

Trends and Progress of Tourism in Kerala

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Abstract

The importance of tourism in Kerala can by no means be underestimated. It helps the tourists to get used to the culture, customs and conventions, language and mode of living of the people at destination. The most important benefits of tourism include job creation, foreign currency earnings, infrastructure development, poverty eradication, and balanced regional development. This study is the trend and progress of tourism in Kerala over the period from 2008 to 2017. All tourism indicators have been showing an increasing trend over the sample period. All these have been possible due to the constructive efforts made by the Centre and State governments over years. The Government of Kerala understands the importance of tourism in building a vibrant sustainable economy in the long-run.

Key Words : *Tourism, Indicators, Trend Analysis, Employment, Kerala*

Introduction

In Kerala, tourism has become the most vibrant service sector activity and a multi-million industry over years. Tourism has been recognised as an engine of economic growth and development. Its role and importance in generating employment opportunities and contributing to national income has well been agreed worldwide. The growth of tourism industry in a country can change economic conditions. Thus prudent policies and projects are warranted for furthering the sector. The National Strategy for the Development of Tourism was prepared in 1996 aiming at the achievement of the benefits of tourism for the overall growth and development of Indian economy. The Expert House status was granted to tourism units so as to give a boost to foreign exchange earnings, employment and income generation through tourism activities during the 9th Five Year Plan. In 2002, National Tourism Development Policy was prepared with the objective of positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth so as to realize the direct as well as multiplier effects of tourism activities for employment and poverty reduction in an environmentally sustainable manner. Seven most important areas, viz., Swagat (Welcome), Soochna (Information), Suvidha (Facilitation), Suraksha (Safety), Sahyog (Cooperation), Samrachna (Infrastructure Development), and Safai (Cleanliness) were highlighted as a means of tourism sector

development.

Kerala Tourism has a global presence and with its clear strategy for growth sheer marketing activities, it has gained a lot of tourists from all over the world, especially from UK, USA, France and Australia. The Mission and Vision of Kerala Tourism is to position itself as a global destination for tourism based on the advantage of the local resources, thereby attracting investment and resulting in sustainable development for the people of Kerala. Kerala has made tourism a sustainable business venture and developed a positioning strategy with proper Tourism Marketing Communication Mix. The mixture of beaches, backwaters, ancient medicines, natural wealth, multicultural cuisines, good weather and highly educated people of Kerala makes it irresistible to foreign and domestic tourists. Total foreign tourist arrival in Kerala has grown since 2010 till 2017 in terms of number of arrivals and foreign exchange earned. The growth of tourism industry of a state can change its economic conditions, warranting effective policies and programmes for furthering the sector. The current study was undertaken to address the issue in the context of the present-day globalized scenario.

Trend Analysis in Kerala

The tourism industry has been showing a tremendous growth over the decade or so. The crucial indicators of tourism such as domestic tourist arrivals, foreign tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings, total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP and total contribution of travel and tourism to employment have been performing well. This section of the paper

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makes a case for the analysis of the trend pattern of the growth of tourism from 2008 to 2017 as the study period. All the time series data over this period have been collected from the publications of India, Tourism

Statistics by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Government of Kerala and from the tourism statistics database provided by World Travel and Tourism Council.

Table 1 :Trends in Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrivals (last 10 years)

Year	Domestic	% Variation over previous year	Foreign	% Variation over previous year
2008	7591250	14.28	598929	16.11
2009	7913537	4.25	557258	-6.96
2010	8595075	8.61	659265	18.31
2011	9381455	9.15	732985	11.18
2012	10076854	7.41	793696	8.28
2013	10857811	7.75	858143	8.12
2014	11695411	7.71	923366	7.60
2015	12465571	6.59	977479	5.86
2016	13172535	5.67	1038419	6.23
2017	14673520	11.39	1091870	5.15

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Foreign Tourist arrival to Kerala during the period 2010 to 2017 is showing an increasing trend (Table 1). Foreign Tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 10,91,870 showing an increase of 5.15% over the previous year's figure of 10,38,419. Domestic Tourist

arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 1,46,73,520 showing an increase of 11.39 % over the last year's figure 1, 31,72,535. Total Tourist arrival to Kerala during the year 2017 is 157,65,390 showing an increase of 10.94% over the last year figure 1,42,10954.

Table 2 :Earnings from Tourism (2008-2017)

Year	Foreign Exchange Earnings(Rs.in in Crores)	% Variation over previous year	Total Revenue Generated from Tourism (Direct and Indirect) (Rs. in Crores)	% Variation over previous year
2008	3066.52	16.11	13130.00	14.84
2009	2853.16	-6.96	13231.00	0.77
2010	3797.37	33.09	17348.00	31.12
2011	4221.99	11.18	19037.00	9.74
2012	4571.69	8.28	20430.00	7.32
2013	5560.77	21.63	22926.55	12.22
2014	6398.93	15.07	24885.44	8.54
2015	6949.88	8.61	26689.63	7.25
2016	7749.51	11.51	29658.56	11.12
2017	8392.11	8.29	33383.68	12.56

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Foreign exchange earnings during the years from 2008 to 2017 is also showing an increasing trend (Table 2). Foreign exchange earnings for the year 2017 are Rs.8392.11 Crores showing an increase of 8.29 % over

the figures of year 2016 (Rs 7749.51 Crores). Total Revenue (direct and indirect) from Tourism during 2017 is Rs 33383.68 Crores, showing an increase of 12.56 % over previous year's figure of Rs 29658.56 Crores.

Table 3 :Contribution of Tourism Sector to Total Employment in Percentage (2008-2017)

Country/ State	Direct Impact	Indirect + Induced Impact	Total Impact
Kerala	11.9	16.6	28.5

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

The contribution of tourism to total employment has direct, indirect and induced impacts (Table 3). Jobs generated by tourism are spread across the economy directly in tourism sectors like travel agencies, accommodation sector, and airlines and indirectly to retail, construction, manufacturing and telecommunications.

Table 4 :Contribution of Tourism Sector to State Gross Domestic Product (2008 – 2017)

Year	Contribution to SGDP	Variation over previous year
2008	8.85	0.11 %
2009	8.97	0.18 %
2010	9.32	0.20%
2011	9.63	0.38 %
2012	10.38	0.39 %
2013	10.59	0.19 %
2014	10.97	0.36 %
2015	11.9	0.85 %
2016	13.09	1.10 %
2017	14.9	1.14 %

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Tourism industry has contributed enormously in the flourishing graph of Kerala's economy by attracting a huge number of both foreign and domestic tourists traveling for professional as well as holiday purpose (Table 4).

Conclusions

Kerala being one of the states which is an example of Sustainable tourism needs to market various other forms of tourism like Heritage, Food and Medical tourism etc. This needs support from Private players and the government needs to act as a facilitator for these activities in terms of certifying the tourist spots for benchmarking activities. The government need to enter into bilateral agreement to solve the infrastructural issues domestically and internationally which will boost the economic development further. The Kerala tourism and hospitality industry has

recently emerged as one of the key drivers of growth in the services sector of the country. Tourism in Kerala is also a potentially large employment generator besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the country. The Government of Kerala has realised the country's potential in tourism industry and has taken several steps to make the State a global tourism hub. Thus, an empirical analysis of the trend and progress of tourism industry in Kerala over a period spanning from 2008 to 2017 found an increasing pattern of trend for all important tourism variables. However, there remains many miles to go. Thus, it is suggested that the Central and State governments, private sector and voluntary organizations should actively and jointly participate in the effort to attain sustainable growth in tourism in Kerala. This would certainly make our tourism sector a vibrant one in the world level.

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