



AN ANALYSIS OF SPACE SHARING AND TOURIST TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR IN THE COASTAL AREA OF PUDUCHERRY MUNICIPALITY

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Tourist survey was conducted on some selected wards (no. 4, 12, 20, 39) of Puducherry municipality on the basis of 100 respondent tourists surveyed in Puducherry, we are trying to draw a perspective that how the space is shared among visitors' and the local area in Puducherry. All the figures are drawn from the Primary survey, 2024. Here, we have specially dealt with gender details and their respective group details, their occupational status, their duration of staying, sources of information from which they have gathered information about the place, how frequently they visit this place, different modes of transport that they prefer while in Puducherry, sources of planning trip for Puducherry, whether they would recommend this place to some other people or not, their mental preparedness for natural hazards, problems they have faced in this place, the most attractive place they have visited in Puducherry, different purposes for using shoreline by the respondents and their level of satisfaction for different parameters.

Keywords: *Space, Travel behaviour, Tourists, Coastal Area, Puducherry Municipality*

Introduction

Puducherry is a coastal tourist attraction destination in India which is the most breathtaking with heavenly beaches, spiritual centre, French cultural heritage, and serene atmosphere. It has a high population of domestic and international tourists, who visit this place every year to have recreation, relaxation, spiritual, and cultural experiences. The entire coastal strip particularly the Promenade and the other adjacent beach hotels serve as a vital shared environment whereby tourists, the residents, the vendors and the service providers meet each other all the time. In this types of tourism-based coast, the notion of sharing of space becomes very pertinent. Various groups use the same physical space to perform various activities including walking, commercial use, photography, leisure, meditation and transportation. Application of the same area several times shows the spatial behaviour and travelling trend of tourists in Puducherry. The current research will examine the movement habits of tourists in coastal area under Puducherry Municipality. It also tries to comprehend the extent of tourist satisfaction, issues encountered when they are staying, and how they are ready to natural hazards in a coastal area. Quoting from "Explanation in Geography" by David Harvey "One of the central conclusion in Hartshones'(1939)'Nature Of Geography' was that the distinctive aim of geography as a science could be defined in terms of spatial concept. And the task of a geographer, it was claimed, was to analyze the interaction and integration of phenomenon in terms of space" (pg-207, Explanation In Geography, Harvey. D).

Study Area: The Study is conducted at the union territory of Pondicherry aimed at analyzing the concept of sharing of space studied at the Promenade beach and its associated areas including fishermen's villages of Pondicherry. The beach, 1.5 km long is a pride of Pondicherry. The beach area is one of the exact location for the study purpose that was aimed up to people from various nationality, background and economic stratum shares this beach for their individual motives and purpose.

Significance of the Study: The research is relevant in the sense that tourism is very central to the economy and urbanization of Puducherry. The behaviour of the tourists on the quests will be understood to give the preferences as well as movement patterns, length of stay, and utilization of the available public spaces.

Another aspect where this study is significant is in the human geography and tourism research since the area of spatial sharing is the aim of research. Tourists and local communities are required to share the space of the beach and its surroundings at the same time, which usually presents both opportunities and challenges regarding planning and management.

The research results can assist tourism planners, local governments, and policymakers to enhance the infrastructure, transport facilities, environmental conditions, and disaster preparedness to tourists. It is also relevant to future studies regarding the field of coastal tourism, spatial behaviour and sustainable destination planning.

Statement of the Problem

The coastal stretch of Puducherry is a significant tourist destination and there are many tourists that interact in the same physical environment with the local people and the vendors as well as services. Although, very little literature exists on the use and perception of these shared spaces by tourists and how their travel behaviour affects the coastal environment. The key issue of the study is to measure the spatial interaction between the tourists and the coastal landscape of Puducherry as well as problems they encounter during their visit. The tourist experience may be influenced by such environmental issues as poor facilities, environmental concerns and the absence of hazard preparedness. So the Study is Entitled that – “An Analysis of Space Sharing and Tourist Travel Behaviour in the Coastal Area of Puducherry Municipality”

Objectives

1. To find out the Socio-Demographic profile of Tourists visiting in Puducherry Municipality.
2. To find out the Travel behaviour of Tourists in Puducherry Municipality.
3. To establish the concept of Sharing of Space in Puducherry Municipality.
4. To find out the Problems faced by tourists and assess their level on Mental preparedness towards Hazards during stay in Puducherry Municipality.
5. To evaluate the level of tourist satisfaction on Puducherry Municipality.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is that there has been massive scale sharing of space by the tourist along the coastline of Puducherry, an union territory located along the south eastern coast of India

Methodology

Pre field

1. *Literature review:* A thorough study of previous literatures available on Pondicherry was done based on which the theme of the work was selected,
2. *Preparation of questionnaire:* Questionnaire to survey for Tourists along the Coastal area of Puducherry Municipality.
3. *Secondary data collection:* Secondary data were collected from available District Census handbook and other previous reports on Pondicherry.

Field work

1. Primary surveys were done in groups, and socio-economic data were collected from the local people and vendors. Surveys were also done to collect data on tourist profile,
2. Antique maps were collected from museum,
3. Careful preparation of master table was done based on the collected data.

Post field work

1. This included analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary data towards the successful completion of the said field report,
2. Ms Excel was used in the said analysis and preparation of the diagrams.

Study Area: The union territory of Pondicherry is located between 11°46' and 12° 3' North latitude and between 79°36' to 79°53' east longitude. It consists of 4 coastal regions viz- Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. Pondicherry and Karaikal are situated on the east coast of Tamil Nadu while Yanam in Andhra Pradesh while Mahe on the west coast of Kerela. However our study area is concerned over only Pondicherry unit which is the capital of this union territory located on the Coromondal coast of bay of Bengal, about 162 km south of Chennai.

Analysis And Discussion

Socio-Demographic Profile of Tourists Visiting Puducherry Municipality

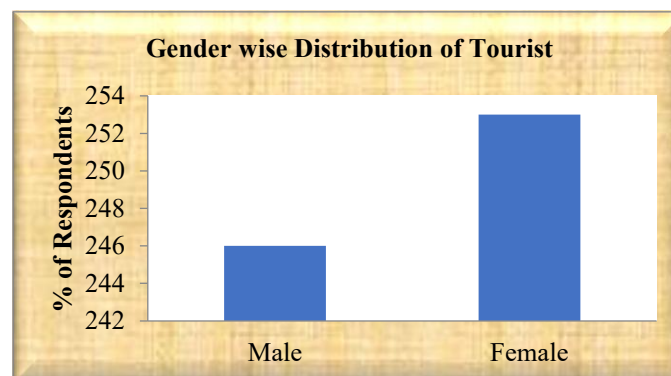


Fig. No. 1: Gender wise Distribution of Tourist

Gender wise distribution of tourist groups

A simple bar graph (Fig no. 1) has been prepared on the basis of the given data to show gender wise distribution of tourist groups, in the diagram. The horizontal axis shows the gender of the respondents and the vertical axis show the percentage of respondents. It can be seen that the percentage share of total male and female population among tourist groups is almost equally distributed. Male population occupies 49.30% of the total tourist population whereas female population occupies 50.70% of the total tourist population. Thus, from the above state of distribution it can be said that there is greater intensity of tourism among females than male or in other sense it can be said that female prefer tourism more than males in different age groups.

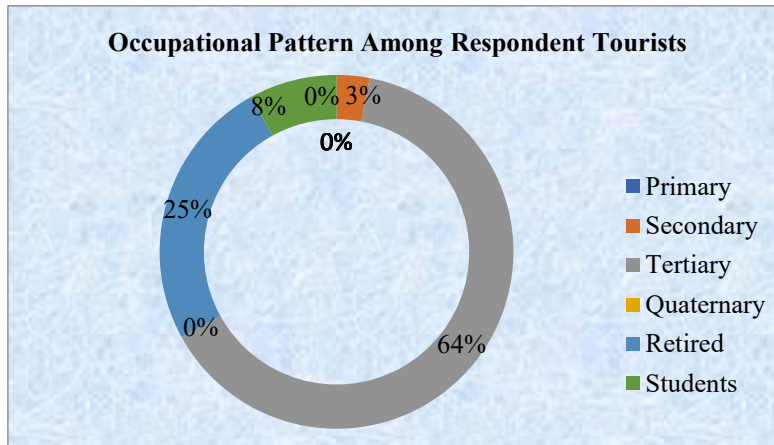


Fig. No. 2: Occupational Pattern Among Respondent Tourists

Different types of occupational patterns among respondent tourists

A Donut diagram (Fig no. 2) has been prepared on the basis of the given data to show the distribution of occupational pattern among respondent tourists in diagram, in the chart given below each sector of the pie shows the share of percentage in different occupational pattern among respondent tourists. From the survey done it can be identified that the highest percentage share is consists of Tertiary sector because now- a-days people are preferably engaged in service sector, which also draw our attention that the highest percentage of tourist belong to Tertiary sector (64%) may have come to this place for their professional dealings. Then the second highest percentage is shared by Secondary sector (25%) it can be so because of the reason that people are getting attracted towards modern industries more and more followed by retired persons (8%) and students (3%) it can be so because that the intensity of tourism among retired persons are less because of their growing age and health issues and it is significantly low among students because of their study pressure and work load. A positive side can also be sighted from this that the retired persons come to this place for enjoyment and refreshment in their old age and students come to this place for study purpose. A significant issue which can be noticed from the diagram is that there is no percentage shared by Primary sector among the tourist which means that the primary sector workers are not that much indulged in tourism.

Travel Behaviour of Tourists in Puducherry Municipality

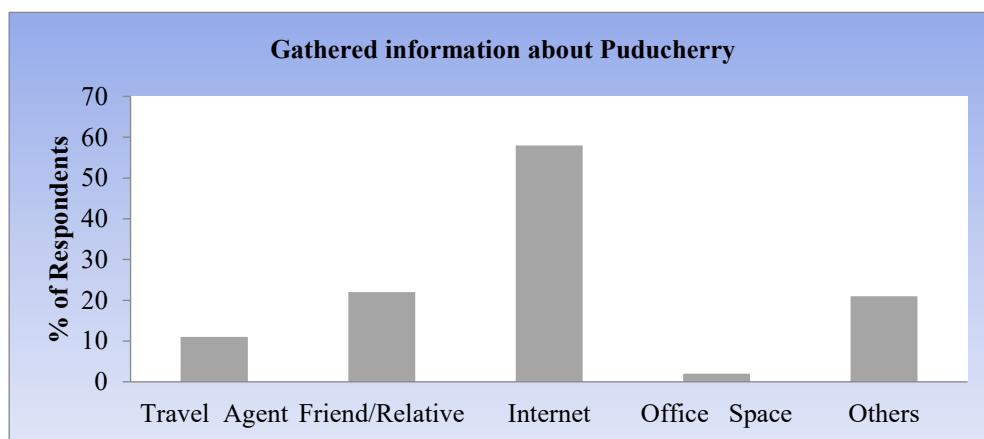


Fig. No. 3: Gathered information about Puducherry

Gathered information about Puducherry by respondent tourists

Simple bar graph (Fig no. 3) has been drawn to represent the sources used to gather information about Puducherry in diagram, by the respondent tourists, in the chart the horizontal axis shows various modes of collecting information and the vertical axis show the percentage of respondent tourists. So, the sources which have been considered are advertisement, travel agency, friends or relatives, internet, office space and others.

From the above mentioned sources Internet consists of the largest percentage share 58% because now-a-days people are more connected to Internet which is considered as the most reliable source to gather information about anything then comes the second highest used source which is friend and relatives 22% which has become the second most reliable source after internet then comes Travel agency which is an important source of information among the tourists which share 11% followed by Other sources which may include Posters, hoardings, announcements, etc and the least percentage is shared by office space which is merely 2%. The most surprising thing which have been noticed in the graph that there is no percentage shared by advertisement to gather information about the place.

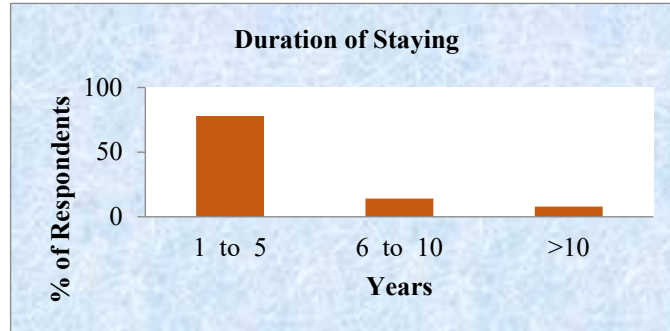


Fig. No. 4: Duration of Staying

Duration of staying of respondent tourists in Puducherry

A simple bar graph (Fig no. 4) has been used to show the duration of staying of respondent tourists in Puducherry in diagram, in the given chart below the horizontal axis shows the duration of staying of the respondent tourists and the vertical axis show the percentage of tourists. It has been divided into three groups among which the largest percentage of tourists belong to 1-5 days group which consists of 78% of tourists which simply means largest percentage of tourist stays in Puducherry for more or less 5 days for different purposes, which is then followed by 6-10 days and > 10 days duration consists of 14% and 8% of tourists in the area respectively.

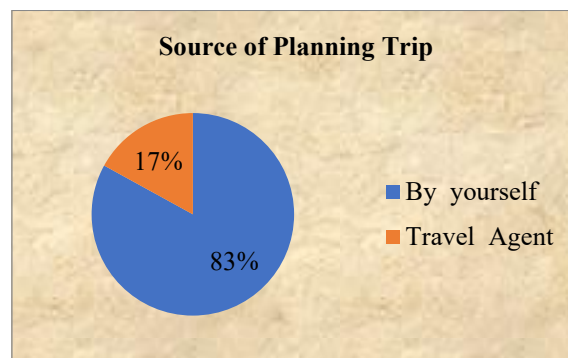


Fig. No. 5: Source of Planning Trip

Sources of planning trip by respondent tourists

Pie diagram (Fig no. 5) has been constructed to show two major planning sources for the trip by the respondent tourists in diagram. Thus, from the given graph it can be identified that a significant share of percentage of 88% of tourists have planned their trip to Puducherry by their own it might be so because of their gathered information and their knowledge about the place and their eagerness to wonder this place. Only 17% of tourists relay on travel agent to plan their trip to Puducherry it might be so because of their busy schedule and their work pressure, etc.

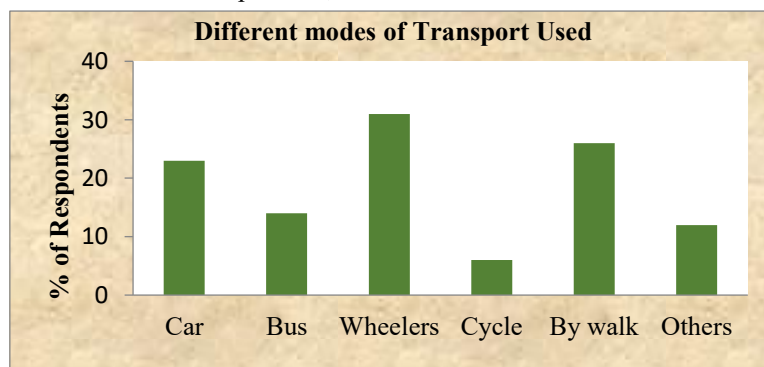


Fig. No. 6: Different modes of Transport Used

Different modes of transport used by respondent tourists

Simple bar graph (Fig no. 6) has been used to represent different modes of transport used by respondent tourists in Puducherry in diagram, in the given chart the horizontal axis shows different modes of local transport and the vertical axis shows the percentage of respondent tourists. From the graph it is clear that the highest percentage of 31%+ 6% 37% is shared by 2- wheelers consisting of percentage shared by cycle also by the tourists, then 26% of respondent tourists prefer to roam by walking it may be so, because they want to keep the environment clean from air and sound pollution caused by vehicular emission then up to 23%of tourists prefer car(four-wheeler) it might be so because they are in group of 4-5 persons or they are not willing to opt for 2-wheeler followed by bus and other modes of transport which is of 14% and 12% respectively because buses are preferred by only those who are in group of 10-20 pupil and the other modes of transport include auto-rickshaw, traveller vans, etc.

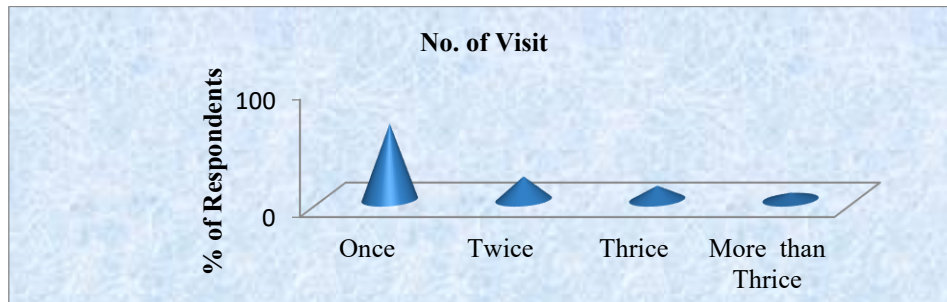


Fig. no. 7: No. of Visit

Frequency of visit of respondent tourists in Puducherry

A cone diagram (Fig no. 7) is chosen to represent the frequency of visit of respondent tourists in Puducherry in diagram. The highest percentage is shared by one time visit(Once) 63% it can be so because they know less about this place yet or they might be the 1st time visitor of Puducherry, followed by twice 19% it might be so, because they have visited this place earlier also and wanted to explore more about this place and also love the environment of this place and then comes the frequency of thrice and more than thrice which consists of 12% and 6% of tourists population respectively it is so, because of their passion for this place or it might be so, because they know about this place very well and want to spend some quality time here or they might have some other purposes to be fulfilled.

Establish the Concept of Sharing of Space in Puducherry Municipality

Space Sharing: A case study on Puducherry

Puducherry holds a significant place in World tourism map. The spiritual radiance of the place coupled with rich cultural heritage has made it one of the most important tourist destination both for domestic and foreign travellers. The most popular tourist destinations are the four beaches in Puducherry viz. Promenade Beach, Paradise Beach, The Auroville Beach, and The Serenity Beach. In Puducherry one can find a blend of spiritual aura, French heritage, Tamil culture virgin beaches and also the cosmopolitan flair of many nationalities in a small town that has made it unique. Tourism means going away on a holiday and its aim is to give us a break from our monotonous busy schedule. That's why we choose destination which offers perfect relaxation. This criteria can be applied in case of Puducherry. Here the first and foremost tourist destination which quenches the psychological thrust of the tourists is the Aurobindo Ashram, located on rue de la marina, which is one of the most well-known and wealthiest ashrams in India. This ashram, founded by MirraAlffsa, disciple of Sri Aurobindo, later popularly styled as 'The Mother' is mainly famous for yoga, meditation. Even now tourists from different countries come here to rejuvenate the body, soul and mind. Here lies the significance of the sea. The Promenade Beach that runs for 1.5 kms is considered as the pride of Puducherry. As the ashram is located along the sea beach it provides a perfect place for yoga, meditation. Apart from this, the War Memorial, the Statue of Dupleix, Old Light house, all are located along the beach in a close proximity of the ashram that have made it popular.

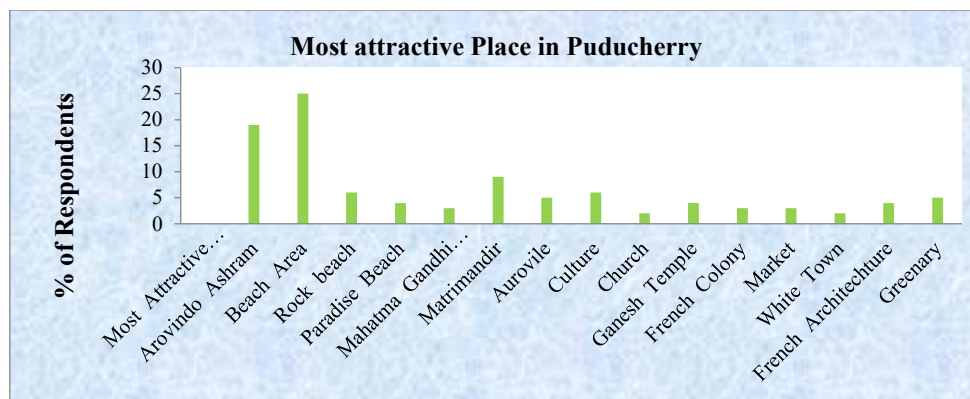


Fig. No. 8: Most attractive Place in Puducherry

Most attractive place in Puducherry

Simple bar graph (Fig no. 8) has been used to identify the most attractive place in Puducherry in diagram. In the survey conducted it can be seen that the most attractive place in Puducherry is the beach area which consists of the highest percentage of all 25%, the beach area is used for various purposes by the tourists, some of them uses it for recreational purpose whereas some other uses it for working and other purposes, etc. The second highest percentage is shared by Aurovindo Ashram 19% of the total share because Aurovindo Ashram in Puducherry is a huge crowd puller and it is considered as a very significant tourist destination. Third highest percentage is shared by the Matrimandir 9% which is because of its immense significance in the life of the followers of Sri Aurovindo and it is also considered as an adobe of peace. The fourth highest percentage is shared by the Rock beach 6% and the Culture of Puducherry also shared 6% of attractiveness, rock beach is also full of scenic beauty and the culture which is mainly French in origin. Followed by Auroville and Greenery of the place (5%+5%), Paradise beach, Ganesh temple, French architecture (4%+4%+4%), Mahatma Gandhi statue, Market of the area and French colony (3%+3%+3%) and Church and White town (2%+2%).

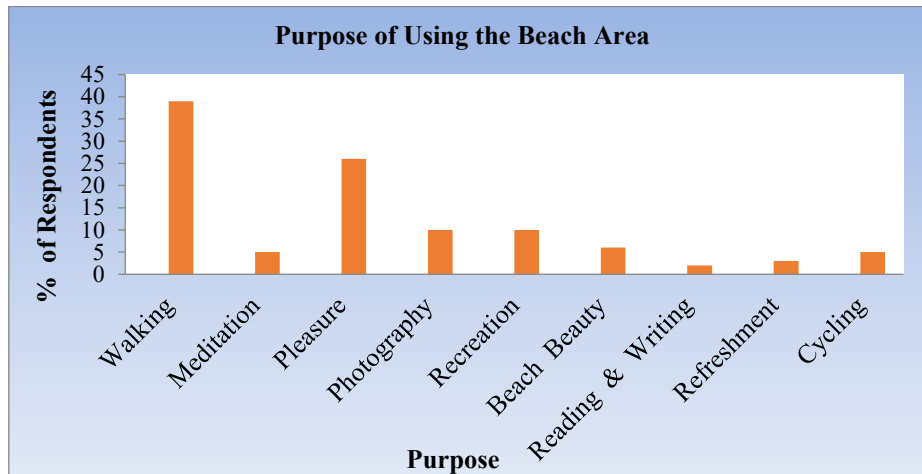


Fig. No. 9: Purpose of Using the Beach Area

Purpose of using beach by the respondent tourists

A simple bar graph (Fig no. 9) has been drawn to represent various purposes of using beach by the respondent tourists in diagram. Thus, from the diagram it can be identified that mostly the beach is used for walking purpose which shares for 36%, secondly for pleasure purpose which shares for 24%, thirdly for photography purpose which consists of 9%, fourthly for its scenic beauty which consists for only 6%, fifthly for cycling and meditation purpose (5%+5%) and only a mere percentage of tourists use beach for refreshment by 3%, for reading and writing purpose by 2% and the least percentage is shared by swimming in the beach area which is only 1% due to poor facility for swimming in the beach area.

Problems Faced by Tourists and Assess Their Level on Mental Preparedness Towards Hazards During Stay in Puducherry Municipality

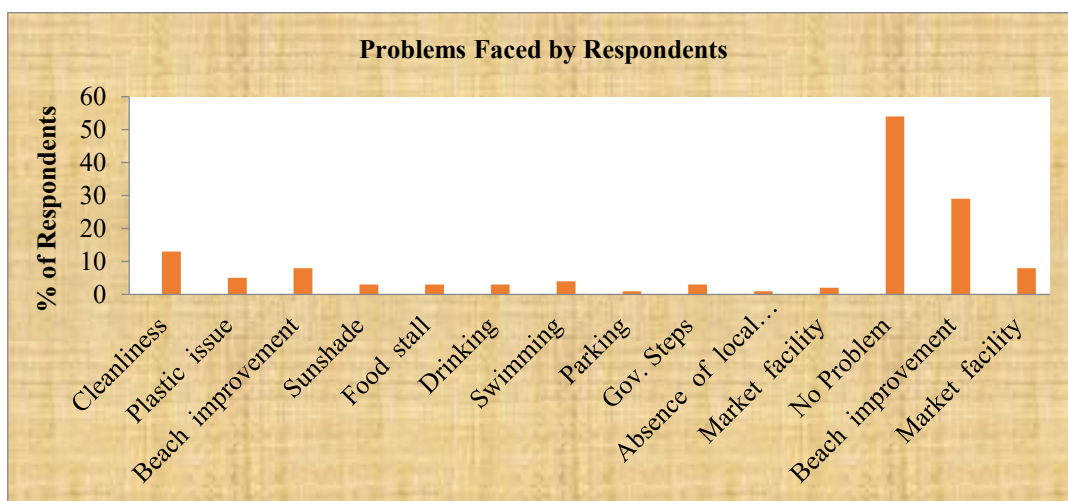


Fig. No. 10: Problems Faced by Respondents

Problems faced by respondent tourists

A simple bar graph (Fig no. 10) has been shown to evaluate the problems that are faced by the respondent tourists in Puducherry in diagram. The highest percentage share is 54% of tourists population have said that they don't have faced any kind of problem

in Puducherry, 8% of tourists have said that the beach condition is not good and thus it needs improvement. 5% of tourists have faced problems regarding throwing of plastic materials, 4% of tourist population have come across problem regarding unavailability of swimming facility in the beach area 12% (3%+3%+3%+3%) of tourists population have faced problem regarding unavailability of food stall in beach area, sun-shed in the beach area, drinking water facilities for tourists in local areas and governmental services. 2% of tourists population have faced problem regarding market facilities and 2% of tourist population have said that they have faced problem regarding parking of vehicles and also due to unavailability of local train in Puducherry.

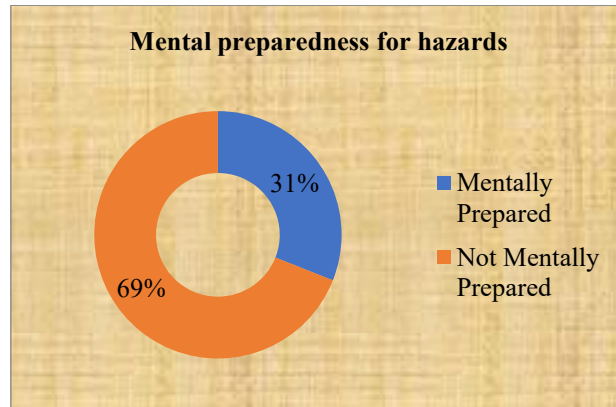


Fig. No. 11: Mental preparedness for hazards

Mental preparedness for hazards among respondent tourists

A donut diagram (Fig no. 11) is used to represent the level of mental preparedness for hazards among respondent tourists in diagram. In the survey it is identified that 69% of tourists were not mentally prepared for any kind of hazard to withstand it because some of them were of the view that they never have witnessed any kind of hazard like Tsunami, cyclone, storm surge, etc which are common hazard in coastal areas, in their native lands therefore, they are not mentally prepared. Whereas, 31% of tourists population were of the view that they are mentally prepared to withstand any kind of natural hazards it might be so because of their awareness about different natural hazards which can often strike a coastal area.

Level of Satisfaction

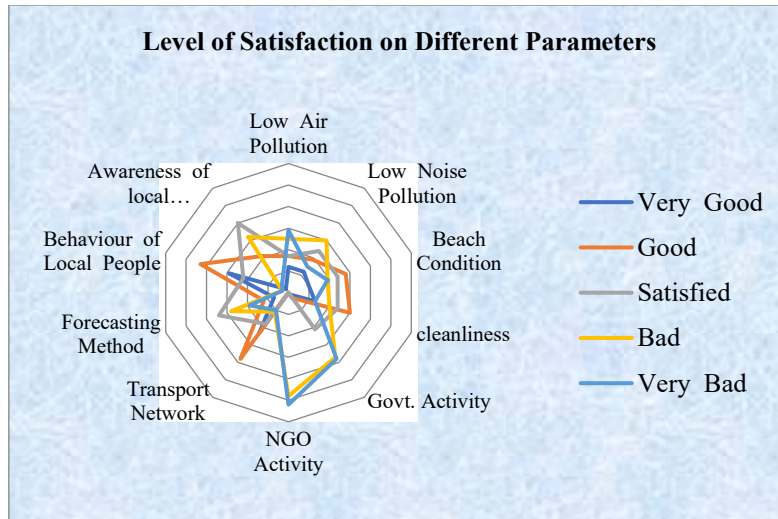


Fig. No. 12: Level of Satisfaction on Different Parameters

Level of satisfaction among respondent tourists on different parameters

A radar diagram (Fig no. 12) has been prepared with the help of given sets of data regarding level of satisfaction on different parameters in diagram, the survey has been conducted on the basis of Likert's scale which ranges from 1-5 point, in the above mentioned scale point 1 signifies very bad level of satisfaction whereas point 5 signifies very good level of satisfaction. Thus, from the survey conducted we can easily notice that the parameters of the diagram are low air pollution, low noise pollution, beach condition, cleanliness, governmental activity, NGO activity, transport network, forecasting method, behaviour of local people and awareness of local people regarding natural disaster. Most of the tourists have said regarding low air and sound pollution is that the highest percentage is shared by 1 point level of satisfaction and by 2 point level of satisfaction respectively it might be so because they have encountered polluted environment in Puducherry, regarding beach condition and cleanliness the tourists have responded that the highest percentage is shared by 4 point level of satisfaction it can be so because of the reason that maximum number of respondent tourists have come across good beach condition and cleanliness, the idea of Governmental

and NGO activity among the tourists is significantly very low and the highest percentage is shared by point 2 level of satisfaction, regarding transport network and forecasting method the respondents have said that they are more or less satisfied meaning that have given 3 point level of satisfaction, regarding behaviour of local people and awareness among local people regarding natural disasters is has been noticed in the diagram that most of the tourists have given point 3 and point 4 level of satisfaction it might be so because of the nature and ethical values of the local people and their active governmental participation respectively.

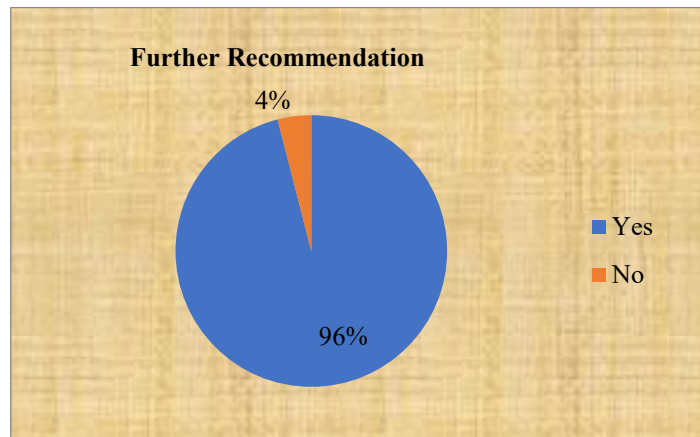


Fig. No. 13: Further Recommendation

Further recommendations of respondent tourists

A pie diagram (Fig no. 13) has been used to show further recommendations of respondent tourists to some other peoples in diagram, where 96% of respondent tourists have said that they will recommend this place to others as a must visit place because of its clean environment, scenic beauty, humble hospitality by the local residents and calm atmosphere, etc but 4% of tourists population have said that they don't want to recommend this place to others because of its poor connectivity, absence of NGO activities, absence of Indian cuisine restaurants, etc.

Major Findings

1. The number of tourists by gender is almost equal showing equal involvement of male tourists and female tourists.
2. There is the internet which is the major source of information to tourists planning their visit to Puducherry.
3. Most of the tourists spend 1-5 days, a situation reflecting short duration tourism.
4. The majority of the respondents like independent travel instead of relying on travel agencies.
5. The most desirable destination known and the most frequently shared social area are the beach area.
6. The key reasons of accessing the beach area are walking and pleasure.
7. Coastal hazards, including cyclone or tsunami, are not psychologically ready to deal with a big percentage of tourists.
8. Majority of the tourists were satisfied with the environment and said that they would recommend Puducherry to others.

Conclusion

The space is used by the tourist to relax and enjoy the soothing breeze of the adjoining ocean and here the space has a aesthetic and enjoyment uses. Some responded were up to indulge in writing and use the beach in photographic purposes which is altogether the different uses of the same space. At the evening the saleswoman with their own commodities uses this beach for the economic purposes. Thus the same beach is being shared by peoples of various nationality, various economic groups, etc for various uses (pleasure, aesthetic, economic, commercial etc.).Sharing the same space according to their own motives restricting unitary use of the space.

Thus, on the basis of the tourist survey which was conducted on Puducherry which underlies serenity in every sense, which is about 100 km away from the capital city of Tamil Nadu in Chennai. Pondicherry is affectionately known as 'Pondy' and officially 'Puducherry'. Most of the people come up with frequent words like 'Auroville', 'French colony', 'Aurobindo Ashram' and of course 'the beach'. Puducherry is considered as an absolute tourist destination because of its absolutely stunning beaches, including Promenade or Rock beach, Serenity beach, Veerambatinam and Paradise beach. Thus, from the above discussion and analysis done we can now conclude that how space is shared among the tourists in Puducherry. Mainly the tourists in Puducherry shares space with the local residents of the concerned area, thus from the diagram regarding the occupational structure of the respondent tourists it can be said that the tourists those who belong to the same occupational background shares some common work space in their daily life, they work together in their office and shares some common working environment and atmosphere with each other, likewise in respect to gathering of information about Puducherry it can be noticed that the highest percentage of tourist population depends on internet to gather information about this place which significantly notify that now-a-days internet and the social networking sites are becoming a virtual space for the interaction of individuals where they can get information about something as well as can provide information about something thus, in simple words it can be said that in recent times internet and the social networking sites are very much in demand because it shares a virtual space among individuals, and it also signify one most important thing that is the tourists who are visiting Puducherry must serve some common space of interest,

about duration of staying of respondent tourists in Puducherry it can be said as while they are residing in Puducherry they shares some common space with the local residents of Puducherry by using the same shoreline, streets, roads, pavements, etc. which is used by the regular vendors of Puducherry as well as the local people of Puducherry for various purposes, as well as they shares common means of transportation like bus, rickshaw, bicycle, motorcycle, etc. while in beach also the tourists shares some common space as they are using the same shoreline which is used by the common peoples and local vendors of this region for various purposes like walking, jogging, laughing, recreation, reading books, refreshment, etc. the Matrimandir which is considered as an adobe of peace is also a very important tourist destination in Puducherry and it is also considered to be an important hub of sharing of space mainly sharing of various culture, ethnic norms, behaviour, knowledge across the whole World is done here because numerous tourist every year come and visit this place they gather some knowledge from here as well as they come and share their part also in this way sharing of space concept is very much prominent among the tourists, as we already know Puducherry was formerly colonized by the French thus from then till now there it can be found some fusion of both the cultures. It can be said that Puducherry is the ultimate confluence of French and Indian colony life.

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