

Case Study

Tourism Plan for Bekal: A Case of Bekal Port, Special Tourism Area of Keralas

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ABSTRACT: The tourism as an industry also third important sector that attracts foreign money to the country. Number of travellers who are interested in spending their valuable time in leading tourist destinations is increasing everyday. It has been booming and developing since primitive, but it has been in the last few decades that specific attention has started to be given to this environment friendly industry because of the income from this in the form of foreign exchange and other means. Tourism has expanded from a relatively small activity of limited importance in the early 19th century to arguably the largest industry in the World today. Olden days human beings had a pursuit for wandering, people used to move for food and shelter after it became a wealthy affair of some opulent people visiting places for leisure activities. Now globally, tourism is a vital industry, recognized as an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and their international relations. India is one of the most popular destinations in Asia, bounded by the Himalayan ranges in the north, and surrounded on three sides by water (the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean), with a long history and diverse culture. Kerala has always been a favourite destination for the foreign as well as domestic tourists. Until the early 1980's, Kerala was a relatively unknown destination. However, marketing campaigns launched by the Kerala Tourist Development Corporation laid the foundation for the growth of the tourism industry in the state. Today, Kerala tourism is a Global super brand and regarded as one of the most famous tourist destinations. In 2017, Kerala attracted one million foreign tourists and 14 million domestic tourists. An annual increase of 10 per cent in foreign tourists and 11.3 per cent in domestic tourist arrivals (Kerala Tourism statistical report).

Keywords: tourism planning, tourism area, national societies, KTDC, Kerala

RUNNING TITLE: Tourism Planning

INTRODUCTION

Tourism as an industry also third important sector that attracts foreign money to the country. Number of travellers who are interested in spending their valuable time

in leading tourist destinations is increasing everyday. It has been booming and developing since primitive, but it has been in the last few decades that specific attention has started to be given to this environment friendly industry because of the income from this in the form of foreign exchange and other means. Tourism

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Need for Study

As tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world, it became one among the world's most competitive industries. Kerala as a state is blessed with unique biodiversity and natural beauty. Unfortunately, it is not able to make use of these possibilities, rather advantages productively and only focussing only on a few tourism destinations and ignoring the wonderful and promising features other centres offer also have miserably failed in making use of the entire tourism prospects. Various states of our country and also neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives are able to provide best services to visitors similar to that of Kerala,

there by the concept of quality tourism which once has been exclusive and unique to our state is replicated and the same has created a competent tourism market where stakeholders are many. Hence, a comprehensive tourism plan envisioning the region in mind should be expertly framed. The most unfortunate side of Bekal fort region and Kasaragod is that the tourism market in this area has simply failed to identify and market all the beautiful spots. Much of Kasaragod's enchanting places still remain unexposed to the nature lovers. Hence, it is required to develop well designed marketing strategies and plans by marketing such spots and places by organizing tour packages and developing other types of tourism products in the region. The present study is to identify the potentials and significant contribution of Bekal fort for reimagining Kasaragod town. There should be tourism planning that in such a way that every single issue is addressed positively and eliminate all the obstacles that help the expected growth of tourism. An integrated approach which includes the utilisation of resources of region followed by the upgradation of already existing system will definitely serve useful. Above all measures to ensure the involvement of localities in the tourism related programs are to be promoted.

Study Area: Bekal fort area region

Bekal region is located on the western coast of Kasaragod the northern most district of Kerala. The Bekal region spreads through 4 coastal panchayats of Chemmnad, Uduma, Pallikere and Ajanoor. The Bekal fort overlooking the sea is the most significant land mark. The well preserved fort with its breath taking views of the coastline to the north and south will form the focal point around which the Bekal area. People in this region are mainly involved in fisheries and agriculture activities.

Kasaragod, the maritime district was the gateway to Malabar Coast for seafarers from the world around. Foreign trade and invasions down the centuries left the land with rich cosmopolitan culture. It is the face of Kerala to the Northern states. Kasaragod Municipality has a high potential for Tourism and it's the

main commercial node between Kannur and Mangalore. Kasaragod attains importance because of its proximity to the business cum commercial centre of Mangalore and tourist centres in the northern Kerala. The region is well connected by road and rail network Besides,an eventful history, kasargod also boasts a number of different art forms among which theyyam stands unique. In general, the district is widely known as Saptabhashabhoomi,which means Land of Seven Languages.People over here are able to speak many languages that include Marathi, Hindi,Malayalam,Kannada, Konkini etc.The district stands bordered by Kannur on south and Mangalore Arabian sea borders it on the west. Presence of 11 rivers makes this piece of land entirely different from that of other districts.Chandragiri, Payaswini,Tejaswini and shiria are a few to name.The district was formed in the year 1956 based on the recommendations of state reorganizing commission’s report. cashew,rubber, arecanut and tobacco are the major crops and a large chunk of population depends mainly on agriculture.Localities follow various traditional customs and rituals, among which ,as mentioned already ,theyyam has an important space



Fig 1: Existing Land use- Site Level (author generated)



Fig 2: location map of study area (author generated)

Tourism Potential

Spectacular beach destination

Bekal is unique. About 300 year old Bekal Fort is exuding an irresistible old world charm. Appealingly landscapes of beaches, rivers and vegetations, hypnotic art forms, fascinating traditions,this quiet little seaside village in the northernmost district of Kerala has every ingredient that would go into the creation of an international tourist destination.

Rich cultural heritage to Kasaragod

Kasaragod, boasts a tradition of vibrant art forms. The temple arts have flourished in this area where different dynasties have major contributions. Needless to say that,the 6th century’s resurgence of Hindu dynasties pan India,produced a characteristic change in the cultural fabric in the south India and Kasaragod as a district cannot stay isolated from this. Traditional art form,namely Theyyam is integrated deeply with the culture of Kasagodians. Originated in North Malabar, Theyyam as a folklore art enjoys the attention of thousands. It is independent and considered widely with a divine perspective where Gods and heroes, demons and spirits are given prominence and myth and legend speak volumes .As a solo folklore dance ,it has attracted the accolades of many more from different corners of the world.The rich cultural heritage that Kasaragod enjoys is inseparably associated with Theyyam in all the way.

Bekal enjoys the advantages of Kerala

Making Bekal even more exclusive is that it is backed by all the intrinsic advantages of Kerala Kerala is an established tourism destination for majority of international tourists. Excellent healthcare systems, 100% literacy and more make Kerala India’s most advanced State with the highest physical quality of life index. Though lack of attention is still a concern, Bekal in Kasargod still stays first in Malabar tourism map. tourism plans introduced by DTPC has promoted Bekal tourism to a greater extent.A confluence of local culture with that

of the modern style makes this place unique in giving unparalleled service to travellers. Situated on the shore of Arabian sea, Bekal enjoys, at the same time reminds us of the beauty of history coupled with colonial influence. The fort made centuries symbolizes the valour and bravery that warriors of freedom fight have shown.

Most tourists who visit Kerala come to experience the cultural ethos of the land and the varied attractions. The rejuvenating old culture and of course, a rich repertoire of monuments, museums, arts, crafts and year round colourful festivals. Truly making it a land where the season never ends.

EXISTING SCENARIO

Bekal Area Attraction

Bekal area is enriched with coconuts centred golden sand beaches, offering amazing and idealistic sun set, these shores fringed with vegetation having different type of cultivation this region having variety colourful art forms and festivals the neighbouring region also contains diversity attractions with variety art forms

Linkages To Other Major Tourist Centers In India

As indicated above the typical pattern of international resort tourism to India is for one week usually to the golden triangle incorporating Delhi, Agra and Jaipur followed by a week in a resort usually in Goa. This means that the Bekal area needs to be easily accessible to the main tourism centres of the country. As indicated from an accessibility point of view the area seems to be reasonably well placed. It is particularly well placed in relation to the attractions of southern India however in relation to its likely competitor such as Goa to the north and Bhubaneswar on the east coast it may be disadvantage to some extent by the additional cost of air transportation however the cost differences could easily be justified by providing resort amenities and quality standards that far exceed those of its competition.

The main tourism attractions of Bekal consist of :

- The Bekal Fort was constructed around AD 1645
- A long and beautiful coastline comprising long stretches of palm- fringed beaches
- Estuaries and backwaters
- The overwhelming greenery of coconut gardens and hill stations
- Pleasant and pristine environs
- Nearby areas like the Chandragiri fort.
- Exotic art forms like Theyyam

Tourist flow in bekal region

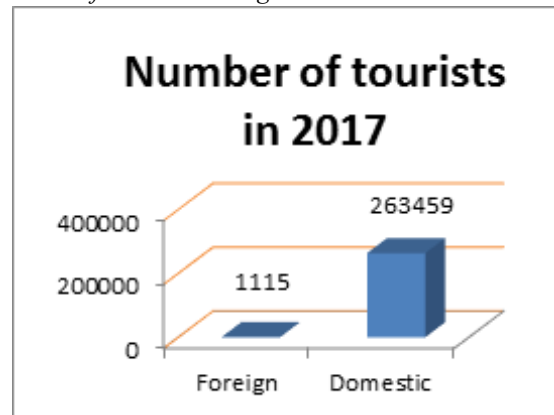


Fig 3: showing foreign and domestic tourist flow in bekal region) Source: Kerala Tourism Department)

TOURIST SURVEY

Profile of Respondents: The percentage of male respondents is higher than female respondents with 62 % and 38 % respectively although visitors were approached with no gender discrimination. There are 77 domestic tourists and 23 foreign tourists with a percentage ratio of 77:23, in those 77 % respondents 43% are within Kasaragod district and 57% outside the Kasaragod district.

AGE OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent
below 18	13	13
18-25	46	46
26-35	17	17
36-45	16	16
46-55	6	6
above 55	2	2
Total	100	100

Fig 4: showing occupation wise distribution of respondents source :primary survey

It has been found from the age wise classification of respondents that age of 18-25 years (46%), followed by those in age group 26-35 years (17%), 36-45 years (16%), 46-55 years (6%) and above 55 years (2%).

Mode of Travel

According to Primary survey the Domestic tourists in Bekal mode of travel pattern shows that 55 % tourists coming by own vehicle, 16 % tourists coming by train, 4 % tourists coming by Bus, 2 % coming through other modes and foreign tourists coming by airlines

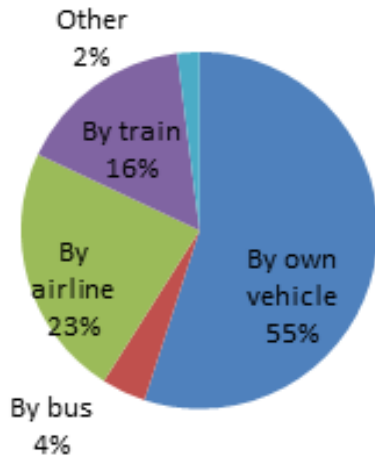


Fig 5: showing respondents Mode of Travel source :primary survey)

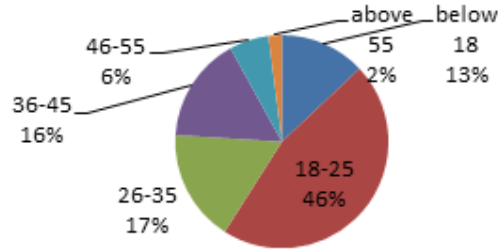


Fig 6: showing age of respondents source :primary survey)

According to primary survey only 38 % respondents are satisfied with connectivity to the site/ approach road because of bottle neck narrow roads. Kappil beach tourist spot has no proper approach road and approach road towards Chandragiri fort is not maintaining properly.

While considering public transport only 43 % are satisfied with public transport to the site. There is no direct public transport service to the site. They have to depend on the trains and buses servicing in between two urban centres Kanhangad and Kasaragod. Kanhangad and Kasaragod are well connected towns. Kasaragod is district head quarters so it's well connected with all parts of the Kerala and Karnataka state. Mangalore, major urban centre is 50km from Kasaragod town. Mangalore is well connected with major cities in the world. Coming to traffic directions and management, 100% not satisfied with traffic directions and management towards the site. There are no proper sign boards towards the tourist destination.

Tourist place of Stay of respondents:

only 25% people are staying more than one day in the Bekal, 57 % not satisfied with the quality of the accommodation, 100 % satisfied with the price of boarding in this tourist destination which is reasonable

In tourist spots, presence of Tourists Security Personals is very less. 39% tourists are not satisfied with Security Personals, because of the number of the Security Personals in the

site; Chandragiri fort and Kappil beach don't have any Tourists Security Personals

PRESENCE OF RESTAURANT/MOTELS/SHOPPING

Nearest refreshment center is located almost 1km from the site. 100 % tourists are not satisfied with presence of Restaurant/Motels/Cafeteria. 100 % tourists not satisfied with possibilities for shopping. There is no tourism related shopping facilities in the Bekal region

62 % Tourists Not Satisfied with Toilet facility in the site, because of lack of maintains Kappil beach don't have any Toilet facility. 77 % Tourists Not Satisfied With Dustbin Facility in the site

TOUR OPERATOR FACILITY

There are some private tour operators in Bekal but they are not mainly concentrating on the Bekal region. They are not operating any daily tour circuits or any other tour activities related to Bekal. There is No Initiative from the Government for Tour Operating in the Bekal Region. In primary survey 61% are not satisfied with Organization of the local transportation services.

PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning strategies to re-imagining of Bekal fort region in Kasaragod. The Site analysis and survey results implied that Bekal and Kasaragod town should expand its Tourism resources and infrastructure to meet international standards in order to be competitive with others districts in Kerala and regions.

A.region level strategies:

Except Bekal fort, tourism sector in the planning area is in an ascending stage; currently the hotspots are not well-documented, and the tourism activities are unorganized. Hence, the first and foremost need of this sector is identifying and documenting the tourism hotspots, assess the infrastructural needs and shortcomings and identify linkages and supporting infrastructure that have to be

created. Tourism circuits, optimally linking these hot spots, and organized tour operations have to be proposed.

For improving tourism systematic networks for public transport system should be established. Additionally, various modes of transportation within tourist areas should be introduced to serve tourists accessibly and conveniently.

Tourism Promotion Zone

Bekal area is earmarked as Tourism Promotion Zone to promote farm tourism, experience tourism, home stays, etc. The water body in this proposed tourism promotion zone is proposed to be replenished by river, storm water run-off and rain water harvesting and thus making it a perennial water body. Aqua culture shall also be promoted here. Water sports and adventure are proposed to be launched in this water body.

Modernization of existing park at bekal

Some tourism activities have been already started in this area. The existing tourism activities are to be strengthened by providing more facilities and amusement items to the tourists visiting there. The site analysis and survey results implies that Bekal park should expand its tourism resources and infrastructure to meet international standards.

It is suggested to establish to the branding Bekal to enhance more national tourism image and international awareness of destination. The branding Bekal is to develop tourism image through slogan, logo, emblem etc, to enhance brand equity of destination attractiveness.

Improvements to kasaragod town

Though rich in resources, Kasaragod Tourism Region covering the entire district lacks adequate promotion and supporting infrastructure. The potentials are relatively under explored and it is evident from tourist arrival statistics. This is true for Kasaragod town also. The southern area of the town comprising of riverfronts, small islands (thuruthus), beach, Central Area and the rest of the peninsula is enriched with both manmade and natural heritage. On the other hand, human interference and activities

with little consideration to conservation of the rich heritage still continue; which is expected to accelerate in future, but for effective interventions. This area is characterised by environmentally sensitive areas due to presence of riverfront with saline intrusion. This calls for conservation of environmentally sensitive areas and developments without adverse effect on such areas. However, the standing testimonies of the history & culture of the town and areas of outstanding natural beauty & environmental significance are under threat. The very identity of the town is getting 'endangered'.

Kasaragod town and premises constitute the major commercial complex attracting floating population to the central area. Like in many other towns in Kerala, the location of this land use has its contribution in giving impetus to development of trade and commerce in the central area.

City level strategies

- [a] Conservation of Heritage Buildings
- [b] Transformation / demolition of other buildings to harmonize with the heritage built space
- [c] Creation of additional built space in harmony with the heritage built space
- [d] Improving the circulation pattern
- [e] Creation of organised parking space
- [f] Conveniences to the floating population coming to the premises
- [g] Landscaping & general improvement of the layout

•RENOVATION OF SEA VIEW PARK

Sea-View Park is situated near the central area of the town at Thayalangadi, near the

Thalangara- Karanthakkad road, with a good view of the Chandragiri River. It is famed for its beautiful views and serenity, but requires considerable development. Even the existing park and facilities are not being used by the

public.

The Development Plan proposes the renovation of Sea View Park, and the project includes:

- River front Walkway, Landscaping
- Lighting/Illumination
- View point
- Street furniture
- Boat jetty
- Kiosks and Eateries
- Public comfort stations
- Tourist information centre

Prospects of public-private partnership shall be explored and assigned priority in materialising the project.

CONCLUSION

Kasaragod is the gateway to Kerala at the North from the State of Karnataka. Bekal Fort is a main attraction of the region and is an established tourism spot of international acceptance and fame. The site analysis and survey results implies that Bekal should expand its Tourism resources and infrastructure to meet international standards in order to compete with others districts of Kerala and regions through systematic networks of public transport system. Additionally, various modes of transportation within tourist areas, promoting new locations and circuits - as a part of marketing campaign, is recommended to develop and leverage new venue for revenue generation, from tourism, through establishment of Arts and crafts village, Development of new location (Hidden sports) and development of new Tourist circuits. Bekal Tourism should be made fast moving where the attention should be given. It will enhance the local run business and the attitude of localities also will change. Many resorts are already functioning there. But it requires a scientific approach towards development that needs efficient management with enough experience and expertise.

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