



“Tourists’ Satisfaction Towards Destinations in Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka: With Special Reference to Beach Holiday”

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1 INTRODUCTION

Jaffna Peninsula was affected by thirty years of war and the aftermath of the war, and the tourism sector has been growing very fast (Mathivathani and Sasitharan, 2010). There are eight beaches in Jaffna, namely Catty beach, Casuarina beach, Mathagal beach, Delft beach, Thondamanaru beach, Manalkattu beach, Roogam beach and K.K.S beach. Further, many local and foreign tourists visiting these beaches in the evening. But, only a few beaches were found with areas for tourists’ leisure and entertainment and most of the beaches had many issues like poor quality of bathrooms, lack of clean drinking water, safety, shopping facilities, food, beverages, and accommodation (Kirusika *et al.*, 2017). According to Martin (2004) there are many factors which affect the quality of the beaches such as attraction, quality of sands, fresh air, sun bathing and water sports.

In addition, the quality of the swimming pool, road facilities, entertainment for children, conflict level, boat services and water sports, hazards, environmental pollution, toilets and bathing facilities, walk ways and shopping facilities also influence on tourists’ positive or negative perceptions on the beaches (Martin, 2004). Casuarina beach and K.K.S beaches were found with a good quality of sands, clean water, water sports,

entertainment for children, fresh air, warning signs therefore, these factors motivated the tourists² to revisit. At the same time, factors such as the boisterous behaviour of youth, use of alcoholism, rocks under water and the accessibility to swimming pools affect the tourists’ satisfaction (Kirusika *et al.*, 2017). In addition, failure to implement proper disposal of garbage affects the tourists’ perception and satisfaction (Thanal, 2005) and when the tourism developers plan to develop beach destinations, critical focus on the negative impacts of fishing community is extremely important. Further development can be carried out in such a way that it does not affect the livelihood of the local community (Biju, 2006).

1.1 Research Objectives

Based on the above problems and literature reviews, the objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To describe factors affecting tourists’ satisfaction in holidays at the holidays in the Jaffna Peninsula
2. To recommend possible strategies to enhance the value of attraction and perception of beaches



1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the factors affecting tourists' perception of beaches?
2. What are the possible strategies applicable to enhance tourists' satisfaction of beaches?

2 METHODOLOGY

This is a **descriptive** and **quantitative** research.

2.1 Sampling:

Convenience sampling technique was used. Five beaches were selected out of eight beaches found in the Jaffna Peninsula for the study. One hundred and twenty five foreign tourists who were above 18 years old from each destination were selected for the study. Further, the foreign tourists were selected because there is a limited study on foreign tourists' satisfaction in beach holidays in Jaffna Peninsula.

2.2 Data collection:

Self-administered questionnaire method was used for data collection and there was an open ended question to allow the tourists to freely explain their views about the particular beach and the five point Likert scale was used to get the opinion of tourists' satisfaction level varying from 5=very highly satisfied, 4= highly satisfied, 3= satisfaction, 2=low satisfaction and 1=dissatisfaction/not satisfied.

2.3 Data analysis:

Further, data was analysed in SPSS version 20 to find the tourists' satisfaction levels and the mean values of the data were displayed in figure 1 and was used to analyse the results. In addition, the percentage of the tourists' satisfaction levels were found through the calculation

of the mean values of variables out of the total variables (18).

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the evaluation criteria $\{(0 < x_i \leq 2) = \text{low}, (2 < x_i \leq 3) = \text{moderate}, (3 < x_i \leq 5) = \text{high}\}$, the data was analysed. The result was revealed that more than 44% of the tourists had perceived the beaches as high quality and that they were highly satisfied with the quality of sea water and they also felt that the safety and security level at the beaches were at a high level. In addition, the tourists enjoyed and were highly satisfied with the atmosphere of the beaches. Notably, tourists' perception on the behaviour of the youth was positive and they were highly satisfied about the quality of sand in the beaches. However, figure I shows that tourists did not enjoy the aforementioned at a maximum satisfaction level (Mean value is 0.42). Further, more than 22% of the tourists viewed that the beaches were of moderate quality and the tourists were not highly satisfied with many attributes of the beaches. As per the evaluation criteria $(2 < x_i \leq 3)$, basic needs such as drinking water and toilet facilities failed to ensure the tourists' satisfaction. The tourists also felt that they were not very satisfied with the shopping choices offered at the beaches. Moreover, as per the result of the data analysis, tourists also felt that the rocks under the water were a risks for their bathing and also they were not highly satisfied with the accessibility to the swimming pool. Finally, more than 33% of the tourists assessed the beaches as low quality and they had observed that there were no warning signals and signs at the beaches. Tourists further felt that there was no facility for water sports and that there was a lack of facilities for relaxation



and entertainment. Consequently, tourists also felt that sunbathing at the beaches was difficult due to the poor conditions and the parents viewed that there was a lack of

places for entertainment for children and some tourists felt that there were some threats from birds and stray animals in the beaches.

Table 1: Tourist opinion on the beach holiday in Jaffna Peninsula

Descriptive Statistics						
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	S.D
Water quality	125	3.00	5.00	539.00	4.3120	.74505
Security	125	3.00	5.00	539.00	4.3120	.68880
Basic needs	125	2.00	3.00	289.00	2.3120	.46517
Pollution	125	2.00	5.00	415.00	3.3200	.93843
Waste Management	125	2.000	5.000	400.000	3.20000	.823055
Shopping facility	125	2.00	3.00	279.00	2.2320	.42381
Use of alcohol	125	2.00	5.00	496.00	3.9680	.87930
Warning Signs	125	1.00	5.00	236.00	1.8880	1.17237
Boisterous behaviour of Youth	125	3.00	5.00	484.00	3.8720	.42075
Watersports	125	1.00	5.00	244.00	1.9520	1.21719
Sunbathing	125	1.00	2.00	168.00	1.3440	.47695
Fresh air	125	3.00	5.00	548.00	4.3840	.68136
Quality of sand	125	2.00	5.00	388.00	3.1040	.82133
Rocks	125	2.00	3.00	273.00	2.1840	.38904
Stray animals	125	1.00	3.00	185.00	1.4800	.61696
Relax	125	1.00	2.00	181.00	1.4480	.49929
Swimming pool	125	1.00	4.00	275.00	2.2000	1.12163
Places of Leisure for children	125	1.00	5.00	231.00	1.8480	.91630
Valid N (list wise)	125					

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results found through the data analysis, it is concluded that in the Jaffna Peninsula, there is a lot of potential in the beaches and that tourists are highly satisfied in many attributes of the destinations such as clean sea water, safety and security, fresh air and atmosphere, pure sand and the behaviour of the youth. However, since the tourists did not perceive the beaches as high quality, some additional attentions is needed to improve

the above factors. There were limited places for relaxation for the tourists therefore destination developers should develop and implement relaxation facilities. Consequently, the parents viewed that these beaches are not suitable for the enjoyment of their children and therefore, one can perceive the beaches as low quality in that aspect. Therefore, further development and improvement should be carried out to ensure that families can enjoy at the beaches. Stray animals like cattle and dogs were found at the beaches and the tourists did not feel safe with these animals around them.



Therefore appropriate actions should be taken by the local authorities to out this issue to ensure high quality. Further, sunbathing and water sports facilities are not available in many beaches or if they are available, they are of low quality and these facilities are expected by foreign tourists. Therefore, destination developers should extend the beach facilities and the local authorities or tourism related organizations can encourage private partners to develop the water sports and sunbathing facilities. In addition, basic needs like toilet, drinking water need immediate attending to as tourists were only moderately satisfied with what was offered. This includes the shopping facilities available to the tourists. The tourists mention the rocks under water which poses a risk when bathing in the sea. Funds need to be allocated remove these rocks or stones. The beaches at the Jaffna peninsula are places to enjoy as many tourists rated the quality of sea water, security and safety at a high level. Further, fresh air and the atmosphere achieved a high rating from the tourists. Finally, the study recommends that the destination developers to carry a deeper study in all beach destinations to identify the tourists' satisfaction and to prepare the feasibility report and master plan for beach development in the Jaffna Peninsula. In addition, a suitable development committee should be nominated and they should review some model beaches in Sri Lanka and other countries to prepare and implement the long term sustainable plan to ensure sustainable beach development.

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