

Satisfaction Level of Tourists in India: A Study of Kashmir Division of Jammu and Kashmir State

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Abstract

Tourist satisfaction has been identified as an important concept in establishing the performance of different destinations. Given the increasing level of competitiveness, it is essential for tourism management authorities to understand the main factors causing satisfaction/dissatisfaction for the tourist. It is extremely important to take into account the way a tourist feels about the destinations they visit. Different kinds of tourists reach a particular destination with a specific objective and if the objective is fulfilled the tourist may like to visit the site again and recommend the site to others. A tourist destination ideally should fulfill the expectations of the tourist including tourism products and market. Each tourist destination could be engineered in the way that it can fulfill most of the aspirations of the visiting tourist. The area under study is 'Kashmir division' of the Jammu and Kashmir State of India is often called as the 'Switzerland of the East'. The purpose of this study is to identify the satisfaction level of tourists on their travel experience in the Kashmir Division. Field survey method was employed to collect the primary data from the mass of 151 tourists with the help of well framed questionnaire. There are 35 close ended items in the questionnaire consisting of demographic information, tourist facilities and services, tourist accommodation, tourist attractions and so on in the Kashmir valley. The study found that the satisfaction level of tourists in Kashmir is high but there are some factors on which policy makers of Kashmir valley should work upon that cause dissatisfaction or in order to increase the inflow of tourists both domestic as well as foreign in Kashmir.

Keywords: Satisfaction level, Tourist services and facilities, Accommodation, Prime Attraction and Natural Beauty, Kashmir Division, India.

1.0 Introduction

Undoubtedly, Kashmir is the world's most fascinating experience offering variety in climate and landscape. The valley is surrounded by high peaks, diverse terrains and lush green forests all around standing as a chain with no parallel in the world and these lap glaciers, pastures and high altitude lakes offering amazing trekking opportunities and far behind these formations the ice clad summits provide a splendid view which provides an excellent place for winter sports. Each spot in the valley plains or up on the highlands excels the other and every small elevation unfolds a new natural set-up bringing altogether new phase of climate and atmosphere. The valley is quite different in each season. It is like garden in summer and golden in autumn. Winter makes Kashmir yet another world. It is a romantic experience to travel to Kashmir in spring when snow over the slopes of Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg still appears fresh while flowers appear in abundance in the valley plains. Certainly, it is an all season affair in Kashmir. It is not as cold in Kashmir as might be expected at such an altitude, the reason being that the chain of mountains all around save the valley from the cold blasts of the north and also the scorching winds from the south. Nature has put the shield of mountains also to save Kashmir from the monsoon miseries. There are no hurricanes in Kashmir. A strong wind that may cause some disturbance in the atmosphere soon turns into a gentle breeze. The lakes, rivers, streams and springs of Kashmir have caught attention of nature lovers for centuries. Similarly, trekkers have incredible experience of the beauty of its high altitude lakes, each altitude unfolding yet another terrain of mountains for the adventurer.

Different writers have described Kashmir differently in their best possible way. Yet most of them felt it was beyond description in the most appropriate term and distinguished travelers and writers have admitted inadequacy of world to define beauties of Kashmir. Thus, while we still feel bankrupt in tracing words to define this land, for me it was quite amazing to learn how the greatest saint of Kashmir, sheikh Noor-U-Din Reshi has commented on the beauty of Kashmir the following linguistics, more than 600 years ago:

*"EVERY MINUTE THAT I SPEND HERE
WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM OUR STAY IN HEAVEN"*

The imponderable judge on the description of the beauty of Kashmir, by the saint of saints, sounds alarmingly natural. It seems perfectly amenable and sound and with this finding ended our journey of discovery of the most exciting definition on the beauty of Kashmir. It appears a super-natural definition that does not require any comment or explanation.

Hospitality of Kashmir has been another matter of great interest among the travelers, which is indeed kashmiri's precious holding even today. They have always been hospitable and forthcoming. Their specific art or act of welcoming or greeting visitors has been polite and friendly. Of Kashmiris it is said, "when asked for assistance, they leave their occupation to guide you to their best honesty." Thus, much investigative is the

description of Pandit Barji Narayan Chakbast Lakhnawi, who says, “How exceedingly hospitable is the land of Kashmir. Even the wayside stones offered me water to drink.”

Kashmir is known as the crown of India. One can experience the beauty of this crowning glory by arranging a travel to Kashmir. Kashmir is blessed with beauty, the splendid view of Himalayan Mountains, the luxurious house boats on the beautiful Dal Lake and the Chinar trees. The state has an enriching tradition and has possessions of ancient literature, language, religion, arts, crafts and music. The travel to Kashmir gives you an opportunity to participate and celebrate its festivals. The region is also famous for the plants such as Walnuts, Almond, pine and Saffron. Travel to Kashmir offers you a chance to feel the wealthy and inherent ancient custom in the Indian culture. The Kashmir's are famous for their generosity. The majestic cookery of Kashmir has been influenced by Iranian styles of cooking. Wazwan, an epicure's delight, is an extravagant cuisine which comprises of 36 courses. People of Kashmir enjoy each and every moment of their life at the fullest. Travel to Kashmir can prove to be a very appealing tour for those who loved shopping. Kashmir is well known for its woven carpets, silk carpets, woolen shawls and embroidered Kurtas. A tour to the states not only involves a visit to several places of Kashmir but also experiences a travel to a paradise with its picturesque view. The famous tourist destinations in the Kashmir Valley are Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Leh, Kargil, Zaskar etc. Each region here is beautiful in its own way. Some of the famous pilgrimage destinations are the Amarnath Temple, the Khanqah Mosque, The Hazratbal shrine, Vaishno Devi temple, and the Gompas. The gardens in Kashmir are filled with lively and colorful flowers. Travel to Kashmir is said to be incomplete if one don't visit to wildlife sanctuaries of the state. The Dachigam National Park, Kishtwar High Altitude, Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve etc. are some of the places worth visiting. The wildlife of Kashmir includes animals such as snow leopard, Hangul, Chiru, Yak and the birds of Ladakh.

Tourism has emerged as an important multidisciplinary subject, embracing various aspects of human activities, ecology, economy and society. It comprises complete system of nature which includes the man and his activities, wild life, mountains and valleys, and waters, forests and trees, social and cultural systems, flora and fauna, weather and climate, sun and the sea. Evanesence of social prejudices and social isolation, social integration, cultural tolerance, education spiritualism religious tolerance, preservation of historical and cultural treasure, sense of hospitality and better civic amenities and the goals towards which the tourism has been moving very fast. Tourism is an organized industry, its dimensions are wide, its location varies and its benefits scattered over large segments of the population. The tourist-both foreign and domestic, all contribute to the development of the economy of the area, provide employment to the people and afford opportunities to them to assimilate the best in the various and diverse cultures. Its significance is enhanced by its stability to patch up regional economic disparities, particularly in backward and underdeveloped areas. Tourism is very much concerned with spatial conditions, the location of the tourism area and the movement of the people between places and places; as such it requires examining the spatial interplay of tourism demand and satisfaction. The structure, form, use and conservation of landscape are closely related to the phenomenon of tourists. Tourism places not only attract the tourists but they also seek attention of government authorities for the proper look after of historical buildings, ancient monuments, archaeological sites, places of scenic beauty and the landscape as a whole. The much sought after ideas of planned tourism and eco-tourism have been brought into practice to boost tourism without disturbing the ecological balance and the environment. It is tourism itself which makes it imperative for man to conserve the ecology, particularly at tourism sites and destination areas, if it has to survive a resource renewable industry. Conservation, intact of natural and human environment and the enhancement of natural resources are the pillars on which tourism rests. It is so integrated into the life and fabric of a country that developments within the industry effect in a positive or negative way, the society, the economy and the environment.

In most of the developing countries, India being no exception, the environmental, social and cultural effects of tourism are given due weightage in the tourist development decisions. The growth of tourist traffic demands more hotels, aircrafts and other infrastructure, failure of which results into overcrowding, a great stress on natural and social environment aspect in tourism development projects and imposition of restrictions on the number and behavior of tourism in natural environment and other crowded historical, religious and cultural sites in the destination areas.

1.1 Inflow of Tourists in Kashmir

Kashmir tourism which holds a significant place on the tourism map, it is essential to analyze its potential so far as the inflows of tourists and the resulting business is concerned. For decades, Kashmir has been popular with Indian and foreign tourist; but with the onset of turmoil in 1989, the number of tourists coming to Kashmir decreased until last decade when a huge rush of mostly domestic tourists started pouring into Kashmir. Different agencies associated with tourism have been trying to encourage this trend and as per the official figures valley hosted 5.72 lakh tourists in 2008 including 5.50 lakh domestic tourist and 22,000 foreigners. In 2009, their number rose to 5.77 lakh domestic tourist and 23,000 foreigners. The number of tourist arrival in the year 2010 crossed all public relation previous record with 7.25 lakh visiting Kashmir, despite the four-month unrest that

paralyzed the region in summer and the popular winter sport destination of Gulmarg, which has covered with a white blanket of snow, had around 500 visitors. Around 700,000 domestic tourists visited in 2010 year in addition to 25,000 foreigners. This is a record that beats even the number of tourists we had before the beginning of the violence 2 and the figures does not include the thousands of pilgrims who arrive here each year for the annual Amarnath Yatra. IN 2011, around one million tourist including thousands of foreigners came to Kashmir, which has crossed all the public relations previous records. In the year 2012 the tourist inflow breaks all the previous record when the tourists' inflow was more than 1.3 million which includes around 37000 thousand foreigners. In 2013 around 11.61 lakh tourists visited Kashmir despite of political instability in Kashmir. In 2014 10 lakh arrive here but due to floods there is decrease in arrival and it goes 8 lakh. Monthly arrival of tourist was 40,000 but due to floods it goes half 20,000 (Jammu & Kashmir Department of Tourism). Kashmir adventure tourism offers the tourist with a wonderful opportunity to explore the vast terrains of the exotic Himalayan Mountains ranges. Kashmir is one of the most sought after tourist destination of India. Apart from natural beauty, the unique landscape of Kashmir also encourages one to find out one's inherent sporting caliber. Exotic Himalayan ranges, swift flowing rivers and vast stretches of green pastoral land republic relation present the beautiful state of Kashmir. Kashmir offers the tourists to choose from a plethora of adventurous sporting events of Trekking, skiing, mountain climbing, river rafting, horse polo, paragliding and Para sailing. The wide variety of sporting events of Kashmir enables the tourists to experiment with their latent sporting zeal and sportsman spirit. The exotic landscape of Kashmir is blessed with many beautiful places that public relation presents the bounty of nature coupled with many adventurous sports. The high mountain of Kashmir offers the tourists to trek along the tourist rough and rugged terrain of the Himalayan ranges. The swifts flowing rivers of the mountainous regions public relations provide the adventurous visitors to engage in rafting. List of places of Kashmir adventure tourism: Lidder River, Dal Lake and wullar, Gulmarg, Nigeen Lake. As is dressed in the attire of a perfect sportsman, the tourists venture into the world of adventurous sports to find out their sporting potentialities. The Kashmir adventure tourism offers the tourists to enjoy their sojourn into the exotic landscape coupled with unlimited fun and frolic. One of the most exciting and thrilling experience, the Kashmir adventure tourism fills the tourists with unlimited enthusiasm and vigor.

2.0 Literature Review

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. Due to the rapid liberalization, globalization and industrialization, Tourists have high levels of disposable income, considerable leisure time, are well educated, and (Sharma et al., nd a) hence, has brought a rapid increase in travel and tourism industry. As a result of which international travellers are increasingly becoming open to unexplored destinations. Travel and tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world in terms of gross output and value addition, capital investment, employment and tax contributions. Travel & Tourism employ approximately 235 million people and generate 9.3 per cent of world GDP (Sharma et al., nd b). It has been said rightly by Batra and Chawla (1995) in their study that travelling stimulates an increased interest in tourism. The decision of a holidaymaker to go for a particular destination is basically influenced by its comparative advantage in terms of attractiveness over the competing destinations. The applications of marketing principles in the tourism industry are meant for the formulation of marketing mix on the basis of the users' behavioral profile. For the successful execution of marketing strategies or for translating the strategies into the meaningful purposes, it is essential to have a detailed knowledge of the changing behavior of users of services in order to satisfy them. In the recent years tourists have become more demanding and discriminating. To keep pace with the changing tourists' needs and wants marketers have to identify ways to improve their products in order to satisfy the customers who are the king of the market. Vinay Chauhan and Suvridha Khanna (2007) attempted to investigate the satisfaction of the tourist's vis-à-vis the tourist infrastructure which includes accommodation, transportation, communication, drinking water, and civic amenities available in the Jammu and Kashmir. The study is based on survey where 100 tourists were considered who visited the various tourist centers of Jammu and Kashmir. The research suggested measures to improvise the available infrastructure to enhance the tourist satisfaction. Torres and Kline (2006) found that customer delight is a better indicator of customer relationship than customer satisfaction because delighted customers were more likely to generate word-of-mouth and be loyal to the business. Sonmez and Sirakaya (2002) studied Turkey's image from American travellers' perspective. They found several factors that influenced the likelihood of travelling were overall appeal, safe and hospitable environment, general mood and vacation atmosphere, travel experience, relaxing effect, local attractions and hospitality, authenticity of experience, social and personal communication channels, comfort/safety, and tourist facilitation. Americans highly valued social and personal information sources (friends, colleagues) in developing a trip to Turkey. However, the top information sources were magazine articles about Turkey, newspaper articles, television and radio news, and friends and family members. The least used sources used were the Turkish embassy or consulate and social organizations. D'Silva & D'Silva (2008) said that tourism plays an extremely important role in the Indian economy. India has the potential to become the number one tourist destination in the

world with the demand growing at 10.1 per cent per annum as predicted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) but as per Union Ministry of Tourism and cultures 20 years perspective plan considers the Tourism in J and K is one of the State's major industries. It has played an important role for developing the economy, particularly in the region of the Valley (MT&C. GOI, nd. a). The hotel product is primarily a mix of five characteristics: its location, its mix of facilities, its image, the services it provides and the price it charges (Holloway and Taylor, 2006). Quality now more than ever is given priority. Hotels are under pressure to deliver the highest standards of excellence as the knowledge and level of exposure of travellers has increased. Mobile booking is expected to become a common practice and therefore hotels will have to update their technology and communication systems (as cited in Priyaanka Berry, 2007-2008). Ministry of Tourism and culture, Govt. of India during its 20 years perspective plan found that the Ladakh is famous for its spectacular caves, monasteries, etc. while Jammu is famous for its temples/ religious tourism. The region of Ladakh is the choice of foreign tourists; Jammu attracts pilgrim tourists, while the Valley attracts a larger number of domestic tourists and a fair sprinkling of foreign tourists (MT&C. GOI, nd. a). Tourism potential of the country as a whole is immense, from both domestic as well as the international travellers. However, this potential has not been fully tapped because of inadequate infrastructure of airports, roads, communication and transportation, inadequate / ineffective promotion and advertising, lack of easily accessible and inadequate tourist information (MT&C. GOI, nd. b).

3.0 Objectives:

1. To examine factors being considered as vital by the tourists when it comes to choosing Kashmir as travel destination.
2. To identify the level of satisfaction of different tourists on their travel experience to Kashmir.
3. To give suggestion on the basis of study result.

4.0 Research Methodology:

In order to generate various outcomes of the study different research method are used. Data for the study was collected through the primary and secondary sources. Field survey method was employed to collect the primary data from the mass of 151 tourists with the help of well framed questionnaire. There are 35 close ended items in the questionnaire consisting of demographic information, tourist facilities and services, tourist accommodation, tourist attractions and so on in the Kashmir valley. The satisfaction level of visiting tourists in the Kashmir division of Jammu & Kashmir has been measured by taking into consideration the three major constructs like Tourist Accommodation, Tourist Facilities and Services and Tourist Prime attractions including natural beauty. The respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire on the basis of 5-Point Likert scale for these three constructs. To ensure validity, twenty tourists were asked to review the questionnaire and few changes were made in the questionnaire on the basis of their recommendation for better clarity.

5.0 Analysis and Discussion:

a) Gender:

As evident from the Figure 1, 63 female respondents participated in the survey as against 88 male respondents. There were a total of 151 respondents out of which 41.70% were females and 58.30% were males.

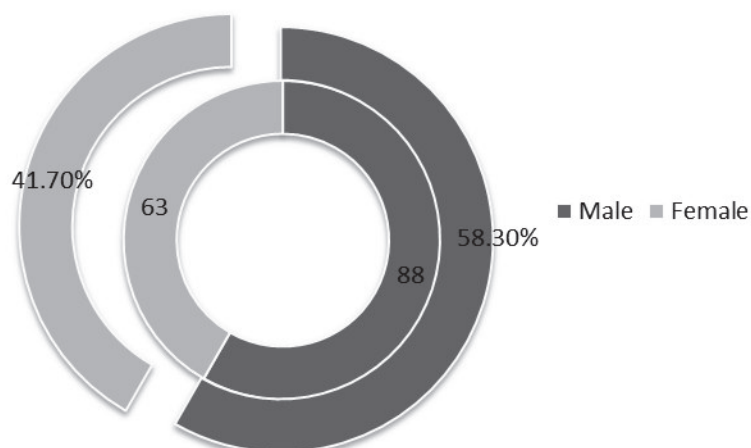


Figure 1: Data Collection on the basis of Gender

b) Age:

Almost 5.3% respondents were below 20 years old, 46% respondents were between 20-30 years of age group, 38.41% falling in the age group of 30-40 years, 9.93% respondents were between the age group of 40-50 years and 0.60% of the respondents were above 50 as shown in the Figure 2.

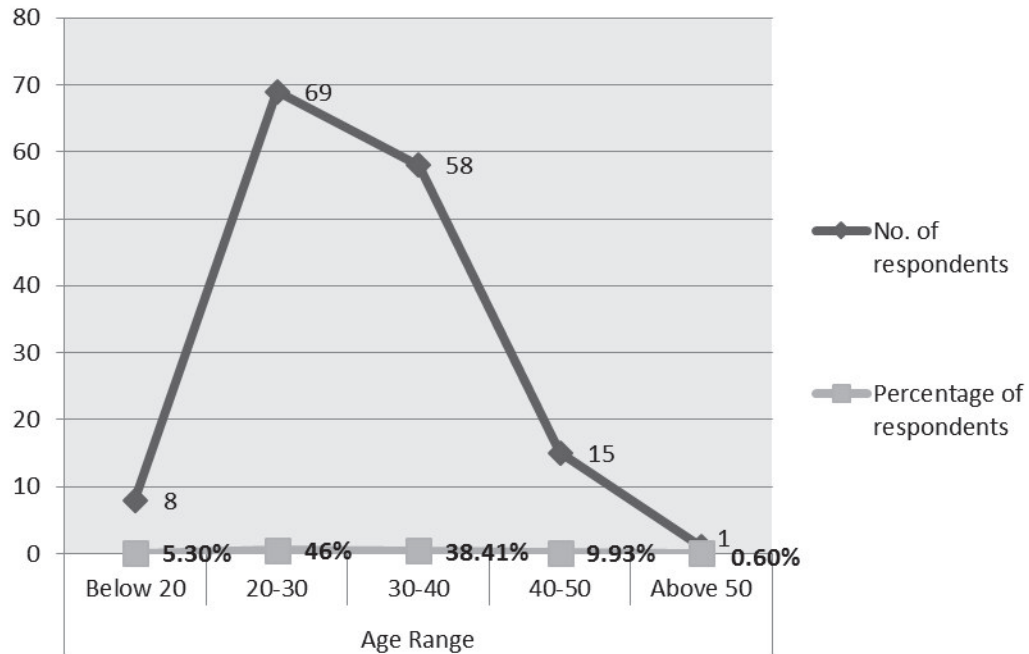


Figure 2: Data Collection on the basis of Age

c) Education:

Educational profile as per Figure 3 shows that highest number of respondents who participated in the study was graduate (60%) and the lowest number of respondents belongs to higher secondary (8%) respectively. Almost 19.20% respondents were Post-graduate and 12.14% respondents were from other category.

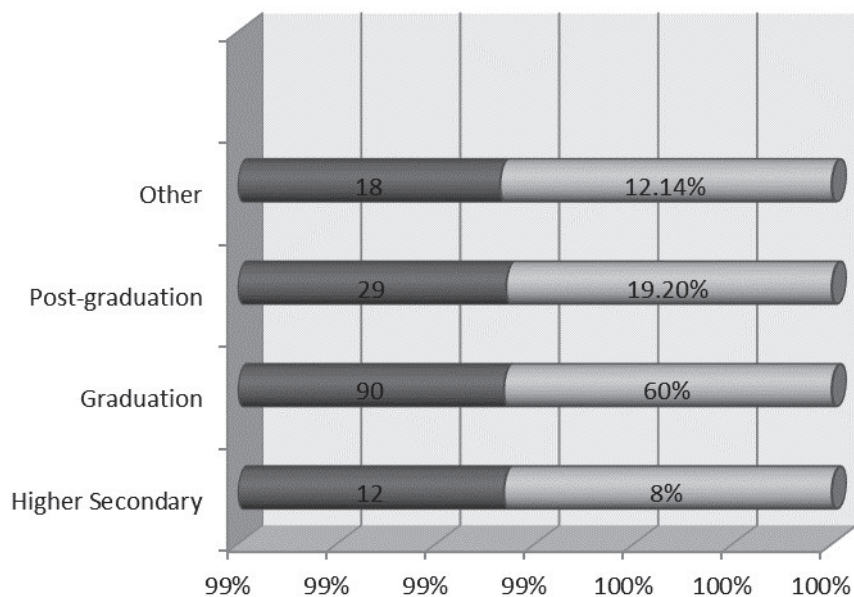


Figure 3: Data collection on the basis of Education of respondents

d) Nationality:

As per Figure 4, 79% respondents were domestic and 21% were foreign respondents.

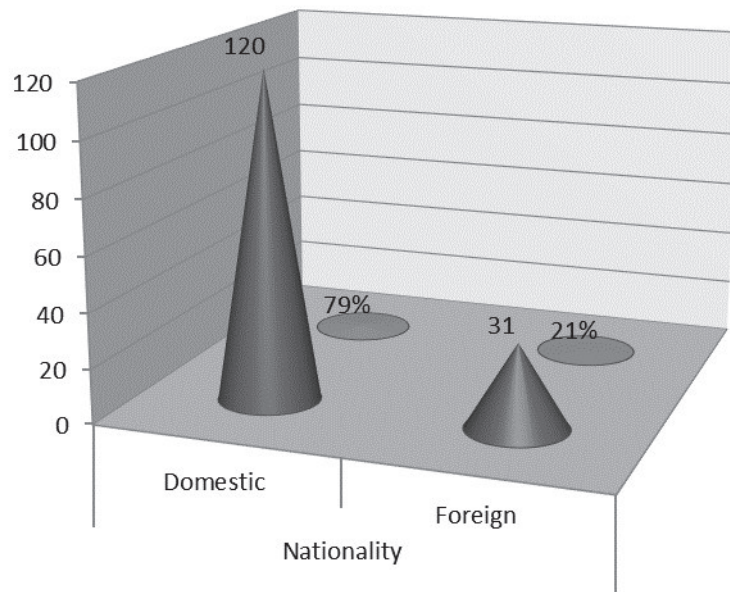


Figure 4: Data collection on the basis of Nationality

e) Occupation:

As far as occupation of the respondents was concerned, 47% were students, 34.44% were from service class, and 18.24% were doing business. Unfortunately, not even a single house wife participated in the study.

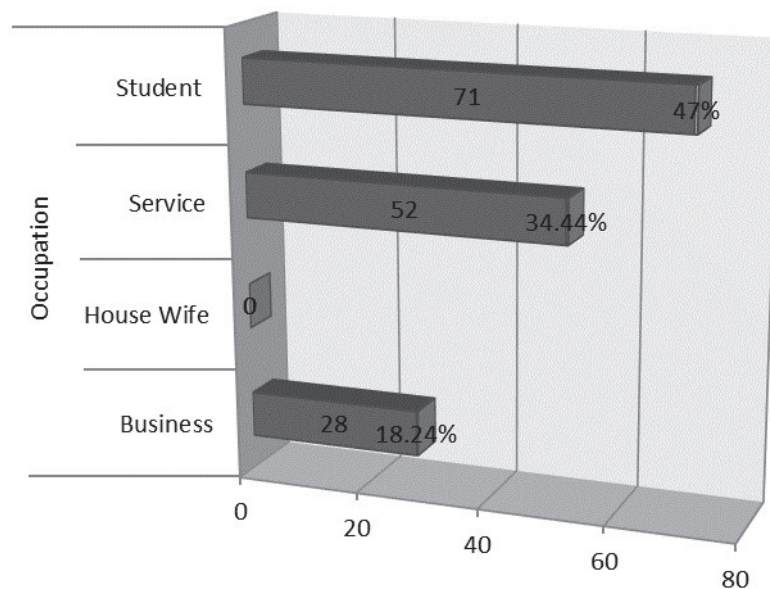


Figure 5: Data Collection on the basis of Occupation

5.1 Factors responsible for the Satisfaction of Tourists in the Kashmir division:

In the present study, Satisfaction level of tourists in the Kashmir valley has been measured with the help of three constructs consisting of various attributes. These are:

1. Tourist Accommodation
2. Tourist Services and Facilities

3. Tourist Prime Attractions and Natural Beauty
 1. Tourist Accommodation

Table 1: Showing the satisfaction of Tourists with the Accommodation in Kashmir

S. No.	Attributes	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Worst
		%				
1	Availability of reasonable rooms in the hotels.	10.00	43.00	33.00	6.00	8.00
2	Hygiene in the rooms of hotels	35.00	40.00	10.00	10.00	5.00
3	Physical appearance of hotel	56.00	22.00	18.00	4.00	0.00
4	Services from hotel staff	50.00	30.00	14.00	6.00	0.00
5	Hotel staff courtesy/helpfulness	10.00	50.00	25.00	12.00	3.00
6	Types of food in hotels (Local, western & Indian)	40.00	35.00	23.00	2.00	0.00
7	Security at hotels	40.00	50.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
	Average percentage	34.43	38.57	19.00	5.71	2.29

Source: Survey data collected for the present study

Figure 6: Level of Satisfaction on the basis of Tourist Accommodation

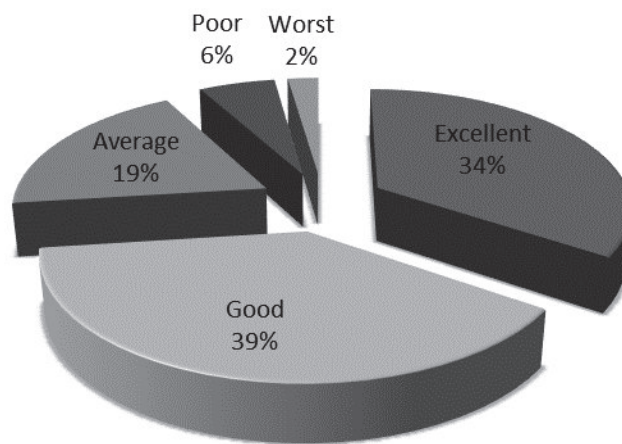


Table 1 exhibits the satisfaction level of tourists towards various attributes that are related with the accommodation of tourists in Kashmir division of Jammu & Kashmir state that are measured at 5-point Likert scale with responses 1 for Excellent to 5 for Worst. As per the Table 1, 10%, 43% and 33% respondents are of the opinion that availability of reasonable rooms in the hotels of Kashmir are Excellent, Good to some extent average as against 6% and 8% respondents that are dissatisfied in this regard. As far as satisfaction of hygiene in the rooms of hotels is concerned, 35% and 40% respondents are of the opinion that it is Excellent as well as Good. Moreover, maximum number of respondents (56%) also likes the physical appearance of hotels in Kashmir. It is evident from the Table 1 that 50% and 30% of the respondents opine that services from hotel staff are Excellent as well as Good as against 25% (average) and 12% (Poor) responses by respondents. Further, 40% respondents believe that types of food in hotels and security at hotels is Excellent; while as 35% and 50% respondents believes that they are Good.

So far as overall/average satisfaction level of tourists towards Accommodation is concerned, 34.43% and 38.57% respondents are highly satisfied and believe that accommodation is Excellent as well as Good in Kashmir as against 5.71% and 2.29% respondents that hold an opinion that accommodation available in Kashmir is poor and worst respectively. Further, 19% respondents believe that tourist accommodation is average in Kashmir as shown in the Figure 6.

2. Tourist Services and Facilities

Table 2: Showing the satisfaction of Tourists with the Services & Facilities provided to them in Kashmir

S. No.	Attributes	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Worst
		%				
1	Adequate tourist information facilities/centres in city	9.00	34.00	43.00	12.00	2.00
2	Availability of tourist guide	20.00	46.00	21.00	8.00	5.00
3	Quality of food at restaurant/hotel	20.00	30.00	10.00	35.00	5.00
4	Tele- communication Facilities near tourist spots	15.00	23.00	10.00	50.00	2.00
5	Banking Facilities near tourist spots.	13.00	43.00	30.00	14.00	0.00
6	Shopping in the Kashmir valley	10.00	40.00	30.00	20.00	0.00
7	Accessibility of the roads in the Division	10.00	43.00	33.00	6.00	8.00
8	Availability of Local Transport	8.00	30.00	53.00	5.00	4.00
9	Basic amenities available at tourist spots	40.00	50.00	10.00	0.00	0.00
10	Availabilities of road side facilities	20.00	30.00	10.00	0.00	40.00
11	Special Tourism area Packages	10.00	20.00	10.00	50.00	10.00
12	Marketing of Kashmir tourism	40.00	35.00	10.00	15.00	0.00
13	Adequate information on official website.	25.00	60.00	10.00	5.00	0.00
	Average percentage	18.46%	37.23%	22.00%	16.92%	5.85%

Source: Survey data collected for the present study

Figure 7: Level of satisfaction on the basis of tourist services & Facilities

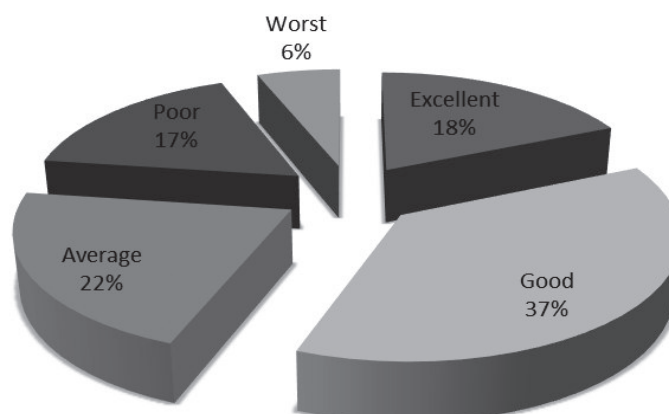


Table 2 reveals the satisfaction level of tourists toward various facilities and services provided to them in the Kashmir valley are analyzed with the help of five point scale with responses 1 for Excellent, Good, Average, Poor and 5 for Worst. It is evident from the table 2 that 43% of the respondent believe that adequate information facilities/centers available to tourist in Kashmir is average, only 9% of the respondents believe that information facilities are excellent in Kashmir as against 12% and 2% respondents that go with the poor and worst option, and 23% respondents believe that information facilities are average. Further, Table 2 exhibits that 46% respondents express that availability of tourist guide in the Kashmir valley is good, 20% excellent, 21% Average, 8% poor and 5% worst. Other tourist facilities and services that are mentioned in the Table 2 being provided to tourists in the Kashmir valley viz. Quality of food at restaurant/hotel, Tele- communication Facilities near tourist spots, Banking Facilities near tourist spots, Shopping in the Kashmir valley, Accessibility of the roads in the Division, Basic amenities available at tourist spots, Availabilities of road side facilities, Basic amenities available at tourist spots, Availabilities of road side facilities, Special Tourism area Packages, Marketing of Kashmir tourism, Adequate information on official website.

The overall level of satisfaction towards tourist facilities and services are shown in the Figure 7. As per the figure 1, 18.46% and 37.23% of the respondents believe that various facilities and services provided to tourists in Kashmir are Excellent as well as Good respectively. Further, 22% respondents are of the view that facilities and services for tourists in Kashmir are Average. Table 2 reveals that 16.92% and 5.85% respondents are of the opinion that tourist facilities and services are dissatisfying for them.

3. Tourist Prime Attractions and Natural Beauty

Table 3: Showing the satisfaction of Tourists with the Prime Attractions and Natural Beauty in Kashmir

S. No.	Attributes	Very Much Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Very Much Disagree
		%				
1	Unique culture	60.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	Wonderful customs and traditions	55.00	45.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	Interesting local crafts & jewellery	59.00	41.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	Nice Attitude of local people	64.00	30.00	6.00	0.00	0.00
5	Appealing festivals	79.00	21.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	Beautiful holiday destinations & places	70.00	30.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	Beautiful gardens and lakes	60.00	40.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	Appealing local cuisine	51.00	49.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
9	Beautiful Streams, Glaciers & mountains	45.00	55.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
10	Wonderful sightseeing opportunities	80.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Average percentage	62.30%	37.10%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Source: Survey data collected for the present study

Figure 8: Level of satisfactions with the Prime Tourist Attractions and Natural Beauty

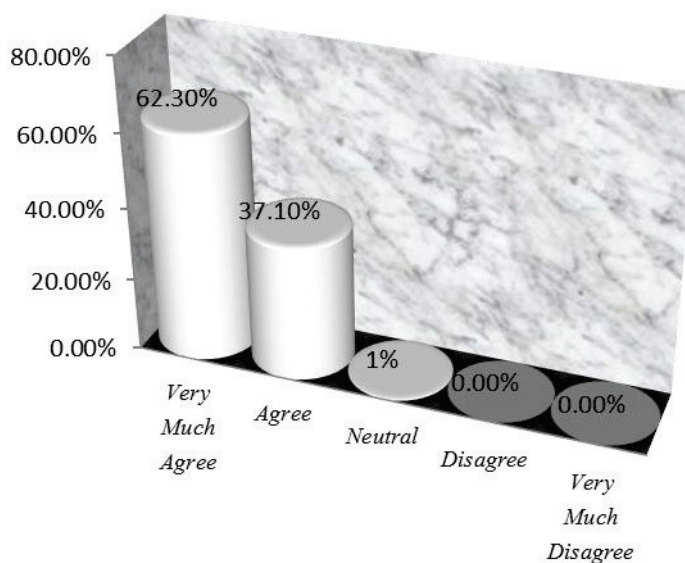


Table 3 shows various attributes related to prime attraction and natural beauty of Kashmir that maximizes the satisfaction level of tourists in the Kashmir valley. These attributes are Unique culture; Wonderful customs and traditions; Interesting local crafts & Jewellery; Nice Attitude of local people; Appealing festivals; Beautiful holiday destinations & places; Beautiful gardens and lakes; Appealing local cuisine; Beautiful Streams, Glaciers & mountains; Wonderful sightseeing opportunities. In order to analyze these attributes 5- point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1. Very Much Agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neutral 4, Disagree and 5. Very Much Disagree. After having a look towards the overall satisfaction level of tourists with the above mentioned prime attractions and natural beauty of Kashmir from the Figure 8, it reveals that 62.30% respondents are highly satisfied. Further, respondents are 37.10% agreed that they are satisfied with the prime Attractions of the Kashmir valley; and just 1% of respondents are neutral about this construct.

6.0 Conclusion and Suggestions

Tourism is the second largest economic activity in Kashmir after agriculture. It brings money into the state and enhances incomes multipliers by creating jobs but Political instability has disgusted the movement of domestic

as well as foreign tourism in the valley. There is however, a steady increase in the number of domestic tourists also from 2002 onwards as is evident from the study. Tourist satisfaction has been identified as an important concept in establishing the performance of different destinations. Given the increasing level of competitiveness, it is essential for tourism management authorities to understand the main factors causing satisfaction/dissatisfaction for the tourist. It is extremely important to take into account the way a tourist feels about the destinations they visit. Different kinds of tourists reach a particular destination with a specific objective and if the objective is fulfilled the tourist may like to visit the site again and recommend the site to others. A tourist destination ideally should fulfill the expectations of the tourist including tourism products and market. Each tourist destination could be engineered in the way that it can fulfill most of the aspirations of the visiting tourist. The present study revealed that most of the tourists in Kashmir are very much satisfied with the prime attractions like culture, crafts, local cuisine, attitude of people, festivals and natural beauty of Kashmir valley. Though this has also been found from the study that tourists are satisfied with facilities and services provided to them but there are some respondents who are dissatisfied with some of facilities and services viz. Adequate tourist information facilities/centers in city, Tele-communication Facilities near tourist spots, Banking Facilities near tourist spots, Special Tourism area Packages, Adequate information on official website and so on. Moreover, one more factor under study that is directly related with the satisfaction of tourists in Kashmir is the Accommodation of tourism in Kashmir. The results of the study shows that maximum number of respondents is satisfied with the accommodation provided to them but there is a section of tourists/respondents that are unhappy with the some of the attributes related to tourist accommodation viz. Availability of reasonable rooms in the hotels, Hygiene in the rooms of hotels and a few respondents are also to some extent dissatisfied with the Hotel staff courtesy/helpfulness. The first important task that policy makers in the Kashmir valley should do to satisfy tourists is to develop and adopt a comprehensive marketing strategy for attracting and increasing the tourist inflow in the Kashmir valley. They should use promotional techniques such as marketing through brochures, Mass media campaigns, Television campaigns, Print campaigns, Advertising film for Kashmir tourism and promotion through internet. In order to improve means of communication policy makers in Kashmir should make wider usage of information technology. Further, it is also important to develop infrastructural facilities along with quicker accessibility, large reach, and excellence in hospitality and service. For attracting the foreign tourism, tourist destination facilities need to be developed of international standards. Besides this, given the competition and the need to satisfy customers/tourists with an increasingly broad range of interests, Jammu and Kashmir State has no option but to offer a tourism product that is competitive and innovative. It is also suggested that more discounted tour packages for group and long stay should be given to Kashmir visiting tourists; further, the need has also been felt to develop an academic think-tank to trigger off the right kind of training in hotel management institutes in Kashmir.

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