

## A Sociological Study of Tourists visiting Amritsar

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism has emerged as one of the most prominent industries which are contributing hugely in the economic growth of developing nations like India. Amritsar is one of the important tourist destinations in India. It has gained name at the global level because of the famous Golden Temple. The present study seeks to examine the social demographic profile of the tourists visiting Amritsar and also the motivations of the tourists visiting Amritsar. An exploratory attempt has been used to find out the profile of the tourists visiting Amritsar. The findings of the study reveal that the age, occupation, religion and gender affects the motivation of the tourists visiting Amritsar.*

**Keywords:** *Amritsar, Motivation, Socio-demographic profile, Tourism*

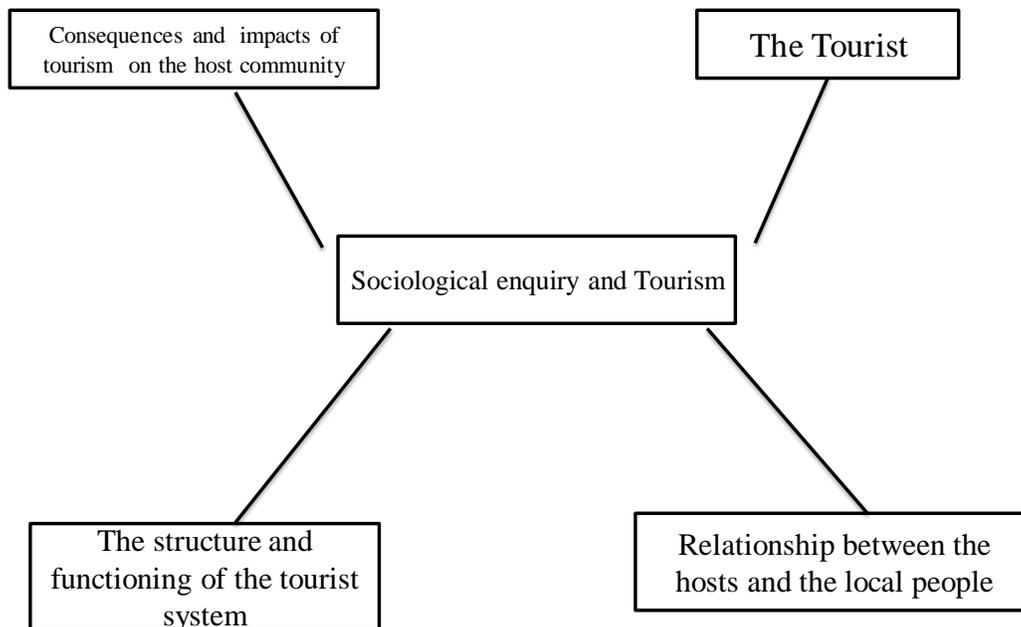
### I INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one such activity which involves the movement of tourists (people) from one place to another. Tourism, today, has emerged as an important tool of change and economic growth in the developing nations. This industry generates maximum employment and attracts both national as well as an international capital. Tourism is a source of bringing economic changes, socio-cultural changes, development and the reconstruction of the physical environment of a place. As an industry, it does not only affect the physical landscape and the economy but it also affects the social structure, local cultures and the local economies at the regional level. Tourism which used to be an international phenomenon has become a global trend. The tourism industry has expanded and the capital resources of the industry are integrated into national economies of the countries of the various developing nations. Various cities and regions are planned in such a way that they attract a maximum number of tourists from all over the globe. Some of the economies today are highly dependent on the tourism industry. The tourism industry is proliferating and has become a global trend now. According to Jafari (c.f Modi: 2001) “ Tourism is the study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs, and the impact that both he and the industry have on the host’s socio-cultural, economic and physical environment.”

Sociology of Tourism is relatively a new branch which tries to study tourism as a social phenomenon. It studies in depth the tourists, hosts, relation between the two and socio-cultural affects of tourism etc. The sociology of tourism helps in gaining an insight about the tourists, their perception regarding the hosts, their behaviour and their motivations of travelling.

## SOCIOLOGY OF TOURISM

Sociology of tourism deals with



Areas of Sociological enquiry in tourism (Cohen, 1984) c.f Andrew Holden

### 1.2 TOURISM IN AMRITSAR

Punjab is blessed with the variety of natural resources and is primarily an agrarian state of India. Amritsar is one of the famous cities of Punjab and it is one of the major tourist attractions in Punjab State. Amritsar since the city was founded and the inhabitants were settled was famous and had religious importance among the Sikh community because of the excavated Holy tank. People from the nearby villages and town used to visit the Holy tank and perform the prayers. With time the city was gifted with many heritage and cultural buildings, religious sites like Gurdwaras, mosque of Khair-ud-din, mosque of Mohammed Jan, Gates, Walls, Durgiana Temple, Khalsa College, Rambagh etc built during the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule and British rule. Since the city had possession of such rich heritage it became an important tourist attraction in Punjab.

Amritsar is an important religious centre for Sikh community and hence the city always had huge potential for religious tourism. Pilgrimages have been quiet popular and they satisfy the religious aspirations of the people.

Earlier the people for religious aspirations used to visit the nearby shrines only, as in case of Amritsar, only the people living in the vicinity of the Amritsar, the then Ramdaspur, used to visit the Holy tank. With time, education, money and easy access of transportation pilgrims often started moving to the far off places for pilgrimage. Amritsar is the home of famous Golden Temple, Jallianwala Bagh and Wagah Border and this attracts the maximum number of tourists. In November, 2017, The Golden Temple was listed as the most visited place of the world by the World Book of Records. Punjab tourism is continuously promoting the tourism in Amritsar and as a result it has developed new tourist spots like Partition Museum, Sada Pind, War Memorial and Gobindgarh fort.

### 1.3 TOURISTS

Tourists may be defined as the people who are at leisure and tourism may be defined as the activities they get engage in during that leisure time. It should not be concluded from this statement that all the people who are at leisure are tourists. One can only enter the leisure arena when one is completely free from all the obligations. One becomes a tourist when one leaves home or its place while free of all the primary obligations. According to Cohen (c.f Modi, 2001: 45) “A tourist is a temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round trip.” It is believed that in the field of sociology, the tourist was first figured in 1960s and was considered to be the one, who had huge money to spend, was rich economically and whose pocket could be deeply exploited for the personal benefits. Later, by 1970’s the tourist gained its place in the literature of sociologists. Earlier the sociologists considered the tourists to be the one who could leave only the economic impact in terms of generating employment, raising the cost and the prices of the goods and services in the host region but later the sociologists tried to find out the social and the physical impacts like affect on the infrastructure, old heritage buildings that the tourists could leave on the hosts (Graburn and Bouchier 2015). Cohen has given different typologies or classification i.e. drifters, explorers, individual mass tourists and organised mass tourists to understand the nature and the characteristics of different travellers. The classification is considered to be helpful and necessary in understanding the demands by the tourists, developing infrastructure and marketing strategies to promote and improve tourism.

In the contemporary times, travelling has become much cheaper and hence popular among the people. People have different motivations for travelling i.e. to see new things and people, to gain new experiences of life, to get away from daily life routine, to escape from the problems, relaxation and many more problems. It is necessary to study the reasons why people travel because studying the reasons helps in understanding the motivations and needs of the tourists. Tourists’ motivations are the basic in understanding the demand and these motivations satisfy the needs of the tourists. A motive can be defined as cognition or an emotion that makes one to do something or to strive towards a goal. There can be numerous push and pull factors which prompts a person to travel, pull factors are those

which attracts a person towards itself like the like the geographical location, scenic beauty, art and crafts and push factors can be daily boring routine at home or work place or need of some entertainment.

## 1.4 PREVIOUS STUDIES

Vuuren & Slabbert (2011) in their study on ‘Travel Motivation and Behaviour of Tourists to a South African Resort’ states that the main motives of the tourists travelling to Resort were relaxation, experiencing new things, exploring new culture and interaction with new people.

Modi (2001) in her work ‘Tourism and Society’ states that tourism can contribute in the change of value systems, behaviour of individuals, kinship ties, lifestyles, moral conduct, traditional customs and traditions of the residents. Moreover the cultural changes may occur because of the modifications in the habitat occupied or the contact between two societies having different cultures.

Heung et al.(2001) states that that tourists’ perceptions is influenced by motives, values, socio-demographic factors, media and the past experiences of the tourists. Tourists’ decision to visit the place again is dependent on the services received by them at the destination. It is necessary to improve the tourists’ satisfaction and this can be done by reducing the gap between tourists’ expectations and the perception on the services consumed at a destination.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY

The present study seeks to explore the socio-demographic profile and motivations of the tourists visiting Amritsar City. The research design used in this study is Descriptive and triangulation method was used to collect the data. The sample for this study was drawn from various parts of the city. A sample of 60 respondents was selected through simple random sampling technique. The data was collected through primary sources. The primary sources consisted of structured interview schedules and the observation method .The secondary sources of data used include various books, articles and journals. Those tourist respondents have been taken for sample who have stayed in Amritsar for at least 24 hours.

## II FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### 2.1 AGE and GENDER

Age defines the maturity level of an individual and is an important attribute while we study the tourists. Gender is something which has been considered as the symbol of family and society. Both male and females are assigned different roles in the society and these gender roles are culturally constructed, since they are culturally constructed

so they differ from society to society. An attempt has been made to figure out the age group and gender preference of travelling more.

**Table 1 Age and Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Age</b>			
<b>15-23</b>	9 (25.00)	7 (29.17)	16 (26.67)
<b>24-32</b>	16 (44.44)	7 (29.17)	23 (38.33)
<b>33-41</b>	2 (5.56)	4 (16.67)	6 (10.00)
<b>42-50</b>	2 (5.56)	1 (4.17)	3 (5.00)
<b>51-58</b>	3 (8.33)	3 (12.5)	6 (10.00)
<b>59-67</b>	1 (2.78)	1 (4.17)	2 (3.33)
<b>68-76</b>	3 (8.33)	1 (4.17)	4 (6.67)
<b>Total</b>	36 (60.00)	24 (40.00)	<b>60 (100.00)</b>

**\*Average age of Males 34.25 and Females 34.38**

A glance at the table 1 shows that both males and females from the age groups of 15-23 and 24-32 prefer to travel more and the average age of the male and female respondents is 34.25 and 34.38 respectively. Young people are more energetic and excited to explore the different places hence they travel more. Usually the people from the higher age groups don't prefer to travel more either because of the health issues or the preferred company for travelling. Jonsson and Devonis (2010) in their study reveal that old age people prefer more to travel to Barbados rather than the young people because of the cultural affiliations. Unlike them this study reveals that youngsters prefer to travel more than the older ones in spite of Amritsar being a religious destination, older people more likely travel to religious places.

## **2.2 EDUCATION**

Education gives a person an ability to shape his/her abilities, attitude and overall activities that define a person. Education gives people courage people to be independent and travel alone. Sociologically, education is an important agent of socialisation of an individual.

**Table 2 Education**

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	2	3.33
High School	6	10.00
Higher Secondary	4	6.67
Graduate	21	35.00
Post Graduate	15	25.00
PhD	1	1.67
Professional	8	13.33
No response	3*	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

\* 3 respondents gave no response about their education.

Table 2 reveals that 3.33 per cent of the total respondents are illiterate and majority of the respondents are educated. Nearly, 10 per cent of the respondents are high school pass and more than one-third are graduates, one fourth have completed their post graduation. In all most of the people travelling are educated and employed. Data reveals that educated and employed people travel more because of the easy monetary access and curiosity to get educated about the new places.

## 2.3 RELIGION

Historically Amritsar has been famous for the Golden Temple and Wagah border but in the past few years Amritsar is catching the eyeballs of tourists for other tourist destinations also. In the present study tourists travelling to Amritsar were mostly Hindus i.e. 35 per cent followed by Atheists and Christian. Sikhs are only 2 (3.33%) because in the presents study only those are considered as tourists who stays at a place for 24 hours and mostly Sikhs come from nearby villages to visit Golden temple and leave after the prayers. They generally don't stay in Amritsar . It shows the secularity prevailing in the Golden Temple which attracts people belonging to different religions to come and see the beauty of Golden temple. Tourists enjoy the peace in the temple, the sunset and the calm and pious atmosphere of the Golden temple. Golden temple is place where people of all the religions like to visit and that is because of its peaceful and divine atmosphere. There has been a visible shift from the religious tourism to secular tourism in Amritsar.

## 2.4 OCCUPATION

Occupation is also one of the important variables of socio-economic profile which tells us about the background of the tourist visiting a tourist area. The following table has been constructed to know about the occupational background of the tourists.

**Table 3 Occupation of the respondents**

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Private Sector	15	25.00
Student	13	21.67
Government Sector	9	15.00
Self Employed	7	11.67
Business	4	6.67
Writer	2	3.33
Doctor	2	3.33
No Occupation	8	13.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

The data in the table 3 reveals that one-fourth of the tourists are the working in the private sector and more than one-fifth are students. Also 13.33 per cent of the respondents are in the category of no occupation which includes retired persons and the housewives. The trend in the table shows that people either in occupation or no occupation prefer to travel. They all want break from their daily routine to get refreshed.

## 2.5 GENDER AND NATIVITY

Upreti (2005) states that gender is a term which is used to mark the difference between men and women with respect to the roles assigned, attitudes and relationships in the society. It refers to the asymmetrical relationship which persists in the society between men and women. Nativity represents an individual's place of birth. Table 4 has been constructed to understand the relation between the gender and nativity of respondents. The table has been constructed to understand the trend in the flow of national and foreign tourists in Amritsar

Table 4 Gender and Nativity

Gender Nativity	Male	Female	Total
<b>Outside India</b>	20 (55.56) (22.86)	15 (62.5) (42.86)	35 (58.33)
<b>India</b>	16 (44.44) (64.00)	9 (37.50) (36.00)	25 (41.67)
<b>Total</b>	36 (60.00)	24 (40.00)	<b>60 (100.00)</b>

Data shows that male tourists are more i.e., 36 (60.00 per cent) followed by female tourists nearly 24 (40.00 per cent). Majority of the tourists are foreigners i.e., 35 (58.33 per cent) and one-fourth is Indians. This trend may be because during the field work Indian tourists didn't prefer to respond to the researcher where as the foreign tourists were easily available for interview.

## 2.6 MOTIVATIONS FOR TRAVELLING

People travel for different reasons. During ancient times people used to travel for food, shelter and some economic reasons. Later people started travelling for religious purpose and now people mostly travel for pleasure. There has always been some reason behind travelling. It's not just that one leaves home and starts travelling without any prior motivation. Iso-Ahola, 1988 (c.f Modi 2001) writes in the motivational theory of leisure that people travel to escape and to seek; to escape from routine work and to seek for some kind of recreational activity. Crompton (1979) writes about socio- psychological motives which people have for travelling and for choosing a particular destination to visit. He has mentioned seven socio-psychological reasons for travelling in which 'break from the mundane routine is the primary one. The respondents were asked about their motivation to travel, in order, to make an analysis of motivations which prompt people to pack their bags and leave their home.

Table 5 Motivation for travelling

Motivation	Frequency	Percentage
History and culture of a place	30	30.61
Curiosity to explore places	23	23.45
Meeting new people	14	14.29
Learning new experiences	12	12.24

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Religion/spirituality	8	8.16
Escape from daily work	7	7.14
Business/Work	4	4.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>99.99</b>

## Multiple Response\*

Data in the table 5 shows that highest proportion of respondents i.e. 30.61 per cent of the respondents travel for learning the history of a place or to get to know about the cultural heritage of a place which includes the architecture, people and places and interest in art and music. More than one-fifth of the respondents said that their motivation for travelling is to explore the new places; their landscape, the adventure over there and the curiosity to taste the food of different places. Nearly, 14.29 per cent of the respondents responded that they like meeting new people, their life styles and their behaviour. Hence they travel to new places to meet new people. Around 8.16 per cent of the respondents said that going to the religious places is the motivation for them for travelling. They go for pilgrimage and side by side they do sightseeing. Also, 12.24 per cent of the respondents revealed that they travel to learn new experiences, to broaden their horizon of knowledge. In fact, the main motive is to get educated about the new things in life and to have a perspective of different people around the world. There are 7.14 per cent of the respondents who said that they travel to break the routine. The get bore of their day to day work life and hence in order to relax they opt for travelling and leisure. Hence leisure is the main motive for travelling. Only few respondents, i.e., 4.08 per cent said that they travel for work. They go to different places for meetings and in the free time they explore the places.

Vuuren and Slabbert (2011) in their work has found that the main motive of the tourists to travel to South African resort was to relax and to get engage in recreational activities, to interact and learn new things and culture from the hosts. Likewise in the present study we find people like to travel for learning new experiences and culture of different places. In the present study it has been seen that people mostly travel to get educated about new places, culture etc.

## 2.7 ATTRACTIONS TO VISIT AMRITSAR

People travel for different reasons. During ancient times people used to travel for food, shelter and some economic reasons. Later people started travelling for religious purpose and now people mostly travel for pleasure. There has always been some reason behind travelling. It's not just that one leaves home and starts travelling without any prior motivation. Amritsar has been a famous tourist spot among the tourists in India. Respondents were asked what attracted them to visit Amritsar, what was their motivation for travelling to Amritsar. Majority of the respondents i.e. 67.05 per cent said that they have come to Amritsar to see the Golden Temple. The architecture of the Golden

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Temple fascinates the maximum number of tourists and leaves them spell bound, second is the sun set sight at Golden Temple and third is the sanctity of the place. These three things attract the maximum number of tourists. Nearly 14.12 per cent of the respondents revealed that another major attraction which pulls them towards Amritsar is the Wagha Border (India-Pakistan border). People from all over the world come to see the retreat ceremony at the Wagha border. It arouses the patriotism among the people; one feels proud to be part of the retreat ceremony. Around 7.06 per cent of the respondent said that Amritsar has rich art and architecture like Golden Temple, Durgiana Temple, War Memorial museum, Heritage stretch and the colourful streets of Amritsar. These attract the people from all over the globe.

Nearly 5.88 per cent of the respondents revealed that Punjabi food is another pull factor for visiting Amritsar. Punjabi food is famous for its taste and hence people who are crazy about food like to visit Amritsar to taste its unique cuisine. There were also some respondents, i.e. 4.71 per cent, who said that they were fascinated to see the unique and colourful turbans of Sikh people and they wanted to know more about Sikhism and hence they landed in Amritsar to know about Sikhism. It was Sikhism which made them to visit Amritsar. There was only one respondent i.e. 1.18 per cent who said that he has come here because the package tour he had opted for made him to visit Amritsar. The present study shows that the major pull factors in Amritsar are Golden Temple and Border. Though many new places have come up now to visit in Amritsar but the tourists get to know about them only when they come to Amritsar.

## CONCLUSION

In summation it can be said that the people from all the age groups, mostly young and the middle aged people, travel. In order to get rid of their daily hectic schedule they prefer to travel. Further the education and occupation play an important role in motivating the people to travel, people who are educated and earn good travel more. Amritsar is famous for Golden temple and tourists from all over the world come to see the Golden temple.

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