

**Title- PROMOTING SLOVAKIA TO INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS FROM  
WESTERN INDIA – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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## **PROMOTING SLOVAKIA TO INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS FROM WESTERN INDIA – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

The sheer size of India motivates Indian outbound tourists to visit MANY countries (which may be smaller in sizes) at one go to satisfy their EGO need. An effort is made by the authors to understand the psyche of the Indian outbound tourists from western India who have visited both USA and Europe earlier at least once and then explore possibility to promote Slovakia, a country close to Austria- a destination familiar to Indian tourists. The objective of the research was to understand the future plans of the respondents of International tour. Authors have used focused group discussion followed by unique qualitative research tool of Russian Dolls. All of them were keen to see this beautiful country. The harsh winter was at the back of their mind and respondents were vocal in communication as to which season to choose to visit and enjoy the destination (May end to June). In case Slovakia wants to go slow on arrival of Indian tourists, then efforts are to be made to encourage the tour operators from India to include Bratislava in their itinerary while offering Grand Europe tour package.

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Russian Dolls, Slovakia, Indian Tourists, Rifle approach, Destinations

## **PROMOTING SLOVAKIA TO INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS FROM WESTERN INDIA – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

### **Introduction**

Indian outbound tourists with deep pockets prefer to go to USA or Europe and those with shoestring budget opt for South East Asia. After the euphoria of first international tour is over, next visits from Indian International tourists are to the places either visited earlier with extended stay or to a new place to have an authentic experience. The sheer size of India motivates Indian outbound tourists to visit MANY countries (which may be smaller in sizes) at one go to satisfy their EGO need (A. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs). This means a good opportunity to countries which are relatively small in size to attract the Indian tourists who have already visited so called prominent places in USA and Europe. Political situation in African continent and the Middle East has been rather turbulent for quite some time. Latin American countries are far off thus increasing the air travel cost; the only option for the experienced Indian International tourist is to visit the smaller, lesser known, till recently lesser aggressively promoted European countries.

An effort is made by the authors to understand the psyche of the Indian outbound tourists from western India who have visited both USA and Europe earlier at least once and then explore possibility to promote Slovakia, a country close to Austria- a destination familiar to Indian

tourists. Although the concept of branding has been applied extensively to products and services, tourism destination branding is a relatively recent phenomenon. In particular, destination branding remains narrowly defined to many practitioners in destination management organizations (DMOs) and is not well represented in tourism literature (Blain, Levy Ritchie). As per Dr Steven Pike, the place name is in effect the destination brand, and yet in most cases will not provide an explicit association with the position sought in travel market(s). Destination branding may have impact on choice of places to be visited by the tourist, fact remains that the weather conditions, time of the year when the tourist choose to travel, exchange rate and overall political scenario play crucial role in not only choice of country to be visited but also the duration of stay and things to do. Off late, countries such as Israel, Turkey, Greece, Indonesia and Spain are trying to attract the Indian tourists. South Africa has recently jumped the bandwagon and has started conducting road shows in metros and mini-metros in India. Recency effect plays a crucial role and we already find the cruise ship business falling after the unbelievable sinking of Coast Concordia in Italy. Even the SNOW EMERGENCY has forced many Indian tourists to postpone their plans to visit Europe.

The number of Indians travelling abroad has increased sharply in the past 10 years and in 2008 reached a level of 11 million outbound travelers. Technopak expects this number to grow to 29 million by 2018. The number of outbound tourists from India has been seeing a steady growth and has almost tripled from 4 million travelers in 1998 to 11 million in 2008. The number is expected to further increase to 18 million in 2013.

Question is- Are the smaller, lesser known (to Indian tourists) countries/destinations interested in attracting this big pie? Once Indian tourists are attracted to a destination; further skill lies with the tourism boards/authorities of respective country as to how to extend their stay and

meaningfully engage them in various activities. The Singapore Tourism Board is trying to attract India tourists by offering value added services in the form of activities such as wave house (surfing lessons and similar pursuits), forest adventures, and perfume making workshops, photography and behind the scenes guided experiences at Singapore Zoo and Underwater World. The Australian Tourism Board offers high-end luxury stay experiences to Indian tourists by offering 'Self-drive' and 'luxury Lodges'.

### **Why Slovakia and Objective of the research-**

The country chosen by the authors was SLOVAKIA, and for obvious reasons. Both the authors came from India and Slovakia respectively and it was easier to connect the attractions (in research) to the respondent tourists.

The objective of the research was to understand the future plans of the respondents of International tour. If the respondents who were well travelled knew Slovakia; were they willing to go there and if so, what all they would like to do? The private tour operators on whom the Indian outbound tourists heavily depended while undertaking a 14/19 days long conducted tour to Europe and USA were deliberately avoided. The reason was obvious. Unless some kind of a carrot was shown to these operators, they normally did not take keen interest in a new destination. They preferred to take the Indian tourists to English speaking countries and in June/July when the weather was good by Indian standards and take them to the well-known/famous places with short (overnight) stay at one place.

Here in this paper, the focus was on a small but beautiful country- Slovakia- (size 49 035 km<sup>2</sup> as per the Slovakia Tourism website).

### **Review of Literature**

According to Citi Indian report on consumption, going by the trends seen in other countries like USA, China and Korea, spending in India is expected to shift further away from necessities like F & B towards discretionary items like travel. Key sectors that could occupy growing wallet share include health care, given weaknesses in the public health system; communication, driven by growing rural penetration of mobile subscribers; and personal products and services. **Spending on tourism is also expected to increase.**

According to Rohit Malkani, economist, Citi India, trends in India indicate three broad phases. The first one is to do with rising disposable incomes, which results in declining share of necessities ( like beverages, clothing).In the next stage, share of necessities is replaced by more discretionary and small luxury items, while in stage three, there is preference for upscale, unique experiences( like tourism). **This means a clear cut opportunity for newer destinations with new/unique experiences to be offered.**

According to Kurush Grant, executive director, ITC, a cigarette-to-hotels major “With the emergence of large middle class in India with rising disposable incomes, **both travel and tourism as well as spends on branded foods are likely to increase**”.

The world travel & tourism industry accounts for \$ 7,340 billion of global economic activity, and this is tipped to grow to \$ 14,382 billion by 2019. It also accounts for approximately 7.6% of global employment. Internationally, women account for 70% of the workforce in the travel and tourism industry.

Another interesting change is noticed and explained by Nigel Harwood, CEO and president, InterGlobe Established, who have sold 45 aircrafts in India. **“Today, luxury goods are a**

**necessity for the affluent segment in India”, he said. He further added- “There is a marked shift from ‘aspirer’ to the ‘acquirer’.**

Mr Vikram Madhok, managing director, told The Week (February 5, 2012 issue) “The discerning travelers are seeking more authentic and personalized experiences in their holidays. The frontrunners in this segment are the emerging BRIC (Brazil, India, Russia, and China) economies, so the growth for outbound luxury travel from India is more progressive than inbound. The vacations are getting quirkier than ever. “End of the earth journeys” , ancestral travel( tracing roots of your family tree), dream adventures with experts and highly individualized and intimate holidays are what most HNIs( High Net worth Individuals) are splurging on.”

**An estimated 50 million Indian outbound travelers will be going abroad by 2020** as per estimate of Kabir Vasudeva, executive director, Pacific Asia Travel Association, Indian Chapter.

The slowdown in Europe and US economies has further pushed the Indian travel market, especially the luxury segment to the forefront. **The first half of 2011 saw 20% increase in Indian tourists in Switzerland in comparison to 2010, according to Carmen Heinrich of Switzerland’s Grand Resort Bad Ragaz which is favored by high net worth Indians.**

The reason why many tourist friendly countries are after Indian market can be seen from statistics released by UNWTO. As per a report appeared in Times of India dated 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, Indian tourist on an average spent Rs. 3.37 lakh in Australia. Indian travelers contributed nearly \$ 4 billion (almost Rs.20, 000 crores) to the US economy in 2010. In a reflection of the changing global trend, tourists from India and China are increasingly acquiring the status of big spenders. In Australia and South Africa, tourists from these two Asian countries outspend those from US

and the UK. Of all the countries that Indians travel, it was in Australia that they spend the most per trip, followed by US and South Africa. Averages spend/tourist included all expenses incurred on the trip like airfare, hotel tariff, food, shopping etc.

### **Research Methodology used-**

Authors have used **focused group discussion** followed by unique qualitative research tool of **Russian Dolls**.

Variants types of focus groups include:

- **Two-way focus group** - one focus group watches another focus group and discusses the observed interactions and conclusion
- **Dual moderator focus group** - one moderator ensures the session progresses smoothly, while another ensures that all the topics are covered
- **Dueling moderator focus group** - two moderators deliberately take opposite sides on the issue under discussion
- **Respondent moderator focus group** - one and only one of the respondents are asked to act as the moderator temporarily
- **Client participant focus groups** - one or more client representatives participate in the discussion, either covertly or overtly
- **Mini focus groups** - groups are composed of four or five members rather than 6 to 12
- **Teleconference focus groups** - telephone network is used

Authors have used **Dual moderator focus group method** considering the complexity of the topic and the types of respondents.



The respondents were from a major Metro from Western India – Mumbai. They were from upper class and in age group of 50 and 65 in case of male and 45 and 55 in case of female. All of them were post graduates and were either independent professionals, or retired from service in senior position or housewives in case of female respondents.

**Sample size was FIFTY only.**

Medium of communication – English language was used for discussion because the respondents were from various Indian states settled in Mumbai for professional reasons .Hence instead of using Hindi- the National language, authors preferred to use English- the business language.

The discussion was around the following questions asked one by one to the group and the responses were summarized.

- a) -Where next?
- b) -When?
- c) -For how many days?
- d) -What to do there?
- e) -What were their expectations from the place? Were they interested in only experience / experiment or comfort and relaxation?
- f) -Methodology of evaluation of tour experience

After the focused group discussion, they were exposed to a slide show which comprised of various attractions from Slovakia without any where naming the country. The respondents were asked to guess the country and were asked if they would visit to see/experience these places.

The photos were taken from the web site of Slovakia Tourism portal and videos from SACR were shown at the end without showing the name of the sponsor- Slovakia Tourism Board. After the show was over, the curious respondents asked the name of the country, travel time to the main destination. They judged that the country must be one from Europe because of pictures of ice skating and the architecture of churches gave them a clue.

The response was overwhelming from practically all the participants but they had their own misunderstandings and expectations which needed immediate clarification. The confusion was of name and some wrongly understood as Slovenia instead of Slovakia. The authors immediately clarified that the new country in discussion was part of earlier Czechoslovakia. The respondents then immediately understood the tourist attraction.

## **1). Findings-**

### **a).Where Next?**

As mentioned earlier, with the SNOW EMERGENCY in Europe and the hype created by the Indian media, none were ready to go to Europe immediately.

Perhaps no other industry is more dependent on climate than travel and tourism. From warm, sunny, beachfront resorts, to majestic, snowy mountains, and turbulence-free flights, nearly every aspect of the industry was better off and more profitable when the weather was stable and predictable, and travelers could move about safely and without disruption.

According to a [2008 study by the UN World Travel Organisation](#), tourism would likely move toward higher latitudes and altitudes, where negative climate change impacts will not be as drastic. If that happens, the competitive position of vacation spots will change, leaving some areas to decline as others

become more popular. The places chosen for the coming summer were Major countries in Europe, Swiss-Austria combination and Kenya including MasaiMara. On specific probing, a dozen also said that they planned to go to Macau with an option to stay with relatives at Hong Kong. Not a single respondent preferred to go to Latin America and 3 respondents who said that Brazil was on their priority list confirmed that they would like to go there during next year carnival. None preferred to go to USA in immediate future because their next of kin had been to India during Xmas in last December. Neither was any respondent ready to go to Japan after last year's Tsunami and earthquake. As many as five participants were ready to travel on The Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express and confirmed that they came to know about the train journey through an article in a magazine -The week (February 5, 2012 issue) and got further information on the web site.

**b) When:-**

Preferred timing to go to Europe was based on collective wisdom and tacit knowledge with the tour operators whose services were utilized earlier by the respondents. They preferred to go to Europe in May end or June/July. The reasons were obvious. Weather during these months was pleasant by Indian standards. After spending a fortune on foreign tour, an Indian tourist who wanted value for money expected that he should be freely moving around without any weather barriers and should be in good health during the tour period. They wanted to enjoy greenery which could be seen in these months. As many as a dozen respondents who visited Paris last year in the month of January and visited Palace of Versailles were disappointed by the condition of the garden behind the palace.

**c) For How Many Days?**

Response to this question evoked different reactions and the duration varied from 5 days to 14 days depending upon number of countries to be visited and the purse( budget for the tour). In case of Swiss-Austria combination, the duration was five days and in case of Grand Europe tour comprising mainly of capital cities of various European countries, the duration was 12-14 days. 50% tourists who opted for Swiss Austria combination were ready if exposed to new destinations.

**d). What to do there?-**

In case of repeat visit to the same place, respondents wanted to revisit a particular spot seen earlier and wanted to spend maximum time there only. One such example was Louvre museum in Paris-France. As many as ten respondents wanted to stay in Venice for longer time and then go to Florence on way to Rome. In other cases, the focus was on experimentation with local culture and cuisine. Not everyone was ready to experiment with local cuisine because more than 50% respondents were vegetarians.

Barring exception of five, they were not interested in adventure sports. Even those who were interested, they were interested in simple games not demanding special skills. Exposure to local culture, engagement in activities as chocolate making for few hours, river cruise followed by dinner on cruise were on top priority.

**e) Expectation from the place**

The respondents who were cash rich and time rich were well informed about various places they had visited earlier. They were also information rich on new places to be visited thanks to websites as Trip advisor and Expedia (Exception- in case of no up-dation of information on web site, lot of complaints on incurring of higher costs). The major complaint was the time allocated

by tour operator to ONE destination. As a result, majority of the respondents now opted to go on their own rather than taking conducted tour option for shorter stay. This again meant a good opportunity for new entrants (countries) to market their countries/destinations directly to the well travelled tourists. Most important expectation of the respondents was on the NEWNESS of the place visited for the first time. In their opinion, destinations such as Mauritius, Shrilanka were not different from India in spite of scenic beauty. This meant PLACE in their opinion was a comprehensive term including geography, architecture, and color of the locales, river, flora and fauna, language and so on. In fact, some respondents confirmed that they were disappointed and surprised on hearing their national language Hindi at some airports in Europe. The shift in paradigm was from mere exposure to experiment and then experience. Twelve respondents, who were independent professionals, wanted a hybrid form of tourism experience – sightseeing plus luxury cruise (river) combination to relax.

**f). Methodology of evaluation of tour experience**

The respondents used different parameters such as number of NEW places visited, kind of food served during tour, quality of information from tourist guide, time allotted for shopping on the last leg of the tour, number of NEW experiences, new acquaintances during tour, train journeys in Europe , overall weather conditions during tour, any add on unannounced earlier.

**Slide show of mysterious (Slovakia) country followed the discussion.**

When the slides were shown, as mentioned earlier, name of the country was concealed and respondents were asked to guess.

Slides were shown in order as under:-

— nature & landscape

— culture & sights

— folklore & traditions

— sports & activities

— spas & wellness

— city breaks

This was followed by the three videos. First two videos had elaborate description of various attractions in Slovakia while the third video talked of Ice Hockey which was in no way appealing to the respondents.

**None could guess correctly the name of the country even after seeing the videos. They however could guess that the destination was from Europe.**

**Another disturbing finding was that some respondent's confused Slovakia (after the disclosure of name) with Slovenia-** country with similar name but with different culture and political background.

**Respondents were thrilled when told that the capital of Slovakia, Bratislava was only an hour drive from Vienna which already was a preferred destination on their itinerary.**

On further probing of capital Bratislava, authors disseminated information on capital which included Slovak National Museum in the Bratislava castle.

All of them were keen to see this beautiful country. The harsh winter was at the back of their mind and respondents were vocal in communication as to which season to choose to visit and enjoy the destination (May end to June).

**When the respondents were shown the portal of Slovakia Tourism and the positioning of the country- The Little Big Country; they were not amused. In their opinion the tag line should have been – SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL or SMALL BUT BEAUTIFUL.**

The reactions were probably because of the size of their country of origin-(India).

## 2). Finding

### **USE OF RUSSIAN DOLLS TECHNIQUE TO UNDERSTAND THE WESTERN INDIAN TOURISTS' REPOSE TO SLOVAKIA**



### **Concept of Russian dolls and use as a qualitative research tool-**

The Russian dolls as seen in the picture are a set of dolls which are of different sizes but similar in appearance, shape and costume and can be fitted into one another, thus creating a unique single identity. When these dolls were fitted into one another, they formed a single identity to a naked eye. On further efforts only, one can know different dolls – although similar in appearance but dissimilar in size.

The respondent tourists like the Russian dolls were not a single identity but a combination of few identities combined together.

Authors classified these dolls considering the roles played by them (tourists) before, during and after the tour as under:-

- a) The Outer doll (Biggest doll) - **The buyer**
- b) The next smaller doll- **The Traveler** (to the destination)-
- c) The third smaller doll- **The Tourist** (the actual experience during consumption of tour/product)
- d) The fourth smallest doll- **The Evaluator** (after the actual tour was over)

All the roles were discussed in context of the tourism product offered for discussion- Slovakia.



**The group was equally divided in context of roles of second and the third doll. Half of the participants were of the opinion that travel to the destination is not strictly the part of the tour; while other half expressed that travel to the destination is an integral part of the overall tourism experience.**

**a) The Outer (biggest) doll- The Consumer/the Buyer-**

All the respondents clearly confirmed that they were willing buyers and (future) consumers of the proposed product. They all agreed that the role of influencer was crucial in their earlier outings which were played by the conducted tour operator. However in case of Slovakia; the influencer was the videos and the information given to them by the researchers/authors. In fact, majority tourism boards were increasingly looking at creating unique experiences to woo potential Indian customers. Large reach and promotion coupled with low marketing cost made social media one of the desirable marketing mediums among travel companies and tourism boards. It helped to show the real picture of the destination with videos and reviews. It was more cost-effective compared to outdoor and print. What respondents expected from the destination was NEW/AUTHENTIC experience, hassle free visa, easy paced sight -seeing, vegetarian food, bundled pricing (no separate entry fees at Museums or castles), signboards in English, water fountains at various sites, bathrooms with special arrangements of washing bottom, No-frills accommodation, opportunity to enjoy Danube river cruise, comprehensive 1/2/3 days pass for transport, Beer bath (10 respondents). **They were not ready to visit Slovakia as a single stand alone destination for 6-7 days right now!** In the first stage, they wanted the destination as part of a package of 2/3/4 countries on lines of BENELUX!

**b) The Second doll- The Traveler (to the destination)-**

Travel was described as both important but cumbersome component while going to Europe. Majority of flights from India were during mid night/late night reaching European destinations in early mornings. This was useful for the business class travelers but was not taken well by the respondent tourists. Considering their age, the early reporting of minimum 3 hours at Mumbai airport, combined with the long travel to airport and long queue at immigration took toll of the tourists. The travelers expected that the return journey should be more comfortable in terms of arrival in India coupled with ease at customs clearance, baggage clearance, pre-paid taxis availability, surrender of sim card to Matrix cellular services and so on. With no direct flight to Bratislava, respondents preferred to take the route via Vienna. On way back also they wanted to return by the same route. This clearly meant a good opportunity for Slovakia Tourism to have a tie up with Austrian Tourism Board and run a joint program. Considering the adjacent countries to Slovakia such as – Austria (1272 kms), Hungary (679 kms), Poland (597 kms), Czech (265 kms), authors suggested an abbreviation/acronym for these countries for the ease of understanding of tourists **(on lines of BENELUX) – CHAPS- (Czech, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovakia)**. **Of course, this suggestion was for academic purpose and the decision of such complexity and magnitude depended upon the political ideologies and multilateral relations of these countries and their priority to tourism.**

Such branding or bundling of attractions would certainly help these countries to create a unique identity of their own in the mind of the tourists. Authors have deliberately avoided Ukraine because the border to Slovakia was very small (98 kms) and inbound tourists from Ukraine to India were having a tough time in getting visa to India.

This bundling would also reduce the pressure of tourists at a single place which was a critical issue, considering the sizes of these countries. The issue assumed criticality in case of Slovakia also, a nation with 49,035 km<sup>2</sup> area.

### **c) The third doll- The Tourist**

Respondents (50%) confirmed that the change in role from traveler to tourist was at the landing at the tourist country airport.

After briefing them on various attractions in Slovakia, they preferred to go to spots as under:-

The respondents wanted to see a large part of Bratislava and then were interested in covering other places with the help of Tourist Trains at a slow pace. Those with deeper pockets were interested in aqua stay package, ski stay package, Tatra Mountains, rafting in the river Dunajec. Only five male respondents were interested in Golf.

All respondents preferred to stay in traditional/historic hotels than in modern ones. Since none preferred to visit Slovakia in harsh winter, all the activities related to snow – particularly adventure were out of question for the respondents. They however wanted to enjoy beauty of snow clad mountains by a cable car as they did in Switzerland. The favorite place for winter relaxation and fun on skis or snowboards **PARK SNOW Donovaly** was on top priority of the respondents. Railway trains in India were relatively slow in terms of speed and quality of coaches was far from satisfactory. As a result, Indian tourists while touring Europe preferred train travel. In absence of experience of trains on earlier visit to USA, Indian tourists in Europe preferred to experience train travel in general and Glacier express, and Eurostar in particular. This meant a good opportunity for funicular railway to Hrebienok. One more reason for Rail travel in Europe in particular becoming popular with Indian tourist was- many Hindi and South

Indian movies were shot in Switzerland and Austria and other prominent countries such as UK, France and Italy. When informed that Danube connects Bratislava to Vienna and Budapest, all of them expressed desire to enjoy a river cruise with one night stay .The sinking of Coasta Concordia was at the back of their mind while expressing themselves.

Last but not the least; all the respondents were vocal on the AIR, WATER FOOD front. They wanted moderate air (climate), free drinking water (repeated mention of water fountains in USA) and vegetarian food.

**d). The fourth doll- The Evaluator (of new destination)**

This was the most difficult part of the entire discussion and respondents were tongue in cheek while discussing the issue of evaluation. They elaborated various parameters for evaluation of a tour experience and some are mentioned as under not strictly in order of their importance.

- 1- Amount of money spent compared to number of countries visited/ number of places seen.
- 2- Weather conditions which included temperature difference in guest and host country, sunny weather, little snowfall, less humidity, little wind chill and so on.
- 3- NEW places seen; NEW experiences, New friends made during tour, experiences surpassing or matching the photos videos seen earlier.
- 4- Ease in understanding of English language in tourist country, friendly citizens, scenic rural areas, and amount of tip to be given at various places, extras offered either by Airline or by the guest country, comprehensive transport pass for 3/5 days.

## **Managerial Implications**

The Slovakia Tourism Board has to decide whether to attract Indian tourists or not. If yes, then some infrastructural modifications of minor nature are necessary.

An indirect method of promotion of a country among Indian tourists has been allowing shooting of Hindi and regional films in these countries by respective Governments. Switzerland and New Zealand were successful in following this strategy and the impact could be seen in the long term. A film titled Zindgi Na Milegi Dobara (meaning you only live one life) was shot in Spain and the entire story was weaved around various prominent spots in Spain and included the famous Tomato festival. Another film DON II was shot in Berlin and local authorities had pulled out all stops to help the producer of the film to have smooth shooting of film in Berlin itself. Another Hindi movie titled “Ek Main Aur Ek Tu” was shot in Las Vegas USA.

South Indian (read regional) films were also shot in various European countries and down under. The best part was – the newlywed couples, young tourists when visited these countries insisted on visiting such places. The famous Rialto Bridge in Venice was a popular spot for various film producers and Honeymooners.

In case of eyeing on Indian market with a long term perspective, Slovakia, a member of Schengen arrangement, has to highlight this aspect to tourists from India in particular.

### **Do not show RUINS to Indian tourists.**

In case Slovakia wants to go slow on arrival of Indian tourists, then efforts are to be made to encourage the tour operators from India to include Bratislava in their itinerary while offering Grand Europe tour package.

If University or B-schools in Slovakia are offering summer school education in English language, students from India also can be attracted. They are the best ambassadors because they quickly post their experiences/videos on net/facebook.

Tourism Board of Slovakia may continue with its appeal/positioning of “Little country big adventure” to Europe. This however may not work for attracting Indian tourists who may shy away because of such positioning.

Authors suggest following slogan!

**SEE SLOVAKIA.**

**SAW SLOVAKIA?**

**SHARE SLOVAKIA!**

Website of Slovakia Tourism need to be up dated quickly. This reflects that the authorities are genuinely serious in attracting the tourists.

“Rifle approach” should be preferred over “Shot gun” approach to attract Indian tourists. Instead of mass marketing with more expenditure involved, niche marketing can be done through rifle approach. The respondents in this research normally were members of a prominent social club or premium card holders of a bank or of an airline under frequent flier program. They either could be communicated on one to one basis by mail. Else a program depicting culture of Slovakia could be sponsored in major Indian metros.

Considering the smaller size of the country and strategic location of the capital, Bratislava, nearing Vienna, authors suggested ∞ shaped tour route to enhance the feeling of largeness of

country. This meant the tour started from Bratislava to – Trencin –Bystrica -Roznava -Presov- Poprad- Zvolen- Komarno and ended at Bratislava.

### **Limitations**

The study was confined to only one metro- Mumbai.

The sample size was only fifty and any extrapolation of finding to a large number of tourists would be dangerous.

The unique tool of Russian dolls was for the first time used and none of the authors were with psychology background. Authors had on their own given the roles/names to different dolls and there was no precedence to the same.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Indian tourists in general and those from high income bracket in particular are an attractive pie. Newer countries/destinations can certainly attract them if they understand the DNA of the unique Indian tourists and target with pinpoint accuracy. Slovakia, till recently not on the main map of Indian tourist who made repeat visits to Europe, can certainly take advantage of the opportunity and the situation will be a win-win. Tourists benefitted with exposure to new/unique spots and experiences and Tourism board of Slovakia benefitted by the influx of tourist and their spending during the stay.

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