

# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF VISITORS TOWARDS TOURISTS DESTINATION

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**Abstract:** Tourism has become one of the largest and fastest-growing industries in the world and has a tremendous economic and social potentiality. It represents the largest service industry globally in terms of gross revenue as well as foreign exchange earnings and has the capacity to capitalize on the country, success in the service sector and provide a sustainable model of growth. An attempt has been made in this study to analyze the perception of tourist regarding various facilities which have been provided by the tourism in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh is one of the most popular holiday destinations and undoubtedly is a land of snow-covered mountains, high peaks, and beautiful waterfalls which make it one of the most scenic states in India. It is divided into four major physiographical divisions; namely the outer Himalayas (Shivalik), the lesser Himalayas (central zone), the Great Himalayas (northern zone) and Zaskar range (Shilla Peak-Kinnaur). In the competitive era, tourist satisfaction is a very important factor to gain better destination image, attract more tourists through providing various services and facilities because satisfied tourist is the best and most powerful publicity medium of a tourism destination and dissatisfied tourist, on the other hand, would be positively injurious to the interest of the industry. Further, the tourism industry is highly competitive, so, even a slight rumor about a particular destination would ultimately discourage the prospective tourists from visiting that place and it would take a long time to remove such a bad reputation. Hence, there is a need for giving the best service to the maximum number of the tourist in the destination area. The study has been based on the primary data. The primary data has been collected through the questionnaire. Percentages of various variables and graphical presentations have been used to achieve the results. Finally, the suggestions and conclusion have been highlighted regarding the study.

**Keywords:** Perception, Tourism, Satisfaction, Economic, Social

## Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is also known as the “Dev Bhoomi” (Lands of Gods). Till the 19th century, Tourism in Himachal Pradesh was restricted only to a limited movement of pilgrims to a few spiritual destinations in around the hills. The British established a chain of hill stations which gave recognition of tourism in the State. Tourism activity received a shot in the arm when the British declared Shimla as “The Summer Capital of India” in 1864. Post independence, more investment in the infrastructure sector led to opening up of Tourism in the State. However, the biggest boost to tourism occurred in the mid - 80s and 90s. While traditionally Himachal was known as a summer destination, the Department of Tourism & Civil Aviation has taken special efforts to break the seasonality factor and has developed diversified tourism products to attract tourists in other seasons too. Now Himachal is known as “A Destination for All Seasons and All Reasons”. In fact, the Department has laid a special emphasis on the development of activity-based tourism and opening up of new sub- destinations. To promote tourism in the countryside and to unexplored areas, appropriate infrastructure is being developed within available resources. By focusing on quality

tourists, the Department aims at promoting sustainable tourism and encouraging the private sector to develop tourism related infrastructure in the State without disturbing the existing ecology and the environment.

At every stage, tourism industry deals with a human being. So, it is important that there should be a continuous friendly human relationship. In the competitive era, tourist satisfaction is a very important factor to gain better destination image, attract more tourists through providing various services and facilities like lodging facilities, transportation facilities, shopping facilities, services at the restaurant etc. and generate business and loyalty. Satisfaction is considered a vital element to continue the competitive business in the tourism industry. Measuring tourist satisfaction is important to successful destination since it is directly linked to destination choice. Measuring satisfaction provides information related to how well a destination is currently meeting the tourists' needs and therefore helps destination, adjust their efforts on improving the quality of services and facilities.

## Review of literature

**Gupta** (1987) revealed that tourism in India has developed rapidly in a well-planned manner since independence. He observed that the old instruments were being maintained properly many picnic spots were located and illuminated in a colorful manner so as to attract tourists and to give them amusing in a proper way. Tourism department of every state had also spent a huge amount of money for tourists, interests, providing them more facilities and comfort. Now there is no problem for tourists to go from one place to another. Air, railway and road services are adequately available in all the important cities of India. **Tyagi** (1989) revealed that Himachal Pradesh is blessed with all the ingredients which impart an importance to the places with respect to tourism. Although the state has all the attraction craved by the tourists, still it could not achieve its due place because of the lack of tourist image which is very important is tourism development. **Heeson** (2004) stated that world Tourism Organization had identified some challenges facing a nations travel industry and noted that tourism industry was keen to promote eco and rural tourism and emphasized to overcome the challenges in tourism ,which include the failure of tourism policies, poor feasibility, low probability, weak infrastructure, poor connectivity and rigid government policies, Experts, too, stress upon the fact that the main challenge in India is low level of community involvement in this sector. **Kumar & Vinod** (2014) was observed that the most notable effect of tourism on traditional values and culture is a certain social and human interactions change into the commercialization of cultural values and traditions at the destination for the purpose of earning of a living. It was indicated that with the introduction of tourism at large-scale in developing countries, goods and/or services that used to be part of people's individual and social life have been commercialized and presented as commodities. He suggested that if there is a proper share of community involvement at a different level of tourism development and people retain control, original social tradition and norms will be less affected and the negative impacts of cultural tourism will be reduced. **Kumar Arvind** (2016) conducted the study on Existing Tourism Infrastructure and Services in Lahaul Valley of Himachal Pradesh. Lahaul- Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh has been the largest districts of Himachal Pradesh. It has been quite evident that different hotels, guest houses, homestays and travel agencies have been provided tourism infrastructural and service needs to numerous tourists. The expected increase in tourist inflow after the construction of Rohtang tunnel would surely enhance the existing tourism infrastructure and services within the valley.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the demographic profile of the tourist of the Himachal Pradesh.
- 2) To analyze the perception of tourists about existing facilities in Himachal Pradesh.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Multi- stage sampling has been used for seeking information from the different categories of the respondents of the research. Three districts namely; Kullu, Shimla and Mandi (two blocks from each district) have been selected from twelve districts in the state of Himachal Pradesh. To achieve the objective, a sample of 225 tourists has been taken on the convenient random basis from the selected tourist places. Information has been collected from respondents by using pre-tested, well- designed questionnaire. The response of these tourists, domestic as well as foreign has been taken at five- degree Likert scale. Percentage and graphical presentation have been used to achieve the objectives.

**Data Analysis and interpretation**

The study examines the profile of the sample respondents; both the domestic and Foreign tourists. The socio-economic status of the people is usually determined by their relative position in various aspects such as gender, age, Income, occupation, education, etc. Table 1.1 depicts the demographic profile of the tourists. If we give a glance on the basis of gender -wise than it has revealed that from the total sample of 225 tourists , approximately 80 % of the respondents are Male and 20 % are female which shows that the majority of the people visiting Himachal Pradesh are Males tourists. In regard of Occupation, the total respondents belong to a different sector where 28% and 25.8% are from Private sector employees & public sector employees respectively , while 18.7% are Businessman, 9.3% were Pensioners and the rest are Student & Professionals. Similarly, on the basis of age classification 15.1% are found in the age group of below 25 years, 33.3% belongs to the age group of 25-35 years , whereas 20 % & 17.8% in the age group of 35-45 years and 45-55 years respectively, 13.8% are such respondents which belong to the age group of 55 & above. While analyzing the status of education 4.9% of the respondents are below Metric, 7.6% & 10.2 % are Metric & Plus two, respectively, while 46.2% and 31.1% are graduations and Post graduation & above respectively. As it is clear from the table that 7.6% respondents are found in the income group of below Rs.10,000, 11.6% belong to the monthly group of Rs.10,001 - Rs.20,000, 22.2% are 20,001-Rs.30,000 , while 32.4% and 26.2% belong to Rs.30001 – 40000 & Rs.40,001 & above respectively, which showed that the majority of people visiting Himachal Pradesh state are having the monthly income of 30,000 & above which reveals that the majority of these tourists visited belongs to upper middle- income class and high- income class families.

**Type of tourist:** Out of 225 respondents, 67 % have domestic respondents and 33% has foreign respondents.

**Table -1.1 Demographic Profile of tourist**

<b>Socio -Demographic Variable</b>	<b>Actual Responses</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	180	<b>80.0%</b>
Female	45	<b>20.0%</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Private sector employees	64	<b>28.4%</b>

Public sector employees	58	25.8%
Businessman	42	18.7%
Pensioners	21	9.3%
Student	16	7.1%
Professionals	24	10.7%
<b>Age(years)</b>		
Below 25 years	34	15.1%
25-35 years	75	33.3%
35-45 years	45	20.0%
45-55 years	40	17.8%
55 & above	31	13.8%
<b>Education</b>		
Below Metric	11	4.9%
Metric	27	7.6%
Plus two	23	10.2%
Graduation	104	46.2%
Post graduation & above	70	31.1%
<b>Monthly Income(Rs)</b>		
Below Rs.10,000	17	7.6%
Rs.10,001 - Rs.20,000	26	11.6%
Rs.20,001-Rs.30,000	50	22.2%
Rs.30,001 - Rs.40,000	73	32.4%
Rs.40,001 & above	59	26.2%
<b>Type of tourist</b>		
Domestic	150	67%
Foreign	75	33%

## 2. TOURISTS PERCEPTION REGARDING FACILITIES

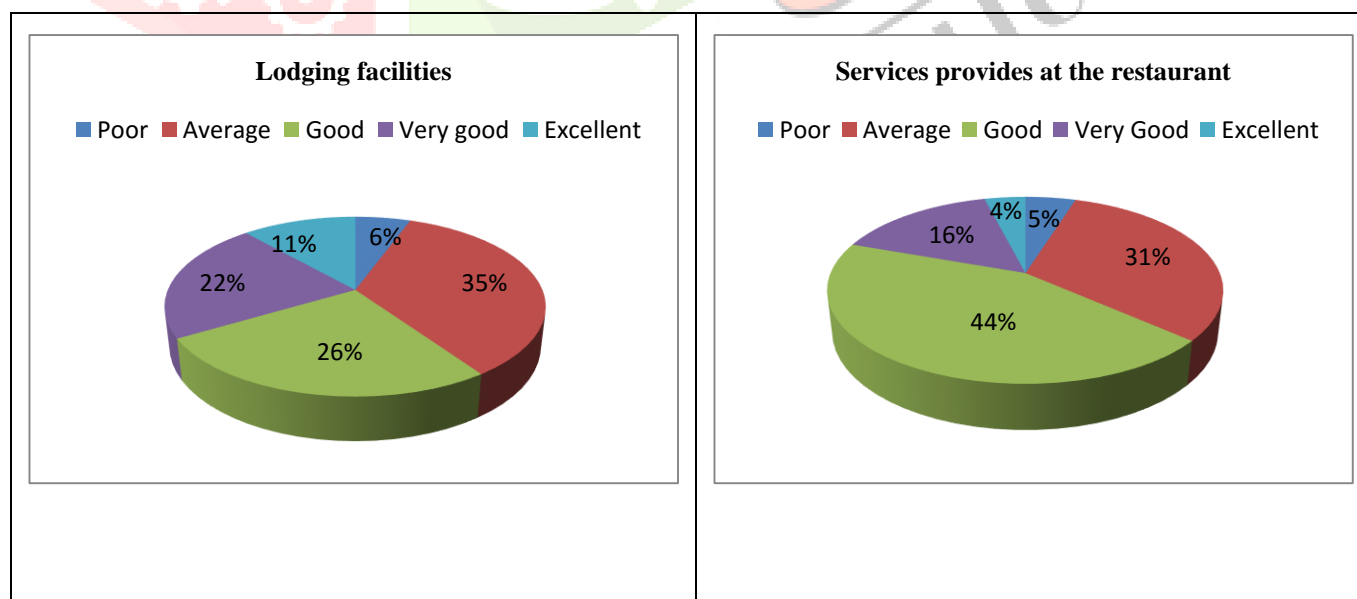
Facilities play an important role at the tourist destination because the travelling group may comprise of men, women, children, young and old of various age groups and as facilities make the traveler feel comfortable in his journey. The tourist has required indicating the level of satisfaction they derived in respect of each factor by stating excellent, very good, good, average and poor. Table 2.1 provides tourist opinion about the availability of facilities during their visit Himachal Pradesh.

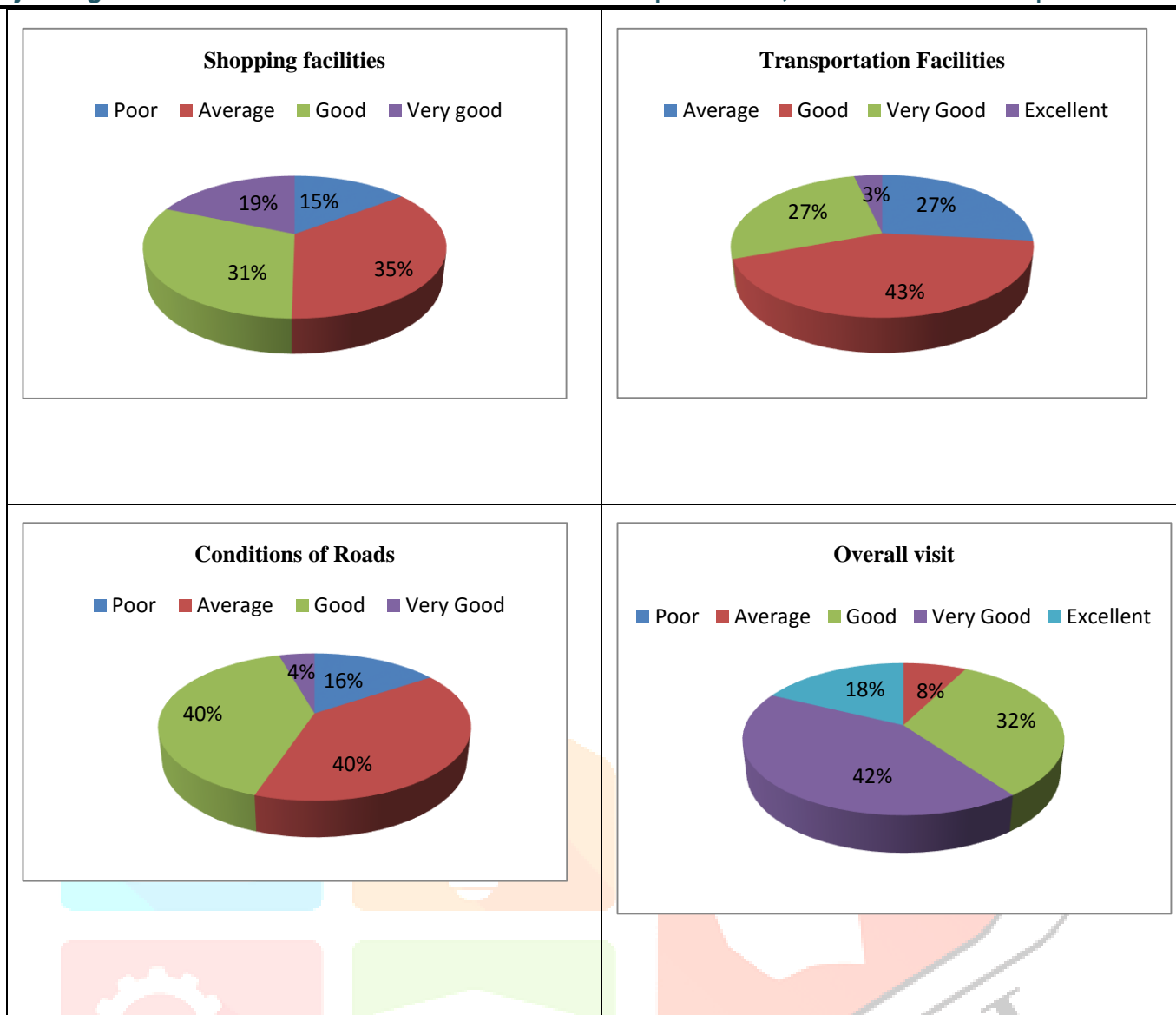
Table 2.1

## Perception of tourists regarding various facilities at the destination

S.No	Statements	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Total
1	Lodging facilities Percentage (%)	13(5.8)	81(36)	61(27.1)	51(22.7)	27(12)	225(100)
2	Services provides at the restaurant Percentage (%)	11(4.9)	71(31.6)	99(44.0)	35(15.6)	09(4.0)	225(100)
3	Transportation Facilities Percentage (%)	33(14.7)	80(35.6)	70(31.1)	42(18.7)	0(0)	225(100)
4	Shopping Facilities Percentage (%)	0(0)	60(26.7)	96(42.7)	61(27.1)	08(3.6)	225(100)
5	Conditions of Roads Percentage (%)	35(15.6)	89(39.6)	91(40.4)	10(4.4)	0(0)	225(100)
6	Overall Visit Percentage (%)	0(0)	17(7.6)	73(32.4)	95(42.2)	40(17.8)	225(100)

Figure-1.1  
Perception of tourists regarding various facilities at the destination





**Interpretation**

It has revealed from the above table 2.1 that majority of the respondents, 36 % rated lodging facilities as average, whereas 27.1% & 12% are stated as they are good & very good respectively. However, 12 % have stated excellent while the rest is admitted that are poor. Similarly, regarding various services provided at the restaurant 44 % ,31.6%, and 15.6% rated that services are good ,average and very good respectively ,Only 4 % rated these facilities as excellent and 4.9% rated that are poor. On the basis of shopping facilities, the table reveals that 42.7% & 27.1% rated these are as good and very good respectively, while 26.7 % rated these facilities as average; however, no one stated these as poor. Shopping is the part of the travel experience which may be major motivations for a leisurely travel trip and oblivious tourists look for exciting opportunities to shop while traveling. While analyzing the transportation facilities it is revealed that 35.6% tourists admitted rated that are average, 31.1% & 18.7 % are rating these as good & very good respectively, and 14.7 % rated that are poor, while no one rated these facilities as excellent in the state. Another facility that is taken are conditions of roads which play an important role in the tourism industry because if the roads are in a good condition then travel goes to comfort and easy way otherwise it will go panic. The entire state of Himachal Pradesh is well connected with the roads. Even far off places are also connected by roads ,but in rainy seasons the conditions of roads are not good. The table reveals that 40.4 % rated that are good while 39.6% rated these are average, whereas 15.6 % rated these facilities as poor, however no one stated these are excellent. Overall, tourist’s

perceptions of the retained five dimensions of tourism product (lodging facilities, services provided at the restaurant, Transportations facilities, conditions of the roads, and shopping facilities) had a positive effect on memorable travel experience. The table reveals that total sample respondents, 42.2 % & 32.4 % rated overall visit as very good & good respectively. However, 17.8 % rated as excellent, and no one rated their visit as poor.

### Conclusion and Suggestions:

No doubt Tourist attraction, accommodation facilities, and transport services are the essentials for the tourism. To understand or measuring the satisfaction level of tourist is one of the greatest need for any tourism industry in the state because satisfied tourists transfer their positive experience of other potential tourists and want to visit the same region, state or country repeatedly. Therefore, to develop successful tourist destination state it requires proper management strategies, and quality improvement programs that are helpful in measuring tourist satisfaction, identifying the problems that are hurdles in the tourism activities and focusing on the right solution methods.

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