VISITOR'S PERCEPTION AND SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY AT DEHIWALA NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, SRI LANKA

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The zoological gardens founded in the 19th century, claimed not only to educate and entertain their audiences, but also to serve science by providing exotic animals. Confronted with increasing financial difficulties, zoos were forced to make money. As a result of recreational experiences money making became one of their top priorities. This case study at Dehiwala Zoological Garden was conducted to examine visitor's perceptions and satisfaction in terms of there creational facilities and experiences they obtained. Simple random sampling method was used and 50 visitors were selected as the sample of this study. Observations, Questionnaires and Discussions were employed in the process of data collection. Associating SPSS 19.0 software and using univariate analysis technique the data were analyzed. 36% visitors stated that the main reason for their visit was, to go out somewhere with their family, relatives or friends, followed by entertainment (27%). In relation to the distance they travelled to visit the zoo, 32.6% travelled 10.1 – 20 km and 25.4% traveled 20.1 – 50km, respectively. Regarding the frequency of their visits to the site, 65.8% visit at least once a year. The time of year they consider to be the best for a visit is school vacations or the festival season. In relation to the infrastructure facilities available at the zoo (canteen, benches, toilets), 73.3% of visitors consider them to be good. Regarding the abundance of animals at the zoo, 55.6% of visitors believe it is low. It can be concluded that, perceptions of visitors were high in terms of there creational facilities and experiences they obtained for quite a substantial number of visitors were satisfied with recreational facilities and experiences they obtained.