

Assessing Tourist Satisfaction in Assam : A Case Study



Management

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a major industry and plays a vital role in the growth of an economy. Its contributions are primarily related to increase foreign exchange earnings, provide employment opportunities, fair return on investment, and conservation of resources. Assam is a rich biodiversity zone in the North East Region of India with extensive forest areas, flora and fauna. It has tremendous strength of Tourism potential due to its scenic beauty, cultural heritage, ethnic mixture and diverse flora and fauna. Such wealth of tourism resources endows Assam with comparative advantage over many other states. The present study shall concentrate assessing satisfaction of both domestic and foreign tourists in the state.

Introduction

Globally, an ever increasing number of destinations have opened up and invested in tourism development, turning modern tourism in to a key driver of socio-economic development. Tourism Sector is a major generator of employment. As a high labour intensive activity, tourism and tourism support activities create high proportion of employment and career opportunities for skilled and semi -skilled workers. Tourism sector can be an important source of employment for many of the unemployed youth and consequently reduces the poverty in the society (UNWTO, 2010). The technological advances, development of communication, better transportation, mainly rail, road and air transportation, marketing and promotional technique etc. had given boost to international as well as domestic tourism. The overall export income generated by inbound tourism, including passenger transport, exceeded US\$ 1.3 trillion in 2012. In 2011 there were 983 million International Tourist Arrivals (ITA) worldwide, recorded 4.6 percent growth rate as compared to 940 million in 2010. World Tourism and Travel Corporation (WTTC) in its vision 2020, forecast that till 2020, the number of tourists travelling across the world will be nearly 1600 million and they will spend nearly US \$ 2000 billion on it.

Assam is famous for her unique natural beauty with flora and fauna, historical monuments, pilgrim centers, tea gardens, industrial and commercial institutions and its colourful cultural festivals. Every tourist destination in Assam has something celestial and a unique diversity to offer. Tourism industry in this region started very recently. It is in 1980 that the tourism industry of this region is permitted by the government due to the recognition of North-East India's tremendous potential for this sector.

Research Methodology

The study is based on both Primary and Secondary sources of information. The secondary information have been collected from various sources such as Directorate of Tourism, Government of Assam, Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) Ltd., news papers, magazines and tourism websites.

The Primary data have been collected through brief, on-site interviews based on a structural, non-disguised questionnaire. 175 samples have been selected by adopting convenience sampling method. Separate questionnaire has been prepared for domestic and foreign tourists. The researcher contracted foreign and domestic tourists in the world heritage site Kaziranga National Park, World largest riverine Island Majuli and the Gate Way of North-East India, Guwahati. Data collection for this study was conducted during the period November 2011 to April 2012. In this study, the management technique Likert Five point scale has been used.

Tourism Potentiality in Assam

The state government has taken various steps for the development of tourism infrastructure project viz.; tourist lodges, restaurant and way side amenities, tourist reception centre, luxury cruise vessel project, wild life circuit, information technology

project etc. State government continuous efforts in increasing plan allocation in tourism sector also helps to boost state tourism.

The emerging dimension of tourism in Assam may be categorized as

- Nature Tourism
- Tea Tourism
- Religious Tourism
- Adventure Tourism
- Eco-Tourism
- Culture and Heritage Tourism
- Rural Tourism
- Conference Tourism
- Medical Tourism
- Leisure Tourism

The state records an increasing inflow of both domestic and foreign tourists. In 2005-06 state received 25,86,428 domestic and 8,309 foreign tourists. The number of domestic and foreign tourists increased to 41,27,447 and 15,633 respectively in 2010-11. The revenue earning of government tourist lodges has been also increased to 143.60 lakh in 2010-11 as compared to 87.16 lakh in 2005-06

Tourist Satisfaction

The extent of tourist satisfaction, both domestic and foreign tourists in the study area have been measured in five point Likert scale responses. The average duration of stay of foreign tourist in Assam has been found as 7 percent as compared to other Indian states. Lack of infrastructure is the major problem of tourism and 80 percent foreign tourist has pointed out this problem. The nature and wildlife is the main attraction of both domestic and foreign tourists. 85 percent tourist has been accommodated in private hotel due to insufficient accommodation facility in government sector. 75 percent domestic tourist has also mentioned that lack of infrastructure is the main obstacle of tourism in the state. 80 percent tourist has indicated that Assam has immense potential of development of tourism if the government provide sufficient fund for development of tourism infrastructure in the state. The Central government L.T.C. tourism scheme helps to increase domestic tourists in the state.

The responses of the respondents to the items have been recorded on five degree of satisfaction. The most desired response is awarded four scores and the least is zero. Thus the tourist satisfaction scale has maximum score of $10 \times 4 = 40$. The respondents have been grouped in to three, based on their level of satisfaction as- (i) low (ii) medium and (iii) high. The low level score is 0-10, medium level score is 11-25 and high level score is above 25. The table-1 has indicated the extent of tourist satisfaction.

Extend of Tourist Satisfaction

Table- 1

Level of Satisfaction	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist
Low	20 (20%)	12 (16%)
Medium	58 (58%)	42 (56%)
High	22 (22%)	21(28%)
Total	100	75

Source- Compiled from Respondent sheet.

Variation in Tourist Satisfaction

The table 2 shows the variation of satisfaction of both domestic and foreign tourists in the study areas.

Variation of Tourist Satisfaction

Table-2

Tourist	Average Satisfaction Score (ASS)	Range	No. of Respondents	
			Above ASS	Below ASS
Domestic tourist	17.50	8-30	50	50
Foreign Tourist	21.65	9-32	41	34

Source : Compiled from Respondent sheet

The domestic tourists satisfaction score have been found in the range of 8 to 30 and their average satisfaction score is 17.50. Out of the 100 respondents of domestic tourist, 50 respondents have their respective satisfaction score above the average and 50 respondents below the average. As the average satisfaction score of domestic tourist is 17.50 out of the maximum of 40, it can be inferred that domestic tourists have been satisfied. It has been observed that the average satisfaction score of foreign tourist was 21.65 and the individual scores range from 9 to 32. The number of respondents above the average satisfaction score were 41 and 34 were below the average satisfaction score (ASS). As the average foreign tourist satisfaction score (FTSS) is 21.65 out of the maximum of 40, it is inferred that foreign tourists have been satisfied in the study areas.

'Z' Test

The 'Z' test has been applied to ascertain the significance of the difference in the average satisfaction scores between domestic and foreign tourists. The test reveals that the difference is significance. Hence the hypothesis is that the foreign tourists are more satisfied than the domestic tourists in the study region.

'Z' test

Table-3

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Sum
	Valid	Missing			
Domestic Tourist	100	1	17,5000	6,1043	1750.00
Foreign	75	26	21,6533	6,1589	1624.00

Source : Compiled from Respondent sheet.

$$Z = \frac{\bar{X} - \bar{Y}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{n_2}}} = 4.4315$$

So, it is greater than 2.58 (1% level) 1.96 (5% level)

Problems faced by tourist

In every business there are certain factors which contribute to the growth whereas certain factors hinder the growth of business and tourism is no exception to this. The tourist has also faced certain problem during their tour. These problems are mainly related with cleanliness, high charges, banking problems, behavioural, pollution, shopping and others. The table -4 shows the major problems faced by domestic and foreign tourists in their tours in the study areas.

Major problems faced during the Trips

Table-4

Sl. No.	Category	Percentage of Respondents	
		Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist
1.	Cleanliness	10%	10.67%
2.	High Charges	42%	40%
3.	Banking Problem	10%	6.67%
4.	Behavioral	5%	5.33
5.	Pollution	3%	5.33
6.	Shopping	25%	26.67%
7.	Others	5%	5.33%

Source : Compiled from Respondent sheets.

Conclusion

Assam has full of tourist potentialities. The different tourist sites in the state provide ample attraction to both domestic and foreign tourists. The inherent object of tourist motivation is a pleasant and delectable experience on their trips. The entire tourism system depends on peace and stability, safety and security, affable host community, absence of extortion and hostility, accessible tourist attraction and requisite services of this industry. The natural beauty, wildlife, green carpeting tea gardens, cultural heritage etc. of the state satisfy the needs of both domestic and foreign tourists.

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