



Tourism Marketing Prospects: A Study on Kerala as a Tourist Destination

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Tourism Marketing Prospects: A Study on Kerala as a Tourist Destination Abstract
Tourism has grown in popularity as a global pastime. For many countries, tourism is crucial, if not essential. The Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980 identified it as such "a vital activity in the life of nations because of its direct consequences on national societies' social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors, as well as on the environment."

ABSTRACT

Tourism has grown in popularity as a global pastime. For many countries, tourism is crucial, if not essential. The Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980 identified it as such "a vital activity in the life of nations because of its direct consequences on national societies' social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors, as well as on the environment. Their international standing "Tourism is a rising service industry that generates significant foreign exchange in many countries. Sections of the globe Kerala is the most popular tourist destination in India, thanks to its unique culture and natural beauty. Beautiful land rich in flora and animals and overflowing in natural splendour To make tourism a huge success, one must do the following steps to take maximum advantage of current technology. Tourism is promoted by many countries, and it has become a key source of revenue for countries such as India, Singapore and Malaysia. Tourism is a major sector in most developed countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Switzerland. Tourism should not only promote and sell packages to international visitors, but should also encourage domestic visitors to use the services. For people in India, the cost of a tourist package is the most relevant factor in deciding whether or not to travel. Tourists can be classified according to their socio economic status, regional disparities, demography, and psychographic characteristics. The tourism marketing mix aspects aid in the creation of a tourist destination's image, as well as raising awareness of the location. Tourism is a service industry that generates a significant amount of foreign cash for developing

countries. Kerala, India, is a popular tourist destination for international visitors due to its distinctive natural beauty, which includes backwaters, mountains, and beaches. Kerala is known as 'God's own country' because of its breath taking natural beauty that resembles heaven. The current paper is an attempt to successfully advertise tourism by adapting the service marketing approach. The strengths and problems of tourism in Kerala are discussed in this article, as well as the services marketing mix concepts and their application in promoting tourism in Kerala.

KEYWORDS

Tourism marketing, Tourism Vision 2020, Ecotourism.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has shown extraordinary growth in recent years. This has developed into a thriving industry with promising future prospects. Tourism has been a fast expanding industry and a far-reaching socio-economic phenomena, with Consequences on a large scale in terms of economics, society, culture, and the environment. Tourism is anticipated to continue to dominate the industry. For many years to come on the international stage. Tourism has magical potential in the eyes of many decision-makers and policy makers.

It generates revenue and is based on the local resources of the tourist destinations in question. Tourism is one of the most rapidly growing industries.

The global economy's fastest-growing sectors, which account for around 11% of global GDP (GDP) Around 200 million people are employed globally. Every year, around 700 million people travel internationally. In many countries, tourism and travel-related industries have envolved into dynamic sources of revenue and a key strategic growth sector. Tourism businesses operate globally, and many have chosen internationalisation as a competitive advantage.

In many rising countries, tourism has become one of the most important industries. Furthermore, the tourism business in these markets is expected to grow during the next decade. As a result, in order to effectively manage this sector, it is necessary to understand and precisely forecast travel trends. The rising trends in tourism are examined in this study, with a special focus on Kerala tourism.

Tourism Marketing

Travel and tourism has long been regarded as a significant service industry. Financial services, health care services, and information sector services are among the industries that make up the service sector. Tourism is one of the most important measures of economic contributions for both developed and developing countries among these businesses. Tourism is rapidly growing as a global industry, with some even considering it to be the most important. Over the last decade, international tourism in emerging and developing countries has expanded at a rate of 6-8 percent on average.

Components of Tourism

Tourism has many components comprising:

- Travel experience
- Accommodations
- Food
- Beverage services
- Entertainment
- Aesthetics and
- Special events

Marketing Mix for Tourism

The marketing mix for any service industry is discussed as 8Ps. They are as follows:

Product

In tourism, the product is essentially the service provider's experience and hospitality. In general, the experience must be presented in such a way that tourists recognise its worth.

Process

Trip preparation and anticipation, travel to the site/area and recall, and trip planning packages are all part of the tourism process. Maps, attractions route and on site, information on lodging, cuisine, and high-quality souvenirs and mementos are all included in the trip planning packages.

Place and Time – Location and Accessibility

In tourism, providing directions and maps, estimating travel time and distances from various market areas, recommending direct and scenic travel routes, identifying attractions and support facilities along various travel routes, and informing potential customers of alternative travel methods to the area such as airlines and railroads are all examples of place and time in tourism.

Productivity and Quality

Other service businesses are comparable in this regard. Time taken for a service, promptness of service, reliability, and other factors are used to determine quality.

Promotion and Education

The promotion, like other services, should include accurate and timely information to assist in deciding whether to visit the target audience, the image to be developed for the organisation, objectives, budget, campaign schedule, media to be used, and assessment methods.

People

Tourism revolves around people. It is a more labor-intensive industry. It is critical to focus on people when it comes to hospitality and visitor interactions. It's also important for quality assurance, personal selling, and employee morale.

Price and other user costs

The cost of producing, delivering, and promoting the product, the willingness of the target, prices charged by competitors offering similar products/services to the same target markets, availability and prices of substitute products/services, and the economic climate all influence the price of tourism services.

Physical Evidence

The physical evidence in tourism is based on the travel experience, stay, and comfort. The main product is presented here.

In the event of a stay, there is a bed.

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Kerala Tourism: The “GOD’S OWN COUNTRY”

Kerala is known as ‘God’s own country’ because of its breathtaking natural beauty that resembles heaven.

Even the tourism ministry of the state Government has adopted “God’s own nation” as an official slogan. Kerala, the country’s first tourism state, has a number of distinguishing advantages over the other states in the Indian union in terms of tourism. Many prizes and accolades have been bestowed upon the state’s tourism industry, both nationally and internationally.

The following are some of them:

- ◆ In India, the state is the only tourism destination chosen for the ‘Super brand.’ The state has been selected as one of three finalists in the WTTC (World Tourism & Travel Council).
- ◆ The state has won the ‘Tourism for Tomorrow’ award in the destination category in 2005.
- ◆ Kerala has won three Awards from Government of India in 2005.
- ◆ Kerala has been a leader in health and medical tourism among Indian states. Kerala and Ayurveda have become interchangeable terms. The state has made a deliberate effort to encourage health and medical tourism, particularly Ayurveda-based health tourism, in a large scale. This has resulted in a significant increase in tourist arrivals.

The Strength Areas of Kerala Tourism

It has been noted that Kerala has a comparative advantage over other countries in terms of tourism development in a few regions. The state’s distinct socioeconomic and geographic profile has contributed greatly to its status as one of the world’s most sought-after tourism destinations. Some of the factors include the long coastal strip, unusual geographical location, lush backwaters, a vast number of beaches, calm hillocks, temperate climate all year, highly literate population, and so on. Kerala has good opportunities for health tourism (because to its Ayurvedic reputation) and medical tourism (due to its cost effectiveness). Kerala has an excellent brand, whether it is based on Ayurveda or modern treatment, either because of reputation or cost effectiveness. Aside from that, Kerala has a lot of potential to become India’s top ecotourism destination. Thenmala, in Kerala (near the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram), was the country’s first ecotourism initiative.

Tourism Vision 2020

In the year 2000, Kerala drafted a detailed strategy plan called “Vision 2020.” Along with economic and feasibility issues, this publication offers adequate regard to the sustainability aspects of tourism expansion. The new policy aims to develop tourism as one of the state’s core competencies, as well as to properly regulate tourism initiatives while taking into account the state’s broader and long-term interests, such as environmental conservation, heritage and culture preservation, tourism infrastructure development, quality standards, and so on. In a nutshell, it strives to promote Kerala tourism in a sustainable and integrated manner. Kerala’s Department of Tourism (DoT) has devised a three-pronged strategy to retain and improve the state’s dominant position on the world tourism map. As a result, below are the three broad strategies:

- ◆ Product Innovation
- ◆ Innovative Marketing,
- ◆ Strategic alliance with the Government of Rajasthan.

Problems of Kerala’s Tourism Sector

Despite the state’s impressive development rates and huge potential in the tourism sector, the truth remains that Kerala tourism is currently beset by its own set of sustainability and other issues. Oommen (2008) explores Kerala’s ecological concerns in detail, referring to the current situation as ‘Ecological Overkill,’ referring to the problems faced by Kerala from a broader viewpoint. He points out that four fundamental problems are affecting the emerging ecological picture. The list is as follows:

- ◆ The hydrological cycle has been severely harmed, and the damage is likely irreversible. Natural systems such as forests and river systems have been irreversibly damaged. Kerala’s plentiful wetland, dubbed the “renal of the economic system,” is rapidly dwindling. Kerala has the lowest per capita availability of fresh water, despite the abundant monsoon rains.
- ◆ Fresh water conservation is only done on a small basis. There have been no worthwhile initiatives to save the rapidly vanishing woodlands.

- ◆ Kerala has a unique geography that has been significantly deformed, with a 580-kilometer-long coastline, mountains, and undulating terrains. The levelling of paddy areas, mountain regions, and excessive quarrying are all destroying Kerala's great bio-diversity.
- ◆ Few places on the planet have such a diverse natural basis of bio-resources, which have become culturally dependent on the people who protect them through time. Unfortunately, this lovely agro-ecosystem matrix is rapidly deteriorating. Traditional knowledge is rapidly dwindling.
- ◆ Heavy solid, liquid, and medicinal wastes are discarded in a consumerist society. Each day, hospitals generate over 1.5 lakh tonnes of solid garbage. In the coastal areas alone, it is estimated that one million cubic metres of sewage is generated per day.

Need for Focusing on Health and Medical Tourism in Kerala

Kerala's strong brand value in Ayurveda therapy offers promising opportunities for Ayurvedic health tourism. Similarly, in terms of contemporary medicine, the state possesses globally competitive medical facilities. The prices for cardiac surgery, dental surgery, heart transplantation, and other procedures have been found to be quite low in Kerala, often in the range of one-fifth to one-tenth of worldwide rates, while the services provided are internationally competitive.

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In recent years, India has placed a greater emphasis on tourism growth. While tourism has excellent prospects for promoting rapid economic development, particularly in developing countries, as evidenced by the experiences of many developing countries, the sustainability aspect of tourism has not always been given adequate consideration in the design of Government tourism policies. As a result, nature is overburdened beyond its carrying capacity, negatively harming its ecological balance. Furthermore, there are many cases where the interests of tourists alone are protected in order to maximise tourism earnings, regardless of the implications for local residents. All of this points to the growing importance of adopting ecotourism in its genuine letter and spirit, rather than simply in order to comply with legislative requirements or norms. This, in turn, needs a determined effort on the part of all parties concerned in the interest of long-term tourism growth. Above all, given the Government's resource restrictions in developing nations like India, private sector participation appears inevitable, highlighting the necessity for a PPP strategy to a holistic, integrated, and sustainable tourist development. Kerala is emerging as a viable tourist destination in the country for both local and international visitors, and the state Government needs to promote it aggressively. A district-by-district tourist project should be implemented, with a separate project implementation committee established. The district level should maintain a micro level database, such as a Management Information System, to record the number of domestic and foreign visitors to the site, the amount of people staying in the destination, the duration of stay, the sites visited, and so on. Kerala's primary goal in establishing various tourism facilities is to promote our rich cultural history and environment. As a result, eco-tourism improves for long-term livelihoods. Aggressive marketing methods should be included in the strategies for ensuring the long-term viability of state tourism projects.

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