

ANALYSIS OF VISITOR'S SATISFACTION AT GITA JAYANTI FEST KURUKSHETRA, 2012

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Abstract

India is known for its spirituality and culture worldwide. The philosophy of Gita is not confined only to the texts but also prevails among the majority of the people of India. In this context, Kurukshetra has important and significant place among the people it is the birth place of Bhagwad Gita which not only has religious importance but also acts as a guiding force for the mankind. Keeping in view the importance of Gita among the people, a fest name Gita Jayanti is organized every year on the northern side of Bramhasarovar which has very interesting mythological significance. Since its inception the number of visitors has been gradually increasing and this year it reached upto 6 lacs visitor (D.P.R.O., Kurukshetra). As a research scholar it naturally created interest and directed us to study the prospects and make an analysis of the satisfaction of the visitors. Here, satisfaction is overtly relative and individualized and when we say visitor satisfaction it becomes even more complicated and explicitly personalized to measure because of its peculiar characteristics. It is heterogeneous in nature hence; the purpose varies from visitor to visitor. For some, recreation is the pulling force while for the others learning, enlightening them with the spiritual effervescence becomes quite prominent. Present paper makes an analysis of the visitor satisfaction from this event, present the scope of improvement and highlight the purpose of their visit.

Keywords: - Visitor Satisfaction-Spiritual Experience-motivations

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Introduction:

In the very first verse of Bhagwad Gita, Kurukshetra is described as DHARAMKSHETRA i.e. 'Region of righteousness'. Kurukshetra is a place of great historical and religious importance, revered all over the country for its sacred association with the Vedas and the Vedic Culture. It was here that the battle of Mahabharat was fought and Lord Krishna preached his philosophy of 'KARMA' as enshrined in the Holy Bhagwad-Gita, to Arjuna at Jyotisar. According to Hindu mythology, the Kurukshetra is spread over, a circuit of about 48 KOS which includes a large number of holy places, temples and Sacred tanks connected with the religious events/rituals, Mahabharat War and Kurus, the ancestor of Kouravas and Pandavs. Kurukshetra is intimately related to the Aryan civilization and its growth all along the sacred river Saraswati. It is believed that all the holy waters of all sacred rivers flow/converge into Kurukshetra's Sannehit Sarovar, at the time of Somavati Amavasya & Solar eclipse. It is believed that those who visit this area reside here, take bath in the tanks, or die in Kurukshetra go to heaven after death. The Mahabharata states that one who dies at Kurukshetra attains salvation after death. It is said that the Almighty God after having performed, divine, yajnas created the universe here. It is the land where the sage Manu penned his 'Manusmriti' and where learned 'rishis' compiled the Rigveda and Samveda.

"Gita Jayanti" is the birthday of Bhagvad-Gita, the sacred text of the Hindus. It is celebrated on the 11th day of the waxing moon of Margaseersha month. It is believed that philosophy of "Bhagavad Gita" was given to Arjuna by Sri Krishna himself in the battlefield of Kurukshetra about 5000 years ago. Gita Jayanti Festival as the name suggests is a unique and exceptional festival dedicated to the birth of Srimad Bhagvad Gita, the holy book of Hindus. The festival is celebrated mainly in Kurukshetra. The festival is very sacred to Hindus and is celebrated with immense devotion and dedication. The Gita Jayanti Festival is organized by Kurukshetra Development Board, Haryana Tourism, District Administration, North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala and Information and Public Relations Department, Haryana. Over the years Gita Jayanti Fest has gained immense importance and popularity. A large number of tourists have started to visit Kurukshetra during the event to participate in this sacred fair. According to the estimates this year in 2012 approximately 6 lacs people visit this sacred fair.

Objective of the study:

The objective of the study is to identify the various attributes that are related to visitor satisfaction at a festival. It also make a critical assessment of various facilities and services provided by the organizing committee of Gita Jayanti Fest and present a scenario whether any scope of improvement is required in any particular area.

Review of Literature:

Satisfaction is a “buzz” word in present competitive market. Every industry is drawing its efforts to satisfy their customer. Customer Satisfaction is the key around which the hospitality and tourism industry is focusing now a day. Hospitality and tourism as a commercial activity is a special kind of relationship between service providers and customers. In this relationship, the host understands the needs and wants of the customer and gives pleasure to the customers in order that they enhance their needs and feel comfortable. The hospitality industry simply cannot survive without delivering satisfied quality of their services. Increased competition in the tourism industry forced tourist managers to identify the variables that attract visitors, ensure their returns **(Barsky & Labagh 1992)**.

Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel (1978) stated that it is important to evaluate consumer satisfaction with every attribute of the destination, for the reason that consumer dissatisfaction/satisfaction with one of the attribute leads to dissatisfaction/satisfaction with the overall destination. **Huh (2002)** has emphasized the need to explore the association between destination attributes and tourist satisfaction from the tourist viewpoint in order to gain an in depth understanding of tourist mind-set and behavior after they visit cultural/pilgrimage destination. Tourist satisfaction is pulling authority an attraction possesses and is the main aspect of tourist behaviour. If a developer is to produce successful attractions, his plans and establishments must elicit user satisfaction **(Richards, 1996)**. There were components to service organizations and that each of these components came jointly to form an overall whole of satisfaction. These components were facilities, services, information and experience. Satisfaction was a concept that was vital in understanding and evaluating tourists and exploring their behaviours **(Burns, 2000)**. Customer satisfaction refers to the divergence between previous

expectation and perceived performance; when performance exceeds expectation, satisfaction occurs (Oliver, 1980).

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) stated that the destination's attractiveness attributes with the industry level attributes such as human resources and infrastructure make a payment to the tourists overall satisfaction of a destination. Enright and Newton (2004) recommended that the tourists' overall satisfaction depends on both destination-specific attributes and factors influencing tourists' agreement of tourism products and services providers. This study seeks to identify cultural and heritage destination attributes which satisfy tourists when they visit these destinations. Sofield & Li (1998) studied the cultural tourism of China. They investigated which cultural and heritage attributes satisfy tourists. The results indicated that cultural and historical events, traditional festivals, historical sites, beautiful scenic locations, architecture, and culture villages as the satisfied attributes. Besides, Janiskee (1996) recognized the significance of events though numerous attributes such as festivals, traditional ceremonies, music, dancing, craftwork, food, historic houses, and direct experiences of traditional life. The results showed the cultural and heritage attributes which satisfied tourists were art, handicrafts, shopping places, traditional scenery, and food. Edwards et al. (2009) with expectation–importance– performance comparison grouped thirty-nine attributes into five categories: 'city environment', 'city experience', 'range of attractions' and 'food services'.

Crompton and McKay (1997) used a push and pull model to study travel motivations and developed six push and pull motivation factors: cultural exploration, novelty/regression, recover equilibrium (rest and relaxation/escape), identified group socialization, external socialization and interaction, and family togetherness. Likewise, Pearce, Philip and Lee (2005) originate that escape, relaxation, relation enhancement, and self-development were key push travel motivations. Huh et al. (2006) factor-analyzed a pool of heritage destination attributes and acknowledged four distinct domains fundamental tourists' satisfaction with the heritage locale. These factors were general tour attraction, culture/heritage attraction, shopping attraction and information factor.

Martilla and James (1977) devised a model of mapping expectations vs. experiences. It is a direct measurement technique which emerged from the earlier work of Martilla and James and was base to the development of the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory which received the

widest acceptance among the theories used to study the customer satisfaction in the tourism (**Shu - Yun Cheng, 2005**) and has become the central framework employed in the assessment of customer satisfaction with hospitality and tourism services (**Atila Yüksel, Fisun Yüksel, 2001**). This theory was propounded by Oliver in 1980 and holds that consumers first form expectations of products or service performance prior to purchasing or use based on advertisements, brochures, commercials, mass media and informal information from friends and relatives. The gap between performance and expectations is mediated through positive or negative disconfirmation. If a product outperforms expectations (positive disconfirmation) post-purchase satisfaction will result.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) developed SERVQUAL model for measuring service quality consisting of five determinants of quality (“tangibility”, “reliability”, “responsibility”, “assurance” and “empathy”). **Cronin and Taylor (1992)** presented SERVPERF Model (named after service performance). SERVPERF does not measure expectations; it does not evaluate quality of service, but consumers’ satisfaction. Unlike SERVPERF, the Importance - Performance technique allows simultaneous comparison of direct performance measure of service quality to the importance rating given by customers for the various quality items being evaluated. The importance-performance scale is based on the assumption that satisfaction is affected by both the significance of an attribute and perceived performance on the attribute (**Monika Prakash et al. 2011**).

Research Methodology:

This year Gita Jayanti festival was celebrated from In order to achieve the said objectives various attributes were identified through extensive review of literature. These attributes have profound effect on the satisfaction level of visitor visiting any festival. The attributes are as follows:

1	Appearance and Ambiance of GJF.	11	Price charged
2	Location of Celebrating the GJF.	12	Variety of cuisine
3	Ease to find the location.	13	Level of hygiene at eateries
4	Ease of Local Transport	14	Hospitality of vendors
5	Availability of recreational facilities	15	Drinking water facility

6	Facilities for physically disabled persons	16	Parking Facility
7	Availability of washrooms/toilets	17	Cleanliness during GJF
8	Appearance of stalls	18	Management of Waste disposal
9	Variety of products	19	Personal safety and security
10	Management of lost and found section	20	Resting area in GJF

In addition to this, various other question were asked from the respondents in order to know their demographic characteristics, their purpose of visit, source of information, whether there visit is worthwhile experience, did they get any spiritual experience etc. At last there overall satisfaction level is being measured. A reasonable sample size of 100 respondents were taken within 4 days of this festival i.e. from

Structured questionnaire was developed on the basis of listed attributes and respondents were requested to give score on 5 point Likert type scale. Hereafter, with the help of SPSS, mean and standard deviation was calculated to analyze the response. Factor analysis was also applied. Output is obtained through Extraction method: Principal component analysis and Rotation method.

Analysis:

Table 1
Factor Analysis of Variables: Extraction method

Variables	Initial Eigen Values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Square Loadings		
	Tot al	% of Varia nce	Cumula tive %	Tot al	% of Varia nce	Cumula tive %	Tot al	% of Varia nce	Cumula tive %
Appearance and Ambiance of GJF.	11.838	56.371	56.371	11.838	56.371	56.371	11.061	52.672	52.672
Location of Celebrating the GJF.	3.300	15.712	72.083	3.300	15.712	72.083	3.617	17.226	69.898
Ease to find	2.90	13.821	85.904	2.90	13.821	85.904	3.36	16.006	85.904

the location.	2			2			1		
Ease of Local Transport	.810	3.858	89.762						
Parking Facility	.508	2.419	92.181						
Facilities for physically disabled persons	.334	1.592	93.772						
Resting area in GJF	.311	1.482	95.254						
Appearance of stalls	.195	.929	96.183						
Variety of products	.180	.857	97.041						
Price charged	.132	.630	97.671						
Variety of cuisine	.090	.430	98.101						
Level of hygiene at eateries	.089	.423	98.524						
Hospitality of vendors	.074	.353	98.877						
Drinking water facility	.057	.269	99.146						
Availability of washrooms/toilets	.044	.211	99.357						
Cleanliness during GJF	.040	.191	99.548						
Management of Waste disposal	.033	.156	99.704						
Personal safety and	.020	.093	99.797						

security									
Management of lost and found section	.018	.085	99.882						
Availability of recreational facilities	.016	.075	99.958						
Overall satisfaction level	.009	.042	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

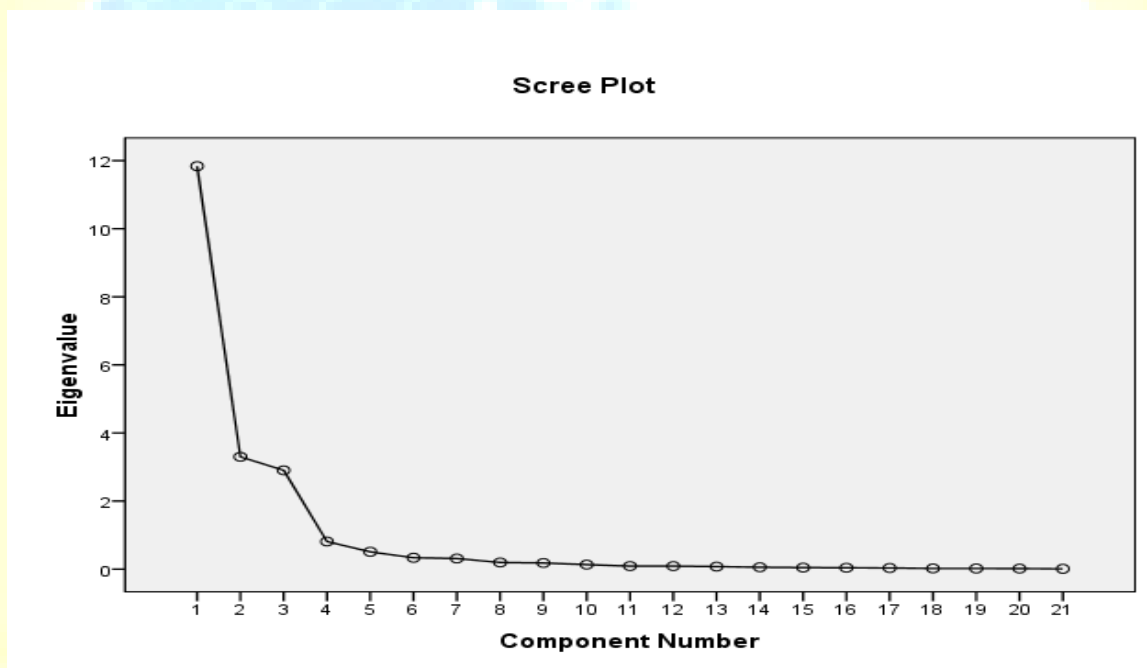


Table 2

Formation of factors with their values

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
Appearance and Ambiance of GJF.	.145	.186	.737
Location of Celebrating the GJF.	.608	.605	-.287
Ease to find the location.	-.365	.182	.810
Ease of Local Transport	.886	.301	-.160

Parking Facility	.931	.293	.026
Facilities for physically disabled persons	-.185	.641	-.659
Resting area in GJF	.255	-.369	.717
Appearance of stalls	.300	.868	-.129
Variety of products	.527	.681	.084
Price charged	.418	.071	-.801
Variety of cuisine	.631	-.561	-.330
Level of hygiene at eateries	.390	.744	.402
Hospitality of vendors	.912	.193	.216
Drinking water facility	.946	.189	-.006
Availability of washrooms/toilets	.924	.264	-.025
Cleanliness during GJF	.937	-.071	.032
Management of Waste disposal	.950	.151	-.033
Personal safety and security	.935	.054	.069
Management of lost and found section	.909	.260	-.198
Availability of recreational facilities	.898	.342	.061
Overall satisfaction level	.908	-.105	-.267

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. A rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Factor 1 has high loadings of location of celebrating the Gita Jayanti festival, ease of local transport, parking facility, variety of cuisine, hospitality of vendors, drinking water facility, availability of washroom /toilets, overall cleanliness, management of waste disposal, personal safety and security, management of lost and found section, availability of recreational facility and overall satisfaction level of visitors visiting the Gita Jayanti festival. All these variables are concerned with the management, general facilities and services hence this factor can be named as **General Facilities, Management and Services**, as it is shown in table no. 3. Mean value of different attribute under this factor, also shown in the table given below.

Table 3

Factor 1 : General Facilities, Management and Services

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Location of celebrating the GJF.	4.6400	.61167
Ease of Local Transport	3.9800	.75183
Parking Facility	3.9000	1.01005
Variety of cuisine	3.1900	1.00197

Hospitality of vendors	3.0600	.97255
Drinking water facility	2.9000	1.02986
Availability of washrooms/toilets	2.9700	.90403
Cleanliness during GJF	3.5000	.75879
Management of Waste disposal	3.0700	1.13933
Personal safety and security	3.3400	.74155
Management of lost and found section	4.0100	.79766
Availability of recreational facilities	2.7800	.90543
Overall satisfaction level	3.7100	.76930

Factor 2 shows high loadings of appearance of stall, variety of products and level of hygiene at eateries. All these three variables are associated with the shopping and hygienic level at the Gita Jayanti festival and hence this factor can be named as **Shopping and Hygiene** as shown in table no. 4. Mean values are also shown with the same.

Table 4
Factor 2: Shopping and Hygiene

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Appearance of stalls	3.9400	.83871
Variety of products	3.7500	.92524
Level of hygiene at eateries	2.8500	.91425

Factor 3 has high loadings of appearance and ambiance of festival, ease to find the location, facilities for the physically disabled persons, resting area and price charged at Gita Jayanti festival. These five variables are associated with special facilities and hence this factor can be named as **Special facilities and price** as shown in table no. 5.

Table 5
Factor 3: Special facilities and Price

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Appearance and Ambiance of GJF.	4.0500	.60927
Ease to find the location.	4.3600	.59493
Facilities for physically disabled persons	2.1900	.87265
Resting area in GJF	2.8200	1.06723
Price charged	2.3500	.91425

Results:

Certain form of other information was also taken from respondents in addition to their response about the identified attributes. This information is related to their age structure, their source of information, their purpose of visit etc. which is shown in table no. 6. 31 % of respondent visit this festival first time and 69 % of respondent visited this festival twice or thrice. Out of that 9 people come more than 5 times with one person visiting highest 8 times.

Table 6

		Percentage
Age	18-25	54
	25-40	30
	Above 40	16
Gender	Male	62
	Female	38
Travel a party	Alone	12
	Family	37
	Friends	51
Source of information	Already knew	51
	Magazine	--
	Newspaper	15
	Television	--
	Word of mouth	34
	Others	--
Purpose of visit	Getting out with relative and friends	11
	Cultural Learning	11
	Fun and Entertainment	61
	Religion and pilgrimage	3
	Shopping	14
	Others	--
Place of residence	Within 20 km. radius	60
	20-40 km. radius	29
	Above 40 km. radius	11

77% people said yes that Gita Jayanti festival increase their knowledge about the place and culture and rest 23% said no. Most of the people are of view that more information is

required to be provided about kurukshetra and especially about philosophy of Bhagvad Gita. Equal emphasis should also be given on spiritual experience of visitor as according to the response 72% respondents didn't get any sort of spiritual experience by their visit to this fest only 28% said yes to this. So there is a need of such methods so that visitor gets some sort of spiritual benefit through their visit. Interestingly, 100% respondent were of view that visiting Gita Jayanti fest was a worthwhile experience and all of them recommend this festival to their friends and relatives, however few of them are of view that they only recommend this fest provided if they are in kurukshetra but not advised them to come kurukshetra specially to visit this festival only.

The mean value of Factor 1 i.e. General Facilities, Management and Services, ranges from 4.6400 to 2.7800. On the other hand mean value of Factor 2 i.e. Shopping and Hygiene ranges from 3.9400 to 2.8500. The mean value of Factor 3 i.e. Special facilities and Price ranges from 4.3600 to 2.1900.

Location of celebrating the Gita Jayanti festival has the highest mean value of 4.64 means most of the respondents are highly satisfied with the location. In addition to this appearance and ambiance of fest, ease to find the location, management of lost and found section, ease of local transport, Variety of products, Cleanliness, Appearance of stalls and parking facility have the highest mean value i.e. 4.05, 4.36, 4.01, 3.98, 3.75, 3.50, 3.94, 3.90 respectively. Means most of the respondents are satisfied with these variables.

Variety of cuisine, Hospitality of vendors, Drinking water facility, Availability of washrooms/toilets, Management of Waste disposal, Personal safety and security, Level of hygiene at eateries, Resting area are those variable for which most of the respondent have more or less neutral response with mean value 3.19, 3.06, 2.90, 2.97, 3.07, 3.34, 2.85, 2.82 respectively.

Rest of the variables like Availability of recreational facilities, Facilities for physically disabled persons and Price charged have less mean score i.e. 2.78, 2.19 and 2.35 respectively. Overall satisfaction score of the respondents from this festival is 3.71 which are moving towards the satisfaction index score.

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