

Strategies Adopted by the Kerala Tourism Department to Rejuvenate Tourism after the Covid-19 Pandemic

Dr. Mumthas. S

*Assistant Professor of Commerce
Mannaniya college of Arts & Science, Pangode*

Abstract: Tourism industry is the world first service industry providing 10 percentage job opportunities out of the total employment, contribute to 10.3 percentage of global GDP in 2019. The pandemic covid -19 leads to tourism industry to a loss of jobs and revenue during 2020 and 2021. Meanwhile it has the synergy to revive and recover all the losses and it has the power to regain. Kerala Government also implement many policies to attract domestic and international tourists in Kerala. It includes eco-tourism, night life tourism, destination project, STREET project, safe food zone project, etc. Kerala included in the New York Times Report, which states that Kerala obtains 52nd place to the places to visit in the world. Responsible tourism in the kumarakam, maravanthuruth, and wykkam makes Kerala tourism to achieve this fame.

Key Words: GDP, STREET, night life tourism, destination project, safe food zone.

Introduction

During 2022, Kerala tourism shows a record hike in domestic tourist arrivals and foreign tourist arrivals than the previous year. The reports of tourism department reveals that 1.88 crore domestic tourists in Kerala in 2022. Kerala included in the Newyork Times Repost, states that Kerala as 52nd place to the places to visit in the world. Responsible tourism in the kumarakam, maravanthuruth, and wykkam makes the name of kerala tourism to achieve this fame.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out new initiatives of Kerala Tourism Department after pandemic for attracting domestic and international tourists in Kerala.
2. To study the effectiveness of new tourism initiatives in the Kerala Tourism after pandemic situation.

Methodology of the Study

The researcher use secondary data for the study. The secondary data collected from books, Newspapers, journals, tourism reports, and tourism websites. The study was focused the tourism initiatives implemented in Kerala and its result. The tourism statistics published by the Kerala Tourism Department taken as the basis for the study.

Eco Tourism in Kerala

Eco tourism provides opportunities to explore enchanting mountains, stunning waterfalls, and wildlife. Another part of eco-tourism involves cycling, bird watching, wildlife safari, photography, and tree-house camp stay. Kerala Government forestry department decided to create new directorate for the eco-tourism. The eco-tourism centres in Kerala, forest committees, and the eco-developments committees are coming under the new directorate. Eco tourism is related with the responsible and sustainable tourism and it has high potential in Kerala.

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism takes care of local people, tourists, current and future social, economic and environmental concerns of tourism industry. Sustainable tourism ensures the welfare of local people through the protection of natural eco system. Sustainable tourism preserves tourism sites for the future generation. Sustainable tourism practices keeps the environment safe and longer life. The sustainable tourism practices includes usage of train instead of plane, avoid private vehicle, adopt public transportation, usage of electric vehicles, using environmental friendly products, consume local food products, never buy wildlife products, purchase of locally produced vegetables and fruits for restaurants and eateries.

Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism refers to making better places for people to live and better place for people to visit. Responsible tourism is related with sustainable tourism and ensures the responsibility to hoteliers, Governments,

tourists and local people to maintain the tourism environment. The Responsible Tourism mission sponsored by the Government of Kerala is responsible for look after responsible tourism initiatives in Kerala. The RT mission adopted 'triple -bottom-line' which covers social, economic and environmental aspects of tourism. The responsibilities of RT Mission includes, making tourism as a tool for development of village and local communities, and eradicating poverty, ensuring women empowerment, provides additional income to farmers and artisans.

Accessible Tourism

Accessible tourism is a new form of tourism which ensures the tourism destination accessible to differently-abled people. According to UNWTO 15% of total world population lives with some form of difficulties. Accessible tourism practices provides audio devices, Sign Language and Braille display for the sensory challenged tourists, ramps and wheel chair path for physically challenged tourists. Accessible tourism also beneficial to senior citizens and women with children.

Night Life Tourism

A new initiative by the Kerala Tourism Department is the Night Life Tourism Project in order to attract domestic and international tourists in Kerala. 'Nagaravasantham' is the great initiative promoting night life at kanakakunnu at 1.00 PM conducted from 21st December 2022 to 2nd January 2023. The show displays more than 2 lakh flowers and jointly organised by District Tourism Promotion Society and Kerala Rose Society.

Safe Food Zone-Kochi

Safe food zone is the another new initiative by the tourism department to be implemented in Kochi, the major tourist destination in Kerala. Under this scheme every food dealer in Kochi corporation is provided training on food safety and certified with health cards. The Kochi Corporation conducted survey of all food handlers were completed and issuance of registration and licensing is in progressing. The special agency responsible for food safety in the Kochi ensuring the cleanliness and safety of street food and disposal of waste without harming environment. The survey result shows that there are 260 homestays, 40 hotels, 190 small-scale food outlets prevailing under Kochi Corporation.

Street Project

Kerala tourism STREET, which is the acronym of sustainable, Tangible, Responsible, Ethnic, Tourism hubs to be implemented as part of UNWTOs 'Tourism for Inclusive Growth'. The STREET projects are decided to implement in Thrithala, Kozhikkode, Kannur, Kottayam, Idukki and Wayanad. The STREET projects will bring tourism as a mixture of arts, culture, life and agriculture. Green streets, cultural streets, food streets, village lifeagri-tourism streets, water streets and arts streets are included in the STREET projects.

Destination Challenge.

The local self-Government bodies of Kerala can locate and develop one travel destination within their boundary. Destination challenge means local bodies can develop un explored tourism locations within their boundary to become an income earning destinations. The major aim of this project was to make the tourism people centric. A women only tourism organisations, with women tour operator, hotels with women only will also plans to implement next year.

Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism in Kerala is the most demanded tourism featured by paragliding, bamboo rafting, surfing, trekking, mountain climbing, tree house stay, nature walking, cycling, night camping at forest etc. in Kerala adventure tourism offers along with hill tourism, beach tourism and in rivers. Kovalam and Varkala are the two beaches in Kerala provides surfing experience during January and February. Paragliding is another adventure tourism enables the pilot to free-flying and foot launched air craft offered at Vagamon in Idukki of Kerala.

Findings, Suggestion and Conclusion

During 2022, Kerala tourism shows a record hike in domestic tourist arrivals and foreign tourist arrivals than the previous year. Kerala Government also implement many policies to attract domestic and international tourists in Kerala. It includes eco-tourism, sustainable tourism accessible tourism, night life tourism, destination project, STREET project, safe food zone project, etc. Kerala included in the New York Times Report, in the year 2022 which states that Kerala obtains 52nd place to the places to visit in the world. Responsible tourism in the kumarakam, maravanthuruth, and wykkam makes Kerala tourism to achieve this global fame.

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