

A Study on “Role of BRDC in Developing Kasargod as a Tourism Destination”

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1.1 Introduction

Tourism is an important contributor and player for the growth of India. Tourism also acts as a catalyst for peace and development. Tourism is defined as the temporary short term movement of people to destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at each destination, it includes movements for all purposes. Tourism encompasses economic, culture, social, environment. In the year 2016 started on a strong note for international tourists arrival that grew by 5% between January and April 2016 according to the latest UNWTO statistics. Prospects for the May-August remains positive with around 500 million tourists expected to travel abroad in the northern hemisphere during summer holiday which is the peak season. Destinations keep benefiting from solid demand across all world regions despite on-going challenges, showing that tourism is dynamic and resilient economic sector. Tourism can play a key role in building peace and supporting reconciliation processes in community engagement and empowerment, as well as in capacity building and training, public and private sector partnership which are key factors in advancing a culture of peace through tourism in post-conflict societies. Tourism is a vehicle for trust and goodwill. Cultural understanding can change attitudes and build peace. Tourism role in peace building is also enacted through its contribution to poverty alleviation.

Tourism has shown that the potential for the creation of jobs and the promotion of income-generating activities in favour of the local and regional authorities. Certainly tourism offers many gateways for the employment of men and women and the possibilities of job creation independent of the small and medium sized income generating activities, the creation of railway undertakings after the removal of the poverty of the women and of the municipalities in the developing countries. Tourism provides employment opportunities in a large number. Today, millions of women are a part of the tourism industry, both directly and indirectly. The tourism industry has contributed positively to the empowerment of women in India and throughout the world. Tourism development aims at improving the lives of people living in the local surroundings through responsible tourism. Studies show that in Kerala, the participation of local community in tourism development activities is increasing and this has resulted in the overall development of the destination. Bekal the village in Kasargod district in the northern most part of Kerala as potential locale for the development of beach resort destination. The Bekal coastal area has been declared as the India's first planned beach destination. In 1992 the Government of India declared, Bekal as 'Special Tourism Area' for integrated resort development.

Kerala Tourism shines again at PATA Gold awards 2016 in Marketing Media categories for its Kerala tourism E-Newsletter and Visit Kerala Broad cast campaigns which was announced at Bangkok by Pacific Asia travel Association (PATA). The campaign built an awareness of the uniqueness of Gods Own country which will create a positive impact. Starring real people and site authentic stories of tourist of tourists visiting local communities, Sharing home-made meals and watching and engaging in cultural performance the “New Worlds films reflects the idea that when the world comes to Kerala new horizon open up. It also demonstrates the benefits of implementing responsible tourism initiatives which have brought about a number of life-altering narratives that have now become the soul of the campaign. Until the early 1980s, Kerala was a relatively unknown destination, with most tourism circuits concentrated around the north of the country. Aggressive marketing campaigns launched by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation the government agency that oversees tourism prospects of the state laid the foundation for the growth of the tourism industry. Kerala Tourism was able to transform itself into one of the niche holiday destinations in India. The tag line Kerala-God’s Own Country was adopted in its tourism promotions and became a global super brand. Government of Kerala (2006) among the fourteen districts of Kerala, Kasargod is the northern most districts bordering the neighbouring state of Karnataka. The district of Kasaragod, blessed with high tourism resources, is trying its level best to develop its potentials in order to position itself in the tourism market. The study is also based on

the contribution of local community. This study will be beneficial to the stakeholders of the tourism industry, including the investors, employees, government, etc. This study will bring out the changes that have brought into the lives of people in Kasaragod district through the various tourism projects both economic as well as social. The Department of Tourism functions as a catalyst, co-coordinator and facilitator and plays a regulatory role in tourism development in the State. The other agencies include Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Tourists Resorts (Kerala) Ltd. (TRKL), Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC), The District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS), Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS) and the private sector.

1.2 History on Kasaragod

The Kasaragod District came into existence on the 24th of May 1984. The District consists of two taluks viz. Hosdurg, Kasaragod which includes 75 Revenue villages, 4 Block Panchayaths and 2 Municipalities.

It lies on the northwest boundary of Kerala. The District has its boundaries South Canara district in the north, Coorg district in the east, Kannur district in the south and the Lakshadweep sea in the west. Naturally the land is divided as low land and mid land. Sandy alluvial and laterite are the type of soil. Hilly Villages are on the eastern side of this district luxuriant with green vegetation and plantation crops. The Kasaragod is experienced with an average climate. The temperature in the plains rises to mean maximum temperature during the South West monsoon. The average annual

rainfall is about 3500 m.m. Paddy, Coconut, Arecanut, Cashew, and Pepper. Rubber and Tapioca are the main crops grown here. Tobacco is also cultivated in Ajanoor and Pallikara Panchayaths of Hosdurg Taluk and in Chengala Panchayat of Kasaragod Taluk. This District may claim the monopoly of Arecanut cultivation. The District is blessed with beautiful backwaters. Kumbala, Kalanad, Bekal, Chithari and Kavvai are the backwaters. The colourful and ritualistic folk art like Theyyam is performed here. Yakshagana, a colourful dance drama of Kannada in origin is also popularly performed here and that too sometimes in Malayalam. Hence, the people are influence by a blend of Kannada and Malayalam culture. Purakkali is a folk dance of the District of its own. Bekal Fort is a special tourist area of growing importance. Ranipuram and kottancherry hills are the places of striking natural beauty. The Bekal Tourism Development Corporation has been established to develop the tourist centres of the district, under its programme Nithyananda Ashram & Anandashram at Kanhangad are the two ashrams of international fame. Edneer mutt, which is belonged to Sankaracharya tradition, is a seat of learning and knowledge.

A study done by equation which is a tourism based organisation which has been conducting a study since last eight years .This study also states about special tourism area which is a part of national tourism policy. Some of the areas which were focused during the study were:

- **Land requirement:** The Bekal project also requires land and how much is government land how much land is required.

1. What is the total financial outlay for this project?
2. Infrastructure investment contribution by state or central government.
3. What is the contribution of Kerala government?
4. Who has already entered into any contract or understanding with any private companies or and international funding agency planning or executing of the project?
5. How are the basic infrastructure facilities (roads, railways, water, electricity and transport facilities etc.) Employment opportunities training and skill development of the employees.

- **Marketing thrust of the project**

1. Foreign advertising or public relation agencies been hired to promote the project internationally?
2. What are the tourist's facilities planned what categories (Star-rating) of hotels are required?
3. What are the proposed entertainment alternative for tourists?
4. What are the measures taken to protect basic ecological features like water, air and land?
5. What are the steps taken to safeguard the flora and fauna?
6. What is the estimated carrying capacity of Bekal as a tourist attraction?
7. What are the provisions made for the adequate water supply? How will be the waste water be managed.

1.3 History of Bekal

Kasaragod, the northern district of Malabar, is a land of forts. Large number of forts, big and small, like Bekal, Chandragiri, Hosdurg, Kumbala etc. reveals the historical importance of this land. Bekal, situated on the seashore of Pallikara village, is an important place of

tourist interest in the district. It lies 12 kilometres south of Kasaragod town. The Bekal fort, which is of great historical and archaeological interest is the largest and best preserved of its kind in the district and the land on which it is situated, runs into the sea with fine bay towards the south. The Fort appears to have been built up from the seas since almost three fourth of its exterior is drenched and the waves do the stroke the citadel. The Hanuman temple and the ancient Muslim mosque nearby hold testimony to the age-old religious harmony that prevailed in the area. The zig-zag entrance and the trenches around the Fort show the defence strategy connected with the Fort. Bekal served as an important military station of Tipu Sultan when he led the great military expedition to capture Malabar. During the reign of the Company, Bekal became the headquarters of the newly organized Bekal Taluk of South Canara District in Bombay Presidency. South Canara became a part of the Madras Presidency in 1862 and the Kasaragod Taluk was set up in the place of the Bekal Taluk. Kasaragod became part of Kerala with the State reorganization in 1956. Presently the protection and preservation of Bekal Fort has been entrusted to the Archaeological Survey of India.

1.4 Bekal as a Special Tourism Area

In 1992, the Government of India declared Bekal as a Special Tourism Area. Extremely scenic landscape, extensive beaches, numerous estuaries and backwaters and unspoilt environs qualified Bekal as a potential site for an international standard beach destination. Bekal is described as the most potential beach destination in India as the country has a very few comparable locations that

offer the diversity of attractions to be found in Bekal. Yet, unlike most other existing resort destinations which are close to a major urban centre, and thus 101 already overdeveloped, the Bekal area is still virgin and pristine. The basic thrust of Bekal Project is sustainable tourism and is considered in terms of the socio-economic and environmental sustainability.

1.5 Bekal Project: India's First Planned Beach Destination

In an effort to develop potential beach locations in the country, a survey was conducted by the Government of India in 1990. The survey identified Bekal as potential locale for the development of beach resort destination. In 1992, the Government of India declared Bekal as "Special Tourism Area" for integrated resort development. Thereafter, the Government of Kerala entrusted a multidisciplinary team consisting of planners, landscape architects, urban and transport specialists, structural consultants and tourism leisure industry experts with the preparation of project blue print for the development of Bekal. The Bekal Project envisages setting up of an integrated beach destination at Bekal and also developing social infrastructure in the region.

The BRDC conducted systematic surveys of the region through Centre for Earth Science Studies (CESS) and has already taken over 178 hectares of land, of which 24 hectares are set apart for resort centres and 75 hectares for housing sites. Programmes like water supply, total sanitation, waste incineration, road construction and installation of street lights are being implemented in the project area.

➤ Development Strategy

While formulating the development strategy for BRDC, it is observed that the planners were very particular to consider the following:

- Minimize loss of existing agricultural land and to strengthen the resource base for traditional sectors like fishing and agriculture.
- Provide employment to the locals.
- Protect the bio-diversity of the area, and safeguard the interests of Fishermen and farmers.
- Keep a check on the commercialization of cultural values and art forms.

➤ **Basic infrastructure**

- The basic infrastructure of the land includes power, water supply, communication, road networks, street lighting, public amenities and tourist attraction facilities. Some of the works completed include:
 - Development of Panchayat roads .
 - Extension of HT line upto resort site is complete
 - Commissioned various techno-economic feasibility studies.
 - A 7 mid water supply scheme estimated to cost Rs. 12 crores .
 - A pilot scheme for solid waste disposal scheme in association with Panchayat

➤ **Tourism Amenities/Facilities**

To offer varied experience to tourists within a short distance and time, attractive tourist spots have been developed nearby. Such facilities include:

- Thanal Vishrama Kendram (tourist facility near Bekal Fort)
- Beautification of the surrounding areas of the Bekal Fort
- Seaside pathway along the Bekal Fort

- Erection of display and signboards in Kasaragod district
- Public beach at Pallikkara near Bekal Fort
- Aqua Park and Chandragiri Boat Club
- House boating cruise in Tejaswini backwaters in Valiyaparamba
- Backwater Tourism - Houseboat
- Children's parks at Bekal Fort and Thanal Vishrama Kendram
- Trekking and adventure tourism
- Setting up of Eco lodges and other tourism products
- International standard water sports centre
- Theme Parks
- Augmenting facilities for tourists visiting Bekal

1.6 Bekal Resort Development Corporation (BRDC)

Established in the year 1995 to develop Bekal as an international standard 'Beach Tourist Destination', Bekal Resorts Development Corporation Ltd (BRDC) is a prestigious project in Kerala. The Chairman of this corporation is the Chief Secretary to Government of Kerala. Many Senior Government officials work as the Directors and Managing Director to BRDC. The corporation mainly plans to focus on eco-friendly and ecologically viable methods of development.

To set comprehensive tourism infrastructure and to ensure the development beneficial to the local community is the main goal of this corporation. BRDC provides support and assistance for almost all the new ventures happening in and around Bekal. By observing specific parameters on the carrying capacity of the region, sustainable limits, architectural guidelines,

environmental safeguards and coastal regulations, the Bekal Project is planned, by BRCD.

To strengthening the existing infrastructure like roads, power supply, sanitation, lighting and water supply are another persuasive role of BRDC. By inviting more investors and promoters, various developmental processes can be carried out in Bekal. BRDC will also be responsible for the speedy implementation of the project. Some of the major responsibilities of BRCD are:

Organize scientific studies and surveys for the balanced and planned development of the destination, to facilitate tourism development of the area by setting up necessary infrastructure facilities like water and power supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal and road.

The Government of India developed a Special Tourism Area scheme to attract investments in lesser known destinations which had huge potential to be developed as major beach destinations. Bekal was categorized as one such exclusive area. Bekal is a spellbinding region which offers a great time to the tourists and travellers. The 300 year old Bekal Fort has an irresistible old world charm surrounded by enchanting landscapes of beaches, backwaters and hill stations. A popular spot of artistic elegance, Bekal is also known for its magical traditions. This quiet little seaside village in the northernmost district of Kerala has every ingredient that would go into the creation of an international standard beach destination.

Here there are various serene and breathtaking virgin beaches, a fort of historical significance by the main beach, calm and peaceful ambience, friendly enterprising people, and two major airports

within about 140 km and acres of beautiful land that holds unlimited.

1.7 Bekal Aseco-Friendly Destination

The Bekal game plan incorporates simple and systematic stages like development of potential sites, strengthening of the infrastructure – roads, power, water supply and sewage systems, inviting investments from around the world marketing of Bekal as a destination and coordinating development at every level. The structure, plan and guidelines for the Bekal Project has been drawn up by the Bekal Tourism Authority (BTA). Efforts are on to ensure Bekal remains green and pristine. For this purpose, BRDC will ensure development as per environment parameters at all stages of development. An extensive environment management programme that includes water management and waste disposal methods using eco-friendly technology has also been designed.

Investment

Bekal is a promising world to invest and has a wide variety of investment opportunities. Here you can invest in what will soon be India's well-planned beach destination and Asia's finest.

The first phase which includes land development i.e. levelling of ground, fencing and lighting has been completed and 76 hectares out of the total 137 sq. km verdant landscape is ready to be handed over as six sites – each with its own unique attraction. At the resort sites, tourism related infrastructure will be regulated by exacting standards which will check the mushrooming of inferior quality establishments.

On the same time BRCD ensured that development is beneficial to the local community. Thereafter Government of Kerala entrusted a multidisciplinary team consisting of planners, landscape

architects, urban and transport specialists, structural consultants and tourism, leisure industry experts with the preparation of project of project blueprint for the development of Bekal. The Bekal project is planned and coordinated by BRCD observing specific parameter on the carrying capacity of the region such as architectural guidelines, sustainable limits, coastal regulation and environmental safeguards. In 2015 Kerala tourism department decided to launch a new campaign to promote Bekal and famed 17th century fort with an aim to develop it into an international holiday hotspot. Chief Minister Mr. Omen Chandy, government of Kerala inaugurated this promotional campaign “ Know Bekal” to showcase this wonderful destination .The campaign kicked off at Bekal with a familiarization (FAM) tour for travel professionals and stakeholder sessions to discuss tourism strategies, this was done with the series of road shows, open theatres ,light and sound displays ,information kiosks would be installed at major destination and airport and Bekal tourism would also get promotion at international trade fair.

To improve the accessibility to Bekal, government planned airstrips by investing Rs 100 Crores .It has also planned to develop six five star luxury resorts in the town. This plan mainly showcase the fastest transformation taking place in the town like improvement in transport, infrastructure, construction of luxury resort in the town, improvement of backwater tour facilities, beach amenities and the introduction of new adventure ,culture and eco-tourism activities. Bekal is also known for beach ,backwater and hill tourism. BRCD also takes the initiatives to promote the other attractions of Bekal such as

backwater, rich cultural heritage and adventure activities like water and aero sports besides the magnificent sea-facing Bekal fort which was built in 1640 as a defence post. This fort is currently protected by the Archaeological survey of India (ASI).The organisation had also invited investors and promoters from the country to devising strategies for marketing Bekal as planned tourism destination.

The aim of this projects is to organise scientific studies and survey for the balanced and planned destination and to set up necessary infrastructure facilities like water supply and power supply, sanitation and solid waste disposal and road and also to develop and improve existing as well as new tourists attraction in and around the area. Bekal have three major nearest railway station, Kerala already submitted a proposal to announce Bekal railway station as the Kerala’s first tourists railways station. The Bekal Project envisages setting up of an integrated beach destination at Bekal, with the objective of developing tourism including social infrastructure in the region. Many new hotels and resorts of large groups have been established in the district in and around the Bekal area as well as on the beach sides. The development of various tourism products has been highly beneficial to the local community and these people living around the destination has shown a positive approach towards these development projects.

1.8 Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC)

The Kerala Tourism development corporation is a public sector undertaking conducts and regulates the tourism activities of the Indian state of Kerala. The

headquarter at Thiruvanthapuram and has office across all the district of Kerala. The official host to Gods own country. Kerala is a leading tourist destination and provides highest quality hospitality services to tourists and act as one source destination for various information regarding tourists destination and other related information.

KITTS was established by the ministry of tourism government of Kerala on world tourism day in 1988. KITTS is a member of TAAI and IATO .KITS has also started a study centre at Thalasseri and alleppey. In 2014 the Bekal tourism project has received Rs. 1.5 crores for the development and maintaining of street lights ,roads and basic amenities for tourists .Now Bekal nearly have 3.5 lakh annual visits and the Bekal fort is the top choice for the most of them.

1.9 Attraction in Bekal

- **Light and Sound**

A comprehensive beautification project of State Tourism Department aimed at developing Bekal Fort as a major tourist destination in the region has secured the approval of Central government. An estimated Rs 5 crore beatification plan includes a light and sound show to shed light on the history of the Fort and special lighting arrangements in the construction. Following the model of Hyderabad’s Golconda Fort, a 45-minute-long light and sound show will narrate the history and significance of the Bekal Fort. A special venue with 220 seats will be constructed near the guest house for the show. Apart from Malayalam, the narration will go on in Kannada and English languages too. The script of the programme needs to be endorsed by the Archaeological department,” said Nagesh, Secretary,

District Tourism Promotion Council. Currently the Fort opens for the visitors at 9.30 a.m. and closes at 6 p.m. Once the light and sound show is launched, the time will be extended to 8 p.m. he added. Situated on the outskirts of Kasaragod town, the historic fort is already attracting a large number of tourists from neighbouring states including coastal Karnataka.

Shivappa Nayaka of Bednore had reportedly constructed the Bekal Fort in 1650AD. It served as an important military station of Tipu Sultan when he led the great military expedition to capture Malabar. The death of Tipu Sulthan in Fourth Anglo-Mysore War in 1799 saw the end of Mysore an control and subsequently the fort came under the British East India Company.

2.0 Role of Tourism Agencies in Kerala

Tourism agencies such as (private and public) play a significant role in tourism development of Kerala. The Department of Tourism functions as a catalyst, co-coordinator and facilitator and plays a regulatory role in tourism development in the State. The other agencies include Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Tourists Resorts (Kerala) Ltd. (TRKL), Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC), The District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS), Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS) and the private sector.

- **Department of Tourism**

The Department of Tourism had its beginning in the State Guest Department and Hospitality Organisation of the Cochin State. At that time, the functioning of the

Department was confined to look after the comforts of the Guest . A few palaces and State Guest Houses were used for accommodating the Guests and a small fleet of cars and boats maintained for their transport needs. The State Guest Department as a small unit was started during 1930 . It also functions as the Estate office for accommodation of VIPs like ministers are concerned. Their conveyance needs are also managed by the Tourist Department. Although the Department continues to handle the hospitality function of the State, more emphasis is now given to promotion, planning and development of tourism. It was only during the Seventh Plan that the tourism promotion activities found a place in the functioning of the Deframed as Department of Tourism. Place in the functioning of the Department of Tourism."

- **Major Functions**

The Department of Tourism has three major functions;

- (i) Hospitality wing of the State Government
- (ii) Estate Office Duty and
- (iii) Tourism Development.

(i) **Hospitality wing:** The Department provides accommodation and transport to the State Guests including VIPs and VVIPs. It maintains 24 Guest Houses at important centres such as Kovalam, Thiruvananthapuram, Varkala, Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Aluva, Devikulam, Munnar, Peerumade, Cheruthuruthy, Idukkl, Thrissur, Guruvayoor, Kozhikode, Sulthan Battery, Kannur, Kasaragod, Yathri Nivases at Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam and Kerala Houses at Kanyakumari and New Delhi.

(ii) **Estate Office Duty:** It is the responsibility of the Department of Tourism to provide furnished Residential Bungalows to the Ministers, Leader of Opposition, Chief Whip, Speaker etc.

(iii) **Tourism Development:** The objective of tourism development in Kerala is to achieve growth in a sustainable manner through Development of selected tourist destinations with proper planning for development so as to retain high quality of aesthetic and environmental beauty and to develop the destinations in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner;

- Development of special tourism sectors such as health tourism, adventure tourism, plantation tourism, rural tourism besides backwater tourism
- Promotion of domestic tourism especially pilgrim tourism; Continuation of extensive and aggressive marketing of Kerala as an international tourism destination; New market development.
- Strengthening local tourism initiated by local Government; Sustainable development by conservation and preservation of cultural heritage.
- Provision of quality services in the form of regulation and monitoring.
- Development of basic infrastructure in terms of roads, power, drinking water, and communication and solid waste disposal/effective waste management and disposal.
- Human resource development
- Infrastructure development through private sector and private-public sector partnership with Government acting as a facilitator and Catalyst.

Department of Tourism is also directly involved in infrastructure and destination development in less developed area to

attract others to invest in these areas which involves some of the activities to attract tourists:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Planning and Development
- Support to other agencies which include media advertisement, printing and distribution of multi-colour brochures, hospitality to travel writers, conducting festivals, participating in National and International fairs and festivals etc.

➤ **Infrastructure Development**

- Development of Veil as an international tourist centre construction of tourist information centre with modern facilities etc. have been undertaken by the Department.
- Beach cleaning and lifeguard services are regularly offered. Development of a sewage disposal system has been initiated.
- The Department initiated activities such as construction of pathways, lighting etc.
- Intensive backwater development, the Department is giving thrust for the development of basic infrastructure along the backwaters of the State for tourism promotion.

2.1 Role of Private Sector

- Tourism is basically a private sector activity. The private sector too has a major role in the promotion of tourism in the State. To encourage more private 108 participation in the development of the Industry, the State Government has declared various attractive incentives and subsidies to investors .Amusement Parks, Recreation Centres and Exclusive Handicrafts Emporia approved by the Kerala State Department of Tourism are eligible for financial concessions /incentives.

- The private sector in Kerala has been able to spread tourism to hitherto virgin areas in the State like Marari, Vythiri, Kalpetta, Mananthavady, Poovar etc. The boutique hotels and resorts of Kerala have also established as a destination for upscale tourists. By preserving and showcasing the unique natural and cultural attractions of Kerala, the tourism trade also contributed to the sustainability of the destination. Non resident Keralites have also identified tourism as a high growth sector area for investment.
- The tour operators have also played a key role in the development of tourism in Kerala like Thomas Cook, SITA, TCI, UVI, etc. feature Kerala prominently in their national and international holiday brochures with popular itineraries to Kerala. A number of homebred Tour Operators like Kerala Travels, Great India Tour Company, Pioneer Travels etc. with exhaustive knowledge of the State have also established themselves as niche players in Kerala's tourism industry. A Joint Task Force focusing on private - public partnership is now working in the State with major actors of the industry as members to act as advisors in the tourism development activities. Amusement Park in Veil, tourism infrastructures at Bekal, development of Pathiramanal, Akkulam, Vagamon etc. are some of the initiatives undertaken through private - public partnership. TRKL is the agency involved in promoting joint ventures in tourism sector.

2.2 Tourism Promotion and Marketing

During the Ninth Plan, the Department of Tourism concentrated more on tourism promotion and publicity. Kerala tourism

has been participating in all the international and domestic tourism trade fairs along with the private sector. As part of its promotional efforts, Kerala Tourism has participated in the following major international fairs.

- RATA Annual Conference
- RATA Travel Mart-05, Malaysia
- China International Travel Mart, China
- ITB Berlin, WTM London and ATM Dubai
- Sri Lanka Travel Mart-05
- BIT-06, Milan
- FITUR-06, Spain

To reduce seasonality in tourist arrivals, major "Monsoon and Ayurveda Campaign" has been launched in the Gulf region. The Department of Tourism organized road shows at major cities in the country to tap new targeted markets. New package with Indian Airlines has been launched to promote new tourism package to the State. A new Rail Tourism package has been launched for tourists visiting Kerala by allotting an air conditioned coach in Mumbai - Thiruvananthapuram sector.

Traditional festivals of Kerala are also being promoted in the State. The following are some of the major festivals and fairs conducted by the Department:

- Kerala Travel Mart
- India International Boat Show
- Mystique of Malabar
- Nishagandhi Dance and Music Festival
- Onam week celebrations
- Flavour Food Festival

Tourism Kiosk has been installed at three international airports in Kerala viz., Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. 'Touch Screen Information Kiosk', the audio visual database

developed by the Department of Tourism provides information on the physical and cultural landscape of Kerala. The system serves as a reliable guide and a confirmation point before a visitor starts exploring 'God's Own Country'. All the information centres and the offices of the department have been computerized to make the dissemination of information fast and effective.

The advertisement clips developed by the best professionals in the area have been telecast in the major international television channels. Kerala tourism's campaign is now featured in CNN, BBC and Discovery Channels. Kerala is the first Indian destination to be featured in the Discovery Channel. Kerala was also the first Indian destination to be featured in CNN's Sight and Sounds info commercial programme, which was telecast in Europe, Asia and Asia Pacific beams

• **Clean Destination Programme**

Department of Tourism has introduced a scheme called 'Clean Destination Programme' for upgrading the quality of destination by up keeping them in clean and hygiene conditions. 'Kudumbashree' is entrusted as the executing agency of this campaign. Kudumbashree are self-help groups functioning all over the State with Government support on operations and organizational.

In partnership with Local Self Governments, the new project is to ensure tourist friendly environment in the villages. Alappuzha to be back as the 'Venice of the East'

The Department of Tourism has decided to develop Alappuzha as a major tourist destination. Various projects are being taken up for the development of

backwaters of Alappuzha, cleaning up of various canals in the district etc. Government of India has sanctioned the following projects at Alappuzha during 2005-06:

- Rejuvenation of heritage canal
- Development of Backwater Tourism Complex, Alappuzha
- Backwater-front walkway, Punnamada
- Beach beatification

Kerala Travel Mart , India's premier international travel mart, witnessed the participation of trade from new markets like USA, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Sweden.

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- **Dubai Shopping Festival 2004:** Kerala was the Theme State at the Indian pavilion at the world's largest shopping festival in Dubai. Tourism, culture, handicrafts and the Islamic heritage of the State were the major highlights of Kerala presence. As part of its promotional efforts, Kerala tourism entered new markets and participated in new international trade fairs. These include OTDYKH Leisure, Russia, China International Tour Mart, RATA Travel Mart, Singapore, and Colombo Travel Mart.
- **Road Shows :** To market Kerala to a wide range of domestic audience, road shows are being held in new destinations in India,

identified as potential markets. The first set of road shows were held in Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai and the second set were held in Goa, Jaipur, Surat, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Pune, Kolkata. Sadya, Kerala food festival and God's Own Moments, a photo exhibition on Kerala were part of the Bangalore Road Show.

- **Encouragement to the private sector through incentives:** Nowadays the Department is giving stress on public - private partnership in promotion. The promotional activities are being undertaken with continuous interaction with stakeholders in tourism. The Department of Tourism has decided to float joint venture companies with private sector participation for implementing three projects for the promotion of health and spiritual tourism and to cater to the demand of trained personnel for tourism and hospitality industry.

As a part of encouraging private sector investments in the State, the concessions and incentives announced for tourism projects include investment subsidies, electricity tariff concession, technical guidance, marketing assistance, publicity through Government publications, and help in availing loans.

- **Tourism Vision 2025**

Government of Kerala has published its Draft Tourism Vision 2025. This is intended to serve as a guiding force which will provide a clear vision and direction for optimal use of the tourism potential of the State in a sustainable manner.

Quality assurance through classification and monitoring, Conservation of heritage sites, development of tourism oriented Infrastructure, Promotion of souvenir

industry, and Developments of specific tourism products like eco-tourism, ethnic cuisine and Ayurveda, tourists' security and so on.

2.3 Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC)

Among the various agencies involved in development of tourism in the State, the Department of Tourism plays a significant role. The functions of the Department of Tourism are service oriented and not profit motivated. The Department of Tourism is the apex body in the State to monitor, supervise and regulate the various promotion activities of tourism in Kerala. Some of the initiatives by KTDC.

- **Helicopter Tourism**

This is also known as heli-tourism. It involves flying tourists in a helicopter to the tourist spots of the State. The heli-tourism product is a new initiative to enable tourists to travel from one destination to another with the double benefit of cutting down on travel time while enjoying a bird's eye-view of the unique beauty of the State. Recently KTDC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Deccan Aviation to commence helicopter services linking major tourist destinations in Kerala. The Corporation has launched a seven nights/eight days package connecting Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Munnar, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram to begin the service. The package costs Rs. 5 lakhs, which includes helicopter charges, local transport, food and accommodation for five persons. The 30-minute "bird's eye-view" package that covers beach, backwater, and hill station for five people costs Rs. 35000.

- **Conducted Tours**

Conducted tours are aimed at sightseeing on a scheduled basis. Unlike conducted tours in important tourism destination in other states, the tours conducted by KTDC are running on heavy losses. According to tourists, the tours of KTDC are not attractive to them. They are of the opinion that the Corporation does not take interest to popularize the tour programmes. A number of tour programmes which had been operated by KTDC were cancelled for the reason that they were not found to be commercially viable. As in the case of accommodation units of KTDC which are highly concentrated in the southern parts of Kerala, it does not operate any conducted tour in any part of Malabar.

- **Tourist Resorts (Kerala) Limited**

TRKL is a subsidiary of the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation. It has been declared by the Government as the nodal agency for promoting private sector investment in the tourism sector in the State. The Company has established two joint sector companies - Taj Kerala Hotels and Resorts Limited (TKRL) and Oberoi Kerala Hotels and Resorts Limited (OKHRL) in association with Taj and Oberoi groups of hotels. Under the Taj Kerala Hotels and Resorts, the company has the following properties:

1. Taj Residency, Marine Drive, Ernakulam
2. Taj Garden Retreat, Kumarakom
3. Taj Garden Retreat, Varkala
4. Taj Garden Retreat, Thekkady

Recently the State government has decided to merge Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC) and Tourist Resorts Kerala Ltd (TRKL) with the objective of capitalizing the high level of synergy between the two organisations. Both

companies work in the area of resort development. BRDC has built up an excellent resource base and has a number of skilled personnel on its staff, while TRKL has entered into partnerships with the Taj and Oberoi hotel groups. It is expected that the merged entity would make it possible for Kerala Tourism to leverage the joint expertise of the two companies.

2.4 Women Participation in Development of Bekal Fort

This study on understanding the extend of local community participation, mainly women will be of high relevance, particularly in a district like Kasaragod which has developed over recent years by utilizing its tourism potentials to the core. Local community participation in tourism is one of the important factors leading to the growth of tourism projects in Kasaragod district. The Bekal Project envisages setting up of an integrated beach destination at Bekal, with the objective of developing tourism including social infrastructure in the region. BRDC conducted systematic surveys of the region through CESS (Centre for Earth Science Studies) and has developed 76 hectares (189 acres) of land that is ideal for setting up resorts. Many new hotels and resorts of large groups have been established in the district in and around the Bekal area as well as on the beach sides. The development of various tourism products has been highly beneficial to the local community and these people living around the destination has shown a positive approach towards these development projects.

The local women population mainly belongs to Hindu and Muslim community. The involvement of local community in

tourism development activities is less in Bekal and people are involved in other jobs such as fishing and agriculture. It is found that the local community of Bekal is not aware of the benefits tourism development can bring into their lives and the local community as well and this makes them less interested in participating in tourism development activities. Many of the women in Bekal are not going for any job and are happy as homemakers, and a negligible number of women out of the few who go for job are only involved in tourism related jobs.

The women's community of Bekal are not well educated and are not aware enough to do any tourism related job. Local women in Bekal believe that tourism related jobs provide enough safety & security to women and are suitable for them as well. Though the women in Bekal know that Bekal is a major tourist attraction of India, they are not interested in knowing how the local community can be benefited through tourism development. Women working in tourism related jobs in Bekal are mainly doing unskilled jobs such as a housemaid at the resort or in the small shops near to Bekal Fort. Almost all the skilled or technical jobs related to tourism development are handled by men, among whom many are from Kasaragod district itself. Family restrictions and lack of time are the major reasons behind women in Bekal not participating in tourism development activities. People of Bekal believe that tourism development has increased employment opportunities for both men & women to a certain extend. Women working in tourism related jobs are highly satisfied with their work environment and this job is the main source of family income for many of them

Research Methodology

➤ **Scope of the Study**

- The scope of the research is it will be helpful for the public /private sector
- The study also shows that travel operators, travel agents and accommodation providers are eyeing health and medical tourism as a segment with tremendous potential for future growth.
- This study is also helpful for the students, stakeholder, and research scholars and for the Government employees.

➤ **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the role of local community involvement in general and women's participation in particular in the development of tourism;
- To public and the private sectors to invest in tourism
- To study the role of BRDC in Kasargod tourism
- To suggest measures to increase women's participation in tourism development.

➤ **Need for the Study**

- The research problem identified were the host community who are unaware of the benefits from tourism and mainly the local community is involved in fishing and agriculture. Though Bekal is a major tourist attraction of India, the host community is not interested in knowing how the local community can be benefited through tourism development.
- .Family restrictions and lack of time are the major reasons behind women in Bekal not participating in tourism development activities.

➤ **Data Analysis**

- Families living very close to the Bekal Fort are unhappy with the activities of the BRDC as they do not allow these people to do any construction work on their own land or even for the renovation of their houses. This has led to the grievance of the local community against BRDC.

➤ **Sources of Data**

The data for the study is collected from primary and secondary sources .The secondary data and the relevant material were collected from the magazines, internet, article etc. Primary data was collected by distributing Questionnaires among host community and tourists(domestic and international) was distributed to know the involvement directly or indirectly in tourism development activities of Kasaragod district.

➤ **Sample Size**

The sample size used for this research was 60 and my target audience were the host community, domestic tourists and international tourists. A structures questionnaire was constructed based on the objectives framed for the study which was used to collect the required data.

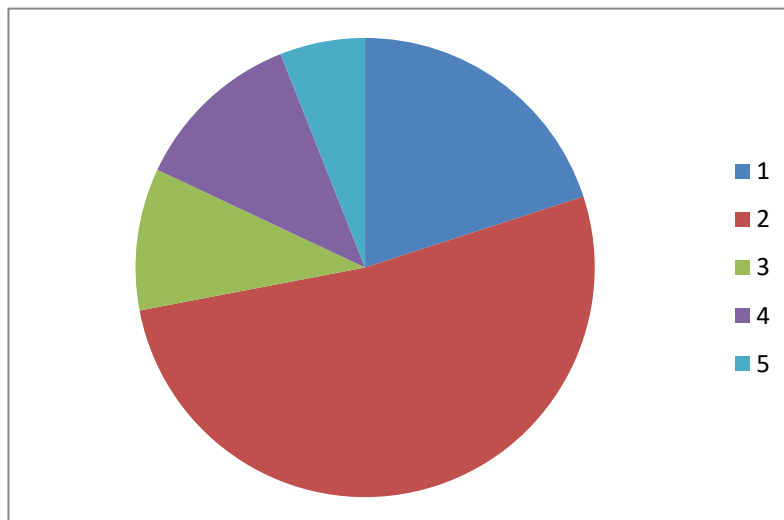
➤ **Research Tool**

The tools used were the close ended questionnaires and use of excel sheets.

➤ **Research Gap**

The research gap here was the study on women involvement and participation in tourism development.

Fig:1. Bekal fort attracts both domestic and international tourists.

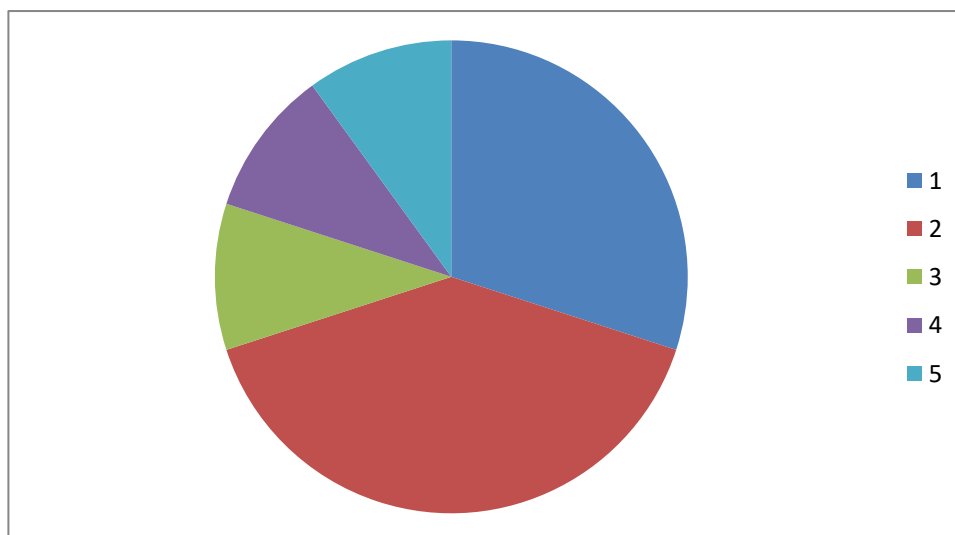


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram show that 52% of tourist is attracted by the Bekal fort and the destination is able to satisfy both international and domestic tourist. Only 6% shows that people are not satisfied.

Fig 2. Bekal Tourism Development Corporation is responsible for transforming Bekal fort into International destination

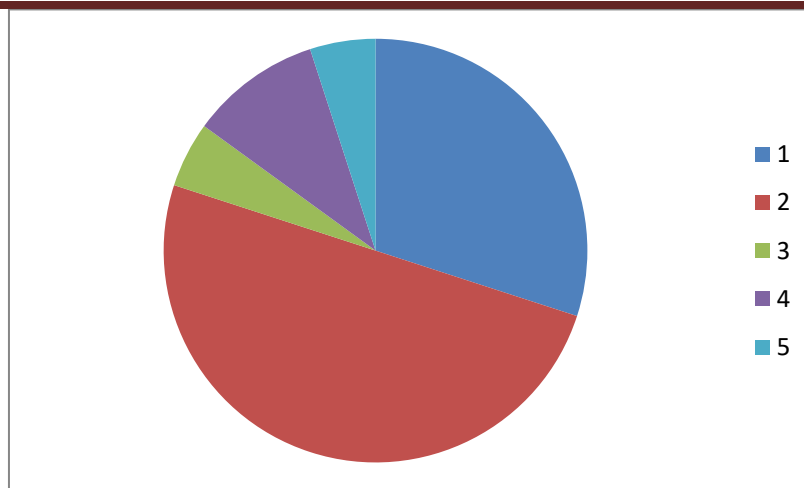


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

BRCD is able to transform Bekal fort into a international destination .40% people agree with the development program and are satisfied with the various practices and training programmes, sponsored by BRCD towards the growth of Bekal fort.

Fig 3. Kerala tourism encourages the local community to participate towards the development of destination.

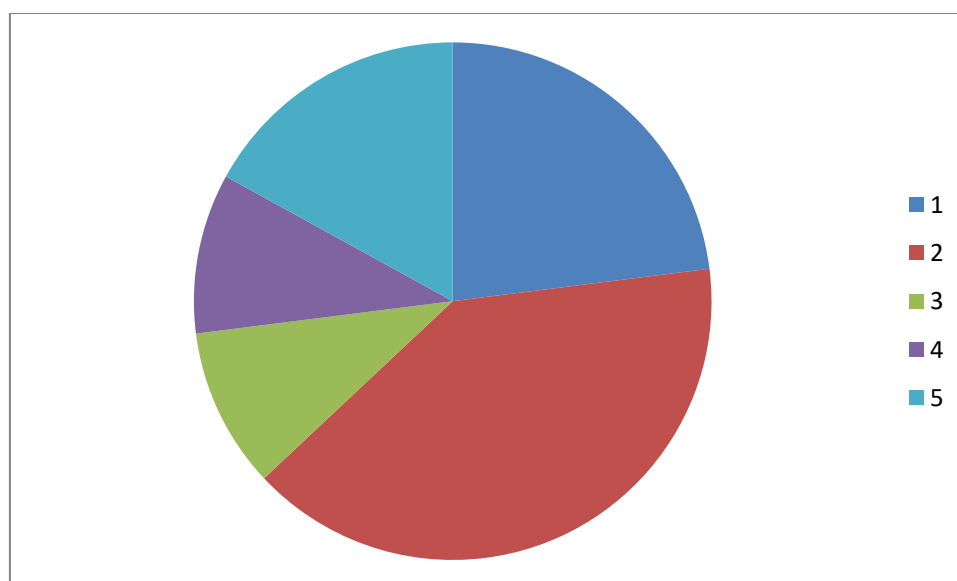


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The diagram above shows that around 50% of the local community involve themselves for the development of Bekal fort as well as the destination. Local community do contribute their time and effort for the growth of the destination by coming up with various tourism products.

Fig 4. Tourism provides employment opportunities for the local communities.

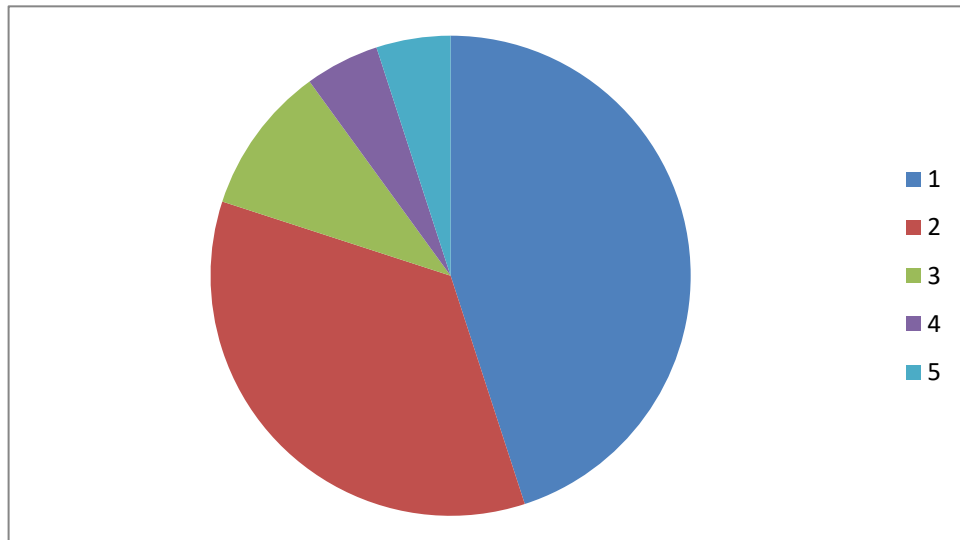


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram show that because of tourism 40% of the local community get the opportunity to get employed .Basically the local community is involved in fishing and agriculture whereas tourism has become the primary source for their income.

Fig 5. BRCD is able to transform the destination as one of the niche holiday destination in India

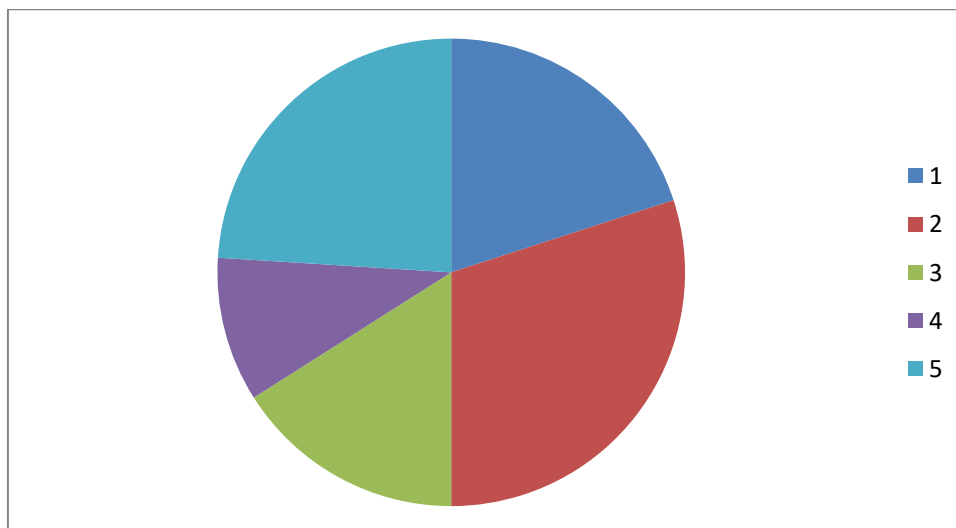


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram shows that the about 45% people agree that BRCD is able to transform the destination as a niche or special tourist's area. Around 35% strongly agree that Bekal offers activities and attraction for the tourists.

Fig 6. Kasargod holds the potential to develop as international standard beach destination.

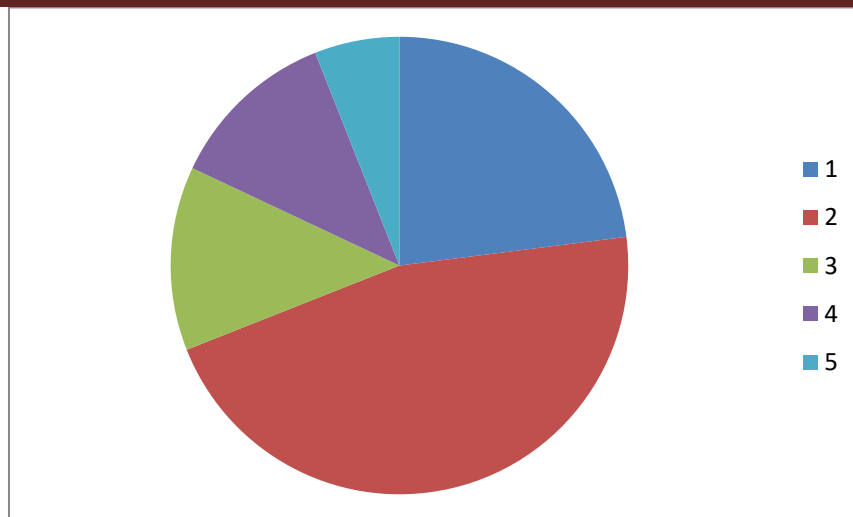


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

Bekal is able to attract the tourist both from domestic and international and BRCD is able to promote the destination as international beach destination. Bekal is one of the first declared beach destination in India and according to the pie chart 30% people strongly agree.

Fig 7. BRCD is involved in developing and improvement of infrastructure of Bekal.

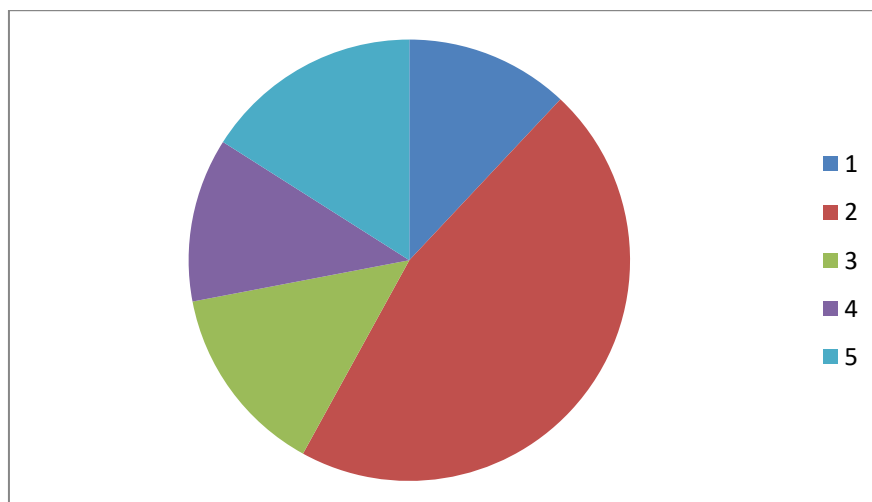


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above pie chart shows that 46% of population agree that BRCD is involved in the development and promotional activities of Bekal and also improvement in infrastructure by building resorts ,hotels and which can be accessible by tourists.23% of the tourists agree that KTCD and private and public sectors are involved in developing activities.

Fig 8. Local women in Bekal believe that tourism related job provide safety and security to them.

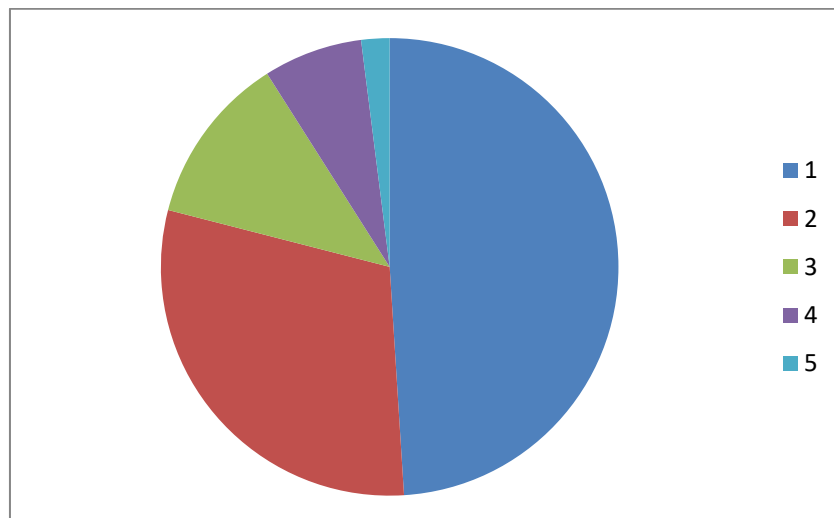


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

Around 46% of the local community believe that tourism is the safest job for women ,because it's a easy mode to earn money with little skill and training given to them whereas 12% agree that it is safe job for women.

Fig 9. Seminars are conducted for the local community to create awareness and knowledge about tourism.

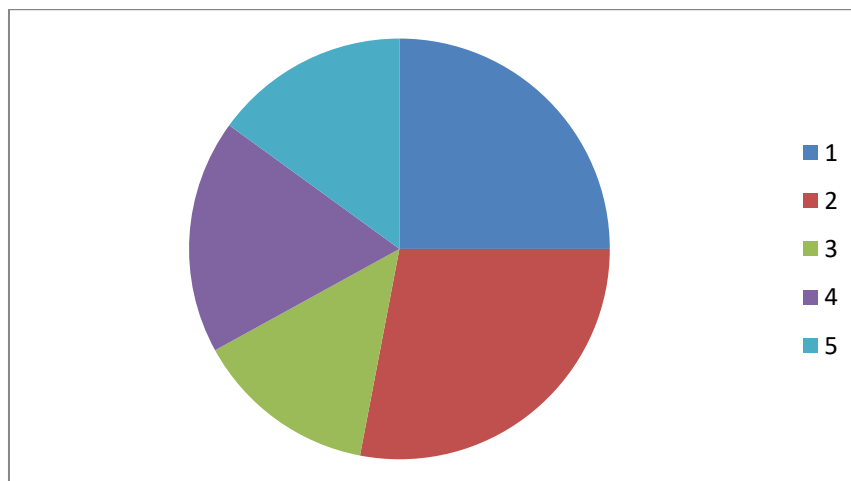


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram shows that 49% of the local community agree that training and seminars are beginning conducted by BRCDD and Kerala tourism, to create knowledge and awareness about the benefits of tourism, whereas 30% people agree that it is benefiting to them, and it is an add on advantage.

Fig 10. Public and private sector takes measures to protect land, water and flora and fauna.

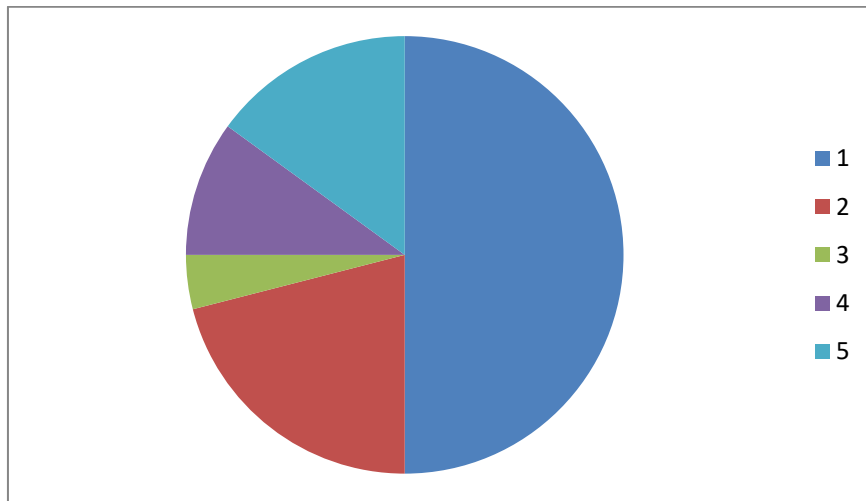


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above pie chart shows that around 28% of local community agree strongly agree that both public and private sector are involved in protecting the flora and fauna by creating the importance of tourism, whereas 25% people agree that the nature is being preserved for the welfare of tourism in Kerala.

Fig 11. Government of Kerala took the initiatives to come up with hotels and resorts in large group in and around Bekal.

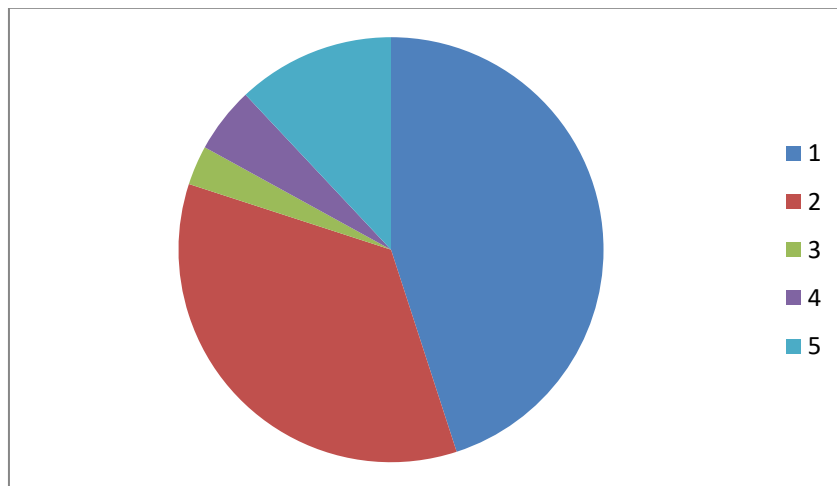


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram shows that 50% of the people agree that government of Kerala takes initiatives to come up with hotels and resort around Bekal, and provides accommodation to the tourists.

Fig 12. Training programmes are implemented for the local community to take up tourism as their living.

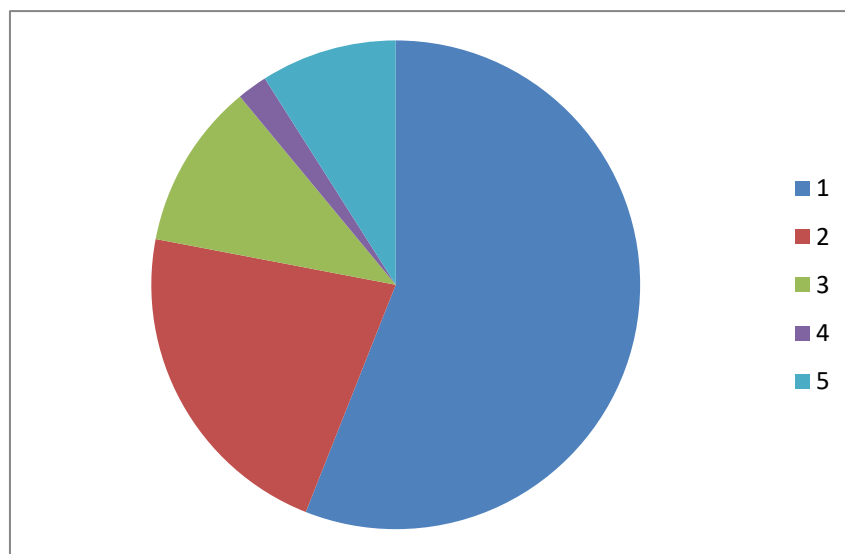


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

Around 45% of the local community take part in the training program and are actively involved in educating themselves and they understand the importance of tourism. The main source for their livelihood is agriculture and fishing so with the help of certain training program they encourage themselves to take up tourism as business.

Fig 13. The local bodies in the area should give more care in involving the local women in tourism development and a special committee must be formed to monitor the participation of women.

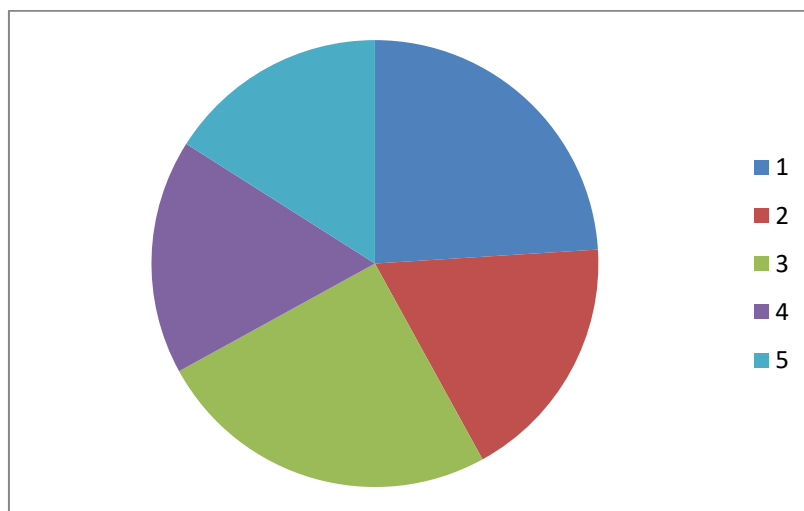


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

In the above diagram around 56% agree that women participation is encouraged and the local bodies are involved towards the development and participation of women ,and 22% strongly agree that there should be more care in involving the women and monitor their activate.

Fig 14: Local people are satisfied with government development work.

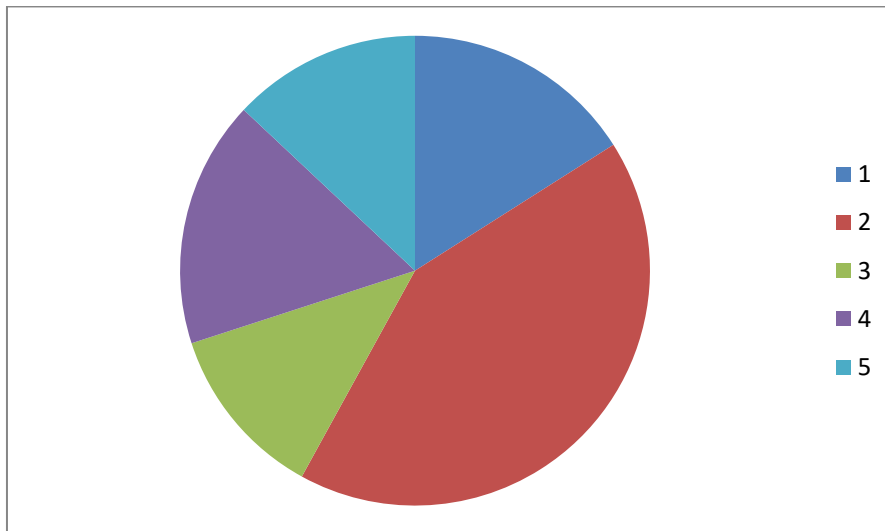


1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

Around 25% of local community have given neutral responds towards the development work done by the government, still there is certain improvement to be done in terms of infrastructure (raods,5 star hotel,4 star hotels and motels, villas, farm house). And 24% local community have agreed that the Kerala government have come up with improvement in terms of infrastructure development

Fig 15: Resident has change in their lifestyle after the development of tourism in Bekal.

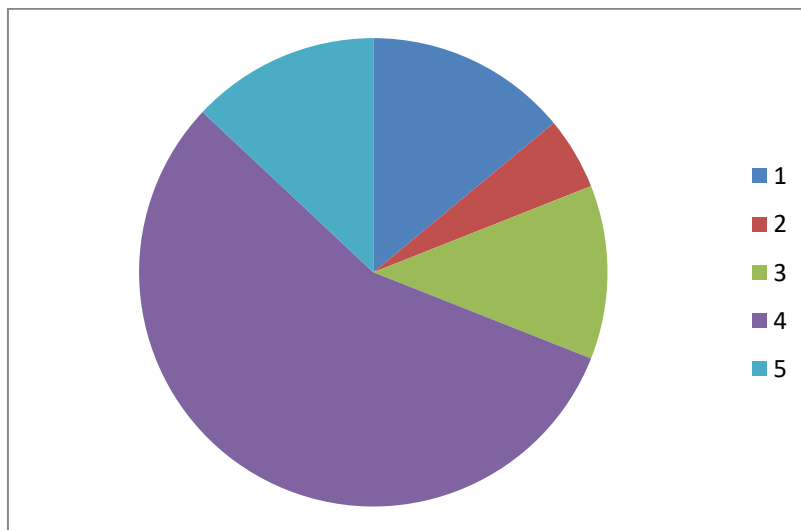


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram shows that 42% of the local community agree that because of tourism their standard of living is beginning upgraded in terms of economic, social and environmentally changes took placed and people are satisfied with the growth and development of the destination.

Fig 16: There is less involvement of women towards tourism development.

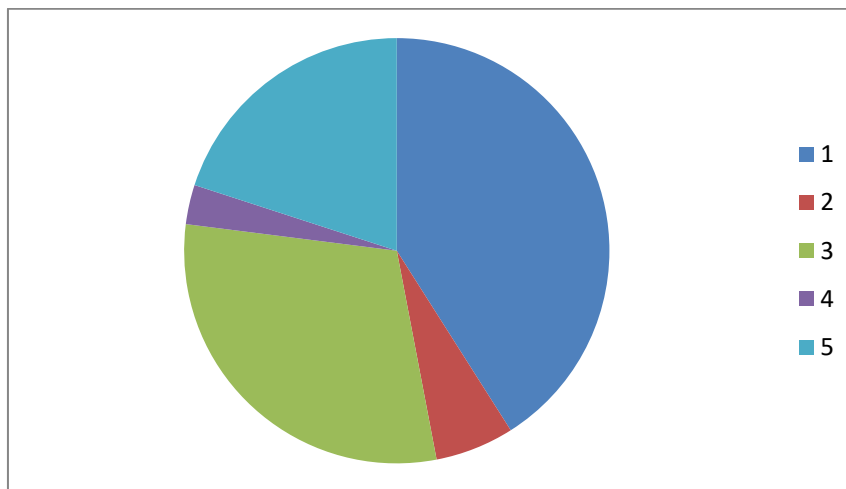


1. Agree 2.Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

According to the survey done around 56% people disagree that there is a less involvement of women towards the development of tourism. Women participation is increased according to the current scenario and they involve themselves in tourism activities like selling of goods and offering services.

Fig 17: The government of Kerala is able to transform the destination as Niche holiday destination in India.



1. Agree 2. Strongly Agree 3. Neutral 4. Disagree 5. Strongly Disagree

Interpretation

The above diagram shows that around 41% agreed that Kerala is transformed into a Niche holiday destination which offers special tourism Area for tourists and is a developed destination. Whereas around only 30% people gave a neutral response.

➤ Limitations of the Study

- The study was limited to Kasargod District
- Time constrain.
- Family restrictions and lack of time are the major reasons behind women in Bekal not participating in tourism development.
- Language was a barrier

Findings and Suggestions

➤ Findings

- The study identified that involvement of local community in tourism development activities is less in Bekal and people are involved in other jobs such as fishing and agriculture.
- The study reveals that environmental pollution is very low at Bekal.

- Increases in employment and income opportunities for the host community.
- Lack of infrastructure facilities for tourism
- It is also found that the local community of Bekal is not much aware of the benefits of tourism development that can bring huge changes and difference in their lifestyles.
- It is also observed that the host community is facing irritation because of the misbehaviour by tourists.
- It is found that increase in tourism attracting investment to Bekal and increase in business opportunities.
- It is found that residents are ready to invest their capital in local tourism business.
- The local women population mainly belongs to Hindu and Muslim community
- Women staying nearby the resorts are supplying various products to resorts such as vegetables, flowers and milk, which helps them in earning a good income.

➤ **Suggestion**

- To encourage local participation in rural areas of Kasargod
- To preserve and conservation of nature
- Provide security and infrastructure facilities for both international and domestic tourists'
- Seminars should be conducted for the students in the local schools to increase their knowledge about the importance of tourism to the local community thus ensuring increased participation by the future generation.
- To appoint efficient and qualified staff as tourist guide.
- To implement and develop programs for employment
- The host community need to give more attentions on improving their skills and also in learning about the history of Bekal by which they can act as a tourist guide.
- It also need good marketing and promotional technique required for the development of tourism at Bekal.
- Preservation of the culture and avoid negative impact of tourists
- Government must encourage beach and heritage tourism by providing the incentives and loans for setting u tourism activities,.
- BRCD have to provide various educational programs and awareness about the importance of tourism to local people.
- The BRCD should develop necessary management strategies that will minimize ecosystem impact and contribution positively to communities.
- The government and BRCD should focus on developing necessary rules and regulation for responsible tourism at Bekal by creating environmental awareness among the local and tourist's conservation, sustainability and cultural sensitivity.
- To build a specific tourist information centre
- Activities of women's organizations such as Kudumbasree should be strengthened by focusing on involvement in tourism related jobs such as opening of a restaurant or home stays.
- People in local area need to give more attention on improving their language skills and also learning about the history of Bekal by which they can work as tour guides.
- More students should be encouraged to do courses providing specialized, in tourism, which would ensure them a high profile job in their locality itself.
- The local bodies in the area should give more care in involving the local women in tourism development and a special committee must be formed to monitor the participation of women. The employers also need to take special interest to recruit their staffs from the local community itself.

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