

Performance Measurement of Responsible Tourism Units with Special Reference to Kumarakom

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Abstract: Tourism has a key role in every economy from several angles. This sector has grown rapidly in recent years. Tourism has been shown to affect human health. Kerala strives to conserve its ecology and culture while providing real and meaningful tourism experiences. Sustainable tourism in Kerala minimises environmental, cultural, and economic consequences and maximises benefits for local populations. The state government and partners promote responsible tourism through trash management, resource conservation, eco-friendly accommodations, and support for local craftsmen and enterprises. This research aims to measure the performance of responsible tourism units in Kumarakom and identify their internal and external drivers and challenges. Kumarakom, a responsible tourism destination in Kottayam District, hosted the study. A proportionate stratified selection selected 60 RT unit leaders as respondents. The index technique and percentage analysis analyze the study objectives. The study used a sample survey and a well-structured interview schedule to obtain primary data through face-to-face interviews. Passion for a job and self-interest are the most motivating internal elements, while low capital, input availability, and product sales ease are the most motivating external aspects. RT units mostly face marketing and financial issues. The report advises the authorities to develop a mechanism to provide financial aid to RT units based on relevant criteria. Working together and using a holistic approach to responsible tourism may ensure that tourism continues to benefit society.

Keywords: Responsible Tourism; Entrepreneurship and Tourism; Community Participation in Tourism; Development of Local Communities; Growth of Tourism; Sustainable Development.

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1. Introduction

The word 'tourism' is derived from the Latin word 'Tornos,' which means a tool for describing a circle. The notion of a round tour has come from this. According to the World Travel Organization (WTO), tourists are defined as "persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes." Manila Declaration on World Tourism, 1980 defines tourism as "an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies and their international relations."

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According to Macintosh and Goldner [1], “Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors” [1]. It can be said that not only tourists but the business concerns, the local community of the destination, and the government ruling over the destination can be regarded as the stakeholders of tourism. Tourism can be regarded as an industry that has a collection of industries at various levels – public, private, and community - and the operations range from local small-scale enterprises and national tourism administering bodies to multinational hotel chains. Kerala initiated Responsible Tourism in February 2007 with the State-level consultative meeting titled ‘Better Together.’ As a pilot phase, the Responsible Tourism (RT) initiative was implemented in four destinations, viz. Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady, and Wayanad, in which Kumarakom, in Kottayam district, was developed as a successful model. Kerala launched the Responsible Tourism Mission on 20th October 2017, aimed at the development of local communities and the growth of tourism in the state. There is a mission co-ordinator at the state level for responsible tourism in Kerala. Eleven tourism destinations in the state, namely Kumarakom, Thekkady, Kovalam, Bekal, Vaikom, Vythiri, Kannur, Ambalavayal, Kozhikode, Alappuzha, and Ponnani are now under the Responsible Tourism (RT) Mission. A Responsible Tourism (RT) Destination Cell is functioning in every RT Destination under the Destination Co-ordinator.

Any single person, a group, or a family can be registered as an RT Unit through an application form for registration provided by the RT mission. There should be a leader for every unit. The activities and products of the unit need to be specifically written in the application form. The units can produce and supply any product or can render any service. RT mission takes a co-ordinator cum facilitator role. They don't give any financial assistance or infrastructural support to the unit. They help units with the marketing of their products. RT mission acts as a mediator for the units in payments and orders for their respective products and services. Thus, the exploitation of intermediaries can be avoided, and the local community will benefit from tourism. It is the mechanism through which the practice of responsible tourism has made possible. Several other programs may also be undertaken by the RT mission suitable to each destination to increase the level of community participation and to enable the local community to get the maximum economic benefit. Daily work reports of every RT destination will be uploaded to the official website. The work report includes the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of that day and also the total revenue generated from tourism for the day. There are a total of 121 units functioning under RT Destination Cell Kumarakom as of 1st December 2019. Out of these, 81 units are dealing with various products, and the remaining are rendering various services.

2. Review of Literature

In a study entitled “An Economic Evaluation of Indian Tourism in India” [2], the economic viability of the Indian tourism industry was analyzed by employing secondary data taken from various national and international reports, journals, books, magazines, and other pertinent literature of this discipline. The Indian tourism industry plays an important role in the economic development of many sectors of the economy by generating employment both for the skilled and unskilled labour force, improving living standards, particularly in remote rural areas, boosting foreign exchange earnings, promoting infrastructure development, and popularising the world-famous Indian traditions. The study “Tourism in India; Potentials, Challenges and Opportunities” [3] figures out that Tourism in India is a sunrise industry, an employment generator, a significant source of foreign exchange for the country, and an economic activity that helps local and host communities. Concerted efforts by all stakeholders, such as the central and state governments, the private sector, and the community at large, are pertinent for sustainable development and maintenance of the travel and tourism sector in the country.

Another inquiry titled “Effectiveness of Responsible Tourism at Kumarakom, Kerala” [4] reveals that the major impact of responsible tourism increases the standard of living of respondents involved in the study. Concerning concessional loans, not much impact is seen. The business houses were able to equip themselves for Tourism. Only a few new customers are there for local handicrafts because of the absence of a variety of handicrafts, the unattractive nature of handicrafts, and the unavailability of handicrafts at tourist spots. Fifty respondents were selected using the convenience sampling method. Statistical software 17.0 Karl Pearson, Chi-square test, Friedman test, and percentages were used to analyze the data.

It has been found that the efficiency of responsible tourism initiatives is equal to average or above average. The respondents were satisfied with the responsible tourism initiative in Kumarakom. Alleviation of poverty and employment opportunities are the dominant factors that stimulated responsible tourism in Kumarakom. The objectives of the study are to analyze various responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom, to study the level of satisfaction among respondents on various responsible tourism initiatives, and to identify the factors stimulating the growth of responsible tourism in Kumarakom. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Samples were selected using the convenience sampling method and collected primary data through a structured interview schedule from local people and visitors. Secondary data were collected from journals, books, and websites. Simple percentages, one sample t-test, and Friedman's test were used to analyze the data. The study suggested the need for capacity building and skill development support for tourism businesses [5]. In a descriptive study titled “Local community participation in responsible tourism – a case of Kumarakom Panchayath in Kerala,” 100 samples were selected

from various beneficiaries, including entrepreneurs, Craftsmen, Kudumbasree workers, etc., through a convenience sampling method.

A field survey was conducted with the help of a structured interview schedule. The study made conclusions that the success of tourism depends on the active support of the local community, without which the Sustainability of industry is threatened. Sustainability is achieved only through responsible tourism activities. Responsible Tourism (RT) is considered a responsible path toward a sustainable future. The local community plays a significant role in responsible tourism that creates socio-economic development in the lives of local people. Even though the local community is encouraged to take part in tourism activities, they are not financially supported by the Government authorities. Most people are reluctant to work for tourism because of a lack of finance.

Hence, in this context, it is better to take the initiative to provide financial assistance to those needy. Percentage analysis, t-test, mean and standard deviation, correlation, and paired t-test were the statistical tools used. Data analysis was done using SPSS Software [6]. There is a relationship between responsible tourism and sustainable development and quality of life. Four dimensions have been selected for the study: economic, social, cultural, and environmental. Kovalam, Thekkady, and Kumarakom have been the three places selected as responsible tourist destinations. Exploratory factor analysis and structured equation models are the tools used for data analysis. A sample size of 410 households has been used for data collection. Wrap software was employed [7].

In another empirical research conducted among 150 respondents, 50 each from business organizations, tourists, and local people selected through convenience sampling method, it has been found that RT initiatives make a positive impact in various spheres of Kumarakom [8]. Interview schedules were used to collect the data from respondents. Statistical tools like Mean, Standard deviation, percentages, and combined mean score were used. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The study revealed that. It leads to economic advancements like infrastructure developments, increased standard of living, a lot of new employment opportunities, new business investments, a market for local produce, recognition for local labourers, etc. The study, titled "Development of Sustainable Tourism in the State of Kerala through Community Participation," sought to investigate and empirically assess local engagement in the tourism industry to promote Sustainability and build a strategic model for regional sustainable tourism.

The Kerala Forest & Wildlife Department identified 55 ecologically sustainable tourism areas for research. A survey method was used, with an interview schedule, to collect data from both visitors and residents using a multi-stage random sample strategy. The proposed paradigm, known as the Conscious Capitalism strategy, holds that stakeholder pleasure leads to a contented community and content visitors. This method stresses collaborations among local communities, government institutions, and NGOs, resulting in improved service quality, better product value, and higher sales [9].

3. Statement of the Problem

Tourism has greater potential for development, so proper policy implementations and sustainable, innovative practices will give a greater advantage to the economy. Although there are developments in the field of tourism, a lot of opportunities are still left unexplored to their fullest extent. It is in this context that Responsible Tourism has gained its importance. Various benefits from tourism can be made available to the local community, like the involvement of local people in decision-making. The responsible tourism initiative of Kerala can be viewed as a sustainable measure for the tourism development of the state, as it has three levels of responsibility, viz. economic, social, and environmental. In Kerala, Kumarakom in Kottayam District has been announced as the most successful Responsible Tourism Destination by the Tourism Department of Kerala. It is the prime destination where guidelines for responsible tourism have been implemented. Local communities constitute most of the tourism workforce.

Studies conducted in this field, especially those done in Kumarakom, have identified that responsible tourism initiatives in Kumarakom have influenced the lives of local people and made social and economic impacts in the community. Some studies reveal the need for adequate awareness among the local people regarding responsible tourism. RT mission of the state does not give any financial assistance and infrastructural support to the units registered under it. Mission helps only to market the products of these units. In this instance, an understanding of whether the functioning of RT units is going well or facing any problems is essential. Local community participation constitutes a core aspect of the fulfilment of the ultimate objective of Responsible Tourism. So, identification of those factors that motivate the people to run the RT units will help in a better understanding of the condition of local people coming under the purview of Responsible Tourism.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the factors motivating the leaders of Responsible Tourism (RT) units in Kumarakom.

- To identify the problems faced by Responsible Tourism (RT) units in Kumarakom.

5. Methodology

The study was conducted in the tourism destination Kumarakom in Kottayam District, one of the responsible tourism destinations in Kerala. The historical importance of Kumarakom has shaped the present tourism landscape of the destination now. Historically, it was part of the kingdom of Thekkumkur. The local kings, fortified by the region's waterways, engaged in frequent conflicts. The remnants of ancient fortifications are still visible, and they are also major tourist attractions. This historical significance laid the groundwork for the region's identity and contributed to its attraction as a destination with historical importance. The area has come under the Kumarakom Grama Panchayath. The establishment of the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary in the 19th Century by George Alfred Baker, which eventually became a haven for bird species, attracted nature lovers and ornithologists. The focus on wildlife conservation has rather easily converted Kumarakom into a responsible eco-tourism destination.

The introduction of the Responsible Tourism concept in Kumarakom has fundamentally transformed its tourism landscape, fostering sustainable practices that benefit both the local community and the environment. This initiative, launched by the Government of Kerala, aimed to create a model of tourism that prioritizes ecological balance while enhancing the economic prospects of the residents. Seeing the potential of the place, the government has launched several projects to improve tourism facilities and encourage environmentally friendly behaviour on the part of all those involved. To ensure that the economic gains are divided fairly while protecting cultural legacy and environmental integrity, the Responsible Tourism program was introduced to involve local people in tourism-related activities.

Through this involvement, the economic advantages of tourism are aimed to be dispersed more fairly among locals as opposed to being concentrated in the hands of a small number of powerful entrepreneurs. It also aims at job creation. Besides, the sustainable and responsible tourism goals are aligned with infrastructural development. It is under these circumstances that the location of the study has been selected to be Kumarakom. Only Primary data were collected for the study by undertaking a sample survey using a well-framed interview schedule that was duly filled by the researcher through direct face-to-face interviews. The respondents for the study were the leaders of various RT units. For the study, a sample of 60 leaders of various RT units dealing with various products has been proportionately selected through the convenience sampling method (Table 1).

Table 1: Category and number of units under RT Cell, Kumarakom

No.	Category	Number
1	Paper bag units	11
2	Cloth bag units	13
3	Coconut supplying units	8
4	Tender coconut supplying units	6
5	Vegetable cultivation units	9
6	Plantain leaves supplying units	4
7	Chips making units	5
8	Curry powder-making units	4
9	Homemade chocolate units	3
10	Handicrafts/ Souvenir making units	5
11	Milk Supplying units	6
12	Tea and coffee-making units	5
13	Ramachamkizhi making units	3
14	Shikhara boat operators	18
15	Auto taxi drivers	12
16	Local guides	6
17	Cultural program units	4
Total		122

Source: RT Destination Cell, Kumarakom, as of 01-12-19

For this study, the units that render various services have been excluded from the study (Table 2). They are Shikhara boat operators, Auto taxi drivers, Local guides, and Cultural program units. Out of 122 total units, 82 units deal with various products. Samples are proportionately selected as

Number of units selected under each category = $\frac{N}{81} \times 60$
N = total number of units under the category.

Table 2: Category and number of units under RT Cell Kumarakom selected for the study

No.	Category	No. of units selected
1	Paper bag units	8
2	Cloth bag units	9
3	Coconut supplying units	6
4	Tender coconut supplying units	4
5	Vegetable cultivation units	6
6	Plantain leaves supplying units	3
7	Chips making units	4
8	Curry powder-making units	3
9	Homemade chocolate units	2
10	Handicrafts/ Souvenir making units	4
11	Milk Supplying units	5
12	Tea and coffee-making units	4
13	Ramachamkizhi making units	2
Total		60

The collected data were analyzed with the help of statistical tools like percentage analysis, index method, and Chi-square. Percentage analysis was used to analyze the socio-economic characteristics of leaders of Responsible Tourism (RT) units. The chi-square test was done in SPSS software. Other analyses were done with the help of Microsoft Office Excel.

Table 3: Statistical tools for each objective

No.	Objectives	Statistical tools
1	Identification of motivational factors	Index method, Chi-square
2	Identification of problems faced by Responsible Tourism (RT) units.	Index method

Indices have been calculated based on the Likert Scale of summated rating.

$$\text{Index} = \frac{\sum_{i=1} \sum_{j=1} S_{ij} * 100}{\sum \max S_j}$$

i= Respondents

j= Factors

S_j= Score of the jth factor

S_{ij}= Total score for the jth factor for ith respondent

max S_j= Maximum score for the jth factor

Where O is the observed cell frequency, and E is the expected cell frequency. It was carried out to test whether the hypothesis that those two categorical variables are independent of each other. In this test, observed frequencies were compared with expected cell frequencies. Suppose the calculated value for χ^2 is less than the Table 3 value at a certain level of significance for given degrees of freedom. In that case, we conclude that the null hypothesis stands, which means that the two attributes are independent or not associated. Observed cell frequencies are the actual number of cases falling in different cells of the contingency table, and expected frequencies are the number of cases that should fall in each cell if there is no relationship between the observed frequency and the expected frequency of each cell of a contingency table. While observed cell frequencies can be directly obtained from the given data, expected cell frequencies are calculated by multiplying the totals of the column and row to which the cell belongs and then dividing by the total sample size.

6. Limitations of the Study

The present study possesses certain limitations. It is conducted in one of the responsible tourism destinations. Therefore, the generalization of the results has to be cautious. So, the study cannot be generalized. Also, the sample size is restricted to 60. The Reluctance of the respondents to disclose the details due to the current political situation made it difficult for data collection. Biasness of the respondents is unavoidable as a field survey has been undertaken for the study. Money was also a constraint.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 4, which depicts the following. Out of the total 60 respondents selected for the study, 36 respondents are females. It can be surmised that women are more oriented towards taking up entrepreneurial units oriented towards promoting responsible tourism and ecological protection. It can be the extension of the mindset of the womenfolk, who are engaged in keeping the surroundings of the homes clean and tidy. Besides, the units provide an opportunity for the women to find an independent source of income. The majority belong to the age group of 41 – 50 years. Further, the respondents between 31 and 50 years constitute more than three-fourths of the sample (79%).

In the literature related to entrepreneurship, it is generally agreed that the propensity to enter into entrepreneurship is enhanced as the age progresses [10]- [12]. Here also, the picture is not different. Besides, the propensity to accept entrepreneurship as a source of living varies inversely with the level of education [13]-[15] as better educated have more chances to get paid employment [16]-[18], the social stigma associated with the acceptance of entrepreneurship as a way of living by those who have higher levels education [19]. The primary data on the level of education of the respondents shows that 87% have an education of up to two or lower levels. Only 13% of the respondents have college-level education, which supports the findings as per the literature mentioned here.

Table 4: Demographic profile

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	24	40
Female	36	60
Total (N)	60	100
Age group	Frequency	Percent
21 - 30 years	5	8
31 – 40 years	22	37
41 – 50 years	25	42
Above 50 years	8	13
Total (N)	60	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Below 10	16	27
SSLC	23	38
Plus Two	13	22
UG	6	10
PG	2	3
Total (N)	60	100
Income level (per month)	Frequency	Percent
Below 10000	10	16
10000 - 20000	18	30
20000 - 30000	19	32
30000 - 40000	9	15
Above 40000	4	7
Total (N)	60	100

Source: Primary data

7.1. Factors Motivating Leaders of RT Units in Kumarakom

The data related to the variables are collected in the 5-point Likert scale summated rating. Fifteen statements were selected to identify the internal motivation factors; a motivational index was constructed by giving weightage to 5 points ranging from 5 to 1 (highly motivated to highly demotivated). For interpretation of the index score, it was rated based on the standard deviation and mean. Table 5 shows the details of the classification index scores according to the scores assigned to the internal motivating factors of the respondents.

Table 5: Scores for delineating the levels of internal motivating factors

Categories	Index Score
Low motivating	Less than 57

Moderately motivating	Between 57 - 81
Highly motivating	More than 81
	Standard Deviation = 12
	Mean = 69

Table 6: Internal motivational factors for the leaders of RT units

No.	Motivational Factors	N = 60		
		Score	Index	Rank
1	Money in hand	187	62.33	12
2	Gaining prestige in society	219	73	5
3	Economic Security	209	69.66	7
4	Achievement in life	223	74.33	4
5	Earning Profit	212	70.66	6
6	Passion for the job	263	87.66	1
7	Motivated from training	194	64.8	11
8	Self-Employment	208	69.33	8
9	Motivated by success stories	132	44	15
10	Self-interest	240	81	3
11	Utilization of time	205	68.33	9
12	Financial Independence	258	86	2
13	Employing others	186	62	13
14	Continuity of family business	150	50	14
15	The welfare of the family	197	65.77	10
Composite Index		3083	69	

Source: primary data

Table 6 depicts the identification of internal motivating factors for the RT unit leaders. The factors that are highly motivating are identified to be passion for the job (87.66), financial independence (86), and Self-interest (81). Those internal motivational factors that are less motivating to the leaders of the RT unit are the Continuity of the family business (50) and motivation from success stories (44). Moderately motivating internal motivational factors are Money in hand, gaining prestige in society, Economic Security, Achievement in life, Earning Profit, motivation from training, Self-Employment, motivation from success stories, Utilization of time, employing others, and Welfare of the family. Also, it shows that RT unit leaders are moderately motivated by internal motivational factors, as the composite index is 69. A Chi-square test was carried out to find out whether there exist any relationships among the opinions of RT unit leaders concerning 15 internal motivational factors. The hypothesis is formulated as follows: There is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning 15 internal motivational factors.

The chi-square test statistic, $p = 0.234$. As $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Take an alpha level of 5per cent (0.05). So, it is revealed that there is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning internal motivational factors. Seven statements were selected to identify the external motivation factors, and data were collected in the 5-point scale of Likert summated rating for interpretation of index score was rated based on standard deviation and mean.

Table 7: Scores for delineating the levels of external motivating factors

Categories	Index Score
Low Motivating	Less than 66
Moderately motivating	Between 66 - 76
Highly Motivating	More than 76
	Standard Deviation = 5
	Mean = 71

Table 8: External motivational factors for the leaders of RT units

No.	Motivational Factors	N=60		
		Score	Index	Rank
1	Institutional support and other assistance	190	63.33	7

2	High rate of return	202	67.33	6
3	High demand for the products	221	73.66	4
4	Low capital requirement	241	80.33	1
5	Support from society	207	69	5
6	Easiness in selling the products	230	76.66	3
7	Availability of inputs	234	78	2
Composite Index		1525	72.61	

Source: Primary data

Table 7 depicts the scores for classifying and ranking the external motivating factors, while Table 8 shows the analysis of external motivational factors for leaders of RT units. The motivational factors, viz., Low capital requirement (80.33), Availability of inputs (78), and Easiness of selling the products (76.66), are highly motivating in nature. High demand for the products, support from society, and a High rate of return are the moderately motivating factors for the leaders of the RT units. The less motivating factor includes Institutional Support and other assistance (63.33). The composite index (72.61) for external motivational factors shows that these factors are motivating the RT unit leaders. A chi-square test was carried out to find out whether there exist any relationships among the opinions of RT unit leaders concerning 7 external motivational factors.

The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis were formulated as follows: There is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning 7 external motivational factors. The chi-square test statistics, $p = 0.227$. As $p > 0.05$. The null hypothesis is accepted. Take an alpha level of 5 per cent (0.05). So, it represents that there is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning external motivational factors. The data related to each problem were collected by identifying variables under each head, and responses were collected on the 3-point scale of Likert summated rating. A problem index was constructed by giving weightage to 3 points ranging from 3 to 1 (Mostly felt to least felt). The interpretation of the index score was rated below:

0 – 33.3 – Least felt (LF)

33.34 – 66.66 – Moderately felt (MDF)

66.67 – 100 – Mostly felt (MF)

7.2. Financial Problems Faced by the Units

Finance is considered to be a major component of every unit. In every stage, finance is the factor that determines the rate of unit activities. In general, all business activities are highly vulnerable to financial constraints. In a study that has been done to identify various problems faced by the RT units, more attention needs to be paid to the financial problems. As the RT mission is not extending any financial assistance to the units, there is also a need to find out whether the RT units are facing any financial problems (Table 10).

Table 9: Financial problems faced by the units

No.	Financial Problems	N = 60	
		Score	Index
1	Shortage of cash in hand	148	82
2	Lack of financial assistance from banks and government agencies	143	79
3	Lack of knowledge about financial schemes	126	70
4	High taxation	125	69
5	Supply/Sales on credit	120	65
6	Delay in cash transaction	116	64
7	No adequate amount for day-to-day operations	136	75
8	Reluctance from financial institutions	114	63
Composite Index		1028	71

Source: Primary data

Table 10: Classification of financial problems based on intensity

No.	Financial Problems	Category
1	Shortage of cash in hand	Chronic
2	Lack of financial assistance from banks and government agencies	Severe

3	Lack of knowledge about financial schemes	Severe
4	High taxation	Severe
5	Supply/Sales on credit	Severe
6	Delay in cash transaction	Severe
7	No adequate amount for day-to-day operations	Severe
8	Reluctance from financial institutions	Severe

Source: Primary data

Table 9 points to the Shortage of cash in hand (82), lack of financial assistance from banks and government agencies (79), No adequate amount for day-to-day operations (75), lack of knowledge about financial schemes(70), and High taxation (69) are the problems which are mostly felt by RT units. Supply/ Sales on credit (65), Delay in cash transactions (64), and Reluctance from financial institutions (63) were identified to be the moderately felt problems for the RT units. The composite index for financial problems indicates that the RT units mostly feel it. Shortages of cash in hand were classified as ‘Chronic’ while all other financial problems were coming under the ‘severe’ category.

7.3. Production Problems Faced by the Units

The RT units that have been taken for this study deal with the production and marketing of various products. So, various constraints that the units usually go through may relate to production.

Table 11: Production problems faced by the units

No.	Production Problems	N = 60	
		Score	Index
1	High wage demand for labour	91	50.6
2	Non- Non-availability of skilled labour	66	36.7
3	High price for raw materials	99	55
4	Difficulty in acquiring raw materials	103	57.2
5	Low quality of raw materials	77	42.8
6	Lack of technical know-how involved	68	37.8
7	Non-availability of modern technology	93	51.7
8	Lack of technical training	75	41.7
Composite Index		671	53.3

Source: Compiled from Primary data

Table 12: Classification of production problems based on the intensity

No.	Production Problems	Category
1	High wage demand for labour	Risk
2	Non- non-availability of skilled labour	Tolerable
3	High price for raw materials	Risk
4	Difficulty in acquiring raw materials	Risk
5	Low quality of raw materials	Risk
6	Lack of technical know-how involved	Tolerable
7	Non-availability of modern technology	Risk
8	Lack of technical training	Risk

Source: Compiled from Primary data

From Table 11, it is evident that all the problems that were considered under production problem were moderately felt to the units as the indices obtained fall under the range 33.34 – 66.66. Based on the intensity, problems have been classified into tolerable and risky. Table 12 shows the classifications. High wage demand for labour, High prices for raw materials, Difficulty in acquiring raw materials, Low quality of raw materials, non-availability of modern technology, and lack of technical training come under the ‘Risky’ category. The ‘Tolerable’ problems include the non-availability of skilled labour and lack of technical know-how involved.

7.4. Marketing Problems Faced by the Units

Marketing is another major area of concern for RT units. The units should make considerable efforts to create a good image for the products in consumer's minds. Better marketing practices need to be followed in every business concern to make its activities more productive. If the units have any constraints related to the marketing of products, it would harm the production activities of the firm in future periods. Some of the major marketing problems are shown in Table 13. The major marketing problems are frequent price fluctuations, low prices for the product, and demand fluctuations. The issues under marketing problems recognized to be mostly felt by the units are frequent price fluctuation with an index value of 83.88, low price for the product whose index value is 82.77, while fluctuations in demand come next with the index value of 77.77. Competition from other units (70.55) and non-availability of communication facilities (68.88) come down the list. Lack of demand for the product and lack of market information are the problems which are moderately felt by the units. Most of the problems related to marketing are identified to be 'Severe' in nature. Low prices for the product and frequent price fluctuation are the 'Chronic' problems related to the marketing of products by RT units. Table 15 ranks the problems into categories according to their severity (Table 14).

Table 13: Marketing problems faced by the units

No.	Marketing Problems	N = 60	
		Score	Index
1	Lack of demand for the product	115	63.88
2	Low price for the product	149	82.77
3	Frequent price fluctuation	151	83.88
4	Competition from other units	127	70.55
5	Lack of market information	111	61.66
6	Fluctuations in demand	140	77.77
7	Non-availability of communication facilities	124	68.88
Composite Index		917	72.77

Source: Primary data

Table 14: Classification of marketing problems based on intensity

No.	Marketing Problems	Category
1	Lack of demand for the product	Severe
2	Low price for the product	Chronic
3	Frequent price fluctuation	Chronic
4	Competition from other units	Severe
5	Lack of market information	Severe
6	Fluctuations in demand	Severe
7	Non- Non-availability of communication facilities	Severe

Source: Primary data

The issues under marketing problems recognized to be mostly felt by the units are frequent price fluctuation (83.88), low price for the product (82.77), fluctuations in demand (77.77), Competition from other units (70.55), and Non-availability of communication facilities (68.88). Lack of demand for the product and lack of market information are the problems which are moderately felt by the units. Most of the problems related to marketing are identified to be 'Severe' in nature. Low prices for the product and frequent price fluctuation are the 'Chronic' problems related to the marketing of products by RT units.

7.5. Political Problems Faced by the Units

The current socio-economic conditions have a considerable influence on the functioning of RT units. In any attempt to study the problems faced by the RT units, attention needs to be given to political problems. Here, the problems analyzed are Changes in pricing policy, Lack of government support, Political intervention, and Complexity of laws/procedures.

Table 15: Political Problems faced by the units

No.	Political Problems	N = 60	
		Score	Index
1	Changes in pricing policy	148	82.2
2	Lack of government support	131	72.8
3	Political intervention	101	56.1
4	Complexity of laws/procedures	108	60
Composite Index		488	67.8

Source: Primary data

Table 16: Classification of political problems based on intensity

No.	Political Problems	Category
1	Changes in pricing policy	Chronic
2	Lack of government support	Severe
3	Political intervention	Risk
4	Complexity of laws/procedures	Risk

Source: Primary data

Table 15 shows that the most felt political problems for the RT units are Changes in Pricing Policy (82.22) and lack of government support (72.77). The units moderately feel other political problems. Political intervention and the Complexity of laws/procedures are the problems at 'Risk' for the RT units. Table 16 infers that Changes in pricing policy are 'Chronic' and Lack of Government support is 'Severe.'

Table 17: Problems of Responsible Tourism (RT) Units

No.	Problems	Score	Index
1	Financial Problems	1028	71
2	Production Problems	671	53.3
3	Marketing Problems	917	72.8
4	Political Problems	488	67.8

Source: Primary data

From Table 17, it is clear that Marketing Problems are mostly felt by the RT units (I = 72.77), followed by Financial Problems (I = 71). Low prices for the product and frequent price fluctuation are identified as major constraints under marketing activities. Political Problems also have a considerable influence on the functioning of RT units as they fall under the mostly felt category (I = 67.77). It also can be inferred that the units moderately feel Production problems.

8. Findings

8.1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of Leaders of RT Units in Kumarakom

The majority of the respondents belong to the age group 41 - 50 years (42%), followed by people aged between 31 - 40 years. Five respondents (8%) fall under the age group 21 - 30 years. It can be concluded that the middle-aged group (41 – 50 years) is more in number as the leaders of the responsible tourism (RT) units. A very small number of younger people are involved in RT activities. Out of 60 respondents, 36 (60%) are females. Only 40 per cent of the total respondents are male. It reveals that females are more actively engaging in responsible tourism-related activities.

Ninety-three per cent of the respondents are married, while 5 per cent are unmarried. About 2 per cent of the respondents fall under the category of separated or widows. The majority (38%) of respondents have an educational qualification of SSLC. About 22 per cent of respondents have studied up to Plus Two. Nearly 10 per cent have completed UG, and 3 per cent have completed PG. In general, it can be said that most of the leaders of responsible tourism (RT) units possess lesser educational qualifications. Out of the total respondents, 50 per cent belong to the family monthly income category, which ranges between 10000 – 20000 Rs. while 37% of the respondents come under the monthly income range of 20000 – 30000 Rs. Only 10 per cent falls under the category of 30000 – 40000 Rs. The above data shows that the majority of the RT unit's leaders belong to

the low-income group. Out of 60, 48 respondents belong to the social strata BPL. It reveals that the majority of the leaders of units (70 percent) are coming from lower social strata BPL. Local community involvement in tourism activities is uneven as the lower strata category is more engaging in the activities.

8.2. Basic Financial Information About the RT Units in Kumarakom

About 32 per cent of the units had initially invested an amount between 20000 -30000. Another 30 percent had employed an amount in the range 10000-20000. Only 7 per cent have made an initial investment of above 40000 rupees. It infers that the majority of the units didn't need any initial investment of more than 30000 Rs. Low capital requirement is a major reason for starting and running the RT units for most of the leaders. The data shows about 44% of the units can generate annual revenue of 100000 – 150000 rupees. Only 8 per cent of the units have earnings of below 50000 annually. In general, RT units can earn to a somewhat satisfactory level. However, there needs to be an improvement in the turnover from the units to withstand as a business unit. 41 out of 60 units have availed credit for their activity. Of which, 31% of the units have taken loans from SHGs, mainly Kudumbasree, while 27% of units have taken loans from Co-operatives and 17% have taken loans from Bank. Lesser procedures and lower interest rates are the reasons for the dependence on SHGs and Co-operatives by most of the RT units. Complex procedures made the units reluctant to avail of credit from commercial banks. Higher interest rate is the reason for lesser dependence on moneylenders for credit.

8.3. Factors Motivating the Leaders of RT Units in Kumarakom

The factors that are highly motivating are identified to be passion for the job, financial independence, and Self-interest. Moderately motivating internal motivational factors are Money in hand, gaining prestige in society, Economic Security, Achievement in life, Earning Profit, Motivation from training, Self-Employment, motivation from success stories, Utilization of time, employing others, and Welfare of the family. Those internal motivational factors that are less motivating to the leaders of the RT unit are the Continuity of family business and motivated by success stories. Also, it shows that RT unit leaders are moderately motivated by internal motivational factors, as the composite index is 69. As the *Chi-Square* test's $p = 0.234$, it represents that there is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning internal motivational factors.

The motivational factors viz. Low capital requirements, Availability of inputs, and Easiness in selling the products are highly motivating in nature. High demand for the products, support from society, and a high rate of return are the moderately motivating factors for the leaders of the RT units. The less motivating factor includes Institutional Support and other assistance. The composite index (72.61) for external motivational factors shows that these factors are moderately motivating the RT unit leaders. As the *Chi-Square* test's $p = 0.227$, it represents that there is no significant difference in opinion among the RT unit leaders concerning external motivational factors.

8.4. Problems Faced by RT Units in Kumarakom

Shortage of cash in hand, lack of financial assistance from banks and government agencies, No adequate amount for day-to-day operations, lack of knowledge about financial schemes, and High taxation are the major financial problems felt by RT units. Supply/Sales on credit, Delay in cash transactions, and Reluctance from financial institutions are identified to be moderately felt problems for the RT units. The composite index for financial problems indicates that the RT units mostly feel it. Shortages of cash in hand were classified as 'Chronic' while all other financial problems came under the 'severe' category. The RT units moderately felt production problems. Based on the intensity, problems were classified which showed the results as the problems viz., High wage demand of labour, High price for raw materials, Difficulty in acquiring raw materials, Low quality of raw materials, non-availability of modern technology, and lack of technical training come under 'Risk.'

The issues under marketing problems recognized to be mostly felt by the units are frequent price fluctuation, low price for the product, fluctuations in demand, Competition from other units, and Non-availability of communication facilities. Lack of demand for the product and lack of market information are the problems which are moderately felt by the units. Most of the problems related to marketing are identified to be 'Severe' in nature. Low prices for the product and frequent price fluctuation are the 'Chronic' problems related to the marketing of products by RT units.

The most felt political problems for the RT units are changes in pricing policy and lack of government support. The units moderately feel other political problems. Political intervention and the Complexity of laws/procedures are the problems at 'Risk' for the RT units. Change in pricing policy is 'Chronic,' and Lack of Government support is 'Severe.' In general, problems that are mostly felt by the RT units are marketing problems followed by financial problems. RT units moderately feel production problems and political problems.

8.5. Suggestions

It is identified that RT units in Kumarakom are facing Marketing Problems to a greater extent. Responsible Tourism (RT) cell in every destination needs to undertake or coordinate activities for better promotion of the RT unit's products. It is also advised to formulate a mechanism to stabilize the price of the products. The study suggests the authority to implement a program for providing financial assistance to RT units based on appropriate criteria. The mechanism should ensure the assistance provided is utilized productively in the unit. The study suggests the authority to implement a program for providing financial assistance to RT units based on appropriate criteria. These will also pave the way for innovations in the field.

9. Conclusion

The study mainly emphasized the Responsible Tourism (RT) units in Kumarakom, which is a well-known responsible tourism destination. The various problems which these units are facing in their functioning were identified through the study. Shortage of cash in hand, lack of financial assistance from banks and government agencies, and no adequate amount for day-to-day operations are the major financial problems that are mostly felt by RT units. The issues under marketing problems recognized to be mostly felt by the units are frequent price fluctuation, low price for the product, fluctuations in demand, Competition from other units, and non-availability of communication facilities. The RT units moderately felt the production problems. In general, problems that are mostly felt by the RT units are marketing problems followed by financial problems. RT units moderately feel production problems and political problems.

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