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Eco-Tourism in Adilabad : An Analysis of Destination Features and Tourist Satisfaction

D. CHENNAPPA AND SARPATWAR SREYESH

Abstract : *Eco-tourism has emerged as a significant component of sustainable tourism development in India, emphasizing environmental conservation, cultural authenticity and community participation. Tourist satisfaction plays critical role in ensuring the long-term success of eco-tourism destination as it influence revisit intentions and destination loyalty. The study examines the relationship between destination features and tourist satisfaction in the eco-tourism context of Adilabad district, Telangana State. Adilabad is known for its waterfalls, forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tribe culture altogether offers immense eco-tourism potential. The research study was based on primary data collected from the four destinations with 96 respondents selected from each, yielding a total sample size of 384, it ensuring equal representation and adequate sample size for analysis. The Reliability Analysis revealed a strong internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.92, it indicating, high reliability of the measurement scale. The demographic variables revealed that most of the tourists are young aged between 15-30 years, predominantly male and well-educated. Notably 91.67% expressing their willingness to revisit the eco-tourism destinations. Factor analysis extracted four major dimensions, i.e., Destination Services, Destination Attraction, Cost of Services, and Accommodation & Amenities, which together explained 77.09% of the total variance. Among these, destination services and Destination attraction emerged as the most significant influencers of satisfaction. The regression model demonstrated a strong predictive ability, with R-square value of 0.789, indicating that nearly 78.9% of the variation in tourists' satisfaction was explained by the independent variables. This model was also statistically significant, with an ANOVA, p-value of 0.000. Further, Multiple Regression Analysis revealed that, Destination Attraction is the strong predictor of the tourist satisfaction.*

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The Cost of Services has moderate but positive impact, suggesting that tourists are willing to pay slightly more for destination services. However, Accommodation & amenities didn't show a significant impact, indicating that tourists' satisfaction is less impacted by the lodging quality, particularly for day-trippers or local visitors. Based on these results, Adilabad district has a significant potential as eco-tourism destination, however tourist satisfaction limited by the inadequate infrastructure, accessibility challenges and insufficient promotional strategies. Telangana State tourism requires a balanced approach focusing on infrastructure upgrades, environmental management and promotions to enhance tourism experience. Strengthening these destination features will not only helpful to improve satisfaction but also contribute to long-term sustainability of eco-tourism in Adilabad.

Keywords : Eco-Tourism, Destination Attributes, Tourists Satisfaction, Adilabad, Telangana Tourism.

1. Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing sectors in India, contributing significantly to national economy, cultural integration and sustainable development (Sarpatwar Sreyesh, 2024). As per the Ministry of Tourism 2023¹ reports India diversified its tourism portfolio by focusing on heritage, adventure, eco and wellness tourism reflecting global demand for responsible and nature-based tourism. Within this framework, the Telangana State has positioned itself as a unique tourism destination by combining heritage with forest rich and eco-sensitive district such as Adilabad (TGTDC, 2022).

Adilabad District, located in the northern part of Telangana State, is known for its natural beauty, tribe culture and waterfalls, its forest covers part of Deccan plateau ecosystem, provides a unique biodiversity hotspot with species rich flora and fauna². It's also home to Gond, Kolam and Pardhan tribes whose traditions and art forms add cultural depth to eco-tourism experiences. Compared to other tourism circuits of the Telangana State, such as Hyderabad or Warangal, Adilabad district remained underexplored, providing opportunities for niche tourism development.

Among the various tourism destinations of the district, it's the waterfalls that occupies the central place in shaping tourists' perceptions and satisfactions. Adilabad is home to nearly hundred waterfalls, making it most naturally

endowed regions often referred to as “Kashmir of the Telangana State”. However, only few of these waterfalls such as Kuntala, Pochara, Gayatri and Kanakai have been officially recognized and promoted by the Telangana Tourism Development Corporations³. These destinations provides both ecological and recreational values, by offering spaces for sightseeing, photography, picnicking, trekking and others. The present study focusses on four major waterfalls of the Adilabad district such as:

Kuntala Waterfall : Considered as one of the highest waterfalls in the Telangana State, located on the Kadem River, surrounded by dense forest and hills. It's among the most visited tourist destinations in Adilabad district, yet it faces problems such as seasonality in tourist's arrivals and limited infrastructure⁴.

Pochara Waterfall : Located on the Godavari river, Pochara is known for its unique wide spread of cascading waterfall. Unlike kuntala it's less commercialized, giving tourists an unspoiled natural experience. However, lack of amenities and accommodation facilities poses barrier to tourist satisfaction.

Kanakai Waterfall : Known for its three cascades i.e., Bandrev, Cheekati Gundam and Kanakai, this destination is surrounded by the dense vegetation making it an emerging site for adventure and eco-tourists⁵. It attracts trekkers and natural enthusiasts but remains under-promoted compared to Kuntala and Pochara.

Gayatri waterfall : Often called as Gadi-Gudem waterfall by locals, it's hidden in the deep forests of Adilabad making it relatively less explored, it represents the potential for community-driven eco-tourism initiatives that blend natural beauty with cultural narratives⁶.

Along with Kawal, Jannaram and Shivaram wildlife sancturies these waterfalls collectively highlight the rich eco-tourism potential of Adilabad district⁷.

Tourist satisfaction plays a vital role in determining long-term success of the destination. It directly has an impact on the perceived value of the travel experience, which in turn influence future behavioural intentions such as revisiting the destination, recommending it to others or lodging formal complaints. This study aims to explore how specific destinations factors such as destination services, destination attraction, cost of services, accommodation and amenities influence the overall tourist satisfaction visiting eco-tourism destinations of Adilabad district. It also examines the outcomes of the satisfaction, namely tourists' loyalty and the tendency to report dissatisfaction.

Here, destination services refer to core infrastructure such as transportation, signages, tourist information centers and accessibility features. Destination attraction focusses on the natural beauty, scenic landscape, flora & fauna, tourism related activities, unique destination features, Cleanliness of destination and overall destination experience. Cost of services includes affordability, value for money perceptions and transparency in pricing related to entry fees, lodging, food, shopping and travel. Accommodation and amenities consider the quality, cleanliness, safety and hospitality options with in accessible range of selected destinations.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Eco-Tourism and Tourist Satisfaction

Eco-tourism is increasingly regarded as a sustainable tourism model that balances conservation, community development, and tourist experience (Honey, 2008; TIES, 2015). In recent years, it has gained prominence in both developed and developing nations as a strategy for promoting biodiversity conservation and rural development (Sultana, 2022). According to UNWTO (2023), eco-tourism accounts for nearly 20% of global tourism, reflecting its growing demand among travellers seeking authentic and responsible experiences. Studies emphasize that satisfaction plays a central role in shaping destination loyalty, revisit intentions, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Chi & Qu, 2008; Chhangani, 2024). In eco-tourism contexts, satisfaction is influenced not only by natural attractions but also by the quality of infrastructure, cultural authenticity, and the sustainability of tourism practices (Weaver, 2001; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000).

Destination Features as Determinants of Tourist Satisfaction

In Telangana's eco-tourism context, natural features such as waterfalls, forests, and wildlife sanctuaries serve as the primary attractions (Rani, 2022). However, inadequate infrastructure, accessibility challenges, and weak marketing often reduce overall satisfaction levels. Narendar (2022) noted that despite the state's potential, tourism infrastructure development remains uneven across districts, particularly in tribal and forested areas such as Adilabad.

Eco-Tourism in India: Growth, Opportunities, and Challenges

India has witnessed a steady rise in eco-tourism initiatives, particularly in biodiversity-rich states like Kerala, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and Telangana (Alam et al., 2022). Eco-tourism is increasingly positioned as a tool for sustainable rural development, biodiversity conservation, and cultural preservation (Das &

Chatterjee, 2015). However, challenges remain in balancing conservation with commercialization. Sultana (2022), in her study on eco-tourism in Hyderabad, highlighted that while eco-tourism contributes to socio-economic development, it requires careful planning to prevent environmental degradation. Similarly, Alam et al. (2022) argued that South Asian eco-tourism faces common barriers such as poor infrastructure, limited community participation, and weak institutional frameworks. These findings resonate with the situation in Adilabad, where eco-tourism attractions such as Kawal Tiger Reserve and Kuntala Waterfall draw visitors but suffer from accessibility and service gaps.

Eco-Tourism in Telangana: Regional Perspectives

Telangana is endowed with rich eco-tourism potential, including wildlife sanctuaries (Amrabad, Kawal, Shivaram), waterfalls (Kuntala, Pochara, Bhogatha), and river-based tourism along the Godavari (TSTDTC, 2022). Rani (2022) noted that eco-tourism in Telangana emphasizes “responsible travel” that integrates natural landscapes, tribal heritage, and rural culture. However, the success of such initiatives depends largely on how destination features are developed and marketed. Tummala and Hassan (2023) found that community involvement in tourism development remains weak in Telangana compared to Maharashtra, with local participation largely limited to unorganized services. This lack of community integration not only reduces the authenticity of tourist experiences but also weakens satisfaction levels. Narendar (2022) further emphasized that Telangana’s eco-tourism suffers from gaps in infrastructure such as transport connectivity, accommodation, and visitor amenities, particularly in tribal districts like Adilabad.

Research Gap : From the literature review it’s observed that while tourist satisfaction and eco-tourism have been extensively studied at global and national levels, research focusing on regional contexts like Adilabad remains limited. Most Indian studies emphasize popular destinations such as Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand whereas, in the context of Telangana, research studies largely focused on state-level tourism or community participation. Despite its rich natural and cultural resources very few studies specifically analyzed the link between destination features and tourist satisfaction in Adilabad district. This gap provides rationale for the present study, which aims to bridge the gap by offering a focused analysis of Adilabad’s eco-tourism features and their influence on satisfaction.

Research Question : The research question formulated to investigate how do destination attributes, such as destination services, destination attractions, cost

of services, accommodation and amenities influence the overall tourist satisfaction in the select eco-tourism destinations of the Adilabad District, Telangana State?

Research Objective : This objective of the study was to examine the impact of destination services, destination attraction, cost of services, accommodation and amenities on overall tourists' satisfaction at select eco-tourism destinations of the Adilabad District, Telangana State?

Research Hypothesis : The research hypothesis aims to analyze the impact of destination attributes on the tourist satisfaction.

H₀₁ : There is no significant impact of destination services on overall tourist's satisfaction.

H₀₂ : There is no significant impact of destination attraction on overall tourist's satisfaction.

H₀₃ : There is no significant impact of accommodation & amenities on overall tourist's satisfaction.

H₀₄ : There is no significant impact of cost of services on overall tourist's satisfaction.

Research Methodology : The present study was based upon empirical in nature, entirely rely on the collection and analysis of primary data. To collect the relevant information a schedule methodology was adopted and a convenient sampling technique was employed to select respondents from four destinations i.e., Kuntala, Pochara, Gayatri and Kanakai. From each destination 96 respondents are systematically selected ensuring equal representation and adequate sample size. A total of 384 respondents, surveyed across selected tourism destinations. The collected data analyzed using various descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics are used to analyze the demographic variables of the respondents, while the inferential statistics are used to analyze the impact of destination attributes on the tourist's satisfaction. To ensure internal consistency of the scale items, Cronbach's alpha was used. Factor analysis was applied to validate and group the constructs related to destination attraction, services, costs, accommodation, amenities and tourists' satisfaction. To analyze the impact of independent variables on dependent variable a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The study was conducted over a period of three months starting from 01-june-2025 to 31-Aug-2025, and it's geographically limited to selected eco-tourism destinations.

Research Analysis : Before the analysis of data internal consistency among the variables is conducted and from the table-1, it's observed the excellent internal consistency with alpha á value of = 0.95 for 21 items (alpha values that are close to 1 is supposed to be reliable). This suggest that all items are reliably measure the same construct i.e., tourist satisfaction and destination features. The strong reliability supports the validity of further statistical analysis in the study.

Table-1 : Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.92	21

Source : Primary data analysis

Demographic Profile : Table-2, presents the demographic characteristics of the 384 respondents, participated in the study on the of the eco-tourism destinations of the Telangana State.

Table-2 : Demographic Profile (n=384)

Particulars	Frequency	% Percent	Particulars	Frequency	% percent
Gender			Education		
Female	168	43.75	Up to secondary	32	8.33
Male	216	56.25	Intermediate	108	28.12
Age			Bachelors	228	59.38
15 - 30	162	42.19	Masters	15	3.91
30 - 45	128	33.33	Ph.D.	1	0.26
45 - 60	94	24.48			
Purpose of Visit			Repeated visitors		
Relaxation	148	38.55	First time visit	124	32.29
Vacation	100	26.04	Repeat Visit	260	67.70
Sightseeing	92	23.96	Like to Revisit	352	91.67
Adventure	44	11.45	Complaints	32	8.33

Source : Primary data analysis.

Out of total respondents 43.75% are females, while the male respondents are 56.25%. In terms of age 42.19% of tourists fall within the 15-30 age group, followed by 33.33% in the 30-45 age group, suggesting the eco-tourism in the Telangana State is particularly appealing to younger travellers. Most of the respondents

possess Bachelor's degree i.e., 59.38%, followed by Intermediate i.e., 28.12%, reflecting a well-educated tourist base. Highest respondents are visited the destination for the purpose of Relaxation followed by Vacation, Sightseeing, and Adventure. Regarding visitation patterns, 32.29% are first time visitors, while a significant 67.70% are repeat visitors, indicating positive previous experiences. Most importantly 91.67% of the respondents expressed their willingness to revisit the destinations, suggesting high satisfaction levels. While, only 8.33% reported complaints, implying overall positive tourist experiences and perceptions of destination quality.

Exploratory Factor Analysis : Table-3, displayed the results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) conducted to identify underlying factors influencing tourist satisfaction in eco-tourism across Adilabad district of Telangana State. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.813, indicates sampling adequacy for factor analysis, while the significant value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity i.e., $p = 0.00$ confirms the suitability of the data for structure detection. From 21 items four distinct factors are extracted, collectively explaining 77.094% of the total variance, which is considered highly satisfactory in social sciences. Factor one represents the Destination services, which compromises eight items, explaining 46.68% of total variance with an eigenvalue of 10.223. Factor two represents the Destination Attraction, which compromises of seven items, explaining 13.185% of total variance with an eigenvalue of 2.769. Factor three represents the Accommodation & amenities, which comprises of four factors, explaining 8.061% of total variance with an eigen value of 1.693. Factor four represents the cost of services, which compromises of two items, explaining 7.168% of total variance with an eigen value of 1.505. It's also representing the internal consistency among each factor, where a cut-off points of 0.40 was used to include an items in interpretation of a factor. While the Destination services with $\alpha = 0.943$, followed by Destination Attraction with 0.932, Accommodation & amenities with 0.877 and cost of services with 0.471. Here except for factor four, all the constructs have alpha scores above 0.85, which indicates that the items used to measure the constructs are reliable and results are satisfactory.

Hypothesis Testing : Table-4, presents the results of regression model assessing relationship between independent variables such as destination services, destination attraction, amenities, safety, cost and dependent variables i.e., tourists' satisfaction. The R-value of 0.888 indicates a strong positive correlation between the predicator and tourist satisfaction. The R-square value of 0.789 signifies that

Table-3: Factor Analysis of the Variables (n = 384)

Factor	Internal-Consistency Among variables	Eigenvalues	Factor loading	%Variance Explained
Factor-1:Destination services	$\alpha = 0.943$	10.223		46.68%
Available transportation			0.868	
Available attraction			0.826	
Safety and security			0.774	
Available amenities			0.762	
Safety in transportation			0.752	
Hygiene Transportation			0.751	
Safety and security attraction			0.723	
Hygiene services			0.667	
Factor-2:Destination Attraction			$\alpha = 0.932$	
Natural beauty	0.901			
Scenic landscape	0.881			
Flora & fauna	0.874			
Tourism related activities	0.869			
Unique destination features	0.86			
Cleanliness of destination	0.692			
overall destination experience	0.54			
Factor-3:Accommodation& Amenities	$\alpha = 0.877$	1.693		
Safety-in accommodation			0.851	
Accommodation- services			0.82	
Hygiene accommodation			0.799	
Customisation facilities			0.63	
Factor-4:Cost of services	$\alpha = 0.471$	1.505		7.168%
Cost for amenities			0.823	
Cost for attraction			0.711	
KMO = 0.813		Sig. = 0.000		
Barlett's Test = 9112.431		Total variance explained = 77.094%		

Source : Primary data analysis.

Table-4 : Overall Strength Between Independent and Dependent Variables

R	R-square	Adj. R- square	Std. error
0.888	0.789	0.786	0.358

Source: Primary data analysis.

78.9% of the variation in tourist satisfaction is explained by the independent variables, indicating a highly predictive model. The adjusted R-square confirms the model's robustness by accounting for the number of predictors used. The standard error of 0.358 reflects a relatively low average deviation of observed values from the predicated values, suggesting a good model-fit.

Table-5, represents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for the regression model examining the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable i.e., tourists' satisfaction. The regression Sum of squares i.e., 181.07 compared to residual Sum of squares i.e., 48.55 shows that a substantial portion of the variation in tourists' satisfaction is explained by the model. The F-value of 353.36 and p-value of 0.00 confirming that the overall regression model is statistically significant and indicating that independent variables collectively have a strong and meaningful impact on the tourist's satisfaction.

Table-5 : Relationship Between Independent And Dependent Variables

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	181.072	4	45.268	353.362	.000
Residual	48.553	379	.128		
Total	229.625	383			

Source: Primary data analysis.

From table-6, it's observed that all the predictors show a positive relationship with the dependent variable, but only three variables have significant effect on the overall tourist satisfaction. They are Destination services with $B = 0.422$; $\beta = 0.369$; $p = 0.000$, Destination Attraction with $B = 0.591$; $\beta = 0.590$; $p = 0.00$ and Cost of services with $B = 0.103$; $\beta = 0.108$; $p = 0.00$. However, the study also reveals that accommodation & amenities with $B = 0.29$; $\beta = 0.21$; $p = 0.508$ is insignificant to the overall tourist satisfaction. The study also revealed that out of four variables destination attraction plays a key role in overall tourist's satisfaction with t-value of 20.345, followed by the second and third predictors are destination services with t-value of 10.735 and Cost of services with t-value of 4.502. The regression equation derived from the model is Tourist Satisfaction = $-0.448 + 0.422$ (Destination Services) + 0.591 (Destination Attraction) + 0.103 (Cost of Services) + 0.029 (Accommodation & Amenities) + Error. -0.448 is the constant, 0.442 , indicates that one unit increase in destination services is associated with 0.442 unit increase in tourist satisfaction. Error term indicates the influence of external factors. While the overall study reveals that H_{01} , H_{02} and H_{04} are rejected while H_{03} is accepted.

Table-6 : Regression Analysis Results (n =384)

Model	B	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	-.448		-2.704	.007
Destination services	.422	.369	10.735	.000
Destination Attraction	.591	.590	20.345	.000
Accommodation & Amenities	.029	.021	.663	.508
Cost of services	.103	.108	4.502	.000

Source: Primary Data Analysis.

Findings : Data collected from 384 respondents, several findings emerged through reliability tests, factor analysis and regression modelling.

- The scale used for measuring tourist satisfaction exhibited significant internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.92.
- The demographic variables shows that most tourists are young aged between 15-30 years, male and well educated, with high percentage of 91.67% expressing interest in revisiting eco-tourism destinations.
- Factor analysis revealed that four key dimensions influencing the tourist satisfaction i.e., Destination services, Destination Attraction, Cost of services, Accommodation and amenities explaining 77.09% of the total variance.
- The destination Attraction and destination services are most influential factors in determining tourist satisfaction.
- Regression results showed a strong model fit, with an R-square value of 0.789 indicating that 78.9% of the variation in tourist satisfaction explained by the independent variables.
- The ANOVA confirmed the model's statistically significant with p-value of 0.00, among all the predictors destination attraction has the highest impact, followed by destination services and cost. However, accommodation and amenities did not significantly affect tourist satisfaction.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the tourists' satisfaction in Adilabad eco-tourism sector is significantly influenced by the destination attraction and destination services. While the accommodation and amenities have no significant impact, their role may grow with evolving tourist expectations. Affordable pricing also

contributing positive but moderate role in shaping tourist satisfaction. Hence immediate focus of Telangana State eco-tourism department should be on enhancing destination attraction and accessibility with long-term planning for accommodation infrastructure. The study reveals that tourists highly satisfied with natural beauty, scenic landscape, flora & fauna, tourism related activities, unique destination features, cleanliness of destination. While the moderate impact of Cost-of-services indicates that tourists are willing to pay slightly more if the service quality justify the price, emphasizing value over affordability alone. In contrast accommodation and amenities showed no significant effect suggesting that most tourists may not rely heavily on overnight stays, indicating that most of the tourists are day trippers or locals. However, this factor may gain importance in the future with an increase in long-stay and foreign tourist arrivals. These findings provide valuable insights for Telangana tourism policy makers to design strategies service infrastructure and policy focussed towards enhancing visitor's experience.

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Footnotes

- 1 <https://tourism.gov.in>
- 2 Adilabad District | Welcome To Adilabad District Web Portal | India
- 3 Telangana Tourism
- 4 Kuntala Water Falls | Adilabad District | India
- 5 Kanakai Waterfalls
- 6 Gayatri Water Falls | Adilabad District | India
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