



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A STUDY ON TOURISTS SATISFACTION OF ECO -TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THENMALA ECO TOURISM

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Abstract

Ecotourism focus on environment-based activities that increase tourist satisfaction and understanding of different values. It helps in preserving natural environment and engage in conservation efforts. Ecotourism helps in creating awareness about the people, their culture and aims economic development. It may lead to environment degradation and displacement of local communities. This paper throws light on tourist satisfaction of thenmala eco-tourism project.

Key words: *Natural environment, Environment degradation, displacement of local communities*

Introduction

Eco tourism aims on socially responsible travel, sustainable development and personal growth. Thenmala eco-tourism is located in Kollam district which is a green forest region that is a home to wide variety of plants and animal species. It provides opportunities for adventure, fun leisure and learning. Thenmala is covered by deep forest and has rubber and teak plantations. It is 72 km away from Thiruvananthapuram. Thenmala which means *honey hills* is popular for honey which is of good quality and is of high medicinal value. All varieties of timber are exported from here.

Statement of the problem

The prospects of ecotourism are gaining popularity now a days as in spite of this busy schedule people love to be with the nature to get rid of tensions. Even though it supports the local communities economically. It faces several challenges and negative impacts. If the number of visitors exceeds the carrying capacity of visitors it may lead to destruction of wild life, damage fragile ecosystem and pollute the environment.

Significance of the study

Eco tourism focuses on preservation of natural areas and wildlife and provides recreational and educational experiences for tourists. In a developing country like ours, ecotourism creates employment opportunities and generate revenue for local communities in turn leads to poverty reduction and speedy economic growth. The involvement may lead to building a sense of ownership and pride in natural areas which helps in better conservation and management.

Objectives of the study

- 1.To analyse the facilities provided by Thenmala Eco-tourism spots.
- 2.To analyse the safety measures offered in Thenmala eco-tourism spot
- 3.To find out the satisfaction level of tourists visiting the spot

Review of literature

Chandel et al. (2020) explored the sustainable management of ecotourism in Western Rajasthan using a geospatial approach. They emphasized integrating environmental protection with tourism activities to ensure sustainable growth. Singh (2019) reviewed the scope of ecotourism in Rajasthan, identifying challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and awareness, and suggested strategic measures to overcome these barriers. Boora (2005) discussed the balance between ecotourism growth and environmental conservation, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices in Rajasthan.

Meena et al. (2017) highlighted the ecotourism potential of the Sorsan region, emphasizing its biodiversity and conservation importance. Jhahria (2021) focused on sustainable practices in the Tal Chhappar sanctuary, particularly for blackbuck conservation. Rawat examined the impact of ecotourism on wildlife in Sariska National Park, underscoring the importance of responsible tourism.

Sindhu and Singh (2014) observed local perceptions of ecotourism impacts in Village Sam, Jaisalmer, noting economic and environmental implications. Singh et al. (2019) emphasized the role of community participation in conservation and resource management at Ranthambore National Park. Kumari and Mathur discussed best practices for empowering local communities through responsible tourism in Rajasthan.

Research Methodology

Primary data was collected for this study. For this a well-structured questionnaire was prepared. The questionnaire was given for 100 respondents. The secondary data collected from articles, journals, magazines, books, publications, information from various websites related to tourism.

The research was based on simple survey. Convenient sampling techniques was used for data collection. Percentage method was used for data analysis.

Analysis and interpretation

Table 1.1 Age wise classification

Age group	No. respondents	Percentage
Below 18	24	24
18- 30	52	52
31-60	14	14
Above 61	10	10

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is clear that 24% of the respondents falls below 18 age category.52 % of respondents falls in between 18-30 age category.14% falls in between 31-60 and 10% falls above 61 age category

Table 1.2 Sex wise classification

Gender	No. respondents	Percentage
Male	60	60
Female	40	40

Source: Primary data

We have learned that 60% of respondents are males and 40% are females

Table 1.3 Types of tourists

Types	No. respondents	Percentage
Students	42	42
Employees	24	24
Govt. employees	18	18
Professionals	8	8
Business men	4	4
Others	4	4

Source: Primary data

Among 100 respondents 42% are students 24% are employees 18% are govt employees 8% are professionals 4% business men and 4% others

Table 1.4 Nationality wise classification

Nationality	No. respondents	Percentage
Indian	90	90
Foreigners	10	10

Source: Primary data

90% of the respondents are Indian tourists and 10% are foreign tourists

Table 1.5 Awareness about tourism spots

Sources	No. respondents	Percentage
Travel agency	24	24
Travel websites	18	18
Friends and relatives	30	30
Travel publication	12	12
Social media	16	16

Source: Primary data

Among 100 respondents 24 % of them got awareness from travel agencies.18% got awareness from travel websites 30% from friends and relatives 12% from travel publication and 16% from social media

Table 1.6 Classification of frequency of visit

Frequency	No. respondents	Percentage
First visit	60	60
Previously visited	40	40

Source: Primary data

60% of the visitors are making the first visit to the spot and 40% have previously visited the spot

Table 1.7 Mode of transport

Mode	No. respondents	Percentage
Four-wheeler	30	30
Two-wheeler	40	40
KSRTC	30	30

Source: Primary data

30 % of tourist use four-wheeler to reach the spot.40% depend on two wheelers and 30% depend on KSRTC

Table 1.8 Satisfaction about price rates

Price	No. respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	40	40
Satisfied	30	30
Dissatisfied	30	30

Source: Primary data

40% of respondents is of the opinion that price rate is very satisfied .30% is of the opinion that price rates are satisfied and 30% is of the opinion that price rates are dissatisfied.

Table 1.9 Satisfaction of cleanliness

Cleanliness	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	36	36
Satisfied	64	64
Dissatisfied	0	0

Source: Primary data

Among 100; respondents 36% are very satisfied with cleanliness.64% are satisfied by cleanliness

Table 1.10 Satisfaction about food and water availability

Food and water	No. respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	30	30
Satisfied	62	62
Dissatisfied	8	8

Source: Primary data

From the table it is understood that 30% of the respondents are very satisfied with food and water availability. 62% are satisfied with food and water availability and 8% are dissatisfied with food and water availability

Table 1.11 satisfaction about safety measures

Safety measures	No. respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	44	44
Satisfied	50	50
Dissatisfied	6	6

Source: Primary data

From the table it is inferred that 44% are very satisfied with safety measures 50 % are satisfied with safety measures and 6% are dissatisfied with safety measures

Suggestions

- 1 Introduce new student and family packages for visitors
- 2 Space of parking can be increased to attain better satisfaction from tourists
3. Government can allow and promote small traders to start stalls and handicraft shops
4. More restaurants can be started so that it will be helpful to visitors

Conclusion

The study titled “A study on tourists’ satisfaction of eco -tourism with special reference to thenmala eco-tourism” is having high potential. Now the modern society loves to travel eco-tourism spots as this spot provide them with distinct experience. Thenmala ecotourism is providing lot of facilities to visitors and the Government can take initiative to improve it as it can be developed into a popular eco-tourism spot.

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