

A Study on the Impact of Responsible Tourism on Women Empowerment in Kollam District

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Abstract

The responsible tourism model in Kerala has enabled thousands of women entrepreneurs to participate in tourism-related enterprises and gain economic independence. This study aims to examine the impact of responsible tourism initiatives on women empowerment in Kollam district. The research focuses on analyzing how tourism activities influence women's economic independence, decision-making power, employment opportunities, and social participation. The study also evaluates the role of government schemes, self-help groups, and tourism organizations in promoting women's involvement in responsible tourism activities. The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach using primary and secondary data collected from women entrepreneurs, tourism workers, and community members involved in tourism activities. The findings of the study are expected to highlight the positive relationship between responsible tourism practices and women empowerment. The study will also provide recommendations to strengthen policies and programs that encourage women's participation in tourism, thereby contributing to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth in Kollam district.

Keywords: development, sustainable, recommendations, descriptive, tourism

Introduction

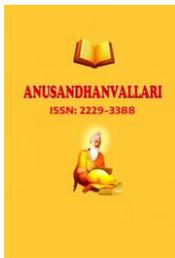
Kollam district is one of the important tourism destinations in Kerala, known for its scenic landscapes, backwaters, beaches, historical monuments, and cultural heritage. Popular tourist attractions in the district include Ashtamudi Lake, Munroe Island, Thangassery Lighthouse, and eco-tourism sites. Tourism development in Kollam has increased significantly in recent years with the introduction of new tourism projects and infrastructure improvements.

The development of tourism in Kollam district has created several employment opportunities for local residents, particularly women. Many women in rural areas are involved in tourism-related activities such as handicraft production, local food preparation, homestay management, and participation in self-help groups. These initiatives help women generate additional income and improve their socio-economic status.

Women empowerment is an important component of sustainable development. Empowerment refers to the process through which individuals gain control over their lives, access to resources, and the ability to participate in decision-making processes. In the context of tourism, women empowerment involves providing women with opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, skill development, and leadership.

Tourism can play a vital role in promoting women empowerment by creating employment opportunities and supporting small-scale enterprises managed by women. Responsible tourism initiatives further strengthen this process by ensuring that tourism development benefits local communities and promotes gender equality. Programs such as women-friendly tourism initiatives and community-based tourism projects have been implemented in Kerala to encourage women's participation in the tourism sector.

Despite the positive contributions of tourism to women empowerment, several challenges still exist. Women often face barriers such as limited access to finance, lack of training and skills, social constraints, and inadequate support



systems. Therefore, it is essential to examine the impact of responsible tourism initiatives on women empowerment and identify strategies to overcome these challenges.

This study focuses on analyzing the role of responsible tourism in promoting women empowerment in Kollam district. The research examines how tourism activities influence women's economic independence, employment opportunities, social participation, and decision-making power. The study also explores the role of government policies, tourism organizations, and self-help groups in supporting women's participation in responsible tourism initiatives.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between responsible tourism and women empowerment. The research will also provide recommendations for policymakers, tourism planners, and community organizations to enhance women's participation in tourism activities and promote sustainable development in Kollam district.

Objectives

To assess the demographic profile of the respondents

To analyse the impact of responsible tourism on women empowerment in kollam district

To suggest feasible solutions to empower women in effective ways

Objereview Of Literature

1. Scheyvens (2020) Tourism and gender empowerment. Journal of Sustainable Tourism.

Aim: To analyze the relationship between tourism development and women empowerment in developing regions.

Sample: 220 women working in tourism enterprises across Southeast Asia.

Statistical Tools: Descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings: The study revealed that tourism employment significantly enhances women's income and social participation. Women engaged in tourism enterprises gained greater decision-making power within their families. Tourism also created opportunities for skill development and entrepreneurship. However, the study highlighted that gender inequality still exists in managerial positions. Community-based tourism initiatives were found to be particularly beneficial for empowering women. The research concluded that responsible tourism practices are essential for ensuring equitable distribution of tourism benefits. Governments should focus on gender-sensitive tourism policies to maximize women's empowerment.

2. Sharma & Dutta (2021) has done a research on Sustainable tourism and rural women empowerment. Aim: To examine how sustainable tourism influences rural women's livelihoods. Sample: 180 women involved in eco-tourism enterprises. Statistical Tools: Correlation and multiple regression analysis. Findings: The study found that tourism significantly improved women's economic independence and employment opportunities. Participation in tourism enterprises increased women's confidence and leadership abilities. Women involved in tourism reported higher household incomes compared to non-participants. The research emphasized the importance of government support and training programs for women entrepreneurs. Sustainable tourism initiatives were found to strengthen community participation and social inclusion. The study recommended expanding women-focused tourism programs to rural areas.

3. Nair & George (2021) Community-based tourism and women empowerment in Kerala. Aim: To evaluate the impact of community-based tourism on women empowerment in Kerala. saample: 150 women entrepreneurs from tourism self-help groups. Statistical Tools: Chi-square test and factor analysis. Findings: The study revealed that community-based tourism significantly contributes to women's financial independence and skill development. Women involved in tourism activities reported improved social recognition and participation in community decisions. The research also highlighted the role of self-help groups in supporting women entrepreneurs. Tourism income helped women contribute to household expenses and education of children. The study concluded that responsible tourism initiatives strengthen gender equality in local communities.

4. Bhaskaran (2022) has done a research on Women entrepreneurship in responsible tourism

Aim: To examine the role of responsible tourism in promoting women entrepreneurship in Kerala. Sample: 200 women entrepreneurs involved in tourism enterprises. Statistical Tools: Descriptive statistics and ANOVA. Findings: The study observed that a large proportion of tourism enterprises are managed by women under responsible tourism programs. Women entrepreneurs benefited from increased income, training opportunities, and market access. Tourism initiatives encouraged women to start small businesses such as handicrafts, food processing, and homestays. The research concluded that responsible tourism has created significant employment opportunities for women across Kerala.

5. Kumar & Joseph (2022) has done a research on Eco-tourism and socio-economic development of women. Aim of the research is to analyze the socio-economic impact of eco-tourism on rural women. the researcher used Sample: 120 women working in eco-tourism projects. The Statistical Tools: Paired t-test and regression analysis. Findings: The results showed that eco-tourism significantly increased women's income levels and employment opportunities. Women participants reported improved self-confidence and social mobility. The study also found that tourism initiatives encouraged women to participate in local governance and community organizations. However, the study noted challenges such as limited training and access to financial resources.

Research Methodology

This paper concentrates on the impact of responsible tourism on women empowerment in kollam district The researcher used both of the primary and secondary data. The researcher used simple Random sampling used to collect the data. The sample was the women entrepreneurs in the region of kollam under the responsible tourism mission and the sample size is 142. The researcher used One way ANOVA to find the result.

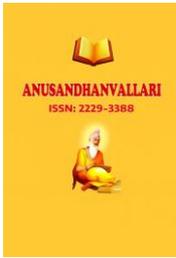
Analysis & Interpretation

Table :1 Opinion of Respondents towards Study Variables Based on women Experience

Factors	Experience and Mean value			ANOVA Result	
	Below 1 - 3Years	3--5 Years	Above5 Years	F- value	P- value
Community Participation in Tourism	3.49	3.39	3.40	1.003	.368
Employment Opportunities in Tourism Sector	3.33	3.27	3.17	8.260	.000
Skill Development and Training Programs	3.46	3.19	3.07	9.682	.000
Access to Financial Resources	3.30	3.20	3.09	8.176	.000
Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism	3.55	3.51	3.51	.386	.680
Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism	3.69	3.78	3.62	2.540	.080
Government Policies and Support	3.19	3.40	3.32	.433	.649

Source: Primary data, * Significant at one percent level, NS-Not Significant

** Significant at five percent level



Ho: There is no difference of opinion towards study variables based on Experience of empowerment respondents.

ANOVA is used to test the variation between responsible tourism and women empowerment practice experience. The above table shows that respondents having experience below 3 years are giving high importance to .Community Participation in Tourism, Employment Opportunities in Tourism Sector, Skill Development and Training Programs, Income Generation through Tourism, Access to Financial Resources, Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism, Government Policies and Support

The respondents having experience between 3 -5 years are giving high importance to Employment Opportunities in Tourism Sector, Skill Development and Training Programs, Income Generation through Tourism, Access to Financial Resources, Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Tourism, Government Policies and Support and Community Participation in Tourism,

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Findings

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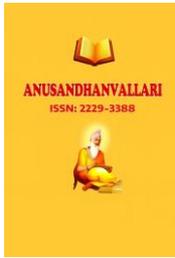
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Suggestions

- Strengthen self-help groups involved in tourism activities.
- Organize tourism awareness programs in rural areas.
- Facilitate easier access to bank loans for women entrepreneurs.
- Encourage eco-friendly tourism initiatives managed by women.
- Promote handicrafts and traditional products produced by women.
- Improve safety and security measures for women working in tourism.
- Strengthen collaboration between government and tourism organizations.

Conclusion

Responsible tourism plays a significant role in promoting sustainable development and improving the socio-economic conditions of local communities. The findings of this study highlight that responsible tourism initiatives



have a positive impact on women empowerment in Kollam district. Tourism activities provide women with opportunities to participate in income-generating enterprises such as homestays, handicrafts, local cuisine preparation, and tourism services. These activities contribute to improving women's financial independence, social status, and decision-making power within their families and communities.

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