



# “A STUDY ON CONSUMERISM AND TOURISM SECTOR: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT”

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## Abstract

Consumerism is a very important concept to be maintained in every field of activities. Likewise in tourism also it is to be maintained. The interest of consumers must be protected. In tourism, the tourists are the consumers of the tourism products and services. The consumers intend to get their rights fulfilled in the places in form of safety, communication facilities, transportation facilities and cleanliness. This study is conducted among tourists from various destinations at Pathanamthitta district to identify the success of consumerism. The result shows that there is no significance difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in tourism based on their educational qualification and age.

**Key words: tourism, consumer protection, consumerism**

## INTRODUCTION

Kerala popularly known as the ‘GODS OWN COUNTRY’ is one of the most sought of tourist destinations in the world. This land is renowned for its rich cultural heritage, tropical climate; palm fringed beaches, misty hills stations, health resorts, wild life sanctuaries, enchanting art forms, grand festivals and the wide backwaters. According to “National Geographic Travel”, the leading travel magazine, Kerala is one of the 50 must see destinations of a lifetime and one of the 10 paradises of the World. Tourists from different parts of the world arrive to state every year. Tourism in the state is under the department of tourism, which is supported by other supporting organizations. The District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC), Kerala Tourism Development Corporation

(KTDC), Bekal Resort Development Corporation (BRDC), Kerala Tourism Infrastructure Limited (KTIL), Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS), Muziris Heritage Projects Ltd, Kerala Adventure Tourism Promotion Society (KATPS), State Institute of Hospitality Management (SIHM-K) are some of the supporting organizations in the state for the development of tourism sector. DTPCs functions in all the 14 districts of the state.

According to Cambridge Dictionary Consumerism is “the protection of customers from dishonest business activities and advertising from unsafe products, etc” in the context of social responsibility. The consumer’s interests must be satisfied in every industry as well as in tourism sector too. If their expectations are not met it will lead to a decline in the tourism sector. Tourism sector can be classified into lots of by-sectors like international tourism, domestic tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, beach tourism, pilgrimage tourism, wildlife tourism, medical tourism, business tourism, rural tourism, etc. All these sectors are meant of different tourism products and services that provide distinct tourism experiences. The consumers travel to these tourist.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study focuses on consumerism in tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district. Every consumer’s interests are to satisfy their needs from the products and services they avail. So the tourism products have to be potential enough for the satisfaction of the consumer in always. The infrastructure facilities, the clean surroundings, better customer management, better guiding, extraordinary experience, so on are to be maintained in every tourism destination. This study becomes relevant because the tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district is in a growing phase and it requires more guidance and also this study helps to understand whether the interests of the consumers are being protected or not in the tourism sector.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- ❖ To measure the awareness level of the consumers regarding the consumer rights in tourism.
- ❖ To study about whether consumerism exists in the tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district.
- ❖ To study the problems faced by the tourists in the tourist destinations in Pathanamthitta district.

## **SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of consumerism includes protection of consumer interests, relationship quality, service quality etc. This study includes the customer’s responses and awareness towards the consumer rights, responsibilities and their interest in the tourism sector with special reference to Pathanamthitta district. This study concentrates on whether consumerism exists in the tourism sector by taking the tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district as reference. Consumerism is a very important concept to be maintained in every field of activities. Likewise in tourism also it is to be maintained. The interest of consumers must be protected. In tourism the tourists are the consumers of the tourism products and services. The consumers intend to get their rights fulfilled in the places in form of safety, communication facilities, transportation facilities, cleanliness, etc. So, it is necessary to know

whether consumerism exists in the tourism sector or not. In this study it is attempted to analyse the consumerism in the tourism sector by looking into the tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is designed as descriptive and analytical one. Both primary and secondary data was used for the study. The sample taken for the study includes 100 consumers those have visited various tourism destinations in Pathanamthitta district. The technique used in selecting the sample is random sampling method. The primary data has been collected from the sample of 100 customers by using structured questionnaire. Some relevant and requires data has been from books, journals, articles and websites through various search engines. Percentage analysis and ANOVA Test were used for the analysis of the data. Tables and charts are used for the better interpretation of data.

### **HYPOTHESIS 1**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their educational qualification.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their age.

**TABLE 1**

Table showing gender wise classification of respondents

<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	60	60%
Male	39	39%
Transgender	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** Gender wise classification revealed that 60% of respondents are female, 39% of respondents are male and 1% of transgender.

TABLE 2

Table showing age wise classification of respondents

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
18-25	79	79%
25-35	11	11%
35-45	9	9%
45-55	1	1%
55 and above	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** Age wise classification reveals that 79% of respondents are between the age of 18 and 25. 11% of respondents belong to 25-35 age groups, 9% to 35-45 and 1% belongs to 45-55 age groups.

TABLE 3

Table showing how often respondents visit a tourist spot

Visiting frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Once in a month	21	21%
Once in a year	45	45%
Whenever there is a holiday	34	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** The above table and figure shows that 45% of the respondents used to visit a tourist place only once in a year. 34% of the respondents used to visit any tourist places whenever there is a holiday and 21% visit a tourist place once in a month.

TABLE 4

Consumer Rights in tourism

Awareness level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly aware	15	15%
Moderately aware	46	46%
Slightly aware	25	25%
Not aware	14	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** The table 4 reveals that only 15 % of the respondents are highly aware about consumer rights in tourism and 46% of them have moderate awareness. 25% of the respondents are slightly aware and 14% of them are completely unaware about the consumer rights in tourism.

**TABLE 5**  
Consumer Responsibilities in Tourism

Awareness level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly aware	23	23%
Moderately aware	45	45%
Slightly aware	22	22%
Not aware	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** From the above table it can be understood that only 23% of the respondents are highly aware about the consumer responsibilities in tourism. 45% of them are moderately aware, 22% are slightly aware and 10% of they are unaware about their responsibilities in tourism

**TABLE 6**  
Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum (CDRF)

Awareness level	No. of respondents	Percentage
Highly aware	22	22%
Moderately aware	42	42%
Slightly aware	25	25%
Not aware	11	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** Table 6 shows the awareness level of the consumers about the CDRF functioning in the district, state and national level. It is clear from the table that only 22% are highly aware about CDRF and 45% have moderate awareness. 25% are slightly aware and 11% of them don't have any knowledge about it.

TABLE 7

Table showing rating of tourism in Pathanamthitta district

Rating	No. of respondents	Percentage
Excellent	19	19%
Very good	37	37%
Good	37	37%
Average	6	6%
Poor	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

**Interpretation:** Table 7 depicts the rating given by the respondents for the tourism sector in Pathanamthitta district. 19% of them have said excellent, 37% of them have said very good and good. 6% of them said average and 1% said it is poor.

## HYPOTHESIS TESTING

### HYPOTHESIS 1

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their educational qualification.

**TABLE 8**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.166	5	.433	.513	.766
Within Groups	79.394	94	.845		
Total	81.560	99			

**Interpretation:** Above table shows One Way ANOVA about awareness of consumer rights in tourism on the basis of educational qualification of the respondents. The result shows the F value of 0.513 and significant value is 0.766 > 0.05. This shows that there is no significance difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their educational qualification.

## **HYPOTHESIS 2**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their age.

**TABLE 9**

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	3.601	3	1.200	1.478	.225
Within Groups	77.959	96	.812		
Total	81.560	99			

**Interpretation:** Above table shows One Way ANOVA about awareness of consumer rights in tourism on the basis of the age of the respondents. The result shows the F value of 1.478 and significant value is  $0.225 > 0.05$ . This shows that there is no significance difference in the awareness level among the respondents regarding the Consumer Rights in Tourism based on their age.

### **Discussions of the analysis:**

- Age wise classification reveals that 79% or respondents are between the age of 18 and 25.
- Educational classification of each respondents reveals that majority of the respondents are graduates.
- The main priority for making a visit to a tourist place by the respondents is the attractive cultural or natural location.
- The major problems the respondents are facing in the tourist places are that there are no proper sanitation facilities, no effective emergency services, no adequate safety measures, no proper guidance, and no drinking water facilities.
- Only 15 % of the respondents are highly aware about consumer rights in tourism and 46% of them have moderate awareness.
- Only 23% of the respondents are highly aware about the consumer responsibilities in tourism and 45% of them are moderately aware.
- It is clear from the table that only 22% are highly aware about CDRF and 45% have moderate awareness. 11% of them don't have any knowledge about it.
- Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the tourism experience from Pathanamthitta district.
- Pathanamthitta district has a very good rating in the tourism experience.
- 96% of them would recommend others to make a visit to the district.

### **CONCLUSION:**

This study was about consumerism in the tourism sector by giving concentration to various tourism destinations in Pathanamthitta district. According to the analysis and interpretation the majority of the people those who visited the



tourist destinations in the district are satisfied with the tourism experiences. Even though the consumer satisfaction level is high they are facing a number of problems in the destinations too. Better food and accommodation is a major need the respondents put forward. As the majority of the tourism destinations in the district are in or near the forest areas, this makes it difficult for better accommodation or food. And also infrastructure and sanitation facilities are also needed ones. Apart from these, this study reveals that the people are more interested in making a revisit in the tourist destinations in the district. The respondents are much aware about their consumer rights. Through this study it can be identified that consumerism exists in the tourist destinations in the district but not in complete potential. Strategies must be adopted by the responsible authorities and departments to improve the conditions in the tourism destinations. Improve infrastructural facilities, establish proper guiding pattern in every tourism center, implement advanced techniques like recycling for making surroundings cleaner and greener and increase safety measures are some of the strategies to enhance the consumerism in tourism sector.

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