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A Study on Community Tourism in Kerala - Upcoming Potential Market

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ABSTRACT

Community tourism means considering the construction of tourist destinations from the angle of community, instructing the overall planning and arrangement of tourist districts with the mutuality theory of community, and improving the efficiency of tourist flow by optimizing the structure of tourist community in order to seek for the harmonious unification and optimization of the tourist destinations' economic, environmental and social benefits. Community tourism has offered a new way to realize the sustainable development of tourism. Compared with the traditional tourism and eco-tourism, community tourism presents a more advanced idea of tourism exploitation. Traditional industries manufacturing such items as coir, handlooms, and handicrafts employ around one million people. Money makes the world go round, or so it is told. When you are offered with a business opportunity, it is astute to ask yourself a pair of vital questions before getting involved. Owing to that, you ought to get the technique to make a living, and for entrepreneurs they are always searching for an excellent business opportunity. When it comes to find out a potential market. No need to go any were but to look for God's Own Country-Kerala

KEYWORDS : Community Tourism, Eco-Tourism, Optimization

New World, new ways - Keralities trying to keep with the Joneses

With a population of more than a billion, India is the world's second largest consumer market, and Kerala has already earned the epithet 'the number one consumer society in the country'. A study shows that India has 70 million people who have per-capita incomes of Rs 50.000 or more a year ,the level at which consumerism begins to blossom. These new consumers will need more of everything. When a gujratji brokerage firm in Kochin recruited a young lady as an office –assistant-cum-receptionist in 1998 ,she spoke poor English ,had long stingy hair and wore a dress that ,some of her acquaintances recall ,looked as if it had been "inherited from her grand mother" .In 2007,when a relative who had long been in the UAE saw her , she was sporting tailored outfit and fashionably cropped hair. Her English was fluent though impeccable. Working as a customer relation executive in a foreign financial firm, the thirty something young lady was making twice as her father. Young lady exemplifies the new face of our women and our state. By the mid 1990's the income of people began to raise .Though these were not enough to live a middle class existence by western standards, it allowed people to enjoy new material comforts.

Things began to change during 1990's. Studies shows that the number of people at lower-income levels is shrinking and the middle class house holds have incomes that enable them to live comfortable. Many others partake of the good life some of time, treating themselves to two-or three-star hotel meals and once-in-a while trips to pilgrimage and tourist centres. Keralities, it appears, spend their lives keeping up with joneses. The result: a materialistic mad race –a race for possessing the latest appliances and gadgets, the latest motorcars (AUDI, BMW, BENZ, VOLVO, VOLKSWAGEN, SKODA etc. all have their own show rooms in Kochin), the most modern furniture, jewellery and what ever that comes into the market for the first time .Corporate giants help them in no small measure. It is not without reason that Kerala has earned the epithet 'The number one consumer society in the country'. Life style in Kerala have changed a lot .To give a real life incident (My friend ,name not mentioned) by a business man in Kochin when he boarded a Bangalore –bound low cost airline for an emergency meeting ,And who do you think was the man seated next to him on the flight? To his amazement it was a small-time vegetable merchant he used to see on kochin's Broadway. Every common Indian Life style has changed, the business man thought himself.

Kerala cities will soon become IT hubs

Kerala is growing as a preferred IT destination in the country .There is huge unexplored potential in the state to justify the investment and growth .Competitive real estate rates, infrastructure and reduced staff attrition rates would make cities in the state more attractive than county's metropolitan states. State led initiatives such as investor friendly policies, supported by political stability with an information technology policy, tax incentives and simplified investment procedures have created a climate highly favourable for many entrepreneurs .It won't be much time before cities in Kerala become better known as IT hubs than just tourist destinations. Over the last decade, as more and more companies become global, there has been an increase in software adoption and automation processes domestically .Growing levels of technology adoption accompanied by a steady appreciation of the rupee is also making India more attractive as a market even for players that had earlier maintained a stricter focus on targeting foreign markets. Ambitious young professionals also invest in themselves by enrolling in evening classes to learn computers, accounting, management and spoken English. Technopark, Trivandrum is an autonomous society promoted by the Government of Kerala. This is the first technology park in the country. Spread over nearly 300 acres with 2.1 million sq. ft. of built-up space available currently Technopark hosts over 120 IT and ITES companies employing over 15,000 IT professionals. It has been founded with a vision to provide knowledge industry with a holistic as well as world-class environment. Technopark is situated in the district of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India.

The InfoTech scene in Kerala is abuzz with activity these days. After the Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram came the Info Park in Kochi. The proposed Smart City project has also been flagged off. Adding to all the excitement is US Technology, which aims to create a large IT hub in the state capital. The company, which caters to Fortune 500 companies by providing them with start-to-end IT services, plans to set up a 36-acre campus near the Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram. According to the company, the proposed campus, when ready, will house three times the current number of IT professionals of over 4000 associates. To be built up on an area of 16, 00,000 square feet in three phases, the US Technology Campus will stand out for its unique architectural style, ambient work spaces and eco-friendly operations.

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four (24) hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited." Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity.

Institutional resources in Kerala

Kerala has during the past half century built up an enormous institutional resource base for farm development .There is a fairly well-developed agriculture department headed by an agriculture production commissioner, and there are directors and assistant directors at the state level, in charge of different programmes, including those founded by the centre. There are district level offices, block offices and panchayat –level krishi Bhavan reporting to LSGI .Departmental marketing outlets, testing facilities for soil, seeds, pesticides and fertilizers

are there all over the state.

Factors contributing to Institutional Change – Background

Institutions are the rules and norms in the society which facilitate and hinder human interaction (North 1990). It can be either conventions or entitlements (Bromley 1989). However, all the institutions may not work efficiently all the time and it has been changing over a period of time. Various factors were identified in the literature associated with institutional change. A change in institutional setup takes place when the allocation of resources become disproportionate or some benefits of the allocation cannot be captured under existing institutional arrangements. Changes in relative factor endowments, technology, changes in social and cultural endowments constitutional order, etc were identified as the factors affecting institutional change (Ruttan and Hayami 19842; Feeny 1988).Bromley (1989) suggests that there are three levels pertinent to the process of institutional change: policy level, organizational level and operational level. In democracy, policy level is represented by legislative and judiciary branches, where as operational level is represented by executive branch. The rules and laws that link policy level to the organizational level are called as institutional arrangements. At the operational level there are operating units in the society like firms and households and their daily actions resulted in certain outcome. The range of choice open to the actors at operational level is defined by the institutional arrangements both at policy and organizational level. It is argued that any change in outcome at the operational level alter the institutional arrangement at the policy and organizational level.

Smart city for Smart Jobs

Huge building complexes spread in an area of 88lakh square feet with world class facilities and comforts ; thousands of IT professionals working in air conditioned rooms for reputed MNCs; vehicles moving through impeccable roads in greenish surroundings; top-notch recreation facilities .All these will become a reality when smart city comes up on 246 acres of prime area right in kochi. If Mumbai is the gateway to India by sea, Kochi is going to be its cyber gateway. Kochi is one of the 12 cities in the world connected by intercontinental submarine cable. Thus it is the most suitable city in the country to carry out data transmission at the lowest rates and efficiently .Naturally, because of these favourable factors, the ITES sector is sure to boom in Smart City. Factors like the availability of well educated youngsters with a flair for English, comfortable weather, natural beauty, a comparatively fine system of law and order, an international airport and IT hubs like Info Park will provide added impetus for such services. The project, the foundation stone of which was laid in November 2007, is yet to take off due to differences between the State Government and Telecom, the promoters of the project, over issues like granting freehold right for 12 percent of the land allotted for the project.

End the Smart row, Start work now.

Everyone knows the smart city project would have been lost to Kerala as the state is known for its reputation as a bastion of old-style bureaucrats. And politicians and rulers without vision, which has always hurt efforts to attract investor's .We, have the experience of losing out to others in the past as they could do the job more cheaply and speedily and with less bureaucratic delay. The exasperated technology and media free zone authority, the promoter of the smart city project in Cochin, would have almost withdrawn from the scene earlier had it not been for some diplomatic and smart moves and commitments to the Dubai based firm to allow it some concessions before it cautiously revived the partnership move than a year ago. The unpalatable truth is that the project is not much more than a theory waiting to happen. What the state needs is strong, committed, working machinery that can ensure the competition of a project in the stipulated time[5].

Can the Government Deliver? Players have a field day

With the political matchmaking having been completed, every body is eager to see what will happen next. The state of Kerala with plenty of potential in variety of business areas is looking for somebody to exploit the resources and hope to start new business venture. .What the state is facing is Tall promises, Unworkable schemes. What business man and entrepreneurs is to do is understand the bright future of Kerala and plan for a good venture in the state. Trust in the government and a good budget gives thrust to new market opportunities. Think that this is the right time to care for neglected lit. The new concepts of new markets regime will help industrialists to go for more investment in Kerala. Many projects have failed to take off this is the main problem Kerala is facing .This has to be changed and massive investment opportunity should be created. Surviving the storm is what the industrialists and entrepreneurs have to do to win the race.

Keralities believe that one day scenario will be changing and the state will be one of the highest FDI in the country.Kerala has already notched up a record, registering the highest tele-density in the country. Unlike other Indian states there is not much difference in Kerala between urban and rural areas. This is one of the main reasons why telecom operators are investing more in the state. Are we back in business? Tourism –There is no doubt that tourism in Kerala will take off in a big way .The state has a lot to offer and is easily approachable by road , rail or air .But the truth is that until new facilities are built it would be hard to bring in too many tourists. Think positive, act positive that's what people of Kerala is telling and hope that in future things will be changing.

The Marvel Called Kerala

Wedged between the Western Ghats on the East and the Arabian Sea on the West, the narrow strip of land known as Kerala is a destination of a lifetime. The timeless beauty of the palm fringed beaches of Kovalam and Varkala, the majesty of the undulating hills of Munnar and Vagamon, the serenity of the pristine backwaters of Kumarakom & Kuttanad and the enchanting woods and forests of Thekkady and Silent Valley will have you bowled over. That such a small terrain can hold diverse geographical features and cultures is a wonder in itself.

Types of Tourism

All types of tourism in India have registered phenomenal growth in the last decade ever since the Indian government decided to boost revenues from the tourism sector by projecting India as the ultimate tourist spot. The reason why India has been doing well in all types of tourism in India is that India has always been known for its hospitality, uniqueness, and charm – attributes that have been attracting foreign travelers to India in hordes. The Indian government, in order to boost tourism of various kinds in India, has set up the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. This ministry recently launched a campaign called 'Incredible India!' in order to encourage different types of tourism in India. The result was that in 2004, foreign tourists spent around US$ 15.4 billion during their trips to India. Being a country with tremendous diversity, India has a lot to offer in terms of tourism and related activities. The diversity that India is famous for, ensures that there is something to do for all tourists in India, no matter what their interests. Some examples are.

Outdoor Tourism

The Indian subcontinent is a geographically varied land form that contains dense jungle, pristine coasts and the highest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas. These mountains are among the most popular destinations on Earth for hikers, mountaineers and climbers, and they offer nearly endless possibilities for trekking adventures. In the lowlands, the forests of India are home to exotic wildlife, including the rare white tigers of Bandhavgarh National Park, and they are popular destinations for safaris and ecological tourism. The varied beaches of India are popular with surfers, divers, sailors and sun worshipers.

Spiritual Tourism

The birthplace of Buddhism and Hinduism and home to hundreds of monasteries and ancient temples, India may be the top destination in the world for spiritual tourism. The Tibetan Buddhist exile community in Dharamsala is home to the Dalai Lama and attracts soul seekers from across the globe. The holy city of Varanasi sits on the banks of the Ganges River and draws hordes of international tourists to its ghats and towering Hindu temples. Many modern international spiritual movements, such as Vipassana, are based in India and followers come to study and meditate with the masters in the home country.

Sightseeing Tourism

India is a popular country for historical sightseeing, and the country's thousands of years worth of monuments and architecture are some of the world's most spectacular. The Taj Mahal was built in the 17th cen-

tury by a Mughal emperor in Agra and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 10th century Hindu temples of Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh feature carved stone walls that depict the decant life of those times, including sexual encounters.

Yoga Tourism

A health phenomenon that has taken the world by storm, yoga is based on ancient Indian scriptures and practices, and many modern practitioners consider a trip to India the must-do trip of their life. The southern city of Mysore is home to several schools that teach Ashtanga yoga, and yoga ashrams can be found all over the country. Tourists come to partake in week-long retreats, months-long certificate programs or even years of dedicated training.

Leisure Tourism

India is also a global hot spot for those who just want to party or relax. The seaside town of Goa hosts large parties and raves as well as a variety of festivals on its white sand beaches. Luxury resorts that offer all-inclusive holidays line the southern Goan coast and the idyllic Andaman Islands.

Community Tourism

Tourism that benefits local people

Community tourism (sometimes called community-based tourism) is a form of tourism which aims to include and benefit local communities, particularly indigenous peoples and villagers in the rural South (ie 'developing world'). For instance, villagers might host tourists in their village, managing the scheme communally and sharing the profits. There are many types of community tourism project, including many in which the 'community' works with a commercial tour operator, but all community tourism projects should give local people a fair share of the benefits/profits and a say in deciding how incoming tourism is managed.

Tourism that benefits tourists

These tours open up a world of adventure and opportunity. Visit the Amazon… trek through the Andes or the Sinai… experience the magic of the central Australian desert Good community-based tours take you beyond mainstream tourism. You'll meet people from different countries and learn far more about them and their culture than on conventional tours. You'll feel better knowing that your visit is genuinely helping your hosts. And if you want to simply lie on a beach.... well, there are tours here that feature some of the best beaches on the planet.

Community tourism should.

1. Be run with the involvement and consent of local communities. (Local people should participate in planning and managing the tour.)
2. Give a fair share of profits back to the local community. (Ideally this will include community projects (health, schools, etc).)
3. Involve communities rather than individuals. (Working with individuals can disrupt social structures.)
4. Be environmentally sustainable (Local people must be involved if conservation projects are to succeed.)
5. Respect traditional culture and social structures.
6. Have mechanisms to help communities cope with the impact of western tourists.
7. Keep groups small to minimise cultural / environmental impact.
8. Brief tourists before the trip on appropriate behaviour.
9. Not make local people perform inappropriate ceremonies, etc.
10. Leave communities alone if they don't want tourism. (People should have the right to say 'no' to tourism.)

Conclusion

Make Kerala a global Trade Centre:

The time is not far off when foreigners, as in years of yore will flock to Kerala in search of Aranmula mirror, handicrafts, payyannur pavithra ring, beautifully crafted bamboo items made by our advasi brethren and our coir products .will the state stage a full recovery? Economists say that most probably it will. The vital question to ask now is whether another Sree Narayana Guru or Mannam or Ayyankali will come up in the new society that is emerging. With everyone looking for good life outside the state, the chances are very little. A degenerating culture with groups of old men interested in promoting their own agenda will lead us to a blind alley in the not so distant future. An unexpected development in the world scenario that will force people back into their own territories may sound retrograde and unfortunate. But in Kerala's case this may be the only way to keep it Gods Own. People are hoping that investors will take a wise decision. Community Tourism presents a unique model of participatory development, which can very well, be emulated by other developing countries the possibility of linking the demands of the Tourism industry with local production and supply should be utilized. Community Tourism should focus on new methods to market their products- like an MNC style they have to change their strategy

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