Factors Influencing Tourist Satisfaction in the State of Punjab

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Abstract

Tourism industry has been among fast growing industries in recent years due to improved infrastructure and focus of various countries on tourism. This industry along with hotel industry has been a great source of revenue and employment. In India, there has been a recent wave of active tourism development. 'Incredible India' has been there to promote cultural, religious and other types of tourism. However, there have been inter-region or inter-state variations concerning tourism initiatives and tourism development. In the wake of this disparity, the study has focused on measuring the relative satisfaction level of tourists visiting Punjab. For this purpose, a sample of 200 respondents from Punjab has been selected. Data was collected using scaled questionnaire covering almost twenty-three variables contributing to tourist satisfaction. Factor analysis was used to reduce the number of variables to six major factors. It was found that tourist destination was the major component of tourist satisfaction followed by facilities at hotels and guesthouses and at last the facilities of reservation etc.

Key Words: tourism, satisfaction, factors, destination.

Introduction

Tourism is an industry that has assumed global propositions today. Tourism is one of the world's largest economic sectors and one that continues to expand very rapidly. This smokeless industry has attracted the attentions of the nations because of the economic and social advantages. It involves movement of millions of people. Many countries are seeking to develop tourism for its benefits (Kumar1998). Tourism today is considered the fastest growing component of the global trade. It is an effective instrument of the economic development by creating employment opportunities, generating income and earning foreign exchange. This industry has also backward and forward linkage with other sectors as well such as transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, agriculture etc.

Tourism In India

India with its abundant range in natural, geographic, cultural and artistic resources has huge potential to grow in tourism sector. Over the years, this industry has touched new heights and brought opportunities for development of Indian economy. Tourism is particularly important to vast and variegated country like ours as it contributes to national integration, promotes social and cultural ambience and plays a key role in socio-economic development). According to World Travel Tourism Council (WTTC) tourism contributed to 9.6% of India's GDP and ranks 7th in the world in terms of total contribution towards countries' GDP. The sector provided 40.3 million jobs in 2016, which ranks India 2nd in the world in terms of total employment supported by Travel & Tourism[i].The number of Foreign Tourist

Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2015 increased to 8.03 million as compared to 7.68 million in 2014 registering a growth rate of 4.5% in 2015 over 2014. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism in India in 2015 in 135193 crores as compared to 12332 crores in 2014 registering a growth of 9.6 % in 2015 over 2014. Domestic tourist arrivals to all states in 2015 accounted for 1431.97 million an increase of 11.6% over previous year[ii]. Thus tourism can help a long way in reviving the economy staggering under the burden of unemployment and fiscal deficit. Foreign tourism along with domestic tourism (the scope of which is manifold in comparison to foreign tourism in India) may contribute to India in its mission of becoming a developed country by 2020(Bhardwaj and Singh 2010).

India with its uniqueness, charm and hospitality has the ability of attracting tourists by offering a varied range of tourism products. States in India are formulating aggressive marketing and promotion strategies to trap the diverse tourism forms in their respective regions. Eco-Tourism also called nature tourism is growing in regions like Darjeeling (West Bengal), Munnar (Kerala), Ooty (Tamil Nadu), Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), Nanital, Mussorie (Uttaranchal). Rural tourism and farm tourism are fast emerging in the states of Punjab and Haryana. The lofty snow covered mountains offer ample variety for nature lovers and adventure seekers in Himalayan regions. Shimla, Manila offers a wide range of mountain adventure activities. Goa and Kerala are favorite destinations among tourists for beach and water sports activities. Punjab, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh are well known religious and pilgrimage centers.

Tourist satisfaction has become essence for successfully running this industry and reaping profits from it. It has become a great force to attract tourists to a particular destination. A tourist compares his experiences of products and services to his expectations and accordingly rates the particular destination. Visitor satisfaction studies with regard to tourist destinations find that a high level of satisfaction encourages tourists to re-visit the destination; satisfied tourists also tell their relatives and friends, providing free advertisement and helping promote increased travel to the destination (Kau and Lim, 2005; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Yu and Goulden, 2006). Tourism products and services consist of bundle of attributes. It becomes important to identify and measure customer satisfaction with each attribute of the destination because satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one of the attributes leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with overall destination (Pizam 1978 and Parasuraman 1998). These attributes may be infrastructure, attractions accommodation, food, accessibility etc. Satisfaction leads to repeat visit, spreading positive word of mouth and lesser complaints from tourists. So it is important for service providers to provide best products and services to tourists which would not only enhance their satisfaction but make them loyal.

Punjab Tourism

Tourism in Punjab has gained wide popularity especially for pilgrimage. It basically suits for tourists interested in culture, ancient civilization, spirituality and epic history. Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) is one of the best spiritual destinations. Amritsar is also becoming famous for food tourism as it is city known for delicious food. The ancient fort of Bathinda, architectural monuments of Kapurthala, city of Gardens, Patiala are among the leading tourist attractions of the state. Punjab has a rich Sikh religious history.

Trend in Total Arrivals in the State of Punjab

There has been an increase in tourist arrivals (foreign as well as domestic) in Punjab over the years. The total tourist arrivals were 16,567,596 in year 2011 and it increased to 26,038,728 in 2015. It showed an increase of 48% from year 2011 to 2015.

Table 1: Total Tourist Arrivals in Punjab

Year	Total tourist arrival (domestic and foreign)
2011	16,567,596
2012	19,199,948
2013	21,544,962
2014	24,526,751
2015	26,038,728

Source: Ministry of Tourism Government of India, Market Research Division

Literature Review

Tourism industry is significantly contributing to the overall development in Punjab. In order to attract and retain the tourists, it is vital that places and services providers offer quality products to tourists. For more successful tourist development, it is crucial to attract tourists and to recommend the destination to others (Chen and Tsai 2007). It is generally known in tourism that high quality of service would result in tourist satisfaction, create a positive word-of-mouth, and lead to repeat visits (Som and Badarneh2011). At this particular point of time satisfaction holds the key. If the tourist is satisfied with facilities at a particular destination, most likely he will pay another visit or recommend the destination to others. The primary function of measuring customer satisfaction is to provide information; information relates to how well destination is currently meeting its current needs (Wong and Law). Tourism products can be defined as bundle of activities, services and benefits that comprise the whole tourism experience (Medlick and Middleton 1973). At a destination, product is presented as a bundle of elements such as transportation, accommodation, and entertainment. These can be drawn by the level of tourist satisfaction to each dimension (Zabkar, Brenc, and Dmitrovic2010). Staff and skill performance and extra amenities provided were the determinants of tourists choice intention(Qua   andTsang,1998).Therefore each attribute of destination is important as consumer dissatisfaction with one of its attribute will lead to dissatisfaction with overall destination(Pizam 1978).

Bramwell (1998) provided theories about tourism and examined how place marketing framework helps to understanding of tourist products satisfaction which can help in development and improvement in tourism product. Kozak& Rimington (2000) reported the findings of a study to determine destination attributes critical to the overall satisfaction level of tourists. Beerli and Martin (2003) analyzed the influence of socio-demographic characteristic as well as psychological characteristics on different components of perceived image. Dwyer(2009) discussed the emerging trends in tourism and strategies to be adopted for destination, tourists and enterprise management. Hui, Wan, Ho (2006) examined the tourists expectation, perception and satisfaction visiting Singapore. The study found the likelihood of tourists to recommend the Singapore to their friends and relatives. Some researchers measured the satisfaction level of tourist visiting India. Chaudhary (2000) examined the satisfaction and expectation level of foreign tourists visiting India. The study found that India was not perceived positively. India lacked behind on infrastructure and safety issues. Khaki and Sahaf (2011) examined the satisfaction of tourists visiting Kashmir on three broad critical attributes: the tourist information, tourist infrastructure and tourist service and facilities. The study found that there was need for further improvement in services and facilities to make state competitive tourist destination.

Shahrivar (2012) investigated tourist satisfaction and destination attributes in Malaysia. The relationship was analyzed with four variables. (Cultural factors, demographic factors, travel behavior factors and information source). Overall foreign tourists expressed higher satisfaction. Tourists were satisfied with factors like natural beauties, community's attitude, value spent for transportation and lodging. Further they were dissatisfied with attributes like safety and security, water, medical facilities and rest and serenity. Aggarwal (2016) examined the factors which impact tourist satisfaction in Mathura- Vrindavan area. With the help of factor analysis five factors were extracted which were- Aesthetic appeal, accessibility, supporting structure, food and services, and health and guide services. The results of regression analysis revealed that these five dimensions were good predictor of overall tourist satisfaction. Debases and Dye (2015) investigated the customer's perceptions and expectations through servqual in luxury hotels in Odisha. The most important dimension extracted through factor analysis was tangibility followed by reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy in hotel services. The study found that there was need to market the destination because the state had not been able to fully exploit the potential. Suanmali (2014) investigated the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in northern Thailand. Factor analysis was carried out which showed five factors- hospitality, attraction and accessibility, cost of staying, environmental factors and infrastructure. Cost of staying was the most influential factor on overall satisfaction. Srivastava, Ali and Kaushal (2015) analyzed the most important factors which affected tourist satisfaction in the holy city of Amritsar.

Eight factors were extracted- employee attributes, promotional measures, communication network, food and security, safety factors, value for money, hotel interiors and extra facilities. Rami & Kshatriya (2015) recognized the satisfaction level of tourist on basic facilities at tourist spots in Guajrat. He analyzed the difference in perceptions and expectations of tourists on the basis of five service quality dimensions. The results indicated that most favorite attribute was infrastructure provided at various spots whereas food facility, accommodation and safety were not up to the satisfaction level of tourists. The Report on Tourism Survey for the state of Punjab (2009-2010) assessed the satisfaction of tourists with respect to various services in the state. The study found that the tourist were not satisfied with services such as quality of information, public convenience, entertainment places, availability of tourist guides and information centres.

Objective Of The Study

- To study the demographic characteristics and travel choice of tourists visiting the state of Punjab.
- To identify the most important factors affecting tourist satisfaction in the state of Punjab.

Research Design

The study covers one state of India i.e. Punjab. In order to measure the satisfaction of tourists visiting the state, a sample of 200 tourists using purposive sampling has been selected. The survey was conducted in the period of seven months ranging from September 2016 to April 2017. These tourists were selected by visiting tourist destinations and hotels in the states. A scaled and well-constructed questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection from tourists. The first part of the questionnaire examined the demographic profile as well as the purpose of visit, travel frequency, duration of stay. Second part of the questionnaire duly covered various aspects of tourist satisfaction. These aspects included satisfaction with reference to Accommodation, Food & Beverages, Bar Services, Shopping, Room Service, Entertainment, Parking Facilities, Transport, Information Centre, Internet/Fax, Medical Services, Beauty Parlors, Information of State as a Tourist Destination, Reservation Facility, Quality of Basic Infrastructure, Quality of Hotels/Lodge/Guest Houses, Quality & Variety of Food, Level of Hygienic Conditions, Safety & Security, Proper Display of Taxi/Rickshaw Fare, Quality & Cleanliness of Environment, Attitude of Local People and Travel Agents & Guide Services.

Scheme of Analysis

Firstly, to calculate the demographic profile of tourists visiting Punjab, descriptive statistics i.e. frequencies were calculated. To measure and compare the level of satisfaction of tourist, factor analysis was used to extract some major components of satisfaction.

Data Analysis

Demographic Profile

The demographic characteristics of respondents shown in Table 2 reveals that 53% were females in the survey where as 43% were males. As regards age group 27%

of the respondents were from age group of less than 25 years, 46% were from 25-40 years, 18% were from 40-60 years and 9% were above 60 years of age. The sample was divided between married and unmarried with majority of individuals in the survey being married (55%) and single being (45%)..   With regards occupation, 24% respondents were students, 15% were self-employed, majority (44%) were employed somewhere, 5% were businessmen. Majority of the respondents (52%) had income below ` 50,000, 26% had income between ` 50,000 to ` 1 lakh.  Further 15% of the respondents had income between ` 1 lakh to ` 5 lakh and 7% had income above ` 5 lakhs. As for education, 49% were post graduate, 34% graduate, and 11% were below graduate.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Variables	Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	86	43%
	Female	114	53%
Age Group	Less than 25 years	54	27%
	25-40 years	92	46%
	40-60 years	36	18%
	60 years & above	18	9%
Marital Status	Married	110	55%
	Unmarried	90	45%
Occupation	Student	48	24%
	Self employed	30	15%
	Service/ Employee	88	44%
	Business	10	5%
	Others	24	12%
Monthly Income	Below ` 50,000	104	52%
	` 50,000 -` 1 lakh	52	26%
	` 1 lakh - ` 5 lakh	30	15%
	` 5 lakh or above	14	7%
Education	Below Graduate	22	11%
	Graduate	68	34%
	Post Graduate	98	49%
	Others	12	6%

Travel choice

In order to know the frequency of visits in the state, it was found that 19% of the respondents had never visited the state before, 24% tourists earlier once had visited the study area, 9% had visited twice and 48% had already visited the place more than twice. The information about purpose of visit revealed that 19% came to the state for a pleasurable trip, 11% came to meet their relatives, 56% for pilgrims and religious visit and 14% for other purpose. In response to duration of stay in the state, 32% preferred to stay for 1-2 days, 38% for 3-4 days, 16% for 5-7 days and 19% for more than a week.

Table 3: Travel Information

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Visits		
Never	38	19%
Once	48	24%
Twice	18	9%
More than twice	96	48%
Purpose of Visit		
Pleasure trip	38	19%
Visiting relatives	22	11%
Pilgrims	112	56%
Others	28	14%
Duration of Stay		
1 - 2 days	64	32%
3 - 4 days	66	33%
5 - 7 days	32	16%
More than a week	38	19%

A set of twenty-three variables was used to measure the level of satisfaction of tourists. Five point likert scale has been used ranging from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied. Reliability analysis has been used to measure the reliability of scale. Generally, cronbach alpha value more than 0.7 is considered good. In this scale, cronbach alpha value is 0.825 which assures high reliability of scale of satisfaction used in this study.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.825	23

Factor analysis helped to reduce the data to six major components. Before going for factor analysis, KMO test and Bartlett's test were used to assure that the sample was adequate and data was spherical. KMO value more than 0.5 and significant chi-square value confirmed that the data was spherical and sample was adequate which was appropriate to use factor analysis.

Table 5:   KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.808
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1321.594
	Df	253
	Sig.	0.000

Table 6 shows the explained variation of extracted factors. A total of six factors were extracted using principal component analysis of extraction. Figures in table showed that first factor which is major one has explained 17.24% variation. Second factor explained 11.06% variation. Remaining four factors have explained variation in between 6% to 10%. In total, these six factors have explained 57.16% variation which is a good proportion.

Table 6: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.587	24.293	24.293	3.965	17.241	17.241
2	2.225	9.676	33.969	2.545	11.064	28.305
3	1.61	7.001	40.97	1.991	8.658	36.963
4	1.343	5.838	46.808	1.649	7.169	44.132
5	1.271	5.525	52.333	1.555	6.761	50.893
6	1.112	4.834	57.167	1.443	6.274	57.167
7	0.966	4.202	61.369			
8	0.873	3.794	65.163			
9	0.839	3.646	68.809			
10	0.786	3.418	72.227			
11	0.731	3.178	75.405			
12	0.694	3.018	78.423			
13	0.637	2.772	81.195			
14	0.618	2.685	83.88			
15	0.585	2.543	86.423			
16	0.552	2.402	88.825			
17	0.527	2.292	91.116			
18	0.464	2.02	93.136			
19	0.413	1.795	94.931			
20	0.329	1.431	96.362			
21	0.311	1.351	97.714			
22	0.279	1.214	98.928			
23	0.247	1.072	100			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 7 shows rotated factor loadings. Varimax rotation has been used to rotate data. An observation into the table shows that ten variables have been clubbed in first factor. These include Information of State as a Tourist Destination (TD), Quality of Basic Infrastructure of TD, Quality of Hotels/Lodge/Guest Houses of TD, Quality & Variety of Food of TD, Level of Hygienic Conditions of TD, Safety & Security at TD,

Proper Display of Taxi/Rickshaw Fare at TD, Quality & Cleanliness of Environment at TD, Attitude of Local People in TD and finally Travel Agents & Guide Services at TD. It is clear that tourist as a primary concern look for facilities and safety issues at tourist destinations. Surprisingly, nothing related to facilities at hotels or guest houses have been given significant importance. This factor has been named as amenities and safety at tourist destinations.

Second factor indicated basic facilities available concerning hotels and guesthouses exclusively. These amenities are Accommodation, Food & Beverages, Room Service and Entertainment. Thus, this factor has been named as basic amenities of hotels and guesthouses. Third factor has covered secondary services available at hotels and

guesthouses. These services include Information Centre at hotels, Internet/Fax, Medical Services and Shopping places at or near hotels and guesthouses. Fourth factor has covered two services namely parking facility and transportation arrangements at hotels and guesthouses. Fifth factor has been bar services at hotels and guesthouses. Last factor has covered reservation facility with regard to tourist destinations.

Thus, in brief it can be said that tourists look for services, facilities and safety concerns related to tourist destinations at first place. Thereafter, basic or primary facilities at hotels and guesthouses become the issue followed by secondary services. Finally, some exclusive services like bar service do not attract much of the attention of tourists.

Table 7: Rotated Component Matrix

		Component					
		1	**2**	**3**	4	**5**	**6**
1.	Accommodation	0.259	0.769	0.107	-0.014	-0.004	-0.104
2.	Food & Beverages	0.131	0.691	0.084	-0.114	0.38	0.252
3.	Bar Services	0.076	0.02	0	0.034	0.752	-0.006
4.	Shopping	-0.004	0.317	0.46	0.138	0.334	0.031
5.	Room Service	-0.128	0.775	0.209	0.129	-0.029	0.02
6.	Entertainment	0.157	0.474	0.165	0.395	-0.128	0.101
7.	Parking Facilities	0.21	0.195	0.147	0.594	-0.004	0.081
8.	Transport	0.247	-0.118	0.29	0.493	0.013	0.258
9.	Information Centre	0.14	0.2	0.688	0.012	-0.009	-0.045
10.	Internet/Fax	0.109	0.081	0.561	0.12	-0.438	0.171
11.	Medical Services	0.057	0.059	0.678	-0.033	0.094	-0.024

12. Beauty Parlors	0.026	0.053	0.351	-0.722	-0.06	0.141
13. Information of State as a Tourist Destination (TD)	0.522	0.086	0.206	0.26	-0.019	0.332
14. Reservation Facility	0.059	0.095	-0.035	0.07	0.028	0.854
15. Quality of Basic Infrastructure of TD	0.695	0.124	-0.122	0.204	-0.251	-0.024
16. Quality of Hotels/Lodge/Guest Houses	0.569	0.419	-0.058	-0.069	0.039	0.191
17. Quality & Variety of Food of TD	0.423	0.365	0.214	-0.201	0.399	0.218
18. Level of Hygienic Conditions of TD	0.732	0.075	0.095	0.147	0.123	-0.217
19. Safety & Security at TD	0.682	0.14	0.222	-0.036	0.123	0.193
20. Proper Display of Taxi/Rickshaw Fare at TD	0.615	-0.118	0.036	-0.014	0.032	0.23
21. Quality & Cleanliness of Environment at TD	0.75	0.114	0.095	0.156	0.049	-0.243
22. Attitude of Local People in TD	0.479	0.21	0.125	0.1	0.391	0.308
23. Travel Agents & Guide Services at TD	0.509	-0.087	0.149	0.307	0.317	0.132

Findings

The study covered twenty-three variables to measure the level of satisfaction of tourists in the state of Punjab. Results of the study showed that these twenty-three variables were categorized into six main factors using factor analysis which were…

1) Amenities and Safety at tourist destinations
2) Basic amenities of hotel and guest houses
3) Secondary services available at hotels and guest houses
4) Parking and Transport arrangement at guest houses
5) Bar services at hotel and guest houses
6) Reservation facility at tourist destinations

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, the tourism service providers, planners, policy makers can chalk out strategies to enhance tourist satisfaction.. There is strong need on the part of the government of Punjab to build a framework for development of tourism in the State. Government in consultation with the private agencies should make plans for long term sustainable tourism development. Though many people are aware of Punjab as a tourist destination yet few tourists get to see the authentic culture and way of life of the people of

Punjab. Punjab formulated the tourism policy in 2003. Moreover, aggressive marketing campaign must be carried out to build an image of Punjab as a major tourist destination. Celebrity endorsement may also help to market tourism. More and more national and international events must be conducted.   Need of the day is to develop basic infrastructure facilities like construction and maintenance of highways, transportation facilities, electricity, sewerage etc. These services are the prerequisites for encouraging visitors. It is important to ensure the safety and security of tourists. It is the prime concern of state as it builds confidence of the tourists that helps to enhance the image of the destination. Making Punjab clean and green would attract more tourists. The study has provided with the knowledge of the factors that can help to increase tourist satisfaction. However the limitations attached to the study include the limited sample size, the time of collecting the data. The results of study might differ from other survey carried out.

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