Development of a Model for Tourism for the State of Kerala

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Abstract

The development of tourism industry has got great positive and negative impacts in terms of environmental, cultural, social and economic development, which can no longer be ignored. The increase in tourism activity at a destination creates pressures on the quality of life of the destination community. These were the result of unplanned developments in tourism industry and sustainable development was evolved as a measure to mitigate these negative impacts. The present study is intended to suggest a model for Kerala tourism which will ensure sustainable development. The study was intended to develop a model in resident's perspective and its relation to the stakeholders like the role of government, the impacts of the tourism industry etc. The study also tries to find out the satisfaction of the tourist with the tourism industry in Kerala. Thus, the study covers the areas of tourist satisfaction, the resident community support, the role of government and the impacts of tourism industry in resident's perspective.

Keywords

Kerala tourism, Tourist, Domestic tourism, Sustainable development

Introduction

The economic significance of tourism in terms of employment generation, income generation, foreign exchange earnings and regional development etc are the major driving force that enables national governments to place tourism appropriately in the development agenda. Among the different states in India, Kerala is a well-known destination for domestic as well as foreign tourists. The intervention of the Government of Kerala in the key areas of development has transformed the industry from barely 50,000 foreign tourist arrivals in 1986, to a status of over 9 million domestic and over 0.7 million foreign tourists in 2012. The tourism industry in broader terms has great indirect multiplier impact in the economy through backward and forward linkages. The economic review report (2013) shows that the total revenue (including direct & indirect means) from tourism during 2012-13 was 20430 Crores, showing an increase of 7.31per cent over the previous year's figure. Thus, tourism has become a very important economic activity of Kerala. The development of tourism industry has got great positive and negative impacts in terms of environmental, cultural, social and economic development, which can no longer be ignored. The increase in tourism activity at a destination creates pressures on the quality of life of the destination community. These were the result of unplanned developments in tourism industry and sustainable development was evolved as a measure to mitigate these negative impacts. The present study is intended to suggest a model for Kerala tourism which will ensure sustainable development.

Need and Significance of the Study

The rapid expansion of tourism in the 20th century has led to many changes in the structure of society. The positive outcomes were that it increases the employment opportunities (Dyer et al., 2007, Untong et al., 2010, Nunkoo et al. 2011, Nunkoo et al.2012), improves the local economy (Dogan et al., 2004), provides revenue for the local government (Dogan et al., 2004, Dyer et al., 2007) and raises the standard of living of the resident community (Ko et al., 2002, Nunkoo et al., 2011). The negative outcomes were that tourism increases the cost of living, increases the crime rate, creates congestion problems, causes different types of pollutions, increases real estate cost, causes increase of alcoholism and prostitution and it also results in the increase of prices of goods and services (Ko et al., 2002, 2004, Dyer et al., 2007, Látková et al., 2012). In

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fact, these impacts were the result of unplanned developments approaches. According to Murphy (1985), development and planning approaches to tourism were entirely myopic and as a result of these ad hoc planning processes, the negative impacts of industry became severe. This has become a threat in the long run for the industry and sustainable development approaches were evolved as a remedy to this problem. The importance of sustainable development has been extensively deliberated in tourism sectors because such development can meet the needs of the present day tourists, provide opportunities to enhance economic growth, protect the physical resources of tourism, and improve the quality of life of residents while enhancing opportunities for the future through the coexistence of tourism development and environmental quality (Eagles, McCool, & Haynes, 2002). These sustainable approaches have to be planned by taking attention to all the stakeholders of tourism industry. The important stakeholders of tourism development are the tourist, tourism industry, resident community and the government and its agencies (Peter E and Ann E (2006). Among the four stakeholders, local community is the main factor which influence the tourist satisfaction, as the tourists are coming to experience the different way of life of people, their culture etc (Aref, Gill and Aref, 2010). The cultural difference between the people are the main attracting factor which make a place different from each other and the resident community is the main contributor to this difference. Thus among these four stakeholders, the resident community is an important one which contributes to the tourist satisfaction. The tourism academicians seem to have achieved an agreement on the view that community-based tourism development is the best tool for ensuring sustainable development of the destination (Sebele, 2010; Taylor, 1995). The effective participation of the resident community in tourism development can only be ensured by the government. The active support of resident's population determines the success and the sustainability of any tourism development. It is important for the government to consider information about the impacts of tourism from the local community's perspective while planning for the industry. Another important stakeholder of tourism is the tourists which determine the future of the tourism industry. In order to attract more tourists, it is necessary to provide them services as per their expectations. Thus, understanding the expectation of tourists and their satisfaction with the facilities available at the destination is important while planning for the sustainability of the destination. As the main aim of the study was to develop a model for tourism for the state of Kerala, the study tries to explain the role of different stakeholders of tourism and finally to suggest a model. A model explains the specified set of dependent relationships that can be tested

empirically and the purpose of the model is to concisely provide a comprehensive representation of the relationships to be tested. Thus, the model contains multiple relationships and this has to be empirically tested. The tourism industry includes mainly four stakeholders and it is not possible to test a model using data collected from four different samples. So, it was decided to find out the most important stakeholder among the four based on pilot study conducted and research reviews. There by the resident community was found to play a decisive role in the sustainable development of tourism at a destination. The initiative of Kerala government also supports this view. So the study was intended to develop a model in resident's perspective and its relation to the stakeholders like the role of government, the impacts of the tourism industry etc. As the tourist is the main actor of the industry, the study also tries to find out the satisfaction of the tourist with the tourism industry in Kerala. Thus, the study covers the areas of tourist satisfaction, the resident community support, the role of government and the impacts of tourism industry in resident's perspective. Thus, the study finally suggests a model for Kerala tourism which ensures sustainability.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the foreign and domestic tourist expectation and satisfaction levels in relation to Kerala as a tourist destination.
2. To understand whether there is any significant relation between demographic variables of the tourists (domestic and foreign) and their satisfaction on different destination attributes.
3. To understand the important variables which determine the resident community support for tourism development
4. To understand the effect of these different variables on resident community support for tourism development.
5. To develop a model for resident community support for the state of Kerala which could lead to sustainable development

Hypotheses

1. There exists significant difference between the expectation and experience of the tourist (domestic and foreign) on different destination attributes of Kerala.
2. There exists significant relationship between the demographic variables of the tourists (domestic and foreign) and the satisfaction of the domestic tourist on different destination attributes.
3. There is a direct negative relationship between Perceived Role of Government and Perceived Cost of Tourism.
4. There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Role of Government and Perceived Benefits of Tourism.

5. There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Role of Government and Overall Community Satisfaction.
6. There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Benefits of Tourism and the Community Support.
7. There is a direct positive relationship between Community Satisfaction and Community Support.
8. There is a direct negative relationship between Perceived Cost of Tourism and Community Support.
9. There is a direct negative relationship between Perceived Cost of Tourism and Overall Community Satisfaction.
10. There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived Benefits of Tourism and Overall Community Satisfaction.
11. There is an indirect effect of Perceived Role of Government and Community Support.

Methodology

The research design used for the study includes exploratory research design which is conducted at the initial part of research and then conclusive research design (including both descriptive and causal research designs) was used. The study uses both primary and secondary data. The secondary data was collected from journals, thesis, reports, newspaper articles etc. The primary data was collected from two samples. For the first sample data was collected from resident community at the destinations. The population for the second sample consists of all the tourists (both domestic and foreign) visiting the destinations in Kerala at the point of study. Multistage sampling method was adopted for drawing sample units. A total of 8 destinations were selected and the selected destinations were Thiruvananthapuram city, Kovalam, Alappuzha, Kumarakom, Munnar, Thekkady, Fort Kochi and the Cochin city. The analyses were done using SPSS (ver21), AMOS and excel spreadsheet. The different analysis used in the study includes factor analysis, anova, t-test, post-hoc test, paired sample t-test and structural equation modeling.

Major Findings of the Study

The findings of the study was divided into three sections, first one is the findings of the analysis of domestic tourists questionnaire. Second section explains the findings of the analysis of foreign tourists' questionnaire and the third section describes the findings of the analysis of resident community questionnaire.

Domestic tourists

1. The larger portions of the domestic tourists were from Tamil Nadu (20%), followed by Andhra Pradesh (18%), Karnataka (17.5%), Kerala (11.5%) and the rest were from Mumbai, Delhi, Orissa and UP.
2. The study has utilized the HOLSAT model to measure the satisfaction and expectation of tourists visited in selected destinations in Kerala. The result of the study shows that the domestic tourists are dissatisfied with 12 positive destination attributes out of the 24 positive attributes of Kerala. The study shows that the atmosphere at the beaches in Kerala, the services of travel agencies, the services of public transportation systems, the recreational activities in Kerala, the conditions of roads, the quality of food etc are not performing as per the expectation of domestic tourists, resulting in dissatisfaction. They are satisfied with the balance twelve attributes which includes the attractions in Kerala, the ayurvedic treatments, the information facilities provided to tourists, the safety at the accommodation units, the variety of local foods available, the hospitality of various service providers etc.
3. The result also show that 3 negative attributes scored better than expected and 7 scored badly than expected. The analysis on negative attribute shows that the experiences of domestic tourists on seven attributes are worse than that of expected and they are dissatisfied with these attributes. They are of the view that the destinations in Kerala are overcrowded and opined that the beggars and street vendors are very commonly seen in the tourist destinations in Kerala. They are dissatisfied because most of the destinations in Kerala lack public toilet facilities and are polluted. They are also dissatisfied because the cleanliness and hygiene conditions of the accommodation units in Kerala are poor.
4. The result also shows that the demographic variables of the domestic tourists have got significance in determining the tourist's satisfaction on different destination attributes.

Foreign tourists

1. The larger portions of the foreign tourists were from U.K(27.5%),U.S.A(16%), Germany (12.5%), France(11.5%) and the rest were from Australia, Canada, Italy, U.A.E, Malaysia etc
2. The result of the study shows that the foreign tourists are dissatisfied with 11 positive attributes out of the 24 positive attributes. The study shows that the services of guides, services of public transportation systems, the atmosphere at the beaches in Kerala, the recreational facilities in Kerala, the quality of foods offered in restaurants, the safety and security at the accommodation units etc are to be improved to meet the expectation of foreign tourists. But, they are satisfied with the attributes like 'the local foods and drinks of

Kerala',' Internet and telephone connectivity in Kerala', 'the natural attractions in Kerala', 'the Ayurvedic treatments of Kerala', 'the attitude of various service providers' etc.

3. The result also show that for 7 out of the 12 negative attributes the difference between ''experience'' and ''expectation'' is significant. The result shows that the performance of 5 negative attributes scored better than expected and 7 scored bad than expected. The foreign tourists opinioned that the destinations in Kerala are overcrowded and the beggars and street vendors are very commonly seen in the tourist destinations in Kerala. They are dissatisfied because most of the destinations in Kerala lack public toilet facilities and are polluted. The study shows that the tourists have not to concern about the changing of foreign currency while travelling in Kerala, about the ATM facilities, about the Immigration and Customs clearance procedure in the airports in Kerala etc.

4. The result also shows that the demographic variables of the domestic tourists have got significance in determining the tourist's satisfaction on different destination attributes.

Resident community

1. Out of the total 800 responses four hundred twenty four (53%) respondents were female while the rest were male (47%). The majority of the sample belongs to the age group 30-40 (24%) followed by 40-50 (22.4%), 20-30 (21.1%) and so on. The sample was dominated by those who studied up to graduate level (33%), followed by the respondents studied up to 12th (26.9%), 10-12th level (25.5%), post graduate (12%) etc. 57.5% of the respondents were married and 49.1% were native of the destination where they are staying. 51.3% were not employed in tourism sector and rest were (48.8%) employed in tourism related job. 22% of the respondents get a lot of money from the tourism sector, followed by 15.6% were get some income and 45.8% get none income from tourism sector.

2. From the literature review the important variables which affect the resident community support were identified. Thus, the present study identifies 'Perceived Costs of Tourism', 'Perceived Benefits of Tourism', 'Perceived role of Government', and 'Overall Community Satisfaction' are the important variables which affects 'Support for tourism development'.

3. The factor analysis on the perceived benefits of tourism gives two factors namely the 'Economic and cultural benefits' and the' Welfare benefits'.

4. The factor analysis on 'perceived cost of tourism, 'resulted in three factors viz 'Socio-Economic cost', 'Socio-cultural cost', 'Socio-environment cost'.

5. The factor analysis on 'perceived role of government' resulted in three factors and they are 'Community Developer', 'Community Participation' and 'Controller of tourism cost'.

6. The factor analysis on overall community satisfaction resulted in two factors namely 'Socio-environment status' and 'Tourism Development Process'.

7. The main objective of the study was to develop a model for tourism in Kerala which could lead to sustainable development. Initially a research model was identified based on the items included in the questionnaire which theoretically explain the relationship between various dimensions of tourism namely, Perceived role of government, Perceived costs of Tourism, Perceived benefits of tourism, Overall community satisfaction and community Support of development of Tourism.

8. The model was tested using 8 hypotheses which clearly stated the relationship between the variables under the study. Out of the nine hypotheses which explain the relationship between the various dimensions of tourism namely, Perceived role of government, Perceived costs of Tourism, Perceived benefits of Tourism, Overall community satisfaction and community Support of development of Tourism, seven were accepted and two were rejected. The fit statistics indicated that the CMIN value was 4.291 which was less than the limit of 5 and the RMSEA (0.046) value was also found to be at the satisfying condition of less than the maximum admissible value of 0.08. The three goodness of fit indices; namely GFI, NFI and CFI were above 0.90 which indicated that the model was an acceptable one. Thus the study developed a community support model for tourism for the state of Kerala with role of government, benefits of tourism, cost of tourism and overall community satisfaction. The study found that among the variables PBT (Perceived benefits of tourism) have a positive relationship with CS (community support) and the direct effect of PBT on CS is 1.10 which was comparatively higher than the effects of Overall community satisfaction (regression weight –0.17) and Perceived cost of tourism (regression weight –0.10) on Community Support. Thus, the study found that PBT play a more direct effect on CS.

Result of Hypotheses tested (H1 to H11)

- The hypothesis "$H1_0$: There is no significant difference between the expectation and experience of the foreign tourist on different destination attributes of Kerala" was rejected and found that there exists difference between the expectation and their experiences of the foreign tourists with the different destination attributes of Kerala.

- In order to test the hypothesis $H2_0$, whether any significant relationship exist among demographic variables and satisfaction of foreign tourist on different destination attributes, the variables were tested by independent samples test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the following demographic groupings:

  1. Gender: - The study found that the gender difference has got no significance in determining the satisfaction of foreign tourists on different destination attributes. This indicates that there is no difference between the opinion of male and female tourists regarding the satisfaction on different destination attributes.

  2. Age Group: - The study found that the age of the tourists has got significance in determining the satisfaction of tourist on different destination attributes. The Post Hoc test results showed that the age group '50-60' has got significant difference in opinion from that of age groups 'below 20' and '20-30' regarding the satisfaction on 'Attraction' attribute. Similarly, the age group '40-50' has got difference in opinion from that of age groups 'below 20' and '20-30'; and the age group 'below 20' has got difference in opinion from that of '50-60' group regarding the satisfaction on 'Accommodation' attribute. Regarding the satisfaction on 'Accessibility', the age group '30-40' has got difference in opinion from that of age groups 'below 20' and '20-30'. Regarding the satisfaction on 'Amenities' the age group 20-30 has got difference in opinion from that of age groups 'below 20' and '50-60'. Similarly, satisfaction on 'Attitude of service providers' the age group 30-40 has got difference in opinion from that of age groups 'below 20','40-50' and '50-60'. Thus, the study found that age is one of the important factor which affects the satisfaction of tourists on different destination attributes. So, the planning should be made considering the age factor to ensure satisfaction of the foreign tourists.

  3. Marital status:- The study found that marital status has got significance in determining the satisfaction of foreign tourists on 'Accommodation' attributes, 'Attraction' attributes, 'Accessibility' attributes and on 'Amenities' attributes. The Post Hoc test result showed that the married group has got different in opinion regarding the 'Accommodation' attribute from that of the unmarried group. On attraction the difference in opinion was between unmarried group and separated and widow/widower. The study also found that regarding the 'Accessibility' attribute, the married group showed difference in opinion from all the other groups.

  4. Type of employment:- The study found that the type of employment has got significance in determining the satisfaction of foreign tourists on all destination attributes. The study thus found that the satisfaction of tourist on the 'Accommodation' attributes, 'Attraction', 'Accessibility' attributes, 'Amenities' and 'Attitude of service providers' varies depending on the type of employment of the tourists. The Post Hoc test result showed that the satisfaction on 'Attraction' attribute, the group 'Government employee' has got difference in opinion from that of groups 'Self-employed (business)', 'employed at private sector' and 'Executive/managerial/ professional'. Similarly regarding the 'Accommodation' attribute the group 'Others' has got difference in opinion from that of groups 'Self-employed(business)', 'Government employee', 'employed at private sector' and 'Executive/ managerial/ professional'. The study also found that regarding the satisfaction on 'Amenities', the group 'Self-employed (business)' has got difference in opinion from that of groups, 'Government employee', 'Employed at private sector' and 'Executive/ managerial/professional'. Similarly, the satisfaction on 'Accessibility', the group 'Government employee' has got difference in opinion from that of groups 'Self-employed (business)', 'employed at private sector' and 'others'. Regarding the satisfaction on 'Attitude of service providers' the group 'Others' has got difference in opinion from that of groups 'Self-employed (business)', 'and 'Executive/ managerial/professional'.

- The study found that the hypothesis $H2_0$: There exist no significant relationship between the demographic variables of the foreign tourists and satisfaction of the tourist on different destination attributes was rejected and concludes that the demographic

variables have got significance in determining the tourist's satisfaction on different destination attributes.

- The model estimation results showed that there exist a direct negative relationship between Perceived role of government and Perceived cost of tourism. Hence, the hypothesis H3 that 'There is a direct negative relationship between PRG and PCT' was accepted.

- The regression weight of PRG on PBT was 0.659 which showed that there exist direct a positive relationship between PRG and PBT and hence the hypothesis H4 'There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived role of government and Perceived benefits of tourism' was accepted.

- The regression weight of Perceived role of government and Overall Community Satisfaction was 0.401 which showed that there exist direct a positive relationship between PRG and OCS and hence the hypothesis H5 'There is a direct positive relationship between Role of Government and Overall Community Satisfaction' was accepted.

- The regression weight of PBT on CS was 1.521 which showed that there exists a direct positive relationship between PBT and CS and hence the hypothesis H6 'There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived benefits of tourism and Community Support' was accepted.

- The model results showed that there exist a direct negative relationship between Community Satisfaction and Community Support with the regression weight being negative (-0.266) and hence the hypothesis H7 'There is a direct positive relationship between Community Satisfaction and Community Support' was rejected.

- The model results showed that the regression weight of PCT on CS was –0.142. So, it was concluded that there exist a direct negative relationship between PCT and CS and hence the hypothesis H8 'There is a direct negative relationship between Perceived cost of tourism and Community Support' was accepted.

- The model result showed that the regression weight of PCT on OCS was –0.017 which was found to be not significant. However, this goes in line with the assumption of the H9 hypothesis. But the hypothesis H9 'There is a direct negative relationship between Perceived cost of tourism and Overall Community Satisfaction' could not be held since the relationship was found to be not significant.

- The regression weight of PBT on OCS was 0.344 which showed that there exists a direct positive relationship between PBT and OCS and hence the hypothesis H10 "There is a direct positive relationship between Perceived benefits of tourism and Overall Community Satisfaction" was accepted.

- The indirect effect of PRG on CS was found to be positive (0.897). When PRG goes up by 1, CS goes up by 0.897. This is higher than the combined effect of PRG on OCS and OCS on CS. Hence the hypothesis H11 'There is an indirect effect of PRG on CS' was accepted.

Contributions of the study

The major contribution of the study is that the study proposes a model for Kerala tourism. The community based tourism initiatives ensures sustainability and therefore the model developed can serve as the guiding manual for these kinds of initiatives. The study also explains the role of government for the development of tourism in tourists' point of view as well as in resident community's point of view. According to domestic as well as foreign tourists the government has to primarily focus on developing infrastructure facilities for the development of tourism and secondly should take proper steps to ensure the protection of tourism resources. The study also explained the other important roles of government for the development of tourism and in their view the other roles were 'as the human resource developer', 'as the promoter of tourism', 'as the coordinator of all departments of tourism' and 'as the formulator of tourism policies'. While in resident's point of view the government has to play three roles for ensuring community support for tourism. The major roles of government in resident's point of view were 'Community Developer', 'Community Participation' and 'Controller of Tourism Cost'. The 'Community Developer' is the major contributing factor among these three roles of government. Thus, the study provides useful insight to the tourism authorities by explaining the different roles of government for the development of tourism in tourists' point of view as well as in resident community's point of view. By delivering these duties the government can ensure maximum benefits to the community from tourism development in Kerala and at the same time can ensure quality visitor experience.

The study measures the expectation of tourists (both domestic and foreign) on the important travel attributes which are particular to Kerala. The study explains both positive and negative attributes of Kerala tourism and clearly measures the tourist's satisfaction on these attributes. The result of the present study can be used to understand the areas which are lagging behind and the study also highlights the strength of Kerala tourism. The study

was able to firm up on the important variables which can be termed as 'satisfiers' and 'unsatisfiers' for tourists visiting Kerala. Satisfiers are the real strength of Kerala tourism and it includes the attributes like 'the local foods and drinks of Kerala', 'The tourist information facilities', 'The services of travel agencies in Kerala',' Internet and telephone connectivity in Kerala', 'the natural attractions in Kerala', 'the Ayurvedic treatments of Kerala', 'The house boat journey' etc. The unsatisfiers includes the areas where the tourists are dissatisfied. The tourists are dissatisfied with the overall cleanliness of the destinations, bad conditions of the roads, the various kinds of pollutions, lack of public toilet facilities', the inadequacies of infrastructure and the pollutions at the beaches. The usefulness of the HOLSAT is further validated by this study. In order to plan for the future prospects of a destination, it is important to know whether the destination facilities met the needs of customer expectations or not. Satisfaction surveys are the effective tool that can be used for this kind of assessment. Hence, the satisfaction surveys like this using HOLSAT, have to be conducted once in a year to identify the areas which need improvement to ensure tourists satisfaction.

Limitations of the study

1. The study was based on the opinion of the tourists who were at the destinations during the time of data collection. The generalisation of the result is limited to the aspect that the result was based on the experiences of the tourists who were included in the study and the experience of others may different for others in some attributes.

2. Since the study was intended to measure the tourist expectation and experience on different destination attributes, the expectation has to be measured before visiting the destinations and experience after the completion of travel. But, because of the difficulty of maintaining contact with respondents before and after travel, the tourist questionnaire was administered only once and this can be taken as one of the limitation of the study.

3. Language seems to be one of the limitations while collecting data from the tourists, as tourists were coming from different countries and from different states in India who were not equally proficient in English.

4. The result of the study is limited to the information provided by the respondents as there was no mechanism to check whether the information is correct or not.

Conclusion

The study thus explains two major areas 'the resident community support' and 'the tourist satisfaction'. The study proposes a model for Kerala tourism. The study explains that the community support is vital to ensure sustainability at the destinations and suggests a model of community support for Kerala tourism. The study had identified the major variables which predict the community support and described the relationship between these variables. The model developed clearly show the ways by which the resident community support for tourism development can be improved. The study suggests that for ensuring sustainable development, the Kerala government has to adopt community support tourism models. The study also made an attempt to understand the satisfaction level of tourists (the domestic and foreign) on different destination attributes of Kerala and found that the expectations of tourists were not fully met. This enabled the researcher to identify the major strength and weaknesses of Kerala tourism. The strength of tourism is the areas where the satisfaction of tourists is met. Even though they are not fully satisfied with the facilities, 98% of the foreign and 97% of domestic tourists gave their opinion that they will recommend Kerala for their friends and relatives. The reason behind this is the uniqueness of the attractions here. The study further validates the applicability of HOLSAT model and the findings are useful for the tourism authorities for further improvement in the tourism industry to ensure tourist satisfaction. The study also explains how the demographic variables affect their satisfaction on different destination attributes. Thus the study was able to explain the problem under study.