

ATTITUDE OF THE TOURISTS TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

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Abstract

Background

Responsible tourism is a new concept in the tourism industry .Tourism is an important sector of the economy and contributes significantly in the country's GDP as well as Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE).With its backward and forward linkages with other sectors of the economy, like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture, etc., tourism has the potential to not only be the economy driver, but also become an effective tool for poverty alleviation and ensuring growth with equity.

Aim

The current study has been undertaken to know Attitude of the Tourists towards Responsible Tourism projects implemented at Kumarakom, Kerala.

Materials and Methods

For the purpose of study, 50 respondents were selected as samples by adopting convenience sampling method. Analysis was done via statistical software 17.0. Karl Pearson Chi-Square Test and percentage were used .

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Results

The data analysis revealed that the majority of the tourist who visited Kumarakam Village received very high respect from local people, Infrastructure facility with regard to comfort station provided at Kumarakam Village was dissatisfactory .Majority of the products consumed by tourist at Kumarakam were basically of “Ecological Nature” and did not include much artificial component. Waste management programme at Kumarakam was conducted properly and with least pollution. As majority of material inputs were of “Agro Nature” and Government has developed proper mechanism for waste disposal and management, Availability of sufficient fresh water to tourist at Kumarakam could be regard as the ecological impact of RT.

Conclusion

The study on the attitude of tourist towards responsible tourism revealed that the majority of the tourist who visit Kumarakam Village received very high respect from local people, Infrastructure facility with regard to comfort station provided at Kumarakam Village was dissatisfactory . Majority of the products consumed by tourist at Kumarakam were basically of “Ecological Nature” and did not include much artificial component. Waste management programme at Kumarakam was conducted properly and with least pollution.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. , International Centre for Responsible Tourism, Karl Pearson Chi-Square Test, Eco- Friendly Products.

Manuscript

Introduction

Responsible Tourism is a new concept in the tourism industry. This concept was developed by Jost Krippendorf in the 1980's. His aim was to "to develop and promote new forms of tourism, which will bring the greatest possible benefit to all the participants - travellers, the host population and the tourist business, without causing intolerable ecological and social damage."

Responsible Tourism can be defined as "tourism which creates better places for people to live in, and better places to visit". India has an abundant scope to emerge as a Responsible tourism destination. Indian tourism industry has grown immensely in the last five years and it is for sure that in the upcoming years India will become a hot tourist destination of South East Asia. To sustain this growth process it is necessary that all the stakeholders of the Indian tourism industry i.e. tour operators, government agencies and NGO's must work in cohesion. They must protect the heritage of our country which in turn will benefit both the local communities and the tourists.

Joseph Antony¹ in his doctoral thesis entitled 'the Role of Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. In the Promotion of Tourism' made an elaborate examination of tourism as an industry and the role of KTDC and its workings. He found that there is a high potential for tourism as an industry in Kerala. He outlined the special relevance of ancient and time-tested scientific systems of medicines like Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy etc. In his study he found out

¹ G. Joseph Antony, 1997, The Role of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. in the Promotion of Tourism, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala.

that in KTDC there is lack of professionalism at different levels of staffing and suggested effective human resource development strategy in KTDC

Sudheer² in his doctoral thesis named 'Tourism in Kerala- Problems and Prospects' undertook a detailed study of the problems and prospects of tourism industry in Kerala. He analyzed the natural resources of Kerala which can promote tourism as an industry. According to him, though Kerala has abundant potentialities of tourism, lack of professionalism and mismanagement are the main problems faced by Kerala tourism. He also evaluated the working of the governmental machinery for ascertaining professionalism in tourism and assessed the various economic benefits obtained by the traders and the business community of the tourist centres.

Another study³ evaluates the role and viability of the infrastructure development under the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation. It conclude that there is a vast scope for tourism in Tamil Nadu and that tourism has a positive impact on the economic development of Tamil Nadu. One important finding is that the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation's workings are not up to the expectations in developing the commercial viability of tourist infrastructure.

Ajith Kumar⁴ analysed the relationship between tourist arrivals and the foreign exchange earnings and also the effect of demographic, psychographic, and life style

² S.V.Sudheer, 1992, Tourism in Kerala- Problems and Prospects, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala.

A. Soundara Rajan, 1993, Commercial Viability of the Tourist Infrastructure of Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, Ph.D. thesis, University Of Kerala.

⁴ M.K. Ajith Kumar, 1998, Psychographic and Demographic Profiles of Foreign Tourists Visiting Kerala with Special Reference to Spending Patterns, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi.

characteristics of tourists on the spending patterns of foreign tourists. According to him, the relationship between the tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings from tourism is not a function of the number of tourists visiting a tourist destination but it depends on the spending patterns of foreign tourists. So he advocated an increase in the number of those tourists who can pay more rather than an increase in the number of foreign tourists.

Significance of the study

Tourism has emerged to a level where tourists are looking for a better experience, quality products and long lasting experience. They are looking for experiences which enable them to get closer to the “real” living culture of countries and to experience our diverse natural and cultural heritage. This is a global trend in the established markets as consumer expectations of their holidays change, people are taking more, shorter trips, and they expect to get more from them.

It is a market trend that any tourism business cannot ignore. Responsible Tourism makes business sense because a growing proportion of consumers are looking for a better product. This trend implies that tourism businesses that practice Responsible Tourism will have a powerful competitive advantage over other tourism products.

Responsible Tourism can be effectively utilised as a tool or mean for the development of the society in terms of its income and employment. For tourist, Kerala is a ‘God’s own country’ but ,for natives it is a land of various problems such as land of educated unemployed youth, land of agriculture less , land of suffering wastage problem, a land of facing food especially vegetable shortage land of showing increasing trend of atrocities and the land of underutilising the human resource. Since the success of RT will be a panacea for many our problems like unemployment and shortage of agriculture, this study has added social importance.

Scope of the study

The first phase of Responsible Tourism Projects implemented in Kerala since 2008 at Kumarakom, Kovalam, Thekkady and Wayanadu. Among these destinations, the Kumarakom is evolved as a successful model. The present study covers only the Kumarakam Project. The study concentrates on the attitude of the tourists towards Responsible Tourism. The respondents of the study include tourists who visit Kumarakom .The analysis has been made on the basis of the perception of the respondents of the study.

Objective of the study

1. To study the attitude of the tourists towards Responsible Tourism projects implemented at Kumarakom, Kerala.

Hypothesis of the study

H_{01} There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the tourists on the present tourism service at Kumarakam.

Research Methodology

Selection of sample

A sample of 50 respondents has been selected by adopting convenience sampling method for the purpose of study.

Collection of data

The primary data were collected from the respondents based on structured interview schedule. The Secondary data were collected from the Annual reports of Ministry of Tourism Departments at Central and State level, ICRT, Responsible Tourism wing and Local Government bodies.

Various study reports made by different national and international agencies related to Tourism and Responsible tourism topics were also considered for the study.

Tools of Analysis

The data collected were suitably classified and analysed keeping in view the objective of the study. Analysis was done via statistical software 17.0. Karl Pearson Chi-Square Test and percentage were used .

Period of study

The survey was conducted during the period April -May 2015.

Limitations of the study

As convenience sampling method was used, the selection of the units from the population on the basis of availability and /or accessibility was the major disadvantage under this study. The study was limited to Kumarakam Village pertaining to tourists Visiting Village .Data collection and evaluation were made on correspondence with the tourist visiting village, but failed to incorporate the views of Tourist visiting village during season.

Attitude of the Tourists towards Responsible Tourism Projects implemented at Kumarakom , Kerala.– Analysis

The study revealed that most of the tourists (66%) who visited Kumara am were males and belonged to the age group of below 40 years(64%) and 42 % of the tourists were self employed.

All the tourists received a high or very high respect from the local people. 80% of the respondents received a very high respect from local people (Table 1). 80% tourists had a very low level of satisfaction with the cultural activities and shows, showcased to them. The study revealed that the cultural programs showcased to the tourist at Kumarakam were not satisfactory (Table 2). 40% of the tourists were of the view that the possibility of getting local handicrafts at

Kumarakam Village was very high. Another 40% were of the view that the possibility of getting local handicrafts was high. (Table 3).60% of the tourists were very highly satisfied and 40 % of them were highly satisfied with the infrastructure facilities, viz, transportation facilities via road, bridges, railway, waterway connectivity available at Kumarakam. The study revealed that the physical infrastructure of Kumarakam was adequate which indicates the economic development via infra development due to RT projects at Kumarakam Village (Table 4). The study revealed that the availability of comfort station facilities at Kumarakam village was least satisfactory from the point of tourist. 80% of the tourists had a low or very low level of satisfaction with these facilities. The study with regard to comfort station revealed that it was least satisfactory from the perspective of Tourist (Table 5).The majority of the products consumed at Kumarakam were basically of “Ecological Nature” and did not include much artificial component (Table 6).All the tourists were very highly or highly satisfied with the waste management system at Kumarakam . The study revealed that waste management programme at Kumarakam was conducted properly and with least pollution, as majority of material inputs were of “Agro Nature” and Government has developed proper mechanism for waste disposal and management (Table 7). 80 % of the tourists opined that the availability of fresh water at Kumarakam was very high or high . The availability of sufficient fresh water at Kumarakam could be regard as the ecological impact of RT(Table 8).For 60% of the tourists, the social support quality was high or very high and for 20% of them it was low. It was revealed from the study that “Social Support Quality of local people towards Tourism and tourist at Kumarakom was worth mentioning(Table 9). 80% of the tourists had no opinion about the pricing of food products. However, 20 % of them felt that the price of the food products was low (Table 10). There was a difference of opinion with regard to “stay pricing”. 40% of the tourists were of the view that stay pricing was expensive;

another 40% opined that stay pricing was very low. (Table 11).20% of the tourists stated that they were highly satisfied with the “Service centre Quality” (Information Centre) ,60% of them had no opinion in this aspect and 20% of them had low level of satisfaction with the “Service centre Quality” offered a Kumarakam Village (Table 12).

All the respondents had no opinion with regard to the “Connectivity Charges” paid at Kumarakam Village (Table 13).60% of the tourists were with the view that implementation of RT had made a low or very low damage to ecological environment via. pollution and rest 40% tourist had no view with regard to pollution(Table 14).

100% support for least problems with regard to “Sexual Harassment”. It could be inferred from the study that Kumarakam was Ideal Model of Social Consciousness, Quality of Good Customs and Values(Table 15).20% of tourists faced a low level of exploitation from the guides, 20% had a high level of exploitation and 60 % of them had no opinion in this regard(Table 16). 40% of them had a low level satisfaction and 20% of them had a very high level of satisfaction with the with regard to present tourism service at Kumarakam Village (Table 17).

Hypothesis testing

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the tourists on the present tourism service at Kumarakam.

Chi-square test has been applied to know whether there is any significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the tourists on the present tourism service at Kumarakam. The test result (Table 17) revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the tourists on the present tourism service at Kumarakam since the p value .135 is greater than 0.05. Therefore,

the null hypothesis H_{01} stating that there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction of the tourists on the present tourism service at Kumarakam is accepted.

Conclusion

The study on the attitude of tourist towards responsible tourism revealed that the majority of the tourist who visited Kumarakam Village received very high respect from local people, Infrastructure facility with regard to comfort station provided at Kumarakam Village was dissatisfactory. Majority of the products consumed by tourist at Kumarakam were basically of “Ecological Nature” and did not include much artificial component. Waste management programme at Kumarakam was conducted properly and with least pollution. The majority of material inputs were of “Agro Nature” and Government has developed proper mechanism for waste disposal and management. Availability of sufficient fresh water to tourist at Kumarakam can be regard as the ecological impact of RT.

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Joseph Antony .G , The Role of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. in the Promotion of Tourism, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala,1997.

²Sudheer .S.V , Tourism in Kerala- Problems and Prospects, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1992.

³ Soundara Rajan.A, Commercial Viability of the Tourist Infrastructure of Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation, Ph.D. thesis, University Of Kerala,1993.

⁴ Ajith Kumar. M.K, Psychographic and Demographic Profiles of Foreign Tourists Visiting Kerala with Special Reference to Spending Patterns, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kochi,1998.

⁵ <http://www.rtkeerala.com/>

<https://www.keralatourism.org/rthome.php>

Table 1 Respect Received by Tourists from Local People

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	40	80.0
High	10	20.0
Neutral	-	-
Low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=18.000$ with 1 degree of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 2 Level of satisfaction on the Performance of Cultural Activity for the Tourists

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	-	-
Neutral	10	20.0
Very Low	40	80.0
low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=18.000$ with 1 degree of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 3 Availability of Local Handicraft

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	20	40.0
High	20	40.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Very low	-	-
Low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=4.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 4 Level of Satisfaction on the Infrastructure Facilities

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	30	60.0
High	20	40.0
Neutral	-	-
Low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=2.000$ with 1 degree of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 5 Comfort Station facilities

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	-	-

Neutral	10	20.0
low	30	60.0
Very low	10	20.0
Total	50	100

Source :Primary Data.

$\chi^2=16.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 6 Use of Eco- Friendly Products

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	40	80.0
High	10	20.0
Neutral	-	-
low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=18.000$ with 1 degree of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 7 Level of Satisfaction on the Waste Management System

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	30	60.0
High	20	40.0
Neutral	-	-
Low	-	-
Very Low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=2.000$ with 1 degree of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 8 Availability of fresh Water

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	30	60.0
High	10	20.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=16.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 9 Social Support Quality

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	10	20.0
High	20	40.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Low	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2 = 6.000$ with 3 degrees of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 10 Pricing of Food

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	-	-
Neutral	40	80.0
Low	10	20.0
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=18.000$ with 1 degree of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 11 Stay Pricing

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	10	20.0
High	10	20.0
Neutral	10	20.0
Low	-	-
Very low	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0

Source : Primary Data.

$\chi^2=6.000$ with 3 degrees of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 12 Service Centre Quality (Information Centre)

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	10	20.0
Neutral	30	60.0
Low	10	20.0
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source : Primary Data.

$\chi^2=16.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 13 Connectivity Charges

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	-	-
Neutral	50	100
Low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=2.000$ with 1 degree of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 14 Pollution Status

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	20	40.0
High	10	20.0
Neutral	20	40.0
Low	-	-
Very low	-	-
Total	50	100.0

Source : Primary Data.

$\chi^2 = 4.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom not significant at 5% level.

Table 15 Sexual Harassment

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	-	-
Neutral	-	-
Low	-	-
Very low	50	100.0
Total	50	100.0

Source :Primary Data .

Table 16 Guide Exploitation

Perception	Frequency	Percent
Very High	-	-
High	10	20.0
Neutral	30	60.0
Low	-	-
Very low	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary Data.

$\chi^2=16.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom significant at 5% level.

Table 17 Satisfaction Level with Present Tourism service

Perception level	Frequency	Percent
Very high	-	-
High	10	20.0
Neutral	20	40.0
Low	20	40.0
Total	50	100.0

Source : Primary Data.

$\chi^2=4.000$ with 2 degrees of freedom not significant at 5% level.