

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM BUSINESS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KERALA TOURISM

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Received: 09 Jan 2018

Accepted: 13 Jan 2018

Published: 29 Jan 2018

ABSTRACT

Tourism is a sector which was giving sizeable revenue to the state of Kerala for at least a few decades. Tourism was viewed as a major supplier of forex as well as expected to provide employment opportunities to millions of Malayalees. Over a period of time, brand Kerala as a favorable destination for international tourists eroded and Kerala tourism experienced only a sluggish growth. One main reason for the same is lack of business management and innovative management practices in the tourism sector. This article tries to put some light on the key factors to be considered in a sustainable tourism model. This article also discusses the USP of Kerala tourism.

KEYWORDS: *Tourism, 4A's of Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Sustainable Business*

INTRODUCTION

The World Tourism Organization defines tourism more generally, in terms which go "beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only", as people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes".

Tourism is travel for pleasure or business; also the theory and practice of touring, the business of attracting, accommodating, and entertaining tourists, and the business of operating tours. Tourism may be international, or within the traveller's country. Tourism can be domestic or international, and international tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country's balance of payments. Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and affects the economy of both the source and host countries, in some cases being of vital importance.

Tourism suffered as a result of a strong economic slowdown of the late-2000s recession, between the second half of 2008 and the end of 2009, and the outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus, but slowly recovered. International tourism receipts (the travel item in the balance of payments) grew to US\$1.03 trillion (€740 billion) in 2011, corresponding to an increase in real terms of 3.8% from 2010. International tourist arrivals surpassed the milestone of 1 billion tourists globally for the first time in 2012, emerging markets such as China, Russia and Brazil had significantly increased their spending over the previous decade. The ITB Berlin is the world's leading tourism trade fair.

As of Tourism

There are a few key factors which can affect the success of tourism business. Those 4 key factors can be summarized as 4 as:

- Attraction
- Accessibility
- Accommodation
- Amenities

Attraction

Attraction is the most important element & object that attract people to travel. It includes cultural sites, archaeological sites, historical buildings & monuments or scenery like flora & fauna, beach, resorts, mountains, national parks. It also includes events like trade fairs, exhibitions, sports events etc.

- **Natural Attraction:** Attraction places made by nature. E.g. climate, natural beauty, landscape, mountains, water resources, flora & fauna, wild life, beaches, safari, caves etc.
- **Man-Made Attraction:** Attraction developed by man. E.g. historical buildings, monuments, music, festivals, temples, churches, leisure parks, Disney lands, museums, discos, casinos etc.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an important key factor for the development of tourism. Attraction may be wherever but without accessibility can't reach towards that place. It is the mode of transportation which helps the tourist to reach the destination.

Three type of Transportation

- **Surface:** Transportation in land through roadways or railways. It is the cheapest means of transportation.
- **Air Transportation:** Transportation through airways to travel long distance. It has helped a lot as people can travel long journey as well as they can travel through high mountains.
- **Water Transportation:** Transportation through water. It made an important contribution to travel in the 19th century after the innovation of shipping technology.

Accommodation

Accommodation includes food & lodging facilities to the guest. It should be comfortable and services & facilities should be provided.

Two types of Accommodation

- **Serviced Accommodation:** It refers to the services provided by the hotel, lodges etc. Different hotels are established to provide service of lodging & food to the guest.
- **Self Catering or Supplementary Accommodation:** It refers to the premises which offer accommodation but not the services of hotel. It provides food & accommodation in return of cash per day.

E.g. Youth Hostel, Dharmasalas, Pati-Pauwa, Tourist holiday villages etc.

Amenities

Amenities include the extra facilities & services required to the guest while traveling. These facilities complement to the attraction. It also provides facilities like providing visa, tickets etc.

Two Types of Amenities

- **Natural:** Seashores, sea bath, fishing, rock climbing, trekking, sightseeing, river, sunrise etc.
- **Man Made:** Dance, Music, Drama, Cinema, Swimming Pool, Fair & Festivals, and Internet etc.

Global Tourism & India's Position in Tourism Business

The World Tourism rankings are compiled by the United Nations World Tourism Organization as part of their *World Tourism Barometer* publication, which is released three times throughout the year. In the publication, UN regions and sub regions are ranked by the number of international visitor arrivals, by the revenue generated by inbound tourism, and by the expenditures of outbound travellers. Top 10 tourist destinations are stated below:

Table 1: Top Tourist Destinations

Rank	Destination	International Tourist Arrivals (2016)
1	France	84.5 million
2	USA	77.5 million
3	Spain	68.5 million
4	China	56.9 million
5	Italy	50.7 million
6	UK	34.4 million
7	Germany	35.0 million
8	Mexico	32.1 million
9	Thailand	29.9 million
10	Turkey	39.5 million

Source: World Tourism Barometer

India is not a major destination of in world tourism map. India is not even a major destination among Asian countries also. India's position in Asia – Pacific tourism business is stated below:

Table 2: Top Tourist Destinations - Asia Pacific Region

Rank	Destination	International Tourist Arrivals (2016)
1	China	59.3 million
2	Thailand	32.6 million
3	Malaysia	26.8 million
4	Hong Kong	26.6 million
5	Japan	24.0 million
6	South Korea	17.2 million
7	Macau	15.7 million
8	India	14.6 million
9	Singapore	12.9 million
10	Indonesia	12 million

Source: World Tourism Barometer

Sustainable Business Model

As per going concern concept in accounting business is created by law and only law can put an end to the life of

the business. In other words, business is expected to have an infinite life.

A sustainable business is any organization that participates in environmentally friendly or green activities to ensure that all processes, products, and manufacturing activities adequately address current environmental concerns while maintaining a profit. In other words, it is a business that “meets the needs of the present [world] without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is the process of assessing how to design products that will take advantage of the current environmental situation and how well a company’s products perform with renewable resources.

Sustainable business, or green business, is an enterprise that has minimal negative impact on the global or local environment, community, society, or economy—a business that strives to meet the triple bottom line. Often, sustainable businesses have progressive environmental and human rights policies. In general, business is described as green if it matches the following four criteria:^[1]

- It incorporates principles of sustainability into each of its business decisions
- It supplies environmental friendly products or services that replaces demand for non-green products and/or services
- It is greener than traditional competition
- It has made an enduring commitment to environmental principles in its business operations

Sustainability is often confused with corporate social responsibility (CSR), though the two are not the same. Bansal and DesJardine (2014) state that the notion of ‘time’ discriminates sustainability from CSR and other similar concepts. Whereas ethics, morality, and norms permeate CSR, sustainability only obliges businesses to make intertemporal trade-offs to safeguard intergenerational equity. Short-termism is the bane of sustainability.

3 Ps of a Sustainable Business

Sustainable business is a business which can run successful for a infinite period. This is possible only if all the 3 Ps are satisfied:

- Profit
- People
- Planet



Figure 1

Profit is the economic variable to be satisfied by any business house. No business can operate, if it fails to generate sufficient profit (in whatever name it’s called). People are the 2nd P of a sustainable business. There are many

stakeholders associated with a business like customers, suppliers, employees etc. If any of these stakeholders are not so happy with the business, then automatically the business cannot work profitably in long run. Third P is Planet. Any business which is harmful to the environment cannot operate in the long run. So a sustainable business is a business which meets economic, environmental and social objectives simultaneously.

Kerala Tourism

Kerala is traditionally considered to be a hot destination for tourism. If we think from 4 A's angle of tourism:

1st A, Attraction - Kerala has beautiful beaches, greenery, backwaters, ayurveda, temples etc.

2nd A, Accessibility – Kerala is accessible via water, air and road

3rd A, Accommodation – Kerala has options for decent accommodation but not so cheap

4th A, Amenities – Have basic amenities like hospitals, but lack other amenities like shopping complex, hypermarkets etc. of global standards.

USP of Kerala Tourism

Even though, Kerala is not having the best beaches in the world or the not the most beautiful place in the world, but the combo of all the attractive features serves as the USP of Kerala tourism. Ayurvedic beach resorts in Kerala provide a unique USP which cannot be copied by most of the beautiful beaches in the world. The combo of Ayurvedic beach resorts, temples, backwaters and greenery can be a unique selling proposition to attract domestic as well as foreign tourist.

Types of Tourist

The tourist can be divided as domestic as well as foreign tourist. The statistics for the same is stated below

Table 3: Foreign Tourist Visit

Rank	State	Foreign Tourist Visit (2016)
1	Maharashtra	4156343
2	Tamil Nadu	3990490
3	Delhi	2301395
4	Uttar Pradesh	2054420
5	Rajasthan	1437162
6	West Bengal	1245230
7	Kerala	858143
8	Bihar	765835
9	Kerala	636378
10	Goa	492322
11	Others	2013308
	Total	19951026

Source: www.tourism.gov.in

Table 4: Domestic Tourist Visit

Rank	State	Domestic Tourist (2016)
1	Tamil Nadu	244232487
2	Uttar Pradesh	226531091
3	Andra Pradesh	152102150
4	Karnataka	98010140
5	Maharashtra	82700556
6	Madhya Pradesh	63110709
7	Rajasthan	30298150
8	Gujarat	27412517
9	West Bengal	25547300
10	Chattisgarh	22801031
11	Others	172534312
Total		1145280443

Source: www.tourism.gov.in

Problems and Prospects of Kerala Tourism

From the data shown above, it is evident that domestic tourist constitutes more than 95% of the tourist visit in Kerala. Kerala can generate revenue from tourism sector only if Kerala succeeds in attracting domestic tourist. Kerala is not even in the 10th place of domestic tourist visit. One of the main reasons for the same is the cost. Most of the resorts are priced at high end, expecting foreign customers. But, India or Kerala was never a hot pic for the foreign tourist.

Affordable tourism is the key factor for the success of Kerala tourism. Kerala has to generate a model where it can compete with major other states like Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra, UP etc. in terms of affordability. The average rate to get a room in Kerala in a beach resort in Kerala is costing at least ₹ 5000 in a peak season, which makes it too expensive for normal Indians. Secondly, lack of infrastructure in Kerala is another hindrance in attracting domestic tourist. Kerala performs average only as far as *Amenity* is concerned. Domestic tourist expects better roads, good connectivity via air and rail. Kerala performs average only as far as road and rail infrastructure is concerned. Development of connectivity (via road and rail) and infrastructure is key for the development of tourism in Kerala.

CONCLUSIONS

Tourism can be a prime revenue generating avenue for Kerala. A proper pricing strategy backed by decent infrastructure and amenities can help in making Kerala a top destination for national as well as international tourist.

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