

Prospective of Ecotourism: Post Covid-19

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ABSTRACT - Ecotourism is a form of tourism directed to undisturbed natural areas and contains a variety of ethical travel practices. It directly promotes economic development and political empowerment of local communities. It gives a completely different view of the world and challenges to open minds to different ways of thinking and work towards the conservation of nature and biodiversity. At the same time, it enlightens people about cultural diversity and environmentally friendly practices. This paper examines the factors that influence to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19 and also the level of opinion on ecotourism in post Covid-19. Henry Garrett Ranking method was applied to find out the factors that influenced to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19. Simple percentage analysis and chi-square test were applied to find out the level of opinion on ecotourism in post Covid-19. The result showed that the first factor influenced to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19 was visiting uncrowded destinations followed by experiencing remote and unspoiled nature, supporting economic benefits to local communities, more attention on food and accommodation and see unusual plants and animals. The researcher suggested that companies engaged in the tourism sector can take responsibility to regain trust of people that ecotourist destinations and accommodations are all safe from Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid – 19, Ecotourism, Level of Opinion, Preference, Prospective, Travel

I. INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is essentially all about bringing nature and wildlife conservationists, local communities, and the responsible travel industry together to ensure development focused on long-term sustainability. It is a growing aspect of tourism that is more focused on protecting the environment and keeping it as natural as possible without necessarily disturbing or damaging habitats. It takes place when travellers, visitors, and the locals are socially responsible and emotionally care for the environment, nature, and cultures of the locations visited. It also promotes responsible travel, which can be initiated by minimum destruction, environmental growth, adventure, and preaching sustainable ways of living on the planet. A vacation at an ecotourism site can give a warm, fuzzy feeling. Ecotourists learn about the ecosystems, traditions and cultures of their destination without missing out on adventure, excitement and relaxation.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ecotourism is the responsible travel to natural areas, conserving the environment, as well as sustaining the well-being of the local people through education and interpretation of local social, environmental, and political matters. Ecotourism is a booming industry and it's going to stay here for long. People are now looking more at experiences compared to tourist destinations. This is an excellent time to develop a common safety and sanitation

standard for hosting and serving its customers. The industry must also utilise this opportunity to adopt ecological waste disposal practices and adopt environment friendly in day to day practices.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Robert R. Hearne and C. Alejandro Santos (2004) analysed the preferences toward alternative scenarios of ecotourism of two important stakeholder groups: foreign tourists and educated local residents in Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala. It was found that the positive preferences towards improved National Park and increased tourist services by both local residents and foreign tourists. It was suggested that efforts to provide improved security in tourist zones and to promote the Maya Biosphere Reserve as an area of integrated nature-based and archaeological tourism should prove beneficial.

P. Chaminuka et al (2011) identified the preferences of tourists to engage in ecotourism related activities as well as their Marginal Willingness to Pay for three specific ecotourism attributes, namely village accommodation, village tours and visits to crafts markets in villages adjacent to the Kruger National Park. The study revealed that the tourists were generally reluctance on the part of all tourists to use accommodation facilities outside KNP, but interest to purchase village tours and visit village-based craft markets. It was suggested that the possibility for including cultural specific tourism activities within the tourism plans for the

trans frontier park and also closer collaboration in developing ecotourism with rural communities.

Veeramani A et al (2018) examined the satisfaction of tourists with respect to visiting Ooty and to identify the factors influencing the tourists to visit again to this hill stations. It was found that all the people expressed their satisfaction that the tourism and ecotourism activities being conducted in Ooty and surroundings were appreciable. It was suggested to implement strategies to realize the prospects of sustainable nature tourism model for ensuring equity in development.

Hary Hermawan et al (2019) examined how loyalty of tourists can be created by the factors of the tourist attraction, safety, and amenities, with satisfaction as an intervening factor, on the model of community- based tourism development in Gunung Api Purba Nglanggeran Tourism Village. The results showed that the tourist attraction was a dominant factor that gives a positive influence on the loyalty of tourists through intervention variable satisfaction. It was suggested that loyalty of tourists can be achieved through efforts to improve the quality of tourist attraction.

Tai- Gi An and Lim-Soo Shin (2020) identified the relationship and influence between the motivation and satisfaction of eco-tourism tourists. It was found that the most influential factor on the overall satisfaction of visitors is nature experience. It was concluded that a tourist system that combines IOT-based tourist attractions and state-of-the-art technology will be a popular destination for visitors.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are,

- To analyze the factors that influence to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19.
- To identify the level of opinion on ecotourism in post Covid- 19.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on survey method. The convenient sampling technique has been adopted in collecting respondents. The study makes both use of primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected from 100 respondents with well-structured questionnaire in Erode Town. The secondary data is collected from various journals, magazines and articles.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between socio-economic variables and level of opinion on ecotourism in post Covid-19.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-economic profile of the respondents based on their demographic factors such as gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly family income and study related profile based on importance of ecotourism in future,

growth in ecotourism after Covid-19, preference of ecotourism activity, stay in ecotourist Places, no. of months postponed are examined by simple percentage analysis. It is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	42	42
Female	58	58
Age		
Below 20 years	27	27
21 to 30 years	23	23
31 to 40 years	28	28
41 to 50 years	14	14
Above 50 years	8	8
Educational Qualification		
School	15	15
Graduate	54	54
Professional	24	24
Others	7	7
Occupation		
Business	31	31
Employed	30	30
Professional	13	13
Others	26	26
Monthly Family Income		
BelowRs.20,000	25	25
Rs.20,000 to Rs.30,000	15	15
Rs.30,001 to Rs.40,000	17	17
AboveRs.40,000	43	43
Importance of Ecotourism		
Very important	51	51
Important	38	38
Quite important	6	6
Not very important	5	5
Growth in Ecotourism		
Yes	82	82
No	18	18
Preference of Ecotourism Activity		
Fishing	5	5
Cycling	38	38
Bird Watching	27	27
Jeep Safari	24	24
Horse Ride	6	6
Stay in Ecotourist Places		
Yes	61	61
No	39	39
If yes, No. of Days Preferred		
Less than 3 days	16	26
3 days to 5 days	39	64
More than 5 days	6	10
If no, Reasons		
Fear of Cleanliness	9	23

Fear to use common transport	2	5
Difficult to maintain social distance	17	44
Fear to take outside food	11	28
No. of Months Postponed		
Less than 3 months	23	23
3 months to 6 months	31	31
6 months to 9months	19	19
More than 9 months	27	27

It is found from the Table 1 that majority of respondents are female (58%), in the age group of 31 years to 40 years (28%), who completed graduate (54%), having an occupation as business (31%), having family monthly income of above Rs.40,000 (43%), need of ecotourism is very important (51%), belief in the growth of ecotourism in future (82%), preferred ecotourism activity is cycling (38%), willing to stay in ecotourist places (61%), number of months postponed is 3 months to 6 months (31%).

INFLUENCE TO PREFER ECOTOURISM SPOT

Influence to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19 is analysed by using Henry Garrett Ranking Method and details shown in Table 2

TABLE 2: INFLUENCE TO PREFER ECOTOURISM SPOT

Factors	Ran k 1*7 5	Ran k 2* 61	Ran k 3 *50	Ran k 4 *40	Ran k 5*2 5	Tot al	Mea n Scor e	Ran k
Visiting uncrowded destinations	330	732	850	520	550	5952	59.52	1
Experiencing remote and unspoiled nature	157	219	120	720	125	5816	58.16	2
Supporting economic benefits to local communities	105	158	190	760	125	5421	54.21	3
See unusual plants and animals	525	610	400	128	925	3740	37.40	5
More attention on food and accommodation	105	976	650	720	775	4171	41.75	4

Table 2 reveals that the factor influenced to prefer ecotourism spot after Covid-19. The ranks have obtained with the help of Henry Garrett ranking method. Visiting uncrowded destinations got 1st rank followed by experiencing remote and unspoiled nature, supporting economic benefits to local communities, more attention on food and accommodation, see unusual plants and animals.

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF OPINION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

Association between various socio-economic variables and level of opinion was analysed by framing a null hypothesis and tested with chi-square test at 5% level of significance. It is shown in Table 3.

H0: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic variables and level of opinion on ecotourism in post Covid-19.

TABLE 3: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF OPINION AND VARIOUS SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

Factors	Degrees of Freedom	Calculated Value	P-value	Result
Gender	2	5.99	0.452	Insignificant
Age	8	15.507	0.524	Insignificant
Educational Qualification	6	12.591	0.998	Insignificant
Occupation	6	12.591	0.271	Insignificant
Family Monthly Income	6	12.591	0.961	Insignificant
Preference of Ecotourism Activity	8	15.507	0.715	Insignificant
Stay in Ecotourist Places	2	5.991	0.878	Insignificant
No. of Months Postponed	6	12.591	0.678	Insignificant

It is found from the Table 3 that the null hypothesis relating to gender, age, educational qualification, family annual income, preference of ecotourism activity, stay in ecotourist places, no. of months postponed are accepted. Hence, it can be concluded that there is no association between level of opinion and various socio-economic variables.

V. SUGGESTIONS

- Local authority can take necessary steps to maintain cleanliness in the ecotourist spot.
- Government can control the flow of traffic to maintain social distance in the tourist destinations.
- Companies engaged in the tourism sector can take responsibility to regain trust of people that ecotourist destinations and accommodations are all safe from Covid-19.

VI. CONCLUSION

The tourism sector is driven by the psychology of people and is very sensitive to safety and security aspects. Based on findings, tourism will take a longer time to return to its normal situation because tourists need to ensure that the situation is really safe and secure before they step out to travel again. To create well-planned destinations in the future, government can take responsibility to promote ecotourism. Local communities need to realise that they need to protect their resources for the future, preserving the

environment and assuring the future of tourism is friendly to our earth.

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