

A Swot Analysis on Tourism and Hotel Industry of Kerala: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is an important sector in every country. It contributes a large amount of revenue to the state, and many stakeholders depend on the tourism industry. Kerala, situated on the southwestern tip of India, appreciates remarkable geological highlights that have possibly made it the most sought-after traveler in Asia. Affectionately referred to as 'God's Own Country', Kerala was chosen by the National Geographic Traveler as one of the fifty destinations that should not be taken lightly and one of the thirteen heavens on the planet. Kerala is the first state in quite a while to announce tourism as an industry. The important objective of this study is to analyze the progressive development of the tourism and hotel industries in Kerala and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of tourism in Kerala.

KEYWORDS: Tourism of Kerala, SWOT Analysis on Kerala Tourism & Hospitality, Growth of Kerala Tourism and Hotel Industries, Effects on economy of Kerala by Tourism Sector, Analytical Study on Kerala Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Kerala The state known as "God's Own Country" is a global leader in driving responsible tourism initiatives across the globe. With its ideal location, Kerala is fast becoming one of the top tourist destinations in the world. From high mountains and deep-cut valleys to sunny tropical beaches and placid backwaters, Kerala holds itself a variety of landscapes that differ in beauty and flavor, each one of them offering an opportunity to relish the outdoors. Several eco-friendly and sustainable initiatives would constitute the high spot. Kerala, named one of the ten paradises of the world by National Geographic Traveler, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. Its unique traditions and culture, blended with its varied demography, have transformed Kerala into one of the most visited and explored tourist destinations in the world. It is a perfect gateway for nature lovers, adventure seekers, honeymooners, families, and backpackers. Kerala is allured with her sun and sand, blue backwater inlets, splendid historical monuments, spice plantations, tea and coffee gardens, lush green forests, and much more. So we can label Kerala as the first choice of tourists in south India. State tourism opens its gateway to beach holidays, group tours, family vacations, honeymoon tours, ayurvedic treatments, cultural tours, and pilgrimages. These are the strengths behind the progressive development of the Kerala tourism and hotel industries for hospitals. We also study the weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Kerala's progressive development of this sector.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Kerala is the state with the most number of five-star rated hotels in India. There are 46 such luxurious hotels in the state. Tourism Minister Mohammed Riyas stated that the state also holds the record for the highest number of hotel bookings. While Kumarakom, near Kottayam, witnesses maximum bookings, Kovalam occupies the third position in the category.
- The Marketing mix of Kerala Tourism analyses the 7Ps of Kerala Tourism, which includes the Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process of Kerala Tourism.
- According to the article he highlighted some weakness and threats for Kerala Tourism which are as follows The campaign excessively relies on its tagline for its appeal and despite good advertising has limited brand recall. The campaign is not very popular outside India & hence limited international tourists. The campaign faces the threat of its shelf life expiring. If the campaign does not innovate it will lose its charm. Other states are coming up with strong campaigns with strong brand ambassadors.
- According to the article published in The Indian Express Kerala govt is preparing masterplan to boost tourism sector by Mission 2030. Set to be formulated in '24, the project aims to elevate the industry to new levels of growth.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To analyze the development of the tourism and hotel industries in Kerala
2. To analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the tourism industry in Kerala

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study has been considered to explore in-depth knowledge about tourism and hotel industry growth, and I followed the **SWOT** analysis. The study was conducted in a descriptive manner to explore the scenarios behind the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. For the study, I preferred secondary data from the various news articles, websites, and previously published research articles. Notable strengths include a growing market and the government's policies to push and upgrade the tourism and hotel industries. Weaknesses include a campaign and promotion of state tourism that have long been operated inefficiently. How a naturally endowed state may have the opportunity to flourish through domestic tourism. The greatest foreseeable threat is interference with tourism and hotel industry growth.

Overview on Kerala Tourism

“Kerala tourism, often referred to as “God’s Own Country,” offers a diverse and rich [product mix](#) for tourism, drawing visitors from all cities worldwide due to its unique geographical features and cultural richness. Kerala Tourism is operated under the direction of the State Tourism Ministry, Kerala. Kerala is one of the world’s top ten paradises because of its scenic beauty, varied demography, eco-tourism initiatives, and rich culture. The growth rate of Kerala tourism is more than 13%, and it has become a vital contributor to the state economy. As per the previous studies about the strategy of Kerala Tourism, it works on the mix marketing strategy. The marketing mix of Kerala tourism analyzes the 7Ps of Kerala tourism, which include the product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process of Kerala tourism.

Kerala Tourism Product Strategy

Backwaters: Kerala’s backwaters are a network of interconnected canals, rivers, lakes, and inlets. This

complex system formed by more than 900 km of waterways is often the highlight for tourists. Houseboat stays in places like Alleppey and Kumarakom offer unique experiences.

Beaches: The state has a long coastline with pristine beaches such as Kovalam, Varkala, Cherai, and Bekal. These beaches are known for their scenic beauty and offer activities for domestic tourists like sunbathing, swimming, and various water sports.

Hill Stations: Kerala's Western Ghats have beautiful hill stations like Munnar, Wayanad, and Thekkady. These places are renowned for their lush greenery, tea and spice plantations, wildlife, trekking trails, and cool climate.

Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks: Kerala has a rich biodiversity. Wildlife sanctuaries like Periyar, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, and Eravikulam National Park offer opportunities to see elephants, tigers, leopards, and various birds.

Cultural Heritage: Kerala's rich cultural heritage includes traditional art forms like Kathakali and Theyyam, ancient temples, and historical sites. Festivals such as Onam and Thrissur Pooram are significant attractions.

Ayurveda and Wellness Tourism: Kerala is known for its Ayurvedic treatments and wellness resorts. Ayurvedic massages, yoga, and meditation retreats are popular among tourists seeking relaxation and rejuvenation.

Cuisine: Kerala's cuisine is another major attraction, with its distinctive flavors and various dishes. Seafood, coconut-based curries, and local spices are integral to the culinary experience.

Eco-Tourism: Places like Gavi and Thenmala promote eco-tourism, offering experiences like bird watching, trekking, and staying in eco-friendly accommodations.

Adventure Tourism: Activities like trekking, paragliding, bamboo rafting, and mountain biking are gaining popularity in Kerala, especially in areas like Vagamon and Wayanad.

Village Tourism: Experiencing the traditional village life, engaging in activities like coir-making, and enjoying the serene rural landscape are increasingly popular.

Monsoon Tourism: Kerala is also known for promoting monsoon tourism, offering a unique state experience during the rainy season.

Kerala Tourism Place Strategy

Kerala Tourism has created a global market, becoming a favorite tourist destination worldwide. Most foreigners arrive from Australia, France, the USA, and the United Kingdom. Kerala has a strong network of railways, roadways, and international airports for the arrival and departure of tourists.

Diverse Geographic Locations: Kerala Tourism capitalizes on its varied geography and tourist destinations, including serene backwaters, pristine beaches, lush hill stations, and rich wildlife sanctuaries, ensuring there's a destination for every kind of traveler.

Accessibility and Connectivity: Emphasizing excellent connectivity, the state government has well-developed transport links, including international airports, a vast network of roads, and efficient local transportation, making tourist spots easily accessible.

Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Destinations: The state focuses on sustainable eco-tourism initiatives. It promotes eco-friendly destinations and practices that preserve its natural beauty and cultural heritage, appealing to environmentally conscious travelers.

Cultural and Heritage Sites: Highlighting its rich cultural heritage, Kerala Tourism strategically markets its historical sites, temples, and traditional art forms, attracting those interested in cultural

experiences.

Integration with Local Communities: The strategy includes integrating the tourism industry with local communities, offering authentic experiences like village tours and homestays, which allow tourists to immerse themselves in the local lifestyle and traditions.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF KERALA TOURISM

STRENGTHS

- Diversity of tourism products available in Kerala
- Kerala has a very good geographical position. Tourism sites are close to each other so both mountain area and beaches can be seen in one day.
- Personalities from Kerala such as Arundhathi Roy, Mata Amruthanandamayi, Saint Alphonsa and all others contribute towards building an image of Kerala all over the world.

WEAKNESSES

- Pathetic condition of the city roads and other main roads is the most difficult thing to be faced by traveller in Kerala
- Inadequate information about tourism by the authorities of Kerala
- Absence of basic amenities in busy tourist centres, Non-availability of qualified guides, Pitiabile cleanliness and hygiene, Poor auto/taxi services
- Lack of internationally famous monuments, Underdeveloped hill stations
- Lack of efficient, time-scheduled pre-advertised and regular conducted tour programmes
- Sustainable tourism development is mentioned in theory only. No concrete steps to implement practically the same.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Kerala has tied up with Google to promote its tourism through search and banner advertisements on the search engine.
- Tie up with neighbouring countries to attract tourist from European and other Asian countries
- Support from the State government of Kerala set a significant portion in its annual budget towards development and promotion of the sector.

It mainly aims at: →

- Marketing of tourism sector
- Conservation and preservation of heritage monuments, organising cultural events, initiatives for responsible tourism, eco tourism, Human Resource Development in Tourism. Modernisation and strengthening of tourism institutions, up gradation and creation of infrastructure facilities and tourism products as well as amenities.
- Possibilities to create diversified tourism packages by the tour operators

THREATS

- Threats to biodiversity - deforestation, pollution, water and land, depletion of natural resources etc. in turn leads to deterioration of tourism products
- Pollution threat to the backwater beauty of Kerala will adversely affect the industry

- Anonymous events like hartal, unfavourable policies of changing Govt also act as a challenge to kerala tourism

CONCLUSION

Tourism is the fastest growing economic sector globally. Kerala tourism also on the path of prosperity. Tourism department in Kerala has achieved several national and international awards for proving its excellence in various fields. The engines of future economic growth of Kerala are IT, Tourism and appropriate medium and large scale industries. Considering the permanent importance of tourism sector a substantial amount is earmarked by the State Govt each year in its annual budget. Kerala is abundant in tourism products and resources. Yet Kerala lags behind six other States and Union territories in India occupying a seventh rank in the foreign tourist visits and eighteenth rank in domestic tourist visits in the year 2016(Source: India Tourism Statistics-2017). In this context an attempt is made to assess the environmental factors that influence the growth of tourism industry in the State. For this purpose a SWOT analysis is done with the objective of assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Kerala tourism and to analyse the trend in growth rate of tourist arrivals in Kerala. Only secondary data is used for the study. From the study it is found that foreign tourists occupies larger share in Kerala tourism market.

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