Chapter-V

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING DESTINATION STRENGTH

The analysis carried out in the preceding chapter enabled us to identify five broad considerations (or pillars) to which sample tourists from the selected four East Asian countries attached importance prior to or during their travel and to which their satisfaction level was intrinsically linked. These five pillars were:

(i) tourism attractions;
(ii) tourism openness;
(iii) tourists’ safety;
(iv) connectivity (within the destination country);
(v) tourism infrastructure & price competitiveness.

Taking each of the above considerations or pillars as the focus of enquiry, a survey of literature is undertaken in the present chapter to identify the variables pertaining to the five pillars that would enable us to measure India’s relative strength in the stated five dimensions as a destination-country (vis-à-vis the leading destination-countries in the globe). To put it otherwise, if “connectivity” were taken as a major consideration or concern for all visiting or prospective tourists from East Asia, then the questions that would invariably arise are: how can the ‘connectivity’-status in India be measured, and, what would be indicators or quantifiable parameters of connectivity?

The points raised above may be addressed from a different point of view. The fact that the five dimensions as listed above were mentioned by majority of the sample tourists from East Asia as the major factors having a
bearing on their travel experience and hence were to be duly considered by a prospective visitor in course of his/her choice of a destination by implication suggests that any destination-country which is adequately endowed in terms of the aforesaid dimensions would be enjoying an edge vis-à-vis its competitors in attracting visitors in the East Asian travel market. That is, from the destination-marketers' perspective, the five major choice-considerations of visitors are to be seen as the five major pillars around which their competitive strength are to be built.

To carry this analysis further forward it might be worthwhile at this outset to examine the concept of competitiveness and then delineate the implications of the adopted conceptual framework for identification of the variables by means of which destination competitiveness can be quantified and measured.

5.1. COMPETITIVENESS DEFINED

Traditionally, the concept of competitiveness has been adopted from economic theory and applied to a general firm or company. The hallmark of the earlier literature on the subject is that these were generally guided by the concept of comparative advantage lying at the heart of theories of international trade. More recently, the focus of the literature has noticeably shifted particularly under the influence of the contemporary works by Michael Porter (Porter 1980, 1985); and the framework for measurement of competitiveness as adopted by the World Economic Forum for compilation of its Global Competitiveness Report.

Despite the discussions on competitiveness, however, no universally accepted definition or model of competitiveness has yet been developed. It has proved to be a broad and relatively complex area, that defy attempts by researchers to summarize it in universally applicable terms. It is a complex
concept because a whole range of factors account for it. Competitiveness is both relative (i.e. compared to what?) and multi-dimensional (i.e. what are the salient attributes or qualities of competitiveness?) (Spence & Hazard 1988: 3-16). Tourism competitiveness would appear to be linked to the relative ability of a destination to meet visitor needs on various aspects of the tourism experience (Ritchie & Crouch 1993: 137-152). Dwyer, Forsyth and Rao have provided the most detailed study on tourism price competitiveness published to date (Dwyer, Forsyth & Rao, 2000: 328-333). Measures of price competitiveness plays an important part in any framework of overall tourism competitiveness.

As mentioned above, the concepts of comparative advantage and competitive advantage provide a theoretical underpinning for the development of a model of destination competitiveness. Comparative advantage concerns a destination's factor endowments, both naturally occurring and created. According to Crouch and Ritchie (1999: 137-152) and Hill (2002: 48-57), there are five broad categories of factor endowments: human resources, physical resources, knowledge resources, capital resources and infrastructure. In the tourism context, Crouch and Ritchie (1999: 137-152) have suggested adding historical and cultural resources, and expanding the infrastructure category to include tourism superstructures such as accommodation facilities, food services and transport facilities. The existence and development of these factors are considered motivating factors for tourists to visit a destination.

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) argued that a country's natural resources are important source of comparative advantage in tourism. Likewise, Grant (2002: 48-52) considered the tangible and intangible resources and capabilities as sources of comparative and competitive advantage. He emphasised that potential resources can be most usefully categorised as
financial, physical, legal, human, organisational and informational. Therefore, resources could translate into a position of competitive advantage in a market place. While comparative advantage is related to resources available to a destination, competitive advantage is related to a destination's ability to use these resources effectively over the long term (Hamel and Prahlad 1993: 75-85). According to Crouch and Ritchie (1999), a destination endowed with a wealth of resources may not be as competitive as one, although lacking in resources, utilises whatever little resources it has more effectively and efficiently.

5.2. DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS

Given the complexities associated with defining the concept of competitiveness, it seems only natural that views on destination competitiveness would widely differ. The following stances taken by some of the leading researchers in the field may be considered in this connection:

- Pearce (1979: 175-182), described destination competitiveness as destination evaluation techniques and methods that can systematically analyze and compare the diverse attributes of competing destinations within a planning context.

- Ritchie and Crouch (1999: 137-152) defined competitiveness as “the ability of a country to create added value and thus increases national wealth by managing assets and processes, attractiveness, and aggressiveness, and proximity, and by integrating these relationship into an economic and social model”.

- Hassan (2000: 234-245) defined destination competitiveness as “destinations ability to create and integrate added value products that
sustain its resources while maintaining market position relative to competitors”

- Mihalic (2000: 65-78), described destination competitiveness from environmental perspectives that can be related to natural and man-made tourism components, as well as social and cultural environments.

- d’Hartserre (2000: 300-307), defined destination competitiveness as “the ability of a destination to maintain its market position and share and/or to improve upon them through time”.

- Heath, (2003: 123-135) defined destination competitiveness “include objectively measured variables such as visitor numbers, market share, tourist expenditure, employment, value added by the tourism industry, as well as subjectively measured variables such as ‘richness of culture and heritage’, ‘quality of the tourism experience’ etc.”

- Bahar & Kozak, (2007: 61-71), defined destination competitiveness “the most competitive destination in the long term is that the one which creates well-being for its residents.”

In general, what makes a destination competitive is its ability to increase tourism expenditure, and to attract increasing numbers of visitors while providing them with quality services and satisfying experiences. However, such efforts should not jeopardise the welfare of local residents, and preservation of resources and the environment for future generations. In the tourism context, the concept of competitiveness has been examined and applied in different destination setting, generally related to growth sustainability of destinations and prosperity of their societies.
5.3 FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING DESTINATION COMPETITIVENESS

Since early 1990's, a good deal of research attempts have gone into exploring an acceptable analytical framework that can be used for assessing the competitiveness of a destination.

Poon (1997: 58-62) suggested four key principals which destinations must follow if they are to be competitive; namely, (1) put the environment, (2) make tourism a lead sector, (3) strengthen the distribution channels in the market place, and (4) build a dynamic private sector. However, Dwyer and Kim (2003: 369-414) and Ritchie and Crouch (1993) has countered the principals opining that they are too broad and general to be meaningful to tourism stakeholders and policyholders.

The most detailed work undertaken by tourism researchers on overall tourism competitiveness is that of Crouch and Ritchie (1994; and 2003: 24-48). They examined the applicability to tourism destinations of competitiveness research and models in other contexts spanning companies and products, national industries, and national economies as well as competitiveness related to service industries. Crouch and Ritchie claims that, in absolute terms, the most competitive destination is one which brings about greatest success; that is, the most wellbeing for its residents on a sustainable basis. Thus, the most competitive destination is that which most effectively creates sustainable well-being for its residents.

Ritchie and Crouch (1994) developed a conceptual model (i.e. Calgary Model) that is based on the theories of comparative advantage as laid down by Adam Smith, (1776); and David Ricardo (1817) and also the Competitive advantage of Michael Porter (1990). Their model recognises five key constructs of destination competitiveness, referring to the destination attractors and deterrents. Attractors include 11 elements, viz: natural
features, climate, cultural and social characteristics, general infrastructure, basic services infrastructure, tourism super structure, access and transportation facilities, attitude towards tourists, cost/price levels, economic and social ties and uniqueness. Among destination deterrents are safety and security (i.e. political instability, health and medical concern, poor quality of sanitation, law and regulation such as visa regulation). These factors can act as a barrier to visiting a particular destination. The Calgary model further emphasises on well-executed program of destination management, destination organisation, destination information and destination efficiency. Over the number of years, Ritchie and Crouch further refined the concepts and propositions underlying the Calgary model, to a point where it has developed to its current form (Ritchie and Crouch, 2004). This more complex model has 36 factors divided into 5 categories with relatively complex interrelationships.

Table E-1: The Calgary Model of Competitiveness in Tourism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination Management</th>
<th>DMO</th>
<th>MIS</th>
<th>IOE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attractions</td>
<td>Managerial Efforts</td>
<td>Management organisation</td>
<td>Internal management information system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
<td>MANAGER</td>
<td>DMO</td>
<td>MIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETER</td>
<td>MKGT</td>
<td>ALLIANCE</td>
<td>RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deterrents</td>
<td>Marketing efforts</td>
<td>Strategic alliances</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PROD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Productivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Ritchie and Crouch (1994) have discussed the dimensions of competitiveness that can be a framework for measuring overall competitiveness. According to the authors the factors should be identified and developed so that those that have influence on the competitiveness and the prosperity of tourism destinations can be determined. Further, they
emphasised that the most appropriate indicators of success regarding the performance of tourism destinations should be determined. Additionally, the relative strength and the positioning of a particular destination in relation to other competitors in the market place should be established.

Chon and Mayer (1995: 227-246) suggested enhancements to the 5 constructs on the Calgary model. They proposed the inclusion of 'technology' for the information dimension. Additional frameworks have also been developed, such as Faulkner (1997: 125-139) and Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000: 43-52), whose simplifies model highlights the intention of return visitation to a region.

Dwyer and Kim (2003: 369-414) also undertook to contribute to the development of a general model of destination competitiveness. Their model considers national and firm competitiveness theory as well as the main elements of destination competitiveness as proposed by tourism researchers and many of the variables and category headings identified by Crouch and Ritchie. The primary elements of the model include resources comprising endowed natural and heritage resources, created resources, and supporting resources (such as general infrastructure, accessibility, service quality, etc.). Destination management is the second core component of their model comprising government and industry. Their model then shows resources and destination management interacting with tourism demand and situational conditions to influence destination competitiveness and socio-economic prosperity.

A model of destination competitiveness has been developed by Ernie Heath (2000: 123-135) who claims that existing models do not appear to adequately provide an integrated treatment of the various issues surrounding the concept of 'competitiveness' and do not place sufficient
emphasis on the key success drivers (people) and the vital linkages (e.g. communication and information management) that need to be considered when developing a comprehensive framework of sustainable destination competitiveness. Heath’s model is presented in the form of a house with foundations, cement, building blocks and roof:

The Foundations provide an essential base for competitiveness. These include: providing and managing the key attractors (e.g. history, culture, climate, events, entertainment, etc.); addressing the fundamental non-negotiable (e.g. personal, safety and health issues); providing the enablers (e.g. infrastructure: airports, roads, signage, etc.); capitalising on the ‘value adders’ (e.g. location, value, and destination linkages); ensuring appropriate facilitators (e.g. appropriate airline capacity, accommodation, distribution channels, etc.); focusing on the experience enhancers (e.g. hospitality, service excellence, authentic experiences).

The Cement binds and links the respective facets of competitiveness. These include continuous and transparent communication channels; balancing direct and indirect stakeholder involvement; information management, research and forecasting; managing competitive indicators and benchmarks.

The Building Blocks are essential to make tourism ‘happen’ in a destination. These include a sustainable development policy and framework (policy and legislative framework, organisational and financing framework, resources and capabilities, investment climate, sustainable environmental principles) and a strategic and holistic destination marketing framework and strategy (destination image and branding, competitive positioning, target marketing/demand management, innovative marketing strategies, and visitor satisfaction management).
The Roof (the key success drivers) comprises the ‘people’ part of destination competitiveness. These include a shared tourism vision and leadership, guiding values and principles, placing strategic priority on the ‘people’ factor (political will, entrepreneurship, community focus and human resources development).

Tourism destination competitiveness is becoming an area of growing interest among tourism researchers (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Hassan 2000; d’Hauteserre, 2000). A number of studies have introduced and applied the concept of competitiveness in the area of tourism destinations (Buhalis 2000; Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; d’Hauteserre 2000; Dwyer & Kim 2003; Ritchie & Crouch 1993). The major interest of the prior studies has been to investigate how destination competitiveness can be sustained as well as enhanced while maintaining a market position among other destination competitors. This increased interest in understanding destination competitiveness has spurred a number of destination-specific studies addressing the competitive position of the Sun/lost City, South Africa (Botha, Crompton, and Kim 1999: 341-352), Australia (Dwyer, Livaic, and Mellor 2003: 60-79), Casino resort (d’Hauteserre 2000: 300-307). Other destination competitiveness research has addressed a variety of other issues including destination positioning (Chacko 1998), destination management systems (Baker, Hayzelden, and Sussmann 1996: 1-13), quality management (Go and Govers 2000: 79-88), destination marketing (Buhalis 2000: 97-116), and price competitiveness (Dwyer, Forsyth, and Rao, 2000: 328-333).

Song et al. (2000: 203-220) introduced a new tourism demand determinant named as the Destination Preference Index (DPI). It is written as: \[ \text{DPI} = \frac{V_i}{V_s} \], where \( V_i \) = total visits to destination \( i \) and \( V_s \) = total visits to all other competing destinations. If the index value is high and exceeded one, it suggests that tourists are more likely to prefer travelling to destination \( i \).
over the other competing destinations. According to the authors, the benefit of this index is that it takes account of non-economic factors (i.e. social, cultural and psychological influences) in tourists decision-making”.

Song et al. (2000) examined whether the index has a significant effect on United Kingdom’s demand for outbound tourism to twelve destinations. Based on the study the destination preference indices for European destinations are high, ranging from 0.79 to 1.1. In contrast, the DPI for USA is 0.12 which is much lower than the DPI for European destinations. This indicates that UK tourists strongly prefer travelling to Europe rather than to the USA. Since the year 2000, DPI has been introduced in the tourism literature and it is an alternative variable available to be incorporated into tourism demand studies.

Thus, in general, the destination competitiveness have been considered as tourism supply factors that represent the driving forces generating tourist demand (Uysal 1998: 79-98) and also primary sources or determinants of measuring destination attractiveness (Hu & Ritchie 1993: 25-34). A study by Buhalis (2000: 97-116) lists six major components of tourism attractions and resources that most of the tourism literature commonly includes in assessing and evaluating the elements of tourism destinations. These components are as follows:

i. Attractions: natural, man-made, artificial, purpose-built, heritage, special Events,

ii. Accessibility: entire transportation system comprised of routes, terminals and vehicles,

iii. Amenities: accommodations, catering facilities, retailing, other tourist Services,
iv. Available packages: prearranged packages by intermediaries and principals,

v. Activities: all activities available at the destination and what consumers will do during their visit,

vi. Ancillary services: services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunications, newsagents, hospitals.

Having discussed the key tourism destination framework as recognised by eminent tourism researchers, Dwyer and Kim (2003: 369-414); Enright and Newton (2005: 339-350) argue that the principal factors contributing to competitiveness will vary amongst destinations, and as such, destinations must take a more customised approach in enhancing and developing tourism competitiveness, rather than adopting a single, universal policy or strategy. Of particular interest is the relevance or importance of key competitiveness variables to destinations at different stages of development or evolution.

Two international tourism journals in the recent past have devoted entire issues to the theme of destination competitiveness. The journal "Tourism" in a special issue, Competitiveness in Tourism and Hospitality (Volume 47 (4), 1999), featured articles which addressed price competitiveness by journey purpose (Dwyer et al.), the international competitiveness of Croatia’s hotel sector (Cizmar & Seric; Osmagic-Bedenik); the role of public administration in the competitiveness of Spain’s tourism industry (Bueno); and the competitiveness of Alpine destinations (Pechlaner). The journal "Tourism Management", in its special issue The Competitive Destination (Volume 21 (1), February 2000), included articles that address destination price competitiveness (Dwyer et al.), competitiveness variables in the area of destination policy, planning and management (Crouch & Ritchie), overall
destination competitiveness (Buhalis; d'Hauteserre; Go & Govers), competitiveness and transport (Prideaux), and competitiveness and the environment (Mihalic).

5.4 ADOPTED INDICATORS FOR MEASURING COMPETITIVE STRENGTH OF DESTINATION-COUNTRY

Tourism and physical environments are inseparable companions, as most destinations are based on the natural resources. The natural resources of a destination define the environmental framework within which the visitor enjoys the destination. They include physiographic, climate, flora and fauna, scenery and other physical assets. While Porter and others have emphasised ‘factor creation’ as a source of competitive advantage Buckley (1994: 661-669); Dunn& Iso-Ahola, (1991: 226-237) stated that a destination’s endowment of natural resources is crucial for many forms of tourism and visitor satisfaction.

While in the context of manufacturing competitiveness emphasised by management theorists resource disadvantages can be overcome by adding value to the goods and services produced, in the tourism context natural resources have a substantial capacity to attract visitors, regardless of any ‘value added’ by human providers. According to Mihalic (2000: 65-78), who studied tourism competitiveness from the environmental perspective, is of the opinion that destination competitiveness can be enhanced by appropriate managerial efforts and environmental quality management. Additionally, certain environmental marketing activities can also enhance destination competitiveness. The concept of environment refers to the physical environment that includes natural and manmade components, as well as social and cultural components (Inskeep 1991, Mathieson & Wall 1982). Since environmental quality is an integral part of the quality of
natural attractions, maintaining a high level of overall environmental quality is critical for destination competitiveness.

Cohen (1988: 371-386); Murphy et al (2000: 43-52); are of the opinion that the heritage and culture of a destination, i.e. history, institutions, customs, architectural features, cuisine, traditions artwork, music, handicrafts, dance etc., provides a basic and powerful attracting force for the prospective visitor. Ritchie & Zins (1978: 252-267) in their research has examined the great number of dimensions of culture that enhance the attractiveness of a tourism destination. As Ritchie, Crouch and Hudson (2000) point out in an example, merely counting of museums and historic sites, while of some help in measuring a destination’s heritage endowment, may well mask the quality of these attractions.

Cavelek (2002: 478-496) observes that safety and security are primary requirements for growth, attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism destinations. Without safety, destinations cannot successfully compete on the generating markets as potential tourists do not want to visit a place that they perceive as unsafe. Chiang (2000: 45-52) observes that safety and security has been identified as one of the five global forces that would drive the tourism industry in the years to come and is an important consideration in tourist destination choice. Day and Wensely (1988: 1-20) posit safety concern causes a decline in tourist arrivals, reducing tourist expenditures and can cause a downturn in travel. The safety and security of a destination therefore plays a role in determining the level of attractiveness.

From the literature on comparative advantage and price competitiveness comes the recognition of the potential importance of destination price competitiveness in influencing visitor flows. Lee et al (1996: 527-542) in their study indicates that the tourists are sensitive to price. Dwyer, Forsyth
& Rao, (2000: 328-333) in their study highlights the importance of levels of technology, exchange rates, government policies, industry competition, and the influence of multinational enterprises as factors influencing the price competitiveness of tourism firms.

Price competitiveness is an essential component in the overall tourism competitiveness of a country or a destination. There is widely accepted evidence that prices are one of the most important factors in decision about whether, and where, to undertake trips. In destination choice decision, tourists consider the price at the destination relative to the cost of living at the origin and the substitute destinations. According to Buhalis (2000: 97-116), tourists incur costs within the destination that they visit that includes accommodation, food, tours and shopping. They compare prices at the destinations with those in their home country or region, deciding whether or not to visit that destination depending on the relative cost of living between the two areas.

Crouch (1991: 643-644) emphasised to pay particular attention to the price competitiveness of a country's tourism industry, as compared to that of its competitors, if the industry is to continue to grow. According to Edwards (1995: 3-10) study of price competitiveness of selected countries in Asia-Pacific region, in both medium and long term, an increase in relative cost can be shown to be linked to a fall in market share in travel from every origin country. A fall in relative cost is linked to a rise in market share. Various studies have been sought to explain the effect of prices on tourism demand, but little on the role of prices on the competitiveness of destinations. Dwyer et al (2000: 328-333) posits that competitiveness of destinations have been said to be determined by the exchange rates, thus attempting to determine costs by the exchange rate of the two countries. The price competitiveness of the touristic products purchased by tourists is
exchange rate determined (Dwyer et al 2003: 60-78), the weaker the destination country’s exchange rate against the source market the more competitive the destination becomes. Robert and Dowlings (2002: 94-100) are of the opinion that tourist taxes charged by the host government also influence the price paid by the tourists.

A destination’s general infrastructure includes road networks, airports, train system, bus system, water supply, telecommunications, sewerage, health-care facilities, sanitation, the electricity generation system, financial services, and computer services. Smith (1994) claims that service infrastructure is housed within the larger macro-environment or ‘physical plant’ of the destination, while Watson and Kopachevsky (1994: 643-660) have argued that tourist experiences cannot be properly understood unless we take into account the larger context and setting in which these encounters take place. Tourism infrastructure includes features such as accommodation facilities, food services, transportation facilities, themed attractions, fast food outlets, taverns/bars and receptive tourism plant, tour wholesalers, tour operators, travel agents, car rental firms, local convention and visitor bureaux.

Tourism also relies on the provision of numerous ancillary services. Related services infrastructure includes retail shopping facilities, food stores, garages (car maintenance, petrol stations), pharmacies, bookstores/newsagents/kiosks, laundries, hairdressers, administration offices (police, courts etc.). Mo et al. (1993: 319-335) have argued that destination tourism infrastructure is, after ‘destination environment’, the most important factor in an international tourist’s experience of the destination product. Murphy et al. (2000: 43-52) found that the level or lack of infrastructure affects tourist experiences and that ‘tourism infrastructure’ is an important predictor of both destination ‘quality’ and perceived trip ‘value’. This does not, of
course, deny the existence of those forms of tourism (nature-based, cultural/heritage, adventure tourism etc.), in which the tourism experience is enhanced by the lack of created tourism infrastructure. This reinforces the importance of the demand side as a determinant of destination competitiveness.

Branding of destinations and publicity enable tourists to identify a destination and differentiate it from competitive offerings. According to de Chernatony and Mc Donald (1998), destination branding also acts as a cue for the communication of benefit to the tourist. The brand acts as a shorthand device for communicating functional and emotional benefits. As such, it can quicken the destination choice decision process. Branding signals the levels and performance of tourism destination quality to the tourist. D’Hauteserre (2001: 327-333) observes that brand reputation has been scarcely applied to the tourism industry but has an important role to play in moderating the relationship between tourists and the travel destinations. To tourists visiting a reputed destination guarantees the quality of experience that they would enjoy from the past performance of the destination. Caruana and Chipcop (2000: 43-57) found that tourists value their associations with high reputed destination. To a destination, owning a positive reputation could mean increased visitation and longer length of stay for the visitors. Positive reputation is a source of competitive advantage, and help to fight competition.

Canestrelli & Costa (1991: 295-335); Machlis & Burch (1983: 666-689), posits that hospitality relates to the perceived friendliness of the local population and community attitudes towards tourists. It includes warmth of reception by local population; willingness of residents to provide information to tourists; attitudes towards tourists and the tourism industry. Tourist guidance and information, including good signage, is important to visitors
feeling ‘valued’ by residents of a destination. Resident support for tourism development fosters a competitive destination.

McKercher (1998: 39-47) demonstrates the link between market access and destination choice. The accessibility of the destination is governed by a variety of influences including the frequency, ease and quality of automobile, air, bus, train, sea access; aviation regulations, entry permits and visa requirements; route concessions; airport capacities; competition among carriers etc. Visas may be expensive in terms of monetary outlay and/or inconvenient to procure, thus deterring visitation. Countries may also impose restrictions on outbound travel by residents. Prideaux (2000: 53-64) notes that tourist choice between alternative destinations is influenced by inefficiencies in the transport system such as uncompetitive practices, safety concerns, comfort levels and journey time. Ease of access to a destination may be facilitated through upgraded distribution channels or through developing a more extensive network of sales contacts. Improving inter-modal linkages among transportation systems contributes to destination competitiveness. Following the Asian currency crisis in late 1997, Ansett Australia, Qantas and Air New Zealand suspended services to Korea, demonstrating the effect of external variables on destination accessibility.

Hoyle and Knowles (1998); Page (1994: 46-66), explored the tourist-transport interface in detail. They are of the opinion that transport provides a major boost in the tourist’s ability to travel because without transport, most forms of travel and tourism could not occur. Transport is the dynamic element which links tourist’s from the origin areas with destination areas. Yet within the literature on Southeast Asian tourism most recent syntheses (Hitchcock et al, 1993: 56-76); Go and Jenkins 1997: 35-45) have failed to discuss the vital role of transport and infrastructural developments as
facilitating and potentially constraining factors in the development of tourism in the region. Islam and Chowdhuy (1997: 21-33) posits that transport has been one of the hidden factors that has assisted the dynamic economies in Southeast Asia to develop export markets. This has been inextricably linked to the development of international trade, regional integration and expansion of extended metropolitan regions and related growth triangles.

Chew (1987); studied the relationship between transport and tourism has been built on a continual introduction of new transport technologies that have enabled travellers to move between origin and destination either faster, safer or for a lower cost. The likely impact of new transport technologies on the operation of the tourism industry is measured against a set of criteria's that includes safety, speed, range, price, comfort and carrying capacity. Of these, range, speed, safety, comfort and capacity relate to the incorporation of new technologies into the design of transport vehicle. Price, or more precisely the cost of individual travel, is an outcome of both technological innovations and the level of economic development.

As the tourism industry becomes increasingly global, it has become necessary for individual firms, as well as destinations, to establish strategic alliances with other organisations and destinations (Heath 2000: 123-135). Thus, for example, many national and international airlines seek to enhance their ability to compete by forming a broad range of working relationships with airlines that complement their route structures as well as their marketing and technical capabilities.

The indicators of destination competitiveness, under the various elements comprising the competitiveness framework, can be categorized according as to whether they are objective or subjective. Thus, we can, for example, classify these key indicators according to whether they are hard or soft.
measures. Hard measures are those that are objectively or quantitatively measurable. Examples of hard measures of a destination's competitiveness, in respect of, say, natural resources, would be indicators such as the size of areas devoted to National Parks and Nature Reserves, topography, average mean temperatures, sunshine levels, number of coral reefs, etc. In contrast, soft measures are those that relate to visitor perceptions and thus tend to be more subjective or qualitative in form. Soft measures of a destination's competitiveness in natural resources would be those relating to aesthetics, grandeur, beauty, etc. An initial attempt to distinguish hard and soft measures for tourism competitiveness has been undertaken by Crouch, Ritchie, and Hudson (2000).

Thus, the review of literature reveals that various authors in the recent past tried to identify the destination competitiveness variable, but so far the most comprehensive framework has been given by the World Economic Forum in the form of the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). The first issue of Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report was published in 2007 and thereafter the report is being published by WEF annually.

Although the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Reports provide a ready competitiveness index encompassing a variety of "pillars" related to travel and tourism, but there are a number of limitations. For instance, Crouch (2007) argued that national goals of economic and social development differ between countries, and these differences will lead to a diverse focus on important industries. Furthermore, Crouch (2007) stated that destinations vary enormously and countries compete for different market segments in tourism, and so it is more meaningful to compare countries by market segment. Indeed, the attributes that matter more in one segment may be less important in a different segment.
Nevertheless, the reports render valuable help by way of pointing to
destination-countries the specific areas that deserve attention for better
tourism destination development.

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index of World Economic Forum
are divided into following three sub-indices:

i) Travel and Tourism Regulatory Framework.

ii) Travel and Tourism Business environment and infrastructure, and

iii) Travel and Tourism human, cultural and natural resources.

The sub-indices are then divided into 14 pillars and 73 sub-pillars or
variables.

In view of the fact that the above framework adopted for compilation of the
Travel and Tourism Competitiveness reports has been the most
comprehensive one so far, a detailed examination of all the 73 sub-pillars
was undertaken by this researcher. It was observed that the Global
Competitiveness Index of WEF focuses on the whole set of macro variables
that promote or hinder the growth of the tourism industry in a country. In
fact, a large number of the variables (out of the 73 WEF variables) were
relevant only if one were to measure the overall regulatory and investment
climate in the countries' tourism sector. These variables hardly had any
direct implication when a country's prime concern was to attract visitors
from a particular travel market like that of the East Asian region.

In fact, it was found that of the 73 variables listed by World Economic
Forum; only 33 were directly linked to the five visitors' considerations (or
pillars) that were identified earlier. These 33 variables were therefore
separated and grouped into five sets, each set being linked to one of the five considerations or destination-strength pillars.

The adopted framework for measuring the competitive strength of India as a destination-country is shown below in Table E-2:

Table E-2: Adopted framework for measuring competitive strength of destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar</th>
<th>Indicators/Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillar 1: Tourism Attractions</td>
<td>1. No of world heritage natural sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Protected areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Quality of the natural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Total known species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. No world heritage cultural sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. No of International fairs and exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar 2: Tourism openness and publicity</td>
<td>7. Visa requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Openness of bi-lateral air service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Effectiveness of marketing and branding to attract tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. T&amp;T fair attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Tourism openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12. Attitude of population towards foreign tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Reliability of police services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15. Business cost of crime and violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16. Road traffic accidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17. Physician density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. Access to improved sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19. Access to improved drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar 4: Connectivity</td>
<td>20. Quality of air transport infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. Departure per 1,000 populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22. Airport density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. No of operating airlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. Quality of roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26. Quality of rail road infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. Quality of domestic transport network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar 5: Tourism infrastructure and price</td>
<td>28. Hotel rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competitiveness</td>
<td>29. Presence of major car rental companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30. ATM's accepting visa cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31. Ticket taxes and airport charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32. Purchasing power parity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33. Hotel price index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 SUMMING UP THE CHAPTER

The position taken by us in this chapter was that, from the destination-marketers' perspective, the following five major identified choice-considerations of East Asian visitors are to be taken as the five major pillars around which India's competitive strength should have been built:

(i) tourism attractions;
(ii) tourism openness;
(iii) tourists' safety;
(iv) location-connectivity within the destination country;
(v) tourism infrastructure & price competitiveness.

To substantiate the linkages between the visitors' destination-selection process and the competitiveness of destinations in terms of their capability to offer what the visitors consider important, the concept of competitiveness was examined in detail and then the implications of the adopted conceptual framework was delineated for identification of the variables which served as indicators of destination-competitiveness or strength.

The survey of literature undertaken in the chapter enabled us to break-up the five competitiveness pillars (as mentioned above) into a total of 33 parameters/variables. The status of these 33 variables in a destination-country (i.e. the country supplying destinations to tourists), as was evident from the survey of literature, would indicate strength of the pull that the country is able to place before outbound visitors in a particular travel market.

* * * * *