

IMPERATIVES OF BHOOTHATHANKETTU ECOTOURISM CENTRE

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Ecotourism has a developing specialty showcase inside the bigger travel industry with the capability of being a significant supportable improvement instrument. This paper highlights the imperatives of Bhoothathankettu Ecotourism Centre, backed up with factual data and quantitative evaluations. By harbouring environmental awareness each among the native folks and guests and by linking eco tourism to social and economic development, it's doubtless doable to conserve the natural and cultural heritage of a region, and to enhance the living standards of host region inhabitants. This study focus on the benefits of the implemented Bhoothathankettu Ecotourism Centre project for the people living in that area and the overall development of this place.

The lush green trees and the cool breeze of the forest make the Bhoothathankettu a popular tourist attraction. Travel along the bridge built across the Periyar river, the mini park on its bank, boating and riding through the forest adds to its beauty. Most of the tourists are natives. Benefits caused by Bhoothathankettu ecotourism are very high. This project caused a lot of changes in the socio-economic life of the local community. Apart from this, the local community is able to start businesses and raise money from it. Boat riding from Bhoothathankettu to Thattekad bird sanctuary is also a source of income for the local community.

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism is not simply the mere experience of visiting a place. It happens when we are socially responsible and emotionally caring for the culture and the nature of the visited location. Travelling is a great way of exploring the world. However, it comes with its cost and drawbacks. Hence, the role of ecotourism is to get rid of the negative aspects of mass tourism. Ecotourism is the respect for the local communities and the empowerment of their cultures and ideologies.

Ecotourism reduces the adverse effects of tourism on the environment as well as enhancing cultures of local people. It evaluate environmental and cultural issues in order to promote recycling, save energy, water re-use and create opportunities for the local people to help achieve

ecotourism with the potential it has of being a sustainable developmental tool for the environment.

Ecotourism aims at the following goals (1) Improvement of both material & non material wellbeing of communities. (2) Protection of biological diversity & maintenance of ecological system. (3) To try and ensure the cultural integrity as well as social cohesion of Communities. The key characteristics of ecological viable tourism includes (1) Social equity and community involvement. (2) It helps to maintain the recreational, cultural and educational opportunities within & across generations (3) Tourism focuses on activities and designs that reflect the character of a region. (4) Local, regional & national plans are integrated within tourism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyse Bhoothathankettu ecotourism centre.
2. To find out the imperatives of Bhoothathankettu ecotourism centre.

IMPERATIVES OF BHOOTHATHANKETTU ECOTOURISM

Surrounded by evergreen forest Bhoothathankettu is an eco-tourist centre situated in centre-west of Kerala. The main attraction is the walking through the forests to old Bhoothathankettu. Thirty minutes exhilarating Journey through the evergreen forest has attracted many travellers. The presence of Neelakoduvelli, Kanmadam and Varamanjil is reported here. Bhoothathankettu is located in Pindimana, about 10 km away from Kothamangalam and is nearest to entrance to the Edamalayar Dam. Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary was the first bird sanctuary in Kerala that was launched in 1994 as a result of a survey by Dr Salim Ali, world famous ornithologist. The sanctuary also attracts a large number of birds like green pigeon, jungle crow, gray jungle fowl, gray tit etc. The sanctuary is surrounded by forests and river, it is home to a rich collection of trees such as Mahogany, Yakkalips and Teak. The sanctuary is rich in 28 and 9 different varieties of animals and reptiles respectively. Boating service from Bhoothathankettu to Thattekkad serves as a source of income for small businesses, especially tribal located in Thattekkad. Rural tourism development is always based on local community. It attracted both local and foreign tourist due to its environment beauty and the life style of the community.

This project caused a lot of changes in the socioeconomic life of the local community. 80% of the areas in the ecotourism are employed in the local community. Apart from this, the local community is able to start businesses and raise money from it. According to report of December 2019, except 50 governments official's majority of the workers belongs to local community. Major change of this ecotourism is the employment generation which helped to raise the income and standard of living. The disastrous flood which affected Kerala last year did not have any impact on the inflow of tourist to Bhoothathankettu. The mini park on the banks of Periyar and trekking through the forest still appeals to the tourist. It has turned into a weekend tourist hub of the local community.

In 2014, a mini hydro electric project was constructed. Though many trees were cut down it didn't create a negative impact on ecotourism. The construction had low impact on ecology, it ensures the sustainability of the development activity around the Eco tourist centre.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in the Bhoothathankettu Ecotourism centre. The sample for the study were selected randomly from the selected zone. As a first step, pilot survey was conducted to determine the feasibility of the study. The primary data was collected from the respondents using questionnaire survey. Apart from this, in depth case study was conducted as a supplement to find out the conditions of the people living in these villages who are involved in ecotourism activities and the arrival of tourist to this this ecotourism centre.

The secondary data for this present study was collected from books, journals, government reports and authentic internet sources. The collected primary data was coded and turned into tables. The findings are represented in the forms of table analysis along with column, line and bar graphs.

ANALYSIS REPORT

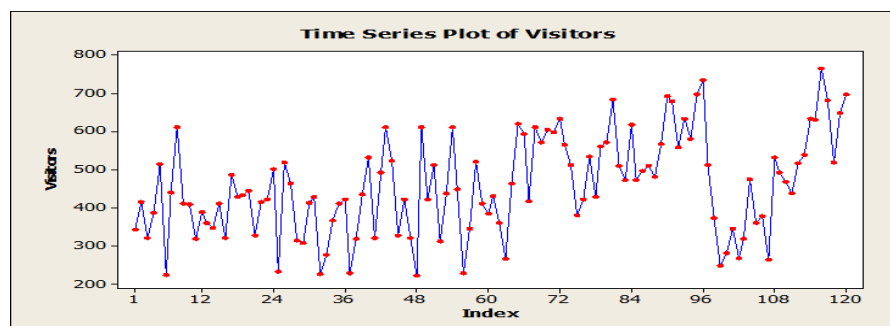
Observed Data: Number of visitors

Date	January	February	March	April	May	Jun	July	August	September	October	November	December
2010	343	416	322	386	514	225	439	610	412	408	318	388
2011	360	348	412	322	486	428	432	443	328	415	423	500
2012	234	518	463	315	308	413	428	226	276	366	410	421
2013	228	318	436	532	321	492	610	523	328	421	321	222
2014	611	422	513	312	438	610	448	228	345	521	410	384
2015	430	360	265	464	620	594	417	612	572	605	598	633
2016	564	511	381	421	534	429	560	572	683	509	472	617
2017	473	496	509	482	568	693	680	558	634	581	696	733
2018	512	373	249	281	346	269	318	475	360	379	264	531
2019	492	468	437	516	538	634	631	764	681	518	649	697

(Source: Primary Data)

Average Number of persons visiting the site

Date	Average
2010	398
2011	408
2012	365
2013	396
2014	437
2015	514
2016	521
2017	592
2018	363
2019	585



The time series plot shows that seasonal variation occurs in the data.

Forecast using Winter's method

Here the data is number of persons visiting Bhoothathankettu, Kerala. Since it was a tourist site, number of visitors will vary seasonally.

Estimate table

Months	Forecast	Lower	Upper
January, 2020	683	925	440
February, 2020	739	985	494
March, 2020	765	1015	515
April, 2020	745	1000	491
May, 2020	802	1062	542
Jun, 2020	828	1093	563
July, 2020	808	1079	537
August, 2020	865	1142	588
September, 2020	891	1174	608

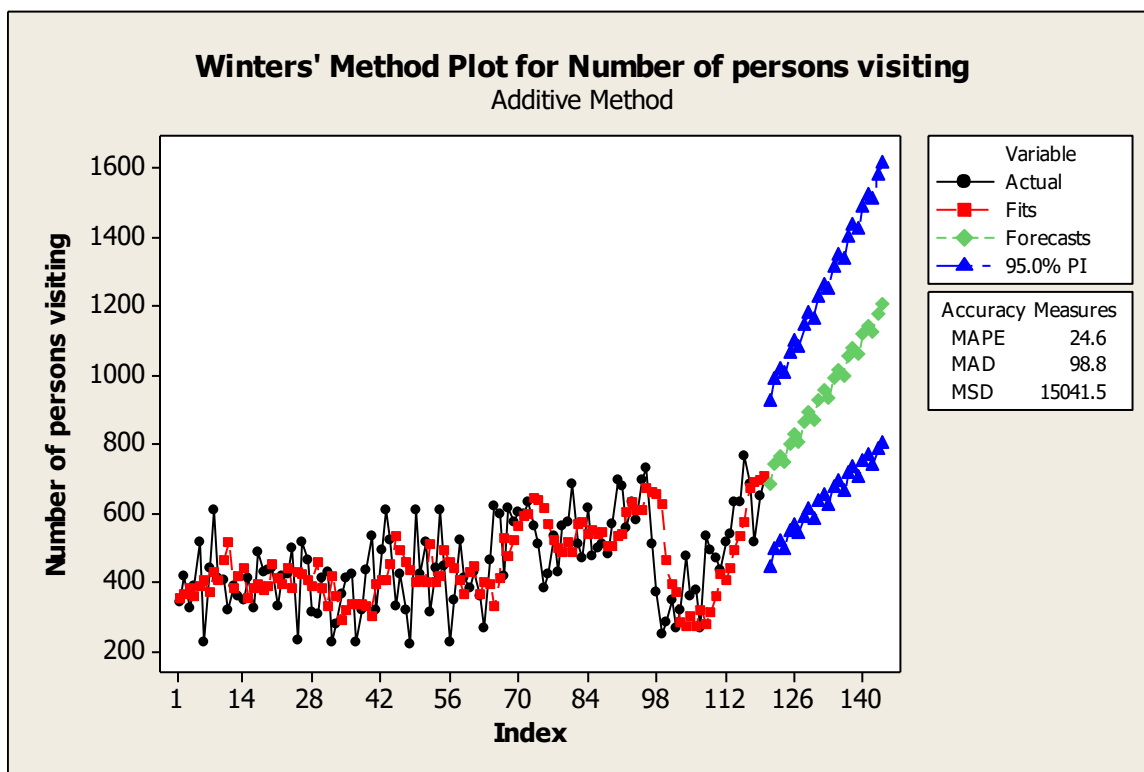
October, 2020	871	1161	581
November, 2020	928	1225	631
December, 2020	954	1258	650
January, 2021	934	1246	622
February, 2021	991	1310	672
March, 2021	1017	1344	690
April, 2021	997	1332	662
May, 2021	1054	1397	710
Jun, 2021	1080	1431	728
July, 2021	1060	1420	700
August, 2021	1116	1485	748
September, 2021	1143	1520	765
October, 2021	1123	1509	736
November, 2021	1179	1575	784
December, 2021	1205	1610	801

(Source: Primary Data)

In the above table forecast is the estimated number of visitors and lower, upper values are the intervals of forecast values.

The table shows the forecasted 2-year tourists visiting the place. Which shows an increasing trend. In the beginning of 2010 there is 343 visitors, projected number of visitors in the end of 2021 is 1205. It shows approximately 4 times increase in 2021.

Projected Plot for number of persons visiting Bhoothathankettu, Kerala.



Here accuracy measures are: Mean Absolute Percent Error (MAPE), it expresses accuracy as percentage of the error.

Mean Absolute Deviation (MAD): expresses accuracy in the same units as the data and Mean Square Deviation (MSD): measures the accuracy of the fitted time series values.

Foreign Visitors

Year	Foreigners
2010	10
2011	8
2012	13
2013	8
2014	11
2015	5
2016	15
2017	10
2018	12
2019	18

(Source: Primary Data)

On the average there will be 11 foreigners visiting in each year.

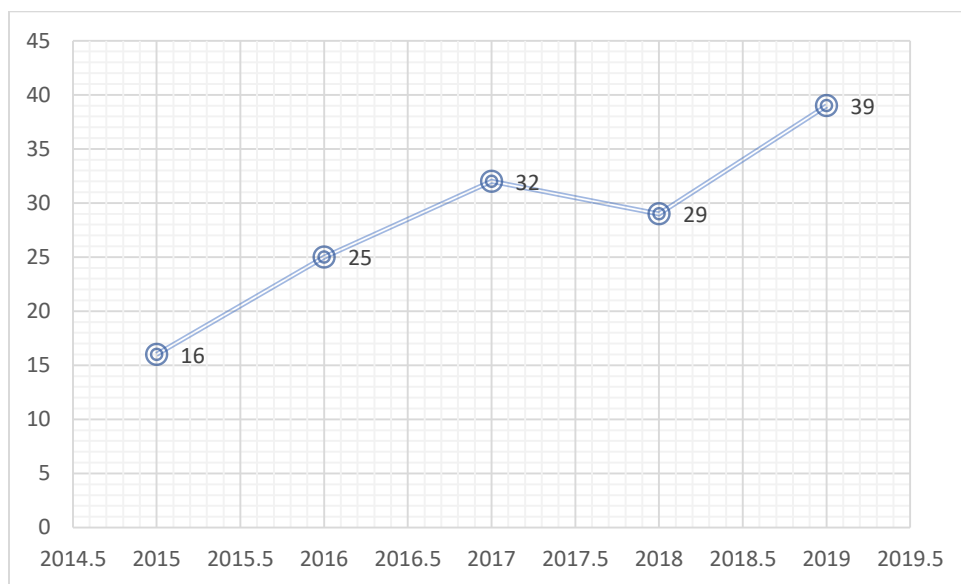
Employment Opportunity

Job	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Gardeners	5	9	12	8	15
Guide	3	3	5	5	6
Others	8	13	15	16	18
Total	16	25	32	29	39

(Source: Primary Data)

In the above figure 'others' constitute the number of person who enjoying indirect employment benefit because of the development of this ecotourism..Beside direct employment, Bhoothathankettu ecotourism generate lot of indirect employment Opportunities.

Total Employment graphical representation



Besides 50 government employees, the balance employment opportunity are providing in the Bhoothathankettu Ecotourism Centre. This growth shows the increasing trend in providing employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

Bhoothathankettu attracts the attention of people with its picturesque views, bountiful nature and of course the myths pervading it. The employment opportunities and tourist arrivals are increasing throughout the years. It has benefited local people with more employment opportunities and ability to bring and start new ideas for the future. As part of development, new

bridge have built and a mini hydroelectric project is on process. This has not affected the environment, tourist arrivals, construction works still remains stable and strong.

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