



PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF HERITAGE TOURISM IN KERALA

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INTRODUCTION

The word 'tour' has a source from the Hebrew word '*torah*' which means learning, studying or searching. The word 'Tourism' which relates to tour is derived from the Latin word '*tomos*' which means a tool for describing a circle. History of civilized world reveals that man has been fascinated by travel and has the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes of environment and to undergo new experiences. Travel to achieve these ends is not new, but tourism is relatively a modern concept and the development of transport, accommodation and communication facilities make tourism with a broader business base.

Culture has always been a major object of travel and the cultural attractions play an important role in tourism at all levels, from the global highlights of world culture to attractions that underpin local identities. (Richards, 1996). Heritage tourism is a branch of tourism oriented towards the cultural heritage of the location where tourism is occurring. Heritage tourism is concerned with identification, management and protection of the heritage values, understanding the impact of tourism on communities and regions, achieving economic and social benefits, providing financial resources for protection. (J. M. Fladmark, 1994).

The concept of Heritage tourism has great significance in world tourism market. When compared to other segments of tourism, heritage tourism account for

larger share of tourism at the international and national level. Though heritage tourism is a segment of tourism, with its unique features and wider employment potential, it facilitates to project the ancestral heredity without loosing or deteriorating the asset base or ecology or moral values. The study has been made to describe the problems and prospects of heritage tourism in Kerala.

SIGNIFICIANCE OF THE STUDY.

Since tourism business is directly in touch with the living beings coming from different parts of the world with vivid nature, culture, tradition and outlook, it is ideal to have regular assessment, evaluation about the policy, procedures and practices in tourism sector. This will facilitate to provide information to the planners and policy makers to device appropriate steps and strategies to minimize the problems of tourists. In this context the study about the problems and prospects related to heritage tourism in Kerala is of the greatest significance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has the following objectives.

1. To narrate the present position and condition of heritage tourism in Kerala
2. To line up the specific problems faced by heritage tourism in Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on primary and secondary data. Discussions and interview with officials of tourism department and tour operators, staff of hotels and home stay enabled to secure relevant information pertaining to the study. The information available from published and unpublished materials, computerized data base and internet relating to home and foreign tourists, the destinations visited, number of days stayed etc. were made available for the study. Information gathered from the officials of Department of

Tourism (DoT), Government of Kerala, District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), and the officials of various heritage centers and different travel agencies were made use of in this study.

The interview with selected tourists, both domestic and foreign, was made purely on the basis of convenience and accessibility and the survey period is limited to October 2017 to November 2017. Major source of secondary data consisted of the materials gathered from State Planning Board, Government of Kerala and the publications of tourism department, Government of Kerala. The coverage is limited to the state of Kerala and the scope is limited to the heritage tourism sector.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

It is mandatory to incorporate information and data pertaining to international tourists by all concerned. Accordingly, the availability of statistics pertaining to foreign tourists is rather easy and reliable. Regarding the domestic tourists most of the tour operators, travel agents and other agencies in the private sector were not willing to disclose something more than the estimates pertaining to their operations. The study doesn't consider the tourism ventures undertaken by freelance tourists both from outside and inside the country.

Table 1.1

Number of Domestic Tourists arrived at Heritage sites in Kerala (Average)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Average	5090	5597	6043	7165	7808
Maximum	15713	17217	19203	22016	27281
Minimum	860	812	946	938	1,008
S.D	5298	5797	6330	7711	8669
C.V	104	104	105	108	111

Source: computed from Kerala Economic Review.

The average number of domestic tourist in various heritage sites in Kerala came to 5090 on an average in 2005. The extreme number came to 15713 and 860 respectively. In 2012 the average is 5597 regarding the domestic tourist in various heritage sites and 17217 came the maximum and 812 the minimum. In 2013 average

came to 6043 with an extreme figure of 19203 and 946. 7165 is the average figure for 2014, with a maximum of 22016 and a minimum of 938. In 2015 the average number of domestic tourist arrived in various Heritage sites in Kerala is 7808, with a maximum of 27281 and minimum 1008. On observing the C.V, it was found that the inter period variation in terms of number of domestic tourists visiting the heritage sites does not vary considerably, though the share claimed by various districts are varying considerably.

Table 1.2

Domestic Tourist arrival at Heritage sites in each district in Kerala (Average)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Alappuzha	1592	1672	1579	2347	4162
Ernakulam	13679	15308	15905	22016	27281
Idukki	4738	5238	5179	5541	4223
Kasaragod	893	812	946	938	1008
Kollam	860	1128	1358	1779	1756
Kannur	2782	2986	3283	3556	3858
Kozhikkodu	3920	3809	4186	4470	4168
Kottayam	1402	1799	1689	2174	2702
Palakkad	2112	2455	2604	2703	2801
Thrissur	15713	17217	19203	21029	21962
Thiruvananthapuram	11163	11917	13280	15613	14865
Wayanad	2230	2824	3309	3809	4913

Source: computed from Kerala Economic Review.

The trend observed in the number of domestic tourist arrived in various heritage centers in each district disclosed that Ernakulam, Palakkad, Kannur, Thrissur and Wayanad has shown consistently increasing trend from 2011 - 15. In Kottayam and Alappuzha except the year 2007, it was showing and upward trend. In Idukki the year 2007 and 2009 has witness a declining phase. Kasaragod and Kozhikkodu

showed ups and downs over the period. In Thiruvananthapuram except the year 2009, the number was found increasing consistently.

TIME SERIES ANALYSIS

Time series analysis, with the help of seasonal indices revealed that the months of October, November, December and January were regarded as peak months of visit for domestic tourists and months of June, July and August happened to be the lean period, in general. However, in Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram the seasonal index was found to be more or less steady across every month, during the period under review. It was found that during the month of April and May the number of domestic tourist arrival in almost all districts was rather high and the rate was comparatively more in Idukki, Wayanad, Thrissur, Palakkad and Kozhikkodu.

Time series analysis, with the help of seasonal indices revealed that the months of , November, December and January ,February and march were regarded as peak months of visit for foreign tourists and months of June, July and August is found to be the lean period, in general.

SEASONALITY INDEX

Table 1.3
Seasonal Index of domestic and foreign tourists

	Composite	
	Domestic	Foreign
Jan-Mar	94.76	148.53
Apr- Jun	101.12	59.84
Jul-Sep	92.79	69.42
Oct- Dec	111.33	122.21

Source: computed from secondary data.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The average number of foreign tourists arrived at the heritage centers came to 309 with extreme figures of 1499 in Thiruvananthapuram and 4 in Palakkad, showing wide variation in between the districts.
2. The seasonal indices as given by time series analysis revealed that the months from October to March was regarded as peak months of visit for foreign tourists while it is October to January for domestic tourists.
3. When the seasonal index for January-March season was 148.53, it was 122.21 for October –December season. It was found that October to March period observed peak arrival of foreign tourists and months from June to August recorded a lean performance.
4. Regarding domestic tourist, the variations between seasons are not very wide. When the seasonal index for October – December season was 111.33, it came to 101.12 for April June season..
5. There are a large number of heritage sites and monuments which are not adequately attracted by the tourists, particularly those from Kerala.
6. Government of Kerala does not have a specific heritage tourism policy to ensure support and protection to heritage tourist centers and it is observed that a systematic survey has not so far been made to identify prospective cultural zones and to document the same
7. When many of the archaeological sites are occupied by modern settlements or agricultural lands, many of the major heritage tourist destinations are identified and fostered by the people in the private sector and at the operational level they are functioning well.
8. The concept of community archaeology is not found among Kerala people. The general public, local administrative bodies and voluntary agencies are not found to have any deep involvement in matters relating to heritage management and

conservation. The standard of the existing infrastructure, basic amenities and public hygiene are not adequate enough.

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