



Reviews in Tourism

The state of Indian tourism and hospitality research: A review and analysis of journal publications



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ABSTRACT

Tourism in India has emerged as a major catalyst for sustainable development because of its strong forward and backward connections with other prominent sectors of the economy. Tourism earned US\$ 17,737 million foreign exchange in 2012 with a 7.1% annual growth rate (Government of India, 2012). This growth has motivated researchers, policy makers and professionals to obtain an in-depth understanding of the tourism industry. This paper is the first study to focus solely on Indian tourism and hospitality research and review literature comprehensively. It provides a complete overview of 182 papers published in major academic databases including Scificedirect.com, SAGE Journals, Routledge.com, Emerald Insight, Springer, Wiley Online Library and Tourism Recreation Research between 1981 and 2012. The findings indicate that research themes have become more diversified, and the research productivity of universities/institutes located in India is continuously increasing. A trend of multiple authorship and more advanced methodological techniques has been found.

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Contents

1. Introduction	90
2. Literature search	91
3. Methodology	91
4. Results	92
4.1 Overview of published articles	92
4.2 Major themes and disciplines	92
4.3 University/institutional performance	93
4.4 Authorship	93
4.5 Coverage of research regions	95
4.6 Types of tourism studied	96
4.7 Methodological discourse	96
5. Discussion and analysis	96
6. Conclusions and limitations	98
References	98

1. Introduction

The National Tourism Policy of India (2002), with objectives to attain socio-cultural and economic benefits, led to an increase in tourism activities throughout the country. Data indicate that foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2012 were 6.58 million with \$17.74 billion in Foreign Exchange Earnings (The Ministry of Tourism, Government of

India, 2012) and \$128 billion contributed to the country's GDP (The World Travel and Tourism Council WTTC, 2013). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2009) has forecasted that India will receive 8.9 million FTAs by 2020. Tourism trends, in terms of traffic, have already started showing evidence of growth opportunities.

The rapid growth in size as well as in economic importance has attracted attention from researchers, and consequently, the number of articles published on Indian tourism and hospitality in recent decades has grown. These developments require a comprehensive literature review in this context because an inventory of research work can be

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used to predict future trends and challenges (Tsang and Hsu, 2011) but is not prominently present in Indian tourism research. This requires systematic investigation of articles published not only in tourism and hospitality journals but also in journals from different disciplines. The mandatory questions, such as how many research articles about India have been published, which university/institute has contributed the maximum number of articles on Indian tourism and hospitality and which are the trends and characteristics of research in India should be answered promptly.

Van Scotter and Culligan (2003) and Tsang and Hsu (2011) assert that research in the industry is attributable to management functions by solving the operational and managerial problems. The industry also needs research to keep operators in touch with their markets, changes and future predictions (McIntosh and Goeldner, 1995). The Indian tourism industry, blessed with tremendous growth opportunities, also expects support from research. Hence, it is time to prepare an updated research agenda through the comprehensive and critical evaluation of Indian tourism and hospitality research. This will produce answers to important questions, such as where we are today and which type of tourism is promising. A number of studies (Jogarathnam et al., 2005; Ryan, 2005; Sheldon, 1991) have investigated these issues from a global perspective. The literature surveyed suggests that, although there are many studies on Indian tourism and hospitality industry, the present paper is the first study aimed at assessing trends in Indian tourism and hospitality research. To obtain objectives, it provides an inventory of published research papers on Indian tourism in journals since 1981. The year 1981 can be taken as the beginning of Indian tourism and hospitality research because only six papers were found in the literature before that year. The present study is an attempt to examine the content of research articles published on Indian tourism and hospitality with the following objectives:

1. To identify those journals that have published research articles on Indian tourism and hospitality.
2. To describe contributions to Indian tourism and hospitality research according to authors, universities, institutes and respective countries of origin.
3. To summarize the content of India tourism and hospitality research in term of themes and disciplines focused; spatial coverage (i.e., research setting); types of tourism studied; nature of data (quantitative, qualitative and hybrid); nature of study (empirical and conceptual) and sophistication of statistical techniques used.

2. Literature search

Evaluation of research literature is helpful in identifying the trends and gaps in the field. It provides an opportunity to improve the quality of research agenda and also benefits industry by equipping it with sound theoretical principles (Van Scotter and Culligan, 2003). Several studies on tourism and hospitality with the objective of assessing trends have reviewed research published in journals using content analysis. Content analysis is an objective, systematic and replicable technique that allows the researcher to discover and describe existing trends in a discipline (Krippendorff, 1980 and Weber, 1990). Both types of data, qualitative and quantitative, have been used to identify research trends. In tourism and hospitality, Dann, Nash and Pearce (1988) used this technique and investigated research papers published in the *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Journal of Leisure Research* between 1974 and 1986. Chon, Evans, and Sutherland (1989) studied the publications of four journals (*Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and *Florida International University Hospitality Review*) by using this technique, whereas Reid and Andereck (1989) provided content analysis of papers published in three journals (*Journal of Tourism Research*, *Annals of Tourism Research* and *Tourism Management*). Five leading journals of hospitality management were

analysed by Crawford-Welch and McCleary (1992). In addition, Baloglu and Assante (1999), Sheldon (1991), Sheldon and Collison (1990) and Hing and Dimmock (1997) also used content analysis in their studies and concluded that the studies available in literature have used only a limited number of journals for analysis. Oh, Kim and Shin (2004) conducted a research review on “tourism and hospitality marketing” using the same technique and revealed that traditional research topics received less importance during 2002–2003. Zhao and Ritchie (2007) studied leadership in tourism research and examined the demographic profiles of fifty seven tourism and hospitality academicians. Meanwhile, Ballantyne et al. (2009) also used content analysis and found the increased importance of qualitative approach in contemporary tourism research. Tsang and Hsu (2011) grouped the existing literature under three main themes: authorship and institutional performance analysis (Jogarathnam et al., 2005), research method analysis (Palmer et al., 2004) and profiling of papers and their titles (Crawford-Welch and McCleary, 1992). Lu and Nepal (2009) analysed the articles published in the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, whereas Tsang and Hsu (2011) used content analysis for papers published on Chinese tourism and hospitality in six top-rated journals of the field and advocated periodical content analysis of journal publications for an up-to-date understanding of trends. Law et al. (2012) also administered a similar technique in their paper on China and included articles only from one journal (i.e., *Journal of China Tourism Research*). A majority of the studies that tried to track the changes in tourism and hospitality research have used content analysis but have excluded a number of journals of tourism and allied disciplines. Furthermore, because of their limited sample sizes, the analysis seems unable to discover full research productivity both at the global and the national level. This was quite evident in a recent study (of China) conducted by Leung et al. (2014). The present study, with India as the research setting, is a modest effort to fulfil this gap. In the Indian context, this is the first study that seeks to review tourism and hospitality research papers published in journals of seven major worldwide academic databases. Journals from other fields were also included because the interdisciplinary nature of the subject might encourage authors to submit their papers to journals in other disciplines (Tsang and Hsu, 2011).

3. Methodology

To achieve the objectives, articles published on India related topics were identified by using the following academic databases: *Scencedirect.com*, *SAGE Journals Online*, *Routledge.com*, *Emerald Insight*, *Springer*, *Wiley Online Library* and *Tourism Recreation Research (TRR)*. Among Indian journals, only one (i.e., TRR) was considered because it follows a strong reviewing system with referees of international repute. A total of 182 articles published in the last 32 years (1981 to 2012) in 78 journals from different disciplines were found suitable for analysis. The articles were selected by keyword searches of the publishers' web portals including the words “India”, “Indian” and “Delhi”. “Indian Tourism”, “Indian Hotels”, “Indian Hospitality” and “Indian Travelling” were supportive keywords under ‘and’ and ‘or’ search helps. Keywords were used to identify the central themes of articles and to determine their eligibility. Selected articles were reviewed individually for their relevance to the present study. Only full-length articles were included. Book reviews, reports, viewpoints, review papers, research notes, conference reports and short communications were excluded from the analysis, following the conventions used by Busenitz et al. (2003). A total of 28 journals were found with two or more papers published on Indian tourism and hospitality research. The focus of analysis for the articles (as in previous studies conducted by Huang and Hsu (2008), Tsang and Hsu (2011), Jogarathnam et al. (2005) and Sheldon (1991) in the context of other countries) is on the contribution of publisher database, theme and discipline, performance of university/institute, authorship information, coverage of research region, types of tourism studied and methodology used. The selected articles were

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