Chapter 6

Major Findings
The data related to preferences and perceptions of tourists have been analysed in the last two chapters. The analyses have yielded some important results, based on which strategies for marketing NE as a tourist destination can be taken up. The important findings are mentioned and discussed in the following part.

6.1 Factors Considered by Tourists while Choosing a Destination:

It may be concluded from the analyses that the factors mentioned in paragraph 4.4 are given more or less equal emphasis by the tourists while evaluating a destination. However, from paragraph 4.4.1 it is observed that the following variables are given more preference over the rest.

a) Availability of Suitable Accommodation
b) Cost of Accommodation and Transportation.
c) Safety / Law and Order Situation at the Destination
d) Drinking Water
e) Main Tourist Attraction
f) Chance
g) Basic Nature of the Place

Least importance is given to the variable Area of Interest by the tourists while evaluating a destination.

Other 12 variables record equal importance at the time of evaluation of a destination for visit.

6.2 Most Important Factors for Positioning a Destination:

Two mutually exclusive broad groups of variables are extracted from the raw variables using factor analysis. These groups, which are also known as principal factors are named as Infrastructure and External Influence.
6.2.1 Infrastructure:

Principal factor *Infrastructure* consists of 9 variables, which are mentioned below. The loading against each raw variable are also shown in italics within brackets. Out of these variables *Area of Interest* was excluded from further consideration due to very low loading (0.297) in the Rotated Component Matrix. Other 8 variables are,

a) Transport to the Destination (0.73)

b) Transport within the Destination (0.75)

c) Availability of Suitable Accommodation (0.73)

d) Cost of Accommodation and Transportation (0.65)

e) Safety (and Law and Order Situation) (0.72)

f) Infrastructure (from respondents' point of view) (0.78)

g) Surrounding Places (0.74)

h) Time Available with the Tourist (0.62)

Figure 6.1 depicts the dispersion of the scores for *Infrastructure* against various segments.

![Figure 6.1: Comprehensive Scores for Infrastructure Across the Segments](image-url)
It is seen clearly from the Figure that the scores for Infrastructure varies across different segments. Coloured legends at the right of the diagram indicate the intensity of the score. No segment is seen in the green area at the top of the Figure, indicating none with Very High score. However, maximum spots are seen in the High category. Some of the segments scored at Moderate level also. This variation of score justifies segmentation of the tourists on the basis of the categories mentioned above.

However, the difference between “Male” and “Female” respondents are very thin and thus the segmentation would not serve any purpose. Likewise, the different Age groups between 25 years to 50 years are having scores on Infrastructure around the same range. In case of Income, no two consecutive groups have created a cluster. For Idea, “Missionary” and “Mass Tourists”; and “Explorer”, “Adventurer” and “Holidaymaker” have scored almost at the same levels. On the basis of “Background” except for “Professional Graduates” all other groups have scored within a close range. For “Visit-wise” differentiation, the respondents with “more than 8 visits” have scored pretty consistently.

6.2.2 External Influence:

Factor analysis clearly assigned the following variables into one principal factor, which is christened as External Influence. The variables that constitute External Influence along with the loading are shown below. 11 variables are clubbed together under this principal factor.

a) Drinking Water (0.58)
b) Main Tourist Attraction (0.54)
c) Chance (0.64)
d) Local People / Culture (0.58)
e) Number of Tourists Visiting (0.74)
f) Distance from Origin (0.63)
g) Recommendations of Earlier Visitor (0.57)
h) Recommendation of Tour Operators (0.67)
i) Weather (0.56)
j) Proximity to a Place Visited (0.67)
k) Basic Nature (0.53)

Figure 6.2 shows the dispersions of the comprehensive scores calculated for External Influence.

As seen from the Figure, the dispersion of the scores for External Influence is very high across the groups. The commonness found in case of Infrastructure is not present in this factor. However, the groups based on Background of the respondents, which are away from the origin of X-axis in the Figure, and the Age groups in the middle of the axis are having quite uniform scores. Therefore, the clubbing of groups as suggested in case of the factor Infrastructure, is not applicable here.

6.3 Segmentation of Tourists:

The analysis indicates many meaningful segmentation bases for tourists, which could be utilised for development of positioning strategies for NE.
6.3.1 Origin:

Origin of the respondents can be used to create different segments.

a. The sensitivity towards the factors, *External Influence*, and *Infrastructure* are significantly different for domestic and foreign tourists. As described in Table 4.17C, the difference is more for the factor *External Influence* (reference paragraph 4.4.5.1).

b. Choice of Package Tour within the destination is significantly related to the origin of the tourist. Preference towards Turnkey Package Tour also bears relationship with the origin of the tourist as well (reference paragraph 4.5.1).

c. Influence of media as image builders is dependent on the origin of the tourist. The tests signify different levels of influence for the groups based on origin, for different media types, namely, Word-of-mouth, Travel brochure, Print Publication, Electronic media like TV/Radio, Tour Operator, and Overall Knowledge of the tourist (reference paragraph 4.6.2).

6.3.2 Sex:

Sex of the respondent does not have significantly different effects on the variables of interest. Hence sex may not be used as a demographic factor for segmentation of tourists. At the same time the effects of various tools of communication do have significant relationship with the sex of the respondent.

a. The difference of the importance level of the principal factors for the segments based on sex is too thin to be considered significant (reference paragraph 4.4.5.2).

b. Choice of Package Tour, either within the destination or on a turnkey basis does not bear any relationship with the sex of the tourists (reference paragraph 4.5.3).
c. However, the influence of the media as tools of building image of a destination does have significant relationship with the sex of the tourist (reference paragraph 4.6.1).

6.3.3 Age:

Age plays vital roles in determining the preferences of the tourist.

a. Age carries significant relationship with the scores of the respondents for the following individual variables. (Reference paragraph 4.4.5.3).

- Transportation to the Destination,
- Transportation within the Destination
- Main Tourist Attractions,
- Chance,
- Infrastructure
- Number of tourists Visiting the Place,
- Distance from the Place of origin,
- Word-of-mouth,
- Recommendation of Tour Operator,
- Weather of the Destination,
- Proximity to a Visited Place
- Basic Nature of the Place

However, no significant relationship is found between the age of the respondents and the variables mentioned below.

- Drinking Water,
- Surrounding Places,
- Local People

b. Different levels of preference for the principal factors External Influence and Infrastructure have been observed across the Age groups. The levels can be clustered into 3 groups, i.e., "Below 25 Years", "From 25 to 50 Years" and "Above 50 Years" (reference Figure 4.9, and paragraph 4.4.5.3).
c. The influence of different media types over the three Age groups is significantly different. This is found to be true in case of the respective populations also. This implies that all tourists grouped on the basis of age may have different reaction to the media types (except for the media type Word-of-mouth), while formulating an image about a destination.

6.3.4 Income:

Tourists may be differentiated on the basis of Income. Due to difficulties in conversion and comparison, foreign tourists are also measured in the same Income groups as the domestic ones. At the same time it is recognised that there remains difference in the disposable income between both the classes of tourists as they are earning in different currencies. Also, the social class enjoyed by a domestic tourist at a particular level of income would definitely not be the same with a foreign one.

However, this grouping does not signify large difference for preferences for different factors. The preference levels for the two principal factors indicate 5 Income groups with different characteristics. These groups are “Below Rs. 5000/-”, “Between Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 8000/-”, “Between Rs. 8000/- and Rs. 10000/-”, “Between Rs. 10000/- and Rs. 15000/-”, and “Above Rs. 15000/-”. The groups “Between Rs. 5000/- and Rs. 18000/-” and “Between Rs. 8000/- and Rs. 10000/-” are most sensitive towards the principal factors. And other three groups possess more or less the same level of sensitivity towards these factors. (Reference: paragraph 4.4.5.4)

a. Income carries significant relationship with the following individual variables.

- Safety
- Drinking Water
- Main Tourist Attractions
- Chance
• Number of Tourists Visiting the Place
• Recommendation of Earlier Visitors
• Recommendation of Tour Operators
• Proximity to a Place visited for other Reasons and
• Basic Nature of the Place

b. Choice towards Package Tours and Income of the tourists are not dependent. Hence, Income does not signify anything regarding the choice of the respondents towards Package Tour.

c. Influences of different media types for building image of a destination are not different for all Income groups. Only "Tour Operator" possesses significantly different means of scores across the Income groups. Within the media "Tour Operator", the following Income groups are found to have significantly different mean scores (for the population).

- "Between Rs. 8000/- and Rs. 10000/-", and "Between Rs. 10000/- and Rs. 15000/-".
- "Between Rs. 8000/- and Rs. 10000/-", and "Above Rs. 15000/-"

6.3.5. Education:
Education too does not play important role in segmenting the tourists on the basis of sensitivity towards the principal factors. Only two distinct clusters can be seen in this regard. They are "Professional Graduates" and all "Other" (Reference: paragraph 4.4.5.5).

6.3.6 Profession:
Respondents divided on the basis of their Profession offer different levels of importance for the principal factors. However, the groups "Service Holders" and "Self Employed" are having almost equal scores for the factors. The scores for the group "Others" are away from these two variable.
a. Profession and preference for Package Tour do not bear any relationship. Therefore, the variable Profession may not be used as demographic criteria to segment the tourists.

6.3.7 Frequency of Visit:

Tourists may be divided meaningfully on the basis of another physical criteria—Frequency of Visit or "Level of Exposure", which signifies the number of visits made by the tourists to various destinations. Many factors are significantly related to this variable.

a. Four distinct segments of tourists might be created taking exposure level as the base. They are namely, "Up to 7 visits", "8 to 12 visits", "13 to 20 visits", "21 and more visits". First two groups ("up to 3" and "4 to 7") were clubbed together for the Chi square analysis mentioned in the following paragraph.

b. 18 out of 20 individual variables tested, found to have significant relationship with the Level of Exposure of the tourists. The two variables for which significant relationships are not found are "Area of Interest" and available "Time".

c. There is a clear upward trend of the mean scores of the respondents along with the level of exposure for the raw variables. However, this trend is found to be slightly reversed for the group with highest exposure level. The levels of preference for the two principal factors also follow the same trend. (Reference paragraph 4.4.5.6.)

d. Choice of Package Tour to the destination and Level of Exposure are significantly related to each other. In fact, choice of Package Tour is a dependent variable of the Level of Exposure of the tourists (reference paragraph 4.5.5).
e. Media types “Travel Brochures”, “Print Publication”, electronic media like “TV/Radio”, “Tour Operator”, and “Overall Knowledge”, which help creating a position for a tourist destination do have significant differences in the respective population mean scores for the groups based on the Level of Exposure. That is, if the tourists are segmented on the basis of the Level of Exposure, the influence of the individual media type over different groups of tourists would be significantly different.

6.3.8 Idea of Vacation:

Psychological factor Idea of Perfect Vacation, which also indicates the purpose of the visits, can be used as a criteria for meaningful segmentation of the tourist into homogeneous groups. The segments thus created may be named as

- Missionary
- Mass Tourist
- Conservationist
- Explorer
- Adventurer and
- Holidaymaker

a. The preference levels of the groups for the two principal factors have created two distinct clusters. The groups “Missionary” and “Mass Tourists” with medium comprehensive scores for both the principal factors create one cluster, whereas, the groups “Explorer”, “Adventurer” and “Holidaymaker” create another cluster towards the high end of the scales. The group “Conservationist” cannot be put into any of the clusters. The scores for the factor Infrastructure for this group is just around the other three groups mentioned later.

The groups in the first cluster do not prefer high level of infrastructure in the destination, nor they want high level of motivation from external sources to make the decision regarding a destination. The second cluster
needs high level of motivation from external sources (*External Influence*) and also high presence of the variables under the principal factor *Infrastructure*.

b. With the exception of the media type "Word-of-mouth", all other types of media measured in the study do bear significant difference in their effects across various groups based on Idea. Thus the effects of various media for the segments mentioned above are different. Therefore, the media would not work the same way for all the segments based on Idea. However, this is not applicable in case of the media type "Word-of-mouth".

6.4 Perceptual Position of NE as a Tourist Destination:

Inflow of tourists into NE, both foreign and domestic, is very low. And for many states this is negligible. The current perceptual position of NE is found to be very discouraging in general and across various segments in particular.

6.4.1 General perception on NE is just moderate in the 0-9-point scale for both the principal factors. The perception on *Infrastructure* is quite low in the scale (4.415).

a. If the perceptual position of NE is compared with the preferred levels of these factors, gap is found to be present between perception and preference. The gap is narrow in case of *External Influence*, while the same is wide for *Infrastructure*.

6.4.2 Segment-wise findings are mentioned below. A general trend is observed regarding the level of perception on both the principal factors. The difference between the preference level and perception regarding NE for the factor *Infrastructure* is quite high across all segments, while the same on the principal factor *External Influence* is very thin, and in some cases the perceptual scores are just above the preferential scores.
a. Domestic respondents are found to have almost the same level of perception as their level of preference for External Influence. However, for the factor Infrastructure the level of perception is far below the level of preference.

b. The level of perception of those who have visited NE differs from those who have not been to NE. The gap is very wide between the level of perception and preference for the respondents who possess the first-hand experience regarding NE. However, the difference is positive for the factor External Influence for the group consisting of the persons who have not visited NE. Likewise, for this group the difference between perception and preference for the factor Infrastructure is also comparatively narrow (reference: Figure 5.4).

c. The groups based on Age of the respondents also bear wide gap between perception and preference. The difference for principal factor External Influence is very small, specially for the respondents of the age group "Above 50 Years". The same can be observed also for the respondents of "Below 25 Years" of age. But for other segments the differences for both the principal factors are large. (Reference: perceptual map at Figure 5.5.)

d. For all segments based on Income, the difference between preference and perception for the factor External Influence is very thin. In fact, for the group with Income "Above Rs. 15000/-" per month the comprehensive score for perception on External Influence is slightly more than the preferential score. However, for all groups the perceptual scores on Infrastructure are much lower than the preference levels. The group mentioned above singularly shows high level of perception (red bubble in perceptual map at Figure 5.6) on both the factors. All other groups have been clustering around with moderate values in the perceptual map.

e. From the scores based on Frequency of Visit it is observed that two consecutive groups at the lower end of the scale namely, "Up to
and "4 to 7" register slightly higher perceptual scores than the preference for the factor External Influence. This trend can be seen for other groups also except for the group "above 21". However, for the factor Infrastructure, the preferential scores are always at a much higher level than the perceptual scores for all the groups.

f. Perception on NE has also been found out for the segments based on Idea of Vacation. The scores across the 6 groups are lower than the preferential scores for the factor Infrastructure. The cluster of groups consisting of "Missionary" and "Mass Tourist" behave little differently, as their perceptual scores for External Influence are higher than the preferential scores. However, in case of other groups this is not seen.

6.5 Current Position of NE

NE's position in relation to other well-known Indian tourist spots is found to be encouraging. For the winter season NE enjoys the 3rd position (jointly with Jaipur and Kanyakumari) while for the summer season it occupies the 5th position. Interestingly, NE has occupied better standing than the famous destination Goa for summer season.

6.6 Level of Awareness about NE

Of the total respondents interviewed, only 60% knew about the Onehorned-rhino of Kaziranga, 44% were aware about Cherrapunjee, while 41% knew about Kamakhya.

a. 95% of the Domestic respondents said "Yes" to Kaziranga, while 93% said so in case of Kamakhya. The Awareness level for Cherrapunjee, Tawang and Jatinga are also fair with more than 75%.

b. Many of the foreign respondents, who had chosen to respond, were not aware about these attractions of NE. One-third of the respondents said "Yes" to Kaziranga. The response rate is very low from the foreign respondents, which can be attributed to the low level of awareness about NE.
6.7 Other Findings

6.7.1 The daily budget of the tourist is significantly related to the income. The direction of the relationship is positive. However, the correlation coefficient is only 0.333, which signifies a weak relationship.

6.7.2 While on tour foreign tourists do spend more per person per day compared to their domestic counterpart. The average spending of foreign tourist per day is around Rs. 700/- while the same for domestic tourist is around Rs.450/-.

6.7.3 The effect of Law and Order situation of NE on the level of perception is negligible in general. The highest effect is shown by the age group "Above 50 years" (with a percentage of change of 19.17). The income-wise segment "Above Rs. 15000/- pm" is the next to follow with a change 12.70%.

6.7.4 Preference to Quiet Place is significantly related to the Idea of Vacation of the tourist. In fact, the preference to quiet place may be a dependent variable of the Idea.

6.7.5 Role of Tour Operator:

The role of Tour Operators as potential promoter of destinations was examined at various points in Chapters 4 and 5. The findings thus gathered are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

6.7.5.1 The influence of Tour Operators while making a decision was found to be minimum in comparison to other vehicles of influence namely, Family and Friends, and National Tourism Organisation (NTO).

6.7.5.2 "Recommendation of Tour Operator" scored an average of 5.86 in the 0-9-point scale, which is lower than the average score (6.68) for the variable "Recommendation of Earlier Visitor".
6.7.5.3 Tour Operators play an important role in overall image creation for a destination. The mean score for influence of Tour Operator on image creation is 5.87, which is more than other media types, Word-of-mouth and Travel Brochure, but less than other media types Print Publication, TV/Radio, and Overall Knowledge of the respondents.

6.7.6 Word-of-mouth and Destination:

The role of Word-of-mouth is also ascertained in promoting a destination. However, contrary to the standard belief that word-of-mouth plays an important role in services promotion, it is observed that the role of Word-of-mouth in destination marketing is limited. Respondents overwhelmingly voted for their own knowledge while processing a destination decision. However, if the influence of Word-of-mouth is compared with Tour Operator and NTOs, the variable Family and Friends (which indicates Word-of-mouth in different terms) scores the highest response from both Domestic (74%) and Foreign (50%) respondents.

6.7.7 Influence of Reference on Tourists:

The variables for measurement of influence of reference on the tourist in the process of a destination decision have shown varied effects. Family and Friends (which can be termed as Word-of-mouth) scores the highest response in general, which is followed by the scores of NTO and Tour Operator.

6.7.7.1 Origin-wise division of the respondents shows that Family and Friends scores the highest response for both the groups. However, foreign tourists tend to depend more on NTO and Tour Operator than their domestic counterparts. Thus the foreign tourists' dependence on Family and Friends are lesser than the domestic ones.

6.7.7.2 The segments on the basis of Level of Exposure do bear significant relationships with the level of dependence on these three vehicles of influence. The reliance on NTO increases with the increase in number of visits by the tourists. On the other hand, the dependence on Family and Friends reduces
with the increase in the exposure level. The dependence on Tour Operators increases with the increase in the number of visit.

6.7.8 Accommodation Tourists Seek: Economy Accommodation is the most popular accommodation form for the tourists across all segments of tourists.

On the basis of the above findings certain position for NE can be determined, details of which along with the strategies to achieve this position are discussed in the next Chapter.