

Tourism Marketing In Kerala: Perception-driven Strategies For Tourism Growth

P. Akhilasan*

Part Time Ph. D. Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Thanthai Periyar Government Arts and Science college(A),
Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

B. Kannan

Associate Professor & Research Supervisor, Department of Commerce, Thanthai Periyar Government Arts and Science college(A),
Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India

* Corresponding Author Email:akhilasan2025@gmail.com

Abstract: *The Indian tourist business has been expanding at a healthy clip over the last several years. With an average daily tariff of around \$85 USD in 2016, hotels had their lowest performance in a decade. The occupancy rate of India's hotel business has been stable at roughly 60% every year for the last many years, even though the average daily tariff has been declining. Traditional hotel room occupancy has been declining as non-traditional lodging options such as home stays, hostels, serviced flats, Airbnb, and OYO Rooms have emerged. When it comes to infrastructure, connectivity, and tourist safety, India's travel and tourism sector is seeing a fresh wave of growth. Everything from a state or city to a specific historical monument, a hotel, a conference center, or any other kind of venue may be advertised as a tourist destination via tourism marketing. It cannot be restricted with particular aspects of travel and tourism.*

Keywords: Tourism, Tourism marketing, Accommodation, Airlines, Travel agents

INTRODUCTION

Human beings want to live with pleasure and enjoyment with natural and artificial creations. Travel from one place to another is unavoidable to the human beings for their employment and entertainment. Therefore, travelling is a part of the people by using different mode of transformation. All trips, whether domestic or foreign, taken by individuals for pleasure, social, or professional reasons are associated with the tourism sector. The hospitality, transportation, and hotel sectors are all interdependent on one another, and on the satisfaction, engagement, and readiness of guests throughout their stay. The tourism industry allows individuals to relax, have fun, and learn about other cultures and landscapes. There is a plethora of unique and new methods available in modern tourism. To fill this informational void, researchers in Kerala set out to examine the District Tourism Promotion Council and the results of its advertising campaigns.

TOURISM MARKETING:

Tourism is one of the unique and challengeable services which need innovative approach to market and promote. Tourism marketing is connected with marketing strategies in the arena of tourism. The tourist industry is a significant contributor to the GDP of many nations in the modern world. Tourism marketing encompasses a broad range of strategies used by businesses in the tourism industry. "The travel sector encompasses a wide range of businesses, including hotels, airlines, car rental companies, restaurants, and places for entertainment, travel agents, and tour operators. Consequently, services ranging from home to distinction are included by tourism."

DEFINITIONS OF TOURISM MARKETING:

One of the most important aspects of service marketing that is impacted by both traditional and seasonal factors is tourism marketing. While there are some similarities to more conventional forms of internet advertising, there are also many unique aspects to the marketing of tourist destinations. The following are some of the most popular and important ways that tourism marketing is defined.

ACCORDING TO KOTLER: "Marketing is a social and managerial process by which consumers obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging product services and values with other." Kotler has focused more on the following: marketing, desires, needs, satisfaction, and demand.

ACCORDING TO BCIM: Identifying, predicting, evaluating, and serving the profitable needs of customers is the responsibility of the management process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As a result of its pleasant weather and beautiful landscapes, Kerala has become a famous tourist destination. Advertising Kerala as a tourist destination that cares about its culture, economy, and history is important for sustain its contribution to the economy. Promotion of tourist destinations in Kerala has been the subject of a great deal of research. The factors utilized in the early research may be better understood with the aid of these reviews.

Fredy.T. Louis. (2018) It is believed that the Indian subcontinent changed during the course of history. India is home to several ancient medicinal traditions, including Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani. Traditional medicine is mentioned in even the most holy of writings, the ancient Vedas. Between 2500 and 500 BC, Ayurvedic thought appears to have begun in India.

Moli.P. Koshy., Vijay Kuriakose., &Paul.V. Mathew. (2018).It has been observed that the notion of tourism is expanding within the realm of destination marketing and management. In response to demands from both visitors and locals for more sustainable tourism, tour operators, businesses, and travel agencies must work to keep their destinations' reputations in good standing if they want to keep attracting visitors.

Anay Kumar., Gurdeep Singh. (2019).Detailed how the months of July and August saw an abnormally high flood of visitors. This implies that tourist spots in hilly and grassy areas will need infrastructure like roads and bridges over rivers and streams that are flooded. When travelling across mountainous terrain, visitors worry about how their focus may affect transportation.

Ishwar Khatri. (2019). Noted that struggle prevalent in the tourism industry as well, acclimating the industry's offerings to best contest the changing tourism patterns with innovative marketing strategies is at the central of gaining achievement in the marketplace.

Deepra Prasand. (2020) mentioned that Kerala is well-known for Pilgrimage tourism. Muslim, Christian and Hindu pilgrimage destinations are many in Kerala. The major religions followed in Kerala are Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. The study focusses on Hindu pilgrimage. There are different types of temples in Kerala namely temples managed by Devaswom Boards Trusts and private individuals.

Sooraj.G., &Kumara.H.S. (2020). The fact that Kasaragod is located in northern Karnataka and serves as a gateway to the state of Kerala was revealed. There is no better place to visit than Bakel Fort, which has long been a popular tourist destination with visitors from all over the world. According to the site study and survey data, Bekal needs to upgrade its tourist infrastructure to compete with other districts in Kerala and regions via well-organised public transportation networks.

Vimal Venugopal., &Sweety Jamgade. (2020).It has been observed that the latest strategic trend in destination marketing is the Tourism Circuit. Developing themed tourism circuits, according to the research, may help venues attract more tourists by focusing their attention.

RESEARCH GAP

There is a wealth of data pertaining to the development of tourist sectors using creative and efficient methods, making marketing of tourism a crucial field of

study. This study primarily focused on the tourist marketing strategy of DTPC in relation to Kerala, whereas previous research had focused on marketing tourism generally.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism improves the local economy without investment. In 2018, tourism contributed approximately 247 billion U.S. dollars to India's GDP. The total is expected to exceed \$500 billion by 2029. Despite the weak economy, the tourist sector has evolved into a major source of foreign cash. Tourism in India creates direct and indirect jobs. Tourism employs mostly unorganized workers who are required in the area. Tourism marketing strategy is a framework for expanding marketing. It unifies and focuses all firm management efforts.

Kerala sets an example for how a culture may honor its heritage while growing and developing. The state's inhabitants are proud of 100% literacy, excellent health care, India's lowest infant mortality, and greatest life expectancy rates. It is also called the Land of God because of its wonderful climate and natural resources for tranquil living. Kerala's history is intertwined with its excitement trade till recently. Celebrated as India's Spice Coast, nearly everyone wish to reach this land.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is aimed to measure the perception towards marketing strategies of District Tourism Promotion council in Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

The research is mostly descriptive. In the sense that it provides a full account of the District Tourism Promotion Council's efforts to promote tourism in Kerala, it may be considered descriptive. Tourists in Kerala were surveyed using a standardized questionnaire to get the main data. Extreme caution was used to prevent data collecting mistakes while administering the questionnaire to 430 visitors in Kerala for testing purposes.

SAMPLING DESIGN

In order to choose the respondents in Kerala, the Proportionate Stratified Sampling Method was used. There are fourteen revenue districts in Kerala, and out of 440 total respondents, 430 were chosen at random from among 110 recognized respondents in each district.

Table-1 Sample Respondents

S.NO	District	Sample Distributed	Sample Collected
1	Alappuzha	32	31
2	Ernakulam	32	31
3	Idukki	32	30
4	Kannur	32	30
5	Kasaragod	31	30
6	Kollam	32	30
7	Kottayam	32	30
8	Kozhikode	32	30
9	Malappuram	31	30
10	Palakkad	31	30
11	Pathanamthitta	31	30
12	Thiruvananthapuram	32	30
13	Thrissur	31	30
14	Wayanad	31	30
	Total	440	430"

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

We have used appropriate statistical procedures, such as percentage analysis and one-way ANOVA, to consolidate, tabulate, and analyze the acquired data. In order to analyze the data, the SPSS 24.0 program was used. Using tables to provide relevant findings is how the research is interpreted.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Tourists visited Kerala

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	442	64.1
	Female	248	35.9
Age	Less than 25	110	15.9
	Between 26-30	139	20.1
	Between 31-40	178	25.8
	Between 41-50	167	24.2
	More than 50	96	13.9
Community	ST	82	11.9
	SC	166	24.1
	OBC	346	50.1
	FC	96	13.9
Religion	Hindu	428	62.0
	Muslim	124	18.0
	Christian	138	20.0
Educational Qualification	No Formal Education	98	14.2
	School Level	192	28.0
	College Level	249	36.1
	Others	150	21.7
Occupation	Self-Employment	125	18.1
	Business	166	24.1
	Profession	262	38.0
	Government Jobs	137	19.9
Annual Income	Less than 1 lakh	125	18.1
	1-5 lakh	166	24.1
	6-10 lakh	262	38.0
	More than 10 lakhs	137	19.9

Source: Primary Data.

Table 2 lists Kerala tourists' gender, age, community, religion, education, occupation, and annual income. The bulk of Kerala tourists were male (442 (64.1%) and female (248). Among visitors, 110 (15.9%) were under 25, 139 (20.1%) were 26–30, 178 (25.8%) 31–40, 167 (24.2%) 41–50, and 96 (13.9%) beyond 50. Kerala attracts 82 (11.9%) ST, 166 (24.1%) SC, 346 (50.1%) OBC, and 96 (13.9%) F. C tourists. It is found that 62% are Hindu, 18% Muslim, and 20% Christian tourists. 98 (14.2%) visitors have no formal education, 193 (28%) have graduated school, 249 (36.1%) have graduated college, and 150 (21.7%) have extra education. Kerala visitors included 125 (18.1%) self-employed, 166 (24.1%) businesspeople, and 262 (38%) others. Government-employed passengers numbered 137 (19.9%). Visitors made 260 (37.7%) less than one lakh, 234 (33.9%) 1 to 5 lakhs, 154 (22.3%) 6 to 10 lakhs, and 42 (6.1%) more than 10 lakhs annually.

More male visitors visited Kerala, most of them were 31–40 years old, OBC, Hindu, college-educated, professional, and earned less than 1 lakh a year.

Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of Tourists visited Kerala

Demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Native Place	Kerala	178	25.8
	South India	220	31.9
	North India	209	30.3
	Other Country	83	12.0
Frequency of Visit	First Time	276	40.0
	2-5 Times	289	41.9
	More than 5 Times	125	18.1
Mode of Transport	Own Vehicles	262	38.0
	Bus	220	31.9
	Train	166	24.1
	Flight	42	6.1
Source of Information	Friends	194	28.1
	Social media	207	30.0
	Tour Agents	165	23.9
	Advertisement by DTTC	124	18.0

Source: Primary Data.

Table 3 shows tourists' native places, frequency of visits, method of conveyance, and information sources. About 178 (25.8%) of visitors are from Kerala, 220 (31.9%) from South India, 209 (30.3%) from North India, and 83 (12%) from other countries. The frequency of visits to Kerala was 276 (40%) for the first time, 289 (41.9%) for 2 to 5 times, and 125 (18.1%) for more than 5 times. It is reported that 262 (38%), 220 (31.9%), 166 (24.1%), and 42 (6.1%) travelers traveled to Kerala via car, bus, rail, or flight. 198 (24.1%) respectively. The tourists acquired information from friends, 207 (30%) from social media, 165 (23.9%) from tour operators, and 124 (18%) via DTTC ads.

From the above description, most visitors visiting Kerala were from South India, visited 2–5 times, drove their own cars, and received information from social media.

Table 4 Demographic Characteristics of Tourists visited Kerala

Demographic characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Trips Arranged	Self	207	30.0
	Tour Agency	248	35.9
	Friends and Relations	193	28.0
	Others	42	6.1
Purpose of Visit	Week end	110	15.9
	Vacation	165	23.9
	Get together	151	21.9
	Heritage	180	26.1
	Others	84	12.2
Accommodation Facilities	Guest House	125	18.1
	Lodges	177	25.7
	Resorts	263	38.1
	Hotels	125	18.1
Budget for Trip	Less than 5000	317	45.9
	5001-10000	248	35.9
	More than 10000	125	18.1

Source: Primary Data.

Table 4 shows tourist information such as travels, purpose, accommodations, companionship, and budget details. It is estimated that 207 (30%) of tourists booked their vacation on their own, 248 (35.9%) via a tour agency, 193 (28%) with family, relatives, and friends, and 42 (6.1%) through other means. When asked why they visited, 110 (15.9%) said weekend tour, 165 (23.9%) said vacation, 151 (21.9%) said get together, 180 (26.1%) said heritage, and 84 (12.2%) said other. 125 (18.1%) travelers stayed in guest homes, 177 (25.7%) in lodges, 263 (38.1%) in resorts, and 165 (18.1%) in hotels. 152 (22%) traveled with family, 261 (37.8%) with friends, 180 (26.1%) with coworkers, and 97 (14.1%) alone. "Budget for trip: 317 (45.9%) allocated less than Rs 5000, 248 (35.9%) allotted Rs5001 to 10000, and 125 (18.1%) allocated more than Rs 10000."

Table 5 Demographic Characteristics of Tourists visited Kerala

Gender		Perception-Place			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Male	Count	95	272	75	442
	% within Gender	21.5%	61.5%	17.0%	100.0%
	% within Perception-Place	54.3%	71.6%	55.6%	64.1%
Female	Count	80	108	60	248
	% within Gender	32.3%	43.5%	24.2%	100.0%
	% within Perception-Place	45.7%	28.4%	44.4%	35.9%
Total	Count	175	380	135	690
	% within Gender	25.4%	55.1%	19.6%	100.0%
	% within Perception-Place	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data.

The table 5 shows the distribution of the tourists' opinion on three levels (low, moderate and high) of the independent variable perception about place across gender. The cross tabulation depicted in the above table (Table 4.04) showed 21.5% of the tourists belongs to male have low level of opinion on place, 61.5% have moderate level of opinion and 17% have high level of opinion on perception about the place visited. With regard to female tourists' 32.3% of them have low level of opinion on place, 43.5% have moderate level of opinion on place and 24.2% have high level of opinion on perception about place tour. In conclusion, the majority of visitors utilized tour agencies to organize their trips, most of them spent between Rs 5001 and Rs 10,000 on their vacation, most of them stayed at resorts, and some of them came with companions.

Table 6 Level of Perception about Accommodation Facilities and Gender

Gender		Perception-Place			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
Male	Count	104	155	183	442
	% within Gender	23.5%	35.1%	41.4%	100.0%
	% within Perception-Place	63.0%	65.4%	63.5%	64.1%
Female	Count	61	82	105	248
	% within Gender	24.6%	33.1%	42.3%	100.0%
	% within Perception-Place	37.0%	34.6%	36.5%	35.9%
Total	Count	165	237	288	690
	% within Gender	23.9%	34.3%	41.7%	100%
	% within Perception-Place	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Primary Data.

The table 6 shows the distribution of the tourists' opinion on three levels (low, moderate and high) of the independent variable perception about accommodation facilities across gender. The cross tabulation depicted in the above table (Table 4.09) showed 23.5% of the tourists belongs to male have low level of opinion on accommodation facilities, 35.1% have moderate level of opinion and 41.4% have high level of opinion on perception about accommodation facilities. With regard to female tourists' 24.6% of them have low level of opinion on accommodation facilities, 33.1% have moderate level of opinion on accommodation facilities and 42.3% have high level of opinion on perception about accommodation facilities.

CONCLUSION

Transport is a major part of tourism service which decides the destination and travel with comfortable mood. Transportation is key to tourism. Tourism is considered as pleasant and rejuvenating, therefore service marketing should include location, pricing, people, and promotion. It is necessary to provide Clean, safe, tranquil, beautiful weather and well connected with affordable accommodation, food, and entrance. It is to be highlighted that Ayurveda healing doorway, great spot to relax, spiritual renewal, and traditional culture are in place in Kerala. Thus, marketing should prioritize the aforementioned service areas to increase DTPC service quality in Kerala. Tourists seek abundant transit, connections, parking, enhanced travel company transport, and state transport to access this destination. Transport should be improved by DTPC through the government of Kerala tourism transport. Tourists are expecting the adequate transport facilities available to reach this place, well connectivity to places with Parking space. Compared to government agencies Private Travel agencies give better transport facilities and adequate transport within the state. Therefore, DTPC and government of Kerala should take necessary steps to promote transport facilities to ensure smooth visit of tourist places in Kerala.

SUGGESTION

Tourism contributes to 40% of Kerala's GDP due to its culture, climate, spirituality, festivals, and customs. Therefore Planning and monitoring of tourism may help Kerala grow worldwide. Communicating and covering destinations and attractions will help. Kerala created District Tourist Promotion Council and other tourist bodies. Kerala's approach fosters and sustains tourism. Although TDPC only offered the official website and alternative admission points for Kerala's tourist hotspots, most respondents found it insufficient. Many areas lack information. More rail and airline options are required for visitors. DTPC's social media and electronic media ads should encourage vacationers and historical tourists to stay at lodges and resorts. Visitors' requirements should govern DTPC accommodation facilities to sustain revenue to the government.

REFERENCES

1. Anay Kumar, & Gurdeep Singh. (2019). Seasonal Effect on Tourism in India.
2. Journal of Finance and Economics, 7(2), 48-51.
3. DeepraPrasand. (2020). A review on Pilgrim Tourism: Link to ancient to current faiths. International Journal of Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity, 11(1), 268-277.

4. Emilda.ALA., &Joseph.K. (2016). Environmental Sustainability and Tourism Activities in Backwaters of Kerala. *International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, 3(2), 69- 74.
5. Fredy. T. Louis. (2018). Tourists' Satisfaction towards Ayurveda Tourism in Kerala.
6. SHANLAX *International Journal of Arts Science and Humanities*, 6(2), 68–74.
7. Ishwar Khatri. (2019). Information Technology in Tourism & Hospitality Industry- A Review of Ten Years' Publications. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Education*, 74-87.
8. Moli.P.Koshy., Vijay Kuriakose., &Paul.V. Mathew. (2018). Measurement for Responsible Tourism- Development of A Stakeholder-Based Scale. *Article in Asian Journal of Management*, 9(1).
9. Pavithra.S, & Kannan.B. (2025). Deciding between ITC and Composition Scheme: A Guide for Small Businesses in the GST Era. *The Chartered Accountant*, 73(7), 59–66. <https://www.icaai.org/post/icaai-e-journal-main>
10. Pavithra. S, & Kannan. B. (2024). GST Composition Scheme on Small Taxpayers in Tamil Nadu. *The Indian Journal of Commerce*, 77(1), 49–61. [https://icaindia.info//Journals/uploads/IJC%20January-March-2024%20Issue%20\(1\).pdf](https://icaindia.info//Journals/uploads/IJC%20January-March-2024%20Issue%20(1).pdf)
11. Rajakumar.P. (2016). A Study on Destinations of Eco Tourism in Kerala. *Shanlax International Journal of Management*.
12. Rajasenan., Varghese Manaloor., & Bijith George Abraham. (2012). Tourist Profiles and Characteristics vis-à-vis Market Segmentation of Ecotourism Destinations in Kerala. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, 3(14).
13. S. Pavithra., & B. Kannan. (2024). Impact Of Composition Scheme in New GST Regime In Tamil Nadu. *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.62656/SIJSS.v22i4.1274>
14. Shruthi.D.B. (2016). Marketing of Tourism: Roles and Responsibilities of Tourism Department. *International Education & Research Journal*. 2.
15. Sooraj.G., &Kumara.H.S. (2020). Tourism Plan For Bekal: A Case of Bekal fort, Special Tourism Area Of Kerala. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, 7(8).
16. Vimal Venugopal., & Sweetly Jamgade. (2020). Integrated Development through Tourism Circuit: Case Study of Kannur Kerala India. 6(1)