

**Park Tourists Behavioral Loyalty in India: A Study on Revisit Intention and Willingness to Recommend *Doors* as a Tourism Destination**

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**Abstract**

Park tourism is a relatively new concept in tourism which may be considered as a purposeful travel to natural areas to comprehend the cultural and natural history of surroundings without disturbing the ecosystem. Park tourism is supposed to generate economic opportunities for the local people who do not have much option to enhance their economic condition. Like ecotourism, park tourism also promises the sustainable use of natural resources without degrading the natural environment. Growth in income and changing life style orientations has increased the demand for tourism, including nature-based tourism. There is a tremendous demand for nature based tourism in India though the scope is limited due to fragmented size of forest available for sustainable development of park tourism which is a form of ecotourism endeavor. The study conducted in the past revealed that in India a total of 590 protected areas cover less than five percent of total land area which are relatively smaller in size (average size is less than 300 square Km) and having a high density of population who are very poor.

A plethora of past studies in the field of destination satisfaction reveals that that visitor satisfaction is the basic factor behind the growth of tourism industries all over the world. Researchers and practitioners have focused a great deal to address various issues concerning the service quality, tourist satisfaction, behavioral intentions and satisfied tourist spreading positive word of mouth communication. However, there is a dearth of empirical research establishing the relationship between perceived service quality and satisfaction of visitors going to destinations surrounding parks and wildlife sanctuaries. This study investigates these service quality issues within the ecotourism initiatives adjoining the National Park and Wild Life Sanctuaries in the *Doors* region. This study included a questionnaire survey of visitors in the vicinity of *Gorumara* National Park. That data on visitors' satisfaction have been gathered by personally administering a questionnaire from tourists visiting different resorts surrounding the National Park and Wild Life Sanctuaries. The study makes several significant theoretical and managerial contributions. The key finding is that the behavioral intention to recommend the destination can be predicted as revealed by the magnitude of the goodness of fit of the multiple regression model. Similarly, it is interesting to note that the willingness to revisit the destination is significantly associated with the quality of holiday satisfaction perceived by the visitors. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) also corroborates the findings as reported above. Conclusions and managerial implications are also discussed to improve the quality of service delivered to enhance the image of the destination.

**Key Words: Park, Tourism, Satisfaction, IPA, Behavioral Intentions, SEM**

## Introduction

Park tourism is a relatively new concept in tourism which may be considered as a purposeful travel to natural areas to comprehend the cultural and natural history of surroundings without disturbing the ecosystem. Park tourism is supposed to generate economic opportunities for the local people who do not have much option to enhance their economic condition. Like ecotourism, park tourism also promises the sustainable use of natural resources without degrading the natural environment. Growth in income and changing life style orientations has increased the demand for tourism, including nature-based tourism. There is a tremendous demand for nature based tourism in India though the scope is limited due to fragmented size of forest available for sustainable development of park tourism which is a form of ecotourism endeavor. The study conducted by Rodgers et al.(2003) revealed that in India a total of 590 protected areas cover less than five percent of total land area which are relatively smaller in size(average size is less than 300 square Km) and having a high density of population who are very poor.

There is not much dissimilarity between ecotourism and park tourism. It may be conceptualized that ecotourism also encompasses park tourism. Park tourism can be conceptualized as any tourism programme that is nature based, ecologically sustainable and where the local people are benefited. If it does not satisfy anyone of these components then it cannot be termed as a real park tourism venture.

On the basis of above discussion, the park tourism, in simple words, means managing tourism and preserving nature in a way so as to maintain a proper balance between the requirements of tourism and ecology. The needs of the local communities should be considered sincerely by creating diverse jobs opportunities by imparting innovative skills to improve their standard of living. The other goal of park tourism is empowering the women so that they become economically self-contained.

## The Tourism Scenario

The tourism industry is considered to be one of the important businesses in the world economy which generates huge employment opportunities and income. In the face of the prevalent worldwide economic uncertainty the demand for tourism continues to show signs of revival in many countries (UNWTO, 2011). On a global perspective the World Tourism Organization has identified it as the segment that will nurture growth of the industry in a big way. The tourism industry is considered to be one of the growing businesses in the global economy having huge potential for generating employment opportunities and income for a cross section of people associated with such business. Considering the economic downturn in the world economy, the demand for tourism is still showing signs of expansion in different countries all over the globe (UNWTO, 2011). The data reported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India reveals that the growth of foreign exchange earnings in the recent years increasing at a rate which is around 20 percent and the accompanying chart show almost exponential growth.(see Table-I) The number of domestic tourist visiting different states and union territories also show increasing trend over the years. As more and more tourists are looking for destinations which would satisfy their needs, the marketers must develop destinations to attract tourists and conduct market segmentation analysis to understand the typologies of different segments of tourists. The Table-I reports the growth in foreign exchange earnings and the Table-II reports the movement of domestic tourists within the national boundaries. In view of this increasing demand from both the international and domestic market, the providers of tourism services need to be more proactive to understand the requirements and satisfy the tourists who are very heterogeneous in terms of services they demand from the marketers of tourism services. The people associated with

the marketing of tourism services are supposed to play a dominant role to improve the image of the destination by providing adequate services. Tourism marketers should develop a proper image of the destination to become more competitive in attracting more tourists keeping in view the ecological issues so that there is minimal impact on the fragile environment.

**Gorumara National Park:**

The *Dooars* valley stretches from the turbulent Teesta river on the west to river Sankosh on the east covering a huge area which is located in the district of Jalpaiguri. *Dooars* is the doorway to Bhutan and large area of *Dooars* is covered with forest and lush green unending tea gardens, with innumerable turbulent rivers surrounding the entire *Dooars* region.

TABLE - I  
Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) (in ₹ Crore) from  
Tourism in India, 1997-2013 (till June)

Year	FEE from Tourism in India (in ₹ Crore)	Percentage (%) change over the previous year
1997	10511	4.6
1998	12150	15.6
1999	12951	6.6
2000	15626	20.7
2001	15083	-3.5
2002	15064	-0.1
2003	20729	37.6
2004	27944	34.8
2005	33123	18.5
2006	39025	17.8
2007	44360	13.7
2008	51294	15.6
2009	53700	4.7
2010#	64889	20.8
2011#	77591	19.6
2012#	94487	21.8
2013 # (Jan-June)	50448	15.3@

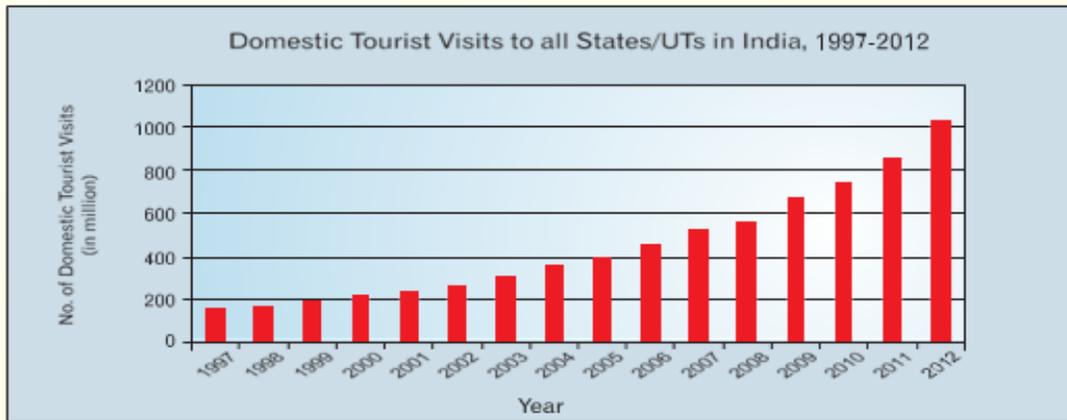
# Advance Estimates, @ Growth rate over Jan-June, 2012  
Source: (i) Reserve Bank of India, for 1997 to 2009.  
(ii) Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, for 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013



**TABLE— II**  
 Number of Domestic Tourist Visits to all States/UTs in India, 1997-2012

Year	No. of Domestic Tourist Visits (in million) to States/UTs	Percentage (%)change over the previous year
1997	159.88	14.1
1998	168.20	5.2
1999	190.67	13.4
2000	220.11	15.4
2001	236.47	7.4
2002	269.60	14.0
2003	309.04	14.6
2004	366.27	18.5
2005	392.01	7.0
2006	462.32	17.9
2007	526.56	13.9
2008	563.03	6.9
2009	668.80	18.8
2010	747.70	11.8
2011	864.53	15.6
2012 (P)	1036.35	19.9

(P) : Provisional  
 Source: State/ UT Tourism Departments



The valley of *Dooars* is particularly famous for tea, tourism, timber and obviously for its wildlife Sanctuaries and National Park. The climate, dense forests, Gorumara National park, Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary and Chilapata forest , unique culture of ethnic communities, historical places contribute substantially in attracting tourists who are interested in ethnic and eco-tourism. The West Bengal Forest Development Corporation (WBFDC) took the initiative to promote the concept of ecotourism in association with the local people residing in the adjoining areas of different

tourist spots on a commercial basis for generating income for the Forest Protection Committee members.

*Lataguri* is a small village that is situated in the in the district of Jalpaiguri, West Bengal. *Gorumara National Park* is located beside the river *Murti River* which is not far away from the *Lataguri* village. *Gorumara* is a small forest area about 80 sq. km. still it is very important and famous destination to visitors for its natural population of one horned Rhinoceros, Gaur, Elephants , different varieties of deer and a large species of birds. *Lataguri* is situated near the *Gorumara National Park* which is 30 km. from *Jalpaiguri* and around 95 km. from *Bagdogra Airport*. Tourists may visit *Gorumara National Park* in day time staying at *Lataguri*. Day visit permission to the National Park may also be obtained from the Nature Interpretation Centre, Department of Forest .Govt. of West Bengal), *Lataguri*. The village is one of the entry points from where the National Park can be accessed and one can visit the Nature Interpretation Center which is situated here. Tourists may obtain information on various varieties of flora and fauna from that center. There are a few roadside inns that are situated beside the highway that cater to the needs of the travelers. Visitors to the forest may obtain permit for entering in to the *Gorumara National Park* from the village of *Lataguri*. After the initiative undertaken by WBFDC during the late 20<sup>th</sup>.century to promote *Dooars* as a viable tourism destination, a large number of private entrepreneurs have started constructing resorts to accommodate an enormous number of tourists every year who come to enjoy the beauty, serenity and tranquility of the National park

### **Review of literature**

In general park-tourism is an environment friendly activity that helps in the preservation of flora and fauna for which there must be certain guidelines that need to be adhered to by the visitors visiting any fragile environment. Like ecotourism park tourism is certainly emerging as a growing niche market within the larger travel industry, with the potential of being an important viable development tool (Sezgin and Gumus, 2016). It should be stressed that it is time to ponder on the sustaining capacity of eco-tourism destination surrounding the national parks in India which are already overpopulated.

Since 1990, ecotourism has been increasing at a rate of 20–34% annually, faster than the tourism industry as a whole, especially in international markets. According to the United Nations Environmental Programme, ([www.responsibletravel.org](http://www.responsibletravel.org)) this discernible growth is taking place around the world's 'Natural Areas', primarily in the developing countries who are seeking to take advantage of their natural property in an endeavor to increase their foreign exchange earnings. These developments seem to reflect a budding trend towards conservationism and environmental movement (Fennell, 2001; Acott, et.al, 2010). Needless to state that, the most important objective of ecotourism is to offer a means of support for both environmental preservation and economic development for local people living in the vicinity of the ecotourism destinations (Honey, 1999).

In service-based hospitality industry, human resource management plays an important role to hire and train its employees because company's success will depend on its employees' appropriate service-based attitude. Dealing with people, process of delivering the service and physical evidences are most important in tourism and hospitality business. Successful hospitality managers need to standardize the delivery of services with the trained staff that would ultimately generate additional revenues. The employee turnover rate is abysmally high for services sector including tourism services. According to Worcester(1999), the employee turnover rate ranges from 60 percent to 300 percent which is high by any standard for which the management should adopt proper steps to retain the employees in order to avoid unnecessary recruitment and training costs. Fitzsimmons (1994) noted the interaction between customer and employees

delivering services plays a positive role in generating positive outcome. A customer always expects to be treated in a fairly decent manner and treated at par with others service recipients. In view of this, the development of standards and employee training in proper system is the key to ensuring consistency in the service provided.

Harris (2000) explained expectations are our personal mental pictures of the result that are formed from our previous experiences. Parasuraman et al. (1991 and 1994) in various studies have refined the Servqual scale and introduced three column formats to include minimum expectation, desired service and perceived service quality to find out perception expectation gaps in providing the service.

In any hospitality industry, due to heterogeneous character of people rendering services, there is a wide variety of employees' behaviors that can occur within the workplace unless proper training is imparted to the staffs. Employees' behaviors may be defined as various sequences of actions carried out by employees within the organization (Hanna *et al.*, 2004). King (2004) in his seminal work states that negative employees' behavior has ruined many businesses and affecting the bottom line of many service providers. The negative attitudes of employees have adverse impact of driving away customers, damaging the morale of employees and increasing employee turnover rate. Dimitris et al. (2007) defined customer satisfaction as a measure of how a product or service performs compared to customer's expectations. Kong and Jogaratnam (2007) corroborated the fact that employee personalization and courtesy are significant predictors of customer satisfaction. Paull (2008) conducted a study in the airline industry and found that employees and customers did not share the same point of view when it came to defining a successful interaction. He observed that 92 per cent of employees stated that they were exceeding customer expectations in terms of the quality of services rendered, while only 26 per cent of customers agreed with them!

Importance-performance analysis stems out from researches undertaken by Martilla and James (1977) where attitude is related to belief and evaluation. Martilla and James (1977) claim that: empirical research has demonstrated that consumer satisfaction is a function both of expectations related to certain performance attributes and judgments of attribute performance.

It is evident from the developments in the tourism sector in the recent past that there is a search for alternative forms tourism to foster socio-economic development in remote places like small island, forests or theme parks. (Kastenholz, Davis and Paul, 1999; O'Neill, Riscinto-Kozub and Hyfit, 2010; Schmallegger, Carson and Temblay, 2010). In fact nature based tourism has gained considerable momentum but rural tourism, health tourism, adventure tourism are also becoming popular (Kastenholz et al., 1999). Some studies have pointed that providing good service and improving the image of the destination may or may not lead to revisit intention or spreading positive word of mouth recommending others to visit the destination (O'Neill et al., 2010; Schmallegger et al., 2010). It is evident from literature that much research has been conducted to measure the level of satisfaction with the services provided by the service personnel but post consumption behavior of services rendered to the tourists have not been extensively studied (Bramwell, 1998; Chhetri, Arrowsmith and Jackson, 2004; Meng et al., 2008; O'Neill et al., 2010).

Sukiman et al (2013) conducted a study to measure tourist's satisfaction among international and domestic visitors while embarking for holiday in Pahang, Malaysia. Holiday Satisfaction model (HOLSAT) was utilized in this study in order to determine the gap between tourist's expectations and experiences based on 47 positive and negative attributes that were

grouped into six categories namely; Satisfaction, accommodation, tourist amenities, tourist activities, food/meal and tourism attractions. The findings provide Pahang’s tourism stakeholders with insights about the level of satisfactions among domestic tourists and call for better improvement strategies for future tourism development in Pahang.

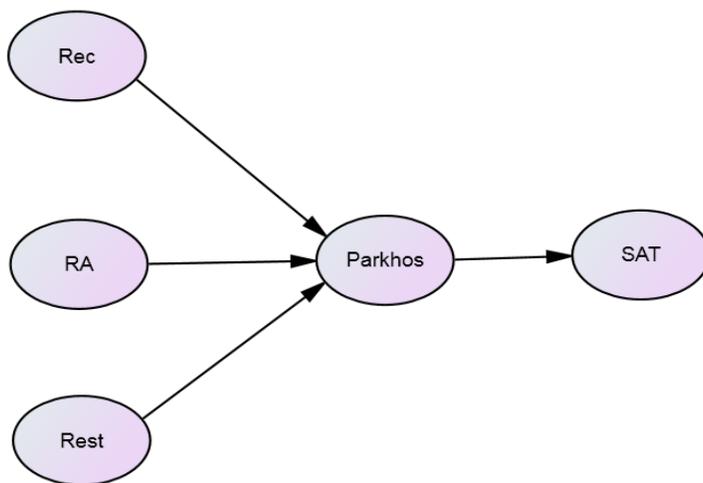
#### The model

Harris (2000) opines that it is mandatory to provide adequate customer service since it is the most efficient and least expensive way to develop an image of the business through excellent customer service. The importance of customer service can never be over emphasized. Many services require personal interactions between customers and the firm’s employees, and these interactions strongly influence the customers’ perception of service quality (Rust, Zahorik and Keiningham, 1996) For instance, a person’s stay at resorts can be greatly affected by the friendliness, knowledge, ability, and helpfulness of the resort staffs.

A superior understanding on relationships between future behavioral intentions and its antecedents allow ecotourism operators to manipulate their ecotourism products to optimize customer satisfaction, and improve marketing efforts. Keeping in view the findings mentioned above park hospitality dimension has been included that encompasses the overall attitude of visitors visiting the park and its surroundings including the behavior of local community (Sukiman et.al 2013).

One’s impression of the resorts and willingness to return are determined to a considerable extent by the brief encounters with the front desk staffs, housekeeping staffs, restaurant staffs that are responsible for providing multifarious services. Gitomer (1998) has in his article has discussed that reasons for customer dissatisfaction.

In continuation to the literature mentioned above, a simple structural model has been developed. The reception of tourists, room ambience and, restaurant services are likely to affect the park tourists’ perception of hospitality provided to them. It is also postulated that the satisfaction of visitors depend considerably on the overall perception of the hospitality extended to the leisure tourists.



## Objectives of the Study

Ecotourism is a growing niche market within the larger tours and travel industry, with the potential of being an important sustainable development tool. In this exploratory study, an attempt will be made to address the following issues:

- (i) To assess the quality of service provided to the eco-tourists visiting the *Gorumara* National Park
- (ii) To investigate the factors that determines the overall satisfaction of tourist using the HOLSAT scaling items in a standard equation framework.
- (iii) To study the service quality gaps and suggests measures to improve the performance of the staffs of resorts.
- (iv) To integrate the findings mentioned above and suggest possible strategies to improve the quality of park tourism service.

## Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature and hence it is imperative to follow a flexible research design to address the issues discussed above. The relevant data for this study are generated from primary data sources. The data for this work are gathered from tourist visiting *Gorumara* and *Jaldapara* ecotourism resorts to investigate the quality of service provided to the visitors. The primary data gathered from visitors are processed using various statistical tools. Apart from various descriptive statistical measures, multiple regression analysis is employed to process the data. The modified HOLSAT scale is administered to assess the visitors' satisfaction with the quality of services provided by the resorts staffs. The HOLSAT scale consists of 17 items covering five dimensions of service quality viz., reception, room ambience, restaurant service, park hospitality, and satisfaction. However, in our study we have used two more five point scale to obtain the positive word of mouth and revisit intention.

The data for the survey have been gathered from a cross section of respondents visiting resorts in the *Gorumara* National Park in central *Dooars*. The data were collected on the basis of systematic random sampling technique with the help of tour operators and trust owners. While collecting data due care was given to keep the representative property of the sample and due care was taken to get the unbiased response by persuading the respondents that the study is interested to assess their exact feeling. The demographic profiles of respondents have been presented in Appendix-I. The results of factor regression and chi square results are presented in Appendices II-IV along with the non parametric correlation.

In addition to asking respondents concerning the service they received from the service providers, another set of short questionnaire was administered to provide their response on a modified Servqual scale to express the quality of service obtained from the resort staffs and the importance of the service attributes to him/her on a five point scale on all the 18 items of modified Servqual scale. The Importance-Performance Analysis conceptually rests on multi-attribute models. This technique identifies strengths and weaknesses of a market offering in terms of two criteria that consumers use in making a choice. One criterion is the relative importance of attributes. The other is consumers' evaluation of the offering in terms of those attributes. A particular application of the technique starts with an identification of the attributes that are relevant to the choice situation investigated. The list of attributes can be developed after canvassing the relevant literature, conducting focus group interviews, and using managerial judgment. The difference between performance and importance reveals the underlying gaps in the quality of service

delivered. The sample size for conducting an IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) was same as the two very short versions of questionnaire was administered to the same group of respondents visiting the park in the last six months from January 2016. In many occasions the respondents were reluctant to provide response on a multi-item scale due to lack of time and negative motivation to express their feeling. Some professional staffs of a reputed tour operator having good contacts with the resort owners, shops and establishments helped a lot to gather data from the respondents mostly from the vicinity of the nature interpretation centre where a large number of tourists shop around after the safari. Altogether 500 questionnaires were distributed 372 pairs of responses were obtained. After a close scrutiny, it was revealed that 311 questionnaires were found to be perfect. To keep parity in the sample of respondents the sample size was restricted to 311 for better comprehension of the findings of the study. The personally administered questionnaires were found to be more accurate in terms of the overall response provided to all the closed ended scales.

The study was undertaken employing both exploratory and descriptive research methodology. The study was conducted in two phases including a preliminary qualitative method to generate attributes and in the subsequent phase a quantitative study was undertaken to reveal the image of the destination. A detailed discussion on the major findings of this study is briefly discussed in the subsequent sections.

**Survey findings:**

The measures of central tendencies and dispersions are reported in Table-III. The data presented in the table reveal that the various values are almost identical representing that the data structures fallow almost normal distribution. The variables Satisfaction, quality of reception, room ambience and restaurant has been measured by using a five point three item Likert scale. On the other hand, Park Hospitality has been measured by a five point Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The revisit intention and willingness to recommend have been measured using a single item primarily to reduce the length of the questionnaire. The mean values are found to quite satisfactory except the quality of reception. However, the modal values are sufficiently higher indicating the higher level of satisfaction.

**Table III**

**Descriptive Statistics**

	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Room ambience</b>	<b>Restaurant service</b>	<b>Park Hospitality</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Revisit Intention</b>
Mean	11.93	10.81	11.53	12.58	19.41	3.98	3.96
Median	13.00	12.00	12.00	13.00	20.00	4.00	4.00
Mode	14.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	22.00	4.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	2.95	3.14	3.01	2.45	4.40	.831	.943

In an attempt to establish the scale dimensionality a factor analysis was conducted to establish the construct validity of the scale. The factor analysis results amply demonstrate that the dimensions included in our study appear distinct and there is no overlap in the data since the dimensions appear distinct.

**Table IV**

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Adequacy.	Measure of Sampling	.799
Bartlett's Sphericity	Test of Approx. Chi-Square	902.058
	Df	136
	Sig.	.000

The purpose of conducting factor analysis was to extract the underlying dimensions in the data structure and the five factor solution is found to be quite satisfactory considering the percentage of variance explained by the five factor solution. A principal component analysis was undertaken with Varimax rotation to extract the factor loadings. The goodness of fit and the variance explained percentages are given in Table IV and Table V

**Table-V**

**Total Variance Explained**

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.30	31.17	31.17	5.30	31.17	31.17	2.65	15.59	15.59
2	2.63	15.46	46.64	2.63	15.46	46.64	2.62	15.46	31.05
3	1.80	10.59	57.24	1.80	10.59	57.24	2.46	14.49	45.55
4	1.39	8.18	65.42	1.39	8.18	65.42	2.32	13.69	59.25
5	1.08	6.39	71.81	1.08	6.39	71.81	2.13	12.56	71.81

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis using Varimax rotation.

The percentage of variance explained is presented in Table-V and it is revealed that almost 72 percent variations in the original variables have been explained by the five underlying dimensions or latent factors. The table VI presents the factor loadings for a forced five factor solution for which a confirmatory factor analysis was used to replicate the factor dimensions. The factor loadings are quite high and the corresponding loadings on the other factors are low indicating the

construct used in this study are distinct and appropriate. The table reported above only depicts the significant loading where it can be discerned that a few split loadings and misloadings are present though the overall output of the factor solution indicates the presence of five latent dimensions.

**Table-VI**

**Rotated Component Matrix**

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Satisfaction1		<b>.861</b>			
Satisfaction2		<b>.856</b>			
Satisfaction3		<b>.743</b>			
Reception1				<b>.853</b>	
Reception2				<b>.826</b>	
Reception3				<b>.826</b>	
Roomambience1			<b>.898</b>		
Roomambience2			<b>.881</b>		
Roomambience3			<b>.860</b>		
Restaurantservice 1					<b>.806</b>
Restaurantservice 2					<b>.856</b>
Restaurantservice 3					<b>.718</b>
Parkhospitality1	<b>.751</b>				
Parkhospitality2	<b>.686</b>	<b>.467</b>			
Parkhospitality3	<b>.641</b>				
Parkhospitality4	<b>.689</b>	<b>.422</b>			
Parkhospitality5	<b>.660</b>				

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

In order to assess the satisfaction of the tourist visiting resorts near the Gorumara National Park the modified HOLSAT model is used and as mentioned in the section 1.5. The overall satisfaction of the visitors depends on the performance of the service personal rendering different kind of services demanded by tourists staying in the resort. In an attempt to measure importance of

different explanatory variables on the level of satisfaction of tourists the multiple regression is quite appropriate to judge the relative importance of the dimensions included in the HOLSAT scale. The results of regression analysis are presented in Tables-VII to X. The dependent variable is the willingness to recommend the destination to their friends, relative and the peer groups and the independent variables are the performance ratings on various dimensions of the HOLSAT scale. We propose to use the following regression model where Y represents the willingness to recommend the destination satisfaction,  $b_0$  the intercept,  $b_i$ s are the performance on five dimensions and  $e_i$  is the random disturbance term.

$$Y = b_0 + b_1A + b_2R + b_3RA + b_4RS + b_5 PE + e_i$$

Where: A= Satisfaction, R= Reception, RA = Room Ambience, RS = Restaurant Service and PE= Park Hospitality

**Table-VII**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.663 <sup>a</sup>	.439	.412	.63709	1.747

a. Predictors: Park hospitality, Room ambience, Reception, Restaurant service, Satisfaction b. Dependent Variable: Recommendation, F 16.432, p<0.000.

The colinearity index and the DW values are within the acceptable limits. The findings of regression are almost free from auto-correlation and the multi-colinearity. The multiple correlation co-efficient is found to be 0.663 which is quite high by any standard. The overall fit is judged by the value of R square and adjusted R square. The result shows that nearly 41percent variation in the dependent variable i.e. willingness to recommend is explained by the set of explanatory variables as proposed by the HOLSAT scale. The overall fit as explained by: R=0.663  $R^2 = 0.439$  and Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.412$  show that the F value is significant beyond  $p < 0.000$ .

**Table-VIII**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Colinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Reception	.037	.026	.130	1.393	.166	.612	1.633
Satisfaction	.000	.021	-.002	-.022	.982	.836	1.197
Room ambience	.039	.022	.141	1.803	.074	.877	1.140
Restaurant service	.067	.027	.197	2.431	.017	.815	1.227
Park hospitality	.081	.018	.432	4.530	.000	.589	1.699

Note: a. Predictors: Park Hospitality, Room ambience, Reception, Restaurant service, Reception b. Dependent Variable: Recommendation

The regression coefficients (Table IX) are all positive indicating that willingness to recommend will be higher if the performance of the employees on the dimensions proposed by the HOLSAT scale is improved. The room ambience, Park Hospitality and as well as restaurant service contribute to a considerable extent the willingness to recommend of visitors. However reception and Satisfaction dimensions are not found to be significant. In fact with regard to warm reception and ambience of the room the service providers should concentrate more to improve the overall quality of the service.

A separate regression analysis was conducted to understand the revisit intention of tourists staying in the vicinity of the *Gorumara* National Park. The same set of explanatory variables was used for this purpose and revisit intention was measured using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The goodness of fit of the regression is found to be quite satisfactory and the F value is significant beyond  $p < 0.000$ . So far as the coefficients are concerned the quality of reception is found to be negatively associated with revisit intention though the level of significance is not very high. One important factor that needs to be addressed is the room ambience which is also not highly significant. The Satisfaction variable is not found to be associated with revisit intention and the coefficient is not at all significant. The colinearity diagnostics measured by tolerance and VIF are within acceptable limits indicating absence of multicollinearity among the set of independent variables. The Durbin-Watson value is also acceptable which corroborates that there is no auto correlation. Hence, the overall output of the regression analysis is acceptable considering the values of different important parameters

**Table-IX**

**Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.757 <sup>a</sup>	.572	.552	.63121	1.847

a. Predictors::Park Hospitality, Room ambience, Reception, Restaurant service, Satisfaction b. Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention, **F:28.121,p<0.000**

**Table-X**

**Regression Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Colinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Reception	.019	.026	.059	.723	.471	.612	1.633
Satisfaction	-.041	.021	-.135	-1.941	.055	.836	1.197
Room ambience	.041	.021	.131	1.919	.058	.877	1.140
Restaurant service	.102	.027	.266	3.770	.000	.815	1.227
Park Hospitality	.125	.018	.584	7.022	.000	.589	1.699

Note. Dependent Variable: Revisit Intention

Tourism/hospitality businesses involve the constant interaction between guests and service providers, and it is the nature of the service a guest receives that determines his/her satisfaction of that particular encounter. The success of this industry is based on the quality of the service. Service characteristics are hard to define and difficult to measure. Service involves the consistent satisfaction of the needs and expectations of all customers. The IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) analysis along with market segmentation analysis can provide very useful information for the protected area supervised by the resort manager. The use of the techniques, in the context of protected area management, can go beyond that of mass marketing studies, which seek to elevate service quality (Parasuraman, A. 1991, 1994). The important-performance tool categorizes the space into four quadrants on the basis of the degree of importance and performance perceived by visitors.

**IPA Analysis**

**Table- XI**

Pair	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Importance assurance	14.5946	.88809	.08429
Importance empathy	13.8018	1.97631	.18758
Importance responsiveness	13.4775	1.71542	.16282
Importance reliability	13.2432	1.48456	.14091
Importance tangible	14.5495	1.18121	.11212

The paired sample statistics presented in Tables XII to XIV reveal that for all the variables considered in our study, the importance scores are much higher than the quality of service provided by the service personnel. The correlation between responsiveness performance importance, reliability performance importance, assurance importance performance and tangible performance importance are not at all significant. Only, for variable empathy, though the correlation coefficient is very low is found to be significant indicating a good performance of the resort personnel.

**Table XII**

**Paired Samples Correlations**

Pair	Correlation	Sig.
Assurance & imp assurance	.067	.482
Empathy & imp empathy	.194	.042
Responsiveness & imp responsiveness	.057	.552
Reliability & imp reliability	.094	.328
Tangible & imp tangibility	-.105	.274

The paired sample ‘t’ tests have been conducted to judge the significance of importance and performance assigned by the respondents. The mean differences are all negative and corresponding ‘t’ values are significantly high. All the differences are found to be significant beyond  $p < .000$ . The performance of the staffs engaged in various resorts could not satisfy the tourists so far as the importance assigned by them with regards to various modified Servqual dimensions used in this study. There is ample scope for improvement of quality of service to be rendered to the tourists staying in resorts adjoining to the *Gorumara National Park*.

**Table- XIII**

**Paired Differences**

Servqual Items	Mean	S.D	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Sig.
				Lower	Upper		
				Tangible – Imp Tangibility	-4.95		
Reliability – Imp Reliability	-3.86	2.59	.246	-4.35	-3.37	-15.68	.000
Responsiveness – Imp Respon,	-3.84	2.56	.243	-4.32	-3.36	-15.81	.000
Empathy – Imp Empathy	-3.16	2.71	.257	-3.67	-2.65	-12.26	.000
Assurance – Imp Assurance	-4.59	2.52	.239	-5.07	-4.11	-19.15	.000

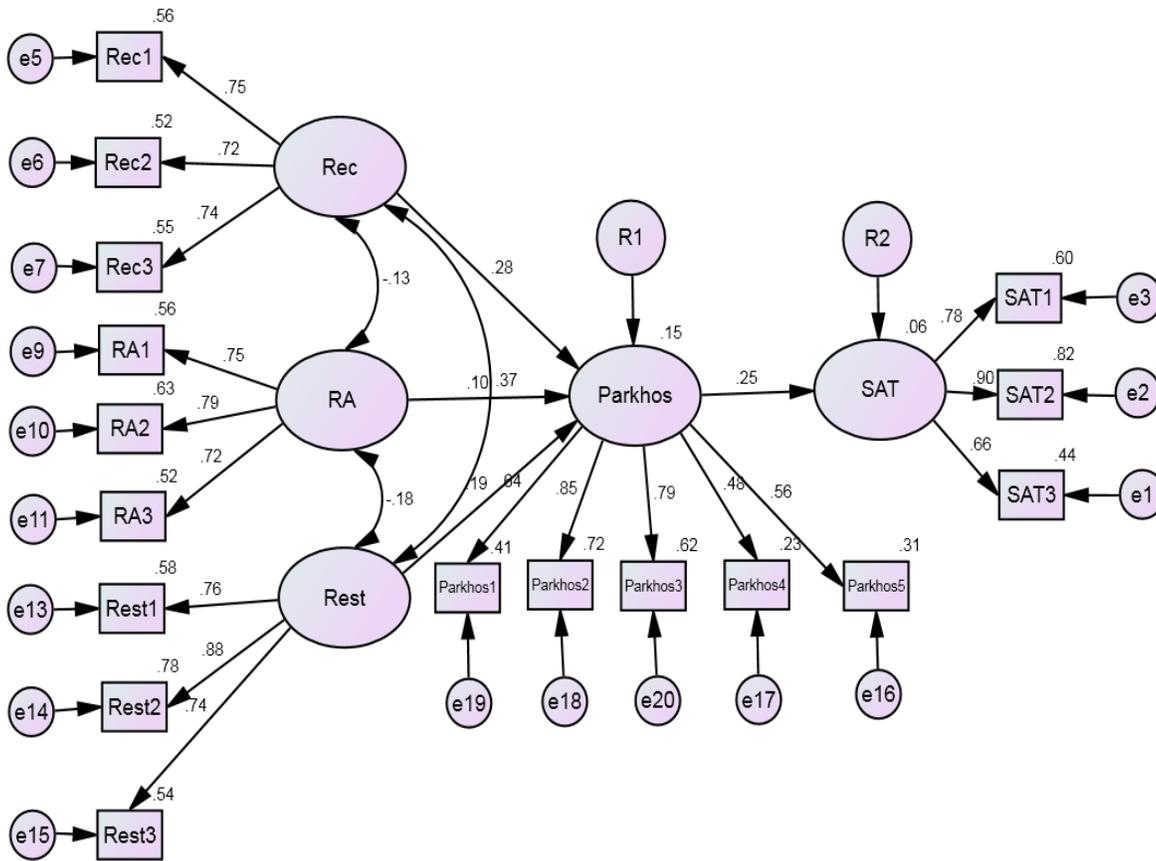
It is evident from Appendix-II and III that some explanatory variables are related with the depended variable. The chi-square test and parametric and non-parametric correlation also substantiate this fact. In view of this, in appendix –IV multiple regression analyses have been conducted to avoid the problem of multicollinearity.

**Structural equation modeling: Discussion**

It is revealed from the path coefficient that the Reception, Room ambience and, Restaurant Service has a direct positive effect on park hospitality construct. The overall satisfaction also is directly affected by the moderating variables considered in this study. It is quite interesting to discern that the Fit Indices are within the acceptable limits. The model developed amply demonstrates that the behavior of tourists can be predicted by the model. The Following hypotheses are supported or unsupported:

H1:Reception at the Destination has positive relationship with Park Hospitality	Supported
H2:Room Ambience positive relationship with Park Hospitality	Not Supported
H3:Restauernet Service has positive relationship with Park Hospitality	Supported
H4:Satisfaction of Tourists has positive relationship with Park Hospitality	supported

Figure -I



**Model fit Indices**

Fit Indices	Recommended Value	Model Result
Chi-square/degrees of freedom	≤3.0	176.216/112=1.573.
Goodness of fit index(GFI)	≥0.9	.937
Adjusted goodness of fit index(AGFI)	≥0.8	.914
Normalized fit index(NFI)	≥0.9	.912
Comparative fit index(CFI)	≥0.9	.966
Root mean square error of approximation(RMSEA)	≤0.08	.043

**Path analysis and results**

**Regression Weights:**

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Parkhos <--- Rec	.261	.073	3.550	***	
Parkhos <--- RA	.073	.051	1.433	.152	
Parkhos <--- Rest	.183	.073	2.525	.012	
SAT <--- Parkhos	.299	.085	3.530	***	

**Standardized Regression Weights:**

	Estimate
Parkhos <--- Rec	.282
Parkhos <--- RA	.097
Parkhos <--- Rest	.186
SAT <--- Parkhos	.246

Path	P	Comment
Parkho <--- Rec	***	significant
Parkhos <--- RA	.152	Not significant
Parkhos <--- Rest	.012	Significant
SAT <--- Parkhos	***	Significant

**Conclusions and Policy Implications:**

The tourism marketing is experiencing revolutionary changes due to unprecedented growth of tourist influx particularly during the last two decades. It can hardly be denied that as more and more locations are developed for tourism, the destination choices available to the tourists continue to expand. A sea change also has taken place in the behavior of tourists due to rising level of disposable income, increased leisure time, efficient transportation network and information revolution. Since the tourists have the opportunity to choose the destination from among a larger number of awareness set of tourist spots, the tourism marketers are experiencing the need to understand the decision making process of tourists for developing an effective destination positioning strategy. The purpose of this study was to assess and describe eco-resorts guests' perception of service quality in relation to importance assigned by them on various dimensions of adapted Servqual and HOLSAT scale. This study investigated how to develop and improve service quality through guest satisfaction survey. The significance of this study was that the findings would encourage management of resort staffs to develop their service-training program according to service quality dimensions. This study attempted to find out guests'

perception of service quality through level of guest's satisfaction. The study focused on five different dimensions that hospitality industry should consider and train their employees accordingly to enhance overall satisfaction of visitors. The study found that this resort did not do well with regard to assurance and responsiveness dimension so far as the overall satisfaction is concerned. It is strongly recommended that the resort managers need to evaluate the level of their service quality and to improve and develop training program for the service personnel to give better service to the guests. There is a need to train the staff to render better services to the tourists visiting this ecotourism spots as the expectations of tourists are not fully satisfied by the services rendered by the resorts' personnel. The managers responsible to oversee the activities of the resort must conduct systematic marketing research periodically to gather feedback from the tourist to have an idea about the performance of their staff who directly interacts with the visitors. The senior managers must interact with the customers and conduct focus group interviews to enrich themselves to implement innovative marketing strategies which would necessarily improve the performance of the resort staffs. The higher level managers must encourage upward communication from customer-contact employees to have a feel regarding the actual situation prevailing in the resort. The performance of the staffs engaged in various resorts could not satisfy the tourists so far as the importance assigned by them with regards to various modified Servqual dimensions used in this study. There is sufficient scope for improvement of quality of service to be provided to the tourists staying in resorts adjoining to the Gorumara National Park. The reception, Park Hospitality and as well as restaurant service contribute to a considerable degree the willingness to recommend. However reception and Satisfaction dimensions are not found to be significant. In fact with regard to warm reception and ambience of the room the service providers should concentrate more to improve the quality of the service. However, the structural equation model portrays a more or less favorable performance so far as tourist satisfaction is concerned.

#### **Limitations of the study and future research direction**

The major limitation of this study is based on a systematic random sample and the sample size is not very large. Another limitation of this empirical study is that we have considered only private resorts for assessing the quality of service delivered. For these reasons, the findings of the study cannot be generalized. Future studies should take into consideration all the eco-resorts and make a comparative assessment of the performance of these resorts. Future studies should employ cluster analysis technique to understand visitors' typologies and frame appropriate strategies to satisfy heterogeneous population of tourist.

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