

The Extend of Civic Participation in Endogenous Tourism Projects and its Impact on Perceived Benefits: A Study from Kumbalangi Village in Kerala, India

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the extend of civic participation on the perceived benefits by the villagers due to the implementation of endogenous tourism project in the island village of Kumbalangi. Collection of data was made from the registered voters of the constituency through intercept surveys. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 530 samples were obtained. The participation was examined in two phases – viz. during the planning phase and during the implementation phase. As per the results *the participation in the planning phase was a significant determinant of participation in the implementation phase. However, civic participation in the implementation phase is found more significantly influencing favourable resident perceptions than participation during the planning phase. The perceived benefits of the project implementation on the community were examined in the areas of infrastructure development, income, increased quality of life, and culture. Additionally, the study discovered that the resident participation in the implementation phase functions as a full mediator.* The practical implications are further discussed.

Keywords: Civic participation, Resident Perception, Endogenous Tourism Project, Quality of life, Kumbalangi Island village, India

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Introduction

Endogenous tourism is one of the new rural tourism models that is successfully implemented by India and Greece. "Endogenous tourism development is based mainly on local and/ or national sources while exogenous is based primarily on foreign or transnational capital" (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 1999). Endogenous tourism development is a somewhat new approach in the tourism industry that aims at maximizing local control and benefits. Government of India had ambitious plans behind the implementation of the endogenous tourism project which is achieved through effective participation of the village. (Equations, 2008). These projects aim at maximizing the quality of the life of the people of the locality by minimizing the leakage of income from tourism. (Mayura, 2009). The implementation approach was to bring intimate and quality interaction between residents and tourists so that the tourists will be able to have deeper experience of the rural life of the region (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2004). The least developed and the developing economies around the world found endogenous tourism model as an appropriate strategy to bring in development of tourism destinations especially in villages. (Philip, Jonathan, & Neil, 1995).

In Indian tourism map, Kumbalangi has a significant place. Kumbalangi is recognized as an excellent model of rural development through tourism without large external investments. Holistic regional development and through people participation was the primary aim of the project. There was a "software" and a "hardware" content in the project. Training the locals in the relevant soft skills to give appropriate services to the tourists was the software part. Whereas the hardware part was the creation of necessary infrastructure like developing homestays, recreation facilities, restaurants etc., for tourists. The Government of India wanted to deliver this hardware part only through local initiatives so that tourism will produce equitable benefits for the island dwellers. In 2006 the project won the World Travel Award in the category of the 'World's Leading Responsible Tourism Project' (Endogenous Tourism for Rural Livelihoods, 2009).

Participation of the residents is very important in all the rural development projects (Jigang & Jiuxia, 2007). Studies have also proved that the resident

ownership of the project and their favourable feeling towards the project depend on their level participation (Gebremedhin & Theon, 2007). The feeling of ownership has direct relationship with sustainability of development projects (Roodt, 2001). The objective of endogenous tourism projects is rural development with intense participation of the residents (Endogenous Tourism for Rural Livelihoods, 2007). Though local participation is one of the central themes of endogenous tourism, there were not many studies that unearthed the multiple impact of participation in the successful implementation of the tourism the project. Resident participation, local participation and civic participation are used interchangeably in this paper.

This study was made to examine some of the important aspects of civic participation in the successful implementation of endogenous tourism projects. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, none of the previous studies have investigated how local participation during the planning phase of rural tourism project affects their participation during the implementation phase of the project. Although the implication of community participation in endogenous tourism project has been acknowledged by many practitioners in the area of rural development projects, none of the previous studies have explored the role of civic participation on their perceptions towards the benefits of the endogenous tourism project. Besides this, the investigation of various components of perceptions towards the impact of endogenous tourism project is scant as well. Therefore, this study aimed at bridging these gaps by empirically testing the relationship between participation and perceptions in the endogenous tourism project. The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of civic participation in the endogenous tourism project on resident perception of the impact of the project. For this purpose the present study distinguished two phases of participation – participation in planning and participation in implementation. The findings of this study are important because it examines both the processes of development and the results of the development. The findings could be certainly useful for the development funding agencies (e.g., UNDP, IMF, World Bank), governments and practitioners in policy formulation, and guidance in tourism project implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Resident Participation

Participation of the community is considered an vital part of the development philosophy (Jigang & Jiuxia, 2007). Some researchers argue that it is even impossible to overemphasize the need for beneficiary participation in the developmental projects (Meyer & Theron, 2000). Participation is the transformation act by the beneficiaries of development. Community participation can bring conflicts and confusions and even then it has to be essential part of the development process (Botes & Van, 2000). Community participation is advocated for long time in all sustainable tourism development projects (Okazaki, 2008). Haywood (1988) defines community participation as a process of involving all stakeholders (local government officials, local citizens, architects, developers, business people, and planners) in such a way that decision making is shared. Taylor (1995) criticized this approach and called it *communitarianism*. In the context of community participation, the term 'social capital' from sociology is also used in tourism literature. Civic engagement is another term used instead of community participation by many authors (Hays, 2007). For the purpose of this study resident participation, and other terms interchangeably used, is defined as the efforts of the residents of the region to effect control over decision making in implementation of the project.

Resident Perception Towards Endogenous Tourism project

This study attempts to explain the relationship between resident participation and resident perception. For this purpose in addition to referring to previous literature, efforts were also made to understand the specific situations existing in Kumbalangi village. Several rounds of focus group discussions were conducted with the authorities of the local self-government, local leaders, and service providers like homestay sellers. In addition to discussions with key informants field visits were also made to informally interact with residents of the place to formulate the survey instrument. Based on the information gathered from the focus group, resident interactions, and personal observations the most important factors that are influenced by

resident participation were identified. Based on this information resident perceptions were analyzed under four major headings. They are infrastructure, tourism income, overall wellbeing and culture.

Infrastructure

The important discourse on sustainability through tourism development revolves around how effective is the utilisation of the natural or built socio-cultural resources of the place. (Butler, 1991). The success of the project is in ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and costs of tourism to the local community as well as to tourists while utilising the tourism infrastructure available in the region. Tourism infrastructure includes man-made and natural resources of the place that directly indirectly help in providing services to tourists. This include shops, restaurants, attractions of the place, travel services on road and water, accommodation and gastronomic facilities etc. These facilities need not be exclusively used for tourism instead they include residential, commercial, leisure and industrial facilities used by the residents, however capable promoting tourism development (Briassoulis, 2002). For the purpose of the study the tourism infrastructure is defined as all man-made resources that are directly or indirectly facilitating tourism and are available for both locals and tourists alike.

Tourism Income

The tourism industry generates substantial economic benefits to both host countries, communities and tourists' home countries. For example, tourism is largest industry in Maldives, which accounts for 28% of GDP. More than 60% of the foreign exchange receipts and over 90% of government tax revenue in Maldives comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). Contribution to the economy is one of the crucial motivations in promoting rural tourism. Developing countries in general has extensive untainted natural rural environments. These regions help promoting tourism. However, the economic impact of tourism varies enormously from region to region (Akama & Kieti, 2007) depending on other factors favouring tourism. Inflow of money because of tourism do not guarantee favourable economic outcomes for a region. The money that comes to a destination may be flowing out of the region because of different

types of economic leakages. Hence a close scrutiny and analysis of the funds flow to and from the place is critical to determine positive or negative flow of money from the tourism industry. The perception of the residents regarding their monetary gains from tourism is an important aspect of the research.

Quality of Life

Quality of life has become a hot topic of discussion in most of the developmental literature (Browne et al., 1999; Conway, 2010). Tourism one of the industries that touches the quality of life of people of the region (Andereck et al., 2007). The impact of tourism on quality of life can be positive (Lankford et al., 2003; Lawton, 2005; GU & Wong, 2006) or negative (Nepal, 2008). Quality of life is decidedly linked to feelings and emotions of individuals and therefore, adoption of multidimensional approach is necessary to capture it (Shalock, 1996). Assessment of quality of life done through aggregation, going beyond the subjective human response and feelings to understanding the objective situation existing in the locality (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 1997). Hence, the perceptions on quality of life even in similar situations and experiences may be different to individuals undergoing the same circumstances (Tylor & Bogdan, 1996). Swain (2002) emphatically states that the indicators of quality of life were not objective in spite of the fact that many of them are derived from unbiased data. Therefore, there is the need to ensure that data collection is made from sufficiently large population. Quality of life, therefore, can be seen as an aggregation of subjective assessment of outlooks of a comparatively large population in an area. This subjectivity element makes it very difficult to define quality of life.

Culture

Residents of a geographical are usually consider their culture as one of the very imperative social values (Nuksunova, 2009; Sabloff, 2008). Tylor (1958) defines culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." The culture of a place gradually gets affected especially in the early stages of tourism development (Leep, 2008). The study by Notzke (2004), reveals the residents' bitterness

towards tourism development because they thought tourism was an invasion into their original culture and would damage it. Hence, the knowledge regarding residents' perception on the influence of tourism on local culture is import to tourism planning and development. Therefore, in this study the impact of residents' participations was also examined from the cultural perspectives.

Relationships between Participation and Perception

Today, sustainable tourism is considered as a key to rural development (Jiuxia, & Jigang, 2007). The participation in tourism projects induce the residents to think, act, and control their dealings (Cole, 2006). Studies have also proved that participation of the residents and/or beneficiaries is found to influence their perceptions. (Attoh, 2006).

Participation in the planning phase is a means to increase the community participation in the implementation phase (UNDP, 2005). However, the participants in both phase need not be the same. Many who participated in planning phase may or may not join in the implementation phase. Participation in planning provide the residents a deeper understanding of technical issues, balance tradeoffs between stakeholders and will have better role clarity during the implementation process. Participation in the planning process by residents also results in their enhanced participation and speedy implementation of projects (Amando et al., 2009). Moreover, studies have also demonstrated that the participation of beneficiaries- irrespective of planning or implementation phase- influence their perceptions positively and is important to long term sustainability of projects (Mirghani & Savenije, 2000; Pollnac & Crawford, 2000). Pagdee and Jailad (2006) divided community participation into four phases, namely participation in planning, implementation, monitoring, and benefiting and established that participation significantly influenced residents' perception regarding the benefits. Hasse & Milne, (2005) also have established in their study that resident participation deepens their understanding of tourism project and therefore, influenced their perceptions. Based on aforementioned discussion, the following hypotheses regarding the relationships between participation and perception were developed:

H1: Planning phase residents' participation will influence their participation in implementation phase.

H2a: Civic participation in planning phase will affect perception on infrastructure development.

H2b: Civic participation in planning phase will affect perception on local income enhancement.

H2c: Civic participation in planning phase will affect perception on increased of quality of life.

H2d: Civic participation in planning phase will affect perception on cultural development.

H3a: Civic participation in implementation phase will affect perception on infrastructure development.

H3b: Civic participation in implementation phase will affect perception on local income enhancement.

H3c: Civic participation in implementation phase will affect perception on increased of quality of life.

H3d: Civic participation in implementation phase will affect perception on cultural development.

METHODOLOGY

Measures

The instrument used for survey was constructed on the basis of prior studies (Ratz, 2003). However, the instrument was modified to suit local conditions. The changes were incorporated based on the insights from focus group discussions, tourism service providers and the residents of the area. The researcher measured residents' perceptions on the level of participation, development of infrastructure, local income, quality of their life and culture (identity). The people perceptions were measured only after the implementation of endogenous tourism project in Kumbalangi. First, a self-assessment their (residents) participation during the planning phase and implementation phases

were made. Participation during both phases were assessed through 5 questions using 5-point scale with responses ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), respectively. Second, after the implementation of the endogenous tourism what is the resident perception about infrastructure, local income, quality of life and culture after tourism development were considered using a 5-point scale (1= significantly deteriorated and 5 = significantly enhanced). Perception about infrastructure was estimated using 11 questions (e.g., roads) and local income -8 questions). Quality of life was assessed using 16 questions (e.g., public security). Culture was measured using 12 items (e.g., tolerance towards different cultures). Lastly, socio-demographic variables (e.g., gender, age, income) were measured.

Sample

In order to identify the respondents, the official voters list published by the Election Commission, Government of India was used. Voters list contained the names everyone in the locality who are 18 and above. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. As per the voters list there were 18612 adults in Kumbalangi village. This island village was initially divided into 5 regions on the basis of the geography of the place. From each geographical region one precinct is taken using lottery method. Finally approximately ten percentage of voters from each precinct was identified through simple random method. An intercept survey was made among the residents by visiting their homes and a total of 530 usable responses were obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 gives the demographic details of the respondents identified. They varied in gender (male = 46.2% and female = 53.8%), level of education (high school and below 66.6%, somewhat college =17.5%, under graduation = 11.5% and graduation and above = 3.2%), occupation (mostly house wives = 40.4 and self-employed = 22.3), age (mostly from middle age group, between 36 -50 = 39.4 % and between 51- 65 = 26.6%), income (mostly belonged to lower income group, below Rs 2000/- per month = 42.6% and between Rs 2000- 4000/- per month = 30.2% and 8.1% or respondents did not share the information about their income level).

Table 1. Demographics of the Respondents

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	245	46.2
	Female	285	53.8
Education	High school & below	353	66.6
	Somewhat college	93	17.5
	Undergraduate	61	11.5
	Graduate	17	3.2
Occupation	Education	22	4.2
	House wife	214	40.4
	Self employed	118	22.3
	Business	14	2.6
	Govt employee	34	6.4
	Private employment	34	6.4
	Daily Wage	43	8.1
	Agriculture	14	2.6
	Others	19	3.6
Age	≤ 22	29	5.5
	22-35	90	17.0
	36-50	209	39.4
	51- 65	141	26.6
	≥ 65	61	11.5
Income	< Rs 2000	226	42.6
	Rs 2000 – 4000	160	30.2
	Rs 4001- 6000	68	12.8
	Rs 6001-8000	10	1.9
	Rs 8001-12000	15	2.8
	> Rs 120000	8	1.5

Local Participation in the planning and implementation phase of endogenous tourism project

Table 2 showed the extend of local participation. From the mean vales it is very clear that the local participation was low in both planning and implementation phase of the project. During the planning phase, the highest participation was for road construction (1.39) and the least was in creating new avenues for water related leisure facilities (1.22). It is fascinating to note that the least partaken item in the planning phase (e.g., creating new water related recreation facilities) received the highest partaking during implementation. Moreover, it is noteworthy that local participation during the implementation (Grand mean 1.74) is better than the participation during the planning phase (Grand mean 1.27). Higher grand mean during the implementation was primarily because of the people participation in arranging homestays and water related tourism avenues. Most favourable perception was for infrastructure development and the lowest value was for improvements in quality of life.

Table 2. Descriptive Information for Questions Used in the Study

Variables (Cronbach's alpha)	Questions	Mean	SD
Participation in Planning (.932)	Establishment of Park	1.25	.69
	Starting Home-stays	1.27	.72
	Road construction and maintenance	1.39	.88
	Creation of Kalagram (Art School)	1.27	.74
	Facilitating water related tourism avenues (like kayaking & Small boat journey)	1.22	.69
	Grand Mean	1.27	0.64
Participation in Implementation (.837)	Establishment of Park	1.22	.78
	Starting Home-stays	1.40	1.02
	Road construction and maintenance	1.27	.85
	Creation of Kalagram (Art School)	1.23	.76
	Facilitating water related tourism avenues (like kayaking & Small boat journey)	3.53	.99
	Grand Mean	1.74	0.66
Infrastructure (.899)	State of affairs of roads	3.59	.67
	Public transportation availability (like buses)	3.76	.55
	Other transportation (like taxi)	3.72	.54
	Bridges	3.74	.54
	Lodging facilities	3.81	.46
	Business opportunities	3.71	.52
	Regular electricity	3.65	.58
	Food and beverages in shops and restaurants	3.55	.78
	Hygiene in tea shops and restaurants	3.88	.46
	Availability of clean drinking water	3.56	.62
	Stability of internet and telephone	3.56	.57
	Grand Mean	3.73	0.33

Income (.645)	Job openings	3.69	.59
	Income and living standard	3.71	.53
	Proceeds of the sale of regular goods and services (like food)	3.13	.68
	The extent of sales in shops	3.47	.55
	Income from art shows	4.65	.49
	Earning from ordinary jobs relating to tourism	2.22	.92
	Increase in real estate value	3.83	.44
	Overall income of the residents	2.89	.79
	Grand Mean	3.58	0.26
Quality of Life (.779)	Progressive changes in life style	2.79	.77
	Entertaining facilities (theaters, cinemas etc)	3.69	.52
	Play grounds	3.33	.66
	Law and order in the island	2.93	.65
	Cultural organisations like clubs	3.16	.89
	Decrease in disturbing public noise	3.13	.72
	Decrease in littering	3.58	.65
	Decrease in spitting in public places	3.16	.72
	Mutual trust amongst people	3.99	.49
	Decrease in public smoking	3.97	.40
	Pleasure in being a resident of Kumbalangi	3.51	.56
	Ability to interact with strangers	3.80	.49
	Attitude towards economic discipline	3.82	.47
	Cleanliness of public places	3.87	.47
	Cleanliness of food service areas	3.93	.37
	Health consciousness	3.93	.41
	Grand Mean	3.31	0.23
Culture (.682)	Approach towards work	4.00	.38
	Connection between generations	3.94	.51
	Moral uprightness	3.92	.44
	Sexual morals	3.87	.45
	Keeping of the culture	3.86	.51
	Politeness and curtesy	3.85	.47
	Upkeep of heritage edifices	3.73	.65
	Forbearance towards different cultures	3.68	.76
	Religiosity	3.59	.56
	Festivity of religious events	3.50	.59
	Honesty	2.23	1.07
	Bond between neighbours	2.22	1.07
	Grand Mean	3.53	.29

When the participation of the residents in the planning and implementation phase are compared, it is observed that except in two areas (i.e., starting of homestays and facilitating of water related recreation avenues) participation in planning mean values are higher. The participation in the establishing new homestays were high because they are independently done by the family members and needed no community support. Those who had enough money and other resources did not want a public approval to establish them. Participation in the water related recreation is high probably because Kumbalangi being an island, most of the residents knew how to provide water related tourism experiences.

Residents' Participation Towards the Endogenous Tourism Project

The growth of infrastructure due to tourism is significant. And on all aspects of infrastructure, the mean values of the people perception ranged from 3.55 to 3.88. Many previous studies have found that almost 25% of the total of tourists' expenses were on their accommodation and dining (Nield et al., 2000). Therefore, any enhancements in restaurants would be certainly a big value addition to tourism growth in Kumbalangi. Level of satisfaction regarding gastronomic experiences significantly contributes to satisfaction about the overall tourism experience. This is also an important factor not only in influencing tourists' repeated visits to the destination but also in spreading the positive or negative word of mouth. At present Kumbalangi tourism village does not have the presence of any big restaurants that are part of the international or national level chains. As part of the endogenous tourism project's soft skills development, trainings were given to local owners of tea shop and restaurants to provide quality services to tourists. Though there is an overall positive perception regarding the impact of this effort, it is interesting to note that the residents had highest regard for the improvements in the physical environments in the restaurants but their perception regarding the quality of food served was the lowest in the category. Endogenous tourism project was aiming at developing tourism in a locality without or with least minimum additional investment in tourism specific infrastructure. The infrastructure items listed in the questionnaire except home-stays were not tourism

specific. Instead, they were supporting improvement in the quality of public life in Kumbalangi village. Therefore, it can be rightly assumed that endogenous tourism project was successful in raising the quality of public infrastructure of the region.

It was also found that highest contribution to local income was through artistic performance. 93% responded positively about the income generated from different art performances (mean = 4.65). As a part of the project execution, focused and consistent efforts were made to preserve and develop *Chavittunadakam*, which is a folklore (dramatic presentation of a theme with rhythmic steps and music) which was on the verge of loss. In tune with the growth of tourism in the region in addition to folklores, encouragement is given to classical art forms such as *Thiruvathira* (one of the classical dance forms in Kerala). Performing artists became quite popular through the one weeklong tourism festival performances which attracted large number of tourists. Performances are also made on the basis of request of tourists in the home-stays. As a part of the project there was an effort to set up an art school (Kalagram) in the village to train the local artists.

The variable 'quality of life' being subjective was operationalized using 16 attributes. The grand mean value of these attributes was 3.54. It indicates the positive perception of the people of Kumbalangi towards the contribution to quality of their life tourism. People also perceived that the tourism project contributed to developing mutual trust among residents (mean = 3.99). This is probably because of the several meetings conducted to discuss various issues concerning tourism. Participation in meetings and the implementation of different projects certainly led to increased mutual trust among people. Another significant contribution of the tourism project implementation was in creating higher consciousness in maintaining public places, especially the premises of food service areas clean (mean = 3.93).

The overall perception about the impact of tourism on culture is positive since the group mean is 3.53. One of significant impacts of endogenous tourism project is the changing positive outlook towards work. Endogenous tourism has given opportunity for employment for many residents, especially women.

Most probably this has also resulted in the improvement of sexual morality in the society. It was found that the respondents had negative perceptions regarding only two factors, namely honesty and relationship with neighbors. Not all the residents were able to get employment or economic benefit out of endogenous tourism. This might have resulted in the negative influence on relationship between neighbors. There were many residents who were willing to cooperate with endogenous tourism project to generate additional income for their livelihood but were not able to find out an opportunity. This has led to dissatisfaction and gaps in the relationships with neighbors. The reference to growing dishonesty in connection with endogenous tourism is related to economic gains from endogenous tourism. When people make references to tourism gains, most people would certainly understate their economic gain which is quite ordinary in Kerala culture. This is probably why the respondents said that there was growing dishonesty among people due to tourism. In all other cases residents perceived endogenous tourism project as a positive influence on their culture.

Planning Phase Participation Impact on Implementation Phase Participation

In order to examine the influence of planning phase participation on implementation phase participation the data were analysed using simple regression method. Planning phase participation was taken as the independent variable and implementation phase participation was considered as dependent variable. Analysis of the results revealed that planning phase participation ($t = 26.354$; $p < .001$) significantly determined implementation phase participation. Therefore, the hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 3. Planning Phase Participation Impact on Implementation Phase Participation

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	0.797	.045		17.546	.000
Participation in planning	0.735	.032	.729	23.180	.000

Note: $R^2 = .531$

The Impact of Participation on Perception

The research examined the influence of participation during both planning (PP) and implementation (PI) phases. For many multiple regression analyses were done. Table 4 below gives both β and P values. People perceptions were significantly influenced by their participation in implementation phase in all the four aspects of the study; Infrastructure ($\beta = .142$ and $P = .001$) Income ($\beta = .190$ and $P = .000$), Quality of Life ($\beta = .064$ and $P = .035$) and Culture ($\beta = .181$ and $P = .000$). Since, study made it clear that planning phase participation does not significantly influence people perceptions, further investigations was made to examine the mediate role of planning phase participation, if any.

Table 4. Influence of participation on perception

Dependent Variables	Infrastructure		Income		Quality of life		Culture	
Independent Variables	β	P-value	β	P-value	β	P-value	β	P-value
Participation Planning (PP)	-.008	.878	-.044	.181	.021	.559	.032	.252
Participation Implementation (PI)	.142	.001	.190	.000	.064	.035	.181	.000
R^2	.055		.126		.036		.210	

Mediating effect of participation in the implementation phase

The mediating role of planning phase participation as suggested by Baron and Kenney (1986) on implementation phase of participation was examined through many regression analyses. The values obtained in the tests established in line with the previous studies that planning phase participation had significant positive effect on resident participation in the implementation phase ($p < .001$) and residents' perceptions ($p < .05$). Participation in the implementation phase also showed a significant effect on residents' perceptions ($p < .001$). However, planning phase resident participation did not significantly impact on the residents' perceptions. Thus, it is found that planning phase participation is a full mediator in significantly influencing resident participation in the implementation phase.

CONCLUSION

Endogenous tourism development projects were implemented in India by the Central Government was fundamentally for the rural development through intense local participation. Kumbalangi was the first place to complete the implementation of the project among fifty plus other destinations. Though the tourism project brought many benefits to the people of Kumbalangi, the findings of the study will be useful for the government, policy formulators and funding agencies to enhance the benefits of tourism to the local public with minimum tourism specific investments.

Educating the Residents. As part of the project there were extensive training for the local public. However, they were inadequate to obtain the participation of the large majority. If the local public, especially the poorest among them will withdraw from any tourism projects, if there are no short term benefits. Therefore, while implementing such projects aimed at rural development, there shall be on going training to ensure short term and continuous flow of income to economically and socially weaker sections in the society.

Comprehensive Tourism Planning and Implementation. A sustainable rural tourism development project shall begin from the preparation of a Tourism Inventory (TI). TI planning will also give

deeper awareness of the tourism project to the residents. This will directly and indirect boost local participation. In addition to the direct benefit of TI planning there are also indirect benefit of developing local leadership and would promote establishment of social structures to protect and promote tourism development.

Eight Step Participation Model

Eight Step Participation Model (Ryu, Roy, & Kim, 2020) (ESPM) is proposed for any sustainable rural tourism model (see Figure 1). The ESPM is a dynamic model that obtains feedback from the stakeholders in every step of implementation. The intervention from external agencies including funding and implementing organisations shall be kept minimum. However, during the second, fifth and seventh stages the interventions from the external agencies may have to be slightly more intense. Rural tourism projects shall be owned and managed by the residents who would be supported by consultant agencies through continuous education and training.

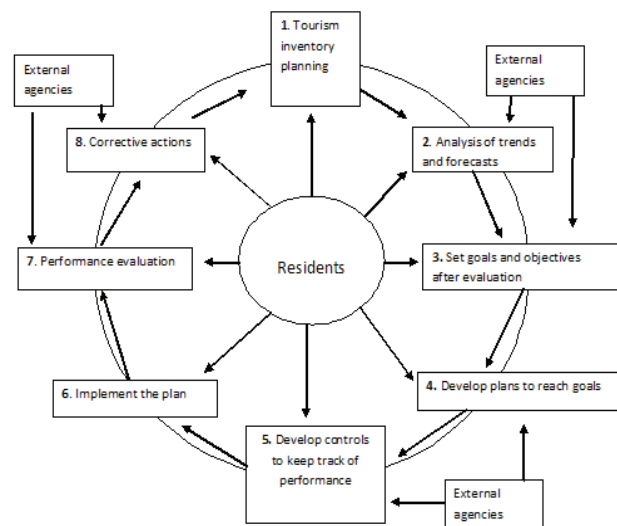


Figure 1. Proposed ESPM

Increasing the social capital of the region will also be one of the very good means to increase resident participation. Social capital refers to those clubs and associations which promote meaningful and constructive interaction among residents. The presence of strong local clubs and associations usually engages in promoting cultural and sports activities,

social actions through community participation like organising festivals, which in turn will become catalysts in promoting tourism related activities and give room for public participation in various other activities.

Need for an Agency to Coordinate and Control. At present there is no agency to coordinate tourism activities in the region, other than the Panchayath. There is the need for a strong agency that is entrusted with the task of monitoring tourism activities in the island. The same organization should take up the task of framing future policy guidelines and strategic plans tourism in the region. At present those financially resourceful need not come to democratic discussion process of public decision making, but are able implement the projects they like without any social control.

Promotional Marketing Efforts. Kumablangi endogenous tourism is in the growth phase. All endogenous tourism projects necessitate promotional support from the tourism departments at the Centre, the State and local self-government. This is primarily because of the small size of the suppliers of tourism product or service. These suppliers alone cannot market compete against large players in the market. Participating in trade shows and exhibitions can be done only if there are support from government.

Generation of Local Income. 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. Moreover, 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 findings of this study already show that residents are very happy to participate in setting up water related recreation avenues.

Endogenous rural tourism models present rural life as the product to 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 be brochures and other promotional materials which clearly and beautifully articulate the unique experiences available for a tourist. The presentation of these products must be made with an eye on revenue for the residents. 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 yet clearly defined. Therefore, the tourists are not able to choose from many different possibilities. Even if some tourists go for nature walk at present there are no defined revenue models.

There are some limitations of the study that need to be acknowledged. The findings of the study are limited to one of the endogenous tourism projects whereas there are more than fifty of them in the country. Hence, the applicability to other projects may be examined. The intercept survey was conducted during the week long tourism festival in the island. Hence there is a possibility of festivity influencing people and likely seepage of behaviour bias (Forgas, 1998) in their survey responses cannot be overlooked.

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