



## **Pepper Tourism: An Innovative Initiative of Responsible Tourism**

**Abhila S, Assistant Professor, Department of Tourism Studies, JPM Arts & Science College**

### **Abstract**

Through the goal of "Develop Global Tourism Destinations with RT Initiatives and Public Private Partnerships," Kerala Tourism has consistently pushed innovative concepts and methods into the tourism industry. Using the ideas and comments developed during discussions of Special Tourism Grama Sabhas, this effort invites concerned LSGs to create proposals for possible tourism initiatives in their community and submit them to the Department of Tourism. Develop a participatory approach in tourism planning and development and Guarantee grassroots community engagement and LSG involvement in tourism development are the major goals of PEPPER tourism. The Department of Tourism will assess the project ideas received under PEPPER and proceed with them based on their viability and priority.

**Keywords:** PEPPER Tourism, Responsible tourism mission, sustainable development, local community

### **PEPPER Tourism**

Participation of the Public in Participatory Planning and Empowerment through Responsible tourism (PEPPER) is an effort to create completely organized RT destinations. By including the local community in its plans for sustainable development, it envisions changing the way that tourism is perceived. PEPPER's major goal is to find new areas or uncharted places with a lot of promise for tourism and to develop them in a way that is completely sustainable and that involves the community there. Finding less well-known tourist attractions that should be created with public input is the process at hand. The Local Self-Governing Institutions and the general public can both participate in the decision-making process for the activities under this plan.

### **PEPPER Tourism Initiative in Kerala**

**Vaikom**

At Vaikom in the Kottayam district, the project was introduced. The Mission is to disseminate PEPPER throughout the State in stages. At Vaikom in the Kottayam district, the project was introduced. The Mission is to disseminate PEPPER throughout the State in stages. The Vaikom temple town will become a well-known tourist destination according to the PEPPER initiative. All of the richly audio-visual festivities held in the local temples and other institutions will be completely documented. Aattuvela (water carnival), Gandharvan Thullal (dance of celestial men), Sarpam Thullal (dance of snakes), Vaikathasthami (Vaikom temple festival), festivals at various churches, Karthika festival at Udayanapuram, Thiyyattu dance, and others will be covered. The sarpa kavus (abodes of snakes) and places where Gandharvan Thullal takes place will be included in the project. Arrangements will be made for tourists to see all the festivals in temples and churches. Moreover, traditional crafts in Vaikom including coir weaving, earthen pot making, mat weaving and coconut leaf weaving will be encouraged as part of the project. Tourists coming to enjoy these traditional and village crafts are set to boost income levels in the village.

**Pennar thodu**

Pennar Thodu and Athirampuzha will now be featured in the canal tourism component of the Discover Kottayam program. Chanthakulam will be accessible via the MVIP canal. Water will flow from Pennar Thodu toward Vembanad Kayal after it reaches Chanthakulam. The canal's beauty and the lushness of the paddy fields can be appreciated by travelers as they travel to Athirampuzha via Pennar Thodu. As part of the 'Take a break' initiative for visitors arriving in Athirampuzha, all amenities, including restrooms, have been set up. There will be tea and coffee, cold beverages, and snacks available.

**Aruvikkuzhy Waterfall**

The Aruvikkuzhy tourism project's first phase was also launched. On both sides of the waterfall, rain shelters have been erected as part of the project. Additionally, there are plans to construct a bridge across the waterfall, and a snack shop has already opened up there. provides breathtaking views of water cascading over rock levels. Although the monsoon is the greatest season, tourists come here all year round. Aruvikkauzhy is reached after an 8 km trek from Pambadi via the Kooroppada-Pallikkathodu road. Visitors can travel the Mutholy-



Pallikkathodu path starting from the Pala side. Awe-inspiring views of water cascading down layers of rocks can be found in Aruvikkuzhy. Although the monsoon is the greatest season, tourists come here all year round.

### **Role of Local Communities in the PEPPER Project**

Local communities are very important in the planning and development of tourism-related decisions. By giving local communities the knowledge and tools, they need to engage in decision-making processes, the PEPPER project empowers them. Local communities have a crucial role in preserving the long-term viability of the tourism industry. The PEPPER project encourages ethical, socially and environmentally sustainable tourism practices. This promotes the protection of local communities' cultural heritage and natural resources. The PEPPER project benefits local communities economically by creating jobs and promoting local businesses run by farmers, Kudumbashree employees, handicraft artisans, home-stay operators, and tribal artists. When used in tourism promotion, technology like Pepper and NAO robots increase product visibility, encourage purchases, and capture the undivided attention of visitors and travelers. By encouraging social cohesiveness and fostering a feeling of community, the PEPPER project has a positive effect on the local communities. To work towards a common objective of sustainable tourism development, the project brings together various stakeholders, including local communities.

### **Benefits of PEPPER Tourism**

PEPPER will gain from the discovery of new areas or uncharted locations with abundant tourism potential and their development in a totally sustainable manner with the active participation of the local people. Through the coordination of several government agencies and the implementation of multiparty initiatives in the area, this tourism initiative aims at the overall development of the region. PEPPER plan envisioned women's empowerment and community capacity building through direct or indirect earnings from the tourism sector. The program prioritizes the best possible use of already-built facilities by emphasizing farm stay, house stay, and grihasthali lodging options above brand-new buildings.



## Conclusion

The sustainability of ecotourism destinations depends on the public's involvement in participatory planning and empowerment through responsible travel. In order to protect the environment and respect many cultures around the world, responsible tourist activities are crucial. Travelers have the chance to discover new locations and cultures while also boosting the local economy and protecting the environment. The sustainability of the ecotourism destination depends heavily on local community involvement and ethical tourism practices. PEPPER encourages ethical, socially and environmentally sustainable tourism practices. This aids in protecting local communities' cultural history and natural resources. In general, local communities are very important to the PEPPER programme. They participate in decision-making processes, the growth of sustainable tourism, economic advantages, brand recognition, and community impacts. By giving local communities the knowledge and tools they need to take part in tourist planning and development, the project empowers local communities.

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