# TOURIST SATISFACTION AND DESTINATION LOYALTY
## (*WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANHA NATIONAL PARK, MADHYA PRADESH*)

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**Abstract** : Kanha National Park is considered as ecotourism capital of Madhya Pradesh. The main reason behind the popularity of this national park is its Tiger sighting. The paper is an attempt to find out the association between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. 320 questionnaires have been analysed and evaluated to find out the associations. Chi Square Test has been used as statistical tool to find out the relation between visitor's satisfaction and intention of revisit the park and hence their likelihood to recommend this park to be visited to others. There is a significant association between tourist's satisfaction and intention of revisit was found($X2(1) > = 96.638$, $p < =.05$) and significant association was also figured out between tourist's satisfaction and their likelihood to recommend this park to others  to be visited.($X2(1) > = 99.363$, $p < =.05$).

**KEYWORD: Kanha National Park, Ecotourism, Tourist's Satisfaction, Revisit, Recommendation**

## INTRODUCTION

Tourism exists on the earth since the beginning of life. Initially human used to travel for food and shelter. Later, after development, they started travelling for business then for education then for recreation and rest is known to the world. Tourism got its shape from Europe and then expanded worldwide.

Ecotourism is one of the kinds of travelling which comes under the umbrella of tourism which consists the motivation to enjoy nature and conserving it for the future along with benefits to the local community. Ecotourism can also be understood as sustainable tourism, green tourism, community tourism and many more because this tourism has its wide expanded wings of benefits in a greater perspective. The main reason of gaining the momentum by this tourism is the hustled and bustled life of today's developing world. People want to travel to serene and peaceful places to enjoy and to stay away from their noisy routine life. Increased discretionary income is also one of the motivations for the tourist to travel for such reasons. Hence the ecotourism is able to save its place strongly among the other types of tourism.

## STUDY AREA

Kanha National  Park was declared as reserve in 1879 and revalued  wildlife sanctuary in the year of 1933. Kanha National Park was established in 1955 which is considered as one of the largest parks in Central India . The national park is situated in the Maikal and Satpura hills in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Rich in its diverse flora and fauna, park is spread in 940 sq.km. in the chain of Maikal Hills and its buffer zone and core zone both are combined, the Kanha Tiger Reserve is spread into 1945 sq km. The whole park is divided into

four parts- Kanha, Kisli, Sarhi and Mukki out of  which Kanha is one of the premium zones. The national park is spread into two different districts i.e. Mandla and Balaghat which has two entrance gates named as Khatiya and Mukki respectively. The National park has been awarded many a times just because of continuous efforts in conserving its flora and fauna. In the series of achievements the Project Tiger was introduced in the national park in 1974 and it has also created a benchmark in preserving hard ground Swamp Deer which was at the point of its extinction.

## LOCATION AND AREA

The Kanha National Park is situated in the Central Indian highlands which lies between 80˚26'E and 81˚03'E longitudes and 22˚07' and 22˚27'N latitudes respectively. It is situated slightly in the Eastern side of these highlands which lie in the Maikal Hills of Satpuras. This park falls in two different districts of Madhya Pradesh i.e. southern part of Mandla district and North Eastern part of Balaghat district. The reserve has a core area of 940 sq km out of which 699sq km is core zone of park while remaining 241sq km is the tourist's zone. The buffer zone is of 1005sq km, in which 40% is core forest and the remaining is used for the revenue land which comes under three divisions, i.e. East and West Mandla, North Balaghat and Kawardha forest division. The forest area which covers the buffer zone of the park is remained under the control of the forest officials of the respective administrative forest division.

**District wise breakup of the Park:**

Mandla District (Kisli and Kanha Ranges): 409.825 sq.km.
Balaghat District(Mukki, Bhaisanghat and Supkhar ranges): 530.122 sq.km.
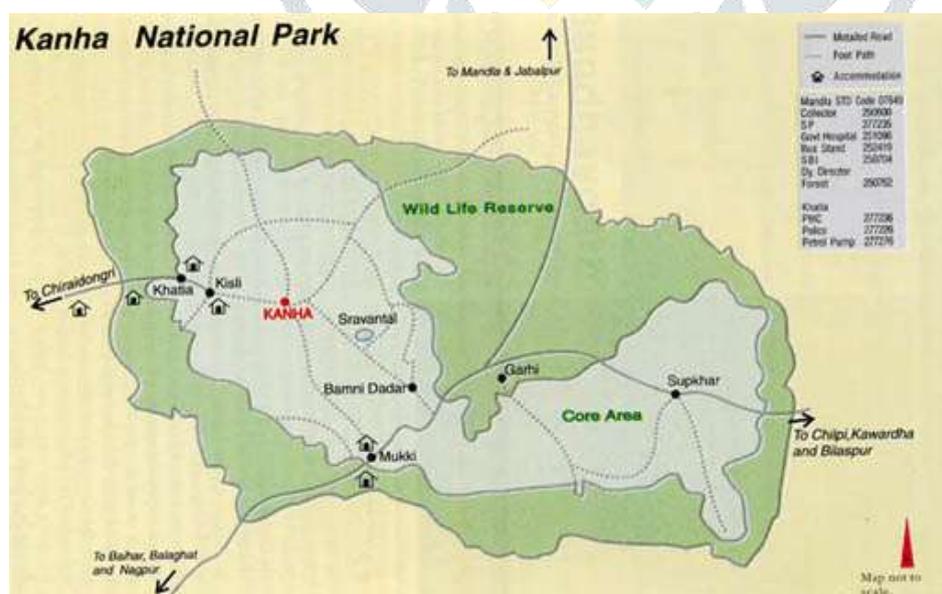
## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Breiby  & Slatten (2018)** tried to find out the relation between the tourist satisfaction and loyalty and stated that three aesthetic experimental qualities were related to the tourist satisfaction and they were genuineness, harmony and scenery and which led to three types of loyalty-(i) They would recommend the same route to others, (ii) they would revisit the same route again and (iii) They would revisit the similar routes again in future.

**Asadi A. *et al.*, (2015)** in their studies with the title" Visitors' Satisfaction of Visit and the Economic Impacts of Perceptions of Ecotourism Development Support in Alamout Area, Iran" suggested that job creation, increased employment opportunity and economic benefits were some of the perceived positive impacts while increased rates of land, attracting non-local investors and increased prices of goods were the perceived negative impacts. This was also concluded that the tourists who emphasized on negative perceived impacts more, were less likely to visit the destination again and also were less likely to recommend the destination to others.

**Rivera & Croes (2010)** surveyed 454 onsite respondents and found out that the tourist visited Galapagos National Park in Ecuador were less likely to visit the national park again but they agreed on recommending the national park to others to visit.

**Yoon and Uysal (2005),** held a study examining the effects of tourist's motivation and   satisfaction on destination loyalty. The researchers used structural equation modeling to find out the relationship between motivation and satisfaction on tourist loyalty and intentions of revisit. On the basis of results it was suggested that managers and stakeholders should focus on tourist satisfaction and post purchase services as these put a great impact on the tourist loyalty and intention of revisit to the destination.

**Jarvis *et al.*, (2016)** found out that the tourist's satisfaction get influenced by the social, economic and environmental factors and hence a satisfied tourist showed a significant relationship with revisiting the national park.

**Kim *et al.*, (2015)** suggested that perceived value, destination image and complains are the influencing factor affecting revisit to national park though tourist satisfaction.

**Salleh *et al.*, (2014)** studied tourist's satisfaction, revisit and recommendation with respect to ecotourism and found that there is positive correlation between a satisfied tourist and their intention of revisiting the national park and hence their likelihood to recommend the national park increases.

**Vetitnev *et al*., (2013)** suggested that satisfaction of a tourist decides the likelihood of revisiting the park and some of the satisfied tourist did agree on recommending the national park to others.

**Okello and Yarian (2009)** found out that the loyalty of a tourist which includes their revisit intention and chances of recommendation completely depends on the tourist's overall satisfaction.

**Alegre and Cladera (2016)** studied that destination attributes helps in intensifying the tourist's satisfaction and hence the chances of revisiting the national park increases.

**Jenner and Smith (1992)** suggested that the second time visitors were more satisfied than the first time visitors.

## OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this paper is to find out the association between tourist's satisfaction and destination loyalty. Hence, objectives can be stated as below-

- To find out the association between tourist's satisfaction and their intention of revisiting the national park.
- To find out the association between tourist's satisfaction and their likelihood to recommend this national park.

## RESEARCH METHOLDOGY

Overall 500 questionnaires were distributed among the tourist visiting Kanha National Park at  Khatiya Gate, Mukki Gate and Sarhi Gate(which are entrance gates of the national park) while some of the questionnaires were distributed in the hotels and eco-lodges to get maximum responses. To get the variety of responses only one questionnaires were given in each gypsy and three in canter as the tourists were more in canter.  320 questionnaires were returned. Chi Square test was applied to find out the association between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty.

## HYPOTHESIS

- H0: Tourist satisfaction has no association with destination loyalty.
- H1: Tourist satisfaction has an association with destination loyalty.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Table is explaining the demographic description of the respondent tourists. It is showing that the 275(85.9%) are the domestic tourists and 45(14.1%) are the foreign tourists.  Out of the total responses 225(70.3%) are the male respondents and 95(29.7%) are the female respondents. Among the respondents 205(64.1%) were the married tourists, 106(33.1%) were the unmarried tourists and 9(2.8%) were separated.

As far as age category is concerned, there were 15(4.7%) tourists who were below 20 years of age, 176 (55%) tourists were falling in the age group of 21 to 40 years of age which is highest in number. 75(23.4%) tourist belonged to the category of 40 to 60 years of age group where 54(16.9%) tourists were of 60 years or more than 60 years of age group. The different income group visitors had visited the park. Total 79(24.7%) tourists were earning less than Rs. 25000 per month and 74(23.1%) tourists were earning Rs 25001 to Rs. 50001  per month. 113(35.3%) tourists were from the income group of 50001 to Rs. 100001 which is highest among all the income group visitors. There were 54(16.9%) tourists who were earning more than Rs. 100000.  In educational qualification of tourists, 22(6.9%) were high school passed out, 17(5.3%) secondary school, 97(30.3%) graduates and 173(54.1) tourists were holding Post Graduation degree. There were 11(3.4%) were holding the other qualification as well. Out of total respondent visitors, 92(28.8%) were self-employed, 74(23.1%) were in government jobs, 80(25%) were involved in private jobs and 34(10.6%) were housewives and 40(12.5%) were holding the other occupational jobs.

| S.No. | Demographic Variables | Category of Respondents | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Types of Tourist | Domestic | 275 | 85.9 |
| | | Foreign | 45 | 14.1 |
| 2. | Gender | Male | 225 | 70.3 |
| | | Female | 95 | 29.7 |
| 3 | Marital Status | Married | 205 | 64.1 |
| | | Unmarried | 106 | 33.1 |
| | | Separated | 9 | 2.8 |
| 4 | Category of Age | Below 20 | 15 | 4.7 |
| | | 21-40 | 176 | 55 |
| | | 41-60 | 75 | 23.4 |
| | | More than 60 | 54 | 16.9 |
| 5 | Monthly Income | Below Rs. 25000 | 79 | 24.7 |
| | | Rs. 25001-50000 | 74 | 23.1 |
| | | Rs. 50001-Rs 10,0000 | 113 | 35.3 |
| | | Above Rs. 100000 | 54 | 16.9 |
| 6 | Educational Qualification | High School | 22 | 6.9 |
| | | Secondary | 17 | 5.3 |
| | | Graduation | 97 | 30.3 |
| | | Post Graduation | 173 | 54.1 |
| | | Others | 11 | 3.4 |
| 7 | Occupational Pattern | Self Employed | 92 | 28.8 |
| | | Government | 74 | 23.1 |
| | | Private | 80 | 25.0 |
| | | Housewife | 34 | 10.6 |
| | | Others | 40 | 12.5 |

The following table shows the distribution of percent on the basis of level of satisfaction visit the Kanha Tiger Reserve.

**Overall Satisfaction from Visit**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Highly Unsatisfied | 44 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 13.8 |
| | Unsatisfied | 90 | 28.1 | 28.1 | 41.9 |
| | Neutral | 70 | 21.9 | 21.9 | 63.8 |
| | Satisfied | 100 | 31.3 | 31.3 | 95.0 |
| | Highly Satisfied | 16 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 320 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |



Overall Satisfaction from Visit
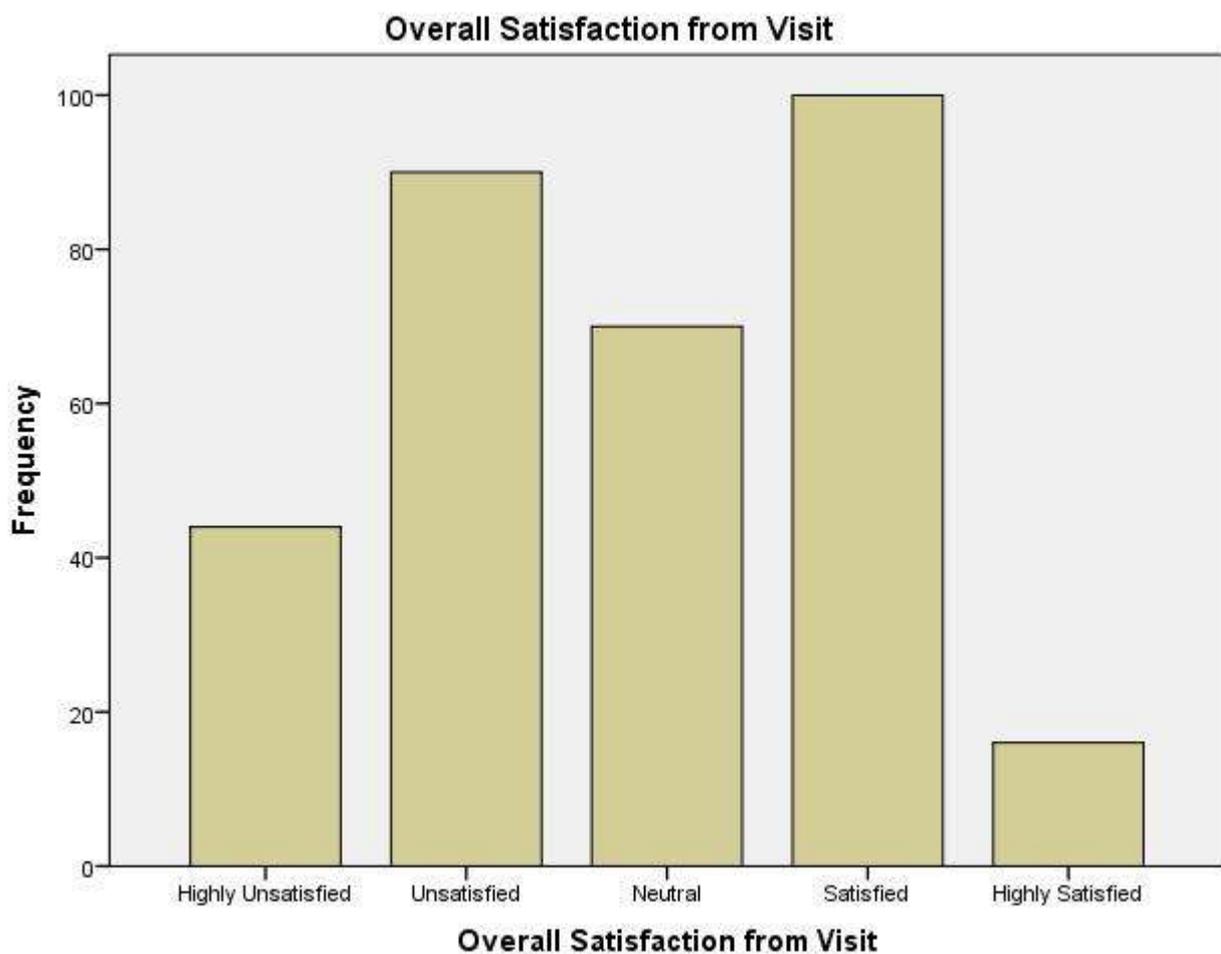
The table shows that 44(13.8%) tourists were highly unsatisfied, 90(28.1%) tourists were unsatisfied, 70(21.9%) tourists were neutral, 100(31.3%) tourists were satisfied and 16(5.0%) tourists were highly satisfied.

The cross tabulation has been made of the responses received. The result is below-

**Tourist Satisfaction & Intention of Revisit**

**Chi Square Test**

|  | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance(2-Sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pearson Chi-Square** | 96.638 | 8 | .000 |
| **Likelihood Ratio** | 77.336 | 8 | .000 |
| **Linear by Linear Association** | 18.612 | 1 | .000 |
| **N of Valid Cases** | 320 |  |  |

The value of Pearson Chi-Square is 96.638 with the degree of freedom 8 while the p value is .000.The table shows that there is a significant association between tourist satisfaction and their intention of revisiting the national park ($X2(1) >= 96.638$, $p < .05$).

**Tourist Satisfaction & Recommendation**

**Chi Square Test**

|  | Value | Df | Asymptotic Significance(2-Sided) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pearson Chi-Square** | 99.363 | 8 | .000 |
| **Likelihood Ratio** | 79.663 | 8 | .000 |
| **Linear by Linear Association** | 47.612 | 1 | .000 |
| **N of Valid Cases** | 320 |  |  |

**Extracted from IBM SPSS (Version 23.0)**

The value of Pearson Chi-Square is 99.363 with the degree of freedom 8 while the p value is .000.The table shows that there is a significant association between tourist satisfaction and their likelihood of recommending the national park ($X2(1) >= 99.363$, $p <= .05$).

Hence the null hypothesis will be rejected and alternate hypothesis will be accepted stating association between the tourist's satisfaction and destination loyalty.
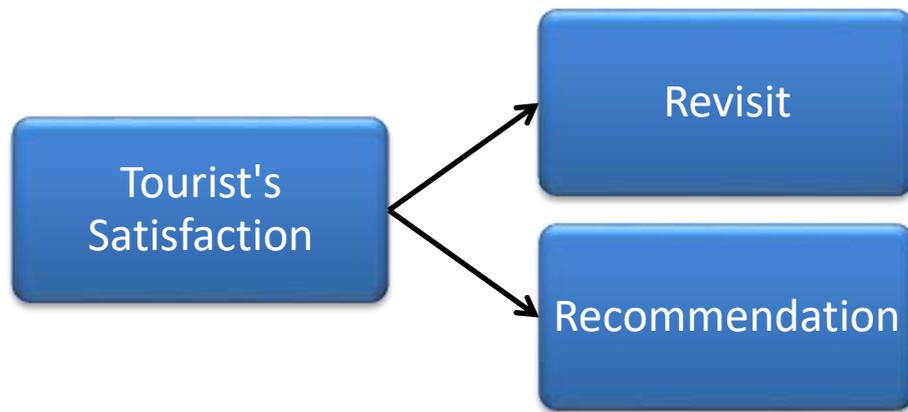
Now it is clearly stated that the satisfaction of tourists from their visit not only impacts their intention to revisit the park in future but also increases the likelihood to recommend the national park to others to visit. Planners and policymakers should ensure the planning and execution should be made in a manner which will yield the maximum satisfied tourist and hence this will increase the footfall in the national park.

**SUGGESTIONS**

On the basis of the results drawn the following things can be suggested:

1. All the stakeholders such as planners, policymakers, tour planners and community members should plan and execute the ideas in a way which increases tourist satisfaction.
2. Many other activities should be included at national park to assure that tourist should feel content about his/her visit in the national park even when they could not spot certain animals which they want to as they visit.
3. The local residents should start showcasing their culture to the tourists in order to improve the tourists' satisfaction level.

**CONCLUSION**

The study is an attempt to find out the association between tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. There are many elements which impact tourist satisfaction in KNP like sighting of animals specially tiger, their accommodation, their transport facility, their interaction with the local community members and many more.

**LIMITATION**

There are a few limitations of the study conducted, mentioned below;

1.  The study focuses on finding direct relation between tourist satisfaction and loyalty. Factors which are affecting tourist satisfaction should also be included in the study.

2.  Sample size should also be increased in order to get wider results.

3.  More International tourist should be included in study and their comparative study should be made with domestic tourist by keeping the tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty as main construct.

The above cited limitation should be taken into consideration to get new dimensions of tourist's satisfaction and tourist loyalty.

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