Chapter VII

Conclusion and Recommendations
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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The nomadic urge of the by gone era has now transformed into the most flourishing global industry, singularly accounting for more than 8% of the world trade and approximately 30% of the total trade in services. The prognosis of futurologists that tourism may emerge as the largest industry of the world has virtually come true. The growth in international tourist traffic has been simply unprecedented during the post World War II period. With its present pace of development tourism may account for about 2000 billion dollars by 2021, is how the majority tourism scholars have predicted. The magnitude of multifarious advantages of this multidimensional phenomenon is consistently motivating more and more countries to take it up as one of the priority areas in their central planning process.

Owing to its enormous advantage in terms of foreign exchange earning, employment potential, infrastructural development, social awareness, greater income and employer multiplier and a horde of other Socio- Culture and economic advantages, tourism is now better known as an agent to holistic development. Obviously the developing countries vitally need it as the single answer to their multi-prong problems; though their share is still distantly less, both in terms of tourist arrivals and receipts when compared to the affluent nations. There was a time when Central and West European countries together with North America accounted for 96% of the tourist traffic and tourism receipts, thus leaving behind just 4% to be scarcely distributed among the entire lot of developing economies. Interestingly, this gap is now steadily narrowing down. The new trends are particularly in favour of Asia – Oceania Region, where India is an important
Thus, the time is ripe now to evolve and implement realistically viable tourism development programmes, if the country has to emerge as a popular tourist destination.

The pace of growth in worldwide tourist traffic over last few decades, more so, after World War II has been virtually dramatic, which is well evident from the fact that as against 14.4 millions and US $1.4 billion in 1948, the tourist traffic and tourism receipts respectively touched 831 million and 754 billion US$ mark by the year 2006.

UNWTO's *Tourism 2020 Vision* forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these worldwide arrivals in 2020, 1.2 billion will be intraregional and 378 million will be long-haul travellers.

The total tourist arrivals by region shows that by 2020 the top three receiving regions will be Europe (717 million tourists), East Asia and the Pacific (397 million) and the Americas (282 million), followed by Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

East Asia and the Pacific, Asia, the Middle East and Africa are forecasted to record growth at rates of over 5% year, compared to the world average of 4.1%. The more mature regions Europe and Americas are anticipated to show lower than average growth rates. Europe will maintain the highest share of world arrivals, although there will be a decline from 60 per cent in 1995 to 46 per cent in 2020.

An interesting fact which comes to the fore is that the major tourism destination countries and regions have so far been traditionally leading global tourism markets in that order. Thus, obviously Europe and Americas are the top tourism generating regions of the world. Till late sixties, these two regions were together accounting
for about 96% of the total international tourist arrivals and approximately 90% of the global tourist departures. However, over last five decades their share has been witnessing consistent decrease in both perspectives. Consequently, by the year 2004, their share came down to 71.77% and 73.57% in terms of tourist arrival and tourism receipts, respectively. In contrast, the performance of such emerging economies like Japan, China, South Africa, South Korea and Countries of Middle East and South East Asia has been steadily improving, to the extent that China now occupies top fourth position in terms of tourist arrivals, displacing such traditionally popular destination countries even like Italy and U.K.

There had been many factors influencing tourism trends in past which may continue to influence tourism trends in future, as well. The generic factors that may influence the future tourism trends have been nicely summed up by Robert Came (1969) in his article, the ‘Future of Tourism’, as under:

- The world’s population is growing at an extremely fast pace and the average length of life will be nearly 80 years.
- Per-capita income will grow swiftly and will reach extremely high levels in the industrialized countries
- “The-Distance” in space will be all but eliminated, and this will result in comparatively lower transport costs.
- The widespread automation of productive processes will lead to a great increase in the leisure activities because of the growing amount of “free time”.
- The rural population will shrink nearly everywhere in the economically developed countries, approaching the level of the United States where at present less then 10 percent of the total population i.e., about 5 percent of the active population is employed in agriculture.
- The population employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors will consist almost entirely of persons living in towns who, hand in hand, with increased spatial mobility, will have greater occupational and social mobility.
Congestion of tourist traffic shall create problems in traffic in time and space.

Greater educational opportunities and in-depth information will lead to increased curiosity and that in turn, to a greater desire for knowledge.

All the eminent futurologists including Fraustie, Came and Kahn promise for more leisure available to the society in coming times, which will obviously have a major impact on tourism growth. The quote Fraustie (cited in Singh 1982): “It is generally expected at present that fairly in near future the average citizen of economically developed country will be able to meet his needs by working thirty hours a week. Thus the time that an individual will devote to productive activities in future will take up about 6% of his existence”.

India is credited to pioneer the concept of tourism in the form of pilgrimages, as early as during Vedic Era. Accounts from the Epics and Puranas reveal that the tradition of religious travels flourished all through the ancient times, and that, sincere efforts were made by the contemporary rulers to develop wayside facilities and amenities, especially enroute the sacred centers. In fact, aware of the paramount contribution of ‘travel’ in broadening the horizons of knowledge vis a vis forging social integration, it was intelligently blended with religious dicta so as to make traveling a social movement. ‘Indra (wise qualities!) is the friend of travelers, therefore travel’ has therefore God’ jealously preached by the scriptures to inculcate healthy guest-host relationship, been propounded in the Aieterya Brahmina in order to instill social attitude for ‘Charevati Charevati (keep on traveling and traveling). The principle of ‘Atithi Devo Bhav(Guest is God) is still valued by the society though the rising materialism has considerably eroded it.

While the glorious tradition of pilgrimages has steadily prospered over the years, international tourism is yet to come of age in the country despite its vividly varied
and rich touristic appeal. As evident from the Preamble of National Tourism Policy (1997), India is aware of its tremendous tourism resource treasure *vis a vis* the strength of tourism as tool to holistic development, and is therefore vying to achieve its rightful share in international tourism.

Evidently, the significance of tourism is comprehensively acknowledged and appreciated by the government of India. In fact, efforts to promote neo-tourism in the country date back to 1945 when a committee under Sir John sergeant was constituted to find ways and means to promote this industry. Though no budget could be allocated to it in the First Five Year Plan, tourism became an important constituent of national planning, onwards the second five year plan. The strong desire of country’s policy makers to promote tourism is aptly illustrated by the various actions taken to this effect, ranging from ‘creation of regional tourism offices in the country and abroad, setting–up NCT; inception of institutions like DOT, ITDC; State Tourism Departments, State Tourism Development Corporations, IITTM, TFCI, and National Council of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition; Launching special operations schemes viz; Operation US and Operation UK; and Organizing India festival abroad to penetrate potential markets; awarding industry status to tourism; celebrating visit India year(s) and above all putting tourism under an exclusive Ministry at the Centre and in some states. Today, India has virtually the most intensive organizational structure of tourism the world. As a result of these efforts international tourist arrivals have steadily increased over the years, registering an average annual growth rate of about 10% during 1950-1990 period. In net terms, the tourism arrivals touched 3.37 million mark in 2004 as against 16829 arrivals in 1951. Though, country’s share in the international tourism is still too meager, 0.44% in terms of tourist arrivals and 0.77% in terms of tourism receipts, the recent trends strongly indicate towards consistently better performance. During 1991 – 2006 period, despite negative trends in the year 1993 (assassination of Sri Rajiv Gandhi), 1998
(General Elections), 2001 and 2002 (after affect of Iraq War, September 11 incident, and terrorist attack on Parliament), tourist arrivals marked net increase of about 1.68 million, during this period.

Country-wise, U.K has traditionally been the largest market for the country, though, of late USA has replaced the former. The touristic significance of these two countries for India is evident from the fact that, together they accounted for over 32.3 % of the total arrivals to the country in 2005. Canada, France, Sri Lanka, Germany, Japan, Malaysia, Australia and Singapore accounting for 3.9%, 3.8 %, 3.5 %, 3.3 %, 2.6%, 2.5 %, 2.4 % and 1.8 % arrival, respectively were the other countries standing on the top ten markets of India in 2005. Over the years, the top ten tourist markets of the country remained generically more or less same with minor reshuffles in the order of the rank.

Presently India has share of meager 0.49 % only, whereas France took a lead recording 76 million arrivals(9.41% share) followed by Spain, USA, China Italy and UK. Among the Asian countries, China has emerged a leader with 46.81 arrivals(5.79% market share ). Going by the available statistics for the year 2005, it is evident that India’s share in international tourism in terms of tourism receipts (0.8 %) has been considerably higher as compared to the tourist arrivals (0.49 %). Also, during 1991-2005 period while the country experienced negative annual growth in 1993, 1998, 2001 and 2003, the negative trend in terms of tourism receipts was prevalent only in the year 2002 and that too by merely – 1 %. It is also apparent from the discussion that the negative growth got effectively countered by the strong growth marked in 2003, 2004 and 2005, which was respectively 15.7 %, 31.5% and 16.5%.

The stronger growth patterns in receipts can be attributed to fact that the average length of stay per tourist (around 30 days) in the country is one of the highest in
the world. Increasing tourist expenditure on account of the interplay of rising prices vis-à-vis worldwide growing per capita income too has its obvious impact in this regard. The economic significance of tourism for India becomes all the more vital in view of the fact that, even now, when the country’s share in world tourism receipts is merely 0.8 %, it is already acting as the third largest source of its foreign exchange earnings.

On account of the open air policy of the central government vis a vis steady increase in the income of the people especially those concerned with the multinationals or working/dealing with exports, the outbound trends have consistently been witnessing remarkable growth, particularly onwards early nineties of the last Century. Unlike the negative growth in international tourism, as well as, in the context of inbound traffic to India, the outbound tourism has never experienced negative growth during last fifteen years though there was zero growth in the year 1994. In fact, the growth has been remarkably high in the year 2004 and 2005, i.e., 16.1% and 15.6 % respectively.

Though, no authentic data are available in this context, conservative estimates reveal that annually over 430 million people travel from one part to the other parts of the country under different pretexts of tourism. Obviously, pilgrimage had and continues to have the lion’s share in domestic tourism in India.

The pace of growth in domestic tourism is evident from the fact that the number of tourists has dramatically increased from 67.7 million in 1991 to 382.1 in 2005 indicating over 5.5 growth in the span of merely fourteen years. Average per annum growth of over 18 % during the 13 years in question, has nevertheless been remarkable. Statistics available for 2005 reveals that Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, each receiving over 24 % of the total domestic tourist continued to retain their position as the leading states followed by Tamilnadu (11.3 %), Karnataka
(6.5 %) and Rajasthan (4.9 %) in that order. Uttaranchal, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, and Gujarat were the other states occupying top ten ranking in this context, though standing way behind Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, in terms of the share in total domestic tourist traffic.

Experiments, all over the world, and resultant experiences have proved that success of a tourist destination depends upon totality of strategic efforts made by various stakeholders and careful marketing, in addition to the inherited tourism magnetism along with the uniqueness of resources, products and activities. This, obviously, requires well-conceived and effectively implemented innovative steps from all the players including planners & policy makers, practitioners, representatives from hospitality sector and media persons to even academic institutions. O’Brien -a British tea saloon owner- has rightly stated “with innovative and effective marketing, one can motivate the people to even eat hay, after the meals”. Tourism marketing, undoubtedly, is extremely complicated and challenging task, mainly due to prevalence of literally independent components of tourism product, in addition to multiplicity of regions in a tourism system that prove to be symbiotic to each other for carrying out varied tourism operations efficiently.

Diverse preferences, priorities, wide-ranging spending abilities & patterns, spectrum of motivations, varied socio-cultural linkages, ethics & ensuing values and customs etc. of the tourists further accentuate the challenges for tourism promoters, practitioners and those who are involved with the management and development of destinations. Then there is a whole set of factors like highly dynamic & capricious economic scenario, newer sets of developmental philosophies & policies, escalating competition, fast changing political equations amongst various countries, climatic catastrophes at destination, transit or tourist generating regions, having direct correlation with the performance of any tourism
system. Undoubtedly, the perceptions, priorities and preferences of individuals or various groups of tourists with regard to perceived touristic appeal of resources or destinations, motivations & reasons behind visit or repeat visits, choice of specific mode & type of transport or board & lodging facilities, shopping behaviour, and price sensitivity do vary, from season to season, circumstances to circumstances and destination to destination.

Talking in Indian context, while appreciating tourist resource potential in the country, Hinchinbrook J. (1970) in his thought-provoking article “The Myth of Tourism” observes that, “the great mass of India’s potential market is still awaiting to be told what India really is”. Almost similar views have been expressed by Chester Bowles (1967), in his paper “Tourism - an untapped market” – ‘Why not show them the promise of India’s future as well as of India’s ancient glories and her varied Natural Resources?’ Thus, while the earlier statement speaks of the failure of the country in terms of en-cashing her vast resource potential, the latter, in a way, is a feedback on the prevailing market awareness, about its otherwise class historical, cultural and natural tourist treasures. The observations of Singh(1974), Anand (1976), Adhikari(1984), Kaur(1985), Kala(1985), Bagri(1992), Punia(1994), Bansal(1994), Singh(1999) and various other researchers, though made in different context of Indian tourism, are taken into consideration, the poor performance of the country can be largely attributed to the lack of an effective, long term integrative tourism planning and not its weak economic base. This conclusion is supported by the fact that there is no dearth of the tourist activities that can be promoted with little infrastructural inputs, like trekking, mountaineering and most of the water based pursuits.
SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM

• In the light of the above discussion it was found imperative to select an applied topic related to tourism market research. The study of expectation level of the tourists was decided to be studied, in order to determine the level of awareness of the tourists’ vis-à-vis various selected destinations of Himachal Pradesh.

• Himachal Pradesh finds an important place on the international tourism map and, in view of the multitude of resources it has, as also, the problems going on in Kashmir valley and in the North-Eastern Himalayan States, it must prepare itself for a greater influx of tourist traffic in future. Thus, it automatically becomes important to understand the quality of tourist experience so that the supply-mix could accordingly be improved-upon, qualitatively and quantitatively.

• For obvious reasons it would have been difficult to study the expectation and/or satisfaction level of tourists at their place of origin, therefore the much viable approach of studying views at destinations has been preferred.

• The levels of expectation of the tourist mainly depend on his/her accessibility to and cross analysis of the information received about various supply factors. Study of expectations has specially been aimed at understanding the type, quality and nature of information available to the tourist market since they derive the expectations from the publicity and promotional channels; other available literature; past experiences; or from the experiences of others. Also, the level of expectation has a direct bearing on the likely satisfaction. The results thus concluded could be critically assessed in the light of the marketing strategies adopted by the state, thereby deriving conclusions on the prevailing strengths and weaknesses there in.

• Since the travel decision of the tourists, affirmative or negative, is highly influenced by expectation level with regard to a given destination, the study would be able, at least tentatively, to ascertain the line of minimum expectation
level generally perceived by the tourists as threshold to decide to visit a destination.

• The tourist destination is an amalgamation of diverse attractions, facilities, services & amenities; in addition to socio-cultural, economic and ecological environments; all of which are decisively instrumental to decide the degree of tourism magnetism of a destination. The presumed of tourism magnetism in fact forms the criteria of individual tourist with regard to the quality levels (say expectation level), the study would be able to highlight the generic quality levels of the core appeal/facilities of the destinations that lead to a encouraging or discouraging travel decisions. It would obviously enable the destination to concentrate on modifying the quality levels of relatively important perspectives of the destinations, in the order of their relative importance.

• The study of satisfaction level of the tourist with regard to various tourism related services, amenities and environments, directly denotes the degree of amendments required in the concerned perspectives. The levels of satisfaction of different group of tourists or individuals, in accordance to expectation, are bound to differ with the ingredients of the tourist plant. The study of satisfaction level enables to understand, at least, the major areas generally given higher importance by the tourist and thus may provide important clues on the part of tourist plant / services / environment that need greater and immediate attention. It has been observed that consistency in quality along with continuous efforts towards improvement in the existing products, services, amenities, facilities and, most importantly, human capital catering to the tourists, directly or indirectly, ensures an optimally higher degree of satisfaction of the tourists with regard to the destination which, in turn, guarantees its long-term success.

• The inter-relationship between expectation and satisfaction levels will be cross-examined with the objective of pragmatically understand the symbiosis
and inter-relationship between these two factors, besides finding out the prevailing gap (if any) between the two with relation to various tourist plant facilities/amenities /appeal/environment in the context of the study area. Higher expectations than the actually available facilities and supplies-quantitatively and qualitatively- is bound to have negative consequences on the level of satisfaction of the buyers while lower levels of expectation than the prevailing standards of services/ facilities/environment at the destination, obviously reflect inefficient planning and ineffective promotional strategies. However, any study on tourist expectation and/or satisfaction seldom proves to be applied or authentic, lest it is co-related with motivation. Therefore, it was considered pertinent to study the motivation, expectation and satisfaction levels of the tourists visiting few selected places of Himachal Pradesh, so as to derive genuine conclusions.

- Being a resident of Himachal Pradesh and having had opportunity to see and feel tourism industry of the state from closer quarters, the researcher has opted to conduct study in the context of Himachal Pradesh.

Based upon the foregoing the problem identified for research may be stated as under:

“A Study of Motivation, Expectation and Satisfaction of Tourists with Relation to Some Selected Destinations in Himachal Pradesh”

HYPOTHESIS

- There exists a close inter-relationship between motivation, expectation and satisfaction level of tourists.
- Tourists belonging to the same class but traveling under different motives may have different levels of expectation.
- Expectation level(s) of tourists to a greater extent, guide their satisfaction level(s).
Tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh, coming with different level of expectations, return with varying degrees of satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to assess the motivations vis-à-vis expectation and satisfaction levels of tourists visiting different destinations of Himachal Pradesh, explore the reasons for their respective satisfaction levels, identify the factors responsible for their moderate satisfaction to dissatisfaction and accordingly suggest viable strategies to ensure an enriched overall touristic experience to them. For convenience, this overall objective can be divided into sub-objectives like:

- to ascertain the motivational factors, or combinations there of, that work behind the visits of tourists to this Himalayan state.
- to study expectation levels of Tourists, both domestic and foreign, with regard to the various ingredients of tourists supply and determine the factors responsible there-in.
- to measure the satisfaction level of tourists with relation to the goods, services, attractions, activities and inter-actions experienced by them,
- to determine the gap, if any, between the expectation and satisfaction levels of tourists and identify the various factors responsible for the same,
- to suggest feasible steps towards abridging the gap between tourist expectations and satisfaction through improvement of various supply components, but strictly within the framework of socio-cultural economic and ecological norms.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Though Himachal was looked upon as a major gainer of the fall out of Kashmir due to geo-political problems, yet even after more than a decade it could not
achieve the achievable in terms of either the tourist traffic or judicious development of newer destinations. This situation, according to many scholars, could be attributed to the lack of research-based marketing. A introspection of the situation reveals that dearth of authentic data on almost every perspective of Tourism including Human Capital, identification, documentation and mapping of tourist resource potential, existing tourist plant facilities and support infrastructure, basic facts about the destination (climatology to cultural anthropology), market and marketing perspectives, SWOT aspects, host perspectives, destination exosphere, intra-sectoral co-ordination, carrying capacity, tourism conservation aspects, and the like factors, have always been the eminent gray areas. In fact tourism in the state has, till now, been developed and promoted with an exclusively myopic profit motive. Such a developmental philosophy, however, can prove to be highly disastrous if not planned along the principle of sustainability and with in the limitations of carrying capacity. A state like Himachal Pradesh needs to take tourism seriously, especially because this can certainly prove to be instrumental in improving the socio-economic condition of its community which is marred by the problems like marginal agricultural land, lack of openings in Governmental sector etc., but is privileged to have an extremely rich panorama of natural resources that have potentiality to be converted into touristic appeals and, of course, a fairly large set of educated youths. There could be no doubt about the priority being attached to tourism under the contemporary policy of the state but if her performance is so dismaying, lack of authentic research seems to be the major reason. Under such circumstances, any research in tourism is vitally important and while the significance of the present research problem particularly dealing with a very challenging and yet applied issue related to marketing, becomes all the more essential.

The study of expectations of the tourist is by and large, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the promotional efforts made by any destination. The
results of such studies obviously highlight the areas of improvement in the ongoing market practices, besides providing important clues on generic level of expectations with regard to the various services available at the destination that play the determining role in the decision making process of the tourist vis-à-vis visiting a given destination. Lower expectation for otherwise stronger appeal / services / facilities / amenities at the destination naturally speaks of ineffective or weak marketing efforts. Likewise, higher expectation with regard to a destination compared to the ground realities denotes over-enthusiastic marketing that is unwanted. Such studies also throw light on the relative significance of various destination-related factors (e.g., services/facilities /amenities/price/general environment) in tourists’ decision-making process.

The multidimensional significance of the present study is summarized below:

- The study would be a model for similar researches for other areas.
- It would help the various public and private sector tourism enterprises in understanding tourist psychology, attitude and behaviour in addition to the specific demands of different tourist segments for food, stay, communication, health & hygiene, recreation and entertainment, tourist-activities, shopping and tour packages etc. and thus enable them to create appropriate tourist supplies.
- The study would be important for tourism practitioners, planners and policy makers in framing suitable plan and policies to ensure balanced development of the various supply ingredients in accordance with the effective and potential tourist demands.
- The study looks forward to be instrumental, to whatever extent, in expediting the growth and development of tourism in the state in long-term perspective through’ judicious utilization of the resources and bringing a positive touristic image of Himachal Pradesh.
The research is based on the cross assessment of empirical and descriptive information available from such secondary sources like books, research papers, popular articles, published and unpublished reports of various institutions, findings of research projects and doctoral studies, physical observations / surveys conducted by the scholar and the responses collected from the tourists through a well structured questionnaire.

Due care has been taken to get the responses of the respondent on expectation before they actually set out for Himachal Pradesh from their respective originating place, while the second part of the document was preferably given to them after completion of their visit. Though the researcher has spent quite a lot of time in Himachal Pradesh during the course of this research, yet it was found to be too difficult to get the two sections of the questionnaire filled from the same set of visitors, mainly because of the good deal of investments in terms of money, time and manpower that for an individual scholar is not viable. Therefore, the only option left was to go for convenient sampling to get the responses of the tourists, irrespective of the fact whether an individual was to begin the journey for Himachal, or already had the cumulative experience of the state and is back to the TGR. Of course, the test questionnaire was launched successively in three phases but only to judge whether there is any gap between the intention / purpose of the question and the perception of the respondent on it.

To begin with, the scholar spent around a month at major tourist centers of Himachal Pradesh in order to have the feel of the study area and to precisely recognize the tourism-mechanism of these places. The whole idea was to see and experience some of the available tourist resources & attractions, activities and facilities, alongside interaction with the various stake-holders of tourism including
tourists, hosts, tourism professionals, as well as tourism planners. These brief orientations proved to be extremely beneficial in reviewing the entire research framework in a matter of fact manner.

The study heavily depended on wide variety of secondary sources. The information on such perspectives like historical, economic and socio-cultural personality of the conserved destinations including their architectural/monumental heritage, prevailing art forms and craftsmanship etc. from sources available in the forms of books, research papers and popular articles on history, art, architecture etc. Likewise, the sources of information for accommodation, transportation, support infrastructure, policy framework, legal and regulatory framework, tourism policy and the like areas were largely gathered from the published and unpublished reports of Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Govt. of India, state tourism bodies, Department of transport and communication, Archeological survey of India (ASI), Airport Authority of India (AAI), Indian Railway Offices, Department of Environment, City Development Boards /Authority / Municipal Corporations, and from the documents of TAAI, IATO, FHRAI and annual reports of various leading travel agencies, tour operators and hotel properties.

As regards the empirical data on tourist demography, stay, expenditure, season wise visits, motivations, mode of transport used vis-à-vis tourist visiting the Indian destinations, hotel occupancy, shopping patterns and like perspective used in the study largely are based on the reports of Central and State Department of Tourism while the international tourist traffic trends and receipt patterns cited in this research monograph are largely based on the WTO reports. A good deal of information has also been collected through on-the-spot interviews and discussions with tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, transport agencies, tour operators and hotel professionals.
As regards the expectation and satisfaction of foreign and domestic tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh, Department of Tourism (Government of India) records and reports of J.P.S. Associates have been used as base studies to cross-examine Motivation, Expectation and Satisfaction levels of the tourists visiting this hill state. It is however based on the primary information derived through the responses of tourists through the carefully designed, structured questionnaire.

As such, in the questionnaire, barring last section incorporates close ended questions largely following the principles of comparative rating scale or Likert’s scale, and rarely Ladder scale. Thus, most of the time the respondents have either to put a check mark at the desired position on the 5-point scale or insert a number between -1 to +3, to indicate their desired weightage. The use of different scales has been done in the questionnaire in view of the convenience of the respondents, clarity of the message they intend to give vis-à-vis convenience in analysis and interpretation.

While convenient sampling techniques were used in filling the questionnaires, due care was taken that the samples are taken during different seasons covering the widest possible market segments especially in terms of age, income and motivation groups. At the end a total 810 duly completed questionnaires were received back, out of which 560 were selected for further analysis. The cooperation from the travel agencies, hoteliers and the related units could not be achieved as per the scholar’s expectations. It was only after strong persuasion by the scholar that all the data collected in this process would solely be used for research purposes and that the research project would eventually benefit them, that the agencies provided the information. The length of the questionnaire was specially judged at a test level and only after receiving significant views from over 84 respondents that the final questionnaire was worked out. The respondents for the test questionnaires were selected from among the fellow scholars,
university/college teachers, college students, tourism professionals, secretarial staff of some public sector offices and a few domestic tourists. The general perception of the respondents about the test questionnaires was that though the questionnaire was somewhat lengthy, it was systematically planned and formatted, in order to get adequate and comprehensive responses. It was also observed that due to perceptual differences, some answers provided by the respondents had anomalies that were eliminated by using alternate words or through reformation of the queries.

Initially, the scholar had been sincerely enthusiastic to use the most modern data analysis techniques to inter-relate and co-relate the facts to reach authentic and applied conclusions. Thus, not only that the widely accepted sampling techniques for data collection was thought of, but also the most modern analytic tools were planned to be implemented. However, when it came to actual analysis of the statistics collected through 560 questionnaires; the analytical tools were further thought to be limited to T-test, Fried-Man test, Kandles – Tau coefficient, Chi-Square test, multiple regression analysis, factor analysis and Cluster analysis; however, the enormity of the variables and magnitude of diversity in the parameters vis-à-vis resulting scope for co-relationships and interrelationships compelled the scholar to apply the most conventional analytical technique of calibrations, limiting him to use the traditional statistical tabulation methods, applying simple average and percentile methods. Infact, after experimenting with various modern analytical techniques, the scholar felt that using the same may lead to series of complexities and confusion than realistic perception, especially when the universe is too huge and varied and the resulting inter-relationship/co-relationship have virtually infinite proposition.

A sincere effort has been made also to translate the facts into graphics so as to ensure better perception of the facts.
STATE OF THE ART

Not many studies have so far been undertaken either on 'expectation' or 'satisfaction' levels of tourists, which incidentally are the most vital aspects of tourism both from academic and professional point of view. Further being a relatively new discipline, authentic literature on tourism is rarely available, more so from the research viewpoint. The extreme paucity of literature with regard to the present research problem, particularly in terms of an effective model research had been a genuine constraint, as:

- **Hardly any research has been conducted on motivational aspects or expectation & satisfaction levels of tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh.**
- **Even in global context, tourism market and marketing remains quite a virgin area, especially from research point of view, therefore information on such important perspectives vis-à-vis the present research problem, is all the more inadequate.**

sector. Interactions, in the form of interviews, with practitioners, planners, policy makers, and distinguished authorities of tourist plants, transportation network and other allied sectors, enabled the researcher to understand operational intricacies with relation to Himachal Tourism.

Himachal Pradesh is known for exuberance of silvery peaks, black mountains, tumbling falling foaming rivers and streams, heavenly lakes and springs, verdant forests and spectacular meadows, and above all, for its glorious history and the rich and colourful cultural heritage. Known as *Jalandhar Khand* during *Pauranic* times, this sylvan Himalayan land has been a centre of attraction for religious souls, as for scholars, voyagers and spirited adventure lovers, not only from the Indian sub continent but also from the distant parts of Central Asia, China and Tibet, who used to travel to places like Kullu, Mandi, Rampur, and Kangra braving the topographical and meteorological discomfiture and the other obvious odds including the wayside risks. Splendidly dotted with Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist religious sites Himachal has been rightly quoted as *Dev Bhoomi* in the Puranas and other scriptures.

The state, strategically perched almost in the centre of the long Himalayan sweep between the coordinates 32°22′40″ to 33°12′40″N and 75°47′55″ to 79°04′20″ E, is bounded in North by Kashmir - *the valley of Saffron*; in the South-East by Uttaranchal - *the land of Holy Ganges*; in the South by Haryana - *the land of famous Kurukshetra battle*; in the West by Punjab - *the granary of India*; and in the North-East by Tibet.

The ancient history of *Himachal Pradesh*, like many other parts of the country and especially the *Himalayan* tract, is available in fragmented form. However, taking references from literary sources, travelogues, archaeological studies, inscriptions and coins etc., it can be derived that some form of human life certainly existed
there at some stage of the Pre-historic Age. Majority of the Historians believe that the nomadic tribes, including *Kolas, Mujavn, Arjiks, Mahavrises, Shivas and Nishadas* etc., occupied this part of the Himalayas during the zenith of the Indus Valley Civilization. Mythological and historical evidences generally indicate that the Aryans may have settled in parts of this hilly terrain at a very early period - probably even before the hymns of *Rigveda* were compiled. As elsewhere in the country, there has been a good deal of fusion between the Aryans and the aboriginals by way of cross-fertilization of socio-cultural beliefs, values and traditions on account of the closer interactions, particularly along the northern and eastern frontiers of this tiny Himalayan hill state. Scriptures reveal that *Kinners, Kiratas, Nagas, Khasas and Yakshas* were the major occupants of the region, parts of which came under the sway of *Rajput* reign when *Susarma Chandra* founded the kingdom of *Trigarta* during the *Mahabharta* times.

Topography of the state is typically Himalayan characterized by complex hilly terrain witnessed by intricate mosaic of snow peaks, black mountains, glaciers, U and V shaped valleys and densely forested slopes frequently intercepted by rivers and streams. Average altitude in the state generally ranges between 450 m to 6500 m above the msl; mountain elevation, as in other parts of the Himalaya, increasing from South-West to North-East. The physiography of the State is comprehensively influenced as much by the interplay of latitude and longitude, as by the three prominent ridges, namely the Dhauladhar, the Pir Panjal and Hathi Dhar. Generally, the steep mountain slopes in the study are are covered with coniferous and broad-leaved forests, meadows, pasturelands and terraces, often clinging precariously to the mountainsides. The Valleys situated amidst these mountain ranges contain gurgling streams, torrents, terraced fields and fairy tale villages.

Tourist plant facilities refer to the amenities created to cater to the various derived demands of tourists which need to be fulfilled in the process of effectively
satisfying the basic tourist demand, i.e., to see and enjoy the desired destination and/or participate in various tourism related activities. Thus, the provision of appropriate inter and intra-destination transformation, accommodation, food and drinks, recreation and entertainment, shopping options, destination interpretation and travel agency and tour operations related services etc., naturally come under the preview of tourist plant facilities. The ultimate success of a destination essentially depends on a balanced mix of attraction, tourist plant facilities and state of socio-cultural and ecological environment duly complemented by strategic marketing efforts. The demand of tourist plant facilities in terms of quality, quantity, availability and cost etc, however, may considerably vary depending on the basic appeal, perceived image of the destination (s) and consequential tourist use-patterns, i.e., leisure, pleasure, culture, religious, nature, business, adventure and so on. Thus, it is essential to first assess the requirement appropriately and then plan and create plant facilities in harmony with the expectations of the target market and inherited cultural and natural characteristics of the destination, so that an exceptionally befitting ambience could be created that ensures higher levels of tourist satisfaction. At the same time one should keep in consideration the advice of Eric Laws (1995) wherein he cautions the planners and practitioners about the usually uncontrolled tendency of the secondary elements of a destination (which include major tourist plant facilities) to be nearest possible to the primary elements (inherited resources and/or products) which inevitably influences the tourism magnetism of a destination negatively, hence causing an fatal decline in the appeal of the place. To cite some examples of this tendency, Shimla and Manali can be taken up as cases from Himachal where excessive and unmindful development has adversely affected not only the flora & fauna – both quantitatively and qualitatively, but also has deprived the locals from many essential basic resources that used to be available in abundance.
The concept of customer satisfaction has a long history in the perspective of marketing thoughts and consumer behavior. However, since Cardozo’s (1965) pioneering study on ‘Customer Effort, Expectation and Satisfaction’, the body of knowledge in the field has now considerably expanded. On account of the ongoing globalization process, the business environment has become dynamically competitive where-in strategic marketing based on innovative market research particularly on demand perspective, has become key to the very sustenance. While talking in the context of service industry, Gronoos (1990) and Parasuraman et al. (1988) observe that among all customer demands, quality of service is a crucial factor in the success of any business. In fact, now the service industry is thoroughly convinced that service quality and customer satisfaction are the key factors in competitive differentiation and customer retention. However, on account of the dynamic interplay between ever changing demand-supply perspective and individual perception vis-à-vis the process of advancement, providing and maintaining customer satisfaction remains and would continue to be one of the biggest contemporary challenges for the service industry.

Lam and Zhang (1999) claim that overwhelming customer demand for quality products and services has, in recent years, become increasingly evident to professionals, particularly in the tourism industry. The increasing numbers of international travellers and the concomitant diversity of the market require that standards for service quality be re-evaluated even from the cultural perspective of the markets served (Becker and Murrmann, 1999). Obviously, the same is applied to the tourism and hospitality business, which has emerged as one of the key components of leisure & recreation industry throughout the globe.

Customer satisfaction is different from perceived service quality. Service quality is the customers’ attitude or global judgment of a company's service over the time, while customer satisfaction refers to a specific business transaction (Lam and
Zhang, 1999). Service management literature argues that *customer satisfaction is the result of a customer’s perception of the value received in a transaction or relationship - where value equals perceived service quality relative to price and customer acquisition costs* (Blanchard and Galloway, 1994; Heskett et al., 1990); *relative to the value expected from transactions or relationships with competing vendors* (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Having had examined the available information on the motivation and satisfaction levels of foreign tourists visiting India, collected and interpreted by the Department of Tourism, Government of India, J.P.S. Associates and Singh (2002), the scholar has analyzed these perspectives with special reference to Indian and International tourists visiting Himachal Pradesh, in general, and Shimla and McLeod Ganj/ Dharamshala in particular. The conclusions have been derived by the scholar on the basis of the feedback received from 560 respondents from diverse cultural, economic, motivational and psychological spectrum; through a specially structured questionnaire. Accordingly, it has been observed that transportation is a major constraint felt by a majority of the tourists, followed by quality / availability of the desired food and bar provisions and, accommodation in that order. Likewise, the views of the target samples have also been documented, analyzed and interpreted in the context of destination society, destination environment and other allied aspects which may not directly come under the gamut of tourism but have determining implications on existing tourism trends to the state. However, realistic and applied conclusions on the subject can be arrived at, only if the resultant data is further interpreted on the basis of demographic, psychographic, behavioral and particularly touristic aptitude of the respondents.

Such an interpretation leads to many interesting and often intriguing conclusions. Putting together the availability, reliability and affectivity of internal transportation sector in Himachal Pradesh, has been rated to be satisfactory by
approximately 45% of the tourists. However, going by the age groups, more than 75% of the respondents from 55 years and above age groups have rated it to be dissatisfactory as against less than 25% of those belonging to the age bracket of 25 years and below. Almost similar picture emerges when the responses of the tourists from high-income group vis-à-vis lower middle-income group are reviewed. Likewise, adventure seekers, wild-lifers and naturalists seem to be not much bothered about the state of transportation of this hill state. It brings home the conclusion that there is considerable variation in the responses of the tourists belonging to different age, income and motivational groups. On the subject, it was really impossible to correlate the expectation level of the respondents with the level of satisfaction only with regard to transport services. However, the cross-examination of travel behaviour (second section of the questionnaire), and the consequent expectation of the respondents indicate towards vital bearing of the former on the later. Obviously, there was option for the scholar to statistically indicate the satisfaction level of the respondents of different age groups, income and motivation group of the tourists with regard to transportation. But, such an effort would have not been of any applied use lest a holistic statistical interpretation on the subject is presented, which was nearly impossible for the scholar. On the whole, the transport service in Himachal needs comprehensive improvement on all fronts including availability, reliability, punctuality and safety / security viewpoints.

If the expectation level of the tourist with regard to Himachal is assumed to be a reflection of the image of the state in their minds then the feedback of the tourists through the questionnaire is virtually discouraging. More than 70% of them have a deep rooted impression about this region where one can expect over crowding, pollution, traffic snarls, unhygienic conditions, extreme economic backwardness, frequent incidences of crime, law and order problems, bad roads, poor basic infrastructure, prevalence of beggars’ mentality, ineffective communication
system and so on. In fact, in the last section of the questionnaire, two specific questions were asked from the respondents i.e., (i) List 3 major problems faced by them (tourist) during their India visit and (ii) Specific suggestions for tourist development in the state in order of priority.

As per the feedback on the first question, pollution was ranked at number one by 82% of the tourists, lack of hygiene and sanitation by 72%, traffic related problem by 69%, lack of authentic information by 69%, substandard transportation by 68%, non availability of quality food and drinks by 62%, substandard accommodation by 61%, menace of begging by 61%, bargaining by 54%, unethical travel practices by 49% and safety / security problems by 41%, emerged to be noteworthy problem areas. The second question has primarily been incorporated in the questionnaire to authenticate the responses of the tourist on the first question, cited above. Incidentally, the suggestions thus given by them comprehensively support their answers to the earlier question.

Fact remains, that Himachal Pradesh has the inherent strength to attract almost every interest group of the tourists, ranging from the cultural anthropologist, pleasure and business tourist to almost every other interest tourist. The rich scope for promoting an entire range of tourist activities including mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking, trailing, wildlife watching, forest recreation, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, skiing, ice skiing, heli-skiing, hand gliding, ballooning, water skiing, cold desert safari, golf to spiritual pursuits.

The situations, problems and suggestions discussed in the foregoing are herewith summarized in terms of specific points;

- India virtually has the potential to be the land of all seasons and all regions.
Performance of the country in general and Himachal in specific of International tourism has so far been dismayingly poor, more-so in view of its unique and extraordinarily diverse tourist resource pleasure.

Despite a fabulously rich tourism development potential vis-à-vis a long and prestigious heritage of tourism, especially in the form of pilgrimages, India has a comprehensively distorted image in terms of socio-economic and infrastructural environment, and the same reflects for Himachal as well.

A closer assessment of the planning policy and organizational perspectives reveal that Himachal has been making desperate efforts to promote both domestic and international tourism.

A cursory review of the contemporary context may readily prove that the range of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives provided to the latent and effective tourism enterprises, organizational strength of tourism at central and state levels, number of travel and hospitality enterprises and the promotional efforts in the context of the study area is comprehensively positive.

Thus, the obvious basis for slackness in performance of tourism can be attributed to the lack of effective destination planning/marketing strategy.

In view of the above observations, it is **recommended** that:

1. **The country in general and Study area in particular should essentially and urgently go for a thoroughly research based planning.** Authentic data on the various perspectives of the destination environment, dynamically changing tourist market and destination trends, emerging demand patterns and the expectation and satisfaction levels of the tourist are thus becoming the essential pre-requisites. On account of the readily available trained manpower vis-à-vis requisite paraphernalia, the universities in particular can play a determining role in this context. Assigning this sacred mission to the
universities may not only prove to be the most effective strategy but comprehensively economic, as well. U.G.C., I.C.S.S.R., C.S.I.R., C.I.H.R. and D.O.E. etc. can be conveniently approached to promote applied research in tourism alongside those directly funded by the Department of Tourism of the State and the Central Government.

2. Going by the promotional efforts being made by the Central and the State Governments through print and electronic media, the outsourcing seems to be too ineffective. It is in fact leading to extensive and repetitive approach with little, if any, outcome. In this context, the possibility of a central marketing entity needs to be essentially explored which should be exclusively responsible to promote India as a destination. Ways and means to ensure direct participation/contribution by the Central and State Government as well as the various private sector tourism and hospitality enterprise to this end, needs to be worked out in applied perspective.

3. Tourism awareness in the society goes a long way in creating an ideal tourism magnetic image of a destination, region or a country. While respect to the guest with utmost hospitality is inherent in Indian society, it needs to be refurbished in the contemporary context.

4. There would be no other economic sector where the attitude, aptitude and overall professional skills are as pivotal as in the case of tourism industry. Of course, isolated efforts have been made by the Central and State Governments, universities and some private institutions to come out with tourism and hospitality education/training. However, the present facilities are urgently required to be carefully examined and strategically integrated so that the quality levels are appropriately maintained. In this context, the role and contribution of the Indian Institute of Travel and Tourism needs to be reviewed and revitalized according to the realistic requirements. “Destination specific” and “Market specific” research is the need of the hour so as to decide whether
to go for destination oriented or market oriented approach of development on a case to case basis.

5. The concept of tourist police, as repetitively recommended in almost every tourism related document, has so far been implemented by a few destinations and that too, half-heartedly. With a little training and motivation oriented approach, this concept can be effectively implemented.

6. Community approach of development, in almost every walk of planning is appreciated. Even a country like Nepal has successfully and satisfactorily proven the fact. The “Annapoorna” experiment of Nepal has really emerged as a success story in the context of tourism. It can indeed prove to be an effective strategy in the Himachal and should be seriously considered. This is especially effective in case of destinations located in the remoter environments.

7. Since demand–supply in tourism is dynamically changing; a cushion area should be kept, be it in terms of appeal, touristic activities, services, price structure or the motivation. No destination can have a healthy long life cycle unless this dynamism is consistently studied and accordingly applied.

8. The experiences over the years, indicate that meteorological, economic or political problem, in one or the other part of the country, comprehensively affect tourism industry as a whole. Therefore, a decentralized approach to tourism marketing and promotion needs to be applied with essential impacts of crisis management.

9. Tourism on account of its multifarious social cultural, economical and environmental benefits needs to be strongly supported in the study area.

10. In the view of the fact that Himachal has a very strong resource base for development of ‘nature tourism’ and ‘adventure tourism’, the same may be aggressively promoted along with pilgrimages and cultural tourism.

11. Likewise, tourism and new tourism need to be conceptually understood, thus, while the former is a generic concept that involves the touristic visit of all the segments of the travelers, the later exclusively covers those traveling to a
definite destination under well-defined motive and are welling ready to respect to prescribed norms at times ‘self imposed ones’, eco tourist mountaineers and trekkers, rural, agri, farm and green tourist and the cultural recreation and entertainment facilities. A typical example can be taken from the trends introduced in the case of the national parks and sanctuaries. Realizations the fact that rising the entry fees or enhancing the tariff of the product seldom stop the otherwise unwanted guest to visit. Thus, came the noble idea of the strict dress code, and prescribed facilities coupled with a series of don’t and do’s

12. The available tourist plant facilities at the likes of Shimla, Manali are suffices in the view of targeted domestic market. However, to ensure grater interest and satisfaction of the foreign tourist, anthropologists genuinely interested in one or the other cultural manifestations like performing arts, fairs and festivals and folk traditions and rituals etc. can consistently be incorporated in the class of new tourist.

13. Since it is not possible to deny any person to visit a certain destination, the unwanted guest can always be segregated by creating desired set of supplies in terms of accommodation, food, drinks, transpiration and exciting facilities need to be thoroughly reviewed especially in terms of hygiene and sanitation and from the view point of the professional services.

14. Tourist information services almost in majority of the places is either in shattered state or is not available at all. It is proposed to take special care in this field by updating the relevant information periodically by applying efficient data gathering techniques, the processing of data should be carried out by professionals and the information must be provided to the target segments according to their needs and requirements.

15. The rich heritage of craftsmanship need to be revived on priority basis. Alongside, catering the positive attention of local people, it would go a long way in the long term marketing of the various tourist destinations.
16. Travel trade services are virtually missing altogether, everywhere in the state except in the case of Shimla, Manali and few other prominent destinations. This indicates towards a need of an effective awareness campaign coupled with appropriate package of incentives required to active the latent entrepreneurship.

17. Authentic information is the only key to sure success. Let it be sincerely realized that the tourism organization, all round the country do not have the requisite expertise and the trained manpower to go into it. Obviously, the professional and consultants can be employed in this regard. The state universities potential needs to be realistically realized. In fact, in all the leading tourism countries, universities do play a pivotal role to this effect.

18. Consideration to sustainable tourism development plan that goes hand in hand with the socio-cultural, economic and ecological environment of the given destination or the destination region. Therefore the carrying capacity, and EIA (Environment Impact Analysis) become too pertinent in the contemporary context and vitally significant in future perspectives. This needs to be taken care of urgently and on a perennial basis.

19. Last but not least is the warning to avoid the prevalent concept in the country to promote anything and everything. Let there be the proper evaluation of available resources for the purpose, vis-à-vis the emerging global trends, before going in to determined decision, as to what is to be developed and when.

Any compromise against the principle of sustainability is bound to prove divesting and hence need to be distantly avoided. Longevity of the destination lifecycle is more important than the magnitude of gains in immediate terms.