

Tourism Experiences Of Households In Kerala; An Empirical Study Based On Selected Areas In Malappuram District

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ABSTRACT

Tour and tourism is everyone's cup of tea. People are traveling irrespective of their age, gender and socio economic lifestyle. The only difference is the places they choose to visit will be based on their viability. It is the job of tourism industry to spot such places of beauty and interest and bring people and places physically closer to one another by providing every facility and comfort. The experience of tourism in India is mostly of a domestic nature as the country itself has a wide variety of cultural and historical heritage. This paper examines the tourism experience of the households in the international, national and state context. The scope of the study is limited to the households of Malappuram District of Kerala covering both urban and rural regimes.

Key Words: Domestic Tourism, Satisfaction of Tourists, Tourism Infrastructure, Travel motivations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Malappuram district is located in the southern part of former Malabar district, is a revenue district of the Indian state of Kerala. The city of Malappuram, the district headquarters, gives the district its name. It is the most populous district in Kerala, which is home to about 12.3% of the total population of the state. The district was formed on 16 June 1969 spanning an area of about 3,550 km² (1,371 sq mi). Today it is the third-largest district in Kerala in terms of area. Thus this study expected to be a real representation of Kerala as a whole.

Malappuram is bounded by the Nilgiris hills on the East and the Arabian Sea on the west. District of Malappuram is literally the land atop the hills, is remarkable for its unique natural beauty. Perched among the undulating hills and the meandering rivers that flow to reach the coconut-fringed seacoast, the land conceals a unique and eventful history. Home to the khilafath movement and the mappila revolts, which questioned the British authority in India, Malappuram was the military headquarters of the Zamorins of Kozhikode since ancient times.

The hill country also contributed much to the cultural artistic traditions of the state. The mosques and temples of the land are known for their spectacular festivals. The land of great poets and writers, political and religious leaders, the district has carved a unique place of its own in the history of Kerala.

The people from this region are love to travel and enjoy various places and cuisines in their trips. People of Malappuram district wish to travel by groups of friends or family. It is a common talk in Kerala that at least a member from a family in Malappuram is said to be employed in a middle-east country. They also started businesses and trades there. People from above average families in district will visit the places in Middle East at least once. Another major income sources are agriculture, fishing and trade etc. Hinduism, Islamism and Christianity are the major religion in this region. People are always travel for pilgrimage purpose in and outside of Kerala.

This paper examines the experiences and behavior of household travelers in Kerala. The study emphasis on the people's attitudes towards the various circumstances of travelling and the decisions taken by them while facing those situations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the language of Jews, the word '*Torah*' means study or search and '*tour*' seems to have been derived from it. In 'Latin' the original word '*Tornos*' stands close to it. '*Tornos*' was a kind of round wheel-like tool hinting at the idea of a travel circuit or a package tour. In Sanskrit, '*Paryatan*' means leaving one's residence to travel for the sake of rest and for seeking knowledge. '*Deshatan*' is another word which means travelling for economic benefits. '*Tirthatan*' is the third equivalent which means travelling for religious purposes. All the three words convey the meaning and concept of tourism much more appropriately.

Kraph (1961) asserted that tourism has a special function in developing countries, a function which is a series of economic imperatives. He alluded that tourism has a perceived ability to generate, from limited investment in plant and infrastructure, large sums of capital which may be transferred to other sectors of the economy. WTO categorises tourism into six viz., domestic, in bound, out bound, internal, national and international. Pierce (1996) viewed tourist destinations from five broad sectors namely attractions, transport, accommodation, supporting facilities and infrastructure. He explains that attractions encourage tourists to visit the location, the transport services enable them to do so, the accommodation and supporting facilities alike cater for tourist's well being during their stay, and the infrastructure assures the essential functioning of the above sectors.

Mowforth and Munt (2003) states that the latest trend in the tourism industry is called "ecotourism", which refers to travel that combines preserving the natural world and sustaining the well being of the human cultures that inhabit it. An early example of ecotourism occurred in Kenya in the 1970's when the Kenya Government began to collect fees for tourists to support conservation and park maintenance in the wildlife reserves.

NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

United Nations World Tourism Organization predicting that 50 million Indians will travel abroad in 2020, up from 23 million in 2017. It also comes close on the heels of a Reserve Bank of India report, which says that Indians are spending record amounts on international travel, almost \$600 million in June 2019 alone.

The travel and tourism sector creates more jobs per million rupees of investment than any other sector of the economy and is capable of providing employment to a wide spectrum of job seekers from the unskilled to the specialized, even in the remote parts of the country. According to the

World Travel and Tourism Centre (WTTC) statistics, an investment of Rs 12 lakh in tourism creates 89 jobs, as against 45 in agriculture, and 13 in manufacturing for the same investment. Jobs generated by Travel & Tourism are spread across the economy - in retail, construction, manufacturing and telecommunications, as well as directly in Travel & Tourism companies. It thus, plays an important role in driving growth and bringing about economic prosperity. More the tourism development, the more will be the economic development. This paper attempts to relish the tourism experience of households with due importance to domestic tourism which proves to be significant in the sector.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The last Five Year Plan states that tourism sector has a major role to play to promote faster, sustainable and more inclusive economic growth. This is because tourism involves a collection of activities, services and industries comprising transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking establishments, retail shops, entertainment businesses and other hospitality services provided to individuals or groups traveling away from home for leisure, business or other purposes. The broad scope of economic activities involved enables wide participation in its growth, including participation by the informal sector. In India, the tourism sector is based on exploiting its unique endowments of biodiversity, forests, rivers, and its rich culture and heritage.

The challenges in this sector lie in successfully preserving these in their original form, and making them accessible to domestic and international travellers. Tourism in India has the potential to create economic interest of local communities in the protection of its natural and cultural endowments leading to a more sustainable growth. This paper attempts to review the tourism experience of households and their satisfaction towards the services/facilities provided.

III. OBJECTIVES

The present study has the following objectives:

- To understand the present tourism experience of households in Malappuram district.
- To study the major reasons or impulses for travel of households beyond their normal inhabitation.
- To assess the satisfaction of households with respect to the various elements of tourism infrastructure or facilities/services available.

HYPOTHESIS (ES)

The present study has the following hypotheses:

- H1 People do not vary in their reason for travel irrespective of their socio-economic background.
- H2 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the transportation facilities available.
- H3 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the accommodation facilities available.

H4 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the food facilities available

H5 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the other amenities and facilities available.

H6 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the shopping facilities available.

H7 People do not vary in their satisfaction with respect to the hygiene of the tourist destinations.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by using structured interview schedules. Households of Malappuram Municipality, Manjeri Municipality, Nilambur Municipality (3 Urban areas) and Chaliyar Panchayath, Karulai Panchayath, Pookottumpadam Panchayath (3 Rural areas) was selected as the sample frame for the study. 120 households (20 each) were selected as the sample for the study altogether from both regions. Secondary data was collected from official publications of government and research reports.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Tourism is the way by which a man can understand, experience the diverse ethnicity, systems, techniques. Tourism is one of the most powerful and most often overlooked tools for promoting economic and social development, in rich and poor countries alike.

The analysis of the present study produced the following results:

Table 1
Reason for Travel

Reason for Travel			Total
Leisure	Religious	Others	
83	30	7	120

Source: Survey Data

INTERPRETATION

The responses show that people tend to travel for leisure and religious purposes. Domestic tourism is largely influenced by both these reasons. Seasonal pilgrimages are a common sight in the State.

Table 2
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on Reason for Travel by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level of Significance
1. Gender	9.887	2	0.007	Significant
2. Age	19.444	4	0.001	Significant
3. Occupation	8.682	6	0.192	Not Significant
4. Education	10.282	8	0.246	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	10.282	4	0.036	Significant
6. Region	8.766	2	0.012	Significant

7. Religion	7.788	4	0.100	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	5.969	10	0.818	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	12.861	4	0.012	Significant
10. Annual Family Income	5.573	6	0.473	Not Significant

Source: Analysis of Survey Data

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that gender, age, marital status, region and type of residence are associated with the reason for travel of the respondents. Whereas occupation, education, religion, number of members and annual family income does not show any significant association with the reason for travel. H1 is partially rejected as 5 out of 10 variables show a significant association.

Table 3
Satisfaction on Transportation Facilities

Rating of Transportation Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
27	67	25	1	0	120

Source: Survey Data

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed a positive accord on the transportation facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 4.

Table 4
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Transportation by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level of
1. Gender	4.280	3	0.233	Not Significant
2. Age	2.729	6	0.842	Not Significant
3. Occupation	12.524	9	0.185	Not Significant
4. Education	14.336	12	0.280	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	5.154	6	0.524	Not Significant
6. Region	5.553	3	0.135	Not Significant
7. Religion	3.703	6	0.717	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	16.692	15	0.338	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	4.827	6	0.566	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	9.542	9	0.389	Not Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that no variable show any significant association with the satisfaction level. The positive accord is distributed evenly across the socio-economic variables. H2 is accepted as no variable show any significant association.

Table 5
Satisfaction on Accommodation Facilities

Rating of Accommodation Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
25	63	28	4	0	120

[Source: Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed a positive accord on the accommodation facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 3.91

Table 6
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Accommodation Facilities by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level of Significance
1. Gender	2.581	3	0.461	Not Significant
2. Age	5.151	6	0.525	Not Significant
3. Occupation	5.692	9	0.770	Not Significant
4. Education	8.395	12	0.754	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	3.766	6	0.708	Not Significant
6. Region	5.884	3	0.117	Not Significant
7. Religion	11.343	6	0.078	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	20.145	15	0.166	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	2.988	6	0.810	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	10.909	9	0.282	Not Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that no variable show any significant association with the satisfaction level. The positive accord is distributed evenly across the socio-economic variables. H3 is accepted as no variables show any significant association.

Table 7
Satisfaction on Availability Food Facilities

Rating of Food Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
24	54	34	5	3	120

[Source: Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed a positive accord on the food facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 3.76.

Table 8
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Food Facilities By Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level Significance
1. Gender	15.068	4	0.005	Significant
2. Age	6.140	8	0.632	Not Significant
3. Occupation	21.932	12	0.038	Significant
4. Education	25.110	16	0.068	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	3.507	8	0.899	Not Significant
6. Region	7.494	4	0.112	Not Significant
7. Religion	20.666	8	0.008	Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	23.994	20	0.243	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	13.081	8	0.109	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	29.262	12	0.004	Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that gender, occupation, region and annual family income are associated with the satisfaction with respect to availability of food facilities. This point to the need of good quality catering facilities at the tourist destinations that suits all types of visitors. H4 is accepted as 6 out of 10 variables do not show any significant association.

Table 9
Satisfaction on Availability of Other Amenities

Rating of Other Amenities / Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
10	63	45	2	0	120

[Source: Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed a positive accord on the other amenities/facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 3.68

Table 10
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Other Amenities by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level of Significance
1. Gender	0.970	3	0.809	Not Significant
2. Age	10.891	6	0.092	Not Significant
3. Occupation	5.322	9	0.805	Not Significant
4. Education	13.846	12	0.311	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	4.050	6	0.670	Not Significant
6. Region	2.233	3	0.526	Not Significant
7. Religion	7.776	6	0.255	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	18.766	15	0.225	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	10.753	6	0.096	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	5.083	9	0.827	Not Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that no variable show any significant association with the satisfaction level. The positive accord is distributed evenly across the socio-economic variables. H5 is accepted as no variable show any significant association.

Table 11
Satisfaction on Availability of Shopping Facilities

Rating of Shopping Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
28	48	40	4	0	120

[Source: Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed a positive accord on the shopping facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 3.83

Table 12
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Shopping Facilities by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% Level of Significance
1. Gender	2.633	3	0.452	Not Significant
2. Age	3.981	6	0.679	Not Significant
3. Occupation	18.597	9	0.029	Significant
4. Education	16.210	12	0.182	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	2.958	6	0.814	Not Significant
6. Region	7.034	3	0.071	Not Significant
7. Religion	3.227	6	0.780	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	18.505	15	0.237	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	12.339	6	0.055	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	14.964	9	0.092	Not Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that no variable show any significant association with the satisfaction level except Occupation of the respondents. The facilities available at the destinations need to be upgraded to suit the requirements of the varied visitors. H6 is accepted as 9 out of 10 variables do not show any significant association.

Table 13
Satisfaction on Hygiene Facilities

Rating of Hygiene Facilities					Total
Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	
19	25	44	26	6	120

[Source: Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

The respondents expressed the least accord on the hygiene facilities and were truly evident from a mean score of 3.21

Table 14
Mann Whitney/Kruskal Wallis Test on
Satisfaction Regarding Hygiene by Various Socio-Economic Factors

Factors	Chi-square values	Df	p value	Inference @ 5% of Level Significance
1. Gender	2.358	4	0.670	Not Significant
2. Age	12.498	8	0.130	Not Significant
3. Occupation	4.916	12	0.961	Not Significant
4. Education	15.755	16	0.470	Not Significant
5. Marital Status	10.618	8	0.224	Not Significant
6. Region	2.273	4	0.686	Not Significant
7. Religion	11.614	8	0.169	Not Significant
8. Number of Members in Family	18.605	20	0.548	Not Significant
9. Type of Residence	6.050	8	0.642	Not Significant
10. Annual Family Income	14.980	12	0.243	Not Significant

[Source: Analysis of Survey Data]

INTERPRETATION

From the analysis it is observed that no variable show any significant association with the satisfaction level. The least accord though in the positive side is distributed evenly across the socio-economic variables. H7 is accepted as no variable show any significant association.

V. FINDINGS

The present study was undertaken to highlight the status of tourism experience with respect to households in Malappuram district and the facilities available for the promotion of tourism, to study the emerging tourism service industry etc. Also to emphasis the problem areas and

suggest the ways through which tourism in general and domestic tourism in particular can be developed.

- The most visited places inside Kerala are Calicut, Munnar, and Wayanad. The most visited place outside Kerala are Ooty, Velankanny, Bengaluru, Mysore, Pazhani and Kodaikanal. This portrays a clear blend of pilgrimage with select leisure destinations by the households in their tourism experience. Though, most of them do not have any international exposure, the most visited places outside India by a limited number of respondents are Dubai, Malaysia, Maldives, and Muscat. On an average, the households spend around Rs.6000 per trip inside and outside Kerala. This alarms the scope of the business prospect of this segment.
- The reason for travel was mostly for leisure and for religious purposes. People do vary in their preference and the hypothesis is partially rejected.
- As the satisfaction towards various facilities was enquired, the most critical factor came out to be hygiene at the tourist destinations. People responded in a similar tone except for food facilities where, some categories showed some significant difference.

RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

- Hygiene being the most criticized factor with respect to tourist destinations and experience of respondents, it is recommended that Responsible Tourism initiatives shall be encouraged to provide a hygienic ambience to the visitors at the destinations of interest.
- Promoting more online facilities for reservations of facilities at the destinations will enable a better planned travel for the tourists.
- User friendly tourist guides/help desks at destinations shall be ensured for the convenience of the visitors.
- The food facilities at the tourist destinations which caters the need for different classes of people needs to be ensured as this being a vital element leading to satisfaction.
- Promote Green and Sustainable tourism at the different venues in general interest
- Efforts from the government authorities shall be accelerated to foster domestic tourism which provide reasonable contribution to the service sector growth

VI. CONCLUSIONS

People are tends to change the mindset and behavior towards the available choices in limited conditions. They will be satisfied when all the prevailing conditions are up to the mark. Travelling not only give them pleasure or recreation but also give a chance to escape from the daily life routines. This study concluded with a note of developing favorable conditions in the destinations so as to increase the number of visitors to it.

On other hands, tourism can produce social and cultural benefits for the domestic population who might not otherwise be able to experience the cultural and natural richness of their own countries. Through the opportunities for the exchange of ideas and practices that domestic travelers can bring, residents will also potentially develop stronger interest in promoting ethnic, racial and religious tolerance; deeper appreciation of the country's natural and cultural diversity; and greater awareness of the achievements of national institutions.

Tourism enables the residents who have growing disposable incomes and their leisure time to participate in productive and satisfying experiences. As leisure time, disposable incomes and higher levels of education increase, so does the need for a broader array of leisure experiences. Domestic tourism is a potential contributor to the quality of life of resident populations, if it is carefully planned and properly delivered. Gradually introducing the domestic travel sector organizations to the critical management requirements needed to compete effectively in the international market place. Domestic tourism can also encourage public and private travel organizations to create the receptive, accommodation, attraction and entertainment facilities needed to compete in key travel markets at home and abroad. Retaining the hard currency that might otherwise leave the country in the form of outbound travel expenditure in travel to foreign destinations, without implementing potentially regressive deterrents to the outbound travel sector, foreign exchange is thus saved by encouraging the spending by the affluent local population in travel to the domestic locations.

Stabilizing the frequently cyclical and seasonal flows of inbound tourism by encouraging domestic tourism to occur during the traditionally slow “off peak” demand periods that is normally associated with international tourism, opportunities exist to fortify the tourism facility and programme utilization levels. This strategy can potentially lead to a more stable and also sustain a level of employment and revenue generation in the domestic destination regions.

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