

A Study on Tourist Satisfaction towards Ecotourism with Special Reference to Ooty

S. Maheswari^{1*} and E. Thenmozhi²

¹Assistant Professor of Commerce, Vellalar College for Women (Autonomous), Erode – 638012, Tamil Nadu, India; maheswarimuthu@rediffmail.com

²Assistant Professor of Commerce (PA), Vellalar College for Women (Autonomous), Erode – 638012, Tamil Nadu, India; maheswarimuthu@rediffmail.com

Abstract

Ecotourism is the rapidly developing proportion of tourism industry with a growing attention on natural environment. It has the potential to attract domestic and international tourists to various tourist destinations. With a focus on environmental protection, the concept of eco-tourism is gaining momentum. The growth in population and increasing movement of people towards tourist destinations to relax themselves necessitates the maintenance of protective environment for healthy tourism. In this regard, the present research aims to measure the tourists' satisfaction and also problems faced by the tourists towards eco-tourism in Ooty. The study uses primary data collected from 130 conveniently chosen tourists through a structured questionnaire survey. Simple percentage analysis, one-way ANOVA and Z-test are used to know the level of satisfaction towards ecotourism. Henry Garrett Ranking method is applied to rank the problems faced by the tourists towards eco-tourism. The result shows that there is no significant difference in the satisfaction among the respondent groups of socio-economic variables and the major problem of tourists towards eco-tourism at Ooty, Tamil Nadu is overcrowding. The suggestions given to the government and management of tourist destinations will help to keep the nature safe and perform eco-tourism methods in a better way for improvement of tourism at Ooty.

Keywords: Eco-tourism, Ooty, Satisfaction and Tourist

1. Introduction

Eco-tourism is one of the fastest-growing markets in the tourism industry and has received widespread attention in non-industrialized countries and financially-poor regions around the world. Eco-tourism renders experience for tourists on high-quality natural experiences, improves assets and supports conservation efforts, protects environment and provides economic benefits to tourist areas. Eco-tourists like to enjoy nature, culture and its development. Eco-tourism operators and other tourism lobbyists consider eco-tourism as always beneficial and help to protect the destination. Tamil Nadu is an all-season destination for tourists¹. Against this background, the present study analyses the tourist satisfaction towards eco-tourism at Ooty, Tamil Nadu.

2. Statement of the Problem

Ecotourism is a developing concept in India. The government of all the states is working to increase the

proportion of natural beauty. Eco-tourism in India is at its infancy and travel agencies are slowly promoting eco-tourism and travel packages. Eco-tourism aims to protect the environment, environmental sustainability and the well-being of surrounding communities. It places a significant role in Tamil Nadu tourism as well as Indian tourism. In past, people used to plan a tour for pilgrimage but in the present, it has completely changed. Many people prefer to go for tour once in a year. In this scenario, the present study focuses on measuring the tourists' satisfaction with destination attributes towards eco-tourism and problems faced by the tourists in the destination.

3. Review of Literature

Vishwanatha and Chandrashekar² examined the impacts of ecotourism relating to environment in Kodagu District. The result showed high negative impact on the environment and positive impact on low quality. It was

*Author for correspondence

concluded that eco-tourism in the district was not well established due to lack of knowledge and awareness among the people. Satish Chandra Bagri and Devkant Kala³ examined the tourist satisfaction with destination attributes in Uttarakhand state of India. They also analysed the importance and performance of destination attributes in overall tourists' satisfaction using the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA). The study concluded that attributes related to tourism product of spiritual and cultural nature, atmosphere and climate, a variety of tourist activities, hospitality and safety were significant in determining tourist satisfaction. Carvache-Franco *et al.*⁴ analysed the level of satisfaction towards eco-tourism in a National Recreation Area: The Samanes Park in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The result showed that the main motivation of the visit were "to enjoy its environment and pure air", "to enjoy its public recreation spaces", "to perform sports" and "to carry out activities in nature". The most valued attributes in satisfaction are "security", followed by "places of recreation". Okki Trinanda and AstriYuza Sari⁵ evaluated the effect of natural attractions and eco-tourism towards tourist's satisfaction and their return intention in West Sumatra. The study found that natural attraction and eco-tourism had a positive and significant effect on both the tourist satisfaction and return intention. Milton⁶ examined the attitude of domestic tourists on eco-tourism and their intention to visit eco-tourism places in Kodaikanal. It was found that the domestic tourists had a positive, moderate and significant relationship with their intention to visit eco-tourism places.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To measure the satisfaction of tourists towards eco-tourism at Ooty.
- To examine the problems faced by the sample respondents during their visit to Ooty.

5. Research Methodology

The study is carried out under survey method. The study makes use of both primary and secondary data. The convenient sampling technique is employed for gathering data from the respondents. The primary data is collected from 130 respondents who visited Ooty by using well-structured questionnaire in Erode Town. The secondary data is collected from various journals, magazines and

articles. The collected data is analysed by using various statistical tools namely Percentage analysis, One-way ANOVA, Z-test and Henry Garrett ranking technique.

6. Hypothesis

H₀₁: The satisfaction of the sample respondents has no significant difference among the groups of socio-economic variables.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 Profile of the Respondents

The profile of the respondents based on their demographic factors such as gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income and study related profile such as source of information, number of times visited, person accompanied, mode of transport, duration of stay and amount spent on one eco-tour are analysed with simple percentage analysis. The details are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents

Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	71	54.6
Female	59	45.4
Total	130	100
Age		
Upto 20 years	28	21.5
21 to 35 years	50	38.5
36 to 50 years	38	29.2
Above 50 years	14	10.8
Total	130	100
Educational Qualification		
School		
Graduate	21	16.1
Professional	65	50
Others	30	23.1
Total	14	10.8
	130	100
Occupation		
Professional	28	21.5
Private Employee	38	29.2
Government Employee	17	13.1
Self Employed	34	26.2
Others	13	10
Total	130	100

Monthly Income		
Upto Rs. 20,000	37	28.5
Rs. 20,001 to Rs. 30,000	32	24.6
Rs. 30,001 to Rs. 40,000	26	20
Above Rs. 40,000	35	26.9
Total	130	100
Source of Information		
Friends and Relatives	56	43.1
Travel Agent	28	21.5
Newspaper/Magazine	38	29.2
Brouchers	8	6.2
Total	130	100
Number of Times Visited		
One time		
Two times	56	43.1
Three times	22	16.9
More than three times	18	13.8
Total	34	26.2
	130	100
Person Accompanied		
Alone	52	40
Family and Friends	39	30
Spouse	28	21.5
Others	11	8.5
Total	130	100
Mode of Transport		
Two-wheeler	18	13.8
Car	66	50.8
Bus	31	23.8
Train	15	11.6
Total	130	100
Duration of Stay		
One Day	52	40
Two to Three Days	67	51.5
More than Three Days	11	8.5
Total	130	100
Amount Spent on one Eco-tour		
Below Rs.10,000	48	36.9
Rs. 10,001 – Rs. 20,000	54	41.5
Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 30,000	19	14.7
Above Rs. 30,000	9	6.9
Total	130	100

Source: Primary Data

The Table 1 reveals that most of the respondents are male (54.6%), belong to the age group of 21 years to 35 years (38.5%), a majority of the respondents (50%) have completed their graduation, a high percentage (29.2%) are private employees, 28.5% of the respondents are having family monthly income upto Rs. 20,000, 43.1% of the respondents have received the source of information

about ecotourism through their friends and relatives visited the eco-tourism spot only onetime, 40% of the respondents travelled alone, 50.8% of the respondents prefer to travel by car, 51.5% of the respondents stayed for two to three days in the eco-tourism places and 41.5% of the respondents spent Rs. 10,001 to 20,000 for their single eco-tour.

7.2 Level of Satisfaction towards Ecotourism Destination

The significant difference between various endogenous variables and the level of satisfaction towards ecotourism is analysed. The null hypothesis is framed to test the significance of the variables and is tested with one-way ANOVA and Z-score analysis at 5% level of significance. The results are shown in Table 2.

It is found from Table 2 that the p-value regarding age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, monthly income, source of information, number of times visited, person accompanied, mode of transport, duration of stay and amount spent on one eco-tourism is greater than 5% level of significance. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the satisfaction of sample respondents among the various groups of all the socio-economic variables of the respondents considered for the study.

7.3 Problems faced by the Tourist in Eco-Tourism Spot (Ooty)

To ascertain the problems faced by the tourist in Eco-Tourism spot (Ooty), the various problems like Parking Facilities, Shopping Facilities, Medical Facilities, Sanitation and Cleanliness, Accommodation Facilities, High Charges for Services and Over-crowding have been considered. The sample respondents are asked to rank the problems based on their experience. The Henry Garrett Ranking technique is used to rank the problems faced by the respondents. The findings are given in Table 3.

Table 3 clearly shows that the problem of “Over-crowding” is ranked first with a mean score of 60. The “High Charges for Services” ranked second by majority of the sample respondents with the mean score of 57, followed by Accommodation Facilities, Sanitation and Cleaning, Medical Facilities, Parking Facilities and Shopping Facilities with the mean score of 53, 50, 48, 42 and 40 respectively.

Table 2. Level of satisfaction towards ecotourism destination

Factors		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	P-value	Result
Age	Upto 20 Years	28	53.18	8.538	0.235	0.872	NS
	21 Years – 35 Years	50	52.56	7.366			
	36 Years – 50 Years	38	51.95	6.746			
	Above 50 Years	14	51.50	5.374			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Educational Qualification	School	21	54.86	6.263	1.204	0.311	NS
	Graduate	65	51.51	7.473			
	Professional Degree	30	52.83	7.451			
	Others	14	51.93	6.604			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Occupation	Professional	28	52.89	7.800	1.393	0.240	NS
	Private Employee	38	50.13	7.140			
	Government Employee	17	53.53	5.713			
	Self Employed	34	53.68	6.299			
	Others	13	53.15	9.468			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Monthly Income	Upto Rs. 20,000	37	53.59	8.738	1.143	0.335	NS
	Rs. 20,001- Rs. 30,000	32	52.69	6.296			
	Rs. 30,001- Rs. 40,000	26	50.23	8.253			
	Above Rs. 40,000	35	52.49	5.043			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Source of Information	Friends and Relatives	56	53.82	7.830	1.781	0.154	NS
	Travel Agent	28	50.71	6.428			
	News Paper/Magazines	38	52.21	6.117			
	Brochures	8	49.25	9.083			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Number of Times Visited	One Time	56	52.59	7.843	0.305	0.822	NS
	Two Times	22	52.95	4.855			
	Three Times	18	53.00	7.616			
	More than three times	34	51.41	7.406			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Person Accompanied	Alone	52	52.94	7.622	1.294	0.280	NS
	Family and Friends	39	53.51	6.312			
	Spouse	28	50.32	7.631			
	Others	11	51.18	6.882			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			

Mode of Transport	Two Wheeler	18	52.00	11.241	0.651	0.584	NS
	Car	66	51.71	6.813			
	Bus	31	53.84	6.553			
	Train	15	52.93	3.453			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Duration of Stay	One day	52	51.40	8.166	2.052	0.133	NS
	2 - 3 days	67	52.55	5.658			
	More than 3 days	11	56.18	9.998			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Amount Spent on one Eco-Tour	Below Rs.10,000	48	52.73	8.256	0.212	0.888	NS
	Rs.10,001-Rs. 20,000	54	51.81	7.217			
	Rs. 20,001-Rs. 30,000	19	53.11	5.216			
	Above Rs. 30,000	9	52.67	5.431			
	Total	130	52.40	7.219			
Factor		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	p-value	Result
Gender	Male	71	53.45	7.471	1.837	0.275	NS
	Female	59	51.14	6.750			

5% level of significance, NS-Not Significant

Table 3. Problems faced by the tourist in Eco-Tourism Spot (Ooty)

Henry Garret Ranking Score											
Rank		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total Score	Garret Mean Score	Mean Rank
Garret Value (Weight)	X	79	66	57	50	43	34	21			
Parking Facilities	F	8	22	2	14	21	24	39	5436	42	6
	FX	632	1452	114	700	903	816	819			
Shopping Facilities	F	6	3	22	6	17	46	30	5151	40	7
	FX	474	198	1254	300	731	1564	630			
Medical Facilities	F	9	12	15	30	44	10	10	6300	48	5
	FX	711	792	855	1500	1892	340	210			
Sanitation and Cleanliness	F	14	10	10	58	14	13	11	6511	50	4
	FX	1106	660	570	2900	602	442	231			
Accommodation Facilities	F	20	7	58	4	14	17	10	6938	53	3
	FX	1580	462	3306	200	602	578	210			
High Charges for Services	F	14	51	18	18	12	9	8	7388	57	2
	FX	1106	3366	1026	900	516	306	168			
Over-Crowding	F	59	25	5	0	8	11	22	7776	60	1
	FX	4661	1650	285	0	344	374	462			

Source: Computed

8. Suggestions

The following measures are suggested to improve the level of satisfaction of tourists towards eco-tourism in Ooty based on the findings of the study.

- The local authorities of tourist destination could take necessary steps to control overcrowding by regulating the traffic in tourist spots regularly.
- The tourism service providers could concentrate on the quality of services provided by them to enhance the satisfaction level of the tourists.
- The government and stakeholders must create awareness about eco-tourism and motivate the tourists for sustainable development at Ooty.

9. Conclusion

Tourism plays a vital role in the development and success of many economies around the world. Eco-tourism minimizes human impact on the environment, protects and builds a natural atmosphere. This nurtures the nature of tourist destinations and brings more attention from domestic and foreign tourists. It fetches several benefits to the host destinations and boosts the revenue of the economy including foreign revenues, creates employment opportunities, develops infrastructures and cultural exchange. Ooty is a significant tourist destination for more than two centuries and the developmental steps may lay more stones in the crown of “Ooty-Queen of the

Mountains”. Hence, the tourism board of Tamil Nadu state can focus more on the study area to improve the satisfaction of tourists.

10. References

1. Manimekalai D., Karthik V. Tourist's Expectation and Satisfaction towards Amenities in Udhamandalam. *International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education*. 2017; 2(1):71–78.
2. Vishwanatha S., Chandrashekaram B. A Study on the Environmental Impacts of Ecotourism in Kodagu District, Karnataka. *American Journal of Research Communication*. 2014; 2(4):256–265.
3. Bagri SC, Kala D. Tourists' Satisfaction at Trijuginarayan, India: An Importance-Performance Analysis. *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)*. 2015; 3(2):89–115.
4. Carvache-Franco M, Carvache-Franco W, Arce Bastidas R, Proano Moreira JL. Analysis of the Motivations and Satisfaction towards Ecotourism in a National Recreation Area: The Samanes Park in Guayaquil - Ecuador. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*. 2018; 4(28):744–756. [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v9.4\(28\).07](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v9.4(28).07)
5. Okki Trinanda and AstriYuza Sari. Exploring Tourist Satisfaction in Eco-Tourism: Antecedents and Consequences. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*. 2019; 124:988-993.
6. Milton T. A Study on Attitude of Domestic Tourists on Ecotourism in Kodaikanal. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*. 2020; 29(9S):2373–2378.