Chapter 3

Methodology Followed for the Study
To fulfill the objectives of the study mentioned in Chapter 4, a detailed analysis of the preferences and perception of tourists and prospective tourists were to be carried out.

As the first step of the study, tourists' level of preferences against certain variables in selecting a destination is to be determined through a sample survey. In order to find out the most important criteria in selecting a destination, the variables are to be compressed using factor analysis. In the process, few principal factors would be derived. The respondents are then segmented on the basis of classification data gathered from the survey. Respondents' preferences are to be determined for the principal factors against the segments as the next step of the study. Segments with significant differences in preferences are to be taken up for determining the tourists' perceptions on NE. The segments with minimum difference between the preference level and the perception on NE (against the principal factors) to be selected as the most feasible segments for targeting and positioning of NE. The process can be summed up by the following Flow Chart.

1. Determine the level of preference of tourists while selecting a destination for visit through a sample survey.

2. Determine the most important ones from the factors determined in the first step.

3. Divide the respondents into various segments using classification data. And determine the profile of each of the segments.

4. Determine the level of perception of the tourists (respondents) on NE for the segments with significant difference on the factors under study.

5. Match these perception levels with the levels of preference derived earlier.

6. Target the segments where the gap between preference and perception is minimum for positioning NE.
The variables that affect the ultimate selection of a destination by the tourists and the profile of the tourists are to be found out by a consumer survey, which is described below.

3.1 Survey on Tourists' Preference and Perception

A survey was conducted during July 1998 and June 1999 among tourists and prospective tourists to study the variables that had direct bearing with the study objectives. Basic objectives of the survey were to find out the factors responsible for decision making regarding the destination, the motivating factors for the tourists, the role of various communication tools in destination marketing and also the role of infrastructure in decision making, the factors that effect psychological positioning of a destination, the positioning of the North East India (NE) as a tourists destination, and to find out the level of awareness about the NE as tourists attractions. The variables to be measured in order to achieve above objectives are mentioned below.

1. Idea of vacation in order to segment the respondents on the basis of their reasons of taking a vacation
2. Planning of vacation
3. Role of family members on selection of destination
4. Role of travel brochure as an influencer in destination selection
5. Role of travel and tour operators
6. Frequency of visits by the respondents
7. Factors responsible for selection of a destination by the tourists and their extent of influence:
   - Transportation to the destination
   - Transportation within the destination
   - Availability and cost of suitable accommodation
   - Safety of the tourist
   - Availability of drinking water
   - Main tourist attraction
   - Chance factor
- Particular area of interest of the tourist
- Attraction of surrounding places
- Local people, culture
- Other infrastructure
- Number of tourists visiting the place
- Distance from the place of origin of the tourist
- Word of mouth
- Tour operator
- Weather of the destination
- Proximity to another place being visited by the tourist
- Basic nature of the place—like hill resort, sea beach, wildlife, greenery etc.
- Time available with the tourist

8. Preference for conducted tour

9. Degree of influence of the following media types in creating image for a destination:
   - Word of mouth
   - Official / unofficial brochure on the destination
   - Other publications
   - Electronic mass media like TV and radio
   - Tour operator
   - Knowledge of the tourist

10. Consistency of image on a destination, in respect of
    - available facilities
    - overall cost
    - local people / heritage / culture
    - environment

11. Type of accommodation tourist generally seek—luxury/economy

12. Respondent’s opinion about NE as a tourist destination on
    - natural beauty
• wildlife
• heritage tourism
• pilgrimage
• adventure tourism etc.

13. Knowledge about NE on
• One-horned rhino
• Cherapunjee
• Tawang
• Kamakhya
• Jatinga- the place of mysterious birds
• Floating National Park
• White winged wood duck

14. Comparison of NE as a tourist destination with Ootty, Kullu, Manali, Goa, Jaipur, Agra, Kanyakumari, Andaman and Nicobar, and Kashmir

Sampling Plan:
3.1.1 The Study Population is defined as follows:

**Element:** Individual tourists and prospective tourists, both domestic and foreign origin. Prospective tourists are individuals above the age of 18 years. The minimum age limit is selected to ensure that the respondents are matured and their responses can be taken as reliable.

**Sampling Units:** Individuals
Extent: Whole of India, particularly Shimla and Goa, the most visited tourist places of the country, and Assam. No other criteria to filter elements were adopted.

Shimla and Goa were selected as the nodal points to collect responses on the basis of their sheer capability to attract all kinds of tourists- from different regions of the country and from throughout the globe. Getting a tourist to answer the questionnaire was relatively easy in these places as the visitors have more time to spare in such locations, compared to their very busy schedules in other places like the cities-which they visit just for transit purposes.

Also these two places attract both types of tourists- foreign and domestic – almost in equal proportions.


Shimla: June-July, 1998
Goa: November-December, 1998
Assam: June, 1998 to May, 1999

3.1.2 Sampling Frame

As the above definition suggests, the population consists of individuals - tourists and prospective tourists. And hence finding a frame of all elements of the population is near impossible task. Also the study objectives do not necessarily need a definite frame of the population. So, a sampling frame is not identified in this survey.
3.1.3 Sampling Procedure

As the study is exploratory and a sampling frame cannot be defined, no probabilistic method of sampling can be employed. Therefore, an improvised non-probabilistic convenience method is used as the basic method for selection of samples. The samples were selected on the spot.

Two basic limitations were faced during selection of samples.

(1) The questionnaire was prepared in English-- and in both the major places of sample selection, namely Shimla and Goa, only a handful of the population was willing to respond to a questionnaire in English. Shimla, a north Indian city, attracts tourists from far-flung areas of Europe and also from nearby places like Haryana and Delhi. As these Indian places are dominated mainly by Hindi speaking population, their spontaneous responses were missing while administering the questionnaire in English. Also, many of the European tourists were not from the UK and hence they were not willing to respond in English. Likewise, Portuguese and Goanese speaking Goans found English a bit difficult. Care was taken, however, to ensure that these shortcomings do not force the interviewer to select sample only who knows English. Personal care also was taken to see that the respondents do not find difficulty in answering the questions. Interventions were made to ensure that respondents' limited knowledge in English does not create any bias in the responses. As the researcher possesses no knowledge of the local language of Goa, the interviews in Goa were conducted by the Goa Institute of Management, Panaji,

(2) Though the questionnaire was not very long, respondents found it disadvantageous to spare the 22 minutes required to fill-in the questionnaire (the tentative time required was mentioned in the front page of the questionnaire prominently). However, time required to fill-in the questionnaire was obviously more for the respondents having limited knowledge of English. This gave rise to, in some cases, non-responses against individual questions.
Care was taken, though, to ensure that the selection of samples does not lose the randomness in the process. This was done with the intention of using some analysis techniques those require a normal distribution of the sample means. However, in few instances the limitations mentioned above were cropping up after selection of the sample. Thus some of the samples had to be abandoned.

As a basic procedure, individuals who were willing to cooperate were chosen as samples.

However, for the survey in Goa, the following instructions were sent to the interviewers of Goa Institute of Management, Panaji to follow while selecting samples. Here a combination of random, convenience and quota sampling was tried to follow.

3.1.3.1 Guidelines for the interviewers in Goa:

1. Questions are framed in such a way that the respondents can answer them without the help of the enumerator. So whenever possible, leave the respondent alone with the questionnaire. However, be around, so that you can come on handy in case of need.
2. Read the questionnaire very carefully so that you can clarify any confusion that might be raised by respondents during the interview.
3. Do not pressurise a respondent to answer, if (s)he does not wish to cooperate.
4. Fill-up the empty box at the right top corner of the questionnaire immediately after or before administration of the questionnaire. Put the sex of the respondent date of interview and place in the blank box.
5. Always have the postal address of the respondent, though it is not mandatory as per the questionnaire. This is required to get back to the respondent in case of any clarification is required at the time of processing the data.
6. If after administration, it is found that one or more question(s) remain(s) unanswered, do not try to fill them up yourself.
3.1.4 Sample Size:

As it is a well known fact that higher the size of the sample lesser is the chances of occurrence of sampling errors. On the other hand, this increases the chance of non-sampling errors. However, the optimum size for a sample still remains an unsolved riddle for the social science researchers. Since the size of the present study population was unlimited and a sampling frame could not be defined, classical statistical method of sample size determination using the precision level and level of confidence could not be employed. There was a need for a large sample size as many statistical tools like factor analysis were to be used while analysing the data. On the other hand, enough funds could not be managed to get a large sample. Hence it was decided to collect responses of around 500 individuals. Eventually, 505 samples were collected. Figure 3.1 shows the composition of the selected samples. Table 3.1 also depicts the number of respondents against their places of origin.

![Figure 3.1: Composition of Samples](image)

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<tr>
<th>Table 3.1: States of Origin of Respondents</th>
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<td>States of Origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uncertain Origin</td>
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Variables described above were tried to be measured through a questionnaire using various scales. Utmost care has been taken to ensure that the variables be measured with least possible error and that these remain fit for using the analytical tools required for the study. This is described in detail in the following paragraphs. Principles regarding questionnaire preparations are followed thoroughly and precautions were taken so that the occurrences of non-sampling errors were negligible, if not nil. All questions were close ended (barring two - on planning time and frequency of tours) so that analysis could be done in a predetermined way and at the same time respondents did not find any difficulty in putting their responses.
The questionnaire was consisting of 30 main questions. However, certain variables have to be measured through two or more questions. While measuring the factors responsible for destination selection, 21 factors were put under one question. Likewise, perception regarding NE India was sought to be measured on 9 different factors under the same question. Thus the number of effective questions was 70. The questionnaire was started with an introductory note stating the reasons as to why this study was necessary. Respondents' full participation was sought. Probable time taken to fill in the questionnaire was also stated prominently, which was approximately 22 minutes. This gives the respondents an idea regarding the time the questionnaire was likely to consume. The first question was put as a warm-up question and thus it was a simple and a preliminary one. Questions using the interval scale (a 10-point scale numbering 1 to 10) were used to ascertain the effects of various predetermined factors on destination selection. The 10-point scale was used also to determine the role of various communication tools in decision making. In other questions nominal and interval scales were used. Identification data were sought from the respondents on their daily budget while on tour, their income, professions, educational qualification, age group, marital status and their place of Origin. The distribution of questions on the basis of measurement scale used is shown in Table 3.2 and in Figure 3.2 above. The idea behind inclusion of many identification data was to find out any relationship that might exist among the respondent's peer and the variables under study.
A Pilot Survey was conducted with the proposed questionnaire in May 1998 on 22 respondents and necessary modifications in the content of questions, wordings, and sequence were made.

The questionnaire is reproduced in Annexure-II to this thesis.

Data collected were validated with due cautions. Specially the data collected from Goa, were verified about the authenticity of the respondents. A form-letter was circulated among randomly selected 50 respondents to confirm whether they participated in the interview. The letters were accompanied by one Reply Paid Envelope and a small sheet of paper where the respondents were to tick to confirm their participation. Few letters returned for want of correct addresses, however, majority of the verified respondents confirmed their participation. The returned letters were attributed to wrong addresses offered by the respondents. The interviewers might also make mistakes in writing down the addresses or the same may be wrongly entered into the database.

A database was created for the information provided by the respondents with the help of Dbase III plus package. In all, 129 fields were created. Responses from all 505 questionnaires were entered in the database. For the ease of data entry, the 10 point scales at question number 9 and 11 of the questionnaire were modified to 0 to 9 from the existing 1 to 10. The change over is not going to affect the original perception offered by the respondents, as the basic scale was kept untouched. Further, minor modifications on responses were made while analysing the data, which are reported along with the analysis.
3.2 Statistical Tools Used

The data thus processed were transferred to SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) version 8.0.0. This software is widely used in analysing the data and arriving at conclusions.

Pearson's Chi-square tests are extensively used throughout this research. Cross Tabulations were also used to find out initial relationships. Multivariate Factor Analysis, details of which are discussed at proper place, is used to extract principal factors from the variables used to study tourists' decision making process. T test for equality of means along with Levene's Test for Equality of Variance, One way ANOVA for multiple comparison are also used in appropriate places.

Microsoft Excel is used extensively to draw customised diagrams like Positioning Maps, inputs for which are gathered from the results of analyses using SPSS.