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Carrying Capacity Assessment Of Beach Tourism High Impact Zone – A Case Of Papanasam, Varkala

Varkala has been seeing a steady growth of tourism of an average of 4.5 % in the past decade. With the increase in tourists, it is attracting more and more investors from the travel and tourism industry from across the state. With the increase in employment opportunities, a steady inflow of migrant laborers is happening as well. Increase in the commercial built up in Varkala in the past decade has been more than 100% along the North cliff, causing a lot of stress on the North Cliff.

Varkala stands a chance to find a place in the Unesco's world map of geo-heritage sites because of the North Cliff. Varkala is the only place on the west coast of India where sediments in the Mio-Pliocene age (13 lakh to 2.5 crore years ago) have been exposed. But cliff erosion is as well happening at a pace of 1.4m/year. In such, a scenario of having a sensitive ecology, a steady inflow of migrant laborers, and a potential growing phase of tourism, it becomes vital to understand the carrying capacity of the place so that sustainable growth can be planned for the future. This study focuses on assessing the carrying capacity on high impact beach tourism zone at Varkala.

Keywords: *Carrying capacity, carrying capacity assessment tool, tourist satisfaction index, Net promoter score*