INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT v

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESIS (ES)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

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APPENDIX/ANNEXURE

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- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.

- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOOKS

- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–23

UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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WEBSITES

- Garg, Bhavet (2011): Towards a New Gas Policy, Political Weekly, Viewed on January 01, 2012 http://epw.in/user/viewabstract.jsp

A PROFILE OF NEW AGE TOURISTS AND THE TECHNOLOGICAL STIMULI: A CASE STUDY ON THE COASTAL TOWN OF GOKARNA, KARNATAKA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The studies on cultural changes have seen a rise due to the "new order" where the tourists started indulging in less damaging activities. Many travelers aspired to forsake the "tourist bubble" and get more authentic in experiencing the local culture by meeting and becoming more acquainted with the local people which heralded the era of Post Modern and the New Age Tourists. The paper aims at understanding the tangential affect of the technology and it's in-betweeness in retaining the destination's ability to cater to the niche segment of new age tourists who aspire for spiritual and philosophical experience. Though Virtual Tourism or Armchair Tourism concepts have long prevailed there is no alternate to the real travel feel and the present paper signifies the importance of physical journey to such exotic destination. The study is part of the doctoral thesis, carried out in the coastal town of Gokarna in Karnataka, India. Being exploratory in approach, the data on beach use pattern presented the all new dimensions of the new age tourists who have transcended the use pattern of the existing attractions. The quantified data collected has been analyzed using the statistical tools backed by qualitative insights. A proposition is placed to sustain the dynamics of Gokarna as a New Age destination while technology could be the impetus.

KEYWORDS
Gokarna, beach use pattern, new age destination, new age tourists, technology and philosophy.

JEL CODE
L83

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been an ever increasing and ever changing phenomenon. Though the motivations may be varied, the underlying key elements for main stream tourism are the operative elements of Leisure Time, Discretionary Income and the Positive Local Sanctions. A tourist was supposed to undertake the activity during the time away from the work hours. It was also subjected to the fact that one had the discretionary income, the money which is in access after fulfilling the personal essentials and more importantly given the fact that one is spending time, money and energy, it is approved by one's peer or the society as a matter of sanction (Smith, 1989). The effect of industrialization was not confined to the transformation of western landscapes, it did revolutionalise the society. Consequently, the tourism industry has rejuvenated post industrialization in terms of its structure as well as in its functioning posing the complexity in defining the horizons of Tourism. The act of travel which was the need became the demand instigating its ancillaries. The demand for expertise in specific fields evolved. So has been the change in the present globalised era. Many new destinations emerged to meet this demand.

The power of technology is well assessed and understood by the travel and the tourism industry. The studies have been increasingly focusing on the impacts of digital transformation on the structure and functioning of the industry, the effects of digital technology on traveller destination choice the Destination Management Systems (DMS) and the other sophisticated models to monitor visitor behavior. The use of Global Positioning System (GPS) is evident has proven to be the path-breaking technology to gather high-resolution and high-precision data (Phillips et al. 2001; Elgethun et al. 2003). Tourism has been one of the foremost industries to use the mobility tracking technology in the real world due to its centrality (Fennell, 1996). Technology has replaced the traditional methods which were employed to record tourists' spatial and temporal behavior. Yet authors have urged the very importance of recording these details and validating the same (Dietvorst 1995; Thornton et al. 1997; Shaw et al. 2000; Forer 2002; Shaw and Williams 2002). The studies have claimed that the movement of tourists has profound implications at the destination in terms of infrastructure and transport development, tourism product development, marketing strategies, the commercial viability of the tourism industry, and the management of the social, environmental, and cultural impacts of tourism. Technology has proven to be the sole accelerator of the accessible tourism as it has empowered the visually impaired and the blind pedestrians (Golledge et al. 1991; Golledge et al. 1998; Maeda et al. 2002). The More accessible and affordable technologies such as mobile phones have changed the dynamics of the domain.

The investigation into the history of tourism and travel have well presented the start of tourism which was undertaken by the elite class and which gradually became an act of mass due to its increasing demand and the decreasing barricades. Many studies have assessed the economic benefits of tourism which happens to be one of the major dimensions. The studies on cultural changes have also seen a rise due to the "new order" where the tourists started indulging in less damaging activities. Many travelers aspired to forsake the "tourist bubble" and get more authentic in experiencing the local culture by meeting and becoming more acquainted with the local people. Out-of-Body travel / experience are one such Post modern tourism phenomenon which is scantly researched.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The current paper aims at answering following research questions: How has New Age Spirituality inclined Tourism emerged over the period of time? What has been the possible link between the technology and the New Age Tourism? What is the Profile of the new age tourists in Gokarna, A religious-coastal town in Karnataka, India which has attracted them over the period of time? In order to answer these questions, the paper reviews the literature published to intertwine the emergence of New Age Tourism and the Technology's role. The beach use pattern data collected as part of doctoral thesis answers the third question as to how Gokarna has been a cultural experience centre.

LITERATURE REVIEW
SPIRITUALLY INCLINED NEW AGE TOURISM AND TECHNOLOGY

The concept of Out-of-Body travel which is slightly different from the principles of the travel has given rise to the "New Age Tourism" (Attix, 2002; Pernecky & Johnston, 2006; Sutton & House, 2003). This is more of a spiritually related tourism taking its shape since 1930s as the New Age has begun. The New Age in the 21st century is said to be the shift in the minds of the people of the world. The increased inclination towards spirituality and the concepts related to it have taken a major share in the people's interest. Accordingly, the access to the literature related to it, the places and the services which cater to this need have sprung evidently. Technology has been the major impetus for disseminating the information and to create the qualitative evidence in terms of publications, dedicated channels on the web and direct-to-home, personalized contents on the e-applications, blogs and discussion forums. The Technology has made this section of people who are indulged in alternative thoughts visible to the other who are constantly in search of it out of their usual, mechanical and materialistic life. The ones who have accepted this reality of the existence of the other world which has an impact on their lives have given arise to the phenomenon of the New Age Tourism. The cultural pluralism has made every dimension of the human culture to transform into form of Tourism. The New Age tourism could be possibly placed as a form of Alternative tourism. As Sutton and House (2003) elucidates "The new age tourist is not only offered with the tangible product as part of the customary tourism

offerings but also the possible experience of a novel, exotic (Cohen 1974), life transforming and even sacred experience (MacCannell, 1976; Graburn 1989; Nash and Smith, 1991). The New Age tourism usually embraces some form of environmentalism (Frommer, 1988), community values (Murphy 1992) and constructive 'host and guest' (Smith, 1989) interactions (Eadington and Smith, 1992), takes the notion of social responsibility seriously (Krippendorf, 1987). Although it does not compete directly in the corporate, global market place, but rather occupies a niche market. Thus New Age tourism is, in part, a re-inflection of the ideologies encapsulated in antecedant counter-cultural movements, but also an interesting and important manifestation of a growing preoccupation with the self (identity tourism) and the environment (sustainable tourism) which are important currents within the postmodern cultural 'sea change' (Harvey 1989).

It's phenomenal to recognize the many facets and reflections of the New Age Tourism in realm of Post Modern way of thinking. The postmodern may be defined as a "a slowly emerging cultural transformation in Western societies, a change in sensibility" (Huyssens 1990:335). One such reflection is such that the Post modern way of being spiritual does not necessarily require belonging to any particular religion and to worship a single God. Parsons (1993) states the offering as 'psyco-logical alternative' to religion.

The technology is supposed to be connecting the one who is looking for the alternative form of experience with the one who actually is eligible to provide the same. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in its varied forms suggests the traveler where the possible product offerings are available to initiate an action. The ICT and internet in particular has been dramatically transforming the way the tourism industry operates. Online technologies within the tourism industry have significantly impacted on communications, transactions, and relationships between the various industry operators and with the customer, as well as between regulators and operators (Clayton & Criscuolo, 2002; Dogac et al., 2004; Galloway, Mochrie, & Deakins, 2004; Sharma, Carson, & DeLacy, 2000; Sheldon, 1998; Werthner & Klien, 1999; World Tourism Organisation, 1999).

It cannot be denied that there also exists a space outside this loop which is generated by the externality of the technology's "in-betweeness" (Floridi, 2013) i.e. the virtual space. In virtual space the experience surpasses reality. Right from the recommendation level by using Visual Travel Recommender Systems (V-TRS) (Ponnada, Jakkilinki & Sharda, 2007) till you virtually reach the place by using the Virtual Reality Applications (Gurau, 2007). The studies are constantly underway to replace the place variable with the Virtual reality techniques (Cooper & MacNeil, 2009).

Sutton and House (2003) signify this representation in their work as hyper reality. In the landscape of the postmodern the surface and quantity of experiences seems to have surpassed depth and quality. Thus, there is no need to visit the "real" India for an exotic experience; a hyperreal Anglicised experience of Indian culture is just as good. In New Age tourism the emphasis is on the *idea of the experience being experienced*: reality has disappeared in images. Thus, tourists can be in communion with Hindu gurus without having to endure the painstaking and challenging physical journeys involved in the 'real' thing; the experience of an image or representation, what Baudrillard calls a 'simulation', is just as real, indeed it is 'more real than real', that is 'hyperreal' (Baudrillard in Kellner 1989:68).

This shift has probably created the differentiation from the post modern tourists to New Age tourists. It is to understand this tangential affect of the technology and it's in-betweeness in retaining the destination's ability to cater to the niche segment of new age tourists. Though Virtual Tourism or Armchair Tourism concepts have long prevailed there in no alternate to the real travel feel and the present paper signifies the importance of physical journey to such exotic destination.

Studies have been underway to understand this interesting, life changing phenomenon (Pernecky, 2006) and the experiences of these travelers who visit places of spiritual importance to channel, dowse, meditate or tune into different life energies. These experiences carry a great importance to these spiritual travelers and they strongly feel the need to connect to these energies and to the land – having a sense of communicating with a higher source (Ateljevic, et al., 2007). The holistic conceptions of nature and the cosmos transform the ordinary place to an energized place. The phenomenon is associated with counter cultural movement which not only bequeaths an alternative lifestyle especially for the westerners with a greater emphasis on community, ecological sensitivity, holistic elements (Parsons, 1993) but also the philosophical and ritualistic sensitivity and spiritual inquisitiveness. This phenomenon is out of the context of positivist / post-positivist thoughts. This is an extraordinary phenomenon and has a major scope to be studied, explained and accepted when it is conceived through the Interpretivist point of view making the study more credible and contributing to the body of knowledge. The researcher's reflexivity is well considered as the subjective meanings are formed through the interaction in an attempt to reduce the effect of crisis of representation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF GOKARNA – AREA UNDER STUDY

Gokarna is a religious coastal town situated in the west -coast of Karnataka, India. As the name suggests 'Gokarn' in the destination's colloquial language of *Kannada* means 'ear of cow' as the place is said to be in that shape which is supported by the *Sthala Purana,* that is the scriptures which describes the place origin. Gokarna is geographically situated between the two rivers Shalmali Ganga or Gangavali on the North, The Aghanashini River in the South, Siddheshwara range of hillocks on the East and is Open to the Sea in the West. Gokarna is a significant place for Hindu adherents having the reference in the religious and mythological scriptures and now a popular beach destination for the tourists. Gokarna is a conjuring place with a hoary history and tradition which is traced back to thousands of years and absolutely stunning in the mists of myths and legends. The earliest reference to Gokarna is found in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It has been one of the holiest places and also an important cultural and tourist centre. Since ages, Gokarna has been revered as the most holy places. Every major *Purana* has extolled the religious and spiritual importance of Gokarna. It has the references in the earliest and major literary works and one such is *Kalidasa's Raghuvamsham.* This certainly makes Gokarna a land of legends.

Gokarna is well known for the *Mahabaleshwara* Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva which has the *'Athmalinga'* of Shiva which is situated few meters away from the sea shore. The Gokarna main beach is a predominant beach for the devotees who perform religious rituals on the shore and is also shared by the tourists. This is followed by the tourist and visitor centric beaches namely, Kudle beach, Om beach, Paradise beach and Half Moon beach. Gokarna records around 1.2 million domestic devotees and tourists as well as about 9,000 International Tourists every year. Gokarna have flourished as centre of religious and philosophical institu-tions. It has about 07 *Mathas,* the philosophical and spiritual learning centers established by the various religious institutions in area of 10.9 sq. Kms. Apart from the stated learning centers; Gokarna also has a Yoga Retreat Centre named Shankar Prasad Foundation which is run by an European domicile. Gokarna is indeed mystical. It's every grain of sand, every stone and the ocean lapping energetically on it's shore whisper the tales onto the inquisitive visitor.

New Age tourism is intimately connected with the desire for new, exotic and transformational experiences. Research reveals that the destinations which run the centres as New Age centres lend the human development activities as 'tourism products'. At these centres a variety of courses, activities and experiences are on offer ranging from; traditional 'hands on' or skills based workshops (hedge laying and wood turning); aesthetic development, (art, drama and music); formal scholarly learning, (including courses hosted by visiting New age spiritual and intellectual 'gurus'); experiential and personalised self-development, (courses on meditation, personal relationships and self knowledge); and finally, courses on alternative approaches to health and welfare including alternative treatments (Sutton and House, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is exploratory in nature. Descriptive statistics is privileged to state the preferences of the new age tourists. The Data collected as part of the doctoral thesis rendered the interesting insights which furthered the current study. A self-designed, semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 84 tourists at the beaches of Gokarna during December 2016 to March 2017 as part of the pilot study. The tourists' motivation to visit the place demonstrated the features of the New-Age Tourists. The response rate was 100%. Apart from the demographic information the questionnaire had 05 questions related to the objective of the study in the form of 5 point likert scale. The questionnaire was formulated in English and the translation as and when required, was provided by the researcher while collecting the data from the domestic tourists. The data collected was carefully handled and treated with PASW-22.0 (SPSS). To further the understanding of the tourist profiling, a qualitative technique of Word Association Test (WAT) was privileged to map the cognitive structures about the beaches of Gokarna.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	54	64.3	64.3
	Female	30	35.7	100
Tourist Category	Domestic	34	40.5	40.5
	International	50	59.5	100
Occupation	Entrepreneur	4	4.8	4.8
	Home-maker	8	9.5	14.3
	Govt employee	3	3.6	17.9
	Professional	37	44	61.9
	Farmer	2	2.4	64.3
	Student	4	4.8	69
	Retired	5	6	75
	Non-working	3	3.6	78.6
	Part-time	8	9.5	88.1
	Others	9	10.7	98.8
	Academician	1	1.2	100
Age	Under 24Yrs	7	8.3	8.3
	25-44Yrs	51	60.7	69
	45-64Yrs	24	28.6	97.6
	65+ Yrs	2	2.4	100

Table No.1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents. The data was collected on the beaches of Gokarna and the less representation of the female respondents was due to denial or where she was accompanied with the family, she preferred her children or or a male member of her family to respond to the questions. Other 35.7% of female respondents willingly took part in the survey. The over sampling for the international tourists were purposely done so as to emphasize group characteristics. It is interesting to find that 53.6% of the respondents were working professionals, 9.5% were the home-makers, 6% retired, 4,8% students and rest were either part time workers or were not working at all. The beach visits were largely undertaken by the age group of 25Yrs to 44Yrs which accounts to 60.7% of the total visitors. The age group is an ideal representation of the post-modern tourists.

TABLE 2: CRONBACH'S ALPHA RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR THE SCALE DATA

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.613	37

The table suggests the reliability statistics of the scales used in the study. The test of reliability had the Cronbach's Alpha Value of.613 which is acceptable for the self-designed questionnaire. Literature reviews for the beach usage pattern have indicated value above.50 is acceptable due to the varied responses and increased number of items which is unidirectional.

BEACH VISIT FREQUENCY AT GOKARNA

The study was done to understand the pattern of the repeat visitors and the first time visitors. It is crucial to have both set of visitors to keep the dynamics of the place alive. Studying the first time visits and the profiling will assist in better understanding the source markets.

GRAPH 1: THE BEACH VISIT FREQUENCY OF THE TOURISTS
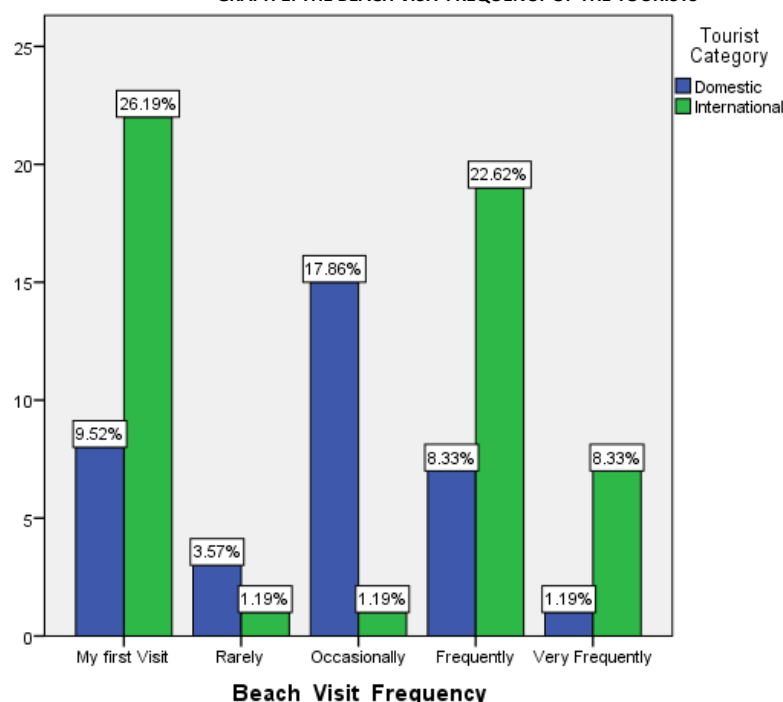
Graph 1 displays the visitor frequency to the beaches of Gokarna. While the place has been visited by the domestic devotees and tourists since the ages, the foreign tourists first arrived to Gokarna around 1975. The first ones to arrive were the French and the Germans. It took around a decade for the others to follow. Gokarna is visited almost frequently by the foreign tourists which states they visit on a yearly basis at least. Significant percentage of tourists (9.52%) visit very

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frequently to the beaches of Gokarna. Gokarna sees slightly more of the repeat visits than that of the first time visits. Yet, the number of visitor to Gokarna is steadily increasing over the period of time. Further explanation to the visit trend is provided in the graph 2 below.

GRAPH 2: THE BEACH VISIT TIME OF THE TOURISTS
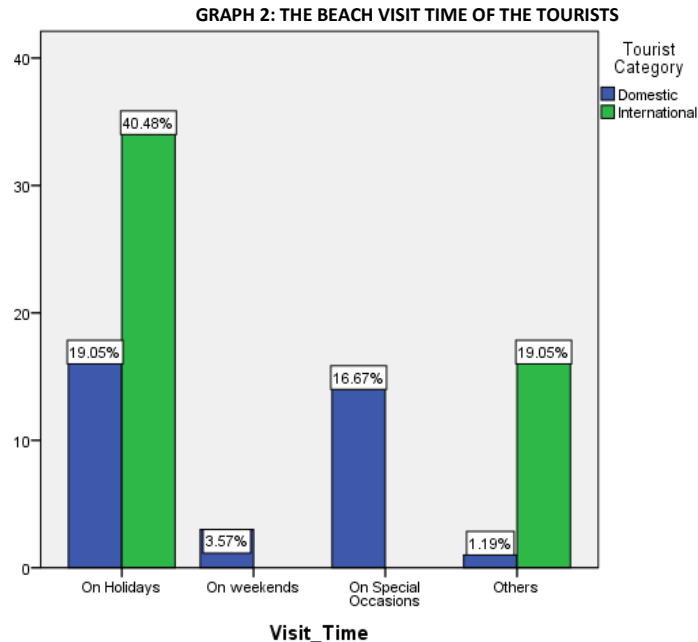
The numbers of International visitors (40.48%) are more on the holidays than compared to the domestic tourists. The reasons are quite obvious as the domestic tourists who hail from within Karnataka state they usually visit on the special occasions i.e. Gokarna is very well known and vibrant during the *Mahashivaratri* a day dedicated to Lord Shiva. The town turns lively and vibrant and thus pulls a large number of devotees. Domestic Tourists usually avoid this time as it will be flocked by the devotees. There will also be acute shortages of the accommodation during this time and the room rates usually soar upto INR 8,000 per roon night!. As this falls in the month of February, it's the ideal time for the International tourists. Many of them especially plan their visit during the Mahashivaratri as the Car festival is one of the major attractions. The beach shores are aptly used to showcase the local intangible culture which includes the classical music and dance performances by the locals, revered artists within and outside Karnataka.

The beaches of Gokarana are revered and regarded to the Ganges of the North. Thus Gokarna is known as the *Mukti Kshetra,* where many of the domestic devotees come to pay the last rites to their elders or the ones who have passed away. Hence they visit during the special occasions.

The trend of the weekend getaways has increased in the domestic tourists since 2015. The working professionals (3.57%) tend to visit Gokarna in the weekends. The 19,5% of the other responses from the foreign tourists is due to the Seasonality at their home country. Many Scandinavian Visitors come down to Gokarna while it's the extreme winters there and and the chilled weather hardly gifts thems 3-4 Hrs of sunlight. The international tourists who are Part-time workers also have their own time schedule to visit Gokarna.

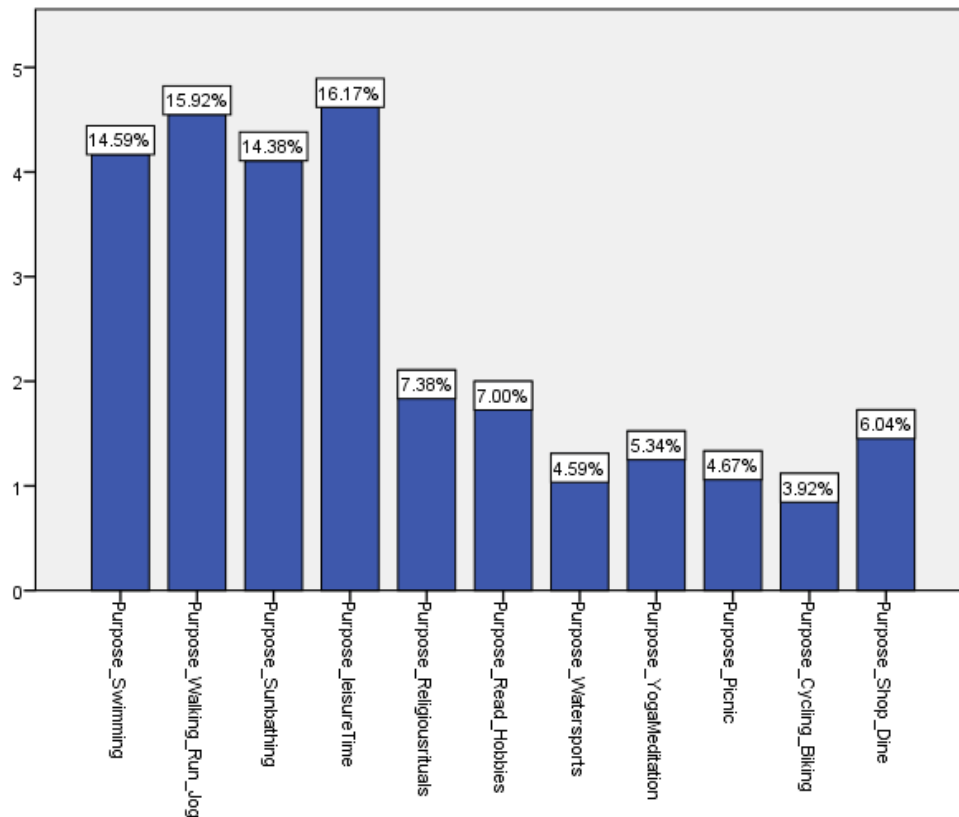**ACTIVITIES ON THE BEACH**

The study has revealed interesting usage patterns by the tourists. The Graph 3 represents the range of activities indulged by the domestic and international visitors on the beaches of Gokarna.

GRAPH 3: THE ACTIVITIES
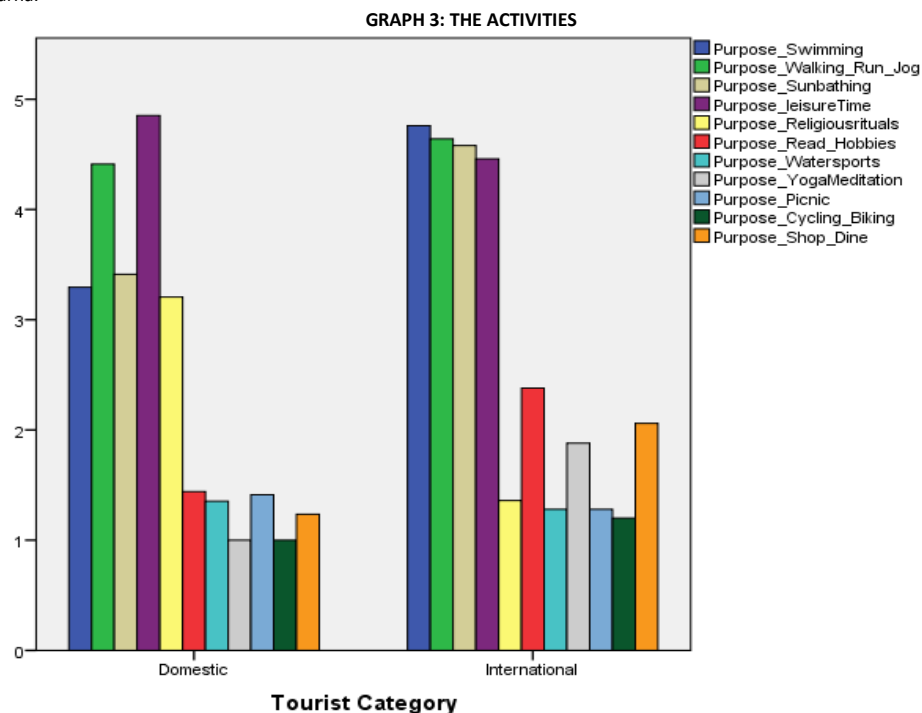
While the activities involved relate to the usual activity pattern of the previous studies such as swimming, walking, running, sunbathing, picnicking, cycling and spending the time in leisure. The Study indicated that highest involved activities were, spending time in leisure and walking which accounts for 30% of the tourists. The other 28% of the tourists were involved in Swimming and Sunbathing. 4.59% tourists especially International tourists had specifically come for Surfing and water sports.

GRAPH 4: TOURISTS INVOLVED IN RELIGIOUS RITUALS, READING, YOGA AND MEDITATION

(Graph 4) The peculiar activity which is very unique to the beaches of Gokarna is the religious rituals which happen on the beach. 28.45% of the domestic tourists stated that they indulge in religious rituals on the beach i.e. to pay salutation to sun, to revere the ones who have passed away by performing the puja on the shore, to pay homage to the Sea by having *samudra snana,* i.e. to have a holy dip in the sea and by offering flowers or by making *Shivalinga* in sand and worship the same. *Samudra Snana* is also recommended to the children or the ones who have certain *doshas by* the priests*,* to eliminate any bad omens. A significant 12.07% of International tourists also mentioned their purpose as religious rituals. Though the main temple is barred for the entry to the international tourists, their interest in the religious rituals and the philosophy is appealing. They are often seen shaping a *Shivalinga* out of the sand and worship the same. The Ashrams present in Gokarna fulfill the philosophical need of the international tourists. About 7% of the International tourists involve in reading the philosophical texts and mythologies related to the Hindu belief and are evident on the shores. 16.69% of International tourists use the shores for meditating and to practice Yoga early in the morning or during the sunset and no domestic tourists use the shore for meditation and Yoga was recorded.

This clearly indicates the characteristics of the new Age tourists who are in constant search of the alternative way of living and India is the most sought destination for finding the alternative life style. Gokarna thus has been serving the tourists who have inclination towards philosophy and religion.

PURPOSE OF VISIT

The above activities indicated are further categorized by investigating the principal purpose of their visit to the beaches of Gokarna. Graph 5 indicates the primary purpose of the visit.

GRAPH 5: TOURISTS' PRIMARY PURPOSE OF VISIT
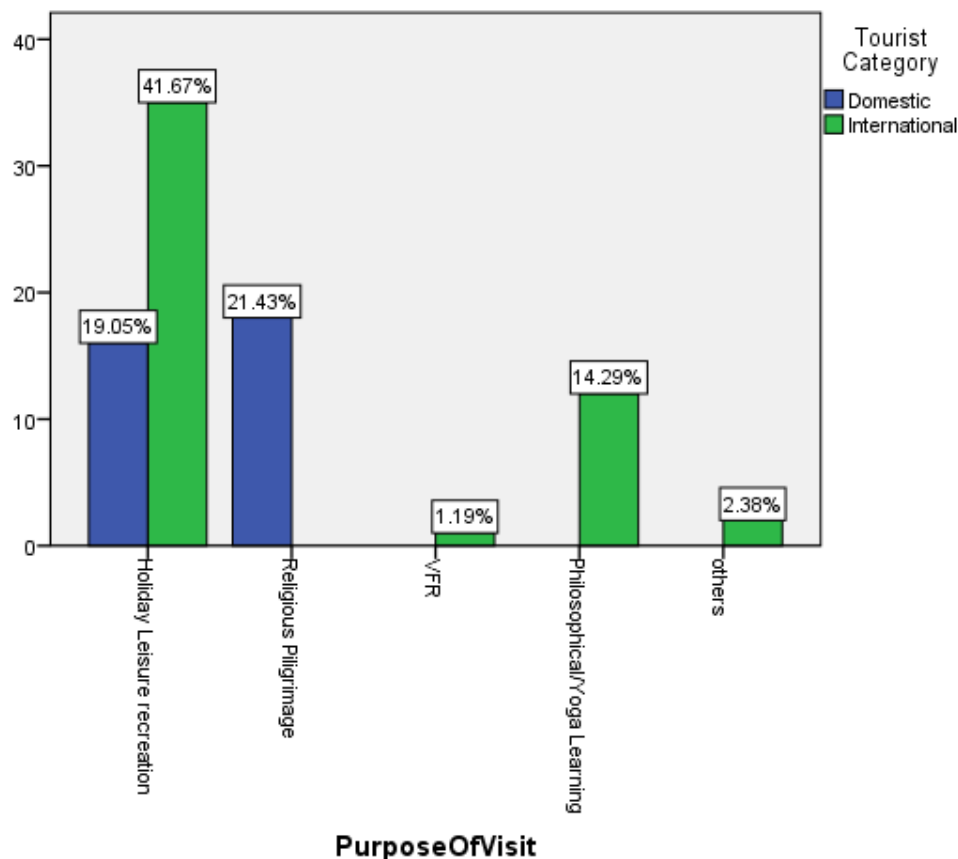
While the majority of the international tourists (41.67%) state their primary purpose to be leisure and recreation, 19.05% of the domestic tourists indicate the leisure purpose about 21.43% state religious and pilgrimage as their purpose of visit. The number of religious tourist's outcast the number of leisure tourists. Though international tourists involved in religious rituals on the shore, none of the tourist's prime purpose was recorded as religious. Rather, 14.29% of the international tourists stated their prime purpose to visit to Gokarna was Philosophical and related to Yoga and Meditation. It's interesting to note that International tourists (1.19%) stated visiting friends and relatives as their purpose and the friends they have made is the locals who have warmly welcomed them over the decades. This is a significant learning from the study that the tourism has created bridges to get along with the other cultures here at Gokarna. This is the most sought requirement of a postmodern traveler with a new age requirement.

BEACH IMAGE USING WORD ASSOCIATION TEST (WAT)
To map the underlying structures about how the tourists, relate to the beaches of Gokarna, Psychoanalytic approach was used. The tourists were advised to project the words which come to their mind when they visualize or hear Gokarna beach. Three words were recorded by each respondent. The words which easily come to their mind at the very beginning could be rated of high importance to form the beach image which would further indicate the environment prevailed. The study indicated that there was no significant pause for the first word but the second and the third word demanded considerable amount of pause. The odd associations were also recorded by some. The words which evidently proclaim the destination to be the New Age destination is listed in the table no. 3 below.

TABLE 3: WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BEACHES OF GOKARNA AND THE FREQUENCY

Sacred (f=15)	Pilgrims (f=10)	Forefathers (f=12)	Nature (f=10)	Foreign Tourists (f=15)
Energy (f=8)	Culture (f=8)	Athmalinga (f=6)	Philosophical (f=5)	Rituals (f=5)
Peace (f=5)	Clean water	Free	Low Profile	Knowledge
Phenomenal	Mythic	Shiva	Holistic	Yoga
Meditation	Music	Stress free	Prayer	Om
Priests	Divinity	Satisfaction	Other World	Chats
Tranquil	Calm	Magical	Festivities	Emotions
Trees	Full of life	Endless	Fresh	Small is beautiful
Ancient Temple	Waves	Surf	India	*Purana* (Legends)
Harvest	Detox	Pure	Positivity	Welcoming
Life	Breeze	Home	Serene	Inspiration
Sand Linga	Sunset	Relaxing	Holiday	Undisturbed
Nature	pristine	Sand	Space	Relief
Beautiful	Good People	Fun	Scenic	Adventure

The table records the words associated with the beaches of Gokarna. While the concept of New Age Tourism revolves around the extraordinary experiences and the encounters with the reality, the projections made by the respondents go well with the literature reviewed. As the beaches remind everyone of a sunset, sand and the sea the beaches of Gokarna remind the New Age tourists and the adherent pilgrim, the Sanctity of the place. The word, Sacred, Culture, Rituals, Pilgrims have occurred more than any other words. The words Energy, Phenomenal, Holistic, Divinity, Other World, Magical and Philosophical make the place adorned. These descriptions rarely describe a beach destination but Gokarna has made its presence significant by offering its product beyond the senses.

FINDINGS
The Study highlights the diverging needs of the post modern travellers and the peculiar experiences they long for which has led to the New Age and the New Age Travellers. The paper also highlights how the advancing technology might affect the experience factor for the post modern tourists as well as what to be conceived

pragmatically while the New Age tourists are catered. The proposition of Gokarna as the New Age destination and the indicators of the phenomenon is studied through the survey. The survey findings could be summarized as

- Gokarna has been the most sought destination for the repeated visits as 35.71% of the tourists are the first time visitors and 64.29% of the tourists are the repeat visitors.
- While the International Tourists arrival is clearly segregated between holidays (40.48%) and others (19.05%) the Domestic tourists are ideally distributed equally during special occasions (16.67%), holidays (19.05%) and others during the weekends (3.57%)
- Apart from the usual activities of swimming, walking, running, sunbathing, picnicking, cycling and spending the time in leisure on the beach, Gokarna beaches are peculiarly marked with the activities of religious purposes and rituals (7.38%), Reading the philosophical texts and others (7%) and Yoga and Meditation (5.34%)
- The 21.43% of domestic tourists' prime purpose to visit Gokarna is for religious purpose followed by 5,95% of International Tourists
- Significantly 8.33% of international tourists prime purpose to visit Gokarna is Philosophical learning or to learn Yoga and Meditation
- International tourists by their repeated visits have developed friends in Gokarna and their prime purpose to Visit Gokarna has been recorded as Visiting Friends
- The Word Association Test (WAT) has demonstrated how the place has been phenomenal in its offerings and experiences.

The study convincingly recommends that Gokarna could be promoted as a new age destination for the new age tourists who seek philosophical and life experiences. This will assist the destination to retain its core offerings while being an impetus for the sustainable growth and development.

CONCLUSION

Previous studies have stated that to date, the world's most industrialized nations have generated the greatest percentage of tourists which have made Germans, Americans, French, Japanese, Swiss and Swedish as frequent travelers and the same results are obtained from the study above.

The post modern travellers choice has been divergent and away from the ordinary and at Gokarna this has rather become a complementing sect of the tourists. While the tourism mostly affects the indigenous culture and the way of life over the period of time, here it could be seen as an opportunity to highlight and offer the New Age niche experience. The society always undergoes a pervasive need for change in terms of modernization and Tourism in Gokarna has been that positive stimulus to bring in the technological up gradations.

Unlike Postmodernists, New Age incredulity stops short of the natural. New Ager tourists possess a very real concept of nature in which the natural is a domain in which eternal truth and personal authenticity reside. It would be beneficial to limit the task of virtual reality approaches to inform and showcase the potential tourist the available market and attractions. As Sutton and House (2003) proposes, it should be well understood that on the horizon of the postmodern landscape, a New Age of tourism is dawning: New Age tourism for New Age people.

The postmodernism is characterized by the blurring of boundaries between true and false, fact and fiction. This disappearance has caused the problems over the period of time. Consumption and instant gratification has been the pattern. This could create serious consequences of making post modern tourism activity a typical activity. While the tourists are more concerned with the experience and not the setting, this creeps in the commodification of the experiences as well. The very reason of the post modern tourism was to satisfy that nostalgic desire of the glorious past through tangible and intangible offerings of New Age centres. This offering should not be replaced by the virtual offerings. The representation should not take over the reality. While the destinations are fully equipped to propose the realities, the same has to be sustained so that it does not get converted into mere representation of the originality. A Strategic planning and futuristic sustained development would help in creating the New Age Experience which in turn would benefit in sustaining destination's unique offerings.

LIMITATIONS

The data was collected as part of the pilot study of the doctoral thesis hence the limited sample size might affect the external validity of the study. Yet, the efforts are made to capture the group specific data to understand the beach usage pattern. The case being specific to Gokarna, there is no attempt of generalization put forth.

SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

A dedicated study with a purposive sampling on the New Age Tourists who are inclined towards philosophical learning and life experiences would disseminate interesting insights on their preferences and choices.

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