



A STUDY ON TOURIST'S SATISFACTION TOWARDS BACKWATER TOURISM IN KERALA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ALAPPUZHA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT :

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Tourism in India is economically important and is growing rapidly. It's potential for earning valuable foreign exchange, employment opportunities directly and indirectly developing countries economy. Kerala is an established destination for both domestic as well as foreign tourists. Kerala is well known for its beaches, backwaters in Alappuzha and Kollam, mountain ranges and wildlife sanctuaries. Travelling through back waters is termed as backwater tourism. Customer's satisfaction is influenced by the availability of various customer services, the quality of customer service has become a major concern of all business. Failure to pay attention to influential attributes in choice of intention may result in a customer's negative evaluation and may lead to unfavourable word-of-mouth. Back water tourism comes under ecotourism. Government of Kerala wants to provide the best service to the tourists without disturbing the nature at any cost. So a study to analyse the satisfaction level of tourists related to the facility available under back water tourism is very important.

KEYWORDS : *Tourism, Backwater tourism, Domestic Tourists, Foreign Tourists.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Kerala is known for its tropical backwaters and pristine beaches in Thiruvananthapuram and other districts. The back water mainly covers four districts of the state Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam and Ernakulam. The largest backwater body, the Vembanad Lake flows through Alappuzha and Kottayam districts and open out into the sea at Kochi Port. Astamudi and Sasthamcotta lakes are the other two important backwaters in Kerala. Alappuzha is one of the backwater tourists centres in Kerala. It is referred to as the 'Venice of the East' by travellers from across the world. Alappuzha is a district of immense natural beauty. Kerala is an established destination for both domestic as well as foreign tourists. Kerala is well known for its beaches, backwaters in Alappuzha and Kollam, mountain ranges and wildlife sanctuaries are the other popular attractions in the state include the beaches at Kovalam, Kappad, Cherai and Varkala, backwater tourism and lake resorts around Ashtamudi Lake, Kollam hill stations and resorts at Munnar, Wayanad, Nelliampathi, Ponmudi and national parks. The city of Thiruvananthapuram first in the total number of international and domestic tourists in Kerala. To further promote tourism in Kerala, the Grand Kerala Shopping Festival was started by the Government of Kerala in 2007. Since then it has been held every year during the December –January period.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The review of related literature is very important especially in the initial stages of any research work, and it is a crucial aspect of planning of the study.

SamsulAlam and SudharshanReddy(2016) studied the impact of tourism on income inequality in developing countries. The analysis of this study utilizes a balanced panel data set from 1991 to 2012 on 49 developing economics around the world. From this study the investigators find that the tourism industry act as one of the source of income in each and every country. But its rate of earnings differ from each developing countries.

Albert NsamKimbu and Michael(2016) studied the women are vectors of social entrepreneurship. It states that drawing on the literature examining women in the tourism sector and social entrepreneurship. This article critically explores a theoretical frame work for analyzing the role of women owner manager of tourism industry.

Meyer –Hubbert(2015) studied the impact of tourism on water and waste water services in town". Tourism requires a high standard of water supply and waste water services. In small population centres tourism growth can significantly increase pressure on the infrastructure that is typically funded by rate payers and sometimes provoke demand for tourism taxes. Appropriate cost and charging structure along with sound infrastructure engineering will contribute significantly to improved and more sustainable water and waste water services and more efficient use of water resource.

Kraay(2014) studied that the tourism industry is looking for newer and better ways to reach out of customers especially in the international market. Kerala tourism already identified Scandinavian countries, Eastern European nations and Australia as new markets. The new campaigns of Kerala tourism is also catching upto the audience. The great backwaters, Ayurveda campaigns have clicked well.

Rao(2005) studied the relationship between tourism and foreign exchange. The study concluded that tourism is a revenue earner and the most significant source of foreign exchange in several countries. He warns that a badly organized tourism development strategy will have some adverse effects on the country rather than the development of the country.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The commercial viability of tourism depends upon scientific product planning and development of attractive tourism products. This hesitate formation and maintenance of amalgam of various tangible and intangible factors. The tangible factors include attraction, accommodation, transportation, recreation, restaurant and shopping. The intangible factors consist of feel good elements like general attitude of tourists at reception centres. Various tourist destinations, airports, hotels and restaurant approaches of tour agent and feeling of safety and security provided by police and officials. The tangible factors are considered to the essential requirements for the promotion of tourism as an industry. The present study attempts to examine the availability of these physical facilities and features associated with backwater tourism and also to access the satisfaction level of tourists about these facilities. The aim of the study is to know the satisfaction level of tourists on physical facilities and features of backwater tourism in Alappuzha district.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Kerala is a beautiful place of land lying between palm fringed Arabian sea on the west and the lush-green Western Ghats on the east with panoramic and unique stretches of backwaters in between. The study is restricted to Alappuzha district is one of the western coast of Vembanad back water. Alappuzha is one of the holidayer's paradises. An enhancing picnic spot and a fast developing back water tourism destination. Alappuzha provides house boating, fishing, sightseeing experiences, sea food, kettuvalloms that are truly exhilarating. An exclusive attraction of this much sought after backwater resort is the kuttanad area is one of the places in the world where farming is done below the sea level. 'Kuttanad' is called the rice bowl of Kerala because of the wealth of paddy crops is at the heart of backwaters. Hence the study tries to point

out major tourism attractions in Alappuzha and also tries to reveal the satisfaction level of tourists who have visited in Alappuzha.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to study the satisfaction level of the tourist on the physical facilities available for back water tourism and access the extend of satisfaction of the tourist on the features associated with back water tourism. The secondary objectives are,

1. To study the backwater tourism in Alappuzha district
2. To offer suggestions for the systematic development of backwater tourism in Alappuzha district.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology is described by identifying the tasks for fulfilling the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary data were made use for the purpose of the study. Primary data collected by using a structured interview schedule. Secondary data were collected from office record of the District Tourism Promotion Council, Publications of Directorate of Tourism, Newspapers, Journals, Previous research work and from websites.

Sample Design:

The population being large so the survey was carried among 200 respondents. They will be considered adequate to represent the characteristics of the entire population. Convenient sampling technique was used for this selection.

Tools for Analysis

Data collected from the study are tabulated, analysed and presented with the help of appropriate tools of analysis by using appropriate mathematical and statistical tools. Simple percentage, Chi-square test, Garrett’s Ranking Technique and Likert’s Five point Scaling Technique were used for the study.

VII. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

1. Sources of inspiration for being interested in Backwater Tourism.

The following table 1 shows the sources of inspiration about backwater tourism.

Table. 1 Garrett mean Score and ranking of the mean score of inspiration about backwater tourism.

Sl.No	Sources of Inspiration	Mean score	Rank
1	Family members and friends	64.78	I
2	Print media advertisement	50.47	V
3	Website	61.32	II
4	Visual media advertisement	53.77	IV
5	Tourist guides and operators	58.69	III
6	Any other source	47.65	VI

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1 shows the sources of inspiration about back water tourism. Among various sources of inspiration “Inspiration from family members” ranked first with a mean score 64.78, “Website” ranked second with a mean score of 61.32. “Tourist guides and operators” ranked third with a mean score of 58.69. “Visual media advertisement” ranked fourth with 53.77 mean score “Print media advertisement” ranked fifth with a mean score of 50.47 and “Other sources ranked sixth with a mean score of 47.65

2. Tourists Level of satisfaction among various facilities available in backwater tourism.

Satisfaction is a personal feeling of pleasure or disappointment, resulting from comparison in relation to his or her expectations. The following table 2 shows the tourist satisfaction towards various facilities in backwater tourism.

Table 2 Tourists level of satisfaction among various facilities available in backwater tourism

Attributes	H.S	S	N.O	D.S	H.D.S	Total	Ranks
	5	4	3	2	1		
Hotel Accomodation	96(480)	88(352)	12(36)	-	4(4)	872	I
Food and beverage	20(100)	148(592)	28(84)	-	4(4)	780	II
Attitude of tour operators	12(60)	80(320)	80(240)	20(40)	8(8)	668	V
Travel facilities	60(300)	80(320)	4(12)	28(56)	28(28)	716	III
Attitude of travel agencies	60(300)	60(240)	20(60)	20(40)	40(40)	680	IV
Availability of Travel tickets	16(80)	60(240)	40(120)	72(144)	12(12)	596	VI
Total	1320	2064	552	280	96	4312	

Source: Primary data

H.S –Highly Satisfied S-Satisfied N.O –No Opinion D.S -Dissatisfied H.D.S- Highly dissatisfied

The findings of the level of satisfaction towards various facilities available in back water tourism are shown in table 2. Likert’s five point scaling method is used and it clearly states that attribute “Hotel accommodation” ranks first and “Food and beverage” ranks second . It also reveals that the tourists are not satisfied with the attitude of tour operators and availability of travel tickets ,since it takes the last two ranks and it must be improved.

3. Tourists Level of satisfaction among various features available in back water tourism.

Various features associated with back water tourism are natural beauty of Kerala, lakes and rivers, trip in house boat, facilities in the house boat, tour package and tour operations are selected for the study purpose. Table 4 shows the level of satisfaction among various features available in backwater tourism in Alappuzha

Table 3 Tourist’s satisfaction towards various features available in Back water tourism

Attributes	H.S	S	N.O	D.S	H.D.S	Total	Ranks
	5	4	3	2	1		
Trip in house boat	20(100)	148(529)	28(84)	-	4(4)	780	II
Facilities in house boat	60(300)	80(320)	80(240)	20(40)	8(8)	668	IV
Natural beauty of Kerala	96(480)	88(352)	12(36)	-	4(4)	872	I
Tour operation	16(80)	60(240)	40(120)	72(144)	12(12)	596	VI
Lake and Rivers	11(55)	80(320)	80(240)	20(40)	9(9)	664	V
Tour Package	60(300)	60(240)	20(60)	20(40)	40(40)	680	III
Total	1320	2064	552	280	96	4312	

Source: Primary data

The above table 3 depicts the level of satisfaction towards various features available for backwater tourism, Likert’s five point scaling method is used .It clearly states that the attribute “Natural beauty of Kerala” ranks first and “ Trip in House boat” ranks second. It also reveals that tourists are not satisfied with the attributes “Lake and rivers, Tour operation, since it takes the last two ranks and it must be improved.

4. LEVEL OF INSPIRATION

Inorder to quantify the inspiration level, the researcher identified six components as various source of inspiration towards backwater tourism and an inspiration scale has been constructed by awarding scores with the help of Likert’s five point scale. The total score of each respondent is computed for analyzing the inspiration level of respondents towards backwater tourism. On the basis of the total mean score(x) and standard deviation (σ) are computed. Inorder to know the different levels of inspiration of respondents, inspiration scores has been grouped into three categories namely tourists with high, medium and low level of inspiration. Low level of inspiration = below $x + \sigma$ Medium level of inspiration = between $x + \sigma$ and High level of inspiration = above $x + \sigma$

(a) Age and Level of Satisfaction

H0: There is no significant relationship between age and level of satisfaction of tourists in backwater tourism.

Table 4 Chi-square analysis on the relationship between Age and level of satisfaction

Particulars	Chi-square value	D.F	Table value
Age and level of satisfaction of backwater tourists	13.12	6	12.592

Source: Computed data

Since the calculated value (13.12) is more than the table value(12.592) at 5 percent level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. So there is no relationship between age and level of satisfaction on backwater tourist.

(b) Gender and level of satisfaction:

H0: There is no significant relationship between age and level of satisfaction of tourists in backwater tourism.

Table. 5 Chi-square analysis on the relationship between Gender and level of satisfaction

Particulars	Chi-square value	D.F	Table value
Gender and level of satisfaction of backwater tourists	7.58	2	5.991

Source : Computed Data

Since the calculated value (7.58) is more than the table value (5.991) the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence it is concluded that there is significant relationship between Gender and level of satisfaction on backwater tourism.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

1. Many house boats did not process the pollution control certificate . So that Government should take necessary steps to insist the owners to take certificate for the house boat.
2. Required publicity should be given for popularizing the tourist spot.
3. To provide hygienic condition in the boats and the boat stops.
4. Toilet waste from the houseboat creates water pollution. To avoid this situation waste storage houses should be built on the banks of these backwaters.
5. Necessary action should be taken by the Government for clearing of weeds from the lake for the smooth functioning of the house boat trip at least from these tourist spots.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Kerala has along chain of lagoons and backwaters, run almost parallel to the sea coast, reserves water from numerous rivers and streams. Back water cruises are world famous and they give everlasting memories to any visitor. Alappuzha is one of the holidayer's paradise. An enchanting picnic spot and a fast developing backwater tourism destination, Alappuzha provides all facilities to tourists that are truly exhilarating. In tourism industry, backwater tourism is the new way to enjoy nature at its best.

IX. REFERENCE

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