



INDO-JAPAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

EXPLORING THE UNEXPLORED PREFECTURE – ‘KOCHI’

by
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RESOURCE PAPER 47



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PREFACE

Dear Readers,

Many of us have visited Japan a number of times for business to major cities known for buzzing activities, would have also hopped into some outskirts of the cities for leisure too. There is a wonderful Prefecture called 'Kochi' (to be pronounced with an extended vowel sound of 'o') worth visiting for business and leisure. This Resource Paper is aimed at enlightening the readers of 'the land of green and blue', a highly potential Prefecture in Japan, good for business and leisure.

Kochi Prefecture, located on the southern Shikoku island is about one and a half hours flight travel from Tokyo. IJCCI in the month of November 2023 hosted a Business Networking Session for the delegation from Kochi Prefecture - senior government officials and business leaders from the prefecture networked with their counterparts from India. The warm and friendly government officials and businessmen showcased the potentials of the prefecture and their industry, enlightened the scope for joint cooperation with Kochi. The Delegation was headed by Mr. HAMADA Kenji, Deputy Director General of the Industry, Commerce and Labour Department.

Young Ms. Lakshimi Suryakumar, an avid reader, good at art and culture, highly enthusiastic and passionate about diverse culture, is a post graduate in English and Human Resource Management from DG Vaishnav College who volunteered to be with the delegation members during the networking meet, brings out the best of Kochi Prefecture for our readers to understand, appreciate and explore avenues of cooperation for mutual benefit. I am sure the Resource Paper by Ms. Lakshimi Suryakumar will be interesting and informative.

Indian SMEs interested in joint cooperation with their counterparts in Kochi are welcome to write to IJCCI for necessary assistance.

December 2023

Suguna Ramamoorthy
Secretary General IJCCI

Exploring the Unexplored Prefecture - “KOCHI”



UNLOCKING KOCHI'S ECONOMIC POTENTIALS: A GUIDE FOR INDIAN ENTREPRENEURS SEEKING JOINT COOPERATION

Where Kochi shines: A Look at its location

Kōchi Prefecture (高知県, Kōchi-ken) is located on the island of Shikoku.

Kōchi Prefecture has a population of over 7 lakhs spread in 7,103 square kilometers (2,742 square miles). Kōchi Prefecture borders Ehime Prefecture to the northwest and Tokushima Prefecture to the northeast. Kōchi is the capital and largest city of Kōchi Prefecture, with other major cities including Nankoku, Shimanto, and Kōnan.

Kōchi Prefecture is located on Japan's Pacific coast surrounding a large bay in the south of Shikoku, with the southernmost point of the island located at Cape Ashizuri in Tosashimizu. Kōchi Prefecture is home to Kōchi Castle, considered the most intact Japanese castle, and the Shimanto River, one of the few undammed rivers in Japan. With its breathtaking natural beauty, including verdant mountains and a pristine coastline, Kochi provides an ideal backdrop for eco-tourism and outdoor activities.

Furthermore, Kochi's potential for innovation and technology, coupled with opportunities for regional collaboration, presents exciting avenues for economic growth. In exploring these facets, the resource paper unveils the diverse facets that contribute to the charm and prosperity of Kochi Prefecture.



Kochi City view

The land and the people

Kochi Prefecture the 29th largest prefecture geographically in Japan. Kochi Prefecture is grappling with significant demographic challenges, experiencing a gradual population decline with an annual rate of -1.03% from 2015 to 2020. This decline is attributed to aging demographics and low birth rates, issues commonly observed in rural areas of Japan. The

prefecture faces the particular concern of an aging population, with over 27% of residents aged 65 or above, surpassing the national average. This demographic shift underscores the necessity for targeted initiatives to address the needs of an elderly population.

In terms of gender distribution, Kochi has a slight female majority, with women comprising 51.2% of the population. The average household size in Kochi is notably smaller than the national average, standing at approximately 2.26 people per household. This demographic characteristic reflects evolving family structures and a trend towards decreased birth rates.

When compared to other prefectures in Japan, Kochi ranks 40th out of 47 in population, positioning it as one of the less populous prefectures in the country. Additionally, the population density in Kochi is lower than the national average, measured at 97.34 people per square kilometer. This lower density is a consequence of Kochi's mountainous geography and rural nature, contributing to its unique demographic profile. These demographic trends in Kochi provide valuable insights for researchers and policymakers addressing the challenges associated with population decline and aging in rural regions.

Transport - Getting around Kochi

Kochi's transportation infrastructure offers convenient access through Kochi Airport, the primary air gateway connecting the prefecture to major cities like Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and Fukuoka with flight durations ranging from 1 to 2 hours. Travellers may also consider Takamatsu Airport (TAK) or Hiroshima Airport (HIJ), depending on their final destination, with options for connecting flights or bullet train connections. On the rail front, Kochi Station serves as a central hub for JR Shikoku Railways, linking various parts of Japan. While Kochi itself is not directly served by the Shinkansen, passengers can connect at Okayama Station for high-speed travel to Osaka and Tokyo. Additionally, regional trains provide a slower yet scenic exploration of Kochi and neighboring prefectures such as Tokushima and Ehime. The diverse transportation options cater to different preferences and destinations, ensuring efficient and flexible travel.

Main activity of Kochi Prefecture : A treasure trove of diverse activities

Nature Lover's Paradise

For outdoor enthusiasts, Kochi unfolds a haven of natural wonders. Embark on invigorating hikes and camping escapades, traversing lush forests and conquering peaks like Mt. Tsurugi and Mt. Jyogadake. Camp beneath starlit skies by the crystal-clear streams of Niyodo River. Dive into water activities, kayaking or paddleboarding on the turquoise Niyodo River and exploring vibrant coral reefs in Muroto National Park through snorkeling or scuba diving. From April to September, thrilling boat tours offer a front-row seat to majestic whales and playful dolphins off the Kochi coast.

Cultural Enthusiast's Playground

History comes alive at Kochi Castle, an Edo-period gem featuring samurai armor, traditional gardens, and panoramic city views. Delight your taste buds with Katsuo no Tataki, Kochi's signature dish of seared bonito with fiery ginger sauce, prepared theatrically by skilled "Tataki-man" chefs. Immerse yourself in the vibrant Yosakoi Matsuri, a summer festival pulsating with energy, dazzling costumes, and lively dance routines. For a spiritual journey, undertake the Shikoku Pilgrimage, traversing the ancient 88 - temple route and soaking in tranquility intertwined with local culture.

Unique Experience

Enter a fairytale realm at Shirakawa-go Farmhouses, where traditional gassho-style farmhouses with steep thatched roofs dot the stunning mountain landscape. Indulge in year-round beach fun at Seagaia Ocean Dome, the world's largest indoor beach dome, offering opportunities to swim, surf, or unwind in a tropical setting. Explore the fascinating life cycle of sea turtles at the Katsurahama Sea Turtle Museum, with a chance to witness hatching season from July to September. Kochi Prefecture promises a diverse and unforgettable tapestry of experiences for every traveler.

Kochi: Weather and Cultural highlights

The weather in Kochi is warm and humid, which is typical tropical weather. Typhoons often hit this region in the summer, but the sun is very strong even in winter. Temperatures change dramatically between day and night. Kochi prefecture's climate varies depending on the season and location within the prefecture.

Katsurahama Beach is famous as a “moon-viewing spot.” In addition, it is a notable site as a place from which Ryoma Sakamoto, a great man during the late Edo Period, thought about foreign countries.

Yosakoi Festival is a summer festival in Kochi prefecture. Farming tools called Naruko are used in Yosakoi dancing. Naruko was used to scare away sparrows from rice fields. More than 18,000 dancers keep dancing for a few days every year, which colors the street in Kochi.

Meditation experience provided by Iwamoto-ji Temple



Meditating under the tutelage of a Zen Buddhist priest while you sit in the middle of the cool, pure ‘Shimanto’ River!

Available from May to September, this is a chance to truly refresh both your mind and body. Allow the gentle flow of the river around your legs to quiet your mind, so that you can focus deeper within. The sounds of the water, birds and wind will bring you back to center. As the temple only accepts one group per day for this soothing session, you will have the priest's full attention and assistance in taking your first step in Zen meditation.

Food and Beverage from Kochi Prefecture to the world



Yosakoi Festival



Katsurahama Beach



Swachi Ryori



Shochu



Katsuo Tataki

Kochi Prefecture, located on Shikoku Island in Japan, boasts a unique culture shaped by its geography, with the Pacific Ocean to the south and steep mountains dividing the region. The weather is warm and humid, featuring tropical conditions with typhoons in the summer. The Yosakoi Festival and Katsurahama Beach are prominent cultural and scenic attractions.

The local food culture is rich, featuring dishes like ‘Sashimi, Katsuo Tataki’, and a distinctive country-style sushi. Kochi is known for its agricultural prowess, ranking high in land productivity and promoting environmentally friendly farming practices. Yuzu, a citrus fruit, is a signature ingredient in Kochi's cuisine, with various processed products like Yuzuponzu sauce and Yuzu sweets.

In fisheries, Kochi excels in producing seasonal seafood, with bonito being a per-capita favorite. The Shimanto River is famous for its sweetfish and



Tosa beef



Shimanto pork

other river products. The region also offers a variety of marine processed products, including dried bonito flake and ‘Shuto’, a local delicacy.

Kochi takes pride in its livestock, with ‘Tosa’ beef and ‘Shimanto’ pork being renowned for their quality. The region also produces high-quality tea, benefiting from its ideal landscapes and climate. Sweets in Kochi, such as ice cream and traditional rice crackers, reflect the area's culinary heritage.

The prefecture’s commitment to quality extends to beverages, with local sake, ‘Shochu’, and fruit liqueurs capturing the essence of regional fruits. Kochi's rice, cultivated in pristine environments with pure water, is renowned for its quality. Additionally, the region produces various processed products, including deep seawater and bay salt.

Kochi’s commitment to promoting its products globally is evident through its logistics infrastructure, with regular shipping routes to international ports like Busan, Korea. The diverse range of products, from agriculture to fisheries and beyond, reflects Kochi's dedication to showcasing its unique cultural and culinary heritage to the world.

Kochi’s agricultural produce ranking high

Kochi Prefecture is one of Japan’s top agricultural producers in shipment volume. Centered on horticulture, its land productivity ranks No.2 in Japan. Kochi Prefecture is a pioneer in promoting environment friendly agriculture by obtaining ISO14001 certification and introducing voluntary inspections for pesticide residue. Particularly, the amount of natural predators it purchases as a measure to reduce pesticide use via biological control accounts for 25.1% of the domestic market.

Kochi's Educational Mosaic: Nurturing excellence and diversity

Kochi Prefecture boasts a diverse educational landscape encompassing renowned universities, junior colleges, specialized schools, and language institutions, each contributing significantly to the region's academic excellence. Kochi University, celebrated for its medical school and impactful research collaborations, stands as a beacon with notable alumni like Nobel Laureate Ryoji Noyori. The University of Kochi excels in programs such as the Faculty of Education, shaping the region's teacher education, while the High Kochi University of Technology advances cutting-edge technology through departments like Mechanical Engineering and Environmental Engineering. Private institutions like Kochi Gakuen University and Kochi Women's University carve their niches in economics and healthcare-related fields, respectively. In the realm of practical training, Kochi Prefectural Naruto Technical Junior College and Kochi Gakuen Kochi Junior College shine, offering hands-on experiences in automotive mechanics and business administration. Specialized schools like the Kochi Culinary School, Kochi School of Nursing, and Shikoku Design College cater to specific disciplines, producing skilled professionals in culinary arts, nursing, and graphic design. From studying Earth's deep oceans at JAMSTEC to nanotech marvels at Kochi University of Technology, research in Kochi Prefecture pulsates with diverse energy. Marine and Earth scientists unravel secrets of the planet, nanotech gurus craft future materials, and agriculture experts nurture sustainable practices. This collaborative tapestry stretches further, encompassing medicine, disaster preparedness, and cultural preservation. The prefecture's commitment to language education is evident through institutions like Kochi International Language School and Kochi Japan Exchange Center, fostering a vibrant, multicultural environment with intensive Japanese language courses and immersive programs for students worldwide. Together, these educational institutions form a robust foundation for knowledge, innovation, and skill development in Kochi.



Kochi University of Technology

Study paths in Kochi for Indians

Indian students aspiring for higher education in Kochi Prefecture have diverse options to explore. They can opt for direct admissions into renowned universities such as Kochi University, emphasizing strong academic records, standardized test scores like TOEFL or IELTS, and relevant research experience. Another avenue is through exchange programs facilitated by many Indian universities, enabling students to study in Kochi while remaining enrolled at their home institutions. For those seeking preparatory courses, certain language schools provide programs focusing on language skills and academic preparation for entrance exams. Additionally, English-taught programs, albeit limited, are available, such as the Master's program in Environmental Engineering at Kochi University of Technology. Admission requirements typically include a strong academic background, standardized test scores, and, in some cases, entrance exams like the Japanese University Entrance Examination (JUET). Scholarships and financial aid options, including JASSO Scholarships, university-specific scholarships, and Indian government scholarships like ICCR, offer valuable support. Furthermore, international students can legally engage in part-time work in Japan to assist with living expenses.

Kochi Prefecture - Industry and employment (2022)

In Kochi Prefecture, the economic landscape is dominated by the Tertiary (services) industry, employing the majority of the workforce (222,070) and generating a whopping 63% of the total GDP. This sector encompasses a thriving blend of tourism, IT, retail, healthcare, and financial services, showcasing its crucial role in driving Kochi's economy.

While the Secondary (manufacturing) industry occupies second place in terms of employment (53,755), its contribution to GDP (28%) remains significant. Food processing, papermaking, and metalworking stand out as prominent players within this sector, ensuring a diverse and robust manufacturing base.

Finally, the Primary (agriculture, forestry, fisheries) industry, although employing the least number of people (36,923), holds special importance for food security and cultural heritage. Its 8% contribution to GDP highlights its essential role in providing fresh produce and sustaining traditional customs.

Overall, Kochi Prefecture's economic fabric is woven with a strong emphasis on services, followed by a robust manufacturing sector and a vital primary industry.

Kochi's economic resilience and prospects

Kochi's GDP exhibits robust growth, with an impressive annual rate of 8.3%, the services sector leads, contributing 63%, fuelled by tourism, IT, finance and retail. Manufacturing contributes 28%, featuring strong industries like food processing. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries contribute 8%, emphasizing Kochi's specialties. Notably, the city faced a slight dip post-2012-13 but is set to surpass the national average in 2023-24. IT and renewable energy sectors drive diversification. Key growth drivers include strategic location, a skilled workforce, government initiatives, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem. Challenges involve infrastructure bottlenecks and talent shortages, while opportunities lie in attracting investments and sustainable development.



Kochi's global hub:

Kochi Prefecture's trade scene thrives through Kochi Port. While 2023 hasn't witnessed significant leaps in export volume (around 3.62 lakh tonnes), the focus on high-value seafood and diversified destinations like Iceland and Mongolia hint at promising progress. Traditional exports like coir products and spices still hold strong, with established markets in the UAE, USA, and China. On the import side, a slight dip in volume (around 5.01 lakh tonnes) reflects global economic trends. Chemicals, cement, and machinery remain key imports. Overall, Kochi Port serves as a crucial gateway, connecting Kochi's diverse offerings to the world and enriching the prefecture with international goods.

IJCCI's Business Networking Event

The Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a Business Networking event on the 27th November 2023 with a 16-member multi-sector delegation, lead by Mr. HAMADA Kenji, Deputy Director General, Industry Commerce and Labour Department. The event provided a valuable platform for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals to foster collaborations and explore joint ventures.

The agenda included presentations from both Indian and Japanese businesses, highlighting their respective strengths, capabilities, and areas of interest for potential collaboration. These presentations served as a foundation for meaningful discussions and networking opportunities, allowing participants to delve into specific projects and explore avenues for mutual growth.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in fruitful interactions, sharing insights and discussing potential areas for cooperation. The exchange of business cards and contact information facilitated the establishment of future connections and partnerships. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with participants expressing optimism about the prospects of collaboration and the potential for strengthening economic ties between India and Kochi Prefecture.

The successful Business Networking Meeting not only served as a bridge for cultural and business exchange but also laid the groundwork for ongoing collaboration and partnerships between Indian and Japanese businesses.

Conclusion

Kochi Prefecture stands as a dynamic and resilient region with vast economic potential and diverse opportunities for collaboration. Its strategic location, vibrant cultural heritage, and commitment to innovation create a unique landscape for entrepreneurs and investors. Despite demographic challenges, Kochi's focus on sustainable development, coupled with a rich educational ecosystem, positions it as a promising destination for global partnerships. Indian entrepreneurs can explore joint cooperation with Kochi.





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