

TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN BIRBHUM

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has tremendous potential due to people's interest in travel and desire to explore nature and new destinations. Tourism in India is expected to play a key role in the country's economic growth, human resource, culture, wealth of the country in terms of foreign exchange earnings etc., This present study attempts to determine the experiences

of visitors from the importance and ability of attractiveness attribute. An IPA (Importance Performance analysis) analysis was conducted. A survey has been steered during the month of October 2019 in multiple attraction sites in Birbhum. Birbhum District is an administrative unit in West Bengal, India. The outcome finds that santiniketan heritage, history and cultural attraction is the only attractiveness attribute that satisfied visitor. In conclusion, these findings will provide additional knowledge on how visitor perceived the attraction in birbhum in term of satisfaction and which attribute need to be focused by destination marketers for future marketing strategy.

KEYWORDS: Satisfaction, attractiveness, Birbhum, heritage, culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

India's foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from the tourism sectors reached US \$27.31 billion in the year 2017. In the year 2017, as many as 10.04 million foreign tourists visited India, out of which 15.7 lakhs to West Bengal. Number of foreign tourist arrivals in India during 2018(Jan-June) is 5.16 million with a percentage change of 7.9% over previous year. Whereas domestic tourist visit in West Bengal is also showing a steep hike as in the year 2017 total number of visits was more than 7.9 crore with a percentage share of 4.8% over

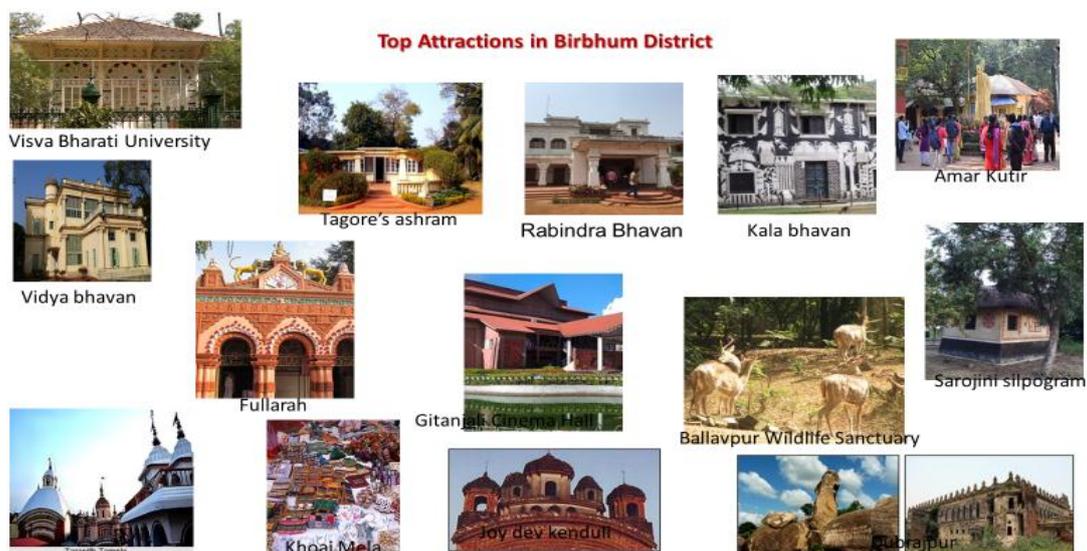
previous year making West Bengal to hold the 7th rank in domestic tourists visits in 2017. FTA's in West Bengal in 2017 is also praiseworthy with more than 15.7 lakhs foreign tourists' arrivals with a percentage share of 5.9 % over previous year making West Bengal to hold the 6th rank in Foreign Tourists Visits in 2017.

Birbhum District is an administrative unit in West Bengal. land of the red soil" (Lalbhumi) is also "the land of the brave". The name Birbhum means the land of the brave. According to the legends, this place was ruled by the Bir dynasty and thus, the name Birbhum was derived. Several brave kings have dominated Birbhum since the beginning. It has witness decades of changes right from the times of Gautam Buddha till the pre-independence era.

Birbhum escalates 4,545 km. sq. and is entrenched on the basin of River Ajoy. With such tranquil geographical location, Birbhum has a tropical climate and experiences distinct temperatures.

Birbhum is blessed with rich folk culture and is home to many cultural groups like Bauls, Kabiyaals and Kirtaniyas. The Poush Fair is a notable attraction that lures the music enthusiasts and folk singer from different direction of this country.

Bolpur-Shantiniketan, Nanor, Joydev-Kenduli, Bakreswar and Nalhati are the principal sites of attraction here. The Visva Bharati University at Shantiniketan, established by Rabindranath Tagore, is one of the internationally renowned places. Many festivals are celebrated in this culturally rich district - Poush Mela, Basanta Utsav, Kenduli Mela etc. Trapaith and Bakreswar are other famous places of attractions.



2) LITERATURE REVIEW

Garín-Muñoz and Moral (2017) had stated that satisfaction is one of the most important information in all market sector including tourism. The increase of visitors' demand in terms of service quality and its value for money has made satisfaction a fundamental goal in any visitor-oriented business (Bernini and Cagnone, 2014). As mentioned by Baker and Crompton (2000), acceptance of visitor in the increase of service quality correlates to a higher level of satisfaction.

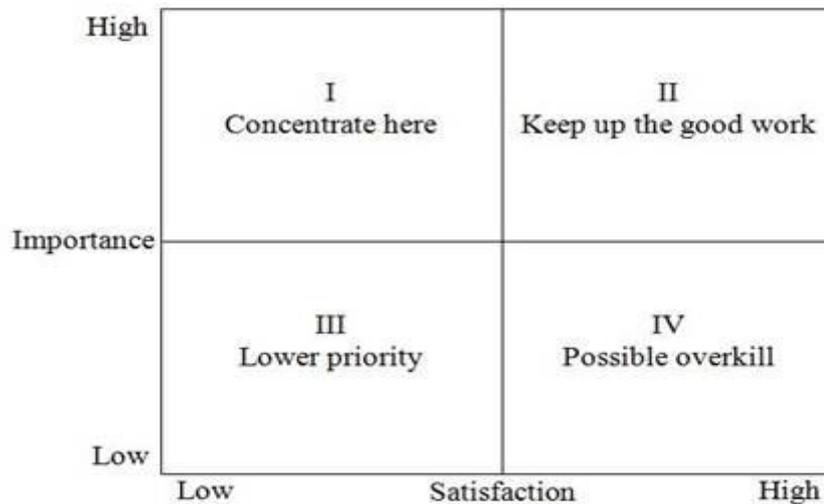
Attributes such as climate, good accommodation, reasonable prices, safety and security are among the commonly used indicators in the evaluation of satisfaction level among visitors in different destinations (Alegre and Cladera, 2009; Shih, 1986)

According to Baker and Crompton (2000), tourism satisfaction refers to the emotional state of visitors after exposure to an opportunity or experience. The feedback from visitors can determine whether they are satisfied with a particular destination's attributes thus revealing the strengths and weaknesses which is vital in promotions and development of tourism destinations. study done by Neal and Gursoy (2008) found 3 determinants of satisfaction during various stage of tourism experience which includes quality of service, efficiency and cost. In order to measure visitor's satisfaction, this study focused on the gap importance and performance of attractiveness attribute as well as the overall satisfaction of visitor.

Importance Performance analysis (IPA) As mention by Martilla and James (1977), Importance Performance analysis (IPA) is a simple and useful method to assess importance and performance attribute in decision making. It is a simple, easy-to-apply technique for marketer to evaluate importance and performance and thus develop a marketing strategy.

This method was adopted to examine the attractiveness attribute in Birbhum. Visitors' perceived importance of each attractiveness attribute is indicated by vertical axis (Y-axis) while horizontal axis (X-axis) denotes the visitors' perceived performance of the respective attractiveness attribute. The mean value of importance and performance is calculated to form the cross-hair (grand mean). Each attractiveness attributes' mean score is plotted in the four quadrants. Each quadrant has different meaning and labelled as 'possible overkill', 'keep up the good work', 'low priority' and 'concentrate here' (Mullins and Spetich, 1987).

Therefore, there is a need to access each of the attractiveness attributes in addition to the importance and performance of the attributes from the visitor's perspective in order to better understand if a destination is performing in accordance to the end-user's expectations.



In this investigation, each destination attributes were spread in the matrix according to their importance and performance grade allotted by the respondents. The distributed attractiveness attribute in the IP grid could help to interpret attribute into action. Strategy for enhancement and the need for instantaneous attention can be suggested from the findings.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i) To Explore and Identify the Tourist attractions in Birbhum;
- ii) To Determine the experiences of visitors from the importance and ability of attractiveness attribute in birbhum.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population for this study was the tourists, who visits birbhum during the month of September and October 2019. A structured Questionnaire was Intended with following sections:

Section 1: Respondent's socio-demographic characteristic.

Section 2: Information about visitor's trip from home to Birbhum.

Section 3: Visitors perception on birbhum Attributes attraction.

Section 4: Experience about the present tour by visitor

Visitor Satisfaction with Attractiveness Attributes in Birbhum

Table 2: Paired Sample T-Test for Mean Importance and Mean Ability of Attractiveness Attribute of Birbhum.

Attractiveness Attribute	Performance Mean	Importance Mean	Gap (P-I)	t	Sig. (2- Tailed)
Sights and Land Marks	4.27	4.03	0.24	-4.57	.000
Museums	2.79	3.87	-1.08	21.07	.000
Nature and Parks	2.34	3.60	-1.26	21.53	.000
Traveller Resources	3.07	3.41	-0.32	5.49	.000
Fun & Games	3.31	3.43	-0.12	2.74	.000
Shopping	2.76	2.87	-0.11	1.76	.078
Cuisines	3.31	3.47	-0.16	2.74	.007
Events	2.91	3.28	-0.37	6.28	.000
Average	3.47	3.8			

This section challenges to answer the prime research aim, to investigate visitor satisfaction towards the attraction in Birbhum. Visitors' satisfaction towards the attraction of Birbhum was measured by using the importance and performance ratings, paired samples t-test and the importance-performance grid (Phan, 2017; Crilley, Weber and Taplin, 2012; Tonge, Moore, and Taplin, 2011).

The means of attractiveness attribute of Birbhum were tested in pairs using paired samples t-test to analyse whether there was a significant difference between the importance means and performance means. The importance of statistical significance is to confirm that the difference is real and does not happen by chance. When the p-value is less than or equal to 0.05, the difference between the importance means and performance means is statistically significant. So, we can state confidently that there was a significant difference between the importance and performance means whereas if the Gap (P – I) is in (-), the importance of attractiveness attribute is higher than performance of the attractiveness attribute thus it indicates that the visitor is not satisfied with the attractiveness attribute and vice versa with (+). The p-values (two-tailed) and t-values of services for attractiveness attribute of Birbhum are presented in Table 3.0.

From the paired t-test, it is revealed that all the means importance was statistically different from their corresponding means performance except one attractiveness attribute that is shopping. This showed that the importance of visitors for other 7 attractiveness attributes did not significantly influence their performance rating.

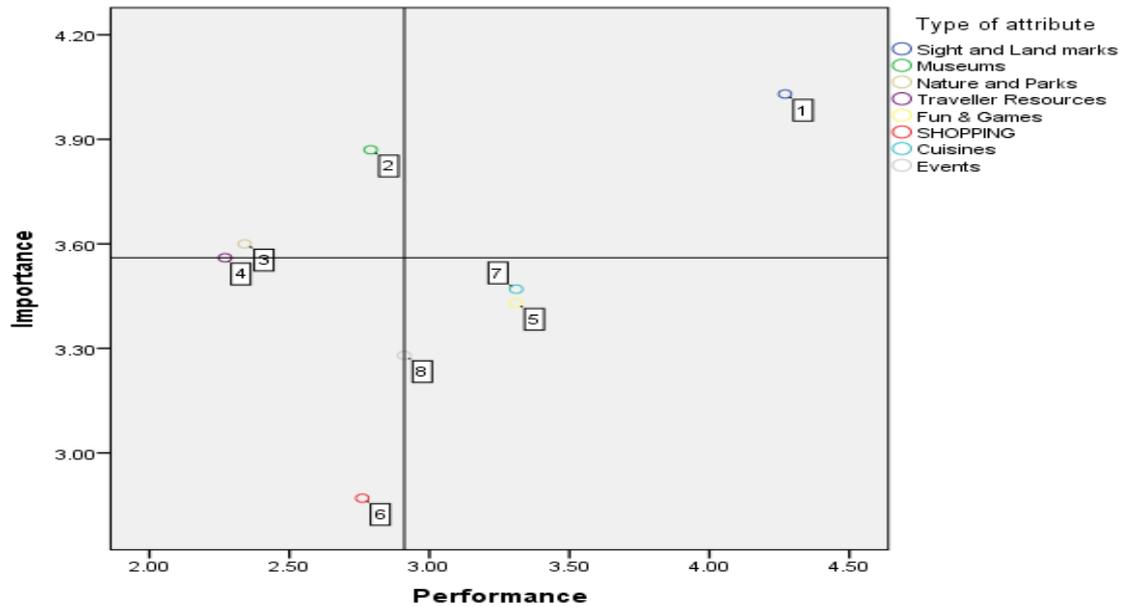


Figure 1: IP Distribution of Attractiveness Attributes.

For the first attractiveness attribute that is Sight and Land marks, the importance mean is significantly lower than the performance mean (4.27, 4.03; $p=0.00$). However, the attractiveness attributes shown that there is no significant difference ($p>0.05$). The table-2 also present the other six attractiveness attribute that are Museums attraction (2.79, 3.87; $p=0.00$), Nature and parks (2.34, 3.60; $p=0.00$), cuisine (3.31, 3.47; $p=0.07$), event (2.91, 3.28; $p=0.00$), Traveller resources (3.07,3.41; $p=0.00$), shopping (2.76, 2.86; $p=0.79$) and Fun and Games (3.31,3.43; $p=0.00$). the mean importance for all of the six-attractiveness attribute is significantly higher than the performance means and from the test showed that there was significant difference in all six-attractiveness attribute ($p<0.05$) except for shopping.

As there are 6 from 8 attractiveness attributes were significantly significant, there are rooms from improvement. From gap ($P - I$), the result displays that there is difference in performance and importance. The higher rating of importance rather than performance indicates that there are rooms for improvement effort (Abola, Valera and Manzano, 2007).

Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA)

IPA was conducted to identify which attractiveness attributes are weak and which one is really strong. Based on this study, the importance-performance distribution of attributes gathered from the visitors that visit Bhirbhum are depicted in Figure -1. From the figure, it shows that there is only one attribute in quadrant 1-Concentrate here. The attributes are Sight

and land marks. All of these items in this quadrant need improvement and a top priority. This is because the attributes are considered important to visitor but it is low in performance based on their experience.

In the quadrant-2 Keep up the good work, there is three attractiveness attribute that is museums, Traveller resources and nature and parks. The attractiveness attribute in this quadrant revealed that it has high importance and high performance from the visitor rating. Item in this quadrant is the major strength of a destination attributes and should be sustained the decent work.

The third quadrant represents the attractiveness attribute that is low priority. The attractiveness attribute includes Shopping and events. All the attractiveness in this quadrant show there is room for improvement but it is unnecessary for the management to focus additional effort here.

Meanwhile, in quadrant 4, it is an overkill to focus on cuisine and fun and games attraction. Two attractiveness attributes in this quadrant has been overly emphasized and it is shown that the attribute has been misused (Dabphet, 2017).

From this analysis, the management can use these four attributes, Sight and land mark, Meuseum, Nature and parks, Traveller resources to market Birbhum as the promotional tourism image as there are high importance and high performance (Dabphet, S., 2017).

Shopping received low importance and low performance. The visitors perceived that shopping attractiveness is a low priority for them. This show that most of the visitors that visit birbhum are not here for shopping activity.

Overall, from the IP distribution of attractiveness attribute in Birbhum, management should focus on improving traveller resources, museums, Nature and parks attraction while keep up the good work with sight and land marks attractiveness attribute. Briefly, by using IPA, we can easily measure the importance and performance on the attractiveness attribute of birbhum, and managers may know for sure which attribute they have to maintain and which one has to be refurbished to attract tourist to visit each attraction. it is necessary to improve on the attributes that have high importance such as traveller resources, museums, Nature and parks attraction. These three attributes high potential to become top attraction in Bhirbum.

5. CONCLUSION

The survey showed that the visitor is satisfied the most are sight and land marks, traveller resources, museums, Nature and parks attraction. shopping was deemed the least satisfying attraction for visitor in birbhum. By looking at the IPA matrix, it is necessary to improve on the attributes that have high importance such as sight and land marks, traveller resources, museums, Nature and parks. These four attributes high potential to become top attraction in birbhum.

Besides that, future research may include foreign visitor as respondent. The perception of domestic and foreign visitor may differ from one another. The study with domestic and foreign visitor may increase the knowledge on how the visitor perceived the attraction in birbhum in term of satisfaction.

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