



Assessment of tourist's satisfaction and perception in Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park, Mukundpur

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Abstract

This paper explores the satisfaction and perception of Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park, Mukundpur and underlying reasons accounting for tourists' tendency to repeat their visit and preferences in the safari park, the category of people who patronized the park most and sourcing visitors' views on what can be done to make the safari park more viable. This study was elucidated using structured questionnaire with in-depth interview. The descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. Results analyzed revealed that student groups in different categories patronized the safari park most. The purpose of visitation among tourists was for education and viewing of animals. The most preferred wildlife species tourism came to view were White Tiger, Lion, Royal Bengal Tiger, Leopard, Deer, Chital Shambar, Wild Boor, Monkeys and birds respectively. Tourists express dissatisfaction over diversity/welfare of fauna species in the safari park, route network, security/protection against hazards and the abandoned areas like the picnic spots, interpretation center and restaurants. They also perceived that good management, proper advertisement, good landscape, restocking and rehabilitation of depilated or abandoned facilities will promote patronage, create satisfaction and equally step up the revenue of the safari. Age, gender, marital status occupation has no significant effect on visitation to the park. The suggestion is made that government should increase its financial commitment, improve on its management strategies and renovate dilapidated and abandoned structures to make the safari park attractive and viable for all age group of tourists.

Keywords: tourist, satisfaction, perception, mukundpur zoo and white tiger

1. Introduction

The conservation of natural resources such as lakes, rivers, waterfalls, hot springs and geysers, wildlife, forests, minerals including mountains/hills is based on the economic value placed on them. Hence ecotourism is the use of such natural areas for tourism and recreational purpose (Kuuder *et al.* 2013) ^[8]. These areas include National parks, Game reserves, Zoological gardens, sanctuaries, museum lagoons, wetlands and Forest reserves. Many National Parks and Zoological parks allow tourists an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate majestic parks rich in wildlife (Kuuder *et al.* 2013) ^[8], sensitize tourists to the value and need for conservation of wildlife (Borokini and Uloko 2004 and 2013) ^[3, 12], increases their interest, motivation, experience and appreciation of nature (Corazon 2008) ^[6]. Furthermore, this solidifies the relationship of co-existence between wild animals and man to satisfy its quest for natural phenomena (Ayodele and Alarape 1998) ^[2]. So, Safari parks are typical examples of Ex-situ conservation and represent an opportunity for family-based trips (Chris and Jan 2004) ^[5].

Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park is one of the most safari parks situated in the west part of Mukundpur village, District Satna, Madhya Pradesh. This safari park presents a very beautiful scenery and has riparian vegetation along the bank of the river. Common faunal base species that are caged include white tiger, lion, leopard, bear, deer, sabhar, Chital, Monkey and Crocodile including unique floristic species. These species therefore offer guests the necessary recreation and amusement when visiting this park. The Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park and

other Safari Park in India have the potentials of tourist attraction especially in wildlife-based tourism but their level of development, patronage and baseline data combined with insufficient funding make its growth stunted.

Ecotourism is credited with promoting the conservation of natural resources provides local economic benefits and employment opportunities while also maintaining ecological integrity through low-impact, non-consumptive use of local resources (Amogne, 2014) ^[11]. Nature tourism is a growing segment of the tourism market with countries of Asia and beyond reaping enormously from the sub-sector (Bush 1996) ^[4]. Measuring satisfaction in tourism have the purposes of providing information about tourists needs and how prepared the organization is currently at meeting these needs and in turn provide a platform for organizations to communicate with their tourists then source their likes and dislikes (Neal and Gursoy 2008) ^[9]. In India the little attention has been given by the Department of Tourism (DOT) to the satisfaction of tourist in nature-based setting. Accordingly, an attempt at finding out tourist satisfaction and perception in this safari park is worth the while. The concepts of quality as perceived by tourists including levels of satisfaction and perception have rarely been applied in nature research (Kozak and Rimmington 2000) ^[7]. However, the recreational participation is based on tourist's attractions.

2. Objective

This study to assess the level of satisfaction derived and perception among visitors who patronized the white tiger safari whilst seeking specifically to determine nationality and

occupation of tourists who visited the white tiger safari. It is to find out visitor-motivation and perception of the white tiger safari. It also ascertains if their expectations are met and to solicit views on what can be done to make the safari more viable and recreation worthy.

3. Material and Methods

The Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park is situated in the village of Mukundpur. Mukundpur is a village panchayat located in the Amarpatn tehsil, Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. Geographically this safari park is located within the area lies between north latitude of 24°11' 35" to 24°26' 25" and east longitude of 81° 6' 35" to 81°22' 20". This area has geo-coordinate of the Mukundpur Maand Forest. It is on the east of village Roop sagar talab, in the west, a forest that is name of Maand is located and the rivers of Murjua and Bee had are flowing in south. The Safari Park is located within the Govindgarh-Bela road and covers about 25 hectares of forest land. The Mukundpur Maand forest was declared a "High quality reserve forest" during Darbar Period (Singh 1919) [10]. It is a type of mixed forest. The forest is known for the best quality of teak tree in this region (Singh et al. 2018) [11]. The study started with a preliminary survey of the area. The data were collected from 200 tourists who visited the safari park and 10 members of staff of the safari in June 2018, with the help of structured questionnaire. The respondents included civil servants, students, business men, and researchers among others. Records for monthly data of tourists were obtained through the park office. The additional information was also obtained through the oral interview from the staff of the park and some selected tourists. The levels of tourist's satisfaction were measured in satisfied, dissatisfied and neutral basis. The descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage, and tables were also used for demographic statistic of the respondents and the relationship between age, gender, marital status and occupation are also implied.

Table 1: Demographic description of Sample size of visitors in Mukundpur Safari Park

Sr. No.	Tourist	Variables	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	Nationality	Indian	199	92.5
		Non-Indian	5	2.5
		Total	200	100.0
2.	Gender	Male	125	62.5
		Female	75	37.5
		Total	200	100.0
3.	Age	< 15	75	37.5
		15-30	86	43.0
		31-40	30	15.0
		> 45	9	5.5
		Total	200	100.0
4.	Occupation	Students	120	60.0
		Researchers	15	7.5
		Teachers	20	10.0
		Retirees	22	11.0
		Drivers	13	6.5
		Others	10	5.0
Total	200	100.0		

Source: Fieldwork, June 2018

The table 1 shows that, 195 visitors representing 92.5% were India and the remaining 5 visitors which constituted 2.5% were Foreigners. Most of the respondents (62.5%) are males while 37.5% are female, and the majority (43%) of the tourists falls within the age of 15–30 years. The result further shows that the majority of 60% were students who visited the safari park during the period of his study, this was followed by retirees 11%, teacher's 10%, researcher 7.5%, drivers 6.5% and others constituted 5% respectively.

Table 2: Experience/Purpose of Visit by Tourists in Safari Park

Sr. No.	Experience/Purpose of visit	Variables	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	Purpose of Visit	Know about nature	20	10.0
		Educational	70	35.0
		Seeing animal	60	30.0
		Pleasure/leisure	45	22.5
		Others	5	2.5
		Total	200	100.0
2.	Searching of Information	Friends/relatives	60	32.5
		Media (Print/Electronic)	40	20.0
		Signpost	35	17.5
		Teachers	50	25.0
		Others	10	5.0
		Total	200	100.0
3.	Sponsored of Visit	Personal	30	22.0
		School/College Management	24	25.0
		Teachers	90	5.0
		Parents	45	20.0
		Others	11	5
Total	200	100.0		
4.	Enjoyment Activity	Natural Environment	30	15
		Lectures	24	12
		Seeing animals	90	45
		Exhibition center	45	22.5
		Others	11	5.5
		Total	200	100.0
5.	Tendency to Revisit	Revisit Yes	40	20.0
		Revisit No	125	62.5
		Neutral	35	17.5
		Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June, 2018

The table 2 represents the purpose of visit by tourists in the safari park where as 35% of the respondents came to learn, 30% see the wild animals and 22.5% came for pleasure activity. Most of the respondents knew of the safari park through friends/relatives (32.5%); teachers (25%) and electronic media (20%). On how the visit was sponsored to the safari 45% indicated that they came on group tour and sponsored by school management; 25% arrived individually whilst 5% was sponsored by the teacher. Most of the respondents (45%) indicated that the peak of their enjoyment was seeing animals and 22.5% tourist are indicated that the exhibition center to gain valuable historical information about the habitat of white tiger in this region. However, about 62.5% indicate lack of interest to repeat their visit against 20% of the tourist, while 17.5% were neutral.

Table 3: Animal of interest in Safari by Tourist

Sr. No.	Animal of interest	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	Whiter Tiger	54	27.0
2.	Lion	45	22.5
3.	Tiger (Bengal)	25	12.5
4.	Leopard	22	11.0
5.	Chital	20	10.0
6.	Chinkara	16	8.0
7.	Sabhar	10	5.0
8.	Bear	3	1.5
9	Monkey	5	2.5
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June 2018

The respondent’s frequency and percentage of animal of interest is presented in table 3. The most preferred animal species were Tiger (Bengal), (22.5%), White tiger (27%), Leopard (12.5%), Lion (10%), Chital (11%), Chinkara (8%), Sabhar (5%), Bear (1.5%), and Monkey (2.5%).

Table 4: Tourists’ Satisfaction Level

Sr. No.	Level of Satisfaction	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	For entry fee of Zoo & Park	70	35.0
2.	Guide Service	50	25.0
3.	Communication Facilities	15	7.5
4.	diversity/welfare of the fauna species	32	16.0
5.	Security and Protection against hazards	20	10.0
6.	Rout Network	10	5.0
7.	Neutral about satisfaction or dissatisfaction	3	1.5
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June, 2018

From table 4, response from tourist indicates that 35% and 25% of visitors were extremely satisfied with the entry fee and the guide service respectively. However 16% of the tourist who visited the safari park were very dissatisfied with the diversity/welfare of the fauna species, route network (5%), communication facilities (7.5%), security and protection against hazards (10%), while a few were neutral (5%). About 5% further registered dissatisfaction because they didn’t see the Elephant. So, to improve the above facilities the safari park will attract and promote for future.

Table 5: Tourists’ Perception

Sr. No.	Level of Satisfaction	Number of tourists	Positive perception	Negative perception
			Agreed	Not agreed
1.	Advertisement	200	165 (82.5)	35 (17.5)
2.	Management	200	170 (85.0)	30 (15.0)
3.	Diversity/welfare of the fauna species	200	150 (75.0)	50 (25.0)
4.	Landscape	200	180 (90.0)	20 (10.0)
5.	Other promotional variable	200	140 (70.0)	60 (30.0)

Source: Fieldwork, June 2018

From table 5, feedback from the tourist, reveal that, they have a positive perception as regards the development and performance of the safari park. They strongly agreed that the park could promote patronage if properly advertised (82.5%), if well managed (85%), provide adequate diversity/welfare of fauna species (75%), and create proper landscape (90%) of

the park and other promotional variables (70%) that can promote the standards of the safari park.

Table 6: Vehicles entry inside the Zoo and Safari Park

Sr. No.	Purpose of visit	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	Visit by walk	20	10.0
2.	On Bicycle (One person)	5	2.5
3.	Gypsy (more than 5 person)	25	12.5
4.	Mini bus (upto 20 person capacity)	25	10.0
5.	Bus (more than 20 person capacity)	80	40.0
6	Safari by management vehicle or visit by Golf cart	50	25.0
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June 2018

Minimum numbers of tourists are required for park vehicle to operate the visit; it is to be decided by the management authority of safari park. Visit of park for limited period and routes are also decided by the management, on the daily basis. An entry fee for entry by walk or by bicycle is also permitted. From table 6, represent the tourist satisfaction for vehicles entry and fees inside the zoo and safari park. The highest majority of the tourists (40%) has visited park safari by bus and lowest majority (2.5%) have visited by bicycle.

Table 7: Issues of Concern Raised by the Tourists

Sr. No.	Issues of Concern	Number of tourists	Percentage
1.	Scarce fauna species and poor cage enrichment	80	40.0
2.	Abandoned picnic (beach)	48	24.0
3.	Poor toilets	22	11.0
4.	Inadequate infrastructures	18	9.0
5.	Interpretation center	15	7.5
6.	Lack of canteen	10	5.0
7.	Dilapidate fence	8	3.5
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, June, 2018

From table 7, the majority of 40% tourists complained of the inadequate diversity of fauna species/poor cage enrichment. Others also identified poor state of the safari park picnic site (24%), poor toilets (11%), inadequate infrastructures (9%), interpretation center (7.5%), lack of canteen (5%) and dilapidated fence (3.5%) as issues of concern that needed serious tackling at the management level. Furthermore, many identified some facilities/services such as wildlife clinic,

telecommunication, nursery (zoo farm) and visitors guide booklet being absent and are needed.

4. Result and Discussion

Recreational facilities in the safari park serve as tourist's attractions which motivate tourists to want to move to the site. The tourist attraction is a vital component of any country's tourism industry, as they stimulate travel to destinations. In this direction, one of the priorities of the Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park, Mukundpur should be to make the Park viable. Majority of 195 (92.5%) tourists were Indian; records from the safari park administration have also proven that over the years, domestic tourist arrivals are greater than international ones. Age bracketed between 15-30 years (43%) of the tourist patronizes the safari park most. A total number of 17995 and 11284 of both children and adult visited the zoo and safari park in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The searching of information about the safari park, 35.5% of the tourists got to hear/knew about the park from friends/relatives. By implication, the most potent tool in "wooing" more tourists to the Safari is through word of mouth. Students and teachers who were the chief patron of the safari park often preferred group tours because it gain knowledge, socialization and an opportunity to admire the nature collectively. The educational motive was found to be high (35%). It also emphasizing student/teacher and family togetherness, enjoyment and novelty seeking, with the added nuance that design perceived to be animal friendly adds to the enjoyment of the visit. Other features visitors listed which were of interest to them within and alongside the park vicinity were breeding center, temple, mazar and river fishing activities outside the safari park. Responses from the tourist indicate that 35% of them were extremely satisfied with the entry fee and 25% guide services. However, 16% of the tourists were very dissatisfied with the diversity/welfare of the caged animals and other basic facilities like electricity, route network and prevention against hazards whereas 10% further registered dissatisfaction because they didn't see the Elephant. This, the tourist perceive and strongly agreed that, the park will attract and promote patronage if well-advertised and managed. Those tourist who made return trips assigned reasons that there aren't many activities of interest to be engaged in after viewing few animals that were caged, such 62.5% indicated loss of interest to repeat their visit. This is a confirmation that satisfaction is a vital element in the survival of any tourism attraction. All tourists were day trippers as they never spend the night in the nearby safari park, hence the park administration has a great task of making the facility more appealing to attract repeat visitors and enticing all visitors to spend qualitative time to maximize their visit. During the survey, few tourists told that when they return on repeat visits, it would be impressive to see an improvement in the abandoned, dilapidated, poor and facilities that were absent. To the respondents, these areas of concern needed urgent attention/improvement by management. Every tourist was asked to identify the most pressing according to his/ her priority.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

This study has examined the satisfaction and perception of tourists to Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park and identified students group as the chief patrons of the park ranging from 15-30 years. The purpose of visit by many tourists (35%) was to learn whilst the most preferred animal

species was the White Tiger. The Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park still remains a good tourist destination and its responsibility as a centre of excellence in tourism is not being met to the fullest of its potentials. The safari park has all it takes to become a World Standard Zoological Reserves; this is because it can support all the ecological resources in terms of both flora and fauna. However, it is only pertinent to mention that the problems of the safari park have been linked to some inadequacies, both in planning, development and management process. Majority of the tourist express concern about the poor state of the picnic spot, toilets, interpretation and inadequate fauna species, creating lack of interest to repeat their visit. A good number of tourists have shown positive perception and indicates that good management is the potent tool to tourist satisfaction. An implication for policy formulation is that if government needs to develop tourism infrastructure to Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park, Mukundpur and other nearby tourist places, reserves and diversity of fauna species and other basic amenities must be made a priority. A sizeable number of the tourist called for the rehabilitation of the zoo and safari park, so it is prudent for adequate funding, skilled personnel and powerful publicity in order to boost domestic tourism receipts to the safari park.

6. Acknowledgement

The authors deeply appreciate to staff member of Maharaja Martand Singh White Tiger Safari Park for providing help during the study. Authors are also grateful to the entire tourist including national and international for providing their valuable feedback for the interest of Safari Park.

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