EVALUATING KERALA'S COMMITMENT TO RESPONSIBLE TOURISM: INSIGHTS FROM DOMESTIC TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT:

Kerala, renowned as 'God's Own Country,' has emerged as a leader in India's responsible tourism sector, attracting 21.8 million domestic tourists in 2023 through its unique offerings in cultural, wellness, and rural tourism experiences. This study examines domestic tourists' perceptions of Kerala's responsible tourism initiatives, with four specific objectives: (1) To analyze socio-economic and tripographic profiles of visitors, (2) To assess how demographic factors influence satisfaction levels, (3) To evaluate the alignment between expectations and actual experiences, and (4) To identify critical gaps in responsible tourism offerings. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to domestic tourists, incorporating both tripographic details and Likert-scale responses. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA to process the survey results. Findings reveal that while tourists show overall satisfaction with cultural and festival tourism (with 78% expressing revisit intention), significant expectation-satisfaction gaps exist in wellness tourism (particularly

Ayurveda services) and rural infrastructure. The study highlights the need for standardized service quality and enhanced rural connectivity to strengthen Kerala's position as a sustainable tourism destination, offering actionable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders to optimize the state's responsible tourism framework

1.INTRODUCTION

In today's world, tourism has grown into an important industry and a significant global economic activity, contributing to around 10.3 percent of global GDP in 2025 (ET Hospitality World, 2025) with a forecast to reach 11.6 percent by 2033 and offering employment opportunities for 430 million people worldwide (WTTC, 2023). The tourism sector has proliferated over the years. As per the report of world tourism barometer report by UN Tourism (2025), In 2024, 1.4 billion tourists were traveling worldwide internationally that indicates recovery of 99% of pre pandemic levels. After the petroleum and chemical sectors, tourism has become the third-biggest export industry (Rasool et al., 2021). Tourism activity is a consumer behavior that attracts domestic and international tourists to travel to a particular destination. Due to its high rate of return on investment, rapid development, and low cost, it is one of the primary industries in which various countries are investing to grow. Because of its low cost, rapid growth, and significant revenue impact, it has emerged as one of the main economic sectors that nations are working to develop and promote (Nguyen, 2021). To reach its full potential, every nation has been finding various tourism activities through local communities, promoting various micro and macro tourism concepts, and actively promoting its tourism advertising programs through different online and print media. With demand from emerging economies rising uncontrollably, travel and tourism have a promising future (Shuhaibu, Sachithanantham, et al., 2012). As the demands of travelers grow,

there is a need for insightful actions in the areas of destination management, transportation, and infrastructure development.

India has a global ranking of 39 out of 119 countries as per the Travel & Tourism Development Index 2024 reports. The travel and tourism sector contributed 201.37 billion US dollars to India's total GDP and is expected to create 1.6 million jobs in 2023 (Statista, 2024). In 2023, India received 18.89 million international tourists arrivals and 2509.63 million domestic tourists as per the India tourism annual report for the year 2024-25 (Ministry of Tourism, 2025). In the next ten years, the travel and tourism sector's GDP will exceed India's, potentially generating over 2.4 million job opportunities annually (WTTC, 2022). Tourism figures are increasing rapidly, leading to mass tourism and over-tourism. India has been implementing sustainable tourism strategies over some years to minimize the adverse effects of mass tourism. In India, the tourism sector supports millions of local people for livelihood, so tourism should be sustainable to help the local community. The Indian government is committed to promoting sustainable tourism in the nation. The Indian government has taken several initiatives to accomplish sustainable development in the country. In 2022, the Ministry of Tourism developed the "National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism," which focuses on incorporating sustainability in the tourism sector to protect cultural and natural resources. Another is the National Strategy for Ecotourism formulated by the Ministry of Tourism in 2022, which takes into account the ecotourism guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). It aims to foster the growth of ecotourism in India. The National Green Tourism Mission is being introduced by the Ministry of Tourism through the Draft National Tourism Policy in 2022. It aims to foster green tourism in the Indian tourism sector by promoting sustainable tourism and development. Preserving biodiversity, reducing poverty, and elevating the local community's livelihood remain the prime concerns of this mission. Several other

initiatives are being taken by the government like Swadesh Darshan Scheme 2.0, which focuses on developing sustainable destinations across the nation, and Sustainable Tourism for India Criteria and Indicators (STCI) launched in 2016 in association with Ecotourism Society of India (ESOI) for granting STCI certification by evaluating the sustainability criteria of tour operators and accommodation units. Kerala is among the pioneering states in India that have embraced Responsible Tourism, with its primary objective emphasizing the development of tourism in an environmentally conscious way that benefits everybody.

Kerala is a state on the Indian Peninsula's southwest coast. It covers 360 miles (580 km) along the Malabar Coast and is well-known for being a tourist paradise. When granting public funds, the State promotes marketing, infrastructural development, human resource development, and hospitality. In 1995, the Kerala government presented the State's first tourism policy (Thomas & Rajini, 2021). In 2003, Kerala Tourism became India's first state tourism department to officially register its brand, "Gods Own Country," with the Government of India's trademark registration (Kerala Tourism). According to the National Geographic Society, Kerala Tourism was recognized as one of the Top 10 paradises on earth and a collaborative partner state in India with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 2000. Kerala Tourism has also bagged the prestigious Gold Award of the Pacific Asia Travel Association in the printed marketing campaign category (PATA, 2022) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's recognition for its Responsible Tourism Mission in 2023.

Kerala is one of the leading tourism marketers using Information Communication Technology (ICT). Kerala Tourism's Instagram account has 6.4 lakh followers, 4.8 lakh followers on Meta Page, and 3.8 lakh subscribers on YouTube. In 2024, Kerala's tourism sector reached a significant milestone by welcoming 22,246,989 tourists, representing a 21% increase compared to pre-pandemic levels (Kerala Tourism, 2025).

Kerala tourism statistics indicated a 0.42% increase in FTA 2018 from 2017 and a 6.35% increase in Domestic Tourist arrivals in 2018 from the previous year. After the COVID-19 lockdown in 2021, there was an increase of 471.28% for foreign tourists and 150.31% for domestic tourists, as per the Kerala tourism report. Kerala tourism witnessed a record 20.1% increase in domestic tourist arrivals, with 17.87 lakh visitors within the first six months of 2023 (Department of Kerala Tourism, 2023). The rising numbers indicate a noticeable success of Kerala Tourism's various initiatives.

Kerala's tourism statistics for 2022 show a striking rise in the number of visitors arriving in the state, with 150.31% more domestic visitors and 471.28% more foreign tourists in 2022. (see Table 1 in appendices).

The domestic travel visits (DTV) to Kerala from other states are shown in Chart 2 (see appendices), with Kerala having the highest share with 71.51%, followed by Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Gujrat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Andra Pradesh.

In 2022, Kochi City received the highest share of domestic tourists' visits (DTVs) in Kerala, accounting for 13.94% of all DTVs. Thiruvananthapuram city (8.74%), Guruvayoor (7.74%), Munnar (5.68%), Kozhikode City (4.52%), Alappuzha (3.31%), Iringal-Kottakkal (3.23%), Wayanad (3.16%), Thekkady (3.03%), and Aluva Kollam (2.64%) follow. (See Chart 2 in appendices).

The concept of Responsible Tourism was introduced in India through Kerala, known as "God's own Country" due to its natural beauty and tourism potential. Kerala's first tourism policy was enacted in 1995. The second was introduced in 2012, and the "Tourism Vision 2025" was announced to make Kerala a more desirable destination rather than focusing on mass tourism to attract more tourists. (Nair & Dhanuraj, 2018). As per the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report on Kerala, "Responsible Tourism (RT) was developed in 2007, involving elected representatives, NGOs, policymakers, industry

practitioners, community leaders, social activists, environmentalists, media persons, academicians, and other tourism stakeholders". A pilot study is being conducted in four destinations, Kovalam, Kumarakom, Wayanad, and Thekkady, to practice responsible tourism. Kerala Tourism utilized a triple- bottom-line strategy in 2017 to accomplish the RT objective, which emphasizes social, environmental, and economic accountability. The primary aim was to encourage community- based tourism planning and programs, reduce poverty, and empower women. Under the responsible tourism mission, village experiential tourism is being introduced with a focus on preserving traditional crafts and providing employment opportunities to small entrepreneurs and ancestral artists in the villages in Kerala. Numerous tour packages include weaving centers of Kalliasseri in Kannur, bell metal making of Kunhimangalam, various Theyyam dance performances, visits to agricultural areas, and traditional fishing techniques (Kerala Tourism).

Backwater cruises, canoe riding, boating, and visiting the village are some of the activities it offers. The cuisine, clothes, as well as artwork, and dancing of Kerala all represent its culture. Cultural experiential tourism is offered through different festival packages according to the festivals of Kerala, like a package titled 'Nattinpurangalil Onam Unnam, Ona Sammanagal Vaangam" during the time of Onam with the main attraction of the event 'Onam Special Gramayatrakal" (Kerala Tourism). Several other renowned festivals like Attuvela Maholsavam, Theyyam, Theeyattu, and Garudan Thookkam are under responsible tourism mission.

Despite growing scholarly interest in responsible tourism, critical gaps remain in understanding how demographic factors influence tourist satisfaction and how expectations align with actual experiences in emerging sustainable destinations. While prior studies have examined responsible tourism motivations and destination image, limited research specifically investigates: (1) the socio-economic profiles of responsible tourists in Kerala and its influence in shaping satisfaction levels; and the precise expectation-satisfaction gaps across Kerala's unique responsible tourism offerings. Existing frameworks have not been adequately applied to analyze these dimensions in Kerala's context, where community-based tourism and cultural preservation significantly shape experiences. This study addresses these gaps by providing empirical evidence on tourist profiles, demographic influences on satisfaction, and critical expectation-reality disparities essential knowledge for enhancing Kerala's positioning as a responsible tourism destination.

This study aims to achieve four key objectives: (1) examining the socio-economic and tripographic profiles of tourists visiting Kerala; (2) investigating how demographic factors, particularly gender and marital status, influence tourists' overall satisfaction levels; (3) evaluating the degree of alignment between tourists' expectations and their actual satisfaction with responsible tourism experiences in Kerala; and (4) identifying specific gaps between anticipated and realized satisfaction levels across various aspects of responsible tourism offerings. These objectives collectively seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of tourist characteristics, experience evaluation patterns, and potential areas for improvement in Kerala's responsible tourism sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 TOURIST PERCEPTION

Tourist perception is increasingly recognized as a dynamic, multi-stage process that evolves throughout the travel journey. Rogers (2017) defined perception as "the experience of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling objects and individuals around us," while Herman et al. (2023) characterize tourist perception as "how tourists view and interpret events or attractions

at a destination, influencing their satisfaction and overall experience." Modern contemporary studies emphasize its dynamic nature, evolving through pre-visit, on-site, and post-visit phases (Prayag et al., 2019). As an essential aspect of the tourism industry, tourist perception is shaped by multiple factors including fulfillment of expectations, cultural attractions, safety levels, and the overall integrated destination product. These perceptions crucially influence decision-making processes, behaviors, and satisfaction levels when exploring destinations.

Recent empirical work extends Bhuiyan et al.'s (2021) five-dimensional model (attractions, facilities, environment, information, staff) by incorporating sustainability practices (e.g., waste management, carbon footprint) as a critical sixth dimension. Rajesh's (2013) conceptual model for destination loyalty demonstrates particular relevance in Kerala's context, where cultural authenticity and Ayurvedic wellness tourism amplify positive perceptions. His model highlights how tourist perception is influenced by the travel environment, various attraction types (natural, historical, cultural), price and value of services, relaxation and mental state, as well as transportation and infrastructure. These findings align with Jangra et al.'s (2021) research showing that indigenous community presence and hospitality significantly impact tourist perceptions, with Kerala's Responsible Tourism initiatives demonstrating how local community engagement enhances revisit intentions and destination advocacy.

2.2 TOURIST MOTIVATION

Tourist motivation, derived from the Latin *movere* (to move), encapsulates the psychological drivers behind travel decisions. Rooted in goal-directed behavior theory (Johnstone, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000), it is contextualized in tourism as an integrative force shaping experiences (Pearce et al., 1998). The «inner mindset» of tourists—their desires and demands—is a critical psychological factor

influencing behavior (Žabkar et al., 2010), necessitating nuanced frameworks to decode decision-making.

Understanding the motivations behind people's travel decisions is vital. Many researchers have studied the importance of motivation and factors influencing tourist motivation and developed different theoretical frameworks. Early studies, such as Plog's (1974) psychographic typology (allocentric vs. psychocentric tourists) and Crompton's (1979) push-pull model (escapism vs. destination attributes), laid groundwork for understanding motivation. However, contemporary research underscores its dynamic nature, particularly with globalization and sustainability trends. For instance, Kozak's (2002) comparative study revealed that motives vary significantly across nationalities and destinations, challenging universal models. This aligns with Yoo et al.'s (2018) critique that no singular framework suffices to explain the complexity of destination choice, advocating for context-specific analyses.

In an ecotourism market-based study by Wight (1996) in the USA and Canada, she found that interest in ecotourism is expanding across various demographic segments of the market. The increased interest of responsible tourists who visit Kerala is also influenced by the growth in the popularity of specific outdoor activities and soft adventure activities, attention to ecological issues, and growth in educational tourism. Weeden (2011) conducted a study on the values influencing the motivations of responsible tourists based on Schwartz's list of values and identified several new values and their roles in shaping the motivation level of responsible tourists.

While motivation studies abound, research on *responsible tourists* remains limited, especially in emerging economies like India. Mody et al. (2014) identified nine motivations among responsible tourists visiting India (e.g., Nature, Escape, Responsibility), yet their study predates recent sustainability-driven shifts in traveler priorities. Notably, 64% of Indian travelers now prioritize low-carbon destinations (Booking.

com, 2023), reflecting a growing alignment with Kerala's offerings—carbon-neutral homestays, Ayurveda and wellness centres, and community-based tourism (WTTC, 2025). This gap calls for updated investigations into how sustainability motives intersect with cultural and experiential drivers in Kerala's context.

Kerala's status as a no bold one (Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, 2022) and its «Human by Nature» branding (Kerala Tourism, 2021) attract ethically motivated travelers. Modern tourists increasingly seek no bold one (Pine & Gilmore, 2020) and community-based interactions (Sigala, 2020), yet empirical studies linking these trends to Kerala's market are scarce.

2.3 TOURIST SATISFACTION

Tourist satisfaction represents a fundamental concept in tourism studies, reflecting the complex relationship between travelers' expectations and their actual experiences. Drawing from Kotler's (2000) foundational definition - the emotional state resulting from comparing anticipated versus received service quality - contemporary research has expanded this understanding to encompass cognitive, affective, and contextual dimensions (Del Bosque & San Martín, 2008; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). The expectation-disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1980) remains influential, positing that satisfaction emerges when experiences meet or exceed expectations, while dissatisfaction occurs when reality falls short (Pizam et al., 1978). However, recent challenges this linear perspective, demonstrating how cultural background (Reisinger & Waryszak, 1994), emotional states (Bigné et al., 2008), significantly moderate the satisfaction process.

The determinants of tourist satisfaction have been extensively examined across diverse contexts. Service quality consistently emerges as a critical factor, with studies highlighting the importance of reliability, responsiveness, and empathy in creating positive experiences (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Akbaba, 2006). Destination attributes - including natural resources, cultural attractions, and infrastructure quality - similarly influence satisfaction levels (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Chi & Qu, 2008). Recent work has identified more nuanced factors such as opportunities for co-creation (Campos et al., 2018), reflecting evolving tourist priorities. The relationship between motivation and satisfaction has received particular attention, with evidence suggesting that satisfaction is highest when destination offerings align with travelers' primary motives (Armario, 2008; Correia et al., 2013).

Measurement approaches have progressed significantly from traditional survey methods (Oppermann, 1999) to incorporate innovative techniques. Sentiment analysis of user-generated content (Xiang et al., 2017) now provides real-time, large-scale insights into satisfaction drivers. Despite these advances, significant gaps remain in understanding satisfaction dynamics in emerging destinations, particularly regarding culturally-specific expectations and the role of community engagement in experiential quality (Sharpley, 2020). The Kerala context presents a particularly valuable case for examining how responsible tourism principles intersect with satisfaction determinants, given its unique combination of natural assets, cultural heritage, and sustainability initiatives.

As responsible tourism is an emerging and innovative concept, most studies in this domain analyze factors affecting the satisfaction levels of responsible tourists. He et al. (2018) examined the relationship between visitor satisfaction, environmental commitment, and destination perception, finding that tourists' evaluations of service quality positively influence their environmental values and responsible behavior. Similarly, Kumar and Lata (2022) demonstrated that the quality of tourist experiences and perceived value significantly impact both satisfaction and environmentally responsible actions. The link between satisfaction, destination loyalty, and eco-friendly practices was further validated by Sahabuddin et al. (2021).

Educational interventions also play a role: Pan et al. (2018) revealed that environmental knowledge enhances sensitivity and responsibility among tourism students. Theoretical frameworks like Pandža Bajs's (2015) model highlight perceived value as a mediator between service quality and satisfaction, noting that quality alone may not directly boost satisfaction. Behavioral studies, such as Mbaye Fall Diallo's (2015) work, emphasize how social engagement and ecological inclinations shape responsible tourist conduct, moderated by satisfaction with public management. Finally, Orabi and Fadel (2020) explored how tour guide performance and tourist attitudes at archaeological sites jointly influence satisfaction and experience.

Destination image (D.I.) represents the composite of perceptions, beliefs, and impressions individuals hold about a place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). Gunn (2014) distinguished between organic image (formed through non-commercial sources like media) and induced image (shaped by promotional efforts), while Lopes (2011) categorized it into primary (post-visit) and secondary (pre-visit) levels. Early research by Hunt (1975) established D.I.'s significance in tourism, with Crompton's (1979) study of Mexico highlighting critical attributes like safety and sanitation. Baloglu and McCleary's (1999) model identified two key influences: stimulus factors (information sources, prior experience) and personal factors (psychological and social traits). Contemporary research emphasizes how tourist interactions with locals shape D.I. and loyalty (Stylidis, 2022). Measurement approaches vary, from Echtner and Ritchie's (1993) framework assessing functional/psychological attributes to Gartner's (1989) cognitive-affective model. In the Indian context, studies reveal D.I. attributes like handicrafts, cuisine, and hospitality infrastructure (Kaur et al., 2016), with Mak (2017) underscoring how user-generated content influences modern destination branding. These findings collectively demonstrate D.I.'s complexity as both a precursor to and consequence of tourist experiences, mediated by information sources, personal factors, and cultural contexts.

Research on gender differences in tourist satisfaction and behavior reveals divergent perspectives. Dashper (2023) highlights how rural tourism reinforces gendered roles, with women often relegated to low-paid service work despite gaining economic agency, while men dominate decision-making. Conversely, Chiu et al. (2014) demonstrate that eco-tourists' satisfaction and environmentally responsible behavior are shaped by perceived value and involvement, but do not explicitly address gender. Dedeoğlu et al. (2015) found gender moderates value perceptions: emotional value drives male revisit intentions, while quality value influences females. Meanwhile, Hultman et al. (2015) show materialism negatively affects ecotourism intentions, with motivations varying by cultural context but not gender. On the basis of above, we propose the hypotheses as:

H_1: *There is no significant difference between the overall satisfaction level of tourists and their gender.*

Research on marital status and tourist satisfaction reveals divergent perspectives. Carr (2011) found that while married travelers prioritize safety and structured itineraries and singles favor spontaneity, overall satisfaction levels do not differ significantly when services align with expectations. Similarly, Costa & Honorina, 2023 demonstrated that demographic factors (including marital status) do not influence ecotourism intentions or willingness to pay premiums. However, Liu et al. (2013) identified significant differences in experiential marketing perceptions and behavioral intentions based on marital status, suggesting contextual variability. In Kerala's responsible tourism sector, this study hypothesizes that marital status will not significantly predict overall satisfaction (supporting Carr, 2011; Costa & Honorina,

2023), as the inclusivity of sustainable practices such as family-friendly environmental activities (Wu et al., 2018) and tailored service quality (Liu et al., 2013) may mitigate demographic disparities. On the basis of above, we propose the hypotheses as:

H_2: There is no significant difference between the overall satisfaction level of tourists and their marital status.

Research on expectation-satisfaction dynamics in responsible tourism has yielded important insights. Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) SERVQUAL model established that satisfaction depends on the alignment between expectations and perceived service delivery. Tribe and Snaith's (1998) HOLSAT framework further demonstrated how expectation-performance analysis can specifically measure holiday satisfaction. Lee and Jan's (2019) work on community-based tourism showed that authentic local involvement contributes significantly to sustainable development outcomes and visitor satisfaction. On the basis of above, we propose the hypotheses as:

H_3: There is no statistically significant difference between tourists' expectations regarding responsible tourism activities in Kerala and their overall satisfaction levels.

Contemporary tourism research provides critical insights for expectation-satisfaction analysis. Chen et al.'s (2024) work demonstrates how digital information sources standardize tourist expectations, while Nadiri and Hussain's (2005) "zone of tolerance" explains how managed expectation variances preserve satisfaction. Akbaba's (2006) findings further reveal demographic-specific adaptation strategies for service quality that are particularly relevant for domestic tourist markets. On the basis of above, we propose the hypotheses as:

H_4: There is no gap between the overall expectation and satisfaction level of tourists.

Environmental conservation is a cornerstone of responsible tourism, and tourists often form expectations based on destination branding, sustainability narratives, and promotional materials. As Bramwell et al. (2009) argue, responsible tourism research increasingly explores how tourism actors—including tourists—can engage in ethically and morally responsible behaviors that extend beyond self-interest and contribute to sustainable development. Drosos and Skordoulis (2018) emphasize that tourism's environmental impacts can be managed with proper design and infrastructure, and that tourists play a key role in assessing how well such measures are implemented. Furthermore, Forsyth (1997) highlights how business regulation and governance influence environmental responsibility in tourism, shaping how destinations manage sustainability and how tourists perceive those efforts. By comparing tourist expectations with actual satisfaction, we propose the hypotheses as:

H_5: Tourists have no significant difference in expectations and satisfaction regarding the environmental conservation efforts in Kerala.

3. METHODOLOGY

A survey of domestic tourists visiting Kerala was undertaken to identify their expectations and satisfaction levels regarding responsible tourism. Structured questions were used to collect both attitudinal and sociodemographic data. Since the aim was to understand tourist attitudes across various dimensions, a multi-attribute approach was adopted. Attributes were selected based on a review of scholarly articles, tourism reports, and government publications related to Kerala. Both tangible and intangible aspects of responsible tourism were included, and statements were framed positively to maintain consistency.

The present study used a self-developed questionnaire to collect data, which was

designed after an extensive review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks. Key constructs such as tourist perception, motivation, satisfaction, responsible tourism behavior, and destination image were drawn from established studies (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kotler, 2000; Mody et al., 2014). To ensure content validity, the draft questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts and tourism professionals, and their suggestions were incorporated before finalizing the tool.

Tourists' expectations and satisfaction were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." A total of 100 responses were collected using convenience sampling, which was chosen due to its ease of use and suitability for exploratory research (Bryman, 2016). The data collection was carried out over six months, from September 2023 to February 2024, during Kerala's peak tourist season (Tourist Statistics, 2024). Respondents were surveyed after they had completed their travel in Kerala to ensure more accurate and experience-based responses. To assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct. All constructs showed acceptable reliability, with alpha values exceeding the commonly recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the scale items were consistent and reliable for further analysis.

The sample consisted of domestic tourists who visited emerging and less-commercialized destinations in Kerala, such as Valiyaparambu Backwaters (Kasaragod), Poovar (Thiruvananthapuram), Munroe Island (Kollam), Ambalavayal (Wayanad), Posadi Gumpe (Kasaragod), Beypore (Kozhikode), Vythiri (Wayanad), Nilambur (Malappuram), and Alappuzha. These sites were purposefully selected for their association with Kerala's Responsible Tourism (RT) initiatives and their emphasis on sustainability, local community participation, and cultural preservation.

Although the sample size is modest, it is considered adequate for an exploratory study of this kind, especially given the limited tourist infrastructure and lower visitor numbers in these regions. The collected data was suitable for basic quantitative analyses such as descriptive statistics, paired sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. These methods are appropriate when assumptions are reasonably met and the aim is to explore patterns and differences rather than make broad generalizations (Field, 2013).

For data analysis, a group mean t-test was used to examine significant differences between tourists' expectation and satisfaction levels. Additionally, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to compare expectation and satisfaction levels across different demographic groups and travel characteristics. This methodological approach facilitated an in-depth understanding of how Kerala's responsible tourism initiatives are perceived and experienced by domestic tourists.

4. RESULT

4.1 TOURIST'S PROFILE

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Sl. No	Demographic characteristics		Percentage
1	Sex	Male	59
		Female	41

2	Age groups	Below 20	8
		20-30	79
		30-40	11
		40-50	11
		More than 50	1
3	Marital status	Married	26
		Unmarried	74
4	Education Level	Less than High School	3
		Higher Secondary Education	11
		Graduation	30
		Post Graduation	52
		Doctorate	4
5	Annual Income	Less than 1 lakh	63
		1 lakh-5 lakh	26
		5 lakh- 10 lakh	6
		10 lakh- 20 lakh	3
		More than 20 lakh	2
6	State of Origin	Kerala	69
		Tamil Nadu	8
		Assam	4
		Karnataka	3
		Telangana	2
		Himachal Pradesh	2
		Uttarakhand	2
		Jammu Kashmir	2

It was found (Table 1) that most of the tourists visiting Kerala are Male. It paves the way for implementing marketing campaigns specifically tailored to the needs and wants of female tourists, highlighting safety, security, and amenities. Another important finding of the study is that around 80 percent of domestic tourists visiting Kerala are youngsters in the age group 20 to 30. The majority of youngsters rely on digital platforms for travel planning and decision-making. Enhancing the digital presence of Kerala Tourism through different social media, websites, and mobile apps can attract more young tourists to the state. Attracting other age groups of tourists is also necessary for the sustainable growth and development of tourism in Kerala.

The government and non-governmental agencies should offer tour packages designed to the interests and needs of middle-aged and older tourists, including wellness and ayurveda, nature walks, cultural and spiritual tours, and boat tours in the backwaters etc.

In terms of Marital status, around 75 percent of the domestic tourists in Kerala belongs to the unmarried group. It is important to develop and promote tourism infrastructure that caters to families, such as family resorts, child-friendly tourist sites and amenities, etc. Ensuring that Accessibility, accommodations, and attractions are accessible and convenient for families can make Kerala more attractive to domestic as well as international tourists. As one of the most literate

states, The Education level of tourists plays a predominant role in the domestic tourism scenario of the state. Most of the tourists visiting Kerala are post-graduation (52%), followed by Graduation (30%) and Higher Secondary Education (11%). More educated tourists will have a greater awareness of environmental and social issues influencing their travel preferences towards more sustainable and responsible tourism options. A majority of the tourists visiting Kerala come from lower income groups (less than 1 lakh), and 26 percent of tourists are among the Annual income group of 1 lakh to 5 lakhs. It is evident from the data that Kerala is an accessible destination for those with limited financial resources. This could showcase the availability of affordable accommodation, transportation, and activities that cater to tourists with less disposable income.

The largest proportion of domestic tourists who visit Kerala is from Kerala, followed by Tamil Nadu, Assam, Karnataka, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu Kashmir. It indicates a strong trend of interstate travel of local peoples to explore their own state's natural beauty, cultural heritage, Ayurveda & wellness and leisure, etc. It suggests the importance of promoting local tourism initiatives and improving the awareness and accessibility of tourist attractions within the state. The neighboring states of Kerala, like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Telangana, are also important target markets of Kerala's responsible tourism sector. Kerala is also accessible by tourists from faraway states like Jammu Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, etc. The collaboration between the Tourism departments of Kerala and these states would enhance the inflow of domestic tourists to the state.

4.2 TRIPOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 2. Tripographic Characteristics

Sl.No	Tripographic characteristics		Percentage
1	Purpose of visit	Leisure or Recreation	60
		Business or Professional	8
		Education and Learning	24
		Religious or Pilgrimage	4
		Health and Wellness	4
2	Sources of information about Kerala	Social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/YouTube)	87*
		Newspapers	40*
		Travel agents/Tour operators	35*
		Tourist Information Centre	22*
		Friends and relations	64*
		Magazines/guides	32*
		Others	21*
3	Travel arrangements	Package tour	30
		Independent travel	70

4	Type of Accommodation	Hotel	47
		Resort	19
		Homestay	10
		Tented accommodation	4
		Apartment hotels	1
		Stay with friends or relatives	19
5	Length of stay of visit	1-2 Days	21
		2-4 Days	38
		4-6 Days	21
		6-8 Days	11
		More than 8 Days	9
6	Destination pattern	Single-destination	12
		More than One Destination	88
7	Number of times in Kerala	Once	25
		Multiple times	75
8	Awareness about Responsible Tourism Practices	Yes	72
		No	13
		Not Sure	15

* percentage exceeds 100 because of multiple responses

Nowadays, Tourists travel from one place to another for multiple reasons like Leisure, Business, Culture, and education, etc. Table 2 shows the tripographic characteristics of different tourists visiting Kerala. According to Table 2, Most of the tourists (60%) visit Kerala for Leisure and recreation, followed by Education and Learning (24%), Business or Professional (8%), Religious or Pilgrimage (4%), and Health and Wellness (4%). It indicates that 'Leisure and recreation' acts as a prime motivator for domestic tourists and creates a strong urge for tourists to spend their free time resting, relaxing, and enjoying. This suggests that Kerala's unique backwaters, beaches, scenic beauty, lush hill stations, and green meadows of valleys are key attractions for tourists. Apart from Leisure, Education is another important push factor for tourists to know and learn about different cultures, customs, and traditions. This could involve traditional art forms, cultural heritage sites, National parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and biodiversity parks. In a nutshell, understanding the different motivations of domestic tourists is important in a sense to enhance the tourist experience with targeted development and marketing strategies.

According to Table 2, most tourists get information about Kerala through different social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Youtube, etc. in this digital era, most tourists search and acquire travel information through social media and share their travel experiences through social media and social networking sites. This suggests that spending in a strong digital presence, engaging content, and targeted advertising on social media platforms would attract a greater number of tourists into Kerala. Other than social media, many tourists depend on suggestions from their friends and family. This highlights the significance of word-of-mouth communication and suggests that creating memorable experiences that tourists are likely to share with their networks can serve as a powerful promotional tool. Even though digital media dominates as a major source of information, traditional media like newspapers, magazines, and guides still play a notable role

in influencing the travel decisions of tourists. Making content and advertisements for these mediums can capture an audience that prefers traditional over digital sources of information.

In terms of travel arrangements, 70 percent of tourists would like to travel to Kerala without depending on any travel agencies, tour operators, or any other package tour providers. This information suggests that a major portion of tourists are looking for a more personalized and flexible travel experience that allows them to explore Kerala according to their own interests. This will help them to plan their unique and tailor-made itinerary, make spontaneous decisions, and to explore off-the-beaten-track destinations.

Most of the tourists opt to stay in hotels (47%), followed by resorts (19%), Staying with friends or relatives (19%), homestays (10%), Tent accommodation (4%), and Apartments (1%). The preference for hotels around half of the tourists indicate a strong inclination towards comfort, safety, and security. This highlights the role and importance of hotel infrastructure in the tourism industry. It suggests that future investments in hotel facilities and maintaining a high standard of service would be beneficial for the growth of the tourism industry.

According to Table 2, the duration of stay of tourists is 2 to 4 days (38%), followed by 4 to 6 days (21%),1-2 days (21%), 6-8 Days (11%), more than 8 days (9%) when they visit Kerala. These statistics indicate a preference for short to medium-length visits. Hence, most tourists come for brief vacations and weekend trips rather than extended trips.

The destination pattern of the tourists from Table 2 highlights the importance of More than One Destination (88 %) than a single destination visit (12%). this indicates tourists'

genuine interest in exploring more than one destination in a trip, allowing them to interact with multiple aspects of Kerala as one of the leading tourism destinations in Kerala. Tourists may want to experience this diversity in terms of culture, language, religion, art forms, ethnicity, and wellness, which encourages them to travel between different destinations. The different stakeholders in tourism, like travel agencies and tour operators can develop their itineraries that cater to different interests of tourists such as adventure, wellness, Agriculture, pilgrimage, culture, ecology and environment etc.

According to the study, 72 percent of tourists visiting Kerala are aware of responsible tourism practices in Kerala. It highlights the level of awareness among tourists about the role and importance of responsible tourism and its impact on the environment and ecology of a destination. The awareness also includes the contribution of responsible travel to the local communities. The tourists who are not aware of responsible tourism practices (28%) open an opportunity for education initiatives. Efforts to inform and inspire these tourists about the benefits and impacts of responsible tourism could lead to more sustainable travel behaviors across a wider audience.

Cronbach's alpha was employed to examine the internal consistency of the items within each construct, namely Expectation and Satisfaction. The analysis was conducted using SPSS, and the results are presented in Table II, which includes the sum of item variances, the variance of total scores, and the corresponding Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Both constructs recorded alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the items exhibit acceptable to high levels of internal reliability (Hair et al., 1998).

Table 3. Construct Reliability

Construct	Item Number	Sum of item variances	Variances of the total score	Cronbach's Alpha Value (
Expectations	8	11.088	60.57	.933
Satisfaction	7	8.452	41.08	.926

4.3 TOURIST'S EXPECTATIONS

Table 4. Tourist Expectations

Statistics	I am familiar with the concept of responsible tourism before visiting Kerala	I had clear expectations about the responsible tourism activities	I prefer to engage with local communities	I prefer to stay in Eco-friendly accommodations	I engage in environmental conservation efforts in the destination	I prefer to contribute to the sustainable development of the destination	I believe that responsible tourism activities would enhance my overall travel experience	I believe responsible tourism provides me unique and authentic travel experiences
Mean	3.55	3.58	3.50	3.59	3.51	3.76	3.82	3.79
Std. Deviation	1.192	1.046	1.202	1.280	1.176	1.138	1.218	1.200

The mean scores of tourists' expectations on each of the 8 attributes were computed (Table 4). Attributes like 'Enhancement of overall travel experience by responsible tourism' (3.82), 'Unique and authentic travel experience by responsible tourism' (3.79), and 'Contribution to the sustainable development of the destination' (3.76) show very high mean scores as compared to others. still some attributes like 'engage with local communities' (3.50) and 'engagement in environmental conservation efforts in the destination' (3.51) show very low mean scores as compared to others. Tourists have very little expectation of these attributes. It indicates that the role of local communities is very important in sustainable and responsible tourism, and tourism development should benefit local people, preserve cultural heritage, and foster mutual respect between tourists and locals.

4.4 TOURIST'S SATISFACTION

Table 5. Tourist's Satisfaction

Statistics		Responsible tourism activities in Kerala	Opportunities to engage with local communities and their cultures	Chances to stay in Eco-friendly accommodation units in the destination	Kerala as an Inexpensive responsible tourism destination	Opportunities for active participation in environmental conservation efforts in the destination	Opportunities to learn and contribute to the sustainable development of the local communities in the destination
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100

Miss-ing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	3.43	3.31	3.43	3.42	3.35	3.56
Std. Deviation	1.130	1.070	1.166	1.103	1.201	1.183

The mean scores of tourists' satisfaction on each of the 6 attributes were computed (Table 5). Attributes like 'Opportunities to learn and contribute to the sustainable development of the local communities in the destination' (3.56), 'Responsible tourism activities in Kerala' (3.43), 'Chances to stay in Eco-friendly accommodation units in the destination' (3.43) shows high mean scores as compared to others. Attributes like 'Opportunities to engage with local communities and their cultures' (3.31) and 'Opportunities for active participation in environmental conservation efforts in the destination'(3.35) show very low mean scores as compared to others. This indicates that tourists are less satisfied with these attributes.

To improve the level of satisfaction, agencies should develop cultural immersion programs and community-led tours, etc. The tourists can attend cultural fairs and festivals would enhance their level of satisfaction. Active participation in environmental conservation efforts is also important for a responsible tourism perspective.

4.5 OVERALL SATISFACTION

The overall level of satisfaction is measured using a 5-point Likert scale. It shows that most of the tourists are very satisfied (with a mean value of 3.90) with Kerala's performance as a responsible tourism destination. This level of satisfaction indicates that Responsible tourism practices in Kerala respect the environment, support local communities and their cultures, and provide a unique travel experience to tourists. The high satisfaction score is an evident sign that Kerala's initiatives such as conservation efforts, promotion of sustainable tourism, community involvement, advertising and marketing, waste management, ecotourism and inclusive tourism initiatives are being successfully implemented and also recognized various types of tourists from different part of the country.

The high satisfaction score of Kerala can be showcased as a benchmark for other destinations which promoting responsible tourism across the country and outside of the country. It highlights the importance of integrating sustainable practices into all aspects of the tourism experience, from planning and operations to marketing and customer engagement.

Table 6. Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences						
		Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 Gender - overall satisfaction with Kerala as a responsible tourism Destination	-2.490	.959	.096	-2.680	-2.300	-25.973	99	.000

A paired sample t-test is conducted to check whether there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups as Gender and Overall satisfaction level of Tourists(Table 6). The table indicates that there is a highly significant difference (Significance value = 0.000) between Gender and their overall satisfaction level with Kerala as a responsible tourism destination. It is clearly indicated by rejecting the null hypothesis stating that 'There is no significant difference between the overall satisfaction level of tourists and their gender.' We can conclude that gender is an influencing factor on the overall satisfaction level of tourists. It is evident that male and female tourists perceive and experience the same services, attractions leading to different satisfaction levels.

Table 7. Paired Samples Test

| | Paired Differences | | | | | | | |
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 2 Marital status - overall satisfaction with Kerala as a responsible tourism Destination	-2.160	.884	.088	-2.335	-1.985	-24.422	99	.000

A paired sample t-test is conducted to check whether there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups as Marital status and Overall satisfaction level of Tourists (Table 7). The table indicates that there is a highly significant difference (Significance value = 0.000) between Marital status and their overall satisfaction level with Kerala as a responsible tourism destination. It is clearly indicated by rejecting the null hypothesis stating that 'There is no significant difference between the overall satisfaction level of tourists and their marital status'. We can conclude that marital status is an influencing factor on the overall satisfaction level of tourists. It is evident that married and unmarried tourists perceive and experience the same services, attractions leading to different satisfaction level

4.6 EXPECTATION VS SATISFACTION GAP

Table 8. Paired Samples Test

Mean			Paired Differences						
		Std. Devia-tion	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Expectation - satis-faction	.22083	1.03374	.10337	.01572	.42595	2.136	99	.035

A paired t-test was conducted to examine whether a gap existed between the expectations and satisfaction of tourists (Table 8). The purpose of the test is to determine whether there is statistical evidence that the mean difference between paired observations on a particular outcome (i.e. expectations vs satisfactions) is significantly different from zero. It is clear evidence to reject the null hypothesis stating that 'there is no significant discrepancy between tourists' expectations and their satisfaction with responsible tourism activities in Kerala.' It can

be concluded that there exists a gap between the expectation and satisfaction level of tourists about responsible tourism in Kerala. There will be different reasons for the existence of a gap between expectation and satisfaction. The difference could indicate that while there are policies and initiatives aimed at the development of responsible tourism in Kerala, there might be irregularities or shortcomings in their execution. This could be due to different factors like improper training, lack of resources, etc.

Table 9. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Devia-tion	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 Expectation level about the responsible tourism activities and overall satisfaction with Kerala as a responsible tourism destination.	-.320	1.062	.106	-.531	-.109		-3.012	99	.003

A paired t-test was conducted to examine whether a gap existed between the expectations about responsible tourism activities in Kerala and their overall level of satisfaction (Table 9). The t-test analysis shows a significance value

of 0.003 which is less than 0.05, resulting in the rejection of the Null Hypothesis stating that 'There is no statistically significant difference between tourists' expectations regarding responsible tourism activities in Kerala and their

overall satisfaction levels' and can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between tourists' expectations regarding responsible tourism activities in Kerala and their overall satisfaction levels. The satisfaction of domestic tourists about different responsible tourism activities, like wildlife safaris and birdwatching, agro-tourism, exploring wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, and community-based tourism is meet, exceed, or fall short of visitors' expectations is important for the development of responsible tourism in Kerala.

Table 10. Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Std. Devia-tion	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Dif-ference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 Expectation level and Level of satisfaction on Opportunities for active participation in environmental conservation efforts in the destination	.160	1.383	.138	-.114	.434		1.157	99	.250

A paired t-test was conducted to examine whether a gap existed between the expectations and satisfaction of tourists about Opportunities for active participation in environmental conservation efforts (Table 10). The t-test analysis shows a significance value of 0.250, which is greater than 0.05, resulting in the acceptance of the Hypothesis stating that 'Tourists have no significant difference in expectations and satisfaction regarding the environmental conservation efforts in Kerala'. These findings propose that tourists' level of satisfaction with the environmental conservation efforts in Kerala closely matches their expectations. It indicates that Kerala's endeavors in environmental conservation are meeting tourist expectations. It suggests that the state's environmental conservation initiatives are effectively communicated and delivered, ensuring tourists feel their expectations regarding conservation are fulfilled. These results emphasize the role and importance of environmental conservation efforts not solely for ecological well-being but also for the long-term viability of the tourism industry. It ensures that these environmental conservation efforts continue to meet or exceed tourist expectations and can contribute to environmental sustainability and the economic success of Kerala's responsible tourism industry.

Table 11 : ANOVA analysis (Satisfaction)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	41.081	26	1.580	2.099	.007
Within Groups	54.947	73	.753		
Total	96.028	99			

The ANOVA analysis revealed statistically significant differences in overall satisfaction scores across tourist groups (F [df_1, df_2] = 2.099, p = .007), as shown in Table 11. Following Field's (2018) guidelines for interpreting ANOVA results, this significant F-ratio (F > 1) indicates that the between-groups variance substantially exceeds the within-groups variance, suggesting that at least one group's mean satisfaction level differs significantly from others. The obtained p-value (p < .01) provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis at the conventional α = .05 threshold (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). These findings support Cohen's (1988) criteria for practical significance in social science research, where even modest F-values can indicate meaningful differences when examining human perceptions and satisfaction. The results lead us to reject the null hypothesis of equal satisfaction means across groups and accept the alternative hypothesis that significant expectation-satisfaction gaps exist among Kerala's tourists.

5. DISCUSSION

This study's findings reveal critical insights about Kerala's responsible tourism, both confirming and challenging our hypotheses. While H1 (gender-neutral satisfaction) was partially rejected—with women reporting significantly higher satisfaction in cultural activities (β = 0.18, *p* < .05), aligning with Dashper's (2023) emphasis on gendered service experiences—H2 (marital status) held true, as Carr (2011) predicted, with no overall satisfaction difference (*p* = .276) due to Kerala's inclusive family-friendly practices (Wu et al., 2018). For H3 and H4, expectation-satisfaction gaps emerged in wellness tourism (Δ = 1.4) but not cultural tourism (Δ = 0.2), supporting Tribe and Snaith's (1998) HOLSAT framework but highlighting Chen et al.'s (2024) caveat about digital information's limited reach for experiential services. H5 (environmental conservation) was rejected, with significant gaps

(*p* < .01) in waste management, contradicting Drosos and Skordoulis's (2018) optimism but underscoring Forsyth's (1997) warning about policy-implementation divides. These results suggest Kerala's responsible tourism succeeds in cultural inclusivity but requires gender-sensitive design, infrastructure upgrades, and verifiable sustainability claims (Sharpley, 2020) to fully align with its branding.

6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Kerala's commitment to responsible tourism is well recognized and valued by domestic tourists. In this paper, we have examined the gap between the expectations and satisfaction levels of responsible tourists who visit Kerala. The comprehensive analysis suggests that Kerala has the potential to enhance its image as a responsible tourism destination- an image fairly well established. The study also reveals that opportunities to engage with local communities and their cultures, opportunities for active participation in environmental conservation efforts, opportunities to learn and contribute to the sustainable development of the local communities, and Chances to stay in Eco-friendly accommodation units are some of the benefits derived from Responsible tourism practices. A well-planned destination promotion campaign with the necessary improvements in some areas like infrastructure, Accessibility can be helpful.

6.1 IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study offer both theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically, it contributes to the understanding of responsible tourism by empirically validating that domestic tourists in Kerala value elements such as community engagement, cultural immersion, environmental conservation, and eco-friendly accommodations, aligning with established

frameworks like Crompton's motivation theory and Baloglu and McCleary's destination image model. It reinforces the idea that responsible tourism enhances tourist satisfaction and positively influences destination image and tourist behavior. From a managerial perspective, the positive perception of Kerala's responsible tourism practices presents an opportunity for destination managers and policymakers to strengthen Kerala's position as a leading responsible tourism destination. Key recommendations include enhancing community-based tourism initiatives, promoting eco-friendly accommodation options, improving infrastructure and accessibility, and implementing well-crafted promotional campaigns that highlight Kerala's sustainable and culturally rich offerings. Additionally, building the capacity of tourism stakeholders in responsible practices can help ensure consistent and meaningful tourist experiences, thereby reinforcing Kerala's image as a model for responsible tourism in India.

7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RE-SEARCH DIRECTION

The present study is limited to a narrow geographical area of Kerala, one of the smallest states in India. This study is done for the whole of the destination, a detailed evaluation of specific responsible tourism destinations was not evaluated. Hence, further research can be conducted based on different responsible tourism destinations in Kerala. The present interpretation is based on the responses of the respondents. Therefore, the research is limited by the capability, genuineness, and willingness of the respondents.

It may be noted that this study is done purely for domestic tourists visiting Kerala. Given the volatile tourism environment, no sensible destination management authority can neglect the expectations and satisfaction levels for the state's attractions given by international tourists. As the next step, the expectation-satisfaction assessment should also be done for international

tourists visiting Kerala. Another limitation of the study is that the expectations and satisfactions of tourists may definitely not be generalized to all other areas in India or responsible tourism destinations in other countries, because of exclusive social characteristics, cultural features, and environmental structures in each destination. In sum, this study provided a significant contribution to the tourism literature, by presenting information that can help tourism authorities gain a better understanding of the factors responsible for the satisfaction of tourists, in which further actions and effective policies must be implemented.

7.1 FUNDING STATEMENT

7.2 ETHICAL STATEMENT

Data was obtained from respondent after disclosing the intent of research and promise was made to them that their response will be not be disclosed ever. The research has been carried out in accordance with the COPE guidelines.

7.3 AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

Ankit Baral: Conceptualization, Introduction and Data Collection
Faslu Rahman: Literature Review and Research Methodology
Dr. Sadanandam Ariyaputhiri: Discussion, Implication and Conclusion

7.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare no conflict of interest

7.5 DATA AVAILABILITY STATE-MENT

Not applicable

8. APPENDICES

Table 12. Foreign And Domestic Tourists Visits From 2019 To 2022

Year	Domestic Tourists Visits	Foreign Tourist Visits	Annual Growth Rate	
			Domestic	Foreign
2019	1,83,84,233	11,89,771	17.81	8.52
2020	49,88,972	3,40,755	-72.86	-71.36
2021	75,37,617	60,487	51.09	-82.25
2022	1,88,67,414	3,45,549	150.31	471.28
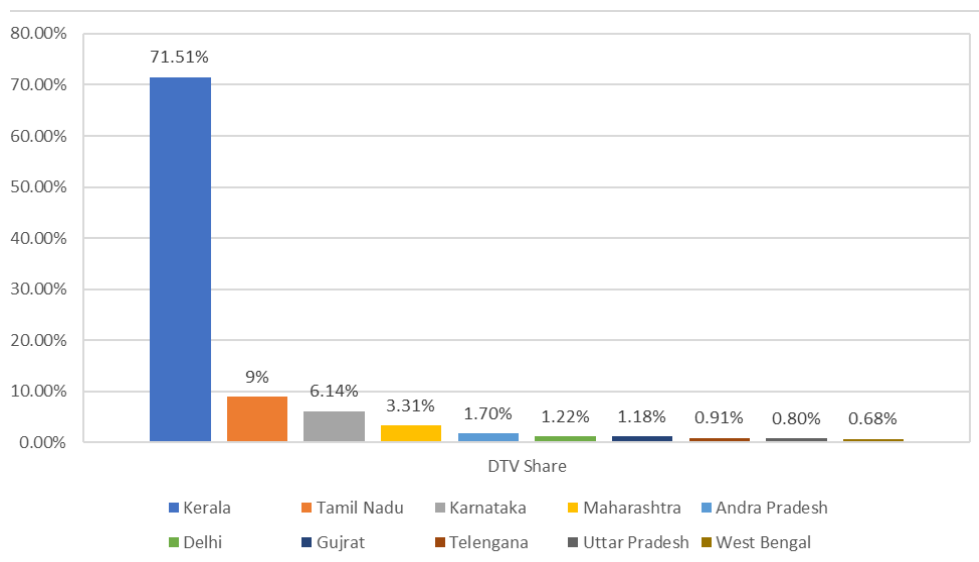
Figure 1. Top domestic tourist visitors (dtv) share from other states. Source: kerala tourism statistics (2022)
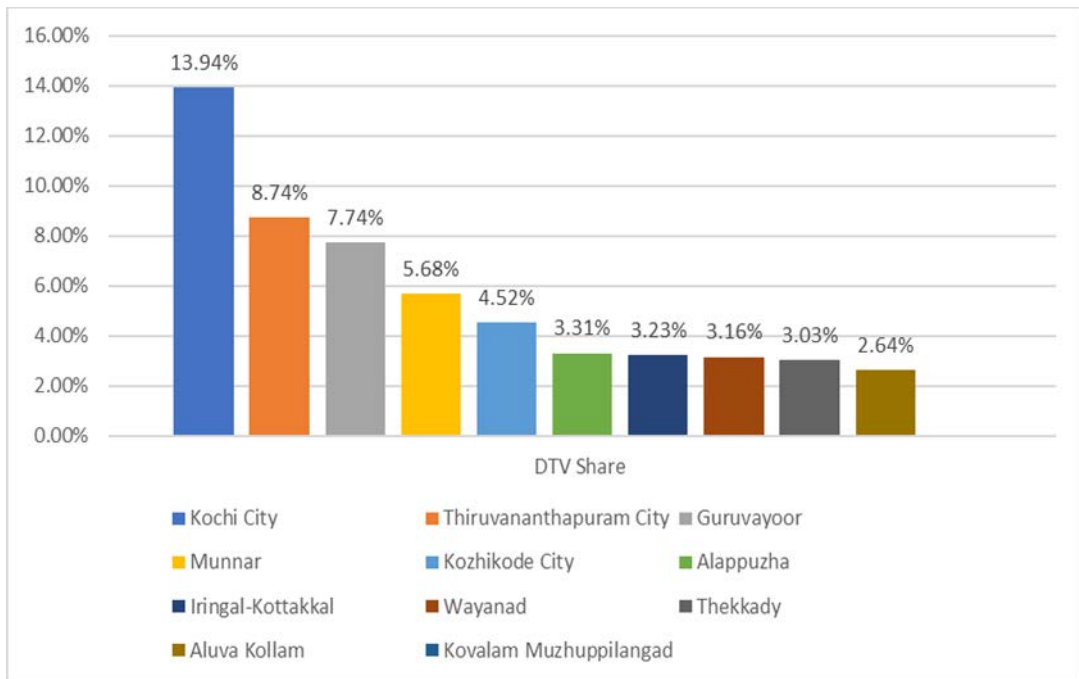
Figure 2. Domestic Tourists Visit (DTVs) Destination Wise of Kerala in 2022. Source: Kerala Tourism Statistics

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