

## RESEARCH PAPER

# Problems encountered by foreign tourists in Kerala

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### ABSTRACT

The study focused on the problems faced by the foreign tourist. For the purpose of analyzing the objective three tourist destinations in Kerala viz., Kovalam beach, Wayanad and Idukki were selected and 30 foreign tourists were surveyed from the three selected tourist destinations using convenience sampling technique. A structured survey schedule was used for interviewing selected tourists and analysis was made with the help of index tool. The study identified that the problems encountered by foreign in Kerala are generally minor problems. However, some of them require particular attention for the improvement of the tourism industry like problems related to legal formalities and enforcement as well as problems related to cleanliness and hygiene which were mentioned to be the most strenuous problems encountered, followed by problems related to food.

**KEY WORDS :** Tourism industry, Foreign tourists, Constraints, Tourists responses

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The tourism industry in India is one of the largest divisions under the services sector of the country's economy with a great contribution to the country's GDP. The tourism industry is a key growth driver and an important source of foreign exchange earnings and it creates direct, indirect and induced employment. Kerala state is named as one of the ten paradises of the World by National Geographical Traveler (2014), Kerala is famous especially for its ecotourism initiatives and

beautiful backwaters. Its unique culture and traditions, coupled with its varied demography, have made Kerala one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world (Traveljee Journal, 2015). Growing at a rate of 13.31 per cent, the tourism industry is a major contributor to the State's economy. Tourism is one of the important economic sectors in India that has the potential to grow at a higher than it does today and can ensure consequential development of the infrastructure at destinations. It has the capacity to capitalize on the country's success in the service sector and to provide sustainable models of growth (Ministry of Tourism Government of India, 2017). Unfortunately, there is still a gap in the sector as India ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in the Asia and Pacific region and 52<sup>nd</sup> in the world in terms of foreign tourist's arrivals according to the UNWTO (2015), despite the country's potentials and natural resources

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advantages. More efforts and investments are required especially on the Government's side for a better growth of the sector. This draws the attention of social science researchers to appraise the existing scenario in the tourism services and come up with strategic options that would help the country to attract and serve the highest number of FTAs. For the development and growth of tourism in Kerala proper care and attention should be given to foreign tourists by catering their needs efficiently and effectively. For this, analysing of the problems faced by them while visiting the tourist destinations addressing their complaints is very much important.

### Research objective:

To analyse the problems faced by the foreign tourists in Kerala tourism sector.

### METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of analyzing the objective three tourist destinations in Kerala *viz.*, Kovalam beach, Wayanad and Idukki were selected as number of foreign tourists visitors are more in these places. Study is mainly based on primary data and data were collected from a sample of 30 foreign tourists from the three selected tourist destinations using convenience sampling technique. A structured survey schedule was used for interviewing selected foreign tourists visiting Kovalam beach, Wayanad and Idukki. The analysis of the objective was made with the help of index tool.

For the selected variables respondents were given the option at a four point scale to indicate their opinion (*viz.*, not a problem, minor, moderate and critical) and given a weightage ranging from 1 to 4 for not a problem to critical problem.

Table A: Ranges used for interpretation of intensity of problem		
Sr. No.	Ranges	Particulars
1.	<37.5	Not a problem
2.	>= 37.5 to <67.5	Minor problem
3.	>= 67.5 to <87.5	Moderate problem
4.	>87.5	Critical problem

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The following consecutive fourteen tables show respondents encountered problems.

#### Problem related to booking:

The ranking index of unreliable information was

found highest (60), unreliable travel agency service followed with ranking index of 54.16; whereas inhospitable staff was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 52.50. The overall ranking index was 55 and problems related to booking were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problem related to travel

The indices of the attributes lack of proper information and problems of boarding and disembarkation were found highest with ranking index of 69.16 and 68.33, respectively and fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The rest of ranking indexes of the remaining attributes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem); whereas the attribute locating affordable and accessible rooms was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 48.33. The overall ranking index was 58.43 falling in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  and problems related to travel were generally found as minor problem.

#### Problems related to tour guides:

In the case of problems related to tour guides, ranking indexes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem). The ranking index of attribute language spoken was found highest with 66.25, followed by time management with 62.50; whereas co-operation was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 47.5. The overall ranking index was 55 and problems related to tour guides were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problems related to accessibility:

Result of analysis of the problems related to accessibility, all ranking indexes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem). The ranking index of attribute insufficient location signage was found highest with 63.33, road ranking index followed with 62.50; whereas sufficient laid pathways was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 50. The overall ranking index was 56.83 and problems related to accessibility were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problems related to hospitality:

The ranking index of attribute lack of proper infrastructure was found highest with 65.83, security followed with 56.66; whereas Organization and management was found to be having the lowest ranking

index of 44.16. The overall ranking index was 53.50 and problems related to hospitality were generally found to be minor problems.

### Problems related to accommodation

The table revealed that the ranking index of attribute room priced high was found highest with ranking index of 67.5 respectively and fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The rest of ranking indexes of the remaining attributes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem); whereas the attribute room do not have necessary facilities was found second with 65.83; whereas inaccessible lobby in hotel was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 50.83. The overall ranking index was 59.33 falling in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  and problems related to accommodation were generally found to be minor problems.

### Problems related to cleanliness and hygiene:

It was observed that the ranking indexes of attributes general cleanliness and sanitation and air, water, noise pollution were found highest with ranking index of 83.33 and 68.33, respectively, falling in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The ranking index of

clean drinking water was 51.66 and fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem). The overall ranking index was 67.77 and falling in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  which derives that the problems related to cleanliness and hygiene were generally found to be moderate problems.

### Problems related to the behaviour of the people of Kerala:

The attribute behaviour of government officials was found highest with ranking index of 73.33, respectively and fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The rest of ranking indexes of the remaining attributes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem); whereas the attribute behaviour of taxi/ auto rickshaw drivers was found second with 66.66; whereas openness in society was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 44.16. The overall ranking index was 57.50 falling in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  and problems related to behaviour of the people of Kerala were generally found to be minor problems.

### Problems related to food:

Availability of desired cuisine menu was found

Table 1 : Problem related to booking			
Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Unreliable information	72	60
2.	Inaccessible booking office	64	53.33
3.	Inhospitable staff	63	52.50
4.	Unreliable travel agency service	65	54.16
5.	Far distance of booking offices	64	53.33
	Total	330	55

Source: Primary data from field survey

Table 2 : Problem related to travel			
Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Long distance between residence and transport station.	67	55.83
2.	Lack of proper information	83	69.16
3.	Problems of boarding and disembarkation	82	68.33
4.	Rules and regulations for carrying equipments for carrying equipments and aids	75	62.50
5.	Lack of auxiliary service at terminals	58	48.33
6.	Equipment loss and damage	74	61.66
7.	Locating affordable and accessible rooms	58	48.33
8.	Unfriendly co-travelers	4	53.33
	Total	561	58.43

Source: Primary data from field survey

highest with ranking index of 69.16 and fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The rest of ranking indexes of the remaining attributes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem); where the attribute quality of food was found second with 65.83; whereas food freshness was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 60. The overall ranking index was 64.79 falling in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  and problems related to food were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problems related to legal formalities and enforcement:

The ranking indexes of problems related to legal formalities and enforcement fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The ranking index of attribute immigration rules and processes was found highest with 83.33, followed by Visa formalities with 62.50; whereas custom formalities was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 73.33. The overall ranking index was 78.19 and falling in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  which derives that the problems related to legal

formalities and enforcement were generally found to be moderate problems.

#### Problems related to safety and security:

With respect to problems related to safety and security ranking index of attribute safety of females was found highest with 75 and fell in the range of  $\geq 67.5$  to  $<87.5$  (moderate problem). The rest of ranking indexes of the remaining attributes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem); where the attribute safety of family was found second with 60; whereas Tourists grievances redressal (if faced), discipline in the country were found to be having the lowest ranking index of 54.16 each. The overall ranking index was 59.30 falling in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  and problems related to safety and security were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problems related to information and accommodation:

Survey result of problems related to information and accommodation indicate that all the ranking indexes fell

**Table 3 : Problems related to tour guides**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Communication skill	40	50
2.	Education and trainings	40	50
3.	Language spoken	53	66.25
4.	Cooperation	38	47.50
5.	Leadership	40	50
6.	Group management	49	61.25
7.	Time management	50	62.50
8.	Integrity	40	50
9.	Flexibility	43	53.75
10.	Stress tolerance	45	56.25
11.	Self control	46	57.50
	Total	484	55

Source: primary data from field survey

**Table 4 : Problems related to accessibility**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Roads	75	62.50
2.	Insufficient location signage	76	63.33
3.	Field risks	64	53.33
4.	Equipment loss and damage	66	55
5.	Insufficient laid pathways	60	50
	Total	341	56.83

Source: Primary data from field survey

in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem). The ranking index of mobile phone networking was found highest (61.66), internet availability followed with ranking index of 60.83; whereas communication with local people was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 41.66. The overall ranking index was 53.54 and problems related to information and accommodation were generally found to be minor problems.

#### Problems related to cost of visit:

It was observed from results of the survey that all

the ranking indexes fell in the range of  $\geq 37.5$  to  $<67.5$  (minor problem). The ranking index of accommodation was found highest (58.33), food and beverage and transport with in destination followed with 50.83 each; whereas entertainments was found to be having the lowest ranking index of 49.16. The overall ranking index was 51.14 and problems related to costs were generally found to be minor problems. Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Jeyakumar (2010); Kurihara and Okamoto (2010) and Sahoo (2011).

**Table 5 : Problems related to hospitality**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Organization and management	53	44.16
2.	lack of proper infrastructure	79	65.87 93
3.	Service level	60	50
4.	Security	68	56.66
5.	Employees behaviour	61	50.83
	Total	321	53.50

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 6 : Problems related to accommodation**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Rooms priced high	81	67.5
2.	Rooms do not have necessary facilities	79	65.83
3.	Inaccessible lobby in hotel	61	50.83
4.	Lack of understanding of staff regarding special needs	66	55
5.	Tax on hotel bill	69	57.5
	Total	356	59.33

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 7 : Problems related to cleanliness and hygiene**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	General cleanliness and sanitation	100	83.33
2.	Clean drinking water	62	51.66
3.	Air, water, noise pollution	82	68.33
	Total	244	67.77

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 8 : Problems related to the behaviour of the people of Kerala**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Behaviour of Government officials	88	73.33
2.	Behaviour of taxi/ auto rickshaw drivers	80	66.66
3.	Friendliness/ behaviour of local people	55	45.83
4.	Openness in society	53	44.16
	Total	276	57.50

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 9 : Problems related to food**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Availability of healthy and hygienic food	77	64.16
2.	Availability of desired cuisine menu	83	69.16
3.	Quality of food	79	65.83
4.	Food freshness	72	60
	Total	311	64.79

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 10 : Problems related to legal formalities and enforcement**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Visa formalities	99	82.50
2.	Registration	93	77.50
3.	Entry permit	93	77.50
4.	Immigration rules and processes	100	83.33
5.	Custom formalities	88	73.33
6.	Rules and regulations for staying in India	90	75
	Total	563	78.19

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 11 : Problems related to safety and security**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Law and order of the country	69	57.5
2.	Safety of luggage	66	55
3.	Safety of family	72	60
4.	Safety of females	90	75
5.	Tourists grievances redressal (if faced)	65	54.16
6.	Discipline in the country	65	54.16
	Total	427	59.30

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 12 : Problems related to information and accommodation**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Communication with local people	50	41.66
2.	Mobile phone networking	74	61.66
3.	Internet availability	73	60.83
4.	Information about destinations through websites	60	50
	Total	257	53.54

Source: Primary data from field survey

**Table 13 Problems related to cost of visit**

Sr. No.	Attributes	Total score	Ranking index
1.	Accommodation	70	58.33
2.	Food and beverage	61	50.83
3.	Shopping	60	50
4.	Entertainments	59	49.16
5.	Entry fees	60	50
6.	Attendant fees	60	50
7.	Transport with in destination	61	50.83
8.	Equipment transportation charge	60	50
	Total	491	51.14

Source: Primary data from field survey

### Concluding remarks:

The problems encountered by foreign in Kerala are generally minor problems. However, some of them require particular attention for the improvement of the tourism industry. The problems viz., problems related to legal formalities and enforcement as well as problems related to cleanliness and hygiene were mentioned to be the most strenuous problems encountered, followed by problems related to food. Furthermore, respondents listed out other problems faced by them during their trip to Kerala namely rush drivers, lack of timely information, beggars as well as embarrassing young boys taking photos without their consent. Based on the above conclusions following suggestions are proposed.

– Immigration offices have to provide timely and necessary information to tourists regarding rules and regulations for staying in India right at their arrivals

– Legal formalities and enforcement are to be made more flexible

– Government officials are to improve their behaviour towards foreigners especially police staff as pointed out by foreign tourists.

– The tourism police may be more active and take care of foreign tourists in needs especially females.

– Suitable accommodations with necessary facilities in hotels at reasonable prices are needed in Kerala.

– Adequate waste management and disposal

facilities are required in public places.

– General cleanliness and hygiene should be a priority to eradicate environmental pollution.

– Public amenities such as clean toilets should be available in public places.

– Food with different cuisine menu should be availed to offer more choices to foreigners.

– Drivers should respect traffic rules and drive safe at an average speed.

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