

Comparative Analysis of the Information Seeking Behaviour of Indian and Foreign Tourists at Kovalam Tourist Region, Trivandrum, Kerala

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Abstract – This study conducted to find out the information seeking pattern and determine the major resources of information major source of information satisfying the needs of Indian and foreign tourists with special preference to tourist visitors of Kovalam tourist region, Trivandrum district of Kerala state. Questionnaire methodology adopted for data collection. The sample population is the tourist visitors of Kovalam tourist region in the period of Jan 2012 to Dec 2013. Results shows that Online searching are the major method used for seeking and collecting information for Indian and foreign tourists but tourist guides the major source of collecting reliable information for both Indian and foreign tourists.

Keywords: Information Seeking Behavior, Indian, Foreign, Tourists, Kovalam, Trivandrum, Kerala

I. INTRODUCTION

Information seeking behaviour simply means the way in which people search information for their personal, academic or work related matters. Wilson(2000) defined information behavior as the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use. According to Leckie et.al (1996) information seeking involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Taylor(1962) pointed that information need has four levels: a)the conscious and unconscious need for information not existing in the remembered experience of the investigator, b)the conscious mental description of an ill-defined area of in decision, c)an investigator forms a rational statement of

his question. d) the question as presented to the information system. Tourism is now consider as one of the economic alternatives of Kerala State. It generates more employment opportunities for all age categories of Kerala .Kerala- God's Own Country was adopted as the the tag line of tourism promotion of Kerala. State. In the year 2012 almost 7.94 lakh foreign tourists arrived in Kerala. The sea shore of Kerala is very beautiful and Kovalam is one of the best seashore attraction of Kerala Its also known as the "Paradise of the South". Kovalam a casual fishing village of Kerala now become the most important tourist destinations in South India..Kovalam is 15 kms away from Trivandrum. This study conducted to find out the information seeking pattern and determine the major resources of information major source of information satisfying the need of Indian and foreign tourists with special preference to tourist visitors of Kovalam tourist region, Trivandrum district of Kerala state.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chon (1990) discussed the importance of the tourist-directed information package as a promotional tool and indicate significant differences between information-seeking tourists and non-information seeking tourists with regard to their socio-economic and vacation travel characteristics. Snepenger et.al (1990) examined the information search strategies used by destination-naive vacationers to Alaska and their vacation-specific behaviors. Result shows that travel agent playing a pivotal role for information search strategies. Fodness and Murray (1997) analyzed information search behavior of 585 auto travelers to Florida and found

that information search is associated with managerially-relevant tourism outcomes; and a priori operationalization of information search is a more appropriate approach to segmentation on a number of criteria.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to examine information seeking behaviour of Indian and foreign tourists:

1. To discover the purpose for information seeking and information needs of Indian and foreign tourists;
2. To determine the methods used for seeking information of tourists;
3. To determine the major source of information satisfying their need;
4. To find out problems faced by Indian and foreign tourists while seeking information.

IV. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study limited to the Indian and foreign tourists of Kovalam tourist region, Trivandrum district of Kerala state in the period of two year - Jan 2012 to Dec 2013. Some of the limitations of the study are: a) The scope

of the study is limited to Kovalam tourist region of Kerala state only. b) Language barrier is the main problem faced by the researcher for collecting information from foreign tourist visitors. c) People who come from non-English countries have failed to answer some questions and so some questions eliminated in the final stage of analysis.

V. METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire methodology adopted for data collection. A structured questionnaire prepared in English language and distributed among the foreign as well as Indian tourists in the period of Jan 2012 to Dec 2013. Since the population is very huge of a random sample of 600 tourists includes 300 foreign and Indian each selected for the study. Questionnaire filled by the researcher itself at the time of each visit for accuracy of the data collection.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows that the main purpose of information seeking of Indian tourists 121 out of 300 (40.33 %) is to know the travel route between various tourist destination across the world whereas 41.66 % foreign tourist information seeking purpose is to know new tourist places all over the world.

TABLE I PURPOSE FOR INFORMATION SEEKING

Sl.No.	Purpose	No. of respondents- Indian	No. of respondents- Foreign	Percentage (Indian)	Percentage (Foreign)
1	Know the tourist places	35	125	11.67	41.66
2	Know the Travel route	121	59	40.33	19.67
3	To find travel agents	86	88	28.66	29.33
4	Update travel knowledge	38	20	12.67	6.67
5	Others	20	8	6.67	2.67
	Total	300	300	100	100

TABLE II METHODS USED FOR SEEKING INFORMATION

Sl.No.	Methods	No. of respondents (Indian)	No. of respondents (Foreign)	Percentage (Indian)	Percentage (Foreign)
1	Reading	29	81	9.67	27
2	Online searching	260	196	86.67	65.33
3	Others	11	23	3.66	7.67
	Total	300	300	100	100

As per table II, it is clear that online searching are the major method used for seeking and collecting information . 86.67 % of the Indian tourists and 65.33 % of the Foreign tourists are prefer online searching as a method of seeking for their tourist information.

Table III reveals that tourist guides the major source of collecting information for both Indian and foreign tourists. Tourist websites and travel agents are comes in the next major source of information.

TABLE III MAJOR SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Sl. No.	Source	No.of respondents (Indian)	No.of respondents (Foreign)	Percentage (Indian)	Percentage (Foreign)
1	Books	19	8	6.33	2.67
2	Tourist Guides	96	139	32	46.33
3	Tourist website	79	89	26.33	29.67
4	Tourist information centers	28	14	9.33	4.67
5	Travel agents	58	42	19.33	14
6	Friends and Colleagues	14	6	4.67	2
7	Others	6	2	2	0.66
	Total	300	300	100	100

TABLE IV PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIAN TOURISTS

Sl.No	Problems	No.of respondent	Percentage
1	Language barrier	141	47
2	Unofficial information	89	29.67
3	Lack of exact information	48	16
4	Others	22	7.33
	Total	300	100

TABLE V PROBLEMS FACED BY FOREIGN TOURISTS

Sl.No	Problems	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Language barrier	180	60
2	Unofficial information	54	18
3	Lack of exact information	46	15.33
4	Others	20	6.67
	Total	300	100

Table IV and Table V reveals that language barrier is one of the main problem faced by Indian as well as foreign tourist at the time of seeking a particular information .

VII. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that online searching are the major method used for seeking and collecting information for Indian and foreign tourists but for reliable information tourist

guides are the major source of collecting information for both Indian and foreign tourists. In case of online searching they get a lots of unofficial information which will leads to mistakes and disappointments for a tourist journey and waste their time and money. The tourist departments and other tourism promotional agencies should considered this point of view that for making more reliable websites, tourist information guides etc in different languages.

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