

Assessing International Heritage Tourist Satisfaction in India

* Dr. Manish Srivastava

INTRODUCTION

If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow - In some part a very paradise on earth -I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solution of some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant-I should point to India.

- Max Muller

India is a land of contrasts - from tropics to snow. India is the second most populous and seventh largest country in the world. No region in the world is more colorful or picturesque than India. Its ancient monuments and building designed by great craftsman of by gone days, its tradition, culture, philosophy, festivals, religion and art testify to one of the oldest and richest civilization and are of absorbing interest. Understanding the tourism potential of India, ABTA (Association of British Travel Agency) has ranked India as the number 1 destination among the top 50 places in 2006. "Conde Nast Traveller". The worlds' leading travel and tourism journal has also ranked India as top 4 preferred holiday destinations in the world.

Traveling and Tourism has been an integral part of Indian Culture & Tradition. In ancient time, tourism was confined to pilgrimage only. People used to travel to holy places situated all over the country. People also travelled to participate in fairs, exhibitions and festivals. Because of this, in India, the concept of "*Atithi Devo Bhavah*" (Guest is God) and "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam*" (All world is a family) started. In 1951, only 16,800 foreign tourists came in India, the number increased to 4.97 million in year 2007, so India's earning from tourism increased to \$ 11.95 billion in year 2007. If we see the average growth rate of tourism industry in India, we find it at 13 % as compared to growth rate in the world as 7 %, which shows the importance of Tourism Industry for the Indian Economy although, the tourism industry in India has a share of **0.52%** of world tourism and the receipts as **0.89%** of the world receipts.

Tourism industry today is one of the world's fastest growing industries. It has earned over \$735 billion (US) world wide, generated by over 842 million international travelers in year 2006 and the No. of tourists has been increased to 898 million in 2007 (World Tourism Organization). Domestic tourism also has been increased upto at least 9000 million worldwide. The contribution of tourism industry in world trade is 30% and in world GDP, it continued to be 10.6% in year 2005 and the employment generated by Tourism Industry was 221.568 million worldwide which is 8.3% of the total employment in the year 2005-06. According to John Naisbit (1994), the only revolution will be in the field of communication and the biggest industry in 21st Century will be "Travel & Tourism Industry". According to "World Tourism Institute" and "World Tourism & Travel Corporation" (Vision 2020), the predictions for Tourism is that till 2020, the number of tourists traveling across world will be nearly 1600 million and they will spend nearly \$2000 billion on it. The average growth in tourism industry will be nearly 4.3 % and the receipts will be 6.7 % of total receipts.

There is no doubt that tourism comes with certain negative attributes of a host community such as increased litter and pollution, increased seasonal employment, inflated local economy, and exploitation of natural resources. Positive outcomes could also result from these recreational outlets with proper guidance and direction (Henderson, 1991), it provides an opportunity for the visitors to understand the host culture and same with the host country too. That is the objective of heritage tourism.

Heritage means inheritance or a legacy; things of value which have been passed through one generation to the next. (Parks Canada, undated, Page 7). In this sense, cultural heritage is cultural property and in extreme cases, it can be fought over or otherwise physically appropriated (Eirinberg 1992) as a relationship of the present with the past; it can also be contested and revised (Light 2000). The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as "Traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present."

India with its glorious past has ensured that the present and subsequent generations have plenty of historical and

* Reader, School of Management Sciences, Khushipur, Mohansarai-Mughalsarai Road, Varanasi-221011, Uttar Pradesh.
E-mail : manishiftm@gmail.com

cultural heritages to be proud of. The fascinating monuments and heritage sites in the country stand quietly today to retell their story of joy, sorrow, courage and sacrifice, which attracts a number of international tourists from all over the world to feel the magic of the oldest country/ civilization. The paper is an attempt to understand the satisfaction indicator among international travelers relating to the heritage sites of India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the sociology of tourism, tourism is viewed primarily as a social phenomenon (Apostolopoulos 1996, Dann 1996a, Cohen 1996), with the consumption and social behavior of tourism being legitimate areas of research and study (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, Baudrillard 1998). There are many theoretical approaches in the sociology of tourism literature, most of which are related to the major sociological theories. The main perspectives are : The evolutionary perspective; The Neo Durkheimian perspective; The conflict perspective; The functionalist perspective; The Weberian perspective; phenomenology; ethnomethodology; symbolic interactionism and sociolinguistic. Dann and Cohen (1996) suggest that a study of tourism and tourist behavior using only one theoretical perspective is limiting, and recommended a more pluralistic, integrative and multi-dimensional approach to these subjects.

A study conducted by Kerkvliet and Nowell (1999) focuses on visitor experience in relation to distance traveled and effort required to access a specific location. Attraction, facilities and accessibility are the three important parameters of a tourist destination. A tourist destination can be popular when it has all the three attributes. Specific attributes relating to setting have the ability to constrain individuals and thereby influence their destination preferences (Siderelis & Moore, 1998). Every destination differs with its potential to attract the tourists. Heritage tourism, now- a -days is gaining attention everywhere. All leisure behavior is multiple goal oriented or needs satisfying (Manning 1986). An alternative benefit chain analysis is found in consumer behavior, as means-end chain (Gutman 1982) where consumers are asked to explain why what they are doing is important (Davies and Prentice 1995).

Cultural capital is the notion that the customers not only have the money capital as resources, but they also have other sorts of capital including that derived from their cultural background. This tradition flows from the work of Bourdieu (Holt 1998; Robbins 2000)

Heritage is about special sense of belonging and of continuity (Miller 1989) but visits are recalled for many reasons other than sense of history alone (Masberg & Silverman, 1996; Prentice 1998). Getz (1989) identified five benefits for heritage events. These are authenticity, belonging, spectacle, games and rituals. Joy, celebration and excess may dominate at such events rather than learning. Such motivations dominate festival consumption (Getz 1991; Williams - Barun 1994).

Heritage sites are selected in relation to the cost involved, accessibility and the facilities in those sites, but it is questionable what the level of satisfaction related with the site is. Tourist satisfaction is one of the most discussed concepts in the field of tourism marketing and the sociology of tourism (Schofield 2000 page no. 269). The more the similarity between cultures, the more the satisfaction.

There are three good reasons to pay so much attention to tourist satisfaction : first, high tourist satisfaction provides word of mouth recommendations of product and services to family and friends, which in turn brings in new customers: Second, it creates repeat customers by satisfying them first time around, and so they provide a steady source of income without the need of additional marketing expenditure: Third, it limits complaints and compensation payments which are expensive, time consuming and bad for an organization's reputation (Swarbrooke and Horner 2001, pg. 238).

Repeat visitation displays a certain level of individual satisfaction and attachment to particular location and/or activity. Tourist attractions have been found to rely heavily on loyal, repeat visitors (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984). A study by Laverie and Arnett (2000) examines recreational attachment and satisfaction in the context of devoted sports fan behavior.

Another study concerning tourism destination loyalty was conducted by Opperman (2000) on the lifelong travel patterns of New Zealand residents. Three primary areas were observed by means of a mail-back questionnaire: visitation frequency between 1985 and 1995, past visitation behavior, and predicted visitation rates. By associating socio- demographics, lifestyle, and tourist loyalty variables, specific population segments were identified as having specific desired loyalty types. Ultimately, the study findings suggest that past travel experiences significantly influence future destination selection.

Fig 1 presents a tourist satisfaction process that has three stages: a tourist product, a satisfaction factor and an outcome defined as satisfaction, partial satisfaction or dissatisfaction and reflecting what a tourist thinks and feels

about their overall experience and their received goods and services (Kozak 2001b, p 304 ; Heber and lerner 1999). Since satisfaction is largely a subjective quality, the self- evaluation of their own experiences by tourist themselves are the most commonly used measurement tools (Kozak 2001b; Schiffman and Kanuk 2000; Swarbrooke and Horner 2001).

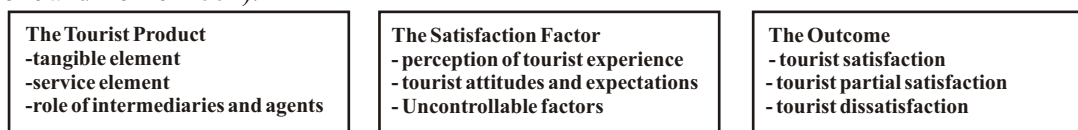


Fig - 1

Cross cultural comparative research is one of the most important of many different research methodologies and approaches in tourist satisfaction research (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2001; Baker and Crompton, 2000; Todd, 1999; Choi and Chu, 2000; Reisinger and Turner, 1998; Kozak and Rimington, 2000; Kozak, 2001a, 2000; Pizam and Sussman 1995). The research compares the tourist satisfaction levels of different nationalities by using a direct or indirect method. The direct method directly asks the tourists themselves about their experiences, perception and satisfaction levels; the indirect method asks local residents, business owners, tour guides etc. about their perception of how the tourists are enjoying (or not) their experiences (Kozak 2001a, page no. 391). This study has employed the direct method, with respondents being asked, through formal surveys, to answer questions about their holidays.

According to a study conducted by Derrick, Lehfeld, and Wolfe (1981), expenditures increased with increasing levels of income and education and decreased with older aged households and tourist satisfaction is significantly related to customer loyalty, repeat visitation, and positive social communications (Beeho & Prentice, 1997).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data was collected through brief, on-site interviews based on a structured, non-disguised questionnaire. The questions were focused on certain demographic information (gender, state and county of residence) and a limited number of core, central questions relating to the overall study objective such as primary purpose of visit, distance traveled, and if it was the respondent's first visit to the area, visitor experience and satisfaction. Expenditure and satisfaction variables were measured through fill-in-the- blank questions, as well as five-point Likert scale responses.

The researcher had contacted foreign tourists on heritage tourist sites like New Delhi (The capital of India and famous for monuments), Agra (The city of Taj), Varanasi (The most ancient and eternal city), Jaipur (historical Rajputana site) etc. and they had been requested to spare 2 minutes. of their time to help in filling the questionnaire.

Data collection for this project was conducted from December, 2007 to February 2008 over a period of ten weeks.

The data collection process resulted in a total of **234** surveys.

DATA ANALYSIS

A profile of the sample population, including age, gender, group size, distance traveled, and first-time visitor status is shown in Table 1-6. There were 112 males and 122 females in the study. The overall mean age of sampled visitors was found to be **37.7** years; however, there were less than ten percent of visitors above the age of fifty five. Average duration of the stay was found to be 20.63 days which is much higher than other Asian countries. Survey has found that nearly 60% of the respondents came to India for the first time.

The primary concern of this paper is to determine overall satisfaction levels among foreign visitors visiting heritage tourist places in India and determine specific attributes that contribute to their level of satisfaction. The survey asked very simple questions just to rank various facilities in the Likert scale of 5. These ranking were given points, which has formed a basis for the developing satisfaction index related with various attributes. The index

Table 1

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Below 25	31	13.24786
25-35	83	35.47009
35-45	53	22.64957
45-55	46	19.65812
above 55	21	8.974359

Mean Age – 37.7

Table 2

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	112	47.86325
Female	122	52.13675

Table 3

Nationality	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Irish	14	5.982906
French	10	4.273504
Japanese	32	13.67521
British	64	27.35043
Korean	42	17.94872
Israeli	14	5.982906
Canadian	10	4.273504
American	34	14.52991
Italian	14	5.982906

Table 4

Duration of Stay	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 7 days	22	9.401709
7-15 days	76	32.47863
15 days- 1 month	60	25.64103
More than 1 month	76	32.47863

Average Duration of Stay – 20.63 days

Table 5

No. of Visits in India	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	138	58.97436
2	42	17.94872
3	30	12.82051
More than 3	24	10.25641

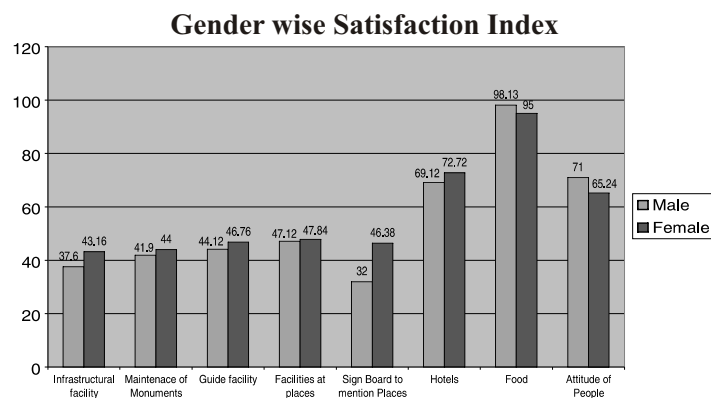
Table 6

Accompanied Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Peer	105	44.87179
Alone	49	20.94017
Family	35	14.95726
Professional	17	7.264957
Tourist	28	11.96581

has been shown in Figure 2. The Figure clearly mentions that the perception about major facilities at important tourist places is below average. Only Hotels and eating facilities have delighted foreign tourists by their services. Differences in satisfaction between categories of different visitor groups were explored using z-tests and analysis of variance.

**Fig 2**

Mean satisfaction level for all the factors is 57.2%, but after removing the last 3 factors, in which government has fewer or no role, the index reduces to 43.2% as last three factors i.e. hotels, food and attitude of people has a mean index of 78.5%.

**Figure 3**

Mean satisfaction level for males is 55.12 and for females is 57.63, which shows that female tourists are more satisfied than male tourists. There are only two factors- food and attitude of people, in which male satisfaction was higher than the female satisfaction. Female tourists rate Indian food as spicy, but they enjoy taking it. Z-test was used to evaluate the satisfaction level for different factors between male and female

Table 7

Factors		Mean	S. D.	z_value
Infrastructural facility	Male	37.6	16.15	-2.78
	Female	43.16	14.32	
Maintenance of Monuments	Male	41.9	14.22	-1.09
	Female	44	15.11	
Guide facility	Male	44.12	13.14	-1.38
	Female	46.76	15.8	
Facilities at landmarks	Male	47.12	17.43	-.36
	Female	47.84	12.4	
Sign Board to mention landmarks	Male	32	16.4	-7.33
	Female	46.38	13.24	
Hotels	Male	69.12	18.7	-1.59
	Female	72.72	15.4	
Food	Male	98.13	17.63	1.43
	Female	95	15.4	
Attitude of People	Male	71	11.2	3.97
	Female	65.24	11.0	

With 5% level of significance, (Critical value for $z = 1.96$) we may conclude that in most of the cases, there is no significant difference between satisfaction level of male tourists and female tourists. Only Infrastructural facility, sign board and attitude of people are the factors where male and female satisfaction is different.

CONCLUSION

There is tremendous hike in tourism all over the world. Even tourism has got the status of largest Export Industry of the world. The estimates about tourism says that the number of tourists leaving their homes is 898 million in 2007 and this number is likely to swell to 1600 million by 2020 and the receipts from it are estimated to cross \$2000 billion.

Although the benefits of tourism are not to be judged in terms of economic benefits alone, tourism has wider implications encompassing not only economic benefits but also social and cultural benefits as well. From the social and cultural point of view, there is enough evidence to support the fact that tourism and travel unquestionably produces an interaction between the cultural customs of the visitors and those of the host population. Heritage tourism is a fertile ground for exercising creative talents, fostering special kinds of relations between the visitors and the host population, between the tourist and the host environment.

India is now increasingly seen as an exotic destination offering a mix of culture, history and state of art amenities to the international traveler. The inbound tourist traffic is growing steadily over the past few years and India has the potential to emerge as a front runner in the world tourism scenario. While the tourists were more satisfied with food, hotel and people of India, a deep sense of dissatisfaction can be perceived with regard to infrastructure. Overall Satisfaction level was 57.2% which can be considered as a good score for a developing country like India. Understanding the potential of tourism industry, the Indian government along with other stake holders tries to build a positive image in the eyes of foreign tourists. Government is now emphasizing more on tourist satisfaction and is working in this area with private public participation.

It was found that the tourists coming in India are very much satisfied with the attitude of Indians. The first Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had once quoted that "Welcome the tourists and send him as a friend". There is no doubt that there were some problems related with law and order with some tourists (basically theft), but overall, the people are friendly and helpful. It is proved by average stay of tourists (20.63 days) which is much more than any other country in Asia. The government is also committed for the safety of tourists and deployed tourist police in major tourist destinations to help tourists.

Major dissatisfaction of tourists was with infrastructural facility. They remarked that there were inordinate delays at immigration counters. These delays were attributable to lack of space and inadequate computerization, coupled

with heavy rush during morning hours. To overcome this, the authorities concerned at international airports must ensure availability of more space so as to enable the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) to locate additional counters and deploy more immigration officers and the paper work involved in immigration should be reduced in line with international practice.

There was dissatisfaction with road transport too. Tourists were of the opinion that roads leading to tourist destinations were in bad condition causing great inconvenience and delays. To overcome this, a comprehensive study should be commissioned by the Ministry of Transport in collaboration with Department of Tourism to ascertain the status of approach roads and prepare a time bound action plan to rectify the defects to make them travel friendly in major tourist destinations.

About 60% of the tourists preferred budget accommodations and only about 20% stayed in starred hotels. Satisfaction index in relation to Hotels was only 71, which can be improved by providing suitable incentives to the private sector in terms of land or lease space and tax benefits as given in other industries.

Tourists were also not satisfied with airport facilities like ambience, toilets, cleanliness, cafeteria, baggage, customs clearance, security etc. With the expansion and modernization under way, these problems are likely to be eased. It is therefore suggested that modernization & expansion of airports and other policy measures under consideration should be expedited and implemented within a specified time frame.

The satisfaction indexes for sign boards, maintenance of heritage tourist places were also very low. Government should take adequate action to maintain these sites to increase tourist inflow. They can also get private partnership to maintain it.

The tourists were very much satisfied with Guides approved by the government, but illegal guides are also present at every heritage site who are involved in earning money through unfair means. Government should curb the practices of illegal guides and tourists should also take help of only government approved guides. There should be training program of guides too.

It is important for tourism service providers to understand the diversity of their potential customers and attempt to cater to the needs of all population segments. Quality services leave a positive impression on visitors regardless of their overall experience. Quality service delivery also possesses the ability to increase monetary profits. The premise of service quality meanders within all aspects of the tourism experience from promotional materials, on-site personnel, cleanliness of facilities, accessibility, and employee knowledge and courtesy. A creative approach should be taken in the tourist product planning, providing them proper facilities, changing of exhibits, programs, and outdoor excursions to offer more reasons for tourist satisfaction.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amaro, B. (1999). Ecotourism and ethics. *Earth Island Journal*, 14, 16-17.
- Beeho, A. J. & Prentice, R. C. (1997). Conceptualizing the experiences of heritage tourists: A case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village. *Tourism Management*, 18 (2), 75-87.
- Davies A.J. and Prentice R.C. (1995) Conceptualizing the latent visitor to heritage attractions, *Tourism Management* 16(4), 491-500
- Eirinberg K. (1992) Culture under fire, *Geographical magazine* 64(12) 24-8
- Getz D. (1989) Special Events. Defining the product. *Tourism Management* 10(2) 125-37
- Getz D. (1991) Festivals. *Special Events and Tourism*. New York : Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Gitelson, R. J., & Crompton, J. L. (1984). Insights into the repeat vacation phenomenon. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 199-217.
- Gutman J (1982) The means- end chain model based on consumer categorization process; *Journal of Marketing* 46, 60-72
- Henderson, K. H. (1991). Dimensions of choice: A qualitative approach to recreation, parks, and leisure research. State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.
- Holt D.B. (1998) Does cultural capital structure American Consumption, *Journal of Consumer Research* 25, 1-25
- Kerkvliet, J., & Nowell, C. (1999). Heterogeneous visitors and the spatial limits of the travel cost model. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31 (4), 404-419.
- Kozak M (2001) A critical review of approaches to measure satisfaction with destinations. In J. A. Mazanec. G.I. Crouch, J.R.B. Richie & A. G. Woodside (Eds) *Consumer psychology of tourism, hospitality and leisure* (Vol II p 303-320)
- Laverie, D. A., & Arnett, D. B. (2000). Factors affecting fan attendance: The influence of identity salience and satisfaction. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32 (2), 225-246.
- Light D. (2000) Gazing on communism, *Tourism Geographies* 2, 157-76
- Manning R. E. (1986) *Studies in Outdoor recreation*. Corvallis: Oregon State university press
- Masberg B.A. & Silverman L.H., (1996) Visitor experiences at Heritage sites, *Journal of Travel Research* 34(4) 20-5
- Miller S (1989) Heritage management for heritage tourism. *Tourism Management* 10(1), 9-14
- Naisbitt John (1994), *Global Paradox*, William Morrow & Co.
- Parks Canada, undated, Parks Canada policy, Ottawa : Parks Canada
- Prentice R. C. (1998) Recollection of museum visits, *Museum Management and curatorship* 17, 41-64
- Robbins D. (2000) *Bourdieu and Culture*, London: Sage
- Oppermann, M. (2000). Tourism destination loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39, 78-84.
- Siderelis, C. & Moore, R. L. (1998). Recreation demand and the influence of site preference variables. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 30 (3), 301-318.
- Srivastava M (2006) *National and State Tourism Marketing*, Kanishka publication, N Delhi.
- Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism: A socio- structural version*. Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings.
- Williams Barun B. (1994) Situating Cultural policies. *Environment and planning : Society and Space* 12, 75-104