

SWOT ANALYSIS OF BACKWATER TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ALAPPUZHA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries with a growth rate greater than 6% per annum. Over the past 25 years. In Indian tourism was once away of life and it become an industry with emphasis mainly on earning foreign currency. In Kerala has recorded a remarkable growth during the last decade, Alappuzha, a district in Kerala that tremendously growing with Backwater tourism. It is felt an appropriate time to conduct a study on Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat of backwater tourism. This analysis is a strategic management tool –SWOT analysis

Keywords: Backwater tourism; swot analysis; strength; weakness; opportunity; threats; Strategic management; houseboats

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Tourist industry today is one of the fastest growing sectors with estimated receipts at over USD 1340 Billion. However, India's share in this big business is very important. Tourism is an excellent foreign exchange earner. In 2004 foreign tourist arrival is 3.37 million which realized the foreign exchange earning 21838 crores and the same year the number of domestic tourist visits is 367.6 million. Kerala is renowned for its high vegetation, tranquil and beautiful features, sprawling backwaters and stemming mountains Kerala is naturally gifted state in India, which has become one of the most sought destination in Asia. The total land area of Kerala is 38863 sq.km, is divided into 14 districts. House boats are the main source of tourist attraction in India mostly backwater tourism played an eminent role. Alappuzha, one of the districts is an enchanting picnic spot and backwater tourism destination in Kerala. The house boat and resort offers comfortable accommodation and exclusive leisure option like boating fishing, trucking and swimming. The serene lakes come alive during onam with a spectacular water regatta – the snake boat races. The low lying and paddy fields near back water available is used for the back water tourism in connection with eco tourism. Back water tourism not only provides the backwater with the subsidiary income but also generate additional employment opportunities for many in allied activities

1.1 Objectives

- To identify strength and weakness of back water tourism
- To find out opportunities and threat of back water tourism
- To know the development needs in Alappuzha as a tourist destination
- To determine the degree of lack of satisfaction among the tourist

1.2 Research methodology

This study is conducted by using samples. to achieve the above objectives primary data has been collected from the sample of 50 tourist and 50 house boat workers. Data has been collected by the direct questionnaire. Both primary data and secondary data have been used for the study. Primary data has been collected by the direct questionnaire. Secondary data has been collected mainly from the reports, publications, and various websites were also used for this purpose. The percentage analysis is used, where in the frequency of each item is expressed as a percentage of the total frequency applicable for the relevant questions

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A close review of past studies is imperative in a scientific investigation as, it will help to provide a clear insight into the existing findings thus aiming in developing a sound conceptual frame work of study. Though tourism has gained importance, only few studies have been carried out in its prospects and problems. A .K.Bhatia[1982] explains tourism

as a composite phenomenon which embraces the incidence of a mobile population of travelers who are strangers to the places they visit. Van Doorn.J.W.[1979] in The Developing Countries ,are they really affected by tourism suggests that evaluation of the tourism development will be possible through the frame work of the level of development reached by the country or area concerned. Nalini Netto “Tourism in Kerala Kerala economy in the post liberalization period”, [2004] also conducted s study on the performance of tourism sector in the state. She also found that tourism has emerged as the single largest net earner of foreign exchange and it is a highly employment generating sector

Backwaters in Kerala are a network of 1500 km of canals both manmade and natural, 44 rivers and 5 big lakes extending from one end of Kerala to the other. Backwaters are one of the major tourism product of kerala , being unique to the state. Traditionally used as one of main transport alleys, today backwaters offer a rejuvenating experience for tourists visiting Kerala. The backwater can be explored by hiring a boat for one or several days . If you go for more than a day, the boat usually comes with a navigator and a cook, which provide you with various facilities when exploring the backwaters . As major rivers and the streams that flow within Kerala drains themselves into backwaters regions, resulting in creation of several small land strips, lagoons, islands etc which opens to sea at few areas. Thus backwaters are one of the largest fresh water sources and rich in marine habitat as well as add to natural beauty .The most beautiful and accessible part of the backwaters is the Ashtamudi Lake and Vembanad lake. In Alappuzha the backwater tourism is through vembanad lake. House boat tourism is the most popular activity in backwaters, with several large kettuvallams , which is traditional rice boats now converted into floating hotels . Apart from kettuvallams ,large cruisers and yatch also operates . The unique and perfect way to explore Kerala backwaters is through the attractive and traditional house boats. Being on board relaxing and enjoying the amenities of a five-star hotel we can get the glimpses of the beautiful surroundings, experience the tranquil backwaters, listen to the blended melody of birds chirps and splashes of water , admits lush greenery .Therefore, the unique combination of Kerala houseboat and pristine backwaters will provide a great experience , which we can cherish throughout our life. Boating is the best way to go around the region, since of course cars can’t navigate the waters. Apart from tourist house-boats, regular mechanized ferries operated by Kerala State Inland Navigation Company (KSINC) and traditional country-side canoes also operate in the region, interconnecting various small island and strips of land. Recently many houseboat operates started innovative programs to engage guests by providing them fishing at the backwaters and allowing guests to make a catch and eat it according their style of cooking .Likewise, many houseboats are anchor at local vegetable markets and allow guests to choose their vegetables to cook food as per their choice. Likewise in the evening house boats are anchored near local toddy shops where guest can treat themselves with traditional Kerala palm toddies and shop special snacks. Most of houseboats are relatively safer with excellent safety track record and all houseboats have trained lifeguards. Yet precaution must be taken, as the backwaters are quite deep and even expert swimmers find it difficult to swim here. Swim in the areas authorized by lifeguards. Never swim in evening and early morning. Being waterborne area, mosquitoes are common hence mosquito repellents shall be must. Backwater tourism though a very profitable business activity requires every huge capital investment in the beginning . The princely earning backwater tourism and the resultant huge profits within a short period is the main encouragement and attraction of the business

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 TABLE SHOWING NATIONALITY OF THE TOURISTS

1. SL NO	NATIONALITY	NO OF TOURISTS	PERCENTAGE
1	UK	15	30%
2	USA	8	16%
3	France	6	12%
4	Canada	9	18%
5	Japan	5	10%
6	Other countries	2	4%
7	Domestic	5	10%
	Total	50	100%

3.2 TABLE SHOWING TOURISTS OPINION ABOUT HOUSE BOATING IN ALPPUZHA

SL NO	OPINION	NO OF TOURISTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Excellent	25	50%
2	Good	17	34%
3	Average	8	16%

4	Poor	0	0%
	Total	50	100%

3.3 TABLE SHOWING TOURIST OPINION ABOUT ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS

SL NO	OPINION	NO OF TOURISTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Excellent	8	16%
2	Good	25	50%
3	Average	17	34%
4	Poor	0	0%
	Total	50	100%

3.4 TABLE SHOWING TOURIST OPINION ABOUT FOOD AND ACCOMODATION

SL NO	OPINION	NO OF TOURIST	PERCENTAGE
1	Excellent	40	80%
2	Good	5	10%
3	Average	3	6%
4	Poor	2	4%
	Total	50	100%

3.5 TABLE SHOWING TOURIST OPINION ABOUT SECURITY IN BOATING

SL NO	OPINION	NO OF TOURIST	PERCENTAGE
1	Excellent	5	10%
2	Good	10	20%
3	Average	20	40%
4	Poor	15	30%
	Total	50	100%

3.6 TABLE SHOWING OWNERSHIP OF BOAT

SL NO	TYPE OF POSSESSION	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Own Boat	25	50%
2	Lease	20	40%
3	Partnership	5	10%
	Total	50	100%

3.7 TABLE SHOWING CATEGORY OF BOATS

SL NO	CATEGORY	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	2 Star	5	10%
2	3 Star	20	40%
3	4 Star	24	48%
4	5 Star	1	2%
	Total	50	100%

3.8 TABLE SHOWING DURATION OF STAY IN BACKWATER TOURISM CENTRES

SL NO	NO OF DAYS	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	0-7	12	24%
2	8-14	20	40%
3	15-21	8	16%
4	22-28	10	20%

	Total	50	100%
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3.9 TABLE SHOWING THE AMOUNT INVESTED IN HOUSE BOATS

SL NO	AMOUNT INVESTED	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	Less than 60 lakhs	5	10%
2	60 lakhs -80 lakhs	20	40%
3	80 lakhs -1 crore	16	32%
4	More than 1 crore	9	18%
	Total	50	100%

4 SWOT ANALYSIS

Swot analysis is an acronym for Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats. It is a strategic management tool for analysis involve in the project or in a business venture. As such SWOT analysis is a systematic study of identified action of all those aspects and strategies that best suit the individual firms' position in a given situation

Strength: Backwater tourism is one of the profits making sectors in Kerala tourism. Alappuzha backwater tourism enjoys a reputation of for many years. Alappuzha possesses largest back water chain in Kerala. Also had highly skilled and professional managers at the top level in this sector got worldwide recognition

Weakness: Lack of delegation of authority, planning, improper implementation of program me. The pricing strategy is not affordable by common man. Absence of clear and well defined policies, inadequate infrastructure to match the expectation lack of professionalism and expertise in preparation of tourism plan are the major drawback

Opportunities: Backwater tourism is one of the fast growing industries in the world with new products which is becoming more and more popular offers new opportunities and new markets. The awareness and attitude of people towards back water tourism is very much conducive to the growth of tourism in the state. The state specific features like high literacy rate, high position in human development index offers sufficient opportunities for the development of backwater tourism. Vast untapped potential can be seen in the heritage tourism, backwater tourism, eco-friendly tourism, health tourism and pilgrimage tourism. Good brand image of the God's own country for targeting high spending up market tourist.

Threat: Various social organizations do not support. Tourism development due to the fear that it will be disturb the environmental balances and cultural heritage of the state. Existence of unethical traders in and out tourism centers. Restrictive airline policy of the government of India made a negative attitude towards tourism. Unbridled and indiscriminate growth of the tourism will lead problems of pollution, environmental and ecological hazards and cultural degradation. Over emphasis on tourism alone be lead to economic recession in period of down turn

5 CONCLUSIONS

Tourism is a highly developed economic activity. It is very useful for all countries particularly the developing nations it is also for this reason that the central and the state Governments in India are taking keen interest in promotion of tourism. Coming to the social benefits of tourism it provides numerous employment opportunities also helps in distribution of wealth. The movement of tourists developed to developing nations or from developed area to under developed areas within the same country leads to balancing the socio –economic structure through transfer funds. It has a great social contribution by way of bringing people together who belong to different cultural, social and economic background. It thus helps to develop international relations, better understanding about different reactions and creates feeling of natural oneness among people. It contributes to the foreign exchange earnings through the influence of foreign tourists. India had a mixed experience in this sector and its share of global tourism is not very high. India possesses all these vital attributes that wanted for the satisfaction tourists. The state, Kerala is blessed with unmatched natural diversity that provides immense scope of tourism. A recent development in the field of back water tourism is spread of modern scientific methods and among them extensive method is more popular. Backwater tourism has become is an important economic activity of people mainly for the reason that it is profitable business, which guarantees employment to the unemployed.

Reference

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