

Tourists' Expectations and Satisfaction towards Ecotourism in Goa: An Empirical Study

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Abstract: Goa is famous for its sun and sand and is also blessed with natural beauty along with various heritage sites, churches and temples. Goa is marketed worldwide as a beach tourism destination, which reached its optimum level. Therefore, there is a need to promote other avenues of tourism. The current study focuses on ecotourism in Goa. For the growth of a specific tourist destination through strategic planning, it is necessary to understand the nature of tourist contentment and discontent. This research is necessary as it will provide a clear image of satisfaction and unhappiness with certain facilities. Gap analysis is used to examine the gap between tourists' expectations before visiting and satisfaction level after the visit at various ecotourism sites with reference to the various ecotourism services available. A negative gap was found with respect to all the 29 variables used to measure tourists' satisfaction with the ecotourism services. The ecotourism services available in Goa need proper attention, so that Goa can be promoted as a world class tourism destination. There is a need for destination planners to undertake measures for improving and maintaining appropriate ecotourism services in Goa.

1. Introduction

Tourism industry has been growing drastically over the years. It possesses a tremendous growth potential. Most of the countries earning and economic development is largely supported by tourism. Indian tourism industry performs an essential role in the economic progress of the nation by generating employment and earning foreign exchange etc. (Kamat, 2013). Goa, a tiny state in India has many species of birds and animals. According to the Goa Tourism Department, the Western Ghats also known as the Sahyadris in Goa with a total length of 3702 kms out of which 600 kms is in Goa which provides a green cover to Goan eco systems. Goa enjoys high rainfall which accounts to a wide belt of forests along the Western Ghats. During the monsoons large number of north Indian tourists visit Goa for enjoying Goa's natural beauty during monsoon. The springs and waterfalls are gushing, there's

plenty of greenery, and the beaches are desolate. In addition, excellent off-season savings are available. This is why an increasing number of tourists are flocking to Goa during the monsoon season. Goa is home to a variety of unusual flora and trees, some of which were introduced by the Portuguese. The coastal areas provide the tropical climate. The tropical location of Goa is responsible for its warm humid climate. Many foreign tourists visit Goa during these humid months, especially from October to February to enjoy this humid climate in order to avoid the extreme cold climate in their home countries. Retired foreign tourists live in Goa for a longer period to enjoy this humid weather. According to the Goa tourism department, Goa is endowed with over 1512 species of plants and there are many spice plantations where tourists can experience how to grow various spices. There are more than 275 subdivision of birds, over 48 subdivisions of animals. Therefore, Goa has a great deal of promise as an ecotourism destination. The Government of Goa is working on promoting hinterland and ecotourism through various projects and making an attempt to promote entrepreneurship. The tourism department of Goa is trying to attract high-end tourists and provide them with a satisfying experience.

For many countries, tourism is an important source of revenue. Extensive research is being carried out worldwide with an intention to explore the competitive advantages of a particular destination. There has been research done to assess the economic, socio-cultural and environmental effects of tourism in a particular destination. Sustainable tourism (Ahmed, 1991), ecotourism (Butler and Boyd, 2000), tactics for sustainable progress (Clarke, 1997), community participation in the decision making process (Puczkó and Rátz, 2000). The studies related to tourism are increasing. However, just a few recent studies have looked into the significance of tourists' revisit intentions (Oppermann, 1999) of which some have concentrated on tourists' satisfaction at various destinations (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). There is a need to understand a destinations attraction or service components which plays a major role in tourism satisfaction and provides the destination management with useful information to develop a destination particularly in the protected areas (Doucouliagos and Hall, 2010).

Customer satisfaction is a major objective of any service provider. There is a need to understand nature of tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction for the development of a particular tourist destination through strategic planning. Understanding consumer's response to various products and services, motivating new consumers, encouraging revisits is necessary to reveal areas that require improvements. It is critical to understand the expectations of tourists visiting a destination in order to assess its strengths and weaknesses and improve its competitive advantage. It is a difficult task to evaluate the tourism industry in quantitative terms; satisfaction is a largely accepted indicator to determine whether a particular destination is successful in the tourism front. Satisfaction in the tourism industry as well as other sectors determines consumer loyalty and acts as a source of competitiveness (D'Mello and Subhash, 2016).

Goa is an attractive destination for tourism and related activities and yet no research has been conducted to assess tourists' satisfaction towards ecotourism services in Goa using Gap Analysis. The present study is an attempt towards the same which is unique and novel.

This study makes an attempt to fill this gap by evaluating the tourists' expectations towards ecotourism in Goa and identify factors that require improvement to enhance the quality of products and services offered keeping in mind the tourists' expectations. The study uses the tiny state of Goa as

a research site to learn about tourists' expectations and contentment with the ecotourism services available in the state as thousand tourist – national as well international tourists visit Goa. This study is needed, as it will provide a clear picture of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the various attributes and strategies to improve these services, which can be developed to promote the growth of ecotourism. The current study will provide information, new insights and possibilities and therefore is essential. This knowledge can be used by tourism planners, government, various stakeholders, tourism related businesses to develop adequate strategies to promote ecotourism in the study region. The study made an attempt to gauge the gap between tourists' expectations and satisfaction towards ecotourism services in Goa.

2. Review of Literature

Tourists' satisfaction is essential to successfully market of a tourist destination as it affects the destination choice, selection of products/services and return decision (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000). As tourism is an important part of the service industry, research focuses on marketing tools for evaluation of customer satisfaction, since satisfaction influences expectations and intentions for future purchase or destination selection decision (Fuchs and Weiermair, 1993). The most fundamental method for evaluating the quality of a tourist's experience is satisfaction (Tonge and Moore, 2007).

Once tourists' actual experience is recognised, destination planners can supply the necessary facilities to meet the tourists' expectations and verify whether the tourists have had a satisfying experience. Various theories and outlooks have been used to study tourism satisfaction. Many researchers have used expectation-disconfirmation models, where consumers have certain expectations from a product of service before buying it and they make a comparison between the actual performance and expectations (Oliver, 1980).

Consumers will have a positive disconfirmation if the performance exceeds their expectations, which may lead to subsequent purchases. On the other hand, consumers will feel a negative disconfirmation if the performance falls short of expectations. The consumer will not be satisfied and will search for other alternatives. This model suggests that consumer satisfaction depends on the comparison between destination image before visitation and actual experience at the destination (Chon, 1986). Attitude-based approach is based on the gap between the expectation and experience. As per the expectation disconfirmation paradigm, satisfaction depends on whether tourist's pre-purchase expectations are met by the services available at the destination.

Managers of eco-sites are realizing the importance of meeting the needs of tourists and providing them with notable experience (Fletcher and Fletcher, 2003). This has resulted in increased emphasis on service quality of various attributes such as walking tracks, safari vehicles, canopy walkways and tourist centres that increase the possibility of satisfying the eco-tourists (Adam *et al.*, 2019). Eco-visitors display high levels of satisfaction with their eco-experiences (Buckley, 2009). Hui *et al.* (2007) assert that high levels of satisfaction of eco-tourists with their experiences are seen in the global appeal of cultural and nature-based attractions. This notion has been equally supported by some studies. For example, 66 percent of eco-tourists in New Zealand's Pirongia Forest Park were pleased with their visit experience (Pan and Ryan, 2007). Similarly, 60% of eco-visitors that visited Kenya's Ambo-seli

National Park were satisfied whereas only 4% were unsatisfied, thus indicating a high levels of satisfaction among eco-visitors (Okello *et al.*, 2008). Prior research pointed out that perceived value can lead to satisfaction and behavioural intentions (Chua *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2015). Repurchase and word of mouth suggestions indicate customer loyalty, which is an outcome tourist satisfaction (Prayag and Ryan., 2012; Prebensen *et al.*, 2014). Tourist satisfaction is a forecaster of customer loyalty, which leads to success of the tourist destination, it also relates to selection of a destination, purchase of products and services and the revisit (Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Zabkar *et al.*, 2010).

Since no such research has been done in Goa to assess the tourists' expectations towards the ecotourism services available in the state using Gap Analysis, this study intends to give destination planners with information on how to improve ecotourism services in order to improve the destinations' long-term competitiveness and sustainability. This current research work tries to examine the expectations of visitors at various ecotourism sites across Goa to gauge their expectations and level of satisfaction with the services available for ecotourism. To determine the most important variables and areas for improvement in order to raise the quality of the ecotourism products and services given to meet tourists' expectations. Conclusions can be drawn with relation to these aspects and the need for development to increase ecotourism in the state based on the evaluation of tourist expectations and satisfaction. Therefore, the current study will fill this gap by contributing through additional knowledge, new perspectives and possibilities for consideration.

3. Objectives and Hypothesis of the Study

3.1. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are:

- To assess the expectations of tourists' visiting various ecotourism sites in Goa in order to determine their expectations and level of satisfaction with the ecotourism services available in the state.
- To identify the most important variables and areas for improvement in order to raise the quality of ecotourism products and services to meet tourists' expectations.

3.2. Hypothesis of the Study

- H_0 : There is no significant difference between tourists' expectations and level of satisfaction with the ecotourism services available.

4. Research Methodology

The aim of this study is to find out tourists' expectations towards ecotourism in Goa. Data was collected between November 2019 and January 2020. A structured questionnaire was used and data was collected from tourists visiting various ecotourism sites in the state, which included spice plantations and a bird watching sanctuary. Convenience random sampling was used. Around 500 questionnaires were provided, 423 of which were returned by visitors, 21 of which were incomplete, leaving only 402 acceptable surveys with an 80.4 percent response rate. For a given population of 10,00,000 and above

the adequate sample size is 384 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970). According to the tourist arrival statistics by the Government of Goa, in any given year since 2001 the tourist arrivals in Goa has been more than 10,00,000. Therefore, the current study used a sample of 402 respondents. The survey instrument was split into two sections. The first section attempted to examine tourist demographic data. The second part deals with the services available for ecotourism in the state. Twenty nine statements were designed to assess the expectations of tourists and their level of satisfaction with ecotourism services available. The statements used in the study were based on past literature (Sörensson and Friedrichs, 2013; Boley *et al.*, 2017; Khan, 2003; Ngoc and Phuong, 2019; Coghlan, 2012).

Various statistical techniques were used to analyse the data, based upon the models used to carry out studies elsewhere. Gap Analysis was carried out to find the answer for: what were the tourists' expectations about the ecotourism services in Goa and what they experienced while participating in ecotourism activities with respect to various services provided for ecotourism. The goal of this study was to determine whether tourists to Goa are happy with the ecotourism services available.

SPSS was used to examine the data. The researchers employed descriptive statistics, mean analysis, gap analysis (expectations–satisfaction of ecotourism services in terms of before and post visit), and paired t-test. Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess the scale's and data's reliability. The mean analysis, which is based on visitor responses on a 5-point Likert scale, shows tourists' expectations and satisfaction with the state's ecotourism offerings where 1 being least important/poor and 5 is most important / excellent. If the mean value is between 3 and 5, it means that the service is important/satisfactory to the tourists. They deem it unimportant / unsatisfactory if the value is between 1 and 2. The difference in values between the Satisfaction Mean (performance mean after the trip) and the Expectation Mean is indicated by Gap Analysis (expected mean before trip) (Tonge and Moore, 2007; Hanim and Redzuan, 2010). If the Gap value is zero or positive, it means that the tourists' actual experience with ecotourism services matches or exceeds their expectations, showing contentment. If the value is negative, it suggests they had higher expectations than what they got, showing disappointment. Paired t-test has been carried out to determine whether the Gap (difference in mean values) was significant or otherwise. Statistically it was used to test the following hypotheses:

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1. Demographic Profile Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Tourists

| <i>Demographic Profile of Tourists (N=402)</i> | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|----------------------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>Demographic Profile</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Demographic Profile</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>%</i> |
| Gender | | | Marital Status | | |
| Male | 197 | 49.0 | Married | 215 | 53.5 |
| Female | 205 | 51.0 | Unmarried | 170 | 42.3 |
| Age | | | Separated | 17 | 4.2 |

contd. table 1

| <i>Demographic Profile of Tourists (N=402)</i> | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|----------------------------|---------------|----------|
| <i>Demographic Profile</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>%</i> | <i>Demographic Profile</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>%</i> |
| 18-29 | 98 | 24.4 | Educational level | | |
| 30-39 | 174 | 43.3 | Upto S.S.C | 111 | 27.6 |
| 40-49 | 58 | 14.4 | Upto H.S.S.C | 58 | 14.4 |
| 50-59 | 38 | 9.5 | Graduation | 206 | 51.2 |
| Above 60 | 34 | 8.5 | Post-Graduation | 27 | 6.7 |
| Monthly Income | | | Social class | | |
| Less than 25,000 | 68 | 16.9 | Individual | 170 | 42.3 |
| 25,001-50,000 | 134 | 33.3 | Couple with no kids | 105 | 26.1 |
| 50,001-75,000 | 129 | 32.1 | Family with children | 127 | 31.6 |
| Above 50,000 | 71 | 17.7 | | | |

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The demographic profile of respondents indicates an approximately equal distribution in terms of Gender - Male (49%) and Female (51%). As per age, the largest group of participants aged 30-39 years (43.3%), followed by the second largest group aged 18-29 years (24.4%). Only 8.5% of the respondents were above 60 years of age. Most of the respondents has income of 25000 to 75000 per month, married people covered 53.5% of the share. More than 51% of the respondents were graduates, most of the tourists were individual travellers.

5.2. Factor Analysis

Table 2: Factor Analysis and Gap Analysis

| <i>Factor Analysis & Gap Analysis (N=402)</i> | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Variables</i> | | <i>Loa- ding</i> | <i>Expec- tations</i> | <i>Perfor- mance</i> | <i>Gap (P)-(E)</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
| F1 | Sustainable tourism; Eigen Value 14.360; % of Variance Explained 49.517; ($\alpha=0.965$) | | | | | | |
| 1. | Improvement in the standard of living of local community | 0.846 | 4.87 | 3.82 | -1.04 | 22.360 | 0.00 |
| 2. | Preservation of water quality | 0.846 | 4.56 | 2.92 | -1.65 | 27.363 | 0.00 |
| 3. | Protection of natural environment | 0.835 | 4.44 | 2.73 | -1.71 | 29.364 | 0.00 |
| 4. | Increase of tourism related employment | 0.825 | 4.46 | 2.73 | -1.73 | 29.400 | 0.00 |
| 5. | Preservation of air quality | 0.821 | 4.71 | 3.20 | -1.51 | 30.653 | 0.00 |
| 6. | Availability of local goods | 0.780 | 4.76 | 3.44 | -1.32 | 30.377 | 0.00 |
| 7. | Contribute to local tourism businesses | 0.774 | 4.76 | 3.56 | -1.20 | 29.736 | 0.00 |
| 8. | Chance to interact with local people | 0.762 | 4.29 | 2.90 | -1.40 | 25.518 | 0.00 |

contd. table 2

Tourists' Expectations and Satisfaction towards Ecotourism in Goa: An Empirical Study

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Loa- ding</i> | <i>Expec- tations</i> | <i>Perfor- mance</i> | <i>Gap (P)-(E)</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|
| 9. Opportunity to view life of locals | 0.743 | 4.54 | 3.21 | -1.33 | 25.105 | 0.00 |
| 10. Hospitality of residents | 0.731 | 4.58 | 3.29 | -1.29 | 25.182 | 0.00 |
| 11. Environmental commitment of staff | 0.591 | 4.61 | 3.32 | -1.30 | 25.374 | 0.00 |
| Factor Mean | | 4.60 | 3.19 | -1.41 | | |
| F2 | Customer Service Attributes; Eigen Value 2.993; % of Variance Explained 10.321; ($\alpha=0.945$) | | | | | |
| 12. Food | 0.854 | 4.75 | 3.59 | -1.16 | 26.218 | 0.00 |
| 13. Accommodation | 0.807 | 4.78 | 3.56 | -1.22 | 27.190 | 0.00 |
| 14. Entertainment | 0.804 | 4.77 | 3.55 | -1.22 | 26.637 | 0.00 |
| 15. Comfort | 0.793 | 4.73 | 3.42 | -1.32 | 25.939 | 0.00 |
| 16. Guides with great knowledge | 0.708 | 4.73 | 3.41 | -1.33 | 27.155 | 0.00 |
| 17. Greenery | 0.661 | 4.70 | 3.49 | -1.21 | 25.216 | 0.00 |
| 18. Excellent communication skills of guides | 0.622 | 4.65 | 3.49 | -1.16 | 23.694 | 0.00 |
| Factor Mean | | 4.73 | 3.50 | -1.23 | | |
| F3 | Environmental friendly; Eigen Value 2.575; % of Variance Explained 8.880; ($\alpha=0.918$) | | | | | |
| 19. Energy saving measures | 0.837 | 4.64 | 3.46 | -1.18 | 23.579 | 0.00 |
| 20. Recycling of waste | 0.823 | 4.54 | 3.21 | -1.33 | 27.375 | 0.00 |
| 21. Water saving initiatives | 0.780 | 4.57 | 3.17 | -1.39 | 27.294 | 0.00 |
| 22. Flexibility | 0.663 | 4.58 | 3.20 | -1.38 | 27.662 | 0.00 |
| Factor Mean | | 4.58 | 3.26 | -1.32 | | |
| F4 | Health care services and security; Eigen Value 1.545; % of Variance Explained 5.328; ($\alpha=0.928$) | | | | | |
| 23. Access for disabled | 0.899 | 4.66 | 3.30 | -1.36 | 29.050 | 0.00 |
| 24. Health care services | 0.881 | 4.72 | 3.35 | -1.37 | 29.767 | 0.00 |
| 25. Security | 0.824 | 4.68 | 3.39 | -1.29 | 27.321 | 0.00 |
| Factor Mean | | 4.69 | 3.35 | -1.34 | | |
| F5 | Ecosite utilities; Eigen Value 1.306; % of Variance Explained 4.504; ($\alpha=0.816$) | | | | | |
| 26. Accessibility | 0.771 | 4.64 | 3.39 | -1.25 | 24.015 | 0.00 |
| 27. Calm environment | 0.770 | 4.57 | 3.21 | -1.36 | 25.946 | 0.00 |
| 28. Use of containers made of natural materials | 0.662 | 4.64 | 3.18 | -1.46 | 27.676 | 0.00 |
| 29. Hygiene | 0.635 | 4.69 | 3.21 | -1.48 | 27.911 | 0.00 |
| Factor Mean | | 4.63 | 3.25 | -1.38 | | |
| | KMO: 0.911 | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity 15022.789 | | | | |

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Exploratory factor analysis was applied for 29 variables, which generated 5 factors. There were five factors with Eigen values more than 1 and attribute loadings greater than 0.3 reported. The statistical

probability and test revealed a substantial connection between the variables, indicating that Factor Analysis was necessary. The overall measure of sample adequacy calculated by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was 0.911, which was commendable, and the Bartlett test of sphericity yielded a result of 15022.789 (Hair *et al.*, 1999). The Cronbach's alpha of each factor was calculated to determine its dependability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of subscales ranged from 0.816 to 0.965 for the five variables, according to the findings. Because 0.70 is the minimum figure for passing the dependability test, the result was deemed acceptable (Nunnally, 1967).

The first factor, F1-Sustainable tourism had an alpha of 0.965 and includes the following variables - improvement in the standard of living of local community, preservation of water quality, protection of natural environment, increase of tourism related employment, preservation of air quality, availability of local goods, contribute to local tourism businesses, chance to interact with local people, opportunity to view life of locals, hospitality of residents and environmental commitment of staff. The second factor F2 - customer service attributes had 7 variables and an alpha of 0.945 and includes the following variables – food, accommodation, entertainment, comfort, guides with great knowledge, greenery and excellent communication skills of guides. The third factor F3 – environmental friendly had 5 variables and an alpha of 0.918 and includes the following variables–energy saving measures, recycling of waste, water saving initiatives and flexibility. The fourth factor was F4 – Health care services and security having 3 variables and an alpha of 0.928 and includes the following variables access for disabled, health care services and security and finally, the fifth factor F5 Ecosite utilities had 4 variables and an alpha of 0.816 and includes the following variables –accessibility, calm environment, use of containers made of natural materials and hygiene.

5.3. Mean Analysis

The Grand Mean Value of the scale, according to mean analysis, is 4.64 in terms for Expectation. For F1, (Sustainable tourism) it was 4.60 (Above average) for most of the variables except preservation of water quality, protection of natural environment, increase of tourism related employment, chance to interact with local people, opportunity to view life of locals and hospitality of residents was somewhat less than 'above average expectation' values. For F2, (Customer service attributes) it was found to be 4.73 (Above average) with greenery and excellent communication skills of guides having somewhat less than 'above average' expectations. F3 (Environmental friendly) received a score of 4.58 (above average), with waste recycling and water conservation programmes scoring slightly lower than the 'above average expectation' levels. It was 4.69 (Average) for F4 (Health Care Services and Security), with two out of three factors (access for disabled and security) having 'below average' expectations.

It was 4.63 (Above average) for F5 (Eco-site utilities), with only calm environment having somewhat lower than 'above average expectation' values.

Thereby indicating Sustainable tourism, Customer service attributes, Environmental friendly and Ecosite utilities (F1, F2, F3 & F5) are thought to be 'above average' Expectations in a destination's charm in the minds of the tourists. Whereas, Health care services and security (F4), had 'average' Expectations.

The actual performance of these factors has a Grand Mean Value of 3.3. For F-1 (Sustainable tourism) it was 3.19, showing 'average' level of satisfaction with 3 variables (improvement in the standard

of living of local community, availability of local goods and contribute to local tourism businesses) inclining towards the higher end of 'average satisfaction', with 4 variables (preservation of water quality, opportunity to view life of locals, hospitality of residents and environmental commitment of staff) inclining to the lower end of 'average satisfaction'. 4 variables (preservation of water quality, protection of natural environment, increase of tourism related employment and chance to interact with local people) had 'below average' values.

For F2 (Customer service attributes) with three variables (food, accommodation, entertainment), it was 3.50, suggesting a 'average' degree of satisfaction inclining towards 'above average' satisfaction. 2 variables (comfort, guides with great knowledge) had slightly 'below average' values. For F3 (environmental friendly) it was 3.26 overall, indicating 'below average' performance, with 3 variables (recycling of waste, water saving initiatives, flexibility) having 'below average' satisfaction and only 1 variable (energy saving measures) having 'above average' satisfaction. For F4 (Health care services and security) it was 3.35 with most of the variables having 'average satisfaction' levels except access for disabled.

For F5 (Ecosite utilities) it was 3.25 overall, showing 'below average' performance, with 3 variables (calm environment, use of containers made of natural materials and hygiene) having slightly 'below average' satisfaction and only 1 variable (accessibility) having 'above average' satisfaction.

Thereby indicating Sustainable tourism, Customer service attributes and Health care services and security (F1, F2 & F4) are normally thought to have 'average' performance/ satisfaction by the tourists. Whereas Health care services and security (F4) tends towards the higher end of 'average' performance. However, Environmental friendly (F3) & Ecosite utilities (F5) have a 'below average' performance.

5.4. Paired t-test

The Paired t-test (Table 2) reveals that in all the variables there exists a significant difference in expectation of tourists with the importance specified to ecotourism services and satisfaction, thus fail to accept the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

5.5. Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis (Refer Table 2) revealed that the gap was negative for all parameters, both overall and for individual variables, showing that expectations were higher than the satisfaction/performance achieved at the destination, and that satisfaction was low, resulting in a less-than-satisfactory experience that may not be repeated.

The highest gap were found in 'Increase of tourism related employment, Protection of natural environment and Preservation of water quality', which belong to (F1 Sustainable tourism). Followed by 'Hygiene and use of containers made of natural materials' which belong to F5 Ecosite utilities and 'Water saving initiatives, Flexibility' that belong to F3 – Environmental friendly. The lowest gap was found in the variable 'Improvement in the standard of living of local community' which is a part of F1 Sustainable tourism. Followed by food and excellent communication skills of guides that belongs to F2 - Customer service attributes.

However, there was a negative difference between expectation and performance for all 29 statements showing that initiatives and resources should be invested to improve tourist satisfaction. The overall picture demonstrates that ecotourism services in the state of Goa are essentially non-existent, or are poorly managed. This is a severe problem that needs to be addressed quickly by the relevant authorities, or else the bad effects of tourism would outnumber the favourable ones in the Goan tourism industry. Thus the hypothesis is rejected and it points out that the ecotourism services provided to visitors to the state are unsatisfactory.

6. Conclusion

The study revealed that there is a need for planning and developing policies to provide effective ecotourism services in Goa. The findings have revealed areas which require improvements to provide quality services. Inappropriate and unsatisfactory ecotourism services are being provided, therefore, it is recommended that planners and policy makers need to take decisions to improve tourists satisfaction towards the various ecotourism services available in the state. To promote tourism-related jobs in the state, initiatives must be undertaken. More stringent measures are needed to maintain the natural environment, preserve water quality, and implement water-saving efforts. Containers made of natural materials can be used.

As a result, we may conclude that there is a disconnect between what people expect and what they get after participating in ecotourism activities in Goa. Therefore, it leads to the conclusion that majority of the tourists are of the opinion that most of the services available for ecotourism in Goa are inadequate, not well maintained and not up to their expectations. Expectations and performance gaps that were highlighted clearly indicate that the various stakeholders, service providers and government tourism departments need to standardize and upgrade the services they offer. The study provides guidelines and highlights areas that require attention.

In Goa, careful attention is required towards the ecotourism services available, or else the appeal to Goa as a tourist destination may suffer irreversible damage in the coming years. There is a need to improve the ecotourism services available in Goa to sustain the destinations competitiveness.

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