



Research Paper

Fresh air Tourism-An evolving Travel Motivator

(Dr Abrar Maqbool Shah)

Dr Abrar Maqbool Shah is Lecturer for Tourism at Government Polytechnic College Bandipora Kashmir

Abstract

Tourism which is all about leaving the place of origin for at least 24 hours and less than a year for which there can be different motivations. The motivating factors can be religion, adventure, culture, education, business, health, status/ego etc. Motivation is what triggers a need in a person to travel. Taking into consideration the scenario of air quality index breathing can emerge out as a strong motivating factor to undertake travel for people living in such cities where the air quality index is too high. With the tremendous growth in urbanization, population in metropolitan cities is increasing manifold. This has given rise to an enormous number of Industrial and Residential towers. The vertical expansion even exceeding fifty stories in many cases, has accommodated thousands of people in otherwise very smaller areas of land. A child born and grown up in such a metropolis is only familiar with such an environment where his sight is confined to such big walls of the towers either from his bedroom or from his classroom. He is used to inhale the air manipulated through air conditioners weather in home, school, shopping malls, gymnasiums, recreation centers or any other places. Even if he attempts to go out of such airtight apartments to inhale fresh air he is unable to do so because what he gets there is the exhaust led out by the thousands of outdoor units of the air conditioners mounted on each wall of every tower. Recently in Delhi the level of such exhausts had reached to such an extent that the government had to close schools for many days because the city had virtually turned into a gas chamber and it was medically inadvisable to breathe in such an environment.

With the deteriorating air quality index in various cities of India especially metropolitan cities, people living in such places feel a need to travel exclusively in order to inhale fresh air to rejuvenate themselves. Thus fresh air had emerged as another travel motivator thereby creating a scope for new destinations to find a place on the tourism map. Since it is the growing corporate culture of such cities that is attracting people there, feeling a scope for financially lucrative carriers. With the achievement of such goals people are left with a more disposable income leaving entrepreneurs with an opportunity to offer products with a potential to sell. Such a product which can emerge as a niche segment for the entrepreneurs is fresh air tourism which can be marketed to such a segment which otherwise have no access to breathe fresh air.

Keywords: Fresh air Tourism, , Entrepreneur, Travel motivator, Metropolitan

Received 05 June, 2022; Revised 18 June, 2022; Accepted 20 June, 2022 © The author(s) 2022.

Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. Introduction:

With the growth in population especially in India where the land people ratio is comparatively very less, we are witnessing a tremendous flow of people to metropolitan cities which is making it rather impossible to breathe fresh air in places like Delhi. Our national capital Dehli is considered to be the world's worst air pollution city(Yale Global Health Review May 14,2017 by Rebecca Slutsky).

According to Lancet study air pollution led to more than 2.3 million premature deaths in India in 2019. In September 2021 data from the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago suggested that residents in the capital of India, Dehli could see upto ten years added to their lives if air pollution was reduced to meet the WHO guideline.

An air quality index(AQI) is a number used by government agencies to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become. Different countries have their own air quality indices, corresponding to different national air quality standards. Some of these are the Air Quality Health Index (Canada), the Air Pollution Index (Malaysia) and the pollutant Standards Index (Singapore). Computation of the AQI requires an air pollutant concentration over a specified averaging period obtained from an air monitor or model.

The national air quality index(AQI) was launched in New Delhi on 17 September 2014 under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The Central Pollution Control Board along with State Pollution Control Boards has been operating National Air Monitoring Programme (NAMP) covering 240 cities of the country having more than 342 monitoring stations. The continuous monitoring systems that provide data on near real time basis are installed in New Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. There are six AQI categories namely Good(0-50), Moderate(51-100), Unhealthy for sensitive groups(101-150), Unhealthy(151-200), Very unhealthy(201-300) and Hazardous(Above 300). Associated likely health impacts for different AQI categories and pollutants have also been suggested, with primary inputs from the medical expert members of the group.

The air quality index (AQI) of Delhi has crossed the safe level mark by the World Health Organization. The permissible limits for PM2.5 concentrations is less than 60 units while the same in Dehli has crossed 200.(Times of India November 16, 2017). People moving around with pollution masks have become a common site in the national capital Dehli. In Delhi government had decided to use anti smog guns to combat air pollution (NDTV 20 December 2017). The PM2.5 standard includes particles with a diameter of no more than 0.0002 inches or one seventh the width of a human hair. While such areas of the country are falling on severe to hazardous category, the citizens specially children and elderly are struggling with many lungs and respiratory diseases (Report from Union Ministry of environment and forest change). It is well known that air pollution is known to cause chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD).

Objective:

To evaluate the potential of fresh air as a travel motivator

II. Methodology:

The study relied on a combination of secondary data and primary data. Reports from various organizations who have studied the air pollution and its impacts on the residents of the metropolitan cities were consulted. In addition to that national newspapers carrying news or articles about Air Pollution Index were studied.

Interactions with a few pulmonologists was also done so as to evaluate the effect of taking periodic short breaks to non polluted areas for inhalation of fresh air.

Interactions were also held with a few residents of metropolitan cities so as to analyze their response toward such type of tourism.

III. Discussion:

Tourism which is all about leaving the place of origin for at least 24 hours and less than a year for which there can be different motivations. The motivating factors can be religion, adventure, culture, education, business, health, status/ego etc. Motivation is what triggers a need in a person to travel. Taking into consideration the scenario of air quality index fresh air can emerge out as a strong motivating factor to undertake travel for people living in such cities where the air quality index is too high. For that such people need to be made aware about the ill effects of breathing and the need to take a short break to rejuvenate themselves by visiting such places where they can inhale fresh air so as to mitigate the effects of inhaling contaminated air for the rest of the days.

Although people living in such places are as such not conscious of this very fact and thereby are used to breathe in the contaminated environment in a normal manner. Government already is aware of such scenario and is also looking for means to mitigate the levels of toxicity in the air by raising the standards of pollution control devices etc. At the same time due to the continuous inflow of people in such areas it does not make any significant difference as the statistical indications have revealed.

In 2017 spirometry tests conducted by the Dehli government on citizens to check lung function found that more than 34% of the people checked had impaired lung function. A study conducted by the central pollution control board which was conducted by Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute found that more than two of five school going children in Dehli have reduced lung function. It also found that the sputum (mixture of saliva and mucus coughed up from respiratory tract) samples of children from Delhi had four times more iron-laden macrophages, indicating bleeding in the lungs. The scientists also found that the changes in the sputum correlated with the ambient air pollution.

Air quality has deteriorated to such an extent that one of India's top pollution researchers, Sarath Guttinkinda has stated, "if you have the option to live elsewhere you should not raise children in Dehli. He has since moved his family.

Moreover the economy has grown leaving more disposable income with a good number of people living in the metropolitan cities of India especially Delhi. This creates a scope for the places which are near to the metropolitan city of Dehli and offer plenty of fresh air. Kashmir too being around an hour flying time from Delhi also makes it feasible for such people to take periodic breathing breaks during the weekends as a health

measure. Benefits of low cost ticketing in Advance bookings can further make such travel feasible and affordable.

The five day week leaves two days week end for a number of people who could become the target segment for such packages. People having a flexible work schedule can also be targeted by offering customized packages. Moreover the commencement of night operations from Srinagar airport and about hundred taking off daily from Srinagar airport will further add to its scope.

Since main purpose of undertaking such tours will be breathing thereby it will be ideal to accommodate them in such destinations which are eco-friendly and away from the hustle and bustle. Such places may be chosen which are virgin tourism destinations thereby a home-stay accommodation may be preferred which on the one side will keep the package cost low and on the other will increase the USP of the package.

The above study was substantiated by the interaction with a few tourists who had come to Kashmir. They strongly agreed with the statement that fresh air tourism can be a significant travel motivator if people are made to understand it's importance on their well being. It was further agreed by the Dehlites that Kashmir can be chosen as a potential destination for the same because of it's flying time which is hardly 75 minutes.

IV. Findings and suggestions:

It was found that Dehli is the worst polluted city of the world where the air quality index(AQI) exceeds 200. In 2017 spirometry tests conducted by the Dehli government on citizens to check lung function found that more than 34% of the people checked had impaired lung function. Air quality in Dehli has deteriorated to such an extent that one of India,s top pollution researchers, Sarath Guttinkinda has stated," if you have the option to live else where you should not raise children in Delhi. He has since moved his family.

The author has personally observed the people living in sky scrapper apartments. The kids born and brought up in such an environment have been inhaling the air in the air conditioned rooms whether at their homes or in their schools, colleges , shopping malls, gymnasiums, recreation centers, cars, coaches, trains etc. In case they are sometime in the open the air they inhale is just the exhaust of the thousands of outdoor units of the Air conditioners mounted on the outer walls of the apartments, the chimneys of the industries, the vehicular emissions etc. The air quality index of such air is detrimental for their health but they are so used to such an environment that they are not even conscious of the toll that it is taking on their health.

One of the leading pulmonologists from a metropolitan city of India was of the opinion that it requires a medical research to establish the fact that by visiting any fresh air destination the respiratory disorders could be mitigated.

On interacting with the residents of Dehli it was concluded that fresh air tourism has got an immense potential to emerge out as a travel motivator especially when the air quality index deteriorates to an alarming level, provided the residents are made aware about the same.

Breathing awareness seminars need to be organized in corporate houses, universities, press clubs etc so that the people may become conscious of the need to undertake travel for the purpose of breathing fresh air. The benefits of such breathing breaks require to be highlighted and further reinforced through the circulation of brochures revealing breathing postures and pictures need to be promoted for making people to receive such offers.

Tour operators can work out such modalities to design breathing tourism packages by taking into consideration the factors mentioned above so as to make their packages attractive and market oriented for the tourists.

This is feasible when people living in metropolitan cities where the air quality index is bad are made conscious about the potential risks of breathing such air and the benefits of periodically taking tours to such places where there is ample fresh air. Such places can be positioned to them as breathing heavens. This way breathing can emerge as a main motivating factor for them to undertake travel.

On a day when AQI is predicted to be elevated due to fine particle pollution, sensitive groups such as the elderly, children and those with respiratory or cardiovascular problems are advised to avoid outdoor exertion. Also voluntary measures to reduce air emissions, such as using public transportation are suggested. Use of masks to keep fine particles from entering the lungs is recommended. In addition to these measures travel should also be encouraged to such places that offer fresh air.

Tourism entrepreneurs need to play a role in identifying this need and make people aware of these issues so that they may positively respond to their offers. Once the entrepreneurs will come up with low cost breathing tourism offers and they will be able to generate a big market for such offers because the nature of such type of tourism will be frequent.

References/ Sources

Lancet Commission on pollution and Health Report 2019
Yale Global Health Review Dated May14'2017. Rebecca Slustsky
www.aqicn.org
www.cpcb.nic.in
www..bbc.com Dated May 18'2022
www.ndtv.com. Dated Nov. 16' 2017
www.timesofindia.com Dated Nov. 16' 2017
www.Hindu.com