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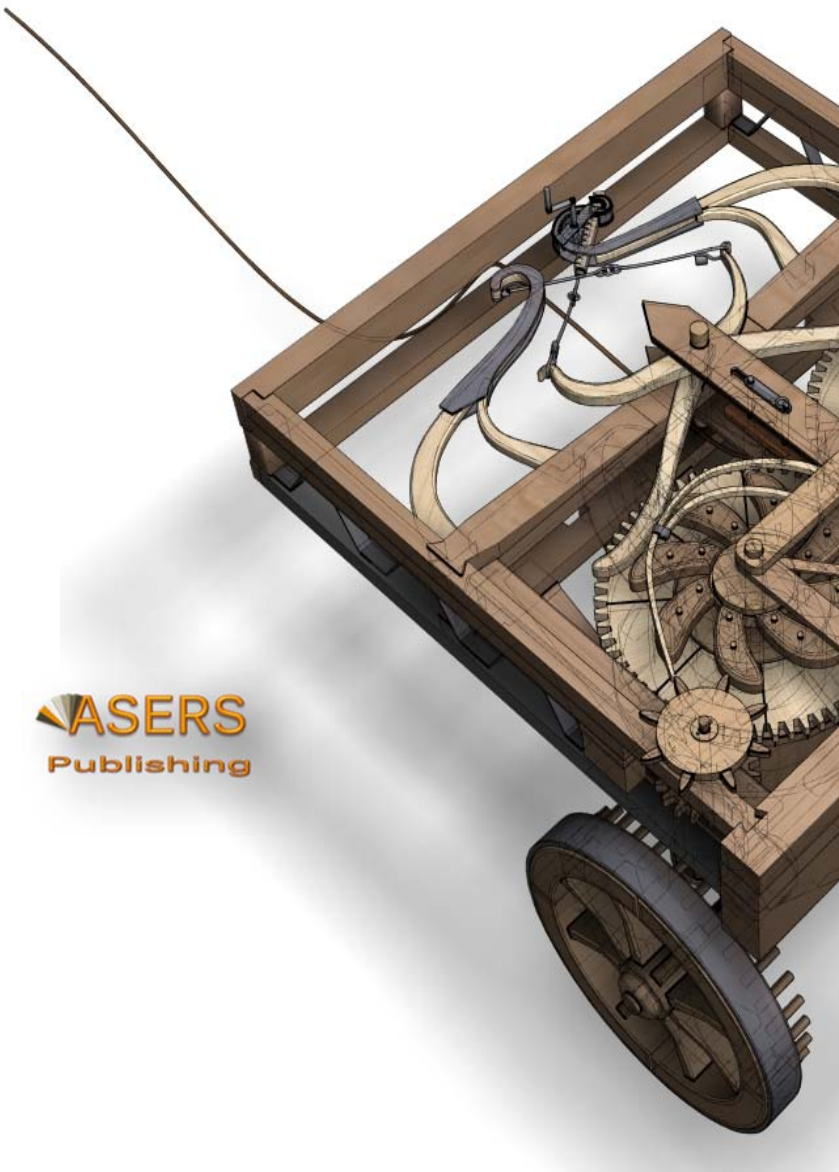

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A Study on the Role of Tourism in Destination's Disaster and Resilience Management

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most sensitive and vulnerable sectors to a disaster. On the one hand, the industry is susceptible to these unprecedented adversities and is a sufferer. On the other hand, tourism significantly contributes to and performs central roles in crisis management and a destination's resilience. Comparatively, the latter topic remains under-researched and fewer studies were focused on the part of tourism as a benefactor. However, due to the intricacy and scope of a global crisis, as an accountable service business, it is significant to understand in what ways tourism benefits a (developing) destination throughout various phases of the crisis. Therefore, this study attempts to understand the crucial role of tourism in the case of the catastrophic flood that occurred in Kerala, India, by adopting the crisis management model proposed by Faulkner. The study findings underline the pivotal role of the tourism industry in rescue, restoration, information & communication, and resilience strategy. Furthermore, the study comes up with several unanticipated yet vital insights about the importance of corporate social responsibility for tourism industries, the inevitable role of tourism stakeholders in disaster management strategies, and the importance of adopting appropriate post-disaster marketing plans to support the rebuilding of the destination.

Keywords: triangulation; reflexivity; Kerala tourism; post-disaster marketing; tourism and community.

JEL Classification: Z30; Z33 ; L83.

Introduction

Historically, tourism activities have been a subtle, unpredictable, and hazardous undertaking. The tourism industry is undeniably one of the most significant components of economies worldwide, though it is also one of the most vulnerable and defenceless sectors to crises, since "the tourism industry is not immune to crises" (Ritchie and Walters 2017, 2). There are many forms of adversities that affect the tourism industry such as natural disasters, pandemics, climate change, geopolitical issues, economic downturns, and terrorism (Paraskevas *et al*. 2013; Dahles and Susilowati 2015). Especially in the 21st century, the magnitudes of these crises influence the national, regional, and global tourism activities. The theoretical foundation of crisis management in the field of tourism is still in its infancy, though there were some efforts to apprise crisis management efforts in the sector (Faulkner 2001; Miller and Ritchie 2003; Ritchie 2004; Santana 2004; Anderson 2006; Glaesser 2006; Xu and Grunewald 2009; Faisa *et al*. 2020).

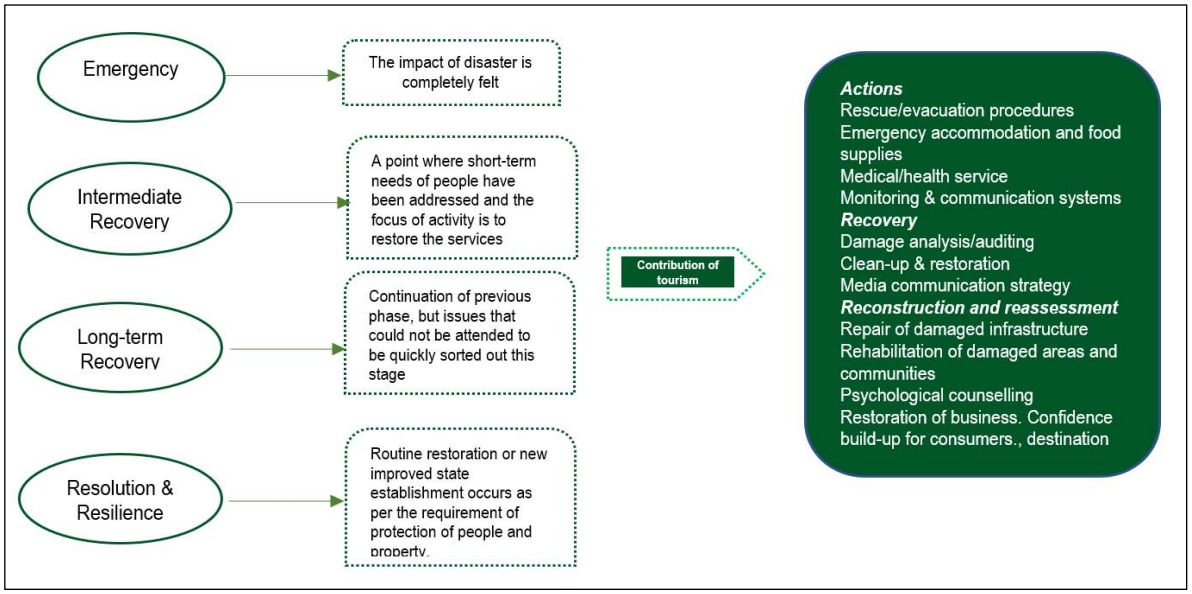
On the one hand, tourism is one of the sectors that are susceptible to a wide range of crises (Faulkner 2001). As a result, tourism researchers have been focused on specific areas of crisis management. For instance, a majority of the studies are mainly focused on disaster risk assessment, strategy, and awareness (Faulkner

2001; Richtie 2004; Tsai and Chen 2011; Becken and Hughey 2013; Nguyen *et al*. 2017); planning and development (Larsen 2011; Orchiston 2013); resilience and recovery (Cochrane 2010; Larsen *et al*. 2011; Gurtner 2016; Prayag, 2018); community and stakeholder's participation (Biggs *et al*. 2012; Lew 2014; Tsai *et al*. 2016); impact assessment (Woong 2012; Ghaderi and Som 2015); and future trends (Korstanje and Ivanov 2012).

On the other hand, the tourism industry and its facilities can be used as a tool to manage crises and as a strategic tool for the recovery and resilience of the destination since "tourism is one of the key industries that play in a role in shaping and potentially reducing disaster risks" (UNISDR 2013, 4). At the time of crisis, tourism infrastructures can be used to support the rescue management of the destination. At the stage of recovery and resilience, tourism activities, mainly the revenue generated from tourism, become the critical facilitator of recovery. However, this always depends on the magnitude of impact as well as the efficiency of community participation and governance (Lew 2004; Ritchie 2009; Chan *et al*. 2019). Most researchers in this area concentrated on the type of disaster and its impact rather than how tourism can be a saviour at the time or post-disaster buoyancy (Mistilis and Sheldon 2006; Fabry and Zeghui 2019; Chan *et al*. 2019; Jones and Comfort 2020). This study attempts to fill the gap by presenting the case of Kerala in India.

Contextually, it is significant to understand crisis, recovery, and resilience — since these three factors decide the future of destination governance. Tourism facilities could be used as a useful tool for crisis management and resilience. However, in the tourism literature, minimal studies are covering all these factors, even though this literature shapes future tourism governance (Fabry *et al*. 2019). Moreover, crisis and vulnerability, the paradigms underpinning resilience, are also important (Tsai and Chen 2011). Preventive measures for, quick responses in, and resilience to a crisis at a destination to maintain the sustainability of tourism have become one of the essential topics (Richtie 2004; Tsai and Chen 2011; Guo *et al*. 2018). Crisis in any form affects tourists' behaviours, and those such as knowledge development have to be seriously considered as shocks (Paraskevas *et al*. 2013). Though there are minimal studies focused on how the tourism sector can contribute to and support the resilience of a destination instead of one-direction, industry-focused resilience, the current research attempts to fill these gaps by providing empirical evidence from Kerala, India, to show the importance of tourism in crisis management at a destination. This paper deployed the tourism disaster management framework (stages three to six) proposed by Faulkner (2001) to analyse the disaster management and resilience of Kerala tourism in the context of the flood of 2018 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Scope of the study operating through the crisis management framework by Faulkner (2001, 144)



1. Literature Review

1.1 Tourism and Crisis

Tourism is "highly susceptible to external factors and pressures in the wider operating environment" (Parsons, 1996). Besides, tourism can be viewed as an open network that is affected by external events, sometimes even beyond control of the individual or places (Ritchie *et al.* 2014). Pforr and Hosie (2008) also opined the same and stated that tourism is particularly vulnerable to adverse events and, because there is often a crisis somewhere

within the world, the sector seems to be under almost looming danger of yet another crisis. A crisis can severely dampen tourism demand as tourism involves a multitude of industries that are all inextricably linked together. Santana (2004, 300) further explained, "the industry suffered because people lost confidence in the destination as an attractive and safe place to visit and stay. Safety misperception can indeed be a serious issue for destinations". In the case of tourism, the destination is often hit by the crisis, and the country may be implicated; hence a response by relevant bodies is demanded at a national level (Ghaderi *et al.* 2012). Though the crisis is more often in tourism, the impact on tourist flow seems short-lived, and the tourism industry has shown the needed resilience to come back to progress further (Ghaderi *et al.* 2012). McKercher and Hui (2004, 102) highlight issues in a different perspective that "fortunately, most tourists have relatively short memories and will resume travelling when they feel the immediate threat has passed. As a result, history suggests that disasters tend to have no lasting impact on tourist flows".

A study by Ritchie *et al.* (2013) on the effects of a tourism crisis connected to the aftermaths of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 revealed the complexity of the impact, generating both winners and losers on industry and geographic basis. It also hinted at the difficulties in determining damages at the macro level.

1.2 Crisis Management in Tourism

A crisis can occur at any point in time, and therefore, it is essential to be ready to face a crisis whenever it arises (Kash and Darling 1998). It is not easy to prevent a crisis, but precautions can be taken effectively; however good governance should prevent crises to some degree though must also implement methods for dealing with an unpredictable occurrence over which the company has no influence (Faulkner 2001). Similarly, Ghaderi *et al.* (2012) stated that "[W]ell designed and executed tourism crisis management plans under the stewardship of official agencies are vital to minimise risks and mitigate the damaging impacts of the crises that will inevitably occur in the future".

According to Santana (2004), crisis management is a continuing effective and holistic effort that organisations effectively put in place to try, first and foremost, to understand and prevent a crisis and to efficiently control those that occur, taking into account the interests of their stakeholders in every phase of their preparing and training activities. This suggests a common strategic framework for dealing with a crisis is not easy.

Pauchant and Mitroff (1992) identified two approaches to crisis management, which are proactive and reactive. In the first approach, management starts before a crisis based on careful monitoring. A potential crisis can be recognised, and necessary measures can be taken to either avoid the issue or to minimise the consequences. In the reactive approach, every effort takes place once the crisis takes place. In this, the priority is to contain the damages and to bring the organisation back to a state of stability.

The reacting crisis management is more authority-led and depends heavily on information and communication management to promote effective coordination and collaboration amongst the relevant stakeholders. Stakeholder collaboration and efficient communication are vital to crisis management (McKercher and Chon 2004; Mukulic *et al.* 2018; Prayag 2018). Moreover, the standard measures taken in the past in the case of reactive crisis management included government aid packages for some of the tourism industries, as well as encouraging domestic tourism, promoting 'niche' products, and developing new forms of tourism, such as sustainable tourism and ecotourism. Effective crisis management also needs reliable information for the managers and the workforce (Pforr and Hosie 2008). Pforr and Hosie (2008) further mention, in the recent tourism literature, that preparedness for, sensibilisation to, and the initial response to crises are core themes where communication, information, and confidence in the destination are vital to managing a crisis effectively. The post-crisis stress reduction strategies can also include the provision of reliable information and undertaking a range of efforts from informal peer interaction to formal professionally conducted programs (Heath 1998). The factors that may affect the efficiency in crisis management can vary widely. Heath (1998) identified several factors which impede crisis management, including bureaucratic factors; communication failures; availability of resources; improper deployment of resources; deviation of focus from crisis management to immediate, more local concerns; and demands for service that exceeds the capabilities of response agencies. A study by Henderson (2007) suggested the need for reliable information and workforce flexibility in areas such as work time. Certainly, Media has a significant role to play in the associated information management and communication processes in the aftermath of a crisis. The literature reveals that proactive crisis management is more effective and comprehensive.

A case study of the application of Smith's Model of crisis management of a UK tour operator in the wake of Sep'11 attacks in the US, as illustrated by Evans and Elphick (2005) specified the following stages. First, at the Crisis incubation stage, there was a contingency plan by the firm created mainly in the wake of the

unpredictability of the industry. Along with acknowledging the limits of contingency planning, the communication and decision roles were clearly articulated in the plan. The Operation crisis stage followed it. The Sep'11 attacks swiftly caused significant difficulties as a result of cancellations, customer and media enquiries, and a rapid decline in new bookings. Swift actions were taken to re-establish the control of the company, and immediate measures were urged to respond to the crisis by different means like cutting costs, limiting advertisements, and so on. The Media was taken care of by company spokespeople. The following stage was that of the crisis of legitimation, involving effective and rapid communication. The media did not attempt to place the company on trial as ''9/11'' was viewed as an external shock. Enquiries were more on capacity and programme reductions, as well as staff redundancies. HR undertook to retain and cost reduction strategies without affecting the existing staff. Smith's model suggested to have appropriate communication at the right time and to enhance the morale of the workforce in dealing with the crisis. In the post-crisis case, destinations must take proper measures to overcome the impact of the crisis. According to Mair, *et al.* (2016), the efforts should include a particular focus on relationship marketing, working with the travel trade, understanding the benefits and drawbacks of price discounting, and sharing knowledge and collaborating within the tourism industry.

Crisis communication is an important area to investigate. According to Avraham (2015), the area of crisis communication offers organisations several ways to get ready for crises and prepare crisis management and communication plans. Another study revealed the significance of efficacy information within a crisis response, and it suggested that "effective responses need to not only match the situation and protect the reputational assets of the organisations but also educate the public on how to protect themselves during the crisis and encourage self-preventive actions" (Liu *et al.* 2016, 315). They also opined that the organisations should switch their crisis communication paradigm from organisation-centred responses to customer/tourist-centred communications so that people can be assisted in coping with the crisis, which helps facilitate interactions and conversations between the organisation and the public during times of crisis. Avraham (2013), after an analysis of the post-crisis situation in the Middle East, points out that the marketers created a variety of marketing initiatives, advertising campaigns, press reports, and public relations crisis techniques to recover from the image crisis due to various disasters that hit destinations.

2. Study Site

Kerala, the southernmost state in India, promoted as 'God's own country', has been listed as one of the fifty must-see tourism destinations in the world. For the past three decades, the Keralan economy has heavily relied upon the tourism revenue, and its shares are skyrocketing nowadays. This is mainly due to successful branding and the range of products offered. Disastrously, Kerala was hit by the worst flood in a century in 2018. The tourism sector in the state collapsed, showing a drastic drop in foreign tourist's arrivals to the destinations. Though tourism operations in Kerala are framed as the predominant victim of this tragedy due to the massive destruction that caused a severe drop in the business, it received massive applause and recognition from all corners of the society. The industry in Kerala contributes 12% the state's economy, resulting in a crushing pause as floods ravaged all sorts of tourism infrastructures and compelled tourists to revoke their holidays. This detrimentally affected the state's economy and put pressure on recovery strategies. However, the state adopted a full-paced resilience strategy by deliberately positioning tourism's potential to revitalise the sector and using the tourism revenue for the crisis management plan called 'Nava Keralam' (New Kerala).

Furthermore, justification of the research methods used. Usually, the methods will be selected from known and proven examples. In individual cases, the development of a method may be a vital part of the research, but then this will have been described in the Introduction section and reviewed in the first one.

3. Methodology

This study follows Chan *et al.* (2019), who investigated disaster management and stakeholder's participation in Kumamoto. Data collection was conducted between August 2018 to July 2020 in four main stages of the disaster (emergency, intermediate, recovery, and resolution) as per Faulkner's (2001) disaster management model. A triangulation approach (Decrop 1999) was deemed as appropriate for this research by incorporating multiple data, methods, and investigators (see Table 1) to get a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Decrop 1999; Alexander 2020). This approach enriches a qualitative inquiry by "dynamic and interactive exchange among participants" (Crabtree and Miller 2000, 199). It brings "both confirmation of findings and different perspectives, adding breadth to the phenomenon of interests "(Carter *et al.* 2014, 545).

Data and method incorporated were:

- Field notes — Researcher 1 was at the study site at the time of crisis, and therefore, her field notes are the valuable source of contextual information (Phillippi and Lauderdale 2017).
- In-depth interviews — were conducted with various stakeholders in the tourism and were considered suitable research approaches (Jiang and Ritchie 2017; Khazai *et al.* 2018).
- Focus group — with selected community members to gain their perceptions about tourism since focus group interviews are "useful in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs" (Morgan 1998). Total of four focus group interviews was conducted.
- Expert opinions — as this was an unprecedented situation and c the first of its kind in the twenty-first century, experts' opinions (four) were taken as "a valuable source for the detailed history of certain technology and its evolution steps in the past" (Rabie 2015, 12).

Table 1. The Applied Triangulation

Name of triangulation method	Applications	Significance of triangulation in this study
Data triangulation	Data source 1: Participant observation field notes Data source 2: Interviews scripts T&H stakeholders Data source 3: Interview scripts of experts' opinions Data source 4: Interview scripts with the community	Using various data sources and methods can be complementary to others to minimise the specific weakness of one source or approach by the strength of another. It will add more accountability to this new qualitative inquiry. The information coming from various sources or different methods can be used to corroborate, elaborate, or highlight the research problems of this transdisciplinary study (Decrop 1999). This synergised insight will help the researchers' capacity to employ the validity or appropriateness of the data source, process, and ideas derived. To enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research, regarding demonstrability by using different kinds of data tools and methods.
Method triangulation	Method 1: Participant observation; In-depth interviews with local community members Method 2: In-depth interviews with T&H stakeholders Method 3: In-depth interviews with experts Method 4: Focus group with community members	
Researcher triangulation	Researcher 1: Emergency stage to recovery; Covered Central and South Zone of Kerala Researcher 2: Emergency stage to recovery; Covered North Zone of Kerala	

The informants were selected by using two sampling techniques. Referral sampling was used to choose in-depth interview participants through the connection made from stakeholders. For the focus group and expert opinion methods, a purposive sample strategy was adopted to select information-rich, context-specific samples for this study. This was done by using three criteria: 1) community members for the affected area, which is renowned for tourism activities, 2) profoundly affected areas (since not all the places were affected equally), and 3) field experience of experts. Both the in-depth interviews and focus groups were structured, and the instrument for these parts involved a list of questions formed based on the Faulkner's (2001) model of disaster management. All these conversations were conducted in person, for 40 minutes up to one hour. All the communications were either in English or Malayalam.

For data analysis, two of the researchers independently interpreted and manually coded the transcripts, then coded them under each stage (emergency, intermediate, recovery, and resolution) of the crisis. Then, in each section, we undertook a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) to identify the main themes (see Figure II). Walters (2016, 115) emphasises "thematic analysis to be a rigorous and valid means of analysing tourism texts that incorporate written and visual elements, particularly where it is recognised that the meaning or significance of the whole may be more than the sum of its parts".

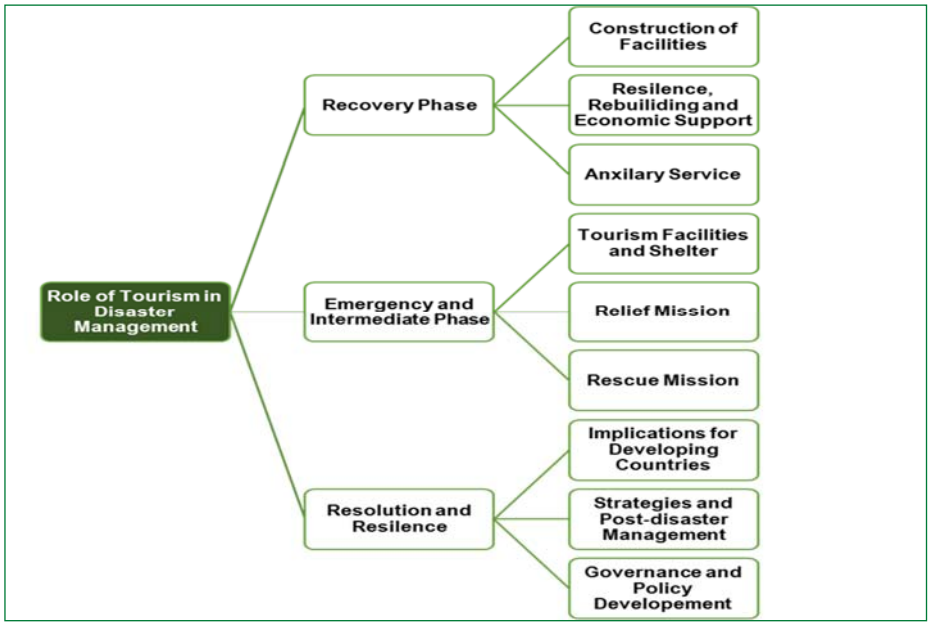
4. Findings

4.1 Emergency and Intermediate Phase

At this stage of occurrence of the flood in July to August 2018, the tourism industry played a central role in the rescue, communication, and public service activities. Tourism facilities, resorts, houseboats, and human resources were substantially utilised in salvage and community support. The backwater tourism attractions and facilities were the key player for the rescue in the Kuttanadu region. These areas lie below sea level and are

surrounded by water resources (backwater, river, ponds, and lakes). Consequently, these places were hit hard by the flood. The inland lagoons streaming parallel to the Kerala coastline are one of the leading tourist attractions in the state.

Figure 2. Thematic analysis (Source: Author)



The word 'houseboat' is a synonym of holidays in Kerala. However, the houseboats of the backwaters of Alappuzha had factually turned out to be domiciled for many evacuated communities in Kuttanadu. Thousands of people were living in around 200 houseboats, which were chained on the coasts of the Vembanad lake for the period of the flood. An Alappuzha district tourism official commented:

> During the floods in Kerala in 2018, houseboat proprietors permitted their boats to be benefitted for rescue and relief activities. Approximately more than 30,00 publics from the low lying Kuttanad region were salvaged and allotted to lodge in the boats (EI 1).
>
> Most of the houseboats participated in the rescue missions. After the early stage of relocated people to the mainland's [sic], families, friends and neighbours of houseboat proprietors and workers shifted to houseboats, since no shelters were safe during the flood in Kuttanad (ID 5).
>
> The flood level has gone above five feet at these regions (Kuttanadu). We have only houseboats to be in and thought that would be the safe option as every minute the water level increases. So, we all shifted into the boats. Not only us, the villagers but also families of the owners of these boats also families moved to boats. We lived in that boats and cooked inside the boat, and they helped a lot in this crisis (FG 3).

In other places, the resorts and hotels became the actual 'food basket'. They cooked, packed, and served foods to the rescue shelters. In Pathanamthitta, a district in Central Kerala that was one of the most affected areas, rooftops of hotels acted as helipads for the military for rescue. Also, some of the hotels served as coordination centres.

4.2 Recovery Phase

This was the most challenging situation for the entire state, and T&H was one of the most affected industries. When the water level went down and back to normal, the state moved into the next stage of disaster by moving out of the emergency phase (Faulkner 2001). In these stages of recovery (both intermediate and long-term), the industry provided quick responses and solutions to extraordinary situations. On the one hand, it was hard for the T&H sector to participate in the recovery mission due to the impact of this catastrophic flood on it:

> The local tourism industry in Kerala shown [sic]" a sanguinity for an early recuperation over the next quarter. Though, this might take long time grounded research conducted, which signposts that the reappearance of foreign tourists might be more sluggish, over the next one year. Local travellers would be coming back quicker. Though the deluges have happened in a monsoon period, which is an off-

> season for Kerala, most of the tourism and hospitality industries (even those not affected) are here and now in front of substantial withdrawals, consecutively into the peak season (ID 7).
>
> This flood destroyed everything in Kerala's top tourism spots such as Alappuzha, Munnar, Kumarakom, Wayanad, and so on. However, even in this crisis, the T&H sector stood along with the local communities. They rebuilt bridges, sanctioned the use of their warehouses and storage rooms for relief material, and supplied clean water to the affected areas. Besides, the hospitality sector provided accommodation facilities for people "who had supported the restoration" (EI 2) and became "information centres to help the renovation activities of the area" (EI 1)
>
> They helped a lot, give us barrels of drinking water, supplied cleaning utilities. It was a great help for us, as we lost everything. Our houses are submerged under mud and sand. This is an enormous task to get rid of all these kinds of stuff, clean the house, rebuilt and resilience (FG 2).

Furthermore, the tourist attractions acted as tourism information centres to "broadcast the facts about renewal across the globe" (ID 5). Also, the "synchronised attempts by the public and private segments at building-back-better will be crucial for lessening the recovery period for the tourism industry and the public" (ID 8). At this stage off recovery, though tourism industries also struggled to survive, many of them worked with the local community for healing.

Immediately after the essential restoration activities, the industry opened many tourist attractions for domestic tourists because of the importance of tourism revenue for the recovery efforts in local communities. This was predominantly aimed toward domestic tourists because they were assumed to be the immediate source of income for Kerala tourism:

After a couple of months, we found that many of the tourism places in popular places in Alappuzha, Koch, Idukki and Kottayam have been either recovered or not severely affected, so we allowed them to run the business. Since, at this stage for a state like Kerala, which is highly depending on tourism income (12%), it is essential to show quick recovery and post-disaster marketing. Our seasons are coming up, and this money is essential for local communities as well. (EI 3)

4.3 Resolution and Resilience

After a devastating disaster such as that faced in Kerala, resolution and recovery require time, effort, and adequate planning. Any kind of crisis has an unforeseen impact on a destination's image, market, resources, and infrastructure. For a developing country, it may take a longer time than expected to recover fully. However, it is worth studying and understanding the strategy of Kerala tourism, as it recovered in a considerably short amount of time and received more visitors within six months than it had in the previous year (Tourism statistics, Ministry of Tourism. GoK, 2019). Indeed, this revenue supported the overall resilience of the state, and this increase in tourism indicated the impact of post-disaster marketing by the Kerala tourism board. As per a tourism expert:

> Yes, we made all the effort to proof Kerala is a safe place to travel. We participated in various trade shows such as the Asia tour fair and started different kinds of promotional activities across the globe. Because at this stage revenue from tourism not only enrich the economy of the state but also it helps the local communities to survive their lives after this flood (EI 3)

It is also worth it to analyse the first stages of recovery, which were not that hopeful; even so, domestic tourism proved to be cultivating. There were several strategies to project post-disaster Kerala to an international platform:

> The tourism sector in Kerala is extensively working in branding and marketing post flood. Resort owners and intermediaries are coming up with innovative and attractive plans. We are doing both internet-based and offline promotions. Nevertheless, for the first 100 days after [the], deluge [were] not that hopeful. The government was doing all the kind of marketing using new techniques using famous bloggers (they are invited to experience post-flood Kerala), and campaigns like [the] #KeralaIsOpen ad campaign. (EI 4)

The hashtag of the ad campaign — #KeralaIsOpen by SamsoniteIndia — reveals everything about the importance of tourism in the resilience of Kerala. One campaign also claimed, "Kerala is waiting. Waiting to rebuild its economy, to revive its tourism. However, most of all, it is waiting for you!"

Discussions and Conclusions

Natural disasters have a wide range of impacts on human life. Any kind of these incidents is assumed to have detrimental effects on tourism, as tourism is very susceptible by nature (Ritchie 2004; Cro and Martins 2017; Chan *et al.* 2019; Rosello *et al.* 2020). However, few empirical studies address the contributions of the sector to disaster management and resilience (Chan *et al.* 2019). The current study findings give significant knowledge to underline the role of tourism in the disaster management process. In Kerala, the industry and its stakeholders participated in every stage of the crisis. At the emergency phase, tourism resources, hospitality sector, and infrastructure were utilised for rescue and shelter (Faulkner 2001; Nguyen *et al.* 2017; Chan *et al.* 2019). Correctly, the houseboats, typically tourist attractions, functioned as a saviour at the time of the flood. At the early stage of the disaster, these houseboats were used as a significant form of transportation to shift people from inland areas to mainland shelters. Later they became the shelter for almost 3000 people, including the family members of the houseboat owners and workers.

The tourism industry also appreciably supported the state by supplying food to rescue shelters; arranging landing stations for helicopter rescue teams; providing rooms for accommodating restoration teams and providing premises as information centres. Altruism in tourism is widely appreciated (Pforr and Hosie 2008). All those affected by the disaster highly appreciated the sense of social responsibility from the sector, and they heavily condemned those who did not express solidarity with the local community and government, after which they warned the public for possible future grievances (McWilliams *et al.* 2006). This unpredicted result further widens the understanding about the social responsibility of the industry as they have "wider responsibilities beyond commerce as [the] tourism industry would seem to have particular and identifiable duties outside of the business arena due to its very close relationship with destination environments and societies which are facets of its products" (Henderson 2007, 229). For the direction of future policy and planning, this reaction by the public should be considered for sustainable development of the destination and the business by ensuring that the crisis management participation is an essential element of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Moreover, governments should include CSR in their tourism planning and policies to ensure the businesses work carefully with the local community concerning the well-being of the public, which broadens to a healthy physical environment.

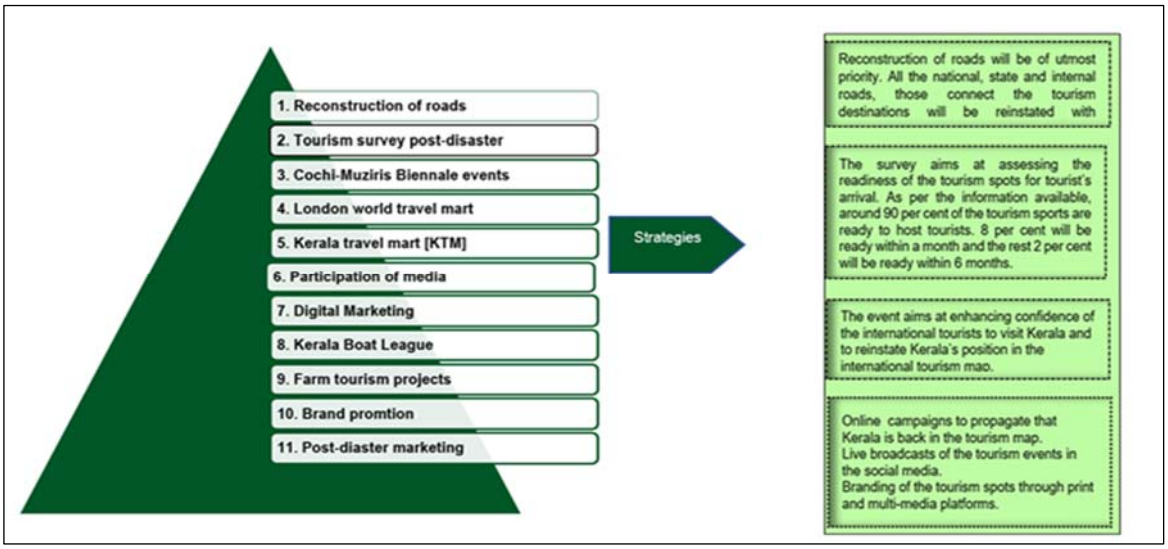
Natural disasters severely affect the tourism industry, which leads to both reversible or irreversible changes. At the same time, revenues are the crucial elements of post-disaster recovery. These issues accentuate the importance of emergency preparedness and adequate disaster management programs. Kerala heavily relies upon the income from international tourism. Importantly, the flood-hit hard many of the popular niches of tourism in the state, including backwater tourism, medical tourism, ecotourism, and rural tourism. This is an indication for the need of eco-friendly sustainable tourism development (Henderson 2007; Chan *et al.* 2019). However, sustainable development seeks out to hold accountable all the stakeholders in the training process and give equal importance to their voices. Community members, entrepreneurs, government officials, experts, businesses all need to be heard and trained correctly.

Another impressive result from this study was Kerala's post-disaster marketing plans and initiatives (see Figure III), which were a fantastic example of tourism's contribution to destination resilience and can be considered for other tourism-driven economies, how the tourism stakeholders involved in post-flood marketing and coordination reached out with their voices internationally aided more in resilience than expected. This bounce-back showed the importance of tourism in social, economic, and ecological perspectives. The government of Kerala deployed tourism stakeholders, famous bloggers, communities, and celebrities to broadcast the message of "Kerala is ready for tourism", which was successful in reinstating the international tourist's arrival to the state within 12-16 months. These findings agreed with the results of Chan *et al.* (2019, 580), who stated that it "would be more effective for governments to advertise consumers to visit by the moderate level of emotional advertising appeals. People tend to exhibit a higher willingness to visit as temporal distance increases, and the moderate level of positive emotion shapes their willingness to visit most" Both offline and online media heavily contributed to the recovery stage for tourism and the state. Blogs and social media advertisements were well played to attract tourists' attention (Mair *et al.* 2016).

However, the post-flood recovery of the state of Kerala contradicted the findings of Chan *et al.* (2019), who identified the lack of coordination and communication in all the stages during an earthquake in Kumamoto, Japan. This was not the case in Kerala due to the effective coordination and wide range of participation. This is an exciting but contradictory outcome, as the whole state of Kerala was affected by the devastating flood except for two or three districts, and the affected districts adequately handled post-disaster communication and marketing to

get tourists back within months. This shows the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and participation in the resilience of a destination (Armstrong and Ritchie 2008; Walters and Mair 2012; Ketter 2016).

Figure 3. Post-disaster strategic plan adopted by the Ministry of Tourism GoK (Source: Author)



This study enhances the existing literature by providing empirical and theoretical understandings about the role of tourism and its stakeholders in disaster management. There are many suggestions for future researchers to consider. First, it is essential to understand the current context of tourism policy developments concerning disaster management, and it is crucial to consider worldwide incidents of crisis and natural disasters. Second, future studies should link CSR and disaster management to future governance to understand the significance of making these agendas lawful as well as mandatory. Finally, it may be significant to explore the eco-friendly, sustainable initiative case studies across the globe to enhance current knowledge.

This study also has some practical implications for the managerial bodies in disaster-prone destinations. First, these bodies should give adequate training to all staff about emergency preparedness and disaster management. This will help the sector to safeguard both tourists and the community. Second, they must revise the CSR policies to consider the level and impact of the crisis so that tourism businesses become responsible. Third, the managerial bodies must consider communication and knowledge transfer within the organisation. It is vital to be aware of global crisis scenarios and natural calamities as part of emergency attentiveness.

The main limitation of this study is that it operated from the emic ontological standpoints. It is, therefore, essential to recognise the subjective and reflective nature as a possible limitation. Similarly, the representativeness of the participants (as the key informants of the study) and their emotional levels at the time of disaster may have influenced their responses.

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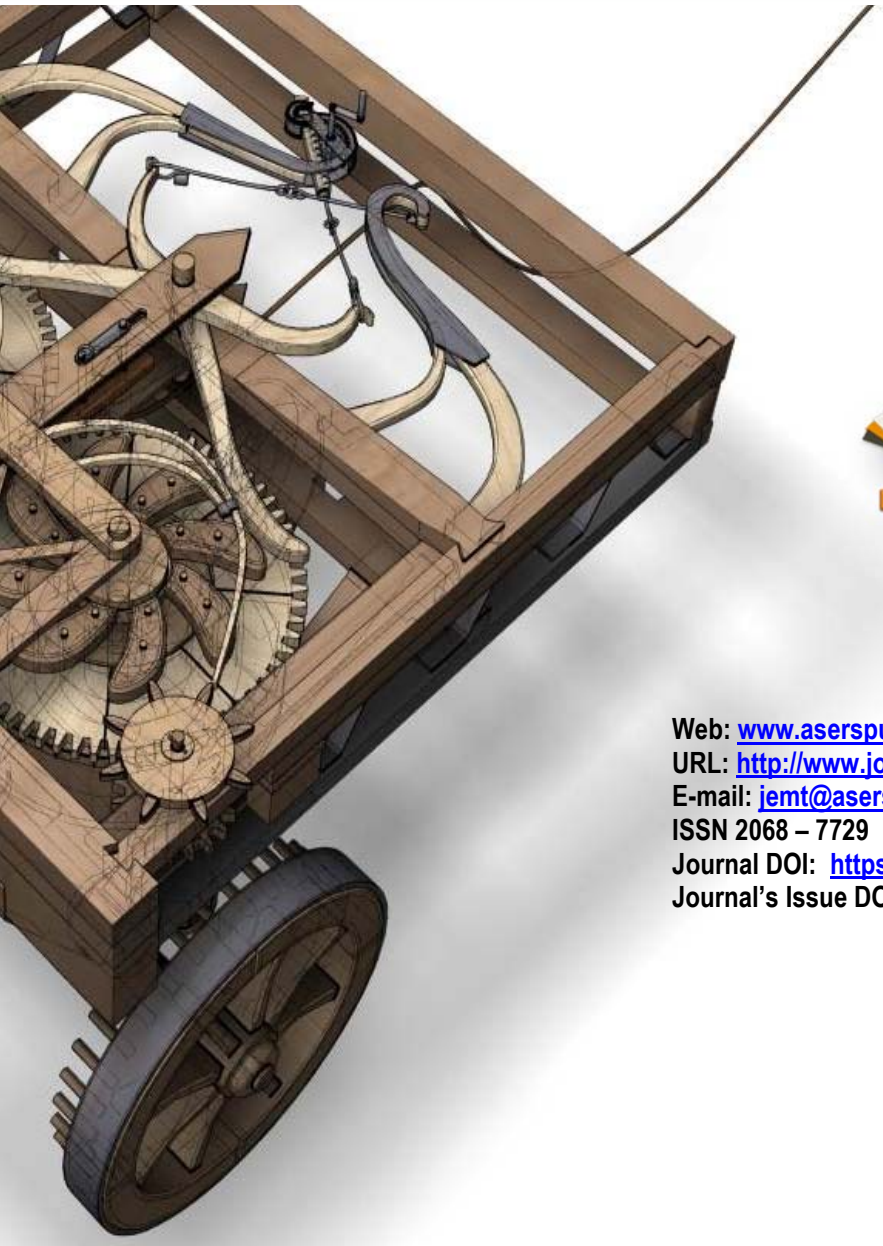

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