

**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM INITIATIVE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUMARAKAM
PANCHAYATH IN KERALA**

**Minor Research Project Report Submitted to the University Grants Commission as per
the Order No MRP(H)-1047/13-14/KLCA057/UGC-SWRO**

By

Ms. Joobi. V.P

Assistant Professor

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

MP MM S N TRUSTS COLLEGE, SHORANUR

SEPTEMBER 2015

**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM INITIATIVE FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KUMARAKAM
PANCHAYATH IN KERALA**

Introduction

Responsible tourism(RT) is an innovative and far reaching concept of Kerala tourism literature. This initiative was first implemented at four destinations viz, Kovalam, Kumarakam, Thekkady and Wayanad. Among these destinations Kumarakam evolved as the successful model for responsible tourism. Responsible tourism at Kumarakam, a tourist destination in Kottayam, starts on Dec 2007, but it is officially inaugurated on March, 2008. The concept of RT is very simple and also very crucial in the development aspects as it shows the responsibility towards the society and local people in the areas where the tourism activities are conducted. Kerala tourism adopted the strategy of responsible tourism to ensure more participation from the local community and get benefited from it. The key behind RT is to work hand in hand with local community to ensure development happens at the right pace and does not exploit those who live there. Hence the present study focusses on the local community participation and their development in responsible tourism. in Kumarakam panchayath in Kerala.

Statement of The Problem

Responsible tourism is an innovative and far reaching concept in Kerala tourism literature. It is becoming a global trend. Operators, destinations and industry organizations in many countries are already practicing responsible tourism. RT is not a product but an approach which take place in communities, natural and cultural heritage sites and environments where people live and work. It is also challenged to demonstrate its positive impacts on livelihood, social and economic development and conservation. Responsible tourism ensures it does not cause any problem to local communities. In Kumarakam local community make up the majority of the tourism workforce and also perform a large number of unpaid and paid work in family tourism business. So, the present study focusses on local community participation in Responsible tourism and finding out how the guidelines of Rt have been successfully implemented in the development of local community in socially and economically.

Objectives of The Study

- ❖ To understand the role of local community in Responsible tourism
- ❖ To study the socio- economic impacts on local community through Responsible tourism and
- ❖ To make suitable suggestions and recommendations.

Methodology of The Study

A descriptive study on participation of local community in responsible tourism in Kumarakam panchayath is conducted. The methodology consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from selected drawn sample of local beneficiaries of responsible tourism. For this field survey with structured questionnaire were used. Secondary data comes from published sources like tourism journals, govt. publications, websites etc.

For the purpose of designing samples the various beneficiaries like Farmers, Transporters, Artists, Local Businesses, Guides& Workers, Women Empowerment like Kudumbasree, Craftsman, Fisherfolk, Unskilled Labour force etc. are taken into account. The sampling design proposed is convenience sampling. A representative sample of 150 selected beneficiaries form sample size. The sampling area for the study is limited to Kumarakam panchayath in Kottayam district of Kerala. Simple mathematical tools and statistical tools such as percentage analysis, t test, ANOVA, mean and standard deviation etc will be applied for the study. The data were analysed with the help of SPSS software. The variables used for the study are Economic variables and Social Variables. Economic variables include Employment opportunities, Household income, Educational level, Income generating projects and Entrepreneurial training and Social variables consists of General quality of life, Decision making power, Social status, Social awareness, Quality of goods & services in general and Accessibility.

Limitations of The Study

- ❖ The geographical area is limited to Kumarakam Panchayath only.
- ❖ The interpretation is based on the responses of the respondents. Therefore, the research is limited by the capability, genuineness and willingness of the respondents.
- ❖ The sampling method adopted and sample size selected also can be limited factors.

Summary of Findings of the Study

- Responsible tourism helps to enhance the wellbeing of local community by way of providing an opportunity to procurement and supply of local produces and by extending local services to various hotels and resorts, shops, restaurants within and outside the locality.
- Majority (82%) of the respondent take part in responsible tourism venture directly and some are depending on the various agencies like RT group, Kudumbasree, Samrudhi group and Cooperative society.
- The study shows that local community is getting enough market opportunity to market and sell their local produces and services with no geographical limitations.
- Local community plays a vital role in the responsible tourism by contributing their expertise and proficiency in various aspects. Majority (52.7%) are involved in marketing and selling their local produces and services where as some are engaged in major areas of services like transport assistance (34.7%) and ground support (19.3%), excursions and attractions (33.3%), catering services, laundry services, local food production, gardening and landscaping, house boat services, tour operations, cultural, social and sports events and guide services.
- It is recognized that local community are not financially supported to invest in tourism development
- Responsible tourism has made a significant economic and social impact on local community in four destinations.
- The study shows that responsible tourism in the destination has made a significant impact on the lives of local community as the various indicators of the live status of local community shows high mean score.

Major Suggestions

- Most of the community are facing shortage of finance to invest in tourism. So, it is better to take initiative by the govt authority to provide financial assistance to the needy ones in the form of favourable schemes, loans and advances, small business projects to support local participation in tourism.

- Even though direct participation is encouraged, it is better to have a continuous and proper monitoring system from the side of authority, to ensure regular and steady supply that will help them to maintain a good relationship with hotels and resorts.
- The govt should take an initiative to devise suitable programmes to promote local production particularly focusing on agricultural and traditional industries like exhibitions, trade fair, cultural and sports events and also it is important to have a capacity building programme at state as well as local level to take pro-active role in production and marketing local products to tourism industry.
- It is necessary to have a proper attention from the responsible authority in the form of awareness campaign, seminars, workshops as well as conservative programme to educate both tourist and host on the positive as well as negative impacts of tourism in the destination.

Conclusion

The Responsible Tourism is a pioneering concept in Kerala Tourism. It provides many worthwhile employment opportunities to local people in the destinations. Local community are the focal point for the supply of local produces, catering, homestays, transport, facilities and services for tourism development. The study shows that the local community has a significant role in Responsible Tourism and that helped to enhance the life status of the people. Responsible Tourism has made a significant socio- economic impact on the lives of local community by way providing numerous opportunities. The remarkable feature of Responsible tourism is it provides better living conditions to the local community, extra income generation, emergence of new entrepreneurs and micro enterprises. After all it has established new linkages and increased seasonable trade.