

THE IMPACT OF RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DESTINATION: A STUDY AT KUMARAKOM, KERALA

DR.SUJITHA ANNIE KURIAN

Associate Professor, Marian International Institute of Management, Kuttikkanam

sujitha@miim.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Tourism is one the largest and fastest growing industry in the world and it provides economic development of the country. In Kerala many of the tourist places are located in the rural areas. Apart from the sightseeing the tourists can practice the essence of God's Own Country through Responsible Tourism. RT is a tool for the development of the destination and conservation of nature and it contribute to the quality of life. This paper discusses the responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom and tries to identify the relationship between the responsible tourism dimensions and Sustainable development.

Key words: Responsible Tourism, Sustainable Development, Quality of life

1. INTRODUCTION

Kumarakom is one of the major tourist places in India, which is located on the banks of the Vembanad Lake in South Kerala near the city of Kottayam. The place is beautiful for its back water, houseboats, Mangroves, intrinsic inland water canals, paddy fields and a bird sanctuary. All of which constitute a flimsy backwaters ecosystem in Kumarakom and it attracts both foreign and domestic tourists from far and wide. In 2008, Government of Kerala inaugurated Responsible Tourism Project in Kumarakom. The main objective of the project is to eradicate the poverty and ensure socio, economic and environmental development of the locality by giving participation to the villagers in various activities of the Responsible Tourism. Women empowerment, regional development, infrastructure development are the major focal point of responsible tourism. In Kumarakom responsible tourism activities are coordinated with the help of Kudumbasree, Harithasree, homestead farmers, farmers group, and various cultural and environmental groups.

The local bodies and village self - help groups are taken initiatives for the growth of responsible tourism activities in Kumarakom. The responsible tourism initiative has led to the cultivation of

local product, the formation of art and culture groups by women and children for showcasing traditional art forms, developed tour packages to know the village life and experiences, and people engaged in retail activities. The responsible tourism initiative has significantly contributed to women's empowerment too. The programmes provide not only the livelihood for the locals but also it ensures the following .

- To get an opportunity for the villagers to interact with tourists
- Villagers are getting a platform for showcasing their talents
- It provides an opportunities for disadvantage groups
- Employment opportunities for the villagers
- To preserve the culture and tradition
- To increase the self-confidence and self-sufficiency of the local people.
- Conservation of nature
- To increase the agricultural activities and retrieval of wasteland

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

N. Sariskumarand T. Bhavan (2018) indicated that responsible tourism development delivered positive effects in local communities. These included economic benefits such as employment, use of local services and products, cultural enhancement, small businesses and also providing benefits to local education, health, and transport and conservation initiatives. He pointed out that residents believe that responsible tourism is creating positive impacts on their lifestyle.

Paul V Mathew and Sreejesh S (2017) found that theresponsible tourism plays a pivotal role in the formulation of perceived destination sustainability, which in turn impacts the perceived quality of life of the residents of the local community. Thus, the study findings offer implications for the successful management of tourism businesses as well as the community sustainability and the well-being of the local community.

Angelique Chettiparamb and DrJithendran Kokkranikal (2012) identified that local embeddedness, local leadership, coercion and information flow are generic non-prescriptive essential principles for the sustained implementation of responsible tourism initiatives. The success of responsible tourism may also be mediated by place specific features, the relative maturity of the tourism industry in the location, the type of tourism and the nature of the place.

Mohd Hafiz Hanafiah and Inoormaziah Azman(2015) explained that Responsible tourism practice (RTP) has become the most prevalent concept for modern tourism development. Responsible Tourism activities promote the protection and conservation of the natural environment, local cultures and contribute towards a better quality of life of the local people. They noticed that economic, social and environmental development as the key contributing factors that directly influence their quality of life.

N.K.Nikhil and Santha S (2015) revealed that natural resources, skilled manpower, supportive entrepreneurial community, strong local-self-governments, civil society organizations, multitude of micro enterprises, streams of professionals and academicians, responsible media and responsive tourism industry, provide the state an ideal setting to implement and practice 'Responsible Tourism. Responsible Tourism initiatives at Kumarakom came up with outstanding results and emerged as the model destination in the implementation of responsible tourism.

Santhimol M.C (2015) Responsible tourism generates direct benefits to local people by donating to the development of local economies and delivers better living condition for the host communities. The responsible tourism principle develops a win-win situation and it also makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural diversity. It provides more rewarding holiday experiences for guests, enables local communities to enjoy a better quality of life and conserve the natural environment.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

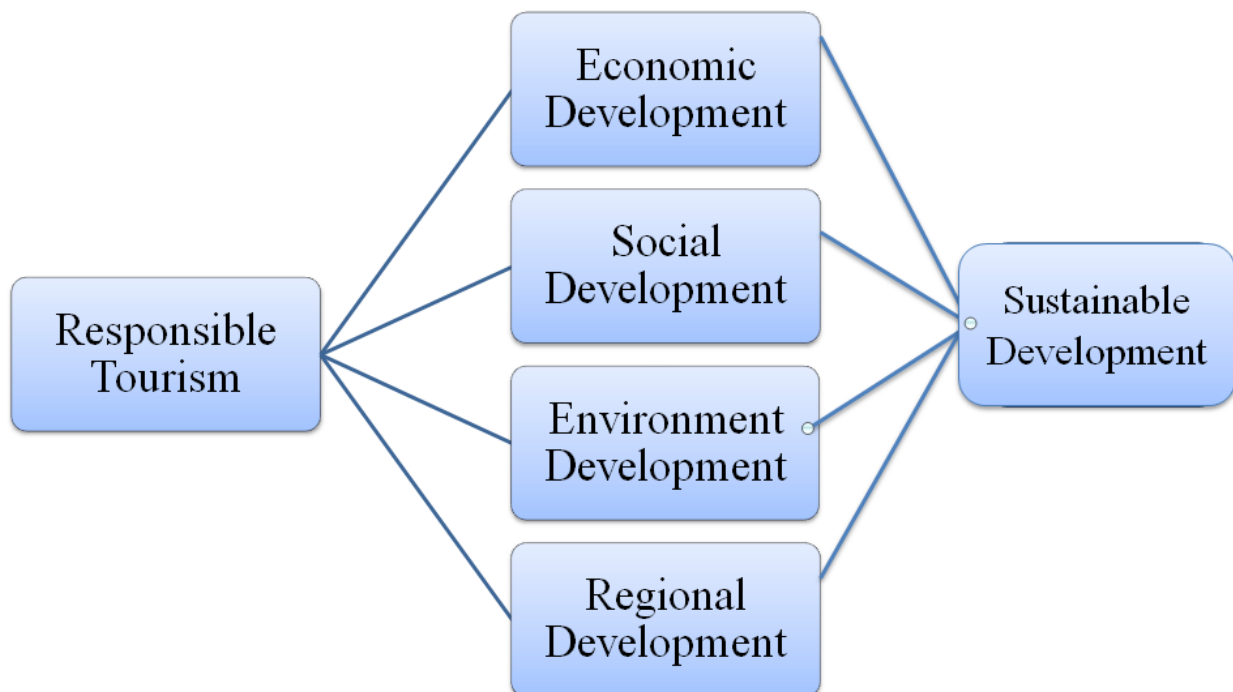


Figure 1

The above figure shows that responsible tourism initiatives are creating four dimensions like economic development, social development, environment development and regional development for the tourist destination which automatically generating sustainable development of the tourist place.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The important objectives of the study as follows;

1. To identify the impact of responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom
2. To identify the relationship between responsible tourism and its various dimensions on sustainable development.
3. To identify the role of responsible tourism for the enhancement of quality of life of the local community.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was descriptive in nature based on both primary and secondary data. In this study, the researcher tries to identify the impact of responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom on sustainable development of the region and quality of life of the local community. The research design used for this study is deductive research and it identifies the impact of independent variable on dependent variable. Here the responsible tourism is the independent variable and various factors of sustainable development are the dependent variable.

In this research the researcher considers the community of Kumarakom Panchayat for collecting the data. The primary data were collected from households, Kudumbasree members, small entrepreneurs, cultural and environmental groups through structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique were used to select the respondents and at the end of the study, 70 usable responses were received. The secondary data were retrieved from research reports, books, periodicals and Internet.

5. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following are the important hypotheses of the study.

H1: Responsible Tourism is positively related to the economic development of the destination

H2: Responsible Tourism is positively related to the social development of the destination

H3: Responsible Tourism is positively related to the environmental development of the destination

H4: Responsible Tourism is positively related to the regional development of the destination

6. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Mean and Standard deviation of Responsible Tourism dimensions for Sustainable Development

Table 1 Overall values for Sustainable Development

Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation
Economic Development	4.0714	.83962
Social Development	4.1286	.81510
Environmental Development	3.8714	.93128
Regional Development	4.0857	.89674
Sustainable Development	4.03	0.86

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that Responsible Tourism practices for Sustainable Development including four dimensions such as Economic Development, Social Development, Environmental Development and Regional Development. These dimensions have the mean value of 4.07, 4.12, 3.87 and 4.08 respectively. The overall mean value of Sustainable Development is 4.03 with a standard deviation of 0.86. It shows that Responsible Tourism dimensions have higher contribution for the Sustainable development of the destination Kumarakom.

6.2 CORRELATION

Table 2 Correlation between Responsible Tourism and Economic Development

		Responsible Tourism	Economic Development
Responsible Tourism	Pearson Correlation	1	.833**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Economic Development	Pearson Correlation	.833**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source : Primary data

The significant is at 0.00 level ($0.000 < 0.01$) and coefficient of correlation (Pearson correlation, r) is 0.833, it is found as a Strong positive correlation because the “r” is greater than 0.05. It indicates that the correlation was significant and relationship is linearly correlated. Therefore, reject H0 and accept H1. So Responsible Tourism is positively related to the economic development of the destination

Table 3 Correlation between Responsible Tourism and Social development of the destination

		Responsible Tourism	Social Development
Responsible Tourism	Pearson Correlation	1	.642**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Social Development	Pearson Correlation	.642**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

There is positive correlation co-efficient between responsible tourism and Social development of the destination. Thus, the above correlation co-efficient is statistically significant (as values are above 0.05) and proves that the hypothesis is positively correlated. Therefore, reject H0 and accept H1. So Responsible Tourism is positively related to the social development of the destination.

Table 4 Correlation between Responsible Tourism and Environment development of the destination

		Correlations	
		Responsible Tourism	Environment Development
Responsible Tourism	Pearson Correlation	1	.558**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Environmental Development	Pearson Correlation	.558**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The significant is at 0.00 level ($0.000 < 0.01$) and coefficient of correlation (Pearson correlation, r) is 0.558, it is found as a strong positive correlation because the “ r ” is greater than 0.05. It indicates that the correlation was significant and relationship is linearly correlated. Therefore, reject H0 and accept H1. So Responsible Tourism is positively related to the environment development of the destination.

Table 5 Correlation between Responsible Tourism and Regional development of the destination

		Correlations	
		Responsible Tourism	Regional Development
Responsible Tourism	Pearson Correlation	1	.528**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	70	70
Regional Development	Pearson Correlation	.528**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	70	70

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

The significant is at 0.00 level ($0.000 < 0.01$) and coefficient of correlation (Pearson correlation, r) is 0.528, it is found as a strong positive correlation because the “ r ” is greater than 0.05. It indicates that the correlation was significant and relationship is linearly correlated. Therefore, reject H_0 and accept H_1 . So Responsible Tourism is positively related to the regional development of the destination.

7. FINDINGS

- 78.6% of the respondents were female.
- Study found that 88% of the local residents' have positive opinion about responsible tourism activities in Kumarakom.
- 80% of the respondents viewed that responsible tourism practices increase the employment opportunities in the destination.
- 92 % of the respondents opined that responsible tourism initiatives build a sustainable growth of the destination.
- The perceptions of 82 % of the respondents revealed that the various responsible tourism initiatives of the destination directly influence their quality of life.
- 78 % of the respondents revealed that majority of the tourists are satisfied with the various responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom.
- Responsible Tourism practices for Sustainable Development including four dimensions such as economic development, social development, environment development and regional development. The study found that responsible tourism dimensions have contributed higher for the Sustainable development of the destination Kumarakom.

8. CONCLUSION

Tourism development delivered positive interferences in local communities. The support from the local people and local self-government is the major success factor behind the Responsible Tourism initiatives in Kumarakom. The major dimensions of responsible tourism which provides sustainable development are economic, social, environment and regional development of the destination. The study found that sustainable development of the region includes poverty eradication, quality of life and regional development of the destination in Kumarakom.

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