

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

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**Abstract – The study is conducted among selected samples of urban and rural tourist centres of Kerala. It is intended to identify which centres are better in terms of reach of positive social benefits in the opinion of the selected sample respondents of four hundred. Out of which one hundred and fifty one belong to urban centres and the remaining two hundred and forty nine to rural. In all out of the six social impacts identified urban tourist centres of Kerala are leading with highest Mean Scores indicating the benefits are more popularly available in urban centres.**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism development and social development go hand in hand because economic development effected through tourism is instrumental in making increased standards of social living. Kerala situated in the south-west corner of India is a world famous tourist centre. Its wildlife centres like Thekkadi and Iravikulam are extra ordinary places to visit. Similarly bird sanctuaries like Kumarakom and Thattekkad and eco tourist centres such as Konni and Thenmala are infact gifted with natural richness. Tourism drives host community to interact with guests leading to inter-transmission and exchange of culture, values, customs and even language. The development of tourism creates job opportunities, infrastructure development and generated additional foreign exchange. All these are fundamental for the development of an area. Urban and rural tourist centres have a lot of changes with respect to its demography, population and geographical features. The present study attempts to compare these two types of tourist centres of Kerala with respect to positive social impacts.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

From the demographic profile of Kerala it is clear that it is an urbanized state. Most of the rural areas show the features of urban areas and there exists an urban-rural continuum. It is one among the many reasons for the tourists' attraction to the state. The society of Kerala is well educated and politically aware and its pattern of development is socialistic. Because of those reasons the people of Kerala welcome tourists whole heartedly. This attitude eventually reaps benefits to the society in terms of development in multiple ways. Infrastructure

development, transportation and communication are some of the examples of such benefits. The study identifies six major benefits accruing to the society because of tourism development. They are Hybrid Culture, Greater Shopping Choices, Infrastructure Development, Local Economy Creation, Quality Improvement and Building Host Identity. In terms of these positive social factors which area-either urban or rural-is more benefited is the subject matter of this study. Hence, the problem is stated as '**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS DUE TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL TOURIST CENTRES OF KERALA**'.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

The study tries to compare the level of social benefits reaping by reason of tourism development to the urban and rural tourist centres of Kerala and to find out which centres are more benefited.

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

## 4. METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLING DESIGN

For the purpose of this study a structured questionnaire is prepared and administered to four

hundred respondents for collecting primary data. Out of which 151 respondents belong to urban tourist area and the remaining 249 belong to rural area. Simple Random Sampling Method is used in the study for gathering primary data. Secondary data is collected from different published sources like Department Publications, Magazines, News Papers, Journals, Reference Books, Library Materials and the internet.

## 5. POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS THROUGH TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism development is a catalyst for infrastructure and economic development of a region. The study finds out the following factors positively influencing the society for its development;

### 5.1. Hybrid Culture

Continuous tourist inflow and its interaction with local society lead to a positive transmission of values one another. This cross cultural transmission refines the values of both host and guest community. A society with a hybrid culture is the outcome of this interaction.

### 5.2. Greater Shopping Choices

Development of tourism is instrumental in bringing additional shopping facilities. Shopping malls, exhibition stalls and trade fairs to suit tourists' demands will become common in such tourism spots. It will give opportunities for greater shopping choices.

### 5.3. Infrastructure Development

By reason of tourism development infrastructure facilities will boost. Transportation, communication, employment opportunities and all other infrastructure will naturally develop.

### 5.4. Local Economy Creation

The development of tourism drives to a local economy creation by way of more shops, more infrastructure, more employment and more income for locals.

### 5.5. Quality Improvement

Tourists normally demand quality products and a constant increase of shops in the tourist centre will definitely lead to high competition. The sellers and service providers will be naturally forced to increase the quality of goods and services.

### 5.6. Building Host Identity

The values of the society are the signature of their identity. The host community will be always trying to uphold their traditions and values.

## 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**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Hybrid Culture	Urban	151	<b>19.6556</b>	2.81909	.22941
	Rural	249	17.4096	3.57422	.22651
	Total	400	18.2575	3.48087	.17404
Greater Shopping Choices	Urban	151	<b>23.7815</b>	3.74681	.30491
	Rural	249	19.7952	4.34804	.27555
	Total	400	21.3000	4.55762	.22788
Infrastructure Development	Urban	151	<b>62.0795</b>	9.27184	.75453
	Rural	249	54.4659	10.86314	.68842
	Total	400	57.3400	10.92349	.54617
Local Economy Creation	Urban	151	<b>50.1457</b>	7.37238	.59996
	Rural	249	45.7831	8.85371	.56108
	Total	400	47.4300	8.58133	.42907
Quality Improvement	Urban	151	<b>18.7550</b>	2.93704	.23901
	Rural	249	16.7510	3.97297	.25178
	Total	400	17.5075	3.74165	.18708
Building Host Identity	Urban	151	<b>18.7020</b>	3.02830	.24644
	Rural	249	16.3454	3.90321	.24736
	Total	400	17.2350	3.77165	.18858

*Source: Primary Data*

There are six variables identified for comparing urban and rural tourist centres in terms of social positives. In the first variable Hybrid Culture, the Mean Score of urban centres is **19.6556** which is higher than that of rural centres indicating that benefit is more prevalent in urban centres. Greater Shopping Choices as a benefit is reflected more in urban centres as their Average Score is **23.7815** higher than that of rural. In the case of Infrastructure Development also urban centres are leading with a Mean Score of **62.0795** indicating urban centres account for more infrastructures by reason of tourism development. In the remaining three factors called Local Economy Creation, Quality Improvement and Building Host Identity urban centres are leading with Mean Scores **50.1457**, **18.7550** and **18.7020** respectively indicating all those benefits are more popular in urban centres of Kerala.

Now it is time to test whether those variations in the Mean Scores are 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;

**$H_0$ : There is no significant difference between the Mean Scores of urban and rural tourist centres with reference to positive social impacts**

**$H_1$ : There is significant difference between the Mean Scores of urban and rural tourist centres with reference to positive social impacts**

**Table1.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Hybrid Culture	Between Groups	474.168	1	474.168	43.281	.000*
	Within Groups	4360.310	398	10.956		
	Total	4834.478	399			
Greater Shopping Choices	Between Groups	1493.658	1	1493.658	87.496	.000*
	Within Groups	6794.342	398	17.071		
	Total	8288.000	399			
Infrastructure Development	Between Groups	5448.754	1	5448.754	51.436	.000*
	Within Groups	42161.006	398	105.932		
	Total	47609.760	399			
Local Economy Creation	Between Groups	1788.956	1	1788.956	25.804	.000*
	Within Groups	27593.084	398	69.329		
	Total	29382.040	399			
Quality Improvement	Between Groups	377.481	1	377.481	28.845	.000*
	Within Groups	5208.496	398	13.087		
	Total	5585.977	399			
Building Host Identity	Between Groups	522.023	1	522.023	40.312	.000*
	Within Groups	5153.887	398	12.949		
	Total	5675.910	399			

Source: Primary Data  
\*Significant at 1% Level of Significance

From the above table it is seen that the Mean Scores are varying at 1% Level of Significance. It is true for 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 of Significance and the variation is realistic and established by using F-Test.

## 7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following findings are arrived at from interpretation of the data analysed;

1. In the case of the first variable Hybrid Culture, the Mean Score of urban centres is **19.6556** which is higher than that of rural centres indicating that benefit is more prevalent in urban centres.
2. As the second variable, the impact of Greater Shopping Choices is evaluated. Its benefit is reflected more in urban centres with a higher Average Score of **23.7815** than that of rural.
3. In the case of Infrastructure Development also urban centres are leading with a Mean Score of **62.0795** indicating urban centres account for more infrastructures by reason of tourism development.
4. Considering the third factor called Local Economy Creation, the Mean Score of urban centres is **50.1457** again higher than rural, indicating better economic development is happening at urban centres.

5. With respect to Quality Improvement as a variable of positive social impact urban centres are leading with an Average of **18.7550** indicating it is more popular in urban centres.
6. Building Host Identity being the last variable is found to be more prevalent in urban centres as its Mean Score is **18.7020** which is higher than rural.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS

1. In the process of development of tourism in all indicators of development rural areas of Kerala are lagging behind as compared to urban centres. Measures should be taken by authorities to overcome the backwardness of rural areas by improving its transportation, communication and other infrastructure facilities.

2. Kerala is currently stands at 10<sup>th</sup> position in terms of tourism revenues and arrivals. The state ranked first for many earlier years and so urgent measures should be taken through campaigning and advertising to take back its lost glory as a tourism centre.

## 9. CONCLUSION

In the tourism map of India, Kerala occupies a prominent position as of its unique tourism characteristics. It is a world famous tourism centre also. Munnar, Kumarakom and Thekkady are its pivotal attractions before the world. Being a consumer state, Kerala depends heavily on tourism revenues. Quite recently its number one position as the most attractive tourism centre among Indian states lost and now it stands at tenth rank. The tourist centres of Kerala are truly equipped with all facilities and its infrastructure development is really wonderful. But it is seen from the study the rural tourist centres need further care to be elevated to international standards.

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