CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
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Introduction:

In order to promote traveling in India, the Tourism Authority of India (TAI) employs marketing tactics and has launched new destinations and new ways of tourism, such as eco-tourism, home-stay, and adventure trips to create freshness to the industry. TAI has also tried harder to conserve the environment for sustainability. However, TAI has never used interpretation to gain benefits as a tool to increase public awareness, appreciation and understanding; to add value to tourist or travelers’ experiences; to reveal meanings about our culture; to help build national identity or to show off the pride of Maharashtra for its past glory, refined culture and tradition.

With a lack of knowledge and understanding of interpretation and its uses, it is not surprising that no study on this topic has ever been conducted in India. Most research on tourism has been focused on identifying the demographic profiles of tourists, expenditure and number of days tourists spend in the State, and places of destination. India severely lacks information concerning the motivation, expectations, level of curiosity to learn and understand new things, and the ways tourists learn, understand and appreciate new experiences.

This missing knowledge of tourists’ psychological profile has an immensely important role in understanding our visitors and much more so than data about gender, age and country of origin. We can use psychological profiling to understand the different needs of visitors so as to plan and manage an interpretation program that is appropriate and effective and of benefit to both the host country and its visitors.

Today, Maharashtra still has the vestiges of a past glory in the ruins of Buddhist related architectural structures, paintings and archaeological artifacts which reflect outstanding craftsmanship. Yet, Maharashtra fails miserably in attracting visitors, both foreigners and Indian. In 2013 less than one million foreigners visited Maharashtra while the whole State hosted about 11 million people. Part of the cause of this failure, it is assumed, has to do with the lack of interesting interpretation at the site.

Hypothesis:

The study was conducted upon the following hypotheses:

1. There is no universal experience for all tourists at all time because tourists experience things not from the true characteristic of the “sight”, but from the comparison and contrast with the thing(s) that tourists are familiar with in the past.

2. Tourists choose their destination out of their daydreaming and fantasy. They imagine how the place would be like before the journey.
3. All tourists value and want authenticity to Maharashtra & UP.

4. The motivation of the visitors to heritage sites is mainly to get educated about the past, and not just to seek pleasure from the visit.

5. Visitors are eager to learn. They keep their eyes and ears open to take in as much knowledge as possible.

6. When the visitors have a firsthand experience with a heritage site/item, they will become interested and appreciate the need to conserve it.

7. Interpretation is a tool for enhancing visitors’ experiences from both educational and entertainment aspects.

Assumptions:

Several assumptions underlie this study.

1. The respondents are a representative sample of cultural visitors to Maharashtra & UP.

2. It is assumed that respondents answered the questionnaire with their best knowledge and did not make up the answer to make themselves look intelligent. (For example, when asked whether they knew about something, or what kind of books they read).

3. It is assumed that visitors who arrived at the four WHS where the survey took place had similar profiles. (Ajanta Caves, Ellora caves, Elephanta Caves, Taj Mahal, Agra fort and FatehpurSikri).

4. It is assumed that foreign visitor’s attitudes and their model of the world were congruent with the culture of their own country. The survey disregarded the possibility that some visitor’s identity and their values might be influenced by another culture apart from their own. For example, a teenage Indian visitor might be Americanized and think like an American teenager.

5. It is assumed that people who read the same category of books have the same educational and leisure interests.

Key Questions:

The research literature laid the foundations of the study. It provided the idea behind the research project and two key questions emerged: (1) how cross-cultural visitors make sense and meanings of heritage sites? and, (2) what interpretation program is most attractive and beneficial to cross-cultural visitors to historic sites, particularly Maharashtra & UP?"
The Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study was to explore the needs of foreign visitors in terms of interpretation at historic sites, focusing on Maharashtra&UP Historic Monuments. The study also sought to understand the difference between the learning process of cross-cultural visitors and of local people. The overall aim of the study was to discover a framework for the interpretation planning of a guidebook.

The objectives of the study were:

a) To investigate the way foreign visitors made sense and made meaning from a visit to Maharashtra.

b) To identify visitors’ expectations, and to find any correlation between expectation and acquired experiences or new knowledge.

c) To determine visitor’s behavior concerning the search for information on the site.

d) To evaluate existing interpretation based on visitors’ opinions.

e) To find out whether visitors

f) learn new things and how different interpretation affects the learning process.

g) To find out what content interests visitors.

Questionnaire Design:

The questionnaire contained 22 questions, (see Appendix A). The majority of questions were nominal, for example “What is the expectation of your visit?”, or “Did you read the signboard at this site?” Some common answers were provided although the respondents could add his or her own answers. Other questions were Likert-like items based on a scale from “not helpful at all” to “very helpful” or from “not interested” to “very interested”. Other questions were open-ended such as the perception before visiting the site, and new experiences acquired from the visit.

For design purposes, each question carried a particular objective as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To identify the visitor’s profile</td>
<td>1.1 Demographic characteristic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Psychographic characteristic (types of books read, special interests)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Motivation (what brings them here: tourist icon vs true interest)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Where else in India they have visited or planned to visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. To identify the visitor’s expectation

3. To determine the visitor’s behavior

   3.1 What source of information the visitor uses before and during the visit? Reasons for choosing it.

   3.2 The percentage of visitors who use both guide and guidebook, percent of visitors who use either, neither.

   3.3 Does the visitor think virtual tours whet their appetite to go and experience the real thing or dull their hunger?

4. To evaluate the interpretation

   4.1 Does the visitor understand key concepts?

   4.2 Is interpretation interesting and stimulating?

   4.3 Are there any words visitors do not understand?

   4.4 Text is appropriate and understandable?

   4.5 Photos and diagrams help or hinder understanding?

   4.6 Time: how long the visitor spends reading text panels compared with the required time.

   4.7 Does the visitor know what to look for in the site?

   4.8 Can the visitor recognize a “sight” when he/she sees one?

5. To find out what role social effects play in enriching the visitor’s experience.

6. To find out whether the visitor learnt new things and how

7. To find out what content interests the visitor

8. To find out what is between “appreciation” and “change in behavior”

Before the questionnaire was finalized, a pilot questionnaire containing 25 questions was developed and tested with 30 visitors at Ellora caves, Taj Mahal and Wat Chaiwatthanaram. (See Appendix E).

The pilot questionnaire and interview test allowed for the identification of certain problems and limitations in the questionnaire design.

I There were too many open-ended questions. Moreover, some questions were too complicated to answer. As a result, the respondents needed more than 10 minutes to
complete the questionnaire. This proved to be too long for most respondents and three out of 30 respondents were discouraged from completing the questionnaire.

2. Visitors who arrived with an organized tour did not have time for the interview because they had a fixed itinerary for hopping from place to place.

3. The majority of Japanese tourists did not understand English and normally came in a big group.

4. Some responses to some questions were too vague to become useful in the analysis. For example, question number nine "For the whole world, what do you consider to be the five must visit places? Why? Please rank them". This question was intended to serve the purpose of finding a pattern and criteria in choosing a travel destination and to try to link those places with particular motives. However, the responses that came out from the test survey were too dispersed and unpatterned. Moreover, no one gave a complete answer and the reason for choosing such a place as his or her destination was omitted.

5. Some questions were too confusing that the responses did not give the information intended. For example question number 10 "Why do you choose to come to Maharashtra&UP Historic Monuments?" was intended to seek information about the motives of visitors in choosing Maharashtra as a place of destination. However, most responses appeared to be a mixture of "Expectation", and "Source of information".

6. Some questions were not necessary. For example question number 16 "Did you read the signboard at this site? Why or Why not?". The purpose of this question was to understand why visitors did not read the sign board more than to know why they did.

7. Some questions received responses that were irrelevant or did not serve the objective of the survey. For example question number 18 "With whom did you come with?". The given responses were "By myself" and "By myself with a guide" could have been asked more directly by "Do you have a tour guide?". The given responses "Friends" and "Family" did not provide a significant difference in terms of social interaction.

8. Some questions received unsubstantial responses. For example question number 19 "List three features about this site that stand out for you", or question number 24 "What would you tell your friends about this place when you have returned home?"

The problems listed above were taken into consideration in order to modify the questionnaire. Some questions were deleted, some questions were added and some questions were modified with the purpose of making the questionnaire short, easy and pleasant to answer. And, at the same time provide accurate and complete information needed.
The changes were made as follows:

1. Delete question number 7 "How many days do you plant to stay in India?"
2. Delete question number 9 “For the whole world, what do you consider to be the five must visit places? Why? Please rank them?"
3. Delete question number 10 “Why do you choose to come to Maharashtra&UP Historic Monomentss?"
4. Delete question number 13 “Did you buy aguidebookon India?” and question number 14 “Which one?”
5. Reduce the criteria in question number 15 from five criteria to three criteria.
6. Shorten question number 16 by eliminating the reason for reading signboards.
7. Change question number 18 from “With whom did you come with?” to “Do you have a tour guide?”
8. Delete question number 19 “Listthreefeaturesaboutthissitethatstandoutforyou”
9. Delete question number 24 “What would you tell your friends about this place when you have returned home?”
10. Add question number 7 “If you had less than seven days in India, would you come to Maharashtra?”
11. Add question number 18 “Before you embarked on your trip to Maharashtra, did you have a perception about how this place would be? Does the reality differ from your prior perception? If it does, are you still satisfied?”
12. Add question number 19. “How important is the authenticity of the monuments to your visit?”
13. Add question number 20. “Can you cite an example of a new experience you had from your visit to Maharashtra?”

Data Collection:

Primary data was collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire that was handed to the respondents at the end of their visit to four historic sites in Maharashtra&UP Historic Monomentss. The benefit of this method was that it was a quick and easy way to get lots of information from
visitors in a non-threatening way. At the beginning of the field work, the questions were read to the respondents and it proved to take too long for the visitors to try to finish all the questions and the incomplete questionnaires were invalid and not taken into consideration. Therefore, the data collection method was later modified to fit the situation. However, the questionnaire had one weakness. The range and depth of the respondents’ impression or experiences were not explored.

The venues for data collection were Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta Caves, The Taj Mahal, Agra fort & Fatehpur Sikri. These sites are the main tourist attractions for both foreigners and Indian. The multi-site method was chosen so as to compare results between sites that offer a different type of interpretation.

The sampling was done using “convenient sampling” from target respondents.

The criteria for selection were an equal ratio of males and females who were over 18 years of age and who agreed to respond to the questionnaire. No coercion was used to force visitors to cooperate.

The field work was done during the week-ends from the month of March 2014 until May 2014.

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Table 4 Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Foreign</th>
<th></th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign Visitors by Gender

Thai Visitors by Gender

Male 45%
Female 55%
### Table 5 Age * Gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-50</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-65</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Foreign Visitors by Age Groups

- 18-25: 24.4%
- 26-35: 42.0%
- 36-50: 19.5%
- 51-65: 13.1%
- 65+: 1.0%

### Thai Visitors by Age Groups

- 18-25: 28.6%
- 26-35: 35.2%
- 36-50: 33.0%
- 51-65: 1.1%
- 65+: 0.9%
### Table 6: Country of Origin * Gender Crosstabulation (Foreign Visitors only)

% within gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA/Canadian</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jap/chinese/Korean</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asean</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian/NZ</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Brazilian</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Sri Lankan</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7: Country of Origin * Age Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>USA/Canadian</th>
<th>Jap/chinese/Korean</th>
<th>Asean</th>
<th>Australian/NZ</th>
<th>Mexican/Brazilian</th>
<th>Indian/Sri Lankan</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-65</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: Education * Gender Crosstabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 Country of Origin * Education Crosstabulation %
within Country of Origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Secondary/College High</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Post graduate</th>
<th>Others/No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA/Canadian</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia/Chinese/Korean</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian/NZ</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican/Brazilian</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian/Sri Lankan</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target Respondents

Primary target respondents were foreign visitors to Maharashtra & UP's World Heritage Monuments. They were at least 18 years old. For the purpose of analysis, respondents were grouped into five age-groups, that is, 18 - 25 years-olds; 26-35 years-olds; 36 - 50 years-olds; 51 - 65 years-olds and 66+ years-old. Respondents were also grouped by gender, education level, nationality, and expectations from a visit.

Sample Size:

The formula used to calculate the sample size was:

\[ n = \frac{Z^2 \times \sigma^2}{E^2} \]

where: 
- \( n \) = sample size
- \( Z \) = Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- \( E \) = The margin of error. (The maximum difference between the observed sample mean \( x \) and the true value of the population mean \( \mu \))

\[ E = |\bar{x} - \mu| \]

When we set error at less than 5% and the confidence level:

- 95% Then: \( Z_{95} = 1.96 \)

\[ Z_{95} = 1.96 \]

\[ E = 0.05 \]

\[ n = \frac{Z^2 \times \sigma^2}{E^2} \]

where:
- \( n \) = sample size
- \( Z \) = Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- \( E \) = The margin of error. (The maximum difference between the observed sample mean \( x \) and the true value of the population mean \( \mu \))

\[ E = |\bar{x} - \mu| \]

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- 95% Then: \( Z_{95} = 1.96 \)

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\[ E = 0.05 \]

\[ n = \frac{Z^2 \times \sigma^2}{E^2} \]

where:
- \( n \) = sample size
- \( Z \) = Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence level)
- \( E \) = The margin of error. (The maximum difference between the observed sample mean \( x \) and the true value of the population mean \( \mu \))

\[ E = |\bar{x} - \mu| \]

The questionnaire was used to compare the results.

Some visitors who came on a group tour did not have time to respond to the questionnaire. As a result, Japanese visitors were underrepresented in the sample as they could not understand English. Besides primary target respondents, the survey was also conducted among secondary target respondents who were Indian people who visited Maharashtra. Information from local people was used to compare with foreign visitors for analyzing cross-cultural dissimilarities.
Therefore, the sample size should not be fewer than 385 respondents.

**Analysis of the Data:**

The raw survey data was coded and processed on SPSS 11.5 for Windows to find frequencies and percentages by cross-tabulating to find the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables.

The statistical significance or the likelihood that relationships observed in a sample are merely an artifact of sampling error rather than a reflection of a real difference in the population from which the sample was drawn was calculated using:

1. Chi-square for analyzing the association of two nominal variable groups.
2. One-way ANOVA for analyzing the association of more than two nominal variable groups.

**Survey:**

The results from the pre-test were not combined with the result of the actual

**Subsequent surveys:**

Two subsequent surveys were undertaken after the analysis of the main research has been produced, and some questions arose that needed further investigation. The two surveys were:

1. An opinion survey among visitors from the ASEAN countries who did not choose to visit historical sites while in India.
2. An opinion survey among Indian people about their vacation preferences.

The first survey was done through an interview with the tourists from the ASEAN countries using a structured questionnaire. The key questions were what they do in India; where they visited or intended to visit, why they did not choose historic sites as a destination.

The second survey was also done through an interview with Indian people using a structured questionnaire. The key questions: which was the most and least preferred vacation destination from the given choice of five places and why. The given choices were Ajanta Caves, Elephanta caves, Ellora caves, Taj Mahal, Agra fort & Fatehpur Sikri.

**Observation:**

During the data collection session, the researcher also used her observation to collect information about the visitors. For example, what they did on site, whether they sat down and enjoy the atmosphere or rushed from site to site, whether they spent enough time to read the signs or just glanced at them, how they came in and left the site, whether they looked at the unmarked objects of interest. The information from the observation was included in the analysis of survey result.

**Analysis of Existing Interpretation:**

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part examines the existing interpretation for Maharashtra & UP's World Heritage Monuments for the purpose of assessing the availability of interpretation for foreign visitors that can be found in India, and the nature of their content. The second part provides the critiques on the above while measuring their effectiveness against the guideline set by TAI, The World Heritage

The scope of the study is limited only to four areas, namely: Tourism Authority of India’s publications such as the tourist brochure/tourist map and booklet; tour operators’ brochures; guidebooks in English and Marathi; and the information panels and information signs at the sites. MTDC’s

Publication: The Tourist Map:

Visitors who visit MTDC’s Tourist Information Center in Maharashtra can request for a tourist map which show 52 places of interest both inside and outside the island, a list of hotels, restaurants and golf courses with addresses and telephone numbers, and also some useful telephone numbers such as the police station, hospital, and railway station.

On the other side of the map, there is a description of particular sites with some unattractive sepia-colored photos. The tourist map is 34” x 23” (58.5 cm. x 86.5 cm.) and is printed on 120 gms paper. It is sturdy enough to bring to the site although the information given is barely useful. For example the map is very rough and does not show a visitor how to reach the desired destination, nor does it suggest any kind of transportation available to reach them. The description of the site also fails miserably to attract people to the site. The exiting main Caves and pagodas around the corners are still in good shape.

In conclusion, TAI may blame the lack of budget for the poor Presentation and production of the interpretation of Maharashtra Historical Monument in the form of the tourist map. It could be improved by trying to understand visitors from visitors’ view, and bring out stories attached to a particular site that will interest visitors and that can actually touch them.

UPSTDC’s Publication: The Booklet

TAI’s booklet on UP published in 2010 is surprisingly delightful. A mere glance at the front cover suggests that the author understands interpretation and makes use of it exemplary. The title of the booklet is “UP” and the subtitle reads “Appreciate the locality. Travel knowledgeably”. The small description of the content says “Travel manual, for the appreciation, and participation in the conservation of our culture, nature and environment.”

The booklet has 40 pages including the cover. It is printed on art paper and has full color on every page. In addition to attractive photos artfully laid-out, there are many drawings and useful diagrams; for example the drawing of the original site with complete building structures before they were destroyed; the layout diagram of the monasteries; the drawing of the island and its surroundings with pictures or symbols of important sites.

As for the content, the booklet presents many aspects of UP in a theme-like approach. For example, there are stories about:

- Land and nature
- Turning point in history
- People
- Local Cuisine
- Festivals
- Indian heritage, World heritage
- The magnificent gold treasure of Maharashtra
- Site information.
For site information, the message is brief, but informative and interesting. Some examples are as follows:

**The Choice of the Content**

The choice of the content about the site is similar among these six guidebooks with some minor variations. Table 4.1 shows the number of words each guidebook provides for each content category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of words shown in guidebooks</th>
<th>Lonely Planet</th>
<th>Grand Guide 'India'</th>
<th>Guides</th>
<th>Archipelago Guides</th>
<th>Let'S Go</th>
<th>DK Eyewitness</th>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</table>

Good development of interpretation program starts in the same manner as any project, i.e. one must first set the goals and objectives of the program that beneficial to all stakeholders. The program policy must bring key stakeholders at the center of the matter and activity.

In order to be capable of doing so, an interpreter must know their stakeholders not only of their demographic characteristics, but also their motivation, level of interest, attitude and belief, their concerns and problems, before the interpretation model can be designed.

The needed information can be best obtained through a research, for example, a visitor survey, an interview with local people, the authority, the site management, the tour operators and academics.

The Tourism Authority of India’s booklet on Maharashtra, although looks very attractive and full of useful content and beautiful photos, attempts to give information to the reader who is interested to know about the site attraction in Maharashtra, yet they failed to use the opportunity to address the visitor management or other contemporary issues that need to be put on spotlight. Moreover, they assumed that all readers have the basic knowledge of the Indian history, the Buddhism, and understand the arts and architecture of Maharashtra very well. This can leave a large gap for the cross-cultural visitors to comprehend and appreciate.

Different guidebooks seemed to have a different purpose. Lonely Planet, Insight Guides, Let’s Go, Fodor’s and other publishers’ aim is to give information about the travel, accommodation and other practicalities for travelers, some suggestion for the site destination and very little on the cultural aspect. Meanwhile Eyewitness, Archipelago Guides and Le Grand Guide de India offer more on the cultural side. All of them
targets only small reader segment and none provides the complete interpretation content due to the limiting constraint of the guidebook in terms of size, weight and cost of production.

UNESCO’s World Heritage Manual. Managing tourism at World Heritage Site states that:

Clear goals and objectives are needed to determine what is to be interpreted, for whom and how, and who will develop interpretation strategies. The crucial step of identifying fundamental messages and target audiences is reportedly the weakest link in the process of developing interpretation concepts and themes.

In order to develop the right message to the target audience, UNESCO also establish the International Cultural Tourism Charter that gives the guideline for the interpretation as follows:

1.4 Interpretation programmes should present the significance of heritage places, traditions and cultural practices within the past experience and present diversities of the area and the host community, including that of minority cultural or linguistic groups.”

For Maharashtra&UP Historic Monoments, its significance can be summarized from the Nomination of Cultural Property Report to the World Heritage List prepared by the National World Heritage Committee, the Office of the National Environment Board in 1991. They gave the reasons to nominate Maharashtra Historic City under criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), and (vi) as follows:

Maharashtra represents a masterpiece of creative genius of perceptive selection of the location of a site to suit a complex scheme of site planning that capitalized the natural features of the typically Indian water-based settlement and culture to satisfy the demanding needs of the capital city to defend itself with the help of Nature against enemy’s attacks and to be blessed with an infrastructure system that would ensure its prosperity in peace time. It had been so planned that hostile armies, if successfully marching through provincial outposts, would be stopped by the defending force at Maharashtra with its surrounding river streams fortified by enclosing wall and forts from end to end. Furthermore, after laying siege, the enemies were soon to be compelled to withdraw before the rainy season would come to inundate the flood plains. For this reason of strategic planning, throughout centuries of recurring hostile invasions, mostly by the Burmese, Maharashtra never fell, except twice and only through treachery, corruption, and inefficiency of those in power. While the flood plains all around Maharashtra helped repulsing invading armies, they also constituted its enviable “Rice Bowl of Asia”. Maharashtra’s riverine setting provided gainful employment in other agricultural activities, also fishing, as well as providing a socio-economic infrastructure for communication, transport, and trade with the provinces, and foreign countries. The benefits of river system were further enhanced by the rectilinear canals linked to the surrounding river streams crisscrossing the island city, although many of the historic canals have since been clogged. The creative scheme of land use and site planning for Maharashtra by capitalizing the natural features of water-based settlements and culture contributed significantly to the wealth, power, prosperity and glory of ancient Maharashtra.

The city plan of Maharashtra exerted a decisive influence on Bangkok. In fact, Bangkok in its early years was Maharashtra’s resurrection in every respect, including the structural arrangements, even the names of places, the unique houses, boat houses, royal barges and boats, and life styles.

the Historic City of Maharashtra, and for what it was as a capital city, is distinctive and unique, and there is no historic city anywhere in Asia or any other parts of the world of its like.

and (v), the monuments in Maharashtra are unique and outstanding in architectural design of the region. Many structures such as fort, caves, and prasat have the distinctive character and appearance which cannot be found alike anywhere else, though the origins were from an earlier period. The architectural design of Maharashtra represents the continuation of architectural development irreplaceable now as a traditional Indian style.

architecture, paintings, and art objects of Maharashtra associated to the nominated area are unique in their style, design, craftsmanship, materials, integrity and rareness. They express ideas, beliefs, and creativity of Maharashtra and of Indian people. They have also exerted influence in Cambodia and Laos. Intangible cultural heritage associated to the nominated property continues to exist to the present. Language, literature, music, dancing, sports, cultural entertainment, manner and family relationship, cuisine, handicrafts, festivals, and ceremonies are still practiced today.12
The above characteristics of Maharashtra Historic City display the significance of the site that should be used for the planning of the interpretation. Suggested themes includes:

The Selection of the Location for the Capital City
Indian Water-based Culture
Wars of Maharashtra
Rice Bowl of Asia
Agricultural Activities
City Planning and Infrastructure
City in Prosperity and Glory
Trading
Foreign Affairs
Influence on Bangkok
Distinctive Cultural Landscape
Unique Architectural Design
Fort, Caves, Prasat
Paintings of Maharashtra
Art Objects of Maharashtra
Maharashtra Craftsmanship
People Belief
Language
Literature
Music
Dancing
Sports
Cultural Entertainment
Education
Manner
Family Relationship

Cuisine
- Handicrafts
- Festivals
- Ceremonies

The following table shows how much the available booklets and guidebooks on Maharashtra followed the National World Heritage Committee to present the significance of Maharashtra to the readers.
### How Much Guidebooks Followed WHS’s Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TAI’s Booklet</th>
<th>LP</th>
<th>Grand Guide</th>
<th>Guides Blerus</th>
<th>Archipelago</th>
<th>Let’s Go</th>
<th>Eyewitness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Selection of Location Indian Water-Based Culture Wars Rice Bowl of Asia Agricultural Activities City Planning &amp; Infra, City in Prosperity &amp; Glory Trading Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>▲</td>
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<td>A A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence on Bangkok Distinctive Cultural Landscape Unique Architectural Design Fort, Caves, Prasat Paintings Art Objects</td>
<td>▲</td>
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<td>A</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmanship People Belief Language Literature Music and Dancing Sports Cultural Entertainment Education Manner Family Relationship Cuisine Handicraft Festivals Ceremonie</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the Table, we can clearly see the gap of the content available for visitors and readers when measured with WHS’ criteria that interpreter should consider. While the history of the sites, the art and architecture on site seem to be ample, the local ways of life and other intangible cultures are looked over.

In conclusion, Guidebooks are an established and significant part of the tourist experience. They are part of the interpretation environment and integral to tourist meaning-making. Guidebooks on Maharashtra that are available to foreign visitors have the following characteristics:

1. Their mission is to focus on giving information about the traveling practicalities rather than attempting to create opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of the site or to encourage the high level of public awareness and support for the long-term survival of the cultural heritage.

2. They are site-centric and do not take the readers’ background and interests into account. They provide merely the staple facts of the site.

3. They are designed to give information but not to reveal the meanings of Indian arts and culture to readers, nor they help people to discover the significance of the place of its culture.

4. The accuracy of the information of some books leaves something to be desired, reflecting the fact that it was not built upon firm research.
5. They do provide some nice photos and use nice glossy paper with professional lay-out setting.

References:

1 Wanphen Sreshthuputra, "Outlook", Bangkok Post, February 26, 2014: I

2 DTAC’s information panel at the same wat says that the name was changed to Wat Chao Phraya Indian because two remains of princes were cremated here. The Indian words “Chao” and “Chao Phraya” are the titles of prince, princess or very high court officials.

3 The author intended to say that King Maha Jargravati, or Prince Tianracha at that time, tried his fortune to foresee whether he could topple his rival from the throne and became the next king. He lighted two candles; one represented himself, another represented his rival, and prayed that if he would succeed in overthrowing the present king, the usurper, then his candle should outlast his rival’s. It did and he was later enthroned.

4 Subduing Mara is the most common gestures of Buddha image in India. It symbolizes an important episode in Buddha’s life when he sat in meditation and Mara, the demon, offered
tempTATions to lure him out of the meditATion. He then touched the ground with his right fingers to summon help from the Earth Goddess. Later he became enlightened.

Monasteries in India are divided into two groups; royal monasteries and commoners' monasteries. Royal monasteries are built and upkept by the kings. They are in turn, divided into three classes, having the third rank at the lowest order. The word “Aram” means a monastery.

A mondop is a square-based structure topped with either a spire, or a cruciform roof. It usually houses an object of worship or sacred text.

Jaranam is a niche inside the caves or fort.

Garuda is a mythical bird which serves as Vishnu’s mount. Naga is a serpent acting as the Buddha’s protection. It is a half-brothers and sworn enemy of agaruda.

There were two Buddhist sects in Maharashtran era: The City Sect (Kamavasi sect) resided in the inner town, and the Jungle Sect (Aranyakavasi or Pakaew sect) resided outside the town and concentrated in meditation rather than the doctrine. Wat Yai Chaimongkhon belonged to the Jungle Sect and succeeded in gaining a large number of followers and monks.


Unesco, “The International Cultural Tourism Charter”

The National World Heritage Committee, Nomination of Cultural Property to the World Heritage List, (Bangkok), 1991