatest potential to be developed for the tourism industry. The choices provided were seafood, fish and fish products, local vegetables and fruits and 'other' products (Figure 6.2). Most number of respondents (n=11 or 91.7%) chose 'other' items which was specified as handicrafts. The fact that the large majority of operators chose products other than local produce provides further support to the argument that tourism operators do not believe that it is important to develop local produce for the tourism industry.

Figure 6. 2 Potential of local produce to be developed for tourism industry



It was pointed out by an expert that opportunities for potential tourists to experience Maldives cuisine before they arrive are rare, unlike for some popular ethnic foods such as Thai or Indian cuisine which prospective tourists are able to experience, albeit in modified form, before they visit those countries. In addition, an expert noted that so far Maldives has not been known for its culinary heritage. No strategic efforts have been made to document unique local foods and market them to tourists, and no studies have been conducted on tourists' perception and preferences about local food. Therefore, a lack of awareness about unique Maldivian food may be a constraint in linking local food and tourism. As an experienced academic in Maldives tourism stated, unlike some

countries where ethnic food is a key motivating factor for visitation, this is not the case in the Maldives.

It was highlighted by an expert that there are some similarities between cuisines of Maldives and some neighbouring countries. This was pointed out as an obstacle in differentiating Maldivian cuisine, limiting the potential to use local food in tourism promotion. Another drawback is the adaptation of local population to imported food which has caused a decrease in demand for local ingredients, which in turn leads to less production. A comment in the experts' survey reads that local cuisine and various local products have been developed from what grows and can be harvested from the local environment. It was also stated that local food relates to the history, religion and culture of the Maldives, therefore those factors that differentiate Maldives are embodied in local food. It was advised that there is a need for the uniqueness of local food to be brought to the forefront. It was noted by an expert that there is a need to look into avenues that celebrate the historical, social and natural environment of the Maldives and one way to achieve this is through local food.

The fact that there are very few activities or events related to local food was seen as an impediment to promote local food among tourists. The only food related event held on a regular basis is The Culinary Challenge. The Culinary Challenge is part of the Hotel Asia Exhibition which is being held annually since 2001 for suppliers of hospitality industry to display and promote their products and services in the Maldives. The Culinary Challenge is conducted as a competition among chefs from tourist resorts and hotels to display their skills. Although there is an element of local food display, exposure of these products to tourists are constrained because the event is not promoted to tourists as this is an event for tourism industry chefs and local food is not the focus of this event.

6.3 Overcoming constraints to linkage development

A number of suggestions and recommendations were proposed by tourism operators and industry experts as to how constraints to linkage development could be overcome. Some initiatives were proposed that could be made at policy making levels to promote, develop and link local food to tourism industry:

- Since tourism operators and experts have expressed that there is huge interest from tourists for local food and culture, this presents the opportunity to incorporate more cultural concepts into events and experiences such as the "Maldivian nights" currently conducted at tourist establishments. Some suggestions were made to enrich these events:
  - Proper traditional attire to be worn by staff on "Maldivian nights": Staff at tourism establishments usually wear uniforms. While the uniforms of some establishments have some semblance of Maldivian cultural attire, not all establishments follow this rule. Given that there are not many opportunities for tourists to experience Maldives culture and local ways of life, "Maldivian nights" projects an opportunity to exhibit the unique traditional attire of Maldives and the richness of the culture that it portrays.
  - Displaying tradition and culture in the presentation of dishes and cultural dances: Currently, tourist establishments practice foreign methods in decoration and presentation of food, such as vegetable, fruit and butter carvings. Food display, decoration and presentation have special ways and styles in Maldivian cuisine and culture that use local products and techniques. *Malaafaiy* (refer to Fig. 6.19 and the related discussion on p. 152) is an example of special food presentation. Some other examples include pomegranate seeds used to decorate desserts, coconut shells, banana leaves and coconut palm used in different ways in food presentation.
  - Folklore dramas or similar events to be followed by the meals: Maldives has a rich heritage of folklore that involves myths and legends some of which are related to Maldivian history. For example, the folklore tales about the first settlers in the Maldives and how Maldives embraced Islam are immensely popular and dramatic tales. At present, after dinner entertainment programmes at "Maldivian nights" involve local music or dance. Folklore dramas or stories will further enrich these events. It was put forward by tourism experts that such activities would not only provide a cultural tourism experience, but would help revive tradition and culture among the staff as well.
- It was pointed out by an expert that the role of local food in tourism is not given much emphasis in TTMP, and that in order to incorporate culture and tradition in tourism, TTMP should encourage the promotion of local food. It was noted by two of the experts that TTMP calls for the development of cultural tourism where food festivals are among the activities proposed to promote culture and tradition. TTMP

proposes development of cultural attractions as a way to mitigate negative impacts on the culture of host communities. It was stated in the Plan:

> Along with sun, sea and sand, the local culture and heritage could become attractions for tourists if efforts are undertaken to do so. Development of cultural tourism could be achieved through a gradual process whereby the Government and the tourism industry play their respective roles in promoting cultural tourism through continuous encouragement and engagement with island communities. Such engagements could lead to the development of cultural or historic attractions where applicable, and facilitate the creation of cultural experiences for tourists by island communities. (MTCA, 2007c, p. 60).

- In order to reap the benefits from promotions conducted at international tourism fairs, local food needs to be developed and linked to tourism industry so that the local food that was promoted abroad is available for tourists when they arrive in the Maldives. Promotion of local food among tourists who visit Maldives is also regarded as important considering that tourists would not have been exposed to Maldivian cuisine prior to their arrival in the Maldives. Experts suggested that The Culinary Challenge is a possible avenue to promote local food among tourists by planning and incorporating local cuisine and local culinary arts into the event. Locals from each atoll in the Maldives could be encouraged to participate in the Culinary Challenge so that the richness and uniqueness of cuisine from all the atolls could be displayed. It was envisaged that this would initiate people to start thinking seriously about integrating local food into tourism and use it in tourism marketing and promotion programmes. It was recommended by experts that the work of those who create innovative local dishes and menus that are suitable for tourists should be recognized by the government to motivate innovation of local food. Prizes and certificates such as those given at The Culinary Challenge to resort chefs would motivate locals to participate in these events.
- Development of events that display and promote local products was suggested by an expert. At present, events that display local products are limited to small scale food exhibitions and fairs organised by individual community groups such as fundraising events conducted by Women's Committees and Island or Atoll Development Committees. These events are not targeted or promoted for tourists. Island Offices and tourist resorts should cooperate to promote these events to tourists from nearby resorts. These events will provide tourists with an enriching experience and exposure

to authentic local foods. In addition, organizers and participants of these events will be encouraged to improve the standard of the event and the quality of products.

- In order to develop local cuisine, a key step is to develop the necessary manpower. Lack of local man power has caused the tourism industry to rely heavily on expatriate labour. Hence, professional development of local chefs in local cuisine and culinary arts related to local food are necessary to develop and link local food to tourism.

As noted by the ADB (2008), limited economic activities, high rate of youth unemployment and shortage of skilled labour are among development challenges faced by the Maldives:

> To mitigate the vulnerability that comes from the narrow economic base, the authorities need to diversify economic activity by promoting the private sector. Improving the legal framework to provide a conducive business environment is needed. The most serious constraints are, however, a shortage of skilled labor and weak public institutions. Since vocational and skills training is underdeveloped, the education system cannot provide the human resources that the labor market requires. This results in high youth unemployment (22% for men and 41% for women in 2005), and heavy reliance on expatriate workers. (ADB, 2008).

FHTS is the government institution that conducts training and skills development for hospitality and tourism industries. In 2006, 272 students completed training programmes conducted by FHTS (MTCA, 2007b). The institution runs certificate level courses in all areas of hospitality in addition to diploma level courses in travel and tourism. The majority of students that join FHTS each year are school leavers and youth. Tourism operators suggested that incorporating training in local cuisine to the programmes conducted by FHTS will introduce and motivate locals to culinary skills. It was also put forward that this will increase the opportunities for employment for those who complete the training while their skills and knowledge will encourage tourism operators to use more local cuisine. A recognized qualification could also assist in changing the negative perceptions among locals regarding culinary professions.

- Among the suggestions given by an operator to combat the issue of the scarcity of local products and ingredients was to cultivate organic gardens in the resorts. Development of local theme restaurants was also suggested to promote local

cuisine. It was suggested that these are features that could be used as attractions to market the resorts.

- One of the experts stated that the key to link tourism and local food is to create awareness and interest among prospective tourists. Support for this suggestion is provided by tourism literature which claims that in tourist experiences, preconceived perceptions influence tourists' level of satisfaction (Fields, 2002). Therefore, Fields recommended that food tourism marketing must be focused on tourists' pre-consumption knowledge. It was disclosed in the experts survey that plans are underway to open a Maldivian Cafe' in Japan where local food will be available. The cafe would play Maldivian music, display Maldivian promotional videos, and distribute flyers about Maldives. The concept of such a cafe is that a local entrepreneur would operate it on a for-profit-basis and MTPB would pay for utilizing the location to promote Maldives. In order to promote local food to potential tourists, it was recommended by an expert to replicate this concept in other major cities around the world, particularly in countries of major tourism generating markets.
- A recent change in government regulations that allow resorts, hotels and guest houses in inhabited islands was highlighted by an expert as something that would present opportunities to create interaction between locals and tourists. Integrating tourism and local food experiences at these locations was suggested which will not only enrich the tourist experience but generate more income earning activities for local people. TTMP provides support to this argument which states that:

> Community based tourism would open several opportunities for gainful economic activities. Such activities do not have to be limited to positioning resorts on inhabited islands or communities. (MTCA, 2007c, p. 59).

TTMP recommends as one of the "(i)mmediate steps that could be taken to increase the benefit of tourism to local communities" is to encourage local communities "to initiate attractions, cultural and historical sites, and activities that would lure the tourists" (MTCA, 2007c, p. 60).

- It was advised by an expert that in order to market local food for tourists, it is important to instil awareness and appreciation among local communities for local

products. This would pave the way for further development of local food to a standard that is capable of being successfully linked to tourism industry.

- An expert who works closely with Maldives tourism and food industries pointed out that while local foods in all South Asian countries share certain similarities, food unique to Maldives does exist. It was suggested that Maldivian food needs to be clearly distinguished and developed to portray its distinctive niche. It was recommended by three of the experts to conduct research to determine the culinary heritage of the Maldives, to identify and document diverse local foods specific to Maldives. This will bring these foods into the mainstream thereby promoting and preserving their authenticity as well as creating awareness among locals about their culinary heritage.
- Experts in the tourism industry concur that even though "it would take a lot of time and effort", the correct approach to develop and market local food could easily achieve the creation of linkages between local food and tourism, as well as present local food as a tourism marketing tool. It was suggested that instead of the present slogan "Maldives- the sunny side of life", a new slogan that incorporates local food to the current branding could be used, such as "Maldives – tastes more than beaches".

In addition to the suggestions above, experts and operators suggested following initiatives that could be made at policy making levels to promote, develop and link local food to tourism industry:

- Make it a regulation that local cuisine should be available on the menu of tourist establishments.
- Improve infrastructure to facilitate the necessary logistics for distribution of local products to the tourist businesses.

Integration of agricultural products into tourism as a way of increasing production was a point that was highlighted by The World Bank as well. To create this link, developing new products and improving logistics were noted as important goals:

> The production and the productivity of many horticultural crops (vegetables and fruits) and Maldive fish can be greatly increased. There are two major potential markets for horticultural products that have not been fully exploited by local producers. The first market is the 87 tourist islands with about 650,000 visitors annually... Key initiatives that need to be addressed include identification of new products and technologies to stimulate increased productivity, better

> delivery of support services and market information, and access to credit. (The World Bank, 2006)

- Develop local industries to broaden the use of local products.

  Government could play a key role by promoting sustainable industries such as vegetable and poultry farming and fishing. Government has assisted local producers in the past by increasing import duty of produce that are locally grown, such as watermelon.

- Provide farmers with training and knowledge.

  The benefits of providing training to farmers can be seen from the example of UNDP funded hydroponics programme that has been successful in engaging rural communities in a sustainable occupation. It was reported by UNEP (2002) that:

> Hydroponics agriculture in the Maldives on a sustainable basis, at a commercial and household level can improve food security and reduce dependence on imports of various types of vegetables and fruits. It will also enhance income and employment opportunities for the new generation in rural islands, and direct domestic investment towards promoting food security.

  Since 2001, a private party has also been successfully using hydroponics in the agricultural island of Maafahi to produce cucumbers, tomatoes, lettuce, herbs and Chinese broccoli which are sold in Male' and to tourist resorts and hotels (The Maldives Story, 2006).

Other suggestions that were provided include:

- Reduce import duty on farming products and equipment.
- Provide financial assistance and incentives to local producers.
- Introduction of a quality control system and guidelines for items produced for tourism industry to ensure the standard of quality required by hoteliers.
- Research, write and design pamphlets and tourism brochures that explain local food, their ingredients, origin and benefits.
- Research and provide promotional materials for food used in the Maldives for health purposes.

- Promote Maldives as an environment-friendly fisheries destination where different types of fresh fish are available that are prepared according to local methods.

Fishing is conducted in the Maldives only by pole and line and environmentally unsafe methods such as net fishing are prohibited. This "responsible fishing method" is promoted by MIFCO to the international market in order to secure premium prices for their products that carry the "dolphin-friendly" certification. It was recently reported that MIFCO plans to market future products to specifically promote the pole and line fishing under the slogan of "One-by-one: The Maldivian way" (Naish, 2009). Naish also reports that it has been declared by the environmental activist group, Greenpeace International that Maldives is "one of the few countries that practice sustainable tuna fishing" and "the only country in the world with 100 per cent pole-and-line fishing". Greenpeace reports that:

> Globally, tuna stocks are heavily over fished. But the fishermen in the Maldives - catching their skipjack by pole and line - are giving their skipjack tuna a brighter future. (Greenpeace International, 2009).

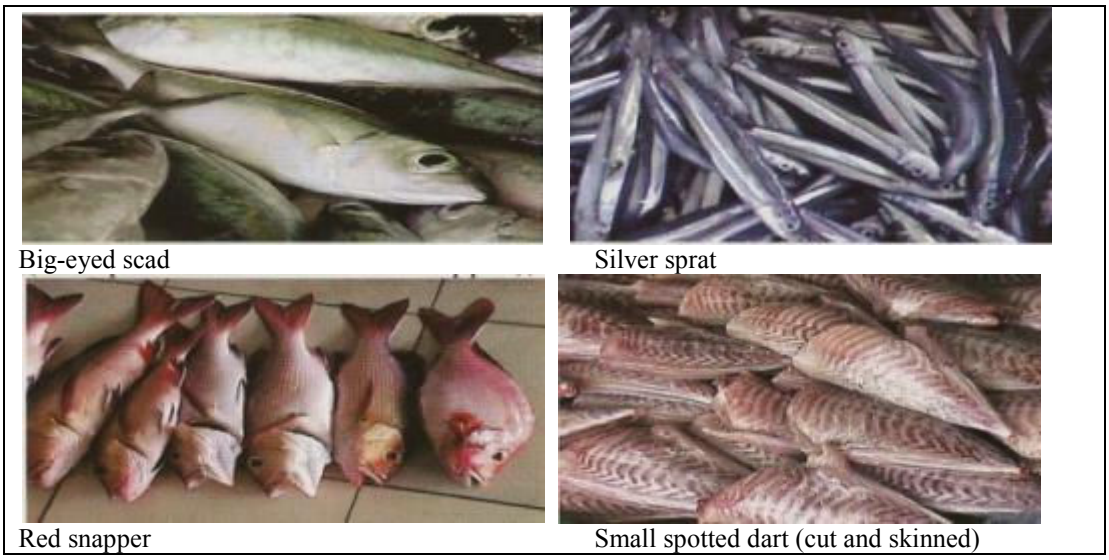
In 2003, the United Kingdom accounted for 70 per cent of canned tuna and 80 per cent of fresh chilled tuna exports from the Maldives, while other major markets for Maldivian fish exports include Germany and Japan (Naish, 2009). Since these countries are among the major tourism generating markets, there is immense potential to promote Maldives as an environmentally-friendly fisheries destination as suggested by the expert survey.

6.3.1 Prospective foods and events

The surveyed industry players identified several potential local foods that can be linked to tourism.

Grilled, baked and barbecued reef fish and tuna are usually the only local food available to tourists at resorts, as established by this research. However there are numerous varieties of fish and local dishes made with both tuna and reef fish (Figure 6.3). It was suggested that more varieties of reef fish and tuna and dishes made from them should be introduced at tourism establishments.

Figure 6. 3 Varieties of local fish



Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 199 - 200)

Of all the dishes made with fish, *Garudhiya* or fish stew is the simplest and the most common dish. Varieties of tuna and reef fish are used to make *garudhiya* with the simple ingredients of water, fresh fish and salt. Fish head, roe, liver and stomach are also added with pieces of fish. Served with rice, this is the most common local daily meal. When served with boiled breadfruit or yam as is the norm in the Southern Atolls, it is a delicacy for the majority of locals. Several accompaniments go along with this traditional dish. A complete *garudhiya baiy* meal (fish stew and rice) would include spicy roasted or fried fish, fresh lemon, onion, fresh chilli, pickles, salad made from a local leafy vegetable and *lonumirus* (chilli paste made with coconut, dried chilli, sour mangoes, salt and pepper). If the stew is served with yam or breadfruit, fresh grated coconut goes with it. This is a meal with the potential to make a rich buffet meal at resorts (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6. 4 ***Garudhiya bai* meal**

Source: www.flickr.com

Rihaakuru is a common traditional dish made by boiling *garudhiya* over a low heat until it is thickened. It is served with rice and several accompanying side dishes for a complete meal. Often *rihaakuru* is used as an ingredient in making other dishes and as a side dish. This is an item that can be introduced at breakfast as well as other meals. Because of its similarity in taste and texture to marmite, *Rihaakuru* can be offered as a spread with bread and as a dip with *roshi* – a local flat bread (Figure 6.5). Due to the long shelf life, *rihaakuru* has the potential to be made available as a souvenir food item. MIFCO produces bottled *rihaakuru,* (Figure 6.6) canned local curries, *garudhiya,* packaged dry and smoked fish (Figure 6.7) that can be made available at resorts, hotels and airports as souvenirs.

Figure 6. 5 ***Roshi* and *rihaakuru***

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 136)

Figure 6. 6 **Bottled *rihaakuru***

Source: www.mifco.com.mv

Figure 6. 7 Canned curries, *garudhiya*, packaged dry and smoked tuna

Source: http://velidhoonews.blogspot.com/2008/01/mifco-introduces-180-gm-garudhiya-cans.html

Bondi is a traditional snack made with different local products such as tender coconut, screw pine (*kashikeyo*), taro and bread fruit as the main ingredient and wrapped like a roll in dried banana leaves. There are several varieties made by different islands. For example, the smaller variety, *kudhi bondi* in Figure 6.8 is a speciality of Kalhaidhu Island while the longer varieties, *Huvadhu bondi* in Figure 6.9 are specific to Thinadhu Island (Shakeela, 2000). This is a snack item - sliced *bondi* is also a local dessert. The development of these products heightens the sense of variation within the Maldives.

Figure 6. 8 *Kudhi bondi*

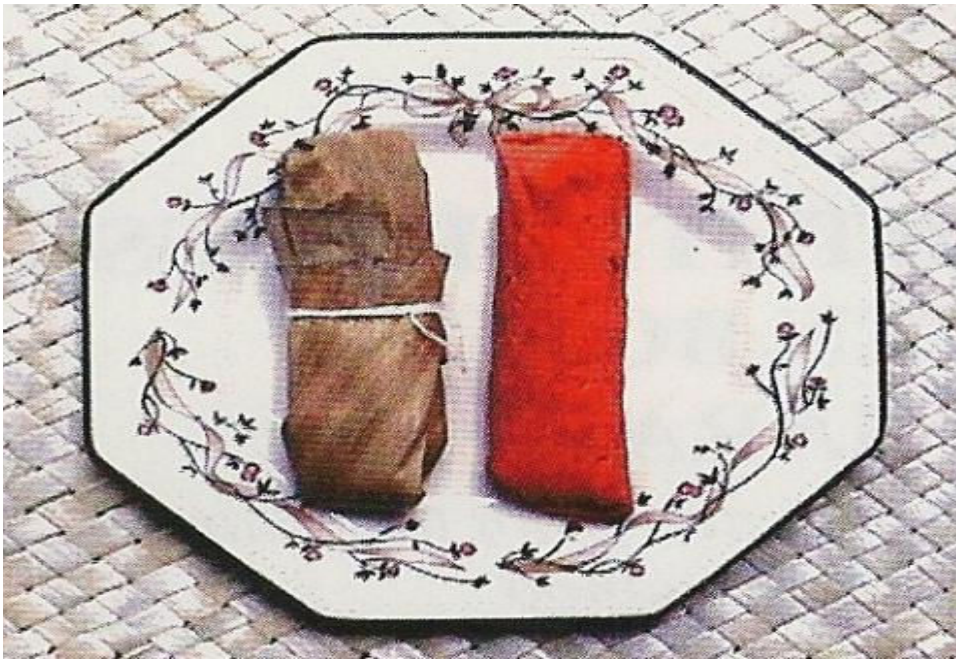
Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 417)

Figure 6. 9 ***Huvadhu bondi***

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 421)

The *bondi* in Figure 6.10 is made from screw pine. Screw pine (Figure 6.11) which grows in the wild is used to make several traditional dishes. The nuts of the screw pine are also a special treat. The seeds of used screw pines are split using a large knife or a small axe to take out the milky nuts inside. Extracting screw pine nuts is an arduous task hence is not very common which adds to its 'uniqueness'. Another type of *bondi* is the savoury *mas bondi* in Figure 6.12 made from smoked tuna.

Figure 6. 10 ***Bondi* made from Screw pine**



Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 390)

Figure 6. 11 Screw pine fruit and nuts

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 38)

Figure 6. 12 ***Mas bondi***

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 369)

There is a large variety of snacks made from taro, bread fruit, sweet potato, coconut and yam which can be packaged and last a long time (Figure 6.13). These are snack items that could be added to the light snacks such as peanuts and popcorn currently available at bars of hotels and resorts. As packaged items are available in the market, these items

could be used as souvenir food items at hotels, resorts, tourist souvenir shops and airports.

Figure 6. 13 Variety of local snacks

Fried bread fruit

bread fruit chips

Taro chops

Naarovah faludha made from breadfruit

Source: Shakeela (2000, from the top left: p. 353, 354, 428, 427)

There is a large variety of short eats both sweet and savoury (Figure 6.14). They are made in different shapes – some are round or egg shaped, others are similar to rolls in shape while others are triangular shaped. Although the shape and size of some short eats resemble food items from some neighbouring countries, for example, *bajia* looks like the Indian *samosa*, the ingredients and methods of making are unique to Maldives. The main ingredients of short eats are fish, coconut, spices, sugar and rice or flour. Tea and short eats has the same bearing as coffee and muffins in Western countries. It is a popular culture among locals to go for tea or *sai* to "tea shops" that are scattered in every island to have a break, or as a way of socialising and celebrating. Tea parties with large varieties of short eats are held to celebrate birthdays and weddings as well.

Figure 6. 14 Short eats

Source: Maldives Visitor's Guide 2007 (p. 32)

Salads made with locally grown leafy vegetables have also got good potential to be linked to tourism. There is a large variety of native leafy vegetables such as *maabulhaa faiy, kuhlafilafaiy, murunga,* and *copyfaiy* (Figure 6.15). The plants are very easy to grow, hence could be included in an in-house garden at resorts and local healthy food.

Figure 6. 15 Local leafy vegetables

Muranga (Drumstick)

Kopee Faiy (Romaine Lettuce)

Maabulhaa (Country Mellow)

Kulhlhafilaa (Compofitae)

Source: Shakeela (2000, from the top left: p 28, 25, 27, 25)

Mas-huni is a popular side dish made with smoked fish and coconut, served usually as an accompaniment with *roshi* as a traditional breakfast. When boiled local vegetables like gourds, pumpkin, smooth loofah (Figure 6.16) or leaves are mixed to make variations of this dish, it makes a nutritious meal.

Figure 6. 16 Smooth loofah, *Thoraa* (left image) and *mas-huni* (right image)

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 29, 105)

Curries made with local vegetables and fish are another type of food identified as having potential to link to tourism. Curries are a major part of local cuisine (Figure 6.17). Curries are served with rice at lunch and dinner and with *roshi* as breakfast. There is a large variety of curries in Maldivian cuisine that are made from tubers, pumpkin, bread fruit (Figure 6.18) fish, meat and other vegetables and seafood. Chicken curry is one of the main dishes that adorn local dinner tables on special occasions.

Figure 6. 17 Fish Curry

Source: Shakeela (2000, 163, 200)

Figure 6. 18 Locally grown vegetables (pumpkin and bread fruit)

Source: Shakeela (2000, p. 17, 223)

Malaafaiy is a significant dinner experience reserved for very special occasions usually offered to dignitaries and honoured guests. *Malaafaiy* (Figure 6.19) is the name given to a large, lidded, round wooden tray decorated with traditional lacquer work in which a number of local dishes are arranged. Because of the traditional style involved in presenting *Malaafaiy,* it would make an enriching food experience that could be provided for tourists in inhabited islands. These meals were also identified by survey respondents as having great potential to be part of broader tourist cultural experiences.

Figure 6. 19 ***Malaafaiy***

Source: Leisure Guide Maldives (2007, p. 43)

A number of fruits that used to be common have become rare in recent years due to increasing pressure on habitat (Figure 6.20). Guava, custard apple and water apple, are examples of local fruits that have become very expensive due to their scarcity. Awareness among locals of the availability of a market for these fruits in the tourism industry would encourage farmers' interest. Instead of the exotic local fruits, tourist hotels and resorts use common imported fruits like apples, oranges, pineapples and grapes. Delicious drinks can be made from these local fruits (Figure 6.21).

Figure 6. 20 Local fruits

Annaaru (pomegranate)

Feyru (guava)

Atha (custard apple)

Aleebukhaari (cordial plum)

Dhandi gandu atha (sugar apple)

Kalhuhuhthumeyva (cherimoya)

Source: Shakeela (2000, from the top left: p. 31, 34, 291, 31, 33, 37)

Figure 6. 21 Drinks made with local fruits

Kuhlhavah (sonneretia alba)

Ambu (mango)

Anoana (Sour sop)

Source: Shakeela (2000, from the top left p. 385, 385, 31, 291, 32, 291)

6.3.2.Events as a vehicle for food linkages

Maldives culture is rich with occasions that celebrate religious and cultural events. The following are events that were identified by experts and operators as having the potential to be integrated into tourism experiences.

Bodu Mauloodhu, a ceremony that includes prayers and feasting is a very special event held once a year in some islands. Everyone in the island where *Bodu Mauloodh* is held participates in the month long preparation. Each house hold contributes food and their best local dishes. People from neighbouring islands, family and friends from other islands attend this very special event. Special sweets made for the occasion are given away as gifts to the invitees and dispatched to friends and family of the island community after the ceremony.

This could be a very enriching tourist experience. However, this special event has almost died out with time, as the 'modern' generations became more indifferent to cultural and religious events. Promotion of such festivals through tourism would help to revive and preserve culture and tradition.

Eid festivals are religious festivals celebrated twice a year, one to mark the end of Ramadan, and the other to mark the occasion of *Hajj*. Both are public holidays. Both occasions are marked with special lunches prepared in every household that include traditional and modern specialties. People wear new clothes for the occasion. Family, friends and neighbours are invited to share the special lunches. Food parcels are sent to neighbours, relatives and friends who cannot attend to share the lunch.

Maahefun is a "feasting" that goes on for days before the start of the fasting month of Ramadan. Traditionally *maahefun* comprised of a variety of local snacks such as dried fish, coconut, dates, honey made out of *rukuraa* or coconut sap *(dhiyaa hakuru)*. In recent times *maahefun* has evolved to become meal experiences celebrated by different community groups.

6.4 Summary

Clearly there is considerable potential for local food to be used as an added dimension in the tourism experience. There is a wide range of local produce and authentic dishes in Maldivian cuisine that can be promoted locally and internationally by linking to tourism. This research shows that the tourism industry has many good ideas that can be tapped to link local food related events to tourism, the potential of which has so far not been exploited. It is evident that the wealth of food and food related events are considerable enough to warrant local food to be prominently featured in tourism marketing.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

In an increasingly competitive tourism industry where globalisation has played a major role in creating homogenization and standardization of products, services and culture (Dehesa, 2006), destinations are faced with the challenge of developing tourist experiences that provide a unique and authentic 'sense of place' (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001; Wahab & Cooper, 2001). At the same time there is a clear need to link the tourism industry more effectively to local economies and to sustain the natural and cultural resources that enable host communities to sustain their livelihoods and quality of life (Gossling & Hall, 2006; Holden, 2008; Scarpato & Daniele, 2002).

This thesis has argued that locally produced food can play an important role in meeting these challenges. The literature related to food and tourism reveals numerous reciprocal benefits that can be obtained by linking these industries (Boyne et al., 2003; Richards, 2002; Santich, 2007). Local food embodies cultures and traditions of destinations and plays an important role in promoting and conserving cultural heritage (Fields, 2002). Local occupations are also encouraged through local food production, and backward linkages are created that stimulate other economic sectors, enhance tourism multipliers, benefit local communities and assist in equal distribution of tourism benefits (Boyne et al. 2002). Indeed, food and agriculture linkages often lie at the heart of pro-poor tourism initiatives (Goodwin, 2009). When local food production is encouraged food imports can be reduced, which also has an important impact of trade balances.

Aside from these benefits, the involvement of local food experiences in tourist products provides an enriching tourist experience (Poulain, 2000, in Frochot 2003). Research has shown that tourists place a very high value on culinary experiences (Selwood, 2003), and that food is often viewed as a significant motivation for travel. At the same time food represents a substantial percentage of average total tourist expenditure (Jones & Jenkins, 2002; du Rand & Heath, 2006). Thus local food provides an excellent opportunity for destinations to both increase economic yield per visitor and to also enhance the attractiveness of the tourism product (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

Unfortunately the benefits of linking local food to tourism are often not recognized by tourism destinations and the businesses that comprise them, and effective linkages between tourism and local food are not established (Okumus. et al., 2007). This research

has explored the potential to create linkages between local food and tourism using the case of the Maldives.

The study identified the extent that local food was used in Maldives tourism marketing materials through a detailed analysis of both printed and web-based marketing materials. The sample of printed and web-based marketing materials included tourist resorts and hotels, promotional agencies, tourist guide books, travel agents and cruise operators. The research was designed to draw parallels between the current role of local food in tourism promotions and development and the opportunities that exist to create linkages between local food and tourism. Industry and local tourism expert perceptions on the importance of food and tourism link were then analysed using on-line surveys conducted with tourism operators and experts. In the surveys, 12 operators and six experts participated.

Current tourism marketing does not feature local food as an important part of the Maldives tourism experience. Food in marketing was largely focused on overseas food items and presentation styles. At present food in tourism marketing represents foreign cultures more than local culture and traditions. Most of the images and descriptions of food in marketing materials were focused on foreign foods. In the images where tourists were pictured with food, they were featured mostly with foreign food.

The most common local food displayed in marketing materials was fruits which were usually mixed with imported fruits in a basket or bowl. While images of local food and beverage staff were featured frequently, there were hardly any pictures of local staff with local food. Information and images about local food and local food related activities are rare. In the few instances where the availability of local food and food related activities were mentioned, it was combined with information on other activities, dining services and facilities with no additional information provided about local food. Fishing was the most commonly featured local food related activity; fish was also the main ingredient of the menu items listed as 'local' food.

In the discussion of 'local' events in marketing materials, the focus was rarely on the local food dimension. Words such as "beach barbeque" and "picnic lunches" that give the impression of local food related activities, when subjected to discourse analysis are shown to have limited relation to local food. Pictures related to food also show a similar theme where foreign foods were the focus of the images. Similarly, menus that

list ‘local’ food items were often found to involve preparation methods and accompaniments that do not belong to local cuisine.

Tourism operators believe that fish and seafood are one of the most important foods for tourism marketing as well as the local food with the greatest potential to be developed for tourists. Despite the fact that Maldivian cuisine comprises a wide array of dishes made with fish and other seafood, the varieties available for tourists at resorts and hotels are generally limited to grilled, baked or barbequed fish and other seafood. There appears to be an opportunity for tourism operators to offer a greater variety of local food for tourists.

Tourism operators do not use much local food in their establishments. The only regular local food related activity conducted in tourist resorts and hotels is limited to weekly “dinner nights” that include some local food and entertainment programmes. Operators do not believe that local food is necessary to promote their businesses. Instead, other types of cuisine related to countries of major tourism source markets to Maldives such as Italian, Mediterranean and Asian were viewed as more important for tourism marketing. This finding relates to tourism literature which states that tourists prefer familiar food when they travel and that hoteliers willingly oblige these wishes (Hall & Mitchell, 2002).

Considering that the types of food that tourism operators believe are important in tourism marketing are mostly foreign foods, it is not surprising that a major portion of tourism establishments’ total food cost is comprised of imported food. Foreign foods require imported ingredients and do not use many local products. Although the overall cost of imported food is cheaper compared to local food, tourism operators do not believe the cost of local foods are much more expensive than imported food. Procurement of the right quality of products from fishermen, farmers, fruit growers, snack suppliers and coconut growers was found to be relatively easy. The ability to obtain sufficient supply to meet demand was found to be easy from fishermen, fruit growers and coconut growers. It was revealed that it is neither very easy nor extremely difficult to source sufficient supply from farmers and snack suppliers. The worst performing group of suppliers in this respect were found to be marine farmers. Obtaining the right quality and quantity of products from this group was found to be very difficult.

Most operators are willing to use more local food which they agreed would reduce food imports. Reducing food imports is also needed to revive the demand for local products. As a consequence of heavy reliance on imported products, demand for many traditional products and ingredients has waned.

A large number of expatriates are employed as chefs in the tourism sector with a ratio of three foreign chefs for every two local chefs employed in tourism establishments. The head chefs of six out of eleven respondent resorts are also foreigners. Due to the influence of the head chefs in menu creation, their experience and knowledge in local food will play a key role in the amount of local food being used in tourist establishments. Hence, the dominant role of foreign chefs was identified as a potential obstacle in linking local food and tourism. However, industry experts cautioned that developing local skilled labour will not be an easy task because culinary professions are often looked down on by the society.

Although tourism operators perceive that there is strong interest from tourists for local food, the success of the current branding makes tourism operators and promoters oblivious to the benefits of linking local food and tourism. However, operators agreed that if local food is to be used in marketing and promotion it would provide positive impacts on the image of their businesses. This finding reflects the observation made by Henchion and McIntyre (2000) that local food enhances the image of tourist destinations. However, at present local food is not used to any major extent either in marketing Maldives tourism or enhancing the tourism experience.

Tourism operators and experts agreed that linking local food and tourism holds potential benefits for tourism and other economic sectors as well as local communities. However, findings from both the operator and expert surveys provide evidence that there are currently very limited linkages between local food and tourism. The one-island-one-resort concept adopted in tourism development in the Maldives restricts tourism multiplier effects and the distribution of tourism benefits among local communities. In addition, culinary activities and events as well as local markets that provide interactions with local communities are not promoted in tourism marketing. Although operators have stated that tourists are interested in visiting local communities and experiencing local culture, opportunities for tourists to take part in these events do not exist since all tourist activities take place in the tourist resort ‘enclaves’. This is

apparent from tourism marketing materials where it was found that such activities are absent in tourism marketing.

Tourism operators and experts that were surveyed in this research expressed that culture and tradition is largely neglected in Maldives' tourism promotion. They strongly believed that local food is an important part of local culture as well as an important tool that can promote culture and tradition. Although, TTMP emphasise the promotion of culture and tradition, the role of local food is not included in the Plan.

This study has established that Maldivian cuisine embodies a wealth of foods, events and experiences that has the potential to provide an enriching tourism experience. It was recommended by operators and experts that local food should be better linked to tourism in order to fill the void created by lack of cultural aspects in tourism. Operators and key players from the tourism industry that participated in this study have ascertained that local food is an integral part of culture, hence linking local food and tourism promotes culture and tradition.

Many of those surveyed, including policy makers suggested that Maldives tourism needs to broaden the tourism product line beyond sun, sand and sea. Tourism based on these undifferentiated environmental features makes Maldives vulnerable to threats of substitutability from destinations with similar products. Experts also noted that Maldives tourism is in need of more tourist experiences and activities. It was suggested that portraying local ways of life through these activities was important as at present such opportunities do not exist.

Tourism industry experts proposed that introducing local food to potential tourists is the key to motivate tourists to experience local food once they arrive in Maldives. But opportunities for potential tourists to experience local food are rare. Hence, wider use of local food in overseas promotional fairs and exhibitions is important to provide potential tourists the chance to experience local food.

The high ratio of food imports compared to domestic production makes Maldives' economy susceptible to external shocks as was acknowledged by MPND (2007b). Excessive dependence on a particular economic sector is also cautioned as a contributing factor to social disharmony that can impede sustainable development (Sönmez, 2002).

The TTMP recommends creating linkages to other supporting economic sectors such as agriculture and fishing to reduce leakages of tourism revenue and community based tourism as a solution to persistent inequalities of income among local communities. However, social norms restrict participation of women in the two largest industries - tourism and fishing. Therefore, more avenues to engage women in these industries need to be explored. This study provides support to the literature which states that opportunities to integrate tourism benefits into the local economy and enhance tourism multiplier effects exists through local supply networks by linking local food and tourism. The prospective benefits from tourism related activities would encourage participation of more locals hence contribute to decreased expatriate labour.

In addition, both operators and experts also support that the use of local food in tourism will promote sustainable occupations, create linkages between tourism and other economic sectors and that the backward linkages of food production would enhance and strengthen economic and social harmony. The operators and experts also agree that local food related activities provide enriching tourist experiences. Thus, this study has identified that local food as part of the tourism experience involves a number of benefits that reflect the principles of sustainable development.

In consideration of these substantial benefits that local food and tourism linkages are capable of generating, it is essential that local food is promoted. Promotion of these linkages can help to build a competitive advantage in the international market (Boyne & Hall, 2003). In order to increase the demand for food and food related activities with reciprocal impacts on food production and consumption, effective marketing is essential (Pearce, 2002). Because effective marketing is a tool that can positively influence tourists' buying behaviour towards local food (Okumus et al., 2007; Boyne et al., 2002).

Recently Maldives announced the decision to achieve carbon neutrality by 2020 through offsetting carbon emissions and introducing renewable energies (BBC, 2009). The impact of this decision would be great on the tourism industry as "resorts will have to adopt sustainable policies alongside the provision of luxury if they are to stay in the game" (Omidi, 2009b). In addition, the high level of consciousness about the environment in Western countries compels tourism industry to adopt sustainable practices. Kouni, a tour operator that specialises in luxury holidays to the Maldives confirms: "Conspicuous consumerism in the current climate is not considered appropriate and people are actively looking to holiday with a socially-responsible tour

operator" (Omidi, 2009b). Those resorts that already strive to limit carbon emissions confirm that, the more sustainable tourist resorts are, the more loyal their clients (ibid). The use of local food in tourism could be an effective way to push these policies towards reality.

7.1 Implications for future research

This research has contributed to tourism literature related to food and tourism with a particular emphasis on the role of local food in tourism marketing and economic development. Since this is the first research on this topic to be conducted in the Maldives, the findings from this research will be enlightening for stakeholders of the Maldives tourism industry as it represents an important first step towards understanding extremely important issues and areas for the future of Maldives tourism development.

The results of this research provide a foundation for future research on this topic. In order to extend and build upon the work completed in this thesis, further research is required in the following areas.

Further research is needed on tourists' perception of and preferences for local food. This will provide a deeper insight to the viability of linking local food and tourism and the usefulness of local food as a marketing tool for tourism industry.

Future research could be conducted with a bigger sample of operators. The issues faced in data collection could be avoided in future research by using interviews in place of e-mail surveys or by perhaps providing an incentive to participate.

The capacity of local producers to cater to the tourism industry in a sustainable manner needs to be explored which requires research with local producers. In order to establish a link that is in harmony with the tourism industry, local communities and the public sector, greater understanding of government and industry perspectives are required. Instead of surveys, in depth interviews with tourism industry experts, policy makers, tourism operators and official and private promotional bodies will provide a deeper understanding of the situation, prospects and potential constraints.

The perspectives of local communities on integrating local food related tourism activities into the wider community need to be explored. Such research could identify the potential of culinary activities that involve local communities to be linked to tourism and gauge locals' willingness to participate in tourism related activities.

Further research and studies were recommended by the expert survey to identify the right ways to create these linkages and to promote local food use in the tourism industry as well as among potential tourists. Through such approaches, and with the data provided by this thesis as a starting point, it will be possible to begin the process of linking local food more effectively into the promotion and development of Maldives tourism.

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Appendix 1 – Operators' Questionnaire

Evaluating the Role of Local Food in Maldives Tourism Marketing and Development

Accommodation Operators survey

By completing this survey you are giving consent to participate in this research.

About Your Business

Question 1:
Which of the following categories best describes this business?

***FN0**

- Resort
- Picnic island
- Hotel
- Guest house
- Other (please specify) [ ] ***FN1**

Question 2:
How long has this business been operating?

< select > years ***FN2**

Question 3:
How many rooms does this business have?

- Less than 50 ***FN3**
- 50-100
- 100-200
- 200-300
- 300-400
- 400-500
- More than 500

Question 4:
Is the executive chef/head chef of this business a Maldivian?

- Yes ***FN4**
- No

Question 5:
How many local chefs work in this business?

< select > *FN5

Question 6:
How many foreign chefs work in this business?

< select > *FN6

About Local Food

Question 7:
Upon arrival, do you welcome your customers with any local food or drinks (made from local products)?

- ○ Yes *FN7
- ○ No

Question 8:
Does this business offer outdoor activities and excursions?

- ○ Yes *FN8
- ○ No

Question 9:
If you answered yes to Q8 - which of the following activities/experiences are included? ***Tick all applicable.***

- ☐ Visit to local restaurants/cafe's *FN9
- ☐ Visit to local food production/preparation sites *FN10
- ☐ Visit to local markets/food stalls *FN11
- ☐ Visit to farms/marine farms *FN12
- ☐ Cooking or cooking classes for local food *FN13

Question 10:
Of the total food costs for this operation, please estimate the proportion that is spent on:

Local food products		% *FN14
Imported food products		% *FN15

Question 11:
How often are events that involve local food such as Maldivian nights or Maldivian buffets held?

- ○ Daily *FN16

- Twice weekly
- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Once a month

Question 12:
Do you work with any of the following suppliers of local food? ***(please tick as many as applicable)***

- ☐ Fishermen ***FN17**
- ☐ Marine farmers ***FN18**
- ☐ Farmers ***FN19**
- ☐ Fruit growers ***FN20**
- ☐ Suppliers of traditional sweetmeats ***FN21**
- ☐ Coconut growers ***FN22**
- ☐ Other ***FN23** - Please specify _____ ***FN24**

Question 13:
Do souvenirs available from your business include any of the following? ***(please tick as many as applicable)***

- ☐ Fish and fish products ***FN25**
- ☐ Local snacks ***FN26**
- ☐ Local cook books/recipes ***FN27**
- ☐ Other ***FN28** - Please specify _____ ***FN29**

Question 14:
On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is very easy and 7 extremely difficult, how would you characterise your ability to purchase the right quality of produce from the following groups:

	Very Easy					Extremely Difficult	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fishermen ***FN30**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Marine farmers ***FN31**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Farmers ***FN32**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fruit growers ***FN33**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Suppliers of local snacks ***FN34**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Coconut growers ***FN35**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 15:
Is there sufficient supply of local produce to meet your demand? Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is very easy and 7 extremely difficult, how you would rate the ease/difficulty to source the amount you require from the following groups:

	Very Easy		Extremely Difficult

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fishermen ***FN36**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Marine farmers ***FN37**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Farmers ***FN38**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Fruit growers ***FN39**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Suppliers of local snacks ***FN40**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Coconut growers ***FN41**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 16:
Please comment on key constraints you may face in your ability to purchase the right quantity or quality of local produce?

[ ] ***FN42**

Question 17:
If you were to use more local food in this business, do you believe it would decrease your food imports?

○ Yes ***FN43**
○ No

Comments:

[ ] ***FN44**

Question 18:
On a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is much lower and 7 much higher, how would you compare the cost of local food compared to imported food?

Much Lower		***FN45**				Much Higher
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 19:
In your opinion, which local produce has the greatest potential to be developed for the tourism industry? ***Please tick as many as applicable***

***FN46** ☐ Seafood, fish and fish products
***FN47** ☐ Local vegetables and fruits
***FN48** ☐ Other (please specify) [ ] ***FN49**

Question 20:

Which local dishes do you believe hold the greatest potential to be developed for the tourist? ***Please tick as many as applicable***

*FN50 ☐ Traditional local dishes
*FN51 ☐ Modified or modern local dishes
*FN52 ☐ Dishes made with locally grown produce
*FN53 ☐ Other (please specify) _____ *FN54

Question 21:
Do you think tourists are interested in consuming local food?

○ Yes *FN55
○ No
Please explain your answer.
_____ *FN56

Question 22:
Do you feel that this business could make more use of local food in future?

○ Yes *FN57
○ No
Please explain your answer.
_____ *FN58

About Marketing

Question 23:
In marketing this business, how important is local food? Please indicate on a scale of 1-7 where 1 is unimportant and 7 very important.

Unimportant		*FN59			Very Important	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 24:
On a scale of 1-7 where 1 is very negative and 7 is very positive. Please indicate how you think promotion of local food could affect the image of your business.

Very Negative		*FN60			Very Positive	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 25:
On a scale of 1 - 7, how important are the following types of food in your marketing and promotional materials?

	Not important at all					Extremely Important	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Italian ***FN61**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Mediterranean ***FN62**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Asian ***FN63**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Seafood ***FN64**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Maldivian ***FN65**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Continental ***FN66**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other ***FN68** (please specify) ***FN67**	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Question 26:
Is any of the following marketed as a special feature of your business? ***Please tick as many as applicable***

- ☐ Local themed restaurant ***FN69**
- ☐ Maldivian buffet ***FN70**
- ☐ Maldivian night (involving local food) ***FN71**
- ☐ Cooking lessons/classes involving local food ***FN72**

Question 27:
Are any of the following supplementary marketing techniques used by your business to promote local food? ***Please tick as many as applicable***

- ☐ Daily special ***FN73**
- ☐ Table talker/tent cards ***FN74**
- ☐ Staff recommendations ***FN75**
- ☐ Food displays in the restaurant ***FN76**

Other (please specify) ***FN77**

About Yourself

Question 28:
What is your role in the business? ***tick only one***

- Owner ***FN78**
- Manager
- Department Manager
- Other (please specify) [ ] ***FN79**

Question 29:
How long have you been employed in this business?

- Less than 1 year ***FN80**
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Question 30:
How long have you worked in the tourism industry in the Maldives?

- Less than 1 year ***FN81**
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

Question 31:
What is your nationality? ***Please tick the closest relevant***

- Maldivian ***FN82**
- Indian
- Sri Lankan
- European (e.g. French, German etc.)
- Other (please specify) [ ] ***FN83**

Question 32:
In your opinion, what government initiatives could be undertaken to enhance links between tourism and local food?

[ ] ***FN84**

Question 33:
Do you believe it is important to link tourism to local food in the Maldives – please elaborate?

*FN85

Question 34:
Does this business participate in any food related organizations such as "The Slow Food Movement"?

*FN86

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please click the submit button to submit your completed survey.

Submit

Appendix 2 - Expert Opinion Survey Questionnaire

Evaluating the Role of Local Food in Maldives Tourism Marketing and Development

Survey for Maldives Tourism Experts

By completing this survey you are giving consent to participate in this research.

Question 1:
What is your view of the current links between tourism and local food in the Maldives?

Question 2:
What is the potential to develop closer links between local food and tourism in the Maldives?

Question 3:
What are the constraints that prevent this potential from being achieved?

Question 4:
Can you identify particular local foods that could be better linked to tourism? – please list and comment

Question 5:
Are there local food/culinary-related events that can be integrated into tourism experiences? – please list and comment

Question 6:
Do you feel there is potential to use local food as a marketing tool for Maldives tourism? Please explain

Question 7:
Do you feel that local food can be a factor in differentiating the Maldives from other competing tourism destinations? Please explain

Question 8:
Do you feel that local food can be a factor in developing local culture and traditional experiences for tourism? Please explain?

Question 9:
What is your opinion about the ability of local food to enhance the "Maldives experience"?

Question 10:
Please provide any other comments of thoughts that you may have on developing future links between local food and tourism in the Maldives.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please click the submit button to submit your completed survey.

Submit

Appendix 3 - Participant Information Sheet

Evaluating the Role of Local Food in Maldives Tourism Marketing and Development

Information for participants

This is an invitation to be part of a research project focused on understanding the significance of local food in the Maldives tourism industry. This research is conducted in fulfilment of the requirement of an MPhil thesis by Fathimath Amira a Maldivian student at the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute (NZTRI) at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand.

This research is being conducted among all resort/hotel operators in the Maldives. This research seeks to know how local food is used and marketed by your business and the difficulties that you may have in using local food. The response to date has been very positive, we hope that you will be willing to spend a small amount of your time to assist with the survey.

This information will be valuable for operators, marketers and policy makers in the Maldives tourism industry in understanding the potential of local food as a tool for tourism marketing and development. After the completion of the research at the end of this year, the results will be presented to local stake holders. A copy will be sent to those participants who wish to have one.

The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation is entirely voluntary. To participate in this research, simply click on the <Take Survey> button below. The survey asks a number of questions - you simply use your mouse to click on your answer from a given selection. Some questions ask you to type your comments in your own words into the box provided. All answers are confidential and the results anonymous.

The survey will run until 30th August 2008. You may complete the survey at any point during this time. By taking the survey you are giving consent to be part of this research. Thank you in advance for your support of this research.

Take the survey

For further information about this research contact:
Researcher: Fathimath Amira: pnr0179@aut.ac.nz
Research Supervisor: Simon Milne: simon.milne@aut.ac.nz, phone 09 921 9245

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Research Supervisor, Simon Milne: simon.milne@aut.ac.nz, phone 09 921 9245.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz 09 921 9999 ext 8044.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on **28/04/08**, AUTEC Reference number **08/72**

Appendix 4 - Ethics Approval

MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To: Simon Milne

From: **Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC

Date: 28 April 2008

Subject: Ethics Application Number 08/72 **Evaluating the role of local food in Maldives tourism marketing and development.**

Dear Simon

I am pleased to advise that a subcommittee of the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) has approved your ethics application at their meeting on 21 April 2008, subject to the following conditions:

1. Provision of the finalised copies of the questionnaires and surveys showing the format that participants will receive;

2. Provision of appropriate consent processes.

I request that you provide the Ethics Coordinator with a written response to the points raised in these conditions at your earliest convenience, indicating either how you have satisfied these points or proposing an alternative approach. AUTEC also requires written evidence of any altered documents, such as Information Sheets, surveys etc. Once this response and its supporting written evidence has been received and confirmed as satisfying the Committee's points, you will be notified of the full approval of your ethics application.

When approval has been given subject to conditions, full approval is not effective until *all* the concerns expressed in the conditions have been met to the satisfaction of the

Committee. Until full approval has been confirmed, data collection may not commence. Should these conditions not be satisfactorily met within six months, your application may be closed and you will need to submit a new application should you wish to continue with this research project.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Fathimath Amira famira@hotmail.com, AUTEC Faculty Representative, Applied Humanities