CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Discussion

Based on the literature, there are four major areas that need to be considered in destination community impact assessment for tourism development. They are Conservation Effort (CE) on how far the development of tourism support the conservation and preservation of the local areas, Social Service (SS) which explains how far the development of tourism support the destination community, Economic Condition (EC) that indicates how far the development of tourism support the destination community in terms of monitory benefits and employment, Social Issues (SI) indicating how far tourism development creates social issues. Based on the study, the indication of these responses directly correlated with the expectation level of destination community.

The study clearly describes that destination communities have high expectation on tourism development, which they expect for a conducive tourism development at the tourist destination that have mutual benefit for both the parties. This is a direct reflection of the educated destination community, they are aware about the social set ups and how tourism industry can contribute for the socio-economic development of the destination. Among the four constructs of Community Impact Assessment (CIA), there are only a few variables that indicate a positive response like destination communities directly benefiting through infrastructures such as retail shops and facilities (SS). However, destination community positively views tourism development as a tool for sustainable economic development and employment generation. This is a very positive
indication for sustainable tourism development in any tourist destination as the benefit of tourism development is significantly noted by the destination community through economic gain and hence the destination communities are receptive to tourism development. However, all destination communities have a “Zone of Tolerance” a range of performance that the consumers consider acceptable (Chang & Bowie, 2005). The zone of tolerance will be different based on the economic condition, education and type of tourism development in a tourist destination by which the community set their standard against a destination judged (Yuksel, 2001). If there is a significant negative contribution of tourism in Conservation Effort (CE), Social Service (SS) and Social Issues (SI), the income and employment alone will not make the destination community receptive. In the study it is clearly evident that communities response on Social Service (SS) are not up to an acceptable level as travel facilities, freshwater supply, electricity and safety and security are not improved up to the expectation level of the destination community. This is an alarming issue as these variables are the basic necessity of the destination community. At the same time for Conservation Effort (CE) community perceives the natural environment and cultural heritages are adversely affected due to tourism development, as per this view, measures need to be taken as the Kerala tourism vows to preserve its natural and cultural heritage. Looking on the Economic Condition (EC), even though destination community perceives the advantages of tourism for economic development and job creation, they expect better support from the public sectors for capacity development and subsidies to start Micro Medium and Small Enterprises (MMSEs) which will
create greater respect, confidence and definite improvement of quality of service, community receptivity and therefore facilitate sustainable tourism development. In the case of Social Issues (SI), it is also evident that the cost exceeds the benefits as all variables are not up to the expectation level of the destination community and therefore receptivity level is low or neutral. Community perceives that tourism brings adverse consequences such as noise pollution, crowd, drug and alcohol abuse, land use conflicts and increase of commodity price. If not controlled, the economic benefit and job creation will get subsided by the Social Issues (SI) as these are some basic factors determining the receptivity of tourism development.

In the tourism development policy by government of Kerala (2007 and 2012), some of the major highlights are on community support such as employment generation and economic development. Even though these are well achieved in the past few years community concern on direct involvement of public sector for capacity development (ongoing basis) and subsidies for small scale enterprises cannot be ignored as there are many evidences where community annoyance was caused by unacceptable decline of the tourist destination in many countries. It is also described in the tourism policy that tourism development has direct social service benefits to the destination community, however, community perceives that some of the infrastructure developments are still ignored for community access and hence, a better synergy needs to be established and monitored in the tourism policy implementation for effectiveness, particularly for community enhancement. In general there are inconsistencies in the tourism
policy implementation effectiveness considering the need of destination communities.

There are thirty four variables considered under four constructs for measuring tourist satisfaction. The overall responses of the three variables except Cognitive Dissonance Scale (CDS) show very neutral feelings of the tourists on Emotional Satisfaction, Product Satisfaction and Service Satisfaction. There are 18 items in the four categories which show neutral feelings in Kerala, however there are 12 items which show slightly increased feelings on the ESS, CPS and CSS scale. The overall favorable and unfavorable feelings of the tourists in Kerala is measured in four variables such as “Chosen Kerala as a right location” “experience is better than expected” “Kerala is value for money” and “most of my expectations are met”. CDS shows a favorable response from the tourist with agreeable standard of product, service, and emotional performance of the tourist destination. This observation indicates that Kerala is a unique tourist destination. Even though majority of the performance indicators show a neutral point of measurement tourists are still satisfied with the overall experience in Kerala. However, the result of the CDS is alarming in that many performance indicators are not showing an accepted performance level. The sustainability of Kerala tourism in terms of tourist experience is questionable and tourism policy on improving these categories performance must be considered for destination stability with improved tourist satisfaction. The result of the performance evaluation of ESS, PSS and CSS therefore need significant improvement in increasing tourist satisfaction.
Looking on the 2007 tourism policy there are eight items such as “quality visitor experience”, “infrastructure development”, “waste management”, “unique experience”, “accommodation”, “safety and security”, “quality control” and “new product development” which are the thrust areas to increase tourist satisfaction. Nevertheless, the implementation effectiveness shows that the improvement of the destinations are only achieved in “unique and memorable experience”, and “introduction of new products”, among the above mentioned indicators measured the performance as not at an acceptable condition. The outcome the performance measurement describes that tourism policy is not effectively implemented in Kerala and needs significant improvement to make Kerala as a visible global brand.

Kerala tourism policy 2012 has highlighted eleven indicators to increase tourist satisfaction such as Quality Human Resource Development, Quality Visitor Experience, Kerala as a waste free tourist destination, Kerala Clean toilet (KCT), effective waste control system, Hope on Hope off tours at selected tourist destinations, access to all, lifesaving and tourist warden, contingency response team and exception of tourism from Harthal. Out of these eleven indicators seven of them are reflected in the Tourist Satisfaction Index, they are Service Quality (Quality Human Resource Development), quality visitor experience, clean destination (waste management), Tourist Information Centre (TIC), Safety and security (lifesaving) and Ease of access (exception of harthal from tourism). Therefore policy related to these indicators need to be effectively implemented and monitored to increase the tourist satisfaction in Kerala.
7.1.1 Level of Integration on Sustainability of the Destination Kerala

Destination development can be classified into type 1, type 2 and type 3 based on the level of integration of tourism development. Type 1 destination is characterized as limited integration between attributes, poor resource management and no synergy between sectors, subsectors and components. Type 2 destinations have the characteristics such as medium integration, relational capabilities (synergy), longer timeframe resource management and no optimal level of resource management. Type 3 destinations are characterized as very high level of integration, good relational capabilities, criteria for sustainable development and integrated management of tourism resources. Based on the data analysis of Kerala tourism performance destination Kerala fall under type 1 based on the reason listed on the following table.

Table 7.1

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Reflection on Kerala Tourism</th>
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| Type 1  | “Very limited or nonexistent integration between the attribute and other resources. No relational capabilities are developed, and synergies that the resources may generate are not exploited. Level of resource management against sustainable development | - No integration with political situation and tourism, hartal has an evil effect on tourism development.  
- No or poor synergy between support services, lacking follow up for maintenance, since the tour operators are the marketing ambassadors and image builders loss confidence on the performance.  
- Improper integration with skill |
criterion is very low. Resource management is short term, and the aim is maximum exploitation of the most valuable resources to achieve the highest possible performance”.

- Development and employment cause bad image through poor services
- Due to lack control on enforcement of policy, the right to travel is restricted, unable to provide what is promised
- Tourists lacking confidence causes decreased tourist flow.

**Note.** Level of integration of Kerala tourism based on destination performance evaluation.

Based on the above characteristics noted in tourism development in Kerala, it can be concluded that a type of non-sustainable development exists in Kerala tourism, which cannot be weighed against the unique quality of resources and rarity of tourist destination. Indeed, success of destination performance is a holistic approach and involve establishment of superior synergy between involved sectors.

### 7.1.2 Triangulation Effect of Kerala Tourism Performance

Managerial action in which aspects the tourism need to grow is important for sustainable and responsible tourism development. A destination’s priority is the reflection of tourism policy. The practical implementation of tourism policy involves synergy between the government’s intentions for policies and the tensions and negotiations among the actors around the policies. (Oratai & Bramwell, 2010). The government intentions and policies reflect the broad role adopted by the government of a tourist destination. Developing countries’ government priority through tourism development is to meet the generic goal of
the government for development. These includes, physical security, social order, strengthen economic activities, increase investment opportunities, opening job opportunities, maintain welfare and education, strengthen human capital, protect the resources from unaccepted exploitation, protect cultural values, and finally maintain wider legitimacy among the destination community. In the case of tourists, there are tourism activity domain and quality dimension need to consider the satisfaction measurement (Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999). These dimension required to be the highlight of the tourism policy should be practiced as per the tourist requirement. The destination politics and tourism interface is a significant factor of success. Tourism development needs to consider as the priority sector of the state and superior synergy need to be established through policy statements.

A well designed tourism policy holistically covers these social development aspects. Since many parties involved, there are conflicts and bargaining between the actors involved in policy related activities (Oratai & Bramwell, 2010). Therefore, tourism policy is a node that ties with various parties involved to achieve the goal oriented result of the government priorities. A successful tourism policy implementation also required a superior synergy between other sectors of the government that have a direct or indirect influence of tourism development. In the context of the current study, it is evidenced that there are significantly weak implementation tourism policy in Kerala causes dissatisfaction of tourist destination community and tourists. It is significantly noted that there is a weak external synergy of tourism policy with other government sectors, improper interactive and negotiation process in implementing tourism policy in Kerala.
These network nodes and ties are described in the following triangle and are called as triangulation effect.

![Triangulation effect of Kerala tourism performance](image)

*Figure 6.1 Triangulation effect of Kerala tourism performance*

Based on the finding of the Kerala tourism performance core component analysis, it can be concluded that the inefficiency of policy implementation is the core reason for non-alignment weak performance of performance constructs such as (1) Tourism Satisfaction Index (a) Cognitive Product Satisfaction Scale (PSS), (b) Cognitive Service Satisfaction Scale (CSS). (2) Community Impact Assessment (CIA) (a) Conservation Effort (CE), (b) Social Service (SS), and (c) Social Issues (SI). (3) Stakeholders Practice and Confidence (a) Confidence, (b) Effectiveness. As a result the destination developments are not efficiently achieving the expected multiplier effects. This is a significant issue of destination development. A functional approach of destination development suggests that all involved parties
required to include in managing tourism system (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). Therefore, destination efficiency is a process of joint decision making among autonomous, key stakeholders of an inter-organizational, community tourism domain to enhance the performance efficiency and the decision initiative is the tourism policy of the state as a node and directly or indirectly involved sectors are the ties. The triangulation effects describes that the Kerala tourism policy implementation effectiveness is the deficiency to improve the performance of community, tourists and stakeholders performance. Hence, managerial action required to consider for enhancing the performance core components of Kerala tourism.

7.2 Conclusion

Many of the results of this study reinforce benchmarking model based on four performance core components of tourism. It is clear that the model tested major components, subcomponents and elements of tourism industry. The result of the Tourist Satisfaction Index (TSI) separates the cognitive satisfaction indices into four. It is clear that tourists appreciate Kerala tourism in terms of their overall satisfaction. But, it is obvious that increased negative attributes such as Cognitive Product Satisfaction (CPS) and Cognitive Service Satisfaction (CSS) result in a weak performance in the case of Kerala tourism. This is an alarming situation as the positive response of cognitive dissonance is not only due to the real expected experience of tourists, but also arise from subsidized services and product based on the unique nature of Kerala tourism, which is an attitude quite evident in exploring tourist destinations. However, this compromise will not be possible
constantly due to the rapid changes of tourist motivation and new and unique destinations are being explored in the tourism market. Destinations should maintain an expected standard in all performance core attributes. This efficiency will further enrich the confidence of tourists resulting in enhanced destination image.

In Community Impact Assessment, Conservation Effort (CE), Social Services (SS) and Social Issues (SI) show a weak performance. However, Economic Condition (EC) is confirmed with a positive influence. This result is a perfect consideration of injection of money in the local economy that outweighs Social Issues and Social Services and Conservation Effort. Definitely, it is a threat for the future sustainable development of the tourist destination. Since Kerala is an exploring tourist destination, community receptivity is much evident due to the euphoria. Whenever the issues outweigh the monitory benefits, community antagonism will be the result. Since most of the tourist attractions have significant involvement in destination community, it is important to look into the improvement of the performance constructs such as Conservation Effort (CE), Social Service (SS) and Social Issues (SI).

Stakeholders’ perception on tourism development is also not promising, they have of the view that the initiatives are not implemented efficiently and poor synergy between sectors causes isolated performance of core components resulting tourism development without proper direction. They perceive that the social image of tourism industry is still not at an acceptable level and recommended for strong public awareness for the long term sustainable
development of tourism industry. Tour operators are taking substantive measures to promote eco-tourism, new packages and community support. However, there are many initiatives are required to be enforced on tour operations, the promotional materials are a good medium of communication to educate the tourists, however it has not been seen in the promotional brochures and folders. There is no significant effort also made by inbound tour operators towards sustainability, which is an indication of lack of synergy established between public and private sectors. Regardless of the issues, it is evident that Kerala tourism has good prospects in terms of investment and future tourism businesses. It is high time to regulate the industry by avoiding unauthorized entry of illegal investors to protect the interest of genuine stakeholders. This action not only protects the stakeholders’ interest but also provide confidence to all the parties involved in tourism business. Tour operators and other stakeholders are the worst hit by harthals, which over weigh all other positive perceptions and result in a poor destination image and loss of opportunity for the stakeholders.

It is also evident that Kerala Tourism Policy 2007 has isolated achievements. There are many unexpected issues and tragedies that continuously happened in the tourism industry, due to these, stakeholders are also not confident in the managerial actions in major thrust areas such as Harthal, waste management, and maintenance of tourist attraction. The experience of 2007 tourism policy implementation effectiveness is also reflected on the confidence of 2012 tourism policy. Stake holders’ perception on the new tourism policy is moderate. Confidence is established in sustainability, community benefits,
increased market share, manpower and information center development. Indeed, stakeholders confidence on development of tourism with international standards, sustainable private investment opportunities, investment control, provision of safety, exception of harthal from tourism are all at stake. It is alarming that these attributes are major nodes of tourism development in Kerala.

In a nutshell, the performance of the tourism index core components is not steadily functioning in Kerala Tourism. It is required to monitor the variables that are performing inefficiently and necessary measures are required to be initiated for the improved functioning of these performance components. A superior synergy is also needed to be worked out among all core components to create a triangular effect to make Kerala tourism system function efficiently so as to achieve international market leadership. This effort will undoubtedly bring in reality the most desirable ideal of long term sustainable development of tourism in Kerala.

7.3 Limitations

Though this study covers the development of a tool for destination performance evaluation and tested the model in Kerala Tourism, a better result of the model can be obtained if using large number of samples from all over the state. However, this need a long time frame for better accuracy. Since tourism development consists of the involvement of many sectors, subsectors and individuals, only core components that directly involve for tourism development is tested in the study. There can be a more accurate results obtained if including various micro and macro components of destination development. Destination
performance evaluation required strong background information from the public sector, however there was a restriction in accessing some of the documents required to conduct the study. In addition, investment and turnover from tourism is also an important area to cover the destination performance efficiency in economic level, however an accurate result can only be obtained if the destination reaches a stable development level, using economic input and output in the exploring stage of destination may bias the result of the study.