

## Tourist Perception of Image of The Destination- A Case Study of Indian Tourism



### Tourism

**KEYWORDS :** Decision making process, perception, destination image, branding

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### ABSTRACT

*In the current scenario the tourist arrivals in any destination depends on the image of the destination which ultimately affects the tourists' decision-making process. Tourism is contributing almost USD 6 trillion to Global economy with a share of 9% to the GDP and 260 million jobs worldwide. India is no exception in this regard & is trying to put its best foot forward to brand India with campaigns like Incredible India. Further, emphasis will be on analyzing the importance of perception of tourists as a factor influencing the ultimate decision of tourist to purchase a tour package. This research will examine the potential for improving the destination image of India. A questionnaire is designed for 250 foreign tourists. In order to analyze the research findings, the statistical package SPSS is used. Further the reliability of data will be assessed by Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ).*

### Introduction

In today's scenario Tourism sector is growing and is being eyed by many developing nations. It has grown through leaps and bounds and contributed in a large way in the growth of the economy as a whole. Tourism is a multi-sectoral and a fragmented activity which means tourism growth is based on several other sectors namely transportation, accommodation, travel agencies etc. Thus all the service providers are supposed to work in same line so that perception of the tourists can be maintained, quality services can be offered and consistency in the system of delivery can be developed. Further in order to increase the domestic tourism and international tourism in India it is required that public and private sectors should work in collaboration in order to increase the marketing efforts by putting forward the positive image of India at the Global level. This is possible through promotional strategies & marketing efforts of Ministry of tourism, Govt. of India.

### Objectives

- 1.) To understand the demographic profile of tourists visiting India (gender, age, education, income & occupation)
- 2.) To examine the travel patterns & behavior of tourists visiting India
- 3.) To identify the underlying dimensions of the current image of India
- 4.) To assess whether there is a statistically significant difference in perceived destination image of India.

### Literature Review

From the last four decades destination image has become quite a popular research topic. Many famous authors have written in this area namely Hunt, Pike, Mc Cleary, Baloglu, Leisen, Galarza, Kotler etc. There is detailed amount of research done in more than 200 articles published in several national and international articles. The extensive study of literature confirms that the image of the destination is very important concept. This is destination image which ultimately leads to more tourist influx & fetches more revenue. Crompton 1979 defined destination image as 'the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination'. According to (Jenkins 1999) from a psychological perspective image is used to denote a visual representation, pertaining to behavioral field image, encompassing all associated impressions, knowledge, emotions, values and beliefs and is more holistic. It is said by Pearce 1988, "the strong visual component, or imagery,

inherent in destination image implies a search of the long term memory for scenes and symbols, panoramas and people". But as per Echtner and Ritchie (1991), both attributes as well as holistic impressions of a place should be investigated while studying the destination image of a place. Therefore it is concluded that if any one of these aspects is missing then the result will be incomplete measurement of the destination image.

### Research Methodology

Convenient sampling method was used to study the objectives. The questionnaire was developed based on the previous studies. The survey questionnaire consisted of the following sections: demographic data of the respondents and destination image. In the demographic characteristics and travel behavior section, gender, age, education, income, occupation, persons accompanying, purpose of visiting and duration of visiting were asked. Then the attributes on destination image were rated on 5 point Likert's scale. Before distributing the questionnaires a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability of the questionnaire through cronbach's alpha of .797. Further the data was analyzed using the SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic data of the respondents. Further an exploratory factor analysis to understand the dimensions of destination image.

### Results & Findings

The majority of tourists were male with the significant differences in age group. 46% respondents were in age group of 18-25 and 54% were educated. The income level was also more than 50,000 p.m. 25% were allocentrics. The main purpose of the trip was holiday. 83% were visiting India for more than 4 days. 67% said that golden triangle is part of their itinerary. Ranking done by tourists was natural attractions, culture, good weather, accessibility & amenities 1 to 5 respectively.

### Conclusion

Building the image and perception of the destination is joint work of all the stakeholders including public sector, private sector, local community. Further perception of any tourist is developed in two phases: one before visiting the destination through marketing resources and second after visiting the destination once the tourist has availed the facilities within the destination. So the need of the hour is to come up with strong marketing strategies and then as per the strategy the development and maintenance of infrastructure and superstructure so as to develop the positive image of India at global level.

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