

Facilities and Motivating Factors Experienced by Foreign Tourists in Alleppey Tourist Destination

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Abstract

The remains of history in the form of destinations are known as Heritage tourism. There are both positive and negative impacts on socio-cultural, physical economic aspects of a nation. It is evident that tourism affects much on cultural resources. Vandalism, wear, tear and pollutions are the major factors that uproot the physical resources in heritage tourism. It also stimulates job opportunities, taxes and entrepreneurialism in the tourist destinations. The study reveals the impacts of socio-cultural phase in various tourist destinations in and around the district of Alleppey, Kerala. For this research, primary data are collected through observation and interviews of local community members and the tourists visiting the various tourist destinations in Alleppey. Thus, this study impacts the culture of heritage tourism which analyzes how best it can increase the positive aspect and restrict the negative aspects in order to sustain the value of the tourist destinations in Alleppey.

Key Word: Tourist, Facilities and Motivating Factors

1.1. Introduction to Tourism

India's subcontinent lies in South Asia, Pakistan, China and Nepal. The Northern region covered by the world's highest mountain chain. Furthermore, the Southern region is bordered by Palm-fringed beaches. India has the world's tallest peaks and snow covered valleys and a jungle not only in the Himalayan ranges but also by sunny beaches and nestled backwaters with a coastline of 7000 Kms. India has become a Tourists' Paradise only because of its cultural heritage and richness of Nature.

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. Indus Valley Civilization and Aryan Civilization are the two primitive civilizations by which India was being called as the Brightest Jewel in the British reign. India has set an example to other countries in many aspects. Having varied races, languages, religions, customs and traditions, India has a rich cultural heritage and tourist spots that offer attractive, historical and archaeological Importance.

1.2. What is Tourism

Tourism is the act and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation and pleasure while making use of the commercial provision of services. As such, Tourism is a product of modern social arrangements, beginning in Western Europe in the 17th Century. Though tourism befits pleasure-seekers, they are generally insulated from difficulty, danger and embarrassment. Moreover, tourism goes beyond other activities, interests and processes including pilgrimage. This gives rise to shared categories such as Brand Tourism, Sports Tourism and Medical Tourism.

Modern tourism is an increasingly intensive, commercially organized, business-oriented set of activities whose roots can be found in the industrial and post industrial West. By the early 19th Century, European journeys for health, leisure and culture became common practice among the middle classes, and paths to the acquisition of cultural capital (that array of knowledge, experience and polish).

1.3. Kerala Tourism

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 Tourism has its hills which offer pleasant and pleasurable diversions that range from going on hiking, biking, trekking and hill climbing tours to wildlife safaris to the numerous wildlife sanctuaries located on the Kerala hills in Kerala. Hill stations of Kerala are blessed with rich flora and fauna. The hill stations of Kerala are Wayanad, Thekkady, Munnar, Vagamon etc. The lush green forest, the soothing waterfalls, the untouched nature are the peculiarities of Wayanad. Munnar has a special place

in the tourism map of Kerala. One of the most visited hill stations of Kerala, Munnar has the best accommodation facilities with numerous resorts, hotels and home stays.

Thekkady is another destination in Kerala, which you can never miss to visit. A boating at Periyar lake, a trekking to the wildlife sanctuary, the beautiful sights of mist covered hillocks etc Vagamon is also another beautiful hillstation rich with its enthralling beauty. Pine Forest, Kurishumala, the Rolling Meadows are some few which will attracts you to Vagamon.

Kerala has a vast and vibrant arena, where drama unfolds in the form of spell bounding heritage cites station, un -spoilt beaches, picturesque hill, roaring water falls, old temple towns, exotic wild life, bustling cities, surrounded with back waters, varied adventure sports and a vibrant way of life. 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 much history and such a variety of natural endowments, the Kerala government is taking a number of steps to improve the state's infrastructures like air, road and rail links.

1.4. Alappuzha Tourist Destination

Located in the heart of the slithering backwaters of Kerala, Alleppey or Alappuzha is often termed the "Venice of the East". The town is among the oldest planned towns in India and is famous for its several backwater canals, beaches, paddy fields and lagoons. Alappuzha is iconic for its houseboats cruises in the backwaters and attracts thousands of visitors each year. Here is the list of the best places to visit in Alappuzha

➤ Alleppey Beach

Alleppey Beach is the perfect place to relax on a quiet and subtle evening. The waters of the Arabian sea look majestic from the white sandy shores. One can view the dolphins from the beach. Nevertheless, the waters are not safe for swimming due to the strong currents especially during the monsoons.

➤ Karumadikuttan

Karumadikuttan refers to the local name for the 9th Century black granite statue of Buddha found abandoned at a nearby stream called Karumady Thodu. The statue is

unfortunately missing its entire left half but has now been conserved by the Kerala State Government.

➤ **Marari Beach**

Located almost 11 kilometers from Alleppey, Marari Beach is famous for its Ayurvedic centers and stylish beach resorts. The Shoreline is covered with long rows of coconut trees and is a great place to tie a hammock and spend the afternoon beside the clean and calm waters.

➤ **Kerala Backwater**

Giving Alleppey the moniker, “The Venice of the East”, Kerala backwater canals attract thousands of tourists to Alleppey each year. The snake boat races and the houseboat cruises are a must do activity in Alleppey. Owing to its rich bird and marine life, the backwaters are the best place to try some extravagant seafood.

➤ **Vembanad Lake**

The longest Lake in India and the largest lake in Kerala, the Vembanad Lake is known by the name Punnamada Lake in Alleppey. The Lake covers an area of 2033.02 sq km, making the largest wetland system in India. The lake enjoys rich biodiversity and is home to several marine, bird and animal species. The lake is also home to the annual snake boat racing which must be witnessed.

➤ **Mannarasala Temple**

Located amidst lush green surroundings, the Mannarasala Temple is dedicated to the Hindu Deity Nagaraja. While the origins of the temple are shrouded with Hindu Legends, it is one of the major pilgrim spots with a typical Kerala temple architecture. The amazing architecture and the 30,000 images of various mythical snakes, makes it a must visit spot.

➤ **Mullakkal Bhagavathy Temple**

Dedicated to Goddess Rajarajeswari a form of the Hindu Deity Shakti, the Mullakkal Bhagavathy Temple is built in a style that distinguishes it from the other

temples in Kerala. The roof is absent over the image of the deity and it also contains an elephant house. The temple is a unique architectural marvel.

➤ **Krishnapuram Palace**

The iconic Travancore style castle, The Krishnapuram Palace was built by Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma in the 18th Century. Today the Palace is a major tourist attraction and also contains a small museum maintained by the Archeological Department of Kerala. Alleppey is one of the major cities that are located in the Kerala Backwaters. Its lush green surroundings, friendly people, rich abundance of marine, bird and animal life make it a prime tourist destination in Kerala.

1.5. Aim of the Study

Located in the South-west of India on the tropical Malabar Coast, Alleppey is filled with beaches; backwaters and countryside have seen it named one of the ten paradises in the world by **National Geographic**. Touring the 900 km network of Keralian backwaters, a system of interconnected canals and rivers including five large lakes, has become increasingly common among tourists who take to houseboats to holiday in the often peaceful and picturesque region.

The researcher focuses specifically on the socio-economic, cultural and environmental sustainability of heritage tourism and preservation of wildlife and varied fish species in Alleppey. In order to ascertain how sustainability is perceived by the guest and host, this investigator seeks to document and interpret how those with a significant stake in Alleppey view sustainability with the ultimate goal of ascertaining any difference in those views and whether those perceptions are conducive to increasing the sustainability of heritage tourism.

But a survey among local people who live and work in the area has discovered the impact has not always been positive. In 2012, a study revealed that 37,741 foreign holiday makers had visited the district of Alleppey on the Vembanad Lake, the largest well and ecosystem in South India. The study detailed 804 houseboats being operated in the district by 18 companies plus 308 private boats and 33 speedboats. Sadly, the houseboats were found to be dumping 23,160 litres of waste water and sewage into Vembanad Lake every day thereby slowly killing the wildlife and fish species upon which many local people rely.

1.6. Statement of the Problem

Tourism means to travel to a particular place for recreation and leisure. Tourism involves a temporary movement of people from one location to another for leisure and economic purposes which create a relationship between the people, places and landscape (Physical, social and culture).

At present, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity and a booming global industry. Countries like Egypt, Greece, Thailand etc largely depend on tourism. If any disturbance occurs or anything that discourages the tourists from visiting, then the economy of the country gets shattered.

Developing countries like India are also gradually emerging as global destinations. India itself has established as the largest service industry in the world. The Govt of India under the banner of Ministry of Tourism along with private players have been deeply involved in almost all the aspects of tourism promotion including the building of hotels, tourist resorts etc. As the private sector matured over time, the government is trying to shed many of its responsibilities like hotels and running of airlines lately.

Among the Indian states Kerala is famous for its backwater tourism, listed as one of the top 10 paradises of the world by National Geographic Tourism for its beautiful backwaters, its Eco-tourism initiatives, Hindu temples and Wildlife sanctuaries. Kerala Tourism clocks record revenue of over Rs36, 528 crore in 2018 as an increase of Rs 2,874.33 crore.

Tourists hire the thatched houseboats to explore the tranquil palm fringed waters and picturesque villages. It is a lovely thing to do which often brings economic benefits to local people. However, there are mounting concerns about the environmental and social impacts of these holidays. Local people use the backwaters of Alleppey for cooking, drinking and washing as well for transportation, fishing and agriculture. Unregulated expansion and unsustainable practices are threatening these rural communities and their environment.

The impacts include the disposal of waste, including sewage into the waters, pollution from use of outboard motors, including oil and fumes, increasing number of unregistered boats, local people in smaller boats being endangered by houseboats, and social issues, including poor behaviour of houseboat guests.

1.7. Research Aim

The term research aim usually refers to the main goal or overarching purpose of a research project. Sentences stating the aim of a project are usually quite brief and to the point. An example is: Aim: To investigate factors associated with partner violence. Because of their generality, research aims are almost always positioned at the very beginning of a statement of research aims and objectives (or questions). They are broad and introductory rather than specific and focused.

1.8. Objective of the Study

- To understand the extent of facilities, motivating factors and information's available at the tourist destination to the tourists.
- To provide suitable suggestions if necessary.

1.9. Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is Qualitative Research as it describes clearly the characteristics of the sample as expressed by the respondents. Based on the review of literatures, a questionnaire was constructed to collect data regarding the factors relating to the facilities and motivating factors of the respondents. The Pilot study was conducted in the various tourists' destinations namely Alleppey Beach, Karumadikuttan, Vembanad Lake, Kerala Backwater and Krishnapuram Palace. The Pilot study revealed that the tool has adequate stimulus value to gather authentic responses from respondents. The population of the study comprises of tourists from the above mentioned tourist destinations in Alleppey district. As the district of Alleppey has 10 tourist destinations the researcher represents the population by using a stratified sampling technique in 5 tourist destinations. The sample size selected for the study among the foreign tourists in various tourist destinations. The respondents are selected from the above specified tourist destinations through random sampling. The data was collected by interview schedule using structured questionnaire. For analyzing the data various statistical tools like frequency distribution, correlation and SEM modelling are used.

1.10. Analysis and Interpretation

This section of the research focuses on analyzing responses to the questions addressed in the questionnaire that are intended to measure the socio-cultural, economical and environmental benefits and impacts of tourism. The questionnaire was designed to investigate the positive as well as the negative socio-cultural economical and environmental impacts of tourism from the perspective of the foreign tourists visiting the destinations.

The present chapter is based on the analysis and interpretation of data. The data may be reliable and valid but it does not serve the purpose unless the data is carefully classified, processed, analyzed, interpreted and concluded. This part consists of three dimensions of analysis with Percentage Analysis, Mean and Standard Deviations, ANOVA, Correlation, Multiple Regression and Path Analysis.

Table.1.1. Motivating Factors influencing Tourist to Visit Alleppey

Items	Mean	Sd
See natural features and scenery.	4.07	.896
To experience nature.	3.49	1.103
Socialisation with family or friends.	3.62	1.282
To take rest and relax.	4.14	.844
Experience tranquillity.	3.78	.960
To see World Heritage sites.	3.99	1.066
To enjoy Aboriginal culture.	3.48	1.065
Hospitality of local people.	3.91	1.165
Mean score	3.81	1.05

The respondents opine that the major motivating factors influencing foreign tourists to visit Alleppey are for taking rest and relaxing, and to enjoy the natural features and scenery with the mean values of 4.14, and 4.07 respectively whereas the local people's sense of receiving the foreign tourists have made them experience a tranquil and socialized atmosphere with family members or friends their experience. The aboriginal cultural make them enthusiastic with mean score values of 3.99, 3.91, 3.78, 3.62, 3.49 and 3.48 respectively. **The overall mean score 3.81 reveals that the respondents are enthusiastic about the motivating factors.**

Table.1.2. Mean for Perception of Tourists towards Heritage Site

Items	Mean	Sd
Overall architectural character of location surrounding of cultural heritage sites.	3.91	.801
Cultural sites preservation and protection of heritage sites.	3.69	1.145
Planning and designing of accessibility of heritage sites.	3.84	1.046
Maintenance of heritage sites.	3.56	1.040
Facilities and service provided at heritage sites.	3.61	1.081
Knowledge and beliefs received from the heritage sites.	3.43	1.078
Advanced information technology for accessing to heritage sites.	2.77	1.088
Mean score	3.54	1.04

The perception of the respondents towards the heritage tourist sites at Alleppey and overall natural character of locations surrounding heritage sites, planning and designing accessibility of heritage sites, preservation and protection of heritage sites, facilities and service provided at heritage sites, maintenance of heritage sites, knowledge and beliefs received from heritage sites make them satisfied with the mean score values of 3.91, 3.84, 3.69, 3.61, 3.56 and 3.43 respectively. Advanced information technology for accessing heritage site with mean value of 2.77 makes them satisfied. **The overall mean score 3.54 reveals that the perception of the respondents towards the product of heritage monument sites at Alleppey tourist destinations is satisfactory.**

Table.1.3. Mean Score for Facilities at heritage sites

Items	Mean	Sd
The site is appealing in terms of character and attractiveness of the facilities.	3.80	1.007
The facilities at this site are adequate.	3.62	1.080
The overall condition of the facilities at this site appears to be good.	3.66	1.051
The facilities and infrastructure at this site are well managed.	3.52	1.031
The presence of an officer at the heritage sites.	3.25	1.080
Mean score	3.57	1.05

The facilities available at tourist sites such as the heritage site is appealing in terms of character and attractiveness of the facilities, the overall condition of the facilities appears to be good, the facilities are adequate, the facilities and infrastructure are well managed, and the presence of the officer at the heritage sites make the respondent satisfied with mean score values of 3.80, 3.66, 3.62, 3.52, and 3.25 respectively. **The overall mean score 3.57 reveals that the respondents are satisfied with facilities available in the heritage tourist sites in Alleppey.**

Table.1.4. Mean for Information Facilities at heritage sites

Items	Mean	Sd
Role of tourist information Centre.	2.80	1.335
The sign boards, maps and directions are easy to find the heritage sites.	3.68	1.080
The signs boards, maps and directions help to find the way around the heritage sites.	3.77	1.039
The rules and safety information are easy to understand.	3.74	1.189
The information about natural features and values is interesting and informative.	3.23	1.127
The information about natural features and values help to better appreciate the special natural values of the area.	3.18	1.130
The aboriginal cultural information is interesting and informative.	3.06	1.075
The aboriginal cultural information helped me to understand the significance of this area and its heritage value.	3.20	1.173
Mean score	3.28	1.14

The information facilities such as the sign boards, maps and directions help them to find their way around the heritage sites, the rules and safety information are easy to understand, the sign boards, maps and directions are easy to find the heritage sites, the information about natural features and values is interesting and informative, information about natural features and values help them to better appreciate the special natural values of the area, the aboriginal cultural information is interesting and informative are useful to the respondents with mean values of 3.77, 3.74, 3.60, 3.23, 3.20, 3.18, and 3.06, respectively. The respondents opine that the role of tourist information centre is satisfactory with the mean score value of 2.80. **The overall mean score 3.28 reveals that the respondents' opinion that information facilities available at heritage sites are useful to them.**

1.11. Conclusion

Heritage conservation is always a centre of discussion in the form of developing economy of various nations as it is a subsidized product of tourism. The present expansion of the Asia's tourism market has many challenges. One of the most difficulties lies in understanding how cultural and religious heritage of Asians could be linked to the overall development of tourism. As heritage tourism is mostly dependent on the history, the events of the past has abundant evidence that how the past travels had been changing the entire pages of each century and affected our past life. As mentioned above, quality management has vital role to create an experience lasting value. Visitors' perceptions about the quality is solely depend diverse range of factors, from site interest and the quality of services provided to the visitor experience as what happens in his/her entire visits rather than gaining a

knowledge about the culture, getting facilities and services which normally available. Hence there need a careful understanding of the tourists' nature to ensure them a sophisticated offering of multi-community, multi-dimensional quality tourist experiences and thus more beneficial to the local community as well as the regional and national economy. Moreover, the combined efforts of the government with the aid of tourism board could alone substantiate economically, socio-culturally and environmentally sustainable tourism development.

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