

Foreign tourist behavior and perceptions of indian tourism



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Tourism industry is one of the major industries of the world. Various sub-sectors of this industry have been developing special relationships among themselves to eliminate competition and cost. Tourism is an important part of economic life and is closely associated with services like travel, food and accommodation. A significant part of human activity is connected with tourism. We can consider the structure of tourism industry in a form in which certain countries offer better destination, quality, and improved programmes with innovations laced with ideas of establishing product differentiation.

The aim of this paper is to provide a practical approach towards the satisfaction pattern of foreign tourist behavior towards Indian tourism. This paper also depicts a clear study of behavioral understanding of foreign tourist which is presented through a qualitative research framework.

Findings highlight the satisfaction level of foreign tourists with respect to Indian tourism. Gap is evaluated between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and strategies to enhance Indian tourism are suggested for future to create a differentiation.

KEY WORDS: Tourism, customer's satisfaction, differentiation.

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who “ travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited”.

Tourism is an industry that operates on a massively broad scale: it embraces activities ranging from the smallest sea-side hotel; to air-lines, multi-national hotel chains and major international tour operators. Originally, non-traditional industries such as tourism emerged as a solution to strike a balance between ecology and industry. The tourism industry is now one of the largest sectors earning foreign exchange for the exchequer. In the face of such benefits, many countries have started assigning due weight age to the tourism industry in their national development agenda.

The Holistic view of Tourism Industry in India:

India has been ranked the “ best country brand for value-for-money” in the Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy. India also claimed the second place in CBI’s “ best country brand for history”, as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity and art & culture, and the fourth best new country for business. India made it to the list of “ rising stars” or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China, and Vietnam. India attracted about 4 million foreign tourists in 2006 that spent US\$8. 9 billion. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275. 5 billion by 2018 at a 9. 4% annual growth rate. The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of Tourism in India. It maintains the Incredible India campaign.

However, India’s tourism sector currently lags behind less endowed countries and faces serious challenges including shortage of hotel rooms and security of foreign tourists. In 2007, there were only 25, 000 tourist-class hotel rooms
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in the whole of India. Among other factors hindering the growth of the tourism industry in India are stringent visa requirements and congested airports. Despite short- and medium-term setbacks, tourism revenues are expected to surge by 42% from 2007 to 2017.

Despite some upheavals, the upward trend in tourism is noticed almost everywhere. Terrorism, threats of wars and economic problems have not been able to harm the industry except for short periods. The overall global picture of tourism arrivals and revenues has been quite good everywhere. The basic spark for tourism comes from the quest for knowledge of different cultures and some illusive or real charms of distant destinations.

Adventurous spirit acts as a magnetic pull for many people. Time and resources permitting, they want to leave their places of residence intermittently.

This gene of curiosity and favorable factors like politico-economic developments and technological change leading to increase in speed and comfort of travel has brought about a revolution in the tourist activity. After the stalemate of World War II, many countries worked hard to improve their infrastructure facilities for the tourists. The laissez faire tourism policy of leaving the job to bureaucrats or clerks was given up in favor of scientific management with high productivity and efficiency.

In several countries, a proper management of the tourism sector was undertaken and an intensive study of different aspects of innovation tourism was carried out. Some tourism inducing factors like favorable government policies, higher incomes, more holidays and leave opportunities have been

conducive to the growth of tourism. People want to move out because of the increasing stress at work and tension and also because of the desire to get away from a polluted atmosphere. Social and seasonal pressures too, generate a short term feeling of the need for abandonment, peaceful relaxation or recuperation. It could be also escapism or an adventurous idea. Each situation gives rise to different types of tourists.

Marketing of tourism and tourist / consumer behavior:

Tourism is a service sector which earns a substantial foreign exchange to developing countries. In India, Kerala is one of the important destinations for the international tourists with its unique nature beauty with backwaters, mountains and beaches. To make the tourism a great success one has to take advantage of the modern technology to full extent. Present paper is an attempt to market tourism by adapting the service marketing approach for achieving great success. Being a service product it has to adopt Service marketing principles. This process is explained through the service triangle.

(SERVICE MARKET TRIANGLE)

a) Company:

The company in the Tourism Sector can be the Central Government, the State tourism Corporations, Tour Operators such as SOTC, ITDC, etc. The company carries out ' External Marketing' as well as ' Internal Marketing'

External Marketing: It makes promises to the customers, for e. g. the Malaysian government's advertisement " Malaysia, Truly Asia" that promises a veritable cultural paradise to the customer.

Internal Marketing: The Company enables the Providers to fulfill the promises made by it to the customers. For example, the Malaysian Government maintains the local transportation within the country, maintains the tourist spots such as KL Towers, etc.

b) Providers:

The Providers include all the entities that finally fulfill the Company's promise to the Customers. They undertake 'Interactive Marketing', because they are in touch with the final customer. Thus in the case of the Malaysian government, this would include the transportation providers (Malaysian Airlines, Air India, local bus transportation, local trains in Kuala Lumpur, car and two-wheeler rentals), the different hotels within Malaysia (Tanjam Putri), souvenir outlets at tourist areas, tourist spots (Genting highland, KL Towers, Twin Towers, etc.), restaurants (KFC Joints, Mary Brown, Pizza Hut), etc.

c) Customers:

These are the end users of the final service delivered by the providers. The satisfaction and dissatisfaction will depend upon the efficiency of the delivery in the service process as well as the promises kept by the service providers. EX. If jet Airways promises to reach a particular destination on a given time, the satisfaction of travelers will depend upon the timely arrival of that flight.

Applications of the Gaps Model:

Perceived service quality can be defined as, according to the Gaps model, the difference between consumers' expectation and perceptions which eventually depends on the size and the direction of the four gaps concerning

the delivery of service quality on the company's side (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985).

Customer Gap = f (Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3, Gap 4)

The magnitude and the direction of each gap will affect the service quality.

For instance, Gap 3 will be favourable if the delivery of a service exceeds the standards of service required by the organization, and it will be unfavourable when the specifications of the service delivered are not met.

First of all the model clearly determines the two different types of gaps in service marketing, namely the customer gap and the provider gaps. The latter is considered as internal gaps within a service firm. This model really views the services as a structured, integrated model which connects external customers to internal services between the different functions in a service organization. Important applications of the model are as follows:

The 10 determinants of service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1985)

1. The gaps model of service quality gives insights and propositions regarding customers' perceptions of service quality.
2. Customers always use 10 dimensions to form the expectation and perceptions of service quality.
3. The model helps predict, generate and identify key factors that cause the gap to be unfavourable to the service firm in meeting customer expectations.

Thus, Perception, expectation and delivery are three basic features on which the success of Tourism depends. Knowledge sharing, change and innovation
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in human societies, as well as economic renaissance have much to do with tourism, which is accompanied by a cross of experiences, social movements, nascent explorations, interaction and coordination of a variety of social system. A tourist is basically interested in a well satisfying experience at a tourist destination. His decision starts with a conglomeration of perception and expectation in the context of the place to be visited. An understanding of a tourist journey can be highly revealing if we can carry out an analysis of three basic factors associated with a tourist. These are his perception, expectation and delivery of the tour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The proposed paper has the following intended objectives:

To identify how foreign tourists influences the Indian tourism.

To envisage the attitude of foreign tourist about Indian tourism.

To suggest strategies to bridge the gap between expectation of tourist and delivery process.

HYPOTHESIS:

Following hypothesis were set for this study:

1. H1: Safety and security is an important factor in foreign tourism
2. H2: Foreign tourists experience overall satisfaction from their visit to India
3. H3: India's rich diversity in culture plays a major role for attracting foreign tourist

RESEARCH DESIGN USED:

In this case, a descriptive research and causal research design study is used to study the relationships in question. Descriptive research facilitates the study to obtain accurate and complete information regarding a concept or a situation or a practice. The objective of a descriptive research revolved around who, what, when and how of a topic. Causal research facilitates the study to know whether one variable is having an effect on another variable.

DATA COLLECTION:

Here, both primary and secondary data is considered. Secondary data is collected from the international and national journals like Journal of Research in tourism, reputed working papers and other reputed journals. Primary data is gathered using Questionnaire as a tool for data collection.

Sampling Technique: Stratified Random Sampling is done for selection of respondents.

Sampling Population- place selected: The respondents were foreign tourists in Mumbai.

Sample Size: Total 100 foreign tourist respondents were surveyed in Mumbai.

DATA ANALYSIS: Data collected through Questionnaire was tabulated using Excel

Personal Details:

1. Gender:

Out of total 100 foreign tourist respondents, 53% respondents were females and 47% were males.

2. Marital Status:

Out of total 100 foreign tourist respondents, 57% respondents were married and 43% were single.

3. Country of domicile:

Out of total 100 foreign tourist respondents, 46% were American, 27% belong to Europe, 17% were from Asia, and 10% were from other country of origin.

4. Purpose of Visit:

Out of total 100 foreign tourist respondents, 50% of respondents visited India for conferences, 37% for holiday/ sight seeing, 7% came to visit friends and relatives, 3% came for studies and 2% came for business purposes.

5. Age:

From the above, it is seen that 40% respondents belong to 41-50 years age group, 33% belong to 31- 40 years age group, 27% belong to 20-30 years age group, none of the respondents were under 20 years and above 51 years.

DETAILED ANALYSIS:

The detailed analysis of the data is given below.

1. Levels of expectation on the following aspects before tour visit to India:

1. 1 Information on India as a tourist destination:

The data presented reveals that nearly 57% of foreign tourist respondents had High expectation from Indian tourism and 17% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had very low expectation from Indian tourism.

1. 2 Accessibility to India from other parts of the globe (ease of getting visa, availability of flights and trains):

The data presented reveals that nearly 77% (13% very high and 64% high) of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation with respect to accessibility parameter and 3% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had very low expectation for the same.

1. 3 Quality of infrastructure, amenities of hotel/ lodge/ guest house/ hostel available:

The data presented reveals that 37% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Quality of infrastructure, amenities of hotel/lodge/guest house/ hostel facility in India 43% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 3% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had low expectation for the same, 17% of respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 4 Quality and variety of food:

The data presented reveals that 27% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Quality and variety of food in India, 46% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 7% of foreign tourist

respondents said that they had low expectation for the same, 20% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 5 Level of hygienic condition:

The data presented reveals that 20% of foreign tourist respondents had very high expectation with respect to Level of hygienic condition, 40% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 14% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had low expectation for the same, 3% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had very low expectation and 23% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 6 Postal and Banking facilities with money changing facilities:

The data presented reveals that 30% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Postal and Banking facilities with money changing facilities available in India, 36% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 7% of respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 27% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 7 Travel agents and guide services:

The data presented reveals that 30% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Travel agents and guide services available, 36% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 7% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 27% of

foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 8 Safety and Security of Tourist:

The data presented reveals that 30% of foreign tourist respondents had very high expectation with respect to Safety and Security of Tourist in India, 40% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation and 3% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 27% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 9 Attitude of local people towards tourist:

The data presented reveals that 27% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Attitude of local people towards tourist in India, 43% of respondents had high expectation and 10% of respondents said that they had low expectation for the same, 3% of respondents said that they had very low expectation and 17% of respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 10 Tourist information centers at prominent locations:

The data presented reveals that 23% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Tourist information centers at prominent locations in India, 35% of respondents had high expectation and 13% of respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 29% of respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

1. 11 Responsiveness to customer complaints:

The data presented reveals that 20% of foreign tourist respondents had very high expectation with respect to Responsiveness to customer complaints, 40% of foreign tourist respondents had high expectation, 10% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 23% of foreign tourist respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

2. Levels of satisfaction on the following aspects after tour visit to India:

2. 1 Information on India as a tourist destination:

The data presented reveals that nearly 43% of respondents were satisfied from Indian tourism after their visit and 13% of respondents said that they were dissatisfied from Indian tourism, 44% of respondents said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied from Indian tourism. None of the respondents were delighted from the same.

2. 2 Accessibility to India from other parts of the globe (ease of getting visa, availability of flights and trains):

The data presented reveals that 53% of respondents were satisfied with respect to accessibility parameter to India and only 3% of respondents said that they were delighted for the same. 37% respondents said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with respect to accessibility parameter to India and only 7% said that they were dissatisfied from the same.

2. 3 Quality of infrastructure, amenities of hotel/ lodge/ guest house/ hostel available:

The data presented reveals that 57% of foreign tourist respondents were satisfied with respect to Quality of infrastructure, amenities of hotel/ lodge/ guest house/ hostel facility in India, 13% of foreign tourist respondents said they were delighted with the above said parameters, 27% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

2. 4 Quality and variety of food:

The data presented reveals that 67% of respondents were satisfied with respect to Quality and variety of food in India, 23% of respondents said that they were delighted, 3% of respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 7% of respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied with the quality and variety of food in India.

2. 5 Level of Hygienic conditions:

The data presented reveals that 47% of respondents were satisfied with respect to level of hygienic conditions in India, 13% of respondents said that they were delighted, 10% of respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 30% of respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied with the quality and variety of food in India.

2. 6 Postal and Banking facilities with money changing facilities:

The data presented reveals that 47% of foreign tourist respondents were satisfied with respect to the Postal and Banking facilities with money changing facilities in India, 20% of foreign tourist respondents said that they

were delighted, none of foreign tourist respondents said that were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied for the same, 33% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied with the Postal and Banking facilities with money changing facilities in India.

2. 7 Travel arrangements (Travel agents and guide services):

The data presented reveals that 43% of foreign tourist respondents were satisfied with respect to Travel arrangements (Travel agents and guide services) in India, 10% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were delighted, 7% of foreign tourist respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 40% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

2. 8 Safety and Security of tourist:

The data presented reveals that 43% of foreign tourist respondents were satisfied with respect to safety and security measures of tourist in India, 7% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were delighted, 7% of foreign tourist respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 40% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

2. 9 Attitude of local people towards tourist:

The data presented reveals that 50% of foreign tourist respondents were satisfied with respect to Attitude of local people towards tourist in India, 10% of foreign tourist respondents said that they were delighted, 17% of foreign tourist respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 23% of foreign

tourist respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

2. 10 Tourist information centers at prominent locations:

The data presented reveals that 37% of respondents were satisfied with respect to Tourist information centers at prominent locations in India, 13% of respondents said that they were delighted, 17% of respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 3% said that they were very dissatisfied, 30% of respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

2. 11 Responsiveness to customer complaints:

The data presented reveals that 47% of respondents were satisfied with respect to responsiveness to customer complaints in India, only 3% of respondents said that they were delighted, 30% of respondents said that were dissatisfied for the same, 3% said that they were very dissatisfied, 17% of respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

3. Miscellaneous:

3. 1 Respondents visit to India before:

Out of total 100 respondents, 63% respondents said that they have visited India before, 37% respondents said that they have not visited India before.

3. 2 Rating the overall satisfaction with respect to the respondents experience about touring in India:

The data presented reveals that 47% respondents said that they had overall satisfaction with respect to the experience about touring in India, 13% respondents were extremely satisfied, 33% respondents said that they were

neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with respect to the experience about touring in India, 7% respondents said that they were dissatisfied for the same.

3. 3. Based on the experience, recommendation given to friends, relatives to visit India:

The data presented reveals that 13% respondents said that they will always recommend to their friends and relatives to visit India due to their own experience, 53% respondents said that they will almost always refer the same, 20% respondents said that they will sometime refer, 7% respondents said that they were rarely refer and 7% respondents said that they will never refer to their friends and relatives to visit India.

3. 4. Rating the extent of importance by the respondents to each of the activities when they are on tour in India:

a) Getting away from stress:

The data presented reveals that 13% respondents said that getting away from stress is very important factor for them to come on tour in India, 17% respondents said that it is an important factor, 46% respondents said that getting away from stress is not at all an important factor for them to come on tour in India, 17% respondents said that it is not important factor and 7% respondents said that it is not important nor unimportant factor for them.

b) Health reasons:

The data presented reveals that 13% respondents said that health reason is very important factor for them when they to come on tour in India, 27% respondents said that it is an important factor, 7% respondents said that it is not at all an important factor for them to come on tour in India, 10%

respondents said that it is not important factor and 43% respondents said that it is not important nor unimportant factor for them.

c) Learning about India and its culture:

The data presented reveals that 27% respondents said that learning about India and its culture is very important factor for them when they to come on tour in India, 23% respondents said that it is an important factor, 3% respondents said that it is not at all an important factor for them to come on tour in India, 10% respondents said that it is not important factor and 37% respondents said that it is not important nor unimportant factor for them.

Testing of Hypotheses:

1. H1: Safety and Security is an important factor in foreign tourism

Rating the expectation level about Safety and Security factor of Tourist:

The data presented reveals that 30% of respondents had very high expectation with respect to Safety and Security of Tourist in India, 40% of respondents had high expectation and 3% of respondents said that they had low expectation for the same and 27% of respondents said that they had moderate expectation i. e. neither to high nor to low.

Rating the satisfaction level about Safety and Security factor of Tourist:

The data presented reveals that 43% of respondents were satisfied with respect to safety and security measures of tourist in India, 7% of respondents said that they were delighted, 7% of respondents said that were

dissatisfied for the same, 40% of respondents said that they were neither to satisfied nor to dissatisfied.

The above data reveals that majority of foreign tourists have high expectations about security and safety parameter and at the same time most of them are satisfied and delighted from the same. This states that foreign tourist care about their security and safety. Thus,

H1: safety and security is an important factor in foreign tourism holds true.

2. H2: Foreign tourists experience overall satisfaction from their visit to India

Rating the overall satisfaction with respect to the respondents experience about touring in India:

The data presented reveals that 47% respondents said that they had overall satisfaction with respect to the experience about touring in India, 13% respondents were extremely satisfied, 33% respondents said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with respect to the experience about touring in India, 7% respondents said that they were dissatisfied for the same.

Thus, from the above it is seen that most of the foreign tourists are satisfied with their overall experience about touring in India.

H2: Foreign tourists experience overall satisfaction from their visit to India holds true.

3. H3: India's rich diversity in culture plays a major role for attracting foreign tourist

Rate the extent of importance:

Learning about India and its culture

The data presented reveals that 27% respondents said that learning about India and its culture is very important factor for them when they to come on tour in India, 23% respondents said that it is an important factor, 3% respondents said that it is not at all an important factor for them to come on tour in India, 10% respondents said that it is not important factor and 37% respondents said that it is not important nor unimportant factor for them.

Thus, the above data shows that majority of foreign tourist visit India for its rich diversity in culture and heritage.

H3: India's rich diversity in culture plays a major role for attracting foreign tourist, holds true.

CONCLUSION:

All types of tourism in India have registered phenomenal growth in the last decade ever since the Indian government decided to boost revenues from the tourism sector by projecting India as the ultimate tourist spot. The reason why India has been doing well in all types of tourism in India is that India has always been known for its hospitality, uniqueness, and charm attributes that have been attracting foreign travelers to India in hordes.

From the study it is evident that mostly male foreign tourist visit India mostly for attending conferences. India attracts tourism for its richness in diversity and culture of which Medical tourism is also picking up pace in India, attracting foreigners. Overall foreign tourists are satisfied with the tour in India, some gap exists in expectation and perseverance pattern. This gap is bridged in recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The study revealed the gap that existed between perception and expectation of foreign tourist. This gap is bridged as follows.

a) Perception:

Perception is the process by which information from the environment is received and interpreted and used in decision making through the interaction of various senses with known aspects of the tourist activity. The accuracy and nature of a person's perception determines the quality of decision and the subsequent action. Perception requires a stimulus which can be something visual or otherwise.

The perception about a tourist spot may depend on the nature of the spot under consideration as well as the nature of the tourist who is bounded by his own ideas, possibly based on his values and current attributes. The nature of the spot would be judged by its location, surroundings and characteristics depending on the taste of the tourist who may or may not be bothered about external appearances. A fun loving tourist will have a very different perception of a spot in comparison with an academic minded tourist.

Perception is used to make decisions. The actual experience which depends on the delivery pattern influences future decisions. Different individuals have different perception about the same thing. It may so happed some tourist are interested in some aspect of tourist spot which they consider specific or important. The differences of opinion may be based on their education and background. The int