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Sustainable Tourism: The Importance of a Pro-active Policy Agenda
The Kerala Experience in Responsible Tourism

The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD



Sustainable Tourism

The Importance of a Pro-active Policy Agenda

The Kerala Experience in Responsible Tourism

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Secretary – Tourism, Government of Kerala, India



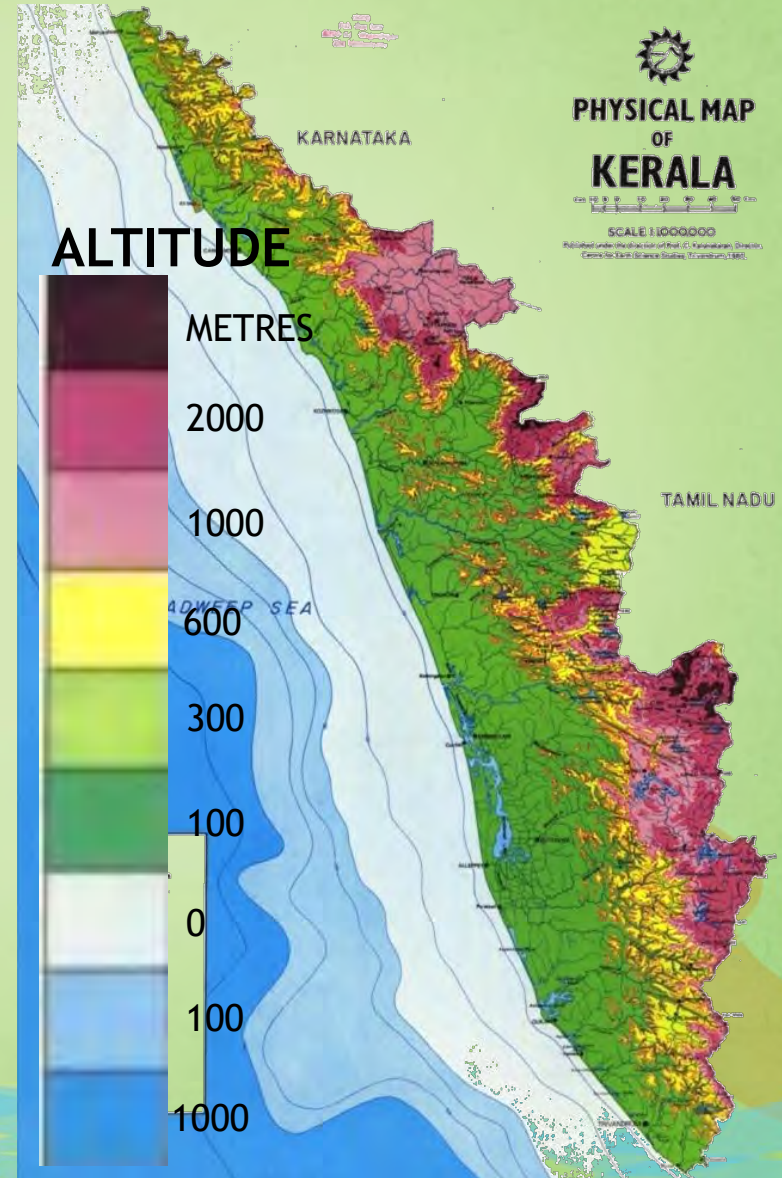
Kerala, The Case for Tourism

- Rich Green Nature with a long coastline
- Low Agricultural Productivity
- Fragmented Land Holdings
- Low level of Industrialisation
- History of Arab, European trade links
- Airline connectivity to Middle East
- A decade and a half ago, Kerala identified Tourism as a key driver of its economic growth

Kerala, A unique Location.



A Unique Geography.



Kerala, Naturally Blessed



580 km long coastline...

Kerala, The Tourism Growth Curve



Domestic Tourist Arrivals Grew By 51% from 1995-2005

Kerala, The Tourism Growth Curve



International Tourist Arrivals Grew By 142% from 1995-2005

Kerala, Need for Sustainability

- Unfettered growth
- Fragile environment and eco system
- High density of population
- History of socialist struggles and governments



Kerala, Evolving a Policy Framework

- In 2006, the Kerala Tourism Department pro-actively decided to make Responsible Tourism (RT) the frame work for sustainable growth and development of tourism in the state



Pro-active, Interventionist Framework

- Extensive Consultation
- Multi Stakeholder Participation
- On ground activation
- Policy Support and Incentives



Extensive Consultation

- First step was an extensive consultative exercise to determine the contours of the overall strategy
- State level consultation on Responsibility in Tourism in association with ICRT-India and EQUATIONS (Equitable Tourism Options) in February 2007
- Follow up meetings and consultations with groups representing - LSGs & Civil Society Organisations, Tourism Industry, Govt. Departments and Organisations
- International Conference on Responsible Tourism in Destinations in Cochin, Kerala in March 2008

Multi Stakeholder Participation

State RT CELL

SLRTC

General Body

Executive Committee

Working Group Economic Responsibility

Working Group Social Responsibility

Working Group Environmental Responsibility

DLRTC
Kumarakom

DLRTC
Kovalam

DLRTC
Wayanad

DLRTC
Thekkady

Exe Committee

Exe Committee

Exe Committee

Exe Committee

WG- Economic

WG- Economic

WG- Economic

WG- Economic

WG- Social

WG- Social

WG- Social

WG- Social

WG- Environ.

WG- Environ.

WG- Environ.

WG- Environ.

Dest.
RT CELL

Dest.
RT CELL

Dest.
RT CELL

Dest.
RT CELL

On Ground Activation

- *Kudumbashree*, the State Poverty Eradication Mission was identified as the partner for local production and services
- Leveraged *Kudumbashree's* community network of women's self-help groups to implement production cum supply plan
- Its closeness with Local Governments made the community - local government - industry engagement easy to facilitate



Policy Support & Initiatives

- Government Subsidies and Incentives are aligned to the Responsible Tourism framework
- Subsidy of 15% for tourism investment following Responsible Tourism guidelines
- Special Electricity Tariff for projects following Responsible Tourism practices
- RT certification for tourism service providers like Tour Operators, Resorts

Kumarakom, The Pilot RT Initiative

- Kerala RT Initiative was formally kicked off on 14 March 2008 at Kumarakom
- Launched after year long consultation and sensitization efforts
- 18 hoteliers signed tripartite agreements for procurement of produce from *Kudumbashree* with the Local Government also as a signatory

Kumarakom RT, Community Engagement

- Micro Enterprises, Group Farming, Cultural Group and Self-help Groups
- Creation of local supply chains
- Ethnic Restaurant run by women from BPL families



Kumarakom RT, Community Engagement

Excursions like Village Life Experience (VLE) tour coordinated and owned by local community

TOUCH THE GOODNESS WITHIN
Every Home has its Own

LIFE. AS LIVED BY GEORGEKUTTY.

Village life experience

The information and more details, please contact your Responsible Tourism's Social Dept. Numbers: 0481 232603, 961090031

kerala
Govt. of Kerala
www.keralatourism.org

STOPOVER 1: PLANTAIN ORCHARD
We have the best tasting plantain orchard managed by the local Kallarthekkal (Kali Patta) community. Kerala is known for the sweet variety of plantain cultivated, none of which can only be found in the State.

STOPOVER 10: SAROSE'S HOUSE
It is an old style of Kerala's houses, where the central window, made of brass, is made from Kerala. Take an hour as a complimentary session from the Kallarthekkal Responsible Tourism Dept. You will have the opportunity to buy other products on display.

STOPOVER 2: LEELAHARI'S HOUSE
Here, hand woven sarees are made from end-to-end. These sarees provide very efficient thermal insulation to the body. Because the silk used is not spun with which they avoid the heat after sunset. Also, they are hand-dyed with natural pigments from the local trees.

STOPOVER 3: SOSANNA'S HOUSE
Using a locally made stone mortar, the stone pine, turmeric and fenugreek are used to produce the traditional Kerala masala. The masala is made up of these herbs.

STOPOVER 6: BACKYARD GARDEN
Instead of buying a pre-made product in Kerala, travellers can grow and sell their own crops. Based in the region we go through the vegetable patch and participate in the farming activities. Also, learn the home-grown Kerala masala.

Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

- Revived agriculture in Kumarakom as farmers became participants in the growing tourism industry
- Fish farming once again started in a big way and ethnic culinary traditions were revitalized



Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

- Local handicrafts, arts that were fast losing ground regained popularity as new audiences were identified



Arjuna Nritham

Kumarakom RT, Preserving Local Ethos

- Started cultivation on shallow land
- Plastic free zone and mangrove protection schemes were initiated
- Master Plan for the bird sanctuary at Kumarakom prepared in association with local environment groups



Kumarakom RT, Capacity Building

- Skill Development programmes on food processing, homestead farming etc.
- Training/Skill Development programmes for local community members to equip them as resources for tourism industry
- Technical Expertise programmes for tourism stakeholders on waste management at destinations



Kumarakom RT, Capacity Building

- Capacity building programmes for development of local souvenirs



Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

- Open procurement and distribution system named *Samrudhi*
- More than 700 women, 500 farmers and 230 homesteads are engaged in this activity



Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

- Cultural group, souvenir and handicraft development units are providing more employment and income opportunities



Kumarakom RT, Economic Benefits

- Village Life Experience tour packages and Eco-bag units are creating another mode of income to households



- Around 1100 families benefit economically through the supply of various goods and services

Kumarakom RT, Empowering Women

- 760 women are included in the cultivation programme, 35 in retail activities, 30 in art and cultural groups and 45 in the village tour group
- Helps poor rural women to become increasingly empowered, improve their status in their families and within the society



Kerala: Sustainable Tourism, Sustaining Growth



Domestic Tourist arrivals have grown at an average rate of 8.2% per year

Kerala: Sustainable Tourism, Sustaining Growth



International Tourist arrivals have grown at an average rate of 13% per year

Kumarakom Initiative, A Model for India

- The Kumarakom Responsible Tourism Initiative has inspired the Planning Commission of India to embrace a ‘pro-poor tourism’ approach
- “The learning experience from Kumarakom RT initiative provides a successful pro-poor tourism model for replication across the country with suitable localisation” - *Approach Paper* to the Twelfth Plan

Kumarakom, A Model for India

- ‘Pro-poor Tourism’ is about redistribution of resources and opportunities and not just the creation of a new product and governments have to be more pro-active
- An approach that can help Tourism in India realise its potential to promote faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth

Thank You



Kudumbashree Restaurant Unit