



ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN SUSTAINING BEACH TOURISM IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism industry is a new service sector which contributes good share of GDP every year. Kerala has different phases of tourism namely heritage tourism, culture tourism, hill tourism, marine tourism etc. Among the above, marine tourism is always an evergreen experience for tourist. It includes leisure and recreationally oriented activities in the off sea shore areas. Tourists visiting Kerala is attracted by both natural and artificial technologies for enjoying the beaches. The availability of basic amenity can influence the tourist arrival up to an extent. The dissatisfaction once created among tourist will limit their re-visit to such places. By providing maximum satisfaction and enjoyment with adequate requirement will become a good mark in minds. This paper tries to indentify the role of infrastructure in sustaining the beach tourism in Kerala.

KEYWORDS: Beach tourism, GDP, basic amenity, tourist.

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is sensitive to the world's economical and political conditions. It can occur on a large scale where the majority of people enjoy some prosperity and security. Tourism and holiday making on global as well as national scale is manifestation of prosperity and peace. The perspective of travel spreads over many fields human activity – cultural ,religious and sociological. Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destination outside their normal places of work and residence. Kerala, known as God s own country is blessed with coastline of 600 km which is a best sign of tourism for both domestic and foreign tourist. The holidays can be well spent in these beaches. The sand, sunbath, swimming is the three factors of attraction in beaches. Along with the 3 'S' of beaches, natural aesthetic also an attracting factor among tourists. In Kerala all district except Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Wayanad, Palakkad and Kottayam have coastlines. Each beach in Kerala has its own specialties. For example; Kovalam is best known beach for swimming. Every tourism packages within Kerala includes at least one beach.

While comparing the tourist visit to beach for a 10 year from 2010, it shows positive trends in Kerala. Some of the tourist has compared the beaches in Kerala with beaches in Goa. The concept of beach tourism comprises of leisure and recreational oriented activities that take place in the coastal zone and off shore coastal waters. These may include recreational boating, coast and marine based eco tourism, deep sea fishing, yacht, snorkeling, diving, wind surfing, swimming and adventure sports. The potential of Kerala beaches is vast and so many beaches remain deserted when compared to beaches in Goa.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Srilal Muthapala (2015) studied the opportunities and challenges of Marine Eco tourism in Srilanka. It revealed the fact that the termination of long duration hostilities in Srilanka enhanced the rate of tourism there. The Pristine beach in Srilanka is its main attraction among marine tourist destinations. This study identified increased tourism led to rise in natural disasters in that particular area. Whale watching, turtle hatcheries, snorkeling, kite surfing, scuba diving and exploring shipwrecks are some attractive tourist activities conducting in marine areas. The study suggested maintaining ecological balance in the marine destinations to avoid natural disasters and to enjoy the economic benefits out marine tourism in a long life.

Mohd Nizam Basiron (1997) focused the trends and prospects of marine tourism in Malaysia and the region of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand triangle. This study points out the increasing trends of cruise tourism and Island tourism. And show projected growth in marine tourism from US 2 trillion in 1993 to US 3 trillion by the year 2000. Three variables of marine tourism were identified in this study; namely hotel & supplementary accommodation, common activities and water spot activities. He recommended for small-medium level development in coastal areas to avoid high level natural burdens and suggested for making stay arrangements by government bodies at low cost for day trippers for enhancing their length of duration. The study concluded that marine tourism is directly linked with health of oceans and development policies should go in tally with sustainability also.

Neda Ghasemmia&Enseih Jafari Sarabi (2000) conducted a case study on coastal and marine tourism development in Persian Gulf which focuses on tourism industry in Iran. The study mentioned, instead of over exploiting marine resources, it can be used for sustainable development by careful designing of water activities such as surfing, sea kayakas etc. This will provide a trade opportunity for developing countries to conserve and protect eco-systems species. They reached on the conclusion that the economic approach in planning & strength oriented approach brings good tourism and offers benefits for the host. They recommended for the proper use of information regarding accommodation, transportation, recreational complex and resort in Persian Gulf to attract more tourist into gulf regions.

Stuti Haldar & Vandana Kapoor (2000) studied the importance of marine tourism along with its effect on the coastal habitats and identified three aspects such as environmental, socio-cultural and economic factors. They considered samples of marine habitats from coastlines of Andhrapradesh, Coromandel Coast, Eastern Coastal plains, Konkan Malabar coast and Western coastal plains of India. They mentioned the sustainable tourism by balanced use of environmental resources and availing economic benefits of tourism. The study suggested for eco-tourism for maintaining sustainability and the awareness of environmental gravity among coastal public can prevent the human activities up to a level. They remarked the issues regarding pressure on grasslands and dunes for getting priorities from government bodies.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Kerala has 600 km of coastline, it has immense potential for generating economic benefits in domestic currency and foreign currency also. The tourist is visiting beaches for enjoying both natural aesthetic and water sports activities. But the situation in Kerala is very opposite to the expectation of tourists. Beaches in Kerala lacks basic amenities such as toilets, changing rooms, good foods, swimming assistance and local guide .Majority of tourist visit beaches or sea shores for enjoying at its best. If the tourist visiting beaches are not availing any of the basic infrastructures, they will be dissatisfied. This feeling may restrict them from visiting the beaches again. This paper studies the role of infrastructure in maintaining beach tourism in Kerala.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Major objectives of the study are

1. To study the role of infrastructure in maintaining beach tourism in Kerala
2. To find out the satisfaction among tourist with regard to available infrastructures in beaches in Kerala.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method of the study is both descriptive and analytical. The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaire from tourist visited Kovalam, Varkala, Alappuzha beach, Fort Kochi and Kozhikode beach. The secondary data were collected through published journals and newspapers. The method of sampling adopted is judgmental sampling.

Sampling unit is selected from the state of Kerala where beach tourism is made available. There is only one sample unit selected for this study. The beach tourism destination in Kerala constitutes that sampling unit. The tourist who utilizes the services of beach tourism constitute that sampling unit. The sample size is expected to be 1% of the total consumers who visit beach tourism destination at 99% significance. The sample size selected limited to 60 which include 30 domestic tourist and 30 foreign tourist destination.

The results of the study explained as follows

Table 1
PERSONAL VARIABLES

1. Gender wise classification		
	No of Respondents	Percentage
Female	21	28
Male	54	72
2. Nationality		
Domestic	35	47
Foreign	40	53
3. Education		
Matriculation	9	12
Plus 2	10	13
Graduate	27	36
PG/Professionals	22	30
Illiterate	7	9

Source : Primary data

75 samples were considered including 35 domestic and 30 foreign tourists from 5 beaches across Kerala, which consists of 28 percent female and 72 percent male visitors. Profession is the major occupation among the samples selected. Major portion of tourist were either graduates (36%) or Post graduates (30%). Only 9 percent tourist belongs to the category of illiterate.

TABLE 2
TIME SPENT BY TOURIST IN BEACHES

Duration of stay	Tourists			
	Domestic		Foreign	
	No:	Percent	No:	Percent
Less than 1 day	20	57	5	17
Between 1 to 3 days	10	29	20	66
More than 3 days	5	14	5	17
Total	35	100	30	100

Source: Primary data

Out of 35 domestic tourists, majority spent less than 1 day especially at weekends or public holidays and in case of foreign tourist majority spent one to three days via sun bathing, swimming, and sun rise & set seeing.

TABLE 3
THE RATE OF INVOLVEMNT IN ACTIVITIES BY TOURISTS

Activities	No: of Respondents
Sun Bathing	30
Swimming	30
Water Activities	10
Walking over sea shores	35

Source: Primary data

The sun bathing and swimming have equal preference among tourists. They engage in more than one activity while they visit beaches, that s why there is a mismatch in accordance with the sample number and response rates. Only a few tourists engage in water activities because of its non availability in all beaches.

Table 4
SATISFACTION OF TOURIST IN BEACH INFRASTRUCTURE

Factors	Mean	S.D
Location Accessibility	61.34	21.74
Sanitation and Changing rooms	58.35	24.52
Food and Accommodation	65	17.81
Water activities	40	30.41
Hospitality	50	26.31
Street light & Night security	40	30.41
Waste management	45	27.48

From the above table, out of 75 tourists from both domestic and foreign tourist, Food and accommodation have highest satisfaction having a mean score of 65_+17.81 comparing with others. Among the other factors, water activities and night security have very low satisfaction having a mean score of 40_+ 30.41. Lack of these amenities will dissatisfy the tourist once visited and it will spread very fast by way of word of mouth marketing.

FINDINGS

Based on the above analysis, Following are the findings

- The infrastructure facilities available in beaches are very poor for satisfying the tourist arrivals
- The average duration of stay will be 1-3 days for a tourist
- Out of the tourists, Foreign tourists spends more time on beaches
- The waste disposal or waste management in sea shore is very poor
- Lack of night security and street lamps in some beaches creates dissatisfaction among tourists
- Lack of parks for children accompanying the tourist.
- Presently most of the foreign tourist enjoys sun bathing and swimming
- Lack of infrastructure creates bad image among tourists

SUGGESTIONS

- The basic amenities like waste disposal systems, street lights and sanitation facilities & changing room should be developed and maintained in a well manner
- There should be trained local guide at each beach for assisting tourists in their activities
- Rules and regulations should be made & followed strictly for maintaining the sustainability of beaches
- Proper awareness and information regarding each beach activities are to be spread among tourist via trained guides
- Activities like scuba diving ,snorkeling ,wind surfing should be made available at each beach with government supports
- Tourism department can conduct survey among tourist once in a while for getting feedbacks and recommendations

CONCLUSION

Tourism is an industry which contributes good share of income to government .Among the tourist subsections like hill tourism, eco tourism, heritage tourism, marine tourist is always an evergreen tourist package. The marine destinations always attract tourists with its natural beauty. The natural beauty of each destination should be sustained with adequate policies by concerned authority for bringing the benefit of tourism in a long term effect. In addition to the above requirements, some manmade innovations should be applied in beach side for attracting more tourists belongs to young generation. The existence of natural beauty with manmade technologies for enjoying marine destination can attract tourist globally and enhance the standard of beaches in Kerala.

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