

Factors Affecting Tourist Satisfaction: An Empirical Study In Selected Tourist Destinations In Assam Of North East India.

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Abstract-The objective of the study was to find out the factors affecting tourist satisfaction. The current study has adopted survey research. Surveys are done by means of questionnaire surveys for both domestic and foreign tourist visiting the selected destinations during the peak season October, 2018-March, 2019. This study was based on primary data collected from two sample destinations of Assam: Majuli, the smallest river island in the world and Kaziranga National Park, another tourist destination with historical importance. The research revealed that the most significant factor affecting the overall satisfaction is the cost of staying, and other significant factors are hospitability, attractions and accessibility, and infrastructure. The findings suggest improvement of the delivery of tourism services, peaceful law and order atmosphere, beautification and refurbishment of the historical monuments, and public private partnership (PPP) in different investments for the development of infrastructural facilities in terms of road, rail and air connectivity that are required for further growth of the tourism industry.

Keywords: Assam, Kaziranga National Park, Majuli, Tourist Satisfaction.

1 Introduction

North East India (officially North Eastern Region, NER) is the easternmost region of India representing both a geographic and political administrative division of the country. It comprises eight states Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. It comprises an area of 262,230 square kilometres (101,250 sq mi), almost 8 percent of that of India, and is one of the largest salients (panhandles) in the world. North East India is the treasure trove of myths and mysteries along with some of the best gifts of 'Mother Nature' (Mazumdar, 2009). Assam the gateway of the North East India is the homeland of the two UNESCO recognized heritage sites i.e. Kaziranga National Park and Manas Wildlife Sanctuary. Another tourist destination, Majuli is the world's largest river island and it attracts tourists from all over the world. Assam is a state with many tourist destinations, such as islands, national park, historical monuments and its architectures etc. Assam is a now becoming paradise for tourists. Its enchanting hills, dancing rivers, thick and dark forests, heavy rain during monsoon, innumerable varieties of flora and fauna, countless species of wild animals and plants, melodious folk music, thrilling dances and festivals, variety of many delicious dishes, handlooms and handicrafts and above all its green landscape used to attract people coming from different parts of the world since time of immemorial. Tourism can play significant role for the development of the state's economy. Most importantly, objective of economic growth can be realized with tourism development.

Considering the importance of tourism in economic development, State like Assam has made planned effort to promote it in different parts of its region. It is in the above background that the present work has been designed to evaluate the satisfaction of tourist visiting destinations namely, Majuli and Kaziranga National Park of Assam.

2 Objectives

The main objectives of the study are to determine factors affecting tourist satisfaction and to recommend possible suggestions.

3 Sample Design

For this study, two tourist spots of Assam namely Majuli and Kaziranga National Park are selected purposively on the basis of the nature of the tourist spots. Taking these two spots into consideration this study aims to showcase the variety of problems faced by the tourists (both domestic and foreign) who visit these spots. The study aims to learn the factors influencing their visits and also problems faced by them during the visits. Satisfaction is actually the comparison of the customer's expectation before and after consumption. Tourist satisfaction is also the difference between tourist's expectations and the actual perceived value (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). The current study is primarily based on primary data, total of 300 tourist respondents. Out of 300 respondents, 120 tourists are foreign tourists and 180 are domestic tourists selected randomly from two selected tourist spots during the peak season in October, 2018-March, 2019. The data is collected with the help of a pre-tested structured questionnaire from sample tourists through personal interview method.

The selection of sample tourists is presented in table 1.

Table-1: Selection of sample tourists from selected tourist spots of Assam			
Tourist Spot	Number of Sample Tourists		Total Sample Tourists
	Domestic	Foreign	
Majuli	90	60	150
Kaziranga	90	60	150
Total	180	120	N=300

Source: Computed on the basis of primary data collected from field survey.

4 Methodology

The present study has adopted both the econometric regression approach and descriptive statistical approach to study tourist's satisfaction visiting Assam. To know about tourist's satisfaction, the present study has used Likert-type scale.

5 Results and Discussions

Table-2 presents overall satisfactions level of sample tourists related to selected destinations. It is found that about 18 percent of tourists were highly satisfied with their tourist destinations and therefore rated as excellent. Another 48.4 percent rated their destinations as good. It indicates that almost 68 percent tourists were found to be satisfied after visiting the tourist spots. Only 3.3 percent tourists were not at all satisfied with their destinations as they rated poor in their overall satisfaction about destinations. However a moderate 30 percent of the sampled tourists expressed their satisfaction as moderate.

Table-2: Overall Rating about selected tourists destination by Sample tourists						
Rating	Excellent	Good	Moderate	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Overall Satisfaction about Destination	55(18.3)	145(48.4)	90(30.0)	10(3.3)	Nil(0)	300 (100)

Figures in the brackets indicate the percentages of the total.

Source: Computed on the basis of primary data collected during the field survey.

5.1 Econometric analysis

Econometrics is the application of statistical methods to economic data and is described as the branch of economics that aims to give empirical content to economic relations (Pesaran, 1987).

5.2 Multiple Regression Model

In order to identify important demographic, economic and social variables that determine the different dimensions of quality of life, this study has applied OLS regression method. The results presented in table 3. The empirical result shows that the explanatory power of the regression equation as measured by R^2 is significantly high ($R^2 = 0.731$). It implies that about 73.1 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable (tourist's satisfaction) is due to the explanatory variables taken in our model and the remaining 26.9 per cent is due to other unmentioned variables. The adjusted R squared value was 0.745. This indicates that 74.5 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the variations in the independent variables. The test of significance (F-test) is accepted at the 1% and 5 % level of significance. The Durbin–Watson (DW) is always between 0 and 4 and the values of $1.5 < DW < 2.5$ shows that there is no auto-correlation in the data (Garson, 2012). In this model, the Durbin–Watson statistic is 1.94.

Factors such as accommodation, local transport, landscape beauty, tourist guide, cleanliness, hospitality, climatic condition, safety and security and cost per day have positive impact on tourist satisfaction. It is also found that accommodation facilities, local transportation, landscape beauty, cleanliness and climate have significant impact on tourist satisfaction. From table 3, it is evident that factors such as tourist guide, safety and security, cost per day, food quality and entertainment have insignificant impact on tourist satisfaction and so all these factors have been dropped from the model and again estimate the model to determine effective factors of tourist satisfaction. Table 3 also reveals that accommodation has strong impact on tourist satisfaction with regression coefficient (β) .485. Next is local transportation with regression coefficient (β) .431 which have a substantial effect on tourist satisfaction. The factors like landscape beauty, cleanliness and climate have moderate effects on tourist satisfaction with the regression coefficient (β) values as .352, .335 and .445 respectively. All these factors have 1 per cent level of significance on tourist satisfaction. After dropping insignificant variables, hospitality of local people has also turned out as positive significant impact on tourist satisfaction at 5 per cent level of significance.

Table 3: Regression Results – Determinants of Tourist's Satisfaction (N=300)								
Explanatory Variables	B	SEB	t-ratio	p-value	B	SEB	t-ratio	p-value
Accommodation	.461	.096	4.840	.000	.485	.088	5.501	.000*
Local transportation	.423	.110	4.054	.000	.431	.105	4.359	.000*
Landscape beauty	.347	.110	3.424	.001	.352	.092	4.304	.000*
Tourist guide	.073	.082	.889	.376	-			
Cleanliness	.335	.092	3.680	.000	.377	.087	4.033	.000*
Hospitality of local people	.096	.057	1.678	.097	.205	.054	3.796	.003**
Climate	.389	.083	3.911	.000	.445	.079	4.267	.000*
Safety and security	5.372	.000	.155	.988	-			
Food quality	-.016	.056	-.107	.855	-			
Entertainment	-.031	.055	-.611	.576	-			
Cost per day	.018	.066	.147	.783	-			
Constant	2.363	0.117	20.139	0.00	2.371	.091	26.174	.000*
	R-square	0.723			R-square	0.731		
	Adjusted R ²	0.734			Adjusted R ²	0.745		
	F-statistic	57.78	Durbin-Watson statistic	1.9	F-statistic	59.81	Durbin-Watson statistic	1.94
	P-value (F)	0.00			P-value (F)	0.00		
Notes: Dependable variables- Tourist's Satisfaction. A dash (-) refers to the situation where corresponding insignificant variables are dropped. *, ** Significant at 1 and 5 per cent level respectively. Source: Computed on the basis of primary data collected during the field survey.								

6 Policy suggestions

Based on the empirical findings of present study, the following policy suggestions can be drawn to uplift the tourism sector of the economy. Seeing this evidence, for the attraction of tourist to the destinations of Assam, professional outlook in every aspects of tourism industry; more stress on the capacity building for service providers for long-term sustainability of the industry; activities based on local communities such as historical sites, ethnic food plaza, and traditional dances and so on can attract tourist to the destination; better services such as readily accessible information relating to tourist destinations, tourist guide book, clean public utilities (sanitation, drainage etc.), hassle-free arrivals, improved hygienic conditions in the tourism sites and surroundings, clean air ports and railway stations and so on; peaceful law and order atmosphere; more priority on beautification and refurbishment of

the historical monuments; and also public private partnership (PPP) in different investments for the development of infrastructural facilities in terms of road, rail and air connectivity that are required for further growth of the tourism industry of Assam.

7 Conclusion

Assam is a destination with many world famous and iconic tourist destination. Tourism is a major driving force for the growth and development of the economy. The tourism authority should adopt such a tourism policy that builds upon the existing foundation of cultural heritage, respects social and cultural traditions, minimizes economic leakages, and adheres to the pro-poor tourism development strategies that are likely to produce economic benefits for the State as a whole. For a sustainable development of a region, types of tourism activities suitable, feasible and applicable for each tourist destination must be determined and these tourism activities must be promoted and supported to attract tourist into Assam. State tourism growth potential can be harnessed on focusing all tourist destinations for all-round growth and development of tourism sector of Assam.

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