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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AN ANALYSIS OF TOURISM CLIMATE IN KANNUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Just like any other economic activity tourism is also being considered as the major bread winner of the economy. Realizing the enormous potential of tourism in the days to come government has started to extend various policies and funding plans in support of this industry. Unlike erstwhile people are very much inclined to various tourism related activities which in turn would prosper the economy and the employability. Foreign inflow of the nation is a matter of concern as far as India is concerned. Though massive inflow of foreign money is not a desirable trend it is recommended to an extent. Government mulls to expand the export segment operations by implementing Special Economic Zones in massive terms. Some relaxed policies and promotional attitude is maintained on the part of the policy makers in boosting the export potential of our country. While considering tourism an industry it is evident that we don't have to export anything in material or tangible. Instead we need to beautify our cities and to ameliorate the infrastructure facilities which would attract the tourists in bulk. Hence it is imperative to note that our intake of resources doesn't flow outside when we think of developing tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

Regional imbalance over the years is ailing the nation like anything. When we boast of the overall development of the nation it is painful to note that lives in villages are still lagging behind in sanitation and basic amenities. Even though the situation has improved a little during these years, there are undeveloped areas where the hospitals, primary schools and banking institutions are still a distant dream. The sphere of tourism activities mainly involve designing a frame work for restructuring the dreams of rural people where lives are seemed to have ignored by the government. Unemployment in Indian scenario is a menace which is to be tackled with utmost attention the failure of which would even undermine the sovereignty of the nation. It is evident that the tourism industry can offer huge employment opportunities in the state. Deployment of various authorized tourist guide and the setting up of infrastructure facility would definitely mount the room for employment and thereby ameliorate the status of the citizens. Development of adequate infrastructure has become a need of the hour. It is needless to say that a well developed infrastructure facility existing in the country would definitely support the tourism and allied activities.

In economically depressed areas, the employment and income provided by tourism especially to young people may help stem out migration from those areas. Increased government revenues, through various types of taxation on tourism that can be used to develop community and infrastructural facilities and services to assist in general economic development are also a direct economic benefit. These direct and indirect economic benefits are usually the primary positive impact of multiplier effect of tourism

Scope of the study

Kerala is considered as the most preferred location of tourist both domestic and foreign over decades despite low carrying capacity and accessibility. Kerala, the god's own country has been attracting the travelers abundantly over the years. The tourism product which is being offered includes handicrafts, cotton textiles, wildlife, museum, zoo and archeology. Many sightseeing locations, drive in beach, hilly areas, wild life sanctuary being the exclusive peculiarities of Kerala remains untapped. Hence it is thought prudent to make a study tourist arrival trend and the income earned through that.

Importance of the study

Tourism exists in an open system which continuously interacts with the material and men around. Hence it cannot remain

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isolated. Nowadays tourism is evolved as one of the prominent segments of economic growth of any country. Kerala is blessed with many favorable factors fostering tourism related activities. Still it is lagging behind to contribute to the economy in many respects. The performance of tourism industry is a function of various environmental factors. As such the factors affecting the tourism climate in Malabar are to be carefully identified and analyzed in potential perspective. Hence it is imperative to identify the tourism climate in Kannur district.

Objectives of the study

The study is made by keeping in view of the following objectives

- To identify the crucial factors affecting the tourism climate.
- To identify the magnitude of various environmental factors that affects the tourism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present paper is structured as an analytical one. Information is collected from the people in Kannur district by issuing questionnaire. Convenient sampling method is used to collect information from a sample of 50 respondents. For the purpose of analysis five point Likert style methods is used. Simple arithmetic Mean value is considered as a statistical measure. If the value of the mean falls above 3, that factor is conducive to the tourism development. If the mean value is less than 3 the factor is treated as challenging to the tourism. For bringing clarity in analysis a separate scaling is used in this. That is, if the mean value is between 1 and 2 treated as most unfavorable, between 2 and 3 unfavorable, between 3 and 4 favorable, between 4 and 5 most favorable.

Investigation Results

Innovation in the sectors of tourism products and service

Sowing the seeds of innovation in the sphere of production and service related to tourism can contribute a lot to the all-round development of nation. There are much more tourism products which are unexposed in Malabar region. For example Home Stay is one of the innovative ways in accommodating tourists in Malabar region. Unlike other parts in Kerala, such practice is yet to gain momentum in Kannur district. A cursory view of the analysis of this variable shows that the mean value is 2.8. As such the variable is found not favorable to the existing tourism climate in the Malabar region. Tourism sector relatively follows the traditional modes operandi, which makes them to compromise both in terms of quality and up gradation. Thus switching over from the prevalent obsolete modes operandi to modernized mechanism has become the need of the hour.

Women empowerment

Educating and equipping a woman signifies educating and equipping the entire society to which she belongs. This statement well exposes the requirement of women

empowerment in the nation building activity. By strengthening the presence of tourism women empowerment is perceived. The mean value here works out to be 1.8 which shows the factor is not contributing to the tourism development of the district. The present tourism activities are contributing few to the women empowerment and uplift. Hence efforts should be made to bring the women from the marginalized sectors to the main stream of the society by developing tourism.

Employment generation: Unemployment and Underemployment is a curse that the country is experiencing. Some are forced to take up a job which is much below his educational qualification. Government is unable to offer job to all the citizens. This emphasizes the need of setting up of a self employment. Tourism activity can expose innumerable chances of employment in the area. The analysis indicates the mean value of this factor works out at 2.8 which is perceived as an unfavorable one. Analysis reveals women willingly do not take up any employment in the unorganized sectors of tourism.

Fund crunch: Fund provides spine to any industry. Free and fair flow of fund ensures the sound and healthy existence of any industry. The existence of tourism offers an array of business opportunities in the vicinity. An enterprise which always faces fund shortage can only offer mediocre performance. A cursory view of the analysis reveals that mean value works out at 1.9 which indicates the factor is unfavorable in the tourism climate of Kerala. (See Table 1). Our monuments and other historical important locations are to be preserved and maintained with improved facilities and programmes. However improper utilization of fund is always a threat to tourism development in the district.

Support of local bodies: Support of local bodies is a pre requisite for the existence of developing tourism in the Malabar region. Infrastructure development and the maintenance demands help from the local self government bodies. This is a determining factor in the tourism development of the area. This requires a good tie up with the local bodies and authorities. The mean value of this factor works out at 2.4, which is turned unfavorable in the study. Study indicates that the rapport of local bodies is not conducive to the tourism development of the state. Hence the authorities should concentrate more on this factor as it has a lot to offer towards the success.

Infrastructural development: To great extent tourism development is dependent on well developed and structured infrastructural facility that contributes a lot to the growth and development of District. A balanced development between various means of transport like rail road etc should be maintained. In the analysis mean value is 2.6 which points out that the factor is unfavorable for the tourism climate in the Malabar region (See TABLE 1). The pathetic situation of roads in Kerala is worth mentioning here. Heavy traffic blocks and worse condition of roads especially during rainy season influences adversely to the tourism. When we boast of the tourism potential we must keep in mind such infrastructure factors also.

Strength of traditional industry: Presence of traditional industry has been consciously incorporated in the study since it is worth mentioning. Traditional industry here stands for coir industry, handlooms weaving and handicrafts. Time tested handloom weaving is still at the helm despite all odds. The tag line of Kannur, 'land of looms and lores' makes much sense. The mean value here works out to be 3.6 which indicate a favorable situation. The presence of such traditional industry is a core pillar in developing tourism in the district. The district has immense potential to boost the tourism with traditional industry. Hence the authorities should see that the traditional industry is not impaired in whatsoever name.

Frequency of employment: Tourists are attracted to the district only during a particular season. During March, April and May owing to the scorching sun tourist are least willing to visit the district of Malabar region. As such the indirect employment at tourist locations like street vendors and road side eateries and handicrafts normally comes down. The value in the table is 2.6 which is unfavorable and not conducive for the growth of tourism in the district.

Presence of Tourist Guide: Tourist guides are the window through which tourists look into the preferred locations. Their presence gives some sort of confidence and courage and removes the fear and indecision in the minds of the new entrant of a location. The mean value here works out to be 3.6 which is favorable one. This reveals that the available tourist guides are efficient in discharging their duties and is conducive for the tourism climate. Authorities should set new norms for the authorized tourist guides and should implement an effective monitoring system to see that this factor is promising for the potential growth of tourism.

Bandh and hartal: Local bandh and hartals, which paralyses normal life, causes huge losses to the economy and human resource is a common phenomenon in Kannur district. These variables can be attributed to many factors. Such hartals and bandh are inherent to the political climate of Kannur district in particular and Kerala in general. Analysis shows that the mean value of this factor works out at 1.8. Since the value is less than 2 it is proven most unfavorable to the tourism climate of Kannur. Tourists gets disappointed with such untoward incident and this in turn reduces the turn up of domestic as well as foreign tourist in the district.

Language translation: Language Communication can alone broaden the outlook and mindset of a traveler. It plays a pivotal role in the tourism promotion in the district. When a foreigner visits our country he loses the confidence to communicate with the locals since it is not their mother tongue. The mean value here works out to be 1.6 which is termed unfavorable for the tourism development of the district. Such a language barrier and communication gap perceives the threat that undermines the tourism development of the district. However with the presence of a sincere language translator in the main tourist destinations this agony is removed.

Tourist facilitation centre: A well designed comfort station and facilitation centre for the tourist alone can boost the tourism in the district. In Kannur district there are many tourist

facilitation centres which are defunct and non operational. Huge money spends for the construction of such premises and remains unmaintained. The analysis gives the mean value of 1.9 which is quite unfavorable for the tourism development of the district. The authorities should give more stress to such abandoned tourist facilitation centre and strive hard to turn the factor conducive for the development of the district tourism.

Adequate security for the tourist: Safety and security of the tourist in the tourist destination matters a lot for the development of the industry. A traveler should always feel a sense of security to make him revisit the same destination with fun and fervor. The mean value here works out to be 3.4 which show the factor is favorable and not detrimental to the development of the tourism in the district. Kannur district is known relatively a safe and tourist friendly location as far as the travelers are concerned.

Beauty of the landscape and climate: Kerala is known for the forests, rivers and coasts and ayurveda. These factors are obviously the spine of tourism industry. Tourist comes to Kerala for visiting the monuments, sightseeing and to enjoy the landscape beauty blended with the gift of nature. The mean value here works out to be 3.8 and is felt favorable in the survey. Such a landscape coupled with the climatically conditions is proven a boon for the development of tourism in the district.

Attraction to the Kerala culture: The unique culture of Kerala is famous across the globe. Foreign tourist is attracted to the state mainly owing to the difference in culture. Various festivals exclusively for Kerala like Onam, Vishu and pulikkali are worth mentioning over here. The unique variety of Malabar region 'Theyyam' attracts wide foreigners to the Kannur district alone. The mean value here works out to be 4.2 and evident that the factor is a strong presence for boosting the Kerala tourism in general and tourism in the district particular.

Table 1. Table showing awareness factors relating to Touris

Awareness Factors	Total Number of Respondents	Mean value
1. Innovation in sectors of production and services	50	2.8
2. Women empowerment	49	1.8
3. Generation of employment	48	2.8
4. Fund crunch	50	1.9
5 Support of local bodies	50	2.4
6. Infrastructural development	50	2.6
7. Strength of traditional industry	50	3.6
8. Frequency of employment.	49	2.6
9. Presence of tourist guide	50	3
10. Bandh and hartal	50	1.8
11. Language translation	48	2
12. Tourist facilitation centre	49	1.9
13. Adequate security	50	3.4
14. Beauty of the landscape and climate	50	3.8
15. Attraction to the Kerala culture	46	4.2

Recommendations

- Attraction to Kerala culture is a factor which earned maximum mean value amongst other factors. Such increased mean value proves to be a highly conducive for the tourism development of the district in particular

and the state in general. Hence the tourism authorities and the government should take necessary initiative to preserve and propagate the Kerala culture and thereby inviting more and more tourist in the days to come.

- Beauty of the landscape and climate ranks second in the survey. It goes without saying that the unique scenery and landscape in Kerala attracts numerous tourists both domestic and foreign. The necessity of the gift of nature to be maintained intact draws special attention here.
- Safety and Security of the tourist is always a matter of concern in India. The mean value of this factor works out to be 3.4 which is favorable one. This shows that the tourists are safe in the district. This is owing to the various safety measures adopted by the authorities and better education. A tourist will be attracted to a destination when their mind is free from all kinds of fear and indecision regarding their journey and stay in Kerala. Hence this factor needs to be maintained intact.
- A true tourist guide can only give direction to the thoughts and wishes of a traveler. His presence, attitude and behavior influence the stay of a tourist. The available guides are seen conducive to the development of tourism in Kannur. They must be imparted the improved skills and education to deal with the different situations of the tourist.
- Women empowerment scored the least mean value of 1.8. Though the topic of women empowerment is discussed everywhere in length and breadth the factor continues to ail the society. Authorities should take required initiative to see that the women of the district are given a chance to be a part of tourism development by opening craft stalls, refreshment facility at the tourist entrances working the capacity of language translator etc.

- History of Kerala and politics is tightly intertwined. Various political parties make hartal calls in the state for their own ideology. Ultimately the common man faces the brunt of such hartals and bandh calls for whatsoever reasons. Such hartals and bandh calls mar the tourism climate of the district. There should be conscious effort and consensus on the part of judiciary, political parties and leaders to resolve this menace.

Conclusion

The smokeless industry is growing at a higher pace compared to the previous years. The industry can contribute a lot to the future potential of the district. However there are many factors that come in the way of development of tourism. Hence the factors are to be analyzed to draw a more clear picture of the tourism climate in Kannur district. As such an analysis of the tourism climate of the district signifies much relevance. Out of 15 factors analyzed only the performance of 5 turned to be favorable. Majority of the factors are unfavorable since its mean value works out to be less than 3. In view of this the government and the authority should take measures to shift the unfavorable factors to the favorable one and to ameliorate the existing favorable factors. These would definitely open up a new horizon in the sphere of tourism development.

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