

A history of indian tourism



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There are a number of industries that play a pivotal role in the development of nations. Tourism being one such industry that has emerged as the largest global industry in the 20th century and is projected to grow even faster during the current century. Tourism when taken in its true sense has following characteristics;

Resource based industry and consumes resources

Creates waste

Specific infrastructure needs

All the characters are linked to the social fabric of the host community. It has social, cultural and environmental impacts with a possibility of over consumption. The conceptual structure of the project aims to investigate the problems and advantages of home stay tourism in Kerala, from an owner's perspective. In this section the researcher attempts to explore the areas such as;

History of Indian tourism

Background of Kerala

Definition of tourism

Sustainable tourism

Community based tourism

Homestay tourism

Tourist motivation

Tourist satisfaction

Relevant research

History of Indian Tourism

India is a centre of two ancient civilizations of the world called the Indus valley civilization, and the Aryan civilization. Tourism development in India started in the early sixties. By that time most of the other countries have achieved a remarkable progress in this area and has exploited to maximum possible extent. The best way to introduce India as a tourist destination to foreigners is that ‘ India is a country of all seasons and all reasons’. India’s tourism resources have always been considered immense. The geographical features are diverse, colorful and varied. As such the resource potential is so much that it can cater to all kinds and tastes of tourists.

India has an ancient tradition of tourism. It existed as an industry in the informal sector in ancient times and was indulged in by all classes of people. Mark Twain aptly remarked about India on ‘ India’ [National Tourism Policy 2002] that “ India is one country that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for the lettered and the ignorant, the wise and the fool, the rich and the poor, the bonded and the free – one land that all men desire to see and once seen, by even a glimpse, would not give the glimpse for all the shows of all the rest of the globe combined.” The unity of India lies in its diversity – people bound together by centuries of common traditions, faith and philosophy [Pran Nath, Sushma 1993].

Indian tourism industry has recorded a phenomenal growth especially from 1990s in terms of both international and domestic tourists arrivals [Honnappa, Ramakrishna 2006]. The ministry of Indian tourism has launched a new programme called ‘ Athithi Devo Bhavah’ which means guest is god. The inspiration behind this expression is to respect because; respect has always been an essential part of Indian soul. Tourism, which is the third largest foreign exchange earner in India, has started gaining prominence to the public agenda only in recent years. Many countries in the world are relying on tourism as one of the fastest growing sectors. In the Chief Ministers’ conference held on October 2001 [National Tourism Policy 2002] the Prime Minister of India, Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee had stated that “ Tourism is a major phenomenon of economic growth in major parts of the world. Many countries have transformed their economies using the tourism potential the fullest.....tourism has the potential to create different types of employment in various sectors – from the most specialized to the unskilled and what India needs is the generation of massive productive employment opportunities “.

Tourism in India has a strong relevance to economic development and employment generation. It creates huge employment opportunities, provides equitable distribution of wealth, helps to acquire the much needed foreign exchange, brings out a speedy development and improvement of infrastructural facilities. Developing countries have given a special importance for the development of tourism, for it is the main source of earning foreign exchange, thereby the economic status of the country goes up [Honnappa, Ramakrishna 2006].

Tourism is one of the few industries which generates high levels of economic output, with minimum investments and has immense socioeconomic development potential. Indian tourism industry has recorded a phenomenal growth particularly from 1990's [Sathyanarayana, Ramu 2006] in terms of both international and domestic visitor arrivals. A noticeable change in the holidaying trend was reported both the international and domestic tourists showed an inclination towards adventure sports. India is slowly but surely awakening to its tourism potential. The outcome of many studies that has been done about tourism states that India is best suited for all kinds of tourism rural, cultural, eco-tourism, spiritual, sports and adventure tourism. With small countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are all ready major tourist destinations; India has to struggle to promote itself to the world tourists [Revathy 2008].

Background of Kerala

Kerala, one of the smallest states lies in the southern coast of India, is one of the leading proponents of tourism in various sectors. Kerala has a vast and vibrant arena, where drama unfolds in the form of spell bounding heritage sites, unspoilt beaches, picturesque hills, roaring water falls, old temple towns, exotic wild life, bustling cities, surrounded with backwaters, varied adventure sports and a vibrant way of life. Kerala is one of India's most advanced societies with nearly full literate people and excellent quality of life. The people of Kerala are more sensitive than people elsewhere because of high literacy rate [Kumar, Sudheer 2007].

On its way to becoming south, Kerala is one of the states that attract a large number of tourists in South India. In order to tap the tourist potential of so

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much history and such a variety of natural endowments, the Kerala government is taking a number of steps to improve the state's infrastructure's like air, road and rail links. The state is evolving new strategies, creating dynamic blue prints and ensuring meticulous execution will make sure that the state will emerge on top. Developing world class tourism products needs enhancing infrastructure, stream lining administration, strategic alliance and marketing will ensure that tourism bring sustainable growth and prosperity to Kerala also known as “ Gods on Country” [Honnappa, Ramakrishna 2006].

Kerala provides an ample opportunity for home stay and rural tourism. In this research work, this aspect of Kerala is trying to be explored. In addition to this, the fact that Kerala has remained and still continues to be one of the most favorite sites for tourists will also be highlighted (Thomas, K. W. (1992), pp. 651-717). The landscape and the scenic beauty of Kerala are such that the tourists enjoy coming in India and exploring the various parts of Kerala (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). In addition, it was also seen that in the recent times, the sector of rural tourism is also increasing manifold (Thomas, K. W. (1992), pp. 651-717). Thus, though this research work, the concept of rural tourism will also be highlighted. This introduction highlights the fact that rural tourism is relevant in developing nations where there is enough of land cape and scenic beauty to give the feel of the rural life (Thomas, K. W. (1992), pp. 651-717). Today, for rural tourism, a village can prove to be an important site for tourist attraction.

Any unbridled and indiscriminate growth of tourism leading to the problems of pollution, environmental and economic hazards and culture degradation

will definitely be opposed by the highly sensitive host population of Kerala. The various negative factors of tourism will have far reaching consequences upon the people of Kerala besides making impact upon the tourists visiting the state.

Definition of Tourism

Tourism has been defined as the “ activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside of their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes” [WTO 1998].

There are different words and meanings for tourism such as Domestic Tourism: – that involves residents of the given country travelling only within the country. Inbound Tourism:- involves residents travelling in the given country. Outbound Tourism: – means residents travelling in another country. International Tourism:- consists of inbound and outbound tourism [WTO 1998].

Sustainable Tourism

There is no widely accepted definition of sustainable tourism. It could, of course, be suggested that sustainable tourism should simply be about applying the Brundtland Report definition of sustainability to tourism. This could lead to a definition such as: “ Forms of tourism which meet the needs of tourists, the tourism industry, and host communities today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

There is another definition of sustainable tourism emphasizes the environmental, social and economic elements of the tourism system. This definition “ means tourism which is economically viable, but does not destroy the resources on which the future of tourism will depend, notably the

physical environment and the social fabric of the host community”

[Swarbrooke 1999].

Sustainable tourism is the tourism development that protects important ecological and biological qualities and the process results in increased economic opportunity for local residents and involves them in decision-making, and respects the integrity of cultural norms and traditions.

Sustainable tourism development is based on the objective that it meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support system [Ashraf, Fazili 2004]. For the development of tourism, the department has decided to develop policies, strategies and plans for sustainable tourism.

The tourism plan or policy is a gambling that will definitely have winners or losers that make the public sector tourism policy a political issue. Tourism has powerful vested interests that will seek to influence the political process such as transport operators and hoteliers. Such kind of groups may also oppose measures to make tourism more sustainable. Rather than giving importance to the merits of tourism view point, the government and local communities are taking the tourism decisions for political reasons [Swarbrooke 1999]. The concept of sustainability clearly embraces the environment, people and economic systems. Therefore sustainable tourism is based on; social progress reflecting the needs for everyone, effective

protection of environment, prudent use of natural resources, maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

According to Swarbrooke 1999, there are number of obstacles that will limit the role of the public sector in tourism, planning and development. They are;

Tourism is only a low priority for the public sector and there seems to be a lack of political will to develop sustainable tourism.

The concept of public sector planning and regulation are out of fashion

Many public sector bodies lack the financial resources required to play a major role in tourism planning and development.

There is lack of staff expertise in tourism in most public sector organizations around the world.

The series of election affects the willingness of politicians to make the kind of long term decisions on which sustainable tourism depends.

Public sector is only a minor player in the tourism industry with least control over tourism products.

Sustainable tourism is lead by motives like spirit of enquiry, love of beauty, search for knowledge and respect for nature. It aims at quality tourism which creates least damage to the natural, social and cultural environment. The sustainable tourism hinges upon the overall management as a viable method in sustainable tourist activities. The overall quality approach renders the management of products especially of tourist areas, extremely sensitive to the preferences and expectations of consumers. The private and public

profitability of a tourist destination will depend on the client sanitation, since they will return more often and stay longer and will transmit a positive image of their holiday experience to others. However, as these preferences and expectations include the demand for unspoilt settings and consumer satisfaction, the profitability of a tourist spot, will call for the development of strategies for sustainable development [Honnappa, Ramakrishna 2006]

Community Based Tourism

Tourism can bring both benefits and problems to an area. If well planned, developed and managed, tourism generates local jobs and income and provides opportunities for local entrepreneurs to establish tourism enterprises that lead to improve the living standards of residents [WTO 1998]. Community based tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by the rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income. It is often considered ideal and inherently sustainable as it attracts manageable number of visitors, does not need much infrastructural development, does not consume too much of already scarce resources, does not require high amount of skill base, and provides a source of income to locals besides preserving the local culture and its traditions.

One of the main attractions of CBT is the highly personal interactions between the host and the guest where both parties can share knowledge, ideas and experience and as a consequence increase the earnings of local community with minimal investments. Events like, a night out with the locals at their homes, participation in the lesser known village religious or cultural events, an opportunity to participate in local activities like agriculture, fishing

or even living with locals and sharing their food, their lives and their occupation could provided the much needed fillip for community based tourism [Mello 2008].

Tourism can bring both benefits and problems to the local society and its cultural patterns. Although more difficult to measure than economic or environmental impacts, socio -cultural impacts are major considerations in developing tourism in any place. These impacts can be especially critical in countries that still have strongly traditional economies and societies. Despite the fact that tourism can generate socio -cultural impacts, it is obvious that any kind of new development brings changes. Tourism is one of the important sources that can bring changes in a society. A well planned, developed and managed tourism in a socially responsible manner can bring some kinds of socio -cultural benefits such as

Improves the living standards of people and helps pay for improvements to community facilities and services, if the economic benefits of tourism are well distributed.

Conserves the cultural heritage of an area which otherwise might be lost as a result of general development taking place. Conservation of archeological and historic sites was referred to under environmental impacts. In some places tourism can be the impetus for revitalizing cultural patterns which might be disappearing.

Reinforces or even renews a sense of pride of residents I their culture, when they observe tourists appreciating it.

Helps develop and maintain museums, theatres and other cultural facilities supported by tourism but the residents can also enjoy it.

Tourism provides an opportunity for cross culture exchange between tourists and residents who learn about, and come to respect one another's culture. This exchange can be best be achieved through certain forms of tourism – educational and other types of special interest tours, village tourism and home visit programmes whereby tourist can arrange to visit local families.

Homestay Tourism

It was noted that these days, the craze for home stay tourism is increasing. This is because now people have less time an in that less time they want to experience all that they can of the culture of the people. Home stay is one of the most recent opportunities for tourism business owners to lure the customers and at the same time maximize profit (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). In this tourism, the host or the business owner allows the tourist to stay at their own houses or at specially designed huts such that they get first -hand information about the culture, and place they are visiting (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). 3-74). These Homestay businesses are running on a small scale by families allowing tourists to stay with them and to enjoy the food, lodging and other requirements. In lieu to these services, the person will give the household a fixed amount of money that fixed earlier. In this way both the person and the visitor also benefitted (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74).

There are cases in Kerala where traditional huts are also constructed so that the tourists and come and stay with the people to have the feel of life in the

rural society (Thomas, K. W. (1992), pp. 651-717). This led to the evolution of the home stay system as they get a chance to interact with the local people and host and gain first -hand experience about the place (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). Home stay tourism is also a variant of ecotourism and primarily ensures in focusing that the tourists to give an experience of the rural lifestyle (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). However, Kerala faces many social and economic problems in this. The culture of the host and the guest meet and so there are changes of hurting the sentiments of one another (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). In addition, there are sometimes cases when the guest is not satisfied at the service given in that host (Hofstede, G. (2001), pp. 34-45). As the sceneries and scenic beauty and hospitality of Kerala are great, this has been using as a marketing strategy to explore the prospects of tourism in Kerala (Sunderland, S., Nelson, R. (1995), pp. 53-74). This interest of the people to get mixed with the local culture of the people help in making rural tourism so popular in Kerala (Hofstede, G. (2001), pp. 34-45). These will be described in detail in the research work.

Definitions of Homestay Tourism

“ It is comparable to bed and breakfasts, but even less formal. A home stay property is a non commercialized, private residence that accommodates paying guest(s) who enjoy staying in the comfort and security of a family home. These guests often reside in the family home for an extended period of time, usually months rather than days. It is a safe, affordable means of housing popular amongst international students, interns, travelling professionals and adult visitors from other countries, who are looking to

experience and learn about local lifestyle and culture” [cited on: onecaribbean. org]

“ Homestay is one type of tourism that promotes interaction between host families and tourists” [cited on: mekongtourism. org]

“ Homestay tourism refers to one pattern of tourism with emphasis on ecotourism and community based tourism, in which tourists will stay over night with the host in the villages. The hosts have to support visitors like a member of the family and involve them in all kinds of activities and shared experiences. These activities have the objective of learning about locals’ life style and livelihood of residents in the community” [Phonwiset, Yomsatharn, Chusakul 2008 cited on: nubkk. nu. ac].