



Visitors' Perception of Outdoor Recreational Facilities in Murree City, Pakistan

Amna Javed, Malik Asghar Naeem, Abdul Waheed and Imtiaz Ahmed Vohra

Abstract— Different types of outdoor recreational facilities in Murree include the most famous sozo adventure park situated in lower topa Murree, Bagh-e-shaheedan, Valley park, Kashmir point, Chattar park and PIA park. Perception of tourists regarding outdoor recreational facilities has been determined through perception index. SWOT analysis has been done to determine the problems and issues faced by the tourists. This study reveals that most of the visitors came from different cities of Pakistan. Almost one-third of the tourists were foreigners. The number of tourists increases during the weekends. Most of the visitors from Sozo adventure park showed most satisfaction with the services in the park. Whereas the other places surveyed for example Baghe-e-shaheedan, PIA park and Kashmir Point showed less satisfaction with the services and available facilities. The key findings show that there is an issue of cleanliness in these recreational facilities. Furthermore, availability of complaint system in parks is not proper. Emergency shelter for protection in extreme weather as well as facilities for disabled persons should be improved. Along with proper management, maintenance and supervision of outdoor recreation facilities, there is a need to upgrade, innovate and make these recreational facilities sustainable.

Keywords— Leisure, management, recreation, tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Leisure and recreation have become vital concerns in contemporary society's neighborhoods. It was first recognized and accepted as a reason for concern during the Great Depression of 1930s (Pigram & Jenkins, 2006). Outdoor recreation has gained communal significance in today's society with many people engaging in range of leisure experiences around the world. Recreation has traditionally been defined as a form of human activity, carried out voluntarily in one's free time. Furthermore, lately scholars have concluded that recreation is a psychologically transforming activity designed to meet one's personal requirements and motivations (Kraus & Curtis, 2000). The significance of outdoor recreation has been highlighted by Mercer (1980) in which he stated that people's recreational utilization of leisure time includes both indoor and outdoor recreational activities.

Outdoor recreation activities are tracked for the purposes of finding peace in nature, enjoying life and relaxing. Improvement of inner perceptual and/or spiritual life may be experienced through outdoor actions and outdoor-related actions such as nature study, aesthetic contemplation, meditation, painting, photography, archaeological or historical research, and native culture are some of the activities among the others. Outdoor recreation serves for diversified purposes in different capacities in the society. Interpersonal motivators such as desire to meet new people, to look for

new and different experiences, flee from routine relationships with neighbours, home environment or for spiritual purposes are some of them (McIntosh et al., 1995).

Outdoor recreation consists of a very broad range of activities carried out in diverse ordinary environments, such as a picnic in a small locality park or climbing challenging mountain peaks. In addition to it, participation in outdoor recreation involves the using up of both markets (travel, food, lodging, guiding, etc.) and non-market (landscape scenery, public trails, safety services, health promotion, etc.) goods and services. A consequence of this mixed good characteristic is that outdoor recreation participation can also be constrained by a large number of factors, as observed by outdoor recreation research (Walker & Virden, 2005).

Tourism has grown swiftly to become a major social and economic strength in the world. Tourism is a major contributor to the World's market and economy, accounting for greater than nine percent of worldwide GDP and almost nine percent of jobs internationally, thereby making it one of the largest categories of international trade. Tourism is a business where there is a growing positive balance of trade flowing from developed countries to developing countries. Recreation industry, is relatively labor intensive, hence, tends to produce larger and more rapid boost in employment than equal investment in other monetary activities. Different categories of people visit amusement centers to experience one thing or the other. Changes in socio demographic character, technological advances and disposable income of the visitors to recreational centers have imposed several proportions to the way the leisure time is spent, and on the extent and nature of recreational participants claimed that whether a tourist is satisfied or not towards a destination is related to tourists characteristics such as socioeconomic and demographic

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factors, motivations and future intent to travel to another similar or alike destination. Tourists' characteristics also have significant dealings with satisfaction. Differences in characters can contribute to the differences in belief and satisfaction towards tourism destination. Different types of tourists tend to undertake different patterns of activities, which will have different types and levels of impact on the objective of recreation. Since there is no particular or clear process of measuring the value of recreation understanding except by circumstantial evidence. If visitors don't criticize, if they speak passionately and if they come back, one assumes that they find the experience worthwhile. Recreation is an optional task, if it doesn't seem worthwhile, the person can choose to evade the experience or to participate somewhere or somehow else (S.O Oladeji & O.O Adedapo, 2014).

The tourist profiles and perception analysis, mutually with community suggestions could be used in management and strategic planning of the facilities. Apart uninterrupted monitoring and assessing is valuable for planning of high quality, innovative amusement opportunities and to make certain sustainability of recreational facilities to maximize the satisfaction of the recreational requirements of the communities (K.K A Chamani, 2011).

Murree, situated in the Punjab Province of Pakistan, is a very popular tourist resort for many years. People from all over the country visit Murree throughout the year. However, despite high visitors' turn over and natural beauty the city never attained the status of an internationally recognized tourist city owing to many factors. The proposed research aims to study the diversity of current outdoor facilities, visitor's perceptions about outdoor facilities and means to promote better and improved recreational facilities in Murree.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Methodology

Mixed method research methodology has been adopted to investigate the proposed research questions in the present research. The detail of the research design is as follow:

2.2 Data Collection

The diversity of outdoor recreational facilities in Murree city has been investigated based on (i) different types of outdoor experiences, (ii) the ownership, (iii) differences in the admission charges with the help of secondary sources of information such as reports, web information, personnel communication, brochures etc. The cultural and special events that are organized in Murree city have also been tabulated based on the secondary sources of information and from personal experience. However, primary data regarding perception of the visitors was gathered through field surveys.

2.2.1 Primary Data Collection

Primary data has been collected from outdoor

recreational spots in Murree through questionnaire surveys observations, interviews and photographs. It includes visiting the study location and making systematic observations of a phenomenon.

2.2.1 (a) Field survey

Field survey has been carried out in Murree to collect first-hand information about the existing situation of outdoor recreational facilities in Murree and to get public opinion about them. For this purpose questionnaires were made to collect appropriate data from public. Questionnaires were pretested and translated into local language for better understanding. Face to face method was used to fill in the questionnaire from the respondents. The detail of the sample size is as follows:

Sampling

Sampling has been done in order to make the data collection process easier and quicker and generalize the results of the study. Samples were taken from the target population in order to fill the questionnaires and to get the public opinion.

Since the target population (tourists) of Murree is a floating population, therefore, for the purpose of this survey Convenience sampling has been carried out. Questionnaires were distributed in each premise and 200 respondents were surveyed. Four premises were selected (i) Sozo water park, (ii) PIA park, (iii) Bagh-e-shaheedan and (iv) Kashmir point after a brief explanation of the study to the respondents. The questionnaire surveys were used to analyze visitor profiles such as the peripheral distances where visitors come from, visitor group sizes, gender classification, age groups, and stay durations. Attempts were made to obtain the difficulties encountered by the visitors and to obtain visitor suggestions to the three facilities concerned. The level of visitor's satisfaction and the performance of the outdoor recreational facilities in terms of cost, safety and accessibility of the recreational facility were selected as two indicators for the recreational sites under study.

2.2.1 (b) Observations

Outdoor recreational facilities in Murree can be observed and analyzed through observation technique. In this technique we just visit the desired recreational sites and get the data through our own observation without making contact with public or any other person.

2.2.1 (c) Interviews

Interviews were conducted from the tourists and users of the recreational sites with the help of questionnaires.

2.2.1 (d) Photographs

Photographs of the outdoor recreational places were taken which were helpful for us in data collection and analyzing process.

2.2.2 Secondary data sources

In this research, the secondary sources of data such as annual reports and publications from Murree city office, brochures and booklets, other source documents, web information has been used to obtain in depth knowledge

and information regarding the sites concerned.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recreation and amusement have become main concerns in modern day societies. Leisure is a phenomenon which has attained great significance in the present era. (Pigram & Jenkins, 2006). Outdoor recreation brings joy, pleasure and entertainment to several people, with the provision of appropriate recreational opportunities critical to the satisfaction of an individual's need for cognitive and visual stimulation, one of six needs identified by Maslow as basic to human wellbeing (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2008). Outdoor recreation involves a character engaging in a preferred activity in a particular ordinary environment that provides the required setting for the desired experience (Manning, Moore & Driver, 2005). Outdoor recreation includes a very broad range of activities and actions performed in diverse natural environments, such as a picnic in a neighborhood park or climbing challenging mountain peaks. Furthermore, participation in outdoor recreation involves the consumption of both market (travel, food, lodging, guiding, etc.) and non-market (landscape scenery, public trails, safety services, health promotion, etc.) goods and services. A consequence and outcome of this mixed good characteristic is that outdoor recreation participation can also be constrained by a large number of factors, as observed by outdoor recreation research (Walker & Virden, 2005). One of the most favorite ways to spend and enjoy a leisure time is to go outdoors. Nowadays, the popularity of nature-based tourism and recreation is intensifying and spreading worldwide; particularly protected areas are major tourist targets (Pickering, Hill 2007; Nyaupane, Poudel 2011). In latest years outdoor recreation has been observed and analyzed from various angles. The benefits of outdoor amusement (Driver, 2003), outdoor recreation demand (Hanley et., al 2003), visitor perceptions, outdoor recreation in urban areas and developed areas (Cooper & Collins, 1998), planning for outdoor recreation, leisure and tourism, recreation environment relationships and impacts of outdoor recreation (Buckley, 2000) are some of the areas that have been studied both in qualitative and quantitative researches.

Recreation and amusement involves many activities which includes traditional beliefs and provides physical challenge. At the same time, outdoor recreation provokes interest for the natural world. Engaging in outdoor amusement and leisure activities has resulted in better physical, mental and spiritual health of people (Arni & khairil, 2013). Recreation and leisure nowadays means more as it has become a platform and podium for the people to know the meaning, its significance, the history and relevance of the environments and parks to their lives (USDA, 2010).

Z, Samadi and Hasbullah, M.N. (2008) describe outdoor spaces as those spaces which have variety of qualities. The recreational space use as a meeting point, an attraction point, outdoor eating point, buying and selling point, linkage point, art appreciation point, display and parade point, interactive information-

directional point, interactive exercise point and photo-taking point. Positive outdoor spaces and recreational sites can be identified through the facade character that surrounds those spaces which contributes to the visual appropriateness and richness. End-users or the tourists who enjoy the outdoor recreational facility normally play a positive role within the existing urban physical setting of positive outdoor space. Choice of selection of the activity by the end-users in the street-life activity reflects the vitality of the outdoor recreational space.

Leisure, recreation and quality of life are a complex and fascinating fields of study and one that deserves much focus and attention. An interesting point to consider how the parks, recreation and tourism can inform ongoing research and inquiry into a person centered perspective of quality of life and community development. Tourism necessitates community development and if it's handled properly, tourism can become an important engine for achieving broader social goals (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Tourism has grown swiftly to become a major social and economic strength in the world. Tourism is a major contributor to the World's market and economy, accounting for greater than nine percent of worldwide GDP and almost nine percent of jobs internationally, thereby making it one of the largest categories of international trade. Tourism is a business where there is a growing positive balance of trade flowing from developed countries to developing countries. Recreation industry, is relatively labor intensive, hence, tends to produce a larger and more rapid boost in employment than equal investment in other monetary activities. Different categories of people visit amusement centers to experience one thing or the other. Changes in socio demographic character, technological advances and disposable income of the visitors to recreational centers have imposed several proportions to the way the leisure is spent, and on the extent and nature of recreational participants claimed that whether a tourists are satisfied or not towards a destination is related to tourists characteristics such as socioeconomic and demographic factors, motivations and future intent to travel to another similar destination. Tourists' characteristics vary depending upon the place of origin. Differences in characters can contribute to the differences in belief and satisfaction towards tourism destination. Different types of tourists tend to undertake different patterns of activities, which will have different types and levels of impact on an objective of recreation. Since there is no particular or clear process of measuring the value of recreation understanding except by circumstantial evidence. If visitors don't criticize, if they speak passionately and if they come back, one assumes that they find the experience worthwhile. Recreation is an optional task, if it doesn't seem worth while, the person can choose to evade the experience or to participate somewhere or somehow else (S.O Oladeji & O.O Adedapo, 2014). Outdoor recreation is a recreation that is carried out on outdoors. There are varieties of activities that can be carried out indoors and outdoors. Outdoor recreation requires space, capital and resources, sometimes large quantities, for the purpose of leisure and

enjoyment. Some kinds are best carried out where the natural landscape has had the least modification whereas other require extensive investment as some of the recreational activities are carried with the monetary involvement. Individuals wish to opt their recreation activities within the range of opportunities physically and economically accessible to them. Their choices are accustomed by their social surroundings and by their knowledge of the opportunities. Recreational activities which require consequent outlays of cash are virtually unavailable to those incomes are low. Recreational choices are greatly influenced by age and sex: what one chooses as a child or youth may no longer appeal when one is grown-up. Leisure is the instance of special kind; recreation is an activity of special kinds. Outdoor recreation takes place during leisure; but not all the leisure is given over to recreation. The way people utilize their leisure can shape the public as much as the way they work. Nowadays leisure is available to bulk of the population all over the world. People find satisfaction in outdoor recreation activities and it's a source of relaxation for them. Leisure and work are competitors for time, if one increases the other decreases. Outdoor recreation for an individual depends upon the time and resources available. If one has enough money to fulfill the expenses of leisure and recreation (Marion & Jack, 2011).

The tourist profiles and perception analysis, along with community suggestions could be used in management and strategic planning of the facilities. Apart uninterrupted monitoring and assessing is valuable for planning of high quality, innovative amusement opportunities and to make certain sustainability of recreational facilities to maximize the satisfaction of the recreational requirements of the communities (K.K A Chamani, 2011).

4. PERCEPTION OF TOURISTS

4.1 Tourists profiles

Total of 200 respondents comprising tourists from various cities of Pakistan and foreign countries answered the questionnaires. The top three respondents classified based on their origin, according to the city/province of origin are Lahore (n=29), foreign cities (n=37) and Sindh (n=19). In terms of age range, majority of the respondents falls within 21-30 years old. It is followed by the age group 10-20 years old. Only 15% of the total respondents were above 40 years of age. It can be assumed that the younger generation is by majority prefers to travel to hill station destination like Murree due to fun and entertainment it offers. As noted in this study, 65 of the respondents came from 10-30 age group. More than half of the respondents have education up to intermediate level. 13% of the respondents had their qualification of bachelor's degree and 33% have their education of masters degree while 13% had qualification of M.phil. The level of education of the respondents might reflect their sophistication of their needs, requirements, attitudes and behaviors as tourists in a hill station like Murree. Moreover, well-educated visitors have a higher level of expectation of the destination. Due

to this, the possibility that they are aware about the destination facilities and services could be elevated, and this may reflect their insight and intention.

Table 1 Tourists profiles

Subject Characteristics	No.	Percentage
Age of Respondent	200	100
10-20	51	25.5
21-30	79	39.5
31-40	40	20
41-50	15	7.5
51 and above	15	7.5
Respondents Occupation	200	100
Student	48	24
Business	55	27.5
Govt. Job	26	13.0
Semi govt. Job	22	11.0
Pvt. Job	31	15.5
Other	18	9.0
Country	200	100
Pakistan	163	81.5
Foreign*	37	18.5
Visit of Outdoor Recreational Facilities in Murree	200	100
Yes	99	49.5
No	33	16.5
Uncertain	68	34
Kind of place	200	100
Historical area	28	14
Hilly area	51	25.5
Hiking track	44	22
Boating	13	6.5
Entertainment area	10	5
Riding area	42	21
Other	12	6
Visit to parks and recreational places	200	100
Once a week	49	24.5
Once a month	61	30.5
Once a year	57	28.5
Others	33	16.5

* (2 from Italy, 1 from London, 5 from Canada, 4 from UAE, 5 from Turkey)

In this table, about 25.5% of the respondents want to visit hilly areas whereas 22% showed their inclination towards hiking track with majority of the respondents (30.5%) visiting these recreational places once a month. This result was expected because questions were asked from holiday oriented tourists in major places of tourists attractions. It is interesting to note that, most of the respondents are running their own business while some of them are students. Majority are the residents of Pakistan belonging to different cities like Lahore, Multan, Larkana, Gujranwala and Peshawar with more ratio of tourists with one day trip. Tourists from Pakistan prefer one day trip to Murree. According to majority of the respondents, hotel accommodation is expensive there and one day is enough to enjoy and relax in a place like Murree. This is the reason that most of the local tourists

prefer one day trip. Only 18.5% have come from foreign countries. Half of the respondents (49.5%) showed their inclination to visit outdoor recreational facilities in Murree whereas only 16.5% of the respondents showed less interest in visiting outdoor recreational facilities. One-third of the respondents mentioned uncertainty.

4.2 Perception of tourists

Perception of the visitors about outdoor recreational facilities has been divided into four components i.e affordability, safety, available facilities and management. Affordability of the parks was assessed in terms of cost, safety and management of outdoor recreational facilities and perception of facilities available.

Table 2 Overall perception index

Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Range
Low	22	11	<2.5
Medium	142	71	2.5-3.5
High	36	18	>3.5
Total	200	100	

Perception index has been calculated based on the survey conducted from the tourists. The survey has been conducted with the help of questionnaires from tourists visiting the outdoor recreational areas in Murree. Perception index shows the satisfaction level of respondents with respect to outdoor recreational facilities. Perception index has been categorized into three scales i) Low ii) Medium and iii) High. Questionnaires which were given to respondents for calculation of visitor's perception comprised of questions having five high scales very poor, poor, fair, good and very good on the basis of which this perception index has been formed.

Calculation of perception index

Five levels of satisfaction along with their labels are as following

Very poor: 1

Poor: 2

Fair: 3

Good: 4

Very good: 5

Range: Max value- Min value, 5-1: 4

Scale : Low, Medium, High

Low: >2.5, Medium: 2.5-3.5, High: < 3.5

Min value: <2.5, Max value: >3.5

Low scale shows that the tourists are less satisfied with the availability of services provided in outdoor recreational facilities. Medium scale determines moderate satisfaction level of tourists towards these facilities and high scale denotes maximum satisfaction level of tourists.

This table shows the overall perception index of respondents. Three ranges were made mainly low, medium and high. Low range was less than 2.5, medium range was from 2.5-3.5 and high range was greater than 3.5. Lower scale shows dissatisfaction, medium scale shows partial satisfaction and high scale shows greater satisfaction level of respondents. Two-third of the respondents (71%) showed medium satisfaction, 11% showed dissatisfaction and 18% showed greater satisfaction level.

This table shows brief summary of perception of respondents on affordability. When asked about the ticketing price, almost half (56%) of the respondents say that the ticketing price of outdoor recreational places is fair. With reference to transport cost, half of the respondents say that transport cost is somewhat fair whereas 2% of the respondents said the transport cost is very high. Less than one-third (15%) of the respondents say that the food items price is high whereas more than two third (44%) of the respondents say that food items price is fair. 16.5% of the respondents claimed that the housing rent nearby is very high, 42% say that it is somewhat high whereas 39.5% say that the rent is fair enough.

Table 3 Descriptive summary of perception on Affordability

Scale	Ticketing price	Transport cost	Food items	House rent nearby	Total	Average Affordability value
N	200	200	200	200	800	
Very high	1 (.5)	1(.5)	5(2.5)	33(16.5)	40	5%
Somewhat high	5 (2.5)	5(2.5)	30(15)	84(42)	124	15.5%
Fair	56 (28)	48 (24.5)	88(44)	79(39.5)	271	34%
Somewhat fair	55 (27.5)	102(51)	68(34)	2(1)	227	28.3%
Low	83 (41.5)	43(21.5)	9(4.5)	2(1)	137	17.1%
Mean value	4.07	3.91	3.45	3.26	14.69	

Q1: Ticketing price, Q2: Transport cost, Q3: Food items price, Q4: Housing rent nearby

Table 4 Descriptive summary of perception on Facilities

Scale	Emergency Shelter	Availability of toilets	Seating arrangement	Children's play area	Food court	Landscaping	Facilities for disabled persons	Waste management	Footpath	Telephone booth	Water cooler	Total	Average value of facilities
N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200		2200
Not at all satisfied	12 (6)	75 (37.5)	27 (13.5)	5 (2.5)	2 (1)	57 (28.5)	50 (25)	43 (21.5)	3 (1.5)	11 (5.5)	2 (1)	28 (7)	13%
Not satisfied	64 (32)	1.5 (52.5)	72 (36)	77 (38.5)	10 (5)	94 (47)	117 (58)	90 (45)	38 (19)	128 (64)	12 (6)	73.5	31%
Partially satisfied	89 (44.5)	18 (9)	70 (35)	87 (43.5)	80 (40)	45 (22.5)	31 (15.5)	46 (23)	127 (63.5)	56 (28)	86 (43)	735	33.4%
Satisfied	29 (14.5)	1 (.5)	23 (11.5)	29 (14.5)	79 (39.5)	2(1)	1(.5)	17(8.5)	31 (15.5)	4 (2)	90 (45)	306	13.9%
Highly satisfied	6(3)	1(.5)	8(4)	2(1)	29 (14)	2(1)	1(.5)	4(2)	1(.5)	1(.5)	10(5)	65	2.9%
Mean value	2.77	1.72	2.57	2.73	3.66	1.98	1.91	2.25	2.97	2.28	3.47	28.31	

Q1: Emergency Shelter. Q2: Availability of toilets, Q3: Seating arrangement, Q4: Children's play area, Q5: Food courts, Q6: Landscaping, Q7: Facilities for disabled persons, Q8: Waste management, Q9: Footpath, Q10: Telephone booth, Q11: Water cooler.

Table 5. Descriptive summary of perception on Safety

Scale	Safety of children's play area	Lighting	Hygienic condition of ponds	Hygienic condition of toilets	Instructions for prohibited areas	Cleanliness	Guards	Total	Average value of safety
N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	1400	
Not at all satisfied	3(1.5)	2(1)	21(10.5)	31(15.5)	4(2)	14(7)	27(13.5)	102	7.2%
Not satisfied	24(12)	12(6)	83(41.5)	96(48)	21(10.5)	57(28.5)	101(50.5)	394	28.14%
Partially satisfied	77(38.5)	90(45)	78(39)	65(32.5)	59(29.5)	108(54)	63(31.5)	540	38.5%
Satisfied	74(37)	73(36.5)	12(6)	7(3.5)	76(38)	17(8.5)	8(4)	267	19.07%
Highly satisfied	22(11)	23(11)	6(3)	1(.5)	40(20)	4(2)	1(.5)	97	6.9%
Mean value	3.44	3.54	2.47	2.24	3.64	2.67	2.26	20.26	

Q1: Safety of children's play area, Q2: Lighting, Q3: Hygienic condition of ponds, Q4: Hygienic condition of toilets, Q5: Instructions for prohibited areas, Q6: Cleanliness, Q7: Guards.

Table 6. Descriptive summary of perception on Management

Scale	Timings of facilities	Restrictions imposed	Complaint system	Staff available	Instructions for prohibited areas	Proper ticketing system	Maintenance	Total	Average value of Maintenance
N	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	1400	
Not at all satisfied	1(.5)	2(1)	47(23.5)	1(.5)	1(.5)	8(4)	12(6)	72	5.14%
Not satisfied	13(6.5)	2(1)	81(40.5)	29(14.5)	22(11)	32(16)	48(24)	227	16.2%
Partially satisfied	72(36)	67(33.5)	55(27.5)	119(59.5)	92(46)	93(46.5)	86(43)	584	41.7%
satisfied	95(47.5)	102(51)	13(6.5)	45(22.5)	73(36.5)	42(21)	38(19)	408	29.1
Highly satisfied	19(9.5)	27(13.5)	4(2)	6(3)	12(6)	25(12.5)	16(8)	109	7.7%
Mean value	3.59	3.78	2.23	3.13	3.37	3.22	2.99	22.31	

Q1: Timings of facilities, Q2: Restrictions imposed, Q3: Complaint system, Q4: Staff available, Q5: Instructions for prohibited areas, Q6: Proper ticketing system, Q7: Maintenance

This table shows the summary of perception of respondents on facilities and services available in outdoor recreational facilities. When asked about emergency shelter, only 3% of the total number of respondents are highly satisfied with the emergency shelter facility, almost half of the respondents are partially satisfied while one-third of the respondents are not satisfied with this facility which shows that there is a need for improvement in provision of emergency shelter. This study showed differences between respondents perception about different facilities for example, respondents are not at all satisfied with the availability of toilets in parks. Regarding provision of seating arrangements in parks, one-third of the respondents are not satisfied, whereas the other one-third are partially satisfied. One-third of the respondents are not satisfied with the children's play area facility while one-third are partially satisfied with the children's play area facility. Almost half of the total respondents are partially satisfied with the facility of food courts. Regarding landscaping, waste management, availability of water coolers and facilities for disabled persons most of the respondents are not satisfied.

One-third of the total respondents are partially satisfied with the safety of children's play area. Lighting facility is also provided as almost half of the respondents are partially satisfied. 41.5% of the respondents are not satisfied with the hygienic condition of ponds and toilets and availability of guards which depicts that there is a need for improvement related to hygienic condition. When asked about cleanliness, 28.5% of the respondents mentioned that they are not satisfied with the cleanliness of outdoor recreational facilities while half of them are partially satisfied which shows there is a need for enhancement and development regarding safety aspect of outdoor recreational facilities.

Almost half of the respondents (47.5%) are satisfied with the timings of facilities and restrictions imposed in the parks. Regarding availability of complaint system in parks, 40% of the respondents are not satisfied while one-third of the respondents are partially satisfied. 46.5% highlighted partial satisfaction with ticketing system and availability of staff. Less than half of the respondents (43%) showed partial satisfaction towards maintenance while almost one-third of the respondents showed dissatisfaction towards maintenance. Our findings clearly depicts that there is dire need for improvement in management of outdoor recreational facilities.

This bar chart 1 shows the overall perception of respondents with respect to their cities. More than 50% of the respondents showed medium response means partial satisfaction with the facilities provided in outdoor recreational facilities. The number of visitors is comparatively higher from cities like Lahore, Larkana and Gujranwala. In cities of Pakistan as well as cities outside Pakistan, more than 50% of the respondents are partially satisfied, whereas some of them are not satisfied.

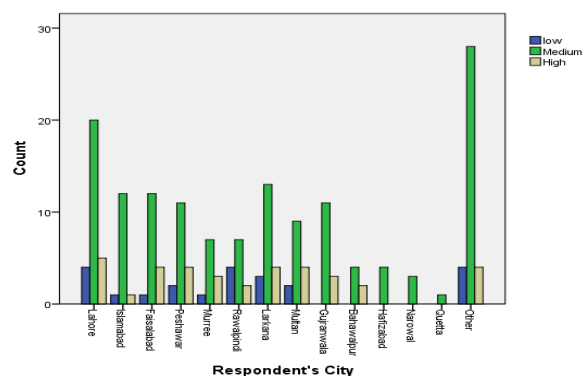


Fig. 1. Place of survey w.r.t respondents city

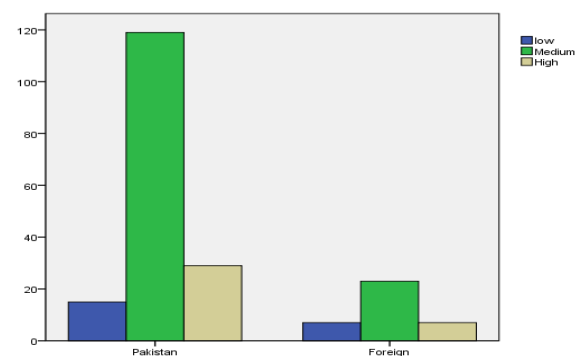


Fig. 2. Overall perception w.r.t respondents country

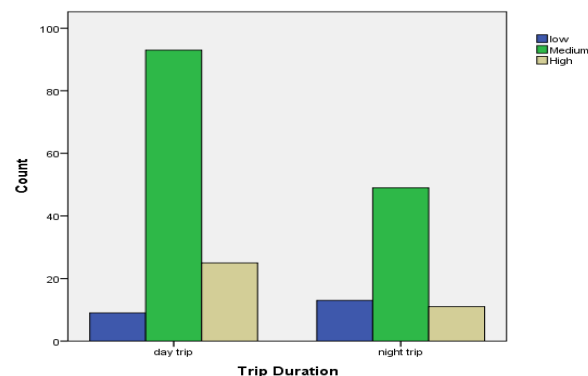


Fig. 3. Overall perception w.r.t trip duration

This bar chart 2 shows the overall perception of respondents with respect to country they live in. In Pakistan, more than 60% highlighted partial satisfaction towards the services whereas less than 40% showed dissatisfaction and full satisfaction. Likewise, 50% also showed medium response (partial satisfaction) where the number of respondents from foreign countries who were full satisfied and who were not satisfied is equal.

This bar chart 3 displays overall perception of respondents with respect to trip duration. Day trippers are more in number than night trippers and majority of the day trippers as well as night trippers have medium perception about the outdoor recreational facilities.

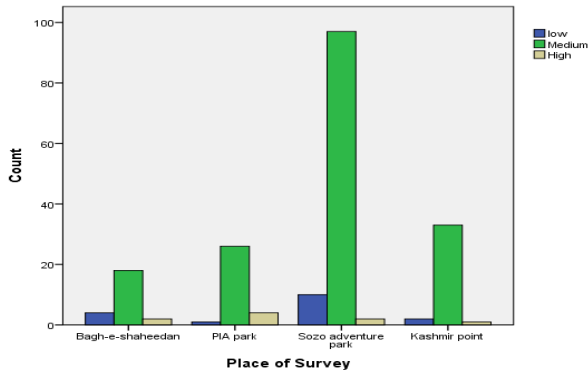


Fig. 4. Place of survey w.r.t safety index

The above bar chart 4 shows the relationship between place of survey and safety index. Most of the respondents in places surveyed showed medium satisfaction with respect to safety of the outdoor recreational facilities.

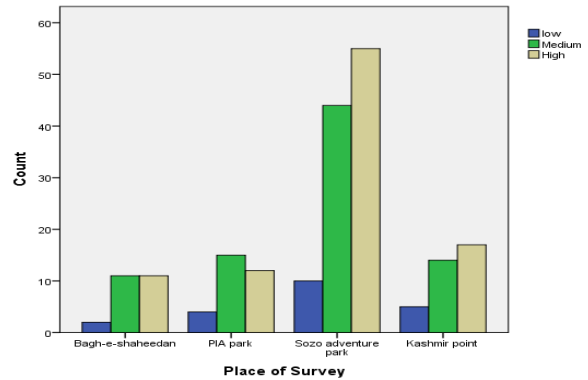


Fig. 7. Place of survey w.r.t facility index

This chart shows the relationship between place of survey and facilities provided in the outdoor recreational facilities.

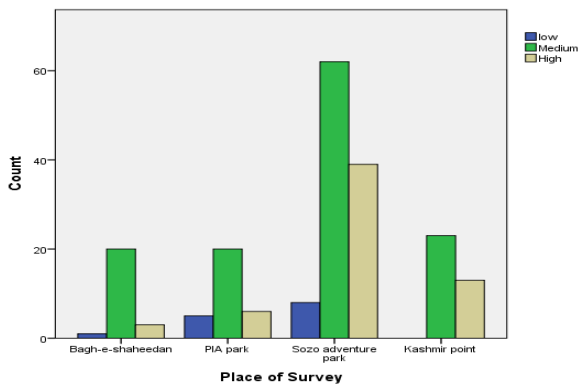


Fig. 5. Place of survey w.r.t affordability index

This Fig 5 shows the relationship between place of survey and affordability index. Majority of the respondents showed medium satisfaction level towards affordability of the facilities.

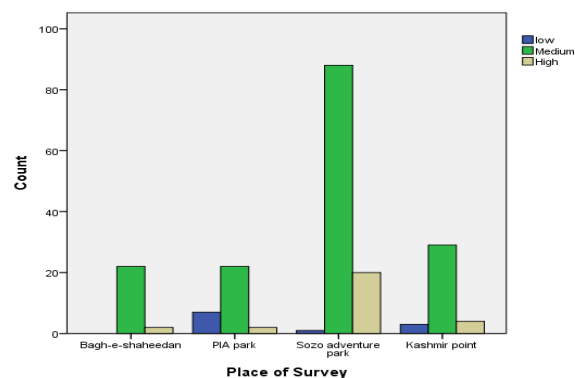


Fig. 6. Place of survey w.r.t management index

This chart shows the relationship between place of survey and management index.

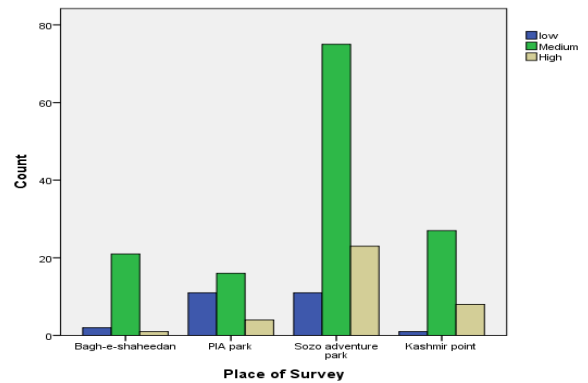


Fig. 8. Place of survey w.r.t overall perception index

This table shows the relationship between place of survey and overall perception of tourists.

5. 5. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

Most of the respondents surveyed in Murree are students who have come to visit the tourist spot. Despite the security concerns, students and families come to relax and enjoy in this hilly area. These students come in groups arranged by their universities and colleges. These are mostly arranged trips with a leader who's guiding the students throughout their trip. Businessmen also come to visit this tourist spot. They come with families once a month for entertainment purposes.

Since most of the respondents are merely students, therefore, the most common education level which has been found in the respondents is intermediate level. There was also large number of respondents who have done bachelors degree and few were holding masters degree. Since mostly colleges trip come to these places from far flung areas, this is the reason that the majority of the respondents are having intermediate education level.

Most of the respondents of the survey are Pakistanis belonging to different cities of Pakistan. The respondents from Pakistan were mainly from Punjab from cities like

Lahore, Gujranwala and Faisalabad. From Sindh, there were many respondents who came from Larkana who came in the form of groups.

There were also few respondents who came from KPK province. This means that the tourist come from all over Pakistan as Murree is the nearest hill station in Punjab which has easy access from every province. One-third of the respondents were foreigners who came from different countries like London, UAE and Turkey. The family who came from UAE was basically Pakistani but they were settled in Dubai, so their origin was Pakistan. Despite the issue of security, families came from other countries as well because Murree is an attractive hill station which attracts large number of tourists throughout the year especially in peak seasons. In peak seasons, hotels nearby get booked before the seasons starts and rates of the commodities also rise due to increase in tourists. When asked from the respondents about their choice to visit recreational areas, most of the respondents mentioned that they like to visit hill stations, historical areas and hiking tracks during their holidays once a month or once a week.

When the respondents were asked about the ticketing price of outdoor recreational facilities, most of the respondents showed satisfaction. According to them, ticketing price is not very much high. Regarding transport cost, most of the respondents mentioned that it is fair and they showed contentment. Since this survey has been conducted off season, therefore, the price of commodities was found relatively lower than the peak season rates. Similarly, half of the respondents said that food items price is economical whereas some of them said it is higher than the normal rates. Housing rent nearby was found somewhat high when asked from the respondents. Since the rates of hotels nearby the main shopping areas in Murree are always touching the sky due to their highly run business.

When asked about the availability of facilities in parks and recreational spots, respondents showed very less satisfaction with reference to emergency shelter. In case of rain and other havocs, emergency shelter should be there in parks. Toilets facility is not satisfactory in parks. Most of the respondents showed dissatisfaction with the availability of toilets. With reference to seating arrangement, one third of the respondents mentioned that the seating arrangement facility is fair. Respondents showed partial satisfaction about the children's play area facility. Water cooler facility is not satisfied since most of the respondents showed dissatisfaction towards it. With reference to safety aspect, when the respondents were asked about safety of children's play area, most of the respondents showed partial satisfaction. Lighting arrangement has also been found satisfactory among the respondents. Respondents were found not satisfied with the availability of toilets in outdoor recreational facilities. They said that they are very less and not properly maintained. This is due to the reason that the concerned authorities do not pay proper attention about the hygienic of parks and especially about the hygienic condition of toilets. Keeping this in view, there is a need to address this issue to solve the problem of toilets in parks. Regarding the cleanliness and availability of

guards, half of the respondents said that they are not satisfied.

When asked about the management of outdoor recreational facilities in terms of opening and closing timings of outdoor recreational facilities, majority of the respondents showed satisfaction on it. Half of the respondents showed satisfaction towards restrictions imposed in the parks. When the respondents were asked about the complaint system in parks, they seemed dissatisfied with this facility. Proper complaint system is not provided in parks and recreational places where the tourists can register their complaints and where they can be addressed on time. Management of ticketing system was found fair among the respondents. Regarding maintenance of parks, respondents were partially satisfied while some the respondents showed dissatisfaction towards maintenance of these outdoor recreational facilities.

Keeping in view all of the above aspects, affordability, safety, facilities and management, the overall perception of respondents who were surveyed, medium satisfaction or partial satisfaction has been found. The services and facilities provided in parks and recreational areas in Murree are just satisfactory and not up to the mark as there are in different hill stations throughout the world. Since the respondents were coming from different urban and rural areas of Pakistan and they do not have much exposure, they showed normal satisfaction level which depicts that there is a need for improvement with reference to affordability, safety, available facilities and management of parks.

Almost two third of the respondents agreed that the outdoor recreational spaces are vibrant and lively whereas almost 20% didn't agree to this fact. Recreational facilities in Murree have facilities for children as well as adults for leisure and entertainment which depicts that these places are vibrant and catering the requirements of users but some of tourists were of the view that these recreational facilities are not vibrant enough as they should be. More than half of the tourists visit these outdoor recreational facilities once a month which shows that people like to visit the recreational places often in order to spend their free time in leisure activities. Almost half of the respondents showed satisfaction towards the security of the outdoor recreational facilities whereas the other half negated the presence of security staff. This means that the security facilities in these recreational places are not sufficient enough to fulfill the needs of tourists. When the respondents were asked about performance of outdoor recreational facilities with reference to facilities provided in it for example availability of rest rooms, lighting facilities, variety of food, availability of staff for help and emergency shelter, they showed partial satisfaction while some the respondents showed dissatisfaction towards these facilities. These are the basic needs of tourists which should be present in parks so that they feel safe and secure and enjoy their time in these recreational places. Key findings of this study are as following:

1) Provision of advanced rides for children/ adults

Like other countries in the world where there is variety

of recreational rides, in Murree there is a need to provide more advanced and secured rides for tourists.

2) Improving the safety of outdoor recreational facilities

Safety and security is a prime requirement of every individual visiting parks, therefore, this suggestion needs to be addressed at once in order to make these outdoor recreational places developed and place of leisure and entertainment for people.

3) Capacity building of management staff

The managing staff looking after the facilities needs capacity building trainings for efficient delivery of their services

4) Beautification of parks/ outdoor recreational spaces

Beautification of outdoor recreational places will make these places more attractive and demanding for the tourists visiting these places.

5) Provision of guide maps

Guidance of tourist is of prime importance when discussing about the performance of outdoor recreational facilities. Tourists need to be guided properly so that there is no obstacle or any kind of nuisance created during their visit. Proper guidance maps indicating different areas in the outdoor recreational places should be provided at the entrance of parks.

6) Installation of complaint system in parks

Advanced complaint system should be provided in outdoor recreational places in order to make them easy for the tourists to place their suggestions and complaints.

7) Facilities for disabled persons

Facilities for disabled persons such as ramps and toilets should be provided in these outdoor recreational places. It will help the disabled persons in visiting these places and provide them ease.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper, we have discussed the tourist's perception of outdoor recreational facilities in Murree. Survey conducted from the tourists visiting Murree helped in finding out the perception of tourists of the available outdoor recreational facilities. The analysis shows that the tourists perception about these recreational facilities is moderately satisfactory but not fully satisfactory which shows that there is a gap which needs to be filled by managing these facilities in a more better way and making them safe and secure along with the provision of basic necessities.

From this research work, it has been concluded that the existing outdoor recreational facilities in Murree do not have sufficient facilities to fully satisfy the needs of the tourists. These outdoor recreational spaces should be increased in number along with provision of better rides for children and adults and advanced safety measures which cater the demands of the tourists.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PAPER

This piece of research work will be useful for the planning agencies and the government departments for future planning. Tourist's perception regarding the outdoor recreational facilities will be helpful in determining the potential demands of visitors. The services and facilities in the parks and outdoor recreational facilities will be provided based on the tourist's needs and demands which have been determined with the help of this study. This will eventually upgrade the existing scenario of outdoor recreation in Murree making it an internationally recognized tourist city meeting the demands of people.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recreation and amusement have always been point of concern in a country's economic and social development. Leisure time eliminates stress and makes a person feel relieved. From the key findings of this study, it has been devised that the recreational spots for tourist should be provided with better and advanced services for its visitors so that they can relax and enjoy their leisure time without facing any kind of problem. More studies should be carried out regarding the diversity of outdoor recreational spaces and their successful management. Development and regulatory authorities of parks and recreational areas should devise ways and means to promote better recreational areas which fulfill the demands of visitors.

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