



A GENERAL STUDY ON PERCEPTION AND COMMUNITY TOURISM IN KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Perception is an important input in individual behaviour. It refers to the process of seeing what is there to be seen. The receiver, the received and the situation will influence ones' perception the study of perception is concerned with identifying the process through which we interpret and organise sensory information to produce our conscious of objects and object relationship. Computers may analyse information in an accurate, unbiased, tireless fashion, but the same cannot be said about human beings. We are far from perfect when it comes to gathering information about others and then making judgments about them. Kerala (Malayalam: K ra am) is a state in south India. It was created on 1 November 1956, with the passing of the States Reorganization Act bringing together the areas where Malayalam is the dominant language. The state has an area of 38,863 km² and is bordered by Karnataka to the north, Tamil Nadu to the south and the east and the Arabian Sea towards the west. Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala. Kochi and Kozhikode are the other major cities. Since independence, Kerala was managed as a democratic socialist welfare economy. Since the 1990s, liberalization of the mixed economy allowed onerous License Raj restrictions against capitalism and foreign direct investment to be lightened, leading to economic expansion and job creation. Traditional industries manufacturing such items as coir, handlooms, and handicrafts employ around one million people. Community tourism is not always successful, and perhaps we could begin to look at failures as pathways to success. Rural community tourism takes place in already marginalized areas. Created with good intentions, community-based tourism projects are abandoned when political pressures rise, jealousies intensify or the heralded eco tourists don't arrive. Developers may talk of 'integrating communities into tourism,' but rarely do they visit a community and ask what it is locals want. Instead, operations are imposed in an all too familiar top-down fashion.

Key Words: *Perception, Sensory Liberalization, Community Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Kerala the land of blue lagoons and pearly beaches, emerald hills and green vales has an incomparable charm and elusive beauty. Kerala (or Keralam) is an Indian state, located south most on its west coast. It was created on 1 November 1956, by the States Reorganisation Act, combining various Malayalam speaking regions. The state has an area of 38,863 km² (15,005 sq mi) and is bordered by Karnataka to the north and north east, Tamil Nadu to the south and southeast and the Arabian Sea towards the west. Thiruvananthapuram is the capital city Kochi and Kozhikode are other major cities. Kerala is also known for its many small towns that are scattered across the state, thus creating a higher density of population. Stone Age carving in Edakkal Caves had pictorial writings believed to be dating to at least 5000 BC, from the Neolithic man, indicating the presence of a prehistoric civilization or settlement in this region. From as early as 3000 BC, Kerala had established itself as a major spice trade center. Kerala is known for its high standards of well-being, gleaned from development indicators, despite low levels of economic development. These development indicators include a 90% literacy rate, high life expectancy, access to health care, a population where women outnumber men, later marriage age for women and low infant mortality rates. The Kerala Model has been glorified by politicians and academics alike.

After independence in 1947, the state of Kerala was created in 1956 from the former state of Travancore-Cochin, the Malabar district of the Madras State, and the Kasaragod taluk of Dakshina Kannada. Kerala is a popular tourist destination famous for its backwaters, ayurvedic treatments and tropical greenery. Kerala has a higher Human Development Index than all other states in India. The state has a literacy rate of 94.59 percent, the highest in India.. Kerala has witnessed significant migration of its people, especially to the Persian during the Kerala Gulf boom, and is heavily dependent on remittances from its large Malayali expatriate community.

'Kerala has suffered from what were until recently fairly anti-market policies, with deep suspicion of market-based economic expansion without control. So its human resources have not been as well used in spreading economic growth as they could have been with a more complementary economic strategy, which is now being attempted in the. Adopting sustainable practices has become a necessity rather than a choice for the tourism industry of our country, especially after what the global economic downturn has taught us by visibly demonstrating how drastically the tourism industry can be affected with any negative alteration in the economic, environmental, or social scenarios occurring worldwide.

PERCEPTION

It is believed that successful services deliver responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability. In fact services are all about relationships. The study of consumers helps firms and organizations to improve their marketing strategies by understanding issues such as psychology of how consumers think, feel, etc. The psychology of how consumer is influenced by his or environment, how marketers can adapt and improve their marketing campaigns and marketing strategies to more effectively reach consumer etc. consumer is the most important visitor in our premises, he is not depended.. He is not an outsider to our business he is a part of it. Consumer behaviour is the process by which individuals select, and interpret stimuli into a coherent picture of the world.

Individuals act and react on their basis of perceptions that person's needs, wants values and personal experiences. Thus to the marketer, consumer perceptions are much important than their knowledge of objective reality. It is important that marketers understand the whole notion of perception and its related concepts to more reality to determine what factors influences to buy.

Factors influencing perception

- 1) In the perceiver
- 2) In the object or target being perceived for
- 3) In the context of the situation in which the perception is made

Fig: 1:1 Perceptual Framework

Object
Awareness
Recognition
Interpretation
Response

Perception is the set of the process by which individual becomes aware of, and interprets information about the environment. People often tend to assume that reality is objective, that we all perceive the same things in the same way. A stimulus makes the individual aware of the object which must then be interpreted.

Characteristic of the Person

A person's own characteristics also affect how he or she perceives and interprets things. The most important characteristics are salience, disposition, attitudes, self-concept, and personality. Salience is the individual's feeling about how important the object is. The more salient the object is to you, he more attention you are likely to pay it. An individual's disposition also affects how he or she perceives things. Disposition is a short term emotional response triggered by various environmental stimuli. Whereas our disposition tends to be a short term mood or emotional response, our attitudes are longer –lasting feelings about things. Attitudes can affect perceptions in

dramatic ways. Self-concept also affects perception. It is a person's personality. A person's personality is the set of distinctive traits and features that make a person unique.

Fig: 2:2 Characteristics and processes that affect perception

Characteristics of the person	Characteristics of the object
Saliency	Contrast
Disposition	Intensity
Attitudes	Movement
Self-Concept	Repetition
Personality	Novelty

Situational Characteristics

Saliency
Organization
Stereotyping
Halo
Projection

Managerial Implication of Perception

Perception has many implications for managers in organizations, particularly in motivation, hiring and performance appraisal.

Perception & Motivation

Perception of the workplace plays a major role in motivation. Suppose an employee is experiencing some unexpected money trouble. Because of her disposition (she is worried) and the saliency of money (it is unusually important to her at the moment), She will be especially sensitive to issues to compensation. Through projection, she may assume that everyone in the organisation also cares mainly about money. A large pay raise given to another employee will seem frustrating and will intensify her efforts to get pay raise of her own, focusing even more attention on her own pay, the pay of others, and how they compare to one another.

New World, new ways - Keralities trying to keep with the Joneses

With a population of more than a billion, India is the world's second largest consumer market, and Kerala has already earned the epithet 'the number one consumer society in the country'. A study shows that India has 70 million people who have per-capita incomes of Rs 50,000 or more a year, the level at which consumerism begins to blossom. These new consumers will need more of everything. When a Gujaratji brokerage firm in Kochin recruited a young lady as an office –assistant-cum-receptionist in 1998, she spoke poor English, had long stinky hair and wore a dress that, some of her acquaintances recall, looked as if it had been "inherited from her grandmother". In 2007, when a relative who had long been in the UAE saw her, she was sporting tailored outfit and fashionably cropped hair. Her English was fluent though impeccable. Working as a customer relation executive in a foreign financial firm, the thirty something young lady was making twice as her father. Young lady exemplifies the new face of our women and our state. By the mid 1990's the income of people began to rise. Though these were not enough to live a middle class existence by western standards, it allowed people to enjoy new material comforts.

COMMUNITY TOURISM: TOURISM THAT BENEFITS PEOPLE

Health tourism and community tourism jointly can play an active role in increasing the revenue for the country. Community tourism (sometimes called community-based tourism) is a form of tourism which aims to include and benefit local communities, particularly indigenous peoples and villagers in the rural South (ie 'developing world'). For instance, villagers might host tourists in their village, managing the scheme communally and sharing the profits. There are many types of community tourism articles, including many in which the 'community' works

with a commercial tour operator, but all community tourism article should give local people a fair share of the benefits/profits and a say in deciding how incoming tourism is managed.

These tours open up a world of adventure and opportunity. Visit the Amazon... trek through the Andes or the Sinai... experience the magic of the central Australian desert Good community-based tours take you beyond mainstream tourism. You'll meet people from different countries and learn far more about them and their culture than on conventional tours. You'll feel better knowing that your visit is genuinely helping your hosts. And if you want to simply lie on a beach.... well, there are tours here that feature some of the best beaches on the planet.

COMMUNITY TOURISM SHOULD-

1. Be run with the involvement and consent of local communities.
(Local people should participate in planning and managing the tour.)
2. Give a fair share of profits back to the local community.
(Ideally this will include community (health, schools, etc).)
3. Involve communities rather than individuals.
(Working with individuals can disrupt social structures.)
4. Be environmentally sustainable
(Local people must be involved if conservation.)
5. Respect traditional culture and social structures.
6. Have mechanisms to help communities cope with the impact of western tourists.
7. Keep groups small to minimise cultural / environmental impact.
8. Brief tourists before the trip on appropriate behaviour.
9. Not make local people perform inappropriate ceremonies, etc.
10. Leave communities alone if they don't want tourism.
(People should have the right to say 'no' to tourism.)

PREVAILING CONSTRAINTS FOR GROWTH

- Inherent Weakness
- Lack of latest Updated Technology
- Poor Infrastructure
- Labour Policy
- Access to foreign Markets
- Different approaches in tapping foreign goods
- Purchasing power of domestic market
- Political intervention in corporate decision

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNITY TOURISM

Indian economy had experienced major policy changes in early 1990s. The new economic reform, popularly known as, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG model) aimed at making the Indian economy as fastest growing economy and globally competitive. Technology is the making, usage and knowledge of tools, techniques, crafts, systems or methods of organization in order to solve a problem or serve some purpose. In the modern world even in rural areas of Kerala technology plays a vital role. Community tourism is very important in while we consider all the factors. But when we compare old generation and young generation their perception about tourism is different. Old generation still believes in the traditional concepts that have become a part and parcel of their life but young generation seems to be enjoying the latest technology.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the technology available to people has influenced their lives and community tourism .The most important contribution of technology to society is making the lives of common people much easier and helping them achieve what was previously not possible but because of certain myths and concept old generation is having,

most of the time technology is not accepted or is not getting the status that it serves. In India where youth population is comparatively higher when you compare with other countries we can say that in the near future technology will have its upper hand it will play a vital role in every body's life even in a small state like Kerala. The time is not far off when foreigners, as in years of yore will flock to Kerala in search of Aranmula mirror, handicrafts, payyannur pavithra ring, beautifully crafted bamboo items made by our advasi brethren and our coir products .will the state stage a full recovery? Economists say that most probably it will. The vital question to ask now is whether another Sree Narayana Guru or Mannam or Ayyankali will come up in the new society that is emerging. With everyone looking for good life outside the state, the chances are very little. A degenerating culture with groups of old men interested in promoting their own agenda will lead us to a blind alley in the not so distant future. An unexpected development in the world scenario that will force people back into their own territories may sound retrograde and unfortunate. But in Kerala's case this may be the only way to keep it Gods Own. People are hoping that investors will take a wise decision.

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