TOURIST'S SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDYOF MATHERAN HILL STATION, MAHARASHTRA

Hajare P.J.

Assistant Professor, Dept. of Geography,

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil College, Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

Pednekar H.M.

Head, Associate Professor,

Dept. of Geography, Kirti College, Dadar, Mumbai

ABSTRACT

Travel and tourism is one of the largest service industries in the world which deals with the human beings. Tourism industry provides employment opportunities to the local people. Tourist's satisfaction is the most relevant variable when analyzing tourists behaviour as it influence on the choice of destination. The tourists and residents of the place can play a major role in tourism development. Good conduct of tourist, increase the popularity of the tourist place.

KEY WORDS: *Tourism, satisfaction,*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism geography is the main branch of human geography, it is multifaceted industry. Tourism industry provides employment opportunities to the local people. Economic development of any tourist place depends on nature of tourism and infrastructural facilities provided to the tourists.
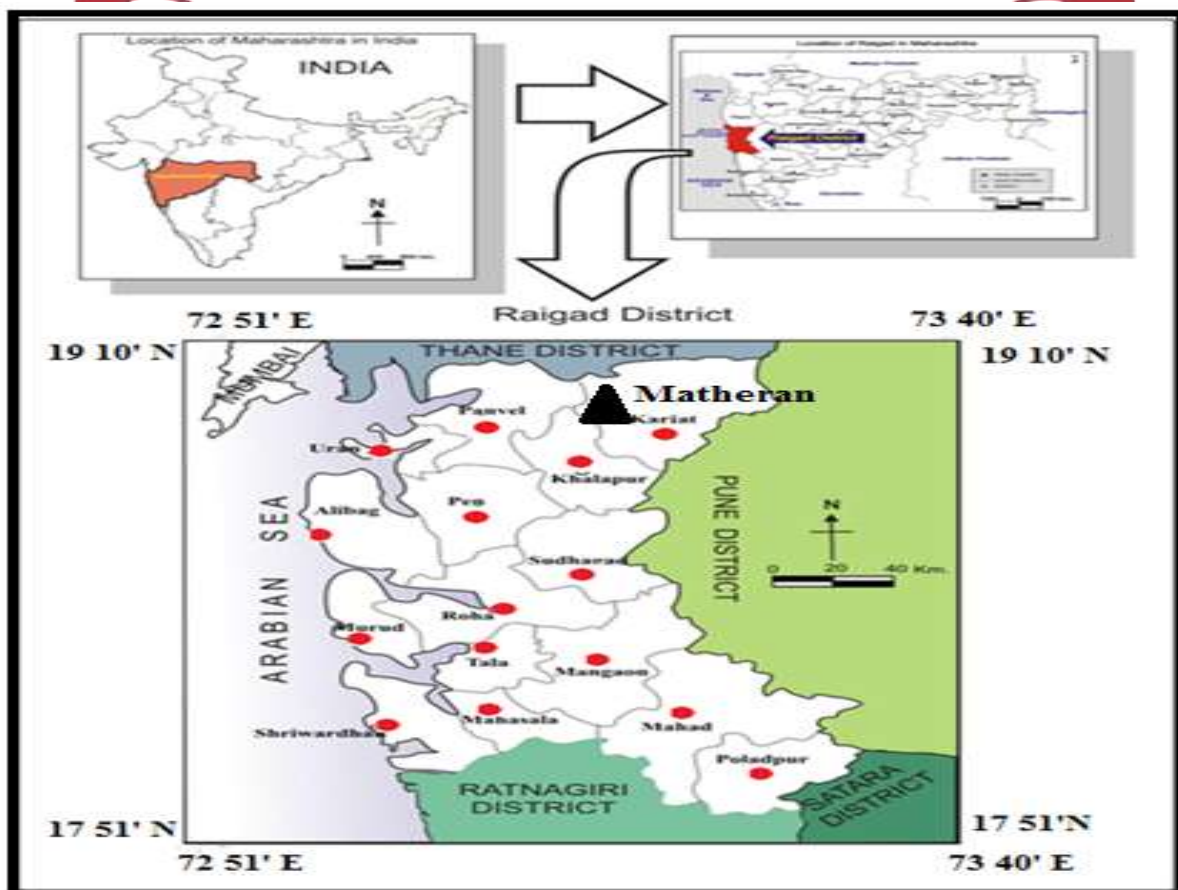
To access the levels of satisfaction of tourists, it is necessary to know the views of tourists about the various facilities provided to them at the destination. Tourists and local people of the destination can play an important role for the development of tourism and ultimately popularity of the destination.

Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal (EIIRJ)
Bi-monthly   **Reviewed Journal**   **Mar/April 2013**

ISSN
2277-8721

Maharashtra has variety of breathtaking hill stations. Most of these were established during the British period. These hill stations attract domestic and foreign tourists on a large scale. Some of the hill stations in Maharashtra like Lonavla, Khandala, Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, Bhandardara, Malshej Ghat, Amboli, Chikhaldara, Panhala, Toranmal, Jawhar and Matheran.

STUDY REGION

Matheran is a popular hill station which is located in Karjat tehsil of Raigad district of Maharashtra.. This place truly loved by all picnic lovers, trekkers and as jungle lovers. Matheran is a smallest hill station in India which is located on the Western Ghats ranges at an elevation of 800 meter above the sea level. It lies 18^0 35' North latitude to 73^0 18' East longitudes. Matheran town covers an area of 724 sq.km with 5139 population.

LOCATION OF MATHERAN IN RAIGAD DISTRICT

The name *Matheran* is derived from two words, '*mathe*' means on top and '*ran*' means forest. So, that means *"forest on top"* or *"mother forest".* Tourists enjoy a cooler and

less humid climate which makes its popular during summer season. Temperature varies from 16^0 C in winter to 32^0 C in summer with annual rainfall 524 cms.

Matheran has been declared as an '*Eco-sensitive zone*' by the Union Environment Ministry and it can be called as *Health Sana Tourism*. Matheran was discovered by Hugh Poyntz Mallet, district Collector of Thane district in May 1850.

Matheran hill station is covered by dense forest with almost 150 varieties of plants and many bird species have made this forest their home. There are 38 points with spectacular view overlooking the beautiful mountainous terrain. A panorama point is witness a breathtaking sunrise early in the morning. Matheran is a peaceful, relaxing place and small paradise for the nature lovers. It is full of lush green landscape and beautiful hills. It is truly a unique thing is all vehicles are banned even motorcycle beyond the Dasturi Naka. Hence this Place as it is 'Pollution Free Hill Station'. There is tremendous growth in the tourists its unique feature. Due to service industry, recreational facilities and more attractions help to increase the number of tourists at Matheran.

OBJECTIVES

1) To analyze the promotional factors at Matheran.
2)   To assess the levels of satisfaction of the tourists.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present is based on primary data which is collected through actual field work. Here an attempt is made to assess the level of satisfaction of the tourist by their views regarding the various facilities. For that purpose, nine indicators were selected which is affected the levels of satisfaction of tourists. To conduct the sample survey, a questionnaire was prepared and filled by tourists. There were 100 tourists personally contacted during the summer vacation period. Tourists' views are noted as excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. The factor wise levels of satisfaction was calculated by giving preferences to their views with numerical values like 8 to 10 for excellent, 6 to 8 for good, 4 to 6 or satisfactory and 0 to 4 for unsatisfactory. The factor wise level of satisfaction is calculated and tabulated. The factor wise average values are calculated categorically summing up the values given by the tourists and dividing the total number of the respondence who noted that category. These averages multiplying by respective frequencies would be given total satisfaction and divided by the

total frequencies for the respective factor would give the satisfaction index for that particular indicator. The following formula is used for calculation of satisfaction index.

$$Sti = \frac{\sum Mi : Ni}{N}$$

Where, St = Satisfaction Index for the 'i'[th] factor.

Mi = Numerical values for particular level of satisfaction for the 'i'th factor.

Ni = Number of respondents deriving the particular level of satisfaction for the 'i'[th] factor.

N = Total number of respondents for that factor for all level of satisfaction.

Then the ranks are given to these satisfaction indices.

FACTORWISE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION

For the assessment of factorwise levels of satisfaction, nine indicators are considered which is affected on levels of tourists' satisfaction are indentified from table I.

Table I reveals that, factor wise levels of satisfaction of the tourist with their nine different indicators. The total 100 tourist were contacted at the Matheran hill station and their views about the facilities provided to them at the destination. Factor wise levels of tourists is evaluated by collection of views given in the Table I. Factorwise average is calculated and noted excellent (31.6 per cent), good (33.4 per cent), satisfactory (19.1 per cent) and unsatisfactory (19.9 per cent). Overall experience of the tourists' levels of satisfaction of the tourist is high. Only 19.6 per cent tourists told that such facilities are not satisfactory.

Table I   Factor wise Level of Satisfaction

Sr. No.	Indicators	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
1	Transportation	28	35	5	32	100
2	Accommodation	55	29	10	6	100
3	Food and drinking water	18	29	38	15	100
4	Shopping	33	49	10	8	100
5	Parking	23	31	19	27	100
6	About Place	34	22	14	30	100
7	Recreation	30	39	10	21	100
Average		31.6	33.4	15.1	19.9	100

Source: Survey by Authors

FACTOR WISE AVERAGE VALUES OF SATISFACTION

Factorwise average values are calculated. For that purpose the tourist were asked to assign points (out of ten) for particular level of satisfaction they derived from each factor. Distribution of ten points like 8 to10 points for excellent, 6 to 8 for good, 4 to 6 for satisfactory and less the 4 for unsatisfactory. The average values for the different levels of satisfaction for different indicators are given in Table II.

Table II Factor wise Average Value of Satisfaction

Sr. No.	Indicators	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
1	Transportation	8.53	6.8	5.1	3.25
2	Accommodation	9.8	7.85	5.8	3.8
3	Food and drinking water	8.46	6.55	4.8	2.8
4	Shopping	9.02	7.49	5.5	3.5
5	Parking	8.31	6.4	4.6	2.6
6	About Place	9.6	7.7	5.65	3.67
7	Recreation	8.6	73	5.4	3.46

 Source: Survey by Authors

SATISFACTION INDEX

The ranks are given to these indicators, which is given as per priority of the factors. Table III observed that, satisfaction index for accommodation is 8.47, for shopping 7.47, about place 6.85, for Recreational facilities 6.69, for transportation 6.06, for food and drinking water 5.66, and for parking is 5.47. These satisfaction indexes are weighted by giving ranks to these indicators.

Page 69

Table III Satisfaction Index

Sr. No.	Indicators	Index	Rank
1	Accommodation	8.47	I
2	Shopping	7.47	II
3	About Place	6.85	III
4	Recreation	6.69	IV
5	Transportation	6.06	V
6	Food and drinking water	5.66	VI
7	Parking	5.47	VII

Above the tables it is observed that, accommodation facilities are more developed at Matheran. There were 33 hotels, 12 resorts and 2 cottages are provided to tourists, Tourists have stayed two or three days, hence it received first rank. Kapadia market has varieties of shops, attractive items, cane and leather articles, hats, Chappals, riding shoes, and popular homemade sweet chikis. Therefore shopping facilities gets second rank. Because of nature's beauty, attraction of Toy train, peaceful and pleasure climate, isolated location, large numbers of local and outsider tourists get preference to the Matheran; it is close to Mumbai and Pune. So Matheran tourist destination received third rank. Recreational facilities received forth rank, most of the tourists enjoy with recreational facilities like horse riding, hand pool rickshaws, picnic spot, etc. Transportation received fifth rank that means 19.6 per cent tourists are not satisfactory. Matheran is connected by state highway – 8 and by narrow gauge railway. The frequency of MSRTC buses is very low. There are only six pairs of toy trains which is ply from Neral. Therefore tourists prefer to local taxi. The fare of taxi is no fixed. All vehicles are parked at Dasturi Naka; vehicles are banned on Matheran hill station. On Matheran plateau only horses and hand carts/ pulled rickshaws are used for transportation purpose. Fleet of Horse in Matheran is more than 500 horses, from that around 65 horses are use for freight rest of use for transportation. There are around 100 hand carts in Matheran for transportation. So, Matheran is only place in Asia where vehicles are prohibited. Now state highway -8 should be widened and increase the number of toy trains. As a result increase the number of tourists.

Food and drinking water facilities received sixth rank. The levels of satisfaction of the tourists are high but inadequate potable water supply is the main problem. Parking facilities received seventh rank because all vehicles are parked at Dasturi Naka which is 2 km from the Matheran town. Parking space is not sufficient during the every holiday, weekend and or summer season, also create traffic jam problem.

CONCLUSION

Matheran is eco sensitive zone. It is necessary to provide various facilities to the tourists and to find out the causes of unsatisfaction of tourists with these facilities. The level of satisfaction of the tourists and factorwise satisfaction index are calculated, it reveals the real facts of tourism. Matheran is a natural attraction, so large numbers of tourists are come from Mumbai and Pune. During the holiday or peak season resorts and hotel have provides inadequate food facilities to the tourists. It is generally tourists are satisfied with existing facilities at this place. But high cost of food. Inadequate transport facilities and parking, tourists are unsatisfied.

REFERENCES

1. Krishan K. Karma (2001), *Managing Tourist Destination,* Kanishka Publisher Distributor, New Delhi.

2. Bae-Haeng Cho (1998) : *Assessing tourist satisfaction,* Tourism Recreation Research Vol.23 (1).

3. Cooper, C et.al (1999), *Tourism Principles and Practices,* Addison Wesley Longman Publishing, New York.

4. Khan, M. A. (2005), *Introduction to Tourism,* Anmol Publication Pvt.Ltd, New Delhi.