

Role of Responsible Tourism in Economic Development: A Systematic Review of Literature

MS. DIVYA JOSEPH

Assistant Professor in Commerce
K.E College Mannanam
Kerala.

divyaj.kec@gmail.com

&

DR.MATHEW JACOB

Associate Professor of Commerce
St.Peter's College, Kolenchery, Kerala &
Research Guide in CMS College, Kottayam

Abstract

Tourism is a major engine of economic development and an important source of employment and foreign exchange earnings in many countries, including India. But the negative effects of tourism activities resulted in the introduction of sustainable tourism practices. Responsible tourism, aimed at sustainable tourism development, has been practiced in the state of Kerala since 2008. This paper examines the implementation of responsible tourism in Kerala state and also reviews the role of responsible tourism in economic development.

Keywords: *Responsible tourism, Triple Bottom Line, Economic development.*

Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing service industries (Creaco&Querini, 2003; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019) globally. It represents one of the main industries in terms of job creation and economic development. (Niñerola, Sánchez-Rebull, & Hernández-Lara, 2019). Tourism enhances economic growth by job creation, source of foreign exchange earnings, and development of regions with potential for tourism (Tiwari &Anjum, 2016).

According to World Travel and Tourism Council (2019), the contribution of tourism and travel in world GDP is estimated as 10.40 percent. India's travel and tourism sector ranks 7th in the

world in terms of its total contribution to the country's GDP. Tourism contributes to 9.2 percent of India's GDP and generates 8.1 percent of total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2019). It accounts for the majority of South Asia's Travel and Tourism GDP, and remains the sub-region's most competitive Travel and Tourism economy. However, the negative effects of tourism activities like pollution, impact of overtourism etc. on the environment and destination communities brings in the need for sustainable tourism practices.

Sustainable tourism is the concept of visiting somewhere as a tourist and trying to make a positive impact on the environment, society, and economy. According to the World Tourism Organization (2005), sustainable tourism is "tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities". Responsible Tourism (RT) has been emerged as one of the forms of sustainable tourism management model which guarantees Triple Bottom Line (TBL) responsibilities i.e., economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. This paper provides a theoretical framework of responsible tourism and its implementation in the state of Kerala and also investigates the role of responsible tourism in economic development through a systematic review of available literature.

Responsible Tourism: The concept

Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed in a more responsible way. Responsible tourism puts more emphasis on the responsibility of tourism industry to minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism activities. Economic responsibility, social responsibility and environmental responsibilities are the triple bottom line responsibilities ensured through responsible tourism initiatives. Creating 'better places for people to visit and to live in', is the theme behind the concept of responsible tourism.

The definition for responsible tourism used by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) considers responsible tourism as "tourism that promotes responsibility to the environment through its sustainable use, responsibility to involve local communities in the tourism industry; responsibility for the safety and security of visitors and responsible government, employees, employers, unions and local communities".

Cape Town Declaration 2002 on Responsible Tourism defines Responsible Tourism as tourism which:

- a) minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- b) generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- c) involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- d) makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
- e) provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- f) provides access for physically challenged people;
- g) and is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence

Responsible Tourism: The sustainable way

Sustainability in tourism can be enhanced through the practice of responsible tourism. Responsible Tourism is not explained as a form of tourism but it's a practice to ensure sustainability. Reducing negative impact on the economy society and environment and to acquire maximum benefits out of tourism initiatives at the same time is aimed through this model. Focusing on the triple bottom line responsibilities responsible tourism highlights the need of a practicing model towards sustainability. Minimising the negative impact at destinations could generate more benefits to the local community, business organization, tour operators, tourists and to all stakeholders of tourism at destinations.

Responsible Tourism: The Kerala Model

In the state of Kerala, the Government has adopted Responsible Tourism as its Tourism policy. Kerala has started RT projects in 2008 with the object of providing for guaranteeing the TBL responsibilities to boost the Tourism industry as a whole. The Government also established a Responsible Tourism Mission Centre. Kerala has declared four tourism spots, 'Kumarakom', 'Wayanad', 'Idukki' and 'Kovalam' as the RT destinations at its pilot phase in the year 2008. Among these, Kumarakom has won fame for its RT initiatives at the international level. Kerala

is now a leading responsible tourism destination in the World (International Centre for Responsible Tourism, 2019).

People's Participation for Participatory Planning and Empowerment through Responsible Tourism (PEPPER) project was launched in November 2017. The project aimed to provide quality of experience to the traveler through innovative products, destination development, quality of life of local people and local economic development.

The socio-cultural and environmental responsibilities cannot be ensured without promising the economic responsibility of a tourism destination. Ensuring triple bottom line responsibility has benefited the host community through the community participation and linkages ensured by RT. 'Kudumbashree' units and 'Samrudhi' groups involve in decision making and it facilitated to reduce leakages of benefits from responsible tourism.

History of RT in Kerala

The history of Responsible Tourism in Kerala can be divided into three phases as follows.

1) First Phase (2008 – 2010)

The first phase of Responsible Tourism in Kerala is from 2008 to 2010. Four destinations were identified for implementing RT. 'Kovalam' (Trivandrum District), 'Kumarakom' (Kottayam District), 'Wayanad' (Wayanad District) and 'Thekkady' (Idukki District) were the destinations. The following activities summaries the first phase of RT;

- a) Workshops were organized for all stakeholders in the destinations with regard to RT and its implementation.
- b) RT consultants were appointed in 'kudumbashree' at all the four RT destinations and a State Level Responsible Tourism Committee (SLRTC) was formed.
- c) Great India Tourism Planners and Consultants (GITPAC) was assigned to provide technical aid.
- d) Supply of local products to hotels was started in Kumarakom with identified 11 products at the initial stage.
- e) 'Vythiri' cluster from 'Wayanad' district only was taken for RT implementation at the first stage.
- f) Destination Level Responsible Tourism Committee (DLRTC) was formed.

During the first phase itself, RT has gained wide acceptance in Kerala.

2) Second Phase (2011- 2017)

The second phase was from 2011 to 2017. Four destinations selected at the pilot phase continued their RT initiatives and three more RT destinations were identified in the second phase namely 'Kumbalangi' in Ernakulam district, 'Ambalavayal' in Wayanad district and 'Bekal' in Kasaragod district. The major initiatives in this phase are summarized as follows;

- a) Implementation of RT Cells at destinations
- b) The project "God's Own Country, People's Own Tourism" with the support of local self-governments was initiated.
- c) Technical and project support by KITTS (Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies).
- d) Starting of RT mission at state level.

3) Third Phase (2017 till date)

The third phase of RT in Kerala begins from the launch of RT Mission on 20th October 2017. The development of tourism in the state and the upliftment of local communities, development of villages, and eradication of poverty in the state and women empowerment are the declared aims of RT Mission. By implementing RT Mission Department of Tourism (DoT) visions to provide direct employment to more than one lakh people by means of giving training and also by making them the active partners in RT initiatives.

As of now more than 50 destinations were selected as RT destinations and it covers all the districts of the state.

Objectives of RT Mission

The following are the listed objectives of RT Mission of Kerala:

- 1) To Initiate community level tourism activities
- 2) To establish tourism linkage to community level activities
- 3) To encourage tourism trade and other stakeholders to practice RT principles
- 4) To facilitate RT Classification of tourism service providers
- 5) To encourage tourism units and tourists to take up socially relevant activities
- 6) To encourage tourism units and tourists to practice environment-friendly practices
- 7) To build capacity of community at various levels to get benefits from tourism
- 8) To document field level activities, studies, researches etc.

- 9) To create good industry- community relations in tourism sector

The objectives also includes; promotion of local employment and local procurement, promotion of green principles in construction and architecture, green protocols in waste management, organic farming etc. in tourism destinations, to facilitate protection and augmentation of farming through tourism, to facilitate the empowerment of women and marginalised communities through tourism, to develop local entrepreneurships in tourism, to protect and promote art and culture through tourism, to facilitate training, research, product development and sustainable projects in the tourism sector, to explore NGO partnership for community-related aspects in the tourism sector, to organise Responsible Tourism Clubs at Colleges & Schools and to promote innovation in the economic, social and environmental aspects of tourism to enhance benefits for local community.

As of now RT Mission have 6,161 registered units, 1,280 people trained during the initial phases from 2008-2017 and 2,269 beneficiaries in 2018 alone which shows the acceptance of RT as a development tool. RT mission has created 40 experiential tour packages all across Kerala and about 450 families linked directly with these experiential packages alone. In the economic point of view RT mission has generated Rs. 12 crores from its RT initiatives for the local community within a period of 10 years since its implementation. RT assures women empowerment and is clear from records that out of the 6,161 units under the mission, 3,456 are headed by women (keralatourism.org).

Responsible Tourism and Economic Development: Review of literature

Large number of earlier researches on tourism studied the relationship between tourism and economic growth. Important of such studies are reviewed first and then studies on responsible tourism.

a. Economic impact of Tourism

Tourism is as a global business which provides for a major portion of world production, trade, employment and investing resulting in inflow of foreign exchange and FDI (Adak & Pradyut Guha, 2014). Generation of foreign currencies and consequent generation of new jobs were considered as the most significant effects of development in an economy through

tourism (Jimenez &Ortuno, 2006). It was examined the international tourists spending has a positive impact on the economic growth of African countries. (Fayissa, Nsiah, &Tadasse, 2007) Development of tourism directed to both household and government incomes as a result of multiplier effect and positively contributed to the economic growth of the country. (Akan, Arslan, &Isik, 2007).

Tourism sector can bring economic development by reducing unemployment and poverty and could bring better position in terms of World Happiness Index which ultimately leads to global peace (Mishra &Verma, 2017).

Income from tourism generated by one sector is diverted to multiple sectors. The economic impact of tourism in general can be known through multiplier effect in income, employment and BOP levels. It is the sum of direct, indirect and induced impacts divided by the direct impacts (Bunghez, 2016). If backward and forward integration of tourism sector with agriculture, manufacturing, transport, hospitality, health and education is made possible, it could stimulate economy further (Gite&Manav, 2014).

b. Responsible Tourism and Economic development

A Proper balancing of economic social and environmental objectives is ensured through Responsible Tourism Management. (Frey & George, 2010). Responsible tourism initiatives in Malaysia are economically feasible. (Nair & Hussain, 2013). Ecological tourism has a socio economic impact as a form of responsible tourism. Ensuring socio economic benefits to the resident population was pointed out as a means for ensuring sustainability (Andrei, Chiritescu, &Gogonea, 2013). Responsible Tourism was expressed as the making up of a balance between three diverse areas of economy, society and environment (Debicka, 2014). Responsible tourism initiatives by business firms were motivated mainly by the economic responsibility which provides for achieving more profit, increased sales and better reputation. Discretionary spending could bring a shared value among business firms and all stakeholders (Camilleri, 2015).

Economic impact of responsible tourism can be measured using the variables like benefit outweigh costs, employment opportunities, local businesses, standard of living and resident welfare (Hanafiah, Azman, Jamaluddin, &Aminuddin, 2016). Organisation benefit is the key

push motive while response demand and market trends are the main pull motives for practicing Responsible tourism. Lack of awareness and limited participation of stakeholders in responsible tourism were listed as the challenges for implementing responsible tourism practices (Chan & Tay 2016). Education is the key criterion for successful practicing of Responsible tourism. (State & Bulin, 2016). To measure the economic development an index of employed people and a poverty index to be used as the variables. Regional economic development is a predictor of growth in Gross domestic product that is, economic growth (Meyer, Bruyn & Meyer, 2017). Socio-demographic characteristics of domestic tourists positively relate and affect their attitude towards responsible tourism management (Amin, 2017).

Responsible Tourism is a provider of sustainability by achieving private sector public sector and voluntary sectors objectives (George, 2017). Added value of tourism sector, number of tourists and tourism spending affects economic growth. Number of tourists is directly related to the Government tourism spending, economic growth and tourism added value (Suhel & Bashir, 2018). Equalizing financial conditions for new projects of different regions and also equitable distribution of generated tourism resources could bring economic growth in the region (Kryukova, Kaurova, Khetagurova, & Makeeva, 2018).

Application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was used by Musavengane (2019), to identify motivators that encourage small hotels to participate in RT and it include economic, marketing, social, social networking and education motivators.

Mehrotra (2015) established in his study that community based tourism can directly influence the poor and their livelihood. Shobhana Devi (2015) validated in the study that the tourist's preference to be a responsible tourist has a positive significant impact on destination sustainability. Rajamanicam, Mohanty, & Chandran (2018) states that host community is benefiting out of responsible tourism economically to a large extend.

Shyamala, Vidhu, Venugopal, & Deepthi (2014) opined that the economic participation of local people to be ensured as owners of tourism, ensure linkage to local economy through supply chain tourism business and to provide for community level employment opportunities

as part of sustainable local social and economic development at the responsible tourism centers.

Responsible tourism gives focus on the responsible role of role players in the responsible tourism destinations which guarantee a sustainable tourism development (Nissar&Mullappallykayamkulath, 2014). Existing Responsible Tourism model of Kumarakom is successful in sense that it assured the local people a livelihood through tourism. Capacity building and empowering the communities are the main strengths of involving communities in tourism ensuring their engagement in their own development process (Raj, 2015).

It is evident from the study of Nikhil &Santha (2015), that ecological and socio economic factors before and after the implementation of Responsible Tourism at Kumarakomis different. Increase in standard of living and progress in the business were identified as the main economic gains from responsible tourism. Pious & Baby (2016) highlighted the involvement of self-help groups in RT and proved that it has provided for women participation and empowerment. Employment opportunities, purchasing of local produces, skill development and local enterprise support are identified as the indicators of economic responsibility of responsible tourism (Mathew &Sreejesh, 2017).

Participation of Self-help groups and participation of local communities has resulted in the development of Kumarakom in an “unscientific manner” (Gulf News, 14 October 2017). Mathew & Kumar (2014) states that the economic linkage of RTwith LSG, Samrudhi Groups of Kudumbashree, and industries has provided for local economic empowerment especially to the women community. Jacob &Satheesh (2017) validated in their research that the local community participation, perception and role played by them in responsible tourism in Kumarakom has a positive economic impact on the local community. Mathew &Kuriakose (2017) states that with Government as the facilitator, industry playing a leading role and by placing community at its centre could achieve a responsible management at tourism destination. Babu (2018) highlighted in their study that ensuring maximum benefits of tourism to local community for ensuring sustainability of tourism development is what RT does. Vinod (2018) observed local community participation is the key for sustainable tourism development. Providing better job opportunities, sharing of economic benefits and safe guarding trust and

credibility of community are some means to ensure a better participation of local community in responsible tourism.

Kerala has gained a lot from RT in the short run and progressed in the economic development of villagers. Sustainable growth and poverty alleviation can be attained through growth of Tourism (Business Line, 28 June 2013).

Conclusion

Tourism sector acts as a powerful instrument for economic development. India has evidenced sustainable and inclusive economic development due to the wide expansion of tourism sector. In Kerala, God's own country, Responsible tourism was introduced to ensure sustainability and economic development. This paper provided a descriptive survey of the literature analysing the relationship between responsible tourism and economic development. Generally, the review of literature shows that tourism contributes to economic development, community development and observance of triple bottom line responsibilities.

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