

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF TOURISM IN KOZHIKODE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the need to promote tourism in Kerala and in that regard a strategic examination of the issues have been attempted. The central theme of the paper is to highlight the fact that Kerala is richly endowed with natural beauty making it an ideal place where tourism can be promoted. The promotion of tourism it is argued will fetch revenue for the state both in Indian and foreign currency. This will enable the government to have a greater aggregate disposable income to moot its social programmes, improve its infrastructure, employment potential and thereby improve the quality of life of the populace. Above all it will generate employment, create an enhanced aggregate disposable income and thereby revive the falling fortunes of Kerala's economy.

Kerala has had the distinction of having the first socialist government in India under the legendary E M S Namboodripad. It boasts a high level of social consciousness and a high level of education across all social strata. The state boasts of 100% literacy and the fact that the term literacy may imply only the ability to sign one's name and engage in socialist rhetoric seems immaterial. Unemployment levels are high and per capita output of labour is low. Moreover industrial development in the state is as poor as is the infrastructure. The roads for instance are narrow, winding and highly dangerous to travel on. The attitude of Kerala Tourism development Corporation KTDC could be more proactive and customer friendly that it is. With this contradictory background we have taken up a case for developing tourism industry in Kerala from a strategic management perspective.

In this paper the case of Kozhikode (earlier Calicut) has been taken up to make our point. The choice of Kozhikode was made because of two reasons. The first author spent a full semester as Visiting professor of Business Policy at IIM (K) and made the observations first hand. The second author converted these observations into an argument for sustainable development.

The major tourism requirements are accommodation transport intermediaries i.e. travel agents, attractions and amenities. A cursory inspection of the hospitality sector might suggest that a few large companies dominate the market, giving the impression of an oligopolistic structure. However the service hospitality sector is mostly fragmented in many small units where location and the spatial distribution of accommodation are important factors determining the degree of competition. The wide range and quality of accommodation, its multi product nature, seasonal variations in demand, introduce an additional dimension into the operation of the market.

KEYWORDS: Social Programmes, Improve Its Infrastructure, Employment Potential and Kerala's Economy