

TOURISM EXPERIENCES OF PEOPLE VISITING DESTINATIONS IN CALICUT DISTRICT OF KERALA

E.V. Shaji

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Kannur University, Kannur, Kerala, India

ABSTRACT

Ensuring the visit and revisit of tourist is a prerequisite for a sustainable tourism development for the state. Merely having attractive tourist destinations does not pay much for the state. In order to reap benefit from the tourism the state must take effective steps for attracting tourist and persuading them to spend more days. However tourist on the other hand will be encouraged to pay a visit to the destinations only when they have a satisfied experience with regard to the attractions and facilities present over here. Here it is imperative to analyse whether the tourist visiting Calicut district are returning with satisfying experience or not. Hence the study of assessing and evaluating the facilities is of paramount importance. For analyzing the tourist experiences in Calicut District various tourist facilities namely accommodation, accessibility, amenities, food and beverage, ancillary services, attitude, and activities are considered. A five point likert scale is prepared to measure the experience level and for collecting the responses. The study finds that, accessibility, food and beverage and attitude are the facilities that help augmenting the tourism industry of the district whereas the tourism amenities, ancillary services and tourism activities pull back the entertainment industry.

KEYWORDS: *Tourist, Tourism Experiences, Facilities, Calicut District*

Article History

Received: 26 Sep 2019 | Revised: 29 Oct 2019 | Accepted: 11 Nov 2019

INTRODUCTION

Like any other economic activity, tourism is being considered as the major breadwinner of the economy. Realizing the enormous potential of tourism in the days to come, government has started to extend various policies and funding plans in support of this industry. Unlike erstwhile people, they are very much inclined to focus on various tourism-related activities, which in turn would prosper the economy and the employability.

Foreign exchange earnings of the nation are a matter of concern as far as India is concerned. Although massive inflow of foreign money is not a desirable trend, it is recommended to an extent. Government mulls to expand the export segment operations by implementing SEZs in massive terms. Some relaxed policies and promotional attitude are maintained by the policymakers in order to boost the export potential of our country. While considering tourism as an industry, it is evident that we do not have to export anything tangible, instead we need to beautify our cities and upgrade the infrastructure facilities, which would be an impetus to a large tourist attraction. Hence, it is imperative to note that our intake of resources does not flow outside when we think of developing tourism

Regional imbalance over the years is greatly ailing the nation. When we boast of the overall development of the nation, it is painful to note that lives in villages are still lagging behind in sanitation and basic amenities. Even though the situation has improved a little during these years, there are undeveloped areas, where the hospitals, primary schools and banking institutions are still a distant dream. The sphere of tourism activities mainly involves designing a framework for restructuring the dreams of rural people, where lives seem to have been ignored by the government.

Unemployment in Indian scenario is a menace, which is to be tackled with utmost attention, the failure of which would even undermine the sovereignty of the nation. It is evident that the tourism industry can offer huge employment opportunities in the state. Deployment of various authorized tourist guides and the setting up of infrastructure facilities would definitely mount the room for employment and thereby ameliorate the status of the citizens.

Development of adequate infrastructure has become a need of the hour. It is obvious that a well-developed infrastructure facility existing in the country would definitely support the tourism and allied activities.

Significance of the Study

Umpteen foreign and domestic tourists are visiting Calicut district of Kerala every year for enjoying the serene beaches and natural attractions. However, it is unknown how many of the tourists visiting Calicut district have really enjoyed the facilities and return satisfied. Sometimes, dissatisfaction with a particular facility may make the tourist reluctant to make further visits. Hence, understanding the experience level of tourist with regard to the facilities in Calicut district is of paramount importance for the policy formation, implementation and ultimately tourism promotion. By reviewing the previous studies, it is found that no such study for analyzing the experience level of the tourists with regard to the facilities in Calicut district has been conducted yet. Accordingly, the study on analyzing the experience level of the domestic and foreign tourists coming to Calicut district carries good amount of importance.

Scope of the Study

Kerala, “the god’s own country”, is considered as the most preferred location of tourists, both domestic and foreign over decades despite low-carrying capacity and accessibility. The study involves identifying and analyzing the experience level of the visitors with regard to the facilities provided to them in the Calicut district. Survey helps to identify the percentage of the people who are in the highly satisfied, satisfied and dissatisfied category. It goes further to analyse the mean score of the facilities and enables to focus more on the area, where special care is required in promoting tourism in Calicut district.

Objectives of the Study

The study is made by keeping in view the following objectives:

- To analyse the quality level of the tourist experience visiting Calicut district.
- To identify the facility, which is more conducive for tourism promotion and which needs special care for boosting tourism in Calicut district.

METHODOLOGY

The present paper is structured as an analytical one. Information is collected from the tourists visiting Calicut district in Kerala. Total sample size for the study is taken as 50, and multi-stage sampling method is used for the study. In the first phase, destinations in the Calicut district, which witness high number of tourist visits is considered first. In the second

phase, proportionate samples are drawn from the selected destinations based on convenience sampling method. However, tourists are randomly selected and not on any other basis. Convenient sampling method is used to collect information from a sample of 50 students. For the purpose of analysis, five-point Likert scale method is used. Simple arithmetic mean value is considered as a statistical measure. If the value of the mean is more than 3, that factor is conducive for tourism development. If the mean value is less than 3, the factor is treated as challenging to tourism. For bringing clarity in analysis, a separate scaling is used, that is if the mean value is between 1 and 2, it is treated as most unfavorable, between 2 and 3 – unfavorable, between 3 and 4 – favorable, between 4 and 5 – most favorable.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency Table of the Tourists

Services/Rating	Highly Satisfied (%)	Satisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Dissatisfied (%)	Highly Dissatisfied (%)
Accommodation	40	35	15	5	5
Accessibility	20	40	30	7	3
Amenities	15	25	40	10	10
Food and Beverage	56	35	4	2	3
Ancillary services	20	25	53	1	1
Attitude	35	30	23	7	5
Activities	18	22	35	10	15

Table 1 reveals the percentage of the tourists who rate the facilities in Calicut districts in five-point scales. Accommodation facility is treated as the first and foremost determinant of the tourist satisfaction. Calicut district is known to have wide range of accommodation facilities in and around the tourist destinations that cater to the visitors' needs. With regard to accommodation facilities, 40% of the tourists opine highly satisfied, 35% opine satisfied, 15% is neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Of the total respondents, 10% is dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied.

Accessibility to the proposed tourist spots is another important factor that has pivotal importance in designing the tour decision. It is generally common for the tourists to visit such spots that are easily accessible to them. In the case of accessibility, 40% of the respondents are satisfied, 30% are neutral and 20% are highly satisfied. It is further observed that 7% of the respondents feel dissatisfied and the remaining 3% are highly dissatisfied.

Tourism amenity means and includes the various facilities that are exclusively meant for facilitating the visitors in Calicut district. Such facilities include shopping facilities, washroom and toilet facilities at destinations. As far as tourism amenities are concerned, 40% of the tourists are neutral, 5% feel satisfied and 15% are highly satisfied. Further analysis reveals that 10% of the respondents are dissatisfied and another 10% feel highly dissatisfied in this regard.

Every region has its own culinary skills and peculiarities, so is the case with Calicut district. Certain foodstuffs in the Calicut district are branded with Calicut, namely Kozhikodan halwa and Kozhikodan biriyani are famous across the state. Accordingly, Calicut district is distinct from other districts in terms of food and beverage. Regarding food and beverage, 56% of the tourists opine highly satisfied, 35% opine satisfied and 4% opine neutral. Of the total respondents, 5% feel dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied.

Ancillary services mean various support services that are extended to tourists in Calicut district. It includes functioning of tourist information centers, banking facilities and tour operators' services. With regard to ancillary services, 53% of the respondents are neutral, 25% feel satisfied and 20% feel highly satisfied. Analysis further unfolds that a meagre 2% of the respondents are dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied in this regard.

The attitude of the host community towards the tourists must be a favorable one, so as to ensure their revisit to Calicut. In the case of attitude of the host community, 35% of the tourists rate highly satisfied, 30% rates satisfied and 23% rates are neutral. Of the total respondents, 10% is dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied.

Some of the destinations are earmarked with certain prominent tourism-related activities such as trekking, boating and kayaking. As far as the tourism activities, at such destinations, are concerned, 35% of the respondents find it neither satisfying nor dissatisfying experience, 22% find them as a satisfying experience and 18% find it as highly satisfying experience. Analysis further reveals in this regard that 15% of the respondents opine highly dissatisfied and the remaining 10% opine dissatisfied.

Table 2: Mean Experience Score of the Facilities

Facilities	Number of Respondents	Mean Value
Accommodation	50	3.4
Accessibility	50	3.2
Amenities	50	2.9
Food and Beverage	50	3.9
Ancillary Services	50	2.8
Attitude	50	3.10
Activities	50	2.95

Table 2 shows the mean experience value score of each facility available for the tourists in the Calicut district. With regard to accommodation, accessibility, food and beverage, attitude of the host community, the average experience scores are 3.4, 3.2, 3.9 and 3.10, and these values appear to be more than the test value 3. This indicates the tourists are happy with these facilities since the mean scores are above 3. Hence, it is to be treated as the contributing factor for the development of tourism in the Calicut district.

However, the mean experience score in the case of tourism amenities (2.9), ancillary services (2.8) and activities (2.95) falls below the test value 3. In other words, these facilities are incapable of attracting tourists to the Calicut district, and hence it reveals that such factors are challenges to the tourism promotion in the district.

Findings of the Study

- With regard to the accommodation facility, majority of the respondents (45%) have highly satisfying experience, the mean experience score of this facility being above the test value and this factor is conducive for the development of tourism in the Calicut district.
- In the case of accessibility to the destination in the district, 60% of the tourists are having satisfying experience. The mean experience score of this facility works out to be 3.2 and hence it is a contributing factor for tourism promotion.
- As far as the tourism amenities are concerned, 40% of the respondents are having satisfying experience and 20% of the respondents are dissatisfied with this. The mean experience score of this facility falls below the test value, and it is a matter of concern for tourism promotion.
- Food and beverage supplied to the tourists get wonderful response and more than 90% of the respondents are satisfied with this. The mean experience value 3.9 is a good indicator for the development of tourism

- With regard to the ancillary services, 53% of the respondents opine being neutral. The mean experience value of this facility being 2.8 is truly a matter of concern.
- In the case of the attitude shown by the host community towards the tourists, 65% of the respondents are satisfied. On top of that, the mean experience score of 3.10 gives hope for the promotion of tourism.
- As far as the tourism activities are concerned, 40% of the respondents are satisfied. The mean experience value 2.95 is not satisfactory, as the tourists are not happy with this factor.

CONCLUSIONS

In Calicut district, rapidly growing tourism industry is suffering from certain serious limitations and lapses. In the case of amenities, ancillary services and activities, much attention needs to be provided with utmost importance to bring this sector to the mainstream of the economy. An improvement of these facilities is likely to trigger spectacular growth of the industry and the economy as well. Hence, providing better facilities will not only improve and raise the quality level of tourist attraction and experience, but will also improve the frequency of tourist visits, which in turn will enable the industry to sustain in the long run.

REFERENCES

1. Chon, K. S. and Olsen, M. D. (1991). *Functional and symbolic approaches to consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction in tourism*. *J. Int. Acad. Hosp. Res.*, 28, 1–20.
2. Parasuraman et al. (1988). *SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring customer perceptions of service quality*. *J. Retail.*, 64, 2–40.
3. Mayo, E. J. (1973). *Regional images and regional travel behavior*. In *Proc of the Travel Research Association Fourth Annual Conf.*, Salt Lake City, p. 217.

