



Increasing footfall at Rajkot zoological park: A case study in Improving weekend and festival tourism

Sheetal S Makwana^{1*}, Dr. Bharatsinh M Gohil²

¹ Department of Life Sciences, M. K. Bhavnagar University, Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India.

² Associate Professor & Head, Department of Life Sciences, M. K. Bhavnagar university, Bhavnagar, Gujarat, India

Abstract

Zoos are famous recreational tourist place for gathering with family and friends. It is popular tourist attraction in most Societies. Zoos can play a vital role for public awareness towards ex-situ conservation. They are also serving for conservation of wildlife as well as gives opportunity for scientific research and for environmental education programs. Rajkot Zoological Park is visited by approx 7.5 lac visitors throughout the year. This research is based on secondary data collection for the month of January 2023. This paper explains scenario of Children, Adult and Senior Citizen count is increases in weekend and festival days. By collecting secondary data, visitors flow has increased in weekend and festival days enhancing due to public holidays, school tours, and attraction towards Wildlife. This study shows student numbers are increases due to school tour in working days inspire zoo management to organize more educational programs. This study can serve as a useful guide for the management of Rajkot Zoo, highlighting the need to prioritize services and enhance facilities in order to provide visitors with a more satisfying experience. By taking steps to improve the overall quality of the visitor experience, the zoo can increase visitor satisfaction and build a strong reputation for itself, which can translate in to increased revenue, repeat visitors and sustain success over time.

Keywords: zoo, weekend and festivals, visitors

Introduction

Zoo is a place where animals are kept in artificial environment and animals are shown to the public. Apart from being a place of entertainment, the zoo also serves as a place for education, research and conservation of endangered species.(pritha dewi Feb-2021).Since the early 1990s, many zoos have placed greater importance on their role in conservation, research and education and recreation as primary motivations for zoos (Hancocks, 2001; Mason, 2007; Sickler & Fraser, 2009) [8, 10] Zoos are popular visitor attractions managing about one million wild species from various parts of the world in captive environments (Association of Zoos & Aquariums, 2021) [1] Zoos are viewed as a significant tool for the tourism industry drawing many tourists (Frost, 2011) [7] Zoos, as a form of tourism attraction offer visitors the chance to observe and engage with wildlife, even if the setting is artificial. It is crucial for zoos to provide these experiences in a way that satisfies visitors, as the quality of services offered and visitor satisfaction are critical to the financial success, loyalty and repeat visits of the attraction. This link between visitor satisfaction and the financial and competitive health of the destination underscores the importance of delivering a high-quality experience to visitors (Coghlan, 2012; Deng, 2007) [3] Rajkot zoological park is spread out of in 137 acre area which is undulating with ridges and valleys, rocky outcrops and well drained area surrounded by two big lakes named Randarda and Lalpari lake, ideal site for modern zoo. Zoo is covered with more than 40000 trees which gives true

ambience of nature. Around 100+ species of free ranging birds, 12

species of reptiles and 6 Species of mammals are attraction of naturally created habitat in and around zoo. A total of 550+ wild animals and birds of 61 species are displayed in 55 exhibits at Rajkot zoo. The zoo is visited by approx 7.5 lac visitors throughout the year. (CZA; Rajkot zoological park master plan) The study provides useful road map to Rajkot-zoo management to emphasize services and improve facilities to give more satisfied experience to visitors.

Methodology

Location and preview of Rajkot Zoological Park

In 1987, A deer enclosure was constructed near Aji dam to provide attraction and subsequently developed as a mini zoo known as Aji dam Zoo, was set up as an adjunct to the public park in February-1992. Since mini zoo suffers from many drawbacks and does not match standards set by Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi. Its closure was recommended by CZA after its evaluation. After that Municipal Corporation of Rajkot took decision to set up a new Modern zoological park in an extensive area known as Rajkot Zoological Park situated about two kilometers away from the existing mini zoo. Rajkot zoological park is situated between two lakes Lalpari and Randarda of Rajkot city. Zoo size ranged from 137 acre. The area of zoo is enriched with more than 40000 various types of trees, shrubs, herbs, creepers and climbers. More than 100 species of Birds, 6 species of Mammals and 12 species of Reptiles are listed in zoo premises. (CZA; Rajkot zoological park master plan)



Fig 1: Map of the study site

GPS Location: 22° 17'57.5"N 70° 50'30.0"E

For the preparation of this study paper Secondary data were collected from January Month (1st January 2023 to 31st January 2023). For secondary resources of data respective standard literature was studied. To collect necessary secondary data about Rajkot zoo visitors, the documents of Zoo authority and publications in this regard were searched. Statistical analysis has done in Microsoft Office Excel 2007.

Result

During the month of January-2023, the Rajkot-zoo welcomed 72065 visitors who collectively contributed Rs. 1716420 to the Zoo's revenue.

Table 1

Children	Adults	Student Group	Senior citizens	Total Visitors	Total Income (Rs.)
8403	50716	12702	244	72065	1716420/-

Table 1: Detail of Total Visitor count of January-2023

In the January 2023, Makar Sankranti (Kite Flying Day) is very popular festival for local people. On this day Rajkot Zoo received the highest number of visitors with a total of 13742 people, out of which 12524 were adults (Fig 2). This resulted in the highest single day revenue of the entire month which amounted 333015.

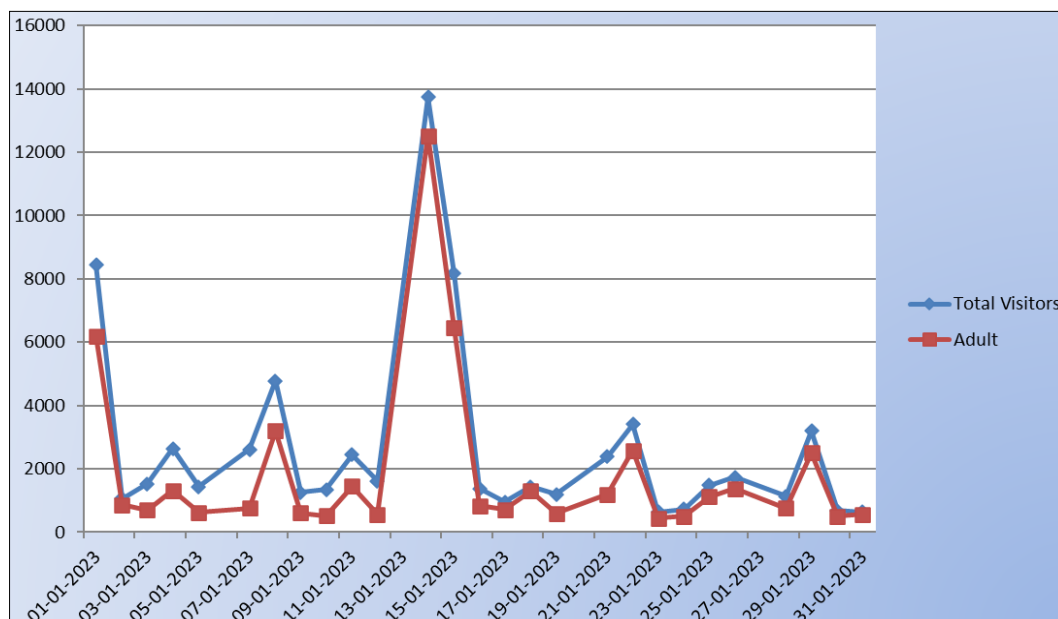


Fig 2: Total Visitors and Adult count in January-2023

During a four –week period in January 23, more visitors went to the zoo on weekends than working days. Specifically, 54% of the total number of visitors visited the zoo on weekends, while 46% visited on working days. The weekends were further broken down into four weekends,

with 10% of visitors going on the first weekend, 31% on the second weekend, 8% on the third weekend, and 6% on the fourth weekend. This information is visually represented in the pie chart (Fig 3).

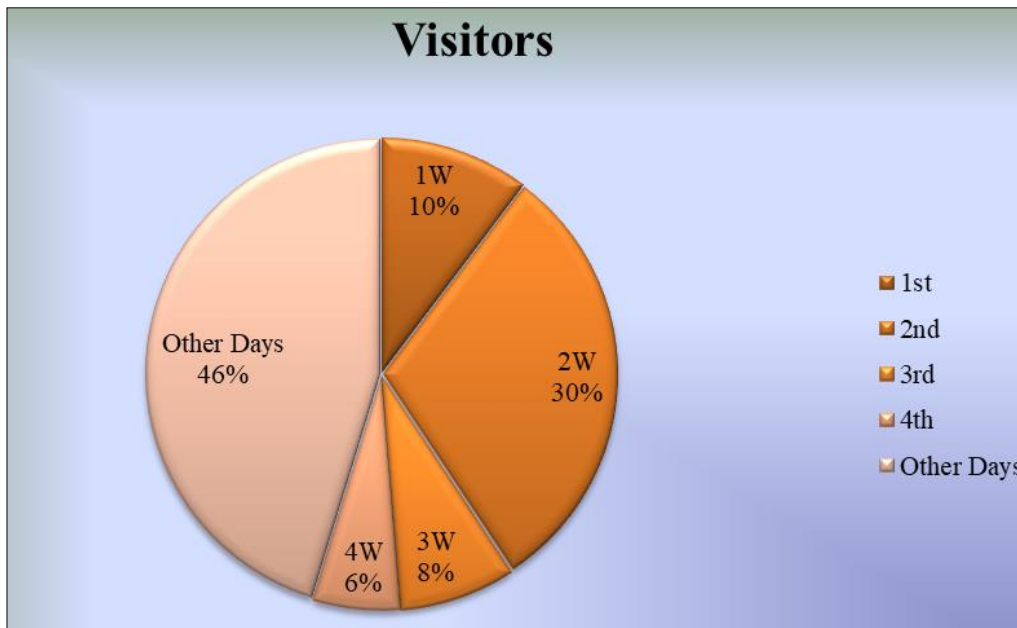


Fig 3: Pie chart representing percentage of weekend visitors

In January 2023, the number of senior citizens visiting the zoo increased on weekends compared to working days. The highest number of senior citizens visiting the zoo was on January 8, with a total of 29. This information is visually presented in following column chart (Figure 4). On the four

weekend of the month, 37 seniors visited during the first weekend, 17 during the second weekend, 18 during the third and 19 during the fourth weekend. These numbers represent 11.88%, 6.96%, 7.3% and 7.78% of the total senior citizen visits during the month, respectively.

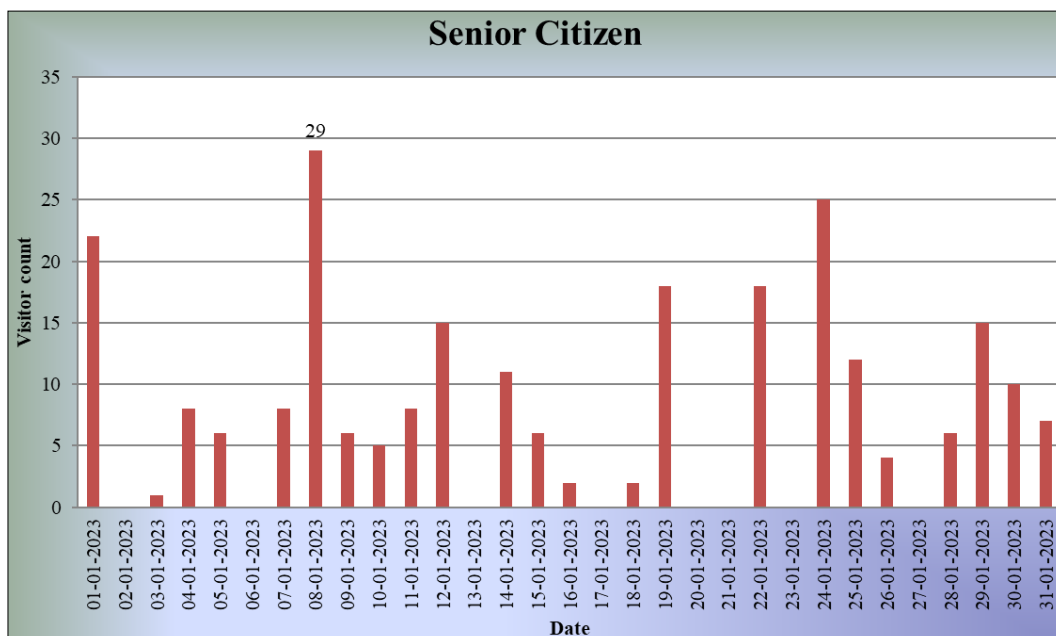


Fig 4: Column chart representing Senior citizens count in weekends

During this month, the number of student groups visiting the zoo is higher on working days than on weekends. This is due to an increase in the number of school trips on working days. On every Saturday of the month, the number of student groups visiting the zoo increases compared to other

weekend days. However, on the second Saturday of the month, which is a public holiday called Makar Sankranti, the number of students is negligible and the lowest among whole month. This information is visually represented in a column chart.

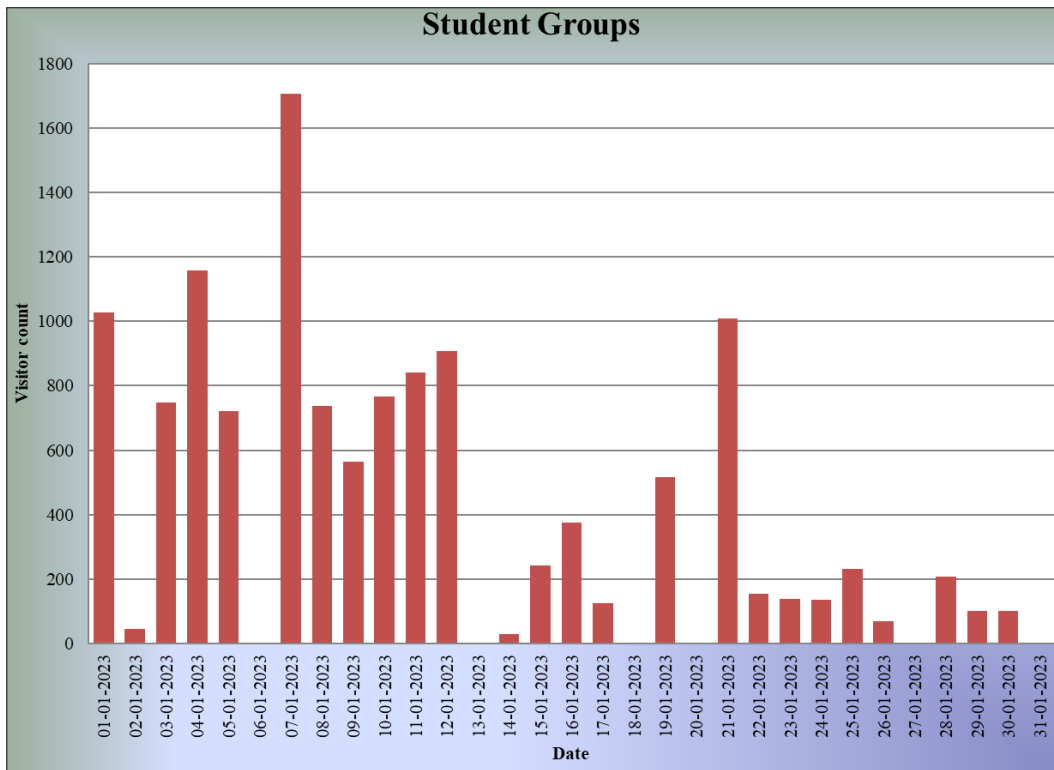


Fig 5: Student groups in working Days

Conclusion

According to the study, The Rajkot Zoological Park experiences a surge in the number of children, adults, and senior citizens visiting on weekends and during festival day in January-2023, leading to an increase in revenue. The parks management can leverage this information to prioritize services and improve facilities, ultimately enhancing visitors’ overall experiences. Additionally, the study found that the number of students visiting the zoo on school tours increases on weekdays, indicating the need for more educational programs. By enhancing the visitor experience, The can improve visitor satisfaction, establish a positive reputation, increased revenue and repeat visits, ensuring long term success. All over practice of zoological parks resulted in to total awareness of nature and environment.

Acknowledgement

The authors express their gratitude towards the Department of Life sciences at M. K. Bhavnagar University in Bhavnagar, as well as Dr. R K Hirpara, The Zoo Superintendent, and Mr. Bhargav Bhatt, Curator at Rajkot Zoological Park in Rajkot, for their generous cooperation. The authors also extend their thanks to the research fellow Mr. Gopal Ram, Ms. Kajal Valiya, Ms. Nayana Dabhi and all staff members at the Department of Life sciences as well as all employees at Rajkot Zoological Park, for their valuable support.

Reference

- 1 Andrew Moss, Decreasing visitor interest in zoo exhibits: ‘Museum fatigue’ or changes in animal visibility? - newsletter (January 2009)
- 2 Association of Zoos and Aquariums. (2021).
- 3 Coghlan A. Linking natural resource management to visitor satisfaction: a study of Australia’s Great Barrier

- Reef. Journal of Sustainable Tourism,2012:20(1):41-58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.614351>
- 4 CZA; annual report of Rajkot zoological park <https://cza.nic.in/uploads/documents/reports/english/annual%20report%202016-17%20rajkot%20zoo>.
- 5 CZA; Rajkot zoological park layout plan; <https://cza.nic.in/uploads/documents/zoos/plan/english/Rajkot%20Zoo%20Master%20Plan%20CZA%20approved>
- 6 Davey G. Zoo visitor density and its role as a confounding variable. Zoo Research News,2006:7(1):3-4.
- 7 Frost W. Zoos and tourism: Conservation, education and entertainment? Channel View Publication, 2011.
- 8 Hancocks D. A Different Nature: The Paradoxical World and Their Uncertain Future. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- 9 Hyung-Sook Lee. Measurement of visitors' satisfaction with public zoos in Korea using importance-performance analysis
- 10 Mason P. Roles of the modern zoo: Conflict or complementary? Tourism Review International,2007:11(3):251-263. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427207783948801>
- 11 The Journal Report the impact of Covid-19 on Ragunan zoo Tourism Destination’s- Prita Dewi Larasati, 2021.