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PPP & CPPP MODELS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA TOURISM IN KERALA – AN INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

The beautiful land, Kerala with its unique cultural and geographical features attracts tourists from all over the world. This beautiful land is often described as the God's own country. The tourism of Kerala has got international popularity for its conspicuous nature beauty, lush greenery, picturesque landscapes, scenic spots, amiable ambiance, lovely lakes, diverse flora and fauna, verdant hill stations, beautiful beaches, serene and scenic back waters, historical monuments, religious monuments etc. Now through the efforts of Government of Kerala, it has become intellectually appealing to international and domestic visitors. In recent times, the Kerala Tourism and the industry have taken top priority to the need to improve visitor's experience. Kerala Tourism Department succeeded in generating its own brand, and positioned the state in terms of its brand. Hence the tourism of the state has become the fastest growing sector of the economy. It has emerged as one of the few economic alternatives to develop the economy of the state. It has been recognized as the vital sector for development of the economy on account of its potential for generating income and employment. Tourism in Kerala is the livelihood of around 12 lakh people and generates revenue of about 13000 crore rupees. The governments' initiative through Department of Tourism to promote the region as a cherished tourist destination succeeded in many respects. But the comprehensive development of the tourism sector necessitates the development of tourism infrastructure like accommodation, airlines, transportation system etc. Meanwhile, for the sustainable development, it should include the local people and it should not be a destroyer of ecologically fragile areas and ecosystems, culture and local community.

Is government alone can contribute to this kind of comprehensive and sustainable development of tourism in Kerala? In an environment of budgetary restrictions, government alone cannot afford new investments especially in tourism projects. This demands the cooperation of private sector for the development of tourism in the state. The role played by Private entrepreneurs in the tourism sector of the state is very emphatic of the total room inventory in Kerala, about 80 percent is in the hands of small and home – grown entrepreneurs. Ninety percent of the house boats in the back waters of the state are owned by private, small entrepreneurs. According to Dr.V.Venu, the State's tourism Secretary, the private sector in Kerala's tourism industry is way ahead in marketing, service operations and professionalism.

Infrastructure still remains the most important impediment in realizing the high potential that the tourism industry holds for the entire country especially Kerala. Inadequate accommodation, inadequate road infrastructure, air connectivity, lack of basic amenities at tourism centers, lack of developed tourism circuits, tourist trains etc. prevents the faster growth of this sector. Here emerges the need for coordination and cooperation between the public sector and private sector. The most sought after model in this regard is the PPP model.

Public Private Partnership

The synergy between the public sector and private sector has been a major force in stimulating tourism competitiveness in a number of countries at national, State and local levels. The comprehensive development of tourism is best possible if created jointly by government, private sector and local community. PPP's enable the public sector to benefit from commercial dynamism; the ability to raise finance in an environment of budgetary restrictions, innovations and efficiencies harnessed through the