# Taj Mahal’s visitor satisfaction

Agra is the city of the inimitable Taj Mahal. It was the Mughals who nurtured Agra with the finest monuments architects could design. Agra has a reputation of being one of the hottest towns in India; hottest as both a tourist destination and in terms of temperature.

Taj Mahal is one of the Seven Wonders of the World and a World Heritage Site. This coveted title is granted by United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jahan, the fifth Mughal ruler, in the memory of his beloved queen Arjumand Banu Begam known as Muntaz-uz-Zamanin or Muntaz Mahal. The majestic, beautifully proportioned mausoleum and other structural elements of the Taj Mahal complex took 17 years to build, from 1631 to 1648, employing twenty thousand workers.

The Taj Mahal represents the finest architectural and artistic achievement through perfect harmony and excellent craftsmanship in a whole range of Indo-Islamic sepulchral architecture. Due to heavy crowds visiting the site, a lot of problems have surfaced, including pollution, over-crowding, the degradation of an historic site and irritation due to tourist behaviour. Therefore, this study emphasises the satisfaction level experienced by the tourists who visited Taj Mahal on different aspects of their visit. In fact, the success of the tourism industry depends on the level of satisfaction experienced by tourists. The tourists will be satisfied when they are offered quality services and warm hospitality.

Satisfied travellers will be pleased to tell friends and relatives about the commendable attitudes and manners of the operators and the workforce at a tourist spot in dealing with them.

# Tourist influx at the Taj Mahal

The Taj attracts large numbers of tourists every year. In 2006, total tourists were about 25 lakhs (hundred thousand) including 5 lakhs foreigners, whereas in 2011, the number was doubled, which includes 6.8 lakhs foreigners, registering an overall growth by 110% in last 5 years. Due to this crowd, a lot of environmental stress is being observed within the premises of site, despite the best efforts being made by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). (Vishal, Vardhal, Amruta, Swapnil, & Rao, 2016)

More foreign tourists were observed during the cooler months, from October to February, whereas Indian tourists were observed more during vacations in summer

(May to June) and during Dusshera- Diwali- Christmas period (October to December). This is based on the total number of the tickets sold, taking into account that children younger than 15 and school tours are also welcomed free of charge. During peak times, more than 50,000 Indian and foreign tourists visit Taj Mahal daily. During the Urs Festival in February 2012, the number of tourists ranged between 1.5 to 1.8 lakhs per day.

Previously tourists were allowed to pay homage at the main mausoleum, which is situated 20 feet below the super structure. The movement of large numbers of tourists resulted in high humidity in the chamber (main mausoleum) and water droplets were observed flowing down the chamber walls. This phenomenon has been considered as one of the most serious concerns affecting the interior and original inlay work, which needs to be protected against manmade activities including tourists.

# Short facts about the Taj Mahal

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|  | Interesting facts |
| 1 | The false tombs are the only non-symmetrical aspects of the Taj Mahal. |
| 2 | The Taj Mahal was declared a World Heritage Site in 1983. |
| 3 | The influx of tourists poses many challenges for the upkeep of the site. |

The Taj Mahal complex was built in perfect symmetry. The building, in white marble, is perfectly balanced with the same number of domes and minarets to either side of the main dome. The red sandstone mosque is also perfectly balanced by the Jawab.

The number four and its multiples were used to design the gardens, and the gardens are also perfectly symmetrical. The canals and fountains in the gardens surrounding the main building flow as a result of clever engineering using the force of gravity in such a way that the water always flows but there are no pumps used.

Although tourism may pose challenges to the upkeep of the Taj Mahal it also provides the funds for its restoration and upkeep. The Taj Mahal was little visited before the late 1800s and there was some damage to this exceptional building. It was the growing interest from tourists that prompted the appreciation and restoration of this unique site.

# Taj Mahal Timings and Tickets

The Taj Mahal remains open every day from sunrise to sunset. However, it is closed every Friday to anyone not attending prayers at the mosque.

The fees:

1. Agra Taj Mahal
2. Adult – INR 750
3. Child – INR 350
4. Family of 4 – INR 2000
5. Agra Fort
6. Akbar's Tomb
7. Fatehpur Sikri

Itimad-Ud-Dulah's Tomb - is made up of charges from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Agra Development Board (ADA). The entry ticket to Taj Mahal costs, out of which INR 500 is a special ADA ticket. It gives you savings on the other four sights when visited on the same day. It will save you INR 50 at Agra Fort and INR 10 each at the other three monuments. You can buy this ADA ticket from any of the five sites.

# Graph/Chart

# About Taj Mahal

Weather: 17° C

Time Required: 2 hours

Open Time: Sunrise to Sunset. Closed on Friday.

Cost: Foreigners: INR 1000,

Citizens of SAARC and BIMSTEC countries: INR 530,

Indians: INR 40,

Free entry for children below 15 years.

*Adapted from https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/mini-taj-maker-faizul-hasan-qadri-dies-in-up-hit-and-run-1945363*