



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM – A PATH WAY TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT Responsible Tourism aims at sustainable future by maximising economic, social and environmental benefits and minimising costs to destinations. It is the best way to maximise the positive impacts of tourism and minimise the negative ones. Responsible Tourism initiative in Kerala helps to enhance a positive and meaningful involvement of the local community in the tourism destinations, through which it has brought about local economic empowerment, especially to women. Responsible Tourism act as a path way for the rural women to enjoy their rights to control and benefits from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage the risk and improve their economic status and well-being. This paper highlights the major role of women in Responsible Tourism and make an earnest attempt to understand how the empowerment is achieved by women through Responsible Tourism. The study focuses on four Responsible Tourism destinations in Kerala, viz., Kovalam, Kumarakam, Thekkadi and Wayanad. The findings are based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected from a sample size of 150 women beneficiaries. The study has revealed that Responsible Tourism has made a positive influence in the economic and social upliftment of the women community in Kerala.

KEYWORDS : Responsible Tourism, Women Empowerment

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Its ever-increasing demand and provisions for relaxation and peaceful environment makes it one of the most important industries. Tourism, as such, has the capacity to transform the entire society and brings foreign wealth through easiest way. It is one of many processes or factors that contributes to social and cultural change in host communities. As the fastest growing industry, tourism has shown potential in not only contributing to but also championing women empowerment initiatives. UNWTO (2008) for example, reveals that women make 60-70% of the total tourism workforce. And elsewhere (Ong, 2009 clearly reveals how tourism, with the embedded element of social entrepreneurship, can perfectly work as the input to Unlock doors for women. From this phenomenon, it is therefore clear that tourism has created chances and opportunities for women empowerment. According to Goldner & Ritchie (2009) tourism is one of the ways through which women can be made to fit the economic and social sphere. With the tourism boom, many job opportunities for women and lead them to the mobility and entrepreneurship, Tourism also create jobs and income for women's economic independence and to help improve their economic and social condition. Thus, to achieve sustainable development the women power must exploit in tourism activities and they have an active role like men. (khajeh Shakuie et al., 2013: 97).

Responsible Tourism is the best way to maximise the positive impacts of tourism and to minimise the negative ones. It is an approach of management of tourism and it aim at maximising economic, social and environmental benefits and minimising costs to destinations. Responsible Tourism initiative in Kerala helps to make the industry socially, environmentally and economically responsible to the people i.e., the local community and local environment. It helps to enhance a positive and meaningful involvement of the local community in the tourism industry of the destination, through which it has brought about local empowerment, especially to women. In most regions of the world, women make up the majority of the tourism workforce and also performs a large amount of unpaid or paid work in family tourism businesses. It is to be appreciated that women understood the opportunity for money making through responsible tourism.

Responsible Tourism

The concept of Responsible Tourism was originated in the work of Jost Krippendorff in the 1980s and its importance is recognised in South Africa. It was endorsed by the White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism in South Africa, which was followed by the publication of National Responsible Tourism Guidelines for South Africa and the Cape Town declaration of Responsible Tourism in destinations. The Cape Town declaration defines responsible tourism as follows:

- “minimises negative environmental, social and cultural impacts;
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances

the wellbeing of host communities, by improving working conditions and access to the industry;

- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage and to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural and environmental issues;
- provides access for physically challenged people; and
- is culturally sensitive and engenders respect between tourists and hosts.”

Responsible Tourism in Kerala

Kerala, South western state of India, has emerged as one of prime tourist destinations on the national and international map for and is considered the tourism trendsetter in the country. Kerala tourism took the pioneering effort to bring responsible tourism in India. This initiative was first implemented in four destinations of Kerala namely Kovalam, Kumarakam, Thekkady and Wayanad. Responsible tourism in Kerala focus mainly on three areas of responsibility; - Economic, Social and Environmental responsibility. The Responsible Tourism projects in Kerala helps the natives reap the benefits of the new industry by offering their products and services to visitors. It also provides opportunities for interaction with tourist giving the natives exposure to new ideas and cultures, and also gives them a platform for showcasing their talents. Altogether it makes the natives an integral part of the growing tourism industry in the village and promote pride in their land and culture. Responsible tourism in Kerala is instrumental in inspiring women to come to the forefront and participate in the development activities of the region. It has given opportunities to women to undergo training and to become entrepreneurs. Women belonging to Kudumbasree units, a state level poverty eradication programme, have undergone training in farming and the products were supplied to the shops, hotels and resorts through Samrudhi group, a group operated by Kudumbasree members having the role of procurement and supply of local produces.

Women Empowerment and Responsible Tourism

Empowerment is defined as a critical aspect of gender equality and implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Women's empowerment is vital to sustainable development and the realization of human right for all. Tourism is a tool to empower women in various ways. Tourism could assist women to increase their power and control over the natural resources; economic empowerment; educational empowerment and political empowerment (Ateljevic et al., 2008).

Empowerment means, “betterment or improvement otherwise, tremendous changes in position than the previous position. Women empowerment is identified with women's ability to influence their lives and also other decisions in the society, which may be expected to result in the betterment of the socio- economic conditions of the society”. The concept of women empowerment in this study refers is an active multi-dimensional process which enables women to realise their economic and social identity and powers in tourism. It represents the ability of women to handle responsibilities and to envision a better future by overcoming obstacles that confront them. Empowerment can be measured by using selective indicators such as active participation in the responsible tourism activities. While considering whether or not a community is economically empowered through responsible tourism venture, it is necessary to consider opportunities which have arisen in terms of employment and business opportunities. Social empowerment refers to a situation in which a community's sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed and strengthened by an activity such as responsible tourism.

Review of literature

1. Praveen and Svkam (2013) in a study as the empowerment of women through tourism in the state of Sikkim in India have concluded that, In this state, about 34 percent of women are involved in the tourism economy which is less than the state's overall labor force, The researchers believe that the first step to empowerment of women through tourism should be supported by government, banks, NGO's and private groups.
2. Khajeh shokouhi and colleagues (2013) in their study as the role of tourism in rural women's empowerment concluded that Rural tourism on the economic empowerment is more effective than the of women empowerment culture. Changing consumption patterns and changes in rural women's increased awareness of the impacts of tourism.
3. Abidan Aisario Mrema made a study the role of tourism on women empowerment and was carried out in Monduli District, Arusha-Tanzania which aimed at provide an overview of the potential of tourism in contributing to women's empowerment, tensions and complexities in the environment facing women and also offered tentative recommendations for better benefits for women. The study revealed that the relationship between tourism and development has been carefully explored in the discipline of tourism studies and also in the community development environment.

Statement of the problem

Women population contributes around 50% of the world population. A large number of women around the world are unemployed. The world economy suffers a lot because of the unequal opportunity for women at workplace. Previously, they are not allowed to treat like men and hence their talents were wasted. But now the situation drastically changed and women are encouraged to show their talents which not only benefit herself but to the society at large. Women empowerment helps women to stand their own legs, become independent and also help to earn for their family. It also helped a lot to reduce domestic violence, corruption and poverty. Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors are essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. Responsible tourism initiative in Kerala provides many worthwhile opportunities for women and there by made them empowered. It acts as a path way for the rural women to enjoy their rights to control and benefit from resources, assets, income and their own time, as well as the ability to manage risk and improve their economic status and wellbeing. Hence, in this context the study focusses on the ways in which women getting involved in Responsible Tourism activities and how extend they are empowered through these initiatives.

Objectives

1. To identify the role of women in Responsible Tourism
2. To study how far the empowerment is achieved by women through responsible tourism.

Hypotheses

- H₁: Responsible Tourism has a significant role in Women empowerment
- H₂: Responsible Tourism creates positive socio- economic development in living status of women.

Research Methodology

A descriptive study is made on the basis of both primary and secondary data. Primary data has come from selected sample of women beneficiaries involved responsible tourism. Secondary data has come from the published sources and Kerala tourism websites. For the purpose designing samples 150 women beneficiaries of responsible tourism from four RT destinations were taken into account on random basis. For collecting data, structured questionnaire was used. The study was confined to four RT destinations namely Kovalam, Kumarakam, Thekkadi and Wayanad.

The statistical tools like mean, standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA were used to interpret data. For measuring the extend of women empowerment, five-point likert scale was used to quantify the data. For measuring empowerment coding was done as 1 for 'very much', 2 for 'somewhat', 3 for 'undecided', 4 for 'not really' and 5 for 'not at all'. In case of socio- economic development coding was done as 1 for 'strongly disagree', 2 'for disagree', 3 'for neutral', 4 for 'agree', 5 for 'strongly agree'.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The Table 1 discloses the number of respondents taken from each destination for the survey.

Table 1 Sample frame

	Frequency	percentage
Kovalam	28	18.7
Kumarakam	60	40.0
Thekkadi	35	23.3
Wayanad	27	18.0
Total	150	100

Survey data

Table 2 Profile of the Respondent

Characteristics	Categories	Total	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age	Upto 35	6	4
	35-45	72	48
	45-55	57	38
	55-65	12	8
	Above 65	3	2
Total	400	100	
Marital Status	Single	3	2
	Married	147	98
	Separated	0	0
	Total	400	100
Education	Degree	2	1.5
	Plus two	41	27.3
	SSLC	87	58
	Below SSLC	20	13.3
	Total	400	100
Living status	More than 10 years	34	22.7
	Since I was born	116	77.3
	Total	150	100
Year of experience in tourism	Up to 5 years	27	18
	5 to 10 years	107	71
	Above 10 years	16	11
	Total	150	100

Survey data

The Table 2 shows the profile of the respondent. It shows that majority of the respondent (48 % and 38%) are in the age group of 35-45 and 45-55. Regarding marital status 98 % are married. Education status reveals 58% are SSLC qualified. 27 % are plus two qualified. Majority of the respondent (77%) living in their locality since their birth. 71% of the respondent are having an experience in tourism activities of 5 to 10 years.

The women take part in Responsible Tourism venture either directly or through the help of an agency. The state poverty eradication programme known as Kudumbasree, group formed by the members of ayalkkoottam or area development society that fall under CDS, plays a significant role in engaging women in Responsible tourism activities. The major role played by women are marketing and sales of local

products or services, catering food and beverages, laundry services, local food production, cultural, social & sports events, furniture & crafts making etc. in addition to this they are also engaged in transportation, providing accommodation, conserving traditional arts & culture, providing excursions and attractions etc.

The women produce and market their local produces and services in their locality or outside their locality with the help of Kudumbasree or directly.

Table 3 Procurement & supply of products and Extending services with the help of Agency

Way of Marketing	Total	
	N	%
Through Agency	126	84
Direct	24	16
Total	150	100

Survey data

The Table 3 shows 84 % of the respondent are engaged in responsible tourism activities are with the help of an agency known as Kudumbasree and others (24%) participate directly.

Women Empowerment

Responsible Tourism enhances a positive and meaningful involvement of local women in the tourism industry of the destination, through which it has brought economic as well as social development to women. Economic empowerment is considered in terms of opportunities which has arisen in terms of employment and business opportunities. Social empowerment refers to a situation in which women's sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed and strengthened by responsible tourism activities.

Table 4 Perception of women on the factors of empowerment through Responsible Tourism

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value	P value
support from the family for profession	1.86	1.12	-12.43	.000
The service / occupation beneficial to economy of local area	1.91	1.07	-12.46	.000
Becoming self-reliant	1.76	.99	-15.27	.000
Able to make own decisions	1.70	.90	-17.78	.000
Increased confidence level	1.76	1.02	-14.87	.000
Able to provide opportunities of growth to the family	1.72	.942	-16.64	.000
good status in society because of the occupation.	1.72	.88	-17.90	.000
opportunities through RT	1.70	.84	-18.92	.000
Awareness of Health and hygiene measures	1.73	.86	-18.11	.000
Able to travel alone	1.76	.95	-16.05	.000
getting opportunities to attend meeting, seminar, and workshops. etc.	1.75	.92	-16.67	.000
Positive attitude towards news media	1.74	.91	-16.86	.000

Survey data

The table 4 explains the perception of women on the factors of women empowerment. The result shows that the women are getting empowered through Responsible Tourism as it shows the lower mean score for each factor which is less than the table value 3. Hence the hypothesis that Responsible Tourism has a significant role in women empowerment is accepted with a significance level of 5%.

Table 5 Destination wise comparison of Women empowerment through Responsible Tourism.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	P value
Kovalam	28	23.50	5.94	.984	.402
Kumarakam	60	21.52	10.98		
Thekkadi	35	19.34	10.21		
Wayanad	27	20.04	11.98		
Total	150	21.11	10.25		

Survey data

Among the destination Kovalam shows a high mean score of 23.50 with SD 5.94. Kumarakam shows 21.52 with 10.98, Thekkadi 19.34 with 10.21 and Wayanad 20.04 with 11.98. The f value is .984 and p value is .402 which is greater than significant level .05 which shows there is no significant difference on women empowerment with regard to destination.

Table 6 Living status of women before and after Responsible Tourism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Income before RT	150	1.42	.534	-36.21
income after RT	150	4.09	.93	14.37
savings before Rt	150	1.41	.52	-37.33
savings after RT	150	3.93	.94	12.05
Borrowings before RT	150	3.40	1.29	3.80
Borrowings aft RT	150	2.59	.82	-6.07
Education of family members before RT	150	1.96	.65	-19.47
Education of family members after RT	150	3.37	.79	5.69
Household before RT	150	1.71	.57	-27.60
Household after RT	150	3.90	.91	12.11
Purchasing power before RT	150	1.84	.83	-17.16
Purchasing power after RT	150	3.94	.94	12.21
Furniture before RT	150	1.67	.54	-30.25
Furniture after RT	150	3.95	1.75	6.62
Food & Beverage before RT	150	1.69	.55	-29.51
Food& Beverage after RT	150	3.92	.88	12.82
Dress&Garments before RT	150	1.67	.54	-30.25
Dress&Garments after RT	150	3.85	.87	12.01
Electronics&electricals before RT	150	1.67	.54	-30.25
Electronics&electricals after RT	150	3.29	.88	3.97
vehicles before RT	150	1.64	.51	-32.74
vehicles after RT	150	3.13	.77	2.13
Health&safety before RT	150	1.66	.50	-32.64
Health&safety after RT	150	3.14	.76	2.26
Insurance before RT	150	1.65	.49	-33.57
Insurance after RT	150	3.09	.75	1.43
mob/telephone before RT	150	1.65	.51	-32.70
mob/telephone after RT	150	3.64	.88	8.94
Computer &modern gadget before RT	150	1.63	.49	-34.66
computers& modern gadget after RT	150	2.59	.82	-6.17

Survey data

The various indicators of the status of local community shows that a positive influence of responsible tourism on local community. The result shows all indicators except borrowings shows that an increase in the mean score after entering into Responsible Tourism activities. 2. Hence the hypothesis that Responsible Tourism creates positive socio-economic development in living status of women is accepted.

Table 7 Destination wise comparison of living status of women before Responsible Tourism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	P value
Kovalam	28	27.46	6.75	1.658	.179
Kumarakam	60	25.22	7.43		
Thekkadi	35	28.11	6.36		
Wayanad	27	27.22	5.43		
Total	150	26.67	6.78		

Survey data

The f value is 1.658 and p value is .0179 which is greater than the significant level at 5 %. It shows there is no association between the perception of respondent on the status of living before Responsible Tourism with regard to destination.

Table 8 Destination wise comparison of living status of women after Responsible Tourism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F value	P value
Kovalam	28	53.93	10.01	3.121	.028
Kumarakam	60	54.88	11.40		
Thekkadi	35	49.29	10.21		
Wayanad	27	49.37	8.85		
Total	150	52.41	10.67		

Survey data

When comparing the status of women after with regard to destinations, it also shows the f value is 3.121 and p value is .028 which is greater than the significant level at 5 %. It shows there is no association between the perception of respondent on the status of living before Responsible Tourism with regard to destination.

Findings and Conclusion

The study shows that women are actively involving in Responsible Tourism through various ways. The Responsible Tourism provides many worthwhile opportunities in terms of employment to women and thereby creates positive socio- economic development which leads to women empowerment. Responsible Tourism created opportunity for the women to increase their decision-making power, self-confidence, life status mobility, social awareness, and also provided opportunities to attend meeting, seminar, workshops to expertise their skills and abilities. Destination wise comparison of analysis also shows Responsible Tourism has created significant positive influence in the economic and social upliftment of the women community in entire Responsible Tourism destinations in Kerala

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