



Scope of Ayurveda to The Growth of Tourism Industry in Kerala

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Tourism is one of the few sectors where Kerala has clear competitive advantages given its diverse geography in a short space ranging from the Western Ghats covered with dense forests to the backwaters to the Arabian sea. Its ancient rich culture including traditional dance forms and the strong presence of alternative systems of medicine add to its allure. Unfortunately, Kerala is dominated by domestic tourism within the state although foreign tourists arrivals to the state has been growing at a faster rate than national average. The goal in the KPP 2030 is to develop Kerala as an up-market tourism destination with the state being the top destination in terms of number of tourists and revenue among all the Indian states. Sustainable tourism is the mission. This can be achieved by integrating tourism with other parts of the economy like medical and health hubs which will attract more stable tourists over a longer period of time and with higher spending capacity. There will be new elements added to leisure tourism and niche products in tourism will be developed. Infrastructure development is crucial to achieve this goal. The success of Kerala tourism will be based on the synergy between private and public sectors. The government has taken steps to encourage private investment in tourism, while adhering to the principles and practices of sustainability. Industry led sustainable tourism development relies upon the government-imposed and self-imposed regulations. Tourism in Kerala will be benchmarked against international indicators and monitored on a regular basis to achieve quality.*

Introduction

Kerala lies on the southwest coast of the Indian Peninsula, stretching 360 miles along Malabar Coast and has been noted as the paradise of tourism. Kerala is a prime high-end tourism in the Indian subcontinent and has been rated as "one of the fifty destinations to be visited in one's lifetime". The World Tourism Organization (WTO) is the leading agency responsible for the development of standardized tourism definitions. This agency states that tourism is defined as "the set of activities of a person travelling to a place outside his or her usual environment for at least one night, but less than a year, and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". The phrase "usual environment" excludes trips within the person's community of residence and routine connecting trips. The phrase "exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". This however does not apply to business related travel such as sales calls, installation of equipment, or convenience where the travelers are located elsewhere then the place visited. Moderate climate, rich art, colorful festivals, diverse natural and cultural attractions with a physical quality of life comparable to developed nations are causing tourism industry to flourish in Kerala. Compare to other states in India, Kerala is unique for its interesting geographical diversity. This diversity offers tourists a range of attractions and experience such as beaches, backwaters, wildlife sanctuaries, evergreen forests and diverse flora and fauna of Kerala. It is often projects as the "Green Gateway" to India.

Tourism has been a major growth industry globally for over five decades. Factors underpinning this growth include the growth of incomes and wealth, improvements in transport, changing lifestyles and consumer values, increased leisure time, international openness and globalization, immigration, special events, education, information and communication technologies, destination marketing and promotion, improved general and tourism infrastructure and so on. Tourism is one of the few sectors where Kerala has clear competitive advantages. Kerala has natural advantages in this industry, in terms of beautiful hills and valleys, lakes, waterfalls, backwaters, lagoons, and beaches. The state is also well-known for its manmade natural advantages, such as national parks and wild life sanctuaries. Kerala's traditional dance forms, cultural festivals, temples, and traditional

medicine are major tourist attractions. Kerala is also India's most advanced society in terms of educational attainment.

Importance of tourism

It is worth analysing the performance of the tourism sector in Kerala against the backdrop of its dismal performance in South Asia in general and India in particular. At the outset it seems pertinent to point out that this discussion is marked by deep crevasses in the development paradigm that underlie Kerala's social transformation in the post-colonial period. The celebrated 'Kerala model' of development seemed to have reached its logical conclusion by the late 1980s. Advances made in the social sectors are receding against a shattered productive base. Declining agricultural and stagnating industrial growth in Kerala has made observers forecast a bleak outlook for the state. The situation is compounded by globalisation, as trade liberalisation has made Kerala's export dependent economy shatter. From the early years of the 1990s tourism was identified as a sector that could provide a fillip to Kerala's economy by enhancing foreign exchange earnings and generating employment opportunities. The new initiatives in the tourism sector coincided with the second-generation liberalisation policies at the national level beginning in 1991.

Kerala's Tourism Assets –Categorization

The various tourist attractions in Kerala can be classified broadly as cultural attractions and natural attractions.

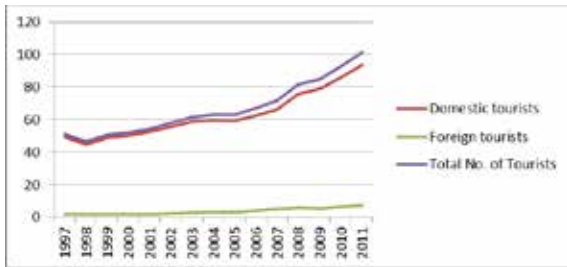
Table -1
Tourism Assets –Categorization

Cultural attractions	Natural Attractions
History, architecture, archeology	Beach
Culture, heritage, arts & crafts	Backwater
Museum, palace	Picnic spot
Fort	Hill station, hill, mountain peak
Religious place, pilgrimage center, place of worship	Wild life/bird sanctuary, forest
	Water falls
	Lake

Achievements

Rapid growth in tourist arrivals

Over the past more than one and a half decades, the total number of tourists increased sharply in Kerala. Between 1997 and 2011, it almost doubled from 51 lakh to 121 lakh, registering an annual growth rate of 9.3 per cent (Figure 11.1). While the number of domestic



It is significant to note that Kerala is able to capture an increasing percentage of the national pie in foreign tourist arrivals. Its share in India's foreign tourist arrivals has grown from less than 8 per cent in 1997 to 12.1 per cent in 2012. Clearly, foreign tourist flow has been growing faster in Kerala than at the national level.

Types of tourism in Kerala

Kerala is far ahead of many other states in India in terms of planning & project implementation in tourism. The state is also a veritable treasure trove of tourism assets of diverse nature. There are at least 175 distinct tourist/pilgrim centers of varying degrees of importance and development potentials across the state.

Heritage and cultural tourism

Heritage tourism constitutes a dominant component among both domestic and foreign tourists visiting the state. Among the available assets, it is imperative to identify and focus upon those that are outstanding enough to attract and satisfy varied interests.

Eco tourism

It is type of tourism that provides the responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people". Ecotourism, also known as ecological tourism, is responsible travel to fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and small scale.

Medical tourism

Medical tourism in Kerala grew without much willful collective efforts. It was recognized as an opportunity by some sectors, particularly the Ayurveda sector who took some collective effort to convert Kerala as a source for Ayurveda treatment. Dentistry and modern medicine also took the role. A combination of many factors has led to the increase in popularity of medical tourism in Kerala.

Hill station tourism

Kerala is famous for its Hill station tourism. There are many hill station destinations in Kerala such as Munnar, Ponnudi, Wagamon, Ranipuram, Nelliampathy, Pythimala, places in Wayanad District etc. Tourism development is having a negative impact on the local plantation based economy. One of the important suggestions put forward is that tourism development may be encouraged in places where the plantation or other form of local economy is on the downside due to extraneous reasons.

Rural tourism focuses on participating in a rural lifestyle. It can be a variant of ecotourism. Any village can be a tourist attraction, and many villagers are very hospitable. Agriculture is becoming highly mechanized and therefore requires less manual labor. This is causing economic pressure on some villages, leading to an exodus of young people to urban areas.

Culture tourism is the subset of tourism concerned with a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life. Cultural tourism includes tourism in urban areas, particularly historic or large cities and their cultural facilities such as museums and theatres. It can also include tourism in rural areas showcasing the traditions of indigenous cultural communities (i.e. festivals, rituals), and their values and lifestyle. It is generally agreed that cultural tourists spend substantially more than standard tourists do.

Dental tourism is a subset of the sector known as medical tourism. It involves individuals seeking dental care outside of their local healthcare systems and may be accompanied by a vacation.

Water tourism is traveling by boat while on holiday, with the express purpose of seeing things meant for the water tourist. This can be traveling from luxury port to luxury port in a cruise ship, but also joining boat-centered events such as regattas or landing a small boat for lunch or other day recreation at specially prepared day boat-landings. Also known as a boating holiday, it is a form of tourism that is generally more popular in the summertime.

Wildlife tourism can be an eco and animal friendly tourism, usually showing animals in their natural habitat. Wildlife tourism, in its simplest sense, is watching wild animals in their natural habitat. Wildlife tourism is an important part of the tourism industries in many countries including many

Religious tourism, also commonly referred to as faith tourism, is a type of tourism, where people travel individually or in groups for pilgrimage, missionary, or leisure (fellowship) purposes. The world's largest form of mass religious tourism takes place at the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Yoga tourism

isa new concept for "celebrating your destination with yoga". a generally accepted idea by the foreigners is, that india is a land of billions of people, of millions of gods, of great variety of religions, of enormous number of temples, of philosophers and sadhus or saints, of festivals and fares, of deserts and hills, of cows and snakes etc.etc.

Forest tourism

Development of tourism in forest areas has often been a subject of considerable debate. The Tiger Trail (guided trekking programme for tourists) in the periyar Tiger Reserve is projected as a model success story in Wildlife tourism. Thattekad Bird Sanctuary, Parambikulam, Wayanad (Muthanga), and Aralam Wildlife sanctuaries, Silent valley National park etc is famous for forest Tourism.

Ayurveda Tourism. There has been a spontaneous growth in Kerala for Ayurveda which has no competition in the Whole world. By unorganized but collective effort the name Ayurveda got branded all over the world. With Ayurveda rejuvenation treatments becoming available widely in different parts of India and abroad, Kerala would have to strengthen its positioning as the real destination for Ayurveda. Traditional Ayurveda treatments in Kerala are famous among the tourists.

Brief history of Ayurveda up to India's independence

The origin of Ayurveda traces back to Vedas: the oldest existing body of knowledge. Through all these 5000 years, in spite of all the negative attitude and rather killer instinct of the foreign invasions and equally worse neglect from our own government in the recent past, this very old traditional medical system of India has survived through ages fulfilling the mission of helping the ailing population through the ways of nature.

The history of Ayurveda lies spread over 50 centuries and can be categorized into four periods.

1. The Vedic Period
2. The Samhitha Period
3. The Revival Period
4. The Present Period

Ayurveda is believed to be the Upveda of Atharva Veda. There are about 160 hymns about medicines in the Atharva Veda. The knowledge of life scattered in these Vedas were collected and comprehended in the form of principles by great Acharyas like Charak, Susruth and Vagbhata during the Samhitha period, and these are still considered to be the bible for the Ayurveda people.

In early days the science was learned in an individual manner in the Traditional Gurukula Sampraday (i.e. Teacher to student method.) from Guru to Shishya or from father to son. Each tradition had their own special techniques and formulae, which were unknown to the rest of the world. Lot of eminent physicians was there and they were known by the family name. The Ashtavaidya tradition of Kerala is the best example. The only problem with this traditional knowledge treasure was that they never shared this knowledge with anyone else. This individualized education system slowly was institutionalized and history says that as back as 2nd Century B.C, medical students from different parts of the world used to come to the ancient University of Takshila to learn Ayurveda. All the specialties of Ayurveda were developed and full-fledged surgery was practiced. From second to 7th Century A.D, University of Nalanda also attracted foreign medical students mainly from Japan, China etc. This can be called as the revival period of Ayurveda where lots of research works were done in metallic and mineral drugs and their de-toxification. In 2nd Century A.D, Nagarjuna had conducted many researches on Rasa Medicines.

By the spread of Buddhism in India, the decline of Ayurveda started. Surgery and Panchakarma practices were banned in the name of Ahimsa. Later with the Mughal invasion, Ayurveda faced a major set back and lots of literatures and ancient books were destroyed by the Mughal invaders. Many valuable traditions we lost that time could never be regained. Then with the British regime, the decline was full and the seed was sowed for the growth of the modern medicine in India. Most of the provincial governments did not support the traditional Ayurveda practices and this added to the decline of Ayurveda.

By the 18th Century, the status of Ayurveda showed some signs of improvements with some provincial rulers showing some interest to promote Ayurveda. In 1827, the first Ayurveda course was started in India in the Government Sanskrit College Calcutta. The British discontinued this after 6 years. Later by the beginning of 20th Century, many Ayurveda colleges were established in India under the patronage of some provincial Maharajas. The Maharajas of Travancore, Cochin, Jamnagar, and Mysore etc. were very keen in promoting the Ayurveda and the colleges established during those days are still considered to be the best. Gulab Kuverba Ayurveda College, Jamnagar, Tilak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Pune, The old Maharaja's College, Travancore which is the present Government Ayurveda College, Trivandram, Ayurveda College, Kottakkal are examples.

In spite of all these single attempts were made by some British people as back as 1829 for understanding Ayurveda. Mr. H.H. Wilson followed by Sir W.Jobes and H.T.Colebrooks did some academic work to bring Ayurveda to the West through their paper on the "medical and surgical sciences of the Hindus" in 1823. Another good work was done by Mr.J.R. Royle on the antiquity and independent origin of Hindu medicine 1837. Mr.T.A.Wise published the first ever-comprehensive treatise of Indian medicine in any foreign language in 1845,

but unfortunately, this went unnoticed by the Western world and nobody took interest to take it further. The Westerners interest in Ayurveda seemed to lie dormant for the next 60 years after this and in 1907 Mr.A.F.H. Horne published his studies in medicines of ancient India part 19 Osteology. This was followed by the publication of the series of scholarly works, both criticizing and appreciating the Ayurveda medicines system under the title of "Studies in ancient Indian Medicine" in the journal of Royal Asiatic Society from 1906 to 1910.

The British people's interest in Ayurvedic system was very superficial and mostly confined to the commercial potential of the Indian medicinal plants, and to a limited extent, the pharmacy-dynamics of the valuable plant tradition of India. In 19th Century lot of books were published in this subject namely

1. Catalog of Indian Medicinal plants by John Fleming in 1810
2. Indigenous drugs of India by K.L. Dey in 1867
3. Supplement to pharmacopoeia of India by Moodeer Sheriff 1865
4. Materia Medica of Hindus by U.C.Dutta in 1877. Etc.

In a later stage during the pre-independence era, the Indian National Congress tried to promote the integrity of this science. In 1907, a professional group of indigenous practitioners established the All India Ayurveda Maha Sammelan. In 1916, 11 members of the Imperial Legislative Council, led by Pandit Madan Mohan Malavya, Sir Surendranatha Banerjee and Sir Gangadhar Chithnavis pressed the then Director General of Indian Medical Services to accept the resolution for conducting an investigation into possibility of placing the ancient and indigenous system of Medicines on a scientific basis and increasing their usefulness. In 1920, INC passed a resolution demanding the government patronage for Ayurveda. Following this, the provincial Governments started promoting Ayurveda. By this time, outside India also, Ceylon and Burma had started moving in the same direction to promote the integrity of this Indigenous System of Medicine. In 1926, the Ceylon government formed a committee of indigenous medicine and Burma followed in 1928. In 1948, Government of India set up a Bhoire Committee, which proposed the creation of a department of history of medicine in the medical colleges of India. Later different central government committees were formed and they all made lots of recommendations for the uplift of the Ayurveda sector, but very little follow-ups were done. The period from 1925 to 1950 is considered as the golden era for Ayurveda in the modern age. Lot of academic works was done, many books were written, and seminars and symposia were held. The works of Pandit Gananath Sen, Acharya Yadvji Thrikamji, Pandit Ramraksha Pathak etc. were remarkable and need mention.

Ayurveda today as a great place in tourism

Ayurveda is passing through a crucial stage in its history of 5000 years in the last decade. The immense commercial potential of the science and its three dimensional holistic approach towards health – in the physical, mental and spiritual plane - attracted the highly stressed Western population who have reached the saturation point of emotional, physical and moral insecurity. Ayurveda, which was struggling to keep pace with the growing craze of its own people for Westernization, resurrected. In the West as a new incarnation as what we call WESTERN AYURVEDA. The science went global in a colorful way, thanks to the marketing skills of Dr. Deepak Chopra and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi! Concept of Ayurvedic packages was born. "Panchkarma" parlors made money than beauty parlors in the West! People from the West started coming to India in search of Ayurvedic de-toxification in cheaper rates and another new concept was born in India – the Ayurveda Tourism! Especially in Kerala this is a highly profit making business. Recently, Government started paying more attention to Ayurveda, not because of its immense healing powers, but for its tourist potential. Today

the promotion and gradation of Ayurveda practice is done not by the health sector but by the tourism sector. Ayurveda Clinics gave way to the Ayurveda Centers attached to star hotels and the government has a policy and guidelines to certify these Centers with Green Leafs and Olive leaves! Thus even in a highly educated state of Kerala, which can be called as the cradle of authentic Ayurveda practices, this great science has got degraded as a massage system. The Ayurvedic practitioners are yet to be treated at par with the modern medicine counterparts. From time to time, both Central and the State Governments had a step-motherly attitude towards Ayurveda. The budgetary allowance for all the six major alternative therapies under the Department of ISM comes up to less than 2% of the total health budget. The Ayurveda system as always has been discriminated here also! It is high time that the Governments both Central and State - with the ISM department and the NGOs in Ayurveda sector sit together and draw up a clear strategy for the speedy execution of the various reform suggestions by different committees to bring forth the Ayurveda science to the National Health care system and boost up the commercial potential of the Ayurveda medicines.

Tourism aggravates Sustainable development or environmental impoverishment?

'Sustainable tourism' is offered as an answer to both poverty and environmental concerns. But as with 'ecotourism', sustainable tourism means different things to different peo-

ple, with the industry often misusing the term to cultivate a positive and 'green' image for themselves. The concept of "sustainability has emerged in a hegemonic discourse. In many areas of the developing world there is "a grassroots groundswell to take control of, and exploit, tourist opportunities at the community level. Currently, this tendency seems to assume automatically that 'sustainability' is their prerogative, and use of the term is as loose as it is in other tendencies. Ecotourism and new programmes linking tourism and poverty are actually promoting industrial tourism models oriented to economic growth. These forms of so-called 'sustainable' tourism are known to be exploitative of both people and land. They dangerously distort the relationship between tourism and biological diversity." The lack of safeguards for environmental and cultural sustainability in tourism policies and programmes poses threats particularly to areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, whose cultural landscapes and even their traditional knowledge, ceremonies and sacred sites are being exploited for tourism purposes, often without their consent. Most sustainable tourism advocates are aware of the fact that tourism competes with local activities for the use of limited natural resources. But to make tourism ventures successful, they suggest that 'tradeoffs' are inevitable. Tourism as 'sustainable development' proves to be a myth when 'trade-offs' are made in the narrow interests of the industry, while local residents draw the short straw and end up making sacrifices in quality of life.

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