

## **Short Communication**

### **A Study of Wild Life Tourism in Madhya Pradesh with Special Reference to Hospitality Facilities**

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From time immemorable India has been known for its hospitality and thus is the most sorted after place of tourism<sup>[1]</sup>. India is known for tags like “Atithi Devo Bhava”; “Padharo Sa”; and “Dev Aaye”. A very famous dialogue quoted about Indian hospitality is, “Aapaaye to apnimarji se hai, par jayenge hamarimarji se”. Indian courtesy, warmth for the guests and grand hospitality has been known across the globe. Apart from these India’s Wild Life Tourism, Aadhayatmic (Spiritual) Tourism, Medical Tourism, age long Ayurvedic Tourism, Historical Tourism or Religious tourism all have been reasons of anxiety and belief for people from across the globe leading them to visit India. These visits can be for varied interest like historic, religious, yoga, meditation, medical or even just like that to see a country with great unity in diversity of religion, beliefs, faith, culture, language, food, history of grandeur and much more. But one reason which most of the visitors do have in their mind is to opportunity to get to see the Royal striped tiger and king lion in flesh and blood. India has always been known as the land of Tigers and Snakes and Snake charmers. The wild life

of the country brings happiness and delight for the people of all classes and ages. The reasons why tourists prefer the Indian Parks and sanctuaries are varied like, the famous Kipling’s “Moughli” who was a reality of the park of Pench; to hear the roar of Great Bengal Tiger; the White Tigers which are still matter of anxiety as to why are they white and so on are still a very exciting experience. Further whether it is the Great Lion at Gir or Rhinosouraus of Kaziranga all are a major reason of attraction for the tourists from across the globe. The Government promotes tourism through various programmes “Hindustan ka Dil” for Madhya Pradesh; “Kuch din to Gujariye Gujrat mein” for Gujrat; North east Tourism and so on by the department of tourism. Pench at Madhya Pradesh every year organizes the “Moughli Week” celebration where children from various parts of the country come to participate in the various activities.

Because of the geographic location of the country India is blessed with the most suitable weather conditions round the year and most beautiful and exotic flora and fauna. The tourists apart from the natural aspect also enjoy the exotic traditional Indian food being served in the

vicinity of the wild life parks and sanctuaries; the traditional ayurvedic therapies and messages for relaxation and rejuvenation; and the huge range of handicraft and other products from the jungle or their replica. This has given opportunity to a huge numbers of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled artisans and craftsmen and resultant a big industry in and around the parks and sanctuaries generating huge employment for the inhabitants.

Over the last two decades the footfall in all the wild life sanctuaries and parks of the country have grown many folds especially in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh etc<sup>[5]</sup>. Although tourists visit these areas regularly but there are pocket periods when this footfall is very high since during this period the parks and sanctuaries are open for tourists. Wild Life tourism is a sector which is majorly availed by people of a particular class and thus it contributes generating substantial foreign exchange<sup>[2]</sup>. Data and statistics have shown that over the years the number of tourists both Indian and foreign have gone up by more than 200% and money spent has also gone

The study was conducted in the three leading wild life parks of central India i.e. Madhya Pradesh i.e. Kanha, Bandhavgarh and Pench. In these areas there are facilities of lodging and boarding both provided by the MPTDC and other private business groups along with some local enterprises.

In this study, "Primary data" will include the information collected through personal interviews from the Wild Life Tourism Office people, General Managers, Maintenance Officers and Operating Personnels of the National Parks and the employees of the MP Tourism hotels, other private resorts and hotels around the

up by almost 300%. This is directly or indirectly supporting the associated industries to flourish<sup>[3]</sup>.

An important point to be noted is that off late a very big number of young adults are indulging into wild life tourism. This is mainly because of getting a job at an early age thanks to the BPOs / KPO's and other MNC's. Youth today have substantial disposable income. In this current hectic and mechanized working life even the people of young age wish to get a relaxing holiday. But since they don't get long leaves, they prefer destinations which are near, comfortable, different, relaxing, rejuvenating and most importantly natural. They wish to breathe in a place which is pollution free and healthy and nothing can be better than a wild life park or sanctuary which fulfill all the needs and is different from the routine holidays. It is also noticed that even the foreign tourist ensure spending a substantial time in Indian wild life parks. Reason stated have been the same as earlier discussed along with one more thing that they get to see the rare wild life which is not otherwise possible<sup>[4]</sup>.

national parks; local vehicle providers, various souvenir shops, local market vendors, guides of the parks, drivers of the forest department authorized vehicles, tourism department personnel, local tourism centers, shop keepers, eateries and employees at other places of holidays; and both Indian and Foreign tourists through convenient sampling.

We will also have to consider "Secondary data" received from the various official and unofficial sources – published or unpublished viz.: universities, annual reports and their analysis, project reports, facts and figures, brief printed material from Madhya Pradesh Paryatan

Office at Bhopal and other wild life locations which would be very informative and useful. Apart from this, material from the national parks, surrounding hotels and resorts both M.P Tourism and private both would be useful.

The number of respondents including all reserves worked in as sample

The study deals with the hospitality aspect of wild life tourism and the respondent category is divided into different kinds. Since all of them form a part of the hospitality they would be treated one by one for analysis before an interdependent analysis is made finally.

The first most sought after respondents were the tourists Indians who were from various parts of the country and the foreign tourists who were from the various parts of the globe. These tourists were asked for information related as to how many days visit was planned by them;

for the research is as follows: Tourists – 300 respondents; Hotels and Resorts – 90 respondents; Eateries – 75 respondents; Drivers – 60 respondents; Guides – 60 respondents; and Local Vendors – 60 respondents. These respondents were identified on convenient sampling basis.

who were accompanying them; how did they travel to the place and how was the travel; how did they get to know about the booked place and variety. Apart from this there were questions related to how was there experience of safari; did they sight the most wished Tiger and how important was it for them to see him; how was the driver in terms of his ability to drive and know routes and network to sight the tiger; and the guide in terms of his knowledge about the flora, fauna and most importantly about the various animals and birds of the forest.

**General Profile of the Respondents Indian Tourists:- Total 184**

Gender	Males	Females				
	55%	45%				
Age	20-25	26 – 30	31 – 35	36 – 40	41 - 45	46 - 55
	12%	19%	28%	24%	11%	6%
Occupation	Govt. Service	Private Orgns.	Public	Business	Students	Retired
	12%	29%	11%	26%	8%	14%
Group / Family size	Single	Group / Family of 2-3	Group / Family of 4	Group / Family of >4	Group/Family of >8	
	36%	37%	12%	8%	7%	
House hold income	< 5 lacs	5 - 8 lacs	8 - 10 lacs	10 - 15 lacs	> 15 lacs	
	83	77	107	46	13	
Tourism Frequency	Monthly	Quarterly	Half Yearly	Yearly		
	22%	27%	19%	32%		

**General Profile of the Respondents Foreign Tourists:- Total 146**

Gender	Males	Females				
	52%	48%				
Age	20-25	26 – 30	31 – 35	36 – 40	41 - 45	46 - 55
	9%	13%	21%	27%	17%	13%

Occupation	Govt. Service	Private Orgns.	Public	Business	Students	Retired
	8%	31%	17%	19%	7%	18%
Group / Family size	Single	Group / Family of 2-3	Group / Family of 4	Group / Family of >4	Group/Family of >8	
	11%	23%	21%	18%	27%	
House hold income	< 5 lacs	5 - 8 lacs	8 - 10 lacs	10 - 15 lacs	> 15 lacs	
	23	22	19	21	15	
Tourism Frequency	Monthly	Quarterly	Half Yearly	Yearly		
	8%	26%	29%	37%		

There has been an increase in environmental awareness and pressure of urbanization. Now, urban masses look for new get away locations, where they can get involved in active recreation and an ambience which is thoroughly relaxing. Thus, national parks and sanctuaries have emerged as the favourite destinations for people of all classes, who wish to have a serene, memorable, peaceful and rejuvenating holiday. The Government of India initiated the 'new ecotourism and wild life tourism policy' which promotes tourism more as against the previous principle of 'for conservation only'. The policy, now, aims at increasing tourism by creating more services and facilities for the visitors to the protected areas and ensuring that the stay of the tourists becomes an experience for life time. Thus, there has been a constant increase in the number of visitors during the 'season' and also off season. The plastic and concrete life has changed the view point of the people, who now prefer places like wild life parks and sanctuaries, meditation centers or natural resorts, for their weekends and holidays. They call these places detoxifying centers. During the course of study it was found that there were a substantial number of visitors who were there inspite of not having received a booking for safari. These were people who were there just to

enjoy nature and the natural surroundings. Although for tourists who were booked for safari for them sighting the tiger was critical, a big enthusiasm and reason to be there. They just wanted to see the king in flesh and blood. There were quite a few foreign tourists who were wild life photographers or where scholars conducting research on various aspects of flora, fauna and animals in the forest. The photographers were reportedly perching up in the deep forest for days together for million dollar shots of the rare species which surprise with acts which are unpredictable and unique.

The respondents of this research also preferred wild life tourism for a few basic reasons as mentioned below:

- 1) Wild life parks and sanctuaries now-a-days have developed in such a way that, they do not just provide a peaceful place to the visitors but also give them information and experiences of various ancient skills and culture.
- 2) Wild life is very fast getting extinct and if they do not see it now they would probably will never be able to see it ever.
- 3) People prefer a weekend travelling distance destination with a motive to spend their personal small quality time with family, friends or even alone in the natural surroundings, which is out

of question in their small apartments and flats.

- 4) They also look forward to these holidays as time spent on getting to see and know something they never knew. For eg: in most of the wild life park resorts they provide with authentic local food, regional dance, music and other cultural programmes, information on the place specific flora and fauna and other places of tourist or historical importance in the vicinity.
- 5) The respondents also mentioned about wild life areas where they could see and feel the wild life. The flora, fauna, animals permitted to be close to and so on.

Respondents from hotels and resorts included employees from the MP Tourism hotel, hotels and resorts of private owners, cottages and traditional hotels. All were places with different amenities and facilities which also were related to the charges that asked for. The MP Tourism hotels were the most wanted hotels which have to be booked through either MP Tourism site or through the MP Tourism kiosks available at various points. Tourists also enjoy tree houses, bamboo houses and tents which are also available in the close vicinity of various parks and sanctuaries. These hotels along with some other resorts were most liked because they provided a very good place to stay which was neat and clean, lush green, and hygienic. There package included breakfast, lunch, evening tea and dinner. The food as reported by the tourists was awesome and had great variety of vegetarian and non-vegetarian varieties. Rooms were well equipped and very comfortable. The staff was very accommodating and supporting; extending help to their best capacities. Similarly, the other hotels also extended good facilities and the reason mentioned by them was that

there business thrived on tourists and since the competition was cut throat and others were providing the mentioned facilities they had to do the same or better to ensure good revenue generation.

Most of the eateries of the wild life localities can be divided into two major kinds; firstly the joints which are like traditional food joints serving food and breakfast and others which serve only quick food like kachories, omelets, bhajiyas etc. The owners of these formal eateries state that people during the evening or night like to eat standard food but during the morning hours or day times they end up eating all kinds of junk food. Since they are on holiday they do not mind experimenting with food of any kind as simple as fresh bhajiya to bread omelets etc. The eateries which provide only fresh miscellaneous junk food mention that tourists end up eating anything that is served hot or cold depending upon the season and weather. Even the foreign tourists like and enjoy eating the oily food like samosa, kachoris, bhajiya, poha, jalebi etc. Some eateries mentioned on special request that per day margin is almost hundred percent, which goes up during the season times. Almost all the eateries mentioned that their business is dependent on the tourist not of very high profile since they are rare visitors. Their business thrives on the tourists who stay in the middle class hotels and also through the hotels which do not have their own catering service but outsource their food from them.

As about the drivers and guides are concerned, in the core areas of safari the private vehicles are not permitted. A tourist has to hire a jungle jeep with an experienced driver since the drive is dangerous as well as the roads have to be known very carefully so that the tourists do

not get deviated from the defined roads or get lost. These drivers have a very good internal network amongst themselves also. If an experienced driver is hired he coordinates amongst his fellow driver and can reach us at destinations where a tiger is sighted. Similarly, a well-informed guide is an asset in these tours since he can extend information of all kinds of flora, fauna and the visible birds, animals and reptiles. This not just increases the knowledge and information of the tourists but also promotes their interest in the trip.

Local vendors included all those shops which were vending memoir, goods

related to jungle needs or goods from jungle or there replica. Like mugs with tigers printed on them, key chains, t-shirts, umbrellas, boots, hats, honey, wood designs, carved wooden pieces etc. There sale completely depends on the quality and quantity of tourist footfalls in the season on otherwise. There are vendors where good quality plants, natural products, herbal products and local handicrafts are available at very reasonable and appealing prices. In the close vicinity there is a fair market of natural products like Honey, Scrubber, Latex, Quality Seeds, herbal plants and herbal products etc.

**Table 1 Footfall in the Wild Life Parks and Sanctuaries - State wise**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Kerala	1.71	1.61	1.43	1.29	1.16	1.04	1.27	2.83
Goa	0.61	0.53	0.48	0.44	0.40	0.36	0.32	0.29
Delhi	0.54	0.56	0.51	0.47	0.44	0.40	0.37	0.34
Rajasthan	4.66	5.09	5.35	5.70	6.06	6.42	6.76	9.18
Tamil Nadu	12.28	11.71	13.30	13.14	12.95	12.71	12.43	14.78
Andhra Pradesh	15.97	15.35	17.46	16.04	16.55	15.98	13.29	13.56
Gujarat	2.25	2.56	2.72	2.95	3.18	3.42	3.67	3.91
Himachal Pradesh	1.84	1.88	1.75	1.65	1.56	1.46	1.37	4.89
J & K	2.00	1.96	1.74	1.59	1.44	1.30	1.18	1.05
Uttar Pradesh	15.66	15.87	14.05	15.75	15.44	16.13	16.83	17.53
Uttarakhand	3.40	3.85	3.80	3.82	3.83	3.82	3.80	3.77
Orissa	1.20	1.26	1.19	1.16	1.12	1.08	1.04	1.00
Karnataka	7.90	8.26	8.25	8.37	8.46	8.52	8.55	8.54
West Bengal	3.60	3.68	3.60	3.59	3.57	3.54	3.49	3.42
Madhya Pradesh	16.50	17.92	17.52	18.16	18.96	19.93	20.12	27.57
Maharashtra	3.89	3.88	3.85	3.87	3.88	3.87	3.85	3.82

Figs in percentages.

Source: Annual reports on Wild Life Survey.

**Table 2 Tourism in the Wild Life Parks and Sanctuaries - Month wise**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
January	6.05	5.44	4.81	4.18	3.57	3.00	2.49	2.04	2.08	2.12	2.13
February	7.72	6.56	5.48	4.50	3.63	2.89	2.26	1.75	1.32	1.10	0.99
March	7.44	6.42	5.46	4.56	3.74	3.02	2.41	1.89	1.42	1.07	0.79
April	6.08	5.43	4.76	4.10	3.48	2.90	2.39	1.94	1.51	1.17	0.89
May	7.48	6.73	5.95	5.17	4.42	3.72	3.08	2.52	2.05	1.41	1.39
June	8.03	7.73	7.32	6.81	6.23	5.62	4.99	4.37	4.36	4.33	4.25
July	6.91	6.95	6.87	6.68	6.38	6.00	5.56	5.09	5.26	5.42	5.53

August	8.45	9.15	9.75	10.21	10.51	10.65	10.64	10.48	10.84	11.17	11.38
September	9.85	10.67	11.37	11.90	12.26	12.42	12.41	12.22	11.74	11.24	10.64
October	10.26	8.87	7.53	6.29	5.16	4.17	3.32	2.61	2.70	2.78	2.83
November	11.50	13.60	15.81	18.07	20.31	22.47	24.49	26.34	26.27	26.10	25.66
December	10.22	12.44	14.90	17.54	20.30	23.13	25.97	28.76	30.45	32.11	33.50

Figs in percentages. **Source:** Annual reports on Wild Life Survey.

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