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## Wellness Tourism: An Empirical Study on Tourists Motivation

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### Piali Haldar

G L Bajaj Institute of Management and Research, Greater Noida

For further information, please contact Dr. Piali Haldar: [Pialihaldar@gmail.com](mailto:Pialihaldar@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*In modern society, work and leisure are two major part of daily life. People choose vacation destination to get wholesome and pleasure. The youth as well as experienced travelers look for niche tourism setting and encourage the business community to develop new products to enrich travel experience. Unlike universal offerings prevalent to the mass travel products, unique leisure initiatives are gaining popularity for those individuals longing for the enriching experiences. In general, from the last decades, ecotourism, agri-tourism, alternative tourism, sport tourism and healthcare tourism were promoted as a fashion product of tourism.*

*In the last few years, scope of wellness tourism gained popularity in developing countries due to recent health issues such as obesity, heart diseases, cancer and other lifestyle diseases. The wellness tourism initiatives imbedding a health tag both body and mind. Health has been always important among individuals for state of wellness. In western countries, lodging facilities are used as wellness center, either as wellness center or wellness hotel or wellness resort. They positioned themselves as a rejuvenating center for body, mind and spirit.*

*The wellness tourism is also gaining popularity in India, the spiritual gurus as well as hospitality industries are in process to promote wellness tourism in India. Wellness tourism is promoted as preventive measures for living healthy, while the health tourism caters the segment seeking treatment of illness. Since there is scarcity of research on wellness tourism in India, this research aims to provide the underlying motivations factors influence a traveler to while choosing place of visit, destinations, facilities which renders wellness services that enhance the state of well-being of mind, body and spirit.*

**Keywords:** *Wellness tourism, health, leisure, motivation, push and pull*

### Introduction

Wellness tourism was projected to be \$808 billion by 2020 with an annual growth rate of 7.5% (GWI, 2018). Wellness tourism is one of important sector of the wellness economy, it comprises of organisations which empower people to incorporate wellness behaviour, activities, habits and lifestyle (GWI, 2018). Tourist particularly in developing countries are more concerned about the travel experience and its impact on their mind, body and spirit i.e., health and quality of life, followed by its impact on environment i.e., passion for environment protection and impact on economy of host country. Thus, tourists always look for variety of experiences while deciding vacation destinations of interest.

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owing to health issues like obesity, heart diseases, cancer and other lifestyle diseases. The wellness tourism initiatives imbedding a health tag both body and mind. Health has been positioned on helping individuals' state of wellness. The wellness tourism is to promote a preventive measure for living healthy while the health tourism is catering the segment seeking treatment of illness. Thus, the indistinctness between health tourism and wellness tourism might be unseparated. The common wellness activities are spa, body massage, body pampering, healthy gourmet meal fitness class and in minority alternative clinical treatment (such as aquatic therapy). In western countries, wellness centers, wellness hotels, and wellness resorts are emerging as a new place of attraction, they are positioning themselves as a rejuvenation center for body, mind and spirit.

Due to the paucity of research on travelers and tourist's interest in joining wellness tourism, this research intended to provide the underlying factors motivations an individual to choose a place of visit, destinations, facilities which renders wellness services that improve the state of well-being of mind, body and spirit. This study is exploratory in nature and the research question is to explore what motivate an individual towards wellness tourism. The tourism industries as well as researchers are interested to explore factors influencing individual's aspiration to have a wellness related holiday, which remain untapped. This study will focus on identifying the factors motivating an individual towards well tourism.

### **The Purpose of Study**

This paper made an attempt to identify the factors motivating the tourist towards wellness trip. Since the concepts of wellness tourism proposes a phenomenon which enhance personal wellness for the people who are traveling to rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit. The specific purpose of this study are as follows:

The first identify the push and pull factors that motivating the travelers' choice of wellness tourist destination.

The second objective is to rank the push and pull factors that motivating the travelers' choice of wellness tourist destination.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Wellness Tourism**

Dunn (1959) coined the term 'wellness' by combination of two words 'well-being' and 'fitness'. It has been defined as an individual, many-sided, interdisciplinary expression for the human need for health and well-being. The scientific definition of wellness stands for a person or an individual lifestyle, where an individual recognised their tensions and anxieties and they deal with mental, emotional, social and physical needs proactively. American doctor Halbert Dunn further developed this concept in 1959; He mentioned that it is comprise of well-being of body, spirit and mind. While Ardell (1977, 1986) conceptualized wellness as a state of health featuring the harmony of body, spirit and mind, the key elements of wellness are self-responsibilities, fitness/beauty treatment, healthy food, meditation, relaxation, intellectual activity/learning, with an emphasis on environmental compassion and social relationships. Wellness tourism is basically different from health tourism, and the difference between these two lies with the services used by guests. The services are free and the tourist activities are not

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financed by social insurance (Ardell D., 1985). According to Mueller and Lanz-Kaufmann (2001) wellness tourism is “a combination of all relations and phenomena caused by journey and residence, where the primary motive of tourists is to accumulate or promote their health”, Lanz-Kaufmann (2002) defined wellness as an individual having healthy body, mind and soul in harmony. Wellness tourism also include different types of recreation like spa, tracking, hiking, swimming (Smith & Puczko, 2009), as well as experiences related to enjoying nature like spending time in coastal area, forest, lake, river, landscape, mountain, etc. The tourism contribute completely to the wellness and well-being of tourists is wellness tourism. Wellness tourism includes challenging outdoor sports, walking through woods, enjoying nature. Relaxation, pursuing multiple activities, recreation, and enjoying nature are identified as the top four motivations for traveling to a wellness destination (Chen et al., 2008). Smith and Puczko (2009) stated that fitness activities, medical treatments, life mentoring, relaxing at luxury spas, theme parks or water activities, or meditation or spiritual activities motivate tourist towards wellness activities. Wellness tourism is also defined as “the sum of all the relationships resulting from a journey by people whose motive, in whole or in part, is to maintain or promote their health and well-being, and who stay at least one night at a facility that is specifically designed to enable and enhance people’s physical, psychological, spiritual and/or social well-being” (Voigt et al., 2011). The tourist normally demands for four types of actions: fitness activities and beauty treatments, nutritious food, relaxation and meditation, and intellectual learning activities or education. Tourists also request therapeutic services.

The idea of wellness, as it was comprehended, with a purpose to prevent illness and promoting health. While medical treatment leads to an initiative to maintain individual health. According to Brooker & Joppe (2014) wellness tourism aims people who are proactive and interested in maintaining their health by offering them treatments like spas or therapy. GWI (2018) defined wellness tourism where people who are proactive towards their health seek experience to maintain or improve their overall health, while in medical tourism people are reactive towards their health problems who normally travel to receive high quality treatment at a lower cost.

Wellness tourism is an escalating niche market globally, providing business opportunities through products that promote and maintain health (Rodrigues et al., 2010). Wellness tourism is expected to grow due to a number of reasons, like ageing world population, increasing public awareness towards health issues, funding issues in conventional medical systems (Voight & Pforr, 2014). Wellness tourism normally targets healthy people with a proactive interest in maintaining or enhancing their health, looking for treatments at spas or therapy establishments (Brooker & Joppe, 2014; Rodrigues et al., 2010).

The wellness tourism is gaining popularity due to desire for healthy lifestyle, spa tourism is also the subset of wellness tourism, in early 1980s, spa tourism defines that a programme which improve an individual’s health and fitness through fun, exercise, balanced nutritious diet, relaxation, and meditation. Wellness elements include physical activities, nutritious diet, food supplements, healthy lifestyle and spiritual practices. Thus, the elements of wellness are holistic, naturopathic, alternative, aboriginal. Eastern medical practices/therapies meets the demand for fitness, healthy lifestyle, nutrition, healing, and solving personal problems like stress and depression.

Thus, aim of wellness is to increase one’s quality of life, achieve and maintain good health, and happiness. Thus, wellness tourism will improve the healthcare system and social

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developments.

### **Motivation**

Motivations are inner drives that influence an individual to take action to satisfy his/her needs (Hudson, 2008). According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, an individual will be motivated towards wellness tourism, if the individual gets satisfied with his/her primary needs like food and second order need safety and then next higher needs like the need for love, esteem and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943), then one get motivated towards wellness tourism. Although this theory has been acknowledged and used to explain travel behavior, lots of researchers pondered that this theory is inappropriate for explaining tourist motivation (Witt and Wright, 1992 in Chang, 2007).

The previous research on tourism motivation reveals that an individual is either "push" or "pull" into travelling (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981). Push factors refer to internal motives that motivate or create a desire to satisfy a need to travel are linked to internal factors like desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, social interaction etc, while pull factors which are recognized as destination attributes and can be divided into three groups are external motives like attributes of the destination, infrastructure, natural heritage etc (Lubbe, 2003).

The most widely applied theory in the field of tourism is push and pull motivation theory, popularly known as push and pull factors theory (Crompton, 1979; Kim et al., 2003; Awaritefe, 2004; Crompton, 1979; Dunne et al, 2007; Hallab et al., 2003; Heung et al., 2001; Jönsson and Devonish, 2008; Kozak, 2002; Lubbe, 2003; McGehee, et al.1996; Uysal and Jurowski, 1993; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Push and pull factors describe how individuals are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions and how they are pulled or attracted by destination attributes.

### **Research Methodology**

This research used qualitative research method to identify the factors and examine the factors motivating travelers towards wellness center, resort and destination. To identify the factors of motivation literature review was conducted from the peer reviewed journals published in English. Quantative research method is used to examine the factors motivating travelers towards wellness center, resort and destination. Convenience sampling was used to collect data from resident of NCR region, the survey was carried out with 350 respondents from different age group interest in wellness tourism. This study collected data using self-administered questionnaire designed to gain information regarding the motivation to participate in wellness tourism activities. The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the literature review in English; there were 10 items for push factor and 15 items for pull factor. Each item of the questionnaire was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Further, to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, limited demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and occupation was asked from the participants.

**Results and Discussion**

**The Demographic Profile of Respondents**

A total of 350 questionnaires were used for data analysis. 65 percent of the respondents were male and rests were female. 36 percent of the responses were from the aged group less than 25 years old, followed by 31 percent from age group 26-46 years old, 23 percent from age group 46-65 years and 10 percent respondents were above 60 years. 45 percent of them are married and rests of them were single. 34 percent of the respondents were unemployed, 36 were self-employed and rests were service. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents.

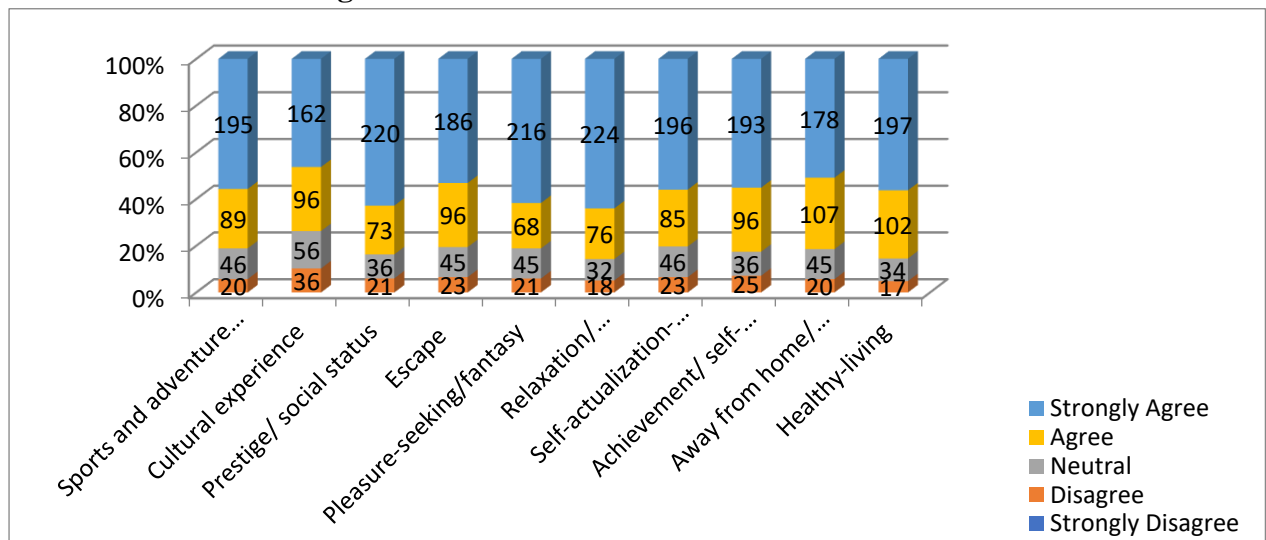
**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents**

Measure	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	228	65
	Female	122	35
Age	Less than 25 years	126	36
	26-45	109	31
	46-65	79	23
	More than 66 years	36	10
Marital Status	Married	158	45
	Single	192	55
Occupation	Unemployed	119	34
	Self-employed	126	36
	Service	105	30

**Motivation Attribute of Push Factor**

Figure 1 shows the 10 motivation attributes of push factor. The mean of each item shown in Table 2 clearly indicate that most of the respondents agreed that indulging in wellness tourism is a way to experience positive change and happiness.

**Figure 1 Push Factor - Motivation Attribute**



**Table 2 Push Factor - Mean of each Motivation Attribute**

S.No.	Motivation Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1	Sports and adventure /exploration/ nature	0	20	46	89	195	4.31
2	Cultural experience	0	36	56	96	162	2.87
3	Prestige/ social status	0	21	36	73	220	3.08
4	Escape	0	23	45	96	186	2.99
5	Pleasure-seeking/fantasy	0	21	45	68	216	3.06
6	Relaxation/ physiological-tension-reducing	0	18	32	76	224	3.11
7	Self-actualization-cultural/education	0	23	46	85	196	3.01
8	Achievement/ self-reward	0	25	36	96	193	3.01
9	Away from home/ isolation and nostalgia	0	20	45	107	178	2.99
10	Healthy-living	0	17	34	102	197	3.06

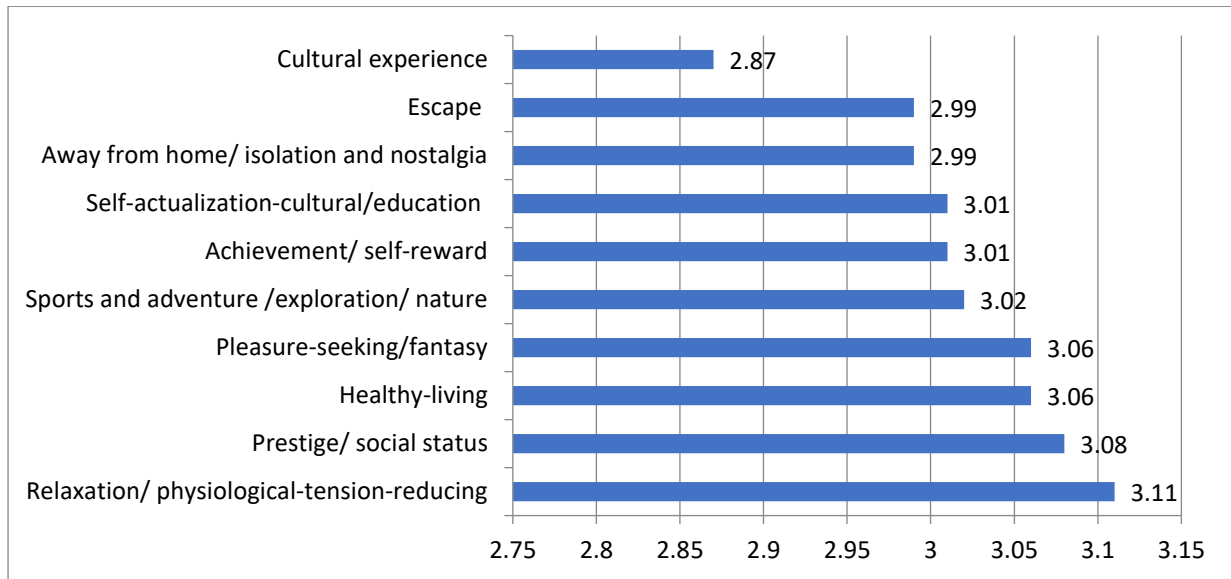
**Ranking of Motivation Attribute of Push Factor**

Table 3 shows the ranking 10 motivation attributes of push factor. The result of the study indicates that relaxation/ physiological-tension-reducing is most important attribute and cultural experience is least important attribute the respondent considers while deciding wellness destination illustrated in Figure 2.

**Table 3 Ranking of Motivation Attribute of Push Factor**

S. No.	Motivation Attributes		Ranking
1	Relaxation/ physiological-tension-reducing	3.11	1
2	Prestige/ social status	3.08	2
3	Healthy-living	3.06	3
4	Pleasure-seeking/fantasy	3.06	4
5	Sports and adventure /exploration/ nature	3.02	5
6	Achievement/ self-reward	3.01	6
7	Self-actualization-cultural/education	3.01	7
8	Away from home/ isolation and nostalgia	2.99	8
9	Escape	2.99	9
10	Cultural experience	2.87	10

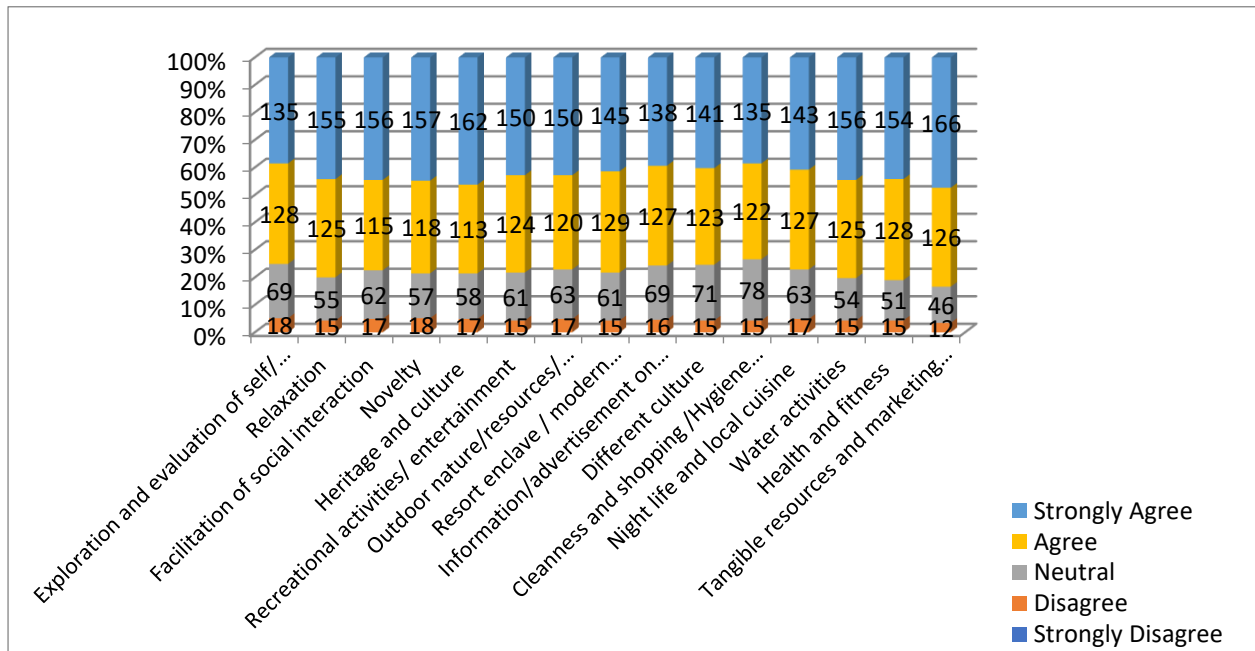
**Figure 2 Ranking of Motivation Attribute of Push Factor**



**Motivation Attribute of Pull Factor**

Figure 3 shows the 15 motivation attributes of pull factors. Similar to push factor, the mean of each item given in Table 4 clearly indicate that most of the respondents agreed that indulging in wellness tourism is a way to experience positive change and happiness.

**Figure 3 Pull Factor - Motivation Attribute**



**Table 4 Pull Factor - Mean of each Motivation Attribute**

.No	Motivation Attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1	Exploration and evaluation of self/ self-development	0	18	69	128	135	2.86
2	Relaxation	0	15	55	125	155	2.94
3	Facilitation of social interaction	0	17	62	115	156	2.92
4	Novelty	0	18	57	118	157	2.93
5	Heritage and culture	0	17	58	113	162	2.94
6	Recreational activities/ entertainment	0	15	61	124	150	2.92
7	Outdoor nature/resources/ rural/inexpensive areas	0	17	63	120	150	2.91
8	Resort enclave / modern atmospheres and activities	0	15	61	129	145	2.88
9	Information/advertisement on destination.	0	16	69	127	138	2.87
10	Different culture	0	15	71	123	141	2.88
11	Cleanness and shopping /Hygiene and the environment	0	15	78	122	135	2.85
12	Night life and local cuisine	0	17	63	127	143	2.89
13	Water activities	0	15	54	125	156	2.94
14	Health and fitness	0	15	51	128	154	2.93
15	Tangible resources and marketing image	0	23	78	126	123	2.8

**Ranking of Motivation Attribute of Pull Factor**

Table 5 shows the ranking 15 motivation attributes of pull factor. The result of the study indicate that water activities is most important attribute and tangible resources and marketing image is least important attribute the respondent consider while deciding wellness destination illustrated in Figure 4.

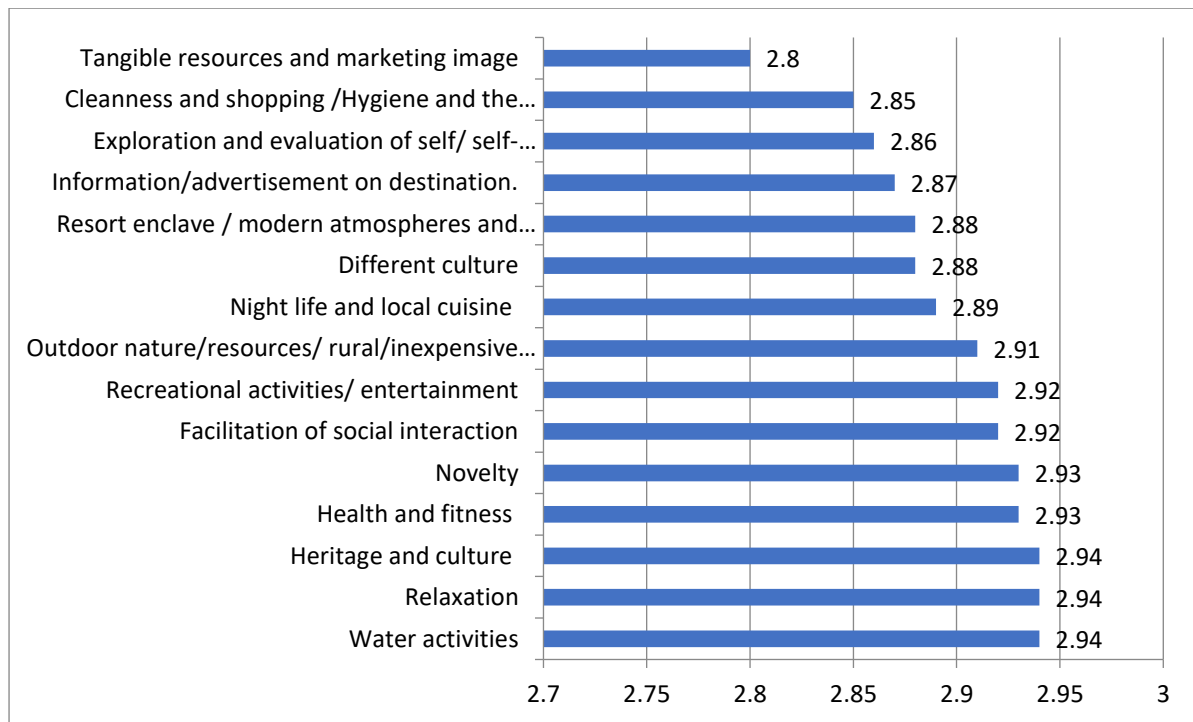
**Table 5 Pull Factor- – Ranking of Motivation Attribute**

S. No.	Motivation Attributes	Mean	Ranking
1	Water activities	2.94	1
2	Relaxation	2.94	2
3	Heritage and culture	2.94	3



4	Health and fitness	2.93	4
5	Novelty	2.93	5
6	Facilitation of social interaction	2.92	6
7	Recreational activities/ entertainment	2.92	7
8	Outdoor nature/resources/ rural/inexpensive areas	2.91	8
9	Night life and local cuisine	2.89	9
10	Different culture	2.88	10
11	Resort enclave / modern atmospheres and activities	2.88	11
12	Information/advertisement on destination.	2.87	12
13	Exploration and evaluation of self/ self-development	2.86	13
14	Cleanness and shopping /Hygiene and the environment	2.85	14
15	Tangible resources and marketing image	2.80	15

**Figure 4 Pull Factor - Ranking of Motivation Attribute**



**Conclusion**

The current study reveals that desire to visit wellness destination is increasing due to many reasons like stress, hectic daily life, increasing cost of medication and living healthy life. On the basis of the result, it is concluded that both the motivation factors i.e., push factor and pull factor affect the response decision to visit wellness destination. Based on the results, the following motivation attributes of push factor are relaxation/ physiological-tension-reducing, prestige/ social status, healthy-living, pleasure-seeking/fantasy, sports and adventure /exploration/ nature, achievement/ self-reward, self-actualization-cultural/education, away

from home/ isolation and nostalgia, escape, cultural experience emerge as important factors with mean value 4.31 to 3.06, this indicated that all the attributes are playing significant role while deciding to visit a wellness destination by the travelers. Similarly, the results indicates that the following motivation attributes of pull factor also emerge as important attribute like water activities, relaxation, heritage and culture, health and fitness, novelty, facilitation of social interaction, recreational activities/ entertainment, outdoor nature/resources/ rural/inexpensive areas, night life and local cuisine, different culture, resort enclave / modern atmospheres and activities, information/advertisement on destination, exploration and evaluation of self/ self-development, cleanness and shopping /hygiene and the environment , tangible resources and marketing image with mean value 2.94 to 2.8. The push factor emerge as more important compare to pull factor, so the marketers, tour operators, service providers and others involve in wellness tourism sector have to focus more on push factor by advertisement in traditional media as well as social media and by meeting the expectation of the tourist to increase the future demand and make the travel experience enjoying. To increase the demand for wellness tourism, the people involved in wellness sector have to meet the expectation of the tourist to increase the future demand and make the travel experience enjoying.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

It is acknowledged that this study has some limitations. First, most of the respondents are young are relatively. Therefore, the results may not represent the opinion of masses. Further to strengthen the results the current study, research can be conducted with target population covering different age groups of users in future. Second, the current study focuses on participants' motivation towards wellness tourism. Future researchers may measure the actual behaviour instead of motivation towards wellness tourism. In addition, the researcher may check the behavioural intention of the tourist. Last but not least, cross-country comparisons could also be conducted.

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