



Exploring Motivational Factors Influencing Visitors to Visit World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract

Understanding the motivational factors affecting visitors to Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites (WHS) is crucial for understanding the region's tourist dynamics, cultural preservation efforts, and sustainable development. The main aim of the study is to examine the motivational factors which influence visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites as well as tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. Data from respondents was gathered by convenience sampling. Those who visited Madhya Pradesh's world heritage sites were among the survey participants. Respondents to this study who travel to Madhya Pradesh's tentative world heritage sites were also included. Respondents were contacted via email addresses as well as social media platforms once the structured questionnaire was created using the internet platform Google Forms. Central tendency technique is used for the analysis of the data in which weighted mean of variables were calculated and ranking was given based on the weighted mean score of the variables. The findings of the study have concluded that most influencing motivational factors which influence tourists to visit UNESCO world heritage sites as well as tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in the state of Madhya Pradesh are desire for adventure and exploration, opportunity for cultural immersion and interaction with locals, availability of cultural events or festivals at World Heritage Sites and personal recommendations from friends or family. Factors which are least influential for tourists to visit world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh are influence of social media and online reviews and availability of amenities and facilities (e.g., restrooms, food options) and desire for relaxation and leisure.

Keywords: Motivational Factors, Visitors, UNESCO, World Heritage Sites, Madhya Pradesh.

Introduction

Understanding the motivational factors affecting visitors to Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites (WHS) is crucial for understanding the region's tourist dynamics, cultural preservation efforts, and sustainable development. Every year, UNESCO-designated WHS attract millions

of visitors from throughout the world and are symbols of cultural, historical, and ecological value (UNESCO, 2020). These include the well-known Khajuraho Group of Monuments, the historic Sanchi Stupa, and the prehistoric Bhimbetka Rock Shelters. Madhya Pradesh is a state in central India (Madhya Pradesh Tourism, 2021). These locations have an enduring charm that draws a wide range of tourists drawn to its architectural wonders, spiritual sanctuaries, and archaeological riches. Motivation has a pivotal role in moulding the behaviours and experiences of tourists, directing their choices, inclinations, and interactions within the tourism domain (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce & Crompton, 1989). Although motivational variables in tourism have been studied in great detail in the literature, the particular subtleties driving tourists to Madhya Pradesh's WHS have not received as much attention. Policymakers, tourist authorities, and heritage managers who want to improve visitor satisfaction, encourage responsible tourism, and protect the area's cultural past must take great care to comprehend these elements (Gunn, 1988; Jamal & Getz, 1995; McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Therefore, by conducting a thorough examination into the motivational elements guiding tourists to Madhya Pradesh's WHS, this research aims to close this gap. By utilising a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative techniques, the research aims to explore the various aspects of tourists' motives, preferences, and views of these cultural sites. The research endeavours to offer practical insights for stakeholders engaged in heritage conservation, tourism development, and destination marketing by exploring the nuances of tourist motives. The results also have the potential to make a substantial contribution to the field of tourism studies by providing theoretical frameworks and useful recommendations for promoting sustainable tourist growth while safeguarding Madhya Pradesh's rich cultural legacy.

Review of Literature

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

A universally accepted framework for locating and preserving natural and cultural resources of exceptional universal importance is represented by the idea of UNESCO World resources Sites (UNESCO, 2020). In order to preserve humanity's shared legacy for future generations, UNESCO established the standards and processes for the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List in 1972 with the adoption of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972). According to Dowling and Newsome (2010), the designation of World Heritage Sites denotes exceptional cultural significance, great universal value, and collective responsibility for their administration and protection. These locations represent various manifestations of human inventiveness, cultural variety, and natural wonders and serve as iconic landmarks (Farsari & Sigala, 2010). The World Heritage Committee evaluates candidates for inscription very carefully, taking into account factors including ecological purity, architectural brilliance, and historical relevance (Leask & Fyall, 2006). According to Richards and Munsters (2010), World Heritage Sites are essential for advancing global collaboration, intercultural understanding, and public awareness of the value of sustainable tourism and heritage preservation. In addition, they act as drivers of socioeconomic growth, drawing millions of tourists each year and bringing in money for nearby towns (Schuster & Vaughan, 2018). The

idea of UNESCO World history Sites reflects humanity's collective commitment to preserving our shared history for future generations and embodies the concepts of sustainable development, cultural diplomacy, and heritage preservation.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh

Central India's Madhya Pradesh state is home to several UNESCO World history Sites that serve as examples of the state's rich natural and cultural history. One example of India's cultural and architectural legacy is the Khajuraho Group of Monuments, which are well-known for its beautiful temple architecture and detailed sculptures (Sharma, 2018). Due to its historical significance and peaceful atmosphere, the Sanchi Stupa, a representation of Buddhist architecture and spirituality, draws both pilgrims and visitors (Mittra, 2017). Paleolithic-era Bhimbetka Rock Shelters provide insights into early human culture and rock art traditions (Mathpal, 2018). These monuments' outstanding universal value and cultural significance are highlighted by their inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2020). Researchers have looked into a range of topics related to these locations, including their socioeconomic effects on nearby communities and their historical and architectural characteristics (Singh & Bhattacharjee, 2019). In light of Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites, research also explores issues with sustainable development, tourism management, and conservation (Sharma & Tiwari, 2020). Enhancing heritage tourism and guaranteeing the long-term preservation and sustainability of these places require an understanding of the dynamics of visitor experiences, attitudes, and motives (Gupta, 2016).

The current study will also look at Madhya Pradesh's tentative UNESCO World Heritage Sites. These potential World Heritage Sites include the Satpura Tiger Reserve, Bhedaghat & Lametaghat. Bhedaghat is located near one of the seven holy rivers in Hinduism, the Narmada river (Saini et al., 2015). For Hindus, the river is extremely sacred, and Bhedaghat is a place of pilgrimage. The Marble Rocks, enormous marble formations towering perpendicular to the Narmada River, are one of the most remarkable sights in Bhedaghat (Das et al., 2022). Additionally situated in the Narmada River Valley, Lametaghat provides breathtaking views of the river and the surroundings (Tandon, 2000). The river valley is renowned for its varied and picturesque landscape. Lametaghat is a region of ecological significance since it is home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Numerous plant and animal species are supported by the rich flora along the Narmada River's banks, which adds to the area's biodiversity (Pant et al., 2020). Satpura Tiger Reserve is the second tentative World Heritage Site in Madhya Pradesh designated by UNESCO. The Satpura Tiger Reserve is renowned for its abundant biodiversity, which includes a wide range of plant and animal species (Pant, 2003). Several endangered species can be found there, such as the sloth bear, Indian leopard, Bengal tiger, and Indian bison (gaur) (Sharma et al., 2013).

Motivational Factors Influencing Visitors to Visit World Heritage Sites

Visitors' decisions to visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS) around the world are largely influenced by motivational factors, which also shape their experiences and behaviours in these culturally and environmentally significant environments. Numerous motivating

factors have been found to influence visitor behaviour in tourism psychology studies (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce & Crompton, 1989). These variables cover a broad range, including innate drives like the need for spiritual fulfilment, historical curiosity, and cultural enrichment (Crompton, 1979; Uysal & Hagan, 1993), as well as extrinsic factors like social status, prestige, and aesthetic appreciation (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Kim et al., 2009). The notion of motivation in the tourism industry is complex and frequently shaped by personal traits, cultural backgrounds, and contextual factors (Bigné et al., 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Additionally, travellers looking for exceptional and meaningful travel experiences are drawn to WHS in large part because of its symbolic importance and perceived authenticity (Gursoy et al., 2002; Wang & Xu, 2019). Researchers stress how crucial it is to comprehend tourists' motivations in order to improve destination management, marketing tactics, and the growth of sustainable tourism (Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Kim & Jamal, 2007). Additionally, studies highlight how dynamic motivating factors are—they change over time in response to shifting consumer preferences, technological improvements, and changing socioeconomic conditions (Gnoth, 1997; McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Researchers hope to provide insight to destination stakeholders, policymakers, and heritage managers in order to help them create customised experiences, maintain cultural authenticity, and promote responsible tourism practices by deciphering the intricacies of the motivational factors influencing visitors' decisions to visit WHS (Chen & Chen, 2010; Lee et al., 2017). In order to maximise tourist happiness, improve destination competitiveness, and guarantee the long-term viability of WHS as treasured worldwide assets, it is imperative to comprehend the nuances of motivational elements.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the factors motivating visitors to visit world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh.
- To suggest measures to destination stakeholders, policymakers, and heritage managers to motivate the visitors to visit world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh.

Research Methodology

To gather the primary data, a structured questionnaire was created. Secondary data was gathered with the assistance of books, journals, earlier studies, websites, government publications, etc. The study made use of both pieces of evidence. 160 respondents were given the questionnaire, and 104 of them completed it. A total of 100 responses were deemed valid out of the 104 that were received. As a result, data analysis was conducted using the 100 valid responses. Data from respondents was gathered by convenience sampling. Those who visited Madhya Pradesh's world heritage sites were among the survey participants. Respondents to this study who travel to Madhya Pradesh's tentative world heritage sites were also included. Respondents were contacted via email addresses as well as social media platforms once the structured questionnaire was created using the internet platform Google Forms. There were two sections to the survey questionnaire, both with closed-ended questions. The questions in the first portion focused on the respondents' demographic profiles. The second set of questions focused on the elements that motivate tourists to visit Madhya Pradesh's world

heritage sites. The questions of second section were asked on a likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 indicates not motivating at all, 2 indicates slightly motivating, 3 indicates somewhat motivating, 4 indicates moderately motivating and 5 indicates extremely motivating. All the variables in the questionnaire were framed after extensive review of literature and taking consultation from research supervisor, academicians, and professionals who are involved in the management of UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. The survey was conducted in the month of January, 2024. Descriptive analysis is used for the analysis of the data. Especially, central tendency technique is used for the analysis of the data in which weighted mean of variables were calculated and ranking was given based on the weighted mean score of the variables.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 is indicating the demographic profile of the respondents. Gender distribution shows that 68% of the respondents are males, 30% are females and 2% of the respondents preferred not to mention their gender. Age distribution shows that 20% of the respondents are in the age group of 18-25 years, 30% are 26-35 years, 17% are between 36-45 years, 23% are between 46-55 years and 10% are the age group of above 55 years. 58% of the respondents are single and 40% are married and 2% of the respondents had not to mentioned their marital status. 2% of the respondents are intermediate, 37% are graduates, 40% are postgraduates, 10% are doctorates and 10% are having other educational qualification. 12% of the respondents are students, 25% are doing government, 33% are having private jobs, 22% are having their self-business and 10% are having other occupations. Annual income distribution shows that 12% of the respondents are not earning any annual income, 15% are earning annual income of up to Rs. 4 lakhs, 32% are earning 4-8 lakhs, 31% are earning 8-12 lakhs, 5% are earning 12-15 lakhs and 5% of the respondents are earning an annual income of Rs. more than 15 lakhs. 57% of the respondents are from Indian state of Madhya Pradesh and 43% are from other states of India. 15% of the respondents are from rural area, 27% are living in sub-urban area and 58% of the respondents are living in Urban area.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables		(%)
Gender	Male	68
	Female	30
	Prefer not to say	2
Age	18-25 years	20
	26-35 years	30
	36-45 years	17
	45-55 Years	23
	Above 55 Years	10
Marital Status	Single	58
	Married	40

	Prefer not to say	2
Educational Qualifications	Intermediate	2
	Graduate	37
	Postgraduate	40
	Doctorate	10
	Others	10
Occupation	Student	12
	Government Job	25
	Private Job	33
	Self-Business	22
	Others	8
Annual Income	Not Earning	12
	Up to 4 Lakhs	15
	4-8 Lakhs	32
	8-12 Lakhs	31
	12-15 Lakhs	5
	More than 15 Lakhs	5
Geographic Location	Within Madhya Pradesh	57
	Outside Madhya Pradesh	43
	Outside India	--
Area of Residence	Rural	15
	Sub-Urban	27
	Urban	58

Profile of the Respondents Related to Their UNESCO World Heritage Sites Visit in Madhya Pradesh

Table 2: Respondents profile related to their visit in UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh

Variables		(%)
Visit to UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh	Khajuraho Group of Monuments	70
	Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi	72
	The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka	56
	Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley (Tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site)	55
	Satpura Tiger Reserve (Tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site)	45
Frequency of Visits to World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh	First time visitor	17
	2 times a year	43
	3 times a year	20

	More than 3 times a year	20
Travel Companion	Alone	10
	With family	40
	With friends	30
	With organized tour groups	5
	With colleagues	13
	Others	2
Primary purpose of visit to world heritage sites	Leisure and recreation	45
	Educational purposes	5
	Cultural exploration	20
	Religious pilgrimage	15
	Business-related purpose	15
Duration of stay at world Heritage site destination	One day	20
	2 days	40
	3 days	30
	More than 3 days	10
Mode of transportation	Personal vehicle	43
	Public transportation	37
	Rental vehicle	7
	Walking/Biking	13
Accommodation Preferences	Hotels	52
	Guesthouses	15
	Homestays	20
	Camping	13

Table 2 is indicating respondents profile related to their visit in UNESCO World Heritage Sites and tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. 70% of the respondents had mentioned that they had visited Khajuraho Group of Monuments, 72% of the respondents had visited Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, 56% of the respondents had visited to the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka, 55% of the respondents had visited to Bhedaghat-Lametaghat in Narmada Valley (Tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site) and 45% of the respondents had visited to Satpura Tiger Reserve (Tentative UNESCO World Heritage Site). 17% of the respondents are first time visitor, 43% of the respondents visit 2 times a year, 20% 3 times and 20% of the respondents visit more than 3 times a year to UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. 10% of the respondents prefer to visit alone, 40% with family, 30% with friends, 5% with organized tour groups, 13% with colleagues and 2% with others to UNESCO world heritage sites of Madhya Pradesh. 45% of the respondents visit for leisure and recreation purpose, 5% for educational purpose, 20% for cultural exploration, 15% for religious pilgrimage and 15% of the respondents visit UNESCO world heritage sites for business related purposes. 20% of the respondents stay for one day, 40% for 2 days, 30% for 3 days and 10% of the respondents stay for more than 3 days in UNESCO world heritage

sites of Madhya Pradesh. 43% of the respondents use their own vehicle, 37% use public transportation, 7% use rental vehicle and 13% of the respondents visit UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh by walking or by bike. 52% of the respondents stay in hotels, 15% in guest houses, 20% homestay and 13% of the respondents prefer to stay in camps while visiting to UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh.

Motivational Factors Influencing Visitors to Visit UNESCO World Heritage Sites/ Tentative World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh

Table 3 is indicating motivational factors influencing visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites/Tentative world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. Data was collected from 104 respondents and out of 104 responses, 100 responses were found valid. Thus, the analysis of the data is done based on 100 responses. The main objective of the study is to examine the motivational factors which influences visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites/Tentative world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. Questions were asked to respondents based on 15 variables and these questions were asked to respondents 5-point likert scale where 1 indicates not motivating at all, 2 indicates slightly motivating, 3 indicates moderately motivating, 4 indicates very motivating and 5 indicates extremely motivating. Central tendency technique was used for the analysis of the data where weighted mean score is calculated and based on weighted mean score, ranking to various variables are given. Thus, from table no. 3, it has been found that desire for adventure and exploration has got 1st ranking, Opportunity for cultural immersion and interaction with locals received 2nd ranking, availability of cultural events or festivals at World Heritage Sites got 3rd ranking and personal recommendations from friends or family has got 4th rank as motivational factor. Religious or spiritual reasons received 5th ranking and influence of promotional campaigns and advertisements got 6th ranking as motivational factor for visitor. Historical significance of World Heritage Sites, Natural beauty and scenic surroundings and Reputation and fame of a World Heritage Site has jointly received 7th ranking as motivational factor for visitors. Accessibility and ease of reaching World Heritage Sites and Experiencing cultural heritage has jointly received 8th rank. Availability of guided tours and informational resources has received 9th rank, Influence of social media and online reviews and availability of amenities and facilities (e.g., restrooms, food options) has jointly got 10th rank and desire for relaxation and leisure has got 11th rank as motivational factor for visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites and tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh.

Table 3: Motivational factors influencing visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites/Tentative world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh

Parameter	Not Motivating at all (1)	Slightly Motivating (2)	Moderately Motivating (3)	Very Motivating (4)	Extremely Motivating (5)	Total	Weighted Total	Weighted Mean	Rank
Experiencing cultural heritage	10	12	24	28	26	100	348	3.48	8
Historical significance of World Heritage Sites	8	18	12	40	22	100	350	3.5	7
Natural beauty and scenic surroundings	8	12	30	22	28	100	350	3.5	7
Religious or spiritual reasons	8	10	30	24	28	100	354	3.54	5
Desire for adventure and exploration	4	14	24	30	28	100	364	3.64	1
Accessibility and ease of reaching World Heritage Sites	6	16	28	24	26	100	348	3.48	8
Reputation and fame of a World Heritage Site	8	14	28	20	30	100	350	3.5	7
Influence of social media and online reviews	12	18	12	32	26	100	342	3.42	10
Availability of guided tours and informational resources	11	8	32	25	26	102	353	3.460784	9
Opportunity for cultural immersion and interaction with locals	6	12	24	30	28	100	362	3.62	2
Influence of promotional campaigns and advertisements	12	14	18	22	34	100	352	3.52	6
Desire for relaxation and leisure	15	14	25	22	32	108	366	3.388889	11
Availability of amenities and facilities (e.g., restrooms, food options)	10	12	28	26	24	100	342	3.42	10
Personal recommendations from friends or family	8	14	20	28	30	100	358	3.58	4
Availability of cultural events or festivals at World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh	10	8	26	24	32	100	360	3.6	3

Suggestive Measures for Destination Stakeholders, Policymakers, and Heritage Managers to motivate Visitors to Visit World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh

The second objective of the study is to suggest measures to destination stakeholders, policymakers, and heritage managers to motivate the visitors to visit world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. To motivate visitors to visit World Heritage Sites in Madhya Pradesh, destination stakeholders, policymakers, and heritage managers can implement various measures aimed at enhancing the appeal and accessibility of these sites. Here are some suggestions:

- Start focused advertising initiatives showcasing the distinctive historical, cultural, and environmental features of Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites. To reach a large audience, make use of social media, travel blogs, and conventional advertising channels.
- Form alliances with tour companies and travel agencies to incorporate Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites as important stops on their itineraries. To draw guests, provide exclusive deals and packages.
- Provide interactive mobile applications and websites that offer 360-degree views, virtual tours, and multimedia information that highlights the World Heritage Sites' significance and beauty. This may stimulate prospective guests' curiosity and motivate them to schedule a visit.
- To honour regional customs, artwork, and cuisines, plan cultural festivals, heritage weeks, and other events at World Heritage Sites. These gatherings have the power to ignite a lively environment and draw tourists eager to take in the rich cultural legacy of the area.
- To improve tourist convenience and overall experience, invest in infrastructure upgrades such as parking lots, road networks, visitor centers, and amenities like refreshment stands and restrooms.
- To provide visitors an understanding of the historical, architectural, and environmental value of the World Heritage Sites, educational programs, guided tours, and interpretive signage should be developed. Using interactive activities and storytelling to engage visitors might help them have a greater understanding of Madhya Pradesh's cultural legacy.
- Empower local populations to take part in tourism-related activities including handicraft workshops, cultural events, and homestay programs, and involve them in the conservation and management of the World Heritage Sites. This gives locals more economic opportunities while also improving the authenticity of the visiting experience.
- Make that wheelchair ramps, tactile paths, and barrier-free access are available to all visitors to the World Heritage Sites, regardless of age or ability. Promoting accessible lodging and modes of transportation can also help to foster inclusive travel.
- Adopt eco-friendly tourist strategies that protect cultural integrity, reduce negative effects on the environment, and help local populations. This could involve encouraging tourists to travel responsibly, providing eco-friendly transit options, and launching trash management programs.

- Use surveys, comment cards, and internet reviews to ask visitors for input on a regular basis so you can learn about their requirements, preferences, and areas for development. Over time, use this feedback to refine and improve the visitor experience.

Stakeholders, legislators, and heritage managers may effectively encourage tourists to explore and enjoy Madhya Pradesh's World Heritage Sites by putting these approaches into practice together. This will aid in the sites' conservation and sustainable growth.

Conclusion

Understanding the motivational factors affecting visitors to Madhya Pradesh's World cultural Sites (WHS) is crucial for understanding the region's tourist dynamics, cultural preservation efforts, and sustainable development. The main aim of the study is to examine the motivational factors which influence visitors to visit UNESCO world heritage sites as well as tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh. The findings of the study has concluded that extremely motivational factors which influence tourists to visit UNESCO world heritage sites as well as tentative UNESCO world heritage sites in the state of Madhya Pradesh are desire for adventure and exploration, opportunity for cultural immersion and interaction with locals, availability of cultural events or festivals at World Heritage Sites and personal recommendations from friends or family. Factors which are least influential for tourists to visit world heritage sites in Madhya Pradesh are influence of social media and online reviews and availability of amenities and facilities (e.g., restrooms, food options) and desire for relaxation and leisure.

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