

Endless Possibilities of Tourism with a particular focus on Kerala Tourism

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Abstract

Tourism in Kerala emphasizes encouraging ecologically sustainable tourism, highlighting local culture, adventure activities in the wilderness, volunteerism, and the personal development of the local population. The primary goal is to minimize the negative impact of conventional tourism on the environment and enrich the local community's cultural authenticity. The state of Kerala offers abundant opportunities for tourism, encompassing sectors such as religious tourism, medical tourism, wellness tourism, and yoga tourism, in addition to the usual attractions. The article underscored the correlation between tourist arrivals and tourism revenue and the influence of unforeseen events on both arrivals and earnings. It also stressed the significance of infrastructure development for advancing this industry.

Keywords: *Tourism, Kerala, visits, arrival, Earnings*

Introduction

Tourism in Kerala focuses on promoting ecologically sustainable tourism, which emphasizes local culture, wilderness adventures, volunteering, and the personal growth of the local population. The efforts are aimed at minimizing the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment and enhancing the cultural integrity of the local people. Kerala is renowned for its unique natural beauty and aesthetic features. It is often called "God's own country" and welcomes visitors worldwide to explore its cultural heritage, natural beauty, religious monuments, medical heritage, and more. Each year, Kerala experiences a significant increase in tourist arrivals, contributing to the state's revenue as an essential industry.

The tourism industry contributes to employment in different ways. Jobs are directly created in tourism-related sectors such as travel agencies, accommodation, and airlines. The industry indirectly supports retail, construction, manufacturing, and telecommunications jobs. Between 2009 and 2012, tourism directly and indirectly accounted for 23.52% of total employment in Kerala. The government has focused its spending on infrastructure projects, including basic amenities in tourism areas, beautification, quality amenities along roads and water bodies, modern information centres, visitor lounges, infrastructure for adventure tourism on land and water, high-quality signage at tourist spots and along travel routes, tourism transportation, and ensuring the safety and security of tourists.

The government's spending in the tourism sector has also focused on marketing. One of its successes has been branding Kerala Tourism in the international market as "God's Own Country". Developing quality human capital and maintaining labour standards are essential for tourism growth in any region. The shortage of skilled manpower poses a challenge to

Indian Tourism. Fortunately, the Kerala government has established institutions like the Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), State Institute of Hospitality Management (SIHM), and Food Craft Institutes (FCIs) to produce high-quality manpower for the travel, tourism, and hospitality sectors.

The economic impact of tourism in Kerala is outlined in this paper. According to the paper's results, tourism has a highly significant economic impact in Kerala. (Joseph, J. (2020)

The main goal of this research project is to assess how tourism affects Kerala's economy, environment, and socio-cultural aspects. It also aims to investigate how Kerala has integrated sustainable tourism development into its core mission to promote economic, environmental, and socio-cultural well-being in tourist destinations. The research findings indicate that the sustainability of tourist destinations in Kerala is influenced by important factors such as resource exploitation, resource management, economic sustainability, social sustainability, heritage management, destination management, tourism governance, and waste management. (Venugopalan, T., & Kumar, D. (2017)

The article indicates the negative impact of tourism on the local economy and how various factors work together to overstate tourism's contribution to the economy in a situation where the government is failing, there's a political crisis, and interest groups are becoming more dominant. (Sreekumar, T. T., & Parayil, G. (2002).

The findings indicated that Kerala's yoga practices are well-suited due to the influence of the traditional yoga system. Family, friends, and travel agents play crucial roles in providing information to yoga tourists, and yoga significantly enhances the lives of tourists. (Ambili, K. (2016)

The demand for new approaches to unwinding and revitalizing is on the rise. Although certain forms of global tourism have slowed due to economic challenges, the tourism industry has thrived by embracing the emerging concept known as Wellness. Wellness, a relatively fresh trend within the tourism sector, has experienced significant growth. (Haseena, V. A., & Kodungallur, K. (2015).

This article outlines the potential connection between various aspects of the medical tourism sector. It presents a viable model for sustainable medical tourism that considers all the factors impacting destinations related to medical services and tourism (Joseph, S. (2017).

Kerala is a state with endless tourism possibilities. These possibilities are spread across various sectors beyond the traditional features, including religious tourism, medical tourism, wellness tourism, and yoga tourism.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Tourism offers the chance to discover other cultures and take in the distinctiveness of places. It may use these man-made and natural environments to raise money and add to the state coffers. However, due to the adverse effects of unforeseen circumstances, it has never been a reliable source of funds. The tourism potential might be negatively impacted by unexpected circumstances in a nation. For instance, the pandemic's expansion in 2019-20 reduced tourist visits and resulted in a loss of income from that source. Various types of tourism possibilities

Table 1.1

State Tourism Visit and Arrival

Year	Kerala(Visits)	% change	Kerala(Arrival)	% Change
2014	923366	7.60	11695411	7.71
2015	977479	5.86	12465571	6.59
2016	1038419	6.23	13172535	5.67
2017	1091870	5.15	14673520	11.39
2018	1096407	0.42	15604661	6.35
2019	1189771	8.52	18384233	17.81
2020	340755	-71.36	4988972	-72.86
2021	60487	-82.25	7537617	51.09

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala 2021

Kerala is a well-liked travel destination due to its abundant natural flora and fauna, as shown in Table 1.1. Kerala sent more tourists abroad in 2014 and 2019. However, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 caused a fall in the number of visitors. Kerala receives a comparatively high volume of visitors, although there was a sharp drop in 2020. The number of visits and arrivals changed in 2020 and 2021, showing a negative growth. Nevertheless, the figures increased the following year. The abrupt spread of the pandemic was the reason for the decline in arrivals and visits.

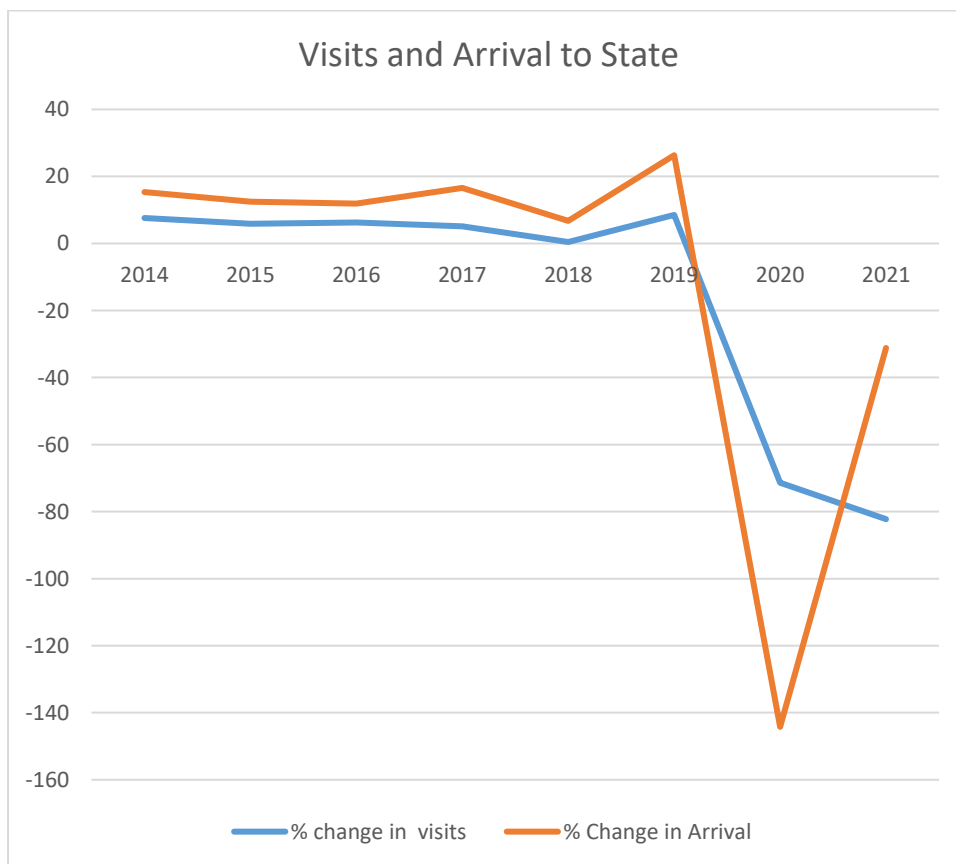


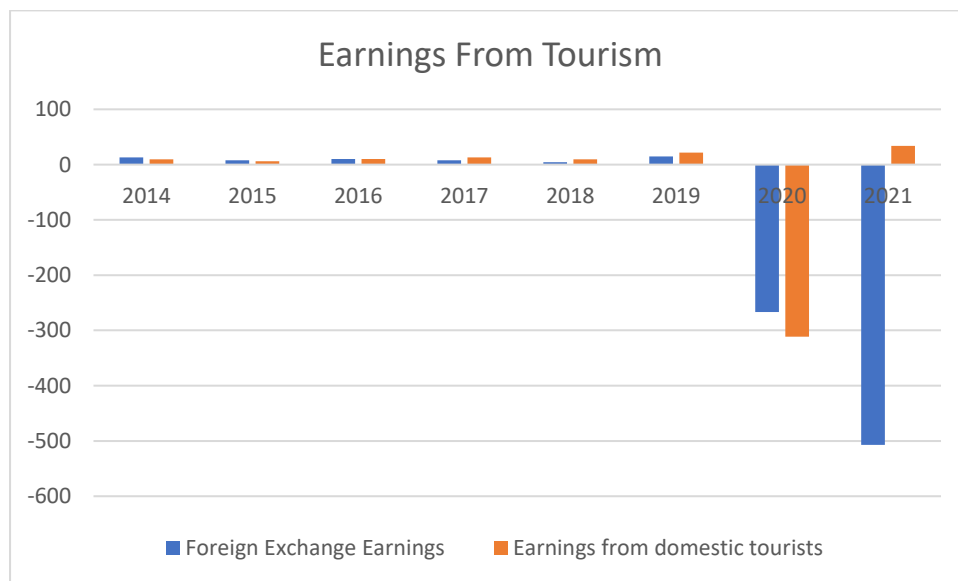
Table 1.2

Earnings from Tourism

Year	Foreign Exchange Earnings (In crore)	Percentage change	From Domestic Tourists (In Crore)	Percentage change
2014	6398.93	13.09	12981.91	9.67
2015	6949.88	7.93	13836.78	6.18
2016	7749.51	10.32	15348.64	9.85
2017	8392.11	7.66	17608.22	12.83
2018	8764.46	4.25	19474.62	9.58
2019	10271.06	14.67	24785.62	21.43
2020	2799.85	-266.84	6025.68	-311.33
2021	461.50	-506.79	9103.93	33.81

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala 2021

Table 1.3 provides data on the earnings generated by domestic and foreign tourists in Kerala. The table clearly shows that Kerala earns a substantial income from tourists, highlighting the significant potential for growth in the service sector to boost the state's revenue further. It's important to note that tourism earnings experienced a substantial decline during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a considerable loss in Kerala's income source.



Arrival and Earnings

Year	Kerala(Arrival)	Foreign Exchange Earnings (In crore)	From Domestic Tourists (In Crore)	Total Earnings(in crores)
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2014	11695411	6398.93	12981.91	19380.84
2015	12465571	6949.88	13836.78	20786.66
2016	13172535	7749.51	15348.64	23098.15
2017	14673520	8392.11	17608.22	26000.33
2018	15604661	8764.46	19474.62	28239.08
2019	18384233	10271.06	24785.62	35056.68
2020	4988972	2799.85	6025.68	8825.53
2021	7537617	461.5	9103.93	9565.43

Source: Department of Tourism Government of Kerala, 2021

The table shows the Total number of tourist arrivals and earnings in Kerala from 2014 to 2021. There is a direct relation between the number of tourist arrivals and total earnings from the tourism sector.

Correlation Matrix

		B	C
B	Kendall's Tau B	—	
	p-value	—	
C	Kendall's Tau B	-0.556	—
	p-value	0.988	—

Note. H_a is a positive correlation.

Conclusion

Kerala's tourist industry possesses the ability to grow significantly. Kerala is uniquely positioned in India in many of the country's finest tourist attractions. Kerala offers enormous potential for growth for an extensive number of tourism-related industries. Moving forward with the required infrastructural development, it is possible to elevate the tourist sector to the status of Kerala's most significant industry. Unexpected events like the COVID-19 epidemic and flood hurt Kerala's tourism industry. Building infrastructure to make it resilient to such circumstances will promote quick development and hasten Kerala's expansion.

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