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## ASSESSING TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN GOA: A GAP ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to examine the perceptions of tourists visiting the state of Goa with regard to the importance given to and the satisfaction level with respect to the infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities available for tourism; to identify infrastructural strengths as well as problem areas which will enable various stake holders to take appropriate measures. 34 variables with respect to infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities were rated on importance given to and the satisfaction level through a structured questionnaire administered to 600 tourists. Gap Analysis, which is based on Importance-Performance Analysis, was used to determine the gap between tourist perception of importance given before trip and satisfaction level after trip; and paired t-test was used to determine whether the gap was significant. Research findings reveal that in 30 out of 34 variables, there is a significant difference in tourist perception before and after the trip. Further, when plotted on an Importance-Performance Grid, 12 out of the 34 variables fall in Quadrant II (Concentrate here) indicating an urgent need to focus efforts and resources to improve the same.

**Keywords:** Tourist perceptions, assessment of Infrastructure, Importance-Performance Analysis, Goa, India.

**Note:** *The paper is from the Doctoral research work of Ms. Carmelita D'Mello, titled "Managing Tourism Development in Goa through Sustainable Tourism". She is presently on Faculty Improvement Programme (FIP) under University Grants Commission (UGC) at the Department of Commerce, Goa University.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the tourism industry and the subsequent interest in investigating its implications has increased greatly over the past few decades. Tourism and travel is now considered one of the world's largest industries. The United Nations World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO's) Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these, worldwide arrivals in 2020 will be 378 million long-haul travelers and 1.2 billion will be intra-regional (UNWTO, 2008). For many countries tourism has become an important source of business activity as well as a generator of income, employment and foreign exchange. With the rapidly growing scope of tourism and the accelerating pace of competition in this field, if tourism is to contribute to both local and national development, the four A's (attractions, access, amenities, and ancillary services) must be nationally and internationally recognizable and competitive. (Cooper, et al, 1994; Yoon, Gursoy, & Chen, 2001).

This has led to extensive research in tourism covering aspects that include competitive advantages of different destinations; the flow of tourists around the world as well as different tourism impacts on socio-cultural, environmental, and economic aspects, destination image (Ahmed, 1991), ecotourism and sustainability (Butler & Boyd 2000), strategies related to sustainable development (Clarke, 1997) as well as the importance of community involvement in decision-making (Puczko and Ratz, 2000). However, despite the increased number of studies related to tourism, only very recently a number of studies have been focusing on the importance of repeat visitors to the same destination (Oppermann, 1999). While some studies on repeat visitation have focused on tourists' satisfaction in different destinations (Kozak, 2000, 2001); others have identified tourists' perception of the environment after years of visiting the same destination (Dymond, 1997; Pollard and Dominguez, 1993; Ryan, C., 1995; Puczko and Ratz, 2000). Visitor satisfaction is a major factor which determines repeat visitation and recommending the destination to others. Previous research findings demonstrate that there is a significant relationship among tourist satisfaction, intention to return, and positive 'word-of-mouth' recommendation (Kozak&Rimmington 2000). Tourists are increasingly becoming more demanding and desire value for money and the provision of quality products and services (Poon, 1993). Since the tourism product comprises many inter-related components such as accommodation, activities, transport and entertainment; a '*halo effect*' may occur wherein satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one of the components leads to satisfaction or dissatisfaction on the total tourism product or experience (Danaher & Arweiler 1996, Ryan 1995).

Customer satisfaction is therefore a major goal of service-oriented businesses. Understanding the causes and nature of visitor satisfaction and dissatisfaction can help to promote and develop a tourism destinations by measuring the 'health' of the industry for strategic planning purposes, understanding the customers reaction to a product, encouraging both new and repeat visitation and comparing different sectors within the industry to determine areas that may need improvement.