**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF TOURISM-A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC TOURISTS IN KERALA**

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***Abstract***

Tourism is a unique phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal (leisure) or business or professional purposes. Tourism includes all the activities that expresses an economy’s cultural, social and traditional aspects. Domestic tourism has also gained greater importance in recent years. Hence, it would be appropriate to study the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists in Kerala.

Key words: Challenges of tourism, Domestic Tourism, Opportunities of tourism and Tourists

**INTRODUCTION**

Tourism can be defined as a specialized activity of travelling from one destination to another for some special purposes such as professional or for relaxation. According to the World Tourism Organization, tourists are people who “travel and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure with the vision of making tourism a positive force for transformation, rural development and community wellbeing. Domestic tourism possesses high potential for stimulating local economic growth and social change because of its complementarity with other economic activities and its contribution to GDP and employment creation. Domestic Tourism can be defined as “a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, lifestyle, culture, fishing and sightseeing.

Domestic tourism is based on various services such as convenient and luxurious accomodation which is complemented by additional facilities relying on the local, social, cultural and natural resources present in each economy which are exploited without violating the principles of sustainable development. The development of infrastructure in rural areas is the most important benefit of Rural tourism.

Domestic Tourism is meant to explore rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations or villages where there exist core competencies in art, craft, handloom, and textiles as also the natural environment. Domestic tourism is intended to benefit the local community economically and socially as well as enable interaction between tourists and local population.

Hence, it would be appropriate to study the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists in Kerala.

 **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In order to give background for the present study, an attempt is made here to review briefly important studies.

Kassegn Berhanu Melese (2020) conducted a study on the topic, “Domestic Tourism Development: Issues Constraints and Trends”. The study aimed at identifying the issues, practices and constraints of tourism development particularly in domestic tourism. Study revealed that countries with richer populations and larger in size have more number of domestic tourists. In addition to these he revealed that factors like technological advancement, transportation facility, natural attractions and unique culture, climate and education are the major factors that motivate people to travel.

Fatemeh Azizi, Fatemeh Shekari b .(2022) conducted a study on the topic “Domestic Tourism during the COVID-19 Pandemic Investigating Socio-Demographics and Travel Purposes”. The study revealed various factors like gender and age are the two factors that are influencing travel and confirmed the existence of gender-related differences in travel intention, attitude towards risk avoidance, perceived risk, and frequency of past behavior.

Rani L and Prakash J W (2016) conducted a study on the topic “Economic benefits of tourism to the host community – a study with reference to Poovar tourist centre, Trivandrum, Kerala”. They concluded in their study that the improvement and development of poor region is very low as compared to other tourist spots. For the development of tourism in that place, various promotional activities are implemented with the help of local self-Government and coastal communities.

Jeet Dogra (2016) conducted a study on the topic “Analytical Study of Domestic Tourism Promotion and Publicity including Hospitality (DPHH) Scheme” The findings of the study states that DPPH scheme can fulfill its primary goals of creating awareness relating domestic tourism. The study revealed that the continuation of the scheme can create enough expansion during the 12th Five Year Plan (2012 - 2017), though the focus of promotion in existing and also new potential areas.

Sushma Rewal Chugh (2020) conducted a study on the topic “Domestic Tourism: A Panacea for Global Disasters”. It has been perceived that Domestic tourists are always frequent travellers than other international tourists who visits only occasionally. The growth and development of domestic tourism is steady and affected by situations of the international market conditions. Furthermore, she concluded that in order to revive tourism industry, it is necessary to promote domestic tourism industry as a less risky and gratifying alternative than international tourism.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Tourism industry has a lot of opportunities in the modern era such as Creation of employment opportunities, Infrastructure development, growth in GDP etc. Also Domestic tourism has been facing so many challenges such as safety issues, lack of infrastructure, lack of basic amenities etc. Hence, it becomes necessary to assess the opportunities and challenges of domestic tourism which would be helpful in the sustainable economic development of our economy.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Tourism is considered to be the fastest growing industry in the world with its ever increasing demand and provisions for relaxation and peaceful environment makes it one of the most important industries. Tourism industry has been contributing several benefits to economies such as boosting revenue of the economy, develops infrastructural facilities, enhances quality of life etc. But our tourism industry is facing so many challenges that affects the tourism industry adversely. Hence the study is significant as it helps in identifying the new opportunities and challenges of domestic tourism.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Objectives of the present study is to identify the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists in kerala.

**HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY**

There is no significant difference in the opinion wise variations about the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

 Following methods were used for examining the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists.

**METHODOLOGY**

The present study is both descriptive and analytical with the objective to examine the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists.

**SOURCES OF DATA**

 The Present study is based on the data collected from both primary and secondary sources. The Secondary data has been collected from various Journals and Books. Primary data was collected with the help of a well drafted questionnaire.

**SAMPLING PLAN**

100 tourists were selected as respondents for the study. Convenient Sampling method was used for selecting sample respondents.

**DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Primary data was collected from domestic tourists using a well-structured Questionnaire. A total of 100 tourists were selected as respondents.

 **DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS PLAN**

Collected data has been processed and analysed with the help of SPSS. For analysing data frequency and percentages were used. In order to test the hypothesis formulated for the study, t test is used.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Domestic tourism is a type of tourism which involves travelling of residents of one country within their own country. Hence an attempt is made to identify the opportunities and challenges of tourism with special reference to domestic tourists.

**Table: 1 Opportunities of Domestic Tourism**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  Variables |   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
| Economic Benefits  | No | 13.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 | 25.00 | 37.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 13.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 | 25.00 | 37.00 | 100.00 |
| Infrastructural development  | No | 13.00 | 12.00 | 25.00 | 24.00 | 26.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 13.00 | 12.00 | 25.00 | 24.00 | 26.00 | 100.00 |
| Improved Standard of living   | No | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 | 37.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 13.00 | 37.00 | 100.00 |
| Employment opportunities  | No | 0.00 | 13.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 13.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| Marketing of domestic products  | No | 0.00 | 37.00 | 38.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 37.00 | 38.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |

Source: Primary data

The above table clearly depicts that 13 percent of respondents strongly disagree that one of the major opportunities of domestic tourism is Economic benefits. 12 percent disagreed that Economic benefits is one of the major opportunities of domestic tourism.13 percent neither agree nor disagree that Economic benefits is one of the major opportunities of domestic tourism. 25 percent agreed that Economic benefits is one of the major opportunities of domestic tourism. 37 percent strongly agreed that Economic benefits is one of the major opportunities of domestic tourism. Likewise, the various responses of domestic tourists towards the opportunities of domestic tourism has been shown in the above table.

**Table : 2 Statistical Significance of** **Opportunities of Domestic Tourism**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **One-Sample Statistics** |   |   |
|   | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t value | Sig |
| Economic Benefits  | 100 | 4.1300 | 1.18624 | 34.816 | .000 |
| Infrastructural development  | 100 | 4.6400 | 1.68487 | 27.539 | .000 |
| Improved Standard of living   | 100 | 3.3600 | 1.50769 | 22.286 | .000 |
| Employment opportunities | 100 | 3.3600 | .85894 | 39.118 | .000 |
| Marketing of domestic products  | 100 | 4.2500 | 1.38808 | 30.618 | .000 |

 Source: Primary data

It is observed that infrastructural development (mean value:4.64) followed by marketing of domestic products (mean value 4.25) are the major opportunities of domestic tourism. This is followed by Economic benefits (Mean value:4.13) and Improved standard of living and Employment opportunities (Mean value:3.36).

**Table :3 Challenges of Domestic Tourism**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables |  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
| Inadequate Infrastructure  | No | 0.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 100.00 |
| Safety and security  | No | 0.00 | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 50.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 50.00 | 100.00 |
| Inadequate Marketing and promotion  | No | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 25.00 | 25.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 13.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 25.00 | 25.00 | 100.00 |
| Lack of skilled manpower  | No | 0.00 | 13.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 13.00 | 50.00 | 25.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| Lack of Government support  | No | 0.00 | 37.00 | 38.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |
| % | 0.00 | 37.00 | 38.00 | 13.00 | 12.00 | 100.00 |

(Source: Primary data)

 The above table gives a clear observation about the fact that around 13 percent of respondents disagree that one of the challenges of domestic tourism is Inadequate Infrastructure.12 percent neither agree nor disagree that Inadequate Infrastructure is one of the challenges of domestic tourism.50 percent agreed that Inadequate Infrastructure is one of the challenges of domestic tourism. 25 percent strongly agreed that Inadequate Infrastructure is one of the major challenges of domestic tourism. Likewise, the various responses of domestic tourists towards the opportunities of domestic tourism has been shown in the above table.

**Table:4 Statistical Significance of** **Opportunities of Domestic Tourism**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|   | **One-Sample Statistics** |   |
|  Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t value | Sig |
| Inadequate Infrastructure  | 100 | 3.8700 | .93911 | 41.209 | .000 |
| Safety and security | 100 | 3.9900 | 1.13258 | 35.229 | .000 |
| Inadequate Marketing and promotion  | 100 | 3.2400 | 1.40791 | 23.013 | .000 |
| Lack of skilled manpower  | 100 | 3.3600 | .85894 | 39.118 | .000 |
| Lack of Government support  | 100 | 4.2500 | 1.38808 | 30.618 | .000 |

(Source: Primary data)

It is observed that Lack of Government support (mean value:4.25) followed by safety and security products (mean value: 3.99) are the major challenges of domestic tourism. This is followed by Inadequate infrastructure (Mean value:3.87) and Lack of skilled manpower (Mean value:3.36 and Inadequate marketing and promotion (Mean value:3.24).

**TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS**

In order to evaluate opinion wise variations about the opportunities and challenges of domestic tourism with special reference to domestic tourists., t test was conducted. The study revealed that opinion wise variation in respect to all variables are below 0.05 the level of significance. Hence, the study rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the opinion wise variations about the opportunities and challenges of domestic tourism and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference in the opinion wise variations about the opportunities and challenges of domestic tourism.

**CONCLUSION**

Domestic tourism always has a high economic potential in stimulating local economic growth and positive social change and development of rural areas due to its complementarity with other economic activities, its contribution to GDP and enormous employment creation, and its capacity to promote the standard of living of each economy. UNWTO defines Domestic Tourism as “a unique type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products and services generally related with nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle, culture and sightseeing”.

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