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Trends in domestic and foreign tourist arrivals in Kerala

Archana K. M.

archanamohan898@gmail.com

Sree Narayana College, Alathur, Kerala

ABSTRACT

Worldwide governments have recognized tourism as a sector with immense potential for economic development and employment generation. Various international agencies like World Tourism Organization (WTO) have pointed out the vast development potential of tourism particularly with reference to developing countries like India. Kerala tourism is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. It is famous especially for its eco-tourism initiatives and beautiful backwaters. Growing at a rate of 13.31%, the Kerala tourism industry is one of the major contributors to the economic development of the state. The paper analyses the trend of tourist arrival to Kerala over the past few years and evaluate the revenue generation trend and growth prospects of the industry. Secondary data published by the Kerala tourism department has been analyzed using tools like trend analysis and simple percentage analysis. The published records of Kerala tourism statistics have also been used in the study. The study may throw light on the future prospects of the Kerala tourism industry with respect to tourist arrival and revenue generation.

Keywords: Domestic Tourist, Foreign Tourists, Kerala Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

World over, particularly among the developing nations, tourism is fast picking up as a tool for economic development and employment generation. However, the question as to the long-term sustainability of tourism is increasingly becoming a challenge for all concerned, because of the adverse effects of tourism on the environment and the universal pandemic situation of Covid-19. Kerala tourism has won several national and international recognitions, mainly due to the region's picturesque beauty and state's responsible tourism projects. Based on the tourism policy documents of the central and state governments, the Kerala tourism model is acclaimed as one of the most liberalized tourism models with the private sector leading tourism development and the state acting as a facilitator rather than a regulator. Kerala government's tourism expenditure is one among the highest in the country. Tourism constitutes 10 per cent of Kerala's GDP, as per official statistics, and reportedly contributes around 23.5 per cent to the total employment in the state. This study, however, shows that most of the claims made by the government about Kerala tourism are inflated and growth prospects in Kerala tourism depends on further attempts made by Govt. to improve the tourist infrastructure.

2. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Analogously, though Kerala tourism has got an enviable potential for growth its relative position among the Indian states is quite small, in spite of appreciable growth over the last few years. In this regard, it may be stated that meticulously planned, carefully designed and clearly articulated strategies are essential to maintain and further improve the performance of tourism sector in the days to come. These strategies for tourism development in turn need to be formulated based on sound principles of ecotourism, for ensuring their long term sustainability. This situation is more acute in respect of Kerala – the state in India with one of the best physical infrastructure for tourism development, though grossly underutilized at present. The paper tries to analyze the growth prospects of Kerala tourism with respect to tourist arrivals and the revenue generated from tourism.

The study shows the need for the government to act as a facilitator by providing the basic infrastructure conducive for tourism and allow the private sector to play the lead role in tourism promotion and development. Tourism promotion and marketing should be the responsibility of the private sector, which will help in implementing innovative marketing methods for attracting international tourists from more countries and domestic tourists from other states. This will help in exploiting the natural potential of Kerala tourism rather than placing artificial constraints on tourism development in the state through government interventions.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

After furnishing a general introduction, an attempt is made in this chapter to review the literature on the subject. The literature on various aspects of ecotourism is quite extensive. In order to find out major developments that took place in ecotourism, a brief review of existing literature on different aspects of ecotourism is made in this chapter. Tourism industry in India plays a significant

role in transforming the society and economy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's oft-quoted remark, namely "welcome a tourist and send back a friend" has been the essence of Indian tourism approach in the post-independence era. Tourism as an industry has great potential to bring about social and cultural development. Today Kerala is the most sought and trusted tourism brand in India. According to the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), travel and tourism in Kerala is expected to grow at the rate of 11.4% per annum in real terms between 2004 and 2013. The importance of ecotourism is evident from a recent study conducted by the World Tourism Organization. According to the study global spending on ecotourism was increasing by 20% a year. This is about six times the average rate of growth for the tourism industry as a whole. Research findings indicate that there is an increase in the demand for and participation in outdoor activities in general, specifically ecotourism. Since the present study is relatively new topic, specific literature on the topic is hardly available. However, a few studies are available in the different aspects of tourism in general and ecotourism in particular.

3.1 Studies on Eco-Tourism

Following are some of the research studies on tourism and ecotourism.

Batra (1990) in his study on 'Tourism in Rajasthan-Problems, Potential and Future Prospects' points out the various snags, impediments and obstacles in the promotion of tourism in the state of Rajasthan in particular and India in general, some of which are in-built in nature. He strongly recommends that, tourism activity in Rajasthan must be taken as a dynamic too. Sudheer's (1992) study on 'Tourism in Kerala-Problems and Prospects' highlighted the importance of tourism in Kerala and various problems confronting the tourism sector.

Rajakumari (2007) in her study on 'Tourism-An Epitome of Incentives' explains that to decrease financial leakages in tourism, it would be important to increase local ownership of tourism-related business, building up tourism infrastructure using local investors and avoiding purely foreign investment.

Haque Immanuel and Shanawaz Ahammed Dur (2007) in their study titled 'Dynamics of Tourism Economics: An Indian Perspective', showed the significance of tourism specifically with reference to employment sector, infrastructural facilities and poverty eradication.

Rao (2005) after analyzing the relationship between tourism and foreign exchange concluded that tourism is a revenue earner and the most significant source of foreign exchange in several countries. He warns that a badly organized tourism development strategy will have some adverse effects on the country rather than the development of the country.

According to Ratna Sree (2010) ecotourism can develop a destination economically, infrastructural and culturally, but if poorly developed it can create crime and other social problems, which is detrimental. In order to achieve sustainable development through ecotourism, effective partnership between local people, tourists, government and other sections of the industry are essential, otherwise ecotourism a boon for the development of Nation may become a doom.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the trend in foreign and domestic tourists arrival in Kerala for last 10 years
- To compare and analyze the district wise tourist arrivals in Kerala for last 5 years
- To evaluate the revenue growth prospects from tourism in Kerala.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Sources of Data

Only secondary data has been used in the study. For this the published records of Kerala tourism department till year 2017 and other secondary sources like Magazines, Journals and various websites including [www. Keralatourism.org](http://www.Keralatourism.org) are being used.

5.2 Variables of the study

The following are the major variables used in the study:

- (a) Foreign tourist arrivals : The number of foreign tourists coming to kerala for last 10 years
- (b) Domestic tourist arrivals : The number of domestic tourists coming to kerala for last 10 years
- (c) Foreign Exchange and Total Revenue earned : The revenue earned from tourism industry in Kerala
- (d) Annual total Number of tourists per district: The foreign and domestic tourist arrivals in each districts per year over last 10 years.

5.3 Tools of Data Analysis

The data has been analyzed using simple statistical techniques like Trend series analysis, Percentage method and Simple statistical averages.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

6.1 Analysis of the trend in tourists arrival in Kerala including foreign and domestic tourists

- (a) The following table shows the Foreign tourist arrival in kerala and the trend in foreign tourist arrival during last 10 years:

Table 1: Foreign Tourist Arrivals to Kerala (2008-2018)

Year	No. of tourists	Trend %
2008	598929	16.11

2009	557258	-6.96
2010	659265	18.31
2011	732985	11.18
2012	793696	8.28
2013	858143	8.12
2014	923366	7.6
2015	977479	5.86
2016	1038419	6.23
2017	1091870	5.15
2018	1096407	0.42

Interpretation: It can be seen that the trend in foreign tourist arrival is continuously declining over last 10 years. Though the figures seem to be increasing the growth percentage is declining over years. The highest growth is marked in the year 2010 and 2018 shows the least progress in tourist arrival. The following table shows the Domestic tourist arrival in Kerala and the trend in Domestic tourist arrival during last 10 years:

Table 2: Domestic Tourist Arrivals To Kerala (2007-2017)

Year	No. of tourists	Trend %
2008	7591250	14.28
2009	7913537	4.25
2010	8595075	8.61
2011	9381455	9.15
2012	10076854	7.41
2013	10857811	11.39
2014	11695411	7.71
2015	12465571	6.59
2016	13172535	5.67
2017	14673520	11.39
2018	15604661	6.35

Interpretation: The domestic tourist arrivals are continuously fluctuating over past few years. The figures are marking a growth, but comparing with previous years’ growth percent the trend is not steady. In 2008 it marks a high growth and after that the highest growth rate is marked in 2013 and 2017

7. COMPARISON AND ANALYSIS OF DISTRICT VISE TOURIST ARRIVALS IN KERALA FOR LAST 5 YEARS

Table 3: District Vise Foreign Tourist Arrivals (20014-18)

Districts	2014	% increase	2015	% increase	2016	% increase	2017	% increase	2018	% increase
Thiruvananthapuram	289612	7.89	310223	7.12	383608	23.66	420719	9.67	342761	-18.53
Kollam	12467	9.33	14100	13.1	8520	-39.57	6227	-26.91	9086	45091
Pathanamthitta	1379	9.88	1667	20.88	1620	-2.82	2003	23.64	1953	-2.5
Alappuzha	60337	8.98	63838	5.8	78049	22.26	75037	-3.86	95522	27.3
Kottayam	44366	8.39	49976	12.64	49513	-0.93	32350	-34.66	43287	33.81
Idukki	77905	13.1	83894	7.69	50366	-39.96	42285	-16.04	44833	6.03
Ernakulam	372997	5.87	383643	2.85	407653	6.26	453973	11.36	488175	7.53
Thrissur	7391	14.43	7874	6.53	10133	28.69	10775	6.34	11333	5.18
Palakkad	2093	11.69	2232	6.64	2385	6.85	1771	-25.74	1967	14.96
Malappuram	21613	5.08	23409	8.31	19769	-15.55	18451	-6.67	17610	4.56
Kozhikode	11313	7.86	12251	8.29	12649	3.25	13106	3.61	18388	4.03
Wayanad	11795	8.77	12377	4.93	7067	-42.9	8995	27.28	11607	29.04
Kannur	7563	8.48	9022	19.29	5264	-41.65	5123	-2.68	5763	12.49
Kasargod	2535	8.15	2973	17.28	1823	-38.68	1115	-38.84	4122	269.69

Interpretation: While analyzing the district wise foreign tourist arrivals in Kerala, Ernakulam seem to be the mostly visited tourist place in Kerala and the trend is increasing and highly progressive. Whereas the other districts exhibit a fluctuating trend percentage mostly non-progressive. Comparing with 2016 in which the growth was 6.26%, 2017 shows 11.36%. In 2017 most of the districts have gone down in growth except Ernakulam, Thrissur etc. It is Kasargod district which marked highest growth in foreign tourist arrivals in 2018

Table 4: District Wise Domestic Tourist Arrivals(20014-18)

Districts	2014	% increase	2015	% increase	2016	% increase	2017	% increase	2018	% increase
Thiruvananthapuram	1707199	9.69	1861470	9.04	2030384	9.07	2505333	23.39	2712387	8.26
Kollam	257097	9.13	277109	7.78	298297	7.65	381829	28	400222	4.82
Pathanamthitta	112548	8.98	126132	12.07	134466	6.61	164494	22.33	192813	17.22
Alappuzha	246156	9.37	270507	9.89	315466	16.62	433456	37.4	511490	18
Kottayam	413812	8.27	458101	10.87	477950	4.33	468593	-1.96	524821	12
Idukki	635621	8.37	668537	5.18	752478	12.56	1090086	44.87	1257403	15.35
Ernakulam	2724718	7.04	2897894	6.36	3073159	6.05	3285088	6.9	3446889	4.93
Thrissur	254376	-89.25	265897	4.5	2721174	923.39	2642546	-2.89	2497278	-5.5
Palakkad	475361	8.39	502244	5.66	512272	2.00	474180	-7.44	509883	7.53
Malappuram	449420	7.03	470261	4.64	47128	-89.98	520832	10.57	565914	8.66
Kozhikode	769425	5.68	811538	5.47	884477	8.99	932345	5.41	1052783	12.92
Wayanad	564274	8.66	607335	7.63	586146	-3.49	815624	39.15	888141	8.89
Kannur	584343	5.5	613199	4.94	632332	3.12	695655	10.01	768038	10.41
Kasargod	210691	6.92	241347	14.55	282906	17.22	263459	-6.87	276599	4.99

Interpretation: Idukki is the top scorer with 44.87% growth in Domestic tourist arrivals whereas Wayanad district shows the growth percent of 39.15% in 2017 and Alappuzha with 37.40%. Almost all districts are showing growth trend in domestic tourist arrivals except Kottayam and Kasargod. Ernakulam district shows large figures in tourist arrivals as usual except the fact that regarding growth in domestic tourist arrivals it is non-progressive with a trend percent of only 6.90%.

Table 5: District Wise Total Tourist Arrivals (20015-18)

	2015	Trend %	2016	Trend %	2017	Trend %	2018	%increase
Tvm	2171693	16%	2413992	17%	2926052	19%	344778	-88.22
Kollam	291209	2%	306817	2%	388056	2%	409308	5.48
Pathanamthitta	127799	1%	136086	1%	166497	1%	194766	16.98
Alappuzha	334345	2%	393515	3%	508493	3%	607012	19.37
Kottayam	508077	4%	527463	4%	500943	3%	568108	13.41
Idukki	752431	6%	802844	6%	1132371	7%	1302236	15.00
Ernakulam	3281537	24%	3480812	24%	3739061	24%	3935064	5.24
Thrissur	2667771	20%	2731307	19%	2653321	17%	2508611	-5.45
Palakkad	504476	4%	514657	4%	475951	3%	511850	7.54
Malappuram	493670	4%	490797	3%	539283	3%	583524	8.20
Kozhikode	823789	6%	897126	6%	945451	6%	1071171	13.30
Wayanad	619712	5%	593213	4%	824619	5%	899748	9.11
Kannur	622221	5%	637596	4%	700778	4%	825641	17.82
Kasargod	244320	2%	284729	2%	264574	2%	280721	6.10

Interpretation: When comes to total tourist arrivals in Kerala despite the fluctuating trends in domestic and foreign tourist arrivals, the trend percentages over last 5 years are non-progressive. It only shows slight variations in growth trends. Alappuzha scores with the highest percent of 19, and Kannur with 17% growth in 2018, other districts are showing a steady line in trend. This means that the growth in tourist arrivals are comparatively steady over last few years.

8. EVALUATION OF REVENUE GROWTH PROSPECTS FROM THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Table 6: Foreign exchange earnings from tourism in Kerala

Year	Forex Earnings (Rs. In Crores)	% Increase
2008	3066.52	16.11
2009	2853.16	-6.96
2010	3797.37	33.09
2011	4221.99	11.18
2012	4571.69	8.28
2013	5560.77	21.62
2014	6398.93	15.07
2015	6949.88	8.61
2016	7749.51	11.51
2017	8392.11	8.29
2018	8764.46	4.44

Interpretation: The revenue from foreign tourist arrivals marks a continuous growth in figures whereas the trend seems fluctuating. It was in year 2013 the hike was notable from 8.28% to 21.62%. Recently over last 4 years the trend is fluctuating and finally marking a decline in growth in 2018.

Table 7: Total Revenue From Kerala Tourism Industry

Year	Total Revenue (Rs. In Crores)	% Increase
2008	13130	14.84
2009	13231	0.77
2010	17348	31.12
2011	19037	9.74
2012	20430	7.32
2013	22926.55	12.22
2014	24885.44	12.11
2015	26689.63	7.25
2016	29658.56	11.12
2017	33383.68	12.56
2018	36258.01	8.61

Interpretation: In contrast with foreign income, the total revenue seems gradually progressing or almost steady except in 2015 with only 7.5% growth. Year 2013 marked a tremendous growth percentage of 12.22% from 7.32%, thus having a hike of more than 5%. In 2010 also there was a notable hike of almost 30% in total revenue.

9. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. The trend in foreign tourist arrival is continuously declining over last 10 years although the number of foreign tourist arrival figures seem to be increasing.
2. The domestic tourist arrivals are continuously fluctuating over past few years. The figures are marking a growth, but comparing with previous years' growth percent the trend is not steady.
3. Most of the districts show a declining trend in foreign tourist arrivals except Ernakulam, Thrissur etc.
4. Wayanad district marked the highest growth rate of 27.28% in foreign tourist arrivals in 2017.
5. Idukki is the top scorer with 44.87% growth in Domestic tourist arrivals whereas Wayanad district shows the growth percent of 39.15% in 2017 and Alappuzha with 37.40%..
6. Ernakulam district shows large figures in tourist arrivals as usual except the fact that regarding growth in domestic tourist arrivals it is non-progressive with a trend percent of only 6.90%.
7. In contrast with foreign income, the total revenue seems gradually progressing or almost steady except in 2015 with only 7.5% growth.

8. CONCLUSION

Of late, there has been increased focus on tourism development in India and so also in Kerala. While tourism has got excellent prospects for promotion of rapid economic development of India, particularly in a resourceful state like Kerala, the promotional aspect of tourism needs more attention in government policies especially foreseeing the current global scenario of Covid-19. That is, there is the need for adoption of infrastructural development. This in turn necessitates a concerted action from the part of all concerned, for the cause of sustainable tourism development. Measures should be taken to identify the growth prospects and Government should work on improvising on weak but prospective areas. In view of the resource constraints of the government for developing countries like in India private sector participation seems imminent, for an integrated and sustainable tourism development. As the full potential of tourism of India in general and Kerala in particular are yet to be tapped, eco-friendly strategies as suggested and it has got significance for rapid and sustainable development of the state.

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