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Unveiling the Allure: Exploring Factors of Destination Attractiveness of "Krishna Circuit"

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Abstract *This study develops a Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) to assess the perceived attractiveness of key pilgrimage and cultural destinations within the Krishna Circuit, including Vrindavan, Mathura, Barsana, Gokul, Nandgaon, Jaipur, Nathdwara, Sikar, and Kurukshetra. Using data collected from 1,321 respondents, the study applies Impact Directional Analysis (IDA) to aggregate and analyze perceptions of destination appeal across multiple dimensions. The findings reveal that spiritual ambiance, cultural heritage, and infrastructure significantly influence perceived attractiveness. The aggregate IDA value of 3.861 reflects moderate to high attractiveness across the circuit. The index offers a practical framework for destination managers and policymakers to monitor, compare, and enhance tourism experiences over time. Recommendations are made for future studies to incorporate multi-stakeholder perspectives and seasonal variations for more comprehensive insights.*

Keywords: *Krishna Circuit, Destination Attractiveness, Tourists, Exploratory Factor Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Travel from the ancient time is been held for exploring the attractiveness offered by the nature. It encourages to explore new attractive places and also helps in enhancement of knowledge. In all the epics whether it is "The Mahabharata "or, The Ramayana", or "The Bible" or "The Quran", everywhere travel has been mentioned, but only the reasons were different in every epic (Srivastava, 2006). The destination attractiveness has a significant influence on person expectations regarding the tour which includes: choice of destination, duration of stay, preference of hospitality services, and the amount spent on tour (Henkel et al., 2006). Measurement of destination attractiveness helps to improve the poor elements of site (Edward, George, 2008; Bhat, 2015; Chaudhary et al., 2017). It makes destination more attractive and preferable for tourists. In addition, researchers have identified destination attractiveness by scrutinizing its attributes (Gearing, Swart & Var, 1974; Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Tang & Rochananond, 1990). Hu and Ritchie (1993) determine the destination attractiveness as belief, feeling, and opinions that makes the successful destination in which provide proper satisfaction to tourists according to their needs.

India is an exceptional tourist destination that offers a plenty of attractiveness and experiences to travelers. It provides religious, spiritual, cultural, heritage, medical, business and sports tourism. The main aim of this sector is to develop and maintain competitiveness of India as world tourist destination and improve and expand existing tourism products and services according to world level (Riley, 1988). In addition, it ensures employment generation and economic

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growth of country. India is a land of pilgrimages, practically all religions: - Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sufism have their plethora of pilgrimage centers in various parts of the country (Chatterjee, 2007). Tourism is historically correlate with religion. In addition, spirituality and religion have always been usual motivations for travel and tourism, with many major tourist attractions having developed largely as a result of their connections to holy places and events (Sharpley, 2009).

The spiritual tourism products spread all over the world and also different corners of India. These products not only enable the tourist to see, feel, and experience these sacred cites but also potentially viable them to familiarize with heritage and culture in the different parts of country (Wang, 2022). Ministry of Tourism in certain crucial circuits across country is developing tourism infrastructure that have tourism potential under its Swadesh Darshan Scheme for integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits. The projects under the scheme are sanctioned with the objective of improving connectivity and infrastructure of tourism destinations to enrich overall tourist experience and enhance employment opportunities (Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2014-2015). Out of various religious/spiritual sites countrywide, fifteen thematic circuits have been identified under the scheme for development. And one of the important circuits identified is the Krishna circuit [(Annual report (2020-21) by MOT & GOI]. The development of Krishna circuit is basically aim to develop the places which are associated with Lord Krishna in different states. It shows lifecycle of lord Krishna from birth to death.

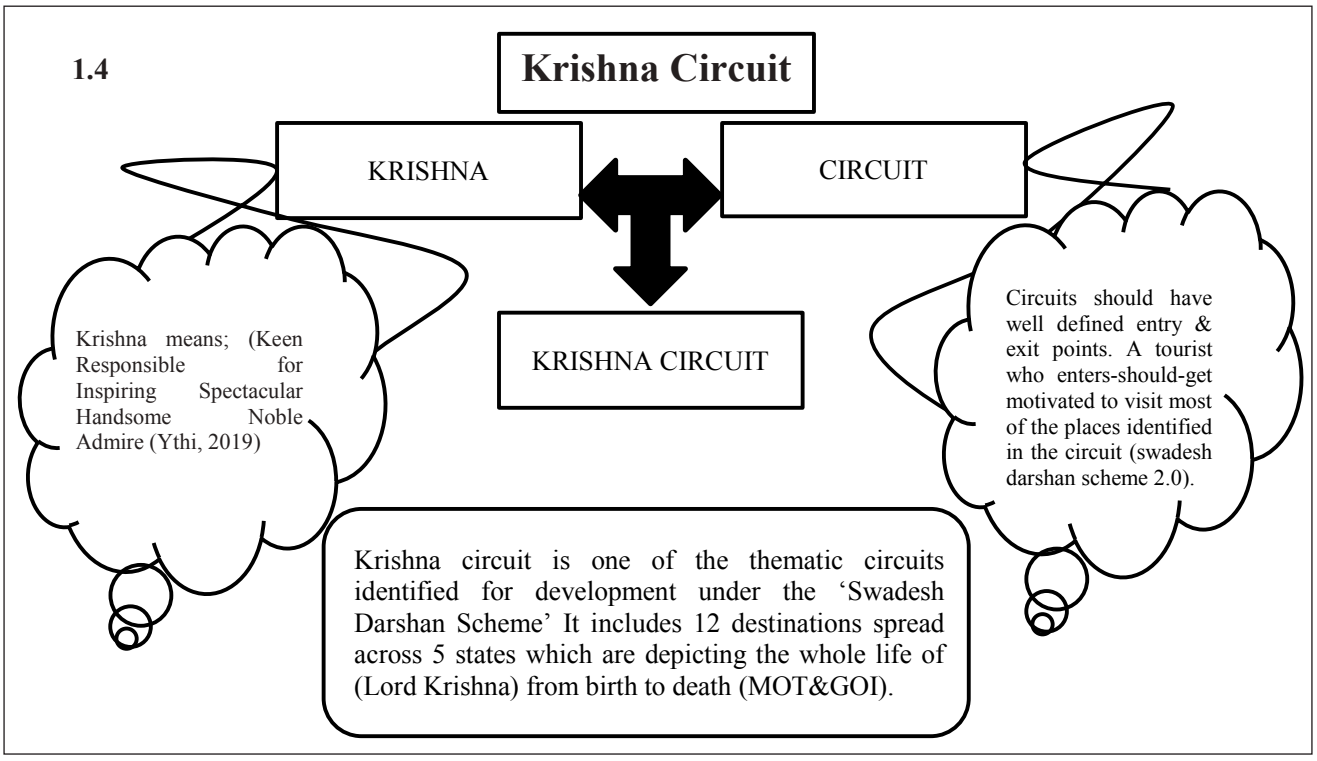

Fig. 1: Meaning of Krishna Circuit

Vrindavan, Mathura, Gokul, Barsana, Nandgaon and Govardhan (Uttar Pradesh); Kurukshetra (Haryana); Puri (Odisha); Jaipur & Sikar (Rajasthan) and Dwarka (Gujarat) are the twelve destinations that have been identified by The National Committee on Krishna Circuit (Annual report (2021-22) by MOT & GOI).

Research Objectives

This research paper aims to reveal the destination attractiveness of Krishna circuit via its factors and thus can be achieved through following research objectives:

- To identify the factors of tourism attractiveness of Krishna circuit and its components.
- To measure the attractiveness level of Krishna circuit on the identified factors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination attractiveness is a first step of motivation for tourist to select a destination according to their likeness and preferences Middleton (1989). According to Lue, Crompton and Stewart (1996, p. 43) tourist attraction basically depends on the individually tourist interest. They are selecting tourist

attraction where they can enjoy their vacations. Number of scholars determine the positive relationship between attractiveness of destination and destination attachment (Hou et al., 2005; Cheng et al., 2013; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Xu & Zhang, 2016; Song, 2017). Destination attractiveness has been measured in a lot of research contexts including; honeymoon destinations, religious mapping and pilgrimage tourism (Lee et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2016; Bhat, 2014; Chaudhary & Islam, 2020).

Basically, destination attractiveness index (DAI) is a squeezing of all the variables and factors in one frame in appropriate manner. The purpose of DAI to evaluation of all the variable in single measure (Smith, 1987). Apart from this, a lot of scholars clarify the destination attractiveness of nature-based tourism in which include natural resources, assets, tourist attractions so on (Deng et al.,2002; Kim et al., 2003 Lee et al., 2010; Jeong, 1997; Priskin, 2001; Martin, 2008). Moreover, Krešić, Prebezac (2011) used indexing as a tool for destination attractiveness.

According to Law (1995) destination factors are divided into two groups; in which includes primary and secondary groups. In primary group includes some features such as; cultural architecture, historical sites, natural resources, ecology, climate. On other side; hotels, food and beverages services, transportation, and entertainment includes in secondary groups.

Destination attractiveness is becoming an essential factor in conceiving and modeling the tourist behavior and thus their behavioral intention towards destination (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996) found that behavioral intentions of tourists are of two types; Affirmative or non-affirmative. Affirmative behavioral intentions can help in building optimistic destination image and enthusiastic behavioral intention of tourists can spread positivity about the site, recommend the destination to friends, family members and relatives and would like to revisit the place again and spend money at the destination. On the other hand, tourists having unfriendly behavioral intentions will not recommend destination to others.

According to Kotler, Bowens and Makens (2002), developing a more attractive image is significant for competitive upper hand which can be studied through the behavioral intentions of the travelers visiting the destination. Research signifies that gastronomy plays a significant role in tourists'experience at the destination and it influences their revisit intention about the destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Moreover, the satisfaction of tourists at the destination will predict future behavior regarding the destination revisit or not (e.g.; Chen & Chen, 2010; Ladhari, 2009; Robinson, 2012).

The outstanding attraction of destination which has highly proficiency to attract the number of tourists from all around the globe (Benur et al., 2015). The destination attractiveness is epitomize a consolidation of subjective factors (opinion, needs, expectations, personal experience, and impressions) and objective factors (the presence of flora and fauna, hospitality services and man-made attractions) which provides a lot of sites option for tourist (Monica et al., 2022).

According to Horner and Swarbrooke 1996, tourist behaviour is a study of why do tourist buy tourism product and how they make their decision about destination hospitality services. The actions a tourist takes towards purchasing and using tourism products and services, including tourist decision making process that precedes and depicts the (Gulid & Lertwannawit et al., 2010). Motivation is one of the crucial attributes shaping tourist behaviour, it is often endorse by tourism researchers and professionals (Fodness, 1994).

Furthermore, COVID-19 transform the destination attractiveness such as; virtual travel, hygiene hospitality Roy (2023). In addition, Formica (2002) illustrates the supply and demand approach to understand the destination attractiveness tourism resources.

STUDY AREA

The Krishna Circuit, one of India's prominent spiritual tourism circuits, has been selected as the study area for its immense religious, cultural, and historical significance. Spread across the states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, this circuit includes key pilgrimage and cultural destinations such as Vrindavan, Mathura, Govardhan, Barsana, Gokul, Nandgaon, Jaipur, Nathdwara, Sikar, and Puri. These towns are deeply embedded in the mythological narratives and devotional practices associated with Lord Krishna, attracting millions of domestic and international tourists annually.

Vrindavan and Mathura, considered the epicenters of Krishna devotion, consistently witness the highest tourist footfall. In 2018, Vrindavan received 14.85 million domestic and 53,000 foreign tourists, while Mathura recorded 7.66 million domestic and 27,000 foreign visitors. Despite a decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these destinations quickly regained momentum, with Vrindavan welcoming over 13 million domestic tourists in 2021. Other destinations such as Govardhan, Barsana, Gokul, and Nandgaon also play a significant role in shaping the religious landscape and attract large numbers of pilgrims during major festivals like Holi, Janmashtami, and Radhashtami.

In Rajasthan, sites like Jaipur, Nathdwara, and Sikar complement the spiritual journey with a blend of heritage tourism. Jaipur, known for its palaces and temples, received over 1.7 million domestic and 646,000 international tourists in 2019. Nathdwara is renowned for the Shrinathji Temple, a major Vaishnavite pilgrimage site, while Sikar serves as a regional religious and cultural node.

The inclusion of Puri in Odisha, a key component of the Char Dham Yatra, further broadens the circuit's geographical and devotional scope. Puri recorded over 13 million domestic visitors in 2018 and remains a vital part of the Krishna pilgrimage due to the famed Jagannath Temple.

The Krishna Circuit has experienced significant growth in pilgrimage and heritage tourism over the last decade, driven by religious devotion, cultural festivals, improved connectivity, and government initiatives to promote spiritual circuits under the PRASAD and Swadesh Darshan schemes. However, this growth also presents challenges in managing infrastructure, tourist amenities, and cultural preservation. Understanding the destination attractiveness of these sites through stakeholder perceptions is crucial for balanced development.

This study seeks to evaluate the tourism potential and attractiveness of the Krishna Circuit by developing a Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) using structured quantitative techniques, offering insights into both strengths and gaps that influence tourist experiences and destination competitiveness.

Table 1: Tourist Arrivals in Krishna Circuit Destination

Destinations	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Indian	Foreigner	Indian	Foreigner	Indian	Foreigner	Indian	Foreigner
Vrindavan	14.85M	53K	16.03 M	56 K	2.56 M	12 K	13.04 M	498
Mathura	7.66 M	27K	8.24 M	29 K	1.36 M	6 K	5.43 M	57
Govardhan	15.98 M	10 K	16.88 M	11 K	1.24 M	887	2.96 M	89
Barsana	3.88 M	2.2K	4.26 M	2.5 K	1.45 M	1 K	2.37 M	0
Gokul	1.16 M	1.2K	1.25 M	1.3K	341 K	348	746 K	0
Nandgaon	2.18 M	1.5 K	2.4 M	1.7K	627 K	550 K	1.35 M	0
Jaipur	1.78 M	681.2k	1.72 M	646.4k	614.5k	180 K	992k	14.7k
Nathdawara	776.1 K	0	797.5 K	0	128.6k	0	330.6k	0
Sikar	179.9 K	2.2k	195.1k	1.9k	57.6k	577	166.5k	42
Puri	13.13 M	40 K	13.44 M	37 K	332 K	3071	12.25 M	463

M: - Millions

K: - Thousands

Source: - (Annual report 2018 to 2021) Rajasthan tourism corporation, Uttar Pradesh tourism corporation, Orissa tourism corporation.

METHODOLOGY

Development of Quantitative Tourism Impact Index as a Research Instrument

The Index of Destination Attractiveness (IDA) is a quantitative indicator developed to assess the overall appeal of a tourism destination. It is designed to identify the most significant tourist attractions within a specific destination, evaluate their level of attractiveness, and facilitate the quantification and comparison of these attractions. The IDA allows for both intra-destination comparisons between different attractions within the same location and inter-destination comparisons of similar attractions across different destinations. This index provides a standardized approach for measuring destination appeal, supporting evidence-based tourism planning and management Krešić and Prebežac (2011), The destination attractiveness of Krishna circuit based on the experience of visiting tourist during their stay.

Data Collection

The researchers collected the primary data using the questionnaire and Google Form for the study. Moreover, the attractiveness study have been done before by plethora of tourism experts Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Formica and Uysal, 2006; Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008; Lee et al., 2010; Iatu and Bulai, 2011; Prebežac, 2011; Chaudhary and Islam, 2020. During 2023, questionnaires were collected from 1400 tourists and 1321 are completely filled. The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated into Hindi language by research scholar. The questionnaire was pretested with a sample of 83 visitors in which; 23 from Kurukshetra, 20 from Vrindavan, 20 from Jaipur, and 20 from Sikar, which resulted minor changes in variables and options. Destination attractiveness is defined with using 64 variables for each on a five point scale. These items have been employed in previous studies of Das et al. (2007), Gearing et al. (1974), Hong (1998), Hu and Ritchie (1993), Krešić and Prebežac (2011), Morachat (2003), Ritchie and Zins (1978), Sharma

(2016) for determining tourism destination attractiveness. Five point rating scale was used ranging from 1 to 5: Very Low to Very High. The data was collected in two season; winters 2023 and summers of 2023 to avoid the impact of peak and lean season of tourism.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile

The study encompassed a diverse group of 1,321 respondents across major destinations of the Krishna Circuit, including Vrindavan (18.7%), Jaipur (18.2%), Mathura (13.5%), Sikar (12.1%), and Nathdwara (11.2%). Other locations such as Gokul, Nandgaon, Barsana, and Kurukshetra also contributed to the sample.

In terms of gender, 60.1% of the respondents were male and 39.9% female. Age-wise, the largest segment of participants (45.6%) were below 30 years, followed by 29.4% in the 31–40 years age group and 24.9% above 40 years. Most respondents were married (62.2%), with unmarried individuals comprising 35.4% of the sample.

A significant majority of the respondents were Indian nationals (98.6%), while a small fraction represented countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain, and Latvia.

Regarding educational qualifications, 36.9% were graduates, followed by undergraduates (17.2%) and postgraduates (17.0%). A small proportion held doctoral degrees (5.8%) or were not formally educated (5.1%).

Occupationally, 33.0% of the respondents were engaged in business, 23.7% in private employment, 21.8% were students, and 13.7% were homemakers. Government employees made up 7.8% of the sample. In terms of annual income, 40.2% reported earnings between ₹2.5 to ₹7 lakh, while 32.2% had no personal income.

A majority of respondents (71.1%) belonged to urban areas, and 73.1% lived in nuclear family structures. Religiously, the sample was predominantly Hindu (95.3%), followed by Sikh (2.9%), Christian (1.7%), and a minimal representation of Jains (0.1%).

This demographic diversity provides a comprehensive base for assessing perceptions on destination attractiveness across multiple socio-economic and cultural backgrounds in the Krishna Circuit.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was done on 64 variables of attractiveness of Krishna circuit. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was taken up to extract magnitude of destination attractiveness. The results of this move showed, KMO of 0.829 and significant Bartlett's test of sphericity at 0.001. The KMO above recommended level reveal that data is appropriate for further analysis (Malhotra & Briks, 2006; Kothari & Garg, 2014). To add to it, Destination attractiveness factors divided into nine factors are subsequently named in Table 2.

Table 2: Factors of Destination Attractiveness

Factor Code	Factors Name
DA1	Transport facilities
DA2	Accommodation facilities
DA3	Facilities at the temples of destination
DA4	Natural beauty
DA5	Tourist activities
DA6	Food attractions
DA7	Tourist amenities
DA8	Cultural attractions
DA9	Safety and security

Moreover, Stevens (2012) and Field (2013) indicates that factor loading should be greater than .364 are relevant for approximate 200 sample sizes. Thus, this research also followed the Stevens and field concept. To add to it, Destination attractiveness factors loading divided into nine factors which have Eigen values greater than 1 and factor loading are in following Table 3.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of Destination Attractiveness

Table 3: Extracted Factors and Their Variable Loadings

Variables	DA1	DA2	DA3	DA4	DA5	DA6	DA7	DA8	DA9
Transportation connectivity	**.390**	-.278	.097	-.332	-.160	.065	.040	.171	.054
Transportation quality	**.376**	-.098	.043	-.148	.259	-.110	-.031	-.071	-.163
Accessibility	**.430**	.341	-.054	-.275	.139	-.037	.024	-.111	-.070
Hygiene and Sanitization at transportation	**.388**	.270	-.348	.115	.169	-.002	.114	-.106	-.269
Road signage	**.439**	-.325	.095	-.065	-.070	.094	.091	-.120	.139

Variables	DA1	DA2	DA3	DA4	DA5	DA6	DA7	DA8	DA9
Traffic conditions	**.412**	-.197	.080	-.178	.151	.299	-.102	.157	.212
Affordable Transportation facilities	**.379**	-.001	-.240	.190	.099	.197	-.007	.309	.324
Safety and Security at Transportations	**.368**	.129	-.211	.211	.186	-.127	-.046	-.050	.133
Hygiene and Sanitization of Hotel	.277	**.422**	.004	-.211	-.122	-.009	.136	-.161	-.181
Variety of Lodging	.214	**.414**	.052	-.164	-.267	.043	.184	-.181	-.170
Physical appearance	.168	**.407**	.032	.120	.137	-.187	-.105	.087	-.177
Staff helpfulness / courtesy	.337	**.440**	.084	-.278	.090	-.005	-.140	-.122	.043
Cleanliness of the Rooms	.332	**.425**	.225	-.042	.055	.242	-.277	.177	-.100
Reception / information given	.303	**.534**	.134	.175	.179	.095	-.028	.120	-.295
Room service	.233	**.556**	.256	.303	-.162	-.150	.200	.007	.069
Safety and security at accommodation	.254	**.459**	.253	.211	-.360	-.159	.257	.199	.066
Parking Facilities	.287	**.528**	-.167	-.006	-.008	-.228	-.264	.338	-.006
Affordable accommodation facilities	.334	**.500**	-.214	-.220	.040	-.300	-.053	.166	.132
Spiritual feel inside the temple	.072	.042	**.441**	-.009	.046	-.005	-.141	.021	-.088
Behavior of priest / Pujari	.225	.003	**.425**	-.106	.026	-.001	.083	.002	.199
Prasadam quality	.054	-.349	**.454**	.020	.026	.056	.031	-.129	-.176
Assistance and guidance in the temple by Temple staff	.022	-.353	**.422**	.180	.260	.119	.180	.079	-.159
Availability of information counter at temple	.168	-.035	**.491**	.081	.327	.039	.341	.088	.127
Queue / line management	.300	.230	**.416**	-.144	.213	.022	.238	-.316	.127
Water facilities	.328	-.350	**.380**	.146	-.281	.249	-.128	-.157	-.036
Cleanliness inide the temple	.361	.060	**.484**	.184	-.145	.007	-.327	-.212	-.031
Shoe keeping / Mobile keeping / cloak room facilities	.345	.039	**.437**	.237	-.070	.083	-.191	-.181	.095
Services of first aid centre	.287	.267	**.467**	.105	.229	.056	.102	.075	-.062
Toilet facilities around the temples	.125	.148	**.466**	-.147	.014	.303	.100	.266	-.338
Shopping facilities near the temple	.196	.316	**.491**	.100	-.491	.273	.040	.342	.097
Behavior of sellers at Shopping area	.283	.314	**.417**	.029	-.239	.073	.043	-.019	.231
Refreshment / tea stalls around temple	.284	-.118	**.384**	-.034	-.025	-.057	.159	.069	.082
Water bodies at Destinations	.350	-.278	.097	**.370**	.093	.065	.040	.171	.054
Wildlife at Destination	.274	-.101	.043	**.381**	-.160	-.115	-.032	-.075	-.168
Gardens and valleys	.230	.341	-.054	**.430**	.281	-.037	.024	-.111	-.070
Mountain and Hills	.303	.270	-.348	**.398**	.139	-.002	.114	-.106	-.269
Heritage walk	.239	-.165	.095	-.065	**.439**	.094	.091	-.120	.139
Shopping	.232	-.197	.080	-.178	**.412**	.299	-.102	.157	.212
Sightseeing Opportunities	.113	-.001	-.240	.190	**.379**	.197	-.007	.309	.324
Recreation activities	.328	.129	-.211	.201	**.328**	-.127	-.046	-.050	.133
Hygiene & sanitization of food outlets at destination	.277	.065	.004	-.114	-.132	**.422**	.136	-.161	-.181
Food quality	.414	.210	.052	-.164	-.267	**.414**	.184	-.181	-.170
Local quality	.168	.207	.032	.120	.137	**.407**	-.105	.087	-.177
Food varieties	.342	.172	-.078	-.004	.215	**.372**	-.051	.094	.050
Affordable food and beverages	.342	.007	-.046	-.096	-.076	**.442**	.102	-.108	-.065
Cellular service	.241	.049	-.022	-.311	.028	.008	**.392**	.063	.114
Internet service	.337	-.033	.084	-.278	.090	-.005	**.440**	-.122	.043

Variables	DA1	DA2	DA3	DA4	DA5	DA6	DA7	DA8	DA9
Banking and ATMs	.342	.043	.325	-.042	.055	.242	**.425**	.177	-.100
Information centers	.303	-.146	.234	.175	.179	.095	**.534**	.120	-.295
Guides	.233	-.023	.256	.303	-.162	-.150	**.556**	.007	.069
Toilets and wash rooms	.254	-.142	.253	.211	-.360	-.136	**.459**	.199	.066
First ad / Medical Facilities	.287	-.046	-.167	-.006	-.008	-.225	**.528**	.338	-.006
Clock room	.324	-.035	-.214	-.220	.040	-.308	.500	.166	.132
Fair and festivals	.154	-.349	-.251	.020	.026	.056	.031	**.454**	-.176
Hospitality	.122	-.353	-.229	.180	.260	.119	.320	**.422**	-.159
Costume	.168	-.035	-.043	.081	.327	.039	.341	**.441**	.127
Handicrafts	.300	.230	.197	-.144	.213	.022	.238	**.427**	.226
I find the place very safe for the visitors	.328	-.350	-.274	.146	-.281	.249	-.128	-.157	.450
The police outpost is located to prevent any untoward incidents	.361	.060	-.171	.284	-.145	.007	-.327	-.212	**.484**
I do not face any difficulty in moving alone or with family members	.345	.039	.077	.137	-.070	.083	-.191	-.181	**.437**
The place is Peaceful	.287	.167	.213	.105	.229	.056	.102	.075	**.467**
CCTV cameras coverage's at various locations	.125	.148	-.086	-.147	.014	.303	.100	.266	**.466**
Beggars create nuisance at the pilgrimage destination	.196	.316	-.138	.100	-.291	.273	.040	.342	**.491**
Cheating by Pujari / Priest	.283	.217	-.116	.029	-.239	.073	.043	-.019	**.417**

Source: SPSS output.

In addition, the nine factors explain a cumulative variance of 42.56 percent. The first factor, Transport facilities explains 9.55 per cent variance, the second factor, Accommodation facilities explains 4.83 % variance , the third factor-Facilities at the temples of destination 'explains 4.76 per cent variance, the fourth factor- Natural beauty ' explains 4.45 per cent variance, the fifth factor-Tourist activities depicts 4.29%, the sixth factor, Food attractions illustrate 4.01%, the seventh factor, Tourist amenities depicts 3.67%, the eight factor-Cultural attractions explain 3.50%, and the ninth factor-Safety and security illustrate 3.46%.

Factor and Variable Weights

The next step involves obtaining variable weights. These weights are required to give relative importance to variables and their factors. The factors weights are then squared and squared loadings of each factor are divided by individual values of rotation sum of squared loadings 'from the total variance matrix'. After doing this, the sum of all weights within a factor should come out to be 1 (Krešić & Prebezac, 2011).

Table 4: Factor and Variable Weights

Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
X1	**0.034**	0.02	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0.01	0
X2	**0.04**	0	0	0.011	0.013	0.01	0	0.01	0.02
X3	**0.04**	0.03	0	0.028	0.01	0	0	0.01	0
X4	**0.04**	0.02	0.015	0.004	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.03
X5	**0.04**	0.031	0	0.001	0	0	0	0	0.01
X6	**0.07**	0.01	0	0.011	0	0.04	0	0.02	0.009
X7	**0.07**	0	0.02	0.012	0	0.02	0	0.002	0.03
X8	**0.017**	0.01	0.01	0.014	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.01
X9	0.012	**0.05**	0	0	0.07	0	0.01	0.01	0.01
X10	0.01	**0.028**	0	0.008	0.03	0	0.01	0.02	0.01

Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
X11	0.005	**0.01**	0	0.004	0.01	0.01	0	0	0.01
X12	0.018	**0.08**	0	0.028	0	0	0	0.01	0
X13	0.023	**0.06**	0.06	6E-04	0	0.02	0	0.01	0.01
X14	0.015	**0.09**	0.01	0.01	0.01	0	0	0	0.04
X15	0.009	**0.1**	0	0.034	0.01	0.01	0.02	0	0
X16	0.01	**0.09**	0.02	0.019	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.02	0
X17	0.013	**0.05**	0.01	2E-05	0	0.11	0.03	0	0
X18	0.023	**0.09**	0.01	0.018	0	0	0	0.01	0.01
X19	9E-04	0	**0.01**	5E-05	0	0	0	0	0
X20	0.008	0	**0.02**	0.004	0	0	0	0	0
X21	0.02	0.04	**0.033**	1E-04	0	0	0	0.01	0.01
X22	0.029	0.04	**0.06**	0.009	0.02	0.01	0.02	0	0.01
X23	0.005	0	**0.05**	0.001	0.04	0	0	0.01	0.01
X24	0.014	0.02	**0.1**	0.008	0.01	0	0.02	0.03	0.01
X25	0.017	0.04	**0.03**	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	0
X26	0.021	0	**0.083**	0.01	0	0	0.05	0.02	0
X27	0.019	0	**0.067**	0	0	0	0.02	0.01	0.01
X28	0.013	0.02	**0.07**	0.003	0.02	0	0	0	0
X29	0.003	0.01	**0.08**	0.007	0	0.04	0	0	0.07
X30	0.006	0.03	**0.09**	0.006	0.01	0.02	0	0.05	0
X31	0.013	0	**0.06**	6E-04	0.02	0	0	0	0.02
X32	0	0	**0.013**	4E-04	0	0	0.01	0	0
X33	0.02	0.02	0	**0.034**	0.01	0	0	0.01	0
X34	0.013	0	0	**0.04**	0.011	0.01	0	0.01	0.02
X35	0.03	0.028	0	**0.04**	0.01	0	0	0.01	0
X36	0.015	0.02	0.004	**0.04**	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0.03
X37	0.031	0	0	0.001	**0.04**	0	0	0	0.01
X38	0.009	0.01	0	0.011	**0.07**	0.04	0	0.02	0
X39	0.002	0	0.02	0.012	**0.07**	0.02	0	0	0.03
X40	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.014	**0.017**	0.01	0	0	0.01
X41	0.012	0	0	0.05	0	**0.07**	0.01	0.01	0.01
X42	0	0.01	0	0.008	0.03	**0.028**	0.01	0.02	0.01
X43	0.005	0.01	0	0.004	0.01	**0.01**	0	0	0.01
X44	0	0.01	0	1E-04	0.02	**0.019**	0	0	0
X45	0	0	0	0.003	0	**0.019**	0	0.01	0
X46	0.009	0	0	0.034	0	0	**0.04**	0	0.01
X47	0.018	0	0	0.08	0	0	**0.028**	0.01	0
X48	0.023	0	0.06	6E-04	0	0.02	**0.06**	0.01	0.01
X49	0.015	0.01	0	0.01	0.01	0	**0.09**	0	0.04
X50	0.009	0	0.02	0.034	0.01	0.01	**0.1**	0	0
X51	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.019	0.03	0.09	**0.04**	0.02	0
X52	0.013	0	0.01	2E-05	0	0.11	**0.05**	0.03	0
X53	0	0	0.01	0.018	0	0.09	**0.023**	0.01	0.01
X54	0.033	0.01	0.02	1E-04	0	0	0	**0.04**	0.01
X55	0.029	0	0.02	0.009	0.02	0.01	0.06	**0.04**	0.01
X56	0.005	0	0	0.001	0.04	0	0.01	**0.05**	0.01

Variables	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9
X57	0.014	0.02	0.01	0.008	0.01	0	0.02	**0.03**	0.1
X58	0.017	0	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.01	0.01	**0.04**
X59	0.021	0	0.01	0	0	0	0.05	0.02	**0.083**
X60	0.019	0	0	0.01	0	0	0.02	0.01	**0.067**
X61	0.013	0	0.02	0.003	0.02	0	0	0	**0.07**
X62	0.003	0.01	0	0.007	0	0.04	0	0.07	**0.08**
X63	0.006	0.03	0.01	0.006	0	0.02	0	0.05	**0.09**
X64	0.013	0.02	0	6E-04	0	0	0	0	**0.06**
Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	1	1
Factor weight	0.22	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.08

Source: Author's calculations.

Once the weights are defined, the nine factors have been used to prepare the Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) based on their weightings presented in Table. DAI. The assumption that the sum of variable weights within each factor should be equal to 1. The intermediate factors are converted into individual destination attractiveness values by multiplying the variable weights with the variable means. Lastly, all individual attractiveness indices are summed up to get the aggregated Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) value.

Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) for Krishna Circuit

The following equation is used for the calculation of DAI values for Krishna circuit, where 'α' indicates variable weight and $\overline{X}$ mean 'depicts variable mean.

$$\sum_{i=1}^{n} \alpha_i * \overline{X}_i$$

The weights are then used to form equations so that Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) can be developed for each of the nine factors and subsequently an aggregated Destination Attractiveness Index of Krishna circuit. The equations for each factor are given below:

Factor 1 (Transport facilities)

= (x10.03) + (x20.04) + (x30.04) + (x4 (x5 (x6+ (x7) + (x8) + (f10.64)

Factor 2 (Accommodation facilities)

= (x0.05) + (x100.02) + (x110.01) + (x12 (x13 (x14+ (x15) + (x16) + (x170.05) + (x180.09) + (f20.35)

Factor 3 (Facilities at the temples of destination)

= (x0.01) + (x200.02) + (x210.03) + (x22 (x23 (x24+ (x25) + (x26) + (x270.06) + (x280.07) + (x20.08) +(x30) + (x310.06) + (x320.01) + (f30.23)

Factor 4 (Natural beauty)

= (x330.03) + (x340.04) + (x30.04) + (x36) + (f40.84)

Factor 5 (Tourist activities)

= (x370.04) + (x380.07) + (x390.07) + (x40) + (f50.80)

Factor 6 (Food attractions)

= (x410.07) + (x420.02) + (x430.01) + (x44) + (x45) + (f60.85)

Factor 7 (Tourist amenities)

= (x460.04) + (x470.02) + (x480.06) + (x49 (x5 (x51+ (x52) + (x53) + (f70.56)

Factor 8 (Cultural attractions)

= (x540.04) + (x550.04) + (x560.05) + (x57) + (f80.84)

Factor 9 (Safety and security)

= (x580.04) + (x59 (x6 (x61+ (x62) + (x63) + (x64) + (f90.51)

Aggregated Value for Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI)

= (f1*0.22) +(f2*0.11) +(f3*0.11) +(f4*0.10) +(f5*0.10) +(f6*0.09) +(f7*0.08) +(f8*0.08) +(f9*0.08)

The variables with lower loadings were represented through a residual weight, ensuring that the sum of all weights within each factor equals 1. The aggregated IDA value of 3.861 for the Krishna Circuit is taken as the benchmark to compare the attractiveness of individual dimensions. This standardized approach enables a consistent assessment across multiple factors, helping identify the relative strength and gaps in destination attractiveness.

Table 5: Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI)

Factors and Attributes		Weightings		Mean	IDA Values
		Variable	Factor		
1	2	3	4	5	6
DA1	Transportation facilities		0.22		3.887
X1	Transportation connectivity	0.03		3.54	0.120
X2	Transportation quality	0.04		3.77	0.150
X3	Accessibility	0.04		3.88	0.155
X4	Hygiene and Sanitization at transportation	0.04		3.94	0.157
X5	Road signage	0.04		3.88	0.155
X6	Traffic conditions	0.07		4.00	0.28
X7	Affordable Transportation facilities	0.07		4.07	0.284
X8	Safety and Security at Transportations	0.01		3.94	0.066
F1	Residual	0.64		3.87	2.516
DA2	Accommodation facilities		0.11		3.806
X9	Hygiene and Sanitization of Hotel	0.05		3.55	0.177
X10	Variety of Lodging	0.028		3.7	0.103
X11	Physical appearance	0.01		3.93	0.039
X12	Staff helpfulness / courtesy	0.08		3.79	0.303
X13	Cleanliness of the Rooms	0.06		3.77	0.226
X14	Reception / information given	0.09		3.81	0.342
X15	Room service	0.1		3.85	0.385
X16	Safety and security at accommodation	0.09		3.88	0.349
X17	Parking Facilities	0.05		3.91	0.195
X18	Affordable accommodation facilities	0.09		3.84	0.345
F2	Residual	0.35		3.80	1.338
DA3	Facilities at the temples of destination		0.11		3.906
X19	Spiritual feel inside the temple	0.01		4.19	0.041
X20	Behavior of priest / Pujari	0.02		4.07	0.081
X21	Prasadam quality	0.033		3.74	0.123
X22	Assistance and guidance in the temple by Temple staff	0.06		3.93	0.235
X23	Availability of information counter at temple	0.05		4.05	0.202
X24	Queue / line management	0.1		3.98	0.398
X25	Water facilities	0.03		3.88	0.116
X26	Cleanliness inide the temple	0.08		3.87	0.321
X29	Toilet facilities around the temples	0.08		3.89	0.311
X30	Shopping facilities near the temple	0.09		3.74	0.336
X31	Behavior of sellers at Shopping area	0.06		3.72	0.223
X32	Refreshment / tea stalls around temple	0.01		3.88	0.050
F3	Residual	0.23		3.92	0.917
DA4	Natural beauty at Destination		0.10		3.783
X33	Water bodies at Destinations	0.034		3.54	0.120
X34	Wildlife at Destination	0.04		3.77	0.150

Factors and Attributes		Weightings		Mean	IDA Values
		Variable	Factor		
1	2	3	4	5	6
F4	Residual	0.84		3.78	3.199
DA5	Tourist activities at Destination		0.10		3.971
X37	Heritage walk	0.04		3.88	0.155
X38	Shopping	0.07		3.98	0.278
X39	Sightseeing Opportunities	0.07		4.07	0.284
X40	Recreation activities	0.017		3.94	0.066
F5	Residual	0.80		3.96	3.185
DA6	Food attractions at destinations		0.09		3.752
X41	Hygiene & sanitization of food outlets at destination	0.07		3.55	0.248
X42	Food quality	0.02		3.7	0.103
X43	Local quality	0.01		3.93	0.039
X44	Food varieties	0.01		3.93	0.074
X45	Affordable food and beverages	0.01		3.72	0.070
F6	Residual	0.85		3.76	3.216
DA7	Tourist amenities at Destination		0.08		3.831
X46	Cellular service	0.04		3.8	0.152
X47	Internet service	0.02		3.79	0.106
X48	Banking and ATMs	0.06		3.77	0.226
X49	Information centers	0.09		3.81	0.342
X50	Guides	0.01		3.85	0.385
X51	Toilets and wash rooms	0.04		3.88	0.155
X52	First ad / Medical Facilities	0.05		3.91	0.195
X53	Clock room	0.02		3.84	0.088
F7	Residual	0.56		3.83	2.179
DA8	Cultural attractions at Destination		0.08		3.915
X54	Fair and festivals	0.04		3.74	0.149
X55	Hospitality	0.04		3.94	0.157
X56	Costume	0.05		4.01	0.200
X57	Handicrafts	0.03		3.98	0.119
F8	Residual	0.84		3.91	3.288
DA9	Safety and Security		0.08		3.867
X58	I find the place very safe for the visitors	0.04		3.88	0.155
X59	The police outpost is located to prevent any untoward incidents	0.08		3.87	0.321
X62	CCTV cameras coverage's at various locations	0.08		3.89	0.311
X63	Beggars create nuisance at the pilgrimage destination	0.09		3.74	3366
X64	Cheating by Pujari / Priest	0.06		3.72	0.223
F9	Residual	0.51		3.86	1.972
Aggregated Value for destination attractiveness index (DAI)					3.861

The comparison of individual Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) values against the aggregated DAI benchmark value of 3.861 reveals significant insights into tourist perceptions of the Krishna Circuit. The index values indicate that the dimensions of 'Tourist Activities' (3.971) and 'Cultural Attractions' (3.915) are rated highest in terms of attractiveness by respondents. This suggests that the Krishna Circuit is strongly associated with engaging tourism activities and rich cultural appeal, making these factors the most powerful contributors to its overall attractiveness.

Among the specific dimensions evaluated, 'Facilities at Temples' (3.907), 'Transportation Facilities' (3.887), 'Safety and Security' (3.867), and 'Tourist Amenities' (3.831) also exhibit DAI values above the aggregated index. These high scores reflect positively on the infrastructure supporting the religious and spiritual experiences of tourists. Respondents reported satisfaction with aspects such as cleanliness, availability of guides, ease of mobility, signage, and general hospitality—all of which contribute to a safe, convenient, and welcoming environment.

Following these are the factors of 'Accommodation' (3.806) and 'Natural Beauty' (3.783), which, though slightly below the aggregated benchmark, still reflect a favorable perception. Accommodation quality is seen as reasonably comfortable and adequate, but the slightly lower score may point toward the need for more diverse options or enhanced quality in mid- and budget-range stays. The score for natural beauty implies that while the Krishna Circuit has scenic elements, it may not be the primary draw for tourists compared to cultural and religious experiences.

The lowest DAI value was recorded for 'Food Attractiveness' (3.752). This suggests that culinary experiences in the Krishna Circuit are not perceived as particularly distinctive or appealing by tourists. The relatively low rating in this dimension implies an area of potential improvement. Enhancing local food offerings, integrating traditional cuisine into the tourist experience, and promoting food hygiene and variety could help improve this perception and add value to the overall visitor experience.

Taken together, these findings reflect a strong religious and cultural appeal of the Krishna Circuit, underpinned by satisfactory infrastructure and services. The areas with slightly lower index values for food and natural aesthetics indicate opportunities for strategic improvement to enhance the circuit's overall appeal. Destination planners and tourism managers can utilize these insights to prioritize development and promotional efforts accordingly.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study reveal that visitors perceive the Krishna Circuit as an attractive religious tourism destination, particularly due to its rich cultural appeal and variety of tourist activities. This is consistent with earlier studies that highlight the influence of cultural heritage and religious engagement in motivating travel to pilgrimage sites (Raj & Morpeth, 2007; Shinde, 2012). Among the various dimensions analyzed, 'tourist activities' (DAI = 3.971) and 'cultural attractions' (DAI = 3.915) score the highest, suggesting that tourists are especially drawn to the circuit's spiritual experiences, cultural narratives, and organized religious festivities.

Other key dimensions such as facilities at temples (DAI = 3.907), transportation (3.887), safety and security (3.867), and tourist amenities (3.831) are also rated above the aggregated DAI value of 3.861. These results reflect positively on the region's infrastructure and visitor support systems. Accommodation (DAI = 3.806) and natural beauty (DAI = 3.783) are perceived as moderately attractive, indicating potential areas for strategic enhancement.

However, food attractiveness was rated the lowest among all dimensions (DAI = 3.752), suggesting that culinary experiences in the Krishna Circuit may not meet tourist expectations or lack distinctiveness. This signals a need to integrate regional food promotion and quality improvements into destination planning.

The study introduces a structured index using factor and variable weights to calculate aggregated DAI values, providing a more robust and scalable approach than relying solely on factor loadings. This approach is aligned with earlier index-based destination evaluations (Krešić & Prebezac, 2011; Islam & Chaudhary, 2020). The dynamic nature of the index enables its application over time for comparative and longitudinal studies.

Adoption of this indexing approach across other religious destinations can support the generalization of the DAI model as a strategic tool in tourism planning. Expanding the study to include other stakeholders such as local residents, business owners, and policymakers, will help in constructing a more inclusive and comprehensive index of destination attractiveness.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that stakeholders involved in the Krishna Circuit tourism sector perceive a high level of destination attractiveness across multiple dimensions. The use of the Destination Attractiveness Index (DAI) in this research provides a structured and quantitative assessment of tourist perceptions. The highest attractiveness scores are attributed to factors such as tourist activities, cultural attractions, temple facilities, transportation, safety and security, and tourist amenities. These dimensions significantly contribute to the appeal of the Krishna Circuit as a prominent pilgrimage and heritage destination.

However, dimensions like food attractiveness received relatively lower DAI values, indicating specific areas where improvement is required. The DAI values thus offer a roadmap for destination managers and planners to prioritize resource allocation and strategic interventions. Enhancing

the food experience, for instance, could strengthen the overall appeal and satisfaction of visitors.

This study affirms that using a multi-dimensional index like the DAI can be a useful tool for continuous assessment of a destination's strengths and weaknesses. The index provides insights that can guide destination management, tourism marketing, and infrastructure development in a way that aligns with tourists' expectations and enhances the holistic travel experience.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The scope is limited to a single stakeholder group that is primarily tourism suppliers which may not reflect the complete perspective of all tourism stakeholders such as local residents, tourists, and government bodies. Additionally, the use of purposive sampling in selected sites along the Krishna Circuit may limit the generalizability of the findings. Seasonal variations, language barriers, and cultural nuances could also influence perceptions and were not fully addressed in this study.

Future research should aim to broaden the scope by adopting a multi-stakeholder approach to better capture the complex and diverse perspectives on destination attractiveness. Longitudinal studies using the DAI model can also be valuable in tracking changes in destination appeal over time, especially in response to tourism development projects or shifts in traveller expectations. Furthermore, integrating qualitative insights alongside quantitative indices can deepen understanding and offer more comprehensive policy recommendations. Expansion of this model to other religious and heritage circuits across India would contribute to the generalization and refinement of DAI as a tool for national tourism planning.

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