SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism industry is based on people having to leave their hometowns to become a customer. In order to be successful, the destinations have to attract customers from other places, regions, countries, and even from other continents, to visit their community (Prebensen, 2007). Recently, tourism has been appreciated as the driving giant for economic development for especially developing nations like India. Tourism in India was seen as a mere service sector for a long time. It has now been recognized as an export industry due to its multiple advantages. Though Tourism gained importance belatedly, it has grown at a rapid pace and enhanced its share in international tourist arrivals as well as in foreign exchange earnings. Now, it is one of the largest service industries in India, with a contribution of 6.23 percent to the national GDP and 8.78 per cent of the total employment in India. According to World Travel and Tourism Council, India will be a tourism hot spot from 2009 to 2018 having the highest ten year growth potential.

International tourism has become a driving force for many world economies, especially developing nations. In fact, it is not only recognised as an economic instrument but also appreciated as an engine for international peace and understanding. Recognising these vary facts many nations have inclined to promote and develop tourism and hospitality industry.

Tourism has been appreciated as a pivotal in social progress, as well as an important vehicle for widening the socio-economic and cultural contacts throughout human history. This industry is the largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue, foreign exchange earnings and generation of huge employment opportunities. It has been a major social phenomenon and is driven by social, religious, recreational, knowledge seeking and business interests and motivated by the human urge for new experience, adventure, education, and entertainment. A wide array of interests-entertainment, sports, religion, culture, adventure, health and business drives tourism. Tourism industry is one of the biggest industries in the world in terms of gross output and value added, capital investment, employment generation
and tax contributions (Berno & Bricker, 2001). The tourism industry includes establishments whose products are mainly sold to visitors, though they do not form a major share of tourist consumption (Goeldner & Ritchie 2007). Several infrastructure sectors like power, telecommunication, water supply, roads and some production sectors like travel items, sports equipment; photographic materials, medicines and cosmetics are included in this category. The infrastructure for tourism thus includes basic infrastructure components like airports, railways, roads, waterways, amenities like electricity, water supply, drainage, sewerage, solid waste disposal systems and services and facilities like accommodation, restaurants, recreational facilities and shopping facilities. Thus, Planning for sustainable development of tourism, therefore, involves the integrated development of basic infrastructure and amenities along with all the tourism facilities in a balanced manner.

In 2015, more than one billion tourists travelled internationally and tourism has become a leading economic sector, contributing 10% of global GDP and 6% of the world’s total exports. Representing more than just economic strength, these numbers reflect tourism’s vast potential and increasing capacity to address some of the world’s most pressing challenges, including socioeconomic growth, inclusive development and environmental preservation (UNWTO annual report 2015). The Year 2015 was International tourism’s sixth straight year of growth with a record of 1.2 billion tourists. International tourist arrivals grew by 4.4% in 2015 to reach a total of 1,184 million in 2015, marking the sixth consecutive year of above-average growth with international arrivals increasing by 4% or more every year since the post-crisis year of 2010. Moreover, 50 million more tourists (overnight visitors) travelled to international destinations around the world in 2015 than in 2014. Interestingly, during 2015 demand remained strong overall, though with mixed results across individual destinations due to strong exchange rate fluctuations, increased safety and security concerns, and the drop in oil prices and other commodities, which increased disposable income in importing countries but weakened demand in exporters.

Asia and the’ Pacific has recorded the highest growth (+9%) in International arrivals from January - April 2016 across world’s regions, with robust results in all four sub regions. Year 2015 also recorded growth of (+5%); 13 million more international tourist arrivals to reach 278 million, consolidating the growth of
previous years. Yet, results were uneven across destinations. Oceania (+7%) and South-East Asia (+6%) led growth, while South Asia and North-East Asia recorded an increase of 4%. In the long-term, the region will continue to be one of the fastest growing tourism regions in the world, forecast to grow at an average of 4.9% a year to reach 535 million international tourist arrivals by 2030.

UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2015 Report says that China has been by far the fastest growing source market and has been the world’s top spender in international tourism since year 2012. Chinese outbound travel has been growing exponentially over the last two decades. Moreover, Chinese travellers spent a record US$ 165 billion abroad in year 2014 with an exceptional 27% growth over last year 2013 and US$ 36 billion more in absolute terms. This all is due to rising disposable incomes, an appreciating currency, improved travel facilitation and an easing of restrictions on foreign travel.

Recent decade has witnessed that travel & Tourism industry achieved rapid growth levels by most macro-economic measures from year 2000 to till date. It has played significant economic role in facilitating international opportunities for work not only for highly skilled professional but also for manual workers. A recent report of WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council) showed that travel & tourism is constantly responsible for the growth in global trade over year by year. The huge scale of the global Travel & Tourism industry is clearly illustrated by estimates of its economic contribution. In 2015, Travel & Tourism in total contributed US$7.2 trillion to world GDP, representing 9.8% of global GDP. The sector supported 284 million jobs, or 1 in 11 jobs in the world. Travel & Tourism grew by 3.1% in year 2015 - the 6th consecutive year of positive growth for the sector. The sector’s contribution to GDP is forecast to grow by 3.3% in year 2016. Travel & Tourism will outperform the global economy throughout the next decade, growing by an expected 4% on average annually over the next ten years. Travel & Tourism’s direct contribution to world gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in year 2015 was US$2.2 trillion (2015 prices) and 108 million jobs respectively.

The tourism industry is the largest and rapidly growing industry in India, employing over 25 million people, accounting for 8.9% of total workforce, and
generating over 4.5 of GNP. There is a visible evidence of growing competitiveness of tourist destinations at the global level and India is no exception in this context. However, the Indian tourism industry is confronted with considerable challenges imposed by the turbulent and rapidly changing external environment that it operates in. Moreover, many nations (Singapore, Thailand, China and others) are receiving more tourists than India despite her long and influential history and culture i.e. tourism resources. In other words, for the successes to continue, we need to develop tourist – centric products to increase tourism share. It is believed that the success of tourist destination is dependent upon the quality of visitors’ experience, it is crucial for destination service providers to understand how the elements of their product/service delivery are evaluated by visitors. Thus, there is need of professional approach to develop product/service, particularly in the area of inbound tourism. Such an approach is crucial, considering the marketing problems the industry is currently experiencing (WTTC: Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2016 Annual Update Summary).

Interestingly, India’s strong forecast growth will propel it into the top ten Travel & Tourism economies by year 2026, moving from 12th place in year 2015 up to 7th place by year 2026 in terms of total Travel & Tourism GDP (WTTC: Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2016 Annual Update Summary). Over the years tourism industry has become economic development instrument in India. The government has also recognised tourist as an industry and extended various financial and non-financial incentives to streamline the growth and development of this young industry. After adoption of economic reforms in 1990, the pace of tourism & hospitality industry diversified manifolds. Its performance was also questioned in the parliament to further streamline the industry with the view to redicate poverty and social upliftment of the society. Today, this industry is recognised a core component of Indian economy to help government to solve the problem of un-employment, protection & preservation of cultural & historical heritage.

Recently, China has emerged as the top inbound tourist country for many countries. According to WTTC’s (World Travel & Tourism Council) Economic Impact Report 2016 report illustrates that Chinese tourist(s) expenditure on outbound travel has increased by 53% reaching to US$ 215 billion in during year 2015,
favourably impacting longer haul destinations such as Europe and Oceania. Whereas stern declines were noticed in its (China) neighbouring regions such as Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan, due to local factors.

On the basis of various reports from tourism ministry, we can conclude that share of East Asian countries FTAs (China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) has significant place among other region of world. So, we may conclude that East Asian tourist arrivals to India in increasing significantly year by year and bringing foreign exchange to country.

During last three decades, tourist destination image has become more popular area for research among the tourism scholar. In fact, recent researches highlighted the fundamental role of destination image to understand travel behaviour and developing effective tourism marketing strategies and the need to develop methodologies to comprehensively and accurately measure the destination image concept.

Today, many people travel to long-haul destinations/tourist places for vacations, pleasure and recreation purposes. Some destinations become fashionable and after sometimes fall out of favour with the tourists for a variety of reasons. In today’s volatile tourism business environment the competition among tourists’ destinations has increased tremendously. Thus, why do people choose one destination over the other, where as these destinations have comparable characteristic. This is the point where a concept of destination image emerges.

The crucial role of destination image, in terms of understanding travel behaviour and in designing effective tourism marketing strategies, highlights the need to develop methodologies to comprehensively and accurately measure this concept. To accomplish this task, tourism researchers have the benefit of accessing the methodologies which have been developed to measure product image in general. However, because of the more complicated and diverse nature of the tourism product, it is necessary to develop more specific and more complex conceptual frameworks and methodologies in order to reliably and validly measure destination image.

Buddhism religion is the foundation stone for the adoption of culture, thoughts, idioms and common spiritual beliefs and practices among people in India, China, Japan, Korea and in other parts of Asia.
The constructive analyses of previous literature have made a significant contribution to the scale development in destination image attributes and provide preliminary information for tourist destination image attributes. Understanding why people travel and which factors influence their behavioural intention while choosing a holiday destination are fundamental for tourism planners and marketers. Interestingly, the literature revealed that the term of destination image is linked to a variety of issues in the tourism research literature, but is most commonly mentioned in relation to tourism destination and discussions provide evidence of how tourism destinations influence the provision of various types of services, safety, and security in the country. Although previous studies have developed critical attributes tied to tourists’ destination images, leading attributes that would help tourism scholars and practitioners measure the total attractiveness of a destination are still unknown. In addition, no such study was found that would help to enhance the image of India as a preferred destination among East Asian countries. These vital issues and considerations have motivated researchers to explore significant destination image attributes as perceived by the East Asian tourists especially in Indian context. Moreover, to explore untapped academic area which has huge tourist generating markets for India?

Thus, considering the above, it seems unlikely that one set of tourism destination image research will work equally well no matter what the context is. However, more research is needed in the tourism sector and in different contexts such as tourist perceptions towards the image of India as a tourist destination. To fill this gap present research has been conducted on an applied area entitled “INDIA’S IMAGE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION: THE PERCEPTION OF EAST ASIAN TOURISTS”.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are -

- To identify the perceived image attributes being considered as vital by the tourists when it comes to choose India as a tourist destination.
- To study how the current image attributes differ among different cultures/nationality.
To study the relationship of image perceived attributes whether these depend upon demographic characteristic of tourists.

To examine the overall perceived importance attached to destination Attributes of Tourists’ Visiting in India,

To suggest measures to tour operators, tourism planners and destination vendors to examine their product(s)\ service(s) offerings in cross-cultural perspective.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

On the bases of objectives, the following hypotheses are tested:

H1: There is a set of destination image attribute that is of most importance among the East Asian tourists to visit Indian destinations.

H2: The image attributes used to choose Indian tourist destination are not statistically significant with tourist culture\ nationality.

H3: There is a positive relationship between destination image attributes and specific demographic characteristic of tourists visiting in India.

H4: There is no significant relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables for overall perceived importance attached to destination Attributes of Tourists’ Visiting in India.

Research Instruments

The present study is based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire developed from the exiting literature available in the area.

Destination image attributes

The main aim of the research is to investigate perceived attributes among East Asian tourists visiting in the Indian destinations. A convenient sampling method was applied to collect the data from foreign tourists (China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan).

The questionnaire consists two parts, part 1 containing demographic profile (gender, age group, nationality, occupation, education, type, type of accommodation used, travel planning, purpose of visit, inducement of visit, duration of tour, past
experience and average annual income) of the respondents and second part includes
tourist destination image variables derived from existing review of literature (Chaudhary, 2000; Kelly and Daniel, 2000; Chen, 2001; Crotts and Pizam, 2003;
Kozak et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2005; Chand, 2010a; Lim, 2012).

The research used 81 image variables measured on a Likert-type 5-point scale
ranging from 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=neutral, 2= disagree and 1=strongly
disagree in case of destination image.

Method of analysis:

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences
(SPSS Version 20.0). The factor analysis, One way ANOVA and Multiple regression
method were used to test the working hypothesis.

FACTORs DERIVED

The exploratory principal factor analyses with Varimax rotation was applied
on the 81 tourists’ perception variables categorized into nine factors. These factors are
as follow:

(a) Cultural Dimensions (CD)
(b) Religious Dimensions (RD)
(c) Family Dimensions (FD)
(d) Knowledge-Seeking Dimensions (KD)
(e) Destination /Sightseeing Dimensions (DD)
(f) Accommodation/Restaurants Service Dimensions (ARD)
(g) Basic Amenities Dimensions (BD)
(h) Safety & Security Dimensions (SD)
(i) Satisfaction /Prices Dimensions (PD)

ORGANISATION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

This research has been divided into 4 chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This gives a brief insight into the Indian tourism industry encompassing all its
sub sectors with adequate emphasis on the East Asian market for Indian tourism. Further, this chapter gives a brief background of the study followed by the main objectives that the research aims to achieve.

Chapter 2: Literature review & Research Methodology

Literature review sets the academic tone for the research. It provides a comprehensive discussion on the existing literature on destination image, providing a framework for exploring into India’s image as a destination for the East Asian market.

Research methodology describes the objectives and procedure for carrying out the research. A detailed description is provided exploring the rationale for choosing the specific techniques for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3: Research Analysis and Findings

In the research analysis, the data collected from the various research methods will be depicted, analyzed and interpreted to obtain the result of the study. The research findings have also been dealt with duly.

Chapter 4: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will cover important findings, conclusion drawn by testing hypothesis and recommendations for tourism industry. This will also include suggestions for further study.

Bibliography

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of image dimensions and tourists’ perceived image attributes data in previous chapter, the findings of the results are given below:

The demographic profile of the tourists shows that gender distribution of the respondents was quite even, sample of foreign tourists assessing the services quality of Indian tourist destinations included 44.07% males and 55.93% females. The majority of them were between age group of 46 – 55 years (25.07%) followed by 36 – 45 years (23.29%), 56 – 65 years (19.5%), 26 – 35 years (12.93%), 66 years & above (11.04%) and 15 – 25 years (8.18%) respectively. The main occupation of the tourists was business (38.04%) followed by student (19.18%), service/job (17.96%),

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housework (13.04%), others work (7.71%) and agriculture (4.07%) respectively. The highest qualified tourists were graduate (45.43%) followed by post-graduate (25.00%), secondary (16.93%) and others (12.64%) respectively. The majority of tourists was from group tour (79.21%) followed by family (17.79%) and single traveller (3.00%) respectively. The accommodation used by tourists was with highest share of 5 star hotels (52.93%) followed by 4 star hotels (26.86%), 5 star deluxe hotels (18.79%), 3 star hotels (0.82%), budget hotels (0.43%) and other type of accommodation (0.18%) respectively. Most of the tourists rely on conductive tour/travel agency/tour operators (79.54%) followed by self tour planning (12.89%), online tour planning (6.71%) and other sources of tour planning (0.86%) respectively.

Holiday/sightseeing (57.21%) was the major purpose of visit to India followed by religious purpose (15.86%), business (15.11%), education (4.50%), history (4.21%), to attend conference/seminar/exhibition (1.61%), adventure (1.04%) and others purpose (0.46%).

With regard to respondents’ inducement of visit, tour operators/travel agents (46.75%) was the highest followed by word of mouth/friends & relatives (13.61%), business (11.64%), media: newspapers/magazines (8.39%), internet (6.64%), other sources (4.29%), TV advertisements (3.96%), tourism fairs/exhibitions (2.43%), directly from tourism India website (1.93%) and previous experience (0.36%) respectively.

In the category of duration of tour (stay) at the destination(s), 46.96% tourists stayed for 06-09 days, followed by 10 – 14 days (21.29%), 03 – 05 days (16.64%). Only 15.11 % of the tourists stayed for 15 – 19 days. 84.18 % tourists were first time traveller to India, followed by 15.82% repeated travellers. With reference to respondent’s household income, the largest group included those with an annual household income of US $60001- US $80000 (27.89%), followed by US $80001 – US $100000 (25.79%), US $40001 – US $60000 (20.18%), US $20001 – US $40000 (18.18%), US $100000 & above (7.11%). Only 0.86% respondent has annual household income below US $20000.

To test the hypothesis H1, factor analysis was performed. The results from exploratory principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation on the 81
individual’s perceived destination image attributes items. The perceived destination image attributes items were factored into nine factors.

The first factor ‘Cultural Dimension (CD)’, comprises ten variables such as Physically and emotionally immerse in the local culture; Seeking or experiencing authenticity of site/destination; Rich culture heritage; Distinctive local culture; Enjoying ritual customs and traditions; Opportunities to enjoy arts and crafts; Fairs/Exhibitions/Festivals are very nice; Appealing different local cuisine/food/drink, Interesting local crafts and jewellery and Interesting rural life. The analysis proved that highest loading factor (0.90) is ‘Seeking or experiencing authenticity of site/destination’, which suggests that respondents gave more importance to Seeking or experiencing authenticity of site/destination followed by Rich culture heritage and Distinctive local culture.

The second factor ‘Religious Dimensions (RD)’ comprises ten variables such as Feel emotionally involved at religious place; Famous tourist attraction; Enjoy unique atmosphere; Learn of its historic background; See new and different things; Feel a sense of belonging to the site; Site has symbolic meaning; Site has religious characteristics; Wanted to pray there; and Enjoy seeing places of worship & rituals performed. The analysis proved that highest loading factor ‘Feel a sense of belonging to the site’ indicates highest loading vale (0.82), which suggests that respondents found themselves emotionally involved with the religious destinations visited.

The third factor ‘Family Dimensions (FD)’ comprises nine variables such as Increase family kinship and ties; Warm receptiveness of local people; Interesting traditional hospitality; Help my family learn more about religious culture; Spend more time with family; Behaviour of local people is quite good; Friendliness of local people; I feel home at India during my tour; and The visit to the site made you feel proud. The variable ‘Behaviour of local people is quite good’ was considered highest loading vale (0.82) by the respondents, which means local people at the destination are friendly and respect the culture of other nationals. Moreover, respondents also considered other variables such as Interesting traditional hospitality (0.81) and Warm receptiveness of local people (0.81) significant.
The fourth factor ‘Knowledge-Seeking Dimensions (KD)’ comprises eleven variables such as Opportunity to increase knowledge; Tourist information is easily available; Adventurous atmosphere; Offer excitement; Seek novelty; Offer benefits that will satisfy my personal needs; Wanted to have some entertainment; Seek adventure; Varied gastronomy; Exotic destination; and Tour escort have enough knowledge about monuments/history and explain very well. The variable Tour escort have enough knowledge about monuments/history and explain very well was found with highest loading vale (0.79). It means that language speaking tourist guides/escorts have ample knowledge about Indian culture, traditions, history and are capable to interpret the associated history with the monuments at the destinations. Another important variable recognised by the respondents was Offer benefits that will satisfy my personal needs (0.78).

The fifth factor ‘Destination/Sightseeing Dimensions (DD)’ includes ten variable such as Many interesting places to visit; Abundance of sites; Architecture of monuments; Outdoor activities available; Scenery/Natural beauty accounting; Degree of urbanization; Nightlife/entertainment; I think tourist destinations are friendly towards tourists; Availability of sports facilities and recreational activities; and Casino and gambling offer. The variable Degree of urbanization was considered highest loading vale (0.79) by the respondents, which means Indian tourist destinations may is capable to provide all modern facilities to a modern tourist.

The sixth factor ‘Accommodation/Restaurants Service Dimensions (ARD)’ consists six variables such as High quality of accommodation facilities; Cleanliness; Good quality of food; Plenty of good quality restaurants; Overall cleanliness; and Staff showed courtesy to solve the problems. Two variables Good quality of food and Overall cleanliness has highest loading vale (0.80) which in turn shows that respondents found varied nature of local food and have better quality restaurants which can offer local/international cuisine to travellers and the accommodations facilities and restaurants were neat and clean. Other important variables got same importance (0.79) i.e. Plenty of good quality restaurants and Staff showed courtesy to solve the problems.
The seventh factor ‘Basic Amenities Dimensions (BD)’ comprises thirteen variables such as VISA formalities laid by embassy ease you; General infrastructure at tourists destinations; Good shopping facilities; Efficient road transport; Efficient railways/ safe to travel/ provide efficient services; Efficient air transport; Appropriate medical facilities; Effective communication facilities; Standard of hygiene is valuable; Overall cleanliness of the destinations; Reliable climate conditions; Prices of food & beverages; and Nuisance caused by beggars. The variables Good shopping facilities and Nuisance caused by beggars got highest loading value (0.80) by the respondents. It means we may say that Indian tourist destinations have plenty of shopping facilities at each places visited. Moreover, you may buy a similar product from a local bazaar shop (road side) and from a big shop specially designed for tourists which offers the replica of Indian tourism; culture and souvenirs. Unfortunately, other variable Nuisance caused by beggars got same significance by the respondents which in turn shows the negative image of India as a poor nation.

The eighth factor Safety & Security Dimensions (SD) contains five variables such as safety & personal security; Racial prejudice; Language spoken; Crowdedness and Touts/dishonest people/pickpockets. The analysis suggested that highest loading factor (0.79) is Crowdedness, which describes that Indian destinations are more crowded in international arena. Interestingly, the respondents found Indian tourists destinations with less Touts / dishonest people/ pickpockets.

The ninth factor Satisfaction /Prices Dimensions (PD) contains seven variables such as Reasonable cost of travel; Travel agent provide all services as per itinerary; I gained a lot of knowledge and experiences from visit to India; The visit to India as a destination exceeded my expectations; Overall, staying in India has been very valuable to me; I will speak highly about India to my friends and colleagues; and I am satisfied with my visit to India. The analysis advised that respondents gave highest loading factor to I am satisfied with my visit to India’ indicates highest loading value (0.85) followed by staying in India has been very valuable to me (0.81); I gained a lot of knowledge and experiences from visit to India (0.80); Travel agent provide all services as per itinerary (0.79); Reasonable cost of travel and I will speak highly about India to my friends and colleagues which means that respondents were satisfied with the quality services, stay during travel, knowledge gained during visit to India.
Moreover, we may conclude that India is a country which can offer value for money in terms of travel and tourism.

In order to test \( H_2 \), One way ANOVA test was performed. The result revealed that Cultural Dimensions, Religious Dimensions, Family Dimensions, Accommodation/Restaurants Service Dimensions, Satisfaction/prices Dimensions and Basic Amenities Dimensions are more significant image attributes for South Korean tourists to choose India as a tourist destination.

Taiwanese tourists gave more significance such image attributes as Knowledge - Seeking Dimensions and Safety & Security Dimensions.

Whereas the image attribute Destination/Sightseeing Dimensions has higher importance among Chinese travellers.

Further, the analysis revealed that Family dimensions (FD) is significant for Chinese nationals' tourists with 10% significant level whereas for other nationals’ tourists it is not significant. In case of Taiwanese tourists, Knowledge – Seeking Dimensions (KD) is significant with 10% significant level whereas for other nationals’ tourists this dimension is not significant. South Korean tourists have Destination/Sightseeing Dimensions (DD) and Satisfaction/Prices Dimensions (PD) significant at 10% significant level whereas for other nationals’ tourists this dimension is not significant.

To test hypotheses \( H_3 \), One way ANOVA was used. While looking at the table no.3.4, it is clear that the factor Cultural Dimensions has the highest mean score and it is significant with gender, occupation, education, average annual income and nationality at 10% level while age at 1% level. Destination/Sightseeing Dimension has the second highest value in terms of mean score which is significant with gender and average annual income at 10% level and with nationality at 1% level while there is no significance with age, occupation and education. Religious Dimensions has third highest mean score value and it is significant with gender and nationality at 10% level and with annual income at 1% where as there is no significance with age, occupation and education. Knowledge - Seeking Dimensions has fourth highest mean score having significance with gender, average annual income and nationality at 10% and with education at 1% level on the other hand there is no significance with age and
occupation. Satisfaction /Prices Dimensions has fifth mean score value and it is significant with age and nationality at 10% level and with education and average annual income at 1% level whereas with gender and occupation there is no significance. Family Dimensions come at sixth position in terms of mean score and it is significant with gender, occupation, education and nationality at 10% level while with age and average annual income there is no significance. Safety and security dimensions holds seventh position in terms of mean score value having significance with occupation and nationality at 10% level and with gender at 1% level and there is no significance with age, education and average annual income. Basic Amenities Dimension has eighth place in terms of mean score value, it is significant with occupation and nationality at 10% level and with gender at 1% level where as there is no significance with age, education and average annual income. The last factor in terms of mean score is Accommodation/Restaurants Service Dimension, which is significant with gender, average annual income and nationality at 10% level whereas there is no significance with age, occupation and education.

Further to test H4, Multiple regression method was employed. The result revealed that only two out of the ten socio-demographic variables entered the regression equation. Other socio-demographic variables such as age, marital status, level of education, types, purpose of visit, tour duration, and others did not have a shared effect on the tourist’s perceptions for importance attached to destination Attributes of Tourists’ Visiting in India. Interestingly, the other variables that did not have a combined effect on the levels of tourists perceptions of destination services. Thus, the findings are also consistent with the previous studies in the study area, which signify that quality of services is at most important for all types of tourists which has a pivotal significant to attract and retain tourists at particulars destinations. Thus, the findings denote that the theoretical perspective of this research, the social exchange theory, was helpful in explaining tourist’s perceptions towards services. Moreover, this study suggested that the tourists’ satisfaction within a tourism context, specifically with reference to the destination-based attributes is pivotal significance for attracting and repeating tourists to the destination in one hand and on the other hand it helps the destination operators to improve in their product/ service quality. The results indicate that H4 accepted.
POSITIONS OF HYPOTHESES

**Hypothesis 1:** There is a set of destination image attribute that is of most importance among the East Asian tourists to visit Indian destinations. The analysis of data indicates that statistically there is a set of destination image attribute that is of most importance among the East Asian tourists to visit Indian destinations, hence **H1 is accepted.**

**Hypothesis 2:** The image attributes used to choose Indian tourist destination are not statistically significant with tourist culture\ nationality. The analysis of data revealed that the image attributes used to choose Indian tourist destinations are not statistically significant with tourist culture/Nationality, hence **H2 is accepted.**

**Hypothesis 3:** There is a positive relationship between destination image attributes and specific demographic characteristic of tourists visiting in India. The analysis of data indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between destination image attributes and specific demographic characteristic of tourists visiting in India, hence **H3 is partially accepted.**

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables for overall perceived importance attached to destination Attributes of Tourists’ Visiting in India. This study suggested that the tourists’ satisfaction within a tourism context, specifically with reference to the destination-based attributes is pivotal significance for attracting and repeating tourists to the destination in one hand and on the other hand it helps the destination operators to improve in their product/ service quality. The results indicate that **H4 is accepted.**

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. The sustainability of a tourism destination plays a pivotal role in making the tourists’ experiences memorable and enhances tourist satisfaction along with improving the image of tourist destination.

2. The study suggests that the development of amenities and touristic attractions at the tourist destinations may creates a memorable tourist experience and a favorable image which in turn will result in positive word of mouth and repeat business for a particular tourist destination.
3. The results indicate that the findings of studies enables local authorities, planners, and developers to identify attributes that are crucial for the development of a tourist

4. The development of tourist destination has a profound impact to enhance residents’ quality of life

5. The study also suggests that every destination in India especially study area may extend its efforts to discover the needs & demand of tourist and deploy necessary promotional strategies to raise interest among the potential tourists.

6. The present study explored that it is very important for the decision makers to understand how tourists of different countries acquire information especially for tourism related services and products in India.

7. Theoretical perspective based on arguments concerning the relationship between destination image attributes and nationality.

8. The findings may strengthen knowledge about the relationship between the factors that are most significant for choosing India as destination.

9. The difference between the destination image that is aimed to create in tourists’ minds and the destination image that tourists have in their minds for real has to be determined and these negative image perceptions has to be reduced or demolished with proper studies.

10. Destination image studies have to be done by destination management organizations which are formed locally, allow all the shareholders to execute cooperatively and encourage them to market destination as a better tourism product.

11. The local authorities must take utmost steps to stop beggars at monuments.

12. Destination knowledge plays a significant role in spreading good image both nationally and internationally. Therefore to manage knowledge about the destination, different stakeholders must be involved in the process of destination planning.

13. The local government must maintain close watch on what suppliers, intermediaries, residents, media, and tourists publish about the destination.
14. The destination operators should develop specific promotional actions leading to an upgrading of the destination image since this is always an important segment of the market.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. This study will be the model study in the area of image of India as a tourist destination.

2. Present study highlights the destination image attributes which are considered vital while choosing India as a tourist destination.

3. The study will imply a model “destination image → trip quality → perceived value → tourists satisfaction → behavioural intentions after visit to India”.

4. This study will put together a theoretical relationship among destination image, service quality and perceived value that affect tourist satisfaction, which in turn persuade re-visit intentions and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations.

5. The study has made a modest attempt to add information to the very little empirical knowledge available referring to tourists’ perception of destination image of India.

6. This study enables understanding of how tourists scrutinize destination images to reach a decision on future action.

7. Helpful to design marketing plan for overseas markets.

8. This study will also help destination managers to define an advertisement strategy that makes India as a tourist destination more attractive.

9. The present study would be proved as an instrument for Government sector, tourism planners, and academician.

10. A model for researchers who are interested and working in this context.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All possible efforts were made to maintain the objectivity, validity and reliability of the study, yet certain limitations need to be kept in mind whenever its findings are considered for implementation. Such limitations are given under:
1. A limited number of studies have been conducted in the Indian context, which made it difficult to examine the problem with adequate number of references.

2. Language barrier has been recognized as a major drawback while collecting data.

3. This study is heavily based on primary data, which is very time consuming and cost effective.

4. Next limitation is measuring the perceived value of a destination image across a list of attributes, without any measure of attribute importance.

5. To understand the image of a destination is in isolation, given the purpose of study is to differentiate the image attributes from competing destinations in the minds of the potential customers.

6. The conceptual formation process requires scholars’ personal mind/concept structures, which may lead to a limitation. Though the reliability and validity are still up to the requirements, it is necessary to mention it for future study suggestions.

7. Limitation of this research ignored to measure tourists’ perception before and after actual visitation in order to evaluate how well the image is promoted and actual image.

8. The study provides empirical evidence of the need for a more careful marketing approach towards tourist destinations in the study area. Only promotional campaigns on heritage and religious is not enough to attract more international tourists to India, instead the destination organisations should employ more highly qualified human resources in the tourism and hospitality industry, which in turn can understand the needs and problems of the tourists. Further, considering the increasingly competitive nature of tourism industry, the governments need to play a significant role in developing policies and strategies to increase the destination image of India especially the study area. Moreover, the government intervention in the tourism industry must expects the establishment of laws and regulations specific to the sector, the provision of security both for the tourists and for the environment, the
protection of the heritage sites and wild environment, tourism planning and promotion.

9. It was clearly indicated that cultural diversity and individual’s characteristics are highly influenced the perception of each nationality. South Korea has more positive favor about study area in almost all aspects as they were more likely enjoying richness of cultural, natural sceneries, experienced good social-safety condition and fair transportation and compared to other counterparts. However, Overall image has a positive and direct relationship with future behaviours of tourists visiting from different nationalities. The results suggests that India has to retain destination competitiveness, continue searching for new attractions and create distinctive tourism packages to differentiate from others reinforce positive images. In fact, integrated strategy is the need of hour to win international competitive edge. In, conclusion, positive destination images generate not only the brand values, but also strengthen destination brand loyalty in term of future behavioral intentions (revisit and recommend) that tremendously make India as one of competitive barriers in today’s tourism industry.