

Empirical Study of International Visitor's Satisfaction at Western Rajasthan (Bikaner City): An Application of HOLSAT Model

¹Arpit Saxena, ²Naveen Kumar Sharma

^{1,2} Department of Management Studies, Government Engineering College, Bikaner.

Abstract: Tourism is an important source of economic growth and a generator of employment of various kinds. The Rajasthan state has hardly managed to stay its place in the top 10 tourist destinations among domestic tourism ranks. However, the state managed to hold its place on foreign tourism map, with fifth rank. The main inflection of this paper is to investigate international tourist satisfactions in various tourist destinations in Western Rajasthan (Bikaner City). The survey method applied in this study in which questionnaire is designed based on the holiday satisfaction (HOLSAT) model. The study reveals that the tourist holiday satisfaction level in various tourist attractions in the area of Western Rajasthan (Bikaner city) is especially high for attraction attributes. The average mean of experience and expectation using the HOLSAT model in this study depicts that attributes listed as activities and attraction components are those that are highly perceived by the international tourists. On the other hand, attributes categorized in amenities and accessibilities components receive the least score by the respondents, which means that the international tourist are not satisfied in these items.

Keywords: Holiday satisfaction, Image, destination, international tourists, HOLSAT model, expectation, experience.

Introduction

World tourism is considered as an important factor in the economy of many nations. In literature of Sanskrit the three famous words "*AththiDevoBhava*" means "the guest is truly god" is a dictum of hospitality in India." Foreign Tourists Arrivals in March 2018 were 10.26 lakh as compared to 9.05 lakh in March 2017 registering a growth of 13.4%. Foreign Tourists Arrivals during the period January-March 2018 were 31.27 lakh as compared to 28.45 lakh in January-March 2017 registering a growth of 9.9%. Foreign Tourists Arrivals during the period January- June, 2016 were 41.86 lakh with a growth of 8.9% as compared to the Foreign Tourists Arrivals of 38.45 lakh with a growth of 3.7% in January- June, 2015 over January- June, 2014. The economic importance of tourism in India benefits the people living in and around tourist centers financially. The Natural Tourism Board and the Tourism Finance Corporation of India have been working in full swing to bring about the upgrading of tourist centres in India. The Rajasthan state has barely managed to keep its place in the top 10 tourist destinations among domestic tourism ranks. However, the state managed to hold its place on foreign tourism map, with fifth rank. Rajasthan observe 1.53 million foreign tourists visiting the state previous year, up from 1.43 million in 2013. Rajasthan literally known as land of the kings, is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Western India. Rajasthan means "the country of Rajputs". Rajasthan is the most trendy travel destinations in India. It is known for Historical Monuments. The modern Rajasthan Tourism is benchmarked for the warm hospitality.

Western Rajasthan is a part of the Thar desert (60% of the area is the desert) and is characterized by the, scarcity of water, occurrence of frequent droughts and lack of industries. The economy of this area is considered as underdeveloped and backward. But since the past two decades tourist arrival and development of tourist industry in this area has become a major source of income for the native population. The Bikaner city is known for producing great warriors and established in the year 1488 AD by *RaoBikaJi*, a Rajput prince. It is situated in the north-western part of Rajasthan. It is the fourth largest city in the state of Rajasthan. Rajasthan also recognized as camel country as Bikaner is exceptionally popular for its camel rides and rich in tradition, culture and exponents of Rajasthani art

and music. Bikaner is known for folk music all around the globe and the festivals and fairs demonstrate the richness of the cultural and traditional heritage of the city of Bikaner. Further, the international visitor's so-called 'end user' of a tourism product development. Perception and satisfaction level towards particular tourism product they consume shown in a systematic study could be used as a reference for a better planning. In addition, it is also a helpful tool for mapping the market segmentation of a particular destination. When a market segment is determined, a more focused planning can be arranged for overall tourism development. The study aims to answer the following questions: First, by utilizing the HOLSAT model how is the level of satisfaction of international tourist who visits attractions in Western Rajasthan (Bikaner). Second, how is the tourist market segmentation for destinations in the Western Rajasthan? To begin with, it is important to trace and review previous studies related to the subject matter of this research. It is exposed that there are several characteristics of tourist market of Bikaner: a. International tourists visiting Bikaner were those who repeated their visit b. information on destinations in Western Rajasthan was mainly obtained from friends and relatives c. their visit to the Bikaner city was by a travel agent and self-arranged both. Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1982) propose that satisfaction refers to the comparison of experiences with expectations in terms of performance. (Tribe & Snaith, 1998) Tourist satisfaction is a function between expectation and experience. When expectations considered higher than experience, then tourists will feel bad. On the other side, if the perceived experience exceeds expectations, tourists will feel really pleased/happy. In Tourists' satisfaction, a tourist's assessment of the features of that destination exceeds their expectations for those features. (Hau & Khatijah, 2014) The result reveals that cleanliness and facilities, destination image, support services and security, directly influenced tourist satisfaction. (Al-Ababneh, 2013) The study reveals that service quality directly affect tourist satisfaction throughout destination accessibility, destination attraction and destination facilities. (Canny, 2013) This study depicts that service quality had significant positive relationship with tourist satisfaction on future behavioural intentions.

(Tribe & Snaith, 1998) The study shows that HOLSAT utilizes and measures tourist satisfaction with a holiday destination by comparing the performance of holiday attributes against customer expectation and this model is flexible enough to be adapted to different circumstances.

Meanwhile, it is important to note what Alegre and Garau (2010) has found in their study entitled "Tourist Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction". Their research suggests that some tourists' disappointments which is expressed into a negative judgment upon a research variable and traces the relation between the evaluations of satisfaction-dissatisfaction in tourism. In order to answer the research questions, it is also important to analyze tourists' profile and satisfaction as well as the evaluation model of the tourists' satisfaction in tourism. Tourism market segmentation is, therefore, determined by the features and the typology of the international tourists. The different profile among the tourists also affects the management and the development of a tourism destination. According to Mill and Morrison (2009), the tourists' profile include: demographic variables, and the social- economic variables that are correlated to geographic variable, and psychographic ones related to thesegmentation of tourism market. For instance, it includes age, gender, the amount of the family, social status and income. The psychographic variable is purposely illustrated by Plog (in Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepherd, and Wanhill, 1998), who divides the kinds of tourists according to their psychographic characteristics.

Recent studies reveals that tourists and their behaviour while they are on trip are always interesting and related to the satisfaction level and also become one particular object of study. The Holiday Satisfaction model, which is given by Tribe and Snaith in 1998, is one among the major contributions in tourism satisfaction study (Truong and

Gebbie, 2007). The Holiday Satisfaction model is developed by investigating the tourists' expectation prior to doing actions at a destination and comparing it with their satisfaction level after finishing their trip. In this case, the HOLSAT model is different from other known models such as SERVPERP, IPA, and SERVQUAL (Truong and Gebbie, 2007). Another thing that distinguishes Holiday Satisfaction model (HOLSAT) from other models is that attributes and tested variables are not static. Instead, they are flexible and site-specific which means that the HOLSAT model is customizable and can be used in different destination.

Research Method

Population and Sample

The primary data was collected by carrying out surveys to the research respondents. The survey was conducted by distributing questionnaire to the international tourists who visited Western Rajasthan during 2017-2019. Non-probability sampling technique is used in this study. (Effendi and Singarimbun Ed., 2006), states that probability of someone to be a respondent is different. Specifically the non-probability sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling technique, a method of taking samples customizing the objectives of the research (Kusmayadi and Sugiarto, 2000).

The Structure and Design of the Questionnaire

The research questionnaire was designed on the basis of the attributes; those were accessibility, attraction, accommodation and amenity. (Cooper et al (1998) mentioned these attributes as the basic requirement of an attraction and tourism destination. The first part of questionnaire was designed to expose the respondents' socio-demographic and their trip characteristics. The second part contains statements of the '4As' variables which were arranged randomly. The research questionnaire consists of negative and positive statements, which were also randomly arranged. The random arrangement of the statements is the essential part of HOLSAT instrument (Truong and Gebbie, 2007). The questions in questionnaire were classified into two groups: reality experienced by the respondents and questions related to expectations. The testing and the determination of satisfaction level were counted based on the mean (\bar{X}) of the expectation score subtracted by the mean (\bar{X}) of the reality score as an important part in defining the satisfaction in HOLSAT model (Tribe and Snaith, 1998). Respondents filled up the statements of the questionnaire in five (5) -range Likert scale (Effendi and Singarimbun Ed, 2006).

Data Analysis

The obtained data in this study was classified according to its importance level. The result of questionnaires was recapitulated in tables and matrix, which is, then, interpreted to reveal the satisfaction level of the respondents during their visit. By using HOLSAT model the data were classified to find out its expectation score and the tourists experience for each variable in tables and matrix. As explained in the previous section, the tour satisfaction level was counted from the result of the questionnaire (part B) by comparing the mean of expectation and reality or experience scores. These scores were obtained by giving numbers to each category of the respondents' answer, each with range 5 to 1 for answer of these categories: 'completely agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree', and completely disagree (Likert scale). To classify the international tourists profile and the interpretation of tourism market segmentation, the result of questionnaire in part A is presented in the form of table and/or chart.

Results and Discussion

As stated before, this study inflection at investigating tourist satisfaction level for international tourists who visit Western Rajasthan (Bikaner City) by using HOLSAT (Holiday Satisfaction) model. In the first section, the data are interpreted from questionnaire recapitulation result that shows tourist satisfaction result. The next section shows international tourists' profile and market segmentation prediction of tourists in the observed area.

Table 1
Summary of Tourist Satisfaction Level by using HOLSAT Model
(Positive Attributes)

No	Statement	Expectation			Experience			Expectati on- Experien ce
		X	SD	n	X	SD	n	
1	The tourist attraction is unique compared to other attractions in the area	3.9 9	0.8 4	153 4	4.0 8	0.7 8	155	-0.05
2	I can relax at the tourist attraction	4.4 2	0.8 7	141 2	4.1 2	0.7 2	154	0.31
3	These tourist attraction is secure from crime	4.0 2	0.8 7	154 4	3.5 4	0.7 5	157	0.49
4	Sport activities can be done at this tourist attraction	3.5 4	0.9 1	153 4	3.5 4	0.9 1	154	0.00
5	Tour activity comply with the safety standards	3.8 7	0.8 6	157 1	3.8 1	0.6 3	157	0.07
6	Traditional art performances are provided in this tourist attractions	2.8 4	0.8 8	150 5	2.7 5	0.9 9	157	0.09
7	The weather in the tourist attraction is clement	3.9 9	0.8 5	157 4	3.9 4	0.8 2	157	0.05
8	The price of food, beverages in the tourist attraction is fair	3.4 6	0.9 4	158 3	3.6 3	0.8 6	156	-0.16
9	This tourist attraction can be easily found and visited	3.7 8	0.9 2	155 4	3.6 4	0.8 8	154	0.14
10	Large parking lot can be easily found	3.7 6	0.8 7	153 9	3.7 9	0.8 4	154	-0.03
11	Access to this tourist attractions is refined	3.8 3	0.9 3	157 9	3.6 9	0.9 6	159	0.14
12	Public facilities can be easily found	3.6 7	0.9 0	155 4	3.7 4	0.8 2	153	-0.07
13	Street food with affordable price can be easily found	3.3 7	0.9 8	156 9	3.2 9	0.8 2	154	0.08
14	Interaction with friendly local people can be	3.6 7	0.8 8	155 9	3.6 9	0.8 2	150	-0.02

	done	7	4		9	8		
15	Souvenir shops with affordable price can be easily found	4.1 4	0.8 5	156	4.1 4	0.7 5	145	0.18
16	Rental place that supports my trip activity can be easily found	3.5 3	0.9 2	157	3.4 6	0.8 6	153	0.07

Table 2
Summary of Tourist Satisfaction Level by using HOLSAT Model
(Negative Attributes)

No	Statement	Expectation			Experience			Expectati on- Experien ce
		X	SD	n	X	SD	n	
1	The tourist attraction is dirty	2.9 6	1.0 5	157	2.9 7	0.9 4	156	0.01
2	There are many disturbing street vendors	2.8 8	0.8 9	155	2.6 7	0.9 2	153	-0.22
3	Public transportations heading to the tourist attraction are hard to find	3.4	1.0 5	156	3.3 9	0.9 8	154	-0.01
4	Public facilities such as restroom and toilets are dirty	2.9 7	0.9 1	153	3.1 1	0.9 6	157	0.14
5	This tourists attraction is full of tourists	3.9 7	0.9 4	156	3.9 1	0.8 6	153	-0.06
6	The quality of restaurants or food stalls is low	3.1 5	0.7 8	156	3.0 9	0.7 9	153	-0.06

Tourist Satisfaction of HOLSAT Model Summary

The research reveals that as a newly developed and recently known tourist destination, especially among international tourists, the satisfaction level is relatively high for attraction attributes (tourist attraction). Attractions are perceived well by the international tourists, especially for natural tourism that includes sand, culture and adventures. Table 1 and 2 above show a summary of questionnaire recapitulation result that reveals international tourist satisfaction level using HOLSAT model: Table 1 and 2 above summarize research questionnaire results that are used to reveal tourist satisfaction levels. Table 1 is a summary of tourist satisfaction level result for the positive attributes, while Table 2 is the result over negative attributes (statements). The interpretations of the tables are explained as follows:

- For positive attributes: if the score differences between mean of expectation and experience are negative, then the attributes will also be considered as negative attributes by international tourists. This means there is no satisfaction of international tourists during their activities. Instead, if the score differences between mean of expectation and experience are positive, it means tourist satisfaction level during tour is reached.

- For negative attributes, it applies vice versa. If the score differences between mean of expectation and experience are negative, there is an increase of tourist satisfaction level. However, if the score differences between mean of expectation and experience are positive, there is a decrease in the satisfaction level.

a) Positive Attributes

Table 1 indicates the overall assessment of the positive attributes on the HOLSAT model as a result of research questionnaire recapitulation. The shaded rows indicate that attributes with score difference of expectations and experience is negative, which means there is no satisfaction on the attributes assessed. As already explained in the positive attributes assessment criteria above, there are some attributes which gets negative average mean, while the majority of other attributes are positive. Positive attributes number 1, 8, 10, 12, and 14 are negative, and the remaining is positive. The difference between average score of experience and expectation on attribute number 1, the uniqueness of tourism attraction being visited compared to other attractions, show the negative score (-0.05), which means that the respondents perceive this attribute negatively. This signifies that in terms of uniqueness of the tourist attraction, there is no increasing satisfaction. International tourists perceived the uniqueness of the attraction lower than their expectations prior to their visit to the destinations in the observed research area. Another attribute shown in Table 1 is number 8, the attribute associated with the price in tourist attraction, which is also negative (-0.16). This also means that international tourists perceive the price in the tourist attractions they visit is not in line with their expectations. For price attribute, therefore, tourists' expectations do not correspond to reality they have experienced in the tourist attraction, which indicates dissatisfaction to price variable. This also affects the perception of tourists to price variable. Another example is attribute number 10 on the availability of parking space. The majority of tourists who visit Western Rajasthan (Bikaner city) are international tourists who come by rental vehicle. Availability of parking spaces becomes an important concern. Based on the results of the study, respondents perceive availability of parking area with negative (-0.03), which can be interpreted that for this attribute tourists feel dissatisfied. This should be a concern for local governments to pay more attention on the availability of sufficient parking space. Similar thing also applies to attribute numbers 12 and 14 on the availability of amenity and interaction with local residents. Both of these attributes show negative scores (-0.07 and -0.02 respectively), which indicate dissatisfaction. Adequate available amenity is indeed still an important issue in the development of tourism in the region. As a popular destination in the province, it has a quite high attraction quality for visitors.

b) Negative Attributes

In contrast to the positive attributes, a negative attribute is interpreted in a different way, that is, if the difference of the experience and expectation average (mean) is negative, it is concluded that international tourists are satisfied with the variables assessed. In Table 2, the attribute number 1 and 4 on tourist attraction cleanliness, the mean (X) difference value on experience and expectation are positive (0.01). This indicates that tourists are satisfied with the attributes assessed. In attribute number 1, the difference score of experience and expectation is 0.01 which can be interpreted that the majority of respondents perceive cleanliness in the tourist attractions are relatively well. A positive score indicates dissatisfaction with the attributes assessed. Since this attribute is negative attribute ('This tourist attraction is dirty'), the positive value ($X = 0.01$) indicates the opposite, namely that 'This tourist attraction is clean'. Similar thing also applies to attribute number 4 on the cleanliness of the restroom in the tourist attraction. The result of HOLSAT analysis shows that the substitution average (mean) of experience and expectation is

positive value ($X = 0.14$), which is equal to dissatisfaction of the attributes assessed. Therefore, the attribute number 4 stating that ‘Public facilities such as restroom and toilet are dirty ‘ is interpreted conversely, in which the respondents perceive that ‘Public facilities, such as restroom and toilet are clean’. Apart from the imperfect amenity (e.g. parking lots, restrooms, toilets and signposts to the tourist attractions), perception of tourists toward the cleanliness of tourist attractions and amenity provided is still relatively fine. For example, the attribute number 2, statement of overcrowded tourist spots, is still perceive as a natural thing. However, despite the crowded tourist attraction, satisfaction levels are still relatively well. This is possible because the majority of respondents are domestic tourists who are relatively more tolerant to crowded tourist attraction.

Tourists’ Profile

This part portrays the tourists’ profile, who visited the tourism objects in Western Rajasthan (Bikaner City). This profile is displayed in the following figures:

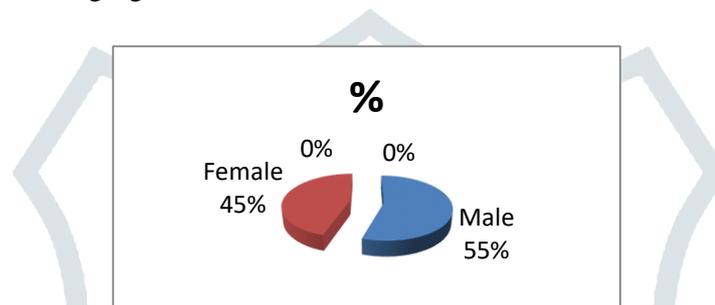


Fig. 1: Respondents’ Gender

Fig. 1 shows the gender of the respondents, which is mostly male (55%). Some tourism objects in Western Rajasthan are quite popular among male tourists because of its cultural, sand related adventurous activities.

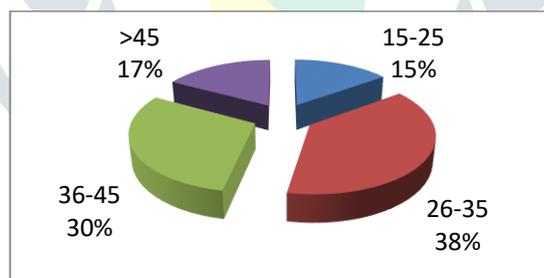


Fig. 2: Respondents’ Age

Fig.2 shows the age of the respondents, which is mostly dominated by 26 to 35 years old.

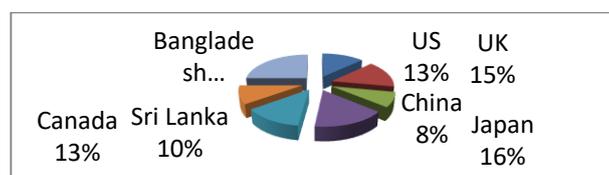


Fig. 3: Country of Residence

Fig. 3 shows that majority of the tourists is still dominated by tourists from the Bangladesh In the future, promoting the Western Rajasthan as a tourism destination in Bikaner must be carried on in order to develop the market potential.

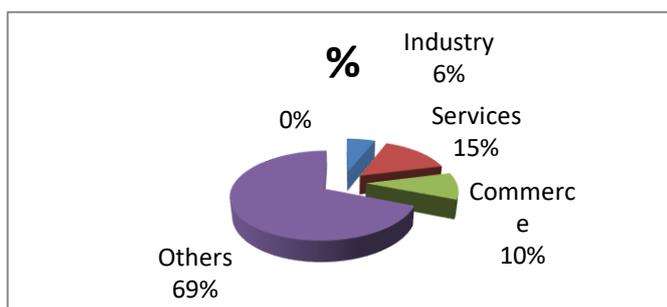


Fig. 4: Occupations

In chart 4, it can be seen that most of the respondents' job are in the other job category, which includes school students and college students, followed by job in service field. Similar with the age of the tourists who are relatively young, thus it can be concluded that the destinations are indeed well known among the young tourists which are dominated by students.

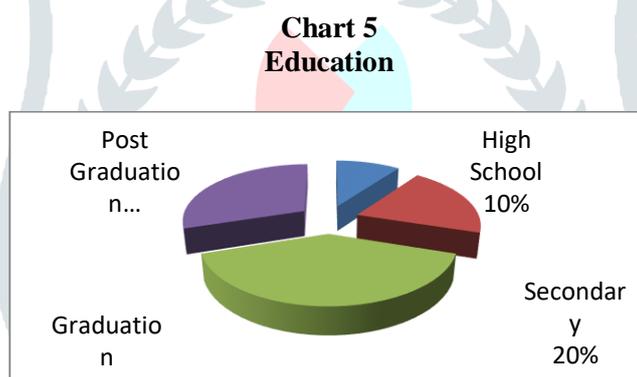
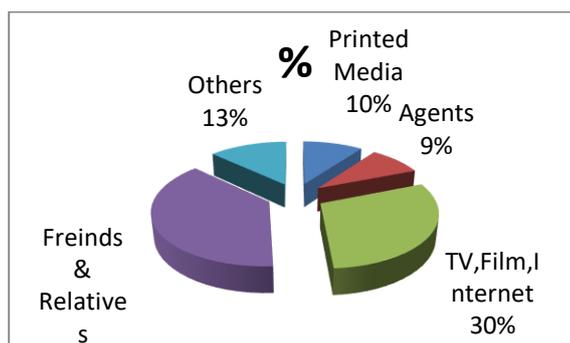


Chart 6 explains the education level of the research's respondents which is dominated by the undergraduate students. This education also influences the characteristic of tourism journey which tends to be more adventurous and challenging. This is correlated with the types of tourism objects in the destinations, which are adventurous and more preferred by youngsters, educated and average income tourists.

Chart 6
Source of Information on Destinations



Meanwhile, the source of information about tourism objects which the international tourists got is mostly from their colleagues and/or relatives with 38% in percentage, followed by electronic media (television, internet, and film) as the information sources by 30%. This can be assumed that the most effective promotion is by ‘word of mouth’.

Chart 7
Travel Intensity

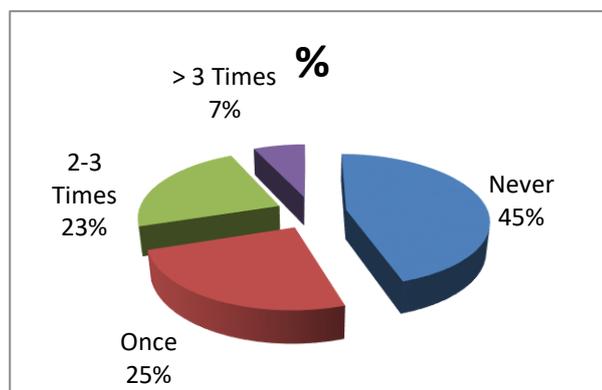


Chart 7 shows the travelling intensity of research’s respondents. Approximately 45% respondents said that they have never visited the tourism objects in Bikaner and 25% mentioned that they have visited the destinations at least once. This can be assumed that majority the tourists are the people who have ever visited the tourism objects at most once. This also means that destinations in the region are still developing and popular among tourists. Maintaining the satisfaction and good impression of the tourists becomes important things to the local government.

Conclusion

In this research, the travelling satisfaction survey is conducted by using Holiday Satisfaction (HOLSAT) approach which was developed by Tribe and Snaith (1998). This method is claimed by the developer to be better and flexible rather than the similar approaches such as SERVPERF or SERVQUAL. The result of HOLSAT approach in revealing the travelling satisfaction of tourists in destinations in Western Rajasthan (Bikaner) shows that generally the tourists feels satisfied with the accessibility, amenity, activities and attractions, which are offered in the region. The result of mean of expectation and experience by using HOLSAT approach in this research reveals that the attraction component and activities are perceived to be the best elements and have resulted in satisfaction for the visitors. Meanwhile, accessibility and amenity are two components which frequently get low grade, which means the tourist get minimum satisfaction for these components. Meanwhile, tourists’ profile which is revealed in this research can be used as a base in mapping the tourism market segmentation of Western Rajasthan (Bikaner) . Facts which are brought up in this research can also contribute to a better marketing planning as the means of improving the tourists visit. This research is intended as a beginning of a deeper study upon tourism satisfaction specifically in Western Rajasthan (Bikaner) This research has not covered the tourists’ segmentation picture in more specific details such as group tourists and individual tourists also how the satisfaction level differs among those different group of tourists. This research also still generalizes satisfaction as something which can be evaluated in all destinations by neglecting the complex travelling motivation aspects.

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