From Peaks to Perception: Examining Tourist Experience and Loyalty on Bangladesh's Sole Mountainous Island

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Abstract: This research is obliging to highlight the importance of aspects responsible for loyalty and other sustainable tourism techniques by identifying behaviors that boost destination loyalty, for one of Bangladesh's most appreciated tourist destinations, lone mountainous Island, but underappreciated in travel literature. The extent to which tourist experiences and destination image promote destination loyalty has been supported by an empirical model. In order to render the study simpler to understand, the demographics have been adjusted to reflect Bangladeshi income earners. The study used a quantitative methodology and SEM-PLS analysis to determine the results. While scales of destining positively influence loyalty where as some negative thoughts remarked for tourist experiences towards destination loyalty. The approach has addressed several narrative flaws in Bangladesh's tourist sector, as the study's conclusion discusses and explains. In order to link destination image and visitor experiences to destination loyalty, this study conceptually builds a framework and proposes an equation. Additionally, the model brought about differences in the results on the same variable's scales.

Keywords: Tourism, Destination Loyalty, Destination image, Tourist experiences, Moheshkhali.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is considered to be unattainable to determine how a destination maintains its reputation among travelers without evaluating their experiences, recognizing the actions of travelers that foster their loyalty to the location. (Stavrianea etal.,2022). In contrast, a destination's image heavily takes into account how its residents interact with tourists. According to (Bermudez et al.,2018), more tourists are much more infatuated to know destination image what they have been much more attracted to visit particular place. As a consequence, numerous studies have also recommended that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) needs to pay substantially more attention to a certain place in response to the impressions that travelers have of it (Králiková, et al.,2020). A visitor's memorable experience can shape loyalty which can also be resulted by the destination's image, which is constructed from its features, culture, and services (Kusnayain et al.,2025) .Destination images are a combination of cognitive beliefs and affective emotions (such as happiness, excitement, and relaxation) (Almeida-Santana,2018), that affect pre-trip desire and post-trip satisfaction, they naturally evoke transitory (temporary) feelings(Rolle,2021).However, as the experience progresses, these feelings change from anticipation to in-the-moment feelings to memories,
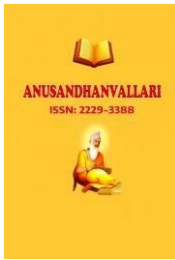
which influence loyalty (Almeida-Santana,2018). Although price resemblance can encourage first visits (Ing et al.,2023), this relationship is complex, with emotional and cognitive factors frequently outweighing pure monetary price in building lasting loyalty (Khuan et al., 2004). Perceived value/fairness and destination image, significantly shape tourist satisfaction, influencing their loyalty, which is a mix of intent to revisit and recommend. Deeper destination loyalty is ultimately fostered by a strong, good destination image that is linked to perceived quality and worth (rather than merely low cost) and equitable pricing (Leo et al.,2021). Hence, this study has attempted to know how well, destination image and tourist experiences brings loyalty to a lone mountainous Island of Bangladesh: Moheshkhali.

Bangladesh asserts exceptional natural beauty and has enormous, but mainly unrealized, tourism potential in South Asia (Islam, 2022). Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation: 2019 claims that the tourism industry makes up the largest portion of the nation's GDP, contributing $391 million, or 4.4% of the total. In the context of Bangladesh's tourism industry, several destinations were highlighted by Amin,2021. This study is being conducted in the upazila of Cox's Bazar in the Chaatragram district of Bangladesh, on the lone mountainous island known as Moheshkhali (beautifulbangladesh.gov.bd). It is a highly recommended tourist destination that attracts visitors from all walks of life and contributes positively to Bangladesh's tourism sector (Talukder, et al.,2021). In the meantime, Moheshkhali's tribal residents are part of the local community, and this study's particular focus is on their emotional solidarity with tourists, which influences their intention to return. The lone mountainous island in Bangladesh, Moheshkhali, is located in the Chattrogram division of the Cox's Bazar district and is referred to as "Vhatti Anchol Dwip." locally (beautifulbangladesh.gov.bd). It is a mountainous island with hilly mangrove forests and several tribal settlements (People's Republic of Bangladesh Data Collection Study on Regional Development in Southeastern Bangladesh:2012). However, it is an upazila with a municipality, eight union parishads, and another smaller island, Kutubdia, in the Bay of Bengal basins ("District Statistics 2011: Cox's Bazar", Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics: 2014). It is located approximately 15 km from the Cox's Bazar district, and its main attractions are the island mountain and the sea voyage to the oldest temple, Adinatha temple (Islam, 2022).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination loyalty is counted as the center of interest for sustainable tourism development. If tourists repeatedly visit any place, they tend to spread positive word of mouth regarding that destination. Which can make an impact in reducing the marketing costs and stabilize demand in the long run (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). According to researchers' destination loyalty can be treated in a multidimensional way. As a result, we can explore its multiple outcomes as, behavioral intentions; attitudinal commitment, and recommendations (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Jin et al., 2020). Recommendations actually advocates regarding any destinations from the tourist's perspective. Existing studies about destination marketing argues that, prior visiting experience; present experience; and post visit memory can establish positive mindset. Destination branding cues such as perceived price fairness is also connected with this (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Liu et al., 2020). The present study tested whether, two dimensions of destination image (cognitive and affective) and; two dimensions of experience (memory and transitory feelings) explain destination loyalty for mountainous island Moheshkhali.

2.1 : Destination image: cognitive and affective components

Destination image is one of the founding bricks in the tourism sector of research. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1993), destination image is multidimensional as it features beliefs and holistic impressions of any touristy place. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) modelled destination image formation as a process because, it is driven by stimulus inputs. Inputs in term of promotional materials, past experience, and tourist characteristics. Which can distinguish between the cognitive and affective elements of the destination image. Cognitive components are beliefs about attributes of any destination and affective components are the emotional responses for destination image. Empirical work has repeatedly shown that, both dimensions matter for choices, satisfaction, and destination
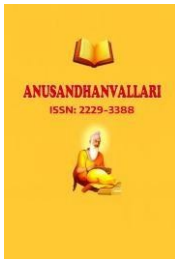
loyalty. However, their relative effects vary across the contexts and measures in destination marketing (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Echtner & Ritchie, 1993).

The cognitive image is measured by tourists' evaluations of tangible destination attributes. Such as access, safety, attractions, and accommodations of any destination. Which has often been linked to satisfaction and behavioral intentions in tourism. However, some studies report only indirect effects via satisfaction or context dependent influences (Beerli & Martín, 2004). In contrast, the affective image is related to the visitors' overall emotional response to a destination. That indicates if the destination is pleasant or, unpleasant; exciting or, boring to the tourist. Affective image captures the experiential, evaluative quality of any destination that directly stimulates attachment and loyalty towards any place (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Stylidis et al., 2020).

The empirical results suggest, both cognitive and affective images exerted positive effects on Moheshkhali loyalty. Which aligns with a growing body of research that finds additive effects of belief based and emotion-based perceptions. Where some earlier studies emphasized affect as dominant because emotions drive immediate attachment. The combined importance of cognitive assessments and affective responses is consistent with integrative models. Where accurate belief assessments can strengthen trust in the destination brand and perceptions of value. Therefore, we can say it influences loyalty via perceived price resemblances and branding while affecting visitors emotionally (Liu et al., 2020; Beerli & Martín, 2004). In practical terms for Moheshkhali, this suggests that improving both attribute quality in terms of cleanliness; services; reasonable prices and the emotional ambience as, hospitality; sense of place can will jointly enhance the destination loyalty.

2.2 : Tourist experiences: memory versus transitory feelings

Experience research distinguishes transient emotions experienced during consumption from enduring memories that persist post visit (Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick, 2012). Which shows how tourist' experiences are way more different in the both situations. Either it's for travel experiences based on memory we have from prior visit or, temporary visit experiences from post visit situations. Kim et al.'s (2012) multiple scales from experiences of tourist that are memorable, identified several dimensions from tourist experiences. These are pleasure-seeking, nourishment, resident culture, significance of the involvement, information, participation, and uniqueness that the destination possessed. That explain how experiences are encoded into long term memory and later motivate behavioral intentions in destination marketing. Recent research demonstrates that memorability enhances revisit intentions. Which often mediated by nostalgia or place attachment towards any destination from the tourist point of view and that memory effects can be robust even after time has elapsed (Hu & Xu, 2021; Lu et al., 2022). If tourists have any nostalgic impact in mind regarding any travel experience it can simply make an attachment to the destination.

Transient or transitory feelings refer to short-lived states which are, momentary excitement; surprise; and annoyance. That arise while tourists navigate the destination (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). While it's also noticeable that, transient positive emotions can increase in moment satisfaction and influence immediate behavioral cues. That is similar to during trip spending or spontaneous recommendations to others. But literature is mixed on whether fleeting emotions translate into durable loyalty. Kim et al., (2012); Hu & Xu,'s (2021) some work suggests that only experiences encoded as memorable. Because they are meaningful, novel, or highly involving and generates the nostalgia and attachment. All these are necessary for revisit decisions of the tourists in destination marketing-based research. Other studies argue discrete emotions like joy, love, and surprise can impute stronger behavioral responses than aggregated affect measures (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). But need to keep in mind that, short lived emotions may decay unless consolidated in memories of the tourists.

It seems memory significantly predicts loyalty, whereas transitory feelings do not provide empirical support. Frameworks supports privilege memory over fleeting emotions. When the outcome variable is durable loyalty rather than immediate satisfaction. This pattern suggests that Moheshkhali visitors' longer-term intentions are

driven by experiences. That were encoded as memorable in terms of novelty, involvement, and meaningfulness, not merely by ephemeral moods. The mediation processes identified in recent studies, memorability to nostalgia or, place attachment towards revisit intention. Which actually offer a probable mechanism to memorable experiences creation and a cognitive-affective trace. That supports future behavioral intentions even in the face of minor episodic negative events in a nut shell (Hu & Xu, 2021; Lu et al., 2022).

2.3 : Integrating image, experience, and loyalty mechanisms

A consistent theme across the literature is that image, experience, and brand cues are interdependent. Destination image shapes expectations and thus influences both how experiences are processed and whether they become memorable. Conversely, memorable experiences update the destination image and strengthen the brand (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kim et al., 2012). According to Liu et al., (2020), brand-related factors such as, perceived price fairness, branding operate as both antecedents and moderators of loyalty. That means, positive brand perceptions can amplify the loyalty effects to destination image. Which are both cognitive and affective image along with positive memories.

It seems study's pattern related to cognitive, affective, memory and, loyalty is theoretically coherent within this integrated view. Cognitive beliefs about attribute quality likely reduced perceived disappointment risk and supported positive value judgments (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Beerli & Martín, 2004). We can also see; affective image and memory then contributed the emotional and mnemonic layers. That translated those evaluations into commitment and advocacy for any destination for the tourism aspect. The non-significant role of transitory feelings suggests a boundary condition. Transitory affective states only matter for loyalty when they are consolidated into durable and meaningful memories. Temporary affective states also matter, when they shape a broader affective image from the destination image (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Kim et al., 2012).

2.4 : Theoretical support

Travelers' intentions to visiting any destination can be explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Ajzen (1991) also says that attitudes, perceived control and social influence all have a great influence in the behavior. In tourism related studies, revisit intention and loyalty are reflection of positive tourist behavior. It is often viewed as the behavioral outcome of tourism cognitive evaluations (Lam & Hsu, 2006). In this study, destination loyalty reflected through perceived pricing fairness, branding impression, and seasonal appeal is considered the final behavioral intention outcome.

The first component of the framework emphasizes destination image. Cognitive image relates to how tourists judge tangible features such as accessibility, facilities, and safety. When such attributes are formed as favorable by the travelers, it is likely to create positive predispositions towards revisiting (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Along with this, affective image means emotional response of the tourists. The emotional response or feelings can be reminded by a destination visited earlier. Attachment can be supported by positive emotional impressions like, excitement or calmness and intentions to come back can become stronger (Stylidis et al., 2020). According to TPB, intentions will be determined by both cognitive and affective aspects of image resulting in H1 and H2.

The second element is the study of tourism experience. Memory plays a significant role in forming tourism experience. Because experiences that remain intense over time in the mind can influence long term decisions about revisiting the place again (Kim et al., 2012). Memorable experiences are usually a combination of cognitive recall and emotional satisfaction and therefore are considered effective predictors of loyalty. This supports H3 and that means, memory contributes meaningfully to loyalty formation.

Transitory emotions, on the other hand, refer to temporary feelings that occur during the visit such as excitement, surprise, or frustration (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). Often these feelings may increase momentary enjoyment but, they may not be strong enough to translate into long term loyalty. It can timeless if, become part of a meaningful

memory. Therefore, TPB always emphasis on durable evaluations over short term emotions. So that, H4 proposes that transient feelings may not significantly influence revisit intention.

This framework altogether suggests that, cognitive and affective image along with memorable experience, are more likely to predict loyalty toward the mountainous island Moheshkhali than transitory emotional reactions.

2.5 : Hypotheses and model of the study:

H1: Cognitive image has no beneficial effect on destination loyalty for Moheshkhali

H2: No favorable impact of affective image on destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali

H3: No positive influence of memory towards destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali

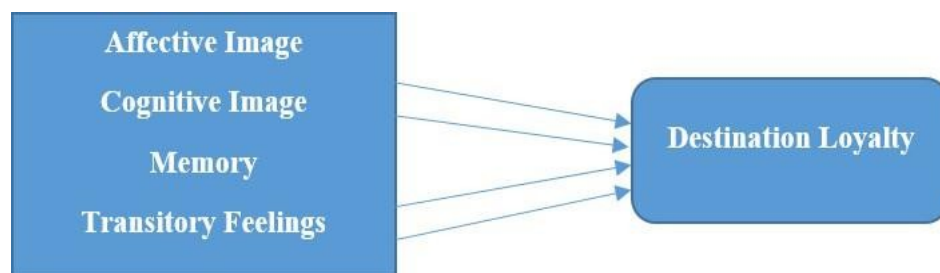H4: No positive influence of transitory feelings towards destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali

Figure1: Model developed from hypotheses (author's own source)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 : Questionnaire and Construction measurement

The scales of destination image (DI: cognitive and affective) and tourist experience (TE: memory and transitory sensations) toward the degree of destination loyalty (DL: pricing resemblances, branding, and seasonal attractiveness) comprise the two portions of the questionnaire used to collect data for this study. A five-point Likert scale has been utilized as to avoid any form of prejudice (Shil et al.,2024). The first section includes two indicators of destination image: the degree to which memory and fleeting emotions influence visitors' perceptions of the location, and the degree to which cognitive and affective factors make the location devoted to tourists (Wang, et al.,2024). Travelers' loyalty to a place is influenced by a variety of factors, including pricing, branding, and seasonal appeal, all of which have been identified by numerous studies as being of the highest importance. (Almeida-Santana et al.,2018). Nonetheless, various studies on destination marketing elements in the travel and tourism sector reveal destination loyalty (Oppermann.,2000). However, the scales that have been taken into consideration to determine the extent of one of the world's most well-known but unexplored tourist destinations are the gap covered by this study.

3.2 : Data collection: Technique of Sampling

Sampling technique that is nonprobability known as Convenience sampling, that allows researchers to swiftly and affordably collect data by choosing individuals based on their proximity and ease of access (Golzar et al.,2022), In contrast, this sample method offers a clear benefit of low costs (Sedgwick.,2013). Nevertheless, this study is descriptive in design. Males and females who visit the research site and want to return make up the target sample unit. More than 1000,000 employed male and female respondents from Bangladesh were used to calculate the sample size (Bangladesh statistics 2020,2019) and conferring to Morgan-krejcie (1970). In accordance with the established sample size of 384 for this known population, questionnaires disseminated were valid rejoinder

degree to 100%. However, the surveys were originally created in English, but in order to get a large number of responses, they were translated into Bangla, the home language.

3.3 : Statistical methods

Cronbach's alpha remained utilized to ensure validity and dependability due to the need for sincerity in data gathering as well as caution and the respected expertise regarding rejoinders (Vaske et al.,2024). Discriminant validity is reviewed in order to figure out how unrelated one test is to another that uses HTMT techniques to evaluate different constructs (Afthanorhan et al., 2021). The bootstrapping approach consumes remained selected to assessment of the hypothesis in the interim. PLS 3 statistical software was used for the SEM model that has been previously indicated statistical analysis.

4. REUSLTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 : Demographic Results:

With males dominating the table at 56% and females at 44%, the demographic bench shows comparatively insignificant variation between the percentages among female and male when taking into account the audience's perspective on the 384 final defendants. Clubbing accounts for 49% on BDT 45000 51% on above of BDT: 46000 respectively. Last but not least, according to the age battering survey, those among the ages, between (18 to 45) control the table with 68% and 32%, correspondingly, for those 46 and elder.

4.2 Reliability and validity:

In demand to assess each tool's fitness and deliver consistent findings under certain circumstances, reliability is tested. Churchill Jr (1979) According to Markovic et al. (2017), reliability is defined as the extent to which a tool is measured without error and at random, which leads to the appropriateness of employed variables continually., where 0.7 and higher is the threshold limit. Figure 2 establishes analysis of the reliability where the dimensions from this paper are compatible inside the threshold limit.

Fig: 2: Reliability Analysis

Dimensions	Item	Outer Loading			Cronbach's alpha
		DI	TE	DL	
DI	CG	0.721			0.801
	AF	0.712			
TE	M		0.777		0.808
	TF		0.789		
DL	PR			0.712	0.712
	BR			0.790	
	SA			0.780	

Note: CG: Cognitive; AF: Affective, M: Memory, TF: Transitory feelings, PR: Price resemblance, BR: Branding, SA: Seasonal attractiveness

However, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant scale validity demonstrates the measure's independence from other concepts that it should not be associated with (Rönkköe t al., 2022). The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlation Criterion (HTMT), is developed by Heseler et al. (2015) to evaluate the veracity of discrimination. Heterotrait-hetero method correlations, or HTMT, are defined as the mean correlations of items across constructs. Comparing the logical mean value of the average correlations between items measuring related

constructs (Franke et al., 2019) that satisfy its requirements by demonstrating discriminant validity because the threshold limit is smaller than 0.09 (Franke et al., 2019) in the Figure 3.

Fig: 3: HTMT Model

	DI	TE	DL
DI		0.622	0.689
TE	0.677		0.666
DL	0.699	0.686	

4.3 : Hypothesis Testing:

Partial least squares structural equation modeling PLS-SEM; (Hair et al., 2022), a well-known multivariate analysis technique in the social sciences, has been utilized to control the impact of connections among different components. It evaluates how dependent an endogenous variable is on external factors and uses route estimate to assess the relevance of various hypotheses (Hair et al., 2010). When examining the impact relationship between different constructs, SEM makes use of every feature of the measurement model (Fan et al., 2016). The SEM results for Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4- which are also detailed in Table 1- are shown in Figure 3 and were obtained using the bootstrapping approach.

Table 1: Hypothesis Results (Significance Level at 0.05)

Particulars	R^2	Path Coefficient (β)	T statistics (p Values)	Result
H1: Cognitive image has no beneficial effect on destination loyalty for Moheshkhali	0.332	1.99	1.97(0.03)	Rejected
H2: No favorable impact of affective image on destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali	0.332	1.98	1.97(0.02)	Rejected
H3: No positive influence of memory towards destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali	0.448	1.97	1.98(0.00)	Rejected
H4: No positive influence of transitory feelings towards destination loyalty towards Moheshkhali	0.448	1.89	1.88(0.06)	Accepted

The hypothesis results in Table 1 indicate a slight absence of interest in both hypotheses. Nakagawa et al. (2017) state that the degree of impact (coefficient determination) in H1 and H2 is 0.332/33% where the deviation from the endogenous variable (destination loyalty) is abstemiously clarified by the scope of the exogenous feature towards destination image and soberly explained to tourist experiences as 0.448/45%. Hereafter, Path coefficient (β) clarifies the healthy impression of destination loyalty controlled for cognitive image (1.99) and good impact of affective image (1.98) towards destination loyalty. H1 demonstrations that β value is more than 0.1 and T-

statistic is more than 1.96 as 1.97 respectively. Rendering to Mueller et al., (2018) the values stated as threshold limit of β and T-statistics, the made null hypothesis is rejected at a lower consequence level of 0.05. For H2 β value more than 0.1 and T-statistics is more than 1.96 as (1.98/1.97) on the significant level of less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected, and so for what, alternative is familiar (Ringle et al.,2014). Likewise, for H3 is rejected as null hypothesis where according to Mueller et al., (2018) the values mentioned as threshold limit of β and T-statistics, at a lower implication level of 0.05. For H3 β value more than 0.1 and T-statistics is more than 1.96 as (1.97/1.9) on the significant level of less than 0.05. In the analysis for H4, where the β and t-statistics are less than the threshold limit of 1.96 as (1.89/1.88) on more than 0.05 significances level and according to Ringle et al.,2014, null hypothesis is accepted.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

This study reflects toward mountainous island Moheshkhali, an emerging coastal destination in Bangladesh. Which contributes to destination loyalty research by empirically examining how destination image and tourism experience influence loyalty towards any destination. The results demonstrate that cognitive image, affective image, and memory significantly predict destination loyalty. While transitory feelings do not reflect destination loyalty in the broader spectrum. These findings are aligned with evolving tourism literature from destination loyalty. It seems enduring memories are more powerful than temporary emotional states. Enduring memories helps tourists to shaping revisit intentions and spreading positive word of mouth or, advocacy. All the outcomes strengthen the legitimacy of the integrative models. Destination image can shape expectations of the tourists and the experiences tourists gain here can be transform into memorable impressions.

In theoretical standpoint, the study demonstrates two different observations. Firstly, this study ensures that cognitive and affective images reflect a direct relationship on destination loyalty. It's not acting only through satisfaction or experience-based mediators. Next, this study explains about different components of experience. From there memory is essential for formation of destination loyalty. While transitory emotions are insufficient if acts alone. It can make sense if embedded into memorable and meaningful tales. That means, memories reflect a much more prolonged impact on destination loyalty than any form of transitory feelings.

From practical viewpoint, Bangladesh tourism needs to emphasis more on strategic planning and proper destination management. As a mountainous island Moheshkhali, we can see there are lack of tourism facilities and modern amenities. Which can be sorted by structured tourism planning and continuous branding effort that, in a long run will facilitate positive visitor experience. Destination marketing organizations works for building cultural heritage, mangrove ecosystem and resilience in local fishing communities. DMO's can also contribute to improve the infrastructural development and quality assurance for destinations. Transparent pricing policies and well-designed experiences along with locally distinctiveness can make experiences more impactful. Moheshkhali needs more investments for designing informational programs for visitors. It can be any guided tour experience involving storytelling, ecotourism and heritage tourism. Training in community-based tourism sector along with a strong visitor feedback system can make a significant impact on both cognitive assessment and emotional engagement.

Furthermore, destination branding is far beyond promotion of the places and it needs a continuous management supervision. Destinations like Bali, Langkawi, Palawan, Madagascar, and Kerala promotes sustainability along with authentic local island-hopping experience and benefit sharing from the locals. If we can combine branding elements properly with memory focused experience design, it will assure the visitors in a long way. Moheshkhali can progress from an underdeveloped mountainous island tourism spot to a competitive and global destination by ensuring all these above-mentioned touch points. This mountainous island destination, is way more capable of fostering sustainable destination image and strong visitor loyalty.
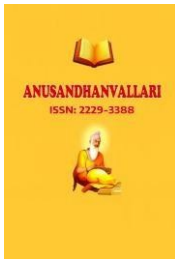
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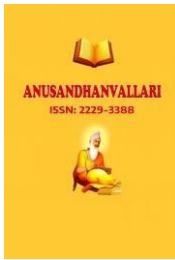
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