

Socio Demographic Characteristics of Tourists from Maharashtra visiting Goa

Rasika Shahane*, Mayola Fernandes**

Abstract

The Maharashtra tourists travel to Goa in large number every year. To date there are very few studies focusing on this group of tourists. This study represents an exploratory attempt to capture the underlying reasons for tourists' decisions to visit a destination. The main objective is to understand the specific case of tourism in the Indian state of Goa, investigating, the socio demographic characteristics of Maharashtra tourists who are drawn to it. The study also examines the motivations, socio-demographic profiles, consumption patterns and image of the destination that the tourist holds. The findings can be utilized for formulating strategies to attract, maintain and retain more number of Maharashtra tourists visiting Goa.

Keywords: Socio Demographic Profile, Travel Motivation, Travel Behavior, Goa

INTRODUCTION

Goa, once known as the "Rome of the East", is famous for tourism world-wide. Besides tourism, mining, farming and fishing are the other important occupations of the locals. Tourism caught the imagination of the people in the world in the 1980s and Goa, due to its natural beauty coupled with the charming Portuguese influence and culture, became a favorite destination for hordes of tourists from all over the world.

In India, Goa has always been one of the most popular tourist places. People travel from far and wide to this small state for its diverse mix of beaches, adrenaline activities,

parties, nature, and history. Goa is India's smallest state in terms of size and population located on the western coast on the Indian subcontinent. However, it attracts over 1.5 million tourists annually and also contributes to a large amount of international tourists. This blistering increase in Goa's tourism is mainly attributed to the 'affordable' and 'sun-sand-sea' image. But then, Goa is much more than just beaches and nightlife. It has a soul which goes deep into unique history, rich culture and some of the prettiest natural scenery that India has to offer. It is bounded by the state of Maharashtra to the north and by Karnataka to the east and south.

Apart from its sun soaked beaches Goa as a tourist destination has various attractions on offer such as its magnificent churches and cathedrals, wildlife sanctuaries, spice plantations and flea markets as well as the various natural resources available to conduct adventure sports which is lately creating a tourist network of its own.

Maharashtra being the state closest to Goa and also sharing its coastal belt has a lot of similarities such as the Konkani language, traditional dressing style and love for seafood. Tourists from Maharashtra flock over to Goa in order to enjoy a long weekend or maybe even a fortnight during the summer and winter breaks.

It is also a fact that apart from just visiting the beaches and holidaying, most Maharashtra tourists visit Goa to offer prayers to their deities who are in Goa such as Mangeshi and Shantadurga.

The socio- demographic factors in this research include, relating to, or involving a combination

* Assistant Professor, AISSMS College of Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Pune, Maharashtra, India.
E-mail: rasika.shahane@gmail.com

** Research Scholar, Savitribai Phule University of Pune, Maharashtra, India.

of social and demographic factors that are inherent in tourists. The study has taken into consideration various factors such as gender, age, educational qualification and monthly income of the tourists visiting Goa in order to understand their profile.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the socio demographic profile of the tourists from Maharashtra.
2. To identify the factors considered by tourists when choosing Goa as a tourist destination.
3. To examine the expenditure pattern while on a visit to Goa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Brewer (International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems Volume 2 Issue 1 2010) took a direct approach to examine the differences in tourist motivations between nationalities and between destinations. The study found that the factors of measure of travel motivations comprised four dimensions of motives: cultural motives, pleasure-seeking/fantasy-based motives, relaxation-based motives, and physical motives.
2. Smitha Bhandare Kamat (International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Systems Volume 3 Issue 1 2010) Goa is always on the minds of tourists as their favourite destination for relaxation and recreation. This destination has gained the popularity in all the possible aspects that tourists expect from a perfect destination. Ever since it is been discovered by Portuguese, people are gathering on this land to have good time. Goa has really evolved as a tourist destination over the years. This destination can accommodate people belonging to all socio demographic profiles. It is truly the destination which takes care of cultural as well as modern expectations of tourists.
3. David Williams (Annals of tourism research, Volume 24 Issue 1, 1997) mentions that, Goa is known for its classic development as a tourism development over last decade. This research done by David Williams, focuses on the gap between the perception of tourists about Goa and the present structure offers to the tourists. The more emphasis is given on the wide ranging involvement of small family business re-views the options for future development of tourism in Goa. Also the strategies which government can adopt to develop Goa as one of the most preferred destination for tourists.
4. Social research, Volume 39, No 1 spring 1972, the article speaks about the tourists psychology while visiting a particular destination. In recent years there are many reasons for which people have started travelling. And this travelling is no more unplanned one. The recent traveler believes in doing a thorough research of the destination and know the options which suite his requirement. The parameters which are considered include the main motto of visiting the destination like relaxation or recreation, business, pilgrim etc. the destination is also chosen on the basis of the spending power of the traveler and the best of the best facility which he can avail at the destination without feeling pinch to his pocket. That is why the host population has to have diversity in offerings and their substitutes to offer which suite different economical classes of tourists.
5. Beerli, Asunción (Tourism Management; Oct 2004, Vol. 25 Issue 5, p 623-636, 14p) wrote this paper in the context of tourism marketing, in specific with the process of image building of a particular destination. The tourist analyses destination image as per the perception and the fulfillment of the needs from the host destination. The destination image is also a result of tourists' motivations, their accumulated experience of vacation travel and the socio-demographic characteristics.
6. Graham Dann (Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing Volume 5, Issue 1-2, 1996) says that the general attitude of the researcher while collecting the data about the travellers preference for selecting a destination, is to offer the questionnaire which needs to be ranked and that data is considered to decide their needs. According to him this information majorly misguides the host community to understand the needs of the travellers. There is another side to it and that is to understand the travel motivators for the tourists, the spending power and the image of the destination that the tourist has in the mind.
7. Mr. Dilip Parulekar, the tourism minister Goa, stated that Goa is known for its excellence in making the guest stay most comfortable and memorable. This all is possible because the conscious efforts taken

by the host community. The tourism has been developed in such a way that it not only remains as a recreational activity but also the way of earning and developing the local communities staying at Goa. Often it is assumed that its just a place for relaxation and recreation but very few people know that Goa has also been developed as a pilgrim place and this tourism mix has created a very positive image in travellers mind and Goa that is why has been rated as most preferred destination by travellers. The award PATWA (Pacific Area Travel Writers Association) is a great motivation for my state to perform even better in future

8. Professor Peter Mason (2013) dissertation submitted to London University - says that past recent years the destination image has played a very important role as far as tourism is concerned. This image building has a large impact on tourist's decision making and is one of the significant factors. Host communities are taking lot of interest in designing the strategies of brand building. These strategies are designed by taking out various information from the tourists visiting particular destination. This helps the host community to understand the expectations one tourist has while traveling to the particular destination. also no tourist travels without any motivation, that's why knowing the major motivators helps in designing the marketing and brand building strategies.
9. R. Rajesh (2013) POSOS International Journal, Vol. 11 N° 3. Special Issue. págs. 67-78. says that, any destination becomes popular not only because of its offerings to the tourists but also the travellers loyalty for it. The loyalty can be achieved by understanding customers perceptions, likes dislikes, spending power, motivators for the travelling etc. The travel environment is defined based on all the above mentioned characteristics that both the travellers and the destination hold. The destination loyalty can be understood by the number of revisits and word of mouth through which the destination has become popular and also the online reviews play a big role in building up the destination image.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature and based on both primary and secondary data. The sample population for this study was composed of tourists from Maharashtra who visited Goa at least once. A convenient sampling technique was made use of to collect primary data by means of a survey, using self-administered questionnaires distributed

to visitors of the study area. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part-A, consists socio-demographic information and travel behavior characteristics of respondents, Part-B, consists of important attributes of the destination and Part- C consists of the expenditure pattern of the tourist.

A sample comprising of 101 respondents was selected on the basis of Random sampling technique.

The secondary data was collected from relevant research report and publications, newspapers, books, website and other published materials.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Respondents' Socio-Demographic & Travel Behavior Characteristics

Respondents Travel Behaviour

Observations:

1. Table 2 shows that Maharashtrians travel outstation at least once a year.
2. The survey also depicts that the tourist would spend 3-5 days on an average number of days in Goa.

Observations:

1. The above table clearly mentions that 91 % of tourists from Maharashtra received information about Goa from family and friends, as well as also travelled to Goa with family and friends, 79%

Observations:

1. Economy hotels and Resorts were the most preferred place of stay for tourists visiting Goa.
2. Majority of tourists did not have any membership of holiday clubs when they planned a visit to Goa.

Observations:

1. As depicted in Table 5, of tourists preferred to Car as a mode of transportation to Goa.

The Attributes Influencing Tourists to Select Goa as Tourist Destination

Observations:

1. The analysis of the below table shows the Maharashtrian tourist opinion on the different mo-

Table 1:

<i>Demographic Character</i>			
<i>Respondents' Gender</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
Male	51%	Married	54%
Female	49%	Single	46%
Total	100%	Total	100%

<i>Respondents' Age</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>	<i>Respondents' Education</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
16-19 years	14%	High School	2%
20-45 years	79%	College	44%
46-65 years	6%	Post Graduate Degree	44%
66 years and over	1%	Doctorate/Professional Degree	10%
Total	100%	Total	100%

<i>Respondent's Employment Status</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>	<i>Respondent's Household Income(Monthly)</i>	<i>Percentage(%)</i>
Employed	64%	INR 25,000 - 50,000	36%
Self- employed	11%	INR 50,001 - 75,000	31%
Unemployed	2%	INR 75001 - 100,000	9%
Retired	2%	INR 100,001 - 125,000	3%
Student/Pupil	20%	INR 125,001 - 150,000	6%
Other	1%	INR 150,001 - or more	6%
Total	100%	Total	91%

Table 2:

<i>Travel Behaviour</i>			
<i>Respondents Frequency of outstation travel</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Respondents length of stay in Goa</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Once in a year	45%	1 to 2 days	2%
Once in 6 months	39%	3 to 5 days	65%
Once in 3 months	13%	A week	30%
Every Month	3%	A fortnight	2%
Every week	0%	A month	1%
Total	100%	Total	100%

Table 3:

<i>Sources of information</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Respondents often travelled with</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Family and/ or friends	52%	Family	45%
Internet(Email, website)	28%	Friends	40%
Travel Magazine	8%	Colleagues	7%
Travel Agent	5%	Alone	3%
Movie/TV Series	3%	Tour Groups	5%
Commercial ads(TV,Radio)	4%	Total	100%
Total	100%		

Table 4:

<i>Respondents most preferred place of stay</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>	<i>Memberships Of Holiday clubs in Goa</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Expensive hotels	5%	Yes	6%
Economy hotels	45%	No	94%
Resorts	34%	Total	100%
Paying guest	8%		
Other	8%		
Total	100%		

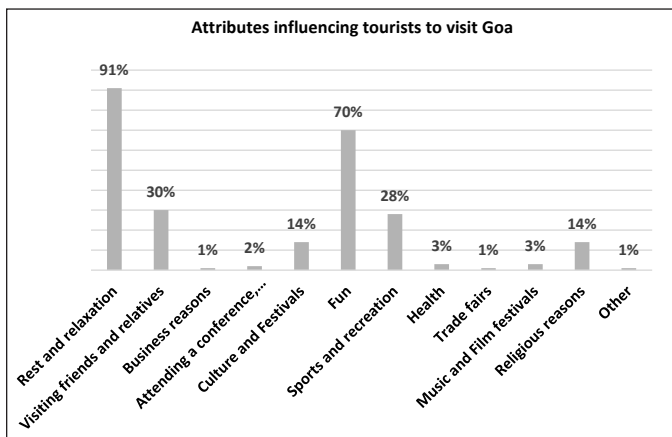
Table 5:

<i>Respondents preferred mode of transportation to Goa</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Flight	31%
Train	11%
Bus	14%
Car	42%
Two wheeler	2%
Total	100%

tives influencing their choice of destination. Rest and Relaxation is the highest factor, followed by Fun.

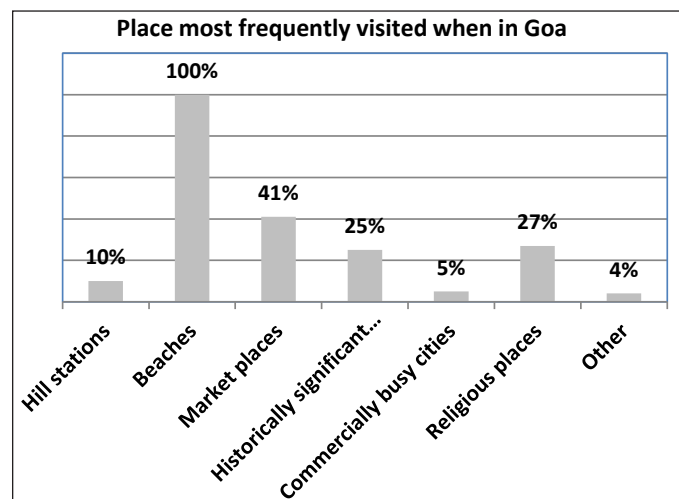
Goa is much more than beaches and contains many historical landmark which are worth visiting like the forts and churches. Goa also offers an interesting mosaic of culture and the tourist visiting Goa every year add more colour to the already vibrant culture of the state.

Table 6:



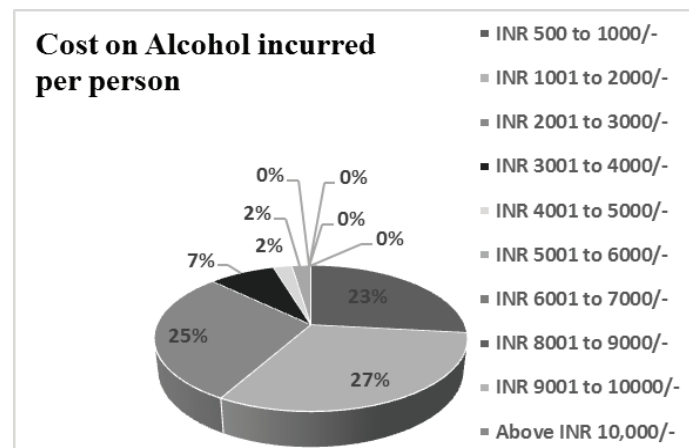
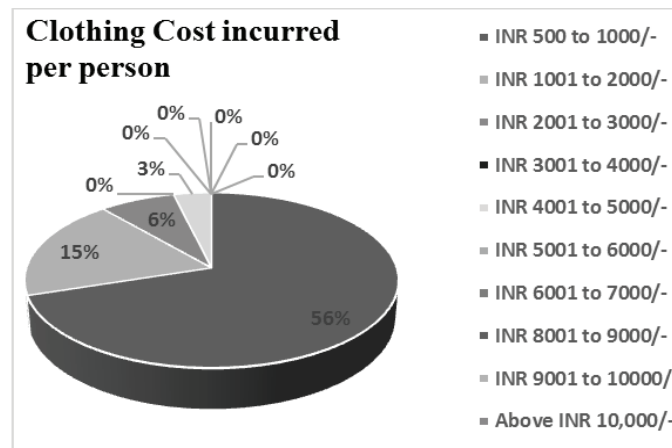
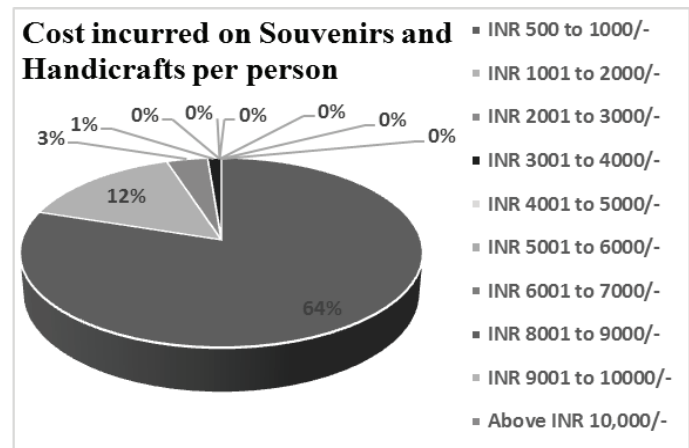
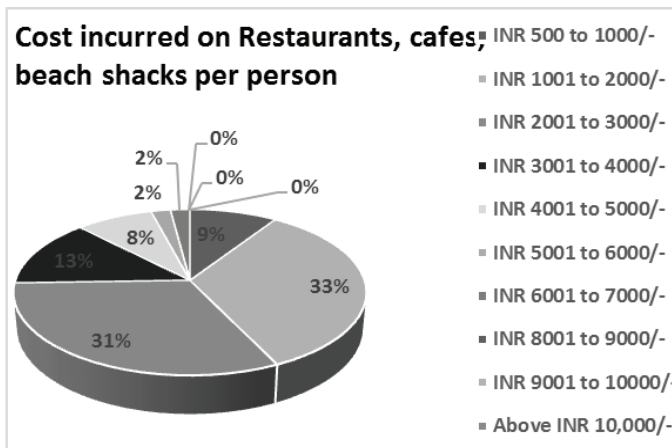
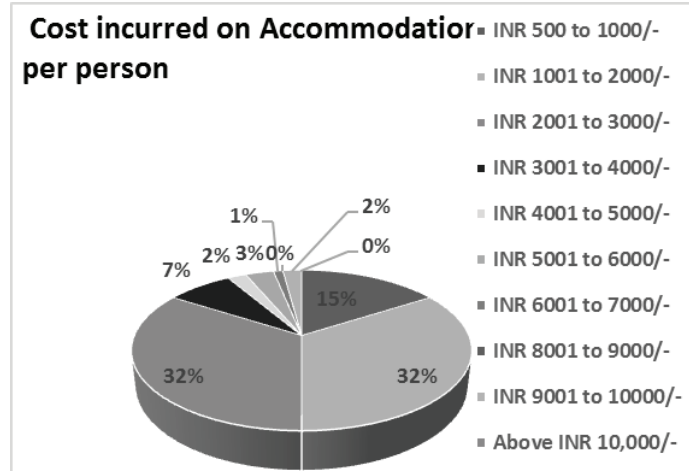
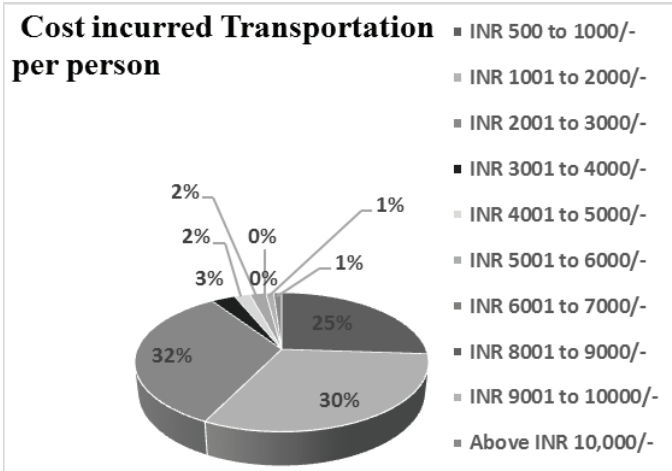
Places most frequently visited by Tourists from Maharashtra

Table 7:



Observation

The purpose and frequency of a tourist to travel to a particular destination may be due to varied reasons. As Goa has been promoted essentially as a holiday destination,



most tourists visit Goa for its natural scenic beauty and beaches. 100% of tourists from Maharashtra have visited beaches in Goa on their holiday which is hard to miss.

Expenditure Pattern of Tourists visiting Goa

The study intends to show how much Maharashtrian tourists would spend per day on factors such as

transportation, accommodations, entertainment etc. Table 8 provides information about tourists' expenditure per day on different activities during their stay in Goa.

Observations

1. Table 8 reveals that tourists are willing to spend approximately INR.2500 on transportation as well as

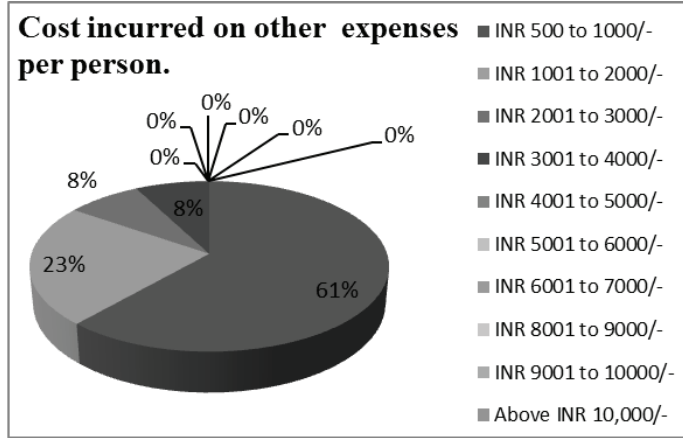
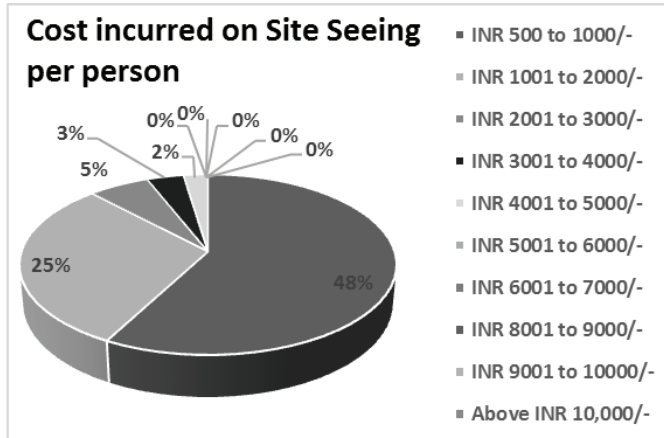
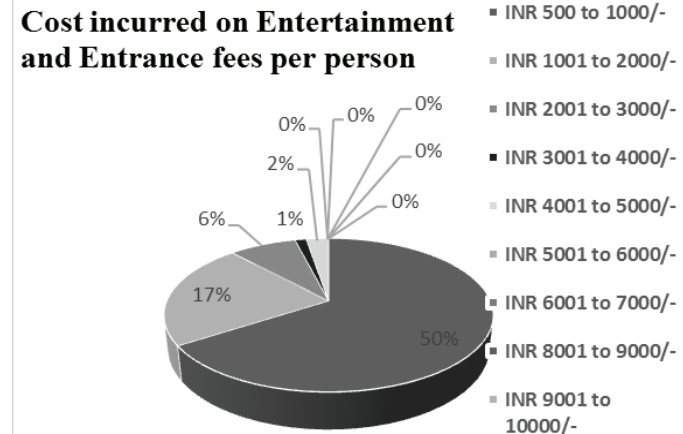
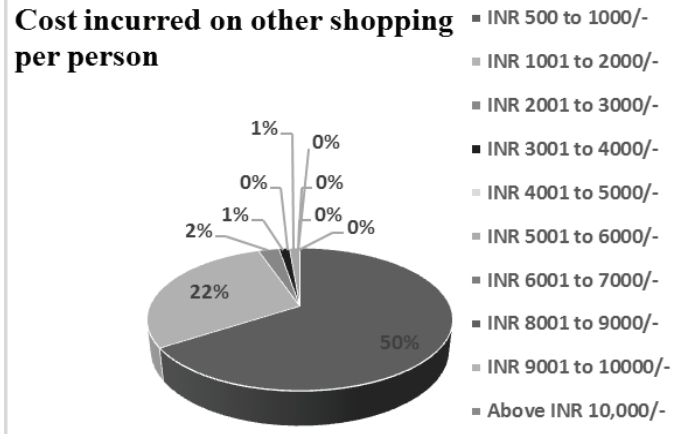
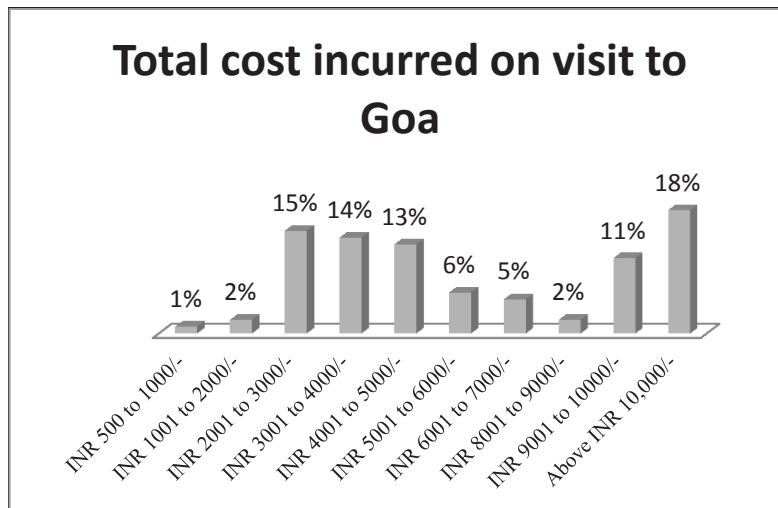


Table 8:



Accommodation while in Goa.

2. Similarly, tourists spend on an average INR.2500 per person per day on visits to restaurants, Cafes and beach shacks.
3. Tourists spend on an average INR.750 of souvenirs and handicrafts purchased in Goa.
4. The study also states that tourists spend around INR.700 on shopping for clothing while on a holiday in Goa
5. The study indicates that INR. 2000 is spend on alcohol by the respondents.
6. Other shopping has an average of INR 750 spend of tourists.
7. Tourists' incur a cost of INR 750 on Entertainment and entrance fees.
8. The amount spend on Site seeing by tourists on an average is INR.600
9. Adventure sports is fast gaining popularity among Maharashtra tourists visiting Goa, with tourists spending INR.1500 on this activity.
10. 48% of tourists spend INR.500 other expenses.
11. The total expenditure incurred by 18 % tourists is INR.10,000 and above.

SUGGESTIONS

The study indicates that the tourists from Maharashtra regularly visit Goa in large numbers. It is important that issues that concern them should be addressed and heed be taken as tourism is one of Goa's highest source of income.

Following are the suggestions offered by the research for the overall improvement of making the experience of Maharashtra tourists who visit Goa memorable.

1. The Department of Tourism in Goa should keep itself abreast with all modern development in the highly technical and complex field of tourism and link this with both properly and planned logistics for travel and accommodation and a sustained and planned marketing effort. The need is to concentrate on the identified tourist points which mainly attract the tourist traffic from Maharashtra.
2. Tourism is ever flourishing in the state owing to its beaches and abundant liquor. But the manmade beauty of Goa is ignored by national tourists. So,

there is a need to channelize tourism which also helps tourists to explore the cultural richness of the state in all aspects, in order to accomplish this well guiding brochure / authentically guiding tours can prove helpful.

3. Wayside amenities along highways such as garages, repair shops, diesel and petrol stations should be provided in large number from the highways connecting from Maharashtra to Goa as majority of tourists travel to Goa by car.
4. Maharashtra is the state closest to Goa and visitors flock here in order to enjoy weekend trips or long vacations. The study states that techniques should be adopted to reduce the seasonality of tourism, by encouraging monsoon tourism.
5. A proper beach management system which has life guards in place at all times as well as cleanliness of the beach, regulation and control of shacks on the beaches and demarcation of reserved areas for water sports away from swimming area is the need of the hour as the study mentions that visiting beaches is one of the most preferred reasons for Maharashtra tourists to visit Goa.
6. Goan art and culture needs to gain popularity as an important aspect of tourism. Souvenirs and handicrafts are often carried away by tourists as mementos to give away to family and friends. Tourists from Maharashtra are willing to spend a reasonable amount to purchase them.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the overall understanding of why tourists from Maharashtra take travel decisions to holiday in Goa. The motives of travellers were assessed both in terms of socio-demographic variables and destination attributes of the state of Goa. Maharashtra tourists travel outstation at least once a year. The survey also depicts that the tourist would spend 3-5 days on an average number of days in Goa. In general the research depicts that age is an important variation in tourist motivation to travel to Goa, however, gender did not emerge as an important determinant. It is evident from the study that the number of married couples visiting Goa exceeds unmarried tourists. Economy hotels and Resorts were the most preferred place of stay for tourists visiting Goa. Majority of tourists did not have any membership of holiday clubs when they planned

a visit to Goa. Most tourist visiting Goa are influenced by reviews offered by friends and family. Rest and relaxation as well as fun are the major reasons for Maharashtrians to visit Goa. Scenic beaches from Goa drew the maximum attention from travellers as compared to other factors of visit. Tourists preferred to Car as a mode of transportation to Goa. The total cost incurred by Maharashtrian tourists visiting Goa is above INR.10,000 which reflects a sound financial background of Maharashtrian tourist visiting Goa and their willingness to spend on various factors such as transportation, accommodation, site seeing, souvenirs and handicrafts etc.

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