

IMPACT OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN SELECT DESTINATIONS OF KERALA

Final Report of Minor Research Project

By

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1.1 Introduction

Tourism has an important role in our country as a whole in terms of its scope for providing employment opportunities, earn foreign exchange and thereby helps in upliftment of society as a whole. Kerala has been significantly successful in its tourism efforts, in creating a key tourism platform for the State and positioning itself competitively in the international tourist market. Acclaimed as India's only 'tourism super brand' Kerala has been able to develop strength in certain core areas of product development and infrastructure creation. Although tourism statistics show that a large amount of revenue is brought into the state, factors like the rate of leakage of tourism receipts and to what extent the local economy retains the revenues generated by tourism is still not clear. There are several challenges that the industry faces like environmental degradation degeneration of cultural heritage and social inequalities. Recognizing these adverse impact, Kerala Tourism has introduced the concept of responsibility in tourism into practice. Responsibility tourism refers to 'create better places for people to live and better places for people to visit.

Responsible tourism is mainly conceived with three kinds of responsibilities which are termed as 'triple-bottom -line'-economic responsibility, social responsibility and environmental responsibility. Though the concept of responsible tourism was there right from 1996, it was after the Capetown Declaration of 2002, that a detailed picture of responsible tourism-including its amid, factors evolved. World Tourism Organisation, now a part of Un, has recently formulated a global code of ethics, which stressed on the necessary changed that have to take place in the nature of tourism and also on its impacts on society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tourism has gained a specific role in generating employment opportunities and making familiar lesser known destinations. In the meantime, efforts have also been initiated by the Government of India and Government of Kerala for ensuring that the increase in tourist traffic to various destinations are in consistency with maintaining its biodiversity

and conservation of natural resources. But how far these initiatives have produced result is important. Hence, it is very significant to examine the impact after implementing responsible tourism.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Responsible tourism is claimed to be a flag ship approach put forward by Department of Tourism, Kerala which has won several accolades from Union Government as well as the Globe. Tourism practitioners worldwide look into the responsible tourism initiatives practiced in Kerala, especially, Kumarakom where it was introduced for the first time in 2008. Even though, Kovalam, Thekkady, Wayanad was also declared as responsible tourism centres, Kumarakom emerged successful among the lot due to the coordination of hotels, local bodies and local community. The present study is focused on identifying the responsible tourism promotion measures adopted in Kovalam and Kumarakom.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- To study the responsible tourism initiatives in the selected tourism destinations in Kerala
- To evaluate the impact of responsible tourism measures in the generation of employment opportunities
- To study the extent of involvement of local community in supporting responsible tourism initiatives

1.5 Methodology

Responsible tourism centres identified by Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala are Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady and Wayanad. But it is successfully implemented in Kumarakom, which is seen as the standard for other destinations. Hence, the researcher have selected Kumarakom and Kovalam as the two responsible tourism centres where responsible tourism measures are implemented. Primary data for this study were collected from Kumarakom Grama Panchayat and Vengannor, Vizhinjam and Kottukal Grama Panchayat of Kovalam in order to give representation of local bodies. Data was collected with the help of a structured interview schedule. Further 50 respondents were selected from Kovalam and Kumarakom to identify how responsible tourism have benefited the local community. Convenience sampling was used to collect responses from both local community and representatives of Panchayat.

Secondary data was collected from internet and information booklets. In addition to this, information has been obtained from guides, houseboat operators, tourism agencies, resorts etc and was very helpful in providing with relevant information.

1.6 Variables of the Study

The variables selected for the study for analysis of responses of local community are age, occupation, monthly income, sex, marital status. In the case of local bodies responses were analysed using name of local body as variable.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Some of the respondents were not co-operative in eliciting responses. Time was a major constraint as representatives of local bodies were not available for collecting information.

1.8 Findings

With respect to sex of the respondents, Majority of the males were involved in coir making and fishing whereas females were mostly involved in coir and running samrudhi stall.

In the case of respondents above the age of 25-30 years, most of them opined that linkage with hotels and other services and creation of employment opportunities is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism. In the case of respondents above the age of 30-35 years, most of them opined that creation of employment opportunities, linkage with hotels and other services is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism in addition to becoming self-dependent in earning livelihood. Most of the respondents of the age above 35-40 years opined that self-dependent in earning livelihood is the effect of change followed by linkage of hotels and services as the effect of change. In the case of respondents of the age group of above 40-45 years, most of them opined that self-dependent in earning livelihood is the effect of change followed by creation of employment opportunities, linkage with hotels and other services, preservation of environment and social awareness as the effect of change.

With respect to sex of respondents, it is found that both male and female does not have difference of opinion regarding creation of employment opportunities due to responsible tourism. Majority of the females considered self-dependency in earning livelihood as an effect of responsible tourism. With respect to linkage with hotels and services,

majority of the females opined that linkage with hotels and other services is the effect of responsible tourism compared to males. Majority of the females opined that preservation of environment is the effect of change. Majority of the males responded that social awareness is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism. There is a difference in perception of respondents on the basis of sex with respect to the effect of responsible tourism.

In the case of respondents who are illiterate, most of the respondents opined that houseboats and running samrudhi stall was the activities towards which there was a shift after the implementation of responsible tourism. In the case of respondents who had an educational qualification of below 10th, majority of them were running samrudhi stall and were engaged in fishing

The sex wise classification of respondents on the change in activity after implementation of responsible tourism revealed that females were mostly involved in all the activities of responsible tourism. Most of the male respondents are involved in coir making followed by some of the respondents who are accompanying tourists for VLE, running samrudhi stall, supplying vegetables to hotels and running candle making unit. In the case of female respondents, most of them are involved in coir making and running samrudhi stall, fishing, supplying vegetables to hotels.

Majority of the males opined that there was a positive change in monthly income after implementation of responsible tourism. Most of the females opined that there is a decrease in monthly income followed by equal proportion of the females who opined that there was an increase in monthly income.

In the case of respondents above 25-30 years, majority of the respondents opined that there was a positive change in monthly income due to responsible tourism. Majority of the respondents who belong to the age above 30-35 years opined that there was a positive change in monthly income due to responsible tourism. Majority of the respondents who belong to the age above 35-40 years opined that there was a positive change in monthly income due to responsible tourism. All the respondents above the age of 40-45 years opined that there was a negative change.

Majority of the respondents who are illiterates are employed in houseboats and are running samrudhi stall. In the case of respondents who are having an educational qualification of below tenth, most of the respondents are running samrudhi stall and engaged in fishing. In the case of respondents with plus two qualification, most of the respondents are engaged in coir making and some are engaged in supplying vegetables, running candle making unit and banana leaf. Among the degree holders, majority are engaged in coir making and others are involved in accompanying tourists, running samrudhi stall, running candle making unit, houseboats, and tender coconut making unit.

Among males, most of the respondents opined that the rate of change in monthly income is above Rs.2000-3000 followed by some of the respondents who felt that the rate of change in monthly income is above Rs.4000-5000. Among females, most of the respondents opined that there is a change in monthly income of above Rs.2000-3000 and above Rs.1000-2000 after implementation of responsible tourism.

In the case of illiterates, majority of the respondents opined that after introduction of responsible tourism, the change in monthly income is above Rs.1000-2000 and above Rs.3000-4000 respectively. Majority of the respondents who are below tenth opined that the rate of change in monthly income is above Rs.2000-3000 followed by some who opined that the rate of change in monthly income is above Rs.1000-2000. In the case of respondents who are having plus two, most of them responded that the rate of change in monthly income is above Rs.3000-4000. In the case of persons who had qualified degree, most of them opined that the change in monthly income is above Rs.2000-3000 and above Rs.4000-5000.

In the case of respondents who are illiterates, all responded that linkage with hotels and services is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism. Most of the respondents who are below 10th qualification opined that linkage with hotels and services is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism. In the case of respondents who have completed plus two, most of them opined that being self-dependent in earning livelihood is the effect in addition to creation of employment opportunities as the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism. In the case of respondents who are having degree, most of the respondents opined that

becoming self-dependent in earning livelihood is the effect of change whereas some of them opined that creation of employment opportunities and linkage with hotels and services is the effect of change in implementation of responsible tourism.

With respect to the various local bodies covered, it was found that both Vizhinjam and Venganoor Panchayat had introduced mostly schemes for supplying vegetables to hotels. In the case of Kottukal Panchayat, samrudhi stall was run by them. But in the case of Kumarakom, all the schemes were introduced. Venganoor and Kottukal had introduced schemes of VLE and running samrudhi stall.

Most of the local bodies involved in responsible tourism initiative are having arrangements for disposing waste. They confirmed that there is a proper mechanism of disposal of waste.

Among the local bodies, Vizhinjam Panchayat opined that panchayat and Kudumbasree is taking the initiative for waste disposal. Venganoor Panchayat opined that panchayat and private parties is taking the initiative for waste disposal. In the case of Kottukal Panchayat, panchayat and private parties is taking the initiative for waste disposal. In the case of Kumarakom panchayat, Kudumbasree is taking the initiative of waste disposal along with panchyath.

According to Vizhinjam panchyath, the role of local body in responsible tourism is to market the product and co-ordinate hotels and locals. But in the case of Venganoor panchyath, they felt that procuring raw material and producing local commodities are the role of local bodies. Co-ordinating hotels and locals and waste disposal is the role of local bodies according to Kottukal panchayat. In the case of Kumarakom panchayat, coordinating hotels and locals and produce local commodities is the role of local bodies.

Almost all the local bodies are satisfied with the tourism development in their area. In the case of Vizhinjam and Kumarakom panchayat, they are highly satisfied with the tourism development whereas in the case of kottukal panchayat, they are highly satisfied and satisfied with the tourism development. In the case of Venganoor panchayat, they are satisfied with the tourism development in their area.

All the representatives of selected local bodies opined that the priority of responsible tourism is to ensure economic wellbeing of the people. In the case of Venganoor panchayat, the priority of responsible tourism is to provide employment opportunities and to preserve the environment. All the selected representatives of Kottukal Panchayat felt that the priority of responsible tourism is to provide employment opportunity. In Kumarakom panchayat, the representatives opined that to encourage co-ordination is the priority of responsible tourism.

Vizhinjam panchayat believe in conducting workshops and showing the results of responsible tourism to the local community in order to create awareness about responsible tourism. In the case of Venganoor panchayat showing the results of responsible tourism to the local community is the way adopted to create awareness about responsible tourism. The representatives of Kottukal panchayat opined that conducting workshops and showing the results of responsible tourism to the local community are the different ways adopted by them to create awareness about responsible tourism. In Kumarakom panchayat conducting workshops and rewarding the local community for their efforts are the different ways to create awareness about responsible tourism.

Almost all the panchayat has good opinion on the initiatives of Department of Tourism. All have rated their initiatives as very good.

1.9 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions are made:

- More integration of responsible tourism from the part of Department of Tourism as most of the initial activities are being stopped down in the identified destinations. Hence integration of various bodies shall be done for the effective implementation of responsible tourism on a large scale.
- Activities shall be monitored on a continuous basis by authorities by providing necessary support to the supporting agencies like panchayat, Kudumbashree, houseboat operators, taxi drivers etc.

Conclusion

Responsible tourism is a concept which has received lots of accolades for the initiatives of the Department of Tourism, Kerala. The success stories from Kumarakom shall be implemented in all the destinations and new destinations shall also be equipped with responsible tourism along with sustainable tourism.