

A Study on Eco – Tourism in Kanyakumari District

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Introduction

The forest department has started eco-tourism activities in two spots in Kanyakumari district under the Tamil Nadu Bio-diversity and Greening Project (TNBGP). Under the project, Kalikesam, 30km from Nagercoil, and Zero Point at Pechiparai, 36km from Nagercoil, were identified for eco-tourism activities. The Tamil Nadu forest department through this model tries to conserve the natural environment as well as improve the livelihood of kani settlers. The earnings derived from these eco-tourism activities will be used for camp maintenance, conservation of eco-system and for tribal community development.

Objectives

The following are the important objectives of the present study.

1. To find out the reason for selecting the place to visit by sample respondents
2. To find out the mode of transport by sample respondents to visit the study places
3. To study the facilities to be improved by the authorities
4. To understand the bottlenecks in the study places

Methodology

The data for the present study were collected from 50 sample respondents by using simple random sampling technique. The collected data were analysed by using statistical tools such as percentages and averages.

Analysis

It is found from the data analysis that the 78 per cent of the people are visiting Kalikesam for the first time and remaining 22 per cent of the people are visiting the place for the second time. 63 per cent of the people have already visited Pechipaaraai and 37 per cent of the people are visiting the place for the first time. It shows that the place Pechipaaraai is more popular than Kalikesam.

21 percent of the sample respondents are accompanied by family, 54 per cent of the sample respondents are accompanied by friends and 25 per cent of the sample respondents are accompanied by officials to visit the place Kalikesam. 58 per cent of the sample respondents are accompanied by family and 42 per cent of the sample respondents are accompanied by friends to visit the place Pechipaarai. From this, we can understand that the place Kalikesam is selected for picnic by working people than the place Pechipaarai. Even though the place Pechipaarai is more popular than Kalikesam, the sample respondents are accompanied by friends and families not by officials. This is due to people preferred to enjoy river water and scenic beauty of Kalikesam.

Table – 1

Reason for selecting the places by sample respondents

| Reason | Kalikesam | | Pechipaarai | |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| | No. of respondents | Per cent | No. of respondents | Per cent |
| Proximity | 5 | 10 | - | - |
| Climate | 31 | 62 | 34 | 68 |
| Attract | 10 | 20 | | |
| Family interest | - | - | 16 | 32 |
| Others | 4 | 8 | - | - |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The Table 1 shows the reason for the selection of Pechipaarai and Kalikesam for visit. The table shows that 62 per cent of sample respondents are informed that climate, 10 per cent of sample respondents are informed that proximity, 20 per cent for attract and 8 per cent are for other reasons to select Kalikesam for their visit. 68 per cent of sample respondents are climate, and 32 per cent of sample respondents are informed family interest is the reason for selecting Pechipaarai for their visit. From this, we can understand that proximity, climate and attract are the major reasons for the selection of Kalikesam. Climate and family interest are the major reason for the selection of Pechipaarai for visit. From the table, one can understand that climate plays important role in both the place for attracting tourists.

Table – 2

Travel Arrangements of Sample Respondents

| Travel arrangements by | Kalikesam | | Pechipaarai | |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | No. of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Tour operator | 34 | 68 | 17 | 34 |
| Self | 16 | 32 | 33 | 66 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The Table – 2 shows the travel arrangements to visit both the places. For 68 per cent of sample respondents, travel arrangements were made by tour operator and for remaining 32 per cent of sample respondents, travel arrangements were made by themselves to visit Kalikesam. For 66 per cent of sample respondents, the travel arrangements were made by themselves and for the remaining 34 per cent of sample respondents, travel arrangements were made by tour operator to visit Pechipparai.

Table – 3

Information about the place to the sample respondents

| Information about the place | Kalikesam | | Pechipaarai | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | No. of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Family / Friends | 23 | 46 | 37 | 74 |
| Tour Operators | 12 | 24 | 10 | 20 |
| Magazines / Travel Guide | 9 | 18 | 3 | 6 |
| DFO | 6 | 12 | - | - |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The Table 3 depicts the information about the place received by the sample respondents. From the table, it is clear that the majority of sample respondents (46 per cent for Kalikesam and 74 per cent for Pechipaarai) received the information about the places from friends and relatives. 12 per cent of the sample respondents received the information about Kalikesam from the District Forest Officer.

Table – 4

Reasons for choosing private vehicle by sample respondents

| Reasons for choosing the above mode of travel | Kalikesam | | Pechipaarai | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | Number of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Time effective | 11 | 22 | 6 | 12 |
| Comfort | 9 | 18 | 31 | 62 |
| Availability | 23 | 46 | 9 | 18 |
| A combination of these | 7 | 14 | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

All the sample respondents are using private vehicle for their visit. 22 per cent for time effective, 18 per cent for comfort, 46 per cent for availability, 14 per cent for combinations of these are the reason for selecting the private vehicle for visiting Kalikesam. 12 per cent for time effective, 62 per cent for comfort, 18 per cent for availability 8 per cent, a combination of these are the reason for selecting private vehicle for the visit of Pechipaarai.

Table – 5

Attraction to Sample Respondents in the study area

| Attracts most | Kalikesam | | Pechipaarai | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | Number of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Hills / Scenic beauty | 42 | 84 | 35 | 70 |
| Forest & wild life | 8 | 16 | 11 | 22 |
| All | - | - | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The Table – 5 indicates that most of the sample respondents (84 per cent for Kalikesam and 70 per cent for Pechipaarai) are attracted by hills and scenic beauty of the places. Only a small number of persons (8 for Kalikesam and 11 for Pechipaarai) are attracted by forest and wild life of the places.



Table – 6

Facilities should be developed in the study area

| Facilities should be developed | Kalikesam | | Pechipparai | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | Number of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Dormitory | 13 | 26 | 11 | 22 |
| Food | 4 | 8 | 9 | 18 |
| Local market for local products | 4 | 8 | 5 | 10 |
| Handicraft market | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Water sports | 8 | 16 | 4 | 8 |
| Park | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Road | 3 | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Convenient local transport | 14 | 28 | 5 | 10 |
| Luxury coach for sight seeing | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The above Table – 6 shows the facilities to be developed in the study area. According to 26 per cent of the sample respondents, dormitory should be developed in Kalikesam and according to 22 per cent of the sample respondents, dormitory should be developed in Pechipparai. 28 per cent of the respondents are opined that convenient local transport should be developed in Kalikesam and 10 per cent of the sample respondents opined that convenient local transport should be developed in Pechipparai.

The Table –7 shows the important bottlenecks in the study area. From the Table– 7, we can understand that poor connectivity/ remote location and lack of accommodation are the major bottlenecks in both the places. The other bottlenecks in both the places are lack of health facilities/ first aid, water supply and sanitation, lack of travel booking, lack of garbage disposal, insecurity/instability, and lifesaving facilities at the river. Therefore the major challenge to the forest officials as well as tourism department is to remove this kind of bottlenecks and to provide such kind of facilities in both the places.

Table – 7

Bottlenecks in the study area

| Bottlenecks | Kalikesam | | Pechiparai | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | Number of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Poor connectivity/ remote location | 12 | 24 | 11 | 22 |
| Lack of accommodation | 11 | 22 | 10 | 20 |
| Lack of health facilities /first aid | 5 | 10 | 6 | 12 |
| Water supply and sanitation | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Lack of travel booking | 5 | 10 | 4 | 8 |
| Lack of garbage disposal | 4 | 8 | 7 | 14 |
| Insecurity/ instability | 7 | 14 | 6 | 12 |
| Lifesaving facilities at river | 4 | 8 | 5 | 10 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

The Table – 8 shows the willingness of the sample respondents to visit the places again. The Table depicts that 82 per cent of the sample respondents are willing to visit again Kalikesam and 78 per cent of the people are willing to visit again Pechipaarai . From this, we can come to a conclusion that almost all the sample respondents are willing to visit these places again.

Table – 8

Willingness of the people to visit again

| Visit again | Kalikesam | | Pechiparai | |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|----------|
| | Number of respondents | Per cent | No. of persons | Per cent |
| Yes | 41 | 82 | 39 | 78 |
| No | 9 | 18 | 11 | 22 |
| Total | 50 | 100 | 50 | 100 |

Source: Primary Data

Findings of the study

The following are the important findings of the study.

- क्र The place Kalikesam is selected for picnic by working people than the place Pechipaarai.
- क्र Proximity, climate and attract are the major reasons for the selection of Kalikesam, climate and family interest are the major reason for the selection of Pechipaarai for visit. From this one can understand that climate plays important role in both the place for attracting tourists.
- क्र For 68 per cent of sample respondents, travel arrangements were made by tour operator to visit Kalikesam and for 66 per cent of sample respondents, the travel arrangements were made by themselves to visit Pechipaarai.
- क्र Majority of sample respondents (46 per cent for Kalikesam and 74 per cent for Pechipaarai) are received the information about the places from friends and relatives.
- क्र All the sample respondents are using private vehicle for their visit
- क्र Most of the sample respondents (84 per cent for Kalikesam and 70 per cent for Pechipaarai) are attracted by hills and scenic beauty of the places.
- क्र Almost all the sample respondents are willing to visit these places again.

Suggestions / Comments

The following suggestions and comments were made by sample respondents.

1. In both the places, there is excellent and eco-friendly atmosphere
2. The forest officials in the places are highly service minded and cooperative to the tourists
3. Good hospitality provided by the forest officials
4. The tourism department can attract more tourist through advertisement
5. In both the places, the tourism department can attract more students to enjoy the wild life habitat
6. The facilities like dormitory, food, local market for local products, Handicraft market, water sports, park, road facilities, convenient local transport, and luxury coach for sight-seeing should be developed in both the places

Conclusion

From the above analysis, we can conclude that the facilities like dormitory, food, local market for local products, Handicraft market, water sports, park, road facilities,

convenient local transport, and luxury coach for sight-seeing should be developed in both the places. The major challenge to the forest officials as well as tourism department in the study area is to remove the bottlenecks mentioned above and to provide such kind of facilities in both the places. Moreover, Kanyakumari district is blessed with the benevolence of nature with the numerous rivers, mountains, streams, forests and seacoast. There is great scope for promoting eco-tourism in the district as it is richly endowed with pristine and diverse forests with rich variety of flora and fauna. The Biodiversity Park at Udhayagiri Fort, Marunthuvaazh Malai and Suchindrum – Theroor Bird Conservation Reserve are some places of ecotourism value.

References

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