

How is the World Looking at India? Story from International Tourists

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Abstract

India as a tourist destination is dynamic and more evolving than ever. With government support, and changes in tourism policies and marketing strategies, tourism in India is expected to expand drastically. As the visible effects of the pandemic are fading away, tourism is receiving abundant attention. There is a rise in all types of tourism in India – inbound, outbound, and domestic. The objective of the study is to find out the motivations of inbound tourists visiting India. The study analyses the motivations of inbound travellers in India and offers an international perspective of the country as a preferred destination. To achieve the objectives, a descriptive research design was adopted using the convenience sampling technique. The instrument was designed using a review of the literature and a survey. The sample was 409 in total, collected from 12 different destinations within India. EFA indicated five types of motivations amongst inbound travellers, namely culinary connoisseurs, spiritual gratification, Value-seeking, Heritage aficionado, and Serenity seeking. The study offers practical implications for destination managers and tourism policy planners in India as they can focus on planning strategies to target these segments of inbound tourists. It will, therefore, provide insights to improvise Incredible India and other campaigns related to the promotion of tourism activities. It has theoretical implications, especially for the existing literature on tourists' motivations. How does the external world look at India?

Keywords: Tourist destination, preferences, choices, outer perspective, exploratory factor analysis, India

Introduction

India is a land of diversity – in culture, religion, language, and geography. The population is 1.42 billion (O'Neill, 2023), India is the seventh-largest nation in the world. The diversity of cultures and people in India make it a preferred tourist destination for travellers from all over the world. The country has something to offer for everyone – from the snow-capped mountains in the north to the sun-drenched beaches in the

south; from the desert sands of Rajasthan to the lush green hills of Kerala; from the historical monuments of Delhi to the holy temples of Varanasi. Accordingly, the article highlights reasons behind India being a popular tourist destination in-bound tourist destination.

Tourism in India has been significantly increasing and witnessing growth in the recent past. It is gradually establishing itself as a significant economic force in the country. From 2010 to 2019, foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) grew from 5.78 million to 17.91 million, an annual growth rate of approximately 16% (Statista, 2020). Resumption of regular international flights set to boost both, inbound (2.5 million trips, 75% higher in comparison to 2020) and outbound (11 million trips, 172% higher in comparison to 2020) tourism. However, despite its geographical and cultural diversity, the Indian outbound demand is 97% higher than the inbound tourism (Euromonitor International, 2022).

Nevertheless, the country is recovering from the pandemic shock, and recent statistics have shown evidence of the growth in Indian tourism market. Compared to 2019, the inbound growth was up to 43% in 2022. In comparison to 2020, it is 12% and in 2021 it is more than 33% (IndiaStats.com, 2023). To maintain the rise and to increase the footfall, it becomes crucial to understand what India offers and how the world sees India.

The Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Govt of India has always been working to enhance the perception about the nation. They've recently launched a number of promotional campaigns. Among them is the "Incredible India" campaign, extending the e-visa facility to more than 170 countries, introducing medical e-visa, and Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series (for promoting domestic tourism) during the COVID-19 lockdown. The MoT has released one recent report stating that the annual growth rate of foreign tourist arrival is -44.5%. This report is a major concern; however, we agree that COVID-19 was one of the important reasons. These recent reports have attracted the attention of the researchers who have thought to utilise their skills to develop a better policy framework and ecosystem.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report published

by the MoT of India, the Incredible India campaign emphasises the country's diversity. During 2014–2015, the MoT launched two of its popular schemes, named., Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) and Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojna (HRIDAY) with a budget of 2.5 billion. Twelve distinct cities with significant religious and historical significance were chosen for the implementation of PRASAD and HRIDAY. These cities are now being developed for promoting tourism activities. The government also provides funds to enhance, upgrade, and build tourism infrastructure to support the rising demand of tourists. For enhancing these facilities Govt. of India has sanctioned 240 billion (highest till now) in the budget 2023.

Even after India's diversity, rich culture, abundant marvellous architectural sites, and rapid tourism growth, the country lags many other developing Asian countries. China, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia are among the Asian nations with much more tourists than India. India is ranked 34th out of 140 nations in the 2017 World Economic Forum global travel and tourism competitiveness index (World Economic Forum: The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019). India was at 40th rank in 2017 and the WEF has reported it as a significant mover. India is ranked ninth and tenth in the same report for cultural resources, business travel, and price competitiveness, respectively. These rankings indicate that India endows a wealth of natural beauty that attracts international tourists. Other economic indicators, however, indicate India's inability to compete with several Asian countries. The Indian MoT plays an instrumental role in the development of the tourism industry by launching advertising campaigns such as "Incredible India" and several others. According to a report by the MoT, the Government of India, despite these efforts, tourism in India continues to fall short of its potential. The unexplored potential could be a result of Indian marketers and administrators' inability to communicate the relevant factors that can attract more tourists (Kaur et al., 2016).

According to Tasci et al. (2007), the choice of a tourism destination is determined by factors related to the destination's features, attractions, and attributes. However,

India, has not found any distinctive qualities for branding in its most recent endeavours (Singh & Ahuja, 2014; Kaur et al., 2016), apart from diversity in terms of geographies, language, culture, food, cuisines etc.

Research into the desires of the travellers is imperative for planning, marketing, and administering a destination (Bayih & Singh, 2020; Fodness, 1994). It also helps in market segmentation for better organisation and understanding of tourist behaviour during the decision-making process and at the destination (Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Pesonen et al., 2011). Knowledge of tourist motivations helps in creating a fair branding strategy too (Kaurav et al., 2020; Li et al., 2016; Maghrifani et al., 2022). It is critical for destination managers and policy makers to understand the target segments/audience interested in travelling to India, to identify the factors that will attract tourists. That's why fail to advertise to the correct audience and resulted in wrong positioning. The tourists should be shown a true image of the destination to provide them optimum satisfaction when their expectations are met (Jathe, Gjerald, & Øgaard, 2022). Mass marketing is the foundation of India's "Incredible India" tourism campaign. This campaign was released globally as opposed to participating in customised branding based on the likes and preferences of people from different geographical boundaries (Singh & Ahuja, 2014; Kaurav, 2023). Whereas India has a vast potential to create customised and engagement-based campaigns, that too targeted for different audience. As a result, the study aims to address one critical objective – to ascertain the motivations of India's foreign (inbound) tourists. Thus, this study proposes to solve the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the anticipated preferences of tourists interested in visiting India?

RQ2: How do foreign tourists perceive India?

Literature review

While the roots of study on motivations lie in other disciplines such as psychology or sociology, the research on tourist motivation gained attention prominently in the 1980s (Baber et al., 2015; Clary et al., 1988; Dann, 1977; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Moscardo et al., 1996). Since then, the

study on tourist motivation has adopted varied approaches (Kainthola, Chowdhary, Kaurav, & Tiwari, 2021). A majority of the scholarly works extensively employed Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1970) as a foundation to validate their arguments (Beard & Ragheb., 1983; Benjamin & Looby, 1998; Brown, 2005; Chen et al., 2022;)). The push and pull theory (Dann, 1977), allocentric–psychocentric (Plog, 1977), and travel career ladder (P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005) are also some of the well-renowned models used in motivation and tourist segmentation studies. Even today the push and pull theory is widely used to link different components such as emotions, tourist behaviour and satisfaction (Madduma, 2020). While one of the most prominent works by Iso-Ahola (1982), is centred around the motivations of tourists mostly around seeking escape, Pearce (1996) highlighted that motivation is related to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Pearce & Lee (2005) through their research stated that factors such as escape, leisure, self-development, and relaxation seem to be a fundamental common aspect for most of tourist motivation. The push factors of escape, relaxation, knowledge, and family togetherness were echoed by several scholars (Chan & Baum, 2007; Polus & Bidder, 2016; Voigt et al., 2011).

The research in consumer motivation can be divided into two broad viewpoints (Campbell et al., 1970)- process models and content models. The process models produce a forecast of the most likely action of the person in each situation, and content models are used to understand the needs. While there is no denying that circumstances and past experiences influence the decision-making process (Hsu et al., 2010), it is also important to comprehend individuals' needs as they impact the end goals and actions (Pizam, 1978). Motivations directly influence the actions of the tourists (Lee & Kim, 2023).

Jafari (1987) and UN World Tourism Organisation (1999) asserted that there is a lack of conceptual comprehension of tourist motivation in literature. While there have been several studies on motivations in tourism from varied perspectives and approaches (Brown, 2005; Egger, Lei, & Wassler, 2020; Kassean & Gassita, 2013; Moal-Ulvoas, 2016; Park & Yoon, 2009; Weaver, 2015), scholars like

Cooper et al. (2005) and Holden (2005) stated that there is an absence of a common conceptualisation of tourist motivations, making the study area challenging. The reasons for this absence of a single understanding can be due to the broad spectrum of human needs, difficulties in finding a common and most suitable methodology for the research, and also as there are cultural, social, and economic differences among people (Brown, 2005; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; P. L. Pearce & Lee, 2005). Although there is no universally accepted theory on tourist motivation even after around four decades of research, it requires to be even further developed till an acceptable comprehension is achieved (Hsu et al., 2010).

A strong ideology suggests that the mere existence of tourism is in response to the desires and needs of the people. These needs convert into motivations of the tourists pushing them towards the most suitable destination of their interest (Bayih& Singh, 2020; Pizam, 1978). These created motivations lead to expectations with the destination and in turn impact the satisfaction of the tourists. Also, the background of person, their culture, psychology, and other connecting factors play a major role in influencing their motivations and expectations from a destination (Bo kus, Vento, Tammi, Komppula, & Kolesnikova, 2023). It is advocated by various scholars that the study of tourist motivation is of great value in planning, marketing, and administrating a destination (Fodness, 1994; Hsu et al., 2010; Kessler et al., 2020; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). In more clear words, the identification of the tourist motivation eases the explanation of questions like 'why does tourist travel?', 'why did they travel to the said destination?' or 'what type of activities will they do?' (Kim et al., 2003). The research on motivation is also proved to be successful in dividing the tourist market into smaller segments (Moufakkir& Selmi, 2017). This provides an insightful direction in the learning of tourist behaviour pre, post and even during the travel of tourists.

Methodology

Instrument designing

A survey was done with foreign tourists visiting India. The objective of the survey was to find the motivating factors

attracting them to India. In the first phase, semi-structured interviews were done with foreign tourists. For this purpose, the research team boarded the train from Agra (the majority of foreign tourists are available here). The research team travelled with them to Delhi and Gwalior. These interviews were in an informal setting to make them more comfortable in providing answers. The interviewers were proficient English speakers. The interview schedule aimed to learn about important attributes which influenced their decision to travel. The additional attributes which were received from these interviews were later added to the survey instrument.

The survey questionnaire was divided into two major sections. The first section of the instrument was about some demographic and socio-economic information of the respondents, such as age group, gender, the purpose of visit, visitation level, and country of origin. The second section of the instrument had a list of about 28 attributes derived from the literature review and further improvised by the panel discussion (Kaurav, 2015). The respondents were asked to choose their perceived most desirable attributes that influence their decision to travel. These items were then collected and filtered carefully in the presence of three professors and seven research scholars. The items of the instrument were about appropriateness in the context of destination India. The items were measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1 indicated– not at all important and 5 indicated- extremely important.

The instrument was piloted with 15 international tourists. A few language improvements were done several times after the pilot study. Based on the results of the pilot study, few attributes were merged, as they were perceived as the same or similar in most cases by the tourists. A total of twenty-four attributes were established for the final instrument.

The Geographical spread of sample

The data collection was carried out in 12 popular tourist destinations of India, namely Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Indore, Gwalior, Mumbai, Goa, Mathura, Khajuraho, and Pune. The selection of these states was based on their importance, popularity amongst tourists, especially inbound and their diverse destination

personalities. These destinations offer distinct benefits and experiences to international travellers. Within the city, the researcher chose different locations for data collection.

Sampling technique and response rate

The sample was collected pre-pandemic (before 1st lockdown, March 2020). For implementation - the convenience sampling technique was used for data collection. Interviewers approached respondents during their time of rest. A total of 485 questionnaires were distributed. 429 forms were returned by the respondents. 20 of those questionnaires were found incomplete, not legible handwriting, overwritten, and missing information, therefore, determined to be unusable. The sample size remained at 409 (pre-pandemic 289, post pandemic 120), which accounts for a 85% response rate.

Data analysis

There were two stages in the data analysis. Each stage has a different statistical tool with its importance and significance. The devised strategy for the data analysis is: first, frequencies and descriptive are used to explain the basic demographic and socioeconomic background of the respondents. Their profiling has been done. Second, the exploratory factor analysis was done by using principal component analysis. The important factors for motivation to visit destination India were identified here.

There were 54% males and 46% females in the sample. Respondents below 18 years were 2% of the sample. Though these respondents were minor and very less in number, still considered because they are found to be playing important roles in deciding on destinations. 49% of respondents participated from the age group of 19-30 years and 31% of respondents belonged to the age group of 31-50 years. The remaining 18% of the respondents were above 50 years of age. More than half of the respondents (61%) were first-time travellers to India. The majority of the respondents were from Europe (25.11%) and North America (22.5%) of the sample. About 42% of the sample was from Asia and Australia. The rest sample was received from African countries. These demographics were similar to the official statistics of the tourist arrival data of the Indian Tourism Statistics (India Tourism Statistics, 2015).

Further, the sample included 21% of respondents from Asian countries, 17% from European continents, 20% from North American countries, 21% from Australia, and 21% respondents from Africa and South American countries.

Factor analysis

A careful investigation was done for papers on motivation in the tourism discipline. It was found that more than 70% of them start with factor analysis (Arissaputra & Sentika, 2022; Clammer, 2008; Gan et al., 2023; Mody et al., 2014; Weaver, 2015). Therefore, this paper followed the style of others. For identification of the underlying factors of motivations using factor analysis, EFA was performed with PCA (principal component analysis) (Oguzet al., 2020). The sample adequacy measure yielded KMO to be 0.742. Bartlett's test of sphericity resulted in $\chi^2 = 237.789$, where the p-value was (significant value) $<.001$. For a newly developed instrument, Ali, (2022), suggested following minimum ratios of respondents to items 10:1. Whereas this study has got a sample size of 340, which is 14:1 in the ratio. This is considered a good measure of sample adequacy and sphericity Hair et al. (2005). The results above indicate that the data was not in the identity matrix and therefore, suitable for factor analysis.

The PCA was used with the Varimax rotation method of factors (Kaurav et al., 2020). These mechanics generated five factors solution. These factors cumulatively have explained 61.9% of the total variance. Factor loadings of more than 0.4 are considered to contribute significantly to the solution. The statements, which have factor loading less than 0.4, were dropped from further analysis. The analysis resulted in five factors with 20 items, while four items were dropped, due to low factor loading. Cronbach's Alpha () was calculated for each factor. As per the latest trend, McDonald's omega (?) was also calculated for checking the consistency of each factor that resulted from the analysis. The new generation of methodologists and statisticians have cautioned that Alpha is not a perfect measure of reliability. Whereas the more generalizable form of reliability is McDonald's omega (?) (Hayes, & Coutts, 2020).

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix of Motivations, and Leading Factors

	Component				
	Factor loadings	Eigen values	% of variance	Cronbach's Alpha ()	Omega ()
<i>Culinary connoisseurs</i>		7.875	15.162	0.853	0.733
“India is profuse in multiple cuisines, varied from traditional, regional and international”	0.862				
“India is rich in Ayurveda and medicines “	0.754				
“Ease of availability of foreign chains of foods”	0.732				
“Multi-ethnic country”	0.713				
“Variety of delicious cuisines”	0.674				
“Indian food is prepared according to local traditions”	0.644				
“Ease of availability of local food”	0.567				
<i>Spiritual gratification</i>		7.653	13.51	0.844	0.728
“India offers high Ayurvedic medicinal quality, rich, aromatic, green and herbal leaves”	0.765				
“Great place to do yoga and meditation”	0.654				
“India is famous for spiritual learnings”	0.543				
<i>Value -seeking</i>		6.159	12.113	0.828	0.671
“Good and reasonable shopping destinations for artefacts, clothes, handicrafts and accessories”	0.757				
“Indian products offer a good value for money”	0.674				
“Cost effective in services, like accommodation, transportation, body spa and body therapy”	0.638				
<i>Heritage aficionado</i>		5.268	11.45	0.716	0.669
“Forts and monuments”	0.712				
“Rich cultural heritage”	0.701				
“Fascinating history about kings and dynasties”	0.698				
“Rich Indian ethnic culture and traditions”	0.657				
<i>Serenity seeking</i>		4.764	9.67	0.707	0.654
“Land of many rituals and festivals”	0.689				
“Diverse landscapes, like, beaches, forests, deserts, mountains”	0.642				
“Ethnical products of India are a significant attraction, like clothes, food, and artefacts”	0.613				

With 62% explained variance, there were five factors extracted having eigenvalues more than one. Cronbach's Alpha reliability was checked for the factors generated through EFA. Reliability of >0.5 is considered (Mehmetoglu, 2005). Factor one consisted of seven items. Cuisines, spices, and food were the main themes of the item in the first factor. Hence, this factor was labelled "Culinary connoisseurs". The reliability value (Cronbach's alpha) of items of this factor is 0.853, which means a good item to total correlation. McDonald's omega (ω) for the items of this factor was 0.733 indicating a more robust and reliable item was present in factor one. With the highest eigenvalues among the factors, this factor has indicated the eigenvalue as 7.875 and accounts for 15% of the variance explained. This factor represented –the importance of Indian cuisine on the world map.

This motivational factor supports the popularity for diverse Indian cuisines (Rathore & Shekhawat, 2008). As local food is prepared as per the traditional practices of a community, this factor highlights the gastronomic significance of preserving the local traditions, of a community (Mangalassary, 2016). Although with globalisation, various international food chains are opened outside India, the authenticity of Indian cuisines can be found only in the country. Also, Indian food and beverage industry is expanding as it caters to travellers with diverse cuisine preferences.

Factor two consisted of the themes of spiritual experiences, yoga and meditation, therefore, this factor is called "Spiritual gratification". The reliability value of the item of this factor is 0.844. The eigenvalue for this factor is 7.653. McDonald's omega (ω) for the items of this factor was 0.728. This indicates that items represent truly, what they should. This factor explained 14% of the total variance. Which is at the second rank for the ranking purpose. The strong inclination towards spirituality, meditation and yoga are obvious due to the rich history of religion, and spirituality in India. It is considered the origin of some prominent religions like Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism and a place with profuse spiritual experiences (Aggarwal, Guglani, & Goel, 2008; Balutiya, 2019; Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005). As wellness is one of the dimensions of

spirituality, the country is well-known for its rich history of Ayurveda. Several places in India still uphold traditional medication practices and other wellness that attract inbound tourists from all over the world (Kumar, 2017). Furthermore, scholars have identified that the wide-scale availability of ancient wellness practices and spiritual essence make India a great place to carry out wellness-related activities (Choudhary & Qadir, 2022, Dutt, 2022).

There were three critical themes of factor three. These themes were – value for money, inexpensive prices, and affordable services. This factor was labelled as "Value-seeking". Cronbach's alpha (0.828) shows strongly bonded items were present in this factor. McDonald's omega (ω) for the items of this factor was 0.671. This factor has got eigenvalue of 6.159 and has explained 12% of the total variance. Value-seeking motivation indicates that the currency in India is lower than the Western currencies, mainly dollar and euro, hence making it a pocket friendly destination for the inbound tourists. Secondly, Indian tourism and hospitality sector offers a wide range of services suitable for diverse travellers. Whether it is staying in a budget-friendly hostel or experiencing a royal treatment at an ancient mansion, the country offers value to the tourists. Accordingly, India as a destination has been offering value for money with its diverse experiences, natural beauty, rich heritage, and ethnicity. The availability of various aspects in one destination is highly appreciated by any tourist. Also, the ethnic products of India attract inbound tourists, making India a perfect shopping destination for traditional clothes, accessories, handicrafts, and artefacts.

The fourth factor consisted of four items of the scale. These items are associated with ethnicity and culture, that is why it is named "Heritage aficionado". The reliability value of this factor is 0.716. McDonald's omega (ω) for the items of this factor was 0.669. The eigenvalue is 5.268, and it explains 11% of the total variance. The themes prevailed on this factor can be represented as –the ancient stories of India along with its historical background have emphasised on the kings, queens, dynasties, exquisite mansions, and rich architecture. The richness of Indian culture can be witnessed in both intangible aspects such as stories,

folklores, music; and tangible aspects such as in the structural designs at forts, monuments, and museums. Furthermore, these tangible and intangible aspects of the Indian heritage vary from one state to another, making them intrigue for the inbound tourists.

Factor five consisted of three statements, included items related to serenity, natural beauty and diverse opportunities of tourism and therefore was labelled as “Serenity seeking”. A reliability value (Cronbach's alpha) of .707 indicates the good correlated items in the instrument. McDonald's omega (?) for the items of this factor was 0.654 and the eigenvalue is 4.764. The factor explains 10% of the total variance. This factor means - India offers diversity in landscapes like mountains, beaches, forests, and deserts.

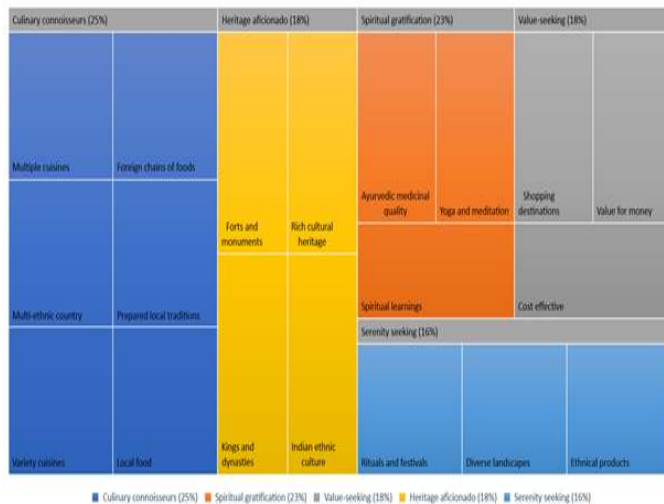


Figure 1: Perceived Identity of Brand India (outside view)

India is a preferred tourist destination for several reasons (figure 1). First, it is a country with a rich and varied cultural heritage. From the ancient ruins of the Indus Valley Civilization to the magnificent temples of the Mughal Empire, there is much to see and learn about India's past. Second, India is home to some of the most beautiful natural scenery in the world. From the snow-capped Himalayas to the lush tropical forests of Kerala, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Third, India is a land of great Yoga and spiritual significance (Aggarwal, Guglani, & Goel, 2008; Buzinde, 2020). With holy sites like Varanasi, Kerala, Rishikesh, and Bodh Gaya, it is no wonder that so many

people come to India in search of enlightenment (Bandyopadhyay & Nair, 2019; Phukan, 2014; Rana, 2015). Fourth, due to vast geography and varied season India became the habitat for many cultures and therefore many cuisines to offer to the tourists (Bhartwal & Sharma, 2022; Gupta, Kumar, Gopal, & Singh, 2022; Rathore & Shekhawat, 2008). Fifth, foreign tourist finds India as less expensive and considering it as a shopping-oriented destination as well, novelty, arts, and crafts are the other reasons to include shopping in the brand identity (Ahmad, 2014; Khan, Chelliah, Haron, & Ahmed, 2017). Finally, India is simply an incredibly diverse and fascinating country. With its myriad of languages, religions, and customs, there is no other place quite like it.

Conclusion

India is a versatile destination with 28 states and 8 union territory, wherein each state offers a unique encounter with its history, culture and geography. The serenity of Indian pilgrim sites, the beauty of its ancient monuments, its serenity, geographical diversity, grandeur of temples with exquisite carvings, and cultural vastness and richness is conspicuous in the numerous works dedicated by the scholars over the years, especially the foreign authors. Tourism in India is significantly increasing and witnessing growth in the recent past. While Covid-19 did bring a temporary halt (Assafet al., 2022; Kainthola et al., 2021), it is again at steady rise (Saxena et al., 2021). The study of tourist motivation is of great value in planning, marketing, and administering a destination. India is seen as a place providing value for money with its rich history, diverse culture, its ethnicity, and abundance of natural beauty. The study enlightens the readers with the major motivations of the tourists visiting India. It highlights the expectations they have from their journey revealing the image of India for them.

India is a country with a lot to offer tourists, and it is no wonder that it is becoming an increasingly popular destination for travellers from all over the world. With its rich culture, amazing food, and beautiful scenery, India has something for everyone.

Managerial and Practical Implications

The study presents practical implications for destination managers and tourism policy planners in India, offering insights that extend to policy considerations. Stakeholders can now focus on strategic planning in diverse ways, leveraging the findings to enhance the Incredible India campaign. The theoretical implications extend to the existing literature on tourists' motivations, particularly in developing economies. The study recommends streamlining management practices, improved tourist services, product enhancements, and a deeper understanding of the market dynamics. This paper proves invaluable for planners, managers, and policymakers in the tourism industry, especially those dealing with inbound tourists. The results suggest a clear direction for the segmentation of international tourists and provide guidance on how to cater to and target them effectively in future marketing campaigns. The study addresses crucial questions about the expectations of tourists looking towards India, contributing meaningful insights to the field.

Theoretical Implications

Brand India is getting significant focus on Yoga and Spirituality now. Especially after the detrimental impact of Covid-19 on the people, travellers are seeking meaningful and relaxing journeys (Kainthola et al., 2022). India has the potential of being a world leader in the sector. The government of India has launched a first of its kind AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy) Ministry. Likewise, a popular travel brand Make My Trip introduced Spiritual Map of India to help tourists plan their trips. Such initiatives along with the proactive involvement of the private sector are a strong step towards strengthening the essence of spirituality in Indian tourism.

Limitations

While we exercised caution in conducting this study, it is essential to acknowledge that achieving perfection in research is inherently challenging. This study, however, is not without limitations. Firstly, the sample size representing each continent was relatively smaller. Additionally, data collection occurred pre-pandemic,

during a time when international borders remained open as before. It is anticipated that in the post-pandemic era, the significance of spirituality and Yoga may contribute to an increased influx of tourists to India.

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