CHAPTER 6

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6.1. Finding from the Analysis of the Tourists Feedback

Around 2000 tourists randomly selected from various tourist centers in Maharashtra were served with a structured questionnaire to get their views and preferences for different services availed by them during the recent period. The analysis is done with the information the researcher gathered and inferences from the same have been drawn in this section.

- Primary data shows that the 18-30 years age group shows more inclination (78.4%) towards the tourism compared to the other age groups.
- Out of the 2000 Tourists sample, 62.8% were males and 37.2% were females.
- Marital status of the tourist’s sample of 2000 is as follows, 41.7% were married and 58.4% were single.
- Where the tourists sample’s qualifications is concerned, from 2000 respondents, 1182 (59%) responders were undergraduate, 638 (31.9%) were graduate and 180 (9.0%) were masters.
- With respect to the primary data the Nationality of the tourists is as follows, 95.1% were of Indian nationality and 4.9% were foreigners.
- 88.5% Tourists like to travel while 11.5% travel just as a matter of obligation, when compelled to.
- Majority of tourists, around 57% travel only occasionally and rest 43 percent travel more frequently.
- The primary data reveals that tourists ranked tours for leisure time at the top, followed by Official tours, Adventure Tours, Pilgrimage tours, and Family Functions 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.
- 48% of those surveyed set aside a budget for travel and 52% of them didn’t plan their tours in advance.
- As per the primary data highest frequency of tourists favoured Maharashtra at 1st rank, followed by Gujarat 2nd rank, Karnataka at 3rd and Madhya Pradesh at 4th rank. Though primary data according to the domestic tourists responses reveals...
that Maharashtra is the most favorable, the secondary data reveals that Maharashtra ranks 5th in domestic tourism.

- Maharashtra attracts tourists for Education, History, Agriculture, and Culture whereas for Pilgrimage and Medical tourism, tourists show moderate inclination. Beaches and cuisine are the least famous attractions for the tourist, though these types of tourism have a larger potential in Maharashtra.

- As per primary data findings from the Tourists, the most preferred regions in Maharashtra is the Konkan Region, followed by Desh-Pune, 3rd famous was Khandesh/Nashik, 4th preferred region was Marathwada and the last priority goes to the Vidarbha region.

- Hill stations are the most visited destination of Maharashtra as they are liked by the tourists for their natural scenic beauty, wonderful climatic condition, fresh air and seasonal delicacies followed by the Konkan stretch where the tourists were very happy with the locale, the fresh water beaches and the regional cuisine.

- Pilgrimage sites like Asthvinayak, Shirdi, Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta caves etc. were liked for their serene location. Destination like Pune, Kolhapur, Nagpur, and Igatpuri were visited for pleasure, culture/art and artifacts/memento.

- Two day short trips to theme parks with resorts were visited by mostly youngsters for leisure and pleasure with friends.

- The most significant reason for visiting different places in Maharashtra for tourists is scenic beauty, followed by Memories which ranked 2nd, Cuisine, Culture/Art and Arty craft / Memento ranked 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.

- According to the finding of primary data the most frequently used source of information by tourist is Internet, followed by Friends, Travel Books, Travel Agents and MTDC ranking 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.

- Findings of the study revealed that advertisement & promotional strategies used by the stakeholders of Maharashtra tourism have less recall value as only 23% of tourist contacted remember any advertisement campaign and only 10% of tourist remembered any message of the advertisement campaign.

- 77% tourists are of the opinion that tourism is not fully explored in Maharashtra. The primary data shows very low footfall of foreign tourist (4.9%) where as Maharashtra ranks 1st in receiving foreign tourist, which proves that Maharashtra (Mumbai) is becoming the transit point for these tourist.
• Primary data thus states that MTDC Resorts and accommodation are not the first choice of the tourists only 31% of tourists have availed of the facility and that 69% of tourists never stayed in MTDC resorts.

• MTDC’s official website provides very little information regarding the tourist places, available accommodation, facilities, tour packages and other necessary information for tourist.

• The primary data of the Tourists reveals that MTDC accommodations are not up to the satisfactory level of the tourists. MTDC till date uses the traditional sources of promotion and marketing.

• Primary data from the tourists revealed that electricity and hot water facility provided by MTDC resorts ranked high comparatively to ease of booking and cleanliness and hygiene, whereas tourists were extremely dissatisfied with the food and breakfast quality and service. Thus overall facilities offered at MTDC properties are not satisfactory.

• Majority tourists did not contact MTDC for making bookings for touring as 48.65% of tourists are unaware of MTDC offering accommodation facility, another 35% of tourists were of the opinion that limited information was available with MTDC with regards to availability of accommodation, while 16% tourists expressed that the entire process of contacting MTDC and then organizing a tour was too tedious.

• Maharashtra cuisine is fairly known globally but its popularity has not been fully explored as 57% tourists believe it to be least and to some extent recognised globally. Another 31% recognise it to a large extent while only 12% tourists said it is most popularly recognized.

• 75% of the tourists feel that Maharashtrian delicacies have the potential to be recognised globally as a specialized cuisine.

• The most famous delicacy is Vadapav followed by Puranpoli and Modak whereas, Kolhapur Tambda/Pandhra Rasa (Red and white gravy) Saoji Mutton are least favoured cuisines by Tourists. This also reveals that a large population of tourists is unaware of popular delicacies of Maharashtra. Thus Maharashtrian cuisine’s exposure is restricted to snacks like vadapav and sweets like Puranpoli and modak, while there is much more to the Maharashtrian cuisine.
6.2. Findings from the Analysis of the Tour Operators/Travel Agents feedback

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaire from 251 Tour Operators/Travel Agents on the various aspects of Tourism and related services, such as membership of a professional body, frequency of organising tours, packages of tours, mode of advertisements and other marketing practices adopted and responses of tourists to their programme etc.

- 71.3% of the tour operators/travel agent’s sample belonged to metropolitan cities, 18.7% belonged to urban cities, 8.4% belonged to semi urban cities & 1.6% belonged to rural Maharashtra.
- 98% of the tour operators/travel agents are members of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) and Travel Agent Association of India (TAAI). Non members with 2% are negligible.
- Tour Operators announce tour packages from time to time. 237 out of 251 (94%) agreed that they do.
- The data reveals that Gujarat tourism is sold maximum with 2.25µ and is the most preferred destination followed by Madhya Pradesh with 2.21µ, Karnataka is next with 2.07µ and Maharashtra at the end with 2µ least preferred.
- Tour operators/Travel agents sold Leisure Tours packages the most, followed by Heritage and Cultural at 2nd rank where as Official Tours, Pilgrimage Tours and Adventure Tour rank 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.
- Religious Pilgrimages (3.21µ), Hill stations (3.21µ), Historical places (3.03µ), and Beaches (2.91µ), are most favourite attractions in Maharashtra. Wild life viewing and visits for medical services scored lowest on the priority list.
- Adventure Tours (2.68µ) and Education Tours (2.46µ) rank next on the travel operators list while Wild Life Viewing (1.87µ), and Visits for Medical services (1.85µ), is lower on the priority list of Tourists according to the Travel Agents.
- As per primary data collected from the Travel Operators/Travel Agents most preferred regions in Maharashtra are Desh-Pune at the top, followed by Konkan Region, Khandesh/Nashik, Marathwada and the last priority goes to Vidarbha region.
• Maintenance is the most severe problem faced by Travel Agents. Awareness among the tourists about scheduled tour programmes is the second largest problem of the Travel Agents. Easy accessibility to various tourists’ spots is the 3rd problem while weather conditions problems worries the Travel Agents the least.

• It is revealed that 88% of tour operators/agents make special itinerary on client demand.

• Only 12.4% of travel agents were found not entertaining any special demands of their clients. This might be because some tourist companies declare their tour programmes well in advance for a longer period of time and book the tourists accordingly. Travel Agents working either on small or medium scale might be in a position to attend such demands.

• Majority travel operators/tour operators were of the opinion that Vidarbha region of Maharashtra on the whole is unexplored (especially National parks of Vidarbha and Jalgaon in Vidharbha), second least explored states were Khandesh and Marathwada.

• It was found that most of the tour operator/travel agents 68% feels that ‘Diverse Tourism Concept’ is not marketed well.

• 58% Travel Agents/Tour Operators deny the proposition that Maharashtra tourism is a seasonal business. This implies that it is an all year round activity for those who could manage tours properly.

• The primary data collected from the tour operators reveals that 62.5% of tourist were interested in the food available at the various tourist spots while travelling. 27.1% often enquired about the same, 7.6% asked some times about the variety of food available while 2.8% were least interested regarding the same.

• Thus according to the tour operator’s data majority of the tourist gave utmost importance to the kind of food available while travelling to the state of Maharashtra, thus justifying the importance of cuisines.

• According to the primary data collected from theTour Operators, it is very much evident that Malwani/Konkani cuisine, Puneri cuisine and Marathwada cuisine were the most famous Maharashtrian cuisines amongst the tourist and ranked 1st 2nd and 3rd respectively. While Kolhapuri and Vidarbha cuisines ranked 4th and 5th respectively.
• Television is perceived by the travel agents as the most effective media for promoting tourism (3.20µ) followed by Newspaper print (3.01µ) and Hoardings (2.79µ). Internet (2.44µ) and Magazines (1.91µ) are least effective media sources used in Tourism Industry.

• The most popular Tour operators to the average ones used some or the other kind of concept of awareness for advertisement and marketing as per their convenience and economic condition. These various mediums includes, Pamphlet Distribution, Local Newspapers, Advertising through Internet & Hoardings, Cable Television, Radio Announcement and Hoardings on railway stations, terminuses and airports.

• Some of the tour operators lured tourists via Mouth to Mouth Publicity, By offering various Discount, Giving Sales call through data collection, Approaching the potential customer from office to office, Magazines, Messaging through cell phones data collection, Website on Internet - Advertising on Google, Advertising on Yahoo's Search Engine, Hand bills and lectures in senior citizens group.

• Publicity and Promotion (2.16µ) rank the most important facility offered by MTDC. Subsidies (1.71µ) offered by MTDC rank second among the privileges provided whereas Booking Preferences(1.53µ) and Discounts on Tour Packages(1.39µ) received the least support offered.

• On the whole, it is observed that majority of tour operators and travel agents don’t get enough support from MTDC. Thus, according to the travel agents/tour operators, MTDC as state government body for developing tourism in Maharashtra plays a very important role in promoting Tourism in Maharashtra.

• Primary data from the Travel Agents/Tour Operators about the bottlenecks being the main stumbling blocks in the development of Maharashtra tourism, reveals that Lack of Initiative by the Government (4.0µ) ranks first, Poor Administration & Management (3.80µ), Improper Marketing and Tourism Promotion (3.65µ), Bureaucracy (3.55µ), Inadequate Infrastructure (3.53µ), Lack of Entrepreneurship promotion (3.50µ) were next in line and Communication & Culture problems (3.12µ) ranks the lowest. Thus each of the bottlenecks mentioned are responsible for the slow development of Maharashtra Tourism.

• Travel Agents/Tour Operators data revealed that Gujarat (2.92µ) is the most efficient state in promoting tourism, followed by Madhya Pradesh(2.70µ) at rank second, and Karnataka (2.17µ) at rank third where as Maharashtra state(1.75µ) is
the least efficient state in promotion of Tourism. It clearly indicates that the Tour Organising Companies and Tour Agents are not very much happy with the Tourism Development in Maharashtra.

- Tour Operators/Travel Agent followed different tactics to promote tourism, a large number believed that by providing a very attractive versatile itinerary they can lure the tourist, while other big group were of the opinion that by promoting the states wild life, adventure and agriculture (Diverse Tourism) they can enhance the state tourism.

- Making itinerary by bifurcating the state into Hill Stations, Wild life, Beaches etc. was one of the ways of attracting tourists by another group. To promote tourism emphasizing on the wonders of Maharashtra & its unexplored destinations was important for some tour operators.

- A small percentage of tour operators used strategies like giving a short presentation of the state and its beauty to the clients, discount on bigger number of booking and by offering unique adventurous trekking itinerary of Maharashtra.

- Majority of the tour and travel operators express that the Maharashtra Government should improve infrastructure of all the tourist destinations, offer more and better transportation facilities, the safety and security of the tourists spots should be the prime concern. Cleanliness of the tourist’s destination should also be one of the priorities.

- Almost all the tour operators expressed that rigorous advertisements and promotions were required to be done through Newspapers, Magazines and Internet (WWW). For this the government should develop effective marketing strategies to sell Maharashtra as a tourist destination for which they need to formulate new systems. Specific market areas should be targeted for promoting tourism in Maharashtra.

- More advertisement required for unexplored destinations of Maharashtra like the state of Gujarat. Proper media coverage should be given to Maharashtra, like the other states of India.

- Promotional and advertisement medium should target the current generation as they are actual users and can spread a positive word around i.e. make Maharashtra more popular amongst the youth.
• Travel Operators were of the view point Maharashtra Tourism needs more informative centers with new professional staff to be put up by the Government to promote tourism.

• A very important valid suggestion was made by a tour operator that accommodation is very expensive in India, sometimes even more expensive than USA and hence some alternate remedy should be found out.

• Majority of travel operator feel that lots and lots of progress is still required to be made by Maharashtra to make it an internationally renowned tourist destination.

6.3. Findings from the Analysis of the Hotels/Resorts Managers Feedback

Researcher has selected a significant number of 245 hotels and resorts, which are located either at the sight of Tourist Point or towns and cities nearby a tourist center that tourists find it convenient to stay and go around the tourist points. Each of the unit was selected by simple random system so as to have a fair representation of the population of hotels and resorts.

• 17.1% of the Hotels/Resorts sample belonged to Metropolitan cities, 50.6% belonged to urban cities, 13.9% belonged to semi urban cities & 18.4% belonged to rural Maharashtra.

• It is surprising to note that 233 (95%) of Hotels and Resorts are away from tourist locations. Only 5% of the hotels and resorts are near tourist location. This is not surprising because Hotels and Resorts close to tourists’ locations may not be offering quality hospitality services which tourists value more than the closeness of tourist location. The distance, if any, can be conveniently covered by vehicles as the essential facilitating services are preferred more.

• According to Hotels and Resorts managers, a guest on official duty ranks 1st, followed by leisure time pleasure finders ranks 2nd, Pilgrimage tourists, Heritage and Culture viewers and Adventure seekers ranks 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively.

• Almost 67% of the hotels and resorts answered in affirmative that they do offer sightseeing/tour itineraries as a package of facilities to their guests, whereas remaining 33% do not.

• According to the Hotels/Resort Managers Hill stations (3.90µ), Beaches (3.57µ), Historical places (3.0µ) and Religious visits (2.98µ) are the favorite tourist
attractions in Maharashtra. Medical \((2.65\mu)\) and Educational Tours \((2.65\mu)\) scores next on tourist attraction. Adventure \((2.06\mu)\) ranked sixth, whereas Wildlife \((1.50\mu)\), scores least on tourist attraction.

- First four most important attributes for the hospitality industry in Maharashtra are Commerce and trade, Scenic beauty, Infrastructure and Cuisine delicacies. This data is based on the responses from the Hotels/resorts managers. Climate, Culture, and Bollywood are considered less important priorities by Hotels. Bollywood scores least on attractiveness according to the perception of hotel managers.

- Problems faced by the Hotels are unstable Govt. policies \((3.67\mu)\) and Inadequate Infrastructure \((3.26\mu)\), rather these are considered as the road blocks. Price v/s VFM \((1.57\mu)\), Limited Tourism Activities \((1.51\mu)\), and Publicity \((1.25\mu)\), acts in a minimal manner with regards to generating revenue.

- Barring a small fraction of 2% Hotels, majority of 98% hold that hotel business is seasonal in Maharashtra so far as arrival of tourists is concerned.

- According to the Hotels/Resorts Managers Winter \((3.79\mu)\) is the most favourable season for hotel business and summer \((1.61\mu)\) is the least favourable as far as arrivals of tourists is concerned. Monsoon season \((2.99\mu)\) is preferred by comparatively lesser number of tourists because it causes inconvenience due to heavy rains, road accidents and health related problems.

- Summer, being long vacation period mainly for teachers and students, more tours and sightseeing programmes are arranged by Travel Agents but least number of tourist travel as the climatic condition is very hot.

- Over 67% of Hotels gave a below par rating for tourism in Maharashtra and just 32.7% said that it is satisfactory only to some extent. None of the hotel management agreed that it is highly satisfactory.

- According to the data collected from the Hotels/Resort managers, 29% of the them responded that maximum tourist asked for Maharashtra’s cusine. This data reveals that 71% Hotels/Resorts Managers were of the opinion that Maharashtra Cuisine has a long way to go where the tourists demand is concerned.

- According to the primary data 85% of Hotels/Resorts are not taking any initiative to promote its own state cuisine where as only 15% of them make efforts by
organizing Food festivals, Themes and advertise for promoting Maharashtra’s cuisine.

- Majority of Hotels/Resorts managers (81%) felt that cuisine has positive impact on the hotels/resort business. They also felt that it is one of the important attributes of the hospitality industry. Also the tour operators revealed that 63% tourist give importance to food availability while travelling to the state of Maharashtra. Though the stakeholders feel that promotions of cuisine helps for attracting tourist, the primary data of the tourists reveals that Maharashtra cuisine/delicacies are the lowest motivational factor for touring Maharashtra.

- Primary data collected from Hotels/Resorts shows that all promotional media are not equally effective. Newspaper is most effective, followed by Television, Internet, Hoardings, and Magazines.

- All the star graded Hotel managements said that they link up with travel portals, travel agents and tour operators, they also link with MICE organizers and media for advertisements.

- All the other four star and three star hotel authorities felt that Internet online promotions were the best way to market their product.

- Some small timers also distributed fliers inserted in the newspapers, and some distributed the same in residential areas and at railway platforms.

- The Bed and breakfast scheme and the Home stay scheme had captured the rickshaws and taxi stands and had a tie up with these for luring customers to their place by offering decent incentives to the drivers of these vehicles.

- Primary data collected from Hotels/Resorts reveals that Price is most important ‘P’ value form ‘4P’ followed by product, place & promotion.

- Various hotel managers responded, being a business hotel they attract business travelers and thus inflow of foreign exchange. Most of their clients are business men and corporate and they are helping in developing official Tourism in Maharashtra.

- Few Hotels/Resorts Managers said that they promote the beaches of Konkan stretch by giving information of the same to the tourist. The others said that the travel desk at the hotel offers awareness, prompt, timely help and proper guidance to the tourist about the tourist destination in and around the hotel.
• Small time Hotels/Resorts Managers of Konkan region try to tie up with various travel agents of other cities and states to attract tourist to the Konkan stretch inturn to the state of Maharashtra. They also put up banners in and around Maharashtra of their property to attract tourist.

• Various Hotels management had different suggestions to give like tourism in Maharashtra can be further developed by maintaining heritage places like forts, temples, beaches etc. they also suggested that infrastructure, transport, connectivity to cities, airport, public transport, Sea - link etc. should be developed further for easy accessibility. Some felt there was a very urgent need to Go Green and promote the same to develop Tourism.

• Others were of the opinion that more advertisements need to be given through different media like Television, Internet, Hoardings put up nationally and internationally and governments help is required to a great extent, in doing so. Some hoteliers felt one of the ways to develop tourism is to lure tourist by advertising the mouth watering delicacies of a particular region and they very strongly felt that the authorities (Government) should promote Maharashtra cuisine.

• Maharashtra government should improve the basic amenities like good roads, reach, clean safe streets etc. Government should provide more help to the hoteliers and reduce taxes. Government has to market Maharashtra tourism more effectively. More emphasis should be given to small unexplored tourist places.

• The Hotels get more of foreign tourist; Domestic tourist should be made aware of all the wonderful destinations in Maharashtra. Government should cooperate with the hoteliers to make tourist destination more likable. Local authorities should help in further developing the tourist spots and maintaining them. Government should help in highlighting the actual facts about the destination, at present there are lot of restrictions.

• Correct marketing of Mother Nature needs to be done. Small Hotels and Resorts should be given priorities and more preferences by the Government. Environmental Hazards should be taken care of by the government.

• Like Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra government also should market its tourism by giving a catchy advertisement on the television as it is watched by the masses worldwide.
6.4 Findings from the Structured Interview of the MTDC Officials

The researcher was fortunate enough to get an appointment with the MTDC official (General Manager). The General manager was kind enough to give time to the researcher and after meeting the official on two occasions, the official did not only fill the Interview Schedule, but also gave an interview to the researcher, after which when the researcher took permission from the MTDC official to get the Interview Schedules filled by the other officials, the official felt that after the MTDC official giving so much data there would not be any need of any supporting information from any other official filling in the Interview Schedule.

Feedback received through in depth interviews with the officials of MTDC,

- MTDC does not have any hotels under their banner instead has 76 Resorts all over Maharashtra. Out of the 76 Resorts 55 have been leased out and the remaining 21 properties are with MTDC.
- MTDC official reveals that the most preffered destinations are Gateway of India, Ashtavinayak, Ajanta, Ellora, Shirdi and Mahabaleshwar and Malvan (Dapoli and Tarkarli beaches). The MTDC official mentioned Lonar (Crater) as an important tourist destination which the MTDC has developed but unfortunately it is not so popular among the tourist. This shows that there are various destinations which have not been explored or promoted with respect to their potential for e.g. Elephanta caves, Kaas Pathar, Lonar Crater and also various forts and beaches of Maharashtra.
- Maximum tourist enquiries received by MTDC (regarding the resorts, their destination and booking) are via telephone, online was the next in demand and very few tourist themselves paid personal visits to the MTDC offices.
- MTDC offers very few facilities and benefits/support to the tour operators, except publicity and promotion which according to the researcher’s survey of the tour operators was negligible. Whereas the travel agents/tour operators play a crucial role for the development and growth of tourism.
- MTDC as such does not make an annual report of tourist destinations in Maharashtra instead it has started doing a research of tourist and their preferences since 2012. Only a research report won’t serve the purpose but along with it audit
based annual report of tourists destinations should be prepared. Both these will help in proper future planning and development of the tourists places.

• MTDC publishes literature to promote tourism in the form of brochures theme wise and location wise and a Quarterly Magazine “Maharashtra Unlimited”. These promotional media already have limitations to reach tourists of various segments and whereas they are not enough to explore the potential of Maharashtra tourism.

• Findings related to the role played by MTDC for marketing and promotions reveal that still MTDC is using the traditional media sources (Hoardings, newspapers and magazines) for advertising and promotions of Maharashtra tourism. They have not taken advantage of the social media, digital media, e-commerce & internet, TV media, FM radios as other states have successfully used. MTDC only publishes a magazine called “Maharashtra Unlimited” as information source, which also needs paid subscription.

• When asked that does MTDC organize any kind of food festival, cultural exhibition, tourism exhibition and workshops, the official replied that they support private players organizing such events and these are the Marketing Strategies MTDC followed to promote their various destinations.

• Problems faced by MTDC in selling tours are - Awareness of the various destinations amongst the tourist being the most common problem followed by accessibility and weather conditions. According to the official maintenance of the destinations was the least problematic. Thus this reveals that there is a large scope of improvement needed in planning, publicity and promotion of tourism for which coordination and communication at various levels of the tourism stakeholders is very much required. Regarding the maintenance of the tourists site the actual picture is exactly the opposite of what the official mentioned.

• The MTDC official felt that agro tourism, archeological tourism, food tourism, marine tourism, adventure tourism, social and industrial tourism are the diverse tourism concepts to be marketed by MTDC to promote Maharashtra.

• Amongst various regions of Maharashtra, Vidarbha is the most unexplored tourist destination followed by Marathwada, Nashik, Desh and Pune and the most explored according to the general manager was the Konkan Region. In reality Vidarbha and Marathwada are blessed with beautiful sanctuaries, parks, heritage
sites, forts and many tourist attractions which have yet not been explored and promoted well.

- MTDC official responded that MTDC is not making any efforts to plan special itinerary on tourist’s demands. If they start doing so their clientele list would grow leaps and bounds and in true sense they would be pioneers of the tourism industry of the state. Ideal example would be “makemytrip.com” or “travigo”.

- The MTDC official very strongly felt that tourism business in Maharashtra is seasonal. Winter season being the most preferred followed by summer and monsoons being the least. There is always an exception to the rule where certain destinations are preferred during the Monsoon e.g. Bhushi Dam, (Lonavala), Khandala, Tungareshwar (Thane), Khadakwasla and Panshet Dam, (Pune), Koyna Dam (Chiplun-Karad) etc. Different regions of Maharashtra have diverse climatic conditions which if promoted correctly will help year round tourism for the state of Maharashtra.

- MTDC gets co-operation only from forest authorities as a local body in developing tourism. Gram Panchayats, Zilla Parishads, Municipal Corporations and Cantonment Boards do not extend any cooperation to MTDC to develop Tourism in Maharashtra. For an inclusive growth of tourism every Government organisations and the private players should work hand in hand.

- Lack of Entrepreneurship, Promotion and Improper Marketing & Tourism promotion is the most important bottlenecks in developing Maharashtra Tourism. More and more private players should be motivated to become a part of the tourism industry whereby more destinations could be developed and marketed well. The advance level of marketing and promotion facilities and resources/medium should be used to get a comprehensive impact.

- The Authority of MTDC felt that Karnataka ranked first in developing tourism then was Gujarat and later Madhya Pradesh. Hence the rate at which tourism is developing in the other states as compared to Maharashtra is commendable. Unfortunately tourism was not the focus area in Maharashtra Government Schemes till recently but the authority of MTDC feels that the scenario is changing rapidly.

- MTDC does not face competition from the Hotels and local tour operators in and around their resorts as the location of these resorts are the most attractive because
of their scenic value. Even though the location is very attractive of the MTDC resorts, it’s not the first choice of the tourists; also those who have stayed at the resorts are not happy with the overall facilities.

- The Maharashtra State Government spends around Rs. 250 Crores annually for the Development of Tourism in Maharashtra. Allocation of funds by the Government of Maharashtra considers importance of specific tourism spots. Development of tourism of a huge state like Maharashtra with its diversified geography demands for much more funds then the allotted amount. Here a major chunk should also be allocated towards appropriate branding and marketing of the state.

- MTDC is working towards the promotion of Maharashtrian Cuisine globally by supporting people to show up in various events along with their regional delicacies. MTDC official mentioned that currently they did not have any project in hand regarding culinary tourism of Maharashtra. As cuisine plays a very important role in the development of the tourism sector and thus promotion of the regional cuisine should also be on the priority list of the stakeholders.

- The MTDC officials mentioned that all the various medias like Television, newspaper, hoardings, internet, magazines, cable connections, handbills, etc. are equally important as the different media caters to different market segments, hence all these should be used to market Maharashtra tourism so the propaganda reaches to all the classes and the masses.

- The MTDC official also stated that the tour operators do not know of an appropriate way of promoting tourism in Maharashtra. According to them even the private tour operators should go through a well formulated training programme so that they can give thorough information and guidance to the tourist. Another fact about the growth of tourism was that a lot of cooperation, coordination and team work were required amongst MTDC, private hotels, resorts and tour operators to market Maharashtra tourism.

- The official was of the viewpoint that there is a big difficulty in Maharashtra with regards to tourism; as one does not understand where to start from? As Maharashtra is very diverse, theming up is difficult. Also “Maharashtra” itself is a big word and is difficult to pronounce and spell and hence ‘If the product is not delivered, promotion would not work.'
• Especially foreign tourists confuse Mumbai for Maharashtra, thus one need to understand that only Mumbai is not Maharashtra and through Mumbai we cannot promote Maharashtra. So it becomes necessary to find the USP (Unique Selling Point) for the Maharashtra state and promote it.

• MTDC official expressed that MTDC should venture into tourist areas, where the private sector has not dared to venture and do things which the private players will not think about and that will make a difference, for e.g. B&B (Bed & Breakfast), single window tourists operation etc.

• The official opined that Maharashtra’s tourist destinations are beautiful but the roads to reach them are not that attractive or scenic, so we have to know our USP and work accordingly. Road and smooth transport facility are the life line of tourism industry and thus their development should be given the top most priority by the Government only then will there be a speedy growth of tourism and its promotion will be worthwhile.

• The official confessed that there should be a change in the approach and attitude of Maharashtra tourism sector for the development of tourism.

• The official accepted that to bring out holistic change, many policies and strategies need to be introduced at every level of the tourism gamete, for e.g. there is a need of developing cooperative societies from rickshaw walas to hoteliers where there will be some kind of formal training given to these people regarding language (communication), hospitality, manners, etiquette etc. This will help the tourism industry get skilled human resources for the better growth of tourism industry.

• Various new concepts of tourism like sustainable tourism, adventure tourism, agro tourism etc. should be introduced. To quote an e.g. A tour was organized by MTDC in the Konkan region where the tourist reached the agro based destination on 31st December 2011 partied the whole night amongst the rustic lifestyle, obviously stayed over a few more days and hence around 15 lakh rupees revenue was earned from this concept. This did not only boost the tourism industry but on their way back home these tourist bought so much rice that all the rice available with the nearby farmers was sold within two days. Hence tourism industry along with it gives a lot of revenue boost to the other industry also. Such new concepts would thus play a key role in the success of Maharashtra tourism.
Further new concept comes forward about the common man participating in farming destination which is very important in giving a status symbol to the agriculture tourism and many people will be interested in these state holdings.

6.5 Findings from the Interview of the Ministry of Tourism Official

ITDC has only a help desk in Mumbai and all the other places in Maharashtra. The researcher then approached the Ministry of Tourism and got to interview the Assistant Director, India Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The Ministry of Tourism official was kind enough to give the researcher an in-depth interview of their organization's policies. This particular segment in detail discusses the data collected from the Ministry of Tourism’s office.

- This particular Ministry of Tourism is under the Government of India. It came into existence in 1962 and has a Head Office: Delhi, Five Regional Office: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai & Guwahati and Three Sub Offices: Indore, Aurangabad & Goa.

- The Ministry of Tourism’s official expressed that funds allocated to a certain project should be judiciously utilized for that specific project only.

- According to the Ministry of Tourism official, there is no proper vision for the state Tourism. The official strongly feels that private players play a very important role in developing and marketing tourism, especially now a day’s builders are very much interested in developing tourist spots, not only that they are developing artificial scenic cities like Ambey valley and Lavasa which are gaining popularity among tourists.

- The Ministry of Tourism official strongly felt that ample amount of funds allotted for Tourism Development remained unutilized in the Maharashtra state. If Goa can do wonders in tourism, why not in Vengurla, which is just 60 kilometers away from Goa. The official was of the opinion that improper infrastructure and awareness of so many unexplored destinations which have a tremendous potential are the cause for underdeveloped tourism in Maharashtra. Hence the need of the hour in Maharashtra at present is that of a vision for the Tourism Industry.

- The official made some valid points where even a common man is responsible, like we visit different countries and go for a guided tour of the Legislative Assembly of that country, why have we not seen Vidhan Bhavan of our own
country? He also named many previous Stakeholders who did wonders for the state tourism like Mr. A K Singh who introduced the Deccan Odyssey, Nilambari etc.

6.6 **Findings from the Interview with a Senior Tour Operator (Ex-officio of MTDC)**

- According to the ex-officio the favourite destinations in Maharashtra are Konkan and Pune, Vidarbha is the least attractive among the tourist.
- Awareness and weather conditions were the most important reason/problems for selling tours in Maharashtra according to the ex-officio. Satpura Ranges were the unexplored destination of Maharashtra. He also felt that Maharashtra tourism business was seasonal in nature and diverse tourism should be explored by the Tourism authorities of Maharashtra and introduce this new concept to the tourists.
- When asked about advertising through which media has more effect on the tourist, the ex-officio mentioned that all the various medias like television, newspaper, hoardings, internet, magazines, cable connections, handbills, etc are equally important as the different media caters to different market segments.
- MTDC and other stakeholders of Maharashtra Tourism Industry should explore the full potential of ICT (Information Communication Technology) and Internet.
- According to the ex-officio tourism in Maharashtra has come a long way but still has the potential to grow leaps and bounds.