

A Comparative Study of the Positive Cultural Impacts Due to Tourism Development between Urban and Rural Tourist Centres of Kerala

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Abstract – The present study is intended to compare the positive cultural impacts between selected urban and rural tourist centres of Kerala in the light of opinions gathered from the respondents who are the inhabitants of the locality. A total of four hundred respondents are selected for the study out of which 151 are from urban centres and the rest 249 are from rural centres. Five major positive cultural impacts are identified for the study. They are acculturation, preservation of tradition, stimulation of cultural exchange, cultural exchange and fixing cultural identity. From the study it is found that in all the five variables used to measure cultural positives, urban centres are leading over rural.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kerala, the state located at the south-west tip of India is tremendously rich with green forests, mountain ranges, landscapes, backwaters and rivers. The natural beauty of Kerala is genuinely inducing tourism industry. Tourism industry is a major driving force behind the economic development of the state. On an average tourism industry of the state is growing at a rate of 13.5% reached to a total tourism revenue of around 40000 crore by 2016. Kerala is not a producer state, it heavily depend other neighbouring states for its food and vegetable demands. Moreover unemployment is a big threat to the economy of the state and hence, youngsters leave the state to overseas in search of employment. It really made a lot of travel agencies flourishing in the state. Slowly they diverted their attention to tourism sector by sensing its potential. They heavily advertised for their business success and the same is done by authorities in the tourism sector. This heavy campaigning really made the state a world tourist centre within a short span of time. Tourism and culture are strongly interwoven that the behavior and attitude of tourists definitely influence the quality of a tourist center's culture. Cultural interaction helps to refine the culture of the both the host and guest at the same time it may ruin the purity of a locality's cultural traditions. The study more concentrates on the positive cultural impacts due to tourism development. It compares a selected sample of urban and rural tourist centres of the state on the basis of opinion sought from respondents who belong to the host community.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism can cause change or loss of local identity and values brought about by several closely related factors. Tourism development has both positive and negative impacts on the culture of the locality. The study tries to bring out specifically the positive cultural impacts of tourism. Positive cultural impacts mean acculturation, preservation of tradition, cultural exchange, fixing cultural identity etc. Commodification of local cultures, standardization in tune with tourist desires, staged authenticity, adaptation to tourist demands, cultural clashes, child labour, solid waste generation, prostitution and irritation due to tourist behavior are some of the negative impacts. It is true that tourism brings massive strain on local resources and most of the tourist centres of Kerala are suffocated with a lot of such socio-cultural problems. Inter cultural contact between tourist and host nationals can be regarded as a unique form of cross cultural interaction. Tourist stay in a locality is for a very short period of time. During this short term stay they interact with host community which in turn makes changes in the cultural pattern of the community. These changes have both positive and negative impacts on the cultural background. The host community's thoughts, beliefs, living styles, habits, ceremonies, relationships and value systems will be definitely impacted through this continuous tourist interaction. The study makes a comparison between a sample of tourist centres selected in urban and rural Kerala with respect to the positive cultural impacts on the basis of an opinion survey among members of the host community. Hence the problem is stated as '**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POSITIVE CULTURAL IMPACTS DUE TO**

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL TOURIST CENTRES OF KERALA¹.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The paper tries to find out answers to the following objectives;

1. To identify the positive cultural impacts in Kerala due to tourism development.
2. To know whether urban or rural centres are better in terms of the identified cultural impacts.
3. To make suggestions for the betterment of positive cultural impacts

4. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING DESIGN

The paper uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire from the respondents belonging to both urban and rural tourist centres of the selected sample. The samples are selected by using Simple Random Sampling Method. The questionnaire is administered to 151 respondents belonging to urban centres and 249 of rural centres from whom data is collected. Hence the total sample size is 400. Secondary data is collected from different published sources like Department Publications, Magazines, News Papers, Journals, Reference Books, Library Materials and the internet.

5. POSITIVE IMPACT ON CULTURE DUE TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism development naturally invites a lot of benefits to the host community in terms of favourable cultural factors. The important factors identified and used in the study are given below;

5.1. Acculturation

Development of tourism will help to adapt positively a new culture in the locality. Due to tourist interaction a cultural advancement is possible leading to a mixed culture in the locality. It leads to the development of language, new food habits, new life style and thereby making the culture hybrid and modern. It boosts education, standard of living and infrastructure facilities.

5.2. Preservation of Tradition

It helps to preserve the monuments and rich traditions of the locality in a better way. Tourism helps to increase the demand for historical and cultural exhibits of the locality. Moreover it will definitely transmit the local culture among the tourists who are visiting the tourist destinations.

5.3. Cultural Exchange and its Stimulation

Cultural exchange is a healthy way of transmission of the richness of the tourist culture with that of the host culture. It will definitely enrich two cultures in a better way. This cultural interaction will mould a new hybrid culture by absorbing the goodness of the two. Local communities can mix with people from diverse back grounds with different life styles which through 'demonstration effect' may lead to the development of improved life styles and practices from the tourist examples. In addition there may be the flowing of the negative sides of the two cultures on either side.

5.4. Fixing Cultural Identity

Tourism development helps to fix the cultural identity of the inhabitants. It makes the host population renowned in the name of their cultural uniqueness.

6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The primary data collected through the questionnaire from four hundred respondents comprising 151 from urban centres and 249 from rural centres of different parts of Kerala are compared by using descriptive statistics including Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation. Finally the significant difference of the variations is tested by using ANOVA. The analysis is done by using SPSS Software.

Table 1.1 Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Place	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Acculturation	Urban	151	38.2715	6.38324	.51946
	Rural	249	33.8474	6.96252	.44123
	Total	400	35.5175	7.07530	.35376
Preservation of Tradition	Urban	151	22.5960	4.76400	.38769
	Rural	249	20.3735	4.52692	.28688
	Total	400	21.2125	4.73639	.23682
Stimulation of Cultural Exchange	Urban	151	27.1523	6.01415	.48942
	Rural	249	24.2329	6.02699	.38194
	Total	400	25.3350	6.17926	.30896
Cultural Exchange	Urban	151	19.0530	3.52286	.28669
	Rural	249	17.4297	4.22599	.26781
	Total	400	18.0425	4.04804	.20240
Cultural Exchange	Urban	151	22.7682	4.17364	.33965
	Rural	249	20.5743	4.33984	.27503
	Total	400	21.4025	4.40329	.22016

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is seen that in all the five variables taken for comparing urban and rural tourist centres latter is leading with higher Mean Scores. In the case of the first variable Acculturation, urban centre is leading with Mean Score **38.2715**. While considering Preservation of Tradition, urban centres lead with Average Score **22.5960** and in Stimulation of Cultural Exchange with a Score of **27.1523**. With reference to Cultural Exchange **19.0530** is the Average Score of the urban centres which is higher than the rural. While considering the last variable Fixing Cultural Identity also, urban centres are leading with a Score of **22.7682**. The outcome of the

analysis proves that the cultural positive impacts are better reflected in urban centres than in rural.

As a next stage it is normal to test whether these variations in the Average Score is significant or not. For the purpose F-Test is used as a tool of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The following hypotheses are used to test the variation;

H₀: There is no significant difference between the Mean Scores of urban and rural tourist centres with reference to positive cultural impacts

H₁: There is significant difference between the Mean Scores of urban and rural tourist centres with reference to positive cultural impacts

Table 1.2 Analysis of Variance-ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Acculturation	Between Groups	1839.809	1	1839.809	40.379	.000*
	Within Groups	18134.068	398	45.563		
	Total	19973.878	399			
Preservation of Tradition	Between Groups	464.315	1	464.315	21.775	.000*
	Within Groups	8486.623	398	21.323		
	Total	8950.938	399			
Stimulation of Cultural Exchange	Between Groups	801.123	1	801.123	22.090	.000*
	Within Groups	14433.987	398	36.266		
	Total	15235.110	399			
Cultural Exchange	Between Groups	247.681	1	247.681	15.671	.000*
	Within Groups	6290.596	398	15.806		
	Total	6538.277	399			
Fixing Cultural Identity	Between Groups	452.435	1	452.435	24.722	.000*
	Within Groups	7283.763	398	18.301		
	Total	7736.198	399			

Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 1% Level of Significance

It is found from the above table that all the five variables under study are varying significantly between the urban and rural places of tourist centres. The variations are found to be significant at 1% Level of Significance in all cases as $p < 0.01$ (vide last column of the table). Hence, the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternate hypotheses are accepted at 1% level.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Considering the first variable Acculturation, urban centre is leading with Mean Score **38.2715**. Hence, it is concluded that in Acculturation first among the positive cultural impacts, urban tourist centres are more benefited.
2. While considering Preservation of Tradition, urban centres lead with Average Score **22.5960** meaning the traditional values are better preserved in urban centres in comparison with rural.
3. While considering Stimulation of Cultural Exchange also urban centres register a higher Mean Score of **27.1523**. That means cultural exchange values are stimulated effectively in urban tourist centres compared to rural.

4. With reference to Cultural Exchange **19.0530** is the Average Score of the urban centres which is higher than the rural.
5. While considering the last variable Fixing Cultural Identity also, urban centres are leading with a Score of **22.7682**. Hence it is concluded that the urban centres are protecting cultural identity positively.
6. The outcome of the analysis proves that the cultural positive impacts are better reflected in urban centres than in rural.

8. SUGGESTIONS

1. The study reveals that rural centres are less benefited in terms of positive cultural gains. Efforts must be taken by the authorities for spreading the cultural benefits in rural centres also.
2. Campaigning and education of tourists are highly essential for preserving the cultural traditions of the host community. In order to achieve this target campaigning teams must be created for making tourists aware of the cultural traditions of the locality.

9. CONCLUSION

Kerala which occupies a prominent position in the tourism map of the world is a visitors' paradise in all respects. Its culture is rich with festivals, art forms and monuments. Its temples, places of worship and cultural traditions are renowned overseas. Kerala is an urban state with a high level of floating population. It is fundamentally prone to a cultural distraction because of its highly volatile society. It is a reason for reaping a lot of cultural benefits also. A cost-benefit analysis from a larger frame only will be able to find out which among these-either cost or benefit-weigh more.

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