

“Tourist’s Satisfaction towards Cultural Tourism Festival: A Case Study on Konark Dance Festival, Odisha”

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Abstract

Cultural heritage is a vital part of the tourism product and is one of the energetic factors that can develop the competitiveness of a tourism destination. Cultural heritage tourism has now become of the biggest and rapidly growing global tourism markets and it covers all aspects of travel that provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about other area’s history, culture and lifestyle. Festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism and boosting the regional economy. The study of festivals and events is now an important and prolific area of tourism research inquiry. Now a days many tourists travel to a destination to attend the festivals in order to experience the culture of that destination. Therefore festivals have to be organized in an effective way in order to satisfy the tourist’s motive harnessing the socioeconomic benefits of tourism to the destination. The crowning glory of the temple architecture of Odisha is the sun temple at Konark which plays an important role in promoting tourism in Odisha by organizing an annual dance festival showcasing the classical and traditional dance forms of India with the main focus on Odissi dance .The open air auditorium near the temple serves the venue. The floodlight along with the beats of classical raga and talas transports the audience in sheer ecstasy. This study attempted to examine the relationship between overall satisfaction of tourists and tourism festival attributes. The case study was drawn on Konark Dance festival, Odisha. A Sample of 50 spectators (Respondents) was taken for the purpose of the study. Various attributes of the festival such as its organization, promotion, cuisine, infrastructure and other facilities, environmental ambience and safety and Security facilities were investigated during the study.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Festival, Tourism, tourists, Satisfaction, Event, Local community, Destination

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1. Introduction

Today Tourism is considered to be a most prevailing industry in the developing world. Many countries are dependent upon tourism industry to eradicate the poverty and improve their economy. According to UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) “

Despite the global economic downturn, tourism has been continued to be one of the Leading industries of the world, generating nearly \$1 trillion in receipts per year. Proper planning and development of tourism, tourism promotes social understanding, develops the

infrastructure, and promises greater revenues in the developing world; however, sometimes in deprived areas are exploited by many contracted tourist businesses looking to craft a profit.

India is a large and populous country with a great past and tradition. It can boast of some four thousand years of civilized life, and as such it must be ranked as one of the greatest civilization of the world. It is moreover, a living civilization whose traditions arises directly from its past. India has several main varieties of cultural heritage tourism destination in different areas of the country, like: a) Monumental heritage related with art and architecture b) the religious heritage c) the natural heritage d) traditional arts and crafts e) music and dance. In Odisha have all the above mentioned varieties of cultural heritage tourism destinations and for that reason, domestic as well as foreign tourists love to visit this beautiful state.

Today many tourist destinations have given due importance to the cultural festivals for the cultural and economic development of those destinations. Tourism planners are now using historical and cultural themes to create annual events in order to attract more tourists and creating the cultural image of the host destinations by organizing a festival at local level. Organizing such events and festivals are not targeted on any specific group. Hosting of such events helps in the development of tourism and brings out a lot of economic benefits along with the cultural benefits. Most of the researchers have cited that the local community plays a very important role in the development of tourism by organizing festivals.

Direct and indirect tourism are generated on a large scale when events are organized to cater out of regional visitors or get grants and sponsorships (Getz, 1997). The government is now adopting strategies of development of cultural tourism, nation building and economic development by extending strong support for the development of events and its promotion. The events are employed as significant tools to attract the visitors and to improve the image among different communities. Stiernstrand (1996) has opined that the economic benefits of tourism in a geographical area are derived upon consumption of the tourism products by the tourists. According to McDonnell, Allen and O'Toole (1999), the major beneficiaries of the event include travel, accommodation, restaurants, shopping etc. By recognizing the interrelationship between the events and the tourism, the Government, private sectors and the local community's role have tremendously changed over the last decade. The state has no longer the sole responsibility for tourism development and public sector has to give up its traditional responsibilities in favour of local, provincial and state authorities, and in going hand in hand with the state to put tourism on world map. This signifies the growing significant behaviour of governments and Private sectors for the development of events and tourism industries. This also indicates that festivals influence the local community and the tourism stakeholders in many ways relating to the environment, socio-cultural and economy which could be positive and negative.

2. Cultural Tourism: An Overview

Tourism industry professionals have defined cultural tourism as "Travel to learn and experience the art forms, heritage and the other cultural characteristics of a particular area." Culture is an identity of a place. People feel the importance of culture is the responsibility of social organization, local government, religious committee, work and leisure. Cultural

tourists are those who travel to different places away from their home town to learn and experience in cultures of host destinations. The main purpose of cultural tourists is to explore the cultural monuments and heritage sites during their travels. According to Garrison Keillor (1995), addressed in a Conference on Travel & Tourism, about cultural tourism *"It is something to think over, this is what tourism is...people don't travel to America to see the airports, hotels and other recreational facilities rather they travel to learn and experience all types of culture that exists in America."*^[1]

The concept of culture developed over the last two decades but not an obvious definition of culture has been accepted by the community as whole. In a modern day culture has been interpreted as a product by the state and central Governments, private sectors and the individuals to develop their own eminence in the given market. Wyman opines that culture has an imperative role in the society: *In an economic environment when people often concerned about health and education , it is also essential to think about the culture which is an important element of a healthy society. Because culture makes the life worth living just as the way health is necessary for life"*^[2]

Moreover, cultural tourism is related to a group of people who travel different parts of the world - individual country, region or a destination and individual events that look for to experience a cultural heritage, pilgrimage and art related sites to enhance knowledge of different communities and their way of life. This also includes a large variety of cultural tourism experiences such as performing arts, fairs and festivals, visit to historical monuments and sites, education tour programs, Museums, art galleries and natural heritage sites.

2.1. Development of Cultural Tourism through Festivals

Over the years a lot of changes have taken place in the celebrations of festivals. Earlier festivals were related to key calendar moments, pertaining to a particular season and heritage sites. But now the things have been changed to organizing a broad and wide range of festival events globally. According to Getz (1997, p. 1) Festival events are described as: "the rapidly growing and exciting form of tourism."

Goldblatt (2002, p. 1) Describes festival events as a:

"Kaleidoscope of planned culture, sport, politics, and business occasions: from big events like the Olympics, World Fairs to community festivals, from event programs at parks and near tourist attraction, from a small gathering to huge conference and convention."

The uprising in festivals has been aroused through commercial aspect to meet the changing needs of the local community groups and promising lot business opportunities for the event management companies and local businesses. For a city and local community, festivals are now playing a major role. The local community supports the festivals as it generates a sense of pride and image for the local people. Further, festivals have an imperative role in the national and the host community with regards to planning of a destination, encouraging and linking tourism and commerce. Festivals as events help in improving the image generate economic benefits, overcoming seasonality, contributing towards the improvement of local communities and local businesses, and supporting the key industrial sectors at a destination.

Through the festivals the local communities share the values and beliefs held by them and exchange their information and experience. The tourists also get an opportunity to know

the local community festivals, the celebrations of their culture and how the festivals help them in the development of their local community; it also gives a chance to the tourists to interact with the local community in order to satisfy their cultural and pleasure needs.

Festivals provide a greater opportunity for those who would like to gain economic benefits by sharing community culture with the broader world. UNEP (2002) proposes that “*culture tourism is developed and promoted by developing the events and festivals. Tourism can help in the upliftment of the communities in many ways.*”^[3]

2.2. Concept of Tourist Satisfaction

Tourist satisfaction is an appraisal of how a service delivered by a tourism destination/organization help in meeting up the expectation of the tourists. It is viewed as a main performance indicator within business and it shows how tourism organization/destinations provide tourism products and or services to the travel market successfully. Customer or Tourist satisfaction is a conceptual perception and the state or level of satisfaction of the people that varies from individual to individual, product to product and also service to service. In today’s dynamic competitive travel market, the business organization and the tourist destination have given much concentration to tourist’s satisfaction an important element of their promotional strategy. (Gitman & McDaniel, 2005).

There are many deliberations and perplexities have been generated relating to the relationship between quality of service and the satisfaction and how they differ from one another. In common parlance, quality is the attributes that are offered to consumers/tourists while satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the emotional reaction of the consumer towards the offer. In fact, both the terms are different. Quality is what the organization/ destination is liable to build and Satisfaction in consumer’s domain is the feeling or experience of the service. On the other hand, the both the Concepts are clearly related since the customer/tourist’s satisfaction/dissatisfaction is evaluated based upon how and whether the right quality has been delivered or not.

3. Objectives of the Study:

Cultural heritage tourism is developing quickly as a separate specific market. There are an increasing number of both the domestic and international tourists for this market due to availability of global communication. The study focuses on three objectives in order to understand the cultural tourism & role of the Konark dance festival in promoting the cultural heritage tourism:

1. To understand the role of festivals in promoting cultural tourism and benefiting the local community.
2. To evaluate the tourist satisfaction with the attributes of the Konark dance festival in promoting cultural tourism in Odisha.
3. To suggest suitable strategies for development of Konark dance festival for tourism promotion.

4. Review of literature

4.1. Cultural tourism festival

There are abundant substantiations on how cultural tourism festivals benefit the tourist destinations. It is stated that festivals contribute to the rejuvenation of local areas and prosperity of the destination. This is by means of creating employment opportunities. (Prentice and Andersen, 2003; Smith, 2004). It helps in the development of eco-friendly and sustainable infrastructure for the visitors. Bachleitner and Zins (1992) affirm that festival tourism increases learning of residents, ethnic identity, generates a sense of community pride, and helps in opening up of many medium size and small family enterprises. It is also said that cultural events and festivals encourage the cross-cultural communication which helps in promoting proper understanding between the guest and the host. (Sdrali and Chazapi, 2007). A region can improve its image; establish its name and a competitive position by developing tourism. (Smith, 2004). According to definition of Falassi (1987, p.2) “cultural festival- a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which different forms and a sequence of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to a diverse extent, all members of a whole community, united by race, language, religion, historical bonds, and sharing a world view.” All the stakeholders such as Government, private sectors and local people have their own interest and expectation for hosting a festival.

4.2. Tourist’s satisfaction

Earlier research has stated customer satisfaction is an important theoretical as well as practical issues. To attract the most variable segments of the market, customer satisfaction is regarded as a marketing tool for most marketers and consumer researchers, Satisfaction is important to successful destination marketing (Kozak and Rimmington 2000); Philip and Hezlett (1996) recognize the fact that one of the strategic routes used by leisure firms in gaining competitive edge has been through an increase concentration in customer satisfaction. They are many agreements that customer satisfaction persuades the selection of destination and consumption of products and services at a destination.

5. Festival Tourism in Konark

The tourist destinations now days are developing and promoting the cultural and heritage of the people as a means of attracting and enhancing visitor experience. This is owing to the fact that cultural and heritage tourism is being used as a tool to improve the local economy and has the potential to aid in the seasonal and geographical spread of tourism (Long and Perdue, 1990). Cultural tourism is described as the movements of people to learn and experience in the culture of others which include performing arts, fairs and festivals, pilgrimage centers, historical sites and monuments, folklore etc. (World Tourism Organisation, 1985). Hence Festivals are regarded as a type of cultural tourism.

The landscape of Odisha is speckled with a large no. of tourist places. The tourist interest includes magnificent temples, beaches, dense forest and wildlife. Odisha swanks a unique and rich cultural heritage. Konark is a small town in the Puri district in the state of Odisha, India. It is situated on the coast by the Bay of Bengal, about 65 kilometers from Bhubaneswar, the states’ capital. It is famous for its 13th-century Sun Temple, also known as the Black Pagoda, built in black granite during the reign of Narasimhadeva-I. The temple is recognized as a World Heritage Site. This magnificent temple is dedicated to the Sun God is

built in the shape of a chariot pulled by seven elegantly craved horses. Another architectural marvel of this temple is the astonishing 'Natyamandap' or the 'dancing hall' sculptured in Odissi dance poses often describe as the poetry Transliterated on stone.

This open air auditorium attached along with this temple is the venue of the Konark Festival – this festival of dance celebrated every year in the first week of December, showcasing the traditional and classical dance forms of India. A similar kind of dance and music festival is also conducted in the month of February every year for which the Natya Mandap serves as a venue.

The Konark festival for the first time was organized in the year 1989 in the open air auditorium. The open air auditorium was constructed with the financial assistance of the Central Government. Konark festival was initially organized as a classical dance festival. The main purpose of hosting such festival was to promote Konark as a tourist destination leading to promotion of Orissa tourism too. Many famous dancers from different part of India perform in this Konark festival. This festival is the merriment of various dance forms such as Odissi, Kathak, Bharathnatyam, Manipuri, Chau dance etc. The music produced from flute and Pakhauj and Ghungroo offer a very festive mood to everyone. As a part of the festival, a crafts Mela is also organized showcasing a variety of handicrafts by the State Industry Department. During the festival the visitors also get opportunities to taste the tasty cuisine of Odisha exhibited and sold by the local vendors. The festival is joint efforts of Orissa Dance Academy and Konark Natya Mandap and Orissa Tourism. The exhibition temple sculpture and the sand art are the added attraction of this festival.

6. Methodology

6.1. The Study Site

The study area is limited to Konark, a small town in the Puri district in the state of Odisha. Konark is well known for wonderful Sun Temple. It is situated 35 km away from Puri in the state of Odisha. The study focuses on scintillating Konark Festival, a very big and well attended event that showcases the different traditional dance forms of India such as the classic Bharatanatyam, the graceful Odissi and Manipuri, to the expressive Kathakali and Sattriya dance styles amongst others. The study was conducted on Konark Dance Festival – 2012.

6.2. Sampling

The study involved the convenience sampling method. This method of sampling has helped the researcher to get a gross estimate of the results of a less costly and time required to select a random sample. The study was conducted by taking 50 spectators' (the respondents) as the sample size and survey questionnaires were administered along with face-to-face interviews with the respondents.

6.3. Research Instruments and Methods

Both the secondary and primary data sources were used for the study. Secondary data sources provided data that have been gathered, examined, used and concluded by previous researchers in the field. Hence, secondary data help to contextualize the present study in the field. A questionnaire pertaining to various attributes of the Konark dance festival was prepared and administered among a group of respondents as mentioned above.

6.4. Measurement of Variable

A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure tourist's satisfaction as follows:

1. Very satisfied
2. Satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Dissatisfied
5. Very dissatisfied

7. Data analysis & Interpretation

Table - 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

N = 50

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender -Male	37	74
- Female	13	26
State – Orissa	22	44
- Others	15	30
- Abroad	13	26
Age – Below 20 years	5	10
- 21- 40 years	13	26
- 41 – 60 years	26	52
- 60 years and above	6	12
Education Level - Graduate	27	54
- Post Graduate & Above	15	30
- Others	8	16
Employment Level –Unemployed	3	6
- Self employed	11	22
- Retired	4	8
- Business person	12	24
- Professional	16	32
- Others	4	8
Income(INR) - Below 20,000	4	8
- 21,000 – 40,000	13	26
- 41,000 – 60,000	27	54
- 61,000 and above	6	12

The above table reveals that 74% of male and 26% of female visited the festivals. The dominant age group was 41-60 years (52%), followed by 21-40 years (26%), 60 years and above (12%) and least was under 20 years (10%). Most of the respondents has stated that they live in odisha (44%). In terms of level of education most of the respondents were Graduates (54%), followed by postgraduates and above (30%) and 16% belong to other categories. More no. of professionals visited the festival (32%), followed by the business person (24%). With regard to level of income, the largest group includes those with a monthly income of INR 41,000 – 60,000(54%), followed by INR 21, 000 – 40,000(26%), INR 61, 000 and above (12%) and below INR 20, 000(8%).

Table - 2. Perception of Festival attributes

1 - Very satisfied

2 – Satisfied

3 - Neutral

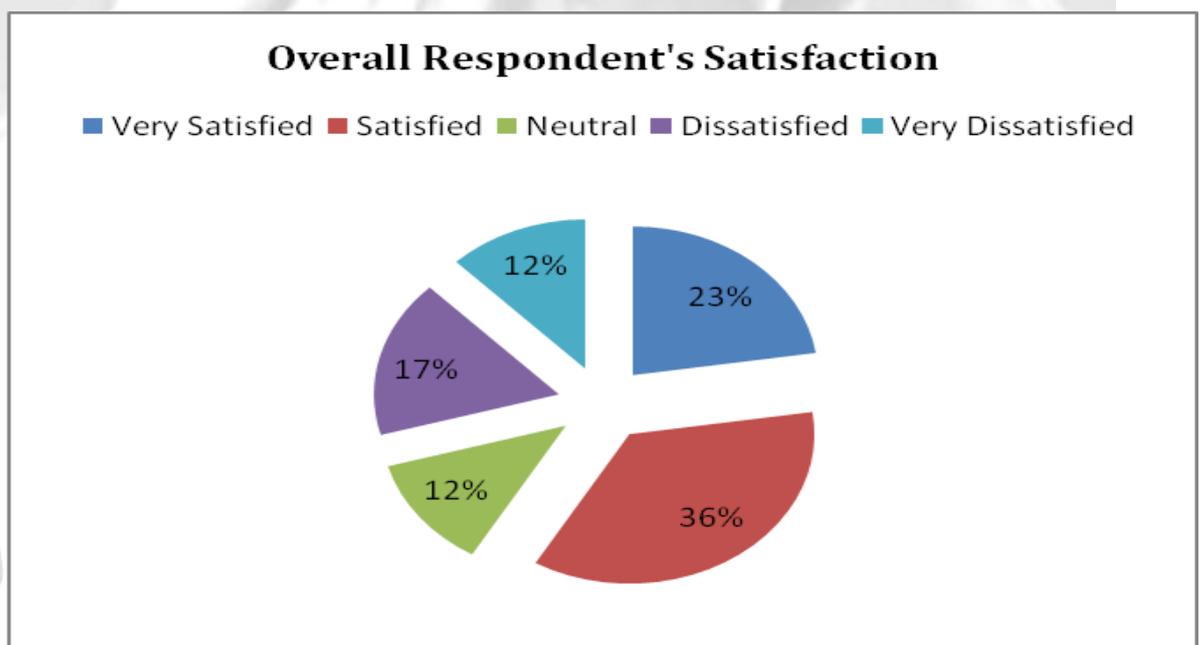
4 - Dissatisfied

5 - Very dissatisfied

Festival Attributes	1	2	3	4	5
Music and dance	17(34)	31(62)	0(0)	2(4)	0(0)
Lighting and Sound	9(18)	17(34)	7(14)	9(18)	8(16)
Ambience	12(24)	20(40)	3(6)	10(20)	5(10)
Art and Craft Fair	8(16)	18(36)	8(16)	9(18)	7(14)
Sand Art	21(42)	23(46)	6(12)	0(0)	0(0)
Cuisine	7(14)	17(34)	9(18)	11(22)	6(12)
Safety & Security	11(22)	12(24)	5(10)	14(28)	8(16)
Hospitality/Friendliness of Local community	15(30)	28(56)	0(0)	4(8)	3(6)
Infrastructure	3(6)	10(20)	11(22)	14(28)	12(24)
Accessibility	12(24)	16(32)	4(8)	9(18)	9(18)
Accommodation	3(6)	10(20)	11(22)	14(28)	12(24)
Organisation	17(34)	19(38)	5(10)	6(12)	3(6)
Promotion	12(24)	12(24)	10(20)	9(18)	7(14)

- Figures without Brackets show no. of respondents
- Figures in Brackets show Percentage to the total sample

The researcher has identified among the respondents 22.61% are very satisfied and 35.84% are satisfied on all the attributes of the Festival. However the satisfaction among the existing attributes according to him was based upon 13 different variables and the result shows to 58.45 %. The researcher also depicts that the various other factors which are negative in nature and hence has reduced the satisfaction level of the respondents which needs to be improved. The overall satisfaction level of the respondents has been presented in the following chart:



8. Discussion of findings

The study reveals relative tourist's dissatisfaction level of respondents towards certain attributes of the festival. Certainly, this is a festival of extraordinary radiance and has tremendous tourism potentials to increase tourist inflows to Odisha. However at present the festival is not properly organized & promoted to the desired extent. Light and sound arrangement is a constant defect requiring a permanent refinement. Sometimes during the dance performances the stage goes completely dark. The clarity and the effect of sound at the auditorium also need an immediate improvement. The organizers have to very much careful as the event is on live broadcast. The stray dogs wandering around the auditorium creating hilarity. Due to improper security facilities the local people creating lots of disturbance during the festival and spoiling the festival atmosphere. There are hardly any accommodations available at Konark to cater the need of lodging and boarding of the visitors. The existing infrastructure is also not up to the mark. Lack of proper promotion results in a less inflow of cultural tourists to the festival.

9. Recommendations

Festivals are now generally used as the important tools for promoting tourist destinations. There are a lot of attributes that affect the overall satisfaction of tourist a relating to the festival. Following are few suggestions relating to better development and promotion of Konark Festival:

- ❖ The lighting and sound system of the festival plays a major role in building up a proper ambience for the festival. Immediate attention must be given for its rectification.
- ❖ Proper security must be provided to avoid the stray dogs and the local people causing disturbance during the festival.
- ❖ The art and craft fair must be arranged in a better way and exhibit high standard of art and crafts. There is an urgent need to improve the existing infrastructure. The place requires establishment of luxury accommodation with some multi cuisine restaurants.
- ❖ Familiarization tours should be conducted for the people of different suppliers of travel products such as airlines, hotels, travel agencies, tour operators etc.
- ❖ Package tours need be conducted to the Festival and it must be available to both domestic and the international tourists at an affordable rate.
- ❖ Proper publicity and marketing strategies must be adopted by the Department of tourism and Orissa Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) for more promotion of the festival in order to reach the potential cultural tourists through tie-up with various promotional organizations in India and abroad. TV channels must be encouraged to create a better image of Festival well in advance. The tourism resources of Konark and the festival must be available in the form of clippings in the websites relating to Odisha tourism.

10. Conclusion

Festival tourism is an instrumentalist discourse in which festivals are viewed as tools in tourism, economic development and place marketing. Tourism planners & developers have long used special events and festivals as the ways to increase the tourist inflows to a destination and derive more economic benefits out of it. Promotion of trade & commerce at a destination and the image of the destination itself could be improved through the festivals. However organizing the festivals are not easy work and its success is also not guaranteed. A poor organized festival will not only lose the income for the destination but also harm the reputation of a destination. As mentioned in Orissa Post, The Department of Tourism, Government of Orissa has a huge action plan ahead to draw a higher number of foreign tourists to major destinations across the state through celebration of an array of festivals. The Konark Festival- A festival of Classical Dances of India is conducted with an objective to promote Konark as well as Odisha as place of tourist destination in order to enhance the economic benefits for the destination. Often the tourism officials organize festival without involving the support of the local community. A festival should be viewed not only a tourism event, but also a community event. If the community does not support it, there are chances of failure of tourism festival. Hence the local community of Konark must be made aware of the potential benefits of organizing such Festival. Further the Government of Orissa must prepare a Check- list of improvement of certain areas as mentioned under findings which at present hinder in successfully organizing this festival. Immediate attention to be given to the recommended measures and to avoid such problems which will help to satisfy the tourists' motive in visiting Konark and the Festival and will improve the image of Konark as an important tourist destination of not only of Odisha but also of India.

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