

Examining the Challenges Faced by Local Government Officials in Tourism Destination Image Building; A Case of Manipur, India

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ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is a cooperative strategy for the growth of a state as it generates employment opportunities in a multitude of sectors. However, officials of the Manipur government have faced challenges while implementing policies, hindering the development of crucial sectors for building a tourism destination. This study aims to examine the challenges faced by local government officials in building tourism destinations by considering the development of the attributes of attractions and accessibility. This study is both exploratory and descriptive in design, and SPSS version 27 is employed for data evaluation. The findings have identified challenges regarding diversifying tourist attractions, adding entertainment activities, and expanding connectivity, as well as the lack of availability of facilities and services. According to the analysis, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the development of attractions and accessibility with destination building. Government officials can use the suggestions provided in this study in their managerial processes. If the government could mitigate the mentioned challenges, the tourism industry, along with other sectors, could grow equally, enabling Manipur's tourism to expand and uphold peace throughout, ensuring a sense of belongingness, providing employment opportunities, and upgrading livelihoods in host communities.

Keywords: Local government; Service sectors; Challenges; Destination building; Sustainable tourism; Manipur.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism destination image building and competitiveness is evident in the rapidly growing tourism industry. Competition is crucial to ensuring destination improvement (Go & Govers, 2000). Tourism destination improvement demands frameworks like; enabling environment, effective policies, and prioritisation of travel and tourism, international openness, infrastructure development, and sustainable exploitation of natural and cultural resources (Lauren and Maksim, 2022).

Manipur boasts a rich cultural heritage, diverse communities, enchanting natural landscapes, and an abundance of flora and fauna. Officials in the Manipur tourism industry have undertaken several initiatives to enhance the appeal of the destination. Their goal is to increase both domestic and international tourist arrivals and generate more state revenue through tourism development. However, there is a lack of development in tourism infrastructure and attractions. These challenges have hindered the growth of various tourism sectors.

India has been ranked 54th in the world and 12th in the Asia-Pacific region in the Travel and Tourism Development Index for 2021 (Uppink, 2022). According to (India Tourism statistics, 2022), Uttar Pradesh is the top destination for domestic tourists, while Gujarat is the top state for foreign tourists with 1.78 million arrivals. The World Travel and Tourism Council India Initiative conducted a state ranking survey that analyzed the potential of travel and tourism in India and assessed the competitiveness of different Indian states. In this assessment, the Sikkim and

Tripura governments received the North-Eastern Destination Leadership Award in 2024. This research highlights the noteworthy obstacles that the tourism officials has encountered in its efforts to position Manipur as a top travel destination in the northeastern states. With this regard, the aim of the study are;

- I. To examine the challenges in the development of the attributes of attractions.
- II. To examine the challenges in the development of the attributes of accessibility.

It also assess if there is significant relationship with the development of attributes of attractions and accessibility to tourism destination image building.

Extensive research is crucial for tourist destinations to understand the challenges of destination building. Even popular destinations need continual improvement to maintain their appeal and avoid decline. In line with Butler's tourism product life cycle, Manipur tourism is in its early exploration stage, making research on this issue is vital as the region is yet to fully exploit its tourism potential and lacks visibility of community involvement. Manipur, one of India's seven sister states, shares borders with Myanmar, Assam, Nagaland, and Mizoram and is home to over thirty-three tribal communities with diverse cultures and traditions. It holds great cultural and natural resource potential for tourism development. Therefore, prioritising the involvement of all communities in tourism development is essential for government officials to build good tourism image.

The significance of this study lies in its focus on the key factors of attraction and accessibility in tourism destination development and image building. The findings will shed light on significant drawbacks in these areas, providing valuable insights for enhancing tourism product development strategies. Local government officials should take note of the research outcomes, which assess the local community's perspective on tourism development in Manipur and highlight effective tourism planning strategies. This study will offer crucial insights into public perceptions of tourism progress in the state, serving as a vital tool in creating a robust framework for destination image building.

This research is both exploratory and descriptive in nature. It explores the current scenario of the tourism phenomenon and clearly identifies the problems and prospects of destination building. It gathers information from groups of people aligned to study the objectives and provides accurate information with regards to tourism product development and tourist destination image building, which further contributes to the engagement of both society and government officials in development programmes.

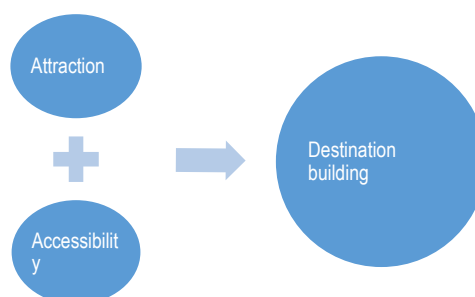
Hypothesis of the study:

H1; There is significant relationship between development of attractions and destination building.

H0: There is no significant relationship between development of attractions and destination building.

H2; There is significant relationship between development of accessibility and destination building.

H0: There is no significant relationship between development of accessibility and destination building.



Source: own elaboration.

The development of attributes of attraction and accessibility has a significant relationship with destination building. These tentative assumption are futher tested and results are discussed in the following text.

For the process of primary data collection, the carefully structured questionnaire was considered for data collection after a reliability test using Cronbach's alpha was performed on the data; the results secured more than the criterion threshold of 0.7. A total of 401 data points were collected during the survey period of August 2024 to November 2024.

A random sampling technique was used in this study. And every community in Manipur is taken into account as a sample.

The objectives of the study are met by subjecting the data to additional statistical analysis, such as descriptive analysis and MANOVA, using SPSS version 27. The study results reveal that the mean and standard deviation of the attributes show that there are major challenges in diversifying tourist attractions and accessibility. Furthermore, neither attraction nor accessibility have significant values larger than 0.05, which means that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. To mitigate the drawbacks, conducting awareness programmes on the advantages of tourism for the community is important because community involvement leads to achieve positive hospitality, successful attraction diversification, infrastructure development, and connectivity enhancement while creating a positive impact on the tourist experience.

2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Tourist attraction.

A tourist attraction system is characterised as an empirical relationship between the visitor, the nucleus, and the marker (Neil Leiper, 1990). In essence tourist attraction consists of landscape for sightseeing, activities to participate and experience to remember (Lew, 1987). Tourist attraction can be natural, manmade and symbiotic. Attraction are the pull factor of tourist to a destination. Tourist attractions have been identified as the primary factors in attractiveness, and tourism wouldn't happen without attractions (Haneef et.al., 2019). Attractions have a crucial role in shaping a destination's image and influencing tourist satisfaction. Natural attractions include magnificent mountain and valley views, gardens, springs, scenic drives, parks, lakes, rivers, wildlife, and caverns (Lascu et.al., 2018). Entertainment options include shows, exhibitions, cultural festivals, musicals, nightlife, and historic sites, including historic structures (Rajesh, 2014) (Biswas et.al., 2020).

Manipur is blessed with enormous natural resources and interesting landscape bearing potential to attract various type of tourists. A pleasing climate, abundant nature, biodiversity, historical significance, distinctive flora and fauna, and vivid and lively festivals make it a prospective tourist destination (sanasam et.al., 2019).

2.2 Tourism destination planning

The rapidly changing environment of the tourism business necessitates that tourism officials be proactive and well-trained in order to organise and adapt to the changing environment, and tackle numerous obstacles (Formica, 2008). Various scholars have researched and talked about the potential resources of Manipur tourism. However, the challenges and problems revolving around the development of potential resources are less researched. The objectives of the current study follows up to fill this gap. Understanding the challenges will guide to better tourism planning. Better tourism planning need extensive study on various successful tourism destination managerial strategies. Let us consider Singapore as an example here; despite being a small region with multi ethnic Singapore's experiences can provide valuable insights into managing urban growth and marketing tourism. Investor trust is further bolstered by transparency and the absence of corruption prevalent throughout most of Southeast Asia. This made Singapore a highly sought-after location for business establishment. Apart from implementing enduring political and economic plans, the government has endeavoured to mould the social and natural landscape of the city. A more specific master plan follows from each concept plan revision like five years planning or ten years planning. Planning revolves around government's acknowledgement to preserving important heritage and reuse of old buildings. Planning are proceeded from multiple discipline in its development and construction. Their planning focused for the betterment of environment resources and healthy society while making it a leisure activities to tourist which aids experiences. They maintain good international relationships, sustain friendly relationship with immediate neighbouring region, exchange of thoughts, and collaboration with the neighbouring state, hosting and undertaking official study trips. Singapore have benefitted from improved international relations (Joan, 2012).

2.3 Tourism destination building

Since the early 1980s, numerous tourist destinations have begun to do research on tourism product development and management. Tourism destination building focuses on maintaining natural and historical treasures, providing a variety of sightseeing alternatives, offering leisure activities to tourists, and combining rural and urban experiences to provide a positive visitor experience and lengthen tourist stays and expenditures (Andronicou, 1986).

Synthesis

Although the literature is replete with works on corporate governance and its effect on the financial performance of organizations, little is known about how industry characteristics can moderate this association. Past studies have tended to categorize results by sector and fail to consider how regulatory, operations, and competition contexts differ in governance. In addition, empirical analysis of the relationship between transparency, board of directors' independence, and ownership structure often focuses on one variable at a time isolated from the others or without taking into account the high-order interaction thereof. Little research has been dedicated to investigating how these mechanisms function where industries are not highly regulated or stabilization is highly volatile, as is the case with the technological and service industries compared to the banking industries. These shortcomings are addressed in this study by employing a broad and company-sector-based research strategy to examine the governance-performance relationship.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1. Nature of research

The nature of the study is both exploratory and descriptive. Exploratory research, by definition, it attempts to discover something new working through a research topic (Swedberg, 2020). It is also said to be descriptive research because this research describes the characteristics of local people perspective to put on the question "What" are the challenges faced by government tourism officials in destination building. This study considered to examine the perception of people towards tourism attraction and accessibility development in Manipur in order to point out the challenging area in tourism image building.

3.2. Sampling procedure

The primary prerequisite for conducting the SEM-based data collection procedure is generally the minimum sample size (n) (Junaedi, 2022). Based on (Hair et al., 2022) the recommended minimum sample size ranges from 113 to 251 samples. The sample size of the current study is obtained with the help of Slovent Formula.

$$\text{Slovent Formula } n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$N = \text{Total population (3,501,897)}$$

$$e = \text{Error Margin (0.05)}$$

$$n = \text{No. of sample (390)}$$

The total population figure is sourced from the 2021 projected census report. The sample size is determined using stratified random sampling, with the sample being randomly selected from the study region.

3.3. Data collection

For our research, we meticulously collected both primary and secondary data. We used structured questionnaires to gather primary data, including a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions. Additionally, we sourced reliable secondary data from books, government websites, news reports, and research publications. Our survey involved measuring variables on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for "extremely disagree" to 5 for "extremely agree." After conducting pilot testing and ensuring the questionnaire's reliability, we distributed the survey link to the local community through various ways. This approach led to a total of 401 valid responses for our study. The questionnaire are focused on local community perspective because it will help in identifying the gap between the initiatives taken up by tourism officials for development of a tourist destination and how local communities perceives about the destination development. It is noteworthy approach to consider the active involvement of host community in the development and upkeep of tourism while promoting welfare of the community (Priatmoko et al., 2021).

3.4. Statistical tools and Data analysis.

The data is subjected to additional statistical analysis using SPSS version 27 to achieve the study's objectives, including descriptive analysis and MANOVA. (Priatmoko et al., 2021) In their study, they adopted descriptive analysis to explain how tourism planning and development challenges go alongside one another. Similarly, the author in this study adopted this tool to find out the challenges associated with tourism development. (Chen, 2000) Adopted

MANOVA as a statistical technique to examine how residents see tourism development. Here, the author also used MANOVA to evaluate how the locals felt about the development of tourism attributes.

3.5. Restriction of the study.

This study focuses on the perceptions of the local community, laying the groundwork for further research to evaluate the perspectives of tourists and tourism stakeholders. While the study is currently limited to attractions and accessibility, future studies can explore additional factors associated with the tourism industry. It's important to note that the study's results may not be applicable to other states, as the research is confined to Manipur.

4 RESULTS ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic description of the respondents.

Table 4.1.1 Frequency distribution of gender & age.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	278	69.2%
Female	124	30.8%
Age	Frequency	Percent
Upto 21	46	11.4%
22-34	242	60.2%
35-49	88	21.9%
50-64	25	6.2%

Source: Author

4.2. Descriptive analysis.

Table 4.2.1. Descriptive statistics for attributes of attractions (N= 401)

Attributes	Mean	SD
Variety of options for site- seeing	4.02	.01
Variety of options for entertainment	3.54	.05
Variety of options historical monuments	4.00	.99
Architecture of modern buildings and infrastructure	3.07	.15
Religious places / places of worship (temples/ mosques/ churches etc.)	3.93	.04
Collection/ display at museums/ libraries	3.60	.04
Variety of events and programmes	3.58	1.02
Availability of adventure activities (sports/ boating/ camping etc.)	3.78	1.06
Night life (clubs/ cinema etc.)	2.40	.13
Availability of recreation activities (exhibitions/ theatre/ cinema/ amusement parks etc.)	3.09	1.13

Source: Own elaboration

The table provides a comprehensive overview of descriptive statistics, including Mean and Standard Deviation (SD), related to various attributes of tourism and leisure activities.

Attributes: The table encompasses several factors that may influence tourism or recreational experiences, such as options for sightseeing, historical monuments, adventure activities, and nightlife offerings.

Mean: The Mean represents the average score for each attribute, based on survey responses or evaluations. A higher Mean score signifies enhanced importance, satisfaction, or availability associated with that particular attribute.

Standard Deviation (SD): The SD serves as an indicator of variability or dispersion in responses. A higher SD denotes greater variation in opinions or ratings among respondents.

In terms of the attributes assessed, the "Variety of options for sightseeing" achieved the highest Mean score of 4.02, followed by the "Variety of options for historical monuments," which received a Mean score of 4.00. These results indicate a strong appreciation for these attributes among respondents. Conversely, "Nightlife options (clubs, cinema, etc.)" received the lowest Mean score of 2.40, suggesting potential challenges in availability, interest, or satisfaction in this area. The attribute "Architecture of modern buildings and infrastructure" exhibited the highest SD, reflecting a broad range of opinions among respondents. In contrast, "Variety of options for historical monuments" demonstrated the lowest SD, indicating a strong consensus on this attribute.

This data can be instrumental in identifying strengths and areas for improvement in tourism and recreational planning. Further analysis or interpretation of this data can be provided upon request to facilitate strategic decision-making.

Table 4.2.2. Descriptive statistics for attributes of accessibility (N= 401))

Attributes	Mean	SD
Availability of information about Manipur on the internet	3.37	0.15
Availability of information about Manipur through travel agents/ tour operators in your city	3.13	0.17
Availability of information about Manipur through / television/ radio	3.10	0.20
Connectivity by rail network	2.02	0.19
Connectivity by roadways network	3.08	0.13
Connectivity by airlines	3.89	0.09
Facilities/ services at railway station(s) (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.)	2.25	1.19
Facilities/services at inter- state bus terminal (information/food/waiting areas/connecting transport etc.)	2.82	0.23
Facilities/ services at airport (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.	3.45	0.13
Convenience of booking/ payment for conveyance to reach Manipur	3.51	1.13
Clarity of sign boards in the city for routes/ direction.	3.18	0.19

Source: Own elaboration.

The assessment of information availability about Manipur through various sources—namely the internet, travel agents, and television/radio—reveals moderate ratings. The Internet received a Mean score of 3.37, with a Standard Deviation of 0.15. Travel agents and tour operators scored a Mean of 3.13 (SD = 0.17), while television and radio received a Mean of 3.10 (SD = 0.20). These findings suggest that the Internet is the most prevalent source of information.

Transportation Connectivity: Connectivity via airlines received the highest rating, indicating a robust air transport infrastructure. Conversely, rail connectivity was rated the lowest, highlighting significant challenges in this area. Roadway connectivity achieved a Mean of 3.08 (SD = 0.13), which suggests a moderate level of satisfaction.

Assessments of facilities at airports yielded a Mean of 3.45 (SD = 1.13), indicating a higher level of satisfaction compared to railway and bus terminals. Railway station facilities scored a Mean of 2.25 (SD = 0.19), revealing a need for improvement. Interstate bus terminals received a Mean of 2.82 (SD = 0.23), which reflects a moderate rating.

The convenience of booking and payment options received a Mean score of 3.51 (SD = 1.13), suggesting effective user-friendliness in the reservation process. The clarity of signboards throughout the city achieved a Mean of 3.18 (SD = 0.19), which indicates moderate satisfaction and points to opportunities for enhanced signage. These findings emphasize critical areas that require improvement, particularly in rail connectivity and the facilities available at railway and bus terminals. At the same time, they highlight existing strengths, such as air connectivity and the availability of information through internet channels.

4.3. MANOVA analysis.

MANOVA is the standard of multivariate analysis of variance. It is conducted when there are two or more than two dependent variables. The items considered for the measurement of tourism development are dependent variables, and the demographic variables genders and age are independent variables. In this study, MANOVA procedures finds how people of different genders and age perceived tourism development.

Table 4.3.1. Multivariate test

Gender * Age	Wilk's Lambda	F value	P value
	.825	1.380	0.038

Source: Own elaboration.

This statistic clearly demonstrates the proportion of total variance in the dependent variables that remains unexplained by the interaction effect of Gender and Age. A lower value decisively indicates a stronger interaction effect. The F-value rigorously tests the null hypothesis, which claims that the means of the dependent variables are equal across groups formed by the interaction of Gender and Age. The p-value reflects the significance level of this test. A p-value below 0.05 unequivocally indicates that the interaction effect of Gender and Age on the dependent variables is statistically significant.

Table 4.3.2. Box's Test of Equality Covariance Matrices

Box'sM	2445.961
F	1.380
df1	1.260
df2	29616.790
Sig.	.001

Source: Own elaboration.

Examine the hypothesis that there is no difference in the observed covariance matrices of the dependent variables between groups.

4.4 Discussion of the Data

In the analysis result, males account for more respondents, with (278) 69.2% and (124) 30.8% being female wherein (N=401) and missing= 0. More than half of the total respondents' age ranges between 22 and 34, contributing 60.2% (242), followed by the age range of 35 to 49 with 21.9% (88).

The study's goals are to look into the issues that tourism government authorities confront when developing tourist destinations. This study takes a gap analysis approach to investigate the relationship between government efforts and how the local community sees them. This gap will aid in detecting the challenges. So, the descriptive analysis findings provide greater clarity of how tourist development and challenges operate.

The analysis of attraction attributes reveals that Manipur offers a wide range of sightseeing opportunities, historical sites, and religious places. However, there is a lack of agreement on the availability of recreational options, modern infrastructure, adventurous activities, and nightlife. Despite efforts by the government, there is insufficient

development of leisure activities for tourists. It is evident that Manipur lacks a vibrant nightlife and comprehensive recreational options, which hinders the overall tourist experience.

In the analysis of accessibility attributes, the mean value of 3.13 suggests that respondents were not satisfied with the availability of information about Manipur through various channels such as the internet, travel agents, television, and radio. While train travel is still in its early stages, bus travel is a traditional and affordable method of cross-border transportation. However, air transport was rated as neutral due to the low frequency of direct flights to major Indian cities. Facilities and services at Imphal's transportation hubs received poor ratings, indicating a significant challenge for government officials. Addressing the lack of clarity in route direction signboards is crucial for improving accessibility to sightseeing spots and locations.

While in MANOVA, multivariate analysis of variance is statistically significant. In the result of Wilk's Lambda, the associated significant value is 0.038. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected because it is less than 0.05. In the test of between subject's effects, the associated significant value of all the attributes of attractions and accessibilities fall below 0.05. Given this, it is inferred that there is a considerable relationship between development of attractions and accessibilities with destination building.

The objective of this research is to identify the challenges associated with tourism development in Manipur. As a result of the findings presented above, it is clear that there is lack of development satisfaction with regard to both attractions and accessibility. Further study of manova, based on the results of the estimated marginal mean, which is conducted to identify the average scores from a group of subgroup in an experiment, it is observed if both male and female have comparable perceptions towards tourism development.

Table 4.4.1. Estimated Marginal Mean (gender)

variables	Gender	Mean
Availability of information about Manipur on the internet	Male	3.415
	Female	3.280
Availability of information about Manipur through travel agents/ tour operators in your city	Male	3.115
	Female	3.077
Availability of information about Manipur through / television/ radio	Male	3.144
	Female	2.962
Connectivity by rail network	Male	2.053
	Female	1.950
Connectivity by roadways network	Male	3.137
	Female	3.103
Connectivity by airlines	Male	4.012
	Female	4.113
Facilities/ services at railway station(s) (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.)	Male	1.198
	Female	1.001
Facilities/services at inter- state bus terminal (information/food/waiting areas/connecting transport etc.)	Male	2.760
	Female	2.918
Facilities/ services at airport (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.	Male	2.190
	Female	2.407
Convenience of booking/ payment for conveyance to reach Manipur	Male	3.561
	Female	3.340
Clarity of sign boards in the city for routes/ direction	Male	3.250
	Female	3.340

Variety of options for site- seeing	Male	4.090
	Female	3.877
Variety of options for entertainment	Male	3.590
	Female	3.426
Variety of options for entertainment Variety of options historical monuments	Male	4.022
	Female	3.934
Architecture of modern buildings and infrastructure Religious places / places of worship (temples/ mosques/ churches etc.)	Male	3.039
	Female	3.248
Collection/ display at museums/ libraries Variety of events and programmes	Male	3.604
	Female	3.517
Variety of events and programmes	Male	3.592
	Female	3.406
Availability of adventure activities (sports/ boating/ camping, etc.)	Male	3.863
	Female	3.786
Availability of recreation activities (exhibitions/ theatre/ cinema/ amusement parks, etc.)	Male	3.081
	Female	3.237

Source: Own elaboration.

From the table 4.4.1 it is seen that the mean value of male and female upon each dependent variable are similar. The similarity in the average value indicate that both male and female citizen of Manipur have similar comments towards the initiatives taken up by government officials in developing tourism resources. The mean value of 3 indicates neutrality towards the given variables, while a score below 3 indicates disagreement. This means that variables scoring below 3 are considered areas where major drawbacks are present. This study further analyse the perception of age groups to assure accuracy in examining the challenges in tourism building.

To find out the problem and prospects of tourism building more precisely, this study further investigated the Tukey HSD homogeneous subsets of the variables to check how different age groups perceived tourism development initiatives taken up by local government. In this study, 82% of respondents are from age groups 22 to 34 and 35 to 49, accounting for a total of 330 out of a 401 sample. For the purpose of comprehending the results, responses from these age groups are taken into account.

Table 4.4.2. Homogeneous subsets (age)

Dependent variable	Age	Mean
Availability of information about Manipur on the internet	22-34	3.3333
	35-49	3.3691
Availability of information about Manipur through travel agents/ tour operators in your city	22-34	3.1867
	35-49	2.9425
Availability of information about Manipur through / television/ radio	22-34	3.1494
	35-49	2.8274
Connectivity by rail network	22-34	1.9917
	35-49	1.9425
Connectivity by roadways network	22-34	3.1162
	35-49	2.9080
Connectivity by airlines	22-34	4.2001
	35-49	4.0001

Facilities/ services at railway station(s) (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.)	22-34	1.9002
	35-49	1.2401
Facilities/services at inter- state bus terminal (information/food/waiting areas/connecting transport etc.)	22-34	2.8714
	35-49	2.6437
Facilities/ services at airport (information/ food/ waiting areas/ connecting transport etc.	22-34	3.5104
	35-49	3.3444
Convenience of booking/ payment for conveyance to reach Manipur	22-34	3.5643
	35-49	3.4368
Clarity of sign boards in the city for routes/ direction	22-34	3.2407
	35-49	2.8966
Variety of options for site- seeing	22-34	4.0332
	35-49	4.0000
Variety of options for entertainment	22-34	3.5851
	35-49	3.2989
Variety of options historical monuments	22-34	4.0581
	35-49	3.8161
Architecture of modern buildings and infrastructure	22-34	3.1079
	35-49	2.8851
Religious places / places of worship (temples/ mosques/ churches etc.)	22-34	3.9876
	35-49	3.8161
Collection/ display at museums/ libraries	22-34	3.6846
	35-49	3.3678
Variety of events and programmes	22-34	3.6473
	35-49	3.3908
Availability of adventure activities (sports/ boating/ camping, etc.)	22-34	3.8050
	35-49	3.6437
Availability of recreation activities (exhibitions/ theatre/ cinema/ amusement parks, etc.)	22-34	3.1245
	35-49	2.8276

Source: Primary data

Based on the data from Tables 4.4.1 and 4.4.2, it is evident that both men and women identify railway connectivity, facilities and services at railway and bus terminals, and airports as major challenges for tourism progress. Secondly, expanding the visibility of Manipur tourism information across several platforms is necessary to attract a larger pool of prospective customers. Additionally, providing engaging entertainment events, programmes, and recreational activities for tourists is essential for the growth of tourism in Manipur.

The data given in the table 4.4.2 shows that the 35–49 age group strongly disagrees that information is widely accessible through travel agencies, radio, and television and that trains are well-connected. Furthermore, they highlight the absence of signboards for land and tourist locations, attractive architecture in modern buildings and infrastructure, and recreational opportunities such as museums, theatres, cinemas, and amusement parks. Likewise, the 22–34 age group also emphasises the lack of services and amenities at the airport, train station, and bus terminal. Additionally, they bring attention to the scarcity of modern architecture in Manipur.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The primary goal of this research is to thoroughly examine the obstacles hindering tourism development. Through comprehensive statistical data analysis, the study has successfully attained its objectives. The analysis has effectively pinpointed the areas where development is lacking and has also revealed the level of satisfaction regarding development using a Likert scale. The mean value of the variables indicates that while people acknowledge Manipur's wide range of sightseeing options, they express dissatisfaction with the local government's tourism resource development initiatives. This lack of satisfaction among the public presents a significant challenge for the

stakeholders. Consequently, this study underscores the key challenges encountered by the local government, based on the data analysis and discussion;

- Difficulties in diversifying a tourism destination include building appropriate infrastructure to better serve the demands of visitors and showcasing entertainment events and programming to improve the visitor experience. Challenges in providing visual representation of historical and cultural folklore of various community, lack of storytelling, light and sound show in museums or monument is not taken into account.
- Combating barriers to guarantee safety and security when engaging in daring activities like camping, trekking, and boating. Challenges in enhancing the availability of recreational activities like exhibitions/ theatre/ cinema/ amusement parks, etc.
- Challenges in building modern infrastructure.
- Challenges include extending road, air, and railway access to surrounding states and major Indian cities at affordable prices, as well as a lack of infrastructure to increase domestic and international flight frequency.
- There are few visible land location sign boards and tourist spot maps both in Imphal and its outskirts.
- Providing excellent facilities and services, such as food kiosks, waiting areas, transportation connections, tourist police, clean public spaces, appropriate waste disposal, etc., presents challenges.
- There are obstacles to distributing travel information through print and online media via various mediums, and advertisements are less visible outside of the state.

According to the respondents the following suggestions to better tourism destination building are given;

Manipur has a rich cultural heritage with a diverse array of traditional art, dance, music, and festivals. The state can promote cultural tourism by organising festivals and events, establishing cultural villages, and showcasing traditional handicrafts. Additionally, adventure activities such as trekking, mountaineering, and river rafting can offer great opportunities for tourists seeking adventure while ensuring safety measures.

It is essential to maintaining and safeguarding the best of the current tourism attractions. Exploring new popular tourist spots that are worth visiting. This includes reviving Kangla, introducing captivating fountain music shows at key locations, and delving into the rich history of Manipur. Folk music and captivating visuals should be accessible at all nearby locations, such as Marjing, Thangjing, Kouburu, Wangburel, and other majestic hills. Furthermore, daily cultural activities must be organised. Public spaces like theatres, shopping centres, pubs, and clubs should extend their operating hours. To facilitate this transformation, the local government must invest in appropriate infrastructure and allocate sufficient funding for tourism.

Ensure that each region provides a wide variety of culinary options, including local delicacies and international cuisines. Encourage collaboration between local eateries and food vendors to promote cultural diversity in food offerings. Implement quality control procedures to maintain food safety and cleanliness. Regulate the prices of food and beverages at hotels and restaurants to prevent overcharging and ensure affordability for visitors. Vigilantly monitor pricing policies and take decisive action against businesses that excessively raise their prices.

Ideas for distinctive beautification that are specific to each location. It's crucial to shine a spotlight on our cultural landmarks, such as Raas Lila, Maibi Jagoi, Mukna, and Polo. It is necessary to ensure that facilities are available for those interested in paid viewing or participation in these cultural activities. Furthermore, we should emphasise the exploration of lesser-known places and establish partnerships with media companies, travel firms, and influencers to promote these hidden gems. Advanced digital technology must be adopted for promotion. It's important to market outside the state using internet travel portals and mobile apps to expand market place. To do this effectively, a well-designed website that showcases all the best things about the state is required.

Local government must focus on developing better transportation and connectivity, including improved roads and more government-run public transport options. Enhancing affordable transport facilities such as uber, Ola in remote areas can attract more visitors. Adequate train services would also benefit Manipur's tourism industry.

Ensure visitor safety by reinforcing security protocols and increasing law enforcement presence in tourist locations. Implement emergency response and surveillance systems to maintain law and order throughout the year, thus preserving Manipur's status as a preferred travel destination in India and around the world. Provide directions and maps for tourists. Establish credible tourism offices in major Indian cities. Encourage travel agents and tour

operators to offer budget-friendly itineraries. Implement policies to promote a safer and more enjoyable tourist experience for both domestic and foreign visitors.

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