

An Assessment of Visitor Satisfaction at the Main Site Attributes of Dehiwala Zoological Garden, Sri Lanka.

Ayesha Gayashani Kotakethanage and Namal Wijesundara

*Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Belihuloya, Sri Lanka
ayeshakgayasha@gmail.com*

The number of visitors to zoological parks around the world has increased during the past few decades and it is applicable to Sri Lanka's National Zoological garden as well. The visitor count at Dehiwala Zoo has been constantly booming since peace in 2009. It is also considered as the mostly visited zoological garden in Sri Lanka. However there have been only a few studies measuring the visitor satisfaction at zoological gardens, globally and in Sri Lanka. Therefore we set out to investigate and identify the visitor satisfaction at different park attributes of the National Zoological Garden and inspect their level of impact. The "mixed methods" was employed for the study and both questionnaires and interviews were utilized for data gathering using the convenience sampling technique. Six destination attributes were used in the study and a set of questions were used to measure the level of visitor satisfaction of different attributes and most influential elements under each attribute. The variables developed were based on the items traditionally used in tourism research on site attributes such as attractions, amenities, accessibility, activities, available packages and ancillary services. The results of the study show that visitors are happy with the prevailing amenities, attraction and accessibility while they are desperate for activities, packages and ancillary services. However, the study further suggested a few recommendations to enhance the visitor satisfaction and uplift future visits to the Zoo.

Keywords: visitor satisfaction, site attributes, zoological garden