

Evaluating Accessible Tourism: A Descriptive And Correlation Analysis Of Tourist Accessibility Requirements And Perceptions

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Abstract

Accessible tourism is an emerging area of interest within the tourism industry, aiming to make destinations, services, and experiences available to all travellers, including those with disabilities or mobility limitations.

Purpose: This study investigates the current landscape of accessible tourism, analysing satisfactory levels, awareness and the demand for accessible facilities amongst the travellers.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Using a structured questionnaire, data were gathered from 330 respondents, encompassing individuals with and without accessibility needs. Descriptive statistics is conducted using SPSS to determine the impact of accessibility features, such as transportation, accommodations, attractions and the traveller's satisfaction.

Findings: The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between the availability of accessible facilities and overall satisfaction. Additionally, the results demonstrate that awareness of accessible tourism is directly linked to a preference for destinations offering inclusive services, underscoring the role of education in fostering demand.

Results: Accessibility in accommodations and public spaces show moderate satisfaction levels whereas customer service was highlighted as an area requiring improvement, particularly in terms of staff training and awareness. The research identifies specific gaps in infrastructure, information accessibility and staff preparedness that hinder the efficiency and development of accessible tourism, thereby offering actionable insights for policymakers and tourism operators.

Originality/Value: Accessible tourism with novelty, addresses social inclusion and presents a broader perspective of economic opportunity through expansion of potential market for tourism services. The findings elaborate in depth understanding of accessible tourism and sketch future research foundation to improve tourism experiences for travellers with diverse needs.

Keywords: Accessible tourism, Inclusive travel, Disability accommodation, Tourism accessibility, Customer satisfaction in tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Accessible tourism [1] has gained momentum in recent years as an essential component in global tourism sector. Ensuring tourism destinations are accessible for individuals with diverse needs is crucial for promoting inclusivity and enhancing experiences pertaining to travel of people with special needs. The theory is grounded on the importance of accessible tourism and provides quantitative insights to the experiences and expectations of travellers regarding accessibility. Accessible tourism, also known as inclusive or disability tourism [2] is an emerging aspect of the tourism industry, making travel destinations, services and experiences are available to all people, irrespective of their physical limitations, disabilities, or age as its main focus. As the global population ages and awareness around disability rights grow, the demand for accessible tourism has surged, prompting both public and private sectors to consider the accessibility of their offerings. Despite this rising demand, significant barriers exist in terms of physical infrastructure, accessible information and trained customer service, creating obstacles for travellers with diverse needs [3]. The concept of accessible tourism extends beyond providing ramps and accessible restrooms; encompassing a holistic approach to create an inclusive travel environment. This considers the travellers requirements with mobility impairments, visual or hearing disabilities, cognitive impairments

and persons in need of accessible options due to age or temporary health issues. The economic potential of accessible tourism is vast, as it has the capacity to accelerate tourism revenue by attracting broader categories of visitors who encourage longer stays. Still lacking standardized accessibility features and limited awareness among service providers are among the significant challenges.

This research evaluates the existing condition of accessible tourism through an empirical study of 330 respondents with various accessibility needs. The study employs descriptive statistics and correlation analysis using SPSS software to assess travellers' experiences, satisfactory levels and their perceptive of accessibility in the tourist destinations. The study seeks to offer actionable insights for policymakers, tourism operators and service providers to help create more inclusive travel experiences [4]. A semantic questionnaire is given to a class of 330 participants who responded to questions covering six core areas: demographic information, awareness of accessible tourism, importance of accessible tourism, travel experience, information and services and general experience with accessible facilities. Descriptive statistics measure central tendencies and dispersion, correlation analysis explores relationships between respondents' demographic variables and their accessibility needs. The data are analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics to generate comprehensive insights.

The primary objective of this research is to evaluate the contemporary status of accessible tourism by assessing levels of satisfaction plus the challenges faced by tourists with accessibility requirements. The study analyses travellers' experiences, awareness levels, satisfaction with available accessibility features and efficiency of customer service at tourist destinations.

This study focuses on understanding accessible tourism from travellers' perspective that require accommodations for disabilities and may benefit from accessible tourism features due to age or other limitations [5]. The scope includes evaluating the quality and availability of accessibility features in transportation, accommodation and attractions across various tourist destinations; Analysing travellers' awareness of accessible tourism and its signature in influencing travel decisions; Examining staff awareness and provide training about accessibility requirements which are handled at destinations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To encompass the need for proposing a comprehensive framework for accessible tourism, some of the literatures were studied. Examination of Leiras & Caamaño-Franco (2024) [6] sketch various terms used in accessible tourism (AT) literature, jolting diverse terminology complications retrieval for the relevant publications. Sen's capability approach postulated by Kim & Adu-Ampong (2024) [7] to access tourism, emphasize the need for recognizing the agency and choices of people with disabilities. Their conceptual paper argues about the approach that deepen understanding of the factors which enable and hinder tourism, suggesting a paradigm shift from viewing disabled individuals as passive beneficiaries to active participants. Theofanous, Thrassou & Uzunboylu (2024) [8] focus on digital inclusivity in tourism that explores sustainable e-commerce along with marketing strategies influence accessibility for individuals with disabilities. They emphasize the role of digital platforms in reducing barriers, promoting inclusivity and enhance user experience for a diverse customer base. Propose future studies to assess practical applications for advancing inclusive digital tourism environments in their framework.

Investigations of Florido-Benítez (2024) [9] regarding beach accessibility in Spain for visually impaired individuals along with their guide dogs, find limited adaptations to meet these needs. This study underscores the exclusion of blind tourist's experience, with only a fraction of beaches providing accessible amenities. Leiras & Eusébio (2024) [10] analyses Google Maps reviews to study the perceived picture of destinations that are accessible (ATDs) in A Coruña (Spain) and Aveiro (Portugal). Correlations and recommendations are identified through data mining, between accessible features and visitor satisfaction, in addition to deficit parking availability and signage. Fan, Xiong, & Peng (2024) [11] explores affordable and accessible travel fulfilment in older communities in China, employing a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach. The key factors influencing satisfaction, including social support, pedestrian pathways and public spaces are identified. Accessible public transportation for special people elaborated by Elorduy & Gento (2024) [12] mainly focus on accessible public transportation taken by persons with special ability in Segovia, Spain, evaluating infrastructure for transport like train stations and bus stops. Ndhlovu, Makuyana, & Dube (2024) [13] propose digitalization as a potential solution to

reduce exclusion in tourism. The conceptual chapter argues digital tools can address tourism barriers for elderly and disabled individuals. In the examination of the holiday experiences of people with disabilities (PwDs) conducted by Rubio-Escuderos et al. (2024) [14], highlight the independence gained in accessible tourism in lieu of in-depth interviews. The study focusses on identifying access to state aid, availability of care assistance and familiarity with the local language which impact PwDs' travel decisions and calls for better understanding of the personal impacts of tourism on individuals with disabilities. Wan (2024) [15] evaluates the access to tourist signage of Macao's site of heritage, applying universal design (UD) to enhance visitor experiences. Interviews reveal that tourists, including those with physical limitations, value accessible signage to navigate complex heritage sites and provide practical recommendations to improve signage access.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study on accessible tourism for differently-abled individuals employ a structured, data-driven methodology to assess respondents' perceptions, needs, and experiences regarding accessible tourism facilities. By analysing the data gathered, we aim to uncover insights that drive the development of accessible tourism.

3.1. Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design focussing on collection and analysis of data through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. A structured questionnaire is designed to gather responses from a sample of 330 participants. The questionnaire is divided into several sections, each targeting specific areas: demographic information, familiarity with accessible tourism, travel experiences, accessibility requirements and opinions on services and facilities.

The primary materials used in this study include:

- A comprehensive questionnaire is developed to cover key areas related to accessible tourism, including awareness, experiences and the importance of accessible facilities [16]. The questionnaire includes MCQs, Likert scale open-ended questions to find both qualitative and quantitative data.
- A sample size of 330 participants is chosen for adequate representation of diverse demographics, including age, gender, and accessibility needs.

The overall Methodological framework is presented in Fig.1.

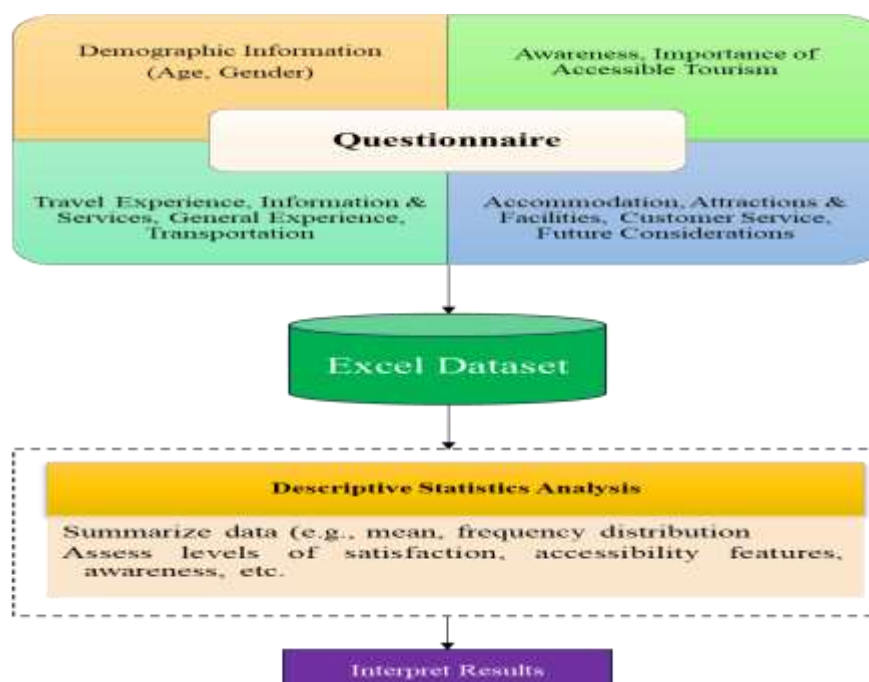


Fig.1. Overall Methodological framework of Accessible Tourism

3.2. Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics [17] describe and summarize the data, focusing on frequencies, percentages including mean scores to interpret participants' demographic details, awareness levels and overall satisfaction with accessible tourism options. This approach has paved way to identify general trends and satisfactory levels within the sample. The survey method is critical in gathering a large volume of responses quickly and efficiently, especially when subjected to diverse demographics. By employing a well-structured questionnaire, the study could capture comprehensive data on the needs and experiences of differently-abled individuals. This method ensures that tourism providers have clear insights into what specific accessibility features are valued, thereby informing more inclusive design and service practices. Through descriptive analysis, we identify primary barriers in accessible tourism, such as transportation and accommodations. Highlighting areas where accessibility features are lacking can guide improvements that enhance inclusivity, such as installing ramps or ensuring availability of Braille signage.

4. Implementation and Techniques

In this accessible tourism study, descriptive statistics are essential for summarizing and interpreting the data collected from respondents. IBM SPSS Statistics is used to implement these statistical techniques, which provide insights into respondents' demographics, awareness and satisfaction levels with accessibility in tourism. The analysis involved calculating measures of central tendency, dispersion and frequency distributions, which allow us to present a clear and comprehensive overview of the data. Below are the detailed techniques which are used in descriptive statistics, along with their derivations and equations.

4.1. Frequency Distribution Analysis

Frequency Distribution [18] is used to display occurrences number of every response category within a variable, providing a straightforward view of how responses are spread across different categories (e.g., age groups, accessibility awareness levels). In SPSS, frequency distributions are generated for categorical variables, such as age, gender and accessibility requirements.

Let f_i represent the frequency of the i^{th} category in a categorical variable with n total responses.

$$f_i = \frac{\text{Number of Responses in Category } i}{n} \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

Each f_i gives the proportion of respondents in each category, which are then expressed as percentages or absolute frequencies in SPSS. This analysis provides an overview of sample demographics, making it easier to identify the characteristics of participants who require accessible tourism features.

4.2. Measures of Central Tendency

Central tendency measures summarize data [19] by identifying a central value. In this study, we focus on three major concerns in central tendency: average, mode and median.

4.2.1 Mean (Average): The mean provides an overall average score for a continuous variable, such as satisfactory level with accessibility. It is generated when repeatedly subtracting the summing up total of all values with the observation total.

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n X_i}{n} \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

Where, X_i = value of the i^{th} observation, n = total number of observations. In SPSS, the mean is automatically computed, allowing us to understand the general satisfaction level among respondents with accessible tourism features.

4.2.2 Median: The median is the midpoint number dividing the data into two equal halves. It is particularly useful when data is skewed, as it represents the central position without being affected by outliers.

4.2.3 Mode: The mode is the highest occurring value in a data, commonly used for categorising data. In SPSS, the mode helps identify the most common responses, such as the most familiar accessibility feature or the most chosen satisfactory rating.

4.3. Measures of Dispersion

Dispersion measures [20] variability within a dataset, providing insights into how consistent respondents' answers are. In this study, we use standard deviation, variance and range as key limitations of dispersion.

4.3.1 Range: The range is the difference between the minimum and maximum values in the data, offering a foundational view to the data spread.

$$\text{Range} = \text{Max}(X) - \text{Min}(X) \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

In SPSS, the range of variables such as satisfactory levels help to identify the extent of variance in respondents' opinions on accessible tourism facilities.

4.3.2 Variance: Variance represents the average squared deviation from the mean, reflecting the degree of spread in the data.

$$\text{Variance } (\sigma^2) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{n-1} \quad \text{Eq. (4)}$$

Where, X_i = individual value, \bar{X} = mean of the dataset and n = total number of observations

Variance highlights the extent to which satisfaction levels or awareness scores vary among respondents.

4.3.3 Standard Deviation: Standard deviation is the square root of variance and offers interpretable detailed measures of dispersion in the same set of the information.

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n (X_i - \bar{X})^2}{n-1}} \quad \text{Eq. (5)}$$

In SPSS, standard deviation is calculated for each continuous variable, such as satisfactory levels, giving route for clarity about the reach of clustered respondents' opinions that spin around the mean.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of accessible tourism data provides perceptual insights, need, and travellers' experiences with diverse accessibility requirements. Through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis conducted via SPSS, the results are organized into key themes, including demographic influences, awareness levels, satisfaction with accessibility features and service quality. Below, the results are summarized in tables with discussions and interpretations following each section.

Table.2. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Under 18	10	3.0
18-25	50	15.2
26-35	90	27.3
36-45	80	24.2
46-55	50	15.2
56-65	30	9.1
66 and above	20	6.0
Total	330	100

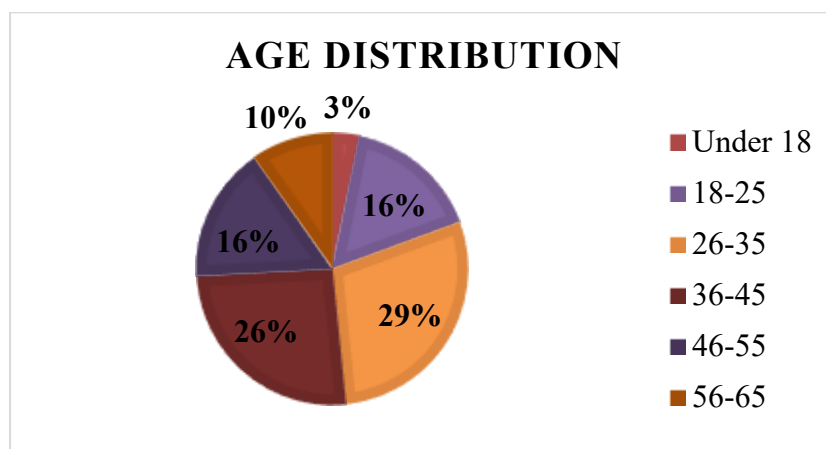


Fig.2. Demographic Distribution of Respondents

The majority of respondents fall into the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups (51.5% collectively), reflecting a younger demography that are aware of accessibility issues in tourism. Older age groups, who often have

different accessibility requirements, constitute about 15.1%, underscoring the importance of age-specific needs in accessible tourism.

Table.3. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	160	48.5
Female	150	45.5
Transgender	20	6.1
Total	330	100

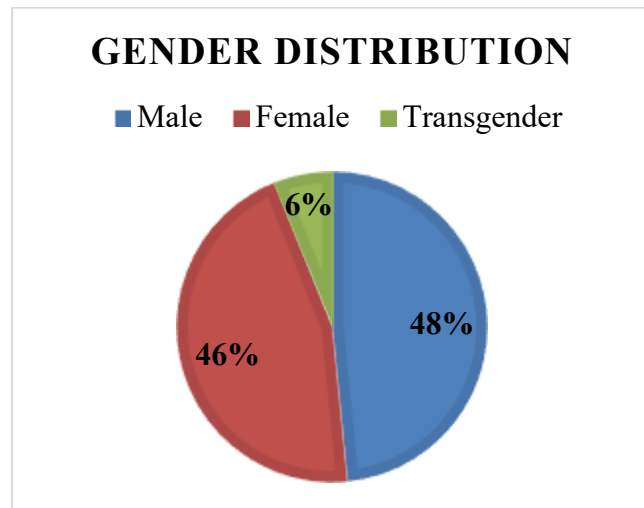


Fig.3. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Males and females form the bulk of the sample, with a smaller representation from transgender individuals. This distribution indicates the need for inclusive tourism that considers diverse gender identities when planning accessibility features.

Table.4. Awareness of Accessible Tourism

Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not familiar at all	40	12.1
Slightly familiar	80	24.2
Moderately familiar	110	33.3
Very familiar	70	21.2
Extremely familiar	30	9.1
Total	330	100

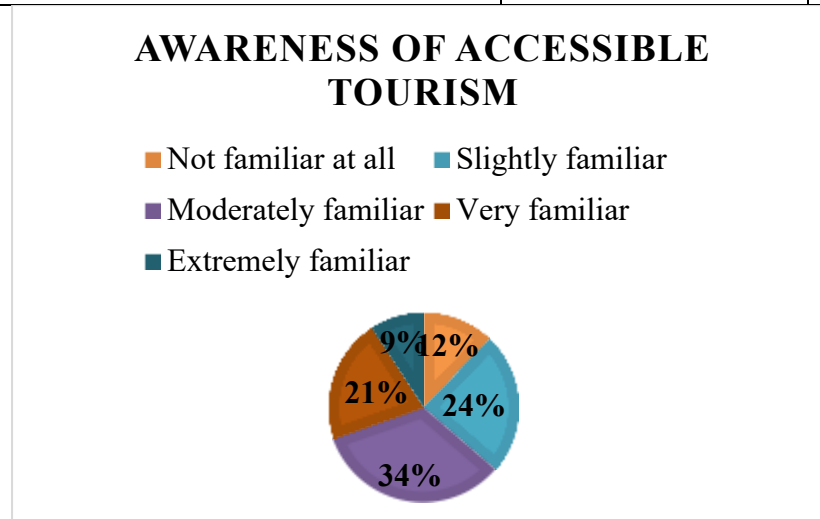


Fig.4. Awareness of Accessible Tourism

A significant portion of respondents (54.5%) report is moderately familiar with accessible tourism. This ensures accessible tourism awareness is relatively high; still there is a sizable group (36.3%) with limited familiarity, highlighting a need for education and outreach.

Table.5. Challenges Encountered Due to Accessibility Barriers

Accessibility Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	210	63.6
No	120	36.4
Total	330	100

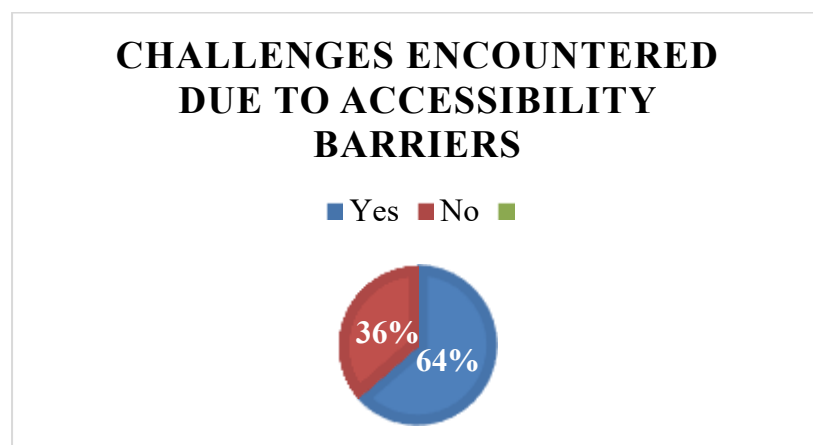


Fig.5. Challenges Encountered Due to Accessibility Barriers

Almost 63.6% of respondents have encountered barriers on accessibility while travelling. This result underscores the need for improvements in accessible tourism infrastructure, as a majority have faced difficulties that may impact their travel experience.

Table.6. Importance of Accessible Tourism for Individuals with Disabilities

Importance Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	300	90.9
No	30	9.1
Total	330	100

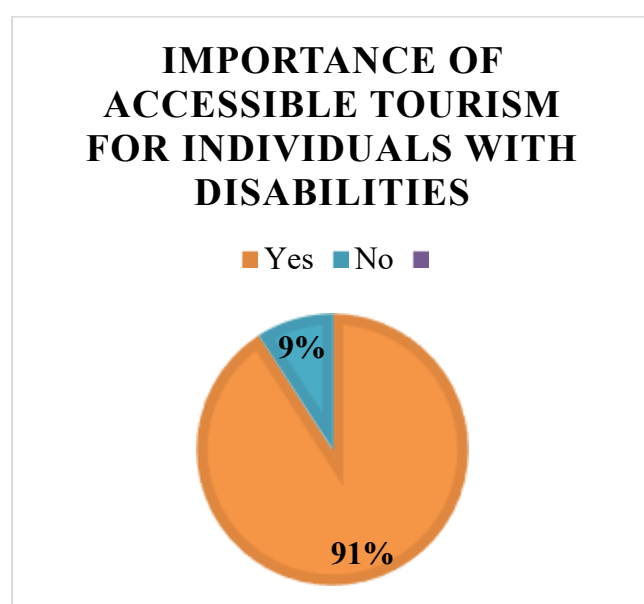


Fig.6. Importance of Accessible Tourism for Individuals with Disabilities

An overwhelming 90.9% of respondents agree that accessible tourism is essential for individuals with disabilities. This consensus indicates strong public support for inclusive travel options and suggests a demand for government and industry initiatives to improve accessibility.

Table.7. Satisfaction with Information on Accessible Tourism

Satisfaction Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Dissatisfied (1)	40	12.1
Dissatisfied (2)	70	21.2
Neutral (3)	110	33.3
Satisfied (4)	80	24.2
Highly Satisfied (5)	30	9.1
Total	330	100

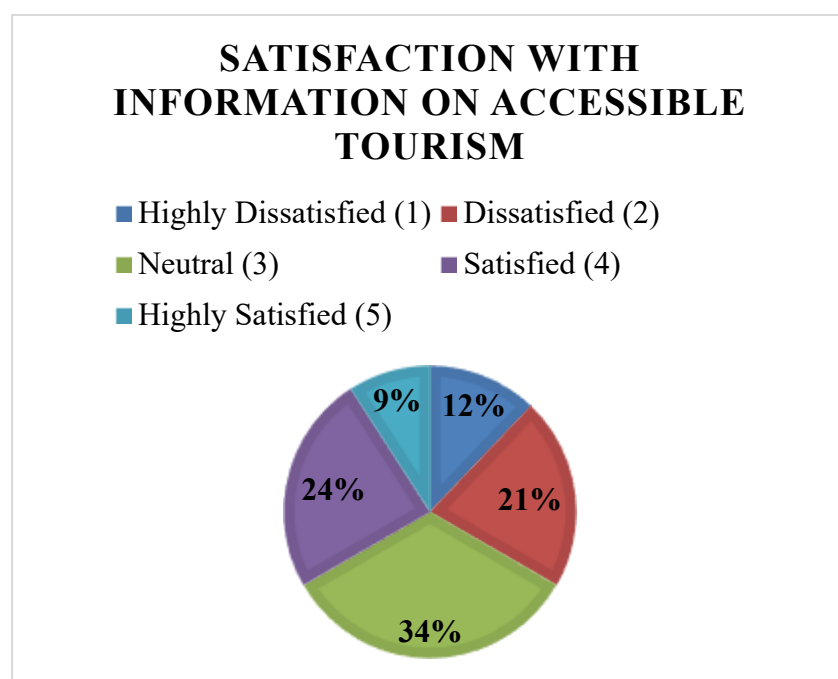


Fig.7. Satisfaction with Information on Accessible Tourism

Only a third of respondents (33.3%) express satisfaction with accessible tourism information. This reveals a gap in accessible information dissemination, where tourism operators may need to enhance visibility and quality of accessible resources.

Table.8. Perception of Accessibility in Accommodations

Accessibility Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor (1)	50	15.2
Low (2)	80	24.2
Moderate (3)	100	30.3
High (4)	70	21.2
Excellent (5)	30	9.1
Total	330	100

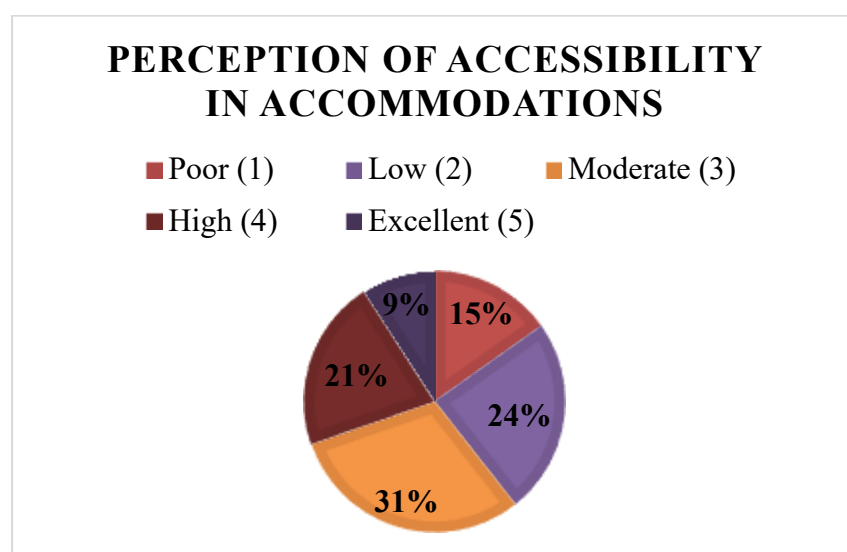


Fig.8. Perception of Accessibility in Accommodations

The majority (39.4%) rate accommodation accessibility as moderate to poor, indicating that accommodations may lack essential accessibility features, such as ramps or accessible bathrooms and need improvement to meet travellers' needs.

Table.9. Accessibility of Tourist Attractions and Facilities

Accessibility Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Inaccessible	30	9.1
Inaccessible	90	27.3
Neutral	100	30.3
Accessible	80	24.2
Very Accessible	30	9.1
Total	330	100

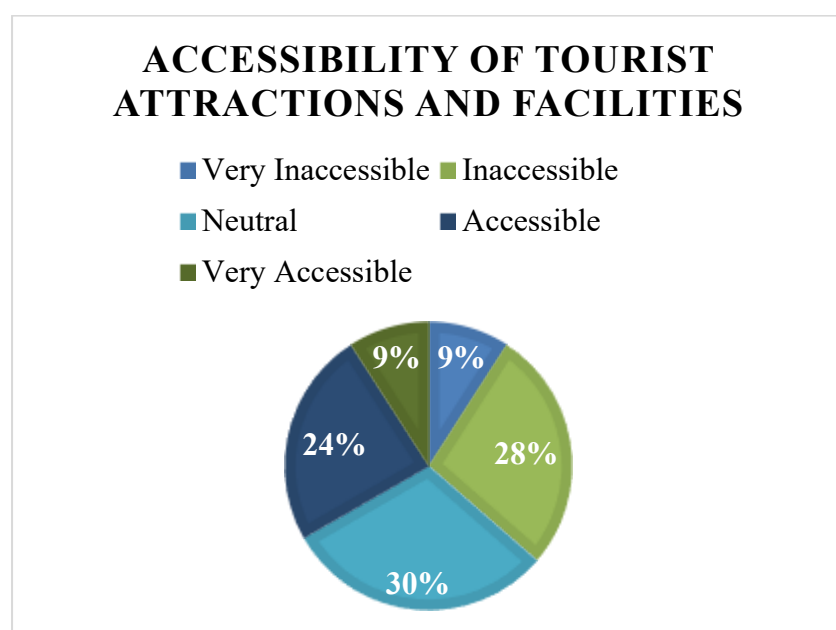


Fig.9. Accessibility of Tourist Attractions and Facilities

Tourist attractions are often perceived as inaccessible or neutral by 66.7% of respondents. This suggests that tourist destinations may need to enhance their facilities to accommodate diverse accessibility needs, improving access to cultural and recreational activities.

Table.10. Availability of Accessible Transportation

Accessible Transportation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	140	42.4
No	190	57.6
Total	330	100

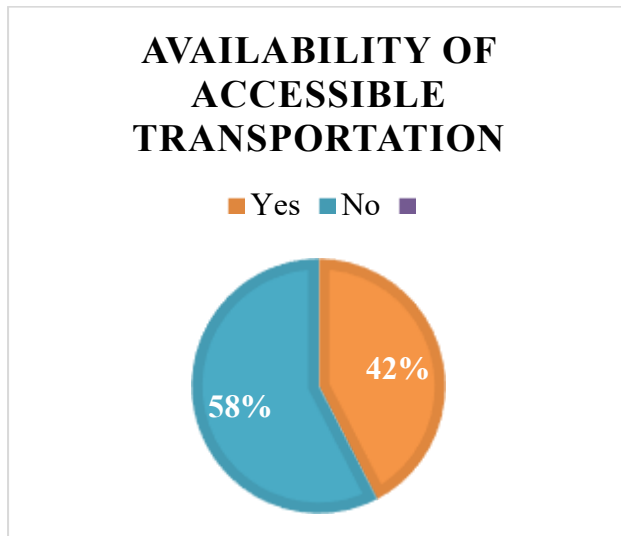


Fig.10. Availability of Accessible Transportation

More than half (57.6%) of respondents report a lack of accessible transportation options. This indicates a significant barrier to mobility within destinations and highlights a critical area where infrastructure improvements could benefit travellers with disabilities.

Table.11. Customer Service and Staff Awareness on Accessibility

Staff Awareness Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor (1)	50	15.2
Low (2)	70	21.2
Moderate (3)	120	36.4
Good (4)	60	18.2
Excellent (5)	30	9.1
Total	330	100

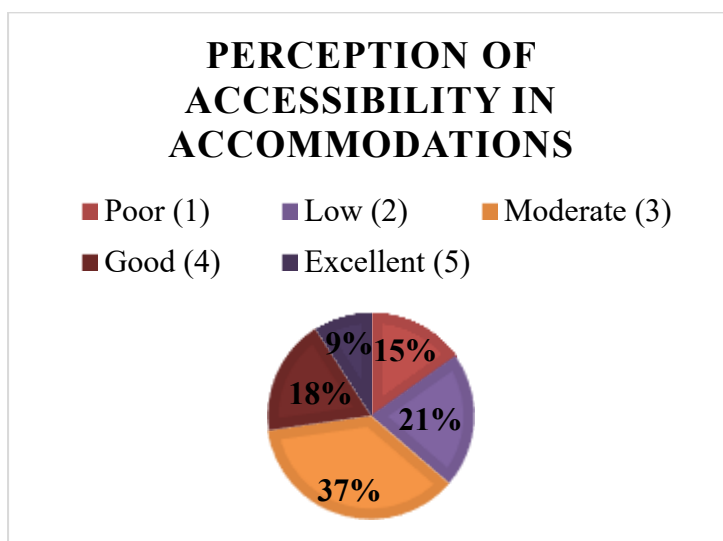


Fig.11. Customer Service and Staff Awareness on Accessibility

A majority of respondents (36.4%) rate staff awareness of accessibility needs as moderate, with 36.4% expressing dissatisfaction. This suggests a need for staff training and education on accessible tourism to improve service quality.

5.1. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive statistics reveal, sample consists of diverse age groups, with the majority between 18 and 45 years. The gender distribution shows a near-equal proportion of male and female respondents, with a minority identifying as transgender. Approximately one-third of respondents indicated having accessibility requirements, underscoring the need for accessible tourism facilities. The data gathered from this study highlights the areas where accessible tourism are to be developed to meet the emerging demands of travellers with needs. The primary insights derived from each key finding are:

1. The demographics indicate a need for age-inclusive accessibility, particularly for middle-aged and older travellers. Tourism services need to recognize that accessibility is not only a requirement for people with disabilities but can benefit all age groups.
2. Awareness of accessible tourism is moderate but could be increased. Targeted awareness campaigns or public educational programs could be effective in raising familiarity among all age groups, ensuring that travellers recognize and seek out accessible destinations.
3. Respondents' satisfaction with accessibility information, accommodation, and transportation features remains low. This dissatisfaction suggests that current infrastructure often fails to meet accessibility standards. Government bodies and private tourism operators bridge these gaps by investing in accommodations, accessible transportation and comprehensive accessibility information.
4. Staff awareness of accessibility needs is crucial in delivering quality tourism experiences for all. Increased staff training on accessibility standards and customer service for differently-abled travellers is essential to foster an inclusive environment in tourism destinations.
5. The high importance respondents place on accessible tourism (90.9%) emphasizes prioritized policy-making on accessible tourism. Subsidizing accessible features in tourist destinations and business model to adopt universal design principles are under Government's consideration.

This research provides significant insights to the current state of accessible tourism, revealing the areas where improvement is needed to serve travellers diverse needs in a better way. The findings underscore the importance of accessible infrastructure, services and information dissemination, making tourism a more inclusive experience. Investing in accessibility improvements, make the tourism industry to enhance satisfaction, promote inclusivity and attract a broader customer base, leading to positive social and economic outcomes.

6. CONCLUSION

The research findings underscore the importance of accessible tourism and highlight several areas that require attention to better serve travellers with special needs. The result signifies awareness of accessible tourism is relatively high; satisfaction with current accessibility features at tourist destinations remains limited. Significant gaps in infrastructure, accessible information, and customer service were identified, illustrating that the tourism industry still has substantial progress to make in becoming truly inclusive. Respondents encountering accessible transportation, accommodations and attractions have expressed higher levels of satisfaction compared to ones with accessibility barriers. This relationship emphasizes the need for tourism operators to prioritize the inclusion of ramps, elevators, Braille signage, accessible restrooms, and other essential features in their facilities. This makes the destinations to meet the needs of travellers with disabilities and enhance the overall experience of visitors, including elderly travellers and families with young children.

The Future study suggests governments and businesses should prioritize investment in accessibility to foster inclusive tourism.

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