

# Chapter 12

## Waste Management Practices in Kerala's Premier Tourist Destinations: A Review

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### ABSTRACT

*Kerala is known as “God’s Own Country” because of its varied tapestry of lush landscapes, tranquil backwaters, and lively cultural heritage. The state’s commitment to sustainable tourism demonstrates how serious it is about protecting its abundant natural and cultural resources for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations. Waste management in Kerala is a significant and urgent problem because of its high population density, fast urban growth, and flourishing tourism sector. It is crucial to tackle this problem to reduce environmental deterioration and protect public health. The waste management system in Kerala combines ancient practices with modern technology to effectively tackle the intricate difficulties brought about by urbanization and population expansion. Kerala aims to accomplish effective trash collection, segregation, recycling, and disposal through community engagement, decentralized initiatives, and innovative technologies. This will contribute to devel-*

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*oping a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Kerala, situated along the southwest coast of the Indian Peninsula, spans 360 miles along the Malabar Coast and has gained a reputation as a tourism paradise. It's considered a top-tier destination for travellers in the Indian subcontinent, earning praise from the National Geographic Channel in 2004 as one of the fifty must-visit destinations in a lifetime. Its pleasant climate, vibrant art scene, lively festivals, and a wide array of natural and cultural attractions contribute to its popularity. Kerala stands out among Indian states for its remarkable geographical diversity in a relatively small area. It offers tourists many experiences, from beaches and backwaters to wildlife sanctuaries and lush forests teeming with diverse flora and fauna. It's often touted as the "Green Gateway" to India. (Edward & George, 2008). Eco-tourism is a big deal in Kerala's tourism scene, boasting 60 forest destinations and 12 nominated sites. This aspect of tourism is crucial for driving visitor numbers in the state. Kerala has 15 wildlife sanctuaries and five national parks, covering about 5.5 percent of its area. The state's eco-tourism projects, focusing on sustainability, play a significant role in promoting eco-friendly tourism. The recent recognition of Western Ghats eco-tourism sites as World Heritage sites is expected to draw even more global visitors. Kerala stands out with 12 of the 39 decorated sites in the Ghats, making it an attractive destination for domestic and international travellers (Rajasenan et al., 2012). Tourism is a significant catalyst for economic expansion in most global regions. The vast potential of tourism is especially pertinent for emerging nations such as India. India stands apart from other areas of the world due to its plentiful and serene natural landscapes and numerous sacred places. This advantageous circumstance is particularly relevant to the state of Kerala in the Indian subcontinent, commonly known as 'God's own Country' due to its picturesque landscapes and ideal topographical, climatic, and other factors. India has had significant growth in tourism over the past two decades, and the tourism industry has strong growth potential.

Kerala has been recognised as an exemplary growth model, and various internal and external factors might influence its performance. The government and bureaucracy promote tourism as a 'catalyst for economic growth,' a valuable means of generating foreign exchange and employment opportunities to revitalize the local economy. Environmental and labour advocates frequently address the resistance against extensive tourism via non-democratic methods (J. K. Sharma, 2020). Although rural tourism undeniably delivers advantages to local communities, it is crucial not to disregard its notable disadvantages. Tourists' conduct towards local inhabitants is typically favourable, but the detrimental impacts on society and the

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