

## A STUDY OF HILL STATION TOURIST SATISFACTION – A CASE STUDY OF MAHABALESHWAR

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Geography is an indispensable subject for tourism, because it gives an overall picture of a tourist place by its site, situation, climate and other aspects.

To assess the level of satisfaction of tourists it is necessary to know the views of tourists about various facilities provided to them at the destination. Here, the tourist and residents of the destination can play a major role in this regards because mostly these two parties frequently come into contact. Good conduct of both these parties increases the popularity of the destination.

**Study Region-**Mahabaleshwar is a famous hill station in the western Ghat of Saihyadri. It lies at 17°55' North latitude and 73°35' East latitude. It's height from sea level is 1672 metres. The town extends over an area of 131 sq.km. Topography of the Mahabaleshwar is made of rocks of basaltic lava. The climate of this hill station is temperate through out the year. The average annual rainfall is more than 650 cms. The summer temperature ranges between 16°C to 30°C and the winter temperature ranges between 10°C to 20°C

In Mahabaleshwar tourism is a growing industry. In this town a tremendous growth in the volume of tourist and overall tourist activity have taken place. In recent, there has been manifold expansion of infrastructural and recreational facilities in the town, but these facilities could not keep pace with the taste and preference of modern day tourist. It is essential that the tourist resort become more and more popular and is able to attract an ever increasing no. of tourist.

**Objective-**The main objective of the study is to assess the level of satisfaction of tourist and to identify the area requiring special attention.

**Methodology-**The methodology adopted for the present work is as below. Here an attempt is made to assess the level of satisfaction of the tourist by noting their views regarding the various facilities. For that purpose, six important factors were selected which influence the level of satisfaction. To conduct a sample survey a questionnaire was prepared and filled up by tourist a few tourists were interviewed. About 100 tour-

ist at the period of summer season were asked to mention their views about the facilities by stating excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. These views were converted into numerical values suet as 8 to 10 for excellent, 6 to 8 for good, 4 to 6 for satisfactory and 0 to 4 for unsatisfactory. The factorwise level of satisfaction is calculated and tabulated. The factorwise average values are calculated. These average values see then utilised to calculate satisfaction index. Following formula is used for calculation of satisfaction index.

$$St_i = \frac{\sum M_i : N_i}{N}$$

Where,

St<sub>i</sub> = Satisfaction index for ith factor

M<sub>i</sub> = Numerical values for the particular level of satisfaction for the I<sup>th</sup> factor.

N<sub>i</sub> = Number of respondents deriving the particular level of satisfaction for the I<sup>th</sup> factor.

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

Finally ranks are given to these satisfaction indices.

**Factorwise Level of Satisfaction-**Level of satisfaction is a state of mind. Six important factors which influence the level of satisfaction are identified as could be seen from the Table I. To conduct a sample survey a questionnaire was prepared and filled up by tourists. The tourists were asked to indicate the level of satisfaction they derived in respect of each factor by stating excellent, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. Factorwise level of the tourist is assessed by collection the information given by them (see Table I)

The categorywise percentage reveals that the facilities provided at Mahabaleshwar are noted excellent (19.5%), good (29.5%), satisfactory (32.5%) and

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unsatisfactory (19.5%). Therefore the level of satisfaction of the tourist is high. Only 19.5% tourist told that facilities are not satisfactory.

**Factorwise Average Values of Satisfaction-** Factorwise average values are calculated. For that purpose the tourist were asked to assign points (out of maximum 10) for the particular level of satisfaction they derived from each factor. To ensure uniformity a forced distribution of points was adopted for convenience. Namely 8 to 10 for excellent, 6 to 8 for good, 4 to 6 for satisfactory and 0 to 4 points for unsatisfactory. The average values for the different level of satisfaction for the different factors are given in table see

table 2

From the above table it is observed that the satisfaction index for accommodation works out as 4.77, for transportation 5.21, for Recreation 7.17 for parking 4.22, for food and drinking water 5.38, for shopping facility 7.91 These satisfaction indices are weighted by given ranks to these factors (see Table III).

It is observed that shopping facility received rank 1st. It is known from the study that purchasing of items of various varieties is found on large scale by tourist. Though the shopping facility received first rank there is a habit of dual pricing system and bargaining is common.

**TABLE I**

Sr.No.	Factor	Distribution of Respondents	Total	Excellent Good	Satisfied	Unsatisfied
1	Accommodation	08	12	62	18	100
2	Transportation	14	46	25	15	100
3	Recreation	38	25	17	20	100
4	Parking	08	24	35	33	100
5	Food & Drinking Water	12	23	42	23	100
6	Shopping Facilities	37	41	14	08	100
	Average (%)	19.5	29.5	32.5	19.5	100

Source: Survey by Authors II.

**TABLE II**  
Factorwise average of Satisfaction (Ni)

Sr.No.	Factor	Numerical	Values for	Excellent Good	Satisfied	Unsatisfied
1	Accommodation	9.07	6.00	4.75	2.08	
2	Transportation	8.59	6.38	4.32	2.09	
3	Recreation	9.92	7.51	5.72	2.75	
4	Parking	8.00	6.17	4.00	2.11	
5	Food & Drinking Water	8.52	7.20	5.20	2.25	
6	Shopping Facilities	9.80	8.00	5.89	2.35	

Source: Survey by Authors

These average values are the utilised to calculate satisfaction indices. The ranks are given to these factors which indicate the priority of the factors.

**TABLE III Satisfaction Index (Sli)**

Sr. No.	Factor	Satisfaction	Index	Rank
1	Accommodation	4.77	05	
2	Transportation	5.21	04	
3	Recreation	7.17	02	
4	Parking	4.22	06	
5	Food & Drinking water	5.38	03	
6	Shopping facility	7.93	01	

Source: Authors

Recreation received rank Second Tourism and recreation are very intimately related concepts. It is known from the study that in Mahabaleshwar the recreational activities most enjoyed by tourists are visits to picnic spots, horse riding and boating. Food and Drinking water received third rank. The level of satisfaction of the tourists is high on this count but during the survey period it is found that the sanitary conditions apart from quality of food were poor. Availability of good quality drinking water has been one of the problem.

It is common experience that in summers the supply of clean potable water falls short for below the demand. The variety and quality of food served by the restaurants in the town is also not upto the satisfaction of tourists.

Transportation received the fourth rank means with relatively medium contribution to the level of satisfaction. Mahabaleshwar is well connected by road to other parts of Maharashtra. There is a need to have railway routs. There is a very heavy rush of tourists during summer seasons.

During peak tourist season, the transport services come under strain. This may cause transport problems to and from connecting station. Accommodation facilities received fifth rank because the accommodation facilities are not satisfactory. Most of the tourists adjust their accommodation on lodging but the condition of the lodge is filthy and unhygienic. Sanitation facilities are unsatisfied. Some tourists complained that they are taking high charges and not providing facilities due to high stain on accommodation facilities during summer.

The problem facing accommodation establishment is due to the fluctuation in demand. This problem is specially acute during summer season. A flood

of tourist enters the city causing demand for accommodation and thereby creating a shortage of accommodation. Rise in demand prompts to exploitation.

Parking facilities received sixth rank because parking facilities are not sufficient during summer. Some roads are narrow designed for a limited traffic and also creates parking difficulties.

**Conclusion-**Mahabaleshwar has many places of tourist interest. In order to mass attractive and friendly environment for tourism, it is essential to provide various facilities provided to them and also to find out some imp. causes for dissatisfaction and areas requiring special attention.

The level of satisfaction of the tourist by noting their views about the facilities provided to them is assessed. The factorwise satisfaction index is calculated reveals the fact that in general the tourists are satisfied with the existing facilities at Mahabaleshwar.

Still is worthwhile to identify the areas requiring special attention. It is send already that there is a general dissatisfaction about accommodation and parking facilities. In Mahabaleshwar, the recreational activities most enjoyed by tourists are visits to picnic spots, horse riding and boating on lake. The scope of recreational facilities rieveds to be expanded as the present places of recreation become over crowded during peak season.

During peak season, it is a common complaint that the hotel industry provides inadequate facilities as compared to the reates charged.

The variety and quality of the food served by the restaurants in tie town is also not upto the satisfaction of a large section of tourists.

In addition to these problems some problems of environmental concern also arise due to overcrowding waste disposal and noise pollution by vehicles.

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