

COMPLETION REPORT

Kazi Nazrul University, Department of Political Science, Asansol, West Bengal, India

Debasish Nandy

【Subject of Research Project】

“Japanese Culinary Industry Business in South Asia: Possibilities and Challenges”

Result of the Study

The Japanese culinary industry has gained widespread international acclaim for its distinct flavors, meticulous preparation, and cultural significance. This global trend is evident in the proliferation of sushi bars, ramen shops, and other Japanese culinary establishments worldwide. South Asia, known for its openness to diverse gastronomic experiences, emerges as a promising market for the expansion of Japanese cuisine. Culinary experiences are recognized as pivotal in fostering cross-cultural interactions, making the introduction of Japanese culinary elements in South Asia a potential catalyst for cultural exchange. This culinary diplomacy, as a form of soft power, holds the potential to build positive relations between Japan and South Asian nations. The entry of the Japanese culinary industry into the South Asian market presents a complex interplay of promising economic prospects and intricate challenges.

The investigation delves into the potential of Japanese cuisine as a form of soft power, elucidating its role in cultivating positive relations between Japan and South Asian nations. An understanding of the influence of culinary exchange on cultural diplomacy stands as a pivotal aspect in shaping the landscape of international relations. Within the context of South Asia's burgeoning middle class, increasing disposable incomes, and a burgeoning fascination with international cuisines, the study provides valuable insights into the prospective economic gains for the Japanese culinary industry. This information proves indispensable for businesses and policymakers seeking to tap into the economic potential inherent in the region. The study specifically investigates the role of Japanese cuisine as a form of soft power and its potential to foster positive diplomatic relations between Japan and South Asian nations.

The exploration of Japanese restaurants in South Asia, particularly in India and Bangladesh, amidst the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, sheds light on a resilient and adaptive industry. Japanese restaurant professionals in India and Bangladesh have displayed remarkable resilience and adaptability. Faced with economic challenges, the industry strategically pivoted towards emphasizing online food delivery, forging partnerships with popular delivery apps, and ensuring continued access to their culinary offerings. This shift aligns with changing consumer preferences and serves as a practical solution to the restrictions imposed on dine-in services, highlighting the industry's capacity to leverage technology for sustained operations. The implementation

of the 'Cool Japan' strategy faced hurdles such as limited cultural exchange activities, disrupted immersive dining experiences, and challenges in sourcing authentic Japanese ingredients. Despite these obstacles, Japanese restaurant professionals demonstrated adaptability and creativity, reimagining their dining experiences and maintaining a balance between traditional authenticity and catering to evolving customer preferences.

Survey responses revealed insights into customer perceptions, preferences, and the impact of the pandemic on dining behaviors. The majority of respondents in India and Bangladesh expressed familiarity with Japanese cuisine, and optimism prevailed regarding the potential for the expansion of Japanese restaurant businesses in the post-pandemic period. The support for the 'cool Japan' policy, aimed at promoting Japanese culture, further highlights a positive outlook on cultural exchange through the culinary domain. This study claims novelty for conducting such research on Japanese culinary business in South Asia.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

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Title of the Presentation: “Japan’s Culinary Business in South Asia and Soft Diplomacy”

Name of the Presenter: Dr. Debasish Nandy

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

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Name of the Author: Dr. Debasish Nandy and Md. Saifullah Akon

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Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)