

Tourist Expectation and Satisfaction at Cultural Heritage Destination.

With Special Reference to Selected Attributes of the Majuli, District of Assam, India.

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Abstract: Art and Culture have long contribution to apple different tourist at the destination. In recent years, cultural heritage tourism is rediscovered as an important marketing tool to attract those travellers who are particularly interested in the field of diverse history, monuments, and culture of the communities in a particular area. The study area Majuli is the home of the Neo-Vaishnavite culture of the state and has often been called the cultural capital of Assam. Accordingly, a good number of domestic and foreign tourists visit Majuli as cultural heritage destination every year for various tourism purposes. However, though tourists are visiting the study area; whether they are satisfied with their expectations at different monuments, art and culture of the people, infrastructures, facilities in the destinations and management of cultural heritage tourism is yet to know. Thus, there is a need to investigate which attributes satisfy tourists at the destination.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage Tourism, Tourist Expectation, Tourist Satisfaction, Majuli.

1. Introduction:

Tourism industry is the more developing industry of the resent world. It plays a vital role for developing national economy. It has become the world's largest industry, with total global economic contribution to GDP was USD 7,613bn (10.2% of GDP) in 2016 and forecast to rise by 3.9% pa to USD 11,512.9bn (11.4% of GDP) in 2027. There is a new trend toward an increased segmentation of tourism and cultural heritage tourism is the fastest growing segment among them. Cultural tourism is experiential tourism based on being involved in and stimulated by the performing arts, visual arts, and festivals. It includes intangible culture such as folklore, traditions, dance & drama, language, and knowledge etc. Heritage tourism, whether in the form of visiting preferred landscapes, historic sites, buildings or monuments, is also experiential tourism in the sense of seeking an encounter with nature or feeling part of the history of the place. It includes tangible things such as unique culture, historical buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artifacts. In this study, both heritage and cultural tourism were used in combination and or interchangeably.

Assam is one of the most favourable destinations of the India. It is the state of diverse population with socio-cultural and ethnic variety. Assam tourism is based on wild life, cultural heritage, natural beauty, holy

place, ancient monuments, colourful festivals, tea garden, adventure etc. In the year 2016 total foreign tourist was recorded 26,320 and total domestic tourist visited in the state was 56,42,950. Assam tourism department has undertaken various steps for development and promotion of tourism. The study area Majuli is the home of the Neo-Vaishnavite culture of the state and has often been called the cultural capital of Assam. During the period of 2002-03 total foreign and domestic tourist arrivals in Majuli was 2050 and it was increased to 2900 tourist in the year 2010-11.

The state government announced in the Assembly (February 2018) that, total 37,840 international tourist were recorded in the year 2016-17 at the state, among them 26,320 tourist were visited to Majuli. However, though tourists were visiting the study area, whether they satisfied with their expectations at different monuments, art and culture of the people, infrastructures, facilities in the destinations and management of cultural heritage tourism is yet to know. Thus, there is a need to investigate which attributes satisfy tourists who visit cultural heritage destinations in order to help tourism planners develop strategies to attract customers and to find cultural heritage tourists' demographic and travel behavior characteristics of tourist in order to help tourism marketers better understand their customers as there have been few studies that identify the relationship between cultural heritage destination attributes and tourists' satisfaction.

2. Objectives of the study:

The objective of the present study is to identify the satisfaction of the tourist based on their expectation at selected cultural heritage destinations attributes of the Majuli.

3. Research Methodology

For consideration of study area previous literature has been examined. In order to determine the expectation and satisfaction of the tourist on different attributes of the destination one of the most commonly adopted approach has been used to examine the satisfaction of consumers through "Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory". It is based on a consumer behaviour model where (a) confirmed when the product or service performance matches prior expectations, (b) negatively disconfirmed when product or service performance fails to match expectations, and (c) positively disconfirmed when perceived the product or service performance exceeds expectations. Samples of 384 respondents were selected out of infinite population by

using the sampling method for infinite population (Godden 2004) for determining the sample size. The study was based on Primary and Secondary data for achievement of the objective of the study. The observation and survey methods were the main methods of data collection. Statistical analyses such as frequencies, cross tabulation, percentage, and weighted average were applied according to the respective objective of the study like to examine tourists an overall level of satisfaction with the different attributes of the Majuli. The inferences drawn on the basis of opinion expressed by the sample respondents.

Study Area, Majuli: The word Majuli itself is a geographical term which means middle of the fresh water course. Majuli is surrounded by the mighty river Brahmaputra. In early day Majuli became the residence of great saint Shree Shree Srimanta Sankardeva with his best follower Shree Shree Madhabadeva. Both these saint jointly publicize their religious feelings of Neo-Vaishnavite Hinduism in and around the locality. Sankardeva establish 65 Satras (monasteries) different part of the Majuli, and edify the people in different aspect like, describe great holy books of Sanskrit through Song, Dance and drama. Majuli has a unique geographical, historical and cultural position of the country. It is also known as land of satriya cultural which is famous for vaishnavite monastery. Besides this, Majuli is famous for various colourful tribal and non-tribal festivals. Most of the international and domestic tourist visited Majuli for the purpose of watching Satriya Culture.

Findings and Analysis:

There were eighteen attribute which has been taken from the previous related literature concurrent with the satisfaction of the tourist at the destination. These were Monuments, Museums, Natural Scenery, Arts and culture, Architecture, Handicrafts, Theatres, Festivals, Food, Shopping place, Information centre, Impression of the people, Expensiveness, Climate and weather, Accommodation, Ferry journey, Tour package, and Guide.

Table- 1: Result of Expectation and Satisfaction of tourist at selected attributes:

S.L No.	Attributes of the Study	Weighted Average of Expectation	Weighted Average of Satisfaction	Expectation Satisfaction
1	Monuments	96.53	96.87	0.34
2	Museum	85.13	94.93	9.8
3	Natural Scenery	90.47	114.33	23.86

4	Art & Culture	65.53	118.6	53.07
5	Architecture	81.6	83.4	1.8
6	Handicraft	81.6	99.6	18
7	Theatres	81.67	88.6	6.93
8	Festivals	67.86	82.21	14.35
9	Food	69.59	101.07	31.48
10	Sopping place	80.6	75.67	-4.93
11	Information centre	87.4	75.67	-11.73
12	Behaviour of the people	82.07	101.26	19.19
13	Expensiveness	81.93	101.26	19.33
14	Climate & Weather	78.86	101.27	22.41
15	Accommodations	64.8	87.47	22.67
16	Ferry Journey	75.07	99.93	24.86
17	Tour Package	47.6	63.61	16.01
18	Guide	56.87	54.93	-1.94

Food: Among 18 attributes highest rank has been occupied by the 'Food'. It has been observed that all international tourists got highly satisfied of their foods. Most of the international tourist stay at resort of the Majuli and took ethnic foods which were available nearby tribal areas.

Ferry journey: Ferry journey, occupied second position among different attributes. Waterway over the Bhahmaputra by ferry is the only means of transport to reach Majuli. Nimati ghat of Jorhat district is the convenient and frequently uses government and private ferry service route to reach Majuli. At the time of ferry journey beautiful scenery of the bank of the river Brahmaputra really appreciable from the ferry.

Natural scenery: The third position was taken by Natural scenery. Majuli is famous for its flora and fauna. It is a land of natural and bears almost all physical and non physical factors of environment. Majuli has more than 150 wet-lands, It has more than thousand species of trees, grasses, creepers, flowers, orchids, ferns and other forms of plants. Sufficient rains humidity endows Majuli with evergreen and deciduous forest.

Accommodation: Accommodation occupied by the 4th rank among others. Large number of ethnic resorts and cottage with a government and Satras guest house are available with a cheap rate of amount cause of satisfaction of the tourist.

Climate and Weather: Climate and Weather taken 5th position. Majuli falls within the greater Brahmaputra valley of Assam and influences by topical monsoon climate. Its location, physical features and surrounded on almost all sides by water bodies and other local natural factors have rendered its climate somewhat different from that of other part of the valley. The climate and weather are favorable for all type of people.

Art & music: Art & music occupied by the 6th position among others. Majuli is the cultural capital of Assam. Most of the people came to Majuli for enjoying Sattriya culture like Nam Prasanga, Choidhya Prasanga, Gayan-Bayan, Borgeet, Dance like, Natua, Chali, Apsara, Jhumura, Nadubhangi, Bahar-Nach, Krishna Nritya etc.

Expensiveness: The rank of the attribute Expensiveness was 7th. Expenditure is one of the major factors at the time of taking decision of tour. Tourist think that Majuli is the popular river island naturally increase the cost of the tour, but after visited the destination they feel very low cost which creates the satisfaction of the respondents.

Impression of the People: The people of the Majuli represent the varied ethnic forms. It is the cradle of neo-vaishnavite religion, art and culture. Hospitality of the Majulians is remarkable and very innocent and obedient. Homely behaviour of the people, clean and discipline house hold always attract anybody who visits the Majuli.

Handicraft: Handicraft stands at 8th rank. Majuli have rich floral and faunal resources which help the people to engage craft work like bamboo and cane handicraft, pottery, mask-making, boat-making, mat-making, handloom and weaving. Endi, silk and cottage fabric of Majuli are in great demand all over the state. Ribigachang, mibugaluk silk and cotton dresses woven by Mising community women are famous. Hand fan made from cane and bamboos by the Bhakata of Satras are famous in the state. Wood craft work beautifully done by Kutir Silpa Kendra of the Uttar Kamalabari satra, personal and commercial boat making work perfectly done by “bhakata” of the Auniti, Natun Kamalabari and Bhogpur satra are the notable handicraft of the Majuli. Experts of the Sri Sri Samaguri satra make mask for use in “Bhaona” and “Raas”

for different part of the state. Mask made by the satras of the Majuli displayed at the Indira Gandhi National centre for performing arts, New Delhi.

Tour Packages: Tour package represent 10th position among the other satisfied attributes. Tour package is one of the major considerable factors of every tourist. In the study, no local tourists were found those who came under any tour agency. Generally foreign tourists and some domestic tourist were come to Majuli under different tourist agency. Regarding tour package, among 384 respondents 226 were fill up the attribute of the questionnaires, but they are satisfied on tour packages of the destination.

Festival: Attribute Festival occupied 11th position among other selected attributes of the study. It is one of the major considerable factors of every tourist. In the study, no local tourists were found those who came under any tour agency.

Museum: Every Satras of the Majuli have their own museum, where they store their valuable manuscript and obsession. “Shri Hasta Mukta wali” a translated book on dance by Suchandra Ozha, about 200 years old; “Gojendra Chintamani” a book on elephant treatment, 288 years old; Ivory and Buffalo horn table donated by Queen Victoria, utensils used by King Gadadhar Singha; Some musical instrument donated by King Rajeswar Singha; Heng Dang (sword) use by Bir Lachit Borphukan and many more precious manuscripts and things are preserve in the museum.

Theatres: Theatres taken 13th rank between the attributes. Rass-Leela (dance drama where attains Lord Krishna’s pure loving devotion) and Bhaona (traditional form of drama with religious messages) are the main theatres of the Majuli. Every year at autumn season on the day of full moon (October- November) Rass-leela is celebrated. It is a dramatic presentation of child-hood and puberty stage of Lord Krishna. At the time of survey, most of the international tourists ignore to fill up anything on the theatre attributes. Most of the international tourist has no idea about theatre of the Majuli and they were not attending the theatre at the destinations. 337 respondents were found who respond the attribute and they satisfied on the attribute.

Architecture: Architecture was the 14th position among the attributes. Majuli is the nurve centre of Satriya culture. There were almost 65 satras (Institution of vaishnavite culture) have now been established but due

to erosion of river Brahmaputra the number of satras has reduce. Among the Satras four Satras was establishes by Ahome king in between 15 and 16th century. The Architecture of the satra is very systemic and unique style. It composed of four architectural unit, these are Batcora, Hati, Namghar, and Manikut. The satisfaction of the respondents was slight higher than expectation because most of the respondents are acquainted with different satras of the Majuli.

Monuments: Monuments was the last satisfied attributes among the other selected attributes of the study. The satisfaction rates of the respondents slightly higher than expectation of the tourist. Majuli have some popular ancient monuments like, Rawna Pukhuri an old religious pond having 400 sqr fit, Dhuwachala Garh- it is a Rampart or ancient road wall, Garamurh-the Rampart constructed from Naga hill to Majuli, Meragarh- it is a group of rampart. This rampart was constructed by Ahome king for the purpose of gold collection from the river Suvanshree. Babu Baruah Garh- it is an ancient rampart constructed by Ahome king Siva Singha in the year 1714 Pani khati Silgurithan, Phuleswarithan, Belogurithan are the ancient Goddess worship place which was imagining in the mediaeval periods and famous for ancient rock architecture and historic pond.

Guides: Guides was the one of the unsatisfied attributes of the study. No local tourist was found with a guide at the destination. But most of the international tourist who came to the destination with a group has their own guide at the time of site seen. Some of the domestic and international tourist locally arranged guide for their tour. Communication problem was the main reason behind the dissatisfaction of the tourist.

Shopping Places: Shopping Places was the one of the unsatisfied attributes of the study, it because Kamalabari and Garhmur are the main commercial place of the district. Handicraft and handloom products generally found near by the satra. The cost of the product little bit higher than other place. All goods are not available due to poor transportation and communication.

Information Centre: It is the highest dissatisfied attributes of the study. Most of the international tourist expected high services at the destination as largest river island of the world, There are only two community information centers, one is situated at Kamalabari and another is situated at Jengraimukh, . On the other

hand poor communications of network at different places of the destination create dissatisfaction of the attributes.

Conclusion:

The study identifies the tourist expectation and satisfaction at cultural heritage destination in Majuli. From these studies it has been found that, except three attributes of the study, majority attributes has been found satisfied, the unsatisfied attributes were Guide, Shopping place and information centre. It has been also observed that due to deprived transportation facility and road ways, unsatisfied internet service and information centre, poor communication skill of the people, tourist were dissatisfied at the destination. . It has been argued that such study would help tourism planner to better understand the interest of the tourist as well as condition of the destinations. With these observations the current research work was concluded.

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