

*Contemporary Research in  
Commerce and Management*

*Dr. Noushad. P. M. & Dr. Vineeth. K. M.*



Maharaja's  
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# *Contemporary Research in Commerce and Management*

*Edited by*

**Dr. Noushad. P. M.** M. Com., M. Phil., LLB, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor and Head

Post Graduate Department of Commerce

Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, Kerala, India - 682011

&

**Dr. Vineeth. K. M.** M. Com., M.B.A., Ph. D.

Assistant Professor

Post Graduate Department of Commerce

Maharaja's College, Ernakulam, Kerala, India - 682011

Sl. NO.	Title	AUTHOR (S)	Page No. (s)
6	<i>Awareness and Adoption of Green Banking Practices from the Perspective of SBI Customers</i>	<i>Greeshmadras M H</i> Research Scholar, Department of Commerce and Management Studies University of Calicut, Kerala <i>Dr. B. Vijayachandran Pillai</i> Research Scholar, Department of Commerce and Management Studies University of Calicut, Kerala	56 – 78
7	<i>Consumer Adoption towards Digital Payment Wallets</i>	<i>Muthulakshmi R</i> Research Scholar, CUSAT, Kochi, Kerala <i>Bindu Achamma Koshy</i> Research scholar, Bharata Mata college, Thrikkakkara, Kerala <i>Dr. Joy Joseph Puthusserry</i> Academic Dean, Naipunnnya Institute of IT and Management, Koratty, Kerala	79 – 88
8	<i>Tourist Satisfaction on Beach Tourism – A Study with Special Reference to Cherai and Fort Kochi</i>	<i>Dr. Radhika. P. C.</i> Assistant Professor of Commerce, Sacred Heart College, Thevara <i>Anakha Sara Paul L</i> <i>Neema Hussain</i> Second B Com Travel and Tourism, Sacred Heart College, Thevara	89 – 98
9	<i>Impact Analysis of Beach Tourism – A Study with Special Reference to Ernakulam District</i>	<i>Dr. Radhika. P. C.</i> Assistant Professor of Commerce, Sacred Heart College, Thevara <i>Dan Antony L</i> <i>Jithin Pandiath</i>	99 – 106

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**TOURIST SATISFACTION ON BEACH TOURISM –A STUDY WITH  
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHERAI AND FORTKOCHI**

**Dr. Radhika. P. C.**

Assistant Professor of Commerce, Sacred Heart College, Thevara

**Anakha Sara Paul and Neama Hussain**

Second B Com Travel and Tourism, Sacred Heart College, Thevara

**ABSTRACT**

Tourism is considered as an engine of growth and as a means of overall development by all national governments. Same is the case with India. Among the different states in India, Kerala has got a unique place in Indian tourism map. "Income from tourism constitutes about 10 per cent of the gross State Domestic Product of the State, and is an important engine of growth. Tourism creates employment, brings in incomes, and opens out cultures to the rest of the country and world. A feature of tourism is its interconnection with other spheres of development."(The Economic Review Report 2016).The development of tourism also ensures the development in health, transport, sanitation, urban and rural planning, local self-government and other areas. Due to all these factors, tourism has become an inevitable part of Kerala economy. As Kovalam was the first promoted destination in Kerala, it was established as a beach tourism destination among international tourists during 1980's. Kerala is blessed with vast coastline with a number of beautiful beaches and the government is promoting beach tourism in a big way. As the foreign tourists are attracted by the three 'S' (Sun, Sand and Surfing), the opportunities of beach tourism are unlimited. So the present study is conducted to understand the importance of beach tourism in tourist's perspective. The study have got two objectives, first one is to understand the importance of beach tourism in tourist's perspective, second one is to understand the satisfaction of tourists (foreign) on beach tourism facilities. The study was based on the data collected from two beach tourism destinations in Ernakulam district namely Fort Kochi and Chera. The result of the study will through light into the area of the satisfaction of tourists on the beach tourism facilities.

**Keywords:** *Beach tourism, tourist satisfaction, travel attributes*

**Introduction**

The travel and tourism industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries of the global economy. The tourism sector is recognized as a major contributor at the International level for long-run economic growth. According to WTTC (World Travel & Tourism Council) study, the contribution of travel and tourism to the world GDP in 2016 was USD 2,306.0 billion (3.1% of GDP), whereas, its total employment effect was more than 100 million jobs, representing 3.6% of global employment. The sector of Travel & Tourism is predicted to grow its contribution in the GDP by 4% to USD 3,537.1 billion (3.5% of GDP) by 2027( Economic Impact 2017,WTTC). 'The year 2016 witnessed a growth of 10.7 % in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India. FTAs during 2016 were 88.9 lakh (provisional) as compared to the FTAs of 80.3 lakh during

2015. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism in rupee terms during 2016 were Rs.1, 55,650 crore (provisional) with a growth of 15.1 %.'(Annual Report 2016-17, Ministry of Tourism, India). Kerala was a relatively unknown destination until 1980's. Now the state government views tourism as one of the few alternatives available to develop the economy, especially in the context of limited prospects of the manufacturing sector, problems in the agricultural and traditional sectors, and the uncertainties facing the expatriate employment in the Persian Gulf (Pushpangadan,2003). As a result of the effective steps taken by Kerala government, the Foreign Tourist arrival to Kerala shows an increase of 6.23 % over the previous year's figure of 9,77,479. The domestic tourist arrivals to Kerala during the year 2016 was 1,31,72,535 . It shows an increase of 5.67 % over the previous year's figure of 1,24,65,571. The total revenue from tourism during 2016 is Rs 29658.56 crore showing an increase of 11.12% over the last year's figure.' (Kerala Tourism Statistics 2016). 'Ernakulam district recorded the maximum foreign tourist arrival which was 3,83,643 in 2015. It shows an increase of 2.85% over the previous year's figure of 3,72,997. The domestic tourist arrivals to Ernakulam during the year 2015 were 28,97,894 which shows an increase of 6.36% than the previous year. The foreign tourist arrivals Fort Kochi was 1,28,975 and in Cherai was 15,096 during the year 2015. The domestic tourist visits to Fort Kochi was 1,97,257 and in Cherai was 64,978 during 2015.'(Kerala Tourism Statistics Book 2015). These figures clearly shows that tourism has become an important industry of Kerala. As it is one of the major sectors of development it is necessary for the government to plan for the sustainability of the destination. The sustainability of a destination depends upon the number of tourist arrivals. In order to attract more tourists it is necessary to provide them services as per their expectations. Thus understanding the satisfaction of tourists with the facilities available at the destination is important while planning for the sustainability of the destination.

### Literature Review

The success of any business mainly depends on the customer satisfaction and in tourism, tourists are the customers. Zeithaml et al (2009), defined Customer satisfaction as "the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met the customer needs and expectations". Pizam, Neumann, and Reichel (1978) defined "tourist satisfaction as a result of comparing tourists' experience at destination visited and expectations about the destination". Unlike other products, tourism is an amalgam of different sectors like accommodation, transportation, other amenities, communication facilities etc. So in order to measure the tourist satisfaction it is necessary to understand the different elements which determine the overall tourist satisfaction on a destination. Many scholars have used different attributes to measure the tourist satisfaction. The study of Tribe and Snaith(1998) used the attributes 1) the physical resort and facilities;2) ambiance;3) restaurants, bars, shops and nightlife; 4) transfers;5) heritage and culture and 6)

accommodation etc to measure the tourist satisfaction visiting Varadero, Cuba. Kozak And Rimmington (2000) in their study determines whether the destination attributes are critical to the overall satisfaction levels of tourists visiting Mallorca, Spain, during the winter season and their future holiday intentions also are investigated. The study uses the factors destination attractiveness, tourist attractions and facilities, availability of English language, and facilities and services at the destination airport to assess the tourist satisfaction. Larry Yu and Munhtuya Golden (2006) in their study analysed the international tourists' satisfaction with tourist attractions, facilities, services and prices in Mongolia. They have used 37 attributes of attractions, activities, facilities, services, transportation and prizes for the measurement of tourist satisfaction in Mongolia. Truong and Foster (2006) in their study specifically examine how Australian pleasure travellers perceive Vietnam as a holiday destination using positive and negative attributes of the destination. In their study, the key attributes chosen were classified under the major headings of the classic "Five As" that constitute a holiday destination's overall appeal, viz. "Attractions", "Activities", "Amenities", "Accommodation" and "Accessibility". The present study tries to measure the tourist satisfaction on different travel attributes under five major headings, viz. "Attractions", "Accommodation", "Accessibility", "Amenities" and "Attitude of service providers".

#### **Beach Tourism in Kerala**

Beaches in the state of Kerala are spread along the 550-km Arabian Sea coastline. The beach tourism is one of the most important type of tourism in Kerala because it is the first type of tourism promoted by the state. In the early 1980's, Kerala was famous for its Kovalam Beach among foreign tourists. As the three 'S'-Sun, Sand and Surfing, remained the main motivation for foreign tourists, the government of Kerala promoted beach tourism by tapping its vast coastal line. As a result beach tourism developed as one of the important type of tourism in the state. Some of the most popular beach tourist destinations in Kerala are like Kovalam, Varkala, Chowara, Chavakkad, Nattika, Cherai, Kizhunna, Poovar, Muzhapilanghad (the drive-in beach) and the list goes on and on. Understanding the importance of beach tourism in the state the present study tries to find out the satisfaction of tourists on the beach tourism attributes.

#### **Study Methodology**

This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The secondary data is based on the literature review which includes major tourism journals, PhD thesis and important tourism websites. The primary data was collected using questionnaire.

**Study Location:-** The primary data was collected from Cherai and Fort Kochi. Fort Kochi, the 'Queen of Arabian Sea' is located on the western coast of India. It is also known as 'The Gateway to Kerala'. The major attractions in Fort Kochi are St. Francis Church, Santa Cruz Basilica, Jewish Synagogue, Dutch Palace, Indo Portuguese and Maritime Navy Museums, etc. Cherai, a suburb of the city of Kochi, has the longest beach in Kochi. It is 30 km from the city of Cochin and the major attractions are

Gowreeswara Temple, Azheekkal Sree Varaha Temple, Munambam Fishing Harbour, Pallipuram Church, Pallipuram Fort, etc.

**Sampling Method:**-The data was collected from the foreign tourists at the destination using convenience sampling method. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The data collection instruments were developed to systematize the collection of data and to ensure that all the respondents are asked the same questions and in the same order. The questionnaires were developed with open-ended and close-ended questions. The questionnaires were personally administered with the respondents. A structured self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 100 foreign tourists (50 foreign tourists from Cherai and 50 foreign tourists from Fort Kochi) in Nov 2017. All the items were measured on a 1-5 Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=strongly agree). In order to assess the satisfaction of tourists visiting Kerala on different travel attributes, the difference between the expectation of tourists and experience of tourists were measured. If the mean score of experience is greater than that of expectation, tourist satisfaction is achieved.

#### **Limitations of the Study**

- The sample size may not be very large to generalize the results.
- It is limited to information provided both by primary and secondary data

#### **Analysis and Result**

The primary data was collected using questionnaire. The questionnaire has three sections, section A consisting questions related to demographic details, section B includes questions in a five point scale to measure expectations of tourists regarding the various travel attributes and section C includes questions in a five point scale to measure actual experience of tourists regarding the various travel attributes. The survey was done in the district of Ernakulam, taking two of the most prominent beaches for the study, Fort Kochi beach and Cherai beach.

#### **Fort Kochi**

Out of the 50 respondents, 53% of them were males and 47% were females. It was noted that 47% of the respondents were from the age group of 20-30 and 33% falls in 30-40, whereas very few turned out to be from 40 and above. 87% of the respondents were employed and 53% of them were married. Most of the respondents preferred to have their trips organised by travel agencies (54%) and the rest preferred other means which includes friends, co-workers etc. The purpose of visit for majority of tourists were rest or relaxation (54%). It was found that 33% of the respondents came to know about the destination from their friends and relatives followed by 27% through various travel agents and the rest 40% from websites and books. 47% of the respondents were accompanied by their families during the travel while 20% preferred to travel alone and 13% were with friends. The length of stay for majority of the tourists was less than 3 nights which was 67% followed by 20% stayed for 3 to 5 nights and the rest 13% for a week and more.

It was found that all the respondents were satisfied about expenses in the tourist destination meeting their expectations. 53% of the respondents preferred to travel in public transports following 40% opted for hired tourist vehicles while the rest used their own vehicle. 27% of the respondents preferred to stay in resorts and home stays and 13% preferred to stay in star hotels, government guest houses and tourist lodges while the rest stayed with their friends and relatives. It can be noted that all the respondents were on their first visit to this destination. All the respondents agreed about recommending the destination to others. The questionnaire also contains ranking question to find out the reason for choosing Kerala as the destination where one has to give rank 1 for the most important reason followed by 2 and so on. The response is presented in table 1. As the most important reason was selected by marking '1', the rank one is assigned to one which has got least mean value and so on.

**Table 1: Reason for choosing Kerala as a tourist destination**

Reason for choosing Kerala as a tourist destination	Mean	Rank
Uniqueness of attraction	1.80	1
Good infrastructure	3.71	4
Pleasing hospitality	3.41	2
Accessibility	3.45	3
shopping facility	5.06	6
Variety of cuisines	5.42	7
Attitude of the local people	4.43	5

Source: Sample survey

From the table it is clear that the most important reason for choosing Kerala as the destination is that the Uniqueness of the attractions (both natural & manmade including cultural attractions), followed by Pleasing hospitality, Accessibility, good infrastructure, Attitude of the local people, shopping facility and Variety of cuisines.

**Satisfaction of tourists on various travel attributes:** In order to assess the satisfaction of tourists visiting Kerala on different travel attributes, the difference between the expectation of tourists and experience of tourists were measured. If the mean score of experience is greater than that of expectation, tourist satisfaction is achieved. The tourists are most satisfied with the travel attribute which has got the highest mean score value.

Through the survey conducted at Fortkochi beach, the researcher have analyzed the various expectations of tourists and the actual experience of tourists. The following table 2 shows the result. From the results, it can found that the accommodation sector has proved to be the most satisfying among the other components of tourism. The averages of the results came out to be 3.7 for expectation and 4.7 for experience. Then comes the second highest satisfaction provider i.e. 'Attitude of service providers'. The next one is 'Amenities', for which the averages turned out to be 3.3 for expectation and 4.1 for experience. Next is accessibility for which the averages are 3.2 for expectation and 4.0 for experience. The lowest satisfaction provider in Fort Kochi



beach turned out to be the various attractions for which the averages are 3.3 for expectation and 3.4 for experience.

**Table 2 Satisfaction of tourists on various travel attributes(Fort Kochi)**

Travel attributes	Expectation	Experience	Satisfaction
Attractions	3.3	3.6	Satisfied
Accessibility	3.2	4.0	Satisfied
Accommodation	3.7	4.7	Satisfied
Amenities	3.3	4.1	Satisfied
Attitude of service providers	3.4	4.3	Satisfied

Source : Sample survey

### Cherai

Out of the 50 respondents, 40% of them were males and 60% were females. It was noted that 40% of the respondents were from the age group of 30-40 and 26.6% falls in 20-30 followed by 20% in 40-50, whereas very few turned out to be from 50 and above. 86.6% of the respondents were employed and the 73.3% of them were married. Most of the respondents preferred to have their trips organised by friends (80%). The purpose of visit for majority of tourists were for leisure(60%) followed by 46.6% for rest and relaxation whereas business and religious purposes were preferred by 6.7% each. It was found that 53.3% of the respondents came to know about the destination from their friends and relatives followed by 33.3% through websites and the rest 6.7% from travel agencies and travel offices abroad. 53.3% of the respondents were accompanied by their families during the travel while 40% preferred to travel with friends and the rest preferred to travel alone. The length of stay for majority of the tourists was less than 3 nights which was 66.6% followed by 20% stayed for 3 to 5 nights and the rest 13.4% for more than a week. It was found that 86.6% the respondents were satisfied about expenses in the tourist destination meeting their expectations while 13.4% were dissatisfied. 53.3% of the respondents preferred to travel in hired tourist vehicles followed by 33.3% opted for their own vehicle while the rest travelled in public transports. 73.3% of the respondents preferred to stay in resorts and 20% in home stays and the rest 13% preferred to stay with their friends and relatives. It can be noted that 40% of the respondents were on their first visit while the rest 60% were repeat visitors. All the respondents agreed about recommending the destination to others. The questionnaire also contains ranking question to find out the reason for choosing Kerala as the destination where one has to give rank 1 for the most important reason followed by 2 and so on. The response is presented in table3. As the most important reason was selected by marking '1', the rank one is assigned to one which has got least mean value and so on.

**Table 3: Reason for choosing Kerala as a tourist destination**

Reason for choosing Kerala as a tourist destination	Mean	Rank
Uniqueness of attraction	2.06	1
Good infrastructure	4.29	4

Pleasing hospitality	2.82	2
Accessibility	4.95	6
shopping facility	4.06	3
Variety of cuisines	5.11	7
Attitude of the local people	4.44	5

Source: Sample survey

From the table it is clear that the most important reason for choosing Kerala as the destination is that the Uniqueness of the attractions (both natural & manmade including cultural attractions), followed by Pleasing hospitality, shopping facility, good infrastructure, Attitude of the local people, Accessibility and Variety of cuisines.

**Satisfaction of tourists on various travel attributes:** In order to assess the satisfaction of tourists visiting Kerala on different travel attributes, the difference between the expectation of tourists and experience of tourists were measured. If the mean score of experience is greater than that of expectation, tourist satisfaction is achieved. The tourists are most satisfied with the travel attribute which has got the highest mean score value. The following table4 presents the result.

**Table 4 Satisfaction of tourists on various travel attributes(Cherai)**

Travel Attributes	Expectations	Experiences	Satisfaction
Attractions	3.5	4.0	Satisfied
Accommodations	3.9	4.8	Satisfied
Accessibility	3.4	3.8	Satisfied
Amenities	3.7	4.5	Satisfied
Attitude of Service Providers	3.2	4.0	Satisfied

Source: Sample Survey

Through the survey conducted at Cherai beach, the researcher have analyzed the various expectations of tourists and the actual experience of tourists on various travel attributes. The study found that the accommodation sector has proved to be the most satisfying among the other components of tourism. The averages of the results came out to be 3.9 for expectation and 4.8 for experience. Then comes the second highest satisfaction provider i.e. Amenities, for which the averages turned out to be 3.7 for expectation and 4.5 for experience. Next is the attractions of this destination for which the averages are 3.5 for expectation and 4.0 for experience. They are also satisfied with the 'Attitude of service providers'. The lowest satisfaction provider in Cherai beach turned out to be accessibility for which the averages are 3.4 for expectation and 3.8 for experience.

#### **Discussion of findings**

**Fort Kochi:-** The study conducted at Fortkochi beach found that most of the respondents were very satisfied with the accommodation facilities provided at the destination. Most of them preferred to stay in resorts and home stays because of the clean and orderly rooms, best services, great location, easy accessibility etc. The accommodation sector has flourished to greater heights through these years, giving greater importance to customers and their satisfactions. The attitude of various service

providers also very good. The study found that the amenities provided to the tourists in this destination have created high level of satisfaction among them because of proper guide facilities, ATM facilities, reasonable restaurant facilities, friendly attitudes of service providers, proper communication facilities, exciting activities, good internet and telephone facilities, best infrastructure etc. As the component of accessibility was observed, this destination proved to be in the category of moderate accessibility. The condition of roads were rated good in consideration with other beach destinations and the facilities provided by public transport systems were also rated good but lack of orderliness and maintenance of the vehicles along with them being overcrowded reduced its overall satisfaction. The last component of tourism studied, attractions of the destination, turned out to be the lowest satisfaction provider. The respondents were of the opinion that the cleanliness at the beaches were the major concern. They were of the opinion that proper waste management techniques has to be practiced at the beaches. It is believed to be so because of the poor waste management systems leading to dumping of all kinds of wastes into the beach. As a result of this, the three S's of beach tourism i.e. sun, sand and surfing remains unfulfilled. Other attractions of Fortkochi such as the synagogue, the Dutch palace, the various churches etc. have definitely created satisfaction among the tourists.

**Cherai:-** The study conducted at Cherai found that the respondents were very satisfied with the accommodation facilities provided in the destination. Most of them preferred to stay in resorts and home stays because of the clean and orderly rooms, best services, great location, easy accessibility etc. The accommodation sector has flourished to greater heights through these years, giving greater importance to customers and their satisfactions. Through observations we came to a conclusion that the amenities provided to the tourists in this destination have created high level of satisfaction among them because of proper guide facilities, ATM facilities, reasonable restaurant facilities, friendly attitudes of service providers, proper communication facilities, exciting activities, good internet and telephone facilities, best infrastructure etc. As the component of attraction was observed, this destination proved to be one with exciting and adventurous activities and attractions. The scenic and soothing view of the beach, enjoying the sun, sand and surfing, engaging in different activities such as fun banana rides etc. are among the most chosen. They are also satisfied with the attitude of various service providers. The last component of tourism studied, accessibility to the destination, turned out to be the lowest satisfaction. The conditions of the roads were rated bad in consideration with other beach destinations and the facilities provided by public transport systems were also rated bad. It was found that there is only a single bus which passes through the main destination which makes it difficult for tourists to reach to the various shops and the main city. The tourists also expressed their opinion regarding their difficulty to walk kilometers to access the facilities. Then comes the condition of the roads, strewn with up to one feet ditches, these roads results in jerking the knees of the two-wheeler drivers. Cracks and

potholes can also cause drivers to lose control. All these explains the reasons for the lowest rating in Accessibility attribute.

#### **Conclusion of the Study**

In recognition that the quality of service is a factor that contributes to the attraction of tourists to a destination, a study concerning the perceptions of tourist satisfaction was undertaken. In conclusion, this research shows that the 5A's of tourism i.e. the attractions in the destination, the accommodation facilities provided to the tourists, the accessibility to the particular destination, the amenities provided such as reasonable restaurants, clean and hygiene restrooms, ATM facilities, shopping malls etc. , 'The attitude of various service providers' do influence the tourist's perception of satisfaction. The study provides a useful contribution as there are very few studies based on the tourist's satisfaction in the various beach destinations in Kerala. These findings may assist the tourist organizations operating in Kerala to be aware that they need to adopt different strategies for the different demographic (age, income, occupation and marital status) and geographic (origin) segments in their markets. Thus the tourists can be made more satisfied and the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC's) can ensure repeat visits of the tourists. Tourist firms in Kerala will be able to match their supply arrangements with the needs and requirements of their tourist guests. This research will also contribute to the development of a reliable instrument to measure tourist satisfaction, which may assist in the development of an industry benchmark. Finally, improvements in satisfaction of tourists will result in having a forward step to the sustainability of tourism development in Kerala.

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