Influence of Travel Motivation and Demographic Factors on Tourist Participation in World's Largest Mass Religious Gathering - The Kumbh Mela

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Abstract

Worldwide, new trends are emerging in tourism, for example, medial tourism, eco tourism, religious tourism, etc. Though destination tourism has gained enormous attention of the academicians, but few studies have been done in context of religious tourism, out of which there are hardly any studies done in the Indian context that explored the motivation of pilgrims or tourists who visit Kumbh Mela. This paper estimated the relationship between demographic factors and travel motivation towards the world's largest mass religious gathering - The Kumbh Mela. An ordered logit model was used to determine the demographic factors which affected visitors' motivation to participate in Kumbh Mela, which was held during April 22, 2016 and May 21, 2016 at Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India. A total of 18 models were computed for different motivations of travel. The results suggested that motivations changed within different groups of varying socioeconomic characteristics. Overall, the demographic factors like age, gender, family member, education, income, and psychographic factors like satisfaction with life and life rewarding came out to be statistically significant, while factors like single, unmarried, student, government employee, and private employee came out to be statistically insignificant. This study also computed the overall rankings of the motivations. The outcomes of this study can potentially aid the organizers of such mass religious gatherings for better planning and management of such mega events.

Keywords : demographic factors, ordered logit model, socio-economic characteristics, travel motivation, Kumbh Mela, India

India is considered as the spiritual hub of the world. It is home to a large number of religions; festivals from all religions are celebrated throughout the country. People being devoutly religious, consider participating in religious gatherings of prime importance. The Kumbh Mela is one such religious gathering for Hindus wherein more than 100 million people gather to worship God, and to take a holy dip in the sacred rivers, with a belief that it helps with atonement (Gayathri, Aparna, & Verma, 2017). The Kumbh Mela is held at regular intervals at four diverse places – Haridwar, Prayag, Ujjain, and Nasik. The main festival site is located on the

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banks of sacred rivers : The Ganges (Ganga) at Haridwar ; the confluence (Triveni Sangam) of the Ganga, the Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati at Allahabad (Prayag) ; the Godavari at Nashik; and the Shipra at Ujjain. Thus, the Kumbh Mela is reorganized at the same place after every 12 years. The Kumbh Mela attracts a lot of tourists from all over the country and around the world, bringing its uniqueness and heterogeneity amongst individuals. Among various ethnicities of people attending this huge spiritual and religious gathering are *Nagas* (saints who do not wear any clothes), *Kalpwasis* (saints who bathe thrice a day), *Urdhawavahurs* (saints who believe in putting the body through serious severities), and common people ranging from infants to aged people. Its uniqueness stretches out to taking a holy bath in a sacred river that attracts millions of individuals to the banks of the holy rivers. The participation in Kumbh Mela entails, apart from the holy dip, visiting the temples and a number of other activities. The extreme challenge for the local administration and organization is to manage this world's largest human gathering, and is ,therefore, now drawing the attention of academicians from wide streams across the world.

The Kumbh Mela at Ujjain is popularly known as *Simhasth* because it is celebrated when Jupiter is in Leo (called as *"Simha"* in Sanskrit) and Sun is in Aries (Simhasth, 2016b). In the recently held Kumbh Mela (Simhasth, 2016a), about 74 million people took part. It was the scorching sun of Indian summers in the month of May 2016 when the temperature was way above 40 degrees Celsius. A unique aspect of this Kumbh Mela is the spiritual mindset of the people participating in it, where they complete the entire religious proceedings without any clamour. This motivation towards religion thus becomes one of the most important factors in describing crowd dynamics in such religious mass gatherings (Simhasth, 2016a).

Kumbh Mela, being a unique religious event, attracts a huge crowd, but without proper crowd management based on scientific study of crowd dynamics and people's motivation, etc., such events can lead to crowd disasters. Incidentally, not much literature is available with respect to studies done on religious tourism, particularly concerning events like Kumbh Mela, which is considered to be the largest human gathering of religious pilgrims. The present study is unique in a way that it measures the motivation of tourists to participate in such a mass religious gathering. The study also explores the relationship between demographic factors and motivations. The outcomes of this study may be helpful in better planning and management of events of such scale or may be of relatively smaller scale that are organized frequently throughout the world. The following are the objectives of the study :

✤ To identify the demographic factors which influence visitors' participation in a religious mass gathering.

✤ To identify motivations for different socioeconomic factors and to observe the existing contrasts between them, if any.

Literature Review

Religious motives are the major driving force behind religious tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Short term religious tourism is recognized by journeys to adjacent religious spots or spiritual gatherings, while long-term religious tourism is recognized through trips of numerous days or weeks to national and international religious sites and pilgrimage centres (Rinschede, 1992). Nolan and Nolan (1992) classified religious sites into pilgrimage shrines, religious tourist attractions, and religious festivals. Vuconic (1996) suggested that such religious journeys were made primarily to seek divine intervention and thus for atonement, enlightenment, and peace. Besides many forms of migration, pilgrimages since the earliest times have been associated with noneconomic migration and bear wide importance in every section of a religious society, regardless of its financial stature (Jackowski & Smith, 1992). Pilgrimages in the recent years have changed a lot as they are not just confined to religiously motivated travel, but also to seek out spirituality, and hence, people from different religious sections take part in such

pilgrimages, thus becoming an important segment of international tourism (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). A study conducted by Sharma and Giri (2009) highlighted the importance of accessibility of tourist destinations and transport infrastructure. Furthermore, to understand the experiences in the services context, a study was conducted by Sathish and Venkatesakumar (2014) with the pilgrims who visited the holy Tirumala Temple in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. They measured the factors like ticketing system, information, experience, and facilities available at the temple. Mishra and Ojha (2014) focused on evaluating the need of marketing of India as a tourism destination, projecting India as a country that offers a totally distinct tourism experience with its diverse geography and cultures.

Motivation is the most crucial aspect to be studied in order to predict tourist behaviour because it is the major impetus behind all behavioural variables (Crompton, 1979). Motivation means the facts and forces creating an internal urge in a person to perform a task or take part in any activity (Fridgen, 1996). This travel motivation is the deciding factor for tourists for choosing one specific destination over another (Crompton, 1979). As per few studies, the motivations behind religious and cultural tourism may be political as well as educational (Digance, 2003 ; Irimias, Mitev, & Michalko, 2016 ; Korstanje, Geoffrey, & Freddy, 2014 ; Timothy & Olsen, 2006). Since ancient times, people go on pilgrimage tours in order to show faith and offer worship. Each one has a different motivation ranging from the need for personal fulfilment to a wish to participate in religious rituals, to offering prayers and vows. It will be helpful for organisers to provide better tourism services if the proper motivations of the people behind the pilgrimage can be understood along with their travel patterns and consumption behaviour (Fodness, 1994). From this perspective, researchers have tried to develop different methodologies as well as parameters to measure motivation behind religious tourism. Two parameters "pull" and "push" have been widely discussed to develop the theory behind motivation. The push elements for a get-away are socio-mental thought processes, which encourage a person to travel, while the pull factors are destination specific and hence provide a reason why a person chooses a certain place or mode for his/her tour (Crompton, 1979 ; Dann 1981).

Socio-psychological motives are valuable, not just in bringing out the underlying excitement and stimulation, but also possibly coordinate the traveller toward a specific destination. Crompton (1979) mentioned that it is conceivable to portray the 'who,' 'when,' 'where,' and 'how' of tourism for pleasure purposes together with the social and financial qualities of vacationers, but still does not answer the fascinated question of 'why'.

Many studies concluded that socio-demographic factors along with the socioeconomic factors influenced the visitors' motivation towards religious events (Irimias et al., 2016 ; Jensen, 2011 ; Zimmer, Brayley, & Searle, 1995). Jensen (2011) proved that female voyagers evaluated 'investigation,' 'escape/unwinding,' 'social association with family/companions,' and 'acclaimed destinations/legacies' essentially higher than their male partners. Likewise, Jensen (2011) found that the age gathering of 55 - 64 years and 65+ years rated 'social association with family/companions' significantly lower than the lower age bunches. Senior voyagers often travel to destinations where they can visit religious spots, while this perspective is not essential for the youths (Irimias et al., 2016). Heung, Qu, and Chu (2001) showed that age, gender, and education were important factors that influenced visitors' decisions to travel. Their study suggested that the lower age group evaluated the 'investigation' figure essentially higher than the higher age group. Heung et al. (2001) likewise found that first-time travellers evaluated the 'investigation' and 'attractions and atmosphere factors' significantly higher than the individuals who had gone to the places four times or more.

In an event like the Kumbh Mela, the push factors can be the strong belief in Hindu mythology that if people take a holy dip in the sacred rivers, all their sins will be washed away, and it will pave way for heaven after life. Meeting similar minded religious people becomes another push factor for the visitors to attend the Kumbh Mela. Furthermore, many people vow and take an oath to take a holy dip if their wishes come true. The pull factors may be proximity and ease of access to the pilgrim station.

Very few studies have been done to discover the connection between travel inspiration and socio-demographic elements as far as religious tourism is concerned. There is no study which has been done for such a mass

gathering, which explains people's behavioural and motivational aspects for visiting this kind of event. Through the present study, an attempt has been made to measure motivation of visitor's participation in Kumbh Mela, which will contribute to the limited existing literature for such mass religious gatherings.

Data Collection and Sample Characteristics

The Kumbh Mela attracts visitors across demographics. It not just attracts rural and urban population, but foreign tourists as well. To understand the motivation of people coming to such a mass gathering that spreads over a month, there were multiple challenges for us with respect to data collection ; it was important to study various segments, which were quite heterogeneous in their socio-demographic characteristics, and at the same time, to build a questionnaire that helps in understanding the commonality of behaviors in such events. The added constraints of administrative and security layers in such an event was an additional challenge for carrying out data collection. Furthermore, the Kumbh Mela attracts a large number of visitors from rural areas with low literacy rate, making it difficult for respondents to self-administer the questionnaire and increased the possibility of incomplete responses. Secondly, the visitors to Kumbh who could have participated in the study by filling the self-administered questionnaire faced time constraints and greater fatigue due to the extremely high temperature during the period of data collection, and this could have lead to response error in data collection. It can be noted here that the temperature during the Kumbh period varies from 39^0C to 46^0C. In order to meet these challenges, students from local colleges and from nearby cities were given extensive training for collecting the responses from the visitors of the Kumbh Mela. They were closely supervised by us during the data collection phase between April 22, 2016 to May 21, 2016.

Two pilot testings were done before carrying out the main survey. The first pilot testing was done on the day of Mahashivratri (March 7, 2016), an annual festival of high significance to Hindus, when they visited the Shree Mahakaleshwar Temple in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. The event attracts many outstation visitors. It may be noted that this temple is of a very high religious importance and is a place where every visitor who comes to the Kumbh Mela will ensure to visit. To have a better understanding of the demographics of Kumbh visitors, this event and the temple were selected for pilot testing with an assumption that similar mix of people will be visiting the Kumbh. During this study, the respondents were asked about their intention to visit Ujjain during the upcoming Kumbh Mela and their motivation behind the visit. The output of this pilot testing helped in finalizing the motivational questions.

The second pilot testing was done a week before the start of the Kumbh Mela to understand the field challenge and let the enumerators get acquainted with the temporary designed Kumbh Mela area. The testing was done using an app - based survey. This study was important since the students had to move with the respondents to collect the data. It was felt that an app could be used to collect the responses from the urban population, but due to limited time availability of free Internet at the mela area and fatigue while walking to reach the desired destination in scorching heat, the respondents found it difficult to participate in the survey using the app, and hence, in the final survey, face to face interview method using a structured questionnaire was used to collect all the responses.

In this study, the dependent variable considered is the level of motivation which has been measured on a 5 - point Likert scale : *strongly disagree* ($y = 1$) ; *disagree* ($y = 2$) ; *uncertain* ($y = 3$) ; *agree* ($y = 4$) ; *strongly agree* ($y = 5$). Along with the level of motivation, each observation included the information of the demographic factors like age, marital status, and level of education. The category with an occupational status 'others' consisted of farmers and retired persons. In marital status, single category included widows and divorced. The data were obtained from 3787 respondents. After deletion and omission of missing cells, analysis has been done with 2579 observations. In this paper, visitors in the Kumbha Mela were considered as tourists who could be pilgrim or non-pilgrim.

In the dataset, the male to female ratio was observed to be of 1.51. Among the sample respondents, majority of

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Explanatory Variables	Type	Coding	Frequency	%
Age in Years	Numerical	18-25	829	32.14%
		25-35	480	18.61%
		35-45	522	20.24%
		45-55	383	14.85%
		55-65: 5	250	9.69%
		65 and above	115	4.46%
Gender	Binary	Female	1024	39.71%
		Male	1555	60.29%
Marital Status	Dummy	Married	1675	64.95%
		Unmarried	806	31.25%
		Single	98	3.8%
Number of Members	Numerical	(0-4)	986	38.23%
in Family		(5-8)	1300	50.41%
		(9-13)	260	10.08%
		More than 13	33	1.28%
Education	Numerical	Primary	519	20.12%
		10th	311	12.06%
		12th	569	22.06%
		Graduate	866	33.58%
		Post-graduate	314	12.18%
Occupation	Dummy	Student	709	27.49%
		House wife	660	25.59%
		Government employee	263	10.2%
		Private employee	337	13.07%
		Self employed	558	21.64%
		Other	52	2.02%
Monthly Income in ₹	Numerical	Less than 10,000	1613	62.54%
		10, 000 - 20, 000	382	14.81%
		20, 000 - 30, 000	304	11.79%
		30, 000 and above	280	10.86%
Satisfaction with Life	Numerical	*Completely Dissatisfied*	6	0.23%
		Dissatisfied	34	1.32%
		Uncertain	122	4.73%
		Satisfied	1155	44.78%
		Completely satisfied	1262	48.93%
Are you Happy with Your	Numerical	*Strongly disagree*	9	0.35%
Life (Life Rewarding)		*Disagree*	34	1.32%
		Uncertain	173	6.71%
		Agree	1271	49.28%
		Strongly agree	1092	42.34%

the respondents were married, which covered around 65% of the total respondents. The low-income group was dominant and contributed to 62.54% of the total respondents. The choice of mode of transport of 90% of the young respondents was a two-wheeler. The socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are summarized in the Table 1.

Research Methodology

The approach of McKelvey and Zavoina (1975) was adopted in this study. The level of motivation is taken as the dependent variable and factors affecting the visitors' motivation are taken as an independent variable. The latent continuous dependent variable z_i is a linear combination of factors X_i like age, level of education, etc., and an error term that has a logistic distribution.

$$z_i = \beta X_i + \epsilon_i \tag{1}$$

Standard regression techniques cannot be used to compute Eq. (1) because the dependent variable z_i cannot be observed directly. In Eq. (1), one can assume that a high level of motivation, denoted by z_i, is related to a high level of observed motivation, denoted by y_i. This relationship can be presented in the following ways (Garrido, Bastos, de Almeida, & Elvas, 2014 ; O'Connell, 2006) :

$$y_i = \begin{cases} k, if u_{k-1} < z_i < u_k \\ K, if z_i > u_{k-1} \\ 1, if z_i < u_1 \end{cases} \tag{2}$$

where, $u = \{u_1, u_2, u_3, u_4, ... u_k,\}$ are the threshold values of all motivation levels corresponding to each ordinal category of y_i. The probability the person chooses a motivation level k is equal to the probability that the motivation propensity z_i assumes a value between two consecutive fixed thresholds (Garrido et al., 2014). The probability of each motivation level chosen by a person is given by the following equation :

$$\begin{cases} P(y=1) = F(u_1 - \beta X_i) \\ P(Y=k) = F(u_k - \beta X_i) - F(u_{k-1} - \beta X_i) \\ P(Y=K) = 1 - F(u_{k-1} - \beta X_i) \end{cases} \tag{3}$$

$$P(y=1) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{\beta X_i - u_1}} \tag{4}$$

$$P(y=k) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{\beta X_i - u_k}} - \frac{1}{1 + e^{\beta X_i - u_{k-1}}} \tag{5}$$

$$P(y=k) = 1 - \frac{1}{1 + e^{\beta X_i - u_{k-1}}} \tag{6}$$

where, F is the cumulative logistic distribution function. For generalization, equation (5) can be written in the following way :

$$P(Y=k) = F(u_k - \beta X_i) - F(u_{k-1} - \beta X_i) \tag{7}$$

where, u_k and u_{k-1} denote the lower and upper thresholds for the motivation level k, respectively. The thresholds β are unknown parameters, which are assessed by maximum likelihood estimation utilizing the BIOGEME software.

Model Estimation and Results

This section provides a description of the model estimation results. The maximum likelihood estimation has been used for computing this model and only the variables at 0.10 significance level are reported. For better presentation, the model estimation results are split in two tables, namely Table 2 (for models 1 to 9) and Table 3 (for models 10 to 18). Along with the maximum likelihood estimates of the model parameters β and the thresholds values μ, two goodness-of-fit measures (the ρ^2 and the adjusted log likelihood ratio index, adjusted ρ^2) were calculated. Final log likelihood was evaluated through an iterative procedure that maximizes the log likelihood of the outcomes seen in the outcome variable. The ρ^2 establishes how well the model fits the data. Apart from this, the t - statistic values were computed for each variable and have been given in brackets in Table 2 and Table 3.

For analysis convenience, unique numbers from 1 to 18 were assigned to each motivation statement that was in the questionnaire ; like the statement : exchange of intellectual ideas was assigned the number 1. Similarly, motivational statements like historical and cultural background of the city, to find meaning in life, to be away from home, to see Kumbh once in lifetime, to increase knowledge of new places, looking for new experience, to meet saints, to be emotionally and physically refreshed were assigned with numbers 2, 3, …9, respectively. Also, statements like to meet people with similar interests, to give exposure of traditional culture to kids, to forget about work and other responsibilities, to rediscover myself, to experience different cultures and ways, to get away from pressure and stress, to have fun, to be together as a family, and lastly, to take a holy dip were assigned with numbers 10, 11, ….18, respectively.

✎ **Relationship Between Travel Motivation and Socio - Demographic Characteristics :** As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, for motivations 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, and 17, the sign of the coefficient of the age variable is positive. It implies

Table 2. Model Estimation Results - Part 1

Model Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Age	0.133(5.21)	0.062(2.35)	-	-0.058(-2.39)	-0.14(-5.69)	-	-0.093(-3.60)	0.091(3.54)	0.081(3.15)
Gender	-	-	-	-	-	0.161(1.91)		0.187(2.44)	-
Family Members	-	-		-		-	-	0.039(2.56)	0.061(4.02)
Income	-	-	-0.106(-3.10)	-	-	-	-	-	-0.064(-1.75)
Education	-	0.202(6.73)	-	-	-	-	0.095(3.22)	-0.081(-2.78)	-
Housewife	-	-	-	0.310(3.71)	-	-	-	-	-
Private Employee	-	-	-	-	0.237(2.12)	-	-	-	-
Satisfaction with life	0.365(5.32)	0.202(2.96)	0.387(6.03)	-	0.187(3.39)	0.3(3.86)	0.156(2.35)	0.232(3.52)	0.210(3.15)
I feel that life is very rewarding (Life Rewarding)	0.323(4.89)	0.369(5.60)	0.219(3.54)	0.162(3.15)	-	0.146(1.79)	0.156(2.26)	0.315(4.92)	0.400(6.19)
u_1	-1.38	-2.62	-0.655	-1.30	-3.11	-2.5	-3.65	-1.08	-1.02
u_2	0.363	-0.548	0.813	0.045	-1.68	-0.884	-2.24	0.415	0.245
u_3	1.31	0.976	2.09	0.793	-0.903	-0.023	-1.00	1.31	1.61
u_4	3.70	3.71	3.52	2.00	0.719	2.13	1.45	3.01	3.66
ρ^2	0.342	0.391	0.106	0.018	0.227	0.328	0.391	0.236	0.271
Adjusted ρ^2	0.341	0.389	0.105	0.016	0.226	0.326	0.389	0.234	0.269

Table 3. Model Estimation Results - Part 2

Model Number	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Age	0.058(2.21)	-	-	-		-	-0.114(-4.28)	0.088(3.51)	-
Gender	-	-	-	-		-	-	-0.258(-3.34)	-
Family Members	0.03(2.18)	0.032(2.05)	-	0.028(1.96)	-		-	-	-
Income	-0.096(-2.48)	-	-	-	-	-	-0.067(-1.72)	-	-
Education	-0.05(-1.64)	-	-0.04(-1.64)		-	-	0.139(4.49)	-	-0.160(-5.50)
Satisfaction with Life	0.210(3.26)	0.145(2.24)	-	0.191(3.07)	0.171(2.58)	-		-	-
I feel that life is very rewarding(Life Rewarding)	0.327(5.22)	0.264(4.21)	.142(2.75)	0.141(2.31)	0.293(4.59)	0.169(3.26)	-	0.247(4.47)	0.334(6.05)
u_1	-1.02	-1.35	-1.50	-1.36	-1.91	-1.53	-2.74	-2.51	-2.14
u_2	0.349	-0.211	-0.136	-0.185	-0.757	-0.172	-1.64	-1.36	-1.44
u_3	1.48	0.781	0.528	0.835	0.22	0.519	-1.05	-0.464	-0.631
u_4	3.24	2.31	1.75	2.30	2.47	1.98	0.281	1.17	0.811
ρ^2	0.164	0.193	0.024	0.064	0.297	0.08	0.165	0.271	0.275
Adjusted ρ^2	0.161	0.191	0.022	0.062	0.295	0.079	0.163	0.269	0.274

that as age increases, visitors are more inclined towards these motivational activities. From the results, it can be clearly seen that old people came to Kumbh Mela for participation in religious activities like : to meet saints, for the exchange of intellectual ideas, etc. It shows that the major motivation behind the visit of elderly people was to share their religious experiences, beliefs, and knowledge with other people. Old aged people also came to experience different cultures because Kumbh Mela attracts a diverse panorama of people from across the nation. For motivations 4, 5, 7, and 16, the sign of the coefficient of the age variable is negative, which implies that youngsters were more inclined towards these inspirations. From the results, it can be clearly seen that young people were not too much inclined towards religious activities as compared to old people. Young people are energetic and adventurous, and the Kumbh Mela provided a new opportunity for them to learn and experience new things. Furthermore, they rarely liked to constantly sit and listen to someone, and hence, they were a bit reluctant to sit for preaching.

From Table 2 and Table 3, it can be seen that for motivations 6 and 8, the sign of the coefficient of the gender variable is positive, which means that men were more probable to come to Kumbh Mela for these motivations as compared to women. From the outcomes, it can be observed that men were more willing to participate in religious activities as contrasted to women. In Kumbh Mela, many priests gather from different parts of the country ; so, people wanted to see them and take blessings from them. Men also wanted to experience the different cultures so that they could enhance their knowledge towards this religious event. The sign of the coefficient for motivation number 17, that is, 'to be together as a family' is negative. It means that the primary objective of women was to accompany their husbands, and they were more willing to spend quality time with their family, which is usually not available in their day to day life.

As recorded in Table 2 and Table 3, it can be seen that for motivations 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13, the sign of the coefficient of the family member variable is positive, which means as the number of members in family increased, people were more willing to visit Kumbh Mela for the above purposes. As the members of a family increase, the probability of having old aged people or excessively religious people in a family increases. So, under their

Table 4. Major Motivations Behind Visiting the Kumbh Mela

Category	Major Motivations Behind Visiting the Kumbh Mela
Old aged people	• Exchange of intellectual ideas
	• To meet saints
Young people	• To see this once in lifetime event
	• To have fun
Male	• To meet saints
Female	• To be together as family
Family Member (more members in family)	• To be emotionally and physically refreshed
	• To meet saints
	• To give exposure of traditional culture to kids
Low Income	• To find meaning in life
	• To meet people with similar interests
Education (Primary and High School)	• To take a holy dip
Education(Graduate and Post-Graduate)	• Historical and cultural background of the city
	• To have fun
Housewife	• To be away from home
Private Employee	• To see this once in lifetime event

Table 5. Ranking of the Motivations with Their Respective Probabilities

Motivation	Rank	Probability (*Agree + Strongly Agree*)
Looking for new experience	1	0.92
To see historical and cultural background of the city	2	0.91
Exchange of intellectual ideas	3	0.89
To increase knowledge of new places	4	0.89
To experience different cultures and ways	5	0.86
To be together as a family	6	0.83
To take a holy dip	7	0.83
To be emotionally and physically refreshed	8	0.82
To see this once in lifetime event	9	0.8
To meet saints	10	0.8
To give exposure of traditional culture to kids	11	0.76
To have fun	12	0.74
To meet people with similar interests	13	0.7
To rediscover myself	14	0.69
To find meaning in life	15	0.59
To get away from pressure and stress	16	0.55
To forget about work and other responsibilities	17	0.49
To be away from home	18	0.46

influence, the whole family was persuaded to visit Kumbh Mela or similar religious functions.

As listed in Table 2 and Table 3, for motivations 3, 9, 10, and 16, the sign of the coefficient of income variable is negative, which means a lower income group (less than ₹ 20,000) rated to meet people with similar interests, to find meaning in life, and to have fun as significantly higher than the higher-income group respondents. The reason behind this might be that people in such a low-income group were mostly daily wage earners and lived at a subsistence level. This festival gives them a hope for their future.

From Table 2 and Table 3, it can be seen that for motivations 2, 7, and 16, the sign of the coefficient of education variable is positive, which means that as the level of education increased from primary to post graduate, people were more willing to visit Kumbh Mela for fun and intellectual purposes. The major purpose of the people with higher education (graduates and postgraduates) to visit Kumbh Mela was to have fun and they looked for new experiences, perhaps because they were overburdened with academic requirements and career anxieties. For motivations 8, 10, 12, and 18, the sign of the coefficient of education variable is negative, which means that people with lower education (primary and 10th) were more inclined towards taking a holy dip and meeting the saints.

It can also be noted that the sign of the coefficient of housewife variable is positive for motivation 4, that is, to be away from home. The reason may be that they were bored with their day to day repetitive chores and wanted to have a break from the routine life and spend quality time with family outside the home. The sign of the coefficient of private employee variable (who worked in private companies) for motivation 5, that is, to see this once in a lifetime event, is positive. It may be concluded from the fact that life for private sector employees is very hectic, with a huge workload in most of the private firms, and hence, they wanted to experience this event once in a lifetime.

As shown in Table 2 and Table 3, for motivations 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 14, the sign of the coefficient of satisfaction variable is positive, which means highly satisfied people visited the Kumbh Mela for the above purposes. It may be noted that the satisfaction could be a result of seeing life in a different perspective, that is, when a person visits a religious place and not necessarily that the person is highly satisfied with the specific elements of personal and professional life.

For almost all the motivations, the sign of the coefficient of life rewarding variable is positive. It shows that the people who are happy with their lives tend to show higher gratitude towards God and religion by participating in such a mass event. The major purpose of those people to visit Kumbh Mela was to meet saints, to exchange intellectual ideas, and to experience historical and cultural background of the city.

Based on the model results, the major motivations behind visiting the Kumbh Mela for each demographic factor have been found and the same have been summarized in the Table 4. The probability of *agree* ($y = 4$) and *strongly agree* ($y = 5$) of each motivation has been computed from equations 5 and 6 and added up. Based on the values of the final addition, the motivations have been ranked. The Table 5 summarizes all the motivations (rank - wise) along with the respective probabilities.

From the Table 5, it can be seen that looking for new experience was the biggest motivation behind the Kumbh Mela visit. Other major motivations were to study the historical and cultural background of the city ; to exchange intellectual ideas ; to increase knowledge of new places ; and to take a holy dip with probability more than 80%. The least chosen motivation was to be away from home and to forget about work and other responsibilities with probability of less than 50%.

Conclusion

This study explores the travel motivation towards a religious event of people coming from different socio-economic backgrounds. Using ordered logit, 18 models have been computed and an attempt was made to see how motivation changed within different groups of varying socio-economic characteristics. The probability of each

scale was computed, and ranking of motivations was done on the basis of the highest probability of *"agree and strongly agree"* scale.

From the outcomes, it can be clearly seen that old aged people were more inclined towards participation in religious activities compared to young people, and this finding is in congruence with different prior studies like Irimias et al. (2016). In the case of young people, the predominant reason for visiting the Kumbh Mela was to enjoy this spiritual festival ; this finding seems to be in accordance with the study results of Heung et al. (2001). Among the young people, 90% of the respondents came by two-wheeler, which means due importance has to be given to traffic regulation and management. The results clearly show that women rated social relationships significantly higher than men as more number of women preferred to 'to be together as a family.' This finding with respect to women is in line with the results of a previous study (Jensen, 2011). From the results, it is also seen that the bigger families primarily visited the Kumbh Mela to meet saints. Families with a higher number of members can help us understand their travel behaviour once we have a clear understanding of their motivation. From the results, it can be clearly seen that people with lower educational qualifications rated "religious motivation" significantly higher than highly qualified persons. According to Jansen (2011), travellers with high school or college being their highest education rated 'escape/relaxation' significantly higher than less educated travellers. From the results, it can be clearly seen the lower income group respondents rated 'to meet people with similar interests' and 'to find meaning in life' significantly higher compared to the respondents from higher income groups.

Managerial Implications

From the overall ranking of motivation, it is clear that many people wanted to witness this mega event as a new experience, while others looked at it as a religious event and wanted to indulge in for spiritual experiences. The factors which affect the travel motivation may aid event organizers in planning and organizing such events in a better manner keeping in mind the choices and preferences of visitors coming from varying socio-economic and demographical backgrounds. The results may also aid in designing customer centric services to ensure a better experience for all the visitors who will participate in future events.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

India is a country of many religions, and multiple religious events are organised throughout our country. This offers tremendous potential not just for domestic tourism, but for international tourism as well. The present study focused on a mega religious gathering - The Kumbh Mela. Though motivation to travel to various places like Ujjain, Haridwar, Nasik, and Allahabad (Prayag) to participate in Kumbh Mela may be more or less the same, but since the city characteristics are different, and Kumbh Mela is organized during different months of a year ; hence, the relationship between travel motivation and demographic characteristics may differ. The present study is limited to Ujjain Kumbh Mela 2016. Similar studies can be conducted in other three cities for better understanding and generalization of the results.

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