CHAPTER 6

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CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS

AND

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The growth and evolution of tourism in the recent past though irregular, the researchers forecast impressive growth and return from tourism activity. Tourism is a highly sensitive industry and its growth and output is dependent on the social and political fabric of a destination. Today globally tourism is recognised as an important means for economic gain. Tourism is in its transition phase from urban tourism to rural tourism. India being more than 70% rural has special advantages in promoting rural tourism in the country. Some of its rural tourism projects are funded also by UNDP. Kumbalangi Panchayath is one of rural tourism places funded by UNDP. This is the final chapter of a research work undertaken in Kumbalangi to understand the impact of tourism in the region.

This chapter is divided into three major sections; findings, recommendations and conclusion. Findings are based on the analysis of data from the questionnaire survey, focus group interviews and personal observations of the researcher.

6.2 Major Findings of the Study

The important findings of the study are presented in thirteen different sub-titles in the following pages.
6.2.1 Tourism and Tradition

In many rural tourism destinations there are temptations for the local people to imitate the behaviour of the tourists. Such people often equate development to the narrow frames of financial gains and try to replace rural with urban practices. Kumbalangi village tourism is very fortunate that vast majority of the settlers are highly in favour of preserving the traditions and practices of the locality. They are able to value and appreciate the traditions and practices in their social, religious and domestic life. Ninety percentages of the respondents said that traditions and practices are important and be preserved. Another appealing finding of the study is that even the new settlers of the place along with the traditional settlers are equally concerned about the conservation of the traditions. The study was conducted among the voters in the Panchayath. From the responses it was found that irrespective of the age group -the youth and the elderly alike stand for preserving traditions. Study was also made to explore there are perception differences among different income and occupational groups and there were no significant differences between any class and group. Therefore it could be rightly concluded that Kumbalangi rural tourism is very much favourably placed with the commitment of people of the region to preserve the traditions.

6.2.2 Tourism and Development of Infrastructure

One of the major issues in connection with rural tourism models is to dedicate or at least prioritise many of the infrastructure facilities for the use of tourists. In such cases tourism development will effectively bring down the availability of basic
infrastructure for the public. In Kumbalangi the available infrastructure is neither dedicated nor prioritised for the use of tourists. No respondent has said that tourism has worsened the availability of basic infrastructure. Almost 98% of the respondents said that tourism has resulted in the development of basic infrastructure of the place. Less than 2% of people responded that it remained the same. Therefore the promoters of Kumbalangi tourism project could be really happy that the public acknowledges the contribution of tourism to infrastructure development.

The respondents in general agreed threat there were increases in accommodation, public transportation, bridges, business avenues, electricity etc. Further analysis of the data was done to find out what people are critical about in terms of infrastructure development. The lowest mean score was for quality of food in tea shops and restaurants. Food is one of the fundamental tourism infrastructures. Almost 10 to 15% of the spending of tourists is for food and beverages. Food and beverages services are particularly important to rural tourism models. People often include rural destinations in their travel plans not only for enjoying the natural beauty of the locality but also for enjoying the local cuisines too. In rural tourism models, people who are not otherwise skilled to take up speciality jobs in the hospitality side can certainly offer food and beverages to tourists and earn an additional income for their living. Kumbalangi offers a food fest every evening in the park at the entrance of the Panchayath. This is managed by the women SHGs (Self Help Groups) of the Panchayath.
6.2.3 Tourism and Growth of Local Income

Tourism in Kumbalangi has helped to generate additional income to the residents. Economic leakage through tourism is almost absent. More than 40% of the respondents said that there is improvement in the local income due to tourism. However, 47% of the people said that tourism could not influence local income at all. 10% of the people responded negatively also and said there is reduction in income due to tourism. In-depth study of the impact of factors was also made. The highest mean value was observed in the case of income from artistic performances and lowest in the case of income from ordinary works. Tourism in Kumbalangi is yet to attract sufficient number of tourists and therefore income from tourism is still not very high. Age was found a significant factor influencing the perception of people. Regarding the income generation capacity of tourism, those below 22 years of age are found the most conservative among age groups.

6.2.4 Tourism and Growth of Quality of Life

The perception of people regarding the improvement in quality of life is very good. Almost 93% of people perceive that tourism has enhanced their quality of life. Mutual confidence among people, reduction in smoking in public places, and health consciousness ranked the highest in the mean value. The respondents who are still in education have the lowest mean value for quality of life. Whereas the highest mean value is for the homemakers. Tourism has brought many opportunities for the unemployed or underemployed women in the village and has resulted in the enhanced quality of their lives.
6.2.5 Knowledge Enhancement through Tourism

In general tourism has helped in gaining knowledge about different cultures and people. The means scores for all the factors under study were above 2.5 out of five. From the analysis of data it was found that knowledge is gained more by the rich and the educated. The main reason is that people belonging to economically upper strata have better possibilities of interacting with the tourists because they are the main tourism service providers. Generally people belonging to upper economic strata have better education too. Most of the interactions by the tourists to those belonging to lower economic strata are indirect. They are often giving tourism related services like art shows, preparing food in the kitchen etc. which require less interactions. The analysis has found that the least educated group has the lowest mean value for knowledge enhancement.

6.2.6 Tourism and Cultural Development

The influence of tourism on the culture of Kumbalangi is not very positive. Only 59% of the people responded positively regarding the influence of tourism, of which only 2% said that tourism has significantly influenced cultural development. On the other hand 3% of people felt that tourism has contributed negatively to the cultural advancement of the region. Of the twelve factors under culture, attitude towards work, relationship between generations, and maintenance of moral uprightness ranked higher mean values. Lowest mean value was for relationship between neighbours. There is a growing gap in the relationship between those who gain economic benefit from tourism and those who do not.
6.2.7 Tourism and Crime Rates

Respondents are evenly divided in their perception regarding reduction of crimes. Fifty percentages say that there is no difference in crime rates whereas 45% of the people say that the crime rate has decreased. The respondents perceive reduction in alcoholism, drug abuse and vandalism. However they perceive increases in organised and personal crimes. Genderwise difference of perception was also observed in the perceptions. Women perceive increase of crime more than men.

6.2.8 Preservation of Ecology & Environment

Since Kumbalangi endogenous rural tourism model is in its infancy the number of tourists to the place is very low. Therefore the damage to ecology and environment due to tourism is also less. Almost 60% of the people feel that the implementation of tourism project has enhanced environmental consciousness and has resulted in better preservation of ecology and environment. From the detailed analysis of the factors it is found that tourism has resulted in more effective domestic and public waste management. However there is significant reduction in the water based resources like fishes and lobsters. Earlier most of the families had a pool in their land and they used to grow fishes in the pool. But now there are not many pools in the land and even if there are pools most of them are not growing fishes. One of the major advantages with Kumbalangi is that the people are aware about maintaining the ecology and environment of the place. They are also willing to support all the efforts to create a clean and safe environment. Those with Masters degree or above
levels of education have expressed highest concerns in the case of environment and ecology.

### 6.2.9 Resident Attitude towards Tourism Development

The villagers in Kumbalangi have a positive attitude towards tourism development. The residents generally agree that tourism is good for rich and the poor alike and is also not going to damage their culture. Many residents are also willing to receive tourists in their home too. But there is a general unhappiness regarding tourism decision making process. Among the four factors under study, the lowest mean value is regarding democratic decision making process. The mode is two in a five point scale, which is negative. It means that people disagree to the statement that tourism decision making is democratic. However in all other three factors the mode is 4 out of five and mean scores are more than 3.5.

It is also noted that people who are positive about tourism have negative attitude towards tourism decision making process. Negative correlation is observed between these factors. This should also be connected with the widening gap in the relationship with neighbours. Most of the people in Kumbalangi are happy to see the development of tourism in the region. But they also think that the benefits of tourism are hijacked by a few through undue influences in decision making.

### 6.2.10 Resident Participation in Tourism Planning

Kumbalangi endogenous rural tourism project planned with the objective to strengthen people participation in decision making. However, in practice the project is not very successful in securing public participation in planning process. Almost
85% of the respondents rarely participated in tourism planning. Only less than 10% usually participated tourism planning, even when they had possibilities to participate in the decision making. The mean values for all the projects are lower than 1.5 out of five. The highest mean is for participation in planning for road construction and maintenance. The mean value is 1.39. One of the main reasons behind the low participation in planning is poor education of the residents. The indifference of people towards tourism related activities will slacken the long term prospects of tourism in the region. Therefore it will be highly necessary to device plans that would encourage people participation in tourism activities. Any development effort cannot be sustained without the generous support from the beneficiaries. The long run success of Kumbalangi Village Tourism model depends also on the level of people participation in tourism.

6.2.11 Resident Participation in Tourism Implementation

Resident participation at the implementation stage is also not very high. Only less than 10% of the population usually participated in tourism development. The highest mean value is 3.53 which is for setting up water related recreation avenues. This is significantly higher than other values. All other values are less than 1.5. The application of civic voluntarism model revealed that while implementing the project, the psychological engagement of the residents was not converted into their participation. People in the higher income group were identified participating more in the implementation stage. This is because they could implement the homestays and water related recreation avenues on their own. The group mean value for all the
richest class was three. The general negative attitude towards tourism decision making process is perhaps the result of an eclipse of the active involvement of the rich. Education is found as one of the important factors affecting participation in implementation. The application of the leader participation theory revealed that the participation of residents in decision making enhanced their participation in the implementation of the project.

6.2.12 Relationship between Planning and Implementation

Strong relationship is observed between participation in planning and implementation. Any effort to enhance the participation in the planning phase will certainly influence the participation in implementation. More than 50% of participation in implementation is influenced by participation in planning.

6.2.13 Relationship between Participation and Perception

The relationship between participation and perception was analysed through hypothesis testing. Strong correlation was observed between participation and perception. But on the basis of multiple regression analysis it was found that perception on tourism impact is significantly related to participation in implementation. However, there is strong correlation between participation in planning and perception too. Participation in implementation is found influencing the perception more significantly than participation in planning.

6.3 Recommendations of the study

The main purpose of Kumbalangi endogenous rural tourism model is the development management of the region. The implementation of the project has
already started producing good results to the village and residents. However, the following suggestions would be helpful for the residents, policy planners, government agencies and funding agencies to further augment and ensure sustainability of positive results. Some of the suggestions are meant also to minimise the possible negative consequences of development.

6.3.1 Educating the Residents

In connection with the implementation of endogenous tourism project, there were extensive training programmes for the residents. But they are found inadequate to elicit necessary participation and involvement in the tourism project. Education and training programmes must be an on-going process. Unless people trained continuously most of the ordinary people will withdraw their effort and support for tourism, because of the absence of adequate short term results.

6.3.2 Comprehensive Tourism Planning and Implementation

Thorough and comprehensive tourism planning is found necessary for the sustained development of Kumbalangi. It should start with a systematic tourism inventory planning. Inventory planning will give the residents a broader framework and an occasion to participate in the tourism planning. The indirect benefits of inventory planning also are very important. Some of them are: development of leadership within the community, increase of democratic processes of discussions and debates, formulation of tourism planning committees and tourism related organisations. The research has already indicated that the participation of residents is not high enough. Moreover, the participation of the residents is fundamental to sustained
growth of tourism in the area. The resident perception is also found significantly influenced by their participation. Therefore in order to enhance participation at various levels of tourism planning and implementation, the following framework is suggested.

**Figure 6.1 Proposed participation model**

The model proposed above is not a static model but it takes feedback from corrective action and continues the same process in periodic intervals. People participation is invited at every stage of tourism planning and implementation. At the same time the model is not ignoring the necessary support from external agencies like government, funding agencies, and experts. However their intervention must be limited to giving support to the residents. The necessary
support may be more intense in the second, fifth and seventh stages. The implementation of the project should be left to the residents with the possibility offering consultancy on a case to case base basis and on request. The second stage of the process should necessarily involve sufficient training sessions to educate the residents.

6.3.3 Income from Tourism

Income from tourism to the residents of Kumbalangi at present is not high. If there are not adequate returns from tourism, people cannot sustain their efforts. For example, many registered homestays are yet to receive even a single guest. They were keeping it operational for more than a year. Therefore immediate steps should be taken by the implementing agencies to ensure a reasonable return for the investments of residents. This can be done only through development of tourism products and effective promotional strategies.

6.3.4 Development of Tourism Products

Endogenous rural tourism models present rural life as the product before the tourists. Many tourists in the village told the researcher that they are not clear about the available resources to choose what they like. At present this gap is filled by the homestay owners, but in a very limited way. Therefore it is highly necessary that there should be brochures and other promotional materials which clearly and beautifully articulate the unique experiences available for a tourist. Detailed planning and preparation of tourism inventory by the residents is necessary to develop new products. Because of the absence of clarity regarding tourism
products many available products are not offered to tourists. For example, many tourists to the place are very happy to go for a village walk. But the trails are not defined. Therefore the tourists are not able to choose from many different possibilities.

6.3.5 Construction of Kalagram

Construction of Kalagram again is an immediate necessity. Kumbalangi has no hotels for tourists. They are all staying in the homestays. These houses are not having enough space for any major art shows. Therefore it is imperative to have a common place for art shows where tourists could come and watch them. Moreover the art school (Kalagram) could be used as a place to train young artists. This will also help the preservation and development of indigenous art forms.

6.3.6 Employment Generation

Tourism planning should incorporate the possibilities of employment generation. There were concerns expressed by residents regarding the rising number of certain forms of crimes. Very often youngsters turn to crimes as an alternate means of employment. Many youngsters could be trained to take up jobs like tourists guides, and cooks.

Kumbalangi is surrounded by water. However there are not many water related recreation avenues developed so far. Water related sports are hot items in most leisure tourism destinations. The survey results already show that residents are very happy to participate in setting up water related recreation avenues.
6.3.7 Cleanliness of Restaurants

Though residents said that there is significant improvement in the cleanliness of food service areas, the situation still requires lot of improvement. Kumbalangi has its own speciality cuisines. But the tourists will not be attracted to an unclean restaurant. The local Panchayath or the tourism society of the place should establish some sort of certification for restaurants based on the implementation of cleanliness norms. Therefore tourists could receive services from cleaner restaurants.

6.3.8 Increase in Social Capital

Social capital refers to those clubs and associations which promote meaningful and constructive interaction among residents. These informal organisations would facilitate social interaction and in turn will be beneficial to the development of the region. At present the recreation and leisure facilities available to the people in destination are grossly limited. There must be conscious efforts from the part of local self-government and other government authorities to encourage setting up of new clubs and associations in the region. They will in turn become catalysts in promoting tourism related activities in the region. They also give room for public participation in various other activities too.

At present there is no agency to coordinate tourism activities in the region other than the Panchayath. There is the need for a strong NGO that is entrusted with the task of monitoring tourism activities in the island. The same organisation should take up the task of framing future policy guidelines and strategic plans tourism in the region.
6.3.9 Information for Tourists

One of the major limitations reported by the tourists to the place is the lack of information regarding the culture of the place. Endogenous tourists look out for opportunities to learn and to have new experience. In general they have very high respect for local culture, practices and beliefs. Hence they expect to get guidance regarding their dress patterns and general conduct during their visit. The tourists expect to receive an information brochure regarding the dos and don’ts which is an urgent necessity.

6.3.10 Marketing Efforts

Kumbalangi tourism is in its infancy. The success of the project depends on the growth and maturity of the project. For the growth of the project a consolidated marketing effort from various agencies is indispensable. In this rural tourism model, the organisations serving the tourists are tiny. The homestays have two to three rooms and the restaurants are local and small. Therefore it is not possible for them to promote themselves internationally or even within India. Efforts must be made to show case Kumbalangi and other rural tourism destinations by State and Central Governments.

The Role of Government of India

Endogenous rural tourism projects implemented in different villages in India will be successful only if proper marketing support is extended to all of them. The service providers in endogenous tourism projects are very small and they cannot spend huge amounts to market their products across globe. Hence government of India
should ensure marketing their products through international exhibitions, publication of brochures, and other means of marketing.

Endogenous tourism is a new concept. It is a new concept to channelize the benefits of tourism directly to the local people, especially to the rural poor. This type of tourism also aims at educating tourists regarding the rural life existing in the region. However, there is very little understanding about this concept and experiment among potential tourists and tourism intermediaries. Hence it is necessary to publish adequate literature to educate the potential customers and intermediaries regarding the nuances of this new experiment. This is especially significant in the context of growing number of responsible tourists.

The tourists who look for authentic experiences and learning from tourism do not have the courage to go to villages and stay in the ordinary houses. This fear could be mitigated or eliminated if the standardizations and support from the government of India are made known to tourists. The Government of India should also provide broad policy frame work in support of rural tourism through soft loans, tax subsidies for a period to tourism service intermediaries, and tax subsidies for rural tourism operators.

**The Role of Government of Kerala**

Government of Kerala intervenes in the tourism industry through department of tourism and KTDC (Kerala Tourism Development Corporation). The ministry of tourism government of Kerala should take special efforts to market Kumbalangi and other rural destinations in the state through their website, participation in
exhibitions, and publications. At present KTDC offers promotions and support only for its own properties and packages. Even the department of tourism government of Kerala website also does not give any information regarding rural tourism projects in the state. It gives a list of destinations which include both rural and urban areas. Among destinations Kumbalangi is not even listed. When it comes to homestays only one homestay in Kumbalangi is listed in the official website against 16 registered homestays. That too listed under homestays in Ernakulam. The state government should strengthen its support in marketing rural tourism destinations in Kerala.

**DTPC Ernakulam**

In Kerala there is District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) in every district. Kumbalangi is under the DTPC of Ernakulam. It has to make focused effort to market Kumbalangi rural tourism. At present there is a very brief mention of Kumbalangi in their website. This is quite inadequate to catch the attention of any international travellers. Different trainings in tourism related activities must also be organised by the DTPC for the residents in Kumbalangi.

**Kumbalangi Gramma Panchayath**

The Panchayath also has to take initiatives to market tourism in the region. The Panchayath should organise a common platform where all the service providers can come together and jointly market their products and services. The Panchayath has definitive role in maintaining positive attitude of residents positive. Through proper taxations and implementation of projects it should convince the residents that
everyone benefits from tourism. Sustained development management of the region depends on the effective intervention of the Gramma Panchayath in tourism development.

**Use of ICT by the Residents**

Internet is a very good means to increase the visibility of the region. The residents also must be adequately trained to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to market their products globally. The use of information technology is the means to reach the potential global customers with lowest cost. The service providers should be able to effectively use the micro blogs and social networking websites to market their product globally.

Rural tourism is found a very good means to the development management of a region. However, its sustainable development depends on the pivotal participation of residents and the patronage from governments.

6.3.11 Revenue for the Panchayath and Government

At present Kumbalangi tourism has not devised any revenue model for the Panchayath and other government agencies. There should be taxation norms implemented at the earliest. Only then these agencies can engage in continuously promoting Kumbalangi as a tourism destination. Moreover, the Panchayath should utilise at least part of these taxes for the development of the whole region so that everyone enjoys a share in the benefit of tourism in the region.
6.4 Need for Holistic Approach in Tourism Development

Tourism development especially in a rural context has wider implications than attracting guests and generating livelihood for the hosts. Rural tourism projects should take lessons from different sciences like environmental science, cultural studies, development management, human development, economics, tax planning, social work, management science etc. Value driven tourism development brings in sustained development for the region. During the process of tourism development the hosts, planners and government agencies should be able to integrate immediate development needs with long term sustainability and values. Resident participation at all levels might slow down the development process. Development driven by democratic process of decision making will pay back effectively in the long run than enforced development by external agencies. Hence the development planners should always overcome the temptation to maximise the speed of development machine forgetting the role of residents and beneficiaries.

6.5 Conclusion

Kumbalangi endogenous tourism model is an attempt to present village life to tourists with minimum investments in tourism specific investments. The fundamental purpose behind the project is to make the Panchayath self-reliant through development management. The idea is similar to Gramma Swaraj which is propounded by Mahatma Gandhi\(^1\). Gandhi always had unambiguous ideas on the suitable ways of India’s economic and social development - especially of the rural
India—which anticipated major elements of the present development management strategies.

The most important short term challenges in building self-reliance is in destination planning, involving capacity building, product development and packaging. The long term challenges involve exercise of controls and direction to lead Kumbalangi to a mature tourism destination without losing identity in the long run. If and when tourism becomes a very profitable venture, how will the Panchayath ensure that its people continue with their agrarian life style? If not the destination loses its unique value. With the rise in the disposable income, will the younger generation leave the village for greener pastures, and then, who will sustain the current initiatives? Finally, the perennial rural tourism worry, will the tourist gaze eventually change Kumbalangi to an urban tourism destination? The greatest risk the project faces is the absence of a comprehensive tourism planning and is perhaps much more than what the current Panchayath authorities realises.

The failure or success of the Kumbalangi model has greater implications than the failure and success of tourism experiment in a small village. It has implications on the livelihoods of several other villages that are waiting to transform their economy based on the same model. Kumbalangi is the first endogenous tourism project India to complete the implementation. A failure in Kumbalangi could avert others from even completing the project. Therefore Kumbalangi enjoys the attention of various agencies both in the government and non-government. The achievements of Kumbalangi are so far commendable. The efforts of Panchayath authorities and the residents are bearing fruits. This research has also identified that the project is doing
notably well on different aspects of development management. However, there is the need for significant improvement of resident participation in the planning and implementation of the tourism project in Kumbalangi.
Notes and References

1 Gandhi M.K (1920). Hind Swaraj or Indian home rule, Young India, December 8, 1920, p.886 (See also Young India, August 6, 1925, p. 276 and Harijan, March 25, 1939, p.64.)