



A Study on Consumers' Attitude towards Night Time Economy in Kochi, Kerala

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Abstract

Night time economy in simple words can mean the economy after dark. Lifestyles and employment practices that are completely different from the laws of the past is slowly changing the social and cultural life unionised around nine to five 'business hours'. The 24-hour economy has become a truth in many metropolia around the world, yet the change from a daytime 'business hour' economy to a 24-hour economy is hardly taken up for discussion by decision makers and the news media. This concept has caught the attention of fewer people in comparison to the economic importance of Sunday shopping and the development of these seven-day economy. Still, the advantages which are real, as well as notional, of stretching the economy, cultural and social life into late night, have a far greater reaching significance than Sunday shopping. The paper discusses the beginning of night economy with late night shopping tendency and support from the state government in Kochi, Kerala which if developed carefully has the potential to become a full-fledged night economy. The paper also explores the attitude of the customers towards night time economy.

Keywords: Night shopping, Night time economy

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Introduction

The citizens of Cochin (Kochi) are known to return home early by 7 p.m. after work and traditionally, the night life of the local population is very limited. But as a part of the Grand Kerala shopping fest which is supported by Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, introduced night time shopping in 2012. There were extensive preparations made for the festivities, and all the stores were open till midnight to provide services to their consumers from around the country and the world for 14 days. Buyers could stroll around the city and purchase their favourite products. The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation arranged dedicated bus services for night shoppers. Pre-paid taxi and auto counters were also lined up at umpteen locations in the city so that commuters could experience the ease of shopping. Security personnel were also deployed in diverse parts of the city to give assurance of security to the tourists. Other added attractions included diverse and colourful events filled with joy and excitement. During this time, there were leisure activities and culture based programs held without exception at certain central places.

The City of Kochi was given an elite status by the Government of Kerala to have Night Shopping, going the way of other Metro cities in the country. With the successful conduct of Night Shopping for ten days during Onam, the City Administration started the Night Shopping facility at festival times and holiday seasons.

Earlier in 80's and 90's Kochi had late night life, where the shops were kept open up to midnight. But later on due to electricity shortage, the Government brought a rule that the lights and other electric equipment must be switched off at 7pm. It brought down the night life in Kochi. After a few years the Government withdrew the orders, but by then the shop owners had made it a habit of closing down the shops early. Now Kochi is going back to its old days of yore. For the night economy to be active, there is a need for recreational spots in Kochi which comprise joints, disco clubs and cafe joints where the 'nocturnal life starts'. Till a few years back, there were hardly any pubs in Kerala. Hardly any clubs lived upto the western context of the word where foreigners can visit, hang

out and enjoy. The sole clubs in Kochi were the absolute 'members only' clubs like The Lotus Club and the Rama Varma Club where visitors are supposed to be guests of an existing member.

On the other side, a lively night life can also be an occasion for unsafe behaviour and feeling of reduced personal safety. For example, antisocial behaviour, injury or assault from excessive alcohol drinking or excess noise from nearby night time activities decreases everyone's enjoyment. But the fact remains that business and social activity that goes at night can be an important part of an economy particularly for tourism, leisure and employment. Managing a city at night can be significantly different from managing the city during the day.

Importance of the study

Doing nothing to improve the functioning of the city at night is not an option because of the risk of the city's reputation as a metro city and an emerging global city. Traders and city establishments have welcomed the concept of night shopping as evidenced from four successful Grand Kerala Shopping festivals but the city needs to go beyond two weeks of late night shopping and must focus on ultimately turning into full-fledged night time economy. The paper discusses the foundations towards such a vision.

Objectives of the study

The present study is exploratory in nature and aims to investigate the feasibility of night shopping which is a part of the night time economy. The concept is welcomed by the traders as can be concluded from the many previous Grand Kerala shopping festivals or festive seasons. The paper tries to explore the following-

- Consumer's attitude towards night time economy in Kochi.
- Difficulties faced by consumers when shopping in the night time.
- Measures to overcome the difficulties.

Research Methodology

Research Problem-Consumer attitude towards night time economy.

Data Source-Primary data

Research Approach-Survey Approach

Research Instrument-Questionnaire

Sample Method-Convenience sampling

Sample size- 200 consumers, consisting of 100 males and 100 females.

Hypothesis

H₀-There is a significant relationship between Gender and opinion on night economy.

H₁-There is no significant relation between Gender and opinion on night economy.

Results and analysis

Table 1 Impression about the concept of night time economy

	Welcome the idea	Not sure about the success of the concept	Unwelcome the concept	Total
Males	85	10	5	100
Females	30	40	30	100
Total	115	50	35	200

Source-Primary data

Interpretation

The table shows impression about the concept of night shopping among the citizens of Kochi. It is concluded that out of 100 male respondents 85 of them welcome the idea while ten are not sure of the success of the concept and 5 percent of males unwelcome the idea. When the same is asked among females, 30 percent welcomed the idea while 40 percent not sure and 30 percent of respondents disagree with the concept of night economy.

Table 2 Chi-square test results

Basis	Value	df	P value	Remarks
Gender	62.16	.00001	.05	Significant

Source-Primary data

Interpretation

Chi-square test results confirm that there is a significant difference in opinion among males and females while males prefer night time economy females are not in favour of the concept and the hence null hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between gender and opinion on night economy stands accepted.

Table 3 Reasons for unwelcoming the concept

Particulars	Males		Females	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
Anti -social elements	4.4	3	4.71	1
Not enough public transport	4.18	4	3.71	4
Lack of proper lighting after dark	4.12	5	4.29	2
Noise pollution and disturbances to locals	3.92	6	3.43	6
City not equipped for night economy	4.42	2	3.36	3
Too much regulation and moral policing	5	1	3.57	5

Source-Primary data

Interpretation

The table shows a weighted mean score of males and females who have pointed various reasons for not welcoming the concept of night economy. The table shows that among males “too much moral policing and regulation” got the maximum weighted mean score which is followed by “city not equipped for night economy”. Among females, the maximum weighted mean score went to the opinion that the presence of anti-social elements discourages them from welcoming the concept which is followed by ‘lack of proper lighting after dark’.

Table 4 Reasons for welcoming the concept

Particulars	Males		Females	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
Less traffic congestion	4.53	1	3.78	3
More parking space	4.11	4	3.61	5
More peaceful shopping	3.89	6	3.83	2
More relaxation options	4.32	2	2.26	6
More time available and need not rush work or shopping	4.26	3	3.91	1
More discounts and reduced prices	3.95	5	3.65	4

Source-primary data

Interpretation

The table shows a weighted mean average of the reasons for welcoming night economy and male respondents have given maximum weight to less traffic congestion during the night which is followed by ‘more relaxation options and entertainment opportunities’. Among females, more time available and more peaceful shopping were considered as important factors to welcome the concept.

Table 5 Places currently visited by respondents during night time

Particulars	Males		Females	
	Mean	Ranking	Mean	Ranking
Shopping Malls	4.03	3	4.25	4
Entertainments like cinema	4.12	1	4.75	1
Dining out	4.09	2	4.31	3
Exhibitions and events	3.94	4	4.44	2
Retail shops and public places	3.82	5	4.19	5
Pubs, discos and partying	2.18	6	4.06	6

Source-Primary data

Interpretation

The table shows the current situation of night time visits and that the respondents mainly use night time to watch late night movie shows, followed by dining out, exhibitions and events.

Findings

- Although night shopping and night economy were implemented on a trial basis, it remains a fact that people are not welcoming the concept of night economy. In other words, the city is not yet equipped for night economy.
- Anti-social activities and elements have created a strong negative feeling against night time economy.
- Consumers welcome the concept because of less traffic congestion and more relaxation options offered by entertainment sectors.
- Currently, the situation is that consumers go out at night mainly for a late night movie or for dining out.

Suggestions

- Separate night governance system by local administration to ensure safety to all during the night time.
- Develop stricter measures to control night time crimes and disturbances. Here administration needs to take a good note of the safety of consumers and not harass them by moral policing.
- Local and state government needs to develop proper support systems with regard to public transport, help centres, city lighting and CCTV cameras.
- The state government, academia, business, locals and visitors all play a part of the economy from 6am to 6 pm, and similarly, all stakeholders should also be part of preparing the city for night time.
- Importance must be given to data collection, monitoring and evaluation to make changes as and when needed and

special check and data on crimes must also be maintained regarding time and place to avoid reoccurrence.

Conclusion

As cities and metros are developing into 24-hour places, Kochi cannot be left behind. The potential of night time economy are manifold as it could be extended to many sectors like tourism, lighting companies, entertainment sectors, art and culture, etc. Employment opportunities and income generation are other promised benefits. Night time economy will also ensure better public transportation, better security and overall growth and it is something that is inevitable in the future.

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