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Coastal Tourism Opportunities in Kerala: A Study of Thrissur District

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Abstract: Coastal Tourism is based on a unique resource combination at the border of land and sea environments: sun, water, beaches, outstanding scenic views, rich biological diversity (birds, whales, corals etc), sea food and good transportation infrastructure. The principal aim of this paper is to assess the factors considered by the tourist while visiting in coastal destination, analyze the facilities available in beaches and to identify the negative factors present in coastal tourist destinations in Thrissur district. Both primary and secondary data used for the study. The secondary data is collected from review of existing literatures and published sources such as information of enterprises, journals, articles, PhD thesis, websites etc. Primary data collected for this study from the tourists of the four coastal tourism destinations located at Thrissur district such as Azhikode beach, Snehatheeram beach, Nattika beach, chettuva backwater and kottapuram backwater located at Thrissur district with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire. The study carried out with descriptive type of research. The survey conducted among the tourists of the six coastal tourism destinations located at Thrissur district such as Munakkal beach, Snehatheeram beach, Nattika beach, chavakkad beach, chettuva Back water and Kottapuram Back water with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire. Purposive sampling method under non-random sampling techniques was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 60 samples respondents through questionnaires. The study revealed that 'Affordability' is the major factor considered by the tourists while they visit at coastal destinations. Beach pollution, Overcrowding and alcoholism are the major factors present in beaches.

Keywords: Coastal tourism, Scenic views, Coastal destinations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism in India accounts for 7.5% of GDP and it is the third largest foreign exchange earner for the country. The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP is expected to grow at 7.2 per cent per annum, during 2015 – 25, with the contribution expected to reach US\$160.2 billion by 2026. Kerala which is popularly known as "God's own country" is one of the 50 tourist spots in the world. The coastal tourism, which is the major component of tourism sector in Kerala and is much commercialized according to the changing needs of the tourists.

Beach tourism utilizes the aesthetic and environmental values of the beach. It also combines water and land resources usage. Kerala is blessed with beautiful beaches which are the most important tourist attractions. The state has about 580 km. long coastlines, studded with world's best string of beaches. Well maintained, neatly kept and securely guarded, the beaches of Kerala are turning into an ideal beach vacation destination in India. Touring the beach sites of Kerala can make any beach holiday a delightful one, as Kerala's beaches are renowned for the gentle surf and blue waters. People from all over the world has acknowledged, experienced and written that water has a strange calming influence on everybody's mind and body and releases the senses and souls of those who seek solace on its shores.

Need and Significance of the Study

Analysis of the economy reveals that the future of Indian economy will depends on two major industries, viz, the tourism industry and the IT industry. In a state like Kerala, these industries have a greater significance because of the availability of rich human resources. These industries are comparatively ecofriendly in their nature. Tourism

demand refinement of nature and maintenance of its natural beauty. Unlike other industries, the nature itself contains and creates tourism potential.

The tourism industry can make use of untapped opportunities in coastal areas for increasing revenue and thereby making overall development of the coastal community as a whole. In order to make further development of coastal tourism in Kerala, it is necessary to identify the potentials of beaches and the perceptions of the tourists while they visit at the coastal destinations. It is also essential to identify the negative factors which make hindrances to the further development of the coastal areas.

The existing literature has clearly shown that no large-scale empirical research has been systematically conducted to explore the perception of tourists towards coastal destinations and negative factors present in coastal tourism destinations in Thrissur District.

In order to bridge this research gap, a study related with coastal tourism in Thrissur District is truly needed. On the basis of these analyses, researcher can identify the areas where further development is needed in the coastal destinations in Thrissur district.

Problem Justification and research questions

Though the study on coastal tourism is a subset of studies on general tourism, the same has been given an exclusive treatment in this section as coastal tourism forms the focus of this research work. It is one among the many types of tourism such as mountain tourism, eco tourism, cultural tourism, etc. According to Pearce, however, it is the most significant forms of tourism. The domestic and international tourist flow in many countries is dominated by visitors seeking the sun, sand and the sea (Pearce, 1989). The coast, with its beaches, dunes, coral reefs, estuaries and coastal waters, has always been a natural playground. Coastal environments provide open space, opportunity for leisure, relaxation, contemplation and physical activity.

So, the researcher wants to explore the perception and satisfaction of tourists towards coastal destinations, negative factors present in coastal tourist destinations and areas where further development is needed in the coastal destinations in Thrissur district.

This study seeks to provide answers to the following two research questions

1. What are the factors to be considered while selecting the coastal destinations?
2. What are the negative factors present in coastal tourism destinations located at Thrissur District?

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are;

1. To identify the factors considered while selecting the coastal destinations.
2. To know the available facilities while visiting coastal destinations.
3. To identify the negative factors present in beach tourist destinations.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, descriptive research is used to examine the perception of tourists towards the factors considered while visiting coastal destinations and the negative factors present in beaches of Thrissur district.

Sources of data: The study includes both primary and secondary data.

Secondary data: The secondary data is collected from review of existing literatures and published sources such as information of enterprises, journals, articles, PhD thesis, websites etc.

Primary data: Primary data collected for this study from the tourists of the six coastal tourism destinations located at Thrissur district such as Munakkal beach, Snehatheeram beach, chavakkad beach and Nattika beach, Chettuva Backwater and Kottapuram Backwater located with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire. Purposive sampling method under non-random sampling techniques was adopted for the study. Data were collected from 60 samples respondents through questionnaires.

Tools for data analysis: Simple analysis table, percentage analysis, and mean score is used for the analysis of the collected data.

Limitation of the study

1. Aged people does not co-operate with study so it is difficult to collect data through questionnaire.
2. It is difficult to identify the perception of people in depth

4. DATA ANALYSIS**TABLE 1.** Personal profile of the respondents

Particulars	Numbers	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	17	28.3
Female	43	71.7
Age		
Below 20	2	3.3
20-25	29	48.3
26-30	11	18.3
31-35	7	11.7
36-40	5	8.3
41-45	2	3.3
46-50	2	3.3
51 and Above	2	3.3
Type of residence		
Rural	24	48
Semi urban	13	26
Urban	13	26
Occupation		
Employed	16	32
Unemployed	34	68
self-employed	2	3.3
Monthly Income		
Below 10000	7	11.7
10000 -20000	3	5.0
20001-30000	17	28.3
30001-50000	14	23.3
Above 50000	19	31.7

Interpretation: The table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents are females (71.7%) and majority of respondents belongs to the age category of 20 to 25(48%) and majority of the respondents are rural people and majority of the people have monthly income between 20001 to 30000.

TABLE 2. Factors considered while visiting the tourism destinations

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Rank based on mean score
Accessibility	3.9167	1.07816	1.162	2
Recommended by experts	2.2667	1.03934	1.080	10
Affordability	4.0667	1.02290	1.046	1
Popularity	3.2833	1.37892	1.901	6
Price factor	3.1333	1.26848	1.609	8
Nearness from tourist spot	3.3833	1.09066	1.190	5
Recommended by tour operator	2.4667	.98233	.965	9
Peer pressure	3.4833	1.03321	1.068	3
Deliberate Choice	3.4500	1.19922	1.438	4
Nearness from other tourist spots	3.1667	1.13745	1.294	7

Interpretation: Based on mean score, affordability (4.06) is the most influencing factor towards visiting the coastal destinations in Kerala followed by Accessibility (3.91), Peer pressure(3.48), Deliberate choice(3.45), Nearness from tourist spot(3.38),Popularity(3.28), Nearness from other tourist spots(3.16), Price factor(3.13),recommended by tour operator(2.47) and recommended by experts(2.27).

TABLE 3. Perception regarding the facilities available in Beaches

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Rank based on mean rank
Cleanliness and hygiene	3.3000	.97945	.959	2
Conditions of the beaches	3.4333	.56348	.318	1
Safety measures	2.9333	.91812	.843	4
Security measures	2.8500	.89868	.808	5
Guidance facilities	2.5667	.96316	.928	8
Behavior of the guides	2.4333	.94540	.894	10
Transport services	2.8167	1.03321	1.068	6
Accommodation and Room Service facilities	2.3333	.98577	.972	14
Food and beverage services	2.9500	.76856	.591	3
Shopping facilities	2.8000	1.07040	1.146	7
Tourist information counters	2.3733	.95831	.918	13
Banking facilities	2.3833	.92226	.851	12
Arrangement to control noise pollution	2.2333	.90884	.826	15
Arrangement to control overcrowding	2.4233	.96316	.928	11
Travel ticketing facilities.	2.5000	1.21432	1.475	9

Interpretation: Based on mean score, ‘Condition of beaches’ (3.43) is the most important facility in the coastal destinations in Kerala which is perceived by the tourist followed by ‘Cleanliness and Hygiene’ (3.3), ‘Food and beverage services’ (2.95), ‘Safety measures’ (2.93), ‘Security measures’ (2.85), ‘Transport services’ (2.81), ‘Shopping facilities’ (2.8), ‘Guidance facilities’ (2.566), ‘Travel ticketing facilities’, ‘Behaviour of the guides’ (2.43), ‘Arrangement to control overcrowding’ (2.42), ‘Banking facilities’, ‘Tourist information counters’ (2.37), ‘Accommodation and room service facilities’ (2.33), ‘Arrangement to control noise pollution’ (2.23).

TABLE 4. Negative Factors Present in Coastal Destinations

Sl.No	Factors	No opinion	%	Not found in Beaches	%	found in Beaches	%
1	Beach pollution	3.0	5	14.0	23.33	43.0	71.67
2	Overcrowding in Beaches	8	13.33	10	16.67	42	70
3	Alcoholism	9	15	9	15	42	70
4	Drug trafficking	16	26.67	25	41.67	19	31.67
5	Unlicensed massage parlours	20	33.33	39	65	1	1.67
6	Illegal money changers	21	35	34	56.67	5	8.33
7	Imitation of bad culture of tourists by host	20	33.33	10	16.67	30	50
8	Excessive land utilization for tourism	20	33.33	35	58.33	5	8.33

Interpretation: Table 4 reveals that Beach pollution is the major negative factor present in beaches (71.67%) followed by Alcoholism (70%), Overcrowding (70%), imitation of bad culture of tourists by the host (50 %) etc.

Major Findings of The study

1. ‘Affordability’ is an important factor considered by the tourists while they visit to coastal destinations followed by Accessibility, Peer pressure and deliberate choices etc.
2. ‘Recommended by experts’ and ‘recommended by tour operators’ are the least important factors considered by the tourists while they visit at coastal destinations.
3. The perception of tourists toward beaches revealed that the ‘condition of beaches’ in the coastal areas of Thrissur district is ‘good’ followed by Cleanliness and Hygienic conditions, Safety and security. Perception of tourists towards all other facilities are unsatisfactory.
4. ‘Beach pollution’, ‘Alcoholism’, ‘Overcrowding’, ‘imitation of bad culture of the tourists by the host’ are the major negative factors present at coastal destinations.

Suggestions:

1. The major negative factor present in Coastal Destination is ‘Beach pollution’. So the Government and Tourism authorities should take necessary steps to reduce Beach pollution.

2. Other factors such as accommodation, Food and Beverages, Tourist information counters etc., the perception of tourists is unsatisfactory. So the authorities should provide necessary facilities to improve customer satisfaction.
3. KTDC and District promotion council should arrange water sport activities in order to attract the tourists towards coastal destinations.

5. CONCLUSION

The principal aim of this paper is assess the factors considered by the tourists while visiting in coastal destination, analyse the facilities available in beaches and to identify the negative factors present in coastal tourist destinations in Kerala. Findings of the study reveal that affordability and accessibility are the major factors considered by the tourist while visiting the coastal destinations. Tourists are satisfied with the cleanliness, safety and security measures at the coastal destinations. Overcrowding, beach pollution, alcoholism are the major negative factors present in the tourist destinations. Government and tourism authorities should take necessary steps to reduce negative factors and make destination more attractive.

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