

Innovations In Campervans: The Future Of Travel And Tourism In Kerala

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Abstract: India is a country with rich and varied heritage. A country where people live with different cultures and traditions. The world's most populous nation where tourism brought wonderful opportunities. India as 'Incredible India' stands top as one among the oldest civilization in the world. A country where people can experience multicultural traditions and heritages. Special in its landscapes and festivals, the country differs in every aspect from place to place. India is the only land where the language spoken changes every few kilometers. Though it is renowned for its 'unity in diversity'. Kerala state popularly known as the "God's own country" ranks within the top 15 must visited place in the country. As a land with lush green sceneries, tea plantations, hill stations, backwaters, aquatic spaces, lagoons, beaches and festivals, the state attracts more tourists. The domestic and foreign tourists are now visiting more places in Kerala and hence any innovations in tourism will determine the future space of tourism and allied businesses in Kerala. The most prominent among them is the new trend of trekking and tourism in motor vehicles. The van-life becomes a trendy pattern in Kerala as more youth bloggers and vloggers travel and report tourism spots and specialities in their own vehicles. The idea of campervans and caravan is the talk of the town and government of Kerala also introduced the concept of caravan tourism through its innovative project 'Keravan Kerala'.

Keywords: Tourism, caravanning, caravan, campervan, motorhomes, recreational vehicles, van-life, Keravan Kerala, trekking, travel, leisure, hospitality, caravan park, innovations, start-ups, entrepreneurship

1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala is a state where the most people are literate in the country. Kerala exhibits a unique character in all aspects when compared to other states in the country. Tourism in Kerala is regarded as one of the major destinations with highest brand recall. The tourism agenda of Kerala state is to promote ecologically sustained responsible tourism. That is sustainable tourism development through ecotourism and responsible tourism.

The state of Kerala is witnessing a growing trend of tourists, both domestic and foreign, coming to explore the destinations than before. The ayurvedic and medicinal importance of Kerala state is worth commendable among the tourists. The tourists can explore a wide variety of places with distinct and different features. The hill stations, the tea plantations, the myst, the beaches, the backwaters, the wildlife, the monuments, the festivals, the tradition, the feasts etc are unique in every means.

The tourists coming to Kerala usually visits the known and famous destinations through some travel agents and trip advisors and are generally on a package basis, which may include their travel, accommodation and other expenditures. These travelling usually fulfil the dreams of the tourist traveler but is not actually covering the unexplored or rural destinations. Usually the tour operators arrange the package travel in a travel and accommodation friendly places.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are a lot of unknown and unexplored tourist destinations in Kerala, which are of most local importance and traditions. These places may be lacking with the tourism standards or hygiene facilities including a good accommodation, good food facility or internet services. If operated well, a Recreational Vehicle (RV), Campervan, or Motorhomes can become a lifestyle choice to traverse the myriad terrains of the state.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the future potential of recreation vehicles and campervans in tourism.
2. To examine how to market caravan tourism as a tourism product.

3. To understand whether caravan tourism can become a substitute to package tourism

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is a try out to understand the state of Kerala, where tourism was established and its operations are carried out to boost tourism industry in these specific regions so as to examine how caravan tourism can play positive role in the development and growth of domestic tourism in Kerala.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Curran and Stanworth (1989, p. 12) state that the establishment of a new business enterprise focused on a unique product or service or, at the very least, one that stands out from those available elsewhere in the market is referred to as entrepreneurship. According to Tasci (2006) the brand image of a tourist destination can be affected by various factors. The brand image can damage the tourism business also. If there are some negative factors in the brand it will be circulated much faster than positive factors. For the destination marketers, dealing with the negative factors are much challenging (Deller C S, Tsai H, Marcouller, English B, 2001). Seraphin (2021) says that new technologies can be assimilated to an amplifier when there are some external shocks like covid pandemic restrictions or similar. According to him new technologies act as enablers and not as a driver to changes. Tourists may place a higher value on hygiene when selecting their choice of accommodation, and the priority of safeguarding the life of tourists is very important for the recovery of tourism industry (Assaf A, Scuderi R 2020).

Since people are expected to travel to different locations in search of new experiences and adventures, the travel industry is especially susceptible to the COVID-19 pandemic due to its interconnection with many other facets of the global tourism industry (Ugur & Akbıyık, 2020). According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization's (2020) estimations, there was a fall in international visitor arrivals globally between 1% and 3% in 2020 compared to the early January 2020 forecast of a 3% to 4% gain. In keeping with its assessment, the UNWTO (2020) reported that, as travel restrictions tightened in nearly every destination worldwide, international arrivals fell by 98% in May 2020. This translates to 300 million fewer tourist arrivals between January and May 2020 than during the same period in 2019. This indicates that travellers worldwide should not take the chance of travelling during the COVID-19 pandemic, which appears to be ongoing due to virus mutations. The most concerning aspect of these seasonal influenza-related pandemics is that they cause a sharp fall in the travel and tourism sector, which is a major global contributor to the service sector. Ozili and Arun (2020) further agreed by stating that countries impose travel bans and travel restrictions on both inbound and outbound passengers as a result of pandemics.

According to Sachin Panchal, the creator of Motohom, the official caravan sellers of Maharashtra Tourism, caravans allow people to travel and live freely. You get to choose where you want to live, sleep, and whether you want to wake up beside the beach or to the sounds of nature. It is a cosy fusion of travel, entertainment, and lodging. People prefer to travel in small groups, primarily with their loved ones. The greatest way to travel is by caravan since it meets all of those requirements. There is a lack of lodging in rural locations, but caravan tourism may be able to fill this need.

Jigyasu Joshi, co-founder of Carvaa India, claims that throughout the past two years, the curve has only increased. This is presumably due to the health protection it offers, particularly in light of the ongoing pandemic. People prefer to travel in a bubble, and a caravan offers exactly that. The passengers think that comfort, flexibility, and end-to-end connectivity are some of the main advantages of caravan travel. For those who wish to interact with the people and see the inside of the destination they are visiting, Caravan provides a solution to the dilemma.

According to Tiger Ramesh, CEO of LuxeCamper, caravan tourism is particularly sustainable because it benefits the locals as well, who feed and engage caravan guests in local customs and activities.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study clearly indicates that it is all about innovations in campervans, the future of travel and tourism in Kerala. The research design is descriptive in nature. The current study is conceptual and is based on various secondary data available and published by organizations and agencies. The study makes use of the data

and information provided by Govt. of Kerala - Dept. of Tourism, District Tourism Promotion Council, Kerala Tourist Development Corporation, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, United Nations World Tourism Organization, Newspapers, Journals, Articles etc.

4. RESULTS

- The covid 19 pandemic raised a sense of hygiene among travelers and hence the scope of Caravan is higher.
- Govt. support is needed to establish the caravan as it requires huge investment.
- Travellers doesn't wish to limit their travel and hence the marketing of Caravan and the features will increase the demand
- Caravan can be a substitute to package tourism as it is a unique tourism model which provides a comfortable blend of travel, leisure and accommodation.

5. CONCLUSION

Caravan Tourism is perfect aspect of Tourism industry which will run very fast on track in terms of incentives, income growth to the local young generation with the help of public and private sectors. Various circuits can be created by using existing as well as new tourist spots such as beaches, backwaters, lakes, water bodies, forts, hill stations, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, tea plantations etc. It will create the way of income for public as well as private sector. Caravan Tourism will be a key asset for the development of tourist places, hill stations, farm tourism. Wildlife Tourism can be boosted by Caravan Tourism. It is a form of adventure tourism which will affect tremendously on income growth of Kerala State's public as well as private sector in positive manner. Since travellers no longer want to limit their travel options to hotels, raising knowledge of the flexible caravans will only increase demand, which will eventually make Caravans as the future of travel and tourism.

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