

“A STUDY ON TOURIST INCLINATION TO VISIT KONNI”

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ABSTRACT: *This study was conducted at Konni, Pathanamthitta district to analyze the ecotourism in that area. The study takes into account the ‘Elephant Cage’ which is located in Konni and serves as a major tourists place in that area. It analyses the overall review of tourist preferences and satisfaction on that particular area and various problem faced by the tourists in Konni. Also analyses the eco-friendly infrastructure and nature of this ecotourism project. The study utilizes method of questionnaire to collect information from the tourists. SPSS software was used to understand and analyze the data obtained from the tourists. Study reveals that the main factors that influence the tourists to visit Konni is the scenic beauty or attractiveness of nature and the popularity of the place makes konni a famous tourist destination. It also reveals that majority of tourists were satisfied with the facilities and potentials in Konni. The ecotourism spot has the potential to attract more tourists if the area is developed more and the drawbacks are accounted for.*

Keywords: *Tourist inclination*

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Bank, Tourism is the fastest and biggest growing industry in the world. It has become the popular global leisure activity that relies mainly on physical environment. In the era of heightened environmental consciousness and accessibility to remote areas, Eco tourism has emerged as one of the fast growing markets in tourism industry that essentially based on natural environment. The ecotourism is defined as ‘Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people’ (TIES, 1990).

The concept of ecotourism is not a new one as it originally appeared in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Nelson, 1994). The idea of ecotourism was primarily generated from the concern of numerous researchers in figuring out the inappropriate use of natural resources made by visitors in different natural destinations. Since then, development approaches were taken into consideration to minimize the adverse effects on local environment as well as enhance the cultural unity in local habitants. Ecotourism is considered as successful when it reduces the environmental impacts of tourism pace while benefits for local community culturally and economically as well as foster environmental education. Despite many efforts of ecotourism developers heading to sustainable development with natural and cultural preservation, the mass tourism brought many negative impacts beside the significant positive impacts on local environments. Ecotourism has contributed greatly on local economics, socio-culture and environment in term of its effects. Among other aspects, the importance of environment was always emphasized in ecotourism activities and development. The most valuable contribution of ecotourism into local environment is preservation of biodiversity. Wildlife and natural surroundings are the assets of ecotourism, therefore, the eco-developers highly focused on conserving and protecting the site. However, the weak operational management may lead to the presence of massive tourists and infrastructures in undisturbed areas. Taking this chance, many opportunist people attempt to cash in on selling natural products of fauna and flora, providing uncontrolled services; the followed consequence of these activities is that the environment and biodiversity are deteriorated.

Many people claim that the more popular ecotourism destination is the more devastated it will be. The study focuses on finding out the impacts of mass tourism in label of ecotourism on local environment from the visitors, NGOs and tour operators’ experiences and perspectives.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is intended to find answers to the following research questions. To know the factors influencing the tourists to visit Konni, whether the tourist are satisfied after visiting Konni? What are the problems faced by the visitors in Konni? The research problem is stated as “A study on tourist’s inclination to visit Konni”.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study.

1. To know the factors influencing the tourists to visit Konni.
2. To know the level of satisfaction after visiting Konni.
3. To know the problems faced by the visitors in Konni.

HYPOTHESIS

The study attempt to test the following hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between Indian and foreign tourist with regard to various factors influencing the tourist to visit konni.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference among different age group with regard to the various factors influencing the tourist to visit konni.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between Indian and foreign tourist with regard to various problems faced by the tourist in konni.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has adopted a descriptive, analytical research design so as to gather relevant knowledge on “A study on tourist inclination to visit Konni” by conducting sample survey. The present study incorporates the collection of both primary and secondary data for an in depth

investigation. The researcher aimed to collect the Primary data with the help of a well-structured questionnaire which contained the questions regarding General information such as nationality, age, sex and also regarding the factors influencing the tourists to visit konni, satisfactory level of tourists and various problems faced by the tourist in konni were administered to 70 samples. The sample respondents were collected using convenient sampling methods.. Secondary data were also recorded in the study which consists of reports of projects and studies conducted by experts, professional journals, magazines and online sources. The data collected were properly analysed to arrive at realistic results using appropriate mathematical and statistical tools such as one-way ANOVA, independent sample t-test which were supported by charts, graphs and SPSS.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jacobson and Lopez (1994) studied the biological impacts of ecotourism in Tortuguero national park of Costa Rica. They observed that using of flashlights and flash cameras, physical overcrowding or touching of turtles arriving from and returning to the sea, mining and movement by tourists near nests and the handling and trampling of hatchlings are drastically disturbing the turtle nesting environment.

Seema Bhatt and Syed Liyakhat (1996) did a study on 'Ecotourism Development in India-Communities, Capital and Conservation' which states that ecotourism is a term debated upon by practitioners all over the world. The initiatives carried out in the name of ecotourism have adversely affected on people and the environment in some areas. However, sustainable ecotourism-tourism carried out within certain defined norms, can lead to the development of the people.

Clem et al (2000) conducted a study on ecotourism in Queensland. The importance of environmental education as a component of ecotourism is highlighted. The extent of environmental education and its impact on attitudes to conservation of sea turtles and actions by Eco-tourists to support such conservation as a result of their visits to Mon Repos Conservation Park (Queensland), an important marine turtle rookery is examined.

Kuuder et al (2003) did a study on the eco village project in Ghana. Poor access and remoteness of some communities often limit their access to the services of development partners/agencies. The study revealed that since the inception of the eco village project, the community's knowledge on conservation has improved considerably; economically, some residents earned extra income which enhanced their livelihood. The community's sense of unity by way of cultural identity had also improved tremendously and there were no noticeable negative effects of host-guest interactions.

Prabha Shastri Ranade (2008) conducted a study on 'Ecotourism, Perspectives and Experiences' analyses a number of issues arising in trying to determine what constitutes successful ecotourism and how to balance conservation with development. She also makes an attempt to highlight broad issues related to the concept and principles of ecotourism. The study focuses on ecotourism experiences and strategies of various countries, including island nations. It highlights ecotourism and local economic development. It considers how ecotourism can generate economic benefits and provide alternative employment and income opportunities for the local communities.

Chern-Wern et al(2010) did a study in Malaysia The Penang National Park (PNP), formerly known as Pantai Acheh forest which is one of the few natural heritages in Northern Peninsular Malaysia with many unique features such as the Meromictic lake, turtle sanctuary and so forth. Several strategic management for PNP in ecotourism context have been identified which are economic opportunities, environmental education and research.

Chandra (2013) performed a study on ecotourism in Uttarakhand. The value of ecotourism in creating opportunities for sustainable development of communities and management of ecosystem and environment was studied in the Uttarakhand state of India The area that was once degraded due to dumping of non-degradable plastic waste is now almost free from such environmental-unfriendly substances.

DATA ANALYSIS AND TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

A. H_{01} : There is no significant difference between Indian and foreign tourist with regard to various factors influencing the tourist to visit Konni

factors influencing

TABLE 1
NATIONALITY AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TOURISTS TO VISIT KONNI

statement	Indian		Non-Indian		t-value	Difference	Sig.(2 tailed)
	mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation			
Scenic beauty or attractiveness	3.70	0.841	3.75	0.500	-0.053	68	0.901
Visit with family and relatives	3.76	1.009	4.25	0.957	-0.492	68	0.345
Recommendation	3.53	1.026	2.50	1.291	1.030	68	0.058
History and culture	3.26	1.042	4.25	0.957	-0.992	68	0.068
Popularity	3.53	1.070	3.50	1.000	.030	68	0.956
Advertisement and media	3.03	1.022	3.25	0.500	-0.220	68	0.673
Nearest tourists destination	3.29	0.973	2.00	1.414	1.288	68	0.014
Movie filmed	2.98	1.088	3.50	1.000	-0.515	68	0.360
Recommendations from travel agency	2.91	1.237	3.50	1.732	-0.591	68	0.367

Source: Primary Data

The table shows the result of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5 per cent significance level. Since the P value is less than 0.05 for scenic beauty or attractiveness (Indian =3.70, non Indian = 3.75) visit with family and relatives (Indian =3.76, non Indian = 4.25) recommendation (Indian =3.53, non Indian = 2.50) history and culture (Indian =3.26, non Indian = 4.25) popularity (Indian = 3.53, non Indian = 3.5) advertisement and media (Indian =3.03, non Indian = 3.25) nearest tourists destination (Indian =3.29, non Indian = 2) movie filmed (Indian =2.98, non Indian = 3.5) recommendation from travel agency (Indian =2.91, non Indian = 3.5). P values are more than 0.05 for scenic beauty, visit with family and relatives, recommendation, history and culture, popularity, advertisement and media, movie filmed and recommendation from travel agency null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significance difference between Indian and foreign tourist with regard to the statement and in the case of nearest tourists destination P value is less than 0.05 null hypothesis is rejected it means there is significant difference between Indian and foreign tourists with regard to the statement nearest tourists destination.

B. H_{02} : There is no significant difference among different age group with regard to the various factors influencing the tourist to visit konni.

TABLE 2
AGE GROUP AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TOURIST TO VISIT KONNI

statement	Descriptive				Annova				
	Age Group	N	Mean	S.D	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Scenic beauty or attractiveness	20-30	37	3.65	0.824	0.729	2	0.365	0.531	0.590
	30-40	26	3.69	0.884	45.971	67	0.686		
	Above 40	7	4.00	0.577	46.700	69			
	Total	70	3.70	0.823					
Visit with both	20-30	37	3.76	0.955	0.079	2	0.040	0.038	0.963

the family and friends	30-40	26	3.81	0.981	69.706	67	1.040		
	Above 40	7	3.86	1.464	69.786	69			
	Total	70	3.79	1.006					
Recommendations	20-30	37	3.49	1.044	0.617	2	0.309	0.269	0.765
	30-40	26	3.38	1.134	76.826	67	1.147		
	Above 40	7	3.71	0.951	77.443	69			
	Total	70	3.47	1.059					
History and culture	20-30	37	3.24	0.955	1.775	2	0.887	0.790	0.458
	30-40	26	3.50	1.140	75.311	67	1.124		
	Above 40	7	3.00	1.291	77.086	69			
	Total	70	3.31	1.057					
Popularity of the destination	20-30	37	3.46	1.095	0.479	2	0.239	0.208	0.812
	30-40	26	3.58	1.027	76.964	67	1.149		
	Above 40	7	3.71	1.113	77.443	69			
	Total	70	3.53	1.059					
Advertisement and media	20-30	37	3.16	0.834	6.333	2	3.167	3.393	0.039
	30-40	26	3.12	0.993	62.538	67	0.933		
	Above 40	7	2.14	1.464	68.871	69			
	Total	70	3.04	0.999					
Nearest destination	20-30	37	3.38	1.010	3.001	2	1.500	1.420	0.249
	30-40	26	3.12	0.952	70.785	67	1.056		
	Above 40	7	2.71	1.380	73.786	69			
	Total	70	3.21	1.034					
Movie filmed	20-30	37	2.95	1.026	2.117	2	1.382	1.184	0.312
	30-40	26	3.23	1.142	107.655	67	1.167		
	Above 40	7	2.57	1.134	109.771	69			
	Total	70	3.01	1.083					
Recommendations from travel agency	20-30	37	2.78	1.182	2.108	2	1.058	0.659	0.521
	30-40	26	3.15	1.190	55.735	67	1.607		
	Above 40	7	3.00	1.915	57.843	69			
	Total	70	2.94	1.261					

Source : Primary Data

Above table shows that there is no significant difference among different age group with regard to the factors scenic beauty, visit with family and friends, recommendation, history and culture, popularity, nearest tourist destination, movie filmed recommendation as the P value is more than 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted and regarding the statement appealing advertisement and various media P value is less than 0.05 so the null hypothesis is rejected. In order to test whether any significance difference between Indian and the foreign tourist with regard to the problems faced by the tourist in konni.

C. **H₀₃: There is no significant difference between Indian and foreign tourist with regard to various problems faced by the tourist in konni.**

TABLE 3
NATIONALITY AND PROBLEM FACED BY THE TOURIST IN KONNI

Statement	Indian		Non Indian		t- value	df	Sig.(2 tailed)
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D			
Problem faced on transportation	3.67	0.687	4.25	0.500	-0.583	68	0.100
Navigation problem	3.09	0.836	2.50	0.577	0.591	68	0.170
Accommodation	3.41	0.944	3.50	1.732	-0.091	68	0.859
Service by guide	3.24	0.895	2.50	0.577	0.742	68	0.107
Restriction on elephant safari	3.12	0.937	3.25	0.957	-0.129	68	0.790
Waste management	3.27	0.887	3.25	0.957	0.023	68	0.961
Difficulty to find hotels	3.24	0.878	3.75	1.500	-0.508	68	0.285

Source : Primary Data

The table shows the result of the t-test administrated on the collected data at 5 per cent significance level. Since the P value is less than 0.05 for problem faced on transportation (Indian= 3.67, non Indian =4.25) navigation problem(Indian = 0.836, non Indian =2.50) accommodation (Indian= 3.41, non Indian =3.50) services by guide(Indian = 3.24, non Indian = 2.50) restriction on elephant safari(Indian = 3.12, non Indian= 3.25) waste management (Indian=3.27, non Indian 3.25) difficulty to find hotels (Indian = 3.24, non Indian = 3.75). P value is more than 0.05 problem faced on transportation, navigation problem, accommodation, services by guide, restriction on elephant safari, waste management, difficulty to find hotels null hypothesis is accepted. It means there is no significant difference between nationality and problem faced by tourist in konni.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Majority of the tourists(30 per cent) strongly agree with the statement scenic beauty or attractiveness influence them to visit konni. 13 per cent of the respondents strongly agree with the statement “it’s a good place to visit with both the friends and family” and 10 per cent were disagree with the statement. Majority of the respondents(19 per cent) visit the place because of the recommendations from friends and family.
- Among the 70 respondents 16 per cent strongly agree that they visit the place to learn about the site history and culture and 20 per cent were disagree with the statement. Majority of the respondents strongly agree that the popularity of place makes them to visit the destination and 20 per cent were disagree with the statement. Majority of the respondents disagree with the statement appealing advertisement and media (21.4 per cent) makes them to visit the place and 9 per cent were strongly disagree.
- It states that majority of the tourists were disagree that the tourists destination is not geographically nearest. Majority of the respondents (28.6 per cent) were disagree with the statement that “ the destination is movie filmed” and 7.1 per cent respondents were strongly agree with the statement. From the 70 respondents 11.4 per cent tourists visit the place through the recommendations from any travel agencies and 14.3 per cent were disagree with the statement.
- The tourists were satisfied (68.6 per cent) with the quality and variety of food available in konni. Majority of the respondents were highly dissatisfied(24.3 per cent) with the accommodation facilities provided in konni. The visitors were satisfied with the quality of transportation facilities available in the region.
- Majority of the respondents were satisfied (25.7 per cent) with site seeing possibilities in the region. The statement “possibilities of shopping facilities” were satisfied (38.6 per cent) from the 70 respondents. Among the 70 respondents, 40 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the quality of infrastructure including sanitary facilities. The satisfaction level of the respondents regarding the safety and security of travelers were 37.1 per cent. Regarding the neatness of the place 28.6 per cent of respondents were satisfied with statement.
- Majority of the respondents(52.9 per cent) agree that the transportation facilities were not favorable in konni. Regarding the navigations, most of the respondents states neutral statement (38.6 per cent) and 22.9 per cent of respondents were strongly agree to the navigation facilities like sign boards.
- Majority of the respondents states neutral (40 per cent) regarding the satisfaction of services provided by the guide. It states that most of the respondents (37.4 per cent) agree that the elephant safari was restricted and 27.1 per cent were disagree with the statement. Most of the respondents states neutral and agree (45.7 per cent, 27.1 per cent) statement regarding the waste management process. Regarding the nearby hotels or restaurants tourists felt difficulty, so 31.4 per cent of respondents were agree to the statement.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

1. There is no significant difference between nationality of respondents and factors influencing the tourists.
2. There is no significant difference between nationality and problem faced by tourist in konni.
3. There is no significant difference among different age group and factors influencing the tourists.

CONCLUSION

From this study we can see that there is scope for ecotourism in this region. The current facilities provided are good, but it has the potential to develop and earn more income. The tourists were satisfied with most of the facilities here, but in some factors they were not. If this ecotourism centers improve their facilities a little more, it will bring a more satisfaction and more tourists to this location. In an overall perception we can say that the ecotourism project is working efficiently, but it can improve its number of visitors and can attract more foreigners. If it expands itself to accommodate more facilities and solve the few drawbacks that it has. We wish all the best to its authorities and congratulate them on their accomplishments so far.

SUGGESTIONS

1. This ecotourism Centre needs more publicity and promotional measures to attract the attention of people outside Kerala and from abroad too. Online promotion can be adopted to improve its publicity and to increase its popularity.
2. The duration of elephant safari must be increased; it will attract the tourists to visit konni. Government should take necessary steps regarding the waste management process.
3. Most of the respondents were not satisfied with the navigations like sign boards, the management should provide more sign boards to reach the destination.

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