Impact of Spiritual Marketing on Different Segments of Tourists and Their Evaluation of the Site

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Abstract

Spirituality, belief and religion have been since and in future will be one of the major factors for travelling. Using the correct stimuli called spirituality the tourism industry can excel. The search for spirituality has always been and will remain a major motivator for tourist for exploring religious and spiritual destination. We need to understand and outline a strategy after understanding that not all visitors to a spiritual destination are 'pious travelers'. Understanding the motives of their visit is the key that will unlock the door for an ideal strategy. In this study the authors have collected primary data with help of a schedule on the site from the tourists for checking their attitudes towards the destination and also tried to know the major motivating factors for their visit. The authors found that even till today more than promotion other factors (belief, inner peace, family suggestions etc.) are responsible for the visit of the person. The findings of this study can serve as one of the platforms for making future strategies in the industry related to promotional and segmentation decisions and also how the revenue creation can augment at these sites and what prerequisite improvements are vital for that destination.

Keywords: Spirituality, tourism, demographics, self actualization

Introduction

The word spirituality has been derived from the Latin word '*spiritus*' which means '*breath of life*' (Principe, 1983) is related to spiritual practices for God. There are two different view about spirituality; One is desire or need to find out the connotation and purpose of one's own life to exist in the universe; Other is a belief of supremacy of God, who controls the whole universe (Hunsberger & Jacksan 2005: Mitroff & Dentan, 1999).The most accepted definition of spirituality is an inner peace or experience of an individual that changes his/her conduct of life (Clark 1958). In July 2011 a USA weekend poll was conducted in which described that 47% of Americans feel spirituality is the most important part of their happiness. So with this we can easily conclude to the fact that spirituality can act as a strong stimuli for attracting the foreign tourist to our country.

Spiritual tourism is a term that has been recently developed in marketing, sociology and business research. Reason why this term came in use is the importance of foreign tourist to any destination. Tourist flying in to any nation from another country brings a whole new set of business and foreign exchange.

The word 'spirituality' is one of the major factors that heave the foreign tourists to any second or third world countries. The urge for foreign exchange in any developing nation is the same as the need of a life saving drug for dying person. The amount of people that visits religious places such as Varanasi, Mecca, Madina, Kashi etc are increasing constantly every year. There are two different aspects of religious tourism in India; One is the faith, beliefs, motivation of domestic tourist who has spiritual attachment; Other is foreign religious tourist who belongs to different religion, region or country come in India for exploring spirituality diverse from their own (Strategic initiatives & government advisory team: April2012).

The sudden shift of people attention towards spirituality has caused an impact on number of industries other than just tourism. The reason for that is the way it has been marketed as a self actualization product, as social phenomena and personal well-being, but the most affected industry among all with the concept of spirituality, is tourism beyond suspicion (Brownstein 2008: Fernand & Jackson 2006: Lewis & Geroy 2000: Mitroff & Denton 19990: Cohen 1972: Tilson 2005: Smith & Kelly 2006). Now a day's tourism is budding service industry in India because 20% of revenue generated from movement of domestic tourist who visit spiritual places. More than 70% of domestic tourist visit spiritual places every year (Cox & Kings 2008-09). Tourism industry plays a significant role in GDP and foreign exchange. Tourism is the second largest industry to generate foreign currency (Bhikha bhaiji, vabhivanijya mahavidyalaya).

There is an imperative need of creating a strategy for the segmentation so that we can tap the maximum of the market and it can only be done by identifying the diverse motivating factors that makes the people visit these destinations. The aspect of religiousness and spirituality is so strong that some scholars argue those 30000 years ago, it made people travel for days, moths and even years to reach to the sacred place (Blackwell, 2007).

With this paper the authors have tried to find out those factors that play the major role in pulling the visitors to sacred destinations. For this we have studied two major destinations, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. One is in the north region of the nation and other one is in the west corner.

Spiritual tourism in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is known as "*Devabhoomi*" which means *Abode of God*. The tourism industry is mounting because of its uniqueness in various spiritual places. Every year many pilgrims visit Himachal Pradesh for spiritual experience in different places like Naina Devi, Laxmi Naryan Temple, Jawalaji, Chandmunda Devi, Baba Balaknath, Deotsidh Temple, Hadimba Temple, Shikari Devi Temple, Chintpurni Mata Temple, Kinnarkailash, Poanta Sahib Gurudwara ,etc.

The state Government establish a tourism development board under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister of the state for the purpose of increase the number of pilgrims and other eco tourist. In the year 2011-2012 there is increase in tourist by 7.12% in domestic and 3.30% foreign tourist.

2011		2012		%Growth	
In lakh		In lakh			
Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign
146.05	4.84	156.46	5.00	7.12%	3.30%

Table – I: Economic and Statistics Department Annual report 2013-2014

Government of Himachal Pradesh, Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation adopt different strategy to attract the pilgrims, spiritual tourist. According to Tourist Policy 2005, the State Government developed parking's, did beautification, and arranged accommodation, cleanliness around the temple with coordination of temple trusts. During fair, festival special safety and security is taken up like information centres, tourist guide, accommodation facilities, transportation, special tourist police force etc. are paid more attention.

Spiritual Tourism in Rajasthan

The state Rajasthan is famous for its culture, tradition, fair, festivals, and spiritual places. The religious places in Rajasthan are not attracting the tourist with the only purpose of religious importance but it also attracts with beautiful historic architectures. Rajasthan is mostly visited to splendid forts and ancient places but now a day Rajasthan attracts thousands of pilgrims, devotees and spiritual tourists.

Some of the famous spiritual places in Rajasthan are Dargah Sharif, Shri Mahavirji Temple, Eklingji Temple, Jain Temple, Brahma Ji's only Temple in the entire world, Pushkar, Ranakpur, Shri Nathji temple, Nathdwara, Govind ji temple, Karnimata temple, Rashvanoth temple. These temples have their unique identity and faith that motivate the tourist.

Tourism was declared as an industry in Rajasthan in 1989. Department of tourism adopt different strategies to attract the tourist.

2011 2012		2012	2012		
Domestics	Foreign	Domestics	Foreign	Domestics	Foreign
27137323	1351974	28611831	1451370	5.43%	7.35%

Table – II

(Source: Tourism annual report 2012-2013, Department of tourism, Rajasthan)

Review of Literature

Not enough research has been done in this field and the availability of current literature on spiritual tourism in India is even lesser in quantity, so with a little literature review on the topic, we conducted our study. Spiritual and religious tourism are still under research, there are undiscovered potentialities in the area waiting to be discovered (Holman 2011: Sharpley & Jepson 2011: Raj & Morpeth 2007: Hall 2006: Tilson 2005).

Spiritual tourism is a new concept in tourism and business research but not a new phenomenon. (Browan 1998: Coher 1979: Burton 1855) A large number of industries have accepted the influence of spirituality on their business including tourism industry. (Rale 2004: Mitroff & Denton 1999) Several researcher accepted that spirituality became an important area of study in social and business research (Climino & Lattion 1999: Hill 2002: Konz & Ryan 1999: Pesut 2003). A spiritual tourist is also a tourist who visit to any place of their personal interest with a motive of spiritual growth concerned with his/her personal faith, there may or may not be any other religious and non-religious compulsion. (Biswajit satpathy & Debendra mahalik 2010) Religious tourism has been evaluated by tourism as tourists completely influenced or motivated by any religion. These tourists are mostly domestic and their motive if visit is purely confined with religion only (Cochrme 2009: Shuo et al. 2009: Raj & Morpeth 2007: Turner 1973), spiritual tourism on the contrary is a term that's wider in scope as it has got religion as a mere part of it and spirituality makes a person explore more then just one religion. Spiritual tourism has been well established for a long time as an informal part of tourism industry. In the history, oral, archaeological, and written document suggests that people were affected by spiritual experience and use to travel for spiritual activities(Halman 2011: Burton 1855: Shackley 2002: Rountree 2002: Smith & Kelly 2006: Straitwell 2006: Timothy &olsen 2006). Many scholars from unique discipline in tourism, religious and spirituality, recognized that spiritual tourism has a unique identification too(Herntrei &Pechlanner 2011: Sharpley & Japson 2011: Coachrane 2009: Finney, Orwing & spake 2009: Geary 2008: Timothy & Olsen 2006: Rountree 2002). There are some specific brand that use to market spiritual tourism as, religion-specific, region-specific, family-specific, selfrecognition-specific and personal well-being-specific (Andriotis 2009: Tilson 2005: Finney et al. 2009). Spiritual tourism is a new phenomenon for tourism industries to adopt marketing strategies, specifically branding (Haq & Wong 2010: Raj & Morpeth 2007).

The journey of pilgrims start when motivated by faith in a particular religion, and a holy place affiliated to that religion, for connect with God or supreme power is visited (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot 2000: Jack owski & sumith 1992). Many religious leaders describe that pilgrims are not tourists because of unique motivation of pilgrims (Hill 2012). Every religious tourist as well as pilgrims in search of God or a supreme power of God is a spiritual tourist, but every spiritual tourist may be or may not be pilgrims or religious tourist (Muhammad Farooq Haq, August 2011). The number of tourist visiting religious destination increases every day (Griffin 2007), the reason behind that is the constant increase of uncertainty in life, people start searching meaning of life. (Richards and Fernander, 2007). While religion is the primary motive of pilgrims there may arise few secondary outcomes either during the visit or at the spiritual destination (Swater 2006: Vukanic 1998). The attitude and behavior of pilgrims, religious tourist may change, alter on their particular religious place or religious affiliation (Poria, Butler and Airey 2003).

In a nation like India the cultural diversity is too high and keeping that in mind the segmentation becomes highly complex. The segmentation in tourism has a nature of being mutually exclusive, as the basis of segmentation is need and demand (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 2008) and it will vary with the varying religion and belief and lifestyle etc.

There is a need to create a model that can identify the spiritual tourists on the basis of their income, lifestyle, belief level, education level and few other types of demographic that can affect the decision of spirituality. (Mc Kercher & Cros,2003)

Research Methodology

Area of Study

The areas chosen to conduct this study are Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan both the states carry high spiritual value in the eyes of the people of this country. Increasing number of spiritual tourist can be observed every year on various numbers of spiritual destinations in the states. This study covers some famous spiritual places as Naina devi, Chintpurni devi, Jwalaji in Himachal Pradesh and Khatushyamji, Salasarbalaji in rajasthan. In this study our major focus was on to find out the fators that influence the decision making of a tourist in finalizing a sacred destination as well as the level of those factors. We have also checked the impact of their personal demographics on the same.

We asked the respondents to rate for us those factors because of which a tourist visits any spiritual destination or that destination comes to his or her knowledge. On the basis of their ratings we calculated average means and ranked those factors accordingly to see which one stands as the biggest motivator for the tourist for a visit.

Hypothesis testing was done in order to check the experience of the tourist on that destination and to check the segmentation effectiveness we used three different measures that affects the judgment of a tourist in general. We checked that whether a person's personal income level affects its experience of visit or not, hen secondly we checked that whether prior visit to the same destination increases the feeling of belongingness to the site and that in turn affects the level of experience to the site visit and finally we checked the occupational demographic effect on the judgment of a site.

Collection of Data

Descriptive research design is used to collect the data. Both primary and secondary data collection methods are used to collect the data. Primary data collected through a schedule from spiritual tourist during the month of March 2014. There were 200 questionnaire distributed and the tourist guided on those questionnaires and interviewed for the information at the same time, among the tourist 130 respondents data was collected. In the structured questionnaire 11 questions with sub questions along with few multiple choice questions were there. Secondary data were collected through the journals, published research paper, websites, and instrument used was unbiased.

Sampling Technique

The data collected through convenience sampling method to develop a sample design total 130 respondent were selected for research study. The study was conducted on a weekday in month when the tourist are spotted a little less in no. although due to this fact the sample size was affected but the study got a focused direction as only the tourist with high motivation were acquainted.

Objective of Study

- > To study the motives for the visit to spiritual places.
- > To study up to what level which motive affects.
- > To study the experience of tourist visit to spiritual destination.
- > To check the impact of personal demographics on decision making in addition to the motives.

Tools for Analysis

In the research study we used qualitative as well as quantitative approach to analysis the data with the help of few applications like MS Office (Microsoft word, Microsoft excel), SPSS. The collected data has been analyzed with the help of mean score and ranking technique.

The anova test describes the discrepancy among the income level. Hypothesis were made and tested by using anova test.

The tests were carried at the 5% significance level.

Analysis and Interpretation

Profile of Respondent

The profile of respondent evaluate in table no. 1. There are 130 respondents selected for study out of them 56.92% are between 21-30 years old, 80.77% are male respondent, 67.70% are below 2L income, 44.61% are students, 21.54% are visited 2 times in same spiritual destination.

Particular	Classification	Percentage	Frequency
Income	Below 2L	67.70	88
	2L-5L	15.38	20
	Above 5L	16.92	22
Occupation	Business	23.09	30
	Service	25.38	33
	Student	44.61	58
	Others	06.93	09
Visit Times	None	16.16	21
	1 Time earlier	13.08	17
	2 Times earlier	21.54	28
	3 Times earlier	16.92	22
	4 Times earlier	16.92	22
	5 Times or More earlier	15.38	20



Motives of Tourist

On the basis of primary data collected from the respondent the following motives of tourist behind visiting spiritual destination were found out. They are-

Factors	Weighted	Rank
	Mean	
Good Experience earlier	3.71	2^{nd}
Belief	4.02	1^{st}
Inner peace	3.61	3^{rd}
Family/Friends	3.44	4^{th}
suggestion		
Advertisements	2.32	5 th
Marketing promotion	2.09	6 th

Belief-The first and most motivational factor is belief because of 1strank on the behalf of 4.02 arithmetic mean which is highest in comparison to others. So we can say that belief is the primary factor that influences the tourists to visit spiritual destination. Tourists have belief on God so that they come to spiritual destination to search the God and supreme power of God. They believe that there is a power that controls the whole universe.

Table – IV

Experience – Experience is the second largest factor that influences the tourists to visit spiritual destination. Goodness is an inner feeling that arises due to experience, word of mouth, some religious factors, etc.

Inner Peace-The third most influence factor is inner peace. Tourists are visit to spiritual destination because it gives peace of mind and spiritual satisfaction.

Family/Friend Suggestion - The last factor that influenced the pilgrims to some extent to visit the spiritual destination was the suggestion by primary influence group.

Advertisements-The advertisement did not play significant role to influence the pilgrims to come for spiritual visit. The weighted mean score of advertisement is 2.32 which is lower than the average mean score.

Marketing promotion-Marketing promotion is also an ineffective factor in perspective of spiritual tourist. The weighted mean score of marketing promotion is again lower which are 2.09.

Experience of Tourist

The experience of tourist is the main factor that determines the post behavior and satisfaction level about tourist destination. Tourist satisfaction depends on various experience and facilities that provided on spiritual destination. To verify the experience of spiritual tourist there are 14 factors determine to check the level of satisfaction. These are: Nature in general, Local life style, Historical sites, Walking and excursions, Accommodation, Nightlife, Shopping, Hospitality, Tourist information, Feeling of safety, Quality of medical service, Money withdrawal facilities (e.g. ATM), Value of money, Spirituality in area and historical sites.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis test has been conducted to know about the experience of the tourist of the visited site. All the factors that have been mention under 'experience of the tourist' were rated by the tourist on Likert scale of 5 and an average of all the factors has been considered as the rating of the site. We have formulated three different hypothesis to check the impact of demographic factors on the judgment of site by the tourists.

Anova analysis

Anova analysis is used for testing the discrepancy among the two or more groups. Respondent profile are classified in more than two catogories based on income, number of prior visits to the same destination and occupation.

Hypothesis

<u>Hypothesis 1</u> – the impact of Income demographics on the experience of visit to the spiritual destination.

H0 = Null Hypothesis - There is no significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on their income level.

H1 = Alternative Hypothesis - There is significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on their income level.

Table - V

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	10.567	2	5.284	44.949	.000	
Within Groups	14.929	127	.118			
Total	25.496	129				

An analysis of variance showed that the effect of income was significant, F(2,127) = 44.94, p = .000.

Table – VI

Multiple Comparisons

Table no.5 Calculated data

(I) income	(J) income		Mean			95% Confider	nce Interval	
				Difference (I-	Std.		Lower	Upper
				J)	Error	Sig.	Bound	Bound
	<2 lakh		2-5	16445	.08493	.133	3659	.0370
		dimension3	lakh					
			>5 lakh	.71390*	.08172	.000	.5201	.9077
dimension2	2-5 lakh	dimension3	<2 lakh	.16445	.08493	.133	0370	.3659
unnension2	dimension2 dimension3	unnensions	>5 lakh	.87835*	.10593	.000	.6271	1.1296
	>5 lakh		<2 lakh	71390*	.08172	.000	9077	5201
		dimension3	2-5	87835*	.10593	.000	-1.1296	6271
			lakh					

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Our null Hypothesis was accepted and alternate hypothesis was rejected the post hoc analyses using the Tukey post hoc criterion for significance indicated that above 5 lakh income group has different opinion than other two group(below 2 lakh and from 2-5 lakh). This means that the experience of spiritual journey of the respondents in the income category of 5 lakh and above was different then the other two groups. There can be numerous reasons for that respondent falling in the higher income category can afford better accommodations and facilities which makes their journey and its experience better than the rest. The life which a higher income group leads is much better and more fulfilling in nature then the lower income group.

<u>Hypothesis 2</u> – the impact of the number of visits prior to the same destination on the experience of this current visit.

H0 = Null Hypothesis - There is a significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on no. of times they have visited to the destination prior.

H1 = Alternative Hypothesis - There is no significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on no. of times they have visited the destination prior.

Table – VII

ANOVA

Score

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.131	5	.226	1.703	.139
Within Groups	16.467	124	.133		
Total	17.598	129			

Table – VIII

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
None	21	3.29	.420	.092	3.10	3.48
One time	17	3.44	.268	.065	3.30	3.58
Two time	28	3.32	.383	.072	3.17	3.47
Three time	22	3.44	.345	.074	3.28	3.59
Four time	22	3.42	.390	.083	3.25	3.59
Five time or more	20	3.58	.335	.075	3.42	3.73
Total	130	3.41	.369	.032	3.34	3.47

The results showed that there was no significant difference. Our null hypothesis was rejected this concludes to the fact that based on the study we can interpret the no. of prior visit does not play a very significant role in enhancing the experience of a visitor.

Hypothesis 3 – The impact of Occupational demographics on the experience of visit to the spiritual destination.

H0 = Null Hypothesis - There is a significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on their occupation.

H1 = Alternative Hypothesis - There is no significant difference in experience of respondent at spiritual destination based on their occupation.

Table –	Х
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	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.943	3	.314	2.373	.073
Within Groups	16.696	126	.133		
Total	17.639	129			

ANOVA VAR00009

Table -IX

					95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
	Ν	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Other	9	3.6270	.28522	.09507	3.4077	3.8462
Business	30	3.4857	.39942	.07292	3.3366	3.6349
Service	33	3.4069	.36223	.06306	3.2785	3.5354
Students	58	3.3325	.35590	.04673	3.2389	3.4261
Total	130	3.4071	.36978	.03243	3.3430	3.4713

Null hypothesis in this case was rejected. On the basis of the primary data the analysis proves that there is no significant difference in the experience of tourist of the spiritual destination based on their occupation. This means that whether you are working or you are a student or in some other occupation the experience remains almost the same for all. This demographic factor failed to play a significant role.

Findings and Suggestions

On the behalf of above findings there are some suggestions to overcome the problem that are helpful for tourism industry as well as spiritual destination care taker to promote spiritual tourism.

- 1. Lack of advertisement and marketing promotion is there, the spiritual sites did not get enough publicity. To fetch more foreign tourist we require a fierce effort to publicize our spiritual sites
- 2. The quality of hospitality services in the spiritual destination is not up to the mark. To enhance the experience of tourists and in order for them to visit again and hard-on effort is required from the side of the government.
- 3. The quality and quantity of accommodations at spiritual destination are not good enough. An effort is required in this area as well.
- 4. There is poor experience about walking and excursions at spiritual destination, due to cleanness and some other reasons. Hygiene is given an utmost importance by the European tourists so this area is need of immense attention.

Conclusion

The spiritual destinations in India are not just mere tourist spots but they are a part of our heritage. Our civilization is considered one among the oldest and that too the finest of the civilizations. We have something in our past that is so enriched with cultural heritage that we have no match. Selling the same should be easy not difficult.

After this study we have came to the conclusion that where we lack in selling and promoting our spiritual destination is that we have not segmented our tourists properly mere a demographic based segmentation will not work. We need to find out a successful segmentation formula and start working on our promotion plans accordingly.

Satisfaction of customer is the key of success of every business. To achieve customer satisfaction we need to know about what the customer want. The first priority of tourism business should be satisfied customer. All the above mentioned factors which helps a tourist to evaluate any site matters and our infrastructure facilities and hospitality has a red dot on it. To convert that color in green we need to make efforts. On the basis of the study the concluding remark is that we have a rich culture to sell but the packaging is not that impressive.

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