

VISITORS' PERCEPTION OF DESTINATION IMAGE – A CASE STUDY OF J&K TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the fastest growing and single largest industries in the world. The contribution of tourism industry in the global as well as individual perspective is really amazing. Many countries in the world depend upon tourism as a main source of foreign exchange earnings. The World Tourism Organization recorded a total number of 763 million international tourist traffics in 2004 and earned US\$ 623.00 billion. Tourism continues to surge as a world economic force, contributing nearly \$5.5 trillion to the world's economy in 2004. The increasing trend of tourist arrivals and earnings is continuing. In 2005, the world tourist arrivals rose to 808 million. The World Tourism 2020 Vision forecasted that this figure will be 1,006.4 million in 2010 and the same will reach to 1,561.1 million in 2020. This continued growth in tourism business throughout the world is encouraging and nations are becoming more concern to attract more tourists to their own destinations and trying to promoting this sector as a major source for the economic development of the nation. Indian is not left unaffected by this trend. Kashmir being called as "paradise on Earth" is one of the major tourist attraction in India. Tourism industry is very much affected with perception the tourists carry with them about a destination. This study captured the perceptions of the visitors about J&K state, as a tourist destination which had ventured into tourism development since independence. With large-scale tourism developments being planned ahead, identifying the underlying dimensions of the image perceptions becomes critical in the destination's positioning. Study is such an initiative to evaluate the perceptions of visitors (tourists) towards J&K state with the broader objective of examining its alignment with the induced image and drawing some insights on the dimensions of the image perceptions related to the overall and specific characteristics of the place. SPSS19 and Factor analysis method was used to analyze the data. Factor analysis extracted three factors. Impact factor is more for "J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)"; followed by "J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality". Least is for the third factor 'Paradise J&K'. Findings resulted in drawing conclusion that visitors do not carry the requisite level of positive perception for J&K as tourist destination in respect of eleven variables out of 37 variables studied in all three factors extracted.

Keywords: J&K State, Tourism, Tourists, Destination, Image, Services, Perception, Satisfaction and Experiences.

BACKGROUND

The natural beauty of the valley of Jammu & Kashmir, offers an unparalleled potential to prop up tourism with all attractions that no part of the globe can offer in one place. Tourism, besides boosting the economy of Kashmir, can act as a major force for conservation of cultural heritage, intellectual advancement, emotional stability and moral development. Despite jolts during the past several years, a series of steps has been initiated by the Jammu and Kashmir Government to revive tourism in the Valley which has remained the mainstay of more than 30 per cent of its population.

Kashmir being the major attraction point in the valley but its popularity is decreasing because of terrorism in the state. The state government has realized the potential of the place in attracting tourists and hence tourism infrastructure development is being pursued at an invigorated pace. The tourism master plan proposes to create a consistent tourist image as a whole for J&K state. The state as brand will be known as “Heaven on Earth” Omar's slogan for tourism in J&K. The market opportunities have been identified based on the assumption that the unique cultural heritages of state may attract people from the all round the world. Mata Vasiho Devi and Amarnath Holy Shrines are major attractions for the world tourists. Tourism in the state is not new. This study is such an initiative to evaluate the perceptions of the visitors to the J&K state using appropriate constructs, with the broader objective of examining its alignment with the induced image and drawing some insights on the dimensions of the image perceptions related to the overall and specific characteristics of the place.

Tourism in J&K State

The state is blessed with a varied topography that is an unusual mix of rugged mountains, green hills, holy caves and rocky deep water fjords. It is said to be a treasure house of geological information due to the diversity of its geographical features. It represents century's old heritage of culture, religion, language, traditions, architecture and art forms. All these provide immense potential for developing a fabulous variety of tourist attractions. Its strategic location within India enhances the scope of dual or multiple destinations tour package promotions. Overall the photographic and verbal stimuli in promotions amplify the geography, nature, culture, life and historical importance of the place. Moreover, the tourist brochures assure world-class hotel facilities, transportation, communication and site-seeing arrangements. At present, the State receives more than half of its guests as pilgrims.

Srinagar, the state capital, is the most famous tourist destination in the state. An ancient city, there are many attractions that can attract even the most unwilling of tourists to this magical land. Dal Lake, Nishat Bagh, Shalimar Bagh, and Chashme Shahi are some of the best-known tourist spot in Srinagar. Jammu is the winter capital of the state and next in importance after Srinagar. Most of

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the tourists who come to the Jammu region have the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine as their destination, which is quite close by. However, the spirit of holiness permeates through the entire city, so much so that Jammu is also known as the 'City of Temples'. If Bahu Mata is the presiding deity of Jammu, the dargah of Peer Budhan Ali Shah is the other shrine that is believed to protect the local people. The other major tourist attraction is the Raghunath Temple Complex, which is the largest temple in North India devoted to Lord Rama. The construction of this temple was begun by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1851 and completed by his son Ranbir Singh six years later.

The temple of Maha Kali (better known as Bahu or Bawey Wali Mata), located in the Bahu Fort, is considered second only to Mata Vaishno Devi in terms of mystical power. The temple was built shortly after the coronation of Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1822. Other temples in the city include the Gauri Kund Temple, Shudh Mahadev Temple, Shiva Temple, Peer Khoh Cave Temple, Ranbireshwar Temple, and the Parmandal Temple Complex.

The most stunning site in Jammu is the Sheesh Mahal. The Pink Hall of the palace now houses the Dogra Art Museum, which has miniature paintings of the various hill schools. The museum also has the handwritten Persian manuscripts of the Shahnama and Sikandernama. The palace was once the royal residence of the Dogra kings. Built as a group of buildings around a courtyard, the palace has a commanding view of river Tawi on one side and the city on the other.

The Amar Mahal Palace Museum is a beautiful palace of red sandstone, which stands amidst the most picturesque environs of Jammu. It offers a beautiful view of the Shivaliks in the north and the river Tawi in the south. This was once the residential palace of Raja Amar Singh, but now it has been converted into a museum. The museum has a golden throne made of 120 kg of pure gold.

A treat for those interested in history is the town of Akhnoor, 32 km southwest of Jammu. Standing on the banks of the mighty river Chenab, the town tells the tragic tale of the lovers Sohni and Mahiwal. Along the riverbank are the majestic ruins of the Indus Valley Civilization that are of great historical importance.

Patnitop, near the Vaishno Devi Temple, is fast becoming a busy hill station and a good place to enjoy the nature in its eternity.

Ladakh is home to the minority Buddhist community in the state. They have preserved their unique culture for the past hundreds of years. Leh is the headquarters of this region. The major points of attraction are the Leh Palace, Namgyal Tsemo Gompa, Sankar Gompa, Shanti Stupa, and Soma Gompa.

Special Package To Promote Tourism In J&K

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has formulated a special package for the revival of tourism in the Valley. It has initiated many schemes for the revival and development of tourism. Soft loans will be provided for reactivating tourism units in the private sector such as house boats and outright investment subsidy for setting up popular units at lesser known areas of the State.

On Improving The Tourism In J&K

Another tourism-related scheme envisages organizing familiarization tours of officers of the Department, travel agents, journalists and tour operators besides encouraging popular TV channels for shooting their episodes in Kashmir.

Efforts To Boost Tourism In J&K

The State Government has urged the Ministry of External Affairs to direct all Indian missions abroad to disseminate information regarding the changed situation in Kashmir. In turn, they are to contact foreign offices in various countries to advise their citizens to include Kashmir in their itinerary as well while visiting India. The Department of Tourism, Government of India, has also started orientation programmes for its regional directors of Tourism posted abroad. Ten of them have visited Kashmir before taking up their assignments abroad.

The Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department is in direct touch with the Government of India Tourist Offices in different countries for sending them latest tourist literature and for arranging visits of travel agents and travel writers to the State.

The Governments of Australia, Austria, France and Italy have relaxed travel restrictions to Kashmir. The State Government sponsored several local travel agents and house boat owners to different fairs, exhibitions and marts to attract foreign tourists to Kashmir. The State Tourism Department is setting up a Website on Internet for disseminating every possible information about Kashmir as a tourist destination.

To enable operations of direct chartered flights to Kashmir, the Srinagar Airport has been upgraded to receive all types of aircraft. Kashmir, what was once known as "Paradise on Land" is now all set to regain its past glory. (PIB)

The department of tourism, government of Jammu and Kashmir, will provide interest subsidies and incentives up to 40 per cent to encourage private entrepreneurs to provide infrastructure in new areas of Jammu and Ladakh. This was revealed by Sonam Dorjay, assistant director in Jammu and Kashmir's tourism department. The tourism department is looking to exploit the potential of

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Jammu as a tourist destination on its own and not just a transit point en route to Kashmir or on a pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi temple.

To protect the interest of tourists, the state government has enacted a special legislation - J&K Registration of Tourist Trade Act. This vests various officers of the state tourism department with magisterial powers, including the powers of compounding, in case of cheating, over-charging, harassment, pestering, etc of tourists. The department has also introduced some tourist packages.

However, J&K competitive position as a stand alone destination is not as strong as that of the other tourist's destinations in the country because of Terrorism. The fact is that the state tourism potential is tied up with its holy shrines and handicrafts. Tourism is the only source of bulk revenue generation for the state followed by arts & crafts and Apples production. In order to increase the percentage contribution in state treasure, there exists a need to repositioning the state in front of the world.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

As the research problem was to evaluate what visitor's thinks about J&K as tourism destination; and what impact it will have in branding the state in front of other tourist destination within India and abroad. In beginning we studied different aspects related to tourism and satisfaction. The research problem was identified. Keeping the same in mind, literatures were reviewed related to tourism, perception building and satisfaction. The conceptual framework will now build the foundation for the methodology, analysis and conclusions.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

It was outlined that tourism plays an important role in the Indian and J&K State economy. Making customers satisfied is important from different perspectives. Many researchers have shown that satisfaction can affect customer retention and also it can make them recommend the goods or services to the others. About the case of tourism, satisfaction in the first step of tourism can affect potential tourists' intention for re-purchasing the products and services. As a result, it become necessary to identify common and unique dimensionalities w.r.t. J&K Tourism and to assess how close induced and the actual image perceptions are. Bearing this statement in mind, the specific objectives of the study were:

- To develop a suitable construct to assess the destination image of J&K State using a set of image variables validated through the process of content analysis and literature review.

- To capture the multi-dimensional perception of visitors towards J&K as a tourist destination through factor analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many approaches to the study of destination image. In fact, it's nature is interdisciplinary mostly led by theories in marketing that focus on the needs of positioning the destinations (Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002). Destination image has been defined in different ways. One set of definitions is based on the overall impressions people have about a destination and the other set focuses on the selected benefits or attributes sought by different tourist segments. The definitions such as "impressions a person hold about a state in which they do not reside" (Hunt 1975, 13:1) and "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Crompton 1979 quoted in Gallarza, Saura and Garcia 2002, 29:60) are based on the overall images held by the tourist, which is a rounded view of a few preferred or selected image components. The attribute-centred definitions differ in that they elucidate the process of image formation by incorporating behavioural aspects relating to image selection. For instance, WTO defines the destination image as an aura, an angle, and a subjective perception accompanying the various projections of the same message transmitter" (WTO 1979 quoted in Ady and Pizam 1995, 33:21).

These definitions generally describe images as vague mental pictures of something 'unknown', 'unseen' or 'yet to be experienced' by an individual. This perhaps, implies the 'seen and experienced' image of a destination, which may be different from these mental pictures held in the pre-visit phase by the traveller. In this context Gun's (1972) description of Destination Image (DI) formation appears to lend itself better in understanding the images that 'get recorded' during the visitation. The 'seen and experienced' image holds much relevance to the marketers as it determines the destination loyalty. The translation of the mental image into word-of-mouth messages has a telling effect on prospective visitor's image of the place (Nolan 1976 quoted in Olivia 1999).

Chon (1992) highlights the need for closing the gaps between image expectation and actual evaluation with interesting observations. A negative pre-visit image and a positive post-visit image enhance the overall positive image unduly favourable. Hence matching the visitation experiences to the images of a visitor is crucial in tourism marketing. Image studies are also intertwined with the theories of consumer behaviour due to the influence of many controlling factors in image formation mostly associated with an individual's self concept, learning, attitude, involvement and level of motivation (Swarbrooke and Homer 1999). These have to be studied in relation with the attributes or holistic image dimensions considered otherwise. Therefore mere de-aggregation of holistic images into components will not serve the purpose of understanding or predicting the process of image formation.

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Image Components — Holistic and Attribute-based

Image construct has two components: Cognitive and affective (Dobni and Zinkhan 1990). Cognitive image refers to beliefs and knowledge and affective images refer to feelings about the object. The country image is concerned with the perceptual/cognitive image and the affective responses are associated with the feelings about the object. But, a direct classification of attributes into generic components and summation of the responses obtained will not be effective in explaining what holistic image the traveller has about a place because the various perceptions often interact to form the overall image of a place (Gartner 1986). The literature on image studies extensively draw insights from Etchner and Ritchie's (1991, 1993) contributions to the topic. They have developed a framework for destination image evaluation consisting of three continua. The continuum, 'attribute-holistic' is underpinned to psychology and consumer behaviour while the second continuum, 'functional-psychological' focuses on the tangible and intangible characteristics of image. The tangible or observable characteristics are said to be functionally oriented while the latter is emotional or affective which is difficult to capture. The third continuum, namely, 'common—unique' represents the commonly held versus unique or distinct images or auras by an individual. Further dimensions are also possible within these continua. The widespread acceptance to this framework is attributed to its flexibility and comprehensiveness in measuring image perceptions associated with destinations having diverse features, while it also takes into view the individual differences in weighing down the attributes. Holistic images sound more topical and down to earth as they effectively deal with the tourists' incapability or helplessness at a rational disaggregating of the perceived holistic image. Etchner and Ritchie (1991) have also emphasized the importance of using pre-tested and validated instruments and components of image in measuring destination image as against going with the commonly held notions, which carry the risk of researcher interpretation bias. Further, images are not summative but a general opinion of an individual, which can be fragmented into distinctive factors.

Often destinations marketers initiate the process of perception through induced images in brochures and other promotional literature. This should be consistent with the perceived images of the visitors to sustain the growth of a destination. Baloglu and Mc Cleary (1999) found significant differences between visitors and non-visitors images of a place in the study of the US international pleasure traveler's image of four Mediterranean destinations. This is supported by Chon's (1992) views that actual experiences of the place have more realistic images, which could be complex and differentiated from the induced images they had before. The dominant theories related to DI measurement (Etchner and Ritchie 1993, Chon 1990) stress on the significance of overall impressions, attribute based images and the conditionalities in the assessments of a destination's image. It is imperative that the impressions a tourist will have about a place will not, probably, be single attribute-based but one which rests in a multi-dimensional space, better known as the 'perceptual space' or the 'mental map' of the tourists. For the same reason, there will be a

high degree of subjectivity and relativity to the dimensions, which determine the overall perceptions of different people and the influence of the controlling factors on them. Subjective expressions of overall image perceptions involve greater difficulty in measuring and interpreting while high levels of sophistication in access to information has made the tourists all over the world more discerning. They are now prepared to look beyond such holistic impressions in more realistic terms. Web sites provide systematic, judgmental and comparative information along with visual evidence thereby transferring the burden of disaggregating the holistic image from the visitor to the sources themselves. This study hence uses separate constructs for evaluating the overall and attribute-based perceptions about J&K State.

The study made the following assumptions regarding the underlying dimensions about the perceptions about State to be explored through factor analysis.

- J&K State is more likely to be perceived as a unique destination within the Country
- J&K State is more likely to be associated with its geographical diversity.

Though culture, tradition and nature get more space in the promotional materials, the above assumption is made based on the attributes that may fall into the common—unique dimensions of a destination's image. Geographical diversity could be one such attribute that may qualify for a unique perception.

METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Type of Research: The nature of research is exploratory in nature because current study identifies and evaluates the perception of visitors towards J&K Tourism.

Research Approach: For designing the questionnaire qualitative approach has been used, but in the further procedures, the data gathering by questionnaire and data analyzing the approach is quantitative.

Type of Data: The data which has been used in this paper is primary data which had been collected by survey.

Sample Selection: Quota sampling method is used because only those people are considered who stated in four star or five star hotels during their visits to J&K State.

Questionnaire Designing and Data Collection

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Phase1:

In order to design the framework of image analyses, involving attributes generation and selection processes, interviews were conducted with people who travel a lot and also from experts. These experts are academicians and professionals from tourism sector. Framework development relied on content analysis of the brochures, travel guides, web sites, literatures review and even from different promotional materials. Thus 37 items were identified to be included in the perception analysis. Literature review and interview with experts are done to increase the reliability of the questionnaire. Pre test and pilot test were implemented in order to increase the reliability of the work.

Questionnaire is divided into two parts:

- Consist of general questions related to gender, age, income, their background, and purpose of visits;
- Consists of statements that will capture visitors multi-dimensional perception about J&K as a tourist destination.

Questionnaire was given to experts in tourism for review and suggested modifications were implemented within questionnaire. Pilot testing is done on 20 visitors. Respondents were asked to rate their perception and experiences against different statements on 5 point rating scale (Likert Scale) ranging from “5: Very much Agree” to “1: Very much Disagree” for analysis.

Phase2:

The second phase entailed the data collection through questionnaire survey using the framework crystallized by the above process. A sample size of 300 was selected and questionnaires were distributed in ten hotels (4 hotels having Five Star ratings and 6 hotels having Four Star ratings) in different tourist destinations of J&K state. The questionnaires were given on the reception of respective hotels to be filled in by the hotel guests before they left. Only 232 questionnaire were complete and usable for analysis.

Quality Test of Research

After collecting the data, Cronbach's alpha and correlation coefficients were calculated. Table below shows that the items in our questionnaire are reliable.

DT2: Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.970	37

As the value of Cronbach's Alpha regression coefficient is 0.970, the internal consistency reliability is high.

DT1: Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	232	100.0
	Excluded (a)	0	0.0
	Total	232	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

DT3: Responses on different factors that decides Attribute-based Perceptions Descriptives							
S. No.	Factors	Very Much Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Very Much Agree	Mean (SD)
1	Unique culture	13 (5.6%)	7 (3.0%)	63 (27.2%)	148 (63.8%)	1 (0.4%)	3.50 (0.81)
2	Wonderful customs and traditions	15 (6.5%)	5 (2.2%)	66 (28.4%)	146 (62.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.48 (0.83)
3	Interesting local crafts & jewellery	20 (8.6%)	1 (0.4%)	56 (24.1%)	155 (66.8%)	0 (0.0%)	3.49 (0.88)
4	Local & Regional languages	35 (15.1%)	46 (19.8%)	67 (28.9%)	73 (31.5%)	11 (4.7%)	2.91 (1.14)
5	Interesting ancient culture	35 (15.1%)	46 (19.8%)	67 (28.9%)	70 (30.2%)	14 (6.0%)	2.92 (1.16)
6	Interesting architecture	28 (12.1%)	46 (19.8%)	85 (36.6%)	69 (29.7%)	4 (1.7%)	2.89 (1.02)
7	Appealing festivals	2 (0.9%)	78 (33.6%)	121 (52.2%)	10 (4.3%)	21 (9.1%)	2.87 (0.87)
8	Beautiful Pilgrims destinations	2 (0.9%)	75 (32.3%)	101 (43.5%)	54 (23.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2.89 (0.76)
9	Beautiful holiday destinations & places	4 (1.7%)	25 (10.8%)	93 (40.1%)	69 (29.7%)	41 (17.7%)	3.51 (0.96)
10	Authentic (original) historic sites	15 (6.5%)	86 (37.1%)	68 (29.3%)	39 (16.8%)	24 (10.3%)	2.88 (1.10)
11	Interesting rural lifestyle	11 (4.7%)	8 (3.4%)	76 (32.8%)	123 (53.0%)	14 (6.0%)	3.52 (0.85)
12	Interesting traditional hospitality	11 (4.7%)	12 (5.2%)	74 (31.9%)	108 (46.6%)	27 (11.6%)	3.55 (0.93)
13	Traditional local markets	3 (1.3%)	1 (0.4%)	119 (51.3%)	87 (37.5%)	22 (9.5%)	3.53 (0.73)
14	Beautiful gardens and	0	0	14	196	22	4.03 (0.39)

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	lakes	(0.0%)	(0.0%)	(6.0%)	(84.5%)	(9.5%)	
15	Appealing local cuisine	7 (3.0%)	13 (5.6%)	58 (25.0%)	154 (66.4%)	0 (0.0%)	3.55 (0.74)
16	Beautiful Streams & Glaciers	0 (0.0%)	3 (1.3%)	20 (8.6%)	193 (83.2%)	16 (6.9%)	3.96 (0.45)
17	Beautiful mountains	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (9.5%)	191 (82.3%)	19 (8.2%)	3.99 (0.42)
18	Interesting natural wonders	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25 (10.8%)	195 (84.1%)	12 (5.2%)	3.94 (0.40)
19	Wonderful sightseeing opportunities	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (7.3%)	193 (83.2%)	22 (9.5%)	4.02 (0.41)
20	Wild life centuries and nature	23 (9.9%)	38 (16.4%)	84 (36.2%)	67 (28.9%)	20 (8.6%)	3.10 (1.09)
21	Forest sceneries	2 (0.9%)	68 (29.3%)	112 (48.3%)	50 (21.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2.91 (0.73)
22	Amazing geography	1 (0.4%)	21 (9.1%)	93 (40.1%)	101 (43.5%)	16 (6.9%)	3.47 (0.77)
23	Excellent camping locations	0 (0.0%)	34 (14.7%)	179 (77.2%)	16 (6.9%)	3 (1.3%)	2.95 (0.52)
24	Relaxing atmosphere	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	37 (15.9%)	171 (73.7%)	24 (10.3%)	3.94 (0.51)
25	Exciting atmosphere	59 (25.4%)	63 (27.2%)	79 (34.1%)	31 (13.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2.35 (1.00)
26	Can enjoy River Rafting	48 (20.7%)	85 (36.6%)	78 (33.6%)	10 (4.3%)	11 (4.7%)	2.36 (1.01)
27	Can enjoy music & dance	10 (4.3%)	78 (33.6%)	88 (37.9%)	37 (15.9%)	19 (8.2%)	2.90 (1.00)
28	Can enjoy mount climbing	0 (0.0%)	16 (6.9%)	99 (42.7%)	92 (39.7%)	25 (10.8%)	3.54 (0.78)
29	Can enjoy camping	11 (4.7%)	25 (10.8%)	122 (52.6%)	74 (31.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3.12 (0.78)
30	Can enjoy forest safari	1 (0.4%)	31 (13.4%)	68 (29.3%)	110 (47.4%)	22 (9.5%)	3.52 (0.86)
31	Can enjoy fishing	28 (12.1%)	69 (29.7%)	71 (30.6%)	24 (10.3%)	40 (17.2%)	2.91 (1.25)
32	Can enjoy golf	0 (0.0%)	31 (13.4%)	122 (52.6%)	75 (32.3%)	4 (1.7%)	3.22 (0.69)
33	Can enjoy hang gliding	11 (4.7%)	7 (3.0%)	61 (26.3%)	150 (64.7%)	3 (1.3%)	3.55 (0.79)
34	Can enjoy trekking	26 (11.2%)	42 (18.1%)	69 (29.7%)	83 (35.8%)	12 (5.2%)	3.06 (1.09)
35	Can enjoy skiing	2 (0.9%)	14 (6.0%)	99 (42.7%)	93 (40.1%)	24 (10.3%)	3.53 (0.79)
36	Can enjoy wild life photography	48 (20.7%)	83 (35.8%)	78 (33.6%)	20 (8.6%)	3 (1.3%)	2.34 (0.94)
37	Pleasant winter climate	0 (0.0%)	6 (2.6%)	57 (24.6%)	116 (50.0%)	53 (22.8%)	3.93 (0.76)

Table DT4 shows descriptive statistics of each item. Mean and standard deviation of each statement have been shown in this table. Looking at the mean, one can conclude that “Beautiful gardens and lakes” is the most important variable that have highest mean of 4.03.

DT4: Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Unique culture	232	3.5043	.81117
Wonderful customs and traditions	232	3.4784	.82675
Interesting local crafts & jewellery	232	3.4914	.88269
Local & Regional languages	232	2.9095	1.14169
Interesting ancient culture	232	2.9224	1.15957
Interesting architecture	232	2.8922	1.01994
Appealing festivals	232	2.8707	.87317
Beautiful Pilgrims destinations	232	2.8922	.76250
Beautiful holiday destinations & places	232	3.5086	.96246
Authentic (original) historic sites	232	2.8750	1.09579
Interesting rural lifestyle	232	3.5216	.85253
Interesting traditional hospitality	232	3.5517	.93369
Traditional local markets	232	3.5345	.72591
Beautiful gardens and lakes	232	4.0345	.39326
Appealing local cuisine	232	3.5474	.73702
Beautiful Streams & Glaciers	232	3.9569	.45379
Beautiful mountains	232	3.9871	.42110
Interesting natural wonders	232	3.9440	.39626
Wonderful sightseeing opportunities	232	4.0216	.41032
Wild life centuries and nature	232	3.0991	1.09053
Forest sceneries	232	2.9052	.73241
Amazing geography	232	3.4741	.77248
Excellent camping locations	232	2.9483	.51547
Relaxing atmosphere	232	3.9440	.51080
Exciting atmosphere	232	2.3534	1.00436
Can enjoy River Rafting	232	2.3578	1.00928
Can enjoy music & dance	232	2.9009	.99505
Can enjoy mount climbing	232	3.5431	.77730
Can enjoy camping	232	3.1164	.77810
Can enjoy forest safari	232	3.5216	.85759
Can enjoy fishing	232	2.9095	1.25374
Can enjoy golf	232	3.2241	.69115
Can enjoy hang gliding	232	3.5474	.78811
Can enjoy trekking	232	3.0560	1.09361
Can enjoy skiing	232	3.5302	.79443
Can enjoy wild life photography	232	2.3405	.94457
Pleasant winter climate	232	3.9310	.75849
Valid N (list wise)	232		

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DT5: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer - Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.893
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	18310.357
	df	666
	Sig.	.000

FACTOR ANALYSIS

A factor analysis was performed to ascertain whether factor measurement reflects consumers' underlying mental model. The result confirmed the model which was mentioned by Szymansky and Hise (2000). To be sure if it is permitted to use Factor analysis or not, KMO analysis should be conducted. As the KMO measures the sampling adequacy which should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed, since KMO is greater than 0.5 (= 0.893), it shows that the number of samples is big enough for using factor analysis (see DT5). Moreover since the Sig. of Bartlett's test is 0 it is permitted to use Factor analysis.

DT6: Communalities^a

	Initial ^b	Extraction ^c
Unique culture	1.000	.840
Wonderful customs and traditions	1.000	.844
Interesting local crafts & jewellery	1.000	.849
Local & Regional languages	1.000	.896
Interesting ancient culture	1.000	.897
Interesting architecture	1.000	.904
Appealing festivals	1.000	.873
Beautiful Pilgrims destinations	1.000	.708
Beautiful holiday destinations & places	1.000	.834
Authentic (original) historic sites	1.000	.911
Interesting rural lifestyle	1.000	.740
Interesting traditional hospitality	1.000	.798
Traditional local markets	1.000	.555
Beautiful gardens and lakes	1.000	.770
Appealing local cuisine	1.000	.779
Beautiful Streams & Glaciers	1.000	.868
Beautiful mountains	1.000	.915
Interesting natural wonders	1.000	.795
Wonderful sightseeing opportunities	1.000	.933
Wild life centuries and nature	1.000	.917
Forest sceneries	1.000	.839
Amazing geography	1.000	.859
Excellent camping locations	1.000	.685
Relaxing atmosphere	1.000	.737
Exciting atmosphere	1.000	.813

Can enjoy River Rafting	1.000	.906
Can enjoy music & dance	1.000	.907
Can enjoy mount climbing	1.000	.872
Can enjoy camping	1.000	.715
Can enjoy forest safari	1.000	.896
Can enjoy fishing	1.000	.910
Can enjoy golf	1.000	.673
Can enjoy hang gliding	1.000	.758
Can enjoy trekking	1.000	.829
Can enjoy skiing	1.000	.874
Can enjoy wild life photography	1.000	.904
Pleasant winter climate	1.000	.834

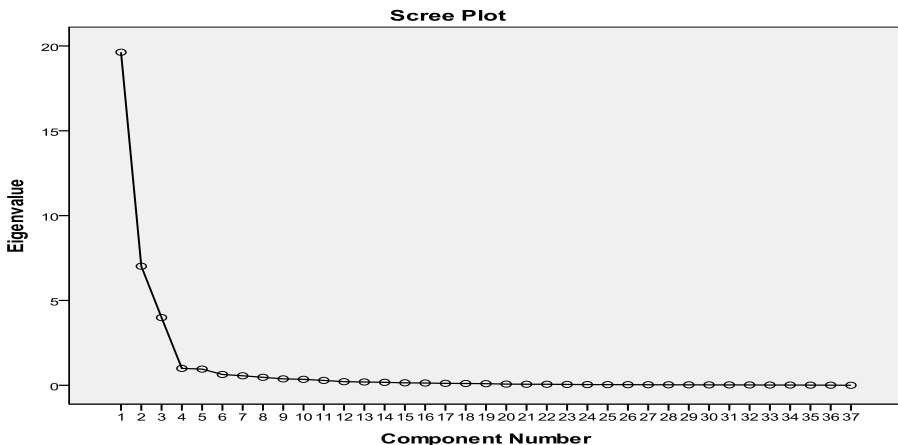
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

a. Communalities - This is the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the factors. It is also noted as h^2 and can be defined as the sum of squared factor loadings for the variables.

b. Initial - With principal factor axis factoring, the initial values on the diagonal of the correlation matrix are determined by the squared multiple correlation of the variable with the other variables.

c. Extraction - The values in this column indicate the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the retained factors. Variables with high values are well represented in the common factor space, while variables with low values are not well represented. They are the reproduced variances from the factors that you have extracted. You can find these values on the diagonal of the reproduced correlation matrix.

Table DT6 “Communalities” shows how much of the variance in the variables has been accounted for by the extracted factors. **Communality, h^2** , is the squared multiple correlation for the variable as dependent using the factors as predictors. The communality measures the percent of variance the indicator. For instance, 93.3% of variance accounted for “Wonderful sightseeing



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opportunities”; whereas, 55.5% of variance is for “Traditional local markets”.

In a given variable explained by all the factors jointly and may be interpreted as the reliability of Table DT7 shows all the factors extractable from the analysis along with their eigenvalues, the percent of variance attributable to each factor, and the cumulative variance of the factor and the previous factors. Notice that the first three factors accounts for 82.802% of the variance. All the remaining factors are not significant.

DT7: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	19.629	53.051	53.051	19.629	53.051	53.051	18.632	50.357	50.357
2	7.018	18.968	72.019	7.018	18.968	72.019	7.646	20.664	71.021
3	3.990	10.783	82.802	3.990	10.783	82.802	4.359	11.781	82.802

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

DT9: Factors extracted to measure perception amongst tourists w. r. t. J&K as Tourism Destination

Factors	Satisfaction statements	Factor Loading	Cronbach's alpha of Factor
J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots) Related Factors 53.051% of TV* MFS** = 3.092 (SD = 0.83)	Local & Regional languages	.881	0.987
	Interesting ancient culture	.891	
	Interesting architecture	.909	
	Appealing festivals	.922	
	Beautiful Pilgrims destinations	.807	
	Beautiful holiday destinations & places	.902	
	Authentic (original) historic sites	.950	
	Traditional local markets	.719	
	Wild life centuries and nature	.945	
	Forest sceneries	.893	
	Amazing geography	.923	
	Excellent camping locations	.817	
	Relaxing atmosphere	.856	
	Can enjoy River Rafting	.946	
	Can enjoy music & dance	.948	
	Can enjoy mount climbing	.918	
	Can enjoy forest safari	.938	
Can enjoy fishing	.946		
Can enjoy golf	.704		
Can enjoy skiing	.915		
Can enjoy wild life photography	.946		
Pleasant winter climate	.887		
J&K Culture, Traditions,	Unique culture	.916	0.950
	Wonderful customs and traditions	.866	

Lifestyle and Hospitality Related Factors 18.968% of TV MFS = 3.505 (SD = 0.70)	Interesting local crafts & jewellery	.874	0.948
	Interesting rural lifestyle	.629	
	Interesting traditional hospitality	.657	
	Appealing local cuisine	.861	
	Exciting atmosphere	.791	
	Can enjoy camping	.788	
	Can enjoy hang gliding	.863	
Can enjoy trekking	.843		
Paradise J&K Related Factors 10.783% of TV; MFS = 3.762; (SD = 0.48)	Beautiful gardens and lakes	.825	
	Beautiful Streams & Glaciers	.879	
	Beautiful mountains	.948	
	Interesting natural wonders	.774	
	Wonderful sightseeing opportunities	.938	
Note: TV* = Total Variance, MFS** = Mean Factor Score, SD = Standard Deviation			

The screen plot is a graph of the eigen values against all the factors. The graph is useful for determining how many factors to retain. The point of interest is where the curve starts to flatten. It can be seen that the curve flattened from 4 to 5. It means that each successive factor is accounting for smaller amounts of the total variance. The screen plot indicated the possibility of a fifth factor but the eigen value of the factor was lower than one. **Though, the factor 4 has Eigen values of less than 1**, so only three factors have been retained.

Variables like: Local & Regional languages, Interesting ancient culture, Interesting architecture, Appealing festivals, Beautiful Pilgrims destinations, Beautiful holiday destinations & places, Authentic (original) historic sites, Traditional local markets, Wild life centuries and nature, Forest sceneries, Amazing geography, Excellent camping locations, Relaxing atmosphere, Can enjoy River Rafting, Can enjoy music & dance, Can enjoy mount climbing, Can enjoy forest safari, Can enjoy fishing, Can enjoy golf, Can enjoy skiing, Can enjoy wild life photography, Pleasant winter climate -- are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 1.

Similarly, variables like: Unique culture, Wonderful customs and traditions, Interesting local crafts & jewellery, Interesting rural lifestyle, Interesting traditional hospitality, Appealing local cuisine, Exciting atmosphere, Can enjoy camping, Can enjoy hang gliding, Can enjoy trekking -- are substantially loaded on Factor (Component) 2.

Finally the factors like: Beautiful gardens and lakes, Beautiful Streams & Glaciers, Beautiful Mountains, Interesting natural wonders, Wonderful sightseeing opportunities -- are loaded on Factor (Component) 3.

The first factor interprets 53.051% of the total variance comprising 22 variables, which can be named '**J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)**', has Mean Factor Score (MFS) = 3.092

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and the reliability of the factor is $\alpha = 0.987$. From the 22 variables that compose this factor, all have a loading of > 0.7 on the factor, implying high satisfaction towards all 22 variables.

The second factor interprets 18.968% of the total variance, has MFS = 3.505 and the reliability of the factor is $\alpha = 0.950$. This factor consists of ten variables which can be named '**J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality Site Design**'. Except of two variables i.e. 'Interesting rural lifestyle' and 'Interesting traditional hospitality', all other variables in this factor have a factor loading > 0.7 , implying high satisfaction.

The third factor interprets 10.783% of the total variance, has MFS = 3.762 and the reliability of the factor is $\alpha = 0.948$. This factor consists of three variables which can be named '**Paradise J&K**'. All the variables in this factor also have a factor loading > 0.7 , implying high satisfaction.

Table DT10 interpret that impact factor is more for first factor i.e. '**J&K Tourists Attractions Destinations & Spots**'); followed by '**J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality**'. Least is for '**Paradise J&K**'.

Table DT10	
Factors	Cronbach's Alpha
J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)	0.987
J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality Site Design	0.950
Paradise J&K	0.948

FINDINGS

Two broadly categorized tourist destinations within state are Jammu and Kashmir. Apparently, these two have been differently positioned and hence marketed in different ways. Jammu with its busy city life attracts a large number of tourists who may consider visiting Jammu "The City of Temples". Kashmir as a 'Heaven on Earth'. Tour operators have exploited this twin positioning well with travel magazines featuring these two in a travel circuit.

Dimensions of Image Perceptions

The attributes set used in the study of image perceptions had three groups; the first group relates to J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots); the second related to J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality; lastly, the third group is related to 'Paradise J&K'.

Principal component analysis was performed initially for data reduction and subsequently factor analysis was applied to explore the dimensionalities. Perception studies frequently entail use of

these tools to explore the underlying dimensions of a large number of variables associated with the dominant or holistic variables.

Descriptive statistics (see DT4) indicated that the highest rating has been obtained for 'Beautiful gardens and lakes'; whereas, the lowest rating recorded is for 'Can enjoy wild life photography'. The descriptive statistics provided indications of the latent dimensions.

All the aforementioned 37 variables were used for the final analysis. Cronbach's alpha for the set of data was tested and was found to be sufficiently high. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be significant = 0, and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was greater than 0.5 i.e. 0.893. Hence factor analysis could be performed with the data.

Factor analysis extracted three factors, i.e. J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots); followed by 'J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality'. Least is for 'Paradise J&K' that accounts for 82.802% of variance, which is very high. The total variation in the final stage didn't change though it got more evenly distributed over the three factors. The Screen plot indicated the possibility of a fourth factor but the Eigen value of the factor was lower than one. Therefore it was excluded. An interpretable matrix could be obtained after several iterations. However, the three-factor solution has been accepted as it is simpler and explains 82.802% of the variance.

From DT9, it can be inferred that though all 37 variables have significant impact on visitors perception building but there exists some variables which have lower level of impact if compared with other variables. Variables like 'Beautiful Pilgrims destinations', 'Traditional local markets', 'Excellent camping locations', 'Can enjoy golf' and 'Relaxing atmosphere' in the factor called as 'J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)' have lower level of factor loading. It means, tourists are not that much positivists to aforementioned variables if compared with remaining variables in the discussed factor.

Similarly, Variables like 'Interesting rural lifestyle', 'Interesting traditional hospitality', 'Exciting atmosphere' and 'Can enjoy camping' in the factor called as 'J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality' have low level of factor loading. It means, tourists stage of being positivists further falls especially in first two quoted variables if compared with remaining variables in the discussed factor and even with variables in factor 'J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)'.

Lastly, Variables like 'Interesting natural wonders' and 'Beautiful gardens and lakes' in the factor called as 'Paradise J&K' again have low level of factor loading, but higher of those variables discussed in factor 'J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality'.

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It means, visitors do not carry the requisite level of positive perception for J&K as tourist destination in respect of above discussed eleven variables in all three factors extracted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each day, the tourism industry meets the aspirations of millions of people who want to travel to share experiences, to encounter different cultures. It has grown in response to increasing demand and it has been at the forefront of innovation, adapting its services and harnessing the best new technologies to deliver consistent quality and value for money to tourists. The results are evident in more jobs and greater prosperity, increased revenue and infrastructure development.

The prospects of tourism and its contribution in J&K state made it mandatory for government department to work in collaboration with communities and industry. The common determination to co-operate more closely has raised the possibilities for ensuring that growth is managed to stimulate economic activity, that the resources are protected and properly utilized, inequality of opportunity or lack of imagination are overcome. The tourism industry is eager to harness its imagination and energy to this open ended challenge and it looks forward to sharing the common task with government and industry.

To know specifically about prospect tourism circuits, linkages with other themes, the target market, marketing mix, modes of service delivery and development requirement, it is imperative for the J&K State tourism department to undertake a broad market research, not only nationally but also at international level.

Recommendation to J&K State Government

- To review existing marketing strategies w.r.t. to promotion of tourism at world forum.
- To emphasise more on catalogue marketing, interactive marketing rather than on internet marketing.
- To perform content analysis and incorporate necessary changes based on three factors identified i.e. **J&K Tourists Attractions (Destinations & Spots)**, **'J&K Culture, Traditions, Lifestyle and Hospitality'**, and **'Paradise J&K'**.
- Participate and arrange international tourism fairs
- Contracting international tour operators
- Advertisements in media like Incredible India, Malaysia Tourism
- Distributes tourism publications, newsletters to the potential tourists
- Need to develop new attractions/ products or services in the destinations.

- Should develop and update an attractive web site to provide the required information to the potential tourists.
- State government should prioritize this sector for development plan.
- Govt support to the private tour operators is necessary for the development of this sector.
- To provide security to tourists from terrorism and to imbibe the feeling in national and international tourist community.
- Take a close look at ways and means of improving the existing infrastructure and hygiene conditions at places of tourist interest and public places;
- Conduct a joint promotional campaign with corporate and allocate budgets for marketing at international travel fairs to boost tourist inflow in the country;
- Grant 'Infrastructure' status to the hotel industry under SEC 80-IA of IT Act and increase depreciation on hotels from 10% to 20%;
- Rationalise Floor Space Index (FSI) /Floor Area Regulation (FAR). This would allow hotels to build more rooms on the same property eventually leading to more affordable room rates. Subsequently, the government can reduce development charges for adding more rooms in existing hotels;
- Further incentives will boost investments in the sector such as offering a tax holiday to the industry;
- Abolition of service tax on tour packages;
- Implement uniform luxury tax code;
- Extend the 5 year tax holiday scheme which currently covers only 2, 3 and 4-star hotels and convention centers with a capacity greater than 3,000 to include 5-star hotels too;
- Tourism play a significant role in rationalizing the cost of land auctioned for hotel development. This would assist the industry in creating value by adding substantial inventory of hotel rooms required to diminish the demand-supply gap;
- Assist in building and developing educational institutions to fulfill the emerging demand for skilled manpower in the tourism sector;

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INDUSTRY

- Promote Public Private Participation;
- Deliver on scheduled timelines and share accountability with the government on public private partnership projects to reduce the cost involved in development;
- Develop an academic think-tank to trigger off the right kind of training in hotel management institutes in India;
- Establish commendable Master's and Ph.D programs in hospitality;
- Undertake measures towards employee retention;
- Coaching, development and training of employees for their long-term career development and retention process.

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- More discounted tour packages for group tour and long stay;

CONCLUSION

The study explores the different variables that build perception amongst tourist's w.r.t. tourist destinations especially in reference to J&K State; and to evaluate what visitor's thinks about J&K as tourism destination mandatory to identify for branding the state in front of other tourist destination within India and abroad.

Being able to recognize the tourist's perceptions on different variables; the J&K Tourism and private players must adapt different strategies to ensure that tourists' needs are met. Hence, the results from this research may have some significant suggestions for the strategic decision makers of Companies of repute and J&K tourism department. The recommendations are based on the results of the quantitative analyses performed. Specifically, taking into consideration the variable loadings on the factors, the service providers can work on improving the variables with low loadings in order to build favorable image towards J&K tourism.

The significance of tourism is viewed from many angles like economic, social, cultural, political, etc. Tourism is now the fastest growing and single largest industry in the world. The industry has attained the impressive growth in the world-wide in terms of tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings which has led the ever increasing competition among the destination countries and gained the top priority in most of the destination countries. Every destination country is trying to attract more tourists by drawing the attention and growing the interest among the potential tourists through adopting effective marketing strategies. Promotion is an important element of marketing mix and plays a vital role in developing marketing strategies. Because of tourism is a field where the customers/tourists want to know in advance about the attractions and facilities of the destination. Marketers need to provide such necessary information to the prospective tourists through different promotional measures and thus, try to motivate and attract them to the sponsor's destination.

LIMITATIONS

The results of this study should be interpreted with several unavoidable limitations in mind. First of all, the outcomes of this study may not have represented the entire population, due to the detail that a non-probability sampling method (Quota sampling) was used to collect the data. Furthermore, the study was conducted on questionnaires distributed only in 9 hotels of state. Another limitation is that there may be some other variables that may influence the satisfaction level of tourists. Future research should be carried out with more variables and a larger sample.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The research has second phase in which the researcher will evaluate the image, both attribute-based and overall, to check its alignment with the induced image to review the relevant promotional strategies. The behavioral influences will be captured by introducing a satisfaction-importance analysis of overall impressions.

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