

RECONNECTING ROOTS: SATVIC TEMPLE FOOD AS A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE, MENTAL-HEALTH-SUPPORTIVE HOSPITALITY

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ABSTRACT

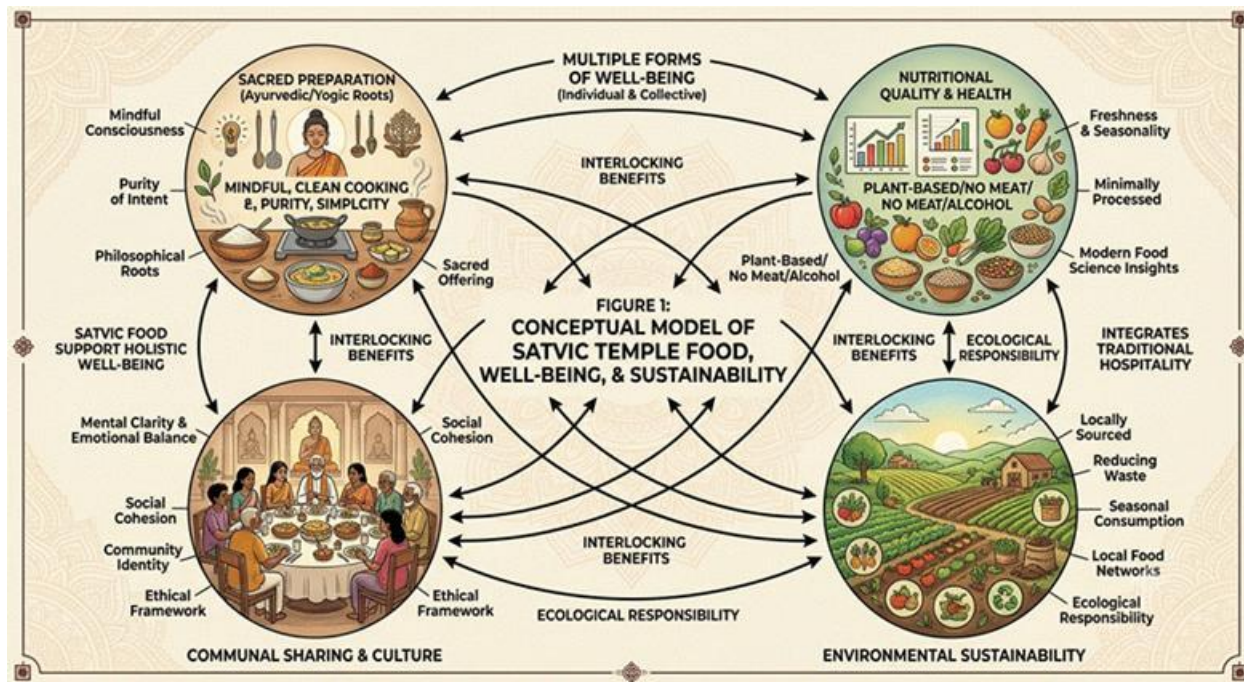
This study examines Satvic temple food as a traditional plant-based dietary system with implications for sustainable well-being, mental health, and ecological food practice. Rooted in Ayurvedic and yogic philosophy, Satvic food emphasizes fresh, seasonal, minimally processed, and spiritually prepared ingredients, excluding meat, alcohol, onion, and garlic. Although historically significant, Satvic temple food has received limited academic attention as a model for sustainable nutrition and holistic health. Using qualitative ethnographic methods, the study combined participant observation, in-depth interviews, and nutritional document analysis across temple communities in India. The findings suggest that Satvic dietary practices support reduced psychological stress, improved digestive health, and stronger community cohesion. The study also highlights sustainability benefits through zero-waste cooking, local sourcing, and seasonal alignment. Furthermore, Satvic food principles align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those related to health, well-being, responsible consumption, and zero hunger. Overall, Satvic temple food offers a valuable model for integrating traditional knowledge into modern hospitality, healthcare, and public food policy. Its wider adoption may contribute to more sustainable food systems and support both human and ecological well-being.

Keywords: Satvic food; temple food; sustainable nutrition; plant-based diet; holistic well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Satvic temple food represents a traditional plant-based dietary system rooted in the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Ayurveda and yoga. It emphasizes freshness, seasonality, purity, simplicity, and mindful preparation, and it is generally prepared and consumed without meat, alcohol, onion, or garlic. Beyond its dietary restrictions, Satvic food reflects a broader worldview in which food is understood not only as nourishment for the body but also as a means of supporting mental clarity, emotional balance, spiritual discipline, and communal harmony. In this sense, Satvic temple food offers a distinctive model of eating that connects nutrition, ethics, culture, and well-being.

The purpose of this study is to examine Satvic temple food as a sustainable model for human well-being, with particular attention to its nutritional qualities, cultural meaning, and ecological relevance. The study also seeks to understand how this food tradition may contribute to mental health, social cohesion, and sustainable hospitality practices in contemporary settings. By focusing on temple food systems, this research highlights a living tradition that continues to shape community identity and collective practice while also offering insights relevant to modern food science and sustainability discourse. The conceptual relationship among sacred preparation, communal sharing, nutritional quality, and environmental sustainability is summarised in Fig. 1, which should appear near the end of this Introduction.



The central hypothesis of the study is that Satvic temple food supports both individual and collective well-being through its use of fresh, minimally processed, locally sourced, and spiritually prepared ingredients. It is further hypothesized that these practices promote ecological responsibility by reducing waste, encouraging seasonal consumption, and strengthening local food networks. In addition, the study assumes that Satvic food principles may provide a viable framework for integrating traditional wisdom into modern hospitality, public health, and food policy.

The existing literature has explored several related areas, including plant-based diets, sustainable nutrition, Ayurveda, yogic food practices, and religious food traditions.

Research on plant-based eating has often focused on physical health outcomes such as weight management, cardiovascular health, and metabolic benefits. Other studies have examined the environmental advantages of plant-based food systems, particularly their lower carbon footprint, reduced water use, and lesser dependence on industrial livestock production. Separately, scholarship on Ayurveda and yoga has emphasized the importance of sattva, balance, and purity in diet, while anthropological studies of temple food have highlighted its cultural and devotional significance.

This environmental argument is supported by life-cycle assessment research showing that grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and other plant-forward foods generally have lower greenhouse-gas impacts than ruminant meats and high-animal-source diets (Clune et al., 2017; Scarborough et al., 2023).

However, much of the existing literature treats these themes in isolation. There is limited interdisciplinary work that brings together ethnographic observation, nutritional analysis, sustainability studies, and spiritual food traditions within a single framework. In particular, Satvic temple food has received insufficient scholarly attention as a model

that connects traditional religious practice with contemporary concerns about wellness, ecological responsibility, and sustainable hospitality. Most studies focus either on health benefits or on cultural symbolism, but rarely on both together in a structured academic analysis. This creates a gap in understanding how temple food traditions may function as practical and meaningful systems of sustainable nourishment.

Another gap in previous studies lies in the limited exploration of the relationship between food and mental well-being in spiritual settings. While there is growing interest in the link between diet and mental health, fewer studies have examined how. The manuscript therefore draws on nutritional psychiatry and gut–brain-axis scholarship, which suggests that dietary quality, gut microbiota, fibre-rich foods, and fermented or bioactive food components may be relevant to mood and mental health, while also requiring cautious interpretation because much of the evidence remains emerging or context dependent (Dinan & Cryan, 2017; Jacka et al., 2017; Kelly et al., 2016; Martel et al., 2021).

temple-based food cultures may influence emotional stability, communal trust, and psychological calm through their preparation and consumption practices. Satvic temple food, with its emphasis on serenity, discipline, and collective service, provides a valuable case for investigating these connections.

This study seeks to address these gaps by offering an interdisciplinary examination of Satvic temple food as both a cultural tradition and a sustainable model. By combining ethnographic insight with nutritional and conceptual analysis, the research aims to demonstrate how traditional food practices can contribute to modern debates on health, sustainability, and hospitality innovation. Ultimately, the study argues that Satvic temple food should be understood not as a relic of the past, but as a living and adaptable system with continuing relevance for contemporary society. At the same time, Satvic temple food systems raise important questions for contemporary hospitality, wellness tourism, and institutional catering design. They demonstrate how plant-forward menus, gratitude-oriented framing, predictable meal rhythms, and shared or communal formats can be integrated into operational practice without sacrificing efficiency or guest satisfaction. In large temple kitchens, routinised sequences of preparation, offering, and redistribution embody a form of vernacular ecological design in which material simplicity, zero-waste behaviour, and symbolic equality are mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives. By studying these environments as living laboratories of sustainable and mental-health-supportive food service, this research seeks to generate design principles that can be adapted, with cultural sensitivity, into secular hotels, hospitals, wellness retreats, and public food programmes. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on how hospitality leaders and policy-makers can reconnect culinary innovation with traditional, Satvic-inspired models of nourishment, care, and ecological restraint.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a pragmatist mixed-methods design to investigate Satvic temple food systems as integrated nutritional, psychosocial, cultural, and environmental phenomena. A pragmatist approach was appropriate because the subject of inquiry crossed multiple disciplinary boundaries, including hospitality studies, anthropology, nutrition, sustainability, religion, and mental well-being, and therefore could not be adequately examined through a single methodological lens. Satvic temple food was approached not merely as a set of recipes or as a symbolic religious category, but as a living system in which ingredients, preparation techniques, ritual meanings, social practices, and ecological relationships interact with one another. This broader framing made it possible to study the phenomenon in a manner that preserved cultural integrity while also generating findings relevant to contemporary discussions of sustainable hospitality, food systems, and holistic well-being.

The study used a sequential exploratory design, in which qualitative ethnographic inquiry was conducted first, followed by descriptive nutritional and environmental assessment informed by the qualitative findings. This sequence was methodologically important because it ensured that the later analytical stages emerged from observed practices rather than from externally imposed assumptions about what should count as

significant. In practical terms, the ethnographic phase identified key dishes, recurring food practices, social meanings, ritual structures, and patterns of community interaction, which then guided the selection of foods and variables for nutritional and sustainability analysis. By allowing the cultural logic of the field settings to shape the structure of the research, the design strengthened contextual validity and reduced the risk of treating sacred food systems as abstract or decontextualised objects. In keeping with the pragmatist orientation, the study also emphasised methodological triangulation and reflexive attention to context. Qualitative and quantitative strands were designed to inform one another rather than operate in isolation, with field observations guiding the choice of dishes and variables for nutritional and sustainability analysis, and descriptive findings feeding back into the interpretation of participants' accounts. Data collection and analysis were documented through transparent protocols, including detailed field notes, interview guides, recipe standardisation sheets, and simplified life-cycle assessment matrices. This integrative design strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings by showing not only what Satvic temple food systems look like in practice, but also how their observed material properties align with reported experiences of calmness, inclusion, and ecological responsibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research was guided by the assumption that Satvic temple food systems should be understood as integrated service environments rather than as isolated food items. In the contexts studied, food is simultaneously nourishment, ritual offering, social practice, cultural memory, and ecological process, which means that the meaning and impact of a meal cannot be understood solely by listing ingredients or calories. For this reason, the methodological design aimed to capture multiple dimensions of the phenomenon: embodied food preparation, symbolic meanings attached to purity and offering, social organisation of communal eating, nutrient composition of central dishes, and the environmental implications of ingredient use, material flows, and waste management.

The mixed-methods strategy was therefore not adopted for methodological variety alone, but because the research questions themselves required convergence across different forms of evidence. Ethnographic methods were essential for understanding lived meanings, culinary practice, and social relations; descriptive nutritional analysis was needed to examine the material food profile of commonly consumed dishes; and a simplified sustainability assessment was necessary to interpret the ecological significance of the system as a whole. Taken together, these strands enabled the study to examine Satvic food as a coherent and operational food-service model with relevance beyond its immediate devotional context.

Fieldwork was conducted across four broad categories of sites where Satvic and sacred food practices were actively maintained: large temple kitchens associated with Mahaprasad traditions, ISKCON communities with codified

Krishna-conscious cuisine, traditional Ayurvedic cooking schools, and

contemporary Satvic lifestyle communities. These sites were chosen because they represented living traditions rather than purely historical examples. The study sought to understand sacred food as an ongoing system of preparation, offering, and consumption, and therefore prioritised settings in which Satvic principles were still enacted in everyday life.

Site selection followed several practical and conceptual criteria. First, there had to be clear continuity of practice, meaning that food preparation and communal eating followed identifiable Satvic or sacred culinary principles on a sustained basis. Second, access had to be possible through the cooperation of local authorities, community leaders, or institutional gatekeepers, given the cultural sensitivity of temple kitchens and ritual spaces. Third, the sites needed to offer diversity in organisational structure and setting, so that the research could compare how similar principles operated across temple, devotional,

educational, and lifestyle contexts. Finally, site selection was guided by relevance to the central research aim: understanding how sacred food traditions function as real-world models of sustainable and well-being-oriented food service.

This multi-site approach increased the depth of the analysis by making it possible to compare continuity and variation within the Satvic tradition. For example, large temple kitchens offered insight into scale, ritual standardisation, and mass food distribution, while Ayurvedic schools and lifestyle communities illuminated pedagogical, therapeutic, and everyday interpretations of Satvic eating. ISKCON contexts added a distinct devotional and institutional framework in which codified dietary norms, community practices, and global adaptation could be observed. Together, these settings provided a sufficiently broad field from which to identify recurring features without reducing the tradition to a single institution or locality.

The first phase of the study consisted of qualitative ethnographic fieldwork, which served as the foundation of the research design. Ethnography was chosen because the study aimed to understand not only what foods were prepared and consumed, but also how food practices were embedded in ritual, labour, spatial organisation, emotional experience, and collective meaning. Participant observation was therefore conducted in kitchens, food preparation areas, offering spaces, distribution points, and communal dining environments. This allowed the researcher to document not only recipes and ingredients, but also rhythms of work, patterns of coordination, modes of serving, sensory atmosphere, and the social life of meals.

Observation focused on several interconnected domains. These included the timing and sequencing of cooking, the division of labour among different categories of participants, the use of earthen pots and wood-fired or traditional heat sources, the handling of grains, legumes, vegetables, dairy, and spices, and the role of ritual actions in distinguishing sacred preparation from ordinary cooking. The researcher also paid attention to spatial design, such as the movement of food from kitchen to sanctified offering to communal distribution, as well as to the bodily and emotional atmosphere surrounding collective eating. Such observational detail was necessary because many of the distinctive features of Satvic temple food systems lie not in written rules alone, but in embodied and routineised practices.

The researcher adopted a participant-as-observer role where appropriate, assisting with basic, culturally permitted tasks while maintaining the primary role of systematic observer. This positioning helped generate trust, allowed closer access to routine kitchen activities, and made it easier to understand the embodied knowledge involved in sacred food preparation. At the same time, it preserved sufficient analytical distance to record field notes on work organisation, ritual process, sensory environment, distribution practices, and interpersonal interactions. Detailed field notes were produced throughout the fieldwork process and included descriptive observations, reflections on recurring themes, documentation of material culture, and interpretive memos linking observed practice to the broader research aims.

To complement participant observation, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with approximately fifty participants across the selected sites. Interview participants included hereditary temple cooks, priests, devotees, Ayurvedic practitioners, Satvic lifestyle practitioners, and pottery artisans. This diversity was important because sacred food systems draw on multiple forms of expertise, including ritual knowledge, culinary inheritance, therapeutic interpretation, artisanal production, and lived experience of consuming consecrated food.

The interview format was semi-structured rather than fully standardised in order to balance comparability with flexibility. A common set of themes guided the interviews, including understandings of sacred food, perceived health and emotional effects, ideas of purity and discipline, reasons for ingredient choices, views on waste and sustainability, culinary transmission across generations, and experiences of equality, belonging, and service in communal food settings. However, participants were also encouraged to speak in their own terms and to emphasise the dimensions of food practice most meaningful in their own social and spiritual context. This approach generated richer narrative material and helped preserve the emic perspective of

participants rather than reducing their responses to pre-coded categories alone. The observed movement of food from preparation to offering, redistribution, and shared consumption is represented in Fig. 2, which should appear in the Methods section after the description of interviews and documentary materials.

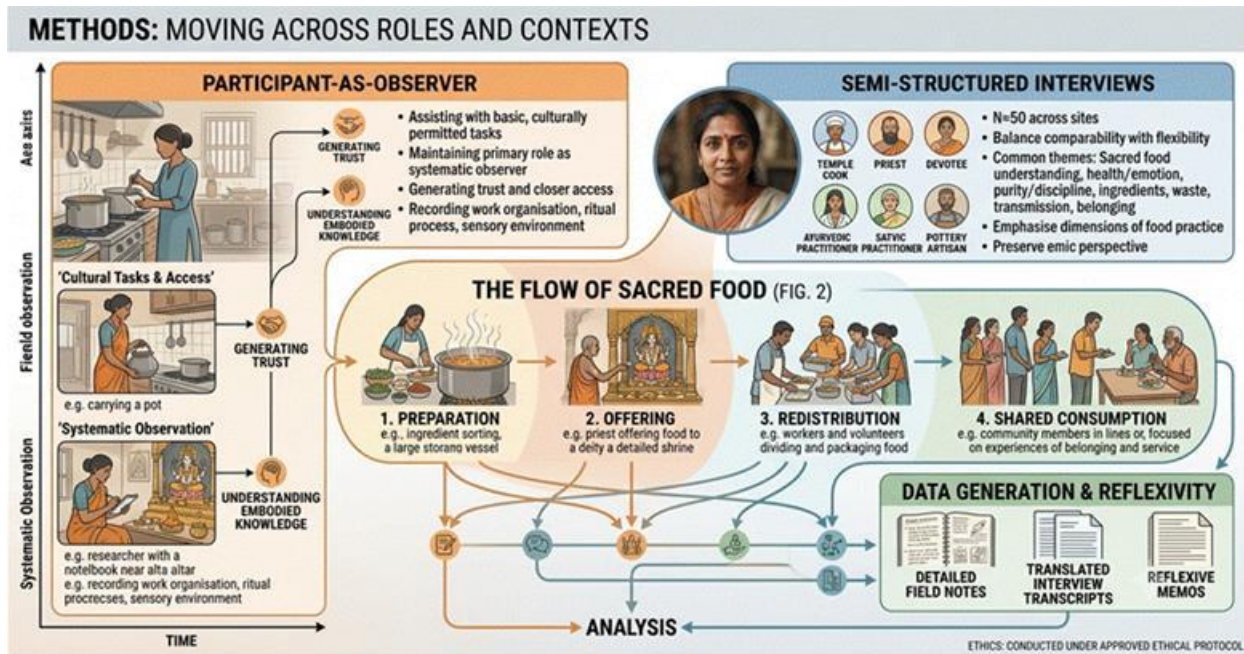


Figure 2: The observed movement of food, integrating participant-as-observer insights and interview data across the sacred food system.

Where possible, interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages and then translated into English for analysis when necessary. This improved linguistic accessibility and reduced distortion that might arise when participants were forced into unfamiliar academic or official forms of expression. All interview materials were anonymised during transcription and analysis, and identifying details were removed from the reporting process.

The research involved ethnographic observation and interviews with adult participants in religious and community settings and was conducted under an approved ethical protocol according to the thesis record. Before participation, interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, the intended use of the information, and the measures taken to protect confidentiality.

Informed consent was obtained before interviews, and where literacy, language, or local circumstances required flexibility, consent procedures were adapted in line with the approved protocol.

Special care was taken to respect the sacred and culturally sensitive nature of the research settings. Temple access restrictions, photography prohibitions, ritual boundaries, norms of purity, and local expectations regarding conduct were observed throughout fieldwork. No sensitive ritual activity was documented without permission, and the researcher worked within the constraints set by community leaders and institutional gatekeepers. Identifying details were removed from interview records, pseudonymous or generic descriptors were used in reporting, and research materials were stored securely to protect confidentiality. These procedures were essential not only for ethical compliance, but also for building trust in environments where food practices were inseparable from devotion, community identity, and sacred obligation.

Several limitations should be acknowledged clearly. First, the research relied on selected case-study sites in India, which means that the findings are analytically rich but not statistically generalisable to all temple food systems or all forms of Satvic practice.

Second, the study was exploratory and descriptive rather than experimental, so it cannot establish direct causal relationships between Satvic food practices and health or psychological outcomes. Third, the nutritional assessment characterised dishes and meal patterns rather than measuring long-term intake or clinical biomarkers among participants. Fourth, the sustainability assessment used simplified life cycle modelling based on field observations, literature values, and available datasets, which necessarily involved assumptions and approximations.

A further limitation is that the study did not test whether Satvic-inspired practices would generate similar effects when translated into secular commercial hospitality settings. The observed coherence of sacred food systems may depend partly on devotional meaning, long-standing ritual structure, and community norms that are difficult to reproduce fully elsewhere. For this reason, the findings are best interpreted as supporting a strong conceptual and design hypothesis rather than a definitive transferable model. Even with these limitations, however, the mixed-methods approach provided a robust and contextually grounded understanding of Satvic temple food as a system that links nutrition, ritual, social cohesion, and ecological restraint in meaningful ways. The practical implications are substantial for hotels, resorts, retreats, institutional caterers, and community food providers. The study suggests that selected principles from Satvic temple cuisine could be thoughtfully adapted into secular settings without copying the religious tradition superficially or stripping it of meaning. Examples include plant-centric menus built around a few simple repeatable dishes, careful use of anti-inflammatory spices, communal seating formats, slower meal rhythms, and small rituals that frame eating as an act of gratitude and attention. Waste-conscious service design is another key lesson, particularly the reduction of disposables, the reuse of vessels, and the redistribution of excess food. These adaptations could help hospitality operators create experiences that feel more coherent, restorative, and distinctive while also lowering environmental impact.

The study also contributes conceptually to the way traditional knowledge systems are understood in academic research. Sacred food traditions are often discussed as heritage practices or symbolic expressions, but the evidence here suggests that they also function as living laboratories of applied sustainability and social care. In other words, temple food systems are not simply preserved customs; they are active systems that organize labour, service, and consumption in ways that produce multiple forms of value at once. This is especially relevant in hospitality scholarship, where food is often analysed through narrow operational categories such as cost, menu engineering, or service quality, while broader questions of meaning and community are treated as secondary.

Satvic temple food challenges that fragmentation by showing that a meal can be a social, ecological, and moral event simultaneously.

At the same time, the study has clear limitations that must shape how the findings are interpreted. The research was exploratory and case-based, conducted in selected sites in India, so it cannot be generalized statistically to all temple traditions or all forms of Satvic practice. The nutritional analysis was descriptive rather than clinical, meaning it identified the character of the foods but did not measure long-term dietary intake, biomarkers, or direct health outcomes. The environmental analysis used a simplified life cycle assessment, which is useful for comparison but not equivalent to a full

engineering-grade model. The study also did not test whether Satvic-inspired interventions would produce similar outcomes in secular commercial hospitality environments, where ritual meaning and community norms may not be present in the same form. These limitations do not weaken the value of the findings, but they do define the boundaries of what can responsibly be claimed.

Future research should therefore move in several directions. First, intervention studies in hotels, resorts, community kitchens, or wellness retreats could test whether

Satvic-inspired meals improve guest mood, satisfaction, social connection, and perceived well-being over time. Second, more detailed nutritional and biomedical studies could examine whether the observed dietary patterns influence inflammation, digestion, or other markers relevant to mental health and resilience. Third, more granular sustainability research could compare sacred food systems with multiple forms of contemporary catering using detailed emissions, fuel, water, packaging, and waste data. Comparative studies across other sacred or traditional food systems would also be useful, because they could show whether the integrative features identified here are unique to Satvic temple cuisine or part of a wider pattern in culturally embedded

food-service systems.

There is also scope for qualitative work on translation and adaptation. Researchers could explore how the principles observed in temple food systems might be reinterpreted for hotels, schools, hospitals, or workplace dining without losing their ethical depth. That would help clarify which elements are transferable as design principles, and which depend on the sacred context that gives them meaning. In addition, future studies could examine the perspectives of guests, chefs, managers, and community members together, so that the implementation of such ideas is grounded in both cultural sensitivity and operational feasibility. This would be especially valuable in destinations where pilgrimage, hospitality, and wellness tourism overlap.

In conclusion, the evidence from this study indicates that Satvic temple food systems provide a credible model for thinking about hospitality in a more integrated way. They show that meals can be organised to nourish the body, support calmness and belonging, and reduce ecological burden at the same time. They also demonstrate that traditional food systems can offer sophisticated answers to modern problems without being reduced to nostalgia or cultural symbolism alone. For contemporary food-service sectors facing pressure to improve guest well-being and sustainability simultaneously, Satvic temple cuisine offers a powerful reminder that coherence matters: the way food is prepared, shared, and valued can be just as important as what is served.

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The author expresses sincere gratitude to the kitchen communities of temple towns, particularly the Suaras and Mahasuaras of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, whose longstanding culinary knowledge, discipline, and devotional commitment made this research possible. Deep appreciation is also extended to the priests, devotees, Ayurvedic practitioners, pottery artisans, and Satvic lifestyle practitioners who generously shared their time, insights, and lived experience during the fieldwork process. Their willingness to discuss sacred food practices, culinary traditions, ritual meanings, and everyday systems of preparation and distribution provided the empirical and interpretive foundation for this study.

The author further acknowledges the support of academic mentors, institutional reviewers, and all individuals who contributed guidance, encouragement, and scholarly feedback during the development of the original doctoral research on which this article is based. The present study emerged from that broader doctoral project, which investigated Satvic temple food systems as integrated models of nourishment, psychosocial well-being, and ecological responsibility within the context of hospitality and food-service studies. Intellectual support received during the conception, fieldwork, analysis, and writing stages of the project played an important role in shaping the interdisciplinary direction of this research.

Special appreciation is also due to the communities and institutions that permitted respectful access to culturally and spiritually sensitive spaces during ethnographic observation. Conducting research in temple kitchens and related sacred food environments required trust, patience, and adherence to community expectations, and the generosity extended by participants

and local custodians made it possible to document practices that are rarely examined in an integrated academic framework. The author remains deeply mindful that this study depends upon forms of inherited knowledge and collective service that have been preserved across generations through devotion, discipline, and lived practice.

This article forms part of the author's original doctoral research and has been adapted for journal publication from that larger body of work. The study was developed to explore how traditional Satvic food systems may contribute to current debates in sustainable hospitality, mental-health-supportive food environments, and ecological food-service design. In that sense, the project is both an academic inquiry and an effort to bring traditional knowledge systems into meaningful dialogue with contemporary scholarship on nutrition, sustainability, and guest well-being.

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This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The work was completed independently as part of the underlying doctoral research and subsequent manuscript development.

The author also acknowledges that this research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The work was completed independently as part of the underlying doctoral research and subsequent manuscript development. Any limitations of interpretation, analysis, or presentation remain the responsibility of the author alone.

Finally, the author offers respectful thanks to all those unnamed contributors whose everyday labour sustains sacred food traditions yet often remains academically unrecognized, including cooks, helpers, servers, artisans, and community participants involved in the preparation, movement, and sharing of temple food. Their practices reflect a living heritage of care, humility, and collective nourishment that inspired both the direction and the purpose of this study.

CONCLUSION

This study examined Satvic temple food systems as applied models of sustainable and mental-health-supportive hospitality and found that these traditions operate as integrated systems rather than as isolated culinary customs. Across the ethnographic, nutritional, and environmental strands of the research, the same pattern repeatedly emerged: plant-forward meals, ritualised preparation, communal sharing, and

low-waste material practices worked together to produce a food-service model that supports nourishment, belonging, and ecological restraint. The findings therefore suggest that Satvic temple cuisine is not only a religious or cultural expression, but also a living operational framework with relevance for contemporary hospitality, public health, and sustainable food design.

A major finding of the study is that the psychosocial value of Satvic temple food extends beyond the nutritional qualities of the dishes themselves. The ethnographic observations showed that temple kitchens and dining spaces cultivate calmness, equality, service, and shared participation through the way food is prepared, offered, and distributed. Participants repeatedly associated prasad with feelings of emotional relief, belonging, and social connection, indicating that the dining experience is shaped by ritual and communal structure as much as by ingredient composition. This matters because it shows that food can

support well-being through atmosphere, rhythm, and symbolic meaning, not only through measurable nutrients. In hospitality terms, the meal experience becomes an environment of care rather than a transaction of consumption.

The nutritional results strengthen this interpretation. Core Satvic dishes such as khichdi, dalma, vegetable curries, and related preparations were generally fibre-rich, minimally processed, and anchored in whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and spices. Their profiles indicated balanced energy, complementary protein sources, diverse micronutrients, and bioactive compounds associated in the broader literature with anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and gut-health-supportive properties. While the study did not measure clinical outcomes, the overall dietary pattern aligns with food systems often associated with metabolic stability and improved mental health potential. This suggests that Satvic temple cuisine may provide a practical example of how traditional diets can support modern discussions of nutritional psychiatry and food-as-medicine.

The cautious interpretation of these effects is consistent with research linking diet quality, microbial pathways, oxidative stress, and mitochondrial function to broader health and ageing processes, while avoiding a direct claim that Satvic meals alone produce clinical outcomes (Grosso et al., 2018; Jackson, 2019; López-Lluch et al., 2006).

The sustainability findings are equally significant. The environmental assessment indicated that Satvic temple food systems can operate with comparatively lower carbon and waste footprints than conventional institutional vegetarian catering, largely because of local sourcing, plant-based ingredients, circular material use, and minimal leftover food. Earthen pots, reusable vessels, and redistribution norms contribute to a material cycle in which food and serveware are treated as part of an ecological and social continuum rather than as disposable outputs. Even where biomass cooking introduces some direct emissions, the overall system still benefits from short supply chains, low packaging dependence, and very limited waste. In this way, the study suggests that sustainability in food service is not achieved only through high-tech solutions; it can also emerge from social norms, ritual discipline, and local ecological knowledge.

Taken together, these findings support a broader conclusion: Satvic temple food should be understood as a holistic model in which nutritional quality, psychosocial

well-being, and environmental responsibility are mutually reinforcing rather than competing goals. This integration is important because much of contemporary hospitality treats these aims separately. Wellness menus, green operations, and guest-experience design are often managed as distinct initiatives, with little attention to how the overall structure of service shapes outcomes. By contrast, the sacred food systems studied here show that the design of the meal environment can simultaneously support health, social inclusion, and ecological restraint. This makes Satvic temple cuisine valuable not only as a cultural tradition, but as a conceptual and practical reference point for future hospitality design.

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HUMAN ETHICS AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE DECLARATION

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles applicable to research involving human participants. Ethical approval was obtained prior to the commencement of the study under the approved doctoral research protocol. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, the intended use of the information collected, and the measures taken to protect confidentiality and anonymity. Written or verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews or observations were carried out, depending on local literacy, language, and contextual requirements. Participants were free to decline participation or withdraw at any stage without any adverse consequences. Special care was taken to respect the cultural, religious, and sensitive nature of the research settings, and no identifiable personal information was disclosed in the manuscript.

CONSENT TO PUBLISH

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript and consent to its publication. Where the manuscript includes information derived from interviews, observations, or other human participant data, appropriate permissions and consent for publication were obtained in accordance with the study's ethical protocol. No personally identifiable information is included in the manuscript, and all efforts have been made to protect participant confidentiality and privacy. If the journal requires a not-applicable statement instead, you may use: “**Consent to Publish declaration: not applicable**”.