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# Unveiling India: A study of representation and bias in digital and traditional travel literature

By

Vrunda Ambrish Upadhyay

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
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Faculty of Journalism & Media Communications

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### **Declaration**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the evolving representation of India in travel literature, focusing on biases in guidebooks and blogs. It explores how travel writing shapes perceptions of India within global tourism. By comparing printed guidebooks and online travel blogs, it highlights differences in language and content between digital and traditional travel writing.

Additionally, it analyses historical representations of India in Murray's Handbook from 1892 and its influence on subsequent travel literature, identifying thematic shifts and changing perspectives from the colonial period to the present.

The theoretical approach for this study was qualitative content analysis utilising semiotics, with nine data sources analysed from 1892 onwards, chosen through purposive selection for their popularity, relevance, and accessibility. Adjectives and descriptive words were identified and classified into coding schemes based on sentiment – positive, negative, or neutral – and themes – cultural, geographical, socio-economic, historical, and touristic.

Results reveal a shift from the cultural focus in traditional guidebooks (41%) to personal and experiential themes in modern travel blogs (57%). Thematic analysis shows cultural themes as most prevalent (45.3%), followed by geographical (19.9%), socio-economic (14.3%), touristic (14%), and historical themes (6.5%). Sentiment analysis indicates a predominantly positive tone (48.5%), particularly in cultural and geographical themes, with 26.7% negative and 24.8% neutral. A key distinction between travel blogs and traditional literature lies in their language and tone. Travel blogs use personal, emotive, and informal language, emphasising storytelling and anecdotes, while traditional literature is more formal and neutral.

This research highlights the dual impact of modern travel literature. While offering diverse perspectives, it often perpetuates stereotypes, such as insensitive portrayals of cultural sites like the Khajuraho temples. These skewed representations distort cultural understanding, influencing tourists' perceptions and overshadowing important local aspects. This can negatively affect local economies, cultural preservation, and community relations. The study points out representation gaps and biases, encouraging more research into prejudices in travel literature. It argues for ethical and inclusive writing methods to encourage thoughtful and respectful tourism, as well as policy implications for encouraging truthful depictions and linking tourism with sustainable and ethical norms.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Aldous Huxley once said, “To travel is to discover that everybody is wrong.” His words,

“The philosophies, the civilisations which seem, at a distance, so superior to those current at home, all prove on a close inspection to be in their own way just as hopelessly imperfect”,

(Huxley, n.d.)

act as a compelling entry point into the complex processes shaping travel narratives on India. In an era distinguished by the intertwined impacts of globalisation and digitalisation, this research seeks to deconstruct the thematic narratives that emerge, including a focus on the overlays of post-colonial criticisms and orientalist perspectives.

Travel writing is a genre of literature that involves the documentation of an author’s journeys to various places. It encompasses a diverse range of sub-genres, including adventure travel, cultural exploration, and reflective accounts. Travel writing serves multiple purposes: it can inform, entertain, and educate readers about distant lands and diverse cultures.

Travel writing about India has a long history, with records dating back to ancient times. Early travel accounts, such as those by the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, and later, the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta, offer insights into how travellers perceived India’s culture and landscapes.

A traveller cannot really be an ‘accidental tourist’ who just happens to find new places or people without any issues. Hence, travel writing can be studied as a collection of writing methods that reveal the typical features of a style influenced by imperialism (Sharp, 2002). Over time, the genre has evolved, reflecting shifts in societal attitudes, cultural understandings, and geopolitical landscapes.

Today, travel writing continues to play a significant role in shaping perceptions and understanding of India. Travel guidebooks and blogs continue to play a crucial role in shaping how travellers perceive and experience destinations. These resources provide valuable information and insights, helping travellers to navigate and understand the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the places they visit.

Travel writing also serves as a medium for cultural exchange and understanding, helping to bridge cultural differences and promote mutual respect and understanding. By providing detailed and respectful portrayals of destinations, travel guidebooks and blogs can help to

challenge stereotypes and promote a more nuanced and complex understanding of different cultures.

The relevance and significance of travel writing are also evident in the growing interest in responsible and ethical travel. Travel guidebooks and blogs often emphasise the importance of respecting local cultures and minimising the environmental and social impacts of travel. This emphasis reflects a broader awareness of the need for sustainable and responsible travel practices, highlighting the importance of considering the social and environmental implications of travel experiences.

Historical, cultural, and geopolitical shifts have all had an impact on how India is represented in travel writing. The evolving nature of travel literature reflects broader changes in societal attitudes and perceptions, influenced by factors such as colonialism, independence movements, and the rise of global tourism. In an era of globalisation and digital communication, it is critical to understand how travel writing influences worldwide perceptions of India. The goal of this study is to fill a knowledge vacuum and give detailed insights on the complex character of Indian travel narratives.

Travel writing, as a literary genre, has long been seen as an effective instrument for influencing perspectives, clarifying cultural nuances, and promoting informed decision-making through expert observations. With its expansive history and ethnically varied environment, India's magnetism has drawn in writers and tourists since the nineteenth century. Early travel narratives, typically authored by Western explorers and colonisers, portrayed India through an orientalist lens, highlighting its exoticism and perceived otherness. The purpose of this study is to conduct a thorough content analysis of the representation, trends and influences inherent in travel writing about India and find out if the representation has changed over time.

In the present globalised world, representation is a critical issue, especially in media and communications. A recent article by Forbes (Verma-Lallian, 2023) argues for the critical importance of diversity and representation within media companies, emphasising that embracing diversity not only enhances corporate culture but also drives innovation and profitability.

“...integrating different cultural viewpoints and life experiences, especially from racialized communities, is not only critical for rich storytelling but also for the future of media.”

(Verma-Lallian, 2023)

She contends that diverse teams bring a variety of perspectives and experiences that better resonate with diverse audiences, thereby increasing engagement and loyalty. It concludes by urging media companies to prioritise diversity as a strategic imperative to remain competitive in an increasingly global and interconnected marketplace.

Similarly, the critiques of the western perspectives on India argue that they often oversimplify and misrepresent the country's complexities (Chabba, 2022). It highlights how western media and policymakers tend to focus narrowly on poverty, caste issues, and religious tensions, while neglecting India's diverse cultural, economic, and technological advancements. Such limited portrayals perpetuate stereotypes and fail to capture India's vibrant democracy, entrepreneurial spirit, and regional diversity. It is important to acknowledge India's multifaceted identity beyond clichéd narratives to foster accurate global perceptions of the country.

The two articles, despite addressing different topics, share a common thread in advocating for nuanced understanding and representation in their respective contexts.

Hence, this study takes a qualitative approach to analyse travel narratives about India across different historical periods and media formats. Qualitative content analysis is chosen because it allows for a detailed exploration of texts, revealing how representations have evolved over time.

The narrative construction in travel writing is significantly influenced by the media, irrespective of its format – be it books, journals, blogs, films, or news pieces. Travel literature, as a form of media, plays a pivotal role in moulding opinions, defining viewpoints, and promoting specific perspectives. Additionally, ethical considerations in media, such as image-building and perceptive representations, offer valuable insights into the enduring impact of media on India's tourism discourse over several decades.

Travel guidebooks have a rich history that dates to the ancient and medieval periods, where they served primarily as navigational aids and pilgrimage guides. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the rise of guidebooks that catered to the European elite undertaking the Grand Tour, blending practical travel advice with cultural and historical insights. John Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in India* (1892) exemplifies this trend, offering a colonial perspective on Indian landmarks and culture. The 20<sup>th</sup> century marked the advent of modern guidebooks, with publishers like Baedeker, Michelin, and later Lonely Planet and Rough Guides, expanding their focus to cater to a diverse range of readers (Sainsbury, 2020).

According to the Cambridge dictionary, guidebook is “a book that gives information for visitors about a place, such as a city or country”. Hence, travel guidebooks are publications, either printed or digital, that provide practical information and advice for travellers. They typically include details about accommodations, restaurants, attractions, local customs, and transportation. Guidebooks aim to make travel more accessible and enjoyable by offering insights into a destination’s culture and practical tips for navigating it.

Lonely Planet is renowned for its comprehensive and budget-friendly advice, making its guidebooks particularly popular among backpackers and budget-conscious travellers. The Lonely Planet guidebook on India, written predominantly by Western writers, provides extensive coverage of the country’s diverse regions, offering practical travel tips and cultural insights that cater to a wide range of travellers. The fact that it is authored by Western writers is significant as it reflects an outsider’s perspective on India, often highlighting aspects of the country that may be particularly intriguing or novel to Western audiences. This can offer valuable insights but also runs the risk of perpetuating certain biases or stereotypes, underscoring the importance of a nuanced and respectful approach to cultural representation.

Rough Guides, on the other hand, focus on providing detailed and engaging travel content with a strong emphasis on cultural immersion and off-the-beaten-track destinations. Their India guidebook offers in-depth information about the country’s rich history, culture, and attractions. By highlighting lesser-known destinations and providing comprehensive background information, Rough Guides encourage travellers to delve deeper into India’s diverse cultural tapestry and explore beyond the typical tourist circuits.

Part of one of the world’s first guidebook series, Murray’s Handbooks (Sainsbury, 2020) offers a historical perspective, providing a glimpse into how India was perceived and described during the colonial era. This guidebook includes practical information for travellers of the time, along with cultural and historical insights that reflect the colonial mindset. While it offers valuable historical context and details about India’s landmarks and cultural practices, it also embodies the colonial attitudes and biases prevalent during that period.

A key facet of exploring travel writing on India also involves examining its historical underpinnings during the colonial era and examining how these historical constructs influenced representations, set trends, and shaped content in subsequent years. This study seeks to reveal insights into how the portrayal of a country through Eurocentric lenses during the colonial period may have forged enduring perceptions. This investigation holds significance as it facilitates a critical examination of the evolutionary trajectory of travel writing about India and its consequential impact on the tourism industry.

In the digital age, the landscape of travel writing has been transformed by online platforms and travel blogs, which offer real-time updates and personal narratives. This shift has added a new dimension to travel literature, complementing traditional guidebooks and reflecting the evolving nature of travel and tourism. By examining these developments, this study aims to provide a multilayered understanding of how travel narratives about India have evolved and their impact on global perceptions.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it aims to contribute to the understanding of how travel writing shapes perceptions of India in a global context. By examining the representations, themes, and influences embedded in travel narratives, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of travel writing.

In the process, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of how travel narratives about India have evolved over time, from colonial times to contemporary digital blogs. By comparing the parallels and contrasts between post-colonial literature and a specific work from colonial times, the research sheds light on how historical perspectives continue to influence modern travel writing.

This study is particularly relevant for the fields of journalism and communications, as it highlights the role of media in shaping cultural perceptions and promoting specific perspectives (Orbe, 2012, p.236). Understanding narratives is crucial for the study of journalism and communications, as travel writing plays a significant role in shaping global perceptions and in forming public opinion.

The study also examines the impact of globalisation on travel narratives about India. In an era where digital content is abundant, the authenticity and curation of travel experiences have become paramount.

“Guides that focus on food and accommodation are falling out of favour in Britain according to Stephen Mesquita, the author of the Nielsen Bookscan Travel Publishing Yearbook, an industry bible. Between 2019 and 2023, sales of such guides for domestic destinations were down by 49% and by 20% for overseas ones.”

(The Economist, 2024)

According to Lonely Planet’s executive editor, the “overhaul was driven by market research that showed that readers “have more information than ever before” on eating and stays, but are looking for things to do.” This shift emphasises the importance of understanding how travel narratives are constructed and consumed in the digital age (The Economist, 2024).

This research explores the influence of media sources on the conceptualisation of travel writing about India. By analysing travel guidebooks and blogs, the study highlights the role of media in framing news, moulding opinions, and promoting specific perspectives. This analysis provides valuable insights into the ethical considerations in media representations and their impact on India's tourism discourse.

Furthermore, this study seeks to address the gaps in existing research by providing a comprehensive analysis of travel writing about India, incorporating both historical and contemporary perspectives. The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on postcolonialism, globalisation, and media representation, offering a deeper understanding of the impact of travel writing on cultural perceptions and tourism. This research also aims to uncover how travel literature can both challenge and reinforce stereotypes, and how it can serve as a bridge between cultures by providing deeper insights into the lived experiences of people in India.

### ***Research Objectives***

The purpose of this study is to look at how India has been portrayed in travel literature across time, using Murray's Handbook (1892) from the colonial period and from early post-colonial period to current opinions on India, using post-colonial guidebooks and digital travel blogs. By doing a content analysis, I intend to explore the following research objectives:

1. To understand and analyse thematic evolution within printed guidebooks and online travel blogs
2. To trace and analyse emerging difference of language between digital travel writing (blogs) and traditional travel writing (guides)
3. To analyse shift in representation, themes and perspectives by comparing modern guidebooks and those from the colonial period
4. To identify themes in colonial and post-colonial perspectives in travel literature

For data collection, primary sources include one colonial-era guidebook published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, two 20<sup>th</sup> century travel guidebooks, three 21<sup>st</sup> century travel guidebooks from most popular publications, and a selection of three relevant online travel blogs. These sources span from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day and encompass works by prominent bloggers and publishers.

Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, critiques, and theories from fields like post-colonial studies and media studies provide additional context and theoretical framework. The sampling strategy involves selection of one relevant colonial guidebook based on its

historical significance and thematic relevance, particularly focusing on themes like cultural, socio-economic and colonial perspectives. Post-colonial and later guidebooks and blogs are chosen to reflect diverse viewpoints and thematic focuses, covering various genres and cultural lenses.

Data analysis employs systematic content analysis (Stepchenkova *et al.*, 2009), where texts are coded and analysed to identify recurring themes, shifts in representation, and dominant perspectives. Comparative analysis (Wang *et al.*, 2024) between colonial and modern narratives aims to highlight changes in portrayal, thematic evolution, and the influence of globalisation and digital media.

Ethical considerations are integral, ensuring respect for authorial intent and ethical use of sources. The study acknowledges potential biases in historical texts and critically examines how contemporary media representations of India may shape perceptions.

Theoretical frameworks drawn from postcolonialism, Orientalism, and media studies guide the interpretation of findings, offering insights into the evolving nature of narratives about India. Limitations include the limited data sources to study colonial perspective, inherent biases in historical texts and the subjective nature of qualitative analysis, challenging the generalisation of findings across diverse travel narratives and audience perspectives.

This study aims to provide a detailed understanding of how travel literature influences global perceptions of India, exploring the intricate dynamics of historical legacies, modern media influences, and cultural representations.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Travel writing has historically served as a crucial medium through which cultures, histories, and personal experiences are documented and communicated. Travel writing has varied definitions and meanings, just like the subjective nature of the genre itself. As per one of the definitions,

“Travel writing is a hybrid genre that borders on, as well as incorporates, elements of various other text types such as novels, autobiographies, reports, legends, diaries, letters, tracts, or essays, and may, therefore, be difficult to distinguish from them.”

(Wilfried Raussert *et al.*, 2020, p.252)

In the context of India, travel literature has evolved significantly over time, reflecting broader socio-political, cultural, and economic changes. This literature review examines travel writing, specifically in guidebooks and blogs, with a focus on the representation of India. It aims to explore thematic evolution, cultural and historical portrayals, post-colonial critiques, conceptual complexities, and the influence of globalisation on travel narratives about India.

A content analysis of travel writing in the context of India allows for a comprehensive study of how this diverse and complicated nation is represented, trends that arise in such representations, and the different influences at work within this literary form.

### **2.1 Representation of India in travel writing**

Travel guidebooks often play a significant role in shaping how destinations are perceived and understood. According to Bhattacharyya's analysis, the representation of India in guidebooks highlight recurring themes such as spirituality, exoticism, and cultural richness. These themes reflect broader cultural and historical narratives, influencing how readers conceptualise and experience India (Bhattacharyya, 1997). This analysis underscores the importance of examining the thematic evolution of travel writing to understand how representations of India have shifted over time.

Travel guidebooks and blogs have played a significant role in shaping the representation of India. Historically, travel literature about India often reflected colonial attitudes, portraying the country as exotic and mysterious. *A Handbook for Travellers in India* (Murray, 1892), for example, presents India through a colonial lens, emphasising its exoticism and romanticising its landscapes and cultures.

In contrast, contemporary guidebooks and blogs offer more refined and diverse representations of India. Lonely Planet's guidebooks provide comprehensive coverage of

India's regions, highlighting its cultural diversity and historical richness. Travel bloggers offer personal and diverse perspectives, emphasising the individuality and complexity of Indian culture and experiences (Banyai and Glover, 2012).

The influence of media and globalisation is evident in the evolving content and themes of travel guidebooks. Bhattacharyya (1997) examines how guidebooks about India are shaped by global cultural trends and the increasing interconnectedness of travel media, reflecting a broader shift towards more diverse and globalised representations of destinations. This analysis underscores the impact of globalisation on travel writing and the importance of understanding how media influences travel narratives.

The influence of media on travel writing is also evident in the shift from traditional guidebooks to digital platforms and social media. Contemporary travel writing is increasingly shaped by digital technology, offering more diverse and immediate perspectives on travel experiences. This shift has significant implications for how travel writing about India is produced and consumed, reflecting broader changes in media and communication.

## **2.2 Tourism and Semiotics**

Jonathan Culler's essay 'The Semiotics of Tourism' (1981) offers a critical examination of tourism through a semiotic lens, highlighting its cultural significance and the intricate processes of signification involved. Culler contends that tourism, despite its centrality to modern life, has been overlooked by cultural critics compared to other popular culture forms such as cinema and music. He argues that tourism deserves serious scholarly attention because it reveals much about contemporary societal values and practices.

One of the key themes in Culler's analysis is the historical and cultural disdain for tourists compared to travellers. This distinction often reflects a perceived difference in the depth of experience, with travellers seen as seeking authentic engagement with cultures, while tourists are viewed as superficial pleasure-seekers. Culler highlights that:

“...the tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself, an instance of a typical cultural practice...”

(Culler, 1981, p.2)

This distinction underscores broader cultural anxieties about authenticity and superficiality, and the desire for a deeper, more meaningful engagement with the world.

The core of Culler's argument is the application of semiotics to tourism. He asserts that tourists engage in a semiotic practice by reading and interpreting cultural signs. They are not merely interested in the cultural practices themselves but in the signs that signify these practices. For instance, a restaurant in the Latin Quarter is not just a place to eat but a symbol of "Latin Quarter Restaurantness" (Culler, 1981, p.2). This semiotic approach helps to uncover the layers of meaning that tourists attach to their experiences and how these meanings shape their perceptions of different cultures.

Another significant theme in Culler's analysis is the quest for authenticity. Tourists often seek what they perceive as the "real" culture, despite being frequently criticised for enjoying inauthentic experiences. Culler notes that,

"The idea of seeing the real Spain, the real Jamaica, something unspoiled, how the natives really work or live, is a major touristic topos, essential to the structure of tourism."

(Culler, 1981, p.5)

This quest for authenticity is paradoxical because tourists often regard inauthentic, contrived experiences as authentic. This paradox reveals the complexities and contradictions inherent in the touristic pursuit of cultural truth.

Culler also discusses the cultural consensus and hostility generated by tourism. Tourism creates a shared system of values among tourists from different backgrounds, but this consensus often leads to hostility rather than solidarity. Tourists tend to resent the presence of other tourists, seeking unique and personal experiences. Culler observes that:

"Tourism brings out what may prove to be a crucial feature of modern capitalist culture: a cultural consensus that creates hostility rather than community among individuals."

(Culler, 1981, p.4)

This phenomenon reflects broader issues in modern capitalist societies, where shared cultural values can result in fragmentation and competition rather than cohesion.

Culler argues that tourism, a significant yet critically neglected aspect of contemporary culture, requires a semiotic approach to be properly understood. By applying semiotics, Culler reveals how tourists engage in complex practices of signification, interpreting and seeking signs of cultural authenticity. Despite widespread criticism of tourists as superficial, their activities uncover deeper cultural mechanisms and the pervasive desire for authentic experiences. Culler's semiotic perspective sheds light on the broader implications of tourism

within modern capitalist culture, urging scholars to recognise its importance and explore the intricate semiotic processes at play.

Roland Barthes, a leading theorist in semiotics explores the concept of myth as a form of speech, asserting that “myth is a type of speech” in his work ‘Mythologies’ (1972). This statement emphasises his broader argument that myth is a mode of communication, rather than a mere collection of objects, concepts, or ideas. Barthes further suggests that myth is intrinsically linked to history and society, asserting that “it is human history which converts reality into speech” (Barthes, 1972, p.110). This highlights the temporal and societal dimensions of myth, suggesting that myths evolve in tandem with cultural and historical changes.

A significant theme in Barthes' work is the idea of myth as a second-order semiological system. He explains that:

“...myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a second-order semiological system...”

(Barthes, 1972, p.113)

This concept illustrates how myths build upon pre-existing signs, adding new layers of meaning. Barthes elaborates on the semiological structure, discussing the relationship between the signifier, signified, and the sign. Using examples such as roses and pebbles, he illustrates how these signs function within mythological contexts (Barthes, 1972, p.115).

Barthes also introduces the notion of myth as metalanguage, a language about language, stating that “myth itself, which I shall call metalanguage, because it is a second language, in which one speaks about the first” (Barthes, 1972, p.115). This reflects the reflective nature of myth, as it interprets and reinterprets signs. In the context of travel writing, these ideas have significant implications. Travel narratives often mirror Barthes' concept of myth as a second-order semiological system, building upon existing cultural and geographical signs to add layers of personal and collective meaning. Travel writers transform mundane objects and experiences into culturally significant narratives, akin to how Barthes describes the conversion of objects into myths.

The use of symbols in travel writing parallels Barthes' analysis of the signifier and signified. Travel writers employ landscapes, monuments, and local customs as symbols to express broader themes of identity, belonging, and cultural exchange. This symbolic usage resonates with Barthes' assertion that myth functions as a system of communication. Additionally,

effective travel writing often contextualises present observations within historical narratives, enriching the narrative and providing a deeper understanding of the destination. This aligns with Barthes' emphasis on the historical grounding of myth.

Barthes' primary argument is that “myth is a system of communication, that it is a message” (Barthes, 1972, p.107). His theoretical framework involves analysing myths through the relationships between the signifier, signified, and the sign, a tri-dimensional pattern crucial for deciphering layered meanings. Barthes also argues that myths transform simple signs into complex messages with cultural and ideological significance, illustrated through the example of a young soldier saluting in a magazine, which signifies broader themes of colonialism and national identity (Barthes, 1972, p.116). Furthermore, Barthes emphasises that myths are shaped by historical and social forces, challenging the notion of myths as eternal and unchanging, and highlighting their dynamic nature.

In conclusion, Barthes' work offers a profound analysis of myths as forms of speech deeply embedded in historical and social contexts. His approach provides a robust framework for understanding the function and evolution of myths. In relation to travel writing, Barthes' insights help elucidate how travel narratives transform ordinary experiences into culturally and ideologically significant stories. The key themes of communication, historical grounding, and the transformation of signs are central to both Barthes' analysis and the practice of travel writing.

### **2.3 Influences of travel writing**

Edward Said's significant work, *Orientalism* (1978), set the groundwork for understanding how the East has been seen through Eurocentric and western spectacles. This is followed by Joanne Sharp's look at the factors influencing travel writing. Sharp critiques by stating that travel writing is not as unbiased or innocent as some people might think. When travellers write about their experiences, they don't just discover new places and people in a straightforward way. Their writing is influenced by various biases and cultural perspectives, especially those related to Western ideas about other cultures, often referred to as “Orientalism” (Sharp, 2002).

This influence can be seen in how travel writing creates and reinforces certain stereotypes and imagined geographies – basically, the way we think about and describe different places and people. Even when writers try to critique or challenge these stereotypes, they often end up maintaining a divide between ‘us’ (the Westerners) and ‘them’ (the Others). This divide shifts suspicion from ‘them’ to ‘us’, but the basic structure of separating and defining different groups remains the same (Sharp, 2002).

In the past, Orientalist writing described non-Western cultures as strange and inferior. After *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), the focus shifted to how Western culture is also simplified and reduced to just power and knowledge. Researchers have studied travel writing to understand how it shapes ideas about gender, sexuality, and class. These studies show that the image of the Orient is not just about a simple divide between East and West but is also influenced by issues of gender, sexuality, and class (Sharp, 2002).

Based on these critiques of orientalist tropes and power dynamics, themes such as representations, trends, influences, and the impact of postcolonialism arise.

Semiotic systems are fundamental frameworks within which signs are created, interpreted, and communicated across cultural boundaries. David Scott (2003) explores these systems, highlighting their role in shaping understanding and communication within diverse contexts. According to Scott, semiotic systems encompass a variety of sign types – linguistic, visual, and symbolic – each carrying detailed meanings that extend beyond their literal representation. He identifies the influence of written communication in cultural dynamics while asserting,

“The most powerful sign systems are those that involve writing. This is not only because writing enables knowledge to be stored, remembered, elaborated, and disseminated widely but also because it can be used as an instrument of exploitation and control.”

(Scott, 2003, p.211)

Scott further examines how travellers and writers engage with semiotic frameworks during cross-cultural encounters.

“Travel writers are sign-readers in many senses of the word. For when they encounter the other, they are faced with an *épistèmè* in which is at stake not only the strangeness to the outsider of the sign itself but also the nature of its relation to its object.”

(Scott, 2003, p.209)

This interpretive process reflects a dialogue between the traveller’s own cultural framework and the cultural codes embedded in the signs encountered. Roland Barthes’ exploration aligns with Scott’s view, as he investigates how signs within different cultural contexts construct and reshape perceptions of reality. Scott illustrates how these insights into semiotic systems not only facilitate communication but also shape perspectives on how we view the world and understand different cultures.

“For the smiling sign is one that enters not only into a functional relationship with its reader or interpretant but also into a relationship of connivance, involving play on intellectual, sensual, aesthetic and other levels.”

(Scott, 2003, p.211)

The dynamic interaction between travellers and signs is central to Scott’s argument about the transformative potential of travel writing. He suggests that travel writing serves as both a semiotic and ethnographic exploration, where writers interpret and represent signs encountered in foreign cultures. This process not only enriches the writer’s understanding of the other culture but also challenges and reshapes their own cultural assumptions. Scott uses the metaphor of the smile to illustrate the complexity of signs in cross-cultural contexts, highlighting how signs can initially appear playful and ambiguous before their deeper meanings are uncovered (Scott, 2003).

Moreover, Scott discusses how semiotic systems facilitate not only communication but also the construction of cultural identity and knowledge. He explains that semiotic systems operate within specific epistemic frameworks, influencing how individuals interpret and assign meaning to signs within their cultural contexts (Scott, 2003). This cultural embeddedness of signs and symbols emphasises the complexity of cross-cultural communication and the importance of understanding semiotic systems when engaging with unfamiliar cultures.

“Barthes’s aim becomes, as the following passage makes clear, to find and to experience the other in terms of signs and to understand how other sign systems (re-)construct the real:

Who has not dreamed of a foreign (strange) language and yet of not understanding it; of perceiving difference in it without this difference ever being attenuated by the superficial sociability of language, communication or vulgarity; of becoming acquainted with the shortcomings of our own language positively refracted in that of another; of learning the system of what was hitherto inconceivable; of undoing our ‘real’ according to the effect of other ways of seeing, other syntaxes; of discovering unheard of positions of the enunciating subject, of re-situating our topological bearings; in a word, of entering into the untranslatable so that we experience its shock without ever fully absorbing it, until the whole of western culture seems to tremor and the rights of the paternal language to shake to their foundations, – that native language that our fathers handed down to us and which makes us in our turn

fathers and proprietors of a culture which history has the effect of transforming into 'nature'."

(Scott, 2003, p.213)

Travel writing, according to Scott, provides a critical platform for studying these semiotic processes in action. It allows writers to document and interpret their encounters with signs and symbols in foreign environments, offering readers insights into the complexities of cultural interactions. Scott's exploration of travel writing as a semiotic and ethnographic endeavour highlights how writers navigate and interpret signs within different cultural landscapes, thereby contributing to broader understandings of cultural diversity and intercultural communication (Scott, 2003).

"As with the Caduveo, I nevertheless handed out sheets of paper and pencils with which they did nothing at first, then one day I saw them all occupied in tracing wavy horizontal lines across the paper. What were they doing? I had to accept the evidence: they were writing."

(Scott, 2003, p.211)

David Scott's analysis illuminates the intricate dynamics of semiotic systems within travel writing. It illustrates how semiotic frameworks shape interpretations of signs and symbols across cultures. It emphasises the transformative potential of cultural encounters mediated through language, symbols, and interpretations, offering profound insights into the complexities of intercultural communication and understanding.

Stuart Hall's essay, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', is an important work that discussed the complexities of identity formation in postcolonial societies, with a particular focus on the Caribbean diaspora. Hall's primary argument centres around the notion that cultural identity is not a static, unchanging essence but a dynamic and fluid construct, continuously shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts.

Hall challenges the conventional understanding of cultural identity as a fixed and stable essence. Instead, he suggests that identity is always in a state of flux, continuously being produced and reproduced through cultural practices and representations. He states:

"Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead, of identity as a "production," which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation."

(Stuart *et al.*, 2021)

This view highlights the idea that cultural identity is a process of becoming rather than being. It is a continuous construction that involves negotiation and reinterpretation of past and present experiences. Hall's argument aligns with postcolonial criticisms that highlight the impact of colonial histories on the formation of identities.

Representation plays a critical role in the formation of cultural identities. Hall argues that the way identities are represented in cultural practices, such as cinema, significantly influences how individuals perceive themselves and their history. He notes:

“Who is this emergent, new subject of the cinema? From where does he/she speak? Practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write—the positions of enunciation.”

(Stuart *et al.*, 2021, p.222)

This perspective highlights the power dynamics involved in representation, where those in positions of authority can shape and control the narratives of marginalised groups. Hall's emphasis on the importance of representation resonates with postcolonial critiques that examine how colonial powers have historically manipulated the images and identities of colonised peoples.

Hall distinguishes between two approaches to cultural identity: rediscovery and production. The former involves unearthing a hidden, essential identity that has been suppressed by colonial domination. The latter, which Hall advocates, views identity as something that is continuously created and redefined. He questions:

“Is it only a matter of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried and overlaid, bringing to light the hidden continuities it suppressed? Or is a quite different practice entailed—not the rediscovery but the *production* of identity?”

(Stuart *et al.*, 2021, p.224)

By emphasising the production of identity, Hall aligns with postcolonial theories that view identity as a construct influenced by ongoing historical and cultural processes. This approach allows for a more refined understanding of identity that accommodates change and diversity within cultural groups.

Hall introduces the idea that cultural identity includes both similarities and differences. While there are shared experiences and histories that unify a group, there are also significant differences that shape individual identities. He explains:

“There are at least two different ways of thinking about “cultural identity.” The first position defines “cultural identity” in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective “one true self,” hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed “selves,” which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common.”

(Stuart *et al.*, 2021, p.223)

This dual nature of identity reflects the complexities within postcolonial societies where common historical experiences, such as colonisation and diaspora, coexist with diverse cultural expressions and individual experiences.

Hall discusses the profound impact of colonialism on the identities of colonised peoples. He notes that colonial powers not only dominated and exploited the physical resources of colonised regions but also sought to control and reshape the cultural identities of the people. He cites Frantz Fanon’s observation:

“Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.”

(Stuart *et al.*, 2021, p.224)

This critique of colonialism aligns with postcolonial analyses that highlight the cultural and psychological damage inflicted by colonial domination, which often results in a fragmented and conflicted sense of identity among the colonised.

Stuart Hall’s analysis of cultural identity emphasises its fluid and dynamic nature. He highlights the importance of representation, the continuous production of identity, and the dual nature of cultural identity that has both shared experiences and individual differences. Hall’s arguments resonate with postcolonial criticisms, offering a complete understanding of how identities are shaped by historical and cultural contexts, particularly in the context of the Caribbean diaspora. His work challenges static and essentialist notions of identity, advocating for a more flexible and inclusive approach to understanding cultural identities in a postcolonial world.

## 2.4 Postcolonial Criticisms of travel writing

Postcolonial critiques are essential for understanding how travel writing about India has evolved and how it continues to be influenced by historical and cultural power dynamics. Said's Orientalism provides a critical framework for analysing how Western travel narratives have historically constructed and reinforced stereotypes about India. Said's work highlights the importance of examining the power dynamics embedded in travel writing and the need to move beyond colonial perspectives (1978).

*The Location of Culture* (Bhabha, 2012) introduces the concept of cultural hybridity, challenging fixed notions of culture and identity. Bhabha's work is crucial for understanding the complexities of cultural representation in travel writing about India, highlighting how cultural identities are fluid and constantly evolving.

Homi Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity is also relevant for postcolonial critiques of travel writing about India. Bhabha's work challenges the notion of fixed cultural identities and emphasises the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural representation (Bhabha, 2012). This perspective is crucial for understanding how contemporary travel writing can move beyond colonial stereotypes and offer more nuanced and respectful portrayals of India.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal essay, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (Spivak, 1988), interrogates the complexities of postcolonial discourse and the representation of subaltern subjects within it. The essay's central argument challenges the ability of Western intellectual frameworks to accurately represent subaltern voices, particularly those marginalised by colonial and postcolonial hegemonies. Spivak's work highlights the challenges of giving voice to marginalised groups and the importance of recognising the complexities and power dynamics involved in representation.

Spivak begins by critiquing Western intellectuals, especially those who claim to speak for or represent the oppressed. She asserts that:

“Some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject.”

(Spivak, 1988, p.24)

This critique suggests that even the most well-intentioned Western critiques often end up recentring Western perspectives and, in doing so, fail to truly understand or represent the subaltern. Spivak argues that this misrepresentation is not a simple oversight but a structural issue within Western epistemologies.

A crucial concept in Spivak's essay is "epistemic violence," which refers to the ways in which colonial powers have systematically silenced and erased the knowledge and voices of the colonised. She illustrates this by pointing to how colonial narratives have historically constructed the colonial subject as the "Other," rendering their subjectivity precarious and erased. This construction of the Other is an act of violence that invalidates subaltern voices and histories:

"The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other."

(Spivak, 1988, p.24)

Spivak engages deeply with the question of whether the subaltern can speak and be heard within dominant discourses. She critiques the notion that oppressed groups, if given the opportunity, can simply articulate their conditions and needs. She references the Subaltern Studies group's attempt to rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of peasant insurgencies but questions their approach, arguing that the subaltern subject is "irretrievably heterogeneous" and thus cannot be easily represented within traditional historiographical frameworks.

Spivak also critiques essentialist tendencies within subaltern studies itself. She notes that even as subaltern studies aim to represent marginalised voices, they risk homogenising these diverse voices into a single, essentialist narrative. She states:

"In subaltern studies, because of the violence of imperialist epistemic, social, and disciplinary inscription, a project understood in essentialist terms must traffic in a radical textual practice of differences."

(Spivak, 1988, p.27)

Thus, Spivak calls for a recognition of the diversity and complexity of subaltern identities and experiences.

Spivak's analysis includes a critical examination of gender within the context of subalternity. She argues that the subaltern woman is doubly marginalised, both by colonial and patriarchal structures. "If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak, 1988). This highlights the layered nature of oppression faced by subaltern women, making their voices even more difficult to recover or represent.

Spivak's main argument in 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' is a profound interrogation of the limits and failures of Western intellectual discourse in representing the subaltern. She asserts that due to persistent epistemic violence and the inherent biases of Western frameworks, the subaltern cannot be authentically represented within these structures. The essay urges postcolonial scholars to recognise the complexity and heterogeneity of subaltern identities and to approach the task of representation with a critical awareness of their own positionality and limitations.

Spivak's essay remains a cornerstone in postcolonial studies, compelling scholars to question the dynamics of power, knowledge, and representation. By highlighting the systemic silencing of subaltern voices and critiquing both Western and indigenous elitist narratives, Spivak calls for a more layered and self-reflective approach to understanding and representing the marginalised. Her work underscores the importance of acknowledging the multifaceted and often inaccessible nature of subaltern experiences, challenging scholars to continually question and refine their methodologies and assumptions.

Postcolonial critiques of travel writing often focus on the ways in which narratives about destinations like India are constructed and mediated. Bhattacharyya's analysis of a guidebook critically examines how guidebooks about India often perpetuate colonial stereotypes, while also highlighting instances where they challenge these narratives and promote more nuanced perspectives. This analysis provides valuable insights into how post-colonial critiques can inform our understanding of contemporary travel narratives and their broader cultural implications (Bhattacharyya, 1997).

Guidebooks have played a crucial role in the evolution of travel writing, particularly in the context of India. Bhattacharyya's analysis of guidebooks in *Mediating India* highlights how these resources have historically mediated and constructed specific narratives about India, shaping travellers' perceptions and expectations (1997). This historical perspective is essential for understanding how contemporary travel narratives have evolved from early colonial representations to more nuanced and diverse portrayals of India.

Guidebooks serve as essential mediators of cultural knowledge, shaping how travellers perceive and experience their destinations. Guidebooks have played an important role in constructing and disseminating specific narratives about India, influencing how travellers understand and engage with the country (Bhattacharyya, 1997). This highlights the significant impact that travel guidebooks have in framing the traveller's journey and shaping their cultural perceptions.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Overview**

This research investigates the representation of India in travel literature through a qualitative content analysis using semiotics. The study focuses on the adjectives and descriptive words that imply “Indianness” in various travel guides and blogs. This chapter details the intricacies of the qualitative content analysis, outlining the selection of guidebooks and blogs, the coding scheme, the data collection process, and the ethical considerations.

Drawing from Jonathan Culler’s ‘The Semiotics of Tourism’, the methodology will focus on understanding how tourists interpret cultural signs and symbols.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

This research adopts a qualitative content analysis approach, utilising semiotics as the theoretical framework. Introduced by Harold Lasswell in 1927,

“Content analysis is used to study a broad range of ‘texts’ from transcripts of interviews and discussions in clinical and social research to the narrative and form of films, TV programs and the editorial and advertising content of newspapers and magazines. Media content analysis was introduced as a systematic method to study mass media by Harold Lasswell (1927), initially to study propaganda.”

(Macnamara, 2005, p.1)

However, in contemporary times, “content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (Macnamara, 2005). Qualitative content analysis is chosen for its ability to provide in-depth insights into latent and manifest content by recognising meanings and themes within textual data. As mentioned in the literature review, Scott (2003) highlights how semiotic research, the study of signs and symbols, is particularly suitable for this research as it allows for a detailed examination of how adjectives and descriptive words are used to convey “Indianness” in travel literature.

For this study, “Indianness” is defined as traditional, social and cultural values, the overall way of life, and the beliefs that an Indian follows whether they live in India or elsewhere. This concept also extends to places, phenomena, events, festivals, and other aspects of Indian culture, capturing the essence of what it means to be Indian beyond just geography.

Jonathan Culler’s ‘The Semiotics of Tourism’ (1981) provides the foundational theoretical base for this study. According to his theory, tourists interpret cultural artifacts and practices

as signs, hence, making semiotics a crucial tool for analysing how travel guidebooks and blogs depict India. He asserts that “tourists are engaged in reading cities, landscapes, and cultures as sign systems” (Culler, 1981, p.3). This semiotic perspective is vital for understanding the construction of identity and perception in travel literature. By examining the adjectives and descriptive terms in travel texts, this study aims to reveal the underlying themes and narratives that shape representations of India.

According to Culler, a semiotic perspective in tourism prevents the misconception that “signs and sign relations” distort reality, which can lead to “simplistic fulminations against tourists and tourism”. This perspective encourages a deeper analysis of how signs shape tourist experiences, avoiding superficial criticisms. Culler argues that such negative views are “symptoms of the touristic system” rather than insightful critiques. By focusing on the complexity of sign interactions, a semiotic approach fosters a detailed understanding of tourism, recognising the legitimacy of signs in shaping experiences rather than dismissing them as mere distortions (Culler, 1981, p.9).

Culler’s theoretical insights highlight the importance of examining how travel literature not only reflects but also shapes perceptions of places. His work underscores the role of language and imagery in creating a narrative that influences how tourists view and experience destinations. By applying Culler’s semiotic framework, this study aims to uncover the deeper meanings embedded in the language of travel literature.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The research design is structured to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand and analyse thematic evolution within printed guidebooks and online travel blogs
2. To trace and analyse emerging differences in language between digital travel writing (blogs) and traditional travel writing (guides)
3. To analyse shifts in representation, themes, and perspectives by comparing guidebooks over time
4. To identify themes and perspective related to India in colonial and post-colonial perspectives in travel literature

The data sources are:

1. Murray’s Handbook for Travellers to India, 1892
2. Lonely Planet India – Travel Survival Kit, 1981
3. Rough Guide to India, 1996

4. Lonely Planet India, 2022
5. Rough Guide to India, 2024
6. Fodor's Guide to Essential India, 2019
7. Travel Bloggers
  - a. Shivya Nath, The Shooting Star (See Appendix A.1)
  - b. Millet Stambough, The Next Somewhere (See Appendix A.2)
  - c. Aneesa, Expat Panda (See Appendix A.3)

The travel guidebooks were chosen based on their popularity and availability in libraries. Murray's Handbooks were among the earliest systematic travel guides and an exclusive source of colonial information.

Travel blogs, on the other hand, were chosen based on author popularity and website traffic (See Appendix C). Nath is an award-winning travel blogger whose writing has appeared in Condé Nast Traveller, BBC, National Geographic Traveller, and the likes. Her blog receives 68,315 monthly hits. Stambough is a renowned travel writer who has contributed to Buzzfeed, Vietnam Tourism, Travel+ Leisure, and other publications. Her website has 4,648 monthly visits. Aneesa is a teacher who travels the world, writing about her authentic experiences. Her blog receives an average of 11,358 monthly visitors.

These sources ensure that the analysis covers both historical and modern perspectives.

The study focuses on the initial general information sections of each guidebook. These sections provide a comprehensive overview of India, relevant to a broad audience, and are typically consulted by tourists for an overall understanding of the country before exploring specific destinations.

### Sampling Method

The sampling method employed in this research is purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling. This method is chosen because it allows for the selection of texts that are particularly relevant to the research objectives. Purposive sampling is a strategy extensively used in qualitative research to identify and choose information-rich instances for the most efficient use of limited resources (Palinkas *et al.*, 2015). This allowed focus on specific guidebooks and blogs that are influential and widely used, thereby ensuring the relevance of the data.

Research shows that readers skim through the guide without lacking interest in the destination. Redesigning guides to prioritise quick-reading formats and visual elements over

lengthy descriptions can benefit marketers (Lever *et al.*, 2019). Hence, this study chose to focus on general information pages of guidebooks rather than specific state chapters as it captures broader themes and provides a crucial overview for understanding India's portrayal.

### 3.4 Data Collection

As explained above, guidebooks and blogs were selected based on their circulation, relevance, and accessibility. Murray's Handbook (1892) provided insights into colonial representations, guidebooks from 1981 and 1996 revealed early post-colonial representations, while modern guidebooks and blogs reflect current perceptions.

Data was extracted from the general information sections of each guidebook and blog (See Appendix D). The extraction process involved:

- Reading and Identifying - Identifying relevant adjectives and descriptive words in the text.
- Coding - Classifying these words according to the established coding scheme: positive, neutral, or negative, and categorising them into themes.

The coding was conducted using Microsoft Excel, with different sheets designated for collecting raw data and managing the coded data. Various pivot tables were utilised to organise and analyse the data, allowing for efficient identification of patterns and themes.

The coding rules were set as follows:

1. Identifying Adjectives and Descriptive Words
  - a. Focus on Adjectives: Look specifically for adjectives or descriptive words used to characterise India, its culture, people, landscapes, etc.
  - b. Contextual Relevance: Ensure the word is used in a context that relates to describing "Indianness" or aspects of India.
  - c. Defining "Indianness" as the perception of being Indian socially, culturally and spiritually.
2. Sentiment Code
  - a. Positive: Words that convey a favourable or positive impression like vibrant, beautiful, diverse, etc.
  - b. Neutral: Words that are descriptive without strong positive or negative connotations like large, populous, urban, etc.
  - c. Negative: Words that convey an unfavourable or negative impression like chaotic, impoverished, polluted, etc.
3. Thematic Categorisation

- a. Cultural: Words describing cultural aspects, for instance traditional, festive, spiritual, etc.
  - b. Geographical: Words describing physical landscapes and geography such as mountainous, tropical, scenic, etc.
  - c. Socio-economic: Words describing economic conditions or social structures such as bustling, impoverished, urban, etc.
  - d. Historical: Words referring to historical context or heritage like ancient, colonial, historic, etc.
  - e. Touristic: Words describing tourist attractions or experiences such as must-see, hidden gem, touristy, etc.
4. Perspective Classification
- a. Colonial Perspective: Descriptions that reflect colonial viewpoints, often characterised by exoticism, othering, or superiority (e.g., untamed, exotic, primitive).
  - b. Post-Colonial Perspective: Descriptions that reflect contemporary viewpoints, often characterised by recognition of diversity, complexity, and modernity (e.g., diverse, modern, vibrant).
5. Identifying language changes
- a. Manual Inspection: Review text manually and examine shifts in vocabulary, syntax and overall style.
  - b. Sentiment Analysis: Examining how sentiments for certain descriptors change over time or over different sources

### **3.6 Defining Analytical Categories**

Upon examining the selected texts, the content was classified according to predetermined dimensions related to the research questions. The content analysis focused on:

1. Themes - Cultural, geographical, socio-economic, historical, and touristic.
2. Adjectives and Descriptive Words - Specific terms used to describe India, coded as positive, neutral, or negative.
3. Representation of “Indianness” - How adjectives and descriptive words construct the identity and perception of India.

These categories were chosen to capture the nuances in how travel literature portrays India and to facilitate comparative analysis across different time periods and formats (guidebooks vs. blogs).

### 3.7 Data Preparation and Analysis

The data preparation and analysis phase of this research was meticulously designed to ensure a thorough examination of the descriptive language used in portraying India across various travel literature sources. This process was facilitated by using Microsoft Excel to construct a detailed coding sheet, which enabled systematic data handling and analysis. The following outlines the steps and methodologies employed in this process:

#### Data Entry

The initial stage involved the systematic entry of identified adjectives and descriptive words into a coding sheet. Each adjective was classified based on its relevance to specific thematic categories and its sentiment. The thematic categories included Cultural, Geographical, Socio-economic, Historical, and Touristic dimensions.

1. The **Cultural** category encompasses adjectives that describe aspects of India's cultural landscape. Terms like "traditional," "festive," and "spiritual" were used to highlight various cultural attributes. "Traditional" denotes longstanding customs and practices that are integral to Indian culture. "Festive" reflects the celebratory nature of Indian festivals and public events. "Spiritual" pertains to India's rich religious and metaphysical traditions.
2. In the **Geographical** category, adjectives describe India's physical landscapes and natural features. Words such as "mountainous," "tropical," and "scenic" were employed to capture the diverse terrain and climatic conditions of the country. "Mountainous" indicates regions with significant elevation, while "tropical" refers to areas characterised by a hot and humid climate. "Scenic" describes visually appealing landscapes that contribute to India's natural beauty.
3. The **Socio-economic** category addresses terms related to economic conditions and social structures. Descriptors like "bustling," "impoverished," and "urban" were used to characterise various aspects of urban and rural life. "Bustling" describes the energetic and busy nature of certain areas, whereas "impoverished" reflects regions suffering from economic hardship. "Urban" pertains to densely populated city environments.
4. The **Historical** category includes adjectives that reflect India's historical context. Terms such as "ancient," "colonial," and "historic" were used to denote historical significance and time periods. "Ancient" refers to early historical periods, "colonial" pertains to the era of British rule, and "historic" signifies events or sites of historical importance.

5. The **Touristic** category features adjectives related to tourism and travel experiences. Descriptors like “must-see,” “hidden gem,” and “touristy” were used to discuss attractions and visitor experiences. “Must-see” identifies essential destinations for travellers, “hidden gem” refers to lesser known but valuable sites, and “touristy” characterises heavily visited areas.

In addition to thematic categorisation, adjectives were analysed for sentiment. This analysis categorised terms into Positive, Neutral, and Negative sentiments (See Appendix E.1). Positive sentiment words, such as “vibrant,” “beautiful,” and “diverse,” highlight favourable aspects of India. Neutral sentiment words, like “large,” “populous,” and “urban,” provide factual descriptions without strong emotional connotations. Negative sentiment words, including “chaotic,” “impoverished,” and “polluted,” reflect unfavourable impressions.

#### Importance of using Contextual Notes

In the coding process, ensuring contextual relevance was crucial for accurately capturing and interpreting descriptive language. Contextual relevance refers to the necessity of understanding and applying adjectives within the appropriate context in which they are used. This ensures that the descriptive terms align with their intended meaning and are accurately categorised.

Without contextual relevance, there is a risk of misinterpreting adjectives or placing them into incorrect thematic or sentiment categories. For instance, the term “traditional” might be used in different contexts to describe either cultural practices or historical artifacts. Similarly, the word “chaotic” might be used to describe both bustling urban areas and disorganised social conditions. Understanding the context in which “chaotic” was used enabled accurate sentiment classification and thematic categorisation. If not analysed with contextual awareness, such terms could be misclassified, leading to skewed or misleading insights. This approach enhanced the reliability of the data and provided a more accurate depiction of how various aspects of India are described across different sources.

#### Checking for Errors

Following data entry, a comprehensive review was conducted to ensure accuracy and consistency. This involved checking for typographical errors and verifying the correctness of the entered data. By cross-referencing the coding sheet with original sources, errors were corrected, and uniformity was maintained.

#### Analysis

The analytical phase utilised pivot tables in Microsoft Excel to examine trends and patterns in the descriptive language. Pivot tables facilitated the identification of trends by analysing the frequency and distribution of adjectives across various guidebooks and blogs. This analysis aimed to reveal patterns in the portrayal of India, identifying recurring themes and common descriptors. By examining these patterns, the study sought to provide a nuanced overview of how India is represented in travel literature, offering insights relevant to the research questions.

Overall, this structured approach to data preparation and analysis enabled a detailed exploration of descriptive language, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how India is depicted in travel-related contexts (See Appendix E).

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are fundamental to maintaining the integrity and credibility of a research study. In this research on travel literature, several key ethical principles guided the methodology to ensure that the study was conducted responsibly and respectfully. These considerations include authorship and citation, accuracy and honesty, confidentiality, and cultural sensitivity.

#### **1. Authorship and Citation**

Proper attribution of sources is crucial in academic research to give credit to the original authors and avoid plagiarism. In this study, guidebooks and blogs that were analysed were cited accurately to acknowledge the work of the original authors (See Appendix B). This involved carefully documenting the sources of all textual references and descriptive terms used in the research. Proper citation also strengthens the credibility of the research by demonstrating transparency and academic integrity.

#### **1. Accuracy and Honesty**

Accuracy and honesty in data analysis and interpretation are essential to uphold the credibility of the research findings. This research adhered to rigorous standards of accuracy by carefully coding and categorising adjectives based on their contextual relevance. Any biases or distortions in interpreting the descriptive language were actively avoided. This commitment to honesty involved a thorough review of data to ensure that findings were based on factual representation and not influenced by personal biases or external pressures. Accurate and honest reporting not only reflects the true nature of the data but also contributes to the reliability and validity of the research outcomes.

## 2. Confidentiality

Confidentiality was critical especially when handling data from travel blogs. In this research, all data was used exclusively for academic purposes, with no exploitation or commercial use. The study maintained strict confidentiality to respect the privacy of both the content creators and their blogs. This approach adhered to ethical guidelines ensuring responsible use of the data.

## 3. Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is crucial when analysing and interpreting descriptive terms related to cultural and societal contexts. In this study, careful attention was paid to conducting the analysis with an awareness of cultural nuances and potential biases. The research critically examined any biased representations present in the guidebooks and blogs. This involved evaluating whether the descriptions of India reflected a diverse and accurate portrayal or if they perpetuated stereotypes or misrepresentations. By addressing these issues, the study aimed to provide a respectful and balanced analysis that recognised the complexity and diversity of the cultural contexts described.

### **3.9 Limitations and Challenges**

Several critical considerations were addressed by the research to ensure the robustness and credibility of the qualitative content analysis conducted for this study. These considerations include managing subjectivity in analysis, the scope of data, understanding temporal and contextual differences, and the representation of digital texts. Each aspect was carefully considered to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings.

#### 1. Subjectivity in Analysis

Qualitative content analysis inherently involves subjective interpretation as it relies on the researcher's judgment to analyse and categorise descriptive language. This subjectivity can introduce bias, which might affect the consistency and objectivity of the analysis. To mitigate these risks, a rigorous coding framework was implemented. This framework included detailed guidelines for categorising adjectives into thematic and sentiment-based categories.

The coding framework was designed to standardise the process and minimise individual biases. Additionally, consistency checks were conducted to ensure reliability. The data was reviewed to reconcile any discrepancies. This process helped maintain a high level

of objectivity and reliability in the analysis, thereby enhancing the credibility of the research findings.

## 2. Scope of Data

The research primarily focused on the general information sections of guidebooks and blogs to analyse the descriptive language used to portray India. This broad approach facilitated a comprehensive overview relevant to the research objectives but excluded detailed descriptions found in specific chapters or specialised sections. While this ensured a wide-ranging perspective, it meant that nuanced insights present in other parts of the texts might be overlooked.

Additionally, only one data source was used for guidebooks from the colonial period due to the limited availability of such old texts or their translations into digital formats. This constraint reduced the scope of data collection.

## 3. Temporal and Contextual Differences

Comparing texts from different periods involves navigating historical and cultural contexts that can significantly influence interpretation. Descriptive language in guidebooks and blogs is shaped by the socio-political and cultural climate of the time in which they were written.

To address this, historical background was done prior to the coding schedule of the literature from different periods. This involved analysing the period in which the guidebooks and blogs were published and considering how historical and cultural contexts might influence their content. By contextualising the texts within their respective eras, the study aimed to provide an accurate interpretation of the descriptive language used.

## 4. Representation of Digital Texts

The study also considered the differences between printed guidebooks and digital travel blogs. Travel blogs, being more dynamic and personal, often feature a conversational and informal tone, reflecting the individual experiences and perspectives of the bloggers. In contrast, printed guidebooks are typically more structured and polished, often curated by publishing teams.

These differences in medium can affect language use and tone. The research acknowledged that variations in descriptive language between printed guidebooks and

digital blogs are not solely due to temporal changes but also reflect the distinct characteristics of each medium. By differentiating between the formal style of guidebooks and the personal nature of blogs, the study aimed to account for these variations in its analysis, ensuring a fair and comprehensive comparison.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This methodology chapter outlines the qualitative content analysis approach grounded in semiotic theory, justified by methodological literature, particularly Jonathan Culler's work. The research design focuses on general information sections of guidebooks and blogs to provide a comprehensive analysis of how India is portrayed in travel literature. Ethical considerations and limitations are acknowledged to maintain the integrity and credibility of the study. This methodology aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the semiotic construction of "Indianness" in travel writing, offering valuable insights into the themes and perspectives in tourism literature.

## **Chapter 4: Analysis**

Over the course of this comprehensive analysis of travel literature, 307 distinct references to various themes, sentiments, and linguistic choices were identified within the selected guidebooks and travel blogs. These were Murray's, Rough Guide, Fodor's, and Lonely Planet, as well as various travel blogs. The data was categorised based on themes, sentiments, and language, providing a detailed picture of the evolution in travel writing from colonial to post-colonial periods.

The thematic analysis reveals a strong presence of cultural and geographical themes across the literature. 41% of all references in traditional guidebooks focus on cultural aspects, highlighting the rich architectural and cultural heritage of destinations like the Khajuraho temples. In contrast, modern travel blogs show a significant shift, with 57% of their content focused on personal and experiential themes under the context of cultural themes. This suggests a move towards more personalised and engaging narratives that cater to contemporary travellers seeking authentic experiences.

Sentiment analysis further layers these differences. All literature predominantly maintains a positive tone, emphasising objectivity and reliability. This is evident in the descriptions of the Khajuraho temples, which were often termed as "deserted" or "historical" in earlier guidebooks. However, modern travel blogs exhibit a wider range of sentiments, from positive to neutral, reflecting more subjective and vivid storytelling. Notably, recent descriptions of the Khajuraho temples have included terms like "erotic", "seductive", and "risqué", indicating a trend towards sensationalism that may detract from their historical and cultural significance.

When comparing travel blogs to traditional guidebooks, it is evident that blogs cover a broader spectrum of themes, especially those related to personal experiences and practical advice. Travel blogs frequently provide firsthand insights and tips, making them highly relatable and useful for readers. In contrast, guidebooks continue to offer comprehensive and structured information, appealing to readers who prioritise thorough and factual content.

The difference in language used between these two types of travel literature is striking. Travel blogs have a conversational and sensory-rich style, creating lively and immersive narratives. This contrasts sharply with the precise and factual language of guidebooks, which focus on providing accurate and reliable information. The descriptive words in travel blogs are often more vivid and engaging, aiming to capture the reader's imagination and convey a sense of place and experience.

Overall, this analysis highlights the diverse approaches in travel literature, reflecting the evolving needs and preferences of modern travellers. While traditional guidebooks remain a valuable resource for detailed and reliable information, travel blogs have emerged as a dynamic platform for sharing personal experiences and practical advice. This duality enriches the field of travel writing, offering a balanced perspective that caters to a wide range of readers.

#### 4.1 Thematic Analysis

The analysis of themes present in travel literature from colonial and post-colonial perspectives reveals a complex interplay of historical, cultural, touristic, and personal elements. These themes not only highlight the changing focus of travel writers over time but also reflect broader socio-cultural shifts.

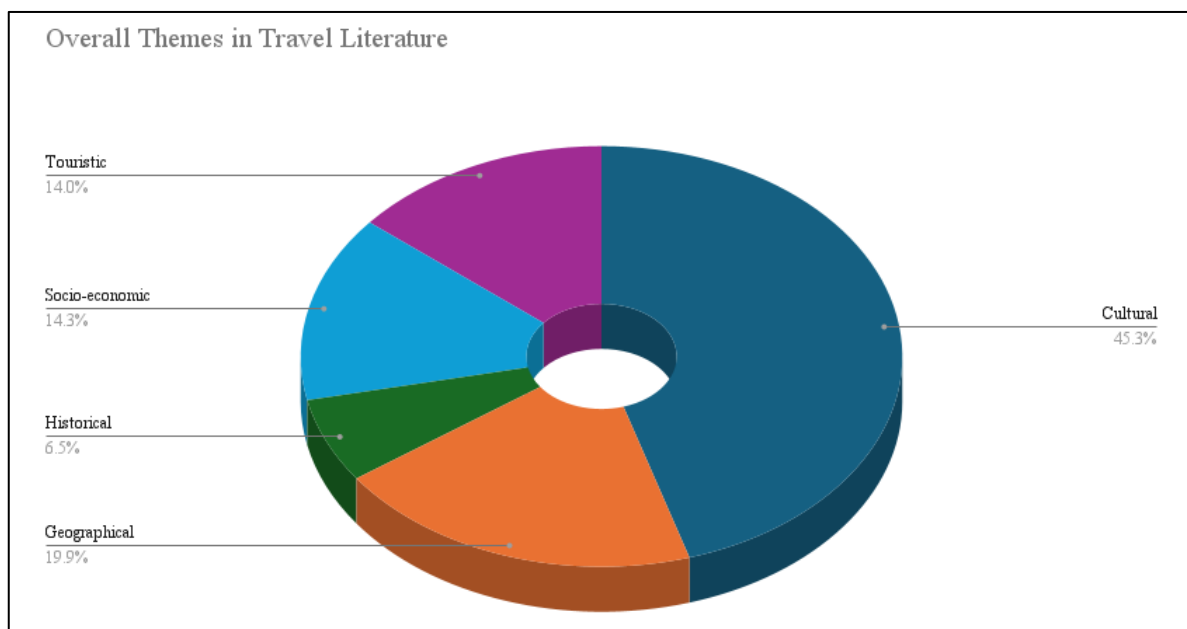


Figure 1: Distribution of Themes in travel literature

##### Historical Themes

Historical themes are a focus in travel literature, especially in traditional guidebooks. These themes constitute 6.5% of the content. In Murray's Handbook (1892), the emphasis on history documents and justifies colonial presence, with descriptions that frame local histories within a Eurocentric narrative. For instance, the Handbook emphasises the "discovery" of ancient sites by European explorers or the "civilising" influence of colonial powers.

In post-colonial literature, historical themes continue to play a significant role, but the narrative has shifted. Modern guidebooks, such as Lonely Planet and Fodor's, provide

detailed historical accounts that focus on the indigenous significance of sites. They aim to educate travellers about the local history and heritage, often highlighting pre-colonial achievements and cultural continuity. The Khajuraho temples, for example, are frequently described in terms of their architectural innovation and historical importance within the Indian subcontinent.

### Cultural Themes

Cultural themes, making up 45.3% of the content, are prevalent across both traditional guidebooks and travel blogs. However, the portrayal of cultural themes varies significantly between these sources. Traditional guidebooks often integrate cultural themes with historical narratives, providing a comprehensive overview of the cultural practices, festivals, and daily life of the regions described. This approach offers readers a structured understanding of the local culture.

Travel blogs, on the other hand, present cultural themes through a personal lens. Bloggers share their experiences of local customs, cuisine, and interactions with residents, offering a more intimate and immersive perspective. This approach resonates with readers looking for authentic travel experiences and a deeper connection with the places they visit.

### Touristic Themes

Touristic themes, accounting for 14% of the content, have gained prominence in recent years, particularly in travel blogs and modern guidebooks. These themes cater to the practical needs of travellers, providing information on attractions, accommodations, dining, and activities. The focus is on enhancing the travel experience by offering useful tips and recommendations. Descriptive terms such as “timeless”, “warm & welcome”, and “breathless” are commonly used to attract and inform potential visitors.

The increasing emphasis on touristic themes reflects the evolving nature of travel, where convenience and accessibility are key considerations for modern travellers. This shift also indicates a move towards a more commercial approach to travel writing, where the goal is to attract tourists and support the local tourism industry.

### Geographical Themes

Geographical themes, while comparatively less prevalent in traditional guidebooks, are a major component of travel blogs. These themes constitute 19.9% of the overall content but

play a crucial role in travel blogs, where the emphasis is on locations in relation to personal narratives and experiences. Bloggers share their emotions, reflections, and interactions, making the content engaging and relatable. This personal touch in describing landscapes helps readers connect with the writer's journey and inspires them to explore similar experiences.

The prevalence of these themes in travel blogs highlights the changing nature of travel literature, where the focus is shifting from authoritative guides to personal storytelling. This shift aligns with the rise of social media and the increasing demand for authentic, first-person accounts that provide a deeper insight into the travel experience.

### Socio-economic Themes

Socio-economic themes are significantly more prevalent in traditional guidebooks, which dedicate 18% of their content to this area, compared to travel blogs where such themes are addressed only 4% of the time. Guidebooks provide a detailed examination of India's infrastructure, city life, and political landscape within the socio-economic context, offering readers a comprehensive view.

However, 24% of the socio-economic content in these guidebooks uses negative descriptors such as "not reliable", "frustrating", and "chaotic" to characterise various aspects of the country. This indicates a notable tendency towards critical portrayal of socio-economic conditions in the guidebooks, contrasting with the more limited and less critical coverage found in travel blogs.

Overall, the thematic analysis shows a clear evolution in travel literature, from a predominantly cultural focus in colonial and later guidebooks to a more diverse and practical emphasis in modern literature, particularly travel blogs. This evolution reflects broader changes in society, where there is a growing appreciation for cultural diversity, personal experiences, and practical information that enhances the travel experience.

## **4.2 Sentiment Analysis**

The sentiment analysis of travel literature provides a detailed understanding of the emotional tone and attitude conveyed in descriptions of various themes. Sentiments are categorised as positive, neutral, or negative, offering insights into how different aspects of travel are perceived and portrayed.

### Overall Sentiment Distribution

The data reveals that positive sentiments dominate the travel literature, accounting for 48.5% of the content. Positive sentiments are especially prevalent in travel blogs, where the focus is on providing first-hand experience and information. Terms like “delightful” and “enchanting” are commonly used in a neutral tone to convey information without emotional bias.

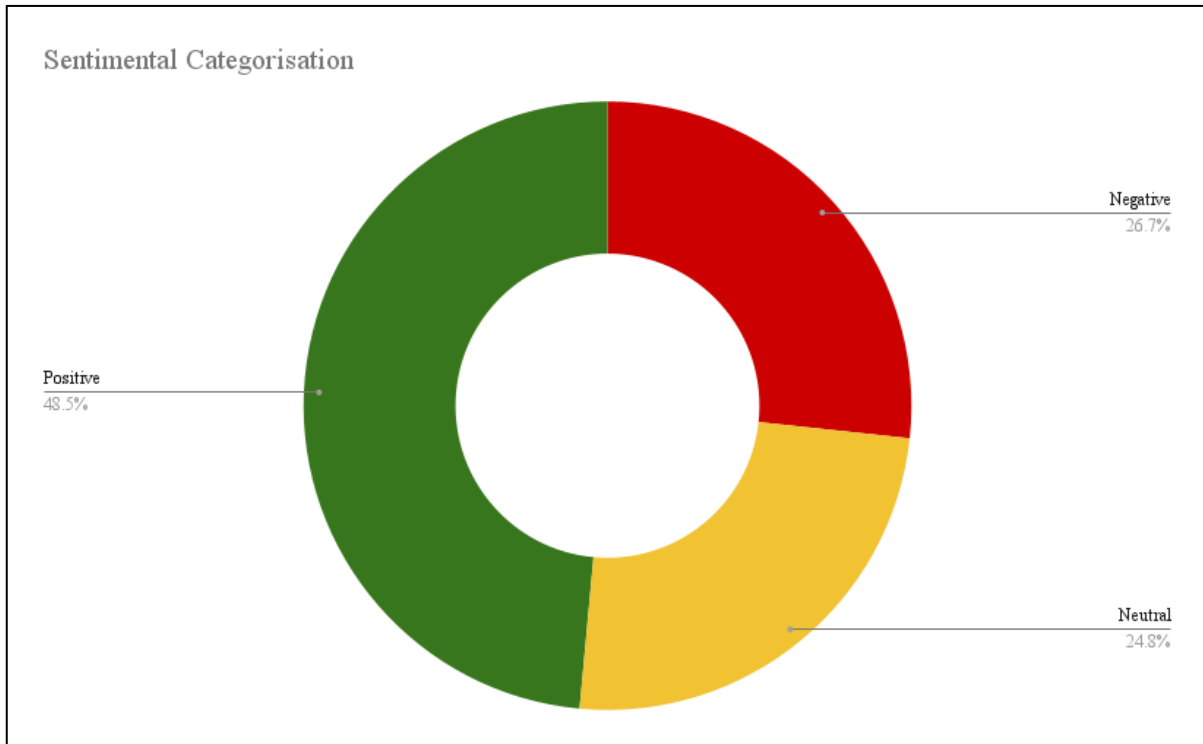


Figure 2: Distribution of Sentiments across travel literature

Negative sentiments make up 26.7% of the content, primarily found more in traditional guidebooks compared to travel blogs. Negative descriptors such as “risqué”, “inefficient”, and “insidious” are used to highlight the cultural and touristic aspects of the country and various destinations. Negative sentiments often reflect personal opinions or critical observations, which can influence readers’ perceptions in a more complex way.

Neutral sentiments are the least common, comprising 24.8% of the content. Neutral sentiments are especially prevalent in traditional guidebooks, where the focus is on providing objective and information. This approach ensures that readers receive accurate and comprehensive details about travel destinations. Terms like “crowded bazaars” and “medieval” are commonly used in a neutral tone to convey information without emotional bias.

### The Khajuraho Temple Sentiment

One finding that emerged during the research process was the evolution of sentiment and description regarding the Khajuraho temples in older texts compared to newer ones. This shift in tone and emphasis reveals interesting trends over time, providing insights into how the perception of these historical landmarks has changed.

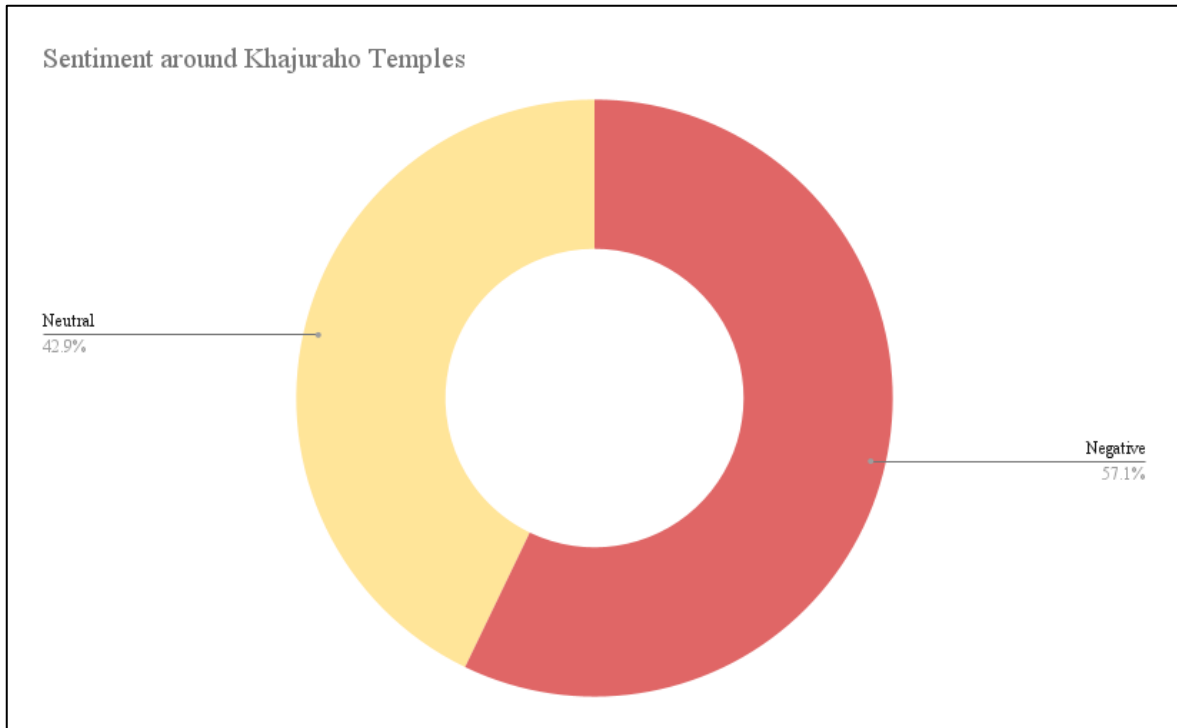


Figure 3: Sentiments associated with Khajuraho Temples of India

Focusing on the Khajuraho temples, the sentiment analysis reveals interesting trends over time. Earlier literature, such as the Rough Guide to India (1996), tends to maintain a neutral and respectful tone. Descriptions like “deserted” convey a sense of ancient mystique without emotional bias, highlighting the historical and cultural significance of the temples.

In contrast, new guidebooks show a mix of neutral and negative sentiments. The use of terms like “erotic” and “seductive” in Lonely Planet India (2022) reflects a modern tendency towards insensitivity. These terms, often used in a negative context, focus on the temples’ provocative aspects, potentially overshadowing their cultural and religious importance. This portrayal can influence readers’ perceptions, emphasising the exotic and controversial elements over the artistic and religious significance.

Despite the presence of negative sentiments, neutral sentiments are also evident. Descriptions like “exuberant” highlight the intricate carvings and artistic value of the Khajuraho temples, emphasising their unique appeal. This duality in sentiment emphasises

the complexity of representing the Khajuraho temples, balancing between respectful admiration and modern insensitivity.

### Sentiment and Themes

Analysing the sentiment associated with different themes reveals interesting patterns. Historical themes are predominantly neutral, reflecting the objective and informative nature of historical literature. Cultural themes show a mix of neutral and positive sentiments, highlighting both the informative and engaging aspects of cultural heritage. Touristic themes are generally positive, focusing on the attractions and amenities that enhance the travel experience. However, aspects of touristic experience involve describing of road infrastructure as not “reliable” and getting around the country as being “exhausting”.

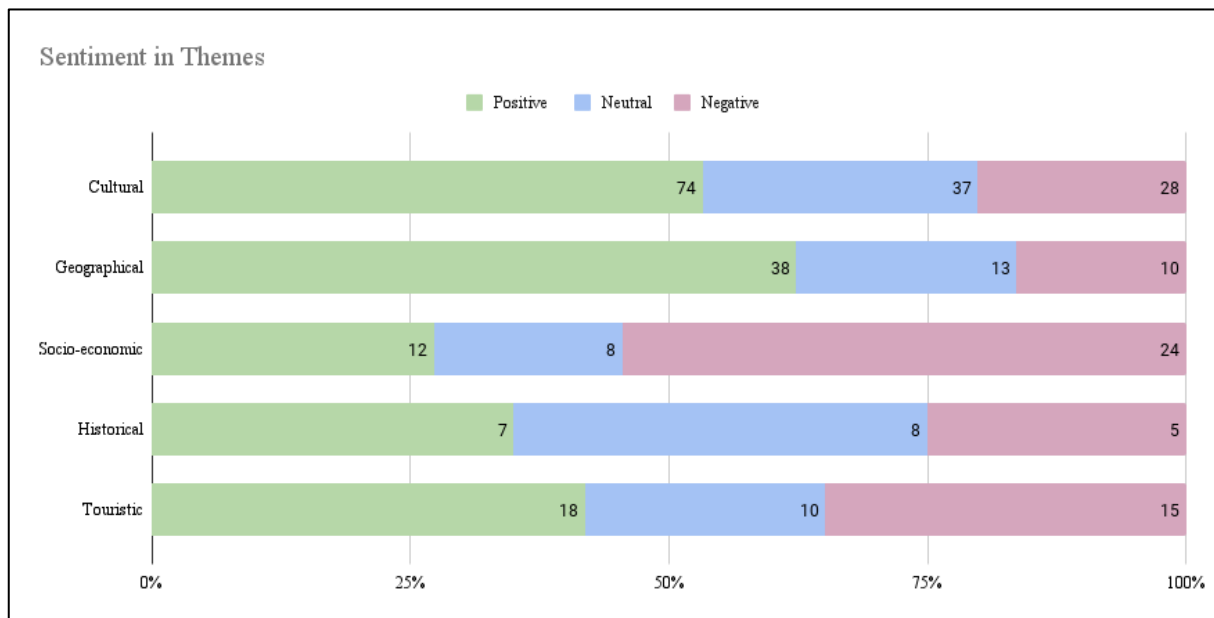


Figure 4: Distribution of Sentiments across various Themes

Since travel blogs are usually written in first person, they exhibited a range of personal themes that range from positive and enthusiastic to critical and reflective. This diversity in sentiment reflected experiencing the culture or travels on a personal manner and subjective nature of travel blogging, where writers share their genuine emotions and opinions. The personal touch adds depth and authenticity to the content, resonating with readers seeking relatable and honest travel experiences.

Overall, the sentiment analysis provides valuable insights into the emotional tone of travel literature. The dominance of neutral sentiments in traditional guidebooks ensures accurate and reliable information, while the positive and personal sentiments in travel blogs offer engaging and relatable narratives. The mixed sentiments associated with the Khajuraho

temples highlight the challenges of balancing respect for cultural heritage with modern storytelling techniques, reflecting broader trends in travel literature.

### 4.3 Travel Blogs vs. Traditional Guidebooks

The comparison between travel blogs and traditional literature highlights significant differences in thematic focus and content style, reflecting the distinct purposes and audiences of these two forms of travel writing.

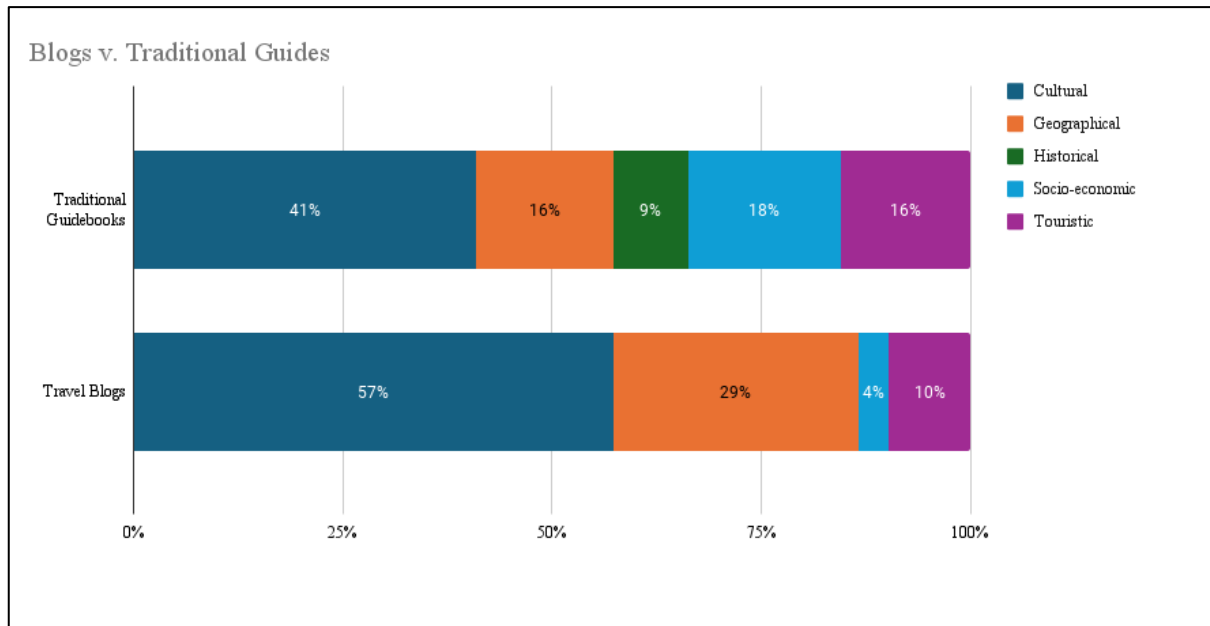


Figure 5: Comparison of Themes in Traditional Guidebooks and Travel Blogs

#### Themes in Travel Blogs

It was observed that travel blogs offer firsthand accounts and personal insights that resonate with readers seeking authentic travel experiences. Personal themes fall under the broader categories of cultural or geographical themes in travel blogs and are non-existent in guidebooks. This emphasis on personal experiences makes travel blogs more engaging and relatable, as bloggers share their unique journeys, emotions, and interactions. This is determined by analysing writer's perspective in travel blogs and guidebooks – whether it is written in first person or third person. Where travel blogs often prioritise storytelling and personal anecdotes, guidebooks focus more on information and practical advice.

Historical themes are largely absent from travel blogs, which focus more on personal experiences and current cultural interactions. Socio-economic themes make up only 4% of the content, reflecting their secondary importance in travel writing. While terms like “efficient” positively describe the railway system and “bustling” neutrally depicts city life, these references are limited. This indicates a shift in travel literature towards immediate, personal narratives rather than detailed historical or socio-economic analysis. The content reflects a preference for contemporary and experiential perspectives over traditional thematic elements.

Cultural themes in travel blogs account for 57% of the content. These themes are often presented through personal narratives that explore local traditions, cuisine, and interactions with residents. This approach offers readers a deeper, more immersive understanding of the cultural context, making the content vibrant and dynamic. Travel blogs frequently use vivid descriptions and personal anecdotes to bring cultural experiences to life.

Touristic themes are also prominent in travel blogs, comprising 10% of the content. Bloggers provide practical tips and advice, such as the best times to visit, recommendations for local accommodations, and tips on navigating destinations. This practical focus caters to modern travellers seeking useful information to enhance their travel experiences. The conversational tone and practical advice make travel blogs an accessible and valuable resource for travellers.

### *Themes in Traditional Guidebooks*

In contrast, traditional guidebooks emphasise cultural and socio-economic themes, providing a comprehensive overview of destinations. Socio-economic themes constitute 18% of guidebook content, with detailed descriptions of infrastructure and social settings in India. These descriptions aim to inform the readers about the life of a common man, economic conditions and infrastructure of places, painting a surface-level scenario of India’s socio-economic status.

Cultural themes make up 41% of guidebook content, often intertwined with geographical narratives to provide a well-rounded understanding of the location. Guidebooks offer detailed explanations of cultural practices, festivals, and daily life, providing readers with a structured and informative perspective.

Touristic themes are less prevalent in traditional guidebooks, making up 16% of the content. These themes focus on practical information but are presented in a more structured and authoritative manner compared to the conversational tone of travel blogs. Guidebooks aim to

offer reliable and comprehensive details, ensuring travellers are well-prepared for their journeys.

### *Distinctive Characteristics*

The distinct characteristics of travel blogs and traditional guidebooks reflect their differing purposes and audiences. Travel blogs prioritise personal experiences and practical advice, catering to readers seeking authentic and engaging content. The conversational and informal tone of travel blogs makes them accessible and relatable, appealing to a broad audience of modern travellers.

Traditional guidebooks, on the other hand, prioritise comprehensive and reliable information, catering to readers seeking detailed and authoritative content. The structured and objective tone of guidebooks ensures accuracy and thoroughness, making them a trusted resource for travellers looking for in-depth knowledge and historical context.

Overall, the comparison between travel blogs and traditional literature highlights the evolving nature of travel writing. Travel blogs offer engaging, personal, and practical content that resonates with modern travellers, while traditional guidebooks provide comprehensive, reliable, and informative content that ensures a thorough understanding of travel destinations. This duality reflects the diverse needs and preferences of contemporary travellers, who seek both authentic experiences and accurate information.

## **4.4 Difference in Language**

The analysis of language used in travel literature reveals distinct differences between the descriptive styles of travel blogs and traditional guidebooks, reflecting their unique approaches to engaging and informing readers.

### *Language in Travel Blogs*

Travel blogs often employ personal and emotive language to describe Indian food, which sets them apart from traditional travel literature. For instance, in *The Shooting Star* (2014), the term “traditional” is used to convey a positive sentiment towards North Kerala food, emphasising authenticity and cultural heritage. This personal and appreciative language highlights the blog’s focus on sharing unique, first-hand experiences with readers, making the descriptions more engaging and relatable.

Furthermore, travel blogs typically prioritise storytelling and personal anecdotes, which enrich their descriptions of local cuisine. The use of descriptive and culturally rich language

allows bloggers to convey not just the flavours and aromas but also the emotional and social aspects of dining. This approach provides readers with a deeper understanding of the food's significance in its cultural context, creating a more immersive and enjoyable reading experience.

In contrast to the more formal tone often found in traditional literature, the language in travel blogs is more informal and conversational. This informal style helps to establish a connection with readers by presenting the blogger's personal experiences and emotions, which enhances the relatability and appeal of the content. As a result, travel blogs often offer a richer, more nuanced portrayal of Indian cuisine, reflecting a broader and more appreciative view of diverse culinary traditions.

### *Language in Traditional Guidebooks*

Traditional travel literature tends to use more formal and sometimes negative or neutral language when describing Indian food. For example, Murray's Handbook - India and Ceylon (1892) uses the term "not good" to describe Indian cuisine, reflecting the historical biases and limited cultural exposure of Western travellers at the time. This negative sentiment indicates a lack of familiarity and appreciation for the local food, highlighting the guidebook's focus on practical information rather than cultural immersion.

In the Lonely Planet India - Travel Survival Kit (1981), the use of contrasting terms such as "terrible" and "magnificent" underscores the subjective nature of food experiences. While "terrible" may reflect an initial shock or discomfort with unfamiliar flavours, "magnificent" suggests an emerging appreciation for the complexity and richness of Indian cuisine. This dichotomy reveals the evolving perceptions of Indian food among travellers and the guidebook's attempt to balance both positive and negative experiences.

The Rough Guide to India (1996) shows a shift towards a more nuanced appreciation, using descriptors like "aromatic" and "delicious" to describe Indian food. These positive terms convey a growing recognition of the sensory appeal and cultural significance of the cuisine. However, the same guidebook also uses the term "dire" to describe Western food in India, indicating a dissatisfaction with non-Indian options and reflecting a preference for local cuisine. This balanced yet formal language underscores the guidebook's focus on providing practical advice while gradually acknowledging the value of cultural experiences.

The difference in language used in travel blogs and guidebooks has a significant impact on readers' perceptions. The emotive and personal language of travel blogs creates an engaging and immersive experience, making the content relatable and inspiring. Readers

are more likely to feel a personal connection with the destinations and be motivated to explore them.

The formal and factual language of guidebooks, while less emotive, provides reliable and comprehensive information. Readers can trust the accuracy and depth of the content, making guidebooks a valuable resource for detailed planning and understanding. The objective tone ensures that readers receive a balanced and thorough perspective.

Overall, the analysis of language in travel literature highlights the distinct approaches of travel blogs and guidebooks. Travel blogs prioritise personal and sensory-rich language to create engaging and relatable narratives, while guidebooks focus on precise and factual language to provide comprehensive and reliable information. This duality reflects the diverse needs and preferences of contemporary travellers, who seek both emotional engagement and accurate knowledge in their travel literature.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

As the results section has outlined, the research offers a detailed examination of how travel literature portrays destinations, focusing specifically on the representation of India. The study has revealed important patterns in the sentiment and thematic content of both traditional guidebooks and modern travel blogs, reflecting shifts in the depiction of various aspects of travel experiences.

The analysis of sentiment shows a clear distinction between traditional and contemporary travel literature. Traditional guidebooks predominantly utilise neutral language, providing factual and objective information about destinations. This approach ensures that readers receive reliable and accurate descriptions, albeit with less personal engagement. Conversely, travel blogs exhibit a wide range of emotional responses, reflecting the subjective experiences of individual travellers. This shift highlights a move from the impersonal tone of guidebooks to the more immersive and personal narratives found in blogs.

Furthermore, the thematic analysis has uncovered significant changes in how India is portrayed over time. Historically, travel literature often emphasised India's exotic and romantic elements, reflecting colonial-era perspectives that framed the country as mysterious and otherworldly. In contrast, modern travel literature presents a more nuanced portrayal, incorporating socio-economic, cultural, and touristic themes. This evolution indicates a departure from simplistic stereotypes towards a richer, more diverse understanding of India's heritage.

Central to these representations is the concept of Indianness, which encompasses the cultural, historical, and social dimensions of India. The study shows that while older travel writings reinforced colonial viewpoints, contemporary literature offers a more authentic and varied representation of India.

In the discussion section, the research will further explore these findings, analysing how the trends in sentiment and thematic content reflect broader shifts in the portrayal of India. This analysis will also consider how the evolving representation of Indianness impacts perceptions and contributes to a deeper understanding of travel literature.

### **5.1 Us vs. Them**

The analysis of travel literature, compared with Joanne Sharp's critique on travel writing (2002), reveals significant insights into how perceptions of the 'Orient' are constructed and conveyed through various forms of travel writing. Said's exploration of how Western

perspectives have historically characterised Eastern societies through a lens of exoticism and inferiority is a foundational concept in understanding the biases inherent in travel literature. Sharp builds on this by illustrating how travel writing, far from being an unbiased account, is deeply influenced by cultural prejudices and the prevailing Western ideologies.

The sentiment analysis of travel literature in this study demonstrates that neutral sentiments are prevalent particularly within traditional guidebooks. This aligns with the aim of such publications to present factual and objective information. Neutral tones, characterised by descriptors like “unbearable summer” and “mystical essence,” reflect an attempt to convey information without the embellishment or bias that might skew readers’ perceptions. This approach maintains the traditional role of guidebooks as sources of practical information, consistent with the descriptive neutrality discussed by Sharp (2002).

In contrast, travel blogs exhibit a greater proportion of positive sentiments, often employing descriptors such as “exuberant” and “dazzling.” This tendency reflects a modern shift in travel literature where personal experiences and enthusiasm play a significant role. The positive sentiment found in blogs aligns with Sharp’s assertion that travel writing is influenced by personal biases and cultural perspectives, particularly in the context of Western perceptions of other cultures. The engaging and inspiring nature of travel blogs can thus be seen as a double-edged sword; while they enhance reader interest and excitement, they also perpetuate certain cultural narratives and expectations, potentially reinforcing stereotypes.

Negative sentiments, although less prevalent than positive ones are notable for their presence in both guidebooks and travel blogs. This mirrors Sharp’s critique that even attempts to challenge stereotypes may inadvertently reinforce a dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them.’ The insensitive portrayal of destinations, evident in terms such as “terrific” or “risqué,” exemplifies how negative sentiments can create a twisted representation of cultural elements, often focusing on provocative aspects rather than respectful or comprehensive portrayals. This tendency towards insensitivity, particularly in recent travel literature, portrays a shift from the neutral and respectful descriptions advocated by traditional guidebooks.

The analysis of sentiments towards the Khajuraho temples provides a particularly illustrative case study. Earlier descriptions of the Khajuraho temples, as seen in the *Rough Guide to India* (1996), maintain a neutral and respectful tone, highlighting their historical and cultural significance without undue bias. This approach aligns with Said’s depiction of Orientalist literature as historically respectful yet fundamentally reductive.

In contrast, recent portrayals in Lonely Planet India (2022) reveal a shift towards a mix of neutral and negative sentiments, with terms such as “erotic” and “seductive” being employed. This modern tendency towards insensitivity reflects a broader trend within contemporary travel writing where the exotic and controversial aspects of destinations are emphasised, often overshadowing their historical and artistic value. Such portrayals exemplify Sharp’s observation that travel writing, even in its critical forms, often maintains a divide between Western and non-Western cultures, thus perpetuating an Orientalist framework.

The evolution of sentiment towards the Khajuraho temples illustrates the complexities of representing cultural sites in travel literature. While the neutral tone maintains a respectful admiration for their artistic and historical significance, the incorporation of insensitive elements reflects contemporary trends in travel writing that prioritise engagement and media framing over clear and respectful portrayal.

In conclusion, the sentiment analysis of travel literature, in conjunction with the critics of Sharp, reveals how travel writing continues to reflect and perpetuate Western biases and cultural narratives. The balance between neutral, positive, and negative sentiments demonstrates the ongoing tension between objective representation and culturally influenced perspectives, highlighting the enduring relevance of postcolonial critiques in understanding the portrayal of non-Western cultures in travel literature.

## **5.2 Identity of Culture**

Stuart Hall’s influential essay, ‘Cultural Identity and Diaspora’ (2021), presents a dynamic understanding of cultural identity, arguing against static or essentialist notions and instead proposing that identity is fluid and constantly evolving. Hall’s emphasis on identity as a “production,” rather than a fixed essence, aligns with postcolonial critiques that stress the impact of colonial histories and cultural representations on identity formation. This theoretical framework provides a valuable lens through which to analyse the findings of the thematic analysis conducted on travel literature.

Hall’s argument that cultural identity is continually shaped by cultural practices and representations echoes through the sentiment analysis results of travel literature. The analysis reveals that historical themes are predominantly neutral in traditional guidebooks, reflecting an objective and factual approach to documenting the past. This neutrality aligns with Hall’s view of identity as being influenced by representation. The historical narratives in these guidebooks serve to frame identities within a Eurocentric context, often focusing on colonial legacies and the supposed “discovery” of sites by European explorers. This reflects

Hall's notion that historical representations, even when neutral, are imbued with the power dynamics and biases of their authors.

In post-colonial contexts, modern guidebooks shift towards emphasising indigenous significance and historical continuity, as seen in descriptions of the Khajuraho temples. This shift aligns with Hall's perspective on the continuous redefinition of identity. By acknowledging pre-colonial achievements and local heritage, contemporary travel literature attempts to address the imbalances of past representations, reflecting a more fluid and inclusive construction of cultural identity. The representation of the Khajuraho temples' architectural and spiritual importance illustrates a move towards recognising and respecting indigenous perspectives, consistent with Hall's idea of identity being "produced" rather than rediscovered.

Hall's notion of representation also intersects with the personal and cultural themes prevalent in travel blogs. Unlike traditional guidebooks, which maintain a more neutral stance, travel blogs exhibit a range of personal sentiments, from enthusiastic to critical. This variability highlights Hall's argument that identity and representation are deeply personal and subjective. The personal narratives found in travel blogs reflect the individual experiences and emotions of the writers, adding depth and authenticity to the portrayal of cultural themes. This subjective approach aligns with Hall's view that identity is shaped by the positions from which individuals speak and write.

The sentiment analysis shows that cultural themes in travel blogs often combine both neutral and positive sentiments, focusing on engaging and immersive portrayals of local cultures. This approach resonates with Hall's argument about the importance of representation in forming cultural identities. Travel bloggers, by sharing personal experiences and reflections, contribute to the production of cultural narratives that challenge monolithic or stereotypical representations. Their personal touch introduces a diversity of perspectives, reflecting the ongoing negotiation and reinterpretation of cultural identities.

The analysis also reveals a rise in the prominence of touristic themes in modern travel literature, particularly in travel blogs and contemporary guidebooks. These themes often focus on the practical aspects of travel, such as attractions and amenities, and can sometimes involve critical reflections on infrastructure. This emphasis on convenience and commercial appeal illustrates a shift towards a more consumer-oriented approach in travel writing, which may influence the representation of cultural identities in ways that cater to tourist expectations rather than purely educational or respectful portrayals.

Hall's critique of colonialism and its impact on identity can be extended to understand the implications of this commercialisation. The shift towards highlighting tourist-friendly aspects and infrastructure concerns may reflect a broader trend towards commodifying cultural experiences. This commercial lens can affect how cultural identities are presented, potentially reinforcing stereotypes or simplifying complex cultural narratives to appeal to a global audience.

Linking Stuart Hall's theoretical insights on cultural identity with the sentiment analysis results from travel literature reveals a complex interplay between historical representation, personal experience, and commercial interests. Hall's concept of identity as a fluid and continuously produced construct aligns with the evolving nature of travel literature, which reflects both historical legacies and contemporary shifts in cultural representation. The sentiment analysis highlights how travel literature navigates these dynamics, balancing neutral historical accounts with personal and commercial portrayals of culture.

Overall, Hall's theories provide a valuable framework for understanding the ongoing changes in travel literature and their implications for the representation of cultural identities. The evolution from colonial-era neutrality to modern, diverse, and sometimes sensationalist portrayals underscore the importance of critically examining how identities are represented and negotiated in the context of travel and tourism.

### **5.3 Traces of “Indianness”**

“Indianness” refers to the cultural, social, and historical attributes that define the identity and essence of being Indian. It encompasses a range of elements including traditions, values, customs, languages, and shared experiences that collectively shape the unique character of Indian culture and identity.

The evolving portrayal of India in travel literature, as reflected in both historical and contemporary texts, provides valuable insights into how perceptions of the country have shifted over time. This discussion links the thematic analysis from the research with the broader literature review, examining the representation of Indianness through the lens of travel guidebooks and blogs.

Historically, travel literature about India has often framed the country through a colonial lens, focusing on themes of exoticism and romanticism. For instance, Murray's Handbook (1892) presents India as an “exotic” and “mysterious” land, reflecting the colonial fascination with the ‘other’ and a tendency to romanticise its landscapes and cultures. This portrayal aligns with Bhattacharyya's analysis, which highlights how early guidebooks emphasised spirituality, exoticism, and cultural richness (Bhattacharyya, 1997). Such representations

served to reinforce colonial narratives, positioning India as a land of mystique and fascination for Western audiences.

The research findings corroborate this historical portrayal, with descriptors like “exotic” and “romantic” continuing to appear in contemporary travel literature. These terms reflect an enduring fascination with India’s allure, albeit with varying degrees of sensitivity and nuance. For example, the term “magical” in recent blogs and guidebooks captures a sense of enchantment like historical representations, but with a more modern appreciation for the country’s cultural and scenic diversity.

In contrast to the colonial-era focus, contemporary travel literature offers more refined and diverse representations of India. Modern guidebooks, such as those from Lonely Planet, provide comprehensive coverage of India’s regions, highlighting cultural diversity and historical richness. This shift reflects broader globalisation trends and the influence of media on travel writing, as noted by Bhattacharyya (Bhattacharyya, 1997). The integration of diverse cultural perspectives in contemporary guidebooks underscores a move away from exoticised portrayals towards more nuanced and inclusive representations of Indian culture.



Figure 6: Word cloud of descriptors across all travel literature mediums

The research results further illustrate this shift. Descriptors such as “beautiful,” “magnificent,” and “charming” in recent travel literature indicate a growing appreciation for India’s natural and cultural assets. The use of positive terms like “blissful” and “pampered” in describing travel experiences highlights an emphasis on the unique and enriching aspects of visiting India, moving beyond simplistic or exoticised portrayals.



aims for a more detailed portrayal, these long-lasting descriptors indicate that the process of decolonising travel narratives is ongoing.

The representation of India in travel literature has evolved from colonial-era exoticism and romanticism to more diverse and layered portrayals shaped by globalisation and media influence. The sentiment analysis of contemporary travel literature reveals a complex interplay between positive and negative descriptors, reflecting both the richness of Indian culture and the challenges faced by travellers.



Figure 8: Word cloud of descriptors prevalent in Cultural Themes

This evolution in representation underscores the impact of historical narratives on contemporary perceptions and highlights the need for a critical examination of how travel literature continues to shape and reflect cultural identities. By understanding these shifts, we gain valuable insights into the changing nature of travel writing and its role in shaping perceptions of India.

#### 5.4 The New Age Travel Writing

Globalisation has significantly influenced travel writing about India, shaping how the country is represented and perceived. Travel guidebooks like Lonely Planet and Rough Guides reflect the global reach of travel literature, providing comprehensive and accessible information for a diverse audience of travellers. These guidebooks emphasise the importance of cultural understanding and respect, reflecting the global context in which travel writing is produced and consumed.

In the advent of technology, travel blogs diversified and personalised these travel guidebooks. The significant rise in online social networking changed how people communicate and shared information, attracting the interest of researchers and marketers due to its impact on consumer purchasing decisions. According to a study, over 93 million Americans used the Internet for planning their trips in 2010 alone (Banyai and Glover, 2012).

The influence of globalisation on travel writing is evident in the shift towards more diverse and inclusive representations of India. Contemporary travel writing often emphasises the country's cultural diversity and historical richness, reflecting the global context in which it is produced and consumed. This shift had significant implications for how travel writing about India is produced and consumed, reflecting broader changes in media and communication.

Blogs are personal websites or online journals where individuals or organisations share information, opinions, and experiences. Travel blogs have become a popular medium for documenting and sharing travel experiences. They offer a more personal and immediate perspective compared to traditional guidebooks.

Travel blogger Millet, offers a vibrant and personal account of global travel experiences, including those in India. It emphasises cultural immersion and unique local experiences, providing readers with detailed travel itineraries, food guides, and personal stories from the author's adventures. The content is rich with vivid descriptions and practical tips that aim to inspire and assist travellers in making the most of their journeys.

'Expat Panda' addresses common misconceptions about travelling to India, aiming to dispel fears and encourage more travellers to explore the country. This blog is particularly valuable for first-time visitors to India, offering practical advice and firsthand experiences that highlight the beauty and diversity of the country beyond common stereotypes. Through engaging and informative posts, Aneesa seeks to challenge negative perceptions and promote a more nuanced understanding of India.

Shivya Nath's travel blog, *The Shooting Star*, stands out for its commitment to sustainable and offbeat travel experiences in India. Shivya's writing captures the essence of exploring India's lesser-known destinations and cultural nuances through an environmentally conscious lens. By advocating for responsible tourism and promoting sustainable practices, *The Shooting Star* offers readers a deeper connection to India's landscapes, communities, and traditions. Shivya's narratives inspire travellers to explore beyond the usual tourist spots, fostering a deeper appreciation for the natural beauty and cultural diversity of India.

These blogs highlight the interconnectedness of the global travel community and the impact of digital technology on travel writing. Each of these travel blogs brings a distinct perspective to exploring India, catering to different interests and travel styles while collectively contributing to a richer understanding of the country's diverse landscapes, cultures, and experiences.

While Bhattacharyya's (1997) analysis provides valuable insights into the role of guidebooks in shaping perceptions of India, it also highlights the need for further research on the long-term impacts of these representations.

In conclusion, the results highlight a significant shift from the neutral, factual tone of traditional guidebooks to the emotionally engaging and personal narratives found in modern travel blogs. The thematic analysis reveals how historical and cultural portrayals of India have transformed, moving from colonial stereotypes to more nuanced and diverse representations. The concept of Indianness has evolved from exoticism and romanticism to a broader understanding of India's cultural and historical complexities.

These findings underscore the impact of globalisation and digital media on travel writing, reflecting a more inclusive and respectful portrayal of destinations.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis sought to explore India's evolution in travel literature, analysing shifts in representation and bias within traditional guidebooks and modern travel blogs from colonial and post-colonial perspectives. The research aimed to investigate thematic changes within these sources and compare the language used in digital versus traditional travel writing. The study has uncovered significant insights into how travel literature has evolved and how these changes reflect broader socio-cultural and economic contexts.

## **Summary of Findings**

The research objectives included understanding thematic elements in travel literature, analysing shifts in representation, and comparing thematic content across different formats. The findings reveal several key trends:

### *Themes and Representations:*

- **Historical Themes**: Traditional guidebooks place significant emphasis on historical themes, constituting 6.5% of the content. This reflects a long-standing tradition of highlighting the historical context of travel destinations.
- **Cultural Themes**: Cultural themes are prominent in both traditional guidebooks and contemporary travel blogs, making up 45.3% of the content. The portrayal of these themes varies notably; traditional guidebooks often provide a static view, while modern travel blogs offer more dynamic and diverse representations that reflect contemporary values and cultural exchanges.
- **Touristic Themes**: Touristic themes, which account for 14% of the content, have become more pronounced in recent years, especially in travel blogs and modern guidebooks. This shift highlights an increased focus on practical information for travellers, such as attractions, accommodations, and activities.
- **Geographical Themes**: Although less prevalent in traditional guidebooks, geographical themes constitute 19.9% of the content in travel blogs. This trend indicates a shift towards a more personalised and experiential approach in modern travel writing, where locations are intertwined with personal narratives.
- **Socio-Economic Themes**: Socio-economic themes represent 14.3% of the content in travel literature. These themes address the economic and social conditions of travel destinations, reflecting the impact of socio-economic factors on travel experiences and representations. Their prominence underscores the importance of understanding the socio-economic context in travel narratives.

### *Sentiments in Travel Writing:*

- **Neutral Sentiments:** Neutral sentiments are predominant in traditional travel literature, constituting 24.8% of the content. This aligns with the objective and factual nature of traditional guidebooks, which aim to provide reliable information without emotional bias.
- **Positive Sentiments:** Positive sentiments are more common in travel blogs, making up 48.5% of the content. This trend reflects the enthusiastic and often promotional nature of contemporary travel writing, with descriptors such as “exuberant,” “fascinating,” and “dazzling” enhancing the appeal of destinations.
- **Negative Sentiments:** Negative sentiments comprise 26.7% of the content. These sentiments are more noticeable in recent guidebooks and travel blogs, where sensational terms like “terrific” and “risqué” are used to attract attention and create a sense of controversy.

### *Case Study: Khajuraho Temples*

A significant finding of this research is the evolution of sentiment and representation concerning the Khajuraho temples. Historical texts presented a more subdued depiction, whereas modern descriptions, particularly in sources such as Lonely Planet India (2022), use terms like “erotic” and “seductive.” This shift illustrates a contemporary trend towards sensationalism, which can overshadow the cultural and historical significance of these landmarks. The provocative language used in modern travel writing highlights a broader tendency to emphasise exotic and controversial elements, potentially reinforcing stereotypes rather than providing a balanced view.

### **Addressing the Research Question**

The hypothesis that older content would exhibit more stereotypical representations was partially confirmed. However, the research revealed that modern texts also perpetuate stereotypical biases, sometimes in more pronounced forms. This finding indicates that while travel literature has evolved, it continues to grapple with issues of representation that have persisted over time. The presence of stereotypes in contemporary travel writing suggests that these issues are not only enduring but have also been amplified in some instances.

### **Gaps in the Literature and Future Research Directions**

The literature on travel writing about India provides valuable insights into the thematic evolution, cultural and historical representations, post-colonial critiques, conceptual

complexities, the influence of media, and the role of globalisation in shaping travel narratives. However, there are several significant gaps and areas for future research:

- i. Diverse Perspectives and Voices: Contemporary travel writing often emphasises diversity and inclusivity, yet there remains a gap in research focused on amplifying the voices of marginalised and underrepresented groups. Future studies should explore how travel narratives can better reflect diverse experiences and perspectives, including those of local communities and travellers from varied backgrounds. This research could promote greater inclusivity and representation in travel writing.
- ii. Impact of Digital Technology: The influence of digital technology on travel writing is an emerging field. Future research could investigate how digital platforms and social media shape travel narratives and impact travellers' perceptions and experiences. Understanding the role of digital technology could provide insights into how these platforms alter the production and consumption of travel literature.
- iii. Responsible and Ethical Travel: With increasing awareness of responsible and ethical travel, there is a need to explore how travel writing addresses social and environmental issues. Future studies should examine how guidebooks and travel blogs promote responsible tourism practices and consider the social and environmental impacts of travel. This research could contribute to developing narratives that encourage sustainable and ethical travel practices.
- iv. Post-Colonial and Globalisation Perspectives: While significant research exists on post-colonial perspectives in travel writing, more exploration is needed into how globalisation influences these narratives. Future research could examine how globalisation shapes travel writing and reflects the complexities of global cultural exchange, offering deeper insights into how globalisation affects cultural representations and travel experiences.
- v. Expanding Colonial Sources: Future study should try to acquire access to a wider range of colonial guidebooks to gain a more thorough knowledge of India's depiction throughout the colonial period. This broader reach may indicate whether the current study's largely neutral or favourable depictions are characteristic of the period or peculiar to the single source under consideration. By comparing numerous colonial writings, academics may better assess whether current alterations in depiction are a contemporary phenomenon or have deeper historical origins, improving the examination of India's portrayal in travel literature.
- vi. Conceptual Complexities and Cultural Hybridity: The concept of cultural hybridity is essential for understanding cultural representation in travel writing. Future research should explore how travel writing addresses and represents cultural hybridity,

highlighting the dynamic and evolving nature of cultural identities. This research could provide insights into how travel narratives portray the blending of cultures and evolving cultural exchanges.

- vii. Insensitivity in representation: Further research could focus on the portrayal of the Khajuraho temples. Investigating both Indian and Western perspectives on this can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how different cultural contexts influence the portrayal of such landmarks. This research could illuminate how sensationalist representations affect cultural perceptions and contribute to broader discussions on the ethics of travel writing.

Future research could explore how guidebook narratives influence travellers' cultural understanding and the broader implications for tourism practices and cultural exchange. This suggests a need for a more in-depth examination of the evolving role of guidebooks in the context of globalisation and cultural tourism.

By addressing these gaps and exploring these areas for future research, travel writing can continue to provide valuable insights into the cultural, historical, and social contexts of travel experiences, promoting greater understanding and respect for diverse cultures and communities.

## **Policy Implications**

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications:

### **1. Impact on Cultural Understanding**

The findings of this thesis have significant implications for cultural understanding. The evolution of thematic and representational elements in travel literature reflects changing attitudes towards different cultures and destinations. The persistence of stereotypes and sensationalism in both traditional and modern travel writing indicates that these issues continue to shape how cultures are perceived globally.

- a. Stereotyping and Representation: The study highlights the enduring nature of stereotypes in travel literature. While modern travel blogs and guidebooks have evolved to include more diverse perspectives, they also often perpetuate stereotypes, albeit in new forms. This suggests that despite the increased emphasis on inclusivity, travel narratives still grapple with deeply ingrained biases. For readers, this means that travel literature continues to influence their perceptions of different cultures in potentially reductive and simplistic ways.

- b. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect: The analysis of sensationalism, particularly in the portrayal of landmarks like the Khajuraho temples, underscores the need for greater cultural sensitivity and respect in travel writing. Sensationalised portrayals can distort the true nature of cultural and historical sites, potentially leading to misinformed perceptions and reinforcing exoticised or controversial narratives. The findings suggest that travel writers have a responsibility to present a more balanced view that respects the cultural and historical significance of destinations.

## 2. Influence on Tourism Practices

The way travel literature portrays destinations has a direct impact on tourism practices. The shift towards more sensational and tourist-centric themes in modern travel writing has implications for how destinations are marketed and experienced.

- a. Tourist Behaviour and Expectations: Sensitised descriptions and a focus on touristic themes cater to specific tourist expectations and preferences. This can influence how tourists choose their destinations and what they seek from their travel experiences. For instance, the emphasis on exotic or controversial aspects of a destination might attract tourists interested in those features, potentially overshadowing other, perhaps less sensational but equally significant, aspects of the culture.
- b. Impact on Local Communities: The portrayal of destinations in travel literature can affect local communities in various ways. Stereotypical representations may lead to a distorted perception of local cultures, which can impact how communities are perceived and interacted with by tourists. This can have repercussions for local economies, cultural preservation, and community relations.
- c. Responsible Tourism: The findings highlight the importance of promoting responsible and ethical tourism practices. Travel literature that prioritises ethical considerations and cultural respect can encourage more mindful tourism. This involves not only providing accurate and respectful representations of destinations but also advocating for practices that benefit both tourists and local communities.

## 3. Contributions to Academic Research

This thesis contributes to the academic field of travel literature by providing a detailed analysis of thematic evolution and representation shifts. The research findings offer valuable insights for scholars studying the intersections of literature, culture, and tourism.

- a. Thematic Analysis: The comprehensive analysis of themes such as historical, cultural, touristic, geographical, and socio-economic provides a nuanced understanding of how these elements influence travel narratives. This contributes to the broader academic discourse on how literature reflects and shapes cultural and socio-economic contexts.
- b. Prevalence of Colonial Perspective: The analysis of the consistent prevalence of colonial stereotypical bias formed on India provides an insight into the problems with representation. This contributes to understanding how cultural identity formed once shapes and sometimes is not malleable.

#### 4. Practical Implications for Travel Writers and Publishers

The insights from this study have practical implications for travel writers, publishers, and content creators. Understanding the impact of thematic choices and representational practices can guide the creation of more responsible and inclusive travel literature.

- a. Ethical Writing Practices: Travel writers and publishers can use these findings to adopt more ethical writing practices that avoid perpetuating stereotypes and sensationalising cultural aspects. By focusing on accurate and respectful representations, travel literature can contribute positively to cultural understanding and tourism.
- b. Inclusive Narratives: The research highlights the need for inclusivity in travel writing. Publishers and content creators should consider diverse perspectives and experiences in their narratives to offer a more comprehensive and respectful portrayal of destinations.
- c. Educational Value: Travel literature that provides balanced and respectful representations can serve as an educational tool for readers, helping them gain a deeper understanding of different cultures and histories. This has the potential to foster greater cultural empathy and appreciation among travellers.

#### 5. Implications for tourism and cultural heritage

- a. Cultural Heritage Protection: Sensationalised portrayals of cultural sites can affect their preservation and management. Policies that promote accurate and respectful representations in travel literature can help protect cultural heritage and ensure that sites are preserved for future generations.
- b. Tourism Management: Insights from this research can inform tourism management strategies, ensuring that tourism practices align with ethical standards and contribute to sustainable cultural and economic development.

By addressing the identified gaps and exploring the implications for cultural understanding, tourism practices, academic research, and practical applications, this study provides a comprehensive framework for future exploration and development in the field of travel literature.

Future research should address the identified gaps by exploring the representation of sensationalism in travel literature, particularly concerning both Indian and Western perspectives. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural contexts influence portrayals and perceptions. Additionally, further studies should focus on the inclusivity of diverse voices in travel narratives and investigate the impact of digital technology on travel writing.

In conclusion, this thesis has provided valuable insights into the evolution and impact of travel literature. By examining thematic shifts and representational practices, the study has highlighted the ongoing challenges and opportunities in travel writing. As the field continues to evolve, it is crucial to engage critically with these issues and strive for narratives that offer respectful and accurate portrayals of diverse cultures and experiences.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Travel Blogs

A.1 Shivya Nath, The Shooting Star

- a. <https://the-shooting-star.com/my-14-incredible-india-moments-in-2014/>

A.2 Millet Stambough, The Next Somewhere

- a. <https://thenextsomewhere.com/2015/10/26/wanderlist-india/>  
 b. <https://thenextsomewhere.com/2015/11/13/indian-cooking-class/>

A.2 Aneesa, Expat Panda

- a. <https://expatpanda.com/dont-let-these-misconceptions-about-traveling-to-india-hold-you-back/>

### Appendix B: Travel Guidebooks

A.1 A Handbook for Travellers in India and Ceylon (Murray, 1892)

A.2 India a travel survival kit by Lonely Planet (Crowther *et al.*, 1981)

A.3 India The Rough Guide (Anon, 1996)

A.4 Fodor's Essential India (Amico *et al.*, 2019)

A.5 The Rough Guide to India (Narayan *et al.*, 2024)

A.6 Lonely Planet India (Bindloss *et al.*, 2022)

### Appendix C: Travel blogger website traffic

Metric	expatpanda.com	the-shooting-star.com	thenextsomewhere.com
Monthly visits	11,358	68,315 🏆	4,648
Monthly unique visitors	6,138	39,016 🏆	2,430
Visits / Unique visitors	1.85	1.75	1.91 🏆
Visit duration	00:00:42	00:01:21 🏆	00:00:28
Pages per visit	1.52	2.11 🏆	1.36
Bounce rate	48.35%	46.29% 🏆	60.12%
Page Views	17,223	143,953 🏆	6,327

### Appendix D: Coding Table

Source Type	Publishing Year	Descriptor	Sentiment	Theme	Contextual Notes	Perspective
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	fanatic	Negative	Cultural	Describing Jagannath temple pilgrims as fanatic	Colonial

Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	not formidable	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the accessibility of the terrain	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	very special	Positive	Touristic	Highlights the unique preparation needed for the journey.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	pleasant	Positive	Geographical	Refers to the agreeable climate during a specific season.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	trying	Negative	Geographical	Refers to the challenging heat experienced.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	cooling	Positive	Geographical	Describes the relief brought by sea breezes	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	thin	Neutral	Cultural	Refers to the type of clothing suitable for the climate.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	convenient	Positive	Cultural	Describes the practicality of local clothing.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	captured	Neutral	Historical	Refers to historical events of conquest.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	sacred	Positive	Cultural	Refers to religious or holy sites.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	ancient	Neutral	Historical	Refers to the long history or antiquity of sites.	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	frightful	Neutral	Cultural	Refers to the Goddess Kali's imagery	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	bad	Negative	Cultural	Refers to Indian washermen of the time who destroyed clothes rapidly	Colonial
Murrays Handbook -	1892	dirty	Negative	Touristic	Refers to bedding in	Colonial

India and Ceylon					hotels as dirty	
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	thin	Neutral	Touristic	Describes what kind of clothing people should wear in India	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	indispensable	Negative	Touristic	Refers to having a travelling native servant as indispensable	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	disappointed	Negative	Touristic	Describes finding good hotels in India as a disappointment - not up to European standards	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	not good	Negative	Touristic	Describes the food in India as not good	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	promiscuous	Negative	Cultural	Describes the way milk and butter are produced referring to cows being fed promiscuously	Colonial
Murrays Handbook - India and Ceylon	1892	striking	Positive	Touristic	Describes the striking architectural monuments in India	Colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	enormous	Positive	Cultural	Describes the variety in India as enormous	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	not easy	Positive	Touristic	Not an easy country to handle	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	crowded	Neutral	Touristic	Describes India as a crowded country	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	terrible	Negative	Cultural	Describes food as terrible	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India -	1981	magnificent	Positive	Cultural	Describes food as magnificent	Post-colonial

Travel survival kit						
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	uncomfortable	Negative	Touristic	Describes transport as uncomfortable	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	affluent	Positive	Touristic	Describes Punjab as affluent and colourful	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	steamy	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the climate in south as steamy - hot	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	great	Positive	Historical	India is home to one of the world's great civilisations	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	developed	Positive	Historical	city engineering in ancient cities	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	oldest	Positive	Cultural	Describes Hinduism as of one the oldest religion in the world	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	overwhelmingly	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the major religion Hinduism as overwhelming	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	confusing	Negative	Cultural	Describes the caste system in India as a confusing mystery	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	desultory	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes how toilets are cleaned in India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	inefficient	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes how 70% of India works on land and is inefficient and unproductive	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	useless	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes how the cattle in India is useless because of religious protection	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India -	1981	soaring	Positive	Geographical	Describes the	Post-colonial

Travel survival kit					Himalayan peaks as soaring	
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	unusual	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the marshland in Rann of Kutch as unusual	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	unbearable	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the hot climate in May as unbearable	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	hazy	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the view in summer as hazy brown	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	delightful	Positive	Geographical	Describes the winter in India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	crisp	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the Delhi winters as crisp	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	noble	Positive	Cultural	Describes the Sikh as noble due to their appearance	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	religious	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Indian art and sculpture as basically religious	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	difficult	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Indian classical music hard to understand for westerner	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	expressive	Positive	Cultural	Describes Indian dances	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	happiest	Positive	Cultural	Describes Diwali as the happiest festival	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	inward	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes Indian media as inward looking	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	discreet	Negative	Touristic	reflects how women should be	Post-colonial

					dressed discreetly	
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	unsavoury	Negative	Touristic	Describes the condition of hotel rooms as unsavoury	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	graceful	Positive	Cultural	Describes the look of a sari	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	elegant	Negative	Cultural	Describes the dhoti as efficient piece of clothing but not elegant	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	determined	Positive	Cultural	Describes the dhoti as a determined washer	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	photogenic	Positive	Geographical	Describes India as photogenic country	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	freak	Negative	Touristic	Describing the domestic travellers of India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	filthy	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing hotels as bug infested and filthy	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	enchanted	Positive	Touristic	Describing the lake palace in Udaipur as an enchanting hotel	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	dull	Negative	Touristic	Describing the travel in India as dull, boring and uncomfortable	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	cheap	Neutral	Socio-economic	Highlights how labour is cheap in India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India - Travel survival kit	1981	awful lot	Negative	Cultural	Highlights how there's a lot of weed in India and correlates it with shiva smoking dope	Post-colonial

Rough Guide to India	1996	lonely	Negative	Geographical	Describes Himalayan lamaseries as lonely	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	dusty	Neutral	Geographical	Describes villages as being far flung and dusty	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	wild-haired	Negative	Cultural	Describes the sadhus with long hair as wild-haired	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	heterogenous	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the Indian society as heterogenous	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	disadvantaged	Negative	Socio-economic	reflects on how grinding the poverty in India has one of the most disadvantaged citizens of the country	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	spicy	Neutral	Cultural	Describes how the dal tastes	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	upbeat	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes Indian cities being upbeat and adrenalin-fuelled	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	comfortable	Positive	Touristic	Highlights that there are many comfortable and inexpensive places to stay in India	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	everchanging	Positive	Geographical	Highlights how landscapes in the country are everchanging on longer journeys	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	efficient	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes the Indian railways	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	tropical	Positive	Geographical	Describes the southern most region	Post-colonial

					of the west coast	
Rough Guide to India	1996	whitewashed	Neutral	Touristic	Describes the Christian churches in goa	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	deserted	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the temples of Khajuraho	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	least expensive	Neutral	Touristic	Describes India as one of the least expensive places to travel to	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	time-consuming	Neutral	Socio-economic	Banks are described as time-consuming	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	quaint	Neutral	Socio-economic	Describes the railway system as frenetic, crowded, yet quaint	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	unstable	Neutral	Touristic	Describes autorickshaws as unstable and drivers as reckless	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	aromatic	Positive	Cultural	Describes Indian food as aromatic and delicious	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	dire	Negative	Cultural	Describes western Indian food as dire and expensive	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	sickly	Negative	Cultural	Describes the sweet jalebi as sickly as it looks	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	unhealthy	Negative	Cultural	Describes Gulab jamun as unhealthy	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	conservative	Neutral	Cultural	Describes how Indian dress	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	inquisitive	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Indians as irrepressibly inquisitive	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	1996	exotic	Neutral	Touristic	Describes the souvenirs as beautiful and exotic	Post-colonial

The Next Somewhere	2013	abundant	Positive	Cultural	Describing the abundance of gastronomic delights found all over India	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	buttery	Positive	Cultural	Describing Naan	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	velvety	Positive	Cultural	Describing Palak Paneer	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	gorgeous	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian food dishes	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	fiery	Neutral	Cultural	Describing Shashi's personality	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	brazen	Neutral	Cultural	Describing Shashi's approach in the kitchen	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	youthful	Positive	Cultural	Describing Shashi's confidence	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	cultural	Positive	Cultural	Describing the significance of cooking Indian cuisine	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	clever	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian women	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	oily	Neutral	Cultural	Describing the vapor from the pot	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	modest	Positive	Cultural	Describing the table setting	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	lively	Positive	Cultural	Describing how the table setting looked with dishes	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	best	Positive	Cultural	Describing the meal	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	fastidiously	Positive	Cultural	Describing the way the author savoured each bite	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	deliberate	Positive	Cultural	Describing the way the author savoured each bite	Post-Colonial

The Next Somewhere	2013	smothered	Positive	Cultural	Describing the Naan	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	clever	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian women	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	modest	Positive	Cultural	Describing the table setting	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	lively	Positive	Cultural	Describing how the table setting looked with dishes	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	best	Positive	Cultural	Describing the meal	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	lovely	Positive	Cultural	Describing the family dynamics	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	interactive	Positive	Cultural	Describing the nature of the cooking class	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	knowledgeable	Positive	Cultural	Describing Shashi's expertise	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	ingenious	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian women	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2013	fascinating	Positive	Cultural	Describing Shashi's kitchen tips	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	pouring	Neutral	Geographical	Describing kayaking in the rains in Goa	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	pristine	Positive	Geographical	Describing the wilderness of Ladakh	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	off the beaten path	Positive	Geographical	Describing less crowded areas in Ladakh	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	stark	Positive	Geographical	Describing the beauty of Ladakh	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	nomads	Neutral	Cultural	Describing the gypsies of Sandur	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	humbling	Positive	Cultural	Reflecting on the lives of gypsy women	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	magnificent	Positive	Geographical	Describing the view from the edge of the Western Ghats	Post-Colonial

The Shooting Star	2014	hypnotic	Positive	Cultural	Describing the invocation ceremony of Theyyam	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	magical	Positive	Geographical	Describing the glimpse of Mount Kanchendzonga	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	glistening	Positive	Geographical	Describing Pawna Lake	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	chaotic	Negative	Geographical	Describing the chaos of Bombay	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	warmth	Positive	Cultural	Describing the warmth of the people in Garhwal	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	pristine	Positive	Geographical	Describing the backwaters of Kerala	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	virgin	Positive	Geographical	Describing untouched beaches in Kerala	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	pink	Positive	Geographical	Describing the sunset in Bhimtal	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	peaceful	Positive	Geographical	Describing a peaceful escape in the Himalayas	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	hot	Positive	Cultural	Describing the aroma of hot aloo parathas in Punjab	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	fresh	Positive	Geographical	Describing the fresh countryside air in Punjab	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	famous	Positive	Cultural	Describing the famous hospitality in Punjab	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	scenic	Positive	Geographical	Describing the scenic Himalayan villages of Spiti	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	stark	Positive	Geographical	Describing the stark desert region in Rajasthan	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	magical	Positive	Geographical	Describing magical reflections in	Post-Colonial

					the water at sunset	
The Shooting Star	2014	virgin	Positive	Geographical	Describing untouched beaches and backwaters in Kerala	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	traditional	Positive	Cultural	Describing traditional North Kerala food	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	bliss	Positive	Touristic	Describing the blissful experience of riding a scooter in Diu	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	bumpy	Negative	Geographical	Describing the bumpy bus ride to Diu	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	charming	Positive	Cultural	Describing a charming café in Diu	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	beautiful	Positive	Geographical	Describing beautiful colonial bungalows in the Himalayas	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	magnificent	Positive	Geographical	Describing magnificent mountain views	Post-Colonial
The Shooting Star	2014	pampered	Positive	Touristic	Describing the pampered experience at a heritage homestay	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	exciting	Positive	Cultural	Referring to the thrilling experience of visiting India	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	magical	Positive	Cultural	Referring to the enchanting experience of visiting India	Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	majestic	Positive	Geographical	Describing the grandeur of India as a superpower	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	extensive	Neutral	Geographical	Describing the railway system	Post-Colonial

The Next Somewhere	2015	efficient	Positive	Socio-economic	Describing the railway system	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	colourful	Positive	Cultural	Referring to the colours in the film adaptation of "A Little Princess"	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	romantic	Positive	Cultural	Describing the romanticism of the film adaptation	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	surreal	Positive	Cultural	Describing the surreal nature of the film adaptation	Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	exotic	Neutral	Cultural	Referring to India's exotic allure	Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	vast	Neutral	Geographical	Describing the geographical diversity	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	efficient	Positive	Socio-economic	Mentioning the railway system	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	bustling	Neutral	Socio-economic	Describing the bustling city life	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	romantic	Positive	Cultural	Referring to the romantic getaway in Udaipur	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	breathtaking	Positive	Cultural	Describing the wedding experience	Post-Colonial
The Next Somewhere	2015	deep	Neutral	Cultural	Mentioning the deep traditions of the wedding	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	shocked	Negative	Touristic	Describes other people being shocked because she had been to India	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	ideal	Negative	Touristic	Describes the road infrastructure as not ideal	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	reliable	Negative	Touristic	Describes the public transport as not reliable	Post-Colonial

Expat Panda	2018	flexible	Neutral	Touristic	Calls for people to be flexible while travelling	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	dirty	Positive	Touristic	Calls for people to understand that India is not solely dirty	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	normal	Neutral	Cultural	Describes staring in "other" cultures as opposed to the west as normal	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	crazy	Neutral	Cultural	Describes India as crazy	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	warm	Positive	Cultural	Describes 90% of Indians as warm, friendly and helpful	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	bilingual	Positive	Cultural	Describes the country as being bilingual	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	original	Positive	Cultural	Describes masala chai in India as original	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	unparallel	Positive	Touristic	Describes the experiences had in India as unapparelled	Post-Colonial
Expat Panda	2018	mystical	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the essence of the land as mystical	Post-Colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	chaotic	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes train station as chaotic	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	romantic	Positive	Geographical	Describes train station as romantic	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	luxury	Neutral	Touristic	Describes travel experiences and affordability	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	poor	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes two-lane road infrastructure condition	Post-colonial

Fodor's Essential India	2019	painstaking	Negative	Touristic	Describes journey on Indian roads	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	reliable	Positive	Socio-economic	Describing rail network	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	so-called	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing legacy airline carriers like Air India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	family-friendly	Positive	Cultural	Describing dining experience and restaurant being family-friendly	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	colourful	Positive	Cultural	Describing fashion in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	uncommon	Negative	Cultural	Describing shorts as uncommon and tourists should avoid wearing it	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	exhausting	Negative	Touristic	Describing getting around in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	exuberant	Neutral	Historical	Describing the Khajuraho temples	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	erotic	Neutral	Historical	Describing the Khajuraho temples	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	rich	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian experiences	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	diverse	Positive	Cultural	Describing Indian experiences	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	extravagant	Positive	Cultural	Describing rituals in Indian religions	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	kaleidoscopic	Positive	Geographical	Describing India as colourful sight	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	kitschy	Negative	Cultural	Describing cultural artefacts sold on traditional bazaars	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	exquisite	Positive	Socio-economic	Describing designer wear	Post-colonial

Fodor's Essential India	2019	warm & welcoming	Positive	Touristic	Describing how people are	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	frustrated	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing electricity access in cities	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	reliable	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing no access to power in villages	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	idyllic	Negative	Geographical	Describing that villages look pretty on the outset but travellers don't know the reality	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	innocuous	Neutral	Cultural	Describing casteism in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	insidious	Negative	Cultural	Describing casteism in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	rife	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing the parliamentary democracy	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	cynical	Negative	Socio-economic	Highlight how an average Indian reacts to Politics	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	poorer	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing women from rural areas to highlight what they wear	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	fabulous	Positive	Historical	Highlighting how Indian history is documented well and kept alive with myths, sites and artefacts	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	complex	Neutral	Historical	Highlights the role of religion in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	elaborate	Neutral	Cultural	Highlights the range of festivals and celebrations in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	limited	Positive	Cultural	Highlights how Indian cuisine is not limited to	Post-colonial

					kebabs and curries	
Fodor's Essential India	2019	ubiquitous	Neutral	Cultural	Describing the range of common Indian cuisine	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	hyperconscious	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Indian behaviour in relation to consumption and consequence of food	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	creative	Positive	Cultural	Highlights vegetarian cuisine in India as diverse and accessible	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	dramatic	Positive	Cultural	Describing difference in textile tradition of saris in India	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	iconic	Positive	Cultural	Describing sari as an iconic Indian garment	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	lusty	Negative	Cultural	Describing rural folk music	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	boisterous	Neutral	Cultural	Describing non-classical music	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	jewel-ornamented	Neutral	Cultural	Describing outfits of classical dancers	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	unusual	Negative	Cultural	Describing dance performances	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	jaunty	Neutral	Cultural	Describing Bollywood music	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	spicy	Neutral	Cultural	Describing food	Post-colonial
Fodor's Essential India	2019	unchanged	Positive	Historical	Describing the unaltered history in parts of India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	terrific	Negative	Historical	Describing the temples of India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	timeless	Positive	Touristic	Describing mosques	Post-colonial

Lonely Planet India	2022	riotous	Negative	Cultural	Describing festivals in terms of spirituality and faith	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	fabulous	Positive	Cultural	Describing festivals as colourful celebrations, specifically Holi	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	medieval	Neutral	Geographical	Describing cities in deserts	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	sumptuous	Neutral	Historical	Describing the architectural legacy	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	seductive	Negative	Historical	Describing the Khajuraho temples	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	intoxicating	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing megacities like Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	legendary	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing scams faced by tourists	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	risqué	Negative	Historical	Describing Khajuraho temples	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	glorious	Positive	Historical	Describing cave paintings in Ajanta-Ellora	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	fascinating	Positive	Historical	Describing the temples in India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	ancient	Neutral	Cultural	Describing the city of Varanasi	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	magnificent	Neutral	Historical	Describing the Mughal ruins in Delhi	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	poised	Neutral	Historical	Describing the Buddhist monasteries in the North	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	safe	Negative	Socio-economic	Highlights the safety of travelling to Kashmir	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	fiery	Positive	Cultural	Describing the thalis in Chennai	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	French-flavoured	Neutral	Touristic	Describing the	Post-colonial

					Puducherry as French colony	
Lonely Planet India	2022	steamy	Negative	Geographical	Describing a tiger reserve's temperature or atmosphere in the south?	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	tranquil	Positive	Geographical	Describing the tea plantations of Munnar	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	frustrating	Negative	Socio-economic	Describing the booking process on IRCTC, unable to use international cards	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	invasive	Negative	Cultural	Highlights how Indians will keep touching foreigners children	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	fairy-tale	Positive	Cultural	Highlighting the magical regions or things for children in India	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	well-oiled	Neutral	Socio-economic	Highlights the tourist infrastructure in Rajasthan	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	exotic	Negative	Cultural	Describing Goan food as inexpensive and ideal but also foreign (note: its just sea-food)	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	fun	Positive	Socio-economic	Describing the transport for kids as amusing	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	respectful	Positive	Cultural	Describing Kashmir's mosques as papier mâché-lined	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	spiritual	Positive	Cultural	Describing Varanasi as a spiritual city	Post-colonial

Lonely Planet India	2022	sophisticated	Neutral	Cultural	Describing Kolkata's culture as a mix of chaos and commerce	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	nostalgic	Neutral	Socio-economic	Describing Raj-era accommodation in Darjeeling	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	spiritual	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Gandhi's ashram and feeling spirituality in Gujarat	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	grandeur	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes Mumbai's architecture as fusion of British grandeur and Indian exuberance	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	ritzy	Positive	Touristic	Describes Mumbai's clubs and bars as ritzy	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	burgeoning	Positive	Touristic	Describes the wine industry in India as burgeoning	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	enigmatic	Neutral	Cultural	Describes tribes of Northeast India as enigmatic	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	exotic	Negative	Geographical	Describes one-horned Rhino as exotic	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	dazzling	Neutral	Touristic	Describes temples in Odisha as dazzling	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	eclectic	Positive	Touristic	Describes MP's attractions as eclectic	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	erotic	Negative	Cultural	Describes the Khajuraho temples	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	colonial	Neutral	Socio-economic	Describes goan architecture as beautiful and colonial	Post-colonial

Lonely Planet India	2022	contemporary	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes Hyderabad's style as contemporary	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	idyllic	Positive	Geographical	Describes the beaches of Kerala as idyllic (peaceful)	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	lavish	Positive	Cultural	Describes the cuisine in Kerala as lavish and coconut-flavoured	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	cool	Positive	Geographical	Describes TN Western Ghats as cool Raj-era hill stations	Post-colonial
Lonely Planet India	2022	unique	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the cultural mix in Andaman as unique	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	quirky	Negative	Historical	Describes remaining effects of British raj as quirky	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	gleaming	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes metro systems as gleaming, speedier and more comfortable	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	ubiquitous	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes technologies like wi-fi and smartphones as ubiquitous	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	bedevilled	Negative	Historical	Describes India's problems as bedevilled	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	malnourished	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes children as malnourished	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	uneducated	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes women as uneducated	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	glaring	Neutral	Socio-economic	Describes disparities for visitors as glaring	Post-colonial

Rough Guide to India	2024	timeless	Positive	Cultural	Describes the land as timeless and ascetic	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	materialistic	Negative	Cultural	Describes the society as materialistic	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	incomprehensible	Negative	Geographical	Describes the continent as bewildering and incomprehensible	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	intractable	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes India's paradoxes as intractable	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	compelling	Positive	Touristic	Describes India as a compelling destination	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	distinctive	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the patina (bazaars, music, smells) as distinctive	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	crowded	Neutral	Cultural	Describes bazaars as crowded	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	pungent	Negative	Cultural	Describes smells of diesel, cooking spices, dust and dung smoke as pungent	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	ubiquitous	Positive	Cultural	Describes filmi music as ubiquitous	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	distinct pleasures	Positive	Geographical	Describes rural India as having distinct pleasures	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	adrenaline fuelled	Positive	Geographical	Describes Indian cities as adrenaline fuelled and upbeat	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	less stressful	Positive	Geographical	Describes rural India a less stressful than cities	Post-colonial

Rough Guide to India	2024	imposing	Positive	Historical	Describes medieval forts and palaces of Jaisalmer as imposing	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	colourful	Positive	Cultural	Describes Rajasthani outfits as colourful	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	extraordinary	Positive	Cultural	Highlights the holy city of Varanasi as extraordinary	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	pervasive	Negative	Cultural	Describes the caste system as pervasive	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	sacred	Neutral	Geographical	Describes the geography of India as sacred	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	countless	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the number of holy places in the India as uncountable	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	decorated	Positive	Socio-economic	Describes the buses being decorated for pilgrimage travel	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	noisy	Negative	Cultural	Describes pilgrim family groups as noisy	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	pressing	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes Kolkata's problems in contemporary India as pressing	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	superlative	Positive	Geographical	Describes the Indian Himalayan views and trekking as superlative	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	mysterious	Negative	Geographical	Describes the lunar landscape of Ladakh as mysterious	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	low-key	Negative	Geographical	Describes Sikkim as a low-key	Post-colonial

					trekking destination	
Rough Guide to India	2024	diverse	Positive	Geographical	Describes the landscapes of Northeast as diverse	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	robotic	Neutral	Cultural	Describes the sounds of the chaiwallah at the railway station as robotic	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	relaxed	Positive	Geographical	Describes Kerala as a tropical and relaxed place	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	ungainly	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes Mumbai as an ungainly beast	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	addictive	Negative	Socio-economic	Describes living in Mumbai with the glitz and glamour as addictive	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	picturesque	Positive	Touristic	Describes Varkala and Gokarna's rural backdrop as picturesque and religious	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	distinctive	Positive	Cultural	Describes the regional culinary traditions of India	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	feisty	Positive	Cultural	Describes the range of flavours in south as coconut and chilli-infused	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	hypnotic	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Sikh hymns as hypnotic	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	intoxicating	Negative	Cultural	Describes spirituality in Amrit Sarovar as intoxicating	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	ear-shattering	Negative	Cultural	Describes the Thrissur Puram march with drum	Post-colonial

					orchestras as ear-shattering	
Rough Guide to India	2024	esoteric	Positive	Cultural	described the various forms of theatre rituals as esoteric	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	romantic	Positive	Geographical	Describes the city of Udaipur as romantic	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	exquisite	Positive	Geographical	Describing the crescent-shaped Palolem beach as exquisite	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	breathless	Positive	Touristic	Describing the journey across Leh as breathless	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	grubby	Negative	Touristic	Describing the local cafes (dhabas and bhojanalyas) as grubby, cheap and unpretentious	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	unrivalled	Positive	Cultural	Describes India as an unrivalled provider of spiritual opportunities	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	conservative	Negative	Cultural	Describes dressing in India as conservative	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	well-groomed	Negative	Cultural	Highlights that dressing respectably and being well-groomed reduces sexual harassment for women	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	ceremonious	Neutral	Cultural	Describes Indian English as formal and ceremonious	Post-colonial
Rough Guide to India	2024	tempting	Positive	Cultural	Describes the array of arts and	Post-colonial

					crafts as tempting	
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## Appendix E: Pivot Tables

Sentiment Analysis				
Source	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Total
Murray's Handbook	8	6	6	20
Rough Guide	26	20	30	76
Fodor's	16	12	16	44
Lonely Planet	27	24	34	85
Travel Blogs	5	14	63	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>307</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>49</b>	

Appendix E.1: Sentiment Analysis

Thematic Analysis		
Themes	Count	Percentage
Cultural	139	45
Geographical	61	20
Historical	20	7
Socio-economic	44	14
Touristic	43	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>	

Appendix E.2: Thematic Analysis

Travel Blogs v. Traditional Guidebooks						
	Cultural	Geographical	Historical	Socio-economic	Touristic	Total
Travel Blogs	47	24	0	3	8	82
Traditional Guidebooks	92	37	20	41	35	225
Percentage Comparison						
Travel Blogs	57%	29%	0%	4%	10%	
Traditional Guidebooks	41%	16%	9%	18%	16%	

Appendix E.3: Theme Comparison in Travel Blogs v. Traditional Guides

Sentiment in Themes			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Cultural	74	37	28
Geographical	38	13	10
Socio-economic	12	8	24
Historical	7	8	5
Touristic	18	10	15

Appendix E.4: Sentiment Analysis by Themes