Local Population and Responsible Tourism

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Introduction

In conventional tourism, the major hitch in its development path is that the benefits in all its manifestations have a macro impact. But, the negative socio-cultural and adverse environmental issues of tourism are borne by the local communities in respective tourism destinations. The potential solution to such developmental issues in destinations lies in sustainable tourism. Different variants of sustainable or alternative tourism, such as farm tourism, religious tourism, nature tourism, ethnic tourism etc are prevailing around the globe. The objectives of these offshoots are generally similar in nature. Hence it also assumes the role as a platform to address the issue of sustainable development at local level. Of these offshoots of sustainable tourism, Ecotourism, Rural tourism and Responsible were implemented in Kerala.

In Kerala, currently, the traditional sectors are losing their shine. This state of affairs calls for a shift in focus towards alternative sectors such as education, health care, information technology and tourism. Tourism as an industry in Kerala is largely nature based. Hence the carrying capacity of destinations is facing multifaceted challenges. In order to face these challenges, the strategy of sustainable tourism is practiced in various forms in different destinations of the State. In this special context of Kerala, various agencies implemented rural tourism, ecotourism and responsible tourism in diverse regions.

Involvement of local community

The behavioural patterns of the local community reflect their level of involvement in the destinations. For analysing involvement of the community an attempt is made to capture several components of community behaviour in destinations. The components of community behaviour have many dimensions. First of all, it means, emotional attachment of the community towards the project. Secondly, it implies that the project has an ability to uplift their standards of living. Thirdly, the project does not irritate or disturb the existing social relations in the locality. Fourthly, the project successfully addresses the livelihood issues of both present and future generations. Lastly, the people should have awareness that the project does not bring in and accentuate ecological imbalances.

For revealing the involvement of the local community, a study based on KAP was considered appropriate. KAP (Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice) is a survey technique programmed to collect information on what is known, believed and done in relation to a particular social issue. KAP studies are highly focused evaluations that measure changes in human knowledge, attitudes and practices in response to a specific intervention. In the present study, the KAP is used in order to reveal the involvement of the communities dwelling in the sustainable tourism project destinations. The term 'Knowledge' refers to awareness or understanding of the community regarding the project. The feelings and preconceived ideas of the community towards the project are brought under the concept expressed as 'attitude'. 'Practice' indicates the demonstrated behaviour of the community in response to their knowledge and attitude in project destinations.

ANALYSIS PLAN

In the case of knowledge level of the local population nine variables were considered for analysis. For analysing the attitude of the local population four variables were considered. The practice level analyses of the local population four variables were taken. For analysing knowledge and practice of the local population F test was designed. In the case of practice Spearman's Rank Correlation Matrix is assigned

Knowledge

Knowledge of the community is vital for the project. The reason is that it has an ability to germinate a suitable social mindset to reveal the gravity of impact in project destinations.

The knowledge possessed by a community refers to their understanding of different dimensions of the project. It refers to the level of understanding of respondents in each destination. There are a number of components which build the platform to explain the concept of 'Knowledge'.

Weighted Knowledge of Statements related to STP

In the above section, nine factors were considered independently to expose community's knowledge about STP in sample destinations. In other words, a compartment wise analysis of level of knowledge of local community in each of the four sample destinations was undertaken. In order to get an understanding of the total picture, the nine compartments were treated as a single unit and analysed. This would help to assess the level of knowledge objectively for each sample destination. For this, knowledge level statements were arranged in the order of its importance. This was done by experts through paired ranking so that weights could be assigned to each statement. The statements thus prepared were arranged according to its weights in descending order is presented in **Table 1**

Table 1
Weights Given to Statements Related to Knowledge about Sustainable Tourism

	Statements	Weights assigned from experts
S1	I believe the community would benefit from developing a sustainable tourism framework	2.25
S2	Local production and standard of living will increase due to STP	2.00
S3	I understand that local population has a role in decision making	1.88
S4	I believe there is a demand for sustainable tourism	1.50
S5	Way of life is a product in STP	1.50
S6	I believe that well-managed attractions maintained in their natural state, are important for attracting tourism	1.38
S7	I believe I understand the concept of sustainable tourism	1.25
S8	I believe natural resource protection and tourism are compatible	0.88
S9	I believe protection of local heritage and tourism are compatible	0.88

Source: Primary Data

Out of the nine statements, the knowledge of head of household that *the community would benefit from developing a sustainable tourism framework* got the highest weight of 2.25. Two statements share the lowest weights with values 0.88 each, namely, (i) compatibility of natural resource protection and tourism and (ii) compatibility of protection of local heritage and tourism. Using the weighted knowledge statements, weighted mean and weighted standard deviation were calculated. These were calculated using scores obtained from household survey. The results so elicited were presented in **Figure 1**

The general formula used to arrive at weights of different statements related to knowledge towards sustainable tourism projects is as follows:

S1= Mean value of Statement one (question number 1) from the scores

(S1 is derived from the average value of the score from the questionnaire, the values were derived from the software SPSS.)

Similarly S9 = mean value of the nth statement from the scores

W1 =Weight of the Statement one

Knowledge = $\frac{\sum (S1 \times W1)}{\sum W1}$

Knowledge = $\frac{(S1 \times W1) + (S2 \times W2) + ... + (S9 \times W9)}{W1 + W2 + ...+ W9}$

Here there are seven questionnaires so the nth value will be seven

In the case of Palaruvi

Knowledge = $\frac{\sum (S1 \times W1)}{\sum W1}$ = 3.63

In the case of Thenmala
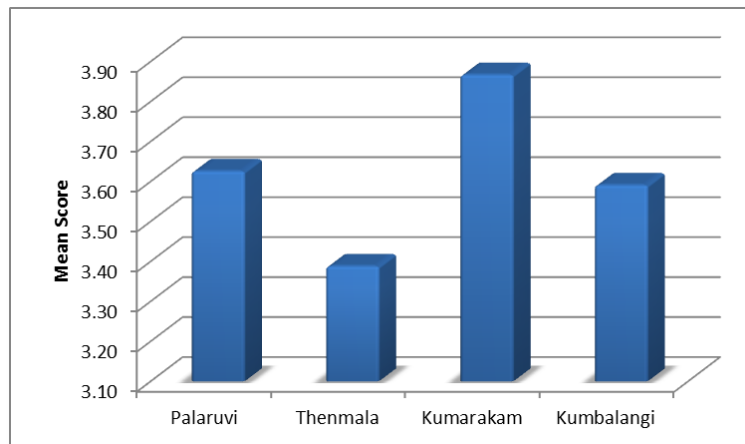
Knowledge = $\frac{\sum (S1 \times W1)}{\sum W1}$ = 3.39

In the case of Kumarakom

Knowledge = $\frac{\sum (S1 \times W1)}{\sum W1}$ = 3.87

In the case of Kumbalangi

Knowledge = $\frac{\sum (S1 \times W1)}{\sum W1}$ = 3.59

Knowledge were been calculated from each destinations, the output can be viewed from the figure 1

**Figure 1 Knowledge of the Community
in the Destinations**
Source: Primary Data

In **Figure 1,** weighted mean of statements on knowledge related to the concept of STP in destinations is presented. The results revealed that Kumarakom has the highest weighted mean and Thenmala has the lowest weighted mean among the destinations.

Table 2

**Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge of Sample Head of the
Household related to STP**

	N	Weighted Mean	SD
Total	298	3.60	0.57
Palaruvi	53	3.63	0.60
Thenmala	90	3.39	0.53
Kumarakom	64	3.87	0.54
Kumbalangi	91	3.59	0.55

Source : Primary Data

In **Table 2,** along with the weighted mean, weighted standard deviation is also presented. Even though the standard deviation is showing high variation among the destinations, Thenmala with 0.53 stands least. On the other hand, Palaruvi stands high with a SD of 0.60.

Attitude

Attitude towards sustainable tourism projects refers to feelings of local population and any preconceived ideas they may have about it. The attitude of local population is a prerequisite for successful implementation of projects. The attitude of the local population on certain components is analysed in the present section. The components are increase in employment opportunities, more business to the local population, increase in in-migration, shift in occupational structure, improvement in the standard of social overhead capital, tourist spending and demonstration effect, and development of cultural activities. Each component is analysed in subsequent sections separately

Weighted Attitude of Statements related to STP

Till now we have presented statement-wise analysis of level of attitude of local community in each of the four sample destinations. In this section, elements related to attitude are combined by giving weights proportional to their importance in building positive attitude towards STP. This will help to assess the attitude of each local community towards STP objectively. The weights for the statements were computed as the mean scores given by three experts using paired ranking method. The statements thus prepared arranged according to its weights in descending order is presented in Table 3

Table 3

Weights given to Statements Related to Attitude towards Sustainable Tourism

|	Statements	Weights assigned from experts
S1	Employment opportunities and income increase with sustainable tourism project.	2.33
S2	More business for local people will arise with STP	1.83
S3	Increase in in-migration(People from other places coming to your village) takes place	0.50
S4	Due to tourism there is shift in occupational structure	1.50
S5	Improve the standard of road and other public facilities	1.83
S6	The way of life of locals will get affected due to high spending tourists.	1.33
S7	Development of cultural activities by local population	1.17

Source : Primary Data

Table 3 presents mean weights given to Statements Related to Attitude towards Sustainable Tourism by three experts using paired ranking for the statements related to attitude towards sustainable tourism projects. Here the weight to statements is assigned on the basis of its relative importance given by the experts in the field. Here the highest weight is assigned to the statement that employment opportunities and income increase with sustainable tourism project, with a weight of 2.33. Similarly, the statement that in-migration increases with STP in sample destinations has the lowest weight, i.e. 0.50.

$$\text{Attitude} = \frac{(S1 \times Wp1) + (S2 \times Wp2) + \ldots\ldots + (S7 \times Wp7)}{Wp1 + Wp2 + \ldots\ldots + Wp7}$$

Similarly we got the attitude of Thenmala, Kumbalangi and Kumarakom as in table 4. From the weighted statements related to attitude, we calculated its weighted mean and weighted standard deviation in each destination using scores from the sample survey using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) from the questionnaire. The Figure 2 presents weighted mean score of statements on attitude related to the concept of STP of sample head of households in each destination.

Attitude were been calculated from each destinations, the output can be viewed from the figure 2
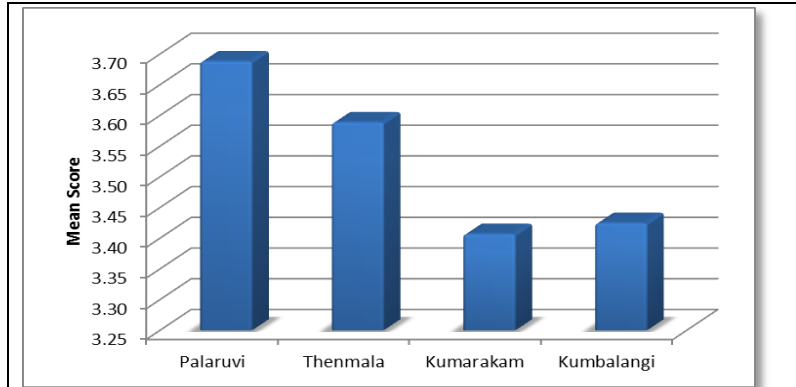
Figure 2 Attitude of the Community in the Destinations

Source : Primary Data

The Figure **2** reveals that sample from Palaruvi has reported highest mean score (3.69) and Kumarakom has the lowest mean score (3.41) among the sample destinations.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics of Attitude of Sample Head of the
Household related to STP

	N	Mean	SD
Total	298	3.52	0.61
Palaruvi	53	3.69	0.45
Thenmala	90	3.59	0.57
Kumarakom	64	3.41	0.76
Kumbalangi	91	3.42	0.58

Source : Primary Data

In the Table 4 it can be seen that the highest standard deviation is for Kumarakom i.e. 0.76 and the lowest is for Palaruvi with value, 0.45.

Practice

Practice refers to the ways in which the local population demonstrates their knowledge and attitudes through actions. It is through the practice the local population shows their involvement in sustainable tourism projects.

Here we are presenting the involvement revealed by the local population through their practices by analyzing four components; namely, community participation, changes in the life style of the community, changes in family bondages, and community behavior. Each of the components has more than one choice.

The **Table 5** presents the weights assigned to the statements and its responses regarding the practice of the local community. The weights are assigned using paired ranking for each statement in such a way that the sample heads have the option of making either multiple response one or more than one response or even not making responses at all. The descriptive statistics of practice of sample head of households in the destinations are given in the **Table 5**

Table 5.
Descriptive Statistics of Practice of Sample Head of the Household related to STP

	Palaruvi	Thenmala	Kumarakom	Kumbalangi
Weighted Mean	4.14	4.63	5.40	4.17
Std Deviation	1.66	1.23	1.50	1.23
F	12.186			
Sig.	0.000			

Source : Primary Data

In **Table 5**, since the significance level is below 0.05, the practices in all the sample destinations are statistically different. From the table, it can also be observed that it is the local community in Kumarakom which follows the best practice as it possess highest mean value (5.40) among all the sample destinations followed by Thenmala (4.63).

In this analysis an attempt was made to reveal the level of involvement of the local communities in the respective destinations and the objective of the study "to reveal the involvement of local population in the sustainable tourism projects in terms of their knowledge, attitude and practice" was analysed. It can be seen that Kumarakom has the highest level of Knowledge and practice and Palaruvi has the highest level in terms of attitude

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