



TOURIST SATISFACTION WITH HILL STATION: A CASE STUDY OF MATHERAN

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Abstract

Maharashtra has very diverse physiography, marked by Sahyadri Mountain in the west is the home of several hill resorts popular for its cool and salubrious climate. The geographical factors fascinating tourists to enjoy available facilities and services. Tourist, the soul of tourism development, hence present paper is an attempt to investigate tourist satisfaction regarding attractions, facilities and services provided by entrepreneurs and other agencies and institutions in Matheran hill station of Maharashtra state. 150 tourists were purposively selected for face-to-face survey. Data were processed and analyzed using 19th version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study result revealed that tourists are satisfied with attraction and services and may be helpful in planning strategies to enhanced infrastructural facilities and maintain attraction for repeat spectator and positive word of mouth.



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Introduction

Tourism is one of most vital phenomenon of 21st century emerged as an alternative option for regional growth and development. Therefore, tourism development is essential for economic growth, political legitimation, social integration and rural development specially in developing areas where agrarian economy is prevailed and substantial portion of population is unemployed and lives below poverty. Considering its paramount significance everything else can wait but not tourism. Emergence of new economy produce surplus and changes interest and test of modern urban technocratic society and rural community. Such communities wants relaxation, peace and mental satisfaction so as to choice hill stations. Sahyari Mountains is an origin place of many hill stations. These play a vital role towards the regional development. Hill stations studies has emerged in India as point of academic discussion from tourism point of view. The British officials have recognized the potential significant of hill stations so they developed hill stations as a sanatoria. A British collector,

Hugh Polyntz Malet discovered Matheran in 1950 and after 57 years Mr. Adamji Peerbhoy developed rail track in 1907 since then it acquired a pace in geography, economics and in other discipline.

Tourism is a study of tourist host interaction both thus remains an integral part of tourism system since its emergence. Tourists, soul of tourism system and his satisfaction is key to development of any tourist's destination and a subject of subject-object dichotomy. Satisfaction is a tourist state of mind at particular destination and time which striggeringly subjective to demographical (age, gender, religion and marital status), geographical (place of origin: rural-urban, distance of travel, nature of attraction, level of education and economic conditions) and psychographic or behavioral (motivational factors, purpose of visit choice of accommodation, duration of stay, type of groups and intention of repeat visit) characteristics. Geographic and demographic characteristics of tourists have found implication on psychographic characteristics and ultimately his satisfaction level.

Literature Review

Tourist satisfaction has always been a foci in tourism studies in western and oriental world. Many credential doctoral research on tourist's satisfaction, Anwari (2008), Patil (2010) assess the tourist satisfaction. Assessment of tourist level of satisfaction is essential to understand stage of development of destination and ensure re-visits. Tourists satisfaction is significant in marketing of successful destination [Kozak and Rimmington (2000)]. Valle at el (2006) studied relationship between tourist satisfaction and geo-demographic characteristics and found relationship between age, level of education and place of origin or nationality. Neal and Gursoy (2008) study revealed that tourist level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction during various stages of travel-tourism and found effects on overall satisfaction with travel and tourism services. Tourism image is a direct antecedent of perceived quality, satisfaction and tourist behavior, perceived quality has a positive influence on satisfaction determines tourists behavior Mohammed (2010).

Study Region

The crown of Raigad, Matheran is a famous hill station in Kokan region of Maharashtra State. It is located at an attitude of 803.47 meters between 18° to 35° north latitude and 73° 11° east longitude around 108 km south of Mumbai. The climate is generally pleasant and salubrious. The temperature in hot weather season is ranging between 20° to 28° c and 20° to 12° c in winter. The average rainfall is about 4000 mm. It has very dense forest cover after Chandrapur in Maharashtra. The soil is laterite and redish in colour.

Matheran is the photographer delight and trekker's paradise covering 7.2 sq. km of area as a home of over 40 species of birds and 150 species of flora. Further the lush-green hills of Sahyadri inspire the human spirit of divine heights and offers ample scope for a wide range of adventurous tourism. Beside these, the quaint little toy train from Neral, horse-riding, glorious sunset point and numerous other sightseeing points are full of tourists attraction fit to meet the dream of tourists from any corner of India and across the borders. According to 2011 census the total population of the area under study is 5139 person most of them are engage in tourism related activities and farming. Matheran is endowed with 38 attraction sites presented in table-1.

Table : 1. Tourists Attractions in Matheran.

Sr. No	Tourists Sites	Sr. No	Tourists Sites	Sr. No	Tourists Sites
1.	Alexander	14.	King George	27.	Myra
2.	Artist Nook	15.	Landscape	28.	Nawriji Lord Garde
3.	Cecil	16.	Little Chowk	29.	Olympia Race Course
4.	Charlotte Lake	17.	Lords	30.	One Tree
5.	Chenoy	18.	Louisa	31.	Panday Ply Grond
6.	Chowk	19.	Lumley Seat	32.	Panorama
7.	Coronation	20.	Madhavi	33.	Panthers Cave
8.	Echo	21.	Malang	34.	Paymaster Park
9.	Edward	22.	Maldunga	35.	Rambag
10.	Garbert	23.	Marjories Nookand Belvedere	36.	Rustomji
11.	Heart	24.	Marry	37.	Shivaji Ladder
12.	Honey Moon	25.	Monkey	38.	Sunset (Porcupine)
13.	Khandala	26.	Mount Barry		

Source : Field work

Objectives :

The present study has following objectives.

1. To study the present status of tourism in the study region.
2. To measure the level of tourists satisfaction with reference to tourism development in Matheran.

Database and Methodology

The present paper has been undertaken to assess tourist satisfaction with hill resorts based on both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data has been collected through field survey carried out at Matheran different in November to December, 2013. Total 150 questionnaires were administrated to tourists, selected purposively for face-to-face interview as this method offers best response. The secondary data on tourist arrivals, amenities available and employment involved in tourism have obtained from records of

municipalities, Matheran. Forest survey of India and Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). The population data has been obtained from census of India and Socio-economic Abstracts of Raigad districts. The collected data were processed by statistical package for social science version, 19.

The tourists proportions ascertained are excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The weightage assigned as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The satisfaction index for each attribute were calculated. The average score above two considered to be most effective in determine the quality of facilities and services available at destination and provided by institutions to present a more realistic picture following equations are used and summarized as :

$$1) \text{ Satisfaction Index } \quad St_i = \frac{\sum MiNi}{N}$$

Whereas,

St_i = Satisfaction Index for the '1'th factor.

M_i = Numerical Values for particular level of satisfaction for the '1'th factor.

N_i = Number of respondents deriving the particular level of satisfactions for '1'th item.

$$2) \text{ Ultimate Satisfaction Index } \quad USI = \frac{\sum S1 RI}{\sum RI}$$

Whereas,

USI = Ultimate Satisfaction Index

SI = Satisfaction Index

RI = Relative Importance

Tourists Arrival in Matheran.

Table- 2. Exhibit the tourist trends in Matheran from 2001 to 2011, domestic tourists increased from 123729 to 1889321 showing a 16 fold rise at Matheran. However, growth rate as compared to previous year was (-8.68 percent). In 2010, arrivals reached to 20 lakh for the first time due to improvement in facilities and nearness of Mumbai and Pune metropolitan regions. In 2002, Matheran received 146772 tourists accounting 18 percent growth as compared to preceding year, 2001 and it dipped down in 2001 (-25.14 percent). In next two years slight upward trend has registered 1.40 and 7.34 percent growth respectively. In 2007, it was declined (-3.40) and year 2008 has marked deemed slacked by (-48.62 percent) whereas 25.25 percent growth reported in consecutive year, 2009.

Table-2 : Arrival of Tourists in Matheran

Years	Tourists Arrival	Absolute Change	Change in Percentage
2001	123729	-	-
2002	146762	23033	18.00
2003	183282	26510	18.06
2004	137187	-46095	-25.14
2005	139112	1925	1.40
2006	149331	10219	7.37
2007	144243	-5088	-3.40
2008	74103	-70139	-48.62
2009	1945537	1871434	25.25
2010	2069027	123490	6.34
2011	1889321	179706	-0.68

Source : Records of Municipal Council, Matheran.

Assessment of Tourists

Tourist satisfaction has been one of the focal themes in tourism studies. The phenomenon of tourist satisfaction is therefore major interest area for researcher, planners, practitioner and geographers. Ibrahim (2005) had study the influence of destination image on tourist satisfaction Faullant, Kurt and Johann (2008) found the impact of destination image and tourist satisfaction on loyalty in the Alpine Ski resort. Tourist satisfaction is the key to tourism industry. It is then measured by using tourist satisfaction index and the parameters considered from general to very special by researcher of different discipline. The author selected the attributes by reviewing huge literature are transportation, accommodation, food Quality, landscape and site seeing, entertainment and adventure, cleanliness and hygiene, personal safety, attitude of host, general shopping, public utility services, medical facilities, administration and management, peace and quiet, availability of snacks, cold drink and souvenir.

Table 3. Level of Tourists Satisfaction

S. No.	Attributes	Excellent		Good		Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		USI	Rank
		N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent		
		o	age	o	age	o	age	o	age		
1	Transportation	2	17.33	5	35.33	4	28.67	2	18.67	2.5	8
		6		3		3		8		1	
2	Accommodation	6	42.67	4	30.67	2	18.00	1	8.66	3.0	1
		4		6		7		3		7	
3	Food Quality	4	31.33	4	31.33	3	22.67	2	14.67	2.7	6
		7		7		4		2		9	
4	Landscape and Site Seeing	5	38.67	4	29.33	3	20.00	1	12.00	2.9	2
		8		4		0		8		4	
5	Entertainment and Adventure	4	26.67	5	39.33	4	30.00	6	4.00	2.8	3
		0		9		5				9	
6	Cleanliness and Hygiene	3	22.00	4	30.00	5	34.00	2	14.00	2.6	7
		3		5		1		1		0	
7	Personal Safety	1	8.00	3	25.33	6	41.33	3	25.33	2.1	11
		2		8		2		8		6	
8	Attitude of Host	3	24.66	4	32.67	3	22.00	3	20.66	2.4	9
		7		9		3		1		1	
9	General Shopping	2	14.00	2	18.00	5	34.00	5	34.00	2.1	13
		1		7		1		1		2	
10	Public Utility Services	2	14.00	3	23.34	6	40.66	3	22.00	2.2	10
		1		5		1		3		9	
11	Medical Facilities	3	2.00	1	8.00	3	26.00	9	64.00	1.4	14
				2		9		6		8	
12	Administrative and Mgmt.	5	36.67	3	20.67	4	31.33	1	11.33	2.8	5
		5		1		7		7		3	
13	Peace and Quite	5	34.67	4	28.00	4	28.00	1	9.33	2.8	4
		2		2		2		4		8	

14	Availability	1	9.33	3	25.33	5	35.33	4	30.00	2.1	12
	of Snack,	4		8		3		5		4	
	Cold drink										
	and										
	Souvenir										

Source : Based on Field Survey

Table 3. Presents the opinions of 150 tourists regarding attraction, tourist's facilities and services available at Matheran. The response ranked to excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Among 14 attributes hotels (accommodation) sector has found highest ranking with satisfaction (3.00) excellent 42.25 percent with rank 1, attraction or site seeing rank 2 reported by (38 percent) the value of ultimate satisfaction index is 2.94, food quality rank 3rd with 32 percent. The entertainment and behavior of people are next in this category. The personal safety is found at the bottom. Only 5.75 percent tourists opinioned that, it was excellent. 135 (33.75 percent) have marked shopping as the most unsatisfactory because of limited shopping facilities and options to tourists. This is followed by personal safety (27.25 percent) behavior and attitude of local people 22.50 percent very least number of tourists 7.75 percent mentioned accommodation and entertainment facilities are poor and unsatisfactory in viewed of myriad accounting 39.75 percent. Here, hotels are organizes shows and provides swimming facilities and indoor games to tourists. In addition to this horse riding, river crossing and valley crossing are choices of many tourists. Cycle rickshaws and Doli are unique means of transport at Matheran (32.25 percent) tourists. 18.00 percent tourists were considered shopping as good, it was noted that 'satisfactory' category, (34.00 percent) to personal safety followed by cleanliness and hygiene whereas 27 tourists answered accommodation facilities are satisfactory. Medical facilities ranked 14th more than 64 percent tourist are unsatisfied the USI is lowest among all the attributes because there is no hospital or medical practioner available in emergency. Even the local residents also depend upon nearby practioner in Karjat ,Neral and Mumbai.

Conclusion:

Matheran hill station is emerged as one of the mass tourism destination in Maharashtra. It is endowed with many sites of tourist interest, a mini train, healthy climate, landscape and available facilities foster tourism development. Attraction, accommodation other infrastructural facilities are the basic attributes of tourism in Matheran The facilities for the tourist should be develop and to facilitated tourist for the return visit are medical, snack

corner and personal safety. Transportation the prerequisite for tourism industry rank 8th among the 14 attributes. So there is a need to connect this hill station by appropriate mean of transportation.

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