

## **Beach Tourism: Domestic Tourists' Experience with Special Reference to Beaches in North Kerala**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Tourism industry is being considered as the key component to employment creation and revenue generation for all the economies in the world. Importance of tourism industry has been recognized by both developing and developed countries. India's abundant cultural and environmental multifariousness offers the basis for a broad range of tourism products and experiences which result in people to people interaction, gaining of foreign exchange, immense job creation, and socio-economic development of the nation. Kerala is a captivating state in India and focus of the world tourism industry. It is a land richly endowed with natural beauty. The present study emphasizes on analyzing the experience of domestic tourists with special reference to beaches in North Kerala. The study reveals that majority of the respondents believe that Kerala is a safe destination for tourists whereas; cleanliness and hygiene conditions in beaches are comparatively poor. The study concludes that the government in co-operation with private tourism promotion agencies should promote beach tourism by offering better infrastructural facilities, accommodation facilities, water adventure facilities and by conserving environmental resources.*

**Keywords:** Tourism industry, beach tourism, North Kerala, domestic tourists and tourism destinations.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Tourism industry has been emerged as one of the world's fastest growing industries and it has been viewed as rapidly growing sector in respect of job opportunities and income creation. Almost all the countries in the world recognize tourism industry as a powerful component in their social and economic developmental policies. Tourism is considered as an eco friendly way to rejuvenate troubled rural and backward people and economies. World tourism can play very vital role in the establishment of a new international economic strategy which will be immensely helpful in the reduction of the wide economic disparities between developed and developing nations and to promote stable stimulation of socio-economic development. Many countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia etc. encourage tourism in massive sense and it has been considered as a major source of revenue for those countries. Tourism in India has shown substantial growth in the recent years.

Beach tourism is one of the major components in the promotion of tourism industry. Beaches are recognized as important resources of tourism. Beach tourism refers to the utilization of the coastal environment in order to attract tourists. The natural environment such as the beach sand, the waves, and the depth along these areas, security, the sights visible and ability to set up eco-friendly cottages are all major components of beach tourism. It can attract large number of both domestic and foreign tourists for any country which is rich with sea and ocean. The economies of large number of countries and cities in the world depend up on the significance of beach tourism for their sustainable development.

India is one of the countries in the world having wide range of sea shores and beautiful beaches. In the country, the state Kerala is considered as one of the major tourist destinations in the world. Kerala is also known as

‘God’s Own Country’ since the state is abundant with large number of tourist attractions such as beaches, rivers, hill stations, forests, pilgrimage centres, craft villages, Ayurvedic centres, wildlife and bird sanctuaries etc.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Sultan Singh Jaswal (2014) in his journal “Role of Tourism Industry in India’s Development” attempts to explain India’s emergence as an important tourist destination in the world through innovative initiatives and creation of values to visitors. It concludes that tourism in India discloses a collection of diversified traditions, art forms, festivals, cultures and different types of natural beauties. Present study suggests that eco-friendly tourism should be promoted in order to protect natural resources.

Dr. Fency Sivadasan (2018) made an endeavour to evaluate the beach tourism development and its significance with special reference to local communities in the state Sarawak, in Malaysia. The researcher emphasized on the extent of involvement of local people in beach tourism, their perceptions, how they are influenced by beach tourism, and their level of satisfaction. The results of this study expose that majority of the ethnic tribal people participate directly or indirectly in beach tourism activities and beach tourism has resulted favourably in their socio-economic status.

Proshanta Kumar Ghosh et al., (2012) tries to analyse the condition of beach oriented tourism and its effects on the sustainability of beaches for long term by evaluating involvement of local community with special reference to Kovalam, a beach village in Kerala. The study shows that special initiatives are required from both the government and non- government sides to conserve the beach village Kovalam from the disruptions resulted from the urban consumer culture.

Dr. Jeemon Joseph (2017) endeavours to identify economic contribution of tourism through the involvement of local community with special reference to Alappuzha district which is the centre of backwater tourism in Kerala. The results of the study say that tourism in Alappuzha contributes much more to the development of the district’s economy by the way of job creation, increased spending and standard of living, economic diversification, farmers markets, infrastructural development etc.

Soumya A. R. et al., (2018) examines the economic influence of beach tourism to the local community of Cherai beach, a popular beach in Ernakulam district, Kerala. The study shows that the host people in Cherai, have been both positively and negatively benefited from various tourism activities. The positive impacts are income generation, female job opportunities, high living standard, increased value for lands, infrastructural development etc. The important negative effect is unemployment problem during off seasons.

## **Research Gap:**

Even though many studies have been conducted in the field of tourism in Kerala, only few studies have been undertaken relating beach tourism. Almost all the beach tourism related studies have been undertaken by focusing on host community perception in South Kerala part. Therefore it is fruitful to undertake a study from the point of view of tourists visiting beaches in North Kerala, so that it will be possible to promote tourism in North Kerala which will be helpful in the socio-economic development of North Kerala districts particularly and the entire state generally.

## **Scope of the Study:**

Kerala is entirely a coastal state. In Kerala, beaches spread along the 550 kilometers Arabian Sea coastline. The topography of the coastline is unique and changes rapidly from north to south. There are many famous beaches in the state in such a way to attract tourists such as Kovalam, Varkala, Bekal, Alappuzha, Beypore, Kappad, Muzhappilangad etc. Even though, Kerala is one of the important tourism destinations in the world, South Kerala and Middle (Central Kerala) are comparatively more developed in respect of tourism promotion than North Kerala. In such a context, it will be fruitful to study about the tourism products especially beach tourism and allied services in North Kerala in order to promote tourism in North Kerala on the basis of experience of tourists visiting beaches in North Kerala.

## **Statement of the Problem:**

In Kerala, when almost all the sectors show decline stage, tourism sector has shown a sustainable growth in last recent years. Even though, the state is an agricultural state, at present the scenario is different. While thinking from industrial aspects, the state’s geographical structure is not suitable for establishing heavy industrial units. Even though there are these types of challenges, the state’s natural beauty and environmental products attracts large number of domestic and foreign tourists year by year. Among various tourism attractions, beaches in the

state play very significant roles in the promotion of tourism. Geographically the state Kerala can be divided into three namely, South Kerala, Central Kerala and North Kerala. Each division has its own natural attractions and features. In such a context, the researcher attempts to evaluate the experience of domestic tourists with respect to beaches in North Kerala.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To understand the socio-economic status of domestic tourists visiting beaches in North Kerala.
- To analyse the experience of domestic tourists towards various services and tourism features available in various beaches in North Kerala.
- To give suggestions that would help in the promotion of beach tourism in North Kerala.

### Hypothesis:

$H_0$  = There is no relationship between occupational status of domestic beach tourists and budget for their trip.

$H_1$  = There is relationship between occupational status of domestic beach tourists and budget for their trip.

### METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

#### Area of the Study:

Present study covers North Kerala. North Kerala includes four districts namely, Kozhikodu, Wayanadu, Kannur and Kasaragodu. Among these, Wayanadu district has no coast line. Therefore, beaches in remaining three districts have been considered for the present study.

#### Sample and Sampling Technique:

Data have been collected from 90 domestic tourists visited different beaches in North Kerala by applying multistage cluster sampling. Under this method, in the first stage, the total study area (entire North Kerala) has been divided into four parts as four districts. Since Wayanadu district has no beaches, in the second stage, major beaches in remaining three districts have been listed out. Out of these listed out beaches, 2 beaches have been selected from Kozhikodu and Kannur districts and one beach has been selected from Kasaragodu district randomly. From Kozhikodu district, Kappad beach and Bepore beach have been chosen. From Kannur, Payyambalam beach and Muhappilangad beach have been selected. Bekal beach has been decided from Kasaragod district.

#### Data Sources:

Primary data have been collected by administering structured questionnaire among domestic tourists in selected beaches and secondary data have been gathered through journals, articles, books, magazines, newspapers, government reports and other published data.

#### Tools:

Collected data have been analysed by using percentage analysis, Chi-square analysis and Garret's ranking analysis.

### LIMITATIONS:

- The sample size is restricted to only 90 respondents.
- The data have been collected from domestic tourists only.
- The study has been within a small time framework.
- Results are based on the opinions and responses of the respondents. So, hidden information and lack of interest on the part of respondents cannot be easily identified.

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

**Table 1: Percentage Analysis**

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	54	60
Female	36	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 20 years	14	15.56
20-40 years	38	42.22
41-60 years	26	28.89
Above 60 years	12	13.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Which Indian state do you belong</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Kerala	37	41.11
Tamil Nadu	12	13.33
Karnataka	16	17.78
Maharashtra	6	6.67
Andhra Pradesh	5	5.56
Delhi	4	4.44
Telangana	3	3.33
Pondicherry	2	2.22
Others	5	5.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
School Level	25	27.78
Graduation Level	30	33.33
Post Graduation Level	18	20
Professional Level	12	13.33
Others	5	5.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupational Status</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agriculture	6	6.67
Business	15	16.67
Employee	27	30
Profession	9	10
Student	17	18.89
Housewife	11	12.22
Others	5	5.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Family Monthly Income</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below Rs. 20000	18	20
Rs. 20000 – Rs. 40000	36	40
Rs. 40001 – Rs. 60000	24	26.67
Above Rs. 60000	12	13.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Purpose of Visit</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pleasure	47	52.22
Education	7	7.78
Official	3	3.33
Business	6	6.67
Health Care	4	4.45
Adventure	3	3.33
To Know about Culture and Heritage	11	12.22
Pilgrimage	9	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Budget for Your Trip</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below Rs. 10000	28	31.11
Rs. 10000 – Rs. 25000	39	43.33
Rs. 25001 – Rs. 50000	18	20

Above Rs. 50000	5	5.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Do you think Kerala is a safe destination?</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	82	91.11
No	8	8.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Opinion about the traders, transporters and hotel staff towards you</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Highly Satisfied	13	14.44
Satisfied	34	37.78
Moderately Satisfied	28	31.11
Dissatisfied	10	11.11
Highly Dissatisfied	5	5.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Does travel to North Kerala fulfills the Kerala tourism slogan "God's Own Country"?</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very Apt	19	21.11
Apt	39	43.33
Moderately Suitable	21	23.33
Least Suitable	7	7.78
Not at all Suitable	4	4.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

#### GARRET RANKING ANALYSIS:

**Table 2: Ranking of Different Tourism Services by Domestic Tourists**

Sl. No.	Tourism Services	Ranks Given by the Domestic Respondents									
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
1	Infrastructural Facilities	14	9	11	12	10	9	7	8	6	4
2	Safety and Security Measures	18	15	12	9	13	10	7	4	0	2
3	Transportation Facilities	7	9	12	13	9	8	10	11	6	5
4	Accommodation Facilities	12	17	13	7	6	9	11	1	11	3
5	Food and Beverage Services	9	7	8	10	10	14	12	11	2	7
6	Cleanliness and Hygiene Conditions of the Beaches	3	5	8	0	7	12	9	11	17	18
7	Behaviour of Local People	4	3	7	10	12	10	12	10	9	13
8	Law and Order	19	16	12	9	11	6	7	4	6	0
9	Shopping Facilities	0	4	3	8	7	5	9	14	17	23
10	Tourist Information Centres	4	5	4	12	5	7	6	16	16	15

**Table 3: Percent Position and Garret Value Percent Position =  $100(R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$**

Sl. No.	$100(R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$	Calculated Value	Garret Value
1	$100(1 - 0.5) / 10$	5	82
2	$100(2 - 0.5) / 10$	15	70
3	$100(3 - 0.5) / 10$	25	63
4	$100(4 - 0.5) / 10$	35	58
5	$100(5 - 0.5) / 10$	45	52
6	$100(6 - 0.5) / 10$	55	48
7	$100(7 - 0.5) / 10$	65	42
8	$100(8 - 0.5) / 10$	75	37
9	$100(9 - 0.5) / 10$	85	30
10	$100(10 - 0.5) / 10$	95	18

**Table 4: Calculation of Garret Value and Ranking**

Sl. No.	Features	Ranks Given by the Respondents										Total	Average Score	Rank
		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>			
1	Infrastructure	1148	630	693	696	520	432	294	296	180	72	4961	55.12	4
2	Safety & Security	1476	1050	756	522	676	480	294	148	0	36	5438	60.42	1
3	Transportation	574	630	756	754	468	384	420	407	180	90	4663	51.81	5
4	Accommodation	984	1190	819	406	312	432	462	37	330	54	5026	55.84	3
5	Food & Beverage	738	490	504	580	520	672	504	407	60	126	4601	51.12	6
6	Cleanliness & Hygiene Conditions	246	350	504	0	364	576	379	407	510	324	3660	40.67	9
7	Behaviour of Local People	328	210	441	580	624	480	504	370	270	234	4041	44.9	7
8	Law and Order	1558	1120	756	522	572	288	294	148	180	0	5438	60.42	2
9	Shopping Facilities	0	280	189	464	364	240	378	518	510	414	3357	37.3	10
10	Tourist Information Centres	328	350	252	696	260	336	252	592	480	270	3816	42.4	8

### Result of Garret Ranking Analysis:

The Table-2 shows the actual experience of domestic tourists towards various tourism services available in beaches of North Kerala. Among 90 respondents, 19 respondents have given first rank for law and order, 18 tourists have chosen safety and security measures as most influenced services and so on. That means, among 90 respondents, they have given their ranks differently. So, in order to find out ranks for various services and features in collective sense, Garret Ranking Analysis has been applied. Table-3 shows percent positions and Garret values. Table- 4 shows the ranks given for various services on the basis of Garret values.

On the basis Garret ranking analysis, Safety and Security Measures and Law and Order have got the same and highest average score of 60.42. Therefore, Safety and Security Measures has been given 1<sup>st</sup> rank and Law and Order has been given 2<sup>nd</sup> rank conveniently. The remaining 3 to 10 ranks have been given for Accommodation Facilities, Infrastructural Facilities, Transportation Facilities, Food and Beverage Services, Behaviour of Local People, Tourism Information Centres, Cleanliness and Hygiene Conditions of Beaches and Shopping Facilities respectively.

### CHI-SQUARE TEST:

Chi-square Analysis between Occupational Status of Domestic Tourists and Budget for their Trip

**Table 5: Observed Frequencies**

Budget for Trip	Occupational Status							
	Agriculture	Business	Employee	Profession	Student	Housewife	Others	Total
Below Rs. 10000	3	4	7	2	7	3	2	28
Rs. 10000 - Rs. 25000	2	6	14	2	6	7	2	39
Rs. 25001 - Rs. 50000	1	4	5	3	3	1	1	18
Above Rs. 50000	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 6: Calculation of Chi-square Value**

O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E	O	E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
3	1.87	0.6828	1	0.83	0.0348	3	1.8	0.8	7	4.77	1.0425
2	2.6	0.0498	7	8.4	0.2333	2	0.5	4.5	1	2.2	0.6545
1	1.2	0.0333	14	11.7	0.4521	7	5.29	0.5528	0	0.61	0.61
0	0.33	0.33	5	5.4	0.0296	6	7.37	0.2547	2	1.55	0.1306
4	4.67	0.0961	1	1.5	0.1667	3	3.4	0.0471	2	2.17	0.0133
6	6.5	0.0385	2	2.8	0.2286	1	0.94	0.0038	1	1	0
4	3	0.3333	2	3.9	0.9256	3	3.42	0.0516	0	0.28	0.28
<b>TOTAL (Σ) = 12.5754</b>											

Level of Significance = 5% (0.05) Degree of Freedom = (r-1) (c-1) = (4-1)(7-1) = 18  
Critical Value = 28.87

### **Result of Chi-square Test:**

Since the calculated value is less than the table value (critical value), null hypothesis is accepted. That means it is understood that there is no relationship between occupational status of domestic tourists visiting beaches in North Kerala and budget for their trip.

### **FINDINGS:**

- It is revealed that majority of the respondents (60%) are male.
- It is identified that 42.22% of the respondents are in the age range of 20-40 and 28.89% belongs to the age range of 40-60.
- It is indicated that majority of the domestic tourists (41.11%) belong to their home state Kerala which is followed by 17.78% from Karnataka and 13.33% from Tamil Nadu.
- It is evidenced that 33.33% of the respondents have the educational qualification of graduation which is followed by school level (27.78%) and post graduation level (20%).
- It is highlighted that 30% of the tourists are employees and 18.89% are students. Moreover, 16.67% of the respondents are engaged in business.
- It disclosed that 40% of the respondents have monthly family income of an amount in between Rs. 20000 – Rs. 40000. 26.67% of the tourists are earning monthly family income of an amount in between Rs. 40001 – Rs. 60000.
- It is proved that majority of the domestic tourists (52.22%) visited beaches in North Kerala to enjoy their pleasure time and 12.22% of the tourists visited North Kerala to know about culture and heritage.
- It is exposed that 43.33% of the tourists decided an amount in between Rs. 10000 – Rs. 25000 as budget for their trip and budget for 31.11% of the respondents was below Rs. 10000.
- It is clear that most of the respondents (91.11%) believe that Kerala is a safe travel destination for tourists.
- It is concluded that 37.78% of the domestic tourists are satisfied about the behavior of transporters, traders and hotel staff whereas, 31.11% of the respondents are of the opinion of moderately satisfaction in this regard.
- It is inferred that 43.33% of the respondents are of the opinion that the slogan “God’s Own Country” is suitable for North Kerala which is followed by 23.33% of the tourists who showed the opinion of moderately suitable.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Rail and road transportation should be strengthened and tourists visiting beaches should be treated well.
- Shopping facilities in beach centres should be improved.
- Beaches and surroundings should be kept neatly and cleanliness and hygiene conditions must be maintained always.
- Adequate tourism information centres should be established to give proper directions to tourists.
- Behavior and hospitality of local people, transporters, traders, hotel staff etc. should be improved.
- Trained staff must be appointed in beach areas for providing first aid and other medical services.
- Home stay facilities should be offered near the beach centres.
- Budget hotels should be established near the beach centres to attract lower income groups.
- Tourist guides and tourism personals having multi linguistic communication skills should be deputed in beach centres.
- Environmental resources should be conserved and culture and social heritage should be protected.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Tourism industry is considered as a crucial service industry in India especially in Kerala with consistent growth in respect of volume of tourists and also average outlay per tourists – both domestic and foreign tourists. Since the State Kerala has exclusive tourism peculiarities and strengths, the state should emphasize on the development of new tourism products such as beach tourism, backwater tourism, monsoon tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, pilgrim tourism, Ayurveda tourism etc. From the present study, it is understood that even though North Kerala districts have adequate beach tourism potentials, those beach resources have not been utilized well for tourists’ sake. Since majority of the respondents believe that Kerala is a safe travel destination for tourists, government in co-operation with private tourism promotion groups should take initiatives to make North Kerala beaches first class tourist destinations. For making this objective realized, better infrastructural facilities must be offered, trained tourism guides and tourism personals should be appointed, budget hotels and home stay facilities should be provided, inland waterways should be improved and more over natural resources and social heritage should be protected.

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