

Identifying Government's Role towards Developing Sustainable Strategies in Tourism Industry.

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Abstract

Now tourism has become one of the major economic activities of Kerala. The vast developments in this sector also results in different types negative impacts. The mitigation of these negative impacts is possible by the proactive role of government. The present study tries to explain the different role of government in this sector to ensure sustainable development. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from two samples. One sample is the foreign tourists and the second sample is the resident community. The data was collected from Fortcochi, Kumarakom and Munnar. Random sampling method was adopted for collecting data from resident community from the three destinations and a total of 300 data was collected. The convenience sampling method was adopted for collecting data from foreign tourist. The study found that the most important role of government as per the opinion of foreign tourist is as the infrastructure developer, which is followed by protector of tourism resources, human resource developer, Promoter of tourism, coordinator of all departments of tourism and formulator of tourism policies. As per the opinion of resident community, the government has got three important roles to play to ensure community support and they are as 'Community Developer', 'Community Participation' and as 'the Controller of Tourism cost'.

Key words: Tourism development, the role of government, sustainable development

Introduction

Travel in ancient times was mainly for the day today survival and was not for pleasure purpose. Then travel transformed drastically over the centuries and now travel became an inevitable part of modern world. The technological developments enhanced the tourism developments in a big way. Among the different states in India, Kerala has got an important place in the tourism map due to its uniqueness of attractions. Kerala started its tourism initiatives by establishing an international beach resort at Kovalam in 1976 and the government took ten more years to declare tourism as an industry. So it was only in 1986, the tourism got the status of an industry. After that the government took several initiatives to boost the tourism industry and the first tourism policy of the state was announced in 1995 underlining the importance of Public- Private Partnership. The latest tourism policy announced was on 2012 which gives importance to community based tourism developments and visitor satisfaction. As a result of these initiatives in

2012, the industry contributed a total revenue of ` 20,430 crore from direct and indirect sources. The foreign exchange earnings during the year 2012-13 were ` 4571.69 crores. The tourism industry in broader terms has great indirect multiplier impact in the economy through backward and forward linkages and also induced impact through spending of benefitted households and firms in the economy. Total Revenue (including direct & indirect means) from Tourism during 2012-13 was 20430 Crores, showing an increase of 7.31 per cent over the previous year's figure. The economic review report of Kerala shows that Kerala's share in India's foreign tourist arrivals has grown from less than 8 per cent in 1997 to 12.07 per cent in 2012. Thus tourism has become a very important economic activity of Kerala. But these developments also resulted in several pressures on the destination environment. These negative impacts of tourism can be mitigated by means of good governance and intelligent regulatory policies. So it could be argued that the sustainability of tourism industry requires the government to be more proactive in planning and development of tourism industry. The present study tries to explain the role of government in sustainable tourism development in tourists and resident's perspective as these are two important stakeholders of tourism.

Review of literature

Review was undertaken on important studies conducted in Kerala from 1991 to 2012. Sudheer (1991) in his study assessed the potential of natural resources for developing tourism industry in Kerala and also analysed the various facilities available to tourists. The study found that there is adequacies of resources for attracting tourists to Kerala and also found that there were lack of information, lack of integration in the state Department of tourism, unethical traders, and inadequacy of communication system found to be giving more inconvenience. Joseph (1997) in his study assesses the role of KTDC (Kerala Tourism Development Corporation) in tourism promotion and suggested measures for improvements based on the findings. The major findings were the road traffic was overcrowded and congested, the law and order situation was not satisfactory to ensure safety of the tourists and the tourists places were not been kept clean and hygiene. The major recommendations were, KTDC should establish a research and development wing, should either conduct programmes for human resource development or can seek the services of professional institutes like KITTS (Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies) and should give wide publicity.

Anil (2004) through his study, the various negative factors of tourism was identified and evaluated its impact upon tourists and host community. Littering, overpricing, disturbance to tourists by taxi and auto rickshaw drivers, water pollution, alcoholism, drug trafficking, prostitution, cultural conflicts, off-seasonal unemployment etc were the negative factors identified in the study and the major recommendation was

that the Government should conduct awareness programs and should impart proper education to the tourists and to the host community to minimize the negative impacts. Vijayan (2007) in his study assess the impact of tourism on the social and economic life of destination population and studies the attitude of local people in tourism centres towards tourism development. The study also analyses the role of officials in bringing awareness among locals regarding the benefit of tourism. The study also found that tourism has got negative impacts on the life of the local people and the tourism officials have not succeeded in bringing awareness among the local people regarding the benefits of tourism. The study suggested that the Government should take speedy measures through local self-government, NGO's and Kudumbasree units to educate the locals about the societal benefits of tourism development through various types of programmes. Binu(2008) in his study assess the strength, weakness ,opportunities and threats of ecotourism in Kerala. Three ecotourism projects (Thenmala ecotourism project TEP, Neyyar ecotourism project NEP and Periyar Tiger Trail PTT) were identified for collecting the perception and attitudes of eco tourists. The study found that Kerala has got enough potentialities for tapping ecotourism and the government should take proper steps for its promotion. Gracious (2008) in his study conducted a cross sector analysis of the marketing mix implemented by different classified and non-classified categories of tourism units and evaluates the effectiveness and frequency of participating in travel mart, trade shows, fairs etc by different sectors of tourism units in Kerala. The study suggests that as seasonality place an important role in tourism, the Government should take adequate steps to overcome this factor. Augustine (2009) in her study examines the effectiveness of tourism brand promotion measures and strategies used by the state. The result of the study shows that Kerala tourism brand promotions are effective in positioning Kerala as a powerful tourism destination brand. Nithya(2011) in her study discusses the present position and condition of heritage tourism in Kerala. The result of the study reveals that many heritage sites having historic and architectural elegance and monuments in various districts are not adequately preserved and promoted and this area should be taken seriously by the government. Jermon (2011) in his study assesses the attitude and reaction of the people of Alappuzha towards tourism development. The study found that there is lack of trained and authorised tourist guides in the district. Another finding of the study was that tourists considered the house boats as an insecure place. The poor and unhygienic condition of the beach was another concern of the tourists. Subash(2012) in his study assesses the identification and implementation of programmes of DTPC(District Tourism Promotion Council). The result of the study reveals that the DTPC's in Kerala has undertaken a number of programmes for the awareness creation, product promotion and provision of amenities at the tourist

destinations. The result of the study shows that these programmes are not found to be effective from the perspective of tourists and host community. The reviews of the studies in Kerala, helped to understand about the major areas in which studies are conducted and the reviews clearly points that the government has got very pivotal role in the development of tourism. The studies shows that the destinations are suffered from different types of negative impacts and all these studies suggest that the negative impacts can be mitigated by the proper steps of the government. Although some researchers argue that the role of government in tourism has been declining, its role in the industry's development should in no circumstances be neglected (Bramwell, 2011; Newman & Clarke, 2009). The state intervenes in tourism development for environmental, political, and economic reasons (Nyaupane & Timothy, 2010). It usually attempts to secure a balance between economic priorities, environment, and the local society in order to gain political support for tourism development (Bramwell, 2011). Wearing and Neil (2009) assert that only government and public authorities can coordinate efforts to achieve sustainable tourism. The study of Chun-Fang Chiang and Kuan-Chieh Huang (2011) shows that local government is the antecedent variables which do affect how residents perceive the impacts of tourism. As the government has a primary influence on governance and on policy-making for sustainable tourism in India as well as in Kerala, there is a need for further research to explain the role of the government in tourism development.

Objectives of the study

1. To understand the role of government in tourism

development in foreign tourist's perspective.

2. To understand the role of government in tourism development in resident's perspective.

Study Methodology

The study was based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected from two samples. One sample was the foreign tourists and the second sample was the resident community. The foreign tourists are tourists coming from other countries to Kerala and resident community includes all the people residing at the destinations in Kerala. The selected destinations were Fortcochi, Kumarakom and Munnar. Random sampling method was adopted for collecting data from resident community and a total of 300 data was collected. The convenience sampling method was adopted for collecting data from foreign tourist from the selected destinations and a total of 60 data was collected. The tool used for data collection was questionnaire. Data was collected during Nov13-Jan 14 from the selected tourist destinations in Kerala. The secondary data was collected from PhD thesis, journals, government reports etc.

Analysis and Result

A total of 300 samples units were collected from resident community and 60 samples units were collected from foreign tourists. The analyses were done using SPSS (ver21). The first part of the questionnaire seeks the information about the socio-demographics of the respondents and the result is presented in the following table 1 and 2

Table1: Demographic details of Foreign tourists

	<u>Groups</u>	<u>Foreign Tourist</u>
Gender	Male	40.0
	Female	60.0
Age groups	below 20	26.0
	20-30	30.5
	30-40	20.5
	40-50	11.5
	50-60	10.5
	60 above	1.0
Marital status	Married	13.0
	Unmarried	68.5
	Separated	13.5
	Widow/Widower	5.0
Type of tour	Conducted	12.0
	Unconducted	88.0
Travelling alone or accompanied	Single	10.5
	with family	22.5
	With friends	67.0
Nights spend in Kerala	1-3 days	9.5
	Between 3-5 days	23.5
	7 days(A week)	13.5
	more than a week	53.5

Source: Sample survey

Table 2: Demographic details of Resident community

	Groups	Percent
Gender	Male	44.0
	Female	56.0
	Total	100.0
Age Groups	Below 20	15.9
	20-30	23.1
	30-40	22.0
	40-50	24.4
	50-60	7.4
	60 Above	7.3
	Total	100.0
Marital Status	Married	56.5
	Unmarried	22.1
	Separated	7.9
	Widow/Widower	10.1
	Divorced	3.4
	Total	100.0
Educational Qualification	Below 10th	26.5
	10-12th	25.9
	Graduate	33.5
	Postgraduate	12.6
	Professional Education	1.5
	Total	100.0

Source: Sample survey

Ranking question was used in foreign tourist questionnaire development and the result is presented in table 3 to understand the role of government in tourism

Table 3 The roles of Kerala Government for tourism development (Foreign tourists)

The roles of Kerala government in tourism development	Mean	Rank
Infrastructure developer	1.77	1
Promoter of tourism	3.38	4
Protector of tourism resources	2.23	2
Human resource developer	2.47	3
Coordinator of all departments of tourism	3.55	5
Formulator of tourism policies	4.14	6

Source: Sample survey

From this table it is clear that the most important role of government as per the opinion of foreign tourist is as the infrastructure developer, which is followed by protector of tourism resources, human resource developer, Promoter of tourism, coordinator of all departments of tourism and formulator of tourism policies.

The resident community questionnaire measured the role of government on a five point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 16 statements were used to measure role of government and to reduce the

dimensions, exploratory factor analysis was done. To detect scale dimensionality, an EFA with a principal component method with varimax rotation was conducted. The appropriateness of factor analysis was determined by examining the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. A value of 0.60 or above from the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy test indicates that the data were adequate for EFA (Tabachnick et al., 1989) and the result is presented in Table 4

Table 4: The result of EFA(the role of government-resident community)

The role of government	
The total reliability of role of govt (Cronbach's Alpha)	0.938(n=16)
The total variance explained	72.680
The Bartlett's Test of sphericity(significance level)	.000
The KMO measure of sampling adequacy	.840
The Factors under the role of govt	
1) Community Developer	Eigen value 7.734
2) Community Participation	2.291
3) Controller of Tourism Cost	1.604

Three factors were explored on the factor analysis of role of government. The items under factor one are discussing about how the steps taken by the government has helped the community to develop further. So the factor one is named as 'Community Developed'. The items under factor two discusses about the role of government to ensure the community participation in tourism development and thus it is named as 'Community Participation'. The factor three includes items measuring the different role of government to reduce the different forms of pollution, to check the overexploitation of natural resources, to control the social problems associated with tourism like alcoholism, crime, prostitution, child abuse etc. Thus the factor three discusses about the role of the government to control the different cost of tourism development and thus it is named as 'Controller of tourism cost'.

Discussion and Conclusion

The review shows that the government has got an important role in the tourism development especially in the developing country like India. The main aim of the study was to understand the role of government in sustainable tourism development in resident's perspective and in foreign tourist's perspective. To understand the role of government in tourism development, the items were generated by extensive literature review and were asked as a ranking question in the foreign tourist questionnaire. In the opinion of foreign tourists the most important role of government is as the infrastructure developer, which is followed by protector of tourism resources, human resource developer, promoter of tourism, coordinator of all departments of tourism and formulator of tourism policies. Providing adequate infrastructure facilities is necessary for the development of tourism, but it should be planned in such a way that it won't result in the destruction of the destination environment. The tourists are also concerned about the destruction of tourism resources as a result of unplanned developments. That is why they gave the second rank for 'protector of tourism resources'. As tourism is a service industry, its success depends on how the services are rendered and it lies in the hand of employees working in tourism sector. So they believe that the third important role of government is as the 'human resource developer'. The fourth role of government is as the promoter of tourism and lastly the government should work as the coordinator of all departments of tourism and formulator of tourism policies. Thus in the opinion of tourist, the government has got a number of roles to play to ensure sustainable tourism development.

As per the opinion of resident community, the government has got three important roles to play for the development of tourism. They are as 'Community Developer', 'Community Participation' and as 'the controller of Tourism cost'. As the impacts of tourism is mainly affects the residents residing at

the destinations, their support is inevitable for sustainable tourism development. Their support can be achieved by the prompt role of government and this is possible by taking adequate steps to ensure the development of community members. Their participation in tourism development process should be ensured by the government by providing them opportunity to take part in the decision making process. Even though the benefits of tourism are multi fold, we cannot close our eyes against the negative impacts of tourism. These negative impacts are to be controlled by the taking adequate steps by the government and that is why the residents opinioned that the government has to perform the role as the controller of tourism cost.

Thus the study throws light into the role of government in foreign tourist's and in resident's perspective. As these are two important stakeholders of tourism, the result serves as guide for the government to ensure tourist satisfaction and the residents support for tourism development. The study explains that the main role of government, as per the opinion of tourists is as the infrastructure developer followed by protector tourism resources, as the human resource developer and so on. As per the opinion of residents, the government has to ensure the community developments, community participation in tourism process and should take proper steps to mitigate the ill effects of tourism. The main limitation of the study is that this study mainly focuses on the role of government in sustainable tourism development. The study explains the role of government in the view of two major stakeholders of tourism-the tourists and the resident community.

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