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A Study On The Tourist Satisfaction Of Kottur Elephant Sanctuary And Rehabilitation Centre Thiruvananthapuram

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Abstract

Over the last number of years tourism is considered as an economic activity. Our ancestors depended on sea routes for travelling which was too time consuming. But due to advancement in technology, world has shrunk into a global village. Tourism provides recreation, relaxation and pleasure in this busy world which provides happiness in life. Indian tourism earns foreign exchange as it attracts lot of foreign travellers. The Kerala government has allocated huge amount of capital for expansion which includes high quality facilities for the tourists. The Kottur Elephant Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Centre located in Thiruvananthapuram is a heaven for elephants, established in 2006. It expanded into a fully-fledged elephant rehabilitation centre in 2019 and was intended to upgrade its facilities to international standards and it will become the largest rehabilitation centre in the world. This paper throws light on tourists satisfaction of Kottur Elephant rehabilitation centre Thiruvananthapuram.

Introduction

India is one of the most attractive tourism spots among world countries. It is blessed with hill stations, historical sites, architecture and monuments, beaches enhancing backwaters and religious places. Developments in transport and communication, hospitality services and better standard of living had led to increasing number of foreign and domestic tourists. Tourism brings countries closer together and helps to explore heritage and ancient history of different places. Recent developments in Kerala had made the state more accessible and attractive to domestic and international tourists. Kottur Elephant sanctuary and rehabilitation centre focus on not just a safe home for elephants but also offer comprehensive medical and psychological rehabilitation by providing space to forage, bath and socialization. By providing a refuge for rescued elephants the sanctuary tries to establish and reduce conflicts between humans and elephants. Visitors can watch and enjoy elephant bathing and avail boating services at affordable rates. Technology has played an important role in the democratization of tourism. It made tourism accessible to travellers with a lot of information.

Statement of the problem

The kottur Elephant Rehabilitation Centre faces a number of challenges. Due to inadequate infrastructure, limited resources and lack of awareness of local communities the rescue of elephants and releasing elephants back into the wild is a problem.

Significance of the study

This study is significant as it identifies the key determinants of tourist satisfaction and helps to know the feedback of visitors experience This helps to enhance repeated visits. This benefits to improve the reputation and generation of revenue. It creates employment to local communities. Satisfied customers can contribute to conservation activities and take part in awareness campaigns.

Objectives

- 1 To find out the facilities provided by kottur Elephant sanctuary and Rehabilitation centre
- 2.To identify the level of satisfaction of tourists
- 3.To identify the problems faced by tourists while visiting the centre
- 4 To suggest some measures to improve the satisfaction of tourists

Research methodology

Primary and secondary data were collected. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 respondents. Convenient sampling method was used to collect data. Percentage method was used for data analysis

Review of literature

Guha & Ghosh (2007) The Sundarbans are degrading due to the dependence of local community on the mangrove forests. It was suggested that the tourism related jobs need to increase. Apart from this, improvement of infrastructural facilities most importantly, electricity, need to be done to attract more tourists and for increasing the participation of local people. Also, proper dissemination of information of Sundarbans needs to be done and new avenues like tree houses and forest walks, etc. need to be explored to attract more visitors in the region.

Ramaswamy & Kumar (2010) The present tourism industry is moving towards ecotourism. The concept of ecotourism and sustainable development are now being taken into consideration by both the tourism service providers and the tourists as it helps in conservation of biodiversity. There is a need to de conduct exercises such as developing naturalist guides doing ecotourism related marketing research, developing and overseeing ecotourism projects, etc. So as to deliver products which would be helpful in setting standards for ecotourism or ecotourism by the policymakers.

Arunmozhi & Panneerselvam (2013) discussed about ecotourism in India which has been developed in the recent years. They discussed that Indians have been aware of protecting and conserving nature and its resources as they have been worshipping nature since ages. This makes the growth of ecotourism in the country as natural one.

Sharma & Sarmah (2019) Ecotourism plays a very important role in attracting tourists in the Meghalaya state. Ecotourism initiatives require less amount of capital and highly educated personnel. It plays highly an essential role in generating income for the developing countries and for the well-being of the local community. They have also found in their studies that the tourists help the local communities of Mawlynngong to maintain cleanliness and also helps in infrastructure development of the village indirectly. Improved infrastructure leads to a better experience to the tourists, satisfies them and encourages them to visit the place again. Sahani (2019) developed methodology for conducting potentiality analysis for ecotourism. The study was an integrated and systematic approach for the revival of strategic marketing planning for ecotourism.

Data analysisAge wise classification (Table 1.1)

Age group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20	18	18%
20-40	64	64%
40-60	16	16%
Above 60	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Out of 100 responds majority of the people falls under the category of 20-40 age group which is 64%. The rest are below 20 which is 18%, age group between 40 – 60 is 16%, above 60 is 2%.

Sex Wise Classification (Table 1.2)

Sex	No of Respondents	Percentage
Male	62	62%
Female	38	38%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Out of 100 responds majority of the people are female which is 62%. Major people visiting the facility is female

Occupation wise classification (Table 1.3)

Occupation	No of Respondent	Percentage
Student	56	56%
Seif Employee	6	6%
Govt Employee	10	10%
Private Employee	20	20%
None	8	8%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Most of the people visiting the facility is Students. 56 % of the total visitors are students. The least category is self-employed people – 6%. The rest are govt employee -10% and private employee -20%.

Mode of Transportation (Table 1.4)

Mode of Transportation	No of Respondents	Percentage
Two-wheeler	38	38%
Four-wheeler	18	18%
Cycling	2	2%
Public transport	40	40%
Others	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Most of the visitors are using public transportation- 40%. The other categories are two- wheeler -38%, four-wheeler -18%, cycling -2%, others -2%

Regularity of tourist (Table 1.5)

Regular Traveler	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	78	78%
No	22	22%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Most of the visitors are regular visitors which is 78%. Most of them are local peoples.

Reason for visiting the centre (Table 1.6)

Reasons	No of Respondents	Percentage
Entertainment	52	52%
Rest or relax	30	30%
Adventure	6	6%
Other	12	12%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Major reason for visit is entertainment which is 52% and the other categories are rest and relax (30%), adventure (6%), others (12%).

Satisfaction about Restroom facility (Table 1.7)

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	86	86%
No	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

People are satisfied with the restroom facilities which is 86%.

Satisfaction about canteen provided (Table 1.8)

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	82	82%
No	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

People are satisfied with the canteen provided in the facility provided in the centre which is 82%.

Satisfaction about Seating facility (Table 1.9)

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	69	69%
No	31	31%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

People are satisfied with seating facility in the facility which is 69%.

Satisfaction Level of Boating Services (Table 1.10)

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Very Satisfied	25	25%
Satisfied	53	53%
Neutral	20	20%
Not Satisfied	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Majority of the visitors are satisfied with the Boat service which is 53%.

Environmental sustainability efforts at the centre (Table 1.11)

Satisfaction	No of Respondents	Percentage
Excellent	14	14%
Good	67	67%
Average	19	19%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

Environmental sustainability efforts at the center are good according to visitors which is 67%.

Challenge Faced in Kottur Elephant Sanctuary and Rehabilitation Center (Table 1.12)

Challenges	No of Respondents	Percentage
Quality of services	13	13%
Price	22	22%
Food & Accommodation	24	24%
Parking Problem	7	7%
Security Problem	4	4%
Linguistic Problem	2	2%
Others	28	28%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

The major challenge faced by the visitors are Price and Food & Accommodation which are 22% and 24% respectively. The other categories are quality of services (13%), food and accommodation (24%), parking problem (7%), security problem (4%), linguistic problem (2%), others (28%)

Willingness For Visiting Again (Table 1.13)

Visit Again	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	86	86%
No	14	14%
Total	100	100%

Source: Primary

People are interested in visiting the facility again which is 86%.

SUGGESTIONS

- The rate of trucking and boating should be reduced so that more local tourist can afford it and attract more tourist.
- The ticket rate for foreigners is high for some facilities than for Indians, so foreigners are less attracted to these facilities. The ticket rates must be normalized for both Indians and Foreigners.
- Most of the visitors are frequent visitors of the facility, visitors must be bored of seeing the facilities again. The facilities must be refurbished and more attractive things must be added to the facilities.
- Improve facility specific transportation system. Coordinated collaboration with KSRTC is required.
- Introduce more family packages and provide discount for family tickets.
- More facilities for elder citizen: like special pathway, transportation and elder friendly infrastructure.
- Provide accommodation facilities.
- Free drinking water facility is to be provided.
- The Government should take steps to improve the various facilities elephant rehabilitation center Kottur.

Conclusion

Tourist satisfaction at the Kottur Elephant Rehabilitation Centre is generally high, largely due to the centre's unique combination of wildlife conservation, educational value, and natural surroundings. Visitors appreciate the opportunity to observe elephants in a safe, ethical, and well-managed environment, which enhances both learning and recreational experiences. The quality of interpretation, staff friendliness, and cleanliness of the facilities also contribute positively to visitor satisfaction. However, feedback indicates that further improvements—such as enhanced amenities, better signage, increased interactive activities, and upgraded transport/parking facilities—could significantly elevate the overall visitor experience. Strengthening these aspects would not only boost repeat visits but also promote the centre as a leading eco-tourism destination.

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