

A Study on Infrastructural Problems Confronting Karnataka's Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The tourism industry in Karnataka is one among an intensifying sectors with respect to trade as well as economy. Comprising of vast resources and involving an excellent monetary value likewise this industry has dipped up as type of backbone for Indian economy. Through this study the researcher has put an attempt to highlight some of the significant issues related to infrastructural problems such as quality accommodation facilities, safety and security facilities, ICT facilities for the communications purposes, basic civic amenities and transportation facilities. These are essential services required for marketing tourism services in Karnataka. A statistical tool Chi-square analysis has been used for testing the hypotheses. The results show that most of the domestic and foreign tourists were not satisfied with respect to availability of ICT facilities at the selected tourism destinations across Karnataka.

Keywords: Tourism Industry; Ecotourism; Heritage tourism; Domestic Tourists; Foreign tourists; Tour operators and consultants; Infrastructure facilities

1.1 Introduction

The Karnataka government launched its Tourism Policy 2015-2020 with a vision to make Karnataka one of the top two destinations in India subsequent to a Karnataka government-constituted Karnataka Tourism Vision Group (KTVG) presenting a roadmap to revitalize the tourism sector and raise it to international standards. The policy places focus on private investments and promotion of entrepreneurship in tourism. An investment of INR 54,000 crores has been contemplated

for the development and maintenance of tourist destinations over the next five years, half of which may be mobilised from the corporate players. The problems that the tourism industry of the state faces can be broadly placed under two heads, namely infrastructural problems and other problems. This classification in itself explains the relevance of infrastructure to the tourism industry. Tourism industry has been rising fast in the country. None believed in the past that the industry would emerge as a major revenue generator for the country (Clark,

2012). If one realises that a good chunk of the revenue is denominated in a foreign currency, one will appreciate even more the role played by the tourism sector in the country's economy. In the circumstances, the government of India, the various state governments including the government of Karnataka and the agencies or organisations set up by these governments departmentally or otherwise are obliged to focus on resolving the said problems faced by the tourism industry swiftly and effectively (Lehto, 2012). By the very nature of its activity, the tourism industry has to utilise the services of intermediaries too for its operations. Intermediaries complement the tourism industry. To rev up the tourism industry, the infrastructural problems and other problems faced by the stakeholders have to be identified and a time-bound action plan executed committedly.

2. Review of literature

The researcher pointedly states that Karnataka's tourism policy does not encourage and does not ensure synergies between tourism-related agencies (Harini, 2015). It is necessary to ensure synergies between policies too, for sustainable tourism. Environmental policy, urban development policy and rural development policy are the policies the researcher has in mind while making this suggestion. This leads to complementarities in the programmes governed by the various policies. The unorganised service providers associated with the tourism industry see their incomes fluctuate owing to the very seasonality associated with the tourism industry. The researcher suggests that such unorganised

service providers be provided social security under the Pradhan Manthri Jeevan Jothi Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Manthri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Atal Pension Scheme (APS), etc.

Karnataka's tag line 'One State, Many Worlds,' reveals the truth about what the state can offer in terms of places of tourist interest (Deccan Chronicle, 2016). The state can offer a huge basket of diverse tourism products and services like the beaches of Mangaluru, the coffee plantations of Kodagu and the magnificent temples and palaces of Malnad and Mysore. The tag line notwithstanding, the state's tourism promotion efforts have cut no ice with the tourists. Tourists have not been able to gain quality experience of the pleasure and excitement that the said tourism products and services are supposed to generate. Inadequate information and inadequate infrastructure make travelling a hassle for the tourists. It is argued in informed circles that Karnataka has a lot to do in areas like connectivity infrastructure, experience at the destination, supporting infrastructure and knowledge infrastructure if it is to achieve progress in the tourism space, at Kerala. Vinay Luthra asserts that the government's role should not overlap with that of the private players (Deccan Chronicle, 2016). The government should play the role of a mere facilitator in the tourism sector. The government should not invest in hotels, restaurants and lodges. It should leave such investments to the private players. Instead, the government should focus on infrastructure development – it should focus on road-laying and provision of basic amenities. Simultaneously, it should ensure

that the services of well-informed and talented guides are made available to the tourists in a hassle-free manner. Motivations for venture out administrators in reacting to capable rustic the travel industry development just as the difficulties and boundaries looked by visitors and operators. (Tay Kai Xin & Jennifer Kim Lian Chan, December 2013,). This examination recommends a hypothetical system that is based upon the main impetuses utilizing the push and pull hypothesis to introduce the activities of travel agents and travel consultants in the act of mindful the travel industry improvement in rural tourism spots. The development of information system for tourists' objects infrastructure growth and its practical implementation. Author highlights here the opportunities for entrepreneurs to make wise decisions about investing and accompanying the growth of infrastructural facilities which are existing at present(Bogdan Gats, Petro Bryzhak, and Yaroslav, 2013). Nichola, (2013) Their examination depended on three essential components, specifically on social activities, level of mindfulness towards ecotourism and strengthening of the neighbourhood local area. The research uncovered that the occupants showed a serious level of mindfulness and affectability with respect to the socio-social issues. They are needing preparing and training identified with ecotourism to improve their ways of life, economy and asset the executives. Their contribution in ecotourism projects would be an expected technique to advance and support practical improvement nearby.

In order to give a major boost to tourism in the state, Karnataka Tourism is looking at

bringing major structural changes. The state aims to showcase its heritage, wildlife, beaches, and adventure in a planned manner to lure travellers. For the past 10-15 years the focus of the Karnataka government was on developing the state as a leading automobile manufacturing state(ehospitalitytimes.com, 2013),. Once that was achieved, the focus shifted to Information Technology (IT) and now Bengaluru is one the of the leading IT hubs. Off late the focus has been shifted to tourism and converts it as major economic activity. To reiterate the same, a major structural change in tourism will be brought to showcase Karnataka as the second-best destination after Rajasthan and Kerala. There is a huge scope for the rural tourism in India. Focused on the tourism in rural areas and its new form that can bring economic and social benefits to the society. It is highlighted that government should encourage private enterprises to promote tourism in rural areas(Rathore, February 2012). For developing the rural tourism there is a need to understand the rural environment, demography, and socio culture, economic and infrastructural facilities of that place. The development of the tourism industry and its emerging issues in the globalization. This study examines the problems and challenges of the country and the pitfalls of tourism planning in India(Patel, August 2012). This paper also focused on policy suggestions to address the issues with regard to sustainability of tourism promotion in India. Tourism industry is hampered by some of the problems which include poor transportation, lack of basic hygienic amenities, poor maintenance of heritages, issues regarding women safety and harassment at the tourists'

spot, inadequacy of manpower etc. The issues identified with the environment just as infrastructural emergency because of overabundance swarm practice of mass the travel industry. Water emergency, deforestation, ecological contamination, absence of convenience facilities like accommodation, overpopulation of monkeys, and so on are the major issues Shimla (Pranab Kr. Das, 2012). This investigation manages infrastructural issues just as natural issues in Shimla.

The literature review has provided valuable insight into the nature of problems that could arise in the tourism industry given its heavy reliance on infrastructure to deliver quality service. Another researcher has pointed out rightly that the government's role should not overlap with that of the private players. The government should play the role of a mere facilitator in the tourism sector. The government should not invest in hotels, restaurants and lodges. It should leave such investments to the private players. Instead, the government should focus on infrastructure development – it should focus on road-laying and provision of basic amenities. However, none of the reviewed studies has examined the functioning of the government agencies which are entrusted with the responsibility of addressing certain infrastructural issues like lodging facilities and boarding facilities. Nor has any reviewed literature suggested adequately how the problems of the associated stakeholders / intermediaries can be addressed in the context of the infrastructural bottlenecks that characterise Karnataka's tourism industry. It is these gaps that the present study pursues to cover. The study

confines itself to 30 domestic and foreign tourists, 30 tour operators and 30. travel consultants at the ecotourism and Heritage destinations across Karnataka. The scope of this study confined to only highlighting the basic infrastructural facilities at the selected tourism destinations such as Beluru, Halebidu, Coorg, Chikmagalore and Shimoga in Karnataka.

3. Objectives

This study basically aims at:

- To identify the problems, the tourists faces in designated tourism destinations across Karnataka.
- To analyse the infrastructural problems, the tourism industry faces across Karnataka.

4. Methodology

This is a descriptive study, comprising investigations and adequate interpretation. It is a fact-finding study. Subsequently authoritative sources like the government departments and the financial press of the country have been used. Research design is the describing of the conditions that were used to collect primary data and analyze them in such a way so that it permits for an unsolidified method of producing result. Logical surveys were comprehensively and exclusively used in this research study as a primary source of data collection.

5. Data

Data required for this study has been collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data obtained from tourists (numbering 30), tour operators (numbering

30) and travel consultants (numbering 50) at the selected tourism destinations such as Beluru, Halebidu, Coorg, Chikmagalore and Shimoga in Karnataka. Secondary data was gathered from the offices and web sites of entities like KSTDC, the financial press, associations representing tourism industry stakeholders like the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), the Association of Tourism Trade Organisations, India (ATTOI), Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), Ministry of tourism and web sites of the government of Karnataka and the government of India and the portals of various medical tourism players. Since secondary data is sourced from authorised and reliable agencies / entities, the Researcher is confident it will be closest to being accurate. Inaccuracy, if any, will be too insignificant to impact the findings of the study.

5.1 Details of Respondents

The study uses three separate structured questionnaires for domestic tourists, foreign tourists and tour operators as an instrument for the collection of primary data regarding the variables related to “Infrastructural problems of tourism” in order to achieve the primary objective. Domestic Tourists: The first set of structured questionnaires was administered to Domestic tourists. Foreign Tourists: The second set of structured questionnaires was administered to foreign tourists. Tour Operators and consultants: The third set of primary data was collected

through a structured questionnaire from tour operators and consultant in the designated Tourism destinations of Karnataka.

5.2 Sampling plan

Domestic Tourists, Foreign tourists, tour operators and travel consultants represent the sampling universe. In order to select the required number of respondents from the population, stratified random sampling technique has been incorporated for Domestic tourists, Foreign tourists and Tour operators. In Stratified sampling the population is divided into 5 tourists’ spots called strata, namely Beluru, Halebidu, Coorg, Chikmagalore and Shimoga in Karnataka. Stratified sampling under the probability sampling method has been undertaken to select the samples since it gives each element an equal and independent chance of being selected. Accordingly, structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents. Structured questionnaires were drafted and administered to the domestic and foreign tourists and travel agents for gathering primary information. The questionnaire featured open questions and closed questions. Open ended questions were incorporated to identify opinions, ascertain the level of exposure to the topic and seek suggestions. The study limitations are: (a) Primary data collected through questionnaire could be misleading to some extent as responses are influenced by biasness of tourists and tour operators. (b) While distributing questionnaire to tourists to collect data was difficult as they were busy in enjoying their tour. This delayed data collection process for this study.

5.3 Data Analysis

1) For Tourists (a) Infrastructural problems faced by the tourists: As already explained, tourists face problems of the infrastructural kind. Thus, the researcher wanted to study the infrastructural problems that tourists face during their tourism activity. Their responses to the questions displayed in the Table 1.

Table 1: Infrastructural Problems Faced by the Tourists

Infrastructural problems	Number of Respondents
Inadequate online booking facility	27
Inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity	26
Inadequate parking slots for vehicles	25
Inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot	19

It can be analysed from the above table no. 1, 27 respondents cite inadequate online booking facility's an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 26 respondents cite inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 25 respondents cite inadequate parking slots for vehicles as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 19 respondents cite inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. (b) Other problems faced by the tourists: Tourists face other problems too – apart from problems of the infrastructural kind shown in

Table 2. Thus, the researcher required to get an awareness from the respondents on other problems that tourists face.

Table 2: Other Problems Faced by the Tourists

Other Problems	Number of Respondents
Security for tourists, particularly women tourists, inadequate	25
The tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing	17
Absence of information in local and international languages on the internet	12

Table# 2 indicates, 27 respondents cite that security for tourists, particularly women tourists, being inadequate, as one of the other problems. 17 cite the tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing as one of the other problems. 12 cite the absence of information in local and international languages on the internet as one of the other problems. In case of Tour operators: (a) Infrastructural problems faced by the tourists: As already explained, tourists face problems of the infrastructural kind. Thus, the researcher put an attempt to get to identify from the respondents on the infrastructural problems that tourists face.

Table 3: Tour Operators: Infrastructural Problems Faced by the Tourists

Infrastructural problems	Number of Respondents
Inadequate online booking facility	27
Inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity	26
Inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot	24

Table #3 analyses that 27 respondents cite inadequate online booking facility as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 26 respondents cite inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 24 respondents cite inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. Other problems faced by the tourists: Tourists face other problems too – apart from problems of the infrastructural kind. Thus the researcher wanted to know the other problems faced by tourists during their tourism activity.

Table 4: Other Problems Faced by the Tourists During their Tourism Activity

Other Problems	Number of Respondents
The tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing	27
Absence of information in local and international	26

languages on the internet	
Security for tourists, particularly women tourists, inadequate	25
Tourism department and the district administration do not work in tandem	23

Table # 4 shows that 27 respondents cite the tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing as one of the other problems. 26 cite the absence of information in local and international languages on the internet as one of the other problems. 25 cite the security for tourists, particularly women tourists, being inadequate, as one of the other problems. 23 cite the tourism department and the district administration not working in tandem as one of the other problems.

2) Travel consultants: (a) Infrastructural problems faced by the tourists. As already explained, tourists face problems of the infrastructural kind Thus the researcher put an attempt to get to identify from the respondents on the infrastructural problems that tourists face.

Table 5: Infrastructural problems faced by the tourists based on Travel Consultants

Infrastructural Problems	Number of Respondents
Inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity	26
Inadequate online booking facility	25

Inadequate parking slots for vehicles	24
Inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot	22

It can be noted from the above table # 5 that 26 respondents cite inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 25 respondents cite inadequate online booking facility as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 24 respondents cite inadequate parking slots for vehicles as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. 22 respondents cite inadequate or little availability of quality accommodation at or near the tourist spot as an infrastructural problem the tourists face. (b) Other problems faced by the tourists: Tourists face other problems too – apart from problems of the infrastructural kind. Thus the researcher put an attempt to get to identify from the respondents on the infrastructural problems that tourists face.

Table 6: Other Problems Faced by the Tourists based on Travel Consultants

Other Problems	Number of Respondents
Security for tourists, particularly women tourists, inadequate	26
Absence of information in local and international languages on the internet	24

The tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing	23
Tourism department and the district administration do not work in tandem	22

Table # 6 indicates that 26 cite the security for tourists, particularly women tourists, being inadequate, as one of the other problems. 24 cite the absence of information in local and international languages on the internet as one of the other problems. 23 respondents cite the tendency to rip off foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing as one of the other problems. 22 cite the tourism department and the district administration not working in tandem as one of the other problems.

Inferences are drawn from the findings of the study. They relate to the research hypotheses. They are the answers to the research questions or the statements of acceptance or rejection of hypotheses. As already explained, the study proposes to test the following hypothesis: “Inadequate online booking facility is a problem the tourists face.” According the null and alternative hypothesis is framed. H_0 : Inadequate online booking facility is not a problem the tourists face. H_1 : Inadequate online booking facility is a problem the tourists face. Based on the primary data which is gathered from the respondents, vide Tables: 1 and 2, a chi-square test was administered to determine the relationship, among an independent and dependent variable.

Table 7: Chi-Square test

AA1:D24		Observed Values	
Category	Yes	No	Total
Tourists	27	3	30
Tour operators	27	3	30
Travel consultants	25	5	30
<i>Total</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>90</i>
Expected Values			
Category	Yes	No	Total
Tourists	26.333333	3.666667	30
Tour operators	26.333333	3.666667	30
Travel consultants	26.333333	3.666667	30
<i>Total</i>	<i>79</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>90</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
o-e	0.6667	-0.6667	
	0.6667	-0.6667	
	-1.3333	1.3333	
(o-e)^2	1	1	
	1	1	
	1	1	
((o-e)^2)/e	0.038	0.2727	
	0.038	0.2727	
	0.038	0.2727	
CV	0.1139	0.8182	0.9321
TV			5.991465
P			0.93

The Table 7 reveals the computation made using Microsoft Excel. Since the observed value of χ^2 that is 0.9321, is lesser than the table value of that is 5.991464547 for an alpha of 0.05 at two degrees of freedom. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and can be concluded that inadequate online booking facility is not a problem the tourists face.

6. Findings and Recommendations

The following are the findings of this study. Subsequently researcher has given some recommendations on the findings.

1. Security of women tourists in particular is an issue that needs greater attention from the government and its law-enforcing machinery. Women tourists and in particular, women tourists that visit the country singly, are always apprehensive about their security while visiting India

(Lockyer, 2000) . The law enforcement agency is by default reactive to complaints lodged by women tourists against the perpetrators of the crime. By default, the law enforcement agency should be proactive in dealing with complaints lodged by women tourists, in particular. A specially-trained women police force should be entrusted with the task of providing security to women tourists. The force should be adequately empowered and adequately armed to ensure that crimes against women tourists are swiftly and effectively acted upon, leading to exemplary punishment of the guilty.

2. Yet another practice or rather malpractice that should be put an end to is the inherent tendency to rip off the foreign tourists through discriminatory pricing. Unbelievably, some of these undesirable practices are endorsed by the government directly or indirectly (McArthur, 1994). For example, the entrance fee at Taj Mahal for a foreign tourist is a whopping INR 1,000, while it is a paltry INR 40 for domestic visitors. Just as our society is divided along caste lines, the tourist community has also been divided on the basis of the geographies the tourists are from. For example, the fee is nominal namely INR 40 for visitors from SAARC and BIMSTEC countries and a prohibitive INR 1,000 for visitors from other countries! And to think it

happens in the largest secular democracy in the world.

3. Tourism department and the district administration lack the much-needed coordination to be of much use to the tourist community. The two must move in perfect lock step. The two often pass the buck instead. (Cobanoglu, 2012) Division of labour is resorted to, to ensure accountability and answerability. But ground reality suggests otherwise – it leads to buck-passing! It is necessary for the government to take this issue seriously. A combination of a maze of bureaucracy and a buck-passing community of bureaucrats is the last thing a sunrise industry like tourism can afford!
4. Online booking facility will go a long way in promoting tourism in the state. The recent relaxation concerning issue of visa has already led to a significant rise in tourist numbers (Bakker, 2006). In the backdrop of this experience, the government is now in a better position to optimise the visa issue regime. For example, it can think of further relaxing the online visa issue regime even while ensuring that the country's security is not exposed. The industry continues to be plagued by the proverbial infrastructure bottlenecks particularly the road infrastructure. Ironically, cess is collected from the tourists by various governments and various local self-governments, for certain tourism-dedicated projects. But

seldom have these projects seen the light of the day!

A serious investigation is warranted into this anomalous outcome. Advocating tourism promotion on the one hand and hobbling tourism-related projects on the other is a disturbing cocktail.

5. Inadequate surface transport / flight connectivity has to be addressed by the government on top priority. Even assuming that ensuring adequate flight connectivity is not entirely on government turf, one cannot forgive the government for its failure to ensure adequate surface transport connectivity. It is not a costly proposition; nor is it an unviable proposition (Chu, 2000). As said in an earlier paragraph, cess is being collected by the various state governments and local self-governments for investment in certain niche areas of the surface transport infrastructure. Some of the collected funds have been lying idle. Hence all that is required is for the government and other government-run tourism agencies to summon the willpower to address the inadequacy in surface transport connectivity.
6. If inadequate availability of quality accommodation at or near the ecotourism spots like Jog-falls, Madikeri Hebbifals are addressed, the problems faced by the foreign tourists can be minimised leading to rising tourist numbers. But investing in

quality accommodation near the tourist spot may not be financially viable for the investor, whether private or otherwise (Brady, 2001)

7. If the tourist spot in question is not popular, such investment in accommodation may not find takers. At least in these cases the government can ensure adequate and quality surface transport connectivity between the tourist spot and the nearest city. This is not something beyond the government concerned.

7. Conclusion

Properly designed and planned growth of tourism is of paramount significance as it has been one of the bases of Karnataka's economy. However, the growth of tourism results in the progress of recreation resources and tourist's activities to get most favorable benefits in terms of social, economic and ecological objectives and satisfaction of tourists. Nevertheless, the challenge is to deal with the future development of the tourism industry to diminish its negative effects on the climate and nearby networks while amplifying the advantages terms of job opportunity, wealth and backing for neighborhood culture, and security of assembled and natural resources.

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